THE
CHANDOS
CLASSICS

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES

AND

HOUSEHOLD STORIES

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Translated from the German

BY

MRS. H. B. PAULL AND MR. L. A. WHEATLEY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE EDITOR OF

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LONDON
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.
AND NEW YORK

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PREFACE.

THIS edition of the celebrated Household Stories or Fairy Tales, collected by the brothers Grimm, has been carefully and closely translated from the German.

The tales have a peculiar interest as originating amongst the people, and having been transmitted orally for many centuries. They were collected chiefly in Hesse and Hanau, during a careful search of thirteen years, by the Grimms, and were published by them in 1812; at least, the first collection was. In 1814 a second collection appeared, and many editions of them have since followed. From the latest and most complete of these this translation has been made.

The tales are full of incident and wonderful adventures; and the hair-breadth escapes from danger into which the heroes and heroines fall are not always attributed to supernatural causes, but often to their own tact and courage.

The stories are highly imaginative, and the characters introduced display a spirit of enterprise which reminds us of the warlike heroes of this ancient Fatherland, who were

the founders of two of the greatest empires of modern Europe.

The translators have been most careful to preserve the sense of the original text, and at the same time to render the English phraseology simple and pure both in style and tendency.

The stories are given exactly as the Grimms told them ; and though some may appear irreverent, we may be sure that the simple people who repeated them, generation after generation, had no idea of showing an irreverent or irreligious spirit, when relating their national myths.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Frog Prince	9
The Cat who married a Mouse	12
The Youth who went to learn to Shudder	15
The Wolf and the Seven Young Kids	24
Faithful John	27
The Good Bargain	34
The Wonderful Musician	38
The Twelve Brothers	41
The Pack of Vagabonds	45
The Little Brother and Sister	47
Rapunzel	52
The Three Little Men in the Wood	56
The Three Spinning Fairies	61
Little Hans and Meg	63
The Three Snake Leaves	70
The White Snake	74
The Straw, the Coal, and the Bean	78
The Fisherman and his Wife	79
The Brave Little Tailor	84
Cinderella	92
The Riddle	99
The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage	102
Madam Holle	104
The Seven Ravens	106
Little Red Cap	109
The Bremen Town Musicians	112
The Singing Bone	115
The Three Golden Hairs	117
The Ladybird and the Fly	124
The Maiden without Hands	125
The Three Languages	131
Clever Bess	133
The Wishing-Table, the Gold Ass, and the Cudgel	136
Little Thumb	146
The Wedding of Widow Fox	151
The Wedding of Widow Fox (*second story*)	153

	PAGE
The Elves	154
The Elves (*second story*)	155
The Changeling (*third story*)	156
The Robber Bridegroom	157
Dr. Korbes	160
The Godfather	161
Godfather Death	163
Thumbling's Travels	165
Fitcher's Bird	169
The Juniper-tree	172
Old Sultan and his Friends	177
The Six Swans	180
Briar Rose	184
Birdie	186
King Thrushbeard	189
Snow-White	193
The Knapsack, the Hat, and the Horn	202
Rumpelstiltskin	208
Dearest Roland	210
The Golden Bird	214
The Dog and the Sparrow	221
Frederick and Catherine	224
The Two Brothers	229
The Queen Bee	249
The Three Feathers	251
The Golden Goose	253
The Princess in Disguise	257
The Hare's Bride	262
The Twelve Huntsmen	263
The Thief and his Master	266
Florinda and Yoringal	268
The Fortune-Seekers	270
The Wonderful Travellers	272
The Wolf and the Man	277
The Wolf and the Fox	278
The Wolf and Godfather Fox	280
The Fox and the Cat	281
The Tulip	282
Clever Maggie	286
The Old Grandfather and his Grandson	289
The Water Sprite	289
The Death of the Little Hen	290
Hans in Luck	292
Hans Married	296
The Gold Children	297
The Fox and the Geese	302
The Singing Skylark	302
The Goose-Girl	308
The Young Giant	313
The Elves	320

PAGE

The King of the Golden Mountain 323
The Raven 329
The Peasant's Clever Daughter 334
The Three Little Birds 337
The Water of Life 341
Doctor Know-all 347
The Bottle Spirit 349
Bearskin 354
The Wren and the Bear 358
Sweet Porridge 361
Clever Folk 361
Stories about Snakes 365
The Miller's Boy and his Cat 366
The Two Wanderers 370
Hans the Hedgehog 379
The Shroud 383
The Jew among the Thorns 384
The Learned Hunter 388
The Flail from Heaven 393
The Two Kings' Children 394
The Clever Little Tailor 400
The Bright Sun brings it to Light 403
The Blue Light 405
The Three Army Surgeons 409
The Seven Swabians 411
The Three Apprentices 414
The Fearless Prince 416
The Wonderful Plant 421
The Old Woman in the Wood 428
The Three Brothers 430
The Dragon's Grandmother 432
Ferdinand Faithful and Ferdinand Unfaithful 435
The Iron Chest 439
The Lazy Spinner 444
The Four Clever Brothers 446
One Eye, Two Eyes, Three Eyes 450
The Fox and the Horse 456
The Dancing-shoes 457
The Six Servants 461
The White and the Black Bride 467
Iron Hans 470
The Three Black Princesses 478
The Lamb and the Fish 479
Mountain Sesima 481
The Little Ass 483
The Turnip 486
The Three Sluggards 488
The Twelve Idlers 489
The Shepherd Boy and the King 491
The Star Dollars 492

PAGE

The Trial of Brides 493
Flax Leavings 493
The Sparrow and his Four Young Ones 494
The Tale of the Schlauraffenland 497
Snow-White and Red-Rose 497
The Glass Coffin 503
Lazy Harry 509
The Griffin 511
Strong Hans 517
The House in the Wood 523
Sharing Love and Sorrow 527
The Willow Wren 528
The Sole 531
The Bittern and the Hoopoe 532
The Owl 532
The Messengers of Death 534
The Goose Girl at the Well 535
The Sprite of the Mill-Pond 544
The Little Folks' Presents 550
The Giant and the Tailor 552
The Nail 554
The Poor Boy in the Grave 554
The True Bride 557
The Hare and the Hedgehog 563
The Spindle, the Needle, and the Shuttle 565
The Crumbs on the Table 568
The Sea Hare 569
The Master Thief 572
The Drummer 579
The Grave Mound 587
The Crystal Ball 590
Princess Maleen 593
The Boots of Buffalo Leather 598
The Golden Key 601
Our Lady's Child 602
Gambling Jack 606
Madam Trude 606
The Little Peasant 607
Brother Jolly 612
The Poor Man and the Rich 621
Old Hildebrand 624
Length of Life 626
The Ears of Corn 628

INTRODUCTION.

This collection of Household and Fairy Stories made by the brothers Grimm, may be called the Classic of Folklore. It was the first made on scientific principles, and taken literally from the oral traditions of the people; for although Strapparola, in his 'Notti Piacevoli' (published in 1550), asserted that he had taken down his stories 'from the lips of ten young girls,' he evidently wrote them in his own language, and intended them simply for amusement, as he mixed with them jests and riddles of so improper a character, that an expurgated edition became necessary.

The 'Pentamerone' appeared in the seventeenth century. Its collector, Giambattista Basile, was well acquainted with the Neapolitan dialect, in which the myths are told, and which renders them very difficult to translate. Many of them belong, also, to Germany; and Basile, with his exuberant style, his allusions to mythology, and manners, and customs, and his numerous similes, can scarcely be said to have faithfully transmitted the folklore of Italy to us. Mr. Keightly, in his 'Fairy Mythology,' has given us three of Basile's tales—one is 'The Dragon,' the second is 'Gagliuso' or 'Puss in Boots,' the third 'The Goat-face.' In 1848, Mr. John Edward Taylor published a translation of the 'Pentamerone.'

The French collections of folklore began later than those of Italy; many of Perrault's stories were also derived from oral tradition, and have been most popular in England; but they were written rather as the imaginative literature of his period than as folklore. To all these the present collection is superior in its purpose, and the manner in which that purpose is carried out. We have not mentioned the 'Gesta Romanorum,' as it is rather a collection of romances invented by troubadours, trouvères and monks, than a volume of folklore.

It was about the commencement of the present century, when

the clever German brothers Grimm began collecting the stories in this volume. They gathered them from the lips of the peasantry in the mountainous districts of Hesse, and in Hanau, gradually extending their field of inquiry, till they had spent thirteen years in their task of collection.

The first volume of the myths appeared in 1812. A second edition was issued in 1819.

When the purpose of the Grimms' research was understood, they received help from many friends; and found, in a village near Cassel, a cow-herd's wife who was a perfect rival of Scheherazade herself. From her dictation they could write easily, and, as when repeating the same tale she never altered it, they could depend on her accuracy—and accuracy was their first aim. That the Grimms added nothing to these stories in the way of embellishment, they have assured us in the preface to the second edition of this work. They gave them as they received them, the mode of telling them being, of course, their own, if we except those dictated by the cow-herd's wife.

'Everyone,' they add, 'who has been engaged in a similar work, will be aware that this cannot be considered a careless or indifferent mode of collection; but that a care and skill only to be acquired by time are needed to distinguish the true version of the story—simpler, purer, more complete in itself—from one that has been tampered with.'

That they did their work admirably has been long acknowledged, and, since folklore has taken its place as a scientific study, the value of the Grimms' Household Legends has greatly increased, especially in the eyes of the students of anthropology, who find an aid to the study of man in these simple stories; for they can trace in them the manners, customs, and degree of civilization of the different races amongst whom they were common, and the general resemblance of the folklore of the world is remarkable; but then, in reality, the earth is small, and mankind had a common origin.

The folklore of all Europe appears to be identical, and to belong not only to the Aryan race, but even to some of the African and Eastern Tribes. Few nations have more than one or two tales belonging exclusively to themselves. England has 'Jack the Giant Killer,' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk;' France, 'Blue Beard' (in great part), and 'Riquet with the Tuft.' But all share the ample store of legendary lore, and meet old friends with new faces in all these collections, with some slight differences of colouring.

Sleeping Beauty appears in Grimm as 'Briar Rose.' In France it is 'La Belle Dormante.'

Scott has altered and localized this myth—which may possibly date back to the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus—placing the fair princess's castle in Cumberland, in the Vale of St. John, where a pile of rocks assume, at a distance, the form of an ancient castle, but resume their own shapes on being approached closer. They are called the Castle Rocks of St. John.

'Paled in by many a lofty hill,
The narrow vale lay smooth and still,
And down its verdant bosom led,
A winding brooklet found its bed.
And, midmost of the vale, a mound
Arose with airy turrets crowned,
Buttress and rampire's circling bound
And mighty keep and tower;
Seemed some primeval giant's hand,
The castle's masonic walls had planned
A ponderous bulwark to withstand
Ambitious Nimrod's power.'

'Fitcher's Bird' bears a faint resemblance in the matter of the forbidden closet to Perrault's 'Blue Beard'; nevertheless, it is probable that the incident of "taboo' alone is repeated by the French author, who, it is said, meant by *Barbe Bleue* to represent the infamous Giles de Retz, who was guilty of more crimes than the Blue Beard of the story. He married and murdered seven wives. At La Verriere Mr. Richie has told us: 'A stair cut in the rock leads to a little hall tapestried with ivy, and round this are planted seven funereal trees as monuments to the manes of the seven murdered wives.' Gille de Retz was burnt at the stake nearly two hundred years before Perrault's time, but traditions of him, doubtless, then existed in Brittany. 'Puss in Boots' is the 'Gagliuso' of the 'Pentamerone,' and is found also in France. Our well-known nursery tale, 'Red Riding Hood,' is in the Grimms' 'Little Redcap,' but the singular ending—the removing the little girl and her grandmother from the dead wolf, and the filling his body with stones instead—proves the greater antiquity of the German legend. It belongs also to Norway, Hungary, and Italy. The legend of the 'Singing Bone' occurs in an old Scotch ballad (see Scott's 'Minstrelsy'); the Servians and the Bechuanas of South Africa also possess the tale.

King Arthur's Tom Thumb appears in the Grimms' collection as Thumbling. Hearne thinks the English dwarf may have been King Edgar's page—our old kings frequently had dwarfs attached to their court—but the little man who was the original Thumbling must be of far greater antiquity,

coming down undoubtedly from the North, where he was known as Thaumlin. In Austria and Denmark the dwarf is also a hero of legends. In the latter country he is called *Svend Tommling*, Swain Tommling. Every nation appears to have had a Tom Thumb, whose adventures differ, but are generally comic.

In the 'Young Giant,' Tom Thumb, or Thumbling, is carried off by a giant, brought up by him and grows as strong as his foster-father. His adventures afterwards resemble those of the champion Siegfried and of Thor, and in one single instance those of Jack the Giant Killer.

The 'Robber Bridegroom' is the 'Mr. Fox' of our ancient nursery tale, in which a Lady Mary acts the part of the heroine. Shakespeare alludes to this story in 'Much Ado about Nothing,' where Benedict quotes the oft-repeated words of Lady Mary, as she tells the tale, 'Like the old tale, my lord,' he says, '*it is not so, nor 'twas not so; but, indeed, God forbid that it should be so.*'

The 'Elves' are our Devonshire pixies, who never return if garments are given to them. They help the servants, by putting the kitchen in order at night; in the dairy they make the butter and prepare the 'clotted cream,' and Milton tells us—

> 'How the drudging goblin sweat
> To earn his cream bowl duly set,
> When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
> His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn,
> That ten day labourers could not end;
> Then lies him down, the lubber fiend,
> And stretched out all the chimney's length,
> Basks at the fire his hairy strength;
> As crop-full out of doors he flings,
> Ere the first cock his matin rings.'
>
> *Allegro*—lines 105 to 114.

'The Little Brother and Sister,' containing the weird incident of the mother coming from her grave to tend her infant, is to be found in the French legend of 'Melusine,' the snake-wife of Raymond of Poitou, who wedded her as a beautiful woman, promising never to see her on a Saturday. He was, however, made jealous by the insinuations of his cousin, broke his word, and found his beautiful wife in her chamber partially turned into a snake of gray and sky-blue skin mixed with white. Still, he would have kept her with him, but some words of reproach once escaped him, and she fled or died; but returned at night to nurse and warm her babes, Dietrich and Raymond. In the 'Foyer Breton' of Souvestre the same story is told; probably

all are embodiments of the universal belief in the strength of maternal love; or may not some mother's exclamation, 'I would return from the dead to take care of my children!' have originated the fables?

The 'Three Snake Leaves' bears some resemblance to the 'Lai d'Eliduc,' one of the poems of the Marie de France who lived in the reign of our Henry I., and was patronised by Beauclerc, but in it the part of the snakes is played by two weasels. The burial of the living with the dead is found in Sindbad's voyages, in the 'Arabian Nights.'

It is still a superstition of the Scotch that it is unlucky to save a man's life. He is sure afterwards to injure his preserver (see Scott's 'Pirate').

Cinderella is found in all lands, though there are additional and evidently more ancient incidents at its close in the Grimms' version; namely, the savage cutting of the sisters' feet to make the slipper fit.

The 'Six Servants' is repeated in Baron Munchausen. It is found in many languages—Norwegian, Italian, etc.

'The Juniper Tree,' with its horrors of the boy made into a pie, is common to all lands, descending probably from the dreadful feast of Thyestes. The Bechuanas possess a similar tale, coming down, perhaps, from cannibal times, and the spirit of a murdered child passing into a bird was known in Scotland. Leyden has preserved the following rhyme from such a story:

> 'Pee wee, pee wee.
> My minny killed me.'

One of the best known Greek myths of this horror is that of Tantalus, who killed his son and placed his limbs before the gods as food, when they visited Thrace, in order to test their divinity. But they knew at once what it was and would not touch the meat, except Ceres, who, grieving for her daughter, was absent and unobservant, and ate a shoulder blade. Jupiter restored the bones to life, and gave the boy, Pelops, an ivory shoulder instead of that which Ceres had devoured. Was this myth the foundation of all these traditions? We have, also, in the 'Lady Isabella's Tragedy' * (a very ancient ballad) the story of the cruel stepmother and the dressing of the human victim's flesh. The horror of the English legend is, however, softened by the self-devotion and truth of the scullion boy, who cries to the wicked cook:

* See 'The Percy Reliques,' p. 348.

'Oh, save her life, good Master Cook,
And make your pyes of mee;'

and then when the father returns 'for to sit down to meat, and missing his daughter vows neither to eat nor drink till he sees her·

'"Oh, then," bespake the scullion boy
With a loud voice so hye;
"If now you will your daughter see,
My lord, cut up that pye.

'"Wherein her fleshe is mincèd small,
And parchèd with the fire;
All causèd by her stepmother,
Who did her death desire."'

The father judges the cruel stepmother to be burnt at the stake.

'Likewise he judged the Master Cook,
In boiling lead to stand;
And made the simple scullion boy
The heire to all his land.'

The story of 'Frederick and Catherine' exists as one of our very old nursery tales, preserved by Mr. Halliwell Phillips.

The 'Frog Prince' is one of the oldest of the Household Legends, and Dr. Leyden has given us a similar story from the Scottish folklore. A daughter is sent by her stepmother to draw water from the well of the World's End, and encounters the frog to whom she is compelled to betroth herself. The rest of the story resembles the German.

'Sweet Porridge' may have given rise to the amusing story of Albertus Magnus's pupil, who learned the secret of sending the broom with a bucket to the well to draw water, but, not knowing the spell to stop it, nearly caused a deluge. An amusing exemplification of 'a little knowledge' being 'a dangerous thing.'

We believe that the fairy lore of Ireland is the most original in the world; the wit and the brilliant and poetic nature of the national intellect giving it an especially charming character.'

Scotland has also her fairy folklore, and we find the Niss of Sweden, and the Kobold or Goblin of Germany in her Brownie, to whom the same habit of departing from the scene of his labours on receiving a gift of clothes, is ascribed as to the German Elf. At Liethin Hall, Dumfriesshire, a Brownie remained for three hundred years. His favourite friend, the master of the hall, died, and Brownie grieved excessively,

abstaining for days from food. When the heir appeared, Brownie came to greet him, and the new laird, touched by his starved appearance, ordered him food and, alas!—clothes. Brownie departed at once, crying,

> 'Ca', cuttee, ca'!
> A' the luck of Liethin Ha'
> Gangs wi' me to Bodstock Ha'.'

The luck departed from Liethin in a few years, while Bodstock flourished.

'The Luck of Eden Hall' is of a rather different description, depending on a fairy gift, but probably both Scotch and English legends have had the same origin. The 'Cauld Lad of Hilton Castle' is also well known, though he is said by tradition to be the spirit of a boy, murdered by an ancestor of the family in which he first appeared.

Wales has her Mabinogion, and Cornwall is rich in folklore peculiar to itself; but as the germ, at least, of most of our best-known household and fairy tales is to be found in this collection, it may be considered, as we have said, to be the best.

We must pause one moment, to observe that if England possesses fewer original folk-stories of fairies than her sister kingdoms, she is richer in having her fairy legends of Puck, Titania and Oberon, enshrined in the immortal 'Midsummer Night's Dream' of Shakspeare.

The world is, at the present time, well instructed in the matter of folklore; the sagas of Scandinavia, the stories told by the Bretons, Welsh, Spaniards, Scotch and Finnish, have been gathered together and published, and these productions of the primitive fancy and imagination of nations have interested some of our most distinguished men, by whom the origin and diffusion of folklore has been variously discussed. Professor Max Müller* traces the origin of the myths to language—almost 'a disease of language'—the chief linguistic influences being gender terminations leading to the attribution of sex to inanimate things, and the allegorical use of verbs; the allegory, after a time, being literally interpreted. Mr. Herbert Spencer† traces the origin of myths to the state of mind in which man personifies and animates all natural phenomena; partly also to lack of words 'free from the implication of vitality,' and partly by mistaking the animal name of some ancestor for the animal itself, and claiming descent from it.

* 'Chips,' and Introduction to 'Science of Religion,' vol. ii.
† 'Principles of Sociology,' vol. i., part 1, chapters x.-xxvi.

Mr. Andrew Lang* seeks the origin of myths in a condition of thought in the minds of savages; language being only subordinate as a cause of their invention. They have also been traced to a superstitious observation of natural phenomena, the stories being myths of the sun, dawn, etc.

In the opinions of all these writers there is, no doubt, much truth. Language may have had its share in the invention of some of these tales; Wolf, as a man's name, would explain 'Red Riding Hood,' for instance, in a remarkable degree; though the ancient German reading of the tale would still be puzzling. But everyone knows how a story grows in being repeated, and how, from a mere simple incident, a wonderful legend may be evolved. Fancy and imagination, of course, had a great share in producing or embellishing these myths, but the inventive faculty in man is very limited, (as novel readers are well aware,) and the materials it has to work on belong to human nature, which is everywhere the same. Only a Shakspeare can rise above the ordinary traditions and invent an Ariel and a Caliban.

That these stories were diffused over the earth by the migrations of the earlier races is quite credible. We know that weeds ever follow the footsteps of man; the House of Hanover brought us Hanoverian rats—if this is not also a myth—and it is still more likely that the mothers and nurses of the primitive emigrants bore with them over sea and land the legends of their homes.

It has been said that Strapparola and Basile could have borrowed nothing from the myths of the East, because the 'Arabian Nights' and other Oriental tales had not been translated at that time, but the stories may have been brought by pilgrims, merchants, seamen, or travellers. Venice was in constant communication with the East, and Strapparola published his 'Notti Piacevoli' there; while Basile spent his boyhood in Candia.

The transformation of men into animals has been a common belief in all uncivilized nations; in fact, to the end of the seventeenth century the people of civilized England believed that a witch could turn herself into a hare; and the *loup-garou* has scarcely yet passed out of the minds of the Breton peasantry. The mermaids, women with a serpent arm, etc., all belong to this kind of superstition.

Animals in the far-off days of early tradition appear to have held a close relation to man in the minds of the people; and

* See Introduction to 'Perrault's Popular Tales,' and 'Cupid and Psyche,' etc.

we find that recently-discovered savages—who are about on the same level of thought as the earliest folklore makers—ascribe the thoughts and language of men to beasts and birds. In Casati's interesting 'Ten Years in Equatoria,' he has given some of the folklore of savage Africa, which proves this to be the case. Here is one of their household tales:

THE FRANCOLIN AND THE TORTOISE.

'I am better off than thou,' said the francolin to the tortoise; 'I can both walk and fly.' 'I congratulate you,' replied the tortoise; 'I draw myself along and do my business in the best way I can.' Now, it happened that some men out hunting set fire to the grass of the plain. The increasing conflagration drew closer and closer and made the spot it surrounded smaller and smaller. The peril of the two animals was imminent and certain. The tortoise drew himself into a deep wet hole made by an elephant's foot, and was saved. The francolin tried to fly, but was overpowered by the smoke, fell and perished. He who boasts fails when tested.

This is not a bad fable for savages to have concocted, who, however, probably do not regard it as a fable, even as our Aryan ancestors did not probably look on their legends as fictions.

We think the readers of the Grimms' Tales will find in them much more than mere amusement; they will notice the savage punishments; the lack of pity; the rudeness of those primitive times; the cannibalism; the savage and monstrous transformations familiar to their inventors' imaginations, and will be able to contrast the infancy of the race of man with what it has become, since the dark, and sometimes cruel, myths of heathendom fled before the light of Christianity and the civilization it has brought with it.

GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES.

THE FROG PRINCE.

In olden times, when people could have all they wished, lived a king who had beautiful daughters; but the youngest was so lovely that the sun himself would wonder whenever he shone on her face. Near to the king's castle lay a dark, gloomy forest, in the midst of which stood an old linden-tree, and under it was a spring.

One day, when the weather was very hot, the king's daughter went into the forest, seated herself on the side of the cool fountain, and began to toss a golden ball in the air, and catch it again, as an amusement. Presently, however, she failed to catch the golden ball in her hand; it fell on the ground, and rolled over the grass into the water.

The princess followed it with her eyes, but it disappeared, for the water was so deep that she could not see the bottom.

Then she cried, and began to weep bitterly. Presently she heard a voice saying:

'Why do you weep, O king's daughter? Your tears could make even a stone pity you!'

She looked at the spot from whence the voice came, and saw a frog stretching his thick ugly head out of the water.

'Oh, there you are, old water-paddler,' she said. 'Well, then, I am crying for the loss of my golden ball that has fallen into the spring.'

'Then weep no more,' answered the frog; 'I can get it for you. But what will you give me if I fetch your plaything?'

'Oh! anything you like, dear frog,' she replied. 'What will you have—my dresses, my pearls and jewels, or the golden crown I wear?'

'Your clothes,' answered the frog, 'your pearls and your jewels, or even your golden crown, are nothing to me. I want you to love me, and let me be your companion and playfellow. I should like to sit at your table, eat from your golden plate, drink out of your cup, and sleep in your little bed. If you will promise me this, then I will dive down into the water and bring up your pretty golden ball.'

'Oh yes,' she replied. 'I will promise you anything you like if you will only bring up my ball again.'

But she thought to herself that a silly, chattering frog, such as he was, living in the water with others like himself, and croaking, could not be a companion for her.

The frog, having received the promise, dipped his head under the water, and sank down to the bottom, where he found the ball, brought it back in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. When the king's daughter saw the beautiful plaything, she was full of joy, and, catching it up, ran away with it.

'Wait, wait,' cried the frog, 'take me with you; I cannot run as fast as you can.' But the young princess would not listen to the frog's croaking; she got to the house as fast as she could, and soon forgot the poor frog, who was obliged to return to the fountain.

The next day, however, while the princess was sitting with the king and his courtiers, and eating out of her own little golden plate, there came a strange noise on the marble steps, splish, splash, splish, splash, and then a knock at the door, and a voice cried, 'Lovely princess, open the door for me.' So she went to see who could be outside. There was the frog. She closed the door hastily and seated herself again at the table, looking quite pale. The king, seeing that his daughter was alarmed, said, 'My child, what is there at the door—is it a giant come to carry you away?'

'Oh no, my father,' she replied, 'it is no giant—only a great ugly frog.'

'A frog! What can he want with you?'

'Ah, dear father, yesterday, when I was playing with my golden ball in the forest, sitting by the spring, I let it fall into the water, and because I cried, the frog brought it out for me, and because he wished it I promised that he should be my companion, for I thought he could not get out of the water to come to me, and now here he is.'

Just then came a second knock at the door, and a voice cried:

'King's daughter, king's daughter, open for me;
You promised that I your companion should be,
When you sat in the shade from the sun's bright beam,
And I fetched up your ball from the fountain's cool stream.'

Then said the king, 'You must keep your promise; go and let him in.' So she was obliged to go and open the door, and the frog hopped in after her, close to her feet and up to her chair. But when she sat down he cried, 'Take me up by you.' She would not at first, till her father ordered her to do so. He was no sooner there than he jumped upon the table and said, 'Now, then, push your little golden plate nearer, and we will eat together.' The princess did as he told her, but everyone could see how much she disliked it. The frog seemed to relish his dinner very much, but at last he said, 'I have eaten and drunk quite enough, and I feel very tired; carry me upstairs into your little bedroom, and make your silken bed ready, that we may sleep together.'

When the princess heard this she began to weep, for she was really afraid of the cold frog; she could not even touch him, and now he actually wanted to sleep in her neat, beautiful little bed.

But the king was displeased at her tears, and he said, 'He who helped you when you were in trouble must not be despised now.' So the young princess found she must obey. Then she took up the frog with two fingers, and carried him upstairs and placed him in a corner of her room.

In the evening, however, as soon as the princess was in bed, the frog crept out of his corner and said to her, 'I am so tired; lift me up, and let me sleep in your bed, or I will tell your father.'

On hearing this, the princess fell into a great passion. Seizing the frog in her hand, she dashed him with all her strength against the wall, saying, 'You will be quiet now, I hope, you ugly frog!'

But as he fell, the frog changed into a handsome young Prince, with beautiful friendly eyes, who, with her father's consent, became her constant companion and husband.

Then the prince told her his history—how he had been changed into a frog by a wicked witch, and that no one could have released him but herself, and that on the morrow they would go to his kingdom.

The next day a splendid carriage, drawn by eight white horses, drove up to the door. They had white feathers on their heads, and golden harness, and by the side of the carriage stood the prince's steward, the faithful Harry. This faithful Harry had been so unhappy when his master was changed into a frog, that he had fastened three iron bands round his heart, to prevent it from bursting with woe and sorrow

The carriage, with the prince and his bride, soon drove away, with Harry behind in his old place, and full of joy at the release of his master. They had not travelled far, when they heard a loud crack, as if something had broken.

Now, the prince knew nothing of the iron bands round his servant's heart, so he cried out, 'Harry, is the carriage breaking?'

'No, sire,' he replied, 'only the iron bands which I bound round my heart, for fear it should burst with sorrow while you were a frog confined to the fountain. They are breaking now because I am so happy to see my master restored to his own shape, and travelling to his kingdom with a beautiful bride.'

THE CAT WHO MARRIED A MOUSE.

Once upon a time a cat made acquaintance with a mouse, and they were together so much that a great love and friendship arose between them; so they agreed to marry and keep house together.

But the cat said to his wife, 'My dear, we must take care to lay in a store for the winter, or we shall suffer from hunger. You, little mousey, cannot venture everywhere, for fear you should be caught in a trap some day.

This good advice was followed, and a jar full of fat was bought; but they did not know where to put it. At last Tom said, 'I don't know a better place than the church—no one ever thinks of robbing a church; so we will place the jar under the altar, and take care not to touch it till we need it.

So the jar was carried to the church, and put in a place of safety; but it did not remain there long.

Tom kept thinking of it, and longing for a taste.

Mousey,' he said one day, 'I have had an invitation from one of my cousins to be present at the christening of her little son, who was born a few weeks ago. He is a beautiful kitten, she tells me—gray, with black stripes; and my cousin wishes me to be godfather. Let me go, while you take care of the house.'

'Oh yes; go by all means,' replied the mouse; 'but when you are enjoying yourself think of me, and bring me a drop of the sweet red wine if you can.' Tom promised to do as she asked him, and went off as if he were going to see his cousin. But after all it was not true. Tom had no cousin, nor had he been asked to be godfather.

No; he went right off to the church, and slipped under the table where the jar of fat stood, and sat looking at it. Then he began licking the fat on the top of the jar, till it was nearly all gone. After that he took a walk on the roofs of the houses in the town, and at last stretched himself out in the sun, and stroked his whiskers as often as he thought of the delicious feast he had had. As soon as the evening closed in he returned home.

'Oh, here you are again,' said the mouse. 'Have you spent a pleasant day?'

'Yes, indeed,' he replied. 'Everything passed off very well.'

'And what name did they give the young kitten?' she asked.

'Top-off,' said Tom, quite coolly.

'Top-off!' cried the mouse; 'that is a curious and uncommon name! Is it a family name?'

'It is a very old name in our family,' replied the cat, 'and it is not worse than Crumb-stealers, as your ancestors were called.'

Not long after the cat had again a great desire to go out, so he told the little mouse that his aunt had invited him to be godfather, and that the kitten was all black, excepting a white ring round its neck, so he could not refuse.

The good little mouse willingly agreed, and Tom ran off; but as soon as he had reached the town, he jumped over the churchyard wall, and found the jar, which he half emptied.

'It tastes as nice as it smells,' said the cat, after his joyful day's work was over and he had had a nice nap. But as soon as he returned home the mouse asked what name had been given to the kitten this time.

'Half-gone,' answered he.

'Half-gone! Why, Tom, what a queer name! I never heard of it before in my life, and I am sure it cannot be found in the calendar.'

The cat soon after had another longing fit after the jar of fat. 'Mousey,' said he, 'of all good things there are always three: I am again to be godfather! The little kitten is quite black, without a single white hair on its whole body. Such a thing has not happened in our family for many years, so you will let me go, won't you?'

'Top-off and Half-gone are such curious names, Tom,' replied the mouse, 'that they are enough to make one suspicious.'

'Oh, nonsense!' replied the cat. 'What can you know about names, staying at home here all day long in your gray coat and soft fur, with nothing to do but to take fancies?'

Mousey was silent, and she patiently remained at home during the absence of the greedy, deceitful cat, who this time quite cleaned out the jar, and left it empty.

'When all is gone, then one can rest,' said he to himself, as he returned home at night, quite fat and sleek.

'Well,' said the mouse, as soon as she saw him, 'and what is the name of this third child?'

'It is sure not to please you,' he said; 'it is named All-gone.'

'All-gone!' cried the mouse; 'that is the most suspicious name yet; I can scarcely believe it. What does it mean?' Then she shook her head, curled herself up, and went to sleep.

After this Tom was not invited to any more christenings; but as the winter came on, and no provisions could be found, the mouse said to the cat, 'Come, Tom, let us fetch the jar of fat from the church; it will be such a nice relish for us.'

'Ah, yes,' he replied; 'it will be a nice relish to you, I dare say, when you stretch out your fine little tongue to taste it!' So they went to the church, and found the jar still standing in the same place, but quite empty.

'I understand now,' said the mouse; 'I can see what has happened. A fine friend you have been to me! When you told me you were going to stand godfather to the three little kittens, you went to the church three times, and ate up all the fat in the jar. I know now what you meant by Top-off, Half-gone——'

'Will you be quiet?' said the cat in a rage. 'If you say another word I will eat you!'

But the poor little mouse had got the other name on the tip of her tongue, and she could not stop herself. Out it came—'All-gone!'

Tom sprang upon her the moment she uttered the word, and ate her up.

Such is the way of the world.

THE YOUTH WHO WENT TO LEARN TO SHUDDER.

A FATHER had two sons, the eldest clever and sensible, but the younger was so stupid that he could neither learn nor understand anything, and people would say, 'What a burden that stupid boy must be to his father!'

Whatever the father wanted done, the elder boy was obliged to do it. But if his father wished him to go anywhere late in the evening, and the road led through the churchyard, he would say, 'Oh no, father, I can't go there; it makes me shudder.' For he was afraid.

Sometimes when stories were told round the fire of an evening, which made the flesh creep, 'Oh!' they would say, 'it makes us shudder.'

The younger boy, seated in his corner among the listeners, would say, 'I can't think what they mean, by saying it makes them shudder; it must be something very wonderful that could make me shudder.'

At last, one day the father spoke to his younger son very plainly, and said, 'Listen, you there in the corner: you are growing tall and strong; you must learn very soon to earn your own living. See how your brother works, while you do not earn your salt.'

'Well, father,' he replied, 'I am quite ready to learn anything; even, if it comes to that, I should like to learn to shudder—I don't know how to do that at all.'

His brother laughed at this speech, and said to himself, 'What a simpleton my brother is! he will have to sweep the streets by-and-by, or else starve.'

His father sighed, and said, 'You will never get your living by that, boy, but you will soon learn to shudder, no doubt.'

Soon after, the sexton of the church came in, and the father related the trouble he was in about his younger son, who was so silly and unable to learn. 'What do you think he said when I told him he must learn to earn his own living?' asked the father.

'Something silly, I suppose,' answered the sexton.

'Silly, indeed! He said he wished he could learn to shudder.'

'Oh!' cried the sexton, 'let him come to me, I'll soon

manage that for him; he won't be long learning to shudder if I have him with me.'

The father was contented, as he thought it would train this boy a little; so the sexton took the youth, led him to the church tower, and made him help to ring the bells. On the third day, at midnight, the sexton roused him out of his sleep to toll the bell—he had to mount to the highest part of the church tower to do it.

'You will soon learn what it is to shudder,' thought the sexton, and he went to the tower secretly before the lad. The youth mounted the steps to the belfry, but just as he reached the bell-rope he saw a figure in white standing on the steps.

'Who's there?' he cried. But the figure neither moved nor spoke. 'Answer me,' he said, 'or take yourself off; you have no business here.'

But the sexton remained immovable, for he wished to be taken for a ghost. Hans exclaimed, for the second time, 'What do you want here? Speak, if you are an honest man, or I will throw you down the steps.'

The sexton, thinking he would not do anything so dreadful, answered not a word, but stood still, as if made of stone. 'Once more, I ask you what you want,' said Hans; and as there was still no answer, he ran against the sham ghost, and, giving him a push, the sexton rolled down ten steps, and, falling into a corner, there remained.

Thereupon Hans tolled the bell, then went home, and, without saying a word, went to bed and fell asleep.

The sexton's wife waited a long time for her husband, and finding he did not come home, she became alarmed, and, going to Hans, woke him and said, 'Do you know where my husband is? He went before you up the tower.'

'There was someone standing on the top of the steps when I went into the belfry, dressed in white, and as he would not answer when I spoke to him, I took him for a thief, and kicked him downstairs. We will go and see who it is; if it should be your husband, I shall be sorry.'

The wife ran to the tower, and found her husband lying in a corner groaning, for he had broken his leg. She carried him down, and then went to the father of Hans with a loud outcry against the boy. 'Your son,' cried she, 'has brought bad luck to the house; he has thrown my husband down the steps and broken his leg. He shan't stay with us any longer; send for him home.'

Then the father was terrified. He ran to his son and scolded him. 'What do you mean, you wretched boy,' he said, 'by these wicked tricks?'

'Father,' answered the boy, 'I am quite innocent. I saw a white figure standing there in the night, and I thought it was there for some bad purpose. I did not know it was the sexton, and I warned him three times either to speak or to go away.'

'Ah! yes, you are the plague of my life,' said his father. 'Now go out of my sight, and never let me see you more.'

'Yes, father, I will go right willingly to-morrow, and then if I learn to shudder, I shall know something that will enable me to earn my living.'

'Learn what you like,' said his father; 'it's all the same to me. There are fifty crowns—take them and go out into the world when you please; but don't tell anyone where you come from, or who is your father, for I am ashamed to own you.'

'Father,' said Hans, 'I will do as you tell me; your orders are very easy to perform.'

At daybreak the next morning the youth put the fifty crowns into his pocket, and went out into the highroad, saying to himself as he walked on, 'When shall I learn to shudder—when shall I learn to shudder?'

Presently a man approaching him overheard what he said, and joined him, and they walked a little way together, till they came to a spot where they could see a gallows.

'Look,' he said, 'there is a tree where seven men have married the rope-maker's daughter, and have learnt how to fly. Sit down and watch below it till night comes on—you will soon learn to shudder.'

'If there is nothing more to do,' answered the youth, 'that is easily done. Come to me again early to-morrow morning, and if it teaches me to shudder, you shall have my fifty crowns.'

Then the young man went and seated himself under the gallows and waited till the evening, and, feeling cold, he lighted a fire; but at midnight the wind rose and blew so fiercely and chill that even a large fire could not warm him.

The wind made the bodies of the murderers swing to and fro, and he thought to himself, 'If I am so cold down here by the fire, they must be frozen up there;' and after pitying them for some time he climbed up, untied the ropes, and, bringing down all the seven bodies one after the other, stirred the fire into a blaze, and seated them round it so close that their clothes caught fire. Finding they did not move, he said to

them, 'Sit farther back, will you, or I will hang you up again.' But the dead could not hear him; they only sat silent and let their rags burn.

Then Hans became angry, and said, 'If you will not move, there is no help for it; I must not let you burn—I must hang you up.' So he hung the seven bodies up again all in a row, then laid himself down by the fire and fell fast asleep.

In the morning the man came, hoping to get the fifty dollars. 'Well, I suppose you know now what it is to shudder?' he said.

'No, indeed,' he replied. 'Why should I? Those up there have not opened their mouths once; and when I seated them round the fire, they allowed their old rags to burn without moving, and if I had not hung the bodies up again, they would have been burned also.' The man saw that he would not carry away the fifty dollars, and went away saying, 'I have never seen such a fellow before.'

Then Hans continued his journey, and again said aloud to himself, 'If I could only shudder—if I could only shudder!'

A waggoner walking along the road by his horses overtook him, and asked who he was.

'I don't know,' he replied.

The waggoner asked again, 'Why are you here?'

'I can't tell,' said Hans.

'Who is your father?'

'I dare not say.'

'What were you grumbling about just now, when I came up with you?'

'I want to learn to shudder,' said Hans.

'Don't talk nonsense!' said the waggoner. 'Come with me, I will show you a little of the world, and find you something to do better than that.'

So the young man went with the waggoner, and about evening they arrived at an inn, where they put up for the night. No sooner, however, did Hans enter the room than he muttered to himself, 'Oh, if I could only learn to shudder!'

The landlord heard him, and said with a laugh, 'If that is all you wish to learn, I can tell you of a splendid opportunity in this part of the world.'

'Ah! be silent now,' said the landlady. 'You know how many people have already lost their lives through their curiosity. It would be a pity for a nice young man like this, with such fine blue eyes, never to see daylight again.'

But Hans said, 'If it is as bad as you say, I should like to

try. All I want is to learn how to shudder, so tell me what I am to do.' And the youth gave the landlord no rest till he had explained the matter to him.

'Well,' he said, 'not far from here stands an enchanted castle, where one could easily learn to shudder. The king of the country has promised to give his daughter in marriage to anyone who will venture to sleep in the castle for three nights; and she is as beautiful a young lady as the sun ever shone upon. Rich treasures in the castle are watched over by wicked spirits, and anyone who could destroy them and set free the treasures, would be a rich man. Numbers of persons have gone into the castle, but they have not been heard of since.'

Hans the next morning started off to visit the king, and to tell him that, if he were allowed, he would watch three nights in the enchanted castle.

The king looked at him earnestly, and seemed much pleased with his appearance; then he said, 'You may ask for three things to take into the castle with you, but they must be without life.'

'I only ask for a turning-lathe, a cutting-board, and a knife,' he replied.

To this the king agreed, and had these articles taken into the castle during the day. When night came, Hans took up his abode in one of the rooms, lighted a fire, which soon burnt brightly, placed the turning-lathe and the cutting-board near it, and sat down on the cutting-board, determined to make himself comfortable. Presently he exclaimed, 'Oh, when shall I learn to shudder? Not here, for I am feeling too comfortable.'

But at midnight, just as he had stirred the fire into a blaze, he suddenly heard in a corner the cry of a cat, 'Miou, miou! how cold it is!'

'What a fool you must be, then,' cried Hans, 'to stay out there in the cold! Come and seat yourself by the fire, and get warm.'

As he spoke two very large black cats sprang forward furiously, seated themselves on each side of the fire, and stared at him with wild, fiery eyes. When they became thoroughly warm, they said, 'Comrade will you have a game of cards?'

'With all my heart,' answered Hans; 'but first stretch out your feet, and let me examine your claws.'

The cats stretched out their paws. 'Ah,' said he, 'what long nails you have! and now that I have seen your fingers, I would rather be excused from playing cards with you.'

Then he killed them both, and threw them out of the window into the moat. As soon as he had settled these two intruders, he seated himself again by the fire, hoping to have a little rest; but in a few moments there rushed out from every corner of the room black cats and black dogs, with fiery chains, one after another, till there seemed no end to them. They mewed and barked and growled, and at length jumped on his fire and scattered it about the room, as if they wished to put it out.

For awhile he watched them in silence, till at last he got angry, and, seizing his cutting-knife, exclaimed, 'Be off, you horrid creatures!' and then, rushing after them, he chased them round the room. Some few escaped in the clamour, but the rest he killed with his cutting-knife, and threw into the moat.

As soon as he had cleared the room, he rekindled his fire by gathering the sparks together, and sat down to warm himself in the blaze. After a time he began to feel so sleepy that his eyes would not keep open any longer, so he looked round the room, and espied in a corner a large bed. 'That is the very place for me,' he said, rising and laying himself upon it; but just as he was closing his eyes to sleep, the bed began to move about the room, and at last increased its speed, and went off at a gallop through the castle.

'All right,' cried Hans; 'now go on again.' At this the bed started off, as if six horses were harnessed to it—through the doorway, down the steps, to the great gates of the castle, against which it came with a great bump, and tumbled, legs uppermost, throwing all the pillows and blankets on Hans, who lay underneath, as if a mountain were upon him. He struggled out from the load, and said, 'Anyone may travel in that fashion who likes, but I don't.' So he laid himself down again by the fire, and slept till the daybreak.

In the morning the king came to the castle, and, as he caught sight of Hans lying by the fire asleep, he thought the evil spirits had killed him. 'Alas!' said the king, 'I am very sorry. It is a great pity that such a fine youth should lose his life in this manner.'

But Hans, who heard, sprang up in a moment, and exclaimed, 'No, king, I am not dead yet.' The king, quite astonished and joyful at finding him unhurt, asked him how he had passed the night.

'Oh, very pleasantly indeed,' replied Hans. 'One night is over; the two others will pass also.'

On returning to the inn the landlord stared at him with wide-

open eyes. 'I never expected to see you again alive. Have you learnt to shudder now?'

'Not I,' he replied. 'I believe it is useless for me to try, for I never shall learn to be afraid.'

The second night came, and he again went up to the old castle, and seated himself by the fire, singing the burden of his old song, 'When shall I learn to shudder?'

At midnight he heard a noise, as of something falling. It came nearer; then for a little while all was quiet. At last, with a tremendous scream, half the body of a man came tumbling down the chimney, and fell right in front of Hans.

'Holloa!' he cried; 'all that noise and only half a man; where's the other half?' At this the noise and tumult began again, and, amidst yellings and howlings, the other half of the man fell on the hearth.

'Wait,' said Hans, rising; 'I will stir the fire into a blaze first.' But when he turned to sit down again, he found that the two halves of the man had joined, and there sat an ugly-looking object in his place. 'Stay!' cried the young man. 'I did not bargain for this; that seat is mine.'

The ugly man tried to push Hans away; but he was too quick for him, and putting out all his strength, he dislodged the creature from his seat, and placed himself again upon it.

Immediately there came tumbling down the chimney nine more of these horrid men, one after the other; each of them held a human thigh-bone in his hand, and the first who appeared brought out two skulls, and presently they set up the nine bones like skittles, and began to play, with the skulls for balls.

'Shall I play with you?' asked Hans, after he had looked on for some time.

'Yes, willingly,' they replied, 'if you have any money?'

'Plenty,' he said; 'but your balls are not quite round.' So he took the skulls and turned them on his lathe. 'Now they will roll better; come on, let us set to work.'

The strange men played with great spirit, and won a few of his dollars; but all at once the cock crew, and they vanished from his eyes. After they were gone he laid himself down and slept peacefully till the king arrived, and asked him what had happened, and how it had fared with him during the night.

'Well,' said Hans, 'I played a game of skittles with some horrid-looking fellows who had bones and skulls for skittles and balls; I won sometimes, and I lost a couple of dollars.'

'Did you not shudder?' asked the king, in surprise.

'Not I, indeed! I wish I could! Oh, if I only knew how to shudder!'

The third night came, and found our hero once more seated on his bench by the fire, and saying quite mournfully, 'When shall I ever learn to shudder?'

As he spoke, there came into the room six tall men, bearing a coffin containing a dead man.

'Ah!' said Hans, 'I know what you have there; it is the body of my cousin. He has been dead two days.' Then he beckoned with his finger and said, 'Come here, little cousin; I should like to see you.'

The men placed the coffin on the ground before him, and took off the lid. Hans touched the face, and it felt as cold as ice. 'Wait,' he said, 'I will soon warm it!' so he went to the fire, and warming his hand, laid it on the face of the dead man, which remained as cold as ever.

At last he took him out of the coffin, carried him to the fire, and placed him on his lap, while he rubbed the hands and chest that he might cause the blood to circulate, but all to no purpose; the body remained as cold as before. Presently he remembered that when two lie in bed together they warm each other, so he placed the dead man in bed, covered him over, and lay down beside him. After awhile this seemed to produce warmth in the body, the blood began to circulate, and at last the dead man moved and spoke.

'There now, dear cousin,' said Hans, 'see, I have warmed you into life again, as I said I could.' But the dead man sprang up and cried, 'Yes, and now I will strangle you.'

'What!' cried Hans, 'is that your gratitude? then you may as well go back into your coffin again.' He leapt out of bed as he spoke, and, seizing the body, he threw it into the coffin and shut the lid down closely upon it.

Then the six tall men walked in, lifted up the coffin, and carried it away.

'That's over,' said Hans. 'Oh! I am sure nothing will ever teach me to shudder.'

Then a man walked in who was taller and larger than any of the others, and the look of his eyes was frightful; he was old, and wore a long white beard.

'You wretched creature!' cried the man, 'I will soon teach you what it is to shudder, for you shall die.'

'Not so fast, friend,' answered Hans. 'You cannot kill me without my own consent.'

'I will soon have you on the ground,' replied the monster.

'Softly, softly, do not boast; you may be strong, but you will find that I am stronger than you.'

'That is to be proved,' said the old man; 'if you are stronger than I am, I will let you go. Come, we will try.'

The old man, followed by Hans, led the way through long dark passages and cellars, till they saw the reflection of a smith's fire, and presently came to a forge. Then the old man took an axe, and with one blow cut through the anvil right down to the ground.

'I can do better than that,' said Hans, taking up the axe and going towards another anvil. The monster was so surprised at this daring on the part of Hans that he followed him closely, and as he leaned over to watch what the youth was going to do, his long white beard fell on the anvil. Hans raised his axe and split the anvil at one blow, wedging the old man's beard in the opening at the same time.

'Now I have got you, old fellow,' cried Hans; 'prepare for the death you deserve.' Then he took up an iron bar and beat the old man till he cried for mercy, and promised to give him all the riches that were hidden in the castle.

At this Hans drew out the axe from the anvil, and set the old man's beard free, while he watched him closely. He kept his word, however, and leading the young man back to the castle, pointed out to him a cellar in which were three immense chests full of gold.

'There is one for the poor,' said he, 'another for the king, and the third for yourself.'

Hans was about to thank him, when the cock crew, and the old man vanished, leaving the youth standing in the dark.

'I must find my way out of this place,' he said, after groping about for some time, but at last daylight penetrated into the vaults, and he succeeded in reaching his old room, and, lying down by the fire, slept soundly till he was aroused by the king's arrival.

'Well,' he said, in a glad voice when he saw the young man alive, 'have you learnt to shudder yet?'

'No,' replied Hans; 'what was there to make me fear? My dead cousin came to see me, and a bearded old man tried to conquer me; but I managed him, and he has shown me where to find hidden treasures of gold; and how could I shudder at these visitors?'

'Then,' said the king, 'you have released the castle from enchantment. I will give you, as I promised, my daughter in marriage.'

'That is good news,' cried Hans. 'But I have not learnt to shudder, after all.'

The gold was soon after brought away from the castle, and the marriage celebrated with great pomp. Young Prince Hans, as he was now called, did not seem quite happy, after all. Not even the love of his bride could satisfy him. He was always saying: 'When shall I learn to shudder?'

This troubled the princess very much, till her lady's-maid said: 'I will help you in this matter; I will show you how to make the prince shudder.'

So the princess agreed to do what the lady's-maid advised.

First she went out to a brook that flowed through the gardens of the palace, and brought in a whole pailful of water, containing gudgeon, which she placed in the room.

'Remember,' said the lady's-maid, 'when the prince is asleep in bed, you must throw this pail of water over him; that will make him shudder, and then he will be contented and happy.'

So that night, while Hans was in bed and asleep, the princess drew down the bedclothes gently, and threw the cold water with the gudgeons all over him. The little fish wriggled about as they fell on the bed, and the prince, waking suddenly, exclaimed, 'Oh dear, how I do shudder! what can it be?' Then, seeing the princess standing by his bed, he guessed what she had done.

'Dear wife,' he said, 'what makes me shudder? Now I know what shuddering is.'

THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN YOUNG KIDS.

THERE was once an old goat who had seven young ones, and she loved them as much as any mother could love her children.

One day she wished to go into the forest and get food for them, so she called them to her and said, 'Dear children, I am going out into the wood. Don't open the door while I am away, for if the wolf should get into our hut, the wicked, deceitful creature will eat you up, even to the very hairs: you may easily know him by his rough voice and his black feet.'

'Dear mother,' said the young kids, 'we will be very careful to keep out the wolf; you may leave us without the least anxiety.' So the old goat bleated, and started on her way comforted.

She had not been absent long, when there came a knock at the door, and a voice cried, 'Open the door, my dear children; I have brought something nice for each of you.'

But the young kids knew by the rough voice that it was the old wolf, and not their mother; so the eldest said, 'We shall not open the door; you are not our mother—she has a soft and gentle voice, and your voice is rough. You are the wolf.'

Then the wolf ran away to a shop at some distance, and bought a great stick of white chalk, which he ate to make his voice soft. After he had eaten it, he went back to the goat's cottage, and knocked again at the door, and said in a soft voice, 'Open the door for me now, dear children; I am your mother, and I have something nice for each of you.'

But the wolf put his foot on the window-sill as he spoke, and looked into the room; the young kids saw it, and one of them said, 'No! we shall not open the door. Our mother has no black feet like that; go away, you are the wolf.'

So the wolf went away again to a baker's, and said, 'Baker, I have crushed my foot; please to wrap it in dough, that will soon cure it.' And as soon as the baker had done this, he went off to the miller and asked him to cover his foot with flour. The miller was too frightened to refuse, so he floured the wolf's foot and sent him away. Such is the way of the world.

Now went the wicked animal for the third time to the house door, and said, 'Open the door, dear children, it is your mother; she has brought you something from the forest.'

'Show us your feet,' said the little kids, 'then we shall know if you really are our mother.' The wolf placed his white foot on the window, and when they all saw it was white, they believed that what he had said was all true, so they opened the door; but as soon as he entered the house they discovered that it was the wolf, and with screams of terror ran to hide themselves.

One hid under the table, another in the bed, the third in the oven, the fourth in the kitchen, the fifth in the cupboard, the sixth under the wash-tub, and the seventh in the clock-case. But the wolf found six, and, without much ceremony, gobbled them up one after the other, excepting the youngest, who was hidden in the clock-case.

After the wolf had satisfied his greedy appetite, he went out, lazily lay down in the green meadow under a tree, and fell fast asleep.

Not long after the old goat returned home from the forest. Ah! what a scene it was for her—the house-door wide open; table, chairs, and stools upset; the wash-tub broken to pieces, the counterpanes and pillows dragged from the bed. She sought for her children in terror, but not one could she find. At last she heard a little voice cry, 'Dear mother, here I am, shut up in the clock-case.' The old goat helped her kid out, who told her how the wolf had come into the hut and eaten up her brothers and sisters. We can guess how the poor mother mourned and wept for her children. At last she went out, and the little kid followed her. As they crossed the meadow, they saw the wolf lying under a tree, and snoring so loud that the branches shook.

The goat examined him on all sides, and saw a movement as if something were alive in his stomach. 'Ah!' thought she, 'if he only swallowed my dear children, they must be still alive.' So she sent the little kid into the house for a pair of scissors, a needle, and some thread, and very quickly began to cut open the monster's stomach. She had scarcely made one cut, when a little kid stretched out his head, and then a second, and a third sprang out as she cut farther, till the whole six were safe and alive, jumping around their mother for joy; the monster, in his eagerness, had swallowed them whole, and they were not hurt in the least.

Then their mother said to them, 'Go and fetch me some large pebbles from the brook, that we may fill the stomach of the dreadful creature while he still sleeps.' The seven little kids started off to the brook in great haste, and brought back as many large stones as they could carry. With these they filled the stomach of the wolf; then the old goat sewed it up again so gently and quietly that the wolf neither awoke nor moved.

As soon, however, as he had had his sleep out, he awoke, and, stretching out his legs, felt himself very heavy and uncomfortable, and the great stones in his stomach made him feel so thirsty that he got up and went to the brook to drink. As he trotted along, the stones rattled and knocked one against the other and against his sides in a most strange manner. Then he cried out,

'What a rattle and rumble!
They cannot be bones
Of those nice little kids:
They feel just like stones.'

But when he came to the brook and stooped over to drink, the weight of the stones in his stomach overbalanced him, so that he fell in and was drowned.

The little kids ran to the brook when they saw what happened. Then they danced round their mother for joy, crying out, 'The wolf is dead! the wolf is dead!'

FAITHFUL JOHN.

THERE was once an old king who became ill, and when he felt he must be on his death-bed, he said to those around him, 'Send Faithful John to me.' Now, Faithful John was the king's favourite servant, and was so called because he had always been faithful and true. As soon as the faithful servant appeared at the king's bedside, the king said to him,

'My faithful John, I feel that my end draws nigh, and I have no care excepting for my son; he is still young, and does not always know how to guide himself. If you will promise to instruct him in all that he ought to know, and be to him a father, then shall I close my eyes in peace.'

'I promise,' replied John. 'I will never leave him, and I will serve him faithfully always, though it should cost me my life.'

'Then,' said the king, 'now I can die in peace. After my death you must show my son the whole castle—all the rooms, the vaults, and the treasures concealed therein. But the last room at the end of the gallery he must not enter, for it contains the picture of "The Princess of the Golden Dome." If he should see this, he will fall in love, and will be in great danger. You must keep him from it.'

When Faithful John had taken the old king's hand, and again promised to do all he wished, the king's mind became peaceful—he laid his head on his pillow and died.

As soon as the old king was laid in his grave, Faithful John related to the young monarch what his father had made him promise on his death-bed, and said, 'That promise I will firmly hold, and I will serve you as faithfully as I have served your father, even should it cost me my life.'

The days of mourning being over, John said to the young king, 'It is time that you should go round the estate which has

been left by your father, and I am ready to show you over the castle.' Then he led him all through the different saloons, and allowed him to see the beautiful rooms and the rich treasures. Only one chamber he did not open, that in which the dangerous picture hung.

This picture was so placed that on opening the door it attracted the eye at once, it was so well painted that it seemed to live, and the colour was more beautiful than anything else in the whole world.

The young king perceived that Faithful John passed by this door without opening it, and said, 'Why do you not unlock this door for me?'

'There is something in that chamber too terrible for you to see,' replied John.

But the king replied, 'I have seen all over the rest of the castle, and I will know what this room contains.'

He went forward as he spoke and tried to open the door by force. But John held him back, saying, 'I promised your father on his death-bed never to allow you to see the interior of this chamber, and I know that misfortune will be the result to both, if I break that promise.'

'Ah! no,' replied the king; 'on the contrary, if I go not into that room, it will be my certain ruin; I shall have no rest day or night till I have seen it with mine eyes. Neither will I stir from this spot till you have unlocked the door.'

Then Faithful John saw that it was useless to resist any longer, so with a heavy heart and many sighs he separated the key from the rest and opened the door. As he did so he stepped in first and tried to hide the picture, but it was of no use. The king, standing on tiptoe, saw it over John's shoulder. But as soon as he caught sight of the beautiful portrait of the young lady bedecked with gold and jewels, he fainted and fell insensible on the floor. Faithful John lifted him up and carried him to his room full of sorrow, saying to himself, 'The misfortune has commenced now. Oh, what will become of us!' Then he gave the young king some wine, and after a time he came to himself. The first words he uttered were to ask whose beautiful portrait he had seen.

'That is "The Princess of the Golden Dome,"' answered Faithful John.

'Oh!' he replied, 'my love for her is so great that if every leaf on every tree were a tongue, they could not express it. My life depends upon obtaining her hand. You are my faithful John, and you must help me.'

The faithful servant reflected for a long time on the best way to find the young princess for his master. At last he thought of a plan, and said to the king, 'Everything she has about her is of gold: the tables the chairs, the dishes, the cups, the goblets, and even the furniture. In the castle you have five tons of golden treasures. All these you must place in the hands of the goldsmith to be formed into various and beautiful articles, such as vases and curious ornaments in the forms of birds, beasts, and wild animals. As soon as these are ready, we will set out on our travels and try our luck.'

On hearing this, the king summoned all the goldsmiths in his kingdom, and desired them to work night and day to get the articles ready as quickly as possible.

The goldsmiths worked day and night to get these beautiful things finished, and Faithful John having engaged a ship, they were carried on board and stowed away carefully. The king and his faithful servant both arrayed themselves in the dress of a merchant that they might not be recognised. As soon as everything was ready they started, and after a long and prosperous voyage reached the city where 'The Princess of the Golden Dome' dwelt.

Faithful John left the king on board, and landed by himself, carrying with him in his bag several beautiful little ornaments of gold. 'Very likely I shall bring the princess back with me to visit you on board ship,' he said, before he went. 'Have the golden vases placed where they can be seen, and let the ship be ornamented with them.' Then Faithful John went ashore and found his way to the castle in which the princess lived.

When he entered the courtyard of the palace, he saw standing by a fountain a beautiful maiden, who was drawing water in a golden vessel. As she turned with the sparkling water in her hands, she caught sight of the strange man and inquired who he was. 'I am a merchant,' he replied, and, opening his basket, he showed her some of its contents.

'Oh, what beautiful things!' she exclaimed, setting down her pitcher and examining them one by one. 'The princess must see these,' she continued; 'she is so fond of golden trinkets that I am sure she will buy them all.' Then she took him by the hand and led him into the castle, for she was the princess's maid.

As soon as the princess saw the beautiful merchandise she was delighted, and said, 'The workmanship is so exquisite that I should like to buy all you have.'

But Faithful John replied, 'I am only the servant of a rich

merchant, and these are nothing to what my master has with him on board ship; there you would see most costly golden trinkets and far more precious.'

'Can you not bring them to me?' she asked.

'Oh no,' he replied; 'it would occupy many days to do so, and there are more than your palace would hold.'

This only renewed her anxiety and wish to see them, so at last she said, 'Conduct me to the ship; I will go myself and see what your master's treasures really are.'

The faithful John joyfully led the beautiful princess to the ship, and the king, as soon as he beheld her, saw that her beauty was greater than that of the beautiful portrait of her in his own palace, and his heart bounded with joy. He offered her his hand to help her on deck, and as soon as she was safely on board, Faithful John went over quietly to the captain and told him to weigh anchor and spread all sail immediately. His orders were obeyed, and in a few minutes the ship was flying before the wind like a bird.

Meanwhile the king was showing the beautiful princess in the cabin and all over the ship the various and rich cups and vessels, vases, and other wonderful things it contained. Many hours passed by, and she was so interested that she did not observe the ship was leaving the shore. At last, after having seen everything, she thanked the merchant and wished to go home. But when she reached the deck and saw that the ship, in full sail, had left the land, and was far out at sea, she became terribly alarmed, and cried out, 'I am betrayed! I am in the power of a merchant who has carried me off; rather let me die.'

Then the king seized her by the hand, and said, 'No, I am not a merchant; I am a king, and as well born as yourself. Nothing but my great love for you would have induced me to carry you away by stratagem; indeed, it is so overpowering that, when I first glanced at your portrait, I fainted and fell to the earth.'

As the princess heard this she gained courage, and in her heart was favourably disposed to this young king, and consented to become his wife. One evening, however, when, seated in the stern of the vessel, Faithful John sat playing on the lute, three crows flew over the ship. Faithful John saw them, and stopped his playing to hear what they said to each other, for he understood their language.

'Ah!' said one, 'there sails "The Princess of the Golden Dome" with the king who has carried her off.'

'Yes,' replied the second, 'but he has not got her yet.'

'Well, but he has her by his side in the ship now,' said the third.

Then the first cried out, 'What does that matter? As soon as they land, a chestnut horse will be brought to the king to mount; and if he does so, the horse will spring into the air and carry him out of sight, so that he will never see the princess more.'

'Can nothing be done to save him?' asked the second crow.

'Oh yes; if someone else would mount quickly, snatch a pistol from the holster, and shoot the horse dead, then the king might be saved.'

'But who knows this? And if anyone did know it and speak of it, he would instantly be turned into stone from his feet to his knees.'

Then the second crow spoke again: 'I know something more; even should the horse be killed, he will never marry his betrothed; for as soon as they enter the palace, a splendid bridal robe will be presented to him on a silver salver, and it will appear as if woven of gold and silver thread, instead of which it will be made of sulphur and pitch, and the moment he puts it on, it will burn him even to the marrow of his bones.'

'And is there a remedy for this also?' asked the third crow.

'Of course there is; for if anyone with gloves on will seize the robe and throw it into the fire, the robe will be burnt, and the king saved. And should any person know this and speak of it, he would be turned into stone from his knees to his heart.'

'Ah well,' cried the third crow, 'supposing the king were saved from the burning robe, he would still lose his bride; for at the ball on the wedding night, while he is dancing with her, she will suddenly faint and fall down as if dead; and unless someone will immediately draw three drops of blood from her right breast, and spit it out again, she will really die. And if anyone did know this, and spoke of it, he would be changed to stone from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, and become a statue.'

As soon as the crows had finished this conversation they flew away; but Faithful John had heard and understood it all, and remained for a long time still and sad.

At last he determined to be silent, and not say a word to his master of what he had heard; besides, he knew that even to hint about it to the king would cost him his own life.

'Ah, well,' he said to himself, 'I will save my master, even if it should be my own ruin.'

As soon as they landed it happened as the crows had prophesied. There bounded forth a noble chestnut horse. 'Heyday!' said the king; 'here is a splendid creature for me to ride to my castle! I will mount at once.' But Faithful John sprang on it, and, quickly drawing a pistol from the holster, shot the horse dead.

The other servants, who were jealous of John, cried out: 'It was scandalous to kill such a beautiful horse, just as the king was to ride on it to the castle!'

But the king ordered them to be silent. 'Leave him to do as he likes,' he said; 'he is my faithful John, and knows what he is about.'

In a short time they arrived at the castle, and there in the hall lay the splendid bridal robe on a salver. It looked exactly like a web of gold and silver; and the king went forward to touch it. Then John, who had already put on thick gloves, pushed him away, and, seizing the bridal robe, threw it into the fire, and left it to burn.

The other servants murmured against John more than ever, and said, 'Why, he has actually burnt the king's bridal robe!' 'Never mind,' said the young king; 'he knows what he is about. Leave him to himself; he is my faithful John.'

In a few days the wedding was celebrated, and at the ball in the evening the young queen danced. John, who watched her face with anxious care, saw her all at once turn pale, and fall on the floor as if dead. Then he sprang hastily forward, lifted her up, bore her into another room, laid her again on the ground; then kneeling by her side, he sucked three drops of blood from her right breast, and spat them out.

At the same instant she breathed again and raised herself from the ground; but the young king, who had seen all this with astonishment, could not in the least understand the conduct of his faithful servant, so he flew into a passion, and cried, 'Take him off to prison!'

Next morning John was brought before the judge, and sentenced to death. As he stood in the king's presence, he said, 'Everyone who is about to die is allowed to speak for himself; shall I not also have that right?'

'Yes,' answered the king; 'I grant you permission.'

'Then,' said Faithful John, 'I have been unjustly condemned, for in every circumstance I have proved myself true and faithful to my king.' And then he related what he had heard of

the conversation of the crows while at sea, and how all he had done had been necessary for the safety of the king and queen.

'Then,' cried the king, 'oh, my faithful John, pardon me! pardon me! Bring him here!' At the last words the faithful servant had uttered in telling the king, he had incurred the consequences spoken of by the crows: he fell lifeless, and was turned into stone.

Then were the king and queen greatly troubled, and the king said, 'Ah, my faithful John, how badly have I repaid thy devotion!' and he commanded that the stone statue should be carried to his sleeping-room, and placed near his bed; and whenever he looked at it, he said, 'Oh, if I could only restore thee to life again, my faithful John!'

And so time passed on, and the queen had twin sons, who, as they grew up, were the joy of their parents. One day, while the queen was at church, the two children were amusing themselves in the room with their father. He cast his eyes on the statue, and feeling full of sorrow, he sighed and said, 'Oh, if I could only restore thee to life, my most faithful John!'

Then the power of speech was given to the statue, and it replied, 'Thou canst restore me to life again if thou wilt give up for me what thou lovest most.'

'Then,' cried the king, 'I would sacrifice all I have in the world for thee.'

'Well,' replied the statue, 'if thou wilt with thine own hand cut off the heads of thy two dear children, and smear me all over with their blood, I shall be restored to life.'

When the king heard this, he was at first stricken with horror; it was indeed dreadful that to save his faithful John he must kill his two dear children. But when he recalled the great devotion of this faithful servant, who had died for his sake, he hesitated no longer: he drew his sword, and with his own hand cut off the heads of his dear boys, and smeared the statue with their blood. In an instant the statue received new life, and his faithful John stood safe and well before the king, and said:

'Thy devotion to me shall not remain unrewarded;' and as he spoke, he took up the heads of the two children, replaced them, and quickly healed the wounds by anointing them with their own blood. So completely was this done that the next moment they were jumping about the room as if nothing had happened.

Now indeed was the king's heart full of joy; and as soon as

he heard that the queen had returned, he made John and the children hide themselves in a large cupboard. Presently she entered the room, and he said, 'Have you prayed at church?'

'Yes,' she replied, 'for I am constantly thinking of our faithful John, and what he has endured for our sakes.'

'Dear wife,' he replied, 'we have the power to bring him back to life; but it would cost us both our dear little sons, whom we must sacrifice for him.'

The queen turned very pale, and her heart seemed to stand still, yet she said, 'We owe him even this sacrifice, because of his great devotion to us.'

Then was the king glad to find that they both thought alike on the matter, and joyfully unlocking the cupboard, called out the children and Faithful John. 'See!' he said. 'Heaven be praised! John is set free, and our little sons we have still with us.'

Then he related to her how it had all happened, and they lived in happiness and peace to the end of their lives.

THE GOOD BARGAIN.

A PEASANT had led his cow to the market, and sold her for seven dollars. On his way home he had to pass a pond, but long before he reached it, he could hear the frogs crying, 'Akt, akt, akt, akt.'*

'Yes, I hear you,' he said; 'but it's seven I have received, not eight.' As soon as he reached the water he exclaimed, 'Stupid creatures that you are, don't you know better? seven dollars are not eight.'

The frogs, taking no heed, continued to cry, 'Akt, akt, akt.'

'Now,' said the peasant, 'if you do not believe me, I can count it out to you,' and he took the money out of his pocket and counted over the seven dollars in seventy-four groschens.

The frogs cared nothing for the peasant's reckoning, but went on croaking, 'Akt, akt, akt, akt.'

'Oh!' cried the peasant in a rage, 'do you know better how to count than I do?' and he threw the money into the water, right in the midst of them. Then he stood and waited till

* The word 'acht,' is German for eight.

they were ready to return his property to him, but the frogs were constant to their first opinion, and screamed out still louder, 'Akt, akt, akt, akt,' and did not attempt to throw the money back again to him.

He waited for a good while till evening came on, and he knew he must go home. Then he abused the frogs and cried, You water-plashers! you thickheads! you blind eyes! with your great jaws you can scream enough to split one's ears, but you cannot count seven dollars; and do you think I am going to stay here and wait till you are ready?' Then he walked away very fast, but he heard the frogs still croaking, 'Akt, akt,' for a long distance, and he arrived home quite out of humour.

After a time he bought another cow, which he slaughtered, and while reckoning how much he should get by the sale of the flesh, as well as the skin, he hoped to make a good bargain with profits, even with the loss caused by the obstinacy of the frogs.

So he started off to the town to sell his dead cow, but on arriving at the butcher's stall he saw a pack of hounds, who all surrounded him, barking and smelling at the meat. 'Wass, wass,'* they cried.

'Ah! yes,' said the peasant, 'it's all very well to say, "what, what?" as if you wanted to know what I have got here, and you know it is meat all the while.'

There was no one to watch the butcher's shop but a large house-dog, and the countryman had often heard his master say how true and faithful he was. So he said to him, 'If I leave this meat here, will you answer for these friends of yours that it shan't be touched?' 'Wass, wass,' cried the dog; while the others barked 'Wass, wass,' and sprang at the meat.

'Oh! well,' said the peasant to the butcher's dog, 'as you have promised, I will leave the meat for your master to sell; but, remember, I must have the money in three days, and if he doesn't send it, I shall come for it.' Thereupon he laid the meat down on the counter and turned to go. The dogs all ran round it, barking 'Wass, wass,' and the peasant heard them for a long distance. 'Ah!' he said, 'they are all longing for a piece; but it's all right, the big one is answerable for them.'

Three days passed, and the countryman made himself quite comfortable in the thought of what he was to receive. 'I shall

* The German 'wass' is translated 'what.' It is used instead of 'bow-wow' for the bark of a dog.

have plenty of money in my pocket by to-morrow evening,' he said, in a contented tone.

But the morrow came and no money. He waited two days, and then said, 'I can't stand this; I must go and demand my money.' The butcher at first thought he was joking.

'Joking, indeed!' replied the peasant. 'I want my money for the meat I left under the care of your great dog three days ago—the flesh of a whole cow.'

At this the butcher flew in a rage, and, seizing a broom, drove him out of the shop.

'Just wait,' cried the peasant; 'there is some justice after all left in the world.' And away he went to the castle, and begged an audience. He was led before the king, who sat with his daughter by his side.

'What is your trouble?' asked the king.

'Alas! your majesty,' he replied, 'the frogs and the dogs have taken all I possess, and when I asked the butcher for my money, he beat me with a broomstick;' and then he related in a confused manner all that had occurred.

The king's daughter burst into a fit of laughter, and the king said, 'I cannot restore to you the money you have lost, but I can give you my daughter in marriage. She has never, during her whole life, laughed till now. I long ago promised her as a wife to the first man who could make her laugh, and you are that man, so you may thank heaven for your good fortune.'

'Ah! my lord king,' replied the peasant, 'I cannot marry the princess. I have one wife at home already, and she is quite too much for me to manage; there is no room for another in our chimney-corner.'

Then was the king angry, and said, 'You are a rude clown.'

'Ah! my lord king,' he replied, 'what can you expect from a pig but a grunt?' and he turned to go.

'Stay!' cried the king, calling him back; 'I mean you to have some reward. Five hundred shall be ready for you if you come here again in three days.'

The peasant looked so joyful as he passed out, after hearing this, that the sentinel asked him the cause. 'You have made the princess laugh, I hear. What reward are you to have?'

'Five hundred dollars,' he replied.

'Why, what will you do with all that money?' asked the sentinel. 'You may as well give me some.'

'I will, if you like,' he said; 'and if you will go to the king in three days, he shall pay you two hundred dollars instead of me,' and away he went.

A Jew, who was standing near, overheard this promise, and running after the peasant, pulled him by the sleeve, and said, 'You are a lucky fellow, friend! I will change it for you into small coins. What do you want with the big thalers?'

'Jew,' replied the peasant, 'three hundred thou canst still have. Give it to me at once in coin, and in three days from this thou wilt be paid for it by the king.'

The Jew rejoiced at such profits, and gave such bad coins in the change that three were only equal to two good ones.

At the end of three days, the peasant went to the king, according to his command.

'Take off his coat,' said the king; 'he shall have his five hundred.'

'Ah! no,' cried the peasant, 'they do not belong to me. Two hundred I have promised to the sentinel, and I have given a Jew a bill to receive three hundred, as he gave me cash for it, so that I have justly nothing to receive.' While he spoke, in came the soldier and the Jew, who demanded what they had obtained from the peasant; and they received it in blows, strictly counted out. The soldier bore them patiently—he knew how they felt; but the Jew said sorrowfully, 'Alas! these are heavy thalers.'

The king could not help laughing at the countryman's folly. 'So,' he said to the peasant, 'as you have been so foolish as to give up your money before it even belonged to you, I suppose I must make you some compensation. Go into that room opposite, and help yourself to as much money as your pockets will hold.' The countryman did not require to be told twice; he went as he was told, and filled his wide pockets to overflowing.

Away he started to the inn to count his money, and the Jew sneaked after him, and heard him talking to himself. 'Now if I had been a knave, and hidden all this from the king, he would never have allowed me to take this money. I wish I knew how much I had. Oh, if the king had only told me what amount I was to take. I'm so afraid I may have taken more than I ought.'

'Ah, ah!' muttered the Jew, 'he is grumbling even now, and speaking disrespectfully of my lord the king. I will run and inform, and then I shall get a reward and he will be punished.'

When the king heard this, he was angry and ordered the Jew to fetch the ungrateful man again before him. 'You must appear before the king immediately,' cried the Jew; 'there must be no excuse.'

'Indeed, I cannot,' he replied; 'who ever heard of a man, with such a heap of gold in his pockets as I have, going before the king in such a ragged coat as this?'

The Jew, seeing that the peasant was determined, and fearing that the wrath of the king would cool, promised to lend him a coat which was very good and nearly new. 'I lend it you for true friendship's sake,' he said, 'and that is seldom done in the world.'

So the peasant put it on, and went into the king's presence. But when the king repeated what he had been told by the Jew, the peasant exclaimed, 'Your majesty, it is all false; there is never a true word out of that Jew's mouth. I dare say he will affirm that the coat I have on belongs to him.'

'What do you mean?' screamed the Jew; 'you know it is my coat; I lent it you out of pure friendship, that you might appear before the king.'

When the king heard that, he said, 'The Jew has certainly deceived either me or the peasant, and he ordered him some more blows.

The peasant went home joyfully to count the gold in his pockets, and said to himself, 'This time, at least, I have made a good bargain.'

THE WONDERFUL MUSICIAN.

There was once a wonderful musician who went quite alone through a forest, and thought of all manner of things, and when he had nothing else to think of, he said, 'I am very lonely by myself; I will bring myself a good companion.' Then he slipped his violin from his shoulder and commenced playing so merrily that it echoed through the wood.

Before long a wolf came out of the thicket and trotted towards him. 'Ah! here comes a wolf,' he exclaimed; 'but I don't want him.'

But the wolf stepped nearer and said, 'Dear musician, how beautifully you play! I wish I could learn.'

'You could learn quickly,' replied the fiddler, 'if you will do all I tell you.'

'Oh, musician,' said the wolf, 'I will obey you in everything, as a scholar should his master.'

'Come along, then,' said the musician.

They had not gone far when they came to a hollow oak-tree which was cleft in the middle. 'See,' cried the fiddler, 'if you wish to learn to fiddle, put your two fore-feet in there.' The wolf obeyed, and the fiddler with a stone quickly wedged the feet of the wolf in the tree so fast that he could not move and found himself a prisoner. 'Stay there till I come back,' said the musician, and went his way.

After wandering on for some distance, he again began to murmur to himself, 'I am still all alone in the wood; I must try for another partner.' So he took down his violin and played, and presently a fox came creeping through the trees. 'Ah! here comes a fox,' said the fiddler, 'but I have no wish for his society.'

'What beautiful music!' exclaimed the fox. 'I should like to be able to play like you.'

'There is no difficulty,' answered the fiddler, 'if you will only do as I tell you.'

'Oh, musician,' he replied, 'I will obey you as a scholar obeys his master.'

'Follow me, then,' said the fiddler. So they walked on together till they came out upon a pathway on each side of which grew high shrubs.

The fiddler stopped, and bending down a branch of one of these shrubs to the ground, placed his foot on it. Then he bent a branch on the other side of the path and also stood on it, and said, 'Come, little foxey, give me your left fore-foot.' The fox obeyed, and the fiddler tied it to a branch on the left hand. 'Now give me the right foot also.' The fox, remembering that he had promised to obey, did as he was told, and the fiddler tied this foot also to the branch on the right. Then, after seeing that the knots were tight, the fiddler lifted his feet and set the branches free. Up they sprung, carrying the fox with them suspended across the pathway from the boughs and struggling as he hung. 'Wait till I return,' said the fiddler, and away he went.

Again he began to feel lonely, and taking down his violin, began to play, and the sound echoed through the wood, saying, 'Oh, if I only had a companion!'

In a few minutes a hare appeared. 'Here comes a hare,' cried the fiddler. 'I don't want him.'

'Ah, dear musician,' said the hare, 'how sweetly you play! I wish I could learn.'

'There is nothing so very difficult to learn,' cried the musician, 'if you will only do as I tell you.'

'Oh, fiddler,' answered the hare, 'only teach me, I will obey you as a scholar does his master.' So they walked on together for some distance, till they came to a clear place in the wood where an aspen tree grew.

The fiddler then took a long string, and tying one end loosely round the hare's neck, fastened the other end to the tree, and said, 'Brisk little hare, run twenty times round that tree.' The hare obeyed, but by the time she had made twenty runs, the string was so firmly wound round the stem that she could not move without cutting her soft neck with the string.'

'Stay there till I come back,' said the musician, and went his way.

In the meantime the wolf had struggled hard to release his feet from the stone.

He succeeded at last, and then, full of anger and rage, hastened after the fiddler, determined to tear him in pieces. When the fox saw him running, he began to lament and cry, 'Brother wolf, do come to my help; the fiddler has betrayed me.' At this appeal the wolf stopped, drew the branches down, untied the string with his teeth, and set the fox free. They both started off together, determined on revenge. They discovered the imprisoned hare, whom they quickly set free, and then the three started together to find their enemy.

But the fiddler had attracted another by his music; the tones of the violin reached the ears of a poor woodcutter, who was obliged to leave off work, and taking his axe under his arm, he went to meet the fiddler.

'At last here comes the right companion for me,' he cried. 'It was a man I wanted, not wild beasts.'

He played his sweetest notes to please the poor woodcutter, who listened to the sounds as if bewitched, when up came the wolf, the fox, and the hare, and he saw that they were set on mischief.

He placed himself before the musician, and raising his glittering axe, exclaimed, 'If you attempt to harm him, take care of yourselves, that's all; you have me to deal with now.'

At this the animals in alarm ran back into the wood, and the fiddler played him one more tune as thanks and went on his way.

THE TWELVE BROTHERS.

THERE were once a king and queen who had twelve children—all boys. Now, one day the king told his wife that if a daughter should be born, all the sons must die — that their sister alone might inherit his kingdom and riches.

So the king had twelve coffins made, which were filled with shavings, and in each was the little pillow for the dead. He had them locked up in a private room, the key of which he gave to the queen, praying her not to speak of it to anyone. But the poor mother was so unhappy that she wept for a whole day, and looked so sad that her youngest son noticed it.

He had the Bible name of Benjamin, and was always with his mother.

'Dear mother,' he said, 'why are you so sorrowful?'

'My child, I may not tell you,' she replied; but the boy allowed her no rest till she unlocked the door of the private room, and showed him the twelve coffins filled with shavings.

'Dearest Benjamin,' she said, 'these coffins are for you and your brothers; for if you should ever have a little sister, you will all die, and be buried in them.'

She wept bitterly as she told him, but her son comforted her, and said, 'Do not weep, dear mother. We will take care of ourselves, and go far away.'

Then she took courage, and said, 'Yes, go away with your eleven brothers, and remain in the forest; and let one climb a tree, from whence he will be able to see the tower of the castle. If I should have a son, a white flag shall be hoisted, and then you may return home; but if you see a red flag, you will know it is a girl, and then hasten away as fast as you can, and may Heaven protect you! Every night I will pray for you, that you may not suffer from the cold in winter or the heat in summer.'

Then she blessed all her sons, and they went away into the forest, while each in turn mounted a high tree daily, to watch for the flag on the tower.

Eleven days passed, and it was Benjamin's turn to watch. He saw the flag hoisted, and it was red—the signal that they must die. The brothers were angry, and said, 'Shall we suffer death on account of a maiden? When we find one we will kill her, to avenge ourselves.'

They went still farther into the forest, and came upon a most pleasant little cottage, which was uninhabited. 'We will make this our home,' they said; 'and Benjamin, as you are the youngest and weakest, you shall stay at home and keep house, while we go out and procure food.'

So they wandered about the forest, shooting hares, wild rabbits, pigeons and other birds, which they brought to Benjamin to prepare for food. In this cottage they lived for ten years happily together, so that the time passed quickly.

Their little sister was growing a great girl. She had a sweet disposition, and was very beautiful to look upon. She wore rich clothes, and a golden star on her forehead.

One day, when she was about ten years old, she discovered in her mother's wardrobe twelve shirts. 'Mother,' she exclaimed, 'whose shirts are these? They are much too small for my father.'

The queen sighed as she replied, 'Dear child, these shirts belong to your twelve brothers.'

'Twelve brothers!' cried the little maiden. 'Where are they? I have not even heard of them.'

'Heaven knows where they are,' was the reply; 'but they are wandering about the world somewhere.' Then the queen took her little daughter to the private room in the castle, and showed her the twelve coffins which had been prepared for her brothers, and related to her, with many tears, why they had left home.

'Dear mother,' said the child, 'do not weep. I will go and seek my brothers.' So she took the twelve shirts with her, and wandered away into the forest.

She walked for a whole day, and in the evening came to a cottage, stepped in, and found a young boy, who stared with astonishment at seeing a beautiful little girl dressed in rich clothing and wearing a golden star on her forehead.

At last he said, 'Who are you, and what do you want!'

'I am a king's daughter,' she said, 'and I seek my twelve brothers, and I intend to search for them till I find them;' and she showed him their shirts.

Then Benjamin knew that she was his sister, and said, 'I am your youngest brother, Benjamin.' Then she wept for joy. They kissed each other with deep affection, and were for a time very happy.

At last Benjamin said, 'Dear sister, we have made a vow that the first young maiden we meet should die, because through a maiden we have lost our kingly rights.'

'I would willingly die,' she said, 'if by so doing I could restore my brothers to their rightful possessions.'

'No, you shall not die,' he replied. 'Hide yourself behind this tub until our eleven brothers come home; then I will make an agreement with them.'

At night the brothers returned from hunting, and the supper was ready. While they sat at table, one of them said, 'Well, Benjamin, have you any news?'

'Perhaps I have,' he said, 'although it seems strange that I, who stay at home, should know more than you, who have been out.'

'Well, tell us your news,' said one. So he said:

'I will tell you if you will make one promise.'

'Yes, yes!' they all cried. 'What is it?'

'Well, then, promise me that the first maiden you meet with in the forest shall *not* die.'

'Yes, yes!' said they all; 'she shall have mercy; but tell us.'

'Then,' said the youngest brother, 'our sister is here;' and, rising, he lifted the tub, and the king's daughter came forth in her royal robes and with a golden star on her forehead, and looking so fair and delicate and beautiful that the brothers were full of joy, and kissed and embraced her with the fondest affection.

She stayed with Benjamin, and helped him in keeping the house clean and cooking the game which the others brought home. Everything was so nicely managed now and with so much order: the curtains and the quilts were beautifully white, and the dinners cooked so well that the brothers were always contented, and lived in great unity with their little sister.

There was a pretty garden around the house in which they lived, and one day, when they were all at home dining together, and enjoying themselves, the maiden went out into the garden to gather them some flowers.

She had tended twelve lilies with great care, and they were now in such splendid bloom that she determined to pluck them for her brothers, to please them.

But the moment she gathered the lilies, her twelve brothers were changed into twelve ravens, and flew away over the trees of the forest, while the charming house and garden vanished from her sight. Now was the poor little maiden left all alone in the wild wood, and knew not what to do; but on turning round she saw a curious old woman standing near, who said to her, 'My child, what hast thou done? Why didst thou not leave those white flowers to grow on their stems? They were thy twelve brothers, and now they will always remain ravens.'

'Is there no way to set them free?' asked the maiden, weeping.

'No way in the world,' she replied, 'but one, and that is far too difficult for thee to perform; yet it would break the spell and set them free. Hast thou firmness enough to remain dumb seven years, and not speak to anyone, or even laugh? for if ever you utter a single word, or fail only once in the seven years, all you have done before will be vain, and at this one word your brothers will die.'

'Yes,' said the maiden, 'I can do this to set my brothers free.'

Then the maiden climbed into a tree, and, seating herself in the branches, began to knit.

She remained here, living on the fruit that grew on the tree, and without laughing or uttering a word.

As she sat in her tree, the king, who was hunting, had a favourite hound, who very soon discovered her, ran to the tree on which the maiden sat, sprang up to it, and barked at her violently.

The king came nearer, and saw the beautiful king's daughter with the golden star on her forehead. He was so struck with her beauty that he begged her to come down, and asked her to be his bride. She did not speak a word, but merely nodded her head. Then the king himself climbed up into the tree, and bringing her down, seated her on his own horse and galloped away with her to his home.

The marriage was soon after celebrated with great pomp, but the bride neither spoke nor laughed.

When they had lived happily together for some years, the king's mother, a wicked woman, began to raise evil reports about the queen, and said to the king, 'It is some beggar girl you have picked up. Who can tell what wicked tricks she practises. She can't help being dumb, but why does she never laugh? unless she has a guilty conscience.' The king at first would listen to none of these suspicions, but she urged him so long, and accused the queen of such wicked conduct, that at last he condemned her to be burnt to death.

Now in the court-yard a great fire was kindled, and the king stood weeping at a window overlooking the court of the palace, for he still loved her dearly. He saw her brought forth and tied to the stake; the fire kindled, and the flames with their forked tongues were creeping towards her, when at the last moment the seven years were past, and suddenly a rustling noise of wings was heard in the air; twelve black ravens

alighted on the earth and instantly assumed their own forms —they were the brothers of the queen.

They tore down the pile and extinguished the fire, set their sister free, and embraced her tenderly. The queen, who was now able to speak, told the king why she had been dumb and had never laughed.

The delight of the king was only equalled by his anger against the wicked witch, who was brought to justice and ordered to be thrown into a vat of oil full of poisonous snakes, where she died a dreadful death.

THE PACK OF VAGABONDS.

'LITTLE hen,' said a young cock to his wife one day, 'this is the time for nuts. Let us go to the mountains and feast ourselves before the squirrel takes them all away.'

'Yes, that will be a happy time,' said the hen.

So they started off together to the mountains very early in the morning, and stayed till evening.

Now, I cannot say whether they had eaten too much, or if they had become proud; at all events, they could not walk home, so the cock made a little carriage of nut shells. No sooner was it finished than the hen seated herself in it, and said to the cock, 'You can harness yourself to the carriage and draw me home.'

'Very likely,' he replied, 'that I should allow myself to be harnessed like a horse and draw you; it would be better to walk home than that. No, I mean to be coachman and sit on the box, but I'm not going to draw you.'

While they were contending, a duck came by. 'You thieves,' she quacked, 'what are you doing in my nut mountains? Be off quickly, or you will get the worst of it,' and she gave the cock a tremendous peck with her beak.

But the cock was not going to stand that. He flew at the duck, and beat her so with his spurs, that she was obliged to beg for mercy, and at last allow herself to be harnessed to the little carriage as a punishment.

The cock sat on the box and drove at a furious rate, crying out, 'Get on, duck! get on!'

After travelling some distance they overtook two foot pas-

sengers—a pin and a needle. 'Halt! halt!' they cried; 'do help us, we are so tired that we cannot go a step farther. Night is coming on, the roads are so dusty, and we cannot sit down. We stopped at the tailors' public-house, and stayed too long over the beer.'

The cock, seeing that they were only thin people, who would not require much room, allowed them to enter the carriage, only making them promise not to step on the hen's feet.

Late at night they reached a roadside inn, and, because it was night, would not go any further, and by this time the duck was so tired that her legs were unsteady, and she waddled terribly. So they stopped at the inn. The landlord made many objections at first—his house was already full, and he thought these new-comers did not look quite respectable.

However, the cock flattered the old landlord, and promised that whatever eggs the hen and the duck might lay while they stayed should be his. So the landlord gave them shelter, and glad enough they were of a night's rest.

Early in the morning, however, just as day began to dawn, and while everyone else was asleep, the cock and hen awoke, and, seeing the egg which she had laid, they made a good breakfast on it, and threw the shell into the kitchen fire. Then they went to the needle, who still lay asleep, stuck it in the cushion of the landlord's arm-chair, and stuck the pin in his towel.

Then they flew away with the greatest indifference through the open window, and across the heath.

The duck, who preferred the open air, had roosted in the outer court, and was awoke by the rustle of wings. Rousing herself quickly, she plumed her feathers, and espying a stream near, partly flew and partly waddled down to it, for to swim home would be far better than drawing the carriage.

A few hours after this the landlord arose and prepared to wash himself; but on taking up his towel to wipe his face, the point of the pin made a long red scratch right across from one ear to the other.

Then he went into the kitchen to light his pipe. As he stooped to put in a match, out popped a piece of burnt egg-shell into his eye.

'To-day everything goes to my head!' said he, and sank down into his grandfather's arm-chair, which stood near; but he started up again more quickly than he had sat down, for the needle in the cushion pricked him terribly.

Then was the landlord very angry, and began to suspect his

guests who had arrived so late the night before. He went out to look for them, and found they were gone. Then he took an oath that he would never again admit such knaves into his house, who ate a great deal, paid nothing, and, above all, instead of thanks, performed knavish tricks.

THE LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER.

A LITTLE brother took his sister's hand and said to her, 'Dear little sister, since our mother died, we have not had one happy hour. Our stepmother gives us dry hard crusts for dinner and supper; she often knocks us about, and threatens to kick us out of the house; even the little dogs under the table fare better than we do, for she often throws them nice pieces to eat. Heaven pity us! Oh, if our dear mother knew! Come, let us go out into the wide world.'

So they went out, and wandered over fields and meadows the whole day till evening. Then they found themselves in a large forest; it began to rain, and the little sister said, 'See, brother, heaven and our hearts weep together.' Tired out with hunger and sorrow and the long journey, they crept into a hollow tree, laid themselves down, and slept.

When they awoke, the sun was high in the heavens, and shone brightly into the hollow tree, so they left their place of shelter and wandered away in search of water.

'Oh, I am so thirsty,' said the boy; 'if we could only find a brook or a stream.' He stopped to listen, and said, 'Stay; I think I hear a running stream.' So he took his sister by the hand, and they ran together to find it.

Now, the stepmother was a wicked witch; she had seen the children go away, and, following them cautiously, had bewitched all the springs and streams in the forest. The pleasant trickling of a brook over the pebbles was heard by the children as they reached it, and the boy was just stooping to drink, when the sister heard in the babbling of the brook—

'Whoever drinks of me, a tiger will be.'

Then she cried quickly, 'Stay, brother! Pray do not drink, or you will become a wild beast, and tear me to pieces.'

Thirsty as he was. the brother did not drink, but said, 'Dear

sister, I will wait till we come to the next spring.' When they came to it, the sister heard it say:

'Who drinks of me, a wolf will be.'

'Brother, I pray you do not drink of this brook; you will be changed into a wolf, and devour me.'

The brother did not drink, but he said, 'At the next stream I must drink, say what you will, my thirst is so great.'

When they came to the third streamlet, the sister heard it say:

'Who drinks of me, a stag will be.'

'Dear brother, do not drink,' she began; but her brother had already knelt by the stream, and as the first drop of water touched his lips he became a fawn. And now the little sister wept over her enchanted brother, and the fawn wept also and sat sadly beside her.

At last she said, 'Be quiet, dear fawn; I will never leave you.' So she untied her little golden garter and fastened it round the neck of the fawn; then she gathered some soft green rushes, and braided them into a string, which she fastened to the fawn's golden collar, and then led him away into the depths of the forest.

After wandering about for some time, they found a little deserted hut, and the sister thought it would form a shelter for them both. So she led the fawn in, and then went out alone to gather moss and dried leaves, to make him a soft bed.

Every morning she went out to gather dried roots, nuts, and berries for her own food, and sweet fresh grass for the fawn, which he ate out of her hand, happy and playful.

When evening came, and the sister felt tired, she would kneel down and say her prayers, and then lay her head on the fawn's back, which was a soft warm pillow, on which she slept peacefully. Had her brother only kept his own proper form, how happy they would have been together! After they had been alone in the forest for some time, a numerous hunting-party came to the forest, and amongst them the king of the country.

The sounding horn, the barking of the dogs, the halloa of the huntsmen, resounded through the forest, and were heard by the stag, who became eager to join his companions.

'Oh dear,' he said, 'do let me go and see the hunt; I cannot restrain myself.' And he begged so hard that at last she reluctantly consented.

'But,' she said, 'I must lock the cottage door against those huntsmen; so when you come back in the evening and knock, I shall not admit you unless you say, "Dear little sister, let me in."'

He bounded off as she spoke, scarcely stopping to listen, for it was so delightful for him again to breathe the fresh air and be free.

The king and his chief huntsman caught sight of the beautiful animal, and started off in chase of him; but they could not overtake him. Once, when they thought they had him safe, the fawn sprang over the bushes and disappeared.

As it was now nearly dark, he ran up to the little cottage, knocked at the door, and cried, 'Dear little sister, let me in.' The door was opened, and he sprang in and rested on his soft bed.

The next morning the huntsmen were again in the forest; and when the fawn heard the halloa, he could not rest in peace, but begged his sister again to let him go.

She opened the door, and said, 'I will let you go this time; but pray do not forget to say what I told you, when you return this evening.'

When the king and his huntsmen espied the beautiful fawn with the golden collar, they all hunted him, but he was too swift for them.

This lasted the whole day.

They chased him till a shot wounded him slightly in the foot, so that he was obliged to limp slowly home.

One of them, however, followed him at a distance, and saw him go up to a door and knock, and heard him say, 'Dear little sister, let me in.' The huntsman returned, and described to the king what he had seen.

'We will have one more chase to-morrow,' said the king.

In the meantime, the loving sister was terribly alarmed at finding the stag's foot wounded. She quickly washed off the blood, placed healing herbs on it, and said, 'Lie down on your bed, dear fawn, until you are well.'

In the morning the wound was so much better that the fawn felt the foot almost as strong as ever, and so, when he again heard the halloa of the hunters, he could not rest. 'Oh, dear sister, I must go once more; no one will catch me.'

But his sister wept, and said, 'If they kill you, dear fawn, I shall be here alone in the forest, forsaken by the whole world.'

'And I shall die of grief,' he said, 'if I remain here listening to the hunter's horn.'

So at length his sister, with a heavy heart, set him free, and he bounded away joyfully into the forest.

As soon as the king caught sight of him, he said to the huntsmen, 'Follow that stag about, but don't hurt him.' So they hunted him all day, but at sunset the king said to the hunter who had followed the fawn the day before, 'Come and show me the little cottage.'

When the king saw it, he went up to the little door, knocked, and said softly, 'Dear little sister, let me in.'

As the door opened, the king stepped in, and there stood a maiden more beautiful than he had ever seen anywhere. But how frightened she felt to see instead of her dear little fawn a noble gentleman walk in with a gold crown on his head.

However, he appeared friendly, and after a little talk he held out his hand to her and said, 'Wilt thou go with me to my castle, and be my dear wife?'

'Ah, yes,' replied the maiden, 'but I cannot leave my dear fawn; he must go with me.'

'He shall remain with you as long as you live,' replied the king, 'and I will never ask you to forsake him.'

While they were talking, the fawn came bounding in, looking quite well and happy. Then his sister fastened the string of rushes to his collar, took it in her hand, and led him away from the cottage in the wood.

The king placed the maiden before him on his horse, and rode away to his castle, the fawn following by their side. Soon after their marriage was celebrated with great splendour, and the fawn was taken the greatest care of, and played where he pleased, or roamed about the castle grounds in happiness and safety.

In the meantime, the wicked stepmother, who had caused these two young people such misery, supposed that the sister had been devoured by wild beasts, and that the fawn had been hunted to death. Therefore, when she heard of their happiness, such envy and malice arose in her heart that she could find no rest till she had tried to destroy it.

Her own daughter, who was ugly as the night, and had but one eye, reproached her, saying, 'To be a queen should have been my lot.'

'Be quiet,' answered the old woman. 'When the time comes, I shall be ready.'

As time went on, the queen had a beautiful little boy. While the king was out hunting, the old witch took the form of the chambermaid, came into the queen's room, and said,

'Come, the bath is ready; it will do you good and give you strength. Be quick and come, before it gets cold.'

The witch's daughter was close at hand, and the two bore the poor queen to the bath-room and put her in the bath. Then they shut the door and ran away. But in the bath-room they had made such a terrible fire that the queen was soon suffocated.

Then the old woman took her own daughter, put a cap on her, and laid her in the queen's bed, giving her also the form of the queen. She could not restore the lost eye. But that the king might not see it, she was to lie on the side that had no eye.

In the evening, when the prince came home, and heard that he had a son, he rejoiced greatly, and wished to go and see his wife in her bed; but the old woman called out, 'Take care, leave the curtains down; the queen must not see light, and must have rest.' The king went away, and knew not that a false queen lay in the bed.

When it was midnight and all slept, the nurse, who watched by the cradle in the nursery alone, saw the door open, and the true queen come in. She took the child out of the cradle, laid it in her arms, and nursed it. Then she shook up the pillow, laid him down again, and covered him with the quilt. Nor did she forget the fawn; she went into the corner where it lay and stroked its back. Then she passed silently out of the door.

The next morning the nurse asked the watchman if anyone had come in the night into the castle, and they answered, 'No, we saw no one.'

After a time the queen began to speak in the night, and said:

'How is my child? how is my roe?
Now will I come twice, and then no moe (more).'

The nurse did not answer, but when the queen was gone she went to the king and told him all.

The king exclaimed, 'Ah, heavens! what is this? *I* will watch by the child to-morrow night.'

The next evening he went to the nursery, and in the middle of the night the queen appeared and said:

'How is my child? how is my roe?
Now come I but once, and then no moe,'

and nursed the child, as was her wont, before she left.

The king did not trust himself to speak to her, but watched again the following night. She again said:

'How is my child? how is my roe?
Now come I this time, and then no moe.'

The king could not restrain himself, but sprang to her and said, 'You can be no one but my own dear wife.'

She answered, 'Yes, I am thy dear wife,' and at the same time, by God's grace, she received back her life, and was fresh and healthy. Then she told the king how cruelly she had been treated by her stepmother, and on hearing this he became very angry, and had the witch and her daughter brought to justice. They were both sentenced to die—the daughter to be devoured by wild beasts, and the mother to be burnt alive.

No sooner, however, was she reduced to ashes, than the charm which held the queen's brother in the form of a stag was broken; he recovered his own natural shape, and appeared before them a tall, handsome young man.

After this, the brother and sister lived happily and peacefully for the rest of their lives.

RAPUNZEL.

THERE were once a man and a woman who wished very much to have a little child. Now, these people had a small window in their cottage which looked out into a beautiful garden full of the most lovely flowers and vegetables. There was a high wall round it, but even had there not been, no one would have ventured to enter the garden, because it belonged to a sorceress, whose power was so great that everyone feared her.

One day the woman stood at the window looking into the garden, and she saw a bed which was planted full of most beautiful lettuces. As she looked at them, she began to wish she had some to eat, but she could not ask for them.

Day after day her wish for these lettuces grew stronger, and the knowledge that she could not get them so worried her, that at last she became pale and thin, and her husband was quite alarmed. 'What is the matter with you, dear wife?' he asked one day.

'Ah!' she said, 'if I do not have some of that nice lettuce

which grows in the garden behind our house, I feel that I shall die.'

The husband, who loved his wife dearly, said to himself, 'Rather than my wife should die, I will get some of this lettuce for her, cost what it may.'

So in the evening twilight he climbed over the wall into the garden of the witch, hastily gathered a handful of the lettuces, and brought them to his wife. She made them into a salad, and ate it with great eagerness.

It pleased her so much and tasted so good, that her desire became three times as great, and she gave her husband no rest till he promised to get her some more. So again in the evening twilight he climbed the wall, but as he slid down into the garden on the other side he was terribly alarmed at seeing the witch standing near him. 'How came you here?' she said, with a fierce look. 'You have climbed over the wall into my garden like a thief, and stolen my lettuces. You shall pay dearly for this.'

'Ah!' replied the poor man, 'let me entreat for mercy. I have only taken it in a case of need. My wife has seen your lettuces from her window, and she wished for them so much that she said she should die if she could not have some of them to eat.'

Then the witch's anger cooled a little, and she replied, 'If what you tell me is true, then I will give you full permission to take as many lettuces as you like, on one condition. You must give me the child which your wife may bring into the world. I will be very kind to it, and be as careful of it as a mother could be.'

The husband in his alarm promised everything; and when the wife became the mother of a girl, the witch appeared, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel was the most beautiful child under the sun, and as soon as she reached the age of twelve years, the witch locked her up in a tower that stood in a forest, and this tower had no steps, nor any entrance, excepting a little window. When the witch wished to visit Rapunzel, she would place herself under this window and sing:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair,
That I may climb without a stair.'

Rapunzel had most long and beautiful hair like spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the witch, she would unbind her golden locks and let them fall loose over the window-sill,

from which they hung down to such a length that the witch could draw herself up by them into the tower.

A few years passed in this manner, when it happened one day that the king's son rode through the forest. While passing near the tower, he heard a lovely song, and could not help stopping to listen. It was Rapunzel, who tried to lighten her solitude by the sound of her own sweet voice.

The king's son was very eager to obtain a glimpse of the singer, but he sought in vain for a door to the tower; there was not one to be found.

So he rode home, but the song had made such an impression on his heart that he went daily into the forest to listen. Once, while he stood behind a tree, he saw the witch approach the tower and heard her say:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair,
That I may climb without a stair.'

Presently he saw a quantity of long golden hair hanging down low over the window-sill, and the witch climbing up by it.

'Oh,' said the young prince, 'if that is the ladder on which persons can mount and enter, I will take the first opportunity of trying my luck that way.' So on the following day, as it began to grow dark, he placed himself under the window and cried:

'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair,
That I may climb instead of a stair.'

Immediately the hair fell over the window, and the young prince quickly climbed up and entered the room where the maiden lived.

Rapunzel was dreadfully frightened at seeing a strange man come into the room, as she had never seen one before; but the king's son looked at her with such friendly eyes, and began to converse with her so kindly, that she soon lost all fear.

He told her that he had heard her singing, and that her song had excited such deep emotion in his heart that he could not rest till he had seen her. On hearing this, Rapunzel ceased to fear him. The prince asked her if she would take him for a husband. For a time she hesitated, although she saw that he was young and handsome, and he had told her he was a prince. At last she said to herself, 'He will certainly love me better than old Mother Grethel does.' So she placed her hand in his and said, 'I would willingly go with you and be your wife, but I do not know in the least how to get away

from this place. Unless,' she said, after a pause, 'you will bring me every day some strong silk cord, then I will weave a ladder of it; and when it is finished I will descend upon it, and you shall take me away on your horse.'

The prince promised to come and see her every evening till the ladder was finished, for the old witch always came in the daytime.

The witch had never seen the prince; she knew nothing of his visits, till one day Rapunzel said innocently, 'How is it that you are so much heavier to draw up, Mother Grethel, than the king's son, who has just left me?'

'You wicked child,' cried the witch, 'what do I hear you say? I thought I had hidden you from all the world, and now you have betrayed me.' In her wrath she caught hold of Rapunzel's beautiful hair, and wound it several times round her left hand. Then she seized a pair of scissors and cut Rapunzel's hair, while the beautiful locks, glistening like gold, fell on the ground. And she was so hard-hearted after this that she dragged poor Rapunzel to a wild and desert place, and left her there in sorrow and woe.

On the same day on which the poor maiden had been exiled, the witch tied the locks of hair which she had cut off poor Rapunzel's golden head into a kind of tail, and hung it over the window-sill.

In the evening the prince came and cried:

> 'Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair,
> That I may climb without a stair.'

Then the witch let the hair down, and the king's son climbed up; but at the open window he found not his dear Rapunzel, but a wicked witch, who looked at him with cruel and malicious eyes.

'Ah!' she cried, with a sneer; 'you are come to fetch your loving bride, I suppose; but the beautiful bird has flown from the nest, and will never sing any more. The cat has fetched it away, and she intends also to scratch your eyes out. To thee is Rapunzel lost; thou wilt never behold her again.'

The prince felt almost out of his mind with grief as he heard this, and in his despair he sprang out of the tower window and fell among the thorns and brambles beneath. He escaped with his life, but the thorns stuck into his eyes and blinded them. After this he wandered about the wood, eating only wild roots and berries, and did nothing but lament and weep for the loss of his beloved bride.

So wandered he for a whole year in misery, till at last he came upon the desert place where Rapunzel had been banished and lived in her sorrow. As he drew near, he heard a voice which he seemed to recognise, and, advancing towards the sound, came within sight of Rapunzel, who recognised him at once with tears. Two of her tears fell on his eyes and healed them. Then he travelled with her to his kingdom, and she became his wife, and the remainder of their days were spent in happiness and content.

THE THREE LITTLE MEN IN THE WOOD.

Once upon a time there was a man who had lost his wife and had one daughter; and there was a widow who also had one daughter. The maidens were brought up together, and played as if they had been sisters.

One day the widow said to the man's daughter, 'Go and tell your father that I will marry him; then thou canst wash in milk and drink wine, but my child shall wash in water and drink water.'

Then the maiden went home and told her father what the woman had said.

Then, said the man, 'What shall we do? Marriage is a happy thing, but it is also a great trouble.'

He thought for awhile, and at last, finding he could make no excuse, he pulled off his boot, and said, 'Take this boot—there is a hole in the sole—and go with it to the loft; then hang it on a large nail, and pour water into it. If it holds the water, then I will again take a wife; but if it runs through the hole, I will not marry.'

Then the maiden did as her father had told her, and the water drew the hole together, so that the boot became full, even to the brim, and she went to inform her father what had occurred.

As soon as he heard what had happened, he rose and went himself to see the boot; and, finding she had spoken the truth, he went at once to the widow, and they were married.

On the next morning, the husband's daughter had milk

placed for her to wash in and wine to drink, but the wife's daughter had water only. On the second morning, there was nothing but water for both of them ; but on the third day, the wine and milk were for the wife's daughter, while her step-child had nothing but water, and so it continued.

In the heart of the wife a bitter hatred soon arose against her stepdaughter, because she was beautiful and amiable, and her own child was ugly and disagreeable.

One day in the winter, when the ground was frozen hard, and mountain and valley lay white with snow, the stepmother made a dress of paper. Then she called the maiden, and said to her, 'Just put on this dress, and go out into the woods and bring me that basket full of strawberries. I have a longing for them.'

'Oh dear,' replied the girl, 'strawberries do not grow in winter, when the ground is frozen and the hedges are covered with snow. Besides, how can I go in this paper dress ? it is so cold out of doors that even one's breath freezes, and the wind will cut through this thin dress, and the thorns tear my skin.'

'Don't answer me,' said the stepmother. 'Get off as fast as you can, and let me not see you again till you get the basket full of strawberries.' Then she gave her stepdaughter a small piece of dry bread, and said, 'That will be enough for you to-day ; now go.'

'Ah,' thought the wicked woman, 'she will be frozen, or starved with hunger, and will never come before my eyes again.'

Now, as the maiden was always obedient, she put on the paper dress and went out. Far and wide there could be seen nothing but snow, not even a little blade of green grass ; but she walked on, and at last came to a small cottage in the wood, from which peeped out three strange little dwarfs.

She wished them 'Good-day,' and knocked timidly at the door. 'Come in,' they cried, and she stepped in and seated herself on a stool near the stove, for she wanted to get warm and eat her breakfast. Presently one of the little men said to her, 'Give us some of your bread, maiden.'

'Willingly,' she replied. So she divided her piece of bread, and gave them half.

Presently they asked again, 'What brought you into the forest on such a wintry day as this, with only a thin dress ?'

'Ah,' she answered, 'I was sent into the wood to fill this basket with strawberries, and I dare not go home again till I have filled it.'

When she had eaten her bread, they gave her a broom, and said, 'Go and sweep the snow away from the back door.'

As soon as she was gone, the little men began to talk together about her. One said, 'What shall we give her, as she is so good, and shared her bread with us?' 'I will promise,' said the first, 'that she shall grow every day more beautiful.' 'And I will grant,' said the second, 'that every time she opens her mouth to speak, a piece of gold shall fall out.' Then the third promised that a king's son should make her his wife.

The maiden did as the dwarfs bade her, and swept away the snow from the pathway behind the cottage, and at last what do you think she found?—rich ripe strawberries of a deep red, lying before her on the snow.

She quickly and joyfully filled her basket, and after shaking hands with the little men, she thanked them for their kindness, and ran home to show her stepmother what she had brought for her. As she entered the house, and said 'Good-evening,' a piece of gold immediately fell from her mouth on the floor.

Her stepmother was astonished, and then the maiden related what had happened to her in the wood, while at every word she uttered a piece of gold fell from her mouth, so that in a very short time the whole room was covered with it.

'You will be proud and haughty,' said the stepsister, 'now that you can scatter gold in this way;' but she was secretly jealous about it, and asked her mother to let her go into the wood to find strawberries.

'No, my dear little daughter,' replied the mother, 'it is too cold for you; you might be frozen.'

But the girl gave her mother no peace, till at last she allowed her to go. Not, however, till she had made her dress herself in a warm fur jacket, and given her bread and butter and cake to eat on the way.

The maiden went to the wood, and walked on till she reached the cottage. The three little men saw her coming, although she knew it not; and without guessing or seeing anything wrong, she walked right into the room, and seated herself by the stove, and began eating her bread and butter and cake.

'Give us a little of your nice breakfast,' said one of the little men.

'I have not enough for myself,' she replied; 'how can I give you any?'

When she had finished, they said, 'There is a broom in the corner; take it, and sweep the pathway at the back door.'

'Go and do it yourself,' she cried; 'I am not your servant.'

However, when she saw that they were not going to give her anything, she went out.

The little men began to talk about her. 'What shall we give her?' asked one; 'for she has such a naughty, wicked, and envious heart.' 'Then,' said the first, 'I ordain that she shall grow more ugly every day.' 'I grant,' said the second, 'that at every word she speaks a toad shall spring out of her mouth;' while the third promised that she should meet with an unlucky death.

The maiden searched in vain for strawberries; so she went home sullen and out of temper. On opening her mouth to relate all that had happened to her in the wood, at each word a toad sprang out on the floor, so that she became disgusting to everyone.

After this, the stepmother became more spiteful against her husband's daughter than ever, and thought only of the means to make her suffer pain and annoyance, for her beauty grew more and more daily.

At last she took a kettle, and set it on the fire to boil yarn. As soon as it was ready, she called the poor girl, and, hanging the thread on her shoulder, gave her an axe, and told her to go to the frozen river, break a hole in the ice, and wash the thread.

Always obedient, she took the axe and went to break a hole in the ice. But as she struck the first blow, a beautiful little carriage passed by, in which sat a young king. He stopped the carriage when he saw the maiden, and said, 'My child, why are you out here in the cold? and what are you doing?'

'I am a poor maiden,' she replied; 'and I am cleaning yarn.'

Then the king was full of pity, and seeing how beautiful she was, he said, 'Will you ride with me?'

'Oh yes,' she replied, 'with all my heart;' for she was overjoyed at the thought of escaping out of sight of her stepmother and sister. Then she entered the carriage, and the king drove her to his castle. And in a very short time after the king asked her to be his wife, and the marriage was celebrated with great splendour, as the little men in the wood had foretold.

In about a year the young queen had a little son, of whom she was very fond. And the stepmother, who had heard of her good fortune, went with her daughter to the castle, to make a long visit.

But one day, while the king was from home and no one in

the castle near, the wicked woman laid hold of the queen by the head, and her daughter held her by the feet; then they lifted her out of bed, and threw her from the window into a stream that flowed on one side of the castle.

Then the stepmother placed her own daughter in the bed and covered her over with the clothes till only the top of her head could be seen. When the king came back and wished to speak to his wife, the mother exclaimed, 'Hush, hush! you must not disturb her, she is in a fever.' However, the next morning the king would see his wife, although he never suspected anything; but when he spoke to her and she answered him, there sprung out of her mouth at each word a toad, instead of the pieces of gold as before. Then the king inquired what could be the cause of this, and the old woman said that if she could have another sound sleep she would soon be all right again. So the king left her. That night the king's page saw something like a duck swimming across the moat under the king's window, and heard a voice saying:

'King, dost thou watchful keep?
Or dost thou close thine eyes in sleep?'

There was no answer, and the spectre said again, 'How are my visitors?'

Then the page replied, 'They are fast asleep.'

Again it spoke: 'How is my little child?'

'He sleeps in his cradle,' answered the page.

Then the apparition took the form of the young queen, went into the infant's room, took him up and fed him, shook up his little bed, laid him to sleep, covered him warmly with the clothes, and then swam back again through the moat in the form of a duck. All this occurred again the next night; but when she appeared the third time, she spoke to the page and said, 'Go and call the king, and tell him to take his sword and swing it three times over me from the window-sill.' Then ran the page quickly and told the king. He came immediately with his sword and swung it three times over the apparition, and after the third time there stood before him his own beautiful wife, healthy, and charming as ever. Oh, how happy the king was now! He kept the queen concealed in the room where his baby lived till Sunday, when he was to be baptized. As soon as the ceremony was over he said to the old stepmother, 'What does that man deserve who takes another out of his bed and throws him into the water?'

'He deserves nothing better,' she replied, 'than to be stuck

in a barrel full of the points of nails and rolled down a mountain into the water.'

'Then,' said the king, 'you have pronounced your own sentence. Let such a barrel as this wicked woman has described be brought, and place her and her daughter in it, that they may be rolled into the water as a punishment for their cruel conduct.'

THE THREE SPINNING FAIRIES.

THERE was once a girl who was idle and would not spin, and let her mother say what she would, nothing would induce her to work. At last the mother became so angry that she gave her a flogging.

At the first blow the girl set up such a loud screaming that the queen, who was passing, stopped to inquire what was the matter; she stepped into the house and said:

'Why are you beating your daughter? Her screams are heard by people in the street.'

Then the mother was ashamed to expose the laziness of her daughter, and said:

'I cannot get her away from the spinning-wheel, and we are too poor to provide her with flax.'

'Oh,' answered the queen, 'there is nothing more pleasant to me than the sound of spinning; the humming of the wheel delights me. Give me your daughter; I will take her to the castle. I have plenty of flax, and she shall spin as much as she likes.'

The mother was quite glad to allow the queen to take the maiden away with her. As soon as they arrived at the castle, the queen took the girl into three rooms that were all quite full of beautiful flax.

'Spin me this flax,' she said, 'and as soon as it is finished I will give you my eldest son for your husband. Although you may be poor, I do not care for that; your unwearied industry is sufficient dowry.'

The maiden was in a fright when she heard this, for she knew she could never spin all that flax if she worked every day from morning till night for a hundred years, and as soon as she was alone she began to cry · at the end of three days,

when the queen came to see her, she had not begun her task. The queen was surprised, but the maiden excused herself by saying that she felt so unhappy at leaving her mother's home that she knew not how to begin.

The queen accepted the excuse, but as she left the room she said, 'You had better begin to-morrow.'

When the young girl found herself alone, and knew that she was unable even to begin this task, she rose in her trouble and walked to the window. Then she saw three strange-looking women coming towards her. One had a broad flat foot, the second such a large under-lip that it hung over the chin, and the third had an enormous thumb.

They remained before the window, looked up at the maiden, and asked her what was the matter. She told them her trouble, and they offered to assist her. 'You must first promise,' said one, 'that we shall be invited to your wedding, and sit at your table, and you must agree to call us your cousins, without being ashamed of us. If you will do this, we will come in and spin your flax in a short time.'

'I promise, with all my heart,' said the girl. 'So come and set to work at once.' She let the three strange-looking women in and cleared a space in the first flax chamber, where they seated themselves and commenced spinning.

The first turned the wheel and drew out the thread, another moistened it, while the third twisted it with her finger on the table, and, as she twisted, there fell on the ground skein after skein of the finest spun flax.

The queen came every day to see how the work was getting on, but the maiden hid the three spinners, and showed her each time so many skeins of the finest thread that she went away quite astonished.

When the first room was empty they went to the second, and at last to the third, till all the flax was spun.

Then the three women bade her farewell, saying, 'Don't forget what you have promised, for it will bring you good fortune.'

When the queen came and saw the empty rooms, and the quantity of skeins of thread, she was delighted, and fixed the day on which the marriage was to take place.

The prince felt overjoyed at the prospect of having such a clever and diligent wife, and praised her greatly.

'I have three cousins,' said the girl, 'who have been very kind to me, and I should not like to forget them in the midst of my good fortune. Will you permit me to invite them to the wedding, and to give them seats at our table?'

The queen and the prince both replied that they could have no reason to object. So on the wedding-day the three women came in great pomp and beautifully dressed.

The bride said, 'Welcome, dear cousins.'

'Ah,' said the bridegroom, 'how came you to have such ugly acquaintances?' Then he went up to them, and addressing the first, he asked, 'How did it happen that you have such a broad foot?'

'From turning the spinning-wheel,' she replied.

He turned away and inquired of the second the cause of her overhanging lip

'From moistening the thread with my lips,' was the reply.

'And your thumb,' he asked of the third, 'what makes it such a size?'

'From drawing and twisting the thread,' she answered.

'Then,' said the bridegroom, 'if this is the result of turning the spinning-wheel, my bride shall never touch it again.'

So the young maiden was set free from spinning.

LITTLE HANS AND MEG.

NEAR a large forest dwelt in olden times, with his wife, a poor woodcutter, who had two children—a boy named Hans, and his sister, Meg. They had very little to live upon, and once when there was a dreadful scarcity in the land, the poor woodcutter could not earn their daily food.

One evening, after the children were gone to bed, the parents sat talking together over their sorrow, and the poor husband groaned, and said to his wife: 'What will become of us, for I cannot earn enough to support myself and you, much less the children?'

'I know what to do, husband,' she replied. 'Early to-morrow morning we will take the children into the forest and in the thickest part we will make a fire, and give them each a piece of bread; then we will go to our work, and leave them alone. They will not find their way home, and we shall be rid of them.'

'No, wife,' said the man, 'that I will never do. How could I have the heart to leave my children all alone in the wood, where the wild beasts would come and devour them?'

'Oh, you fool!' she replied; 'then we must all four perish with hunger. You can cut the wood for our coffins.' And after this she let him have no peace till he consented, though he was sorry about his children.

The two children, who also were too hungry to sleep, heard all that their stepmother had said to their father. Poor little Meg wept bitter tears as she listened, and said to her brother: 'What is going to happen to us, Hans?'

'Hush, Meg,' he whispered; 'don't be so unhappy. I know what to do.'

As soon as their parents were asleep, Hans got up, put on his little coat, unfastened the door, and slipped out. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebble stones which lay before the cottage door glistened like new silver money. Hans stooped and picked up as many of the pebbles as he could stuff into his little coat-pockets. He then went back to Meg, and said: 'Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace; heaven will take care of us.' Then he laid himself down again in bed and slept.

As soon as the sun was risen, the stepmother came and woke the two children, and said: 'Get up, you lazy bones, and come into the forest with me to gather wood for the fire.' Then she gave each of them a piece of bread, and said: 'You must keep that to eat for your dinner, and don't eat it before, for you will get nothing more.'

Meg took the bread under her apron, for Hans' pockets were full of pebbles. Then they all went into the forest. They had gone but a very short distance, when Hans looked back at the house, and this he did again and again.

The father said, 'Why do you keep staying behind and looking back so? Take care, you may break your bones.'

'Oh, father,' said the boy, 'I can see my little white cat sitting on the roof of the house, and I am sure she is crying for me.'

'Nonsense,' the woman said, 'that is not your cat; it is the morning sun shining on the chimney-pot.'

Hans had not been looking for the cat, but he had stayed to drop a white pebble from his pocket on the ground as they walked.

As soon as they reached a thick part of the wood the father said:

'Come, children, gather some wood and I will make a fire, for it is very cold here.'

Then Hans and Meg raised quite a heap of brushwood,

which soon blazed up into a bright fire, and the woman said to them :

'Sit down here, children, and rest, while we go cutting wood in the forest. When we have finished our work, we will come again and fetch you.'

Hans and Meg seated themselves by the fire, and when noon arrived they each ate their piece of bread, and as long as they heard the strokes of the axe they thought that their father was working near them. But it was not an axe they heard—only a branch which still hung on a withered tree, and was moved up and down by the wind. At last, when they had been sitting there a long time, the children's eyes became heavy with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke it was dark night, and poor Meg began to cry, and said, 'Oh, how shall we get out of the wood?'

But Hans comforted her. 'Don't fear,' he said; 'let us wait a little till the moon rises, and then we shall easily find our way home.'

And when the moon rose Hans took his little sister by the hand, and the white pebble stones, which glittered like newly-coined money in the moonlight, pointed out the way. They walked all the night through, and did not reach their father's house till break of day.

They knocked at the door, and when their stepmother opened it she exclaimed: 'You naughty children! why have you been staying so long in the forest? We thought you were never coming back.' But their father was overjoyed to see them, for it grieved him to the heart to think that they had been left alone in the wood.

Not long after this there came again a time of scarcity and want, and the children heard their stepmother talking after they were in bed. 'The times are as bad as ever,' she said; 'we have just half a loaf left, and when that is gone all is over. The children must go away; we will take them deeper into the forest this time, and they will not be able to find their way home as they did before. It is the only plan to save ourselves from starvation.' But the husband felt heavy at heart, for he thought it was better to share the last morsel with his children.

His wife would listen to nothing he said, but continued to reproach him, and as he had given way to her the first time, he could not refuse to do so now. The children were awake, and heard all the conversation, so as soon as their parents slept, Hans got up intending to go out and gather some more

pebbles to let fall as he walked; but his stepmother had locked the door, and he could not open it. However, he told his little sister not to fret, but to go to sleep in peace, for he was sure they would be taken care of.

Early the next morning the stepmother came and pulled the children out of bed, and when they were dressed, gave them each a piece of bread for their dinners, smaller than they had had before.

As they walked Hans, who had the bread in his pocket, broke off little crumbs, and stopped every now and then to drop one, turning round as if he was looking back at his home.

'Hans,' said the father, 'what are you stopping for in that way? Come along directly.'

'I saw my pigeon sitting on the roof, and he wants to say good-bye to me,' replied the boy.

'Nonsense,' he said, 'that is not your pigeon; it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney-top.'

But Hans dropped pieces of bread behind him. They went on till they reached the thickest part of the forest, where they had never been before in all their lives. Again a large fire was made up; then the woman said, 'Remain here, children, and rest. When you feel tired you can lie down and sleep for a little while, and we will come and fetch you in the evening when your father has finished his work.'

At mid-day Meg shared her piece of bread with Hans, for he had scattered his own all along the road as they walked. After this they slept for awhile, and the evening drew on, but no one came to fetch the poor children. When they awoke it was quite dark, but Hans comforted his sister. 'You know, little sister,' he said, 'that I have thrown bread-crumbs all along the road we came, and they will easily point out the way home.'

But when they went out of the thicket into the moonlight they found no bread-crumbs, for the thousands of birds which fly about in the trees of the forest had picked them all up.

Hans said to his sister, 'Cheer up, Meg; I dare say we shall find our way home.' But this they found impossible. They wandered about the whole night and the next day from morning till evening, but they could not get out of the wood, and were so hungry that had it not been for a few berries which they picked they must have starved.

At last they were so tired that their poor little legs could carry them no farther, so they laid themselves down under a

tree and went to sleep. When they awoke it was the third morning since they had left their father's house, and they determined to try once more to find their way home; but it was no use, they only went still deeper into the wood, and knew that if no help came they must starve.

About noon they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on the branch of a tree, and singing so beautifully that they stood still to listen. When he had finished his song, he spread out his wings and flew on before them. The children followed him, till at last they saw at a distance a small house, and the bird flew and perched on the roof.

The boy and girl when they came nearer found that the house was built of gingerbread, and ornamented with sweet cakes and tarts, while the window was formed of barley-sugar. 'Oh!' exclaimed Hans, 'let us stop here and have a splendid feast. I will have a piece from the roof first, and you can eat some of the barley-sugar window, it tastes so nice.' Hans reached up on tiptoe, and, breaking off a piece of the gingerbread, he began to eat with all his might, for he was very hungry. Meg seated herself at the window, and began eating the barley-sugar. Presently a voice came out of the cottage:

'Munching, crunching, munching,
Who's eating up my house?'

Then answered the children:

'The wind, the wind,
Only the wind,'

and went on eating, as if they never meant to leave off, without a suspicion of wrong. Hans, who found the cake on the roof taste very good, broke off another large piece, and Meg had just taken out a whole pane of barley-sugar from the window, and seated herself to eat it, when the door opened, and a strange-looking old woman came out leaning on a stick.

Hans and Meg were so frightened that they let fall what they held in their hands. The old woman shook her head at them, and said: 'Ah, you dear children, who has brought you here? Come in and stay with me for a little while, and there shall no harm happen to you.' She took them both by the hands as she spoke, and led them into the house. She gave them for supper plenty to eat and drink—milk and pancakes, and sugar, apples, and nuts; and when evening came, Hans and Meg were shown two beautiful little beds with white curtains, and they lay down in them and thought they were in heaven.

But although the old woman pretended to be friendly, she was a wicked witch, who had her house built of gingerbread on purpose to entrap children. When once they were in her power, she would feed them well till they got fat, and then kill them and cook them for her dinner, and this was her feast-day. The witch had weak eyes, and could not see very well, but she had a keen scent, as wild animals have, and could easily discover when human beings were near. As Hans and Meg had approached, she had laughed to herself maliciously, and said with a sneer, 'I have them now; they shall not escape from me again.'

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she was up standing by their beds, and when she saw how beautiful they looked in their sleep, with their round, rosy cheeks, she muttered to herself, 'What nice titbits they will be!' Then she laid hold of Hans with her rough hand, dragged him out of bed, and led him to a little stable, which had a lattice door, and shut him in; he might scream as much as he would, but it was all useless.

After this she went to Meg, and, shaking her roughly, cried, 'Get up, you lazy thing, and draw some water, that I may boil something good for your brother, who is shut up in the stable outside till he gets fat, and then I shall cook him and eat him.' When Meg heard this, she began to cry bitterly, but it was all useless; she was obliged to do as the wicked witch told her.

For poor Hans' breakfast the best of everything was cooked, but Meg had nothing for herself but crabs' claws. Every morning the old woman would go out to the stable and say, 'Hans, stick out your finger, that I may feel if you are fat enough for eating.' But Hans stuck a bone through the bars, which she thought was his finger, for she could not see, and when she felt how thin it was, she wondered why he did not get fat.

However, as four weeks were passed, and Hans seemed not to get any fatter, she became impatient, and said she could not wait any longer. 'Go, Meg,' she cried to the girl, 'be quick and draw water; Hans may be fat or lean, I don't care, to-morrow morning I mean to kill him and cook him.'

Oh, how the sister grieved when she was forced to draw the water, and, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, she exclaimed, 'It would have been better to be eaten by wild beasts, or to have been starved to death in the woods—then we should have died together.'

'Stop your crying,' cried the old woman; 'it is not of the least use.'

Early in the morning Meg was obliged to go out and fill the great pot with water, and hang it over the fire to boil. As soon as this was done, the old woman said, 'We will bake some bread first. I have made the oven hot, and the dough is already kneaded.' Then she dragged poor little Meg up to the oven-door, under which the flames were burning fiercely, and said, 'Creep in there, and see if it is hot enough to bake the bread.' But if Meg had obeyed her, she would have shut the child in and baked her for dinner.

Meg, however, guessed what she wanted to do, and said, 'I don't know how to get in.'

'Stupid goose!' said the old woman; 'why the oven-door is quite large enough for me. Just look, I could get in myself.' As she spoke, she stepped forward and put her head in the oven.

A sudden thought gave Meg strength. She gave the old woman a push, which sent her right into the oven; then she shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt.

Oh, how the old witch did howl—it was quite horrible to hear her! But Meg ran away, and she was left to burn. And how quickly Meg ran to Hans, opened the door of the stable, and cried, 'Hans, Hans, we are free! The old witch is dead.' He flew like a bird out of his cage at these words, as soon as the door was opened, and the children were so overjoyed that they ran into each other's arms and kissed each other.

And now that there was nothing to be afraid of, they went back into the house, and found chests full of pearls and precious stones. 'These are better than pebbles,' said Hans, and he filled his pockets as full as they would hold.

'I will carry some home, too,' said Meg, and she held out her apron.

'We will go now,' he said, 'and get away from this enchanted forest.'

They had been walking for a few hours, when they came to a large piece of water. 'What shall we do now?' said the boy; 'we cannot get across, and there is no bridge.'

'Oh, there is no boat,' cried Meg, 'but a white duck is swimming there; perhaps she will help us across, if we ask her;' and she sang, 'Little duck, help poor Hans and Meg. There is not a bridge nor a boat; take us across on your white back.'

The duck came near the bank, and Hans seated himself, and

wanted to take his little sister on his lap, but she said, 'No: we shall be too heavy for the duck. Let her take us over one at a time.'

The good creature did as the children wished. And then they found themselves in a part of the wood which they remembered quite well, and as they walked on, the more familiar it became, till at last they caught sight of their father's house. Then they began to run, and, bursting into the room, threw themselves into their father's arms.

The poor man had not had a moment's peace since the children had been left in the forest; and their stepmother was dead.

Meg opened her little apron, and the glittering pearls and precious stones were scattered about the room, while Hans drew handful after handful from his pockets. From this moment all his care and sorrow was at an end, and the father lived in happiness with his children till his death.

THE THREE SNAKE LEAVES.

THERE was once a poor man who could hardly earn enough to keep his son. One day the boy said to him, 'Dear father, I see you every day looking so sorrowful, that I am determined to go out into the world and try to earn my own living.'

Then his father gave him his blessing, and took leave of him with the greatest sorrow. Just at this time a great king was going to war, and the youth took service under him and marched to the battle-field. In the first conflict with the enemy he was in great danger; his comrades fell on each side of him. Their commander, also, was killed, and the soldiers were inclined to take flight. But the youth stepped forth to raise their courage, and cried, 'No, no, we will never allow our fatherland to be lost!' Then they followed their young leader, who led them forward, and vanquished the enemy. When the king heard to whom he owed this great victory, he raised him to great honour, gave him large treasures, and made him first in the kingdom next to himself.

Now, the king had a daughter who was very beautiful, but she was also very whimsical. She had made a vow that she

would take no man for a husband who did not promise that if she should die he would be buried alive with her. 'If he loves me,' she said, 'he will not wish to outlive me;' and in return for this she would also promise to be buried with him, should he die first.

This vow had hitherto frightened away all wooers, but the young soldier was so struck with the beauty of the princess, that he disregarded the vow, although her father warned him, and said, 'Do you know what a promise you will have to make?'

'Yes,' replied the young man, 'I must be buried with her in the grave if I outlive her; but my love for her is so strong that I disregard that danger.'

Then the king gave his consent, and the marriage was celebrated with great pomp.

After they had lived together for some time in great happiness and contentment, the princess was seized with a terrible illness, from which her physicians were unable to restore her. As she lay dead, the young husband remembered what he had promised, and the thought of lying in the grave alive filled him with horror, but there was no escape. The king placed a watch at every outlet from the castle, so that it was not possible to avoid his fate. When the day of the funeral arrived, and the body had been carried down and placed in the royal vault, he was taken there also, and the door firmly fastened with locks and bolts. Near to the coffin stood a table, upon which were four lights, four loaves of bread, and four bottles of wine, and he knew that when these provisions came to an end he must starve. So he seated himself, feeling full of grief and sorrow, took only a small piece of bread and the least drop of wine, and death seemed nearer than ever. While he thus sat, he saw from a corner of the vault, just opposite to where he sat, a white snake creep out and approach the body. He rose in horror, thinking it was about to gnaw it, and, drawing his sword, exclaimed, as with two blows he cut the snake into three pieces, 'As long as I live you shall not touch that.'

After awhile a second snake crept out of the corner, but as soon as he saw the other lying dead in three pieces, he went back and quickly returned with three green leaves in his mouth. Then he took the three separate portions of the snake, placed them together, and laid a leaf on each wound, and no sooner were they joined than the snake raised himself as lively as ever, and went away hastily with his companion.

The leaves remained on the ground, and as he looked at them, it suddenly occurred to the unfortunate man that a leaf which could restore a dead snake to life, might be useful to human beings. He stooped and picked up the leaves, then, advancing towards the body, laid one on the mouth of the dead, and the others on both the eyes. Hardly had he done it than the blood began to circulate in the veins and blushed softly in the pale face and lips of his dead wife. She drew a deep breath, opened her closed eyes, and exclaimed faintly, 'Where am I?'

'Thou art with me, dear wife,' answered her husband; and then he told her all that had happened, and how he had wakened her to life.

After giving her a little of the wine and bread she became stronger, and was able to rise and walk to the door of the vault with her husband. Here they knocked and called loudly for a long time, till at last the watchman heard them, and word was sent to the king. He came himself quickly and ordered the door of the vault to be opened, and how joyful he was to find them both alive and uninjured!

The three leaves the young prince took with him, and gave them in charge to a servant to take care of, saying, 'Preserve them carefully for me, and see that they are safe every day; who knows what help they may be to us in any future trouble?'

In the wife of the young prince, after this event, a great change appeared—it was as if, with her return to life, all her love for her husband had vanished from her heart.

Not long after, he wished to take a voyage across the sea to see his old father, and she accompanied him. On board ship she forgot all the true and great love he had shown for her in restoring her to life when she was dead, and made friends with the captain.

One day, when the young prince lay asleep on deck, she called the skipper to her and told him to take her husband by the feet, while she raised his head, and they threw him overboard into the sea. As soon as this shameful deed was accomplished, she said to the skipper, 'Now let us sail home again, and say that the prince has died on the voyage. I will praise and extol you so greatly to my father, that I know he will readily give his consent to our marriage, and leave the crown to you after his death.'

But the faithful servant saw all that his master's wife had done. Unnoticed, he lowered one of the boats from the ship's

side, got on board, and very soon discovered the body of the prince. Dragging it hastily into the boat, he produced the precious leaves, which he always carried about with him, laid one on each eye and one on the mouth of the dead man, and restored him to life. They both rowed with all their strength day and night, and their little bark flew so swiftly that they arrived at the king's palace before his daughter and the captain.

The king wondered greatly when he saw his son-in-law and the servant enter, and asked them what had happened. But when he heard of his daughter's wickedness, he said, 'I can scarcely believe she would act so basely. However, the truth will soon be brought to light. For the present, I advise you both to hide yourselves in a private chamber, and keep yourselves unknown to everyone.'

A few days afterwards the large ship made its appearance, and the king's guilty daughter appeared before her father with a sorrowful countenance.

'Why have you come back alone?' he asked. 'Where is your husband?'

'Ah, dear father,' she replied, 'I am come home to you in great sorrow, for during the voyage my husband was taken suddenly ill and died, and if the good captain had not stood by me, it might have been bad for me. He stood by my husband's death-bed, and he can tell you all that occurred.'

'Oh,' said the king, 'I can restore your dead husband to life again. He threw open the door of the private room as he spoke, and told his son and the servant to come out.

When the wife saw the husband she was thunderstruck, and sank on her knees, imploring mercy.

'I can show you no mercy,' said the king. 'Your husband was not only ready to be buried and die with you, but he used the means which restored you to life, and you have murdered him while he slept, and shall receive the reward you so truly merit.'

Then was she, with her accomplice, placed in a boat full of holes, and driven out to sea, where they were soon overwhelmed in the waves.

THE WHITE SNAKE

In times of old there lived a king whose wisdom was so great that it was famous over the whole land. Nothing remained unknown to him; it appeared as if news of the most carefully concealed event was carried to him through the air. It was the custom of this king each day at noon, when the dinner had been removed, and no one else was present, for a trustworthy servant to bring in a large bowl, which was always covered up. Neither the servant nor anyone else knew what it contained, for the king never took off the cover to eat of the contents till he was quite alone. This had continued for a long time, but there came a day when the curiosity of the servant was too strong to be overcome, and, after removing the dish from the king's table, he took it into his own room. After carefully locking the door, he lifted up the cover, and saw to his surprise a white snake lying at full length in the dish. He no sooner caught sight of it than he became unable to resist a desire to taste, so he cut a little piece off and put it in his mouth. Scarcely had it touched his tongue than he heard outside his window strange whisperings of soft voices. He went and listened, and then noticed two sparrows who were talking together and relating to each other all that they had seen in the woods and fields. That taste of snake had given him the power to understand the languages of animals.

Now, it happened that on this very day the queen had lost one of her beautiful rings, and she suspected that this trustworthy servant had stolen it. The king sent for him, and with harsh, angry words told him he should be brought to justice and punished. It was of no use for him to protest his innocence, the king was inexorable. In his sorrow and distress of mind he went out into the court behind the castle and tried to think of some means by which he might get himself out of this trouble.

On the water of the lake two ducks were swimming peacefully together, side by side. They plumed their shining feathers with their smooth bills, while they held a very confidential conversation. The servant stood still to listen, and heard them talking of where they had been waddling, and of the good food they had found.

'Ah, yes,' said one, 'but some of it lies very heavy on my

stomach; I think it must be that ring which lay under the queen's window. In my hurry, I dare say I swallowed it.'

The servant no sooner heard this than he seized the duck by the neck, and, carrying her into the kitchen, said to the cook, 'Kill this duck for dinner, will you? it is quite fat.'

'Yes, I see it is,' replied the cook, taking it in his hand. 'I shall not have the trouble of fattening this one, at all events, or waiting till it is ready.' Then he cut off the duck's neck, and on opening it he found the queen's ring in her stomach.

The servant now could easily prove his innocence to the king, who, anxious to make amends for having so unjustly accused him, promised him whatever high position in the court he wished. The servant wanted no office, but asked for a horse, and money to travel, for he had a great desire to see the world.

His requests were granted, and he set out on his travels.

One day he came to a pond, in which he saw three fish, who had been caught by the rushes, and were gasping for water. Although people say that fish are dumb, yet he understood the complaining tones well enough to know that without help they would quickly perish. He sympathized from his heart with their suffering. So he alighted from his horse, and, rescuing the little fish from the rushes, placed them again in the water. They wriggled about with joy, and one of them stretched out his head and cried, 'We will always think of thee, and thou wilt be rewarded for having saved us.'

He rode away, however, and presently beneath his feet a voice spoke, and he understood that the words were those of an ant-king mourning over the danger to his community. 'If only these human beings,' he said, 'would not ride by on awkward animals! Here's a stupid horse coming along; with his heavy hoofs he will tread down our people unmercifully.'

But the rider turned his horse aside, and the ant-king cried out, 'I will often think of thee, and thou shalt be rewarded.'

Then he travelled on till he reached a wood, and there he saw two ravens, a father and mother, and heard them say, as they stood by their nest, 'Go along with you, we cannot feed you any more; you are fat enough, and must now provide for yourselves,' and the old birds threw the young ones out of the nest as they spoke.

The poor little birds lay on the ground, fluttering and beating their little wings, and crying, 'Oh, we poor helpless children,

we have to provide for ourselves, and we cannot even fly; there is nothing left for us but to die of hunger.'

Then the good young man dismounted, killed his horse with his dagger, and left it there for the young ravens to feed on. They hopped upon it, and began to feast themselves, crying out, 'We will always think of thee, and thou shalt be rewarded.'

He was now obliged to use his own legs instead of riding, so he walked on for a long distance, till at last he came to a large town. There was a great noise in the streets, and crowds of people, and presently a man on horseback rode up and made a proclamation, that the king's daughter was seeking a spouse, but that he who was a candidate for her hand must first perform completely a very difficult task, and if he undertook it and did not succeed, he would forfeit his life. The young man had no sooner seen the young princess than he became quite dazzled with her beauty, forgot all danger, and offered himself to the king as her suitor.

One day he was led to the sea, and saw a gold ring fall into it before his eyes. The king ordered him to fetch this ring from the deep, adding, 'Every time you come up without it, you shall be thrust back into the waves till they overwhelm you.'

Everyone pitied the handsome youth, but left him as he went back to the sea. While standing mournfully on the shore, he saw three fish swimming about, and they proved to be none other than those whose lives he had saved. One of them held a mussel in its mouth, and, swimming to the shore, laid it on the strand at the young man's feet. He took up the mussel and opened it, and there lay the gold ring. Full of joy, he carried it to the king, and expected that the promised reward would be granted him.

But the king's proud daughter, when she understood her suitor was not so well born as herself, said that he must have another difficult task to perform. So she went out herself into the garden, and scattered ten sacks full of grain over the grass. Then she called her lover, and showed him what she had done, saying, 'These grains must all be separated from the grass before the sun rises to-morrow morning; not the smallest grain must be overlooked.'

The poor young man seated himself in the garden, and thought that for him to perform such a task as this would be impossible. So he sat still, in sorrowful expectation that the break of day would be the hour of his death. But when the

first sunbeam fell in the garden, he saw with surprise the ten sacks of grain standing quite full near each other, and not the smallest grain left behind in the grass.

The ant-king had arrived during the night, with thousands from his ant kingdom, and the grateful creatures had, with great industry, picked up every tiny grain, and filled the sacks.

At sunrise the king's daughter came herself into the garden, and saw with wonder that the young man had in every way performed the allotted task. But she could not even now conquer the pride of her heart, and therefore she said, 'It is true he has accomplished two difficult tasks, but I require one more: he shall not be my husband until he brings me an apple from the tree of life.'

The young man knew not even where this wonderful tree grew, but he was determined to make an effort to find it, so he set out to walk as far as his legs could carry him, but he had very little hope of success. He had travelled day after day through three kingdoms without success, when one evening he wandered into a wood, and laid himself down under a tree to rest. Presently, in the branches, he heard a chattering of birds in a nest, and a golden apple fell down into his hand. Immediately three young ravens flew down to him, perched themselves on his knee, and said, 'We are the three young ravens which you saved from being starved to death. As soon as we were grown large and strong enough to fly, we took our flight to distant countries, and heard that you were in search of the golden apple, so we have travelled over the sea, even to the end of the world, where the tree of life grows, and have brought away an apple for you.'

Full of joy, the young man, returning quickly, placed before the beautiful princess the golden apple. She had not now another word to say. They divided the apple of life between them, and ate it together. Then was the heart of the princess softened and filled with love for the brave youth, and they lived in uninterrupted happiness to a good old age.

THE STRAW, THE COAL, AND THE BEAN.

In a village there lived an old woman, who one day gathered some beans from her garden to cook. She had a good fire on the hearth, but, to make it burn more quickly, she threw on a handful of straw. As she threw the beans into the pot to boil, one of them fell on the floor unobserved by the old woman, and not far from a wisp of straw which was lying near. Suddenly a glowing coal bounced out of the fire, and fell close to them. They both started away, and exclaimed, 'Dear friend, don't come near me till you are cooler. Whatever brings you out here?'

'Oh,' replied the coal, 'the heat luckily made me so strong, that I was able to bounce from the fire. Had I not done so, my death would have been certain, and I should have been burnt to ashes by this time.'

'Then,' said the bean, 'I have also escaped with a whole skin; for had the old woman put me in the pot with my comrades, I should without mercy have been boiled to broth.'

'I might have shared the same fate,' said the straw, 'for all my brothers were pushed into fire and smoke by the old woman. She packed sixty of us in a bundle, and brought us in here to take away our lives, but luckily I slipped through her fingers.'

'Well, now what shall we do with ourselves?' said the coal.

'I think,' answered the bean, 'as we have been so fortunate as to escape death, we may as well be companions, and travel away together to some more friendly country.'

This proposal was gladly accepted by the two others; so they started on their journey together. After travelling a little distance, they came to a stream, over which there was no bridge of any sort.

Then the straw took courage, and said, 'I will lay myself across the stream, so that you can step over me, as if I were a bridge.'

So the straw stretched himself from one shore to the other, and the coal, who from his nature is rather hot-headed, tripped out quite boldly on the newly-built bridge. But when he

reached the middle of the stream, and heard the water rushing under him, he was so alarmed that he stood still, and dared not move a step further. The straw began to burn, broke in pieces from its weight, and fell into the brook. The coal, with a hiss, slid after him into the water, and gave up the ghost.

The bean, who had cautiously remained behind on the shore, could not contain herself when she saw what had happened, and laughed so heartily that she burst. Now would she have been in the same plight as her comrades; but, as good luck would have it, a tailor, who was out on his travels, came to rest by the brook, and noticed the bean. He was a kind-hearted man, so he took a needle and thread out of his pocket, and, taking up the bean, sewed her together. She thanked him very much, but unfortunately he had only black thread to sew with, and, in consequence, since that time all beans have a black mark down their backs.

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE.

A FISHERMAN once lived contentedly with his wife in a little hut near a lake, and he went every day to fish.

One day the line suddenly sunk to the bottom, and when he pulled it up again, there was a large flounder hanging to the end of it.

'Oh dear!' exclaimed the fish; 'good fisherman, let me go, I pray you; I am not a real fish, but a prince in disguise. I shall be of no use to you, for I am not good to eat; put me back again into the water, and let me swim away.'

'Ah,' said the man, 'you need not make such a disturbance. I would rather let a flounder who can speak swim away than keep it.'

With these words, he placed the fish back again in the water, and it sunk to the bottom, leaving a long streak of blood behind it. Then the fisherman went home to his wife in the hut.

'Husband,' said the wife, 'have you caught anything to-day?'

'I caught a flounder, he replied, 'who said he was an enchanted prince, so I threw him back into the water, and let him swim away.'

'Did you not wish?' she asked.

'No,' he said; 'what should I wish for?'

'Why, at least for a better hut than this. He would have promised you whatever you asked for. However, go and call him now.'

The husband did not like this task; however, to please his wife, he went and stood by the sea. When he saw how green and dark it looked he felt much discouraged, but made up a rhyme and said:

'Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray, and talk to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Sent me here a tale to tell.

Then the fish came swimming up to the surface, and said, 'What do you want, then?'

'Ah,' said the man, 'I caught you and let you go, and my wife says I ought to have wished, for she cannot live in such a hut as ours, and she wants a cottage.'

'Go home, man,' said the fish; 'your wife has all she wants.'

So the husband went home, and there was his wife, no longer in her hovel, but sitting at the door of a neat little cottage.

She took her husband by the hand, and said, 'Come in, and see how much better it is.'

So he followed her in, and found a beautiful parlour, and a bright stove in it, a soft bed in the bedroom, and a kitchen full of earthenware, and tin and copper vessels for cooking, looking so bright and clean, and all of the very best. Outside was a little farmyard, with hens and chickens running about; and beyond, a garden, containing plenty of fruit and vegetables.

'See,' said the wife, 'is it not delightful?'

'Ah, yes,' replied her husband; 'now we must live contented.'

'We shall see,' said the wife. They then had supper and went to bed.

A fortnight passed, and the husband felt quite happy, till one day his wife startled him by saying, 'Husband, after all, this is only a cottage, much too small for us, and the yard and the garden cover very little ground. If the fish is really a prince in disguise, he could very well give us a larger house. I should like to live in a large castle built of stone. Go to thy fish, and ask him to build us a castle.'

'Ah, wife,' he said, 'this cottage is good enough for us; what do we want with a castle?'

'Go along,' she replied, 'the flounder will be sure to give it to us.'

'Nay, wife,' said he, 'the fish gave us the cottage, but if I go again he may be angry.'

'Never mind,' she replied; 'he can do what I wish easily, and I have no doubt he will; so go.'

The husband rose with a heavy heart. He said to himself, 'This is not right,' and when he reached the sea he noticed that the water was now a dark blue, yet very calm, so he began his old song:

'Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray, and talk to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I fear to tell.'

'Now, then, what do you want?' said the fish, lifting his head above the water.

'Oh dear!' said the fisherman, in a frightened tone, 'my wife wants to live in a great stone castle.'

'Go home, man, and you will find her there,' was the reply.

The husband hastened home, and where the cottage had been there stood a great stone castle, and his wife tripped down the steps, saying, 'Come in!'

So she took him by the hand and led him into the castle, through halls of marble, while numbers of servants stood ready to usher them through folding doors into rooms where the walls were hung with tapestry, and the furniture was of silk and gold. From these they went into other rooms equally elegant, where crystal looking-glasses hung on the walls, and the chairs and tables were of rosewood and marble. The soft carpets sunk beneath the footstep, and rich ornaments were arranged about the rooms.

Outside the castle was a large courtyard, in which were stables and cowsheds, horses and carriages. Beyond this was a beautiful garden, full of rare flowers and delicious fruit, besides acres of park, in which deer, oxen, and sheep were grazing—all that the heart could wish.

'Well,' said the wife, 'is not this beautiful?'

'Yes,' replied her husband; 'we will live here and be content.'

'We must think about that,' she replied, and then they went to bed.

Not many mornings after this the fisherman's wife rose early. It was just daybreak, and she stood looking out, with her arms akimbo, over the beautiful country that lay before

her. Her husband did not stir, and presently she exclaimed, 'Get up, husband, and come to the window. Look here, ought you not to be king of all this land? Then I should be queen. Go and tell the fish I want you to be king.'

'Ah, wife,' he replied, 'I don't want to be king. I can't go and ask that.'

'Well,' she replied, 'if you don't care about being king, I wish to be queen, so go and tell the fish.'

'It's no use, I cannot.'

'Why not? Come, go at once; I must be queen.'

The husband turned away in a sorrowful mood. 'It is not right,' he said; 'it is not right.' However, he went, and as he stood on the seashore, he noticed that the water looked quite dark and rough, while the waves foamed and dashed against the shore, as if they were angry. But still he said:

'Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray, and talk to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I fear to tell.'

'What!' cried the fish, rising to the surface, 'she is not content, and she wants to be queen? Very well, then; go home, and you will find her so.'

When he got near home he found the castle had disappeared, and he saw at a distance a palace, which seemed to grow larger as he approached it. At one end was a large tower, and a noble terrace in front. A sentinel stood at the gates, and a band of soldiers, with drums and trumpets, were performing martial music. On arriving at the palace, he found it was built of precious marble. Within no expense had been spared. The furniture was of the most precious materials, and the curtains and carpets fringed with gold. The husband passed through the doors into a state apartment of immense size, and there sat his wife upon a lofty throne of gold and precious stones. She had a crown of gold upon her head, and a golden sceptre in her hand adorned with jewels. On each side of her stood six pages in a row, each one a head taller than the one next him. He went up to his wife and said:

'Ah, wife, so you are queen now!'

'Yes,' she said, 'I am queen.'

He stood looking at her for a long time, till at last he spoke again. 'Well, wife, now that you are queen, we have nothing left to wish for; we must give up wishing.'

'No, indeed,' she replied, 'I am not yet satisfied. Time

passes very heavily. I am as impatient as ever. Go to your enchanted prince again, and tell him I want to be empress.'

'Empress!' cried the husband. 'It is beyond his power; there is only one emperor.'

'What!' she replied; 'I am queen, and you must obey me, although you are my husband. Go at once; if the fish can make a queen, he can also make an emperor.'

So the husband went away muttering. 'This is not good; I am certain the fish will put an end to it this time.'

When he reached the shore the sea was quite black, and the waves rushed so furiously over the rocks that he was terrified, but he contrived to repeat his wild verses again, saying:

'Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Come, I pray, and talk to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I fear to tell.'

Up came the fish. 'Well,' he said, 'what does she want now?'

'Ah!' said the husband timidly, 'she wants to be empress.'

'Go home, man,' he replied; 'she has her wish.'

And on his return he found his wife acting as empress in a palace of marble, with alabaster statues, and gold and pearls, and soldiers and lords and barons bowing to her. But she was not satisfied even now, and at last told her husband that she wished to be Pope, and that he must go to the fish and tell him so.

'No,' he said, 'that is impossible. The Pope is the head of the Church. You cannot have that wish.'

'But I will be Pope,' she exclaimed. So he was obliged to go, and when he reached the shore the sea was running mountains high, and roaring and beating against the shores, and it was such terrible weather that the sky looked quite black.

However, he ventured to call up the fish with the old song, and told him of his wife's wish.

'Go home,' he said; 'your wife is Pope.'

He went back and found a large cathedral surrounded by palaces.

On a high throne sat his wife, with thousands of lights around her, dressed in robes embroidered with gold, and wearing a large golden crown on her head. Candles of all kinds stood near her, some as thick as a tower, others as small as a rushlight, while emperors, kings, and nobles knelt at her footstool, and kissed her slippers.

'Well, wife,' said her husband, 'so you are Pope.'

'Yes,' she said, 'I am.'

He stood still for a time watching her, and at length he remarked, 'You cannot be higher than the Pope, so I suppose now you are content.'

'I am not quite sure,' she said. But when evening came, and they retired to rest, she could not sleep for thinking of what she should next wish for. Her husband slept soundly, for he had tired himself the day before; but she rose even before the day broke, and stood at the window to watch the sun rise. It was a beautiful sight, and she exclaimed as she watched it, 'Oh, if I only had the power to make the sun rise! Husband, wake up,' she added, pushing him in the ribs with her elbows, 'wake up, and go and tell the enchanted prince that I wish to be even as God is.'

The husband was so frightened at this that he tumbled out of bed, and exclaimed: 'Ah, wife, what didst thou say?'

She repeated the words.

Her husband fell on his knees before her. 'Don't ask me to do this. I cannot!' he cried; but she flew into a rage, and drove him from the house.

The poor fisherman went down to the shore in terror, for a dreadful storm had arisen, and he could scarcely stand on his feet. Ships were wrecked, boats tossed to and fro, and rocks rolled into the sea.

In his terror and confusion he heard a voice from amidst the storm say, 'Your wife wishes to be like unto God. Go home, man, and find her again in her dirty hovel.'

He went home and found the glories and palaces vanished, and his wife sitting in the old hut. She sits there still.

THE BRAVE LITTLE TAILOR.

One fine summer morning, a little tailor sat at his open window on a table at work. He was very cheerful, and sewed diligently.

A farmer's wife came down the street, crying, 'Good jam for sale! good jam for sale!' The voice had a lively sound to the ears of the little tailor, so he put his soft head out of the

window and cried, 'Come here, my good woman; this is the place to sell your goods.'

The woman ascended the three steps with her heavy basket, stood before the tailor, and showed him how much she had. As soon as he saw the contents, he rose from his table, and, putting down his nose to smell, he exclaimed, 'This jam smells so good that I must have four ounces, and if it is a quarter of a pound, it is of no consequence.' The woman, who had hoped to sell a large quantity, gave him what he wished for, but went away quite angry and discontented.

'Now God bless the jam,' cried the tailor; 'it will give me strength and energy for my work.' Then he fetched the bread from his cupboard, cut off a piece the whole size of the loaf, and spread the jam upon it. 'That will not taste bitter,' he said; 'but before I take even a bite, I must finish this waistcoat.' Then he placed the bread on a chair near, and sewed and stitched away.

In the meantime, the smell of the jam rose to the wall, where numbers of flies were clustered together; so tempting was it, that they flew down in swarms just to taste.

'Hallo! who invited you?' cried the tailor, as he drove away the unbidden guests.

But it was of no use. The flies did not understand German. They would not be sent away, but returned again in larger companies than ever. Then ran the little tailor 'head over heels,' as people say, and, pulling from under his work-table a piece of cloth, he said, 'Wait and see what I will give you;' then he struck it unmercifully amongst them.

When he stopped, he counted no fewer than seven lying with their legs stretched out quite dead. 'Am I such a churl,' he exclaimed, 'that I must admire my own bravery alone? No, no, the whole town shall hear about it.' And the little tailor, in great haste, cut out a waist-belt, on which he sewed and stitched large letters forming these words, 'Seven at one stroke.' 'This town,' said he again, 'indeed, the whole world, shall hear of it.' And his heart waggled with pride like a lamb's tail.

The tailor bound the girdle round his waist, and determined to go out into the world, for he considered his workshop too small for such bravery. Before starting, he searched in every corner of the house to discover if there was anything he could take with him, but found nothing but an old cheese, which he stuck in his pocket.

As he passed out, he saw before the door a bird caught in

the bushes; this he also placed in his pocket with the cheese. Then he set out on his journey, tripping lightly along, for he was so light and pliant that he felt no fatigue.

The road he took led him up a high mountain. When he reached the summit, there sat an enormous giant, who looked at him in a friendly manner.

The brave little tailor went straight up to him, and said, 'Good-morning, comrade. Upon my word, you have a grand prospect of the world stretched out before you. As for me, I am travelling in search of adventures—will you go with me?'

The giant looked quite disdainfully at the little tailor, and exclaimed, 'You conceited little imp! You contemptible fellow!'

'Stop,' cried the tailor, 'not so fast;' and unbuttoning his coat, he pointed to the words on his girdle. 'If you can read, that will show you what sort of a man I am.'

The giant read, 'Seven at one stroke!' and thinking it must be seven men whom the tailor had killed, he began to feel more respect for him.

'Well, now, I will prove you,' said the giant. 'Look here, can you do this?' and he took up a large stone and squeezed it till the water came from it.

'Oh, that is nothing,' exclaimed the tailor, 'it is but play to me;' and taking out the soft cheese from his pocket, he squeezed it till the whey ran from it, crying out at the same time, 'Beat that, if you can.'

The giant knew not what to say; the strength of the little tailor quite astonished him. However, he took up another stone, and threw it to such a height in the air that it was impossible to see where it went.

'Certainly, that is clever,' said the tailor; 'but the stone will fall somewhere. I will throw one up that shall not come down again.' He put his hand in his pocket, and, drawing out the bird, threw it up into the air.

Overjoyed at regaining its freedom, the bird rose immediately, and, spreading its wings, was soon far out of sight.

'What do you think of that, comrade?' he asked.

'You can throw very well, certainly,' replied the giant; 'but I should like to see if you can draw a heavy weight as easily as you can throw.'

He led the little tailor to an enormous oak which had fallen to the ground. 'Now, then,' he said, 'if you are as strong as you say, just help me to carry this tree out of the forest.'

'Most willingly,' replied the little man. 'You take the

trunk on your shoulders, and leave me the leaves and the boughs; they are the heaviest.'

The giant lifted the trunk on his shoulders, but the cunning little tailor seated himself among the branches, unseen by the giant, who had therefore to carry the whole tree and the tailor into the bargain, without knowing it.

Our little friend was so merry as he went along, that he could not help whistling and singing, 'Three tailors rode from the door away,' as if carrying trees was mere child's play.

The giant, however, had not gone far when he began to stagger under his heavy load. 'I cannot move a step further,' he cried. 'Don't you hear, I shall let the tree fall.'

At this, the tailor sprung lightly down, seized the tree with both hands, and exclaimed, 'Well, you can't be so very strong, not to be able to carry such a tree as this.'

They left the tree, and walked on together till they came to a cherry-tree loaded with ripe fruit. The giant seized the topmost branch, and, bending it down, placed it in the tailor's hand, and told him to eat as many as he liked. But the little man had not strength enough to hold the branch, so up it sprang again, carrying the little tailor high into the air and letting him fall on the other side, but without hurting him at all. 'What,' said the giant, 'had you not strength enough to hold such a twig as this?'

'My strength did not fail me,' he replied. 'Do you suppose a man who could kill seven at one stroke would find this a difficult task? I sprung over the tree because I saw a number of hunters shooting in a wood close by. Now, you do the same; I should so like to see you spring over.'

The giant made an attempt, but he could not clear the tree, he only entangled himself in the branches; so that in this, also, the tailor gained the upper hand.

Then the giant said to him, 'As you are such a clever little fellow, you had better come home with me to my cave and stay the night.'

The tailor was quite ready to accompany him, and when they reached the cavern, there sat two other giants before a blazing fire, each with a large roast sheep in his hands, eating his supper.

The little tailor seated himself, and thought, 'Well, this is a sight worth coming out into the world to see.'

The giant then showed him a bed in which he could sleep, but, when he laid himself down, it was so large that he got up again, and, creeping into a corner, curled himself round and went to sleep.

At midnight the giant, thinking his visitor was fast asleep, rose up, and taking a heavy iron bar, struck a blow at the bed, which broke it right through. 'Ah,' thought he, 'I must have killed the little grasshopper, and got rid of his cunning tricks now.' But the next morning, when the giants went out into the wood, and were not thinking of the tailor, he walked up to them as brave as ever, and looking as fresh and merry as a bird.

The giants were so alarmed at the sight of him come to life again, as they thought, and remembering that he could kill seven at one stroke, they quite expected he would be the death of them all. So, taking to their heels, they ran away quickly and were soon out of sight.

Then the little man journeyed on, always following his nose, as the saying is, till after wandering a long time, he arrived at the entrance-court of a king's palace. Feeling very tired, he lay down on the grass, and soon fell fast asleep.

While he lay there, the people passing read on his girdle, 'Seven at one stroke.' 'Ah,' exclaimed one, 'what can a great warrior like this want here in time of peace? He must be a great hero.'

So they went and told the king, and suggested to him that in case a war should break out, it would be a great advantage to secure the services of such a wonderful and clever man at any price.

The king listened to this counsel, and sent one of the gentlemen of the court to tell the little man, as soon as he awoke, that he wished to enlist him in his service.

The messenger remained by him, and waited till he at last opened his eyes and stretched his limbs; then he delivered his message.

'Ah,' exclaimed the little man, 'that is exactly what I came for; I wish to be enlisted in the king's service.'

Then was he received at the palace with high honours, and handsome apartments prepared for his use.

But the military men at the court were jealous of the little tailor, and wished him thousands of miles away. 'What will become of us,' they said one to another, 'if we should quarrel with him, or attempt to fight him? If he can kill seven at one blow, there will soon be an end of us all.' So they formed a resolution, and went together to the king, and resigned their commissions, saying 'they could not associate with a man who could kill seven men at one blow.'

The king was vexed at the idea of losing all his old and

tried servants on account of this stranger, and began to wish he had never seen the tailor.

But how to get rid of him he knew not, for he might kill them all and place himself on the throne. The king reflected long and deeply on the subject, till at last a plan suggested itself. So he sent for the tailor, and told him that, as he was such a great hero, he wished to make a proposal to him.

'In a forest not far from here,' he said, 'two giants dwell, who have committed so many dreadful deeds of robbery, murder, and violence, that no one will venture near where they live, for fear of losing his life. Now, if you can vanquish and destroy these dreadful giants, I will give you my only daughter in marriage, and the half of my kingdom as her dowry; and if you will undertake to do this, I will send an escort of one hundred knights with you, to assist you in any way you wish.'

'Well,' thought the tailor, 'that is a reward worth trying for, especially for such a man as I am. It is an offer not met with every day.'

So he replied to the king, 'Yes, sire, I will overcome the giants; but the hundred knights will be of no use to me. I, who have slain seven at one blow, am not likely to be afraid of two.'

Then the tailor set out, the hundred knights following him; but when they reached the borders of the wood, he told them to remain there till he returned, as he would rather go alone to attack the giants.

Then he sprang into the forest, and looked cautiously around.

After awhile he saw the two giants lying fast asleep under a tree, and snoring so loudly that the branches above them were shaken, and moved up and down.

The little tailor was not idle; he ran quickly, and filled both his pockets full of stones. Then he climbed up into the tree, and, sliding out to the end of a branch under which the sleepers lay, let fall upon the chest of one of the giants one stone after another.

It was a long time before even this could disturb him, but at last he woke, and, pushing his companion roughly, exclaimed, 'What do you mean by knocking me about like this?'

'You are dreaming,' said the other; 'I never touched you.' And presently they were both asleep again.

Then the little tailor threw a heavy stone on the other giant, who woke up in a rage and cried, 'You are striking me now; what do you mean by it?'

'I never struck you,' he growled.

They were both so ill-tempered at being disturbed, that they quarrelled till they were tired, and then lay down to sleep again.

As soon as their eyes were closed, the tailor began again at his game, and choosing the largest stone he could find, threw it with all his strength on the chest of the first giant.

'This is really too bad,' cried he, springing up in a fury, and striking his comrade against the tree so violently that it trembled.

The other returned him as good as he gave, and a regular combat followed. So furiously did they fight, that they uprooted the large trees near them to use as weapons, the earth shook under their feet, and the conflict only ended when they both lay dead on the ground.

Down sprang the little tailor, exclaiming, 'It is a lucky thing for me that they did not uproot the tree in which I sat, or I should have had to spring like a squirrel to another. However, it is all right now.'

Then he drew his sword, and giving a few thrusts in the breasts of the giants, went out of the forest, and returned to the knights, who were waiting for him.

'The deed is done,' he said; 'I have made an end of them both. It was no easy task, I can tell you, for in their struggles for life they rooted up trees for weapons; but all this was useless against one who has killed "seven at a stroke."'

'And are you not wounded?' asked one of the soldiers.

'Not a very likely thing,' he replied. 'No, not a hair of my head has been even ruffled.'

The soldiers would not believe him, till he led them into the wood, where they found the giants weltering in their blood, and the trees they had rooted up lying near them.

The little tailor returned to the court, and presented himself before the king to claim the promised reward; but the king regretted having promised, and all his anxiety now was to get rid of the little hero.

'Ere I can give you my daughter and half of my kingdom,' said the king, 'you must perform one more heroic deed. There is in my forests a fierce unicorn, who spreads destruction wherever he is found. You must kill him also.'

'One unicorn will be nothing, after two giants,' he replied. 'Seven at one blow, that is my business.'

So he started off again to the forest, taking with him a rope and an axe, and again asked those who accompanied him to remain outside.

He had not long to wait. The unicorn very quickly made his appearance, and as soon as he saw the tailor, sprang forward to pin him to the ground.

'Softly, softly,' he cried; 'that cannot so easily be done.'

Then he stood still, and waited for the animal to come nearer, and on seeing him preparing to make a final spring, the tailor jumped lightly behind the trunk of the tree, at which the unicorn ran with all his force, and stuck his horn so fast in the trunk that he had not strength to pull it out, and therefore remained a prisoner.

'I have just caught my bird,' said the bold little man; and coming forth from behind the tree, he first fastened the rope round the neck of the unicorn, and with the axe cut the horn out of the tree, and then led the animal into the presence of the king.

But the king even now would not grant the promised reward, without requiring a third feat of valour. He made a bargain that before the marriage with his daughter took place, he should kill a wild boar, that did great mischief in the forest, and that the king's hunters should assist him.

'Oh, certainly,' replied the tailor; 'that will be child's play for me.' So he set out immediately for the forest, but left the hunters outside, to their great delight, for the wild boar had often hunted them, and they had no wish to join in the tailor's enterprise.

As soon as the wild boar caught sight of the tailor, he flew at him, with gleaming tusks and a foaming mouth, and would have thrown him on the ground. But our hero was too quick for him; he sprang into a little chapel that stood near, and out through the window on the other side. The boar was soon after him; but the moment he entered the chapel through the door, the tailor ran round quickly to close it, and the wild animal found himself a prisoner, for he was much too heavy and excited to jump through the window.

The little tailor called the hunters, and showed them the prisoner. After this, he presented the wild boar to the king, who this time, whether he would or no, was obliged to keep his promise to give to the hero his daughter and half his kingdom.

Had he known that a tailor stood before him instead of the hero he imagined, it would have grieved the king to the heart.

So the wedding was performed with great pomp, but very little rejoicing, and thus was a tailor made into a king.

Some little time after the young queen heard her husband talking in his sleep, and saying, 'Work away, youngster; finish that waistcoat, and sew the seams of the trousers, or I will lay the yard measure about your ears.'

This sort of talk occurred several times, and the young queen discovered by it that her husband was of low birth.

When she told her father of her trouble, and asked him to send away a husband who was only a tailor, the king tried to comfort her by saying, 'This evening leave your chamber door unlocked, and as soon as your husband is fast asleep my servants shall enter and bind him hand and foot, and carry him away to a ship, in which he shall sail to distant lands.'

The young wife was overjoyed at hearing of this scheme. But the king's equerry had overheard the conversation, and as he had a regard for this young man, he discovered to him the whole of the plot.

'I'll soon settle that,' was the little tailor's reply; 'there shall be a bolt to the door they don't expect.'

When night came, and as soon as the queen thought her husband slept, she rose quietly and opened the door. But the tailor, who had only pretended to sleep, exclaimed in a loud voice, 'Be quick, youngster, and finish that waistcoat, and stitch these trousers, or you will soon have the yard measure about your ears. I have killed seven at a blow; I have destroyed two giants; I have hunted a unicorn, and taken a wild boar captive; and shall I be afraid of those who stand outside my chamber door?'

As soon as the conspirators heard this, they were in a great fright, and fled as if a wild host were at their heels; and from that time no one in the kingdom could be prevailed upon to take part against him, and so the tailor remained a king for the rest of his life.

CINDERELLA.

Once upon a time the wife of a rich man fell sick, and as she knew her end was approaching she called her only daughter to her bedside, and said, 'Dear child, when I am gone continue good and pious, and Heaven will help you in every trouble, and I will be your guardian angel.'

Soon after this the mother closed her eyes in death, and day after day the maiden went to her mother's grave to weep, and she continued pious and gentle to all around her. Winter came and covered the grave with its dazzling drapery of snow; but when the bright sun of spring again warmed the earth the husband had taken to himself another wife. This wife had two daughters who were fair and beautiful in appearance, while at heart they were evil-minded and malicious. It soon became a sad time for their poor stepsister.

'Is the stupid goose to sit in the parlour with us?' they said. 'Those who eat ought to work. Send her into the kitchen with the kitchen-maid.'

Then they took away all her nice clothes, and gave her an ugly old frock and wooden shoes.

'Look at our fine princess now. See how she has dressed herself,' they said, laughing and driving her into the kitchen.

And there she was obliged to do hard work from morning till night; and she had to rise early to draw water, to light the fire, to cook and to wash. Besides all this, her stepsisters invented all sorts of mischief; they threw peas and lentils among the ashes, and she had to pick them out.

At night, when she was tired with her work, she had no bed to lie on, but was obliged to lie in the ashes on the hearth, and thus grew so black and smutty that they gave her the name of Cinderella.

It happened that the father was once going to a fair, and he asked his two stepdaughters what he should bring back for them.

'Beautiful dresses,' said the eldest. 'Pearls and diamonds,' said her sister.

'And, Cinderella,' asked her father, 'what will you have?'

'Father,' she replied, 'bring me the first twig that strikes your hat on your way home.'

So the father bought for his stepdaughters beautiful dresses, and pearls, and diamonds; as he was returning home he rode through green bushes, and a hazel twig struck his hat. Then he stopped, broke off the twig, and carried it home with him.

As soon as he reached the house he gave his stepdaughters the presents they had wished for, and to Cinderella the twig from the hazel-bush. She thanked him, and went out immediately to her mother's grave, where she planted the hazel twig, and wept over it so much that her tears fell and softened the earth.

The twig grew and became a beautiful tree, and Cinderella

went three times every day to pray and weep at the grave; and on each visit a little white bird would perch on the tree, and when she expressed a wish the bird would throw down whatever she wished for.

After a time the king gave a grand ball, which was to continue for three days. All the beautiful young ladies in the land were invited to it, so that the king's son might make choice of a bride from amongst them.

The two stepsisters, when they heard that they were invited, knew not how to contain themselves for joy. They called Cinderella in haste and said, 'Come and dress our hair and trim our shoes with gold buckles, for we are going to the ball at the king's palace.'

When Cinderella heard this she began to cry, for she wanted to go with her stepsisters; so she went to her stepmother and begged to be allowed to accompany them.

'You, Cinderella!' cried her stepmother, 'so covered with dirt and smut as you are, you go to a ball! Besides, you have no dress nor shoes, and would you dance?'

Cinderella, however, continued to beg for permission to go till her stepmother said at last: 'I have just thrown a shovelful of linseed into the ashes; if you can pick these seeds all out and bring them to me in two hours you shall go.'

Away went the maiden through the back-door into the garden, and called out:

'Little tame pigeons,
Turtle-doves, too,
If you don't help me
What shall I do?
Come, pick up the seeds,
All the birds in the sky,
For I cannot do it
In time, if I try.'

Then came flying in at the kitchen-window two pretty white doves, and they were followed by all the birds of the air, twittering in a swarm. Nodding their heads at Cinderella, they began to pick, pick, and very quickly picked every seed from the ashes, till the shovel was full. It was all finished in one hour, and then the birds spread their wings and flew away.

The maiden carried the shovelful of seed to her stepmother, believing that now she was sure to go to the ball. But her stepmother said:

'No, Cinderella, you have no dress, and you have not learnt to dance; you would only be laughed at.'

Still she cried and begged so hard to be allowed to go that her stepmother, to keep her quiet, threw *two* shovelfuls of linseed in the ashes this time, and told her she should go if she picked all these out in two hours.

'She can never do that,' thought the cruel women; but the maiden went again into the garden and called the birds:

'Little tame pigeons,
Turtle-doves, too,
If you don't help me
What shall I do?
Come, pick up the seeds,
All the birds in the sky,
For I cannot do it
In time, if I try.'

Then the birds all came as before, and in less than an hour every seed was picked out and laid in the shovel. As soon as they had flown away, Cinderella carried the shovelfuls of seed to her stepmother, quite expecting now to go to the ball with her stepsisters. But she said again, 'It is of no use to fret, Cinderella; you have no dress, you cannot dance, and were you to go, it would be a disgrace to us all.'

Then she turned her back on the poor girl, and hastened away with her two proud daughters to the ball. There was no one at home now but Cinderella, so she went out to her mother's grave and stood under the hazel-tree and cried:

Shake and shiver, little tree;
With gold and silver cover me.'

Then the bird in the tree threw down a beautiful silk dress, embroidered with gold and silver, and a new pair of glittering golden slippers. In great haste she dressed herself in these beautiful clothes, and went to the ball. When she entered the ball-room, looking so beautiful in her rich dress and slippers, her stepmother and sisters did not know her; indeed, they took her for a foreign princess. They supposed Cinderella was safe at home picking linseed from the ashes.

The king's son came to meet her, took her by the hand, and danced with her, till at last he would dance with no other, always saying, 'This is my partner.' So she danced all the evening till it was time to go home, and the prince said he would accompany her, for he wanted to discover where she lived. But she avoided him, and with one bound sprang into the pigeon-house. The prince waited till her father came, and then told him that the strange lady was in the pigeon-house.

'Could it be Cinderella?' thought the stepmother. So she advised the prince to send for workmen to pull down the pigeon-house; this was soon done, but they found no one there. When the stepmother and her daughters reached home, they found Cinderella in her smutty dress, lying in the ashes, and a dingy little lamp burning on the chimney-piece. The truth was, Cinderella had slipped out from the back of the pigeon-house even more quickly than she had jumped in, and had run to the hazel-tree. Here she took off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave while she put on her kitchen clothes, and the bird came down and carried the ball dress away, while Cinderella went home to lie in the ashes.

On the next day, when the feast began again, and her parents and stepsisters went to it, Cinderella went to the hazel-tree and said:

'Shake and shiver, little tree;
Throw gold and silver over me.'

Then the bird threw down a far more elegant dress than the first, and when she entered the ball-room in her rich apparel, everyone was astonished at her great beauty. The king's son, who had waited to dance till she came, took her hand and danced with her alone, always saying, when others came and asked her to dance, 'This is my partner.'

Again, when it was time to go, the prince wanted to accompany her and find out her home, but she ran into the garden behind the palace, in which grew a beautiful tree loaded with pears. She climbed like a squirrel between the branches, and the prince could not find her anywhere. He waited until the father came, and then said, 'The foreign lady has escaped me. I think she climbed the pear-tree'—'Can it be Cinderella?' thought he. Still, he sent and had the tree cut down, but no one could be found among the branches. The stepmother still had a fear that it might be Cinderella, but when they returned home, there she was in her kitchen dress lying among the ashes as usual. When they were looking for her, she had sprung down at the other side of the tree, and the bird in the hazel-tree had brought her kitchen clothes and taken away the ball-dress.

On the third day, when the stepmother and her daughters were away, Cinderella again went to her mother's grave and said to the tree:

'Shake and rustle, little tree;
Throw gold and silver over me.'

Then the bird threw down a most magnificent dress, more glittering and elegant than ever, and the brightest pair of gilded slippers.

When she appeared at the fête in this dress, everyone was astonished at her beauty. The prince danced only with her, and to every other proposal replied, 'This is my partner.' When the time came to leave, Cinderella wanted to go, and the prince wished to accompany her, but she darted away from him and vanished so quickly that he could not follow her.

Now, the king's son had had recourse to stratagem in the hope of discovering the home of the lovely princess. He had ordered the steps of the castle to be strewed with pitch, so that, as Cinderella hurried away, her left slipper stuck to the steps, and she was obliged to leave it behind. The prince himself picked it up; it was very small and elegant, and covered with gold.

The next morning he sent for one of his servants, and said to him, 'None other shall be my bride but the lady to whom that slipper belongs, and whose foot it shall fit.'

When the stepsisters heard of this proclamation from the prince, they were delighted, for they both had small feet. The eldest tried it on first in another room, and her mother stood by. She could have worn it if her great toe had not been so large, so her mother offered her a knife and told her to cut it off. 'When you are queen,' she said, 'you will not want to use your feet much.'

The maiden cut the toe off and forced on the slipper in spite of the pain, and the messenger led her to the prince. But on their road they had to pass the grave of Cinderella's mother, and on the hazel-tree sat two doves, who cried:

'That is not the right bride,
The slipper is much too small,
Blood is flowing inside,
The shoe does not fit her at all.'

Then the messenger examined the slipper and found it full of blood. So he led her back and told the next sister to try. She also went into another room with her mother, and found that she could not get the slipper over her heel.

'Cut a piece off,' said her mother, offering her a knife; 'when you are queen you will not have to use your feet.'

The maiden cut a piece off her heel, and fitted on the slipper in spite of the pain, and then went to the prince. They also had to pass the grave of Cinderella's mother, in which the two doves still sat, and cried:

Go back, go back,
There is blood in the shoe,
The shoe is too small,
That bride will not do.'

So the messenger examined the shoe, and found the white stocking quite red with blood. He took the false bride back to the house, and this time the king's son went with him.

'Hast thou not another daughter?' asked the prince of Cinderella's father.

'None,' he said, 'excepting the child of my first wife, a little Cinderella; she could not possibly be your bride.'

'Send for her,' said the prince.

But the stepmother answered, 'Oh no; I dare not let you see her, she is much too dirty.'

But the prince insisted that Cinderella should be sent for, so at last they called her in.

After washing her hands and face, she made her appearance, and bowed to the prince, who offered her the golden shoe. She seated herself on a footstool, took off the heavy wooden shoe from her left foot, and slipped on the golden slipper, which fitted her exactly. Then, as she lifted up her head and looked at the prince, he recognised the beautiful maiden who had danced with him at the ball, and exclaimed, 'That is the right bride!'

The stepmother and her two daughters turned white with anger.

But the prince disregarded their anger, and, taking Cinderella on his horse, rode away with her. As they passed the hazel-tree on the grass, the two white doves cried:

'Fair maid and true,
No blood in her shoe;
She is he bride,
With the prince by her side.'

And as they rode by, the doves came and perched on Cinderella's shoulder, one on the right and the other on the left.

When the marriage day came, the two stepsisters, wishing to share Cinderella's fortune, contrived to be present. As the bridal party walked to church, they placed themselves, one on the right, and the other on the left of the bride. On the way, the doves picked out one eye from each of them. When returning, they changed places, and the doves picked out the other eye of each; so they were for their wickedness and falsehood both punished with blindness during the rest of their lives.

THE RIDDLE.

THERE was a king's son who had no greater pleasure than to travel, and with no other companion than his faithful servant.

During one of their journeys they one day found themselves in a great forest, and knew not where to get shelter for the night. At last they espied a little maiden, and as they drew near to her they saw she was young and fair, so they followed her to a little cottage.

The king's son spoke to her, and said: 'Dear child, can I and my servant find accommodation for the night in your little cottage?'

'Ah, yes,' said the maiden, in a sorrowful tone, 'you can very easily; but I advise you not to stay, nor even to go in.'

'Why should I not?' he asked.

The maiden sighed and said: 'My stepmother carries on a wicked trade. She is not good to strangers.'

It was evident to the travellers that this was the house of a witch, but as it grew darker every minute, they could not go farther, and they had no fear, so they stepped in.

As they entered an old woman, who sat in an arm-chair near the fire, turned and looked at the strangers with her red eyes.

'Good-evening,' she said, in a tone that seemed quite friendly; 'lie down there, and rest as long as you like.'

Then she blew up the fire to make the coals burn under a saucepan in which something was boiling, but the daughter cautioned them not to eat or drink anything in the house, for her stepmother was brewing wicked drinks.

So they went to sleep without any supper, and slept quite peaceably all night till the next morning. Just as they were about to start—indeed, the king's son was already on his horse—the old woman came up to them, and said: 'Wait a moment till I give you some drink for a farewell cup.'

While she went to fetch it the prince rode away, and his servant, who sprang hastily into the saddle, was just about to follow him, when the wicked witch returned with the drink.

'Carry this to your master,' she exclaimed, and at the same moment the bottle burst, and the poison spurted all over the horse. So virulent was the venom that the animal instantly fell dead.

The servant ran after his master, and related what had happened, but as he did not wish to lose the saddle he went back to fetch it.

When he came to the place where he saw the dead horse lie, he found a raven already feeding upon the carcase.

'I will take this bird,' he said; 'it will do very well for our dinner to-day, unless we find something better.' So he killed the raven, and took it away with him.

After this the king's son and his servant travelled the whole day through the forest, but could find no resting-place till evening advanced, and then they came to a kind of inn and entered. They were shown into a small parlour, and the servant gave the bird he had killed to the landlord, telling him to have it roasted for their supper.

But they had lighted on a den of murderers and thieves.

When it was quite dark twelve evil-looking men surrounded the house, whose intention it was to get at the strangers and rob them.

However, before commencing their evil operations, they seated themselves at the supper-table, and presently they were joined not only by the landlord, but also by the witch herself. A dish full of soup was first placed on the table, in which the bird had been cooked, and they began to eat quite greedily; but scarce had they taken two mouthfuls when they all fell to the ground dead. The raven, in feeding on the poisoned flesh of the horse, was itself poisoned, and shared this poison with the robbers.

There was now no one left in the house but the daughter of the landlord, who was a truly honest girl, and would take no part in the terrible deeds done in the house. She opened all the doors for the strangers, and pointed out to them an accumulation of treasures; but the king's son said she might keep them, he would have none of them, and so he rode away with his servant. They had been travelling for many days, when they came to a large city in which lived a very proud and beautiful princess.

She had made known her determination that she would take for her husband any man who should propose to her a riddle which she could not find out. But if she did find out the answer, then his head would be cut off.

Three days was the time allowed for her to try, and she was so clever that she always discovered the meaning of the riddle before the appointed time had expired.

Already had nine of these *wise* men risked their lives for

the beautiful princess, and the king's son, who had just arrived in the town, was so struck with her great beauty that he determined to follow their example.

So he presented himself before her, and propounded his riddle: 'What is that which never slew anything, and yet slew twelve?'

The princess was puzzled now. She thought and thought, but she could make nothing of it. Then she studied her riddle book, but all to no purpose. Her wisdom had come to an end.

So the princess determined to try some other means, and calling her maid, she told her to hide herself in the stranger's room, for that very likely he might dream, and tell the answer of the riddle in his sleep.

But the prince's clever servant found out what was going on, and laid himself in bed in the room of his master, and when the maid came in he pulled off the cloak in which she had tried to conceal herself, and drove her from the room.

The next night she sent her chambermaid to try her fortune as a listener, but she was just as unsuccessful, for the servant also pulled off her cloak, and drove her out.

On the third night the master, believing himself safe, went to bed. Then the princess came herself to the room. She wore a large dark-gray mantle, and thought, as she softly placed herself near him, that she should not be seen.

As soon as he closed his eyes, the princess began to question him in the hope that he would talk in his sleep as many do; whereas, the prince's servant was wide awake, and knew very well what he was about.

Then asked the princess, 'What is it that never killed anyone?'

'A raven,' he answered, 'who ate the flesh of a dead and poisoned horse, and died in consequence.'

Again she inquired, 'How was it that it killed twelve!'

'Twelve murderers ate the raven, and were poisoned and died.'

As soon as the princess knew the riddle she wanted to run away, but the servant caught hold of her cloak, and held it so tight that she was obliged to leave it behind.

On the following morning the princess announced that she had found out the riddle, and sent for the twelve judges to hear her reply to it.

But the servant, who was present with his master, requested to be heard first. 'The princess,' he said, 'would never have

found out the riddle if she had not come into my master's room, and when she questioned me about the riddle, I told her all she knows about it.'

'Can you,' the judges said, 'give us some proofs of what you have affirmed?'

The young man went immediately and fetched the three cloaks, and explained to the judges how he had obtained them.

As soon as they saw the dark-gray mantle which the princess had worn and tried to keep, they said: 'Let this mantle be stuck full of gold and silver, so that it can be worn as a wedding-cloak when the princess is married.'

THE MOUSE, THE BIRD, AND THE SAUSAGE.

THERE was once a little mouse, a little bird, and a sausage, who formed a partnership. They had set up housekeeping, and had lived for a long time in great harmony together. The duty of the little bird was to fly every day into the forests, and bring home wood; the mouse had to draw water, to light the fire, and lay the table-cloth; and the sausage was cook.

How often when we are comfortable we begin to long for something new! So it happened one day that the little bird had met in his road another bird, to which he had boasted of their happiness and friendship at home.

The other bird replied scornfully, 'What a poor little simpleton you are to work in the way you do, while the other two are enjoying themselves at home! When the mouse has lighted the fire and drawn the water she can go and rest in her little room till she is called to lay the cloth. The sausage can sit by the stove while he watches that the dinner is well cooked, and when the dinner-time arrives he devours four times as much as the others of broth or vegetables till he quite shines with salt and fat.'

The bird, after listening to this, came home quite disconcerted, and, laying down his load, seated himself at the table, and ate so much and filled his crop so full that he slept till the next morning without waking, and thought this was a happy life.

The next day the little bird objected to go and fetch wood, saying that he had been their servant long enough, and that he had been a fool to work for them in this way. He intended at once to make a change, and seek his living in another way.

After this, although the mouse and the sausage were both in a rage, the bird was master, and would have his own way. So he proposed that they should draw lots, and the lots fell so that the sausage was to fetch the wood, the mouse to be cook, and the bird to draw the water. Now, what was the consequence of all this? The sausage went out to get wood, the bird lighted the fire, and the mouse put on the saucepan, and waited till the sausage returned home with wood for the next day. But he stayed away so long that the bird went out to look for him. On his way he met a dog, who told him that, having met with the sausage, and considering him as his lawful prey, he had devoured him.

The bird complained greatly against the dog for his conduct, and called him a cruel robber.

'But,' said the dog, 'the sausage had false papers with him, and, therefore, his life was forfeited.'

The little bird, full of sorrow, flew home, carrying the wood with him, and related to the mouse what he had seen and heard. They were both grieved, but quickly agreed to remain together.

From that time the bird undertook to prepare the table, and the mouse to roast something for supper, and to put the vegetables in the saucepan, as she had seen the sausage do; but before she had half finished, the fire burnt her so terribly that she fell down and died.

When the little bird came home, there was no cook to be seen, and the fire was nearly out. The bird, in alarm, threw the wood here and there, cried out, and searched everywhere, but no cook could be found.

Meanwhile, a spark from the fire fell on the wood, and set it in a blaze. The bird ran in haste to get water. Unfortunately, he let the pail fall into the well, and, falling after it, he sank into the water and was drowned.

MADAM HOLLE.

A WIDOW had two daughters, one of whom was beautiful and industrious, the other idle and ugly. But this ugly one the mother loved best, because she was her own child; and she cared so little for the other that she made her do all the work, and be quite a Cinderella in the house.

The poor maiden was obliged to go every day, and sit by a well in the broad highroad, and spin till her fingers bled.

One day, when the spindle was covered with blood, she dipped it into the well to wash it. As she was doing so, it slipped from her hand and fell to the bottom. In tears, she ran and told her stepmother what had happened.

The woman scolded her in a most violent manner, and was so merciless that she said, 'As you have let the spindle fall into the water, you may go in and fetch it out.'

Then the maiden went back to the well, and, hardly knowing what to do, threw herself into the water to fetch the spindle.

She lost all consciousness, but, as her senses returned, she found herself in a beautiful meadow, on which the sun was shining and thousands of flowers grew.

She walked across this meadow, till she came to a baker's oven, which was full of new bread, and the loaves cried, 'Ah, pull us out! pull us out! or we shall burn; we have been so long baking!'

Then she stepped near to the oven, and with the bread-shovel took the loaves all out.

She walked on after this, and came to a tree full of apples, and the tree cried, 'Shake me! shake me! my apples are all quite ripe!'

Then she shook the tree till the fruit fell like rain, and at last there was not one left on it. After this, she gathered the apples into one large heap, and went on farther.

At last she came to a small house, out of which she saw an old woman peeping, who had such large teeth that the girl was frightened, and turned to run away.

But the old woman cried after her, 'What dost thou fear, dear child? Come and live with me, and do the work in the house, and I will make you so happy. You must, however, take care to make my bed well, and to shake it with energy, for then the feathers fly about, and in the world they will say it snows for I am Mother Holle.'

As the old woman talked in this kind manner, the maiden readily agreed to enter her service.

She was anxious to do all to please her, and took care to shake up the bed well, so that the feathers might fly down like snowflakes. Therefore she had a very happy life, plenty to eat and drink, and she never heard an angry word.

But after she had stayed a time with Mother Holle, she began to feel sad, and could not tell why, till at last she found that she was homesick. And although it was a thousand times better than at home, here, she still wanted to go.

And the longing grew so strong that she was obliged to speak.

'I have such sorrow in my heart,' she said, 'that I cannot stay here any longer; I must return to my own people.'

'Then,' said Mother Holle, 'I am pleased to hear that you are longing to go home; and as you have served me so well and truly, I will show you the way myself.'

So she took her by the hand, and led her to a broad gateway. The gate was open, and as the young girl passed through, there fell upon her a shower of gold, which clung to her dress, and remained hanging to it, so that she was covered with it.

'That is your reward for having been so industrious;' and as the old woman spoke she placed in her hand the spindle which had fallen into the well.

Then the great gate was closed, and the maiden found herself once more in the world, not far from her stepmother's house. As she entered the farmyard, a cock perched on the wall crowed loudly, and cried, 'Kikeriki! our golden lady is come home.'

Then she went in to her mother; and because she was so bedecked with gold, both the mother and sister welcomed her kindly. The maiden related all that had happened to her; and when the mother heard how much wealth had been gained by her stepdaughter, she was anxious that her own ugly and idle daughter should try her fortune.

So she made her go and sit by the well and spin. She pricked her finger, and pushed her hand in the thorn-bushes, till at last a few spots of blood dropped on the spindle.

Directly she saw these spots, she let it drop into the water, and sprang in after it herself. Just as her sister had done, she found herself in a beautiful meadow, and walked for some distance along the same path, till she came to the baker's oven.

She heard the loaves cry, 'Pull us out! pull us out! or we shall burn; we have been here so long baking.'

But the idle girl answered, 'No, indeed; I have no wish to

soil my hands with your dirty oven ;' and so she walked on till she came to the apple-tree.

'Shake me ! shake me !' it cried, 'for my apples are all quite ripe.'

'I don't agree to that at all,' she replied, 'for some of the apples might fall on my head;' and as she spoke she walked lazily on farther.

When she at last stood before the door of Mother Holle's house, she had no fear of her great teeth, for she had heard about them, so she walked right up to her and offered to be her servant. Mother Holle accepted the offer, and for a whole day the girl was very industrious, and did everything that was told her, for she thought of the gold that was to be poured upon her.

But on the second day she gave way to her laziness, and on the third it was worse. Several days passed, and she would not get up in the mornings. The bed was never made or shaken, so that feathers could fly about, till at last Mother Holle was quite tired of her, and said she must go away.

The lazy girl was quite overjoyed at going, and thought the golden rain was sure to come when Mother Holle led her to the gate. But as she passed under it a large kettle of pitch was upset over her.

'That is the reward of your service,' said the old woman as she shut the gate. So the idle girl walked home with the pitch sticking all over her, and as she entered the court the cock on the wall cried out :

'Kikeriki ! our smutty young lady is come home.'

The pitch stuck closely, and hung all about her hair and her clothes, and do what she would, as long as she lived it never would come off.

THE SEVEN RAVENS.

A MAN had seven sons, but not one little daughter, although he wished for one. At last a daughter was born, to their great joy ; but the child was very small and slight, and so weak that they feared it would die. So the father sent his sons to the spring to fetch water, that he might baptize her.

Each of the boys ran in great haste to be the first to draw

the water, but in the struggle they let the pitcher fall into the well.

Then they stood still and knew not what to do; not one of them dared to venture home without the water. As the time went on and they did not return, the father became very impatient, and said, 'I suppose in the midst of their play they have forgotten what I sent them for, the careless children.'

He was in such an agony lest the child should die unbaptized, that he exclaimed in his anger, 'I wish that the youngsters were all turned into ravens.'

The words were scarcely uttered when there was heard a rushing of wings in the air over his head, and presently seven coal-black ravens flew over the house.

The father could not recall the dreadful words, and both parents grieved terribly over the loss of their seven sons; their only consolation now was the little daughter, who every day grew stronger and more beautiful.

For a long time the maiden was not told that she had brothers; her parents were most careful to avoid all mention of them. But one day she overheard some persons talking, and they said that no doubt the young girl was very beautiful, but she must have been the cause of the misfortune which had happened to her seven brothers.

Oh, how sad she felt when she heard this! She went at once to her father and mother and asked them if she really had had any brothers, and what had become of them. Then her parents dared not any longer keep the secret from her. They told her, however, that it was the decree of Heaven, and that her birth was the innocent cause of all. She then made a firm determination that she would try and break the enchantment in which her brothers were held.

She had neither rest nor peace till she had made up her mind to leave home and seek her brothers, and set them free, cost what it might.

When she left home, she took nothing with her but a little ring, in memory of her parents, a loaf of bread, a jug of water, and a little stool, in case she felt tired.

So she went farther and farther, till she came to the end of the world, and there was the sun; but it was so hot and fierce that it scorched the little child, and she ran away in such a hurry that she ran into the moon. Here it was quite cold and dismal, and she heard a voice say, 'I smell man's flesh,' which made her escape from the moon as quickly as she could, and at last she reached the stars.

They were very kind and friendly to her. Each of the stars was seated on a wonderful chair, and the Morning Star arose and gave her the drumstick of a chicken, and said, 'If you have not a drumstick you will not be able to unlock the glass mountain in which your brothers are shut up.'

So the maiden took it and wrapped it up carefully in a cloth. When she arrived at the iceberg the gate was closed; she opened the cloth to take out the bone, but found it empty. What was she to do now? She wished to rescue her brothers, and had no key to the glass mountain.

The good little sister took a knife, cut off one of her little fingers, put it in the door, and opened it. When she had gone inside a little dwarf came forward to meet her, and said, 'My child, what are you seeking?'

'I seek my brothers, the seven ravens,' she said.

'The seven ravens are not at home,' replied the dwarf; 'but if you like to wait here till they return, pray step in.'

Then the little dwarf carried the ravens' dinner in on seven little plates and in seven little glasses.

The sister ate a few crumbs from each plate, and drank a little draught from each cup, and into the last cup she let fall the ring that she brought from home.

Suddenly she heard the rushing of wings in the air, and the little dwarf said, 'Here come the seven Mr. Ravens flying home.'

They came in, and were about to eat their supper, but as they caught sight of their little cups and plates, they said each one to the other, 'Who has been eating from my little plate?' 'Who has been drinking from my little cup?' 'It has been touched by the mouth of a human being!' cried one. Then the youngest took up his cup and turned it over, and out rolled the little ring, which they knew had once belonged to their father and mother.

Then said he, 'O God, grant that our sister may be here; we should be free.'

The maiden, who heard the wish from behind the door, came forth smiling, and stood before them.

Then the seven ravens were freed from the enchantment, and became seven handsome young men. Oh, how joyfully they all kissed each other, and their little sister, and started off at once to their parents and their home!

LITTLE RED CAP.

THERE was once a sweet little girl loved by everyone, especially by an old grandmother, who knew not how to do enough for her. Once she sent her a little cloak with a red velvet cap, which became her so well that she obtained the name of Little Red Cap.

One day her mother said to her, 'Come, Little Red Cap, I want you to go to your grandmother, and take her a piece of cake and a bottle of wine, for she is ill and weak. Make haste before the day gets too hot, and go straight on your road, and do not run, for fear you should fall and break the bottle, and then grandmother would have no wine. And when you come into the room do not forget to say "good-morning," and do not go looking in all the corners first.'

'I will do everything you tell me, mother,' said the child, as she wished her good-bye.

It was quite half an hour's walk through the wood to the grandmother's house, and as Red Cap entered the wood she met the wolf.

Red Cap did not know what a wicked animal he was, and felt not the least afraid of him.

'Good-day, Red Cap,' he said.

'Good-morning, Wolf,' replied the little girl.

'Where are you going so early, Red Cap?' he asked.

'To my grandmother,' she replied. 'Mother baked yesterday, and she has sent me with a piece of cake and a bottle of wine to her because she is sick, and it will make her stronger and do her good.'

'Where does your grandmother live, Red Cap?'

'About half a mile from here, through the woods; her house stands under three large oak-trees, near to the nut-hedges; you would easily know it,' said Red Cap.

The wolf thought to himself, 'This little delicate thing would be a sweet morsel for me at last, and taste nicer than her old grandmother. I must act cunningly, so as to catch them both.'

Then he walked quietly on by the side of Red Cap till they came to a part of the wood where a number of flowers grew.

'See, Red Cap,' he said, 'what pretty flowers are growing here. Would you not like to gather some? And don't you hear how sweetly the birds are singing?'

Then Red Cap looked up and saw the dancing sunbeams shining between the trees and lighting up the beautiful flowers that grew all around her, and she thought, 'If I were to take my grandmother a fresh nosegay, it would make her so pleased; it is early yet, and I have plenty of time.'

So she went out of her way into the wood to gather flowers. And when she had picked a few, she saw some more beautiful still at a little distance, so she walked on farther and farther, till she was quite deep in the wood.

Meanwhile, the wolf went straight on to the grandmother's house, and knocked at the door.

'Who is there?'

'Little Red Cap,' replied the wolf, imitating the voice of the child, 'who brings you cake and wine; open the door.'

'Lift up the latch and come in,' she replied; 'I am too weak to get up.'

So the wolf lifted the latch, and the door flew open; then he rushed in, sprang upon the poor old grandmother, and ate her up. Then he shut the door, dressed himself in the old woman's nightgown and nightcap, and lay down in the bed to wait for Red Cap.

After Red Cap had gathered as many flowers as she could carry, she found her way back quickly to the right path, and walked on very fast till she came to her grandmother's house. She was surprised to see the door open, and when she entered the room she had a strange feeling, and said, 'Oh dear, how uneasy I feel to-day! yet I like being with grandmother.'

But when she saw her grandmother, as she thought, lying in bed, she went up to her and drew back the curtains; but she could only see the head, for the wolf had pulled the nightcap as far over his face as he could.

'Good-morning,' she said; but there was no answer. Then she got on the bed and cried out, 'Oh, grandmother, what great ears you have got!'

'The better to hear with, my dear,' he said.

'And what great eyes you have got!'

'The better to see with, my dear.'

'And, grandmother, what large hands you have got!'

'The better to hold you, my dear.'

'But, grandmother, what great teeth you have got!' cried Red Cap.

'The better to eat you,' cried the wolf, jumping from the bed, and, seizing poor Red Cap, he swallowed her up at one mouthful.

Now, as soon as the wolf had satisfied his hunger, he laid himself in the bed, and snored so loudly that he could be heard outside.

A hunter, who was out with his gun, was passing by, and thought to himself, 'How the old woman snores! I must go in and see what is the matter.'

Then he stepped into the room, and when he came to the bed he saw the wolf lying on it.

'Oh, you old sinner,' said the hunter, 'have I found you at last! I have been seeking you a long time, Mr. Wolf.'

He was just going to raise his gun when he missed the old grandmother, and, thinking that the wolf might have swallowed her, he remembered she might yet be saved. So he would not shoot, but, taking a pair of scissors, cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

How surprised he was to see the smiling face of Red Cap peep out at the first snip, and, as he cut further, she sprang out, exclaiming, 'Oh, I have been so frightened; it was dreadfully dark in the wolf's stomach.'

Then they helped out the old grandmother, who was also unhurt and living, but she could scarcely breathe. Red Cap ran and fetched some great stones, with which they filled the wolf's body. When he awoke, he wished to spring out and run away, but the stones were too heavy; so he sank back on the bed and died, and the hunter had his skin. After this they all sat down very contentedly, and drank the wine and ate the cake which Red Cap had brought.

'Ah,' she thought, 'I will never go out of my way to run in the wood again when my mother has forbidden me.'

* * * * *

It is related that once after this, when little Red Cap was going again to her old grandmother with some of the nice things her mother had made, another wolf spoke to her, and wanted to entice her out of the way.

But Red Cap was on her guard, and went straightforward without stopping till she came to her grandmother's house.

'Oh, grandmother,' she said, 'I met a wolf, who wished me "good-day"; but he looked at me with such wicked eyes that, if I had not been in the street, I am sure he would have eaten me up.'

'Perhaps he will come here,' said the grandmother; 'so we will lock the door and keep him out.'

Sure enough, soon after, the wolf came to the door and knocked, crying, 'Open the door, grandmother; I am Red

Cap, and I have brought you some cake and wine.' But all remained silent, and the door was not opened.

Then the sly old thief prowled round the house, and at last sprang on the roof to wait till Red Cap went home in the evening, that he might seize her in the dark and devour her.

But the grandmother knew what was in his mind. Now, there stood near the house a large stone trough, and she said to the child, 'Red Cap, I cooked a large sausage yesterday; you can empty the water in which it was cooked into the stone trough.'

Red Cap drew off the water from the copper, and emptied it into the trough until it was quite full, and the smell of the sausage reached the wolf's nose. He sniffed, and sniffed, and looked down, till at last he stretched his neck out to such a distance that he lost his balance, and fell from the roof into the great trough full of water and was drowned. Red Cap went home that evening in safety, and no one ever after attempted to hurt her.

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS.

An ass who had carried sacks to the mill for his master during many long years felt his strength fail at last, so that he could no longer work for his living. His master thought of getting rid of his old servant, that he might save the expense of his food. But the ass discovered his intentions, and determined to run away.

So he took the road to Bremen. 'There,' said he, 'I can be a musician.'

He had not travelled far when he saw a hound lying on the road, and gasping for breath as if he were tired of running.

'Why are you panting so, friend?' asked the ass.

'Ah,' he replied, 'now that I am old, and get each day weaker and weaker, I can no more go to the hunt, and my master has ordered me to be killed, so I have run away; but how I am to earn my living I don't know.'

'Will you go with me?' said the ass. 'I am going to be a musician in Bremen; I think you and I could easily earn a living by music. I can play the lute, and you can beat the drum.'

The dog was quite contented, and so they both walked off together.

Not long after they saw a cat sitting in the road with a face as dismal as three days of rainy weather.

'Now, what has come across you, old whiskers?' asked the ass.

'How can one be merry when one has a collar on?' said the cat; 'now I am getting old, and my teeth are become stumps, I cannot catch mice, and I like to lie behind the stove and purr, but when I found they were going to drown me and my wife, I ran away as fast as I could; my experience has cost me dear, and now what am I to do?'

'Go with us to Bremen,' said the ass; 'you are accustomed to perform night music, I know, so you can easily become a street musician in the town.'

'With all my heart,' said the cat, so he walked on with them.

The three fugitives came to a farm-yard, and on the gate stood a cock screaming with all his might.

'Your crow goes through one's head,' said the ass. 'What is the matter?'

'I have prophesied fine weather because it is lady-day, when Our Lady washes the Christ Child's shirts, and wishes for fine weather; but the housekeeper has no pity, for I heard the cook say that she shall want me to put in the soup. So this evening my head will be cut off, therefore I shall scream at the top of my voice as long as I can.'

'Listen, Red Comb,' said the ass; 'would you like to run away with us? We are going to Bremen, and you will find something better there than to be made into soup; you have a fine voice, and if we all play together it will have a good effect.'

The cock readily fell in with this proposal, and they all four went away together.

They could not, however, reach Bremen in one day, and evening came on just as they entered a wood, where they meant to pass the night.

The ass and the dog laid themselves under a large tree, but the cat and the cock settled on the branches. The cock flew to the summit of the tree, where he felt himself quite safe.

Before they slept, the cock, who from his high position could see to all points of the compass, discovered in the distance a tiny spark burning, and calling to his comrades, told them he was convinced that they were not far from a house in which a light was shining.

'Then,' said the ass, 'we must rouse up and go on to this

light, for there is plainly a harbour of refuge for us.' The dog said he should be glad of a little piece of meat or a couple of bones.

So they were soon on their way to the place where the light shone, and it grew larger and brighter as they approached, till they saw that it came from a robber's cave. The ass, who was the tallest, went near and looked in.

'What is to be seen, old gray horse?' said the cock.

'What do I see?' answered the ass; 'why, a table laid out with plenty to eat and drink, and robbers sitting at it and enjoying themselves.'

'That would do for us,' said the cock. 'Yes, yes,' the ass replied, 'if we were only there.' Then the animals consulted as to what they had better do to drive the robbers away; at last they fixed upon a plan.

The ass was to place his fore-feet on the window-sill, and the dog to stand on his back. The cat was to climb on the dog, and the cock was to fly and perch on the cat's head.

As soon as this was accomplished, they all began to perform their music together. The donkey brayed, the hound barked, the cat mewed, and the cock crowed with such a tremendous force through the window into the room that the window rattled.

The robbers, hearing such a horrible outcry, thought it could only be caused by a ghost, and fled in great terror to the wood behind the house. Then our four comrades placed themselves at the table, and took whatever was before them, which the robbers had left, and ate as if they had been hungry for a month.

When the four musicians had finished they put out the light, and each sought a sleeping-place most easy and suitable to his habits. The ass laid himself down on the dust-heap, the dog behind the door, the cat rolled herself up on the hearth among the warm ashes, while the cock perched on the beam in the roof; and as they were all tired with their long journey, they were soon fast asleep.

About midnight the robbers from a distance saw that the light was out and all quiet; then their chief said:

'I do not think there has been any cause for fear.'

Then he called one of their number, and sent him to the house to see if it was all right.

The messenger, finding everything still, went into the kitchen to strike a light, and seeing the glaring fiery eyes of the cat looking like a live coal, held a match towards them, that he might set fire to it. But puss, not understanding such sport,

flew up, spit at him, and scratched his face. This frightened him so terribly that he rushed to the door, but the dog, who lay there, sprang out upon him, and bit him in the leg.

In the court he ran against the donkey, who gave him a kick with his hind-foot, while the cock on the beam, aroused by the noise, became alive and brisk in a moment, and cried out as loudly as he could, 'Cock-a-doodle-doo.'

Then ran the robber, as fast as he could, back to his chief.

'Ah, me!' he said, 'in that house is a horrible witch, who flew at me, and scratched me down the face with her long fingers. Then by the door stood a man with a knife, who stabbed me in the leg, and out in the court lay a black monster, who struck me a violent blow with his wooden leg, and up in the roof sat the judge, who cried, "Bring me the scoundrel here." On that I made off as fast as possible.'

From the moment that they heard this, the robbers never again entered the house, and the four musicians found themselves in such good quarters that they would not leave, and the last heard of them was that they were still there.

THE SINGING BONE.

THERE was once in a country great trouble about a wild boar, who attacked the peasants in the fields, and had killed and torn to pieces several men with his tusks. The king of the country promised a large reward to anyone who would free the land from this plague. But the animal was so large and strong, that no man would even venture near the forest where he lived.

At last the king made a proclamation that he would give his only daughter in marriage to any man who would bring the wild boar to him, dead or alive.

There lived two brothers in that country, the sons of a poor man, who gave notice of their readiness to enter on this perilous undertaking. The eldest, who was clever and crafty, was influenced by pride; the youngest, who was innocent and simple, offered himself from kindness of heart.

The king said that the surest way to find the animal would be for them to take opposite directions in the wood, the eldest to go in the evening and the youngest in the morning.

The youngest had not gone far, when an elf stepped up to

him. He held in his hand a black spear, and said, 'I will give you this spear, because your heart is innocent and good. With this you can go out against the wild boar, and he shall not be able to harm you.'

He thanked the little man, took the spear, placed it on his shoulder, and, without fear, went farther into the forest. It was not long before he espied the animal coming towards him, and fiercely making ready to spring. But the youth stood still, and held the spear firmly in front of him. In wild rage, the fierce beast ran violently towards him, and was met by the spear, which pierced him to the heart.

The lad took the dead monster on his shoulder, and went homewards to carry it to the king. As he approached the other side of the wood, where stood a large hall, he heard music, and found a number of people dancing, drinking wine, and making merry. His eldest brother was amongst them, for he thought the wild boar would not run far away, and he wished to get up his courage for the evening by cheerful company and wine.

When he caught sight of his youngest brother coming out of the forest laden with his booty, jealousy and malice rose in his heart. But he said, 'Come in, dear brother, and rest awhile, and get up your strength by a cup of wine.'

So the youth, not suspecting anything wrong, went in, and told him of the little man he had met in the wood, who had given him the spear, and how he had killed the wild animal.

The elder brother persuaded him to stay and rest till the evening, and then they went out together, and walked till it became quite dark. A little bridge lay across the river, over which they had to pass, and the eldest brother let the young one go before him. When they arrived at the middle of the stream, he gave his young brother a blow from behind, and he fell down dead.

He then buried him under the bridge. After this wicked deed he took the wild boar on his shoulders, and carried it to the king, with the pretence that he had killed the animal, and claimed the princess as his wife.

As the younger brother never returned, he said that the boar had killed him, and all believed it.

But a dark deed is seldom concealed, and something happened to bring this to light. Not many years after a herdsman, passing over the bridge with his flock, saw in the sand a little bone as white as snow, and thought that it would make a very nice mouthpiece for his horn.

He waded into the stream, took up the bone, and cut it into a mouthpiece for his horn.

But the first time he blew the horn it filled the herdsman with amazement, for it began to sing of itself, and these were the words it sang :

'Ah ! dear shepherd, you blow on my bone,
Buried under the bridge alone :
I killed the wild boar, and my brother slew me,
And gained the princess by pretending 'twas he.'

'What a wonderful horn,' said the shepherd, 'that can sing of itself ! I must take it to my lord the king.'

As soon as the horn was brought before the king and blown by the shepherd, it at once began to sing the same song and the same words.

The king understood it, and ordered that the sand under the bridge should be dug up ; and then the entire skeleton of the murdered man was discovered, and the whole wicked deed came to light.

The wicked brother could not deny the deed. He was therefore ordered to be tied in a sack and drowned, while the remains of his murdered brother were carefully carried to the churchyard and laid to rest in a beautiful grave.

THE THREE GOLDEN HAIRS.

THERE was once a poor woman who was very happy when her little son was born, for he had a caul, and it was prophesied, therefore, that in his fourteenth year he should marry the king's daughter. It happened very soon after that the king came to the village, but no one knew that it was the king. So when he asked for news, they told him that a few days before a child had been born in the village with a caul, and it was prophesied in consequence that he would be very lucky. Indeed, it had been said that in his fourteenth year he would have the king's daughter for his wife.

The king, who had a wicked heart, was very angry when he heard this, but he went to the parents in a friendly manner, and said to them, 'Good people, give up your child to me ; I will take the greatest care of him.'

At first they refused, but when the stranger offered them a

large amount of gold, and mentioned that, if their child was born to be lucky, everything must turn out for the best with him, they willingly at last gave him up.

The king placed the child in a box and rode away with it for a long distance, till he came to deep water, into which he threw the box, saying to himself, 'From this unwelcome suitor have I saved my daughter.'

But the box did not sink; it floated like a boat on the water, and so high above it that not a drop got inside. It sailed on to a spot about two miles from the chief town of the king's dominions, where there was a mill and a weir, which stopped it, and on which it rested.

The miller's man, who happened to be standing near the bank, fortunately noticed it, and, thinking it might most likely contain something valuable, drew it on shore with a hook; but when he opened it, there lay a beautiful baby, who was quite awake and lively.

He carried it in to the miller and his wife, and, as they had no children, they were quite delighted, and said Heaven had sent the little boy as a gift to them. They brought him up carefully, and he grew in all virtues.

It happened one day that the king was overtaken by a thunderstorm, while passing near the mill, and stopped to ask for shelter. Noticing the youth, he asked the miller if that tall young man was his son.

'No,' he replied, 'he is a foundling. Fourteen years ago a box was seen sailing on the mill stream by one of our men, and, when it was caught in the weir, he drew it out of the water, and found the child in it.'

Then the king knew that this must be the child of fortune, and therefore the one which he had thrown into the water, and said, 'I want to send a letter to the queen; if that young man will take it to her, I will give him two gold pieces for his trouble.'

'We are at the king's service,' replied the miller, and called the young man to prepare for his errand. Then the king wrote a letter to the queen, containing these words:

'As soon as the boy who brings this letter arrives, let him be killed, and I shall expect to find him dead and buried when I come back.'

The youth was soon on his way with this letter. He lost himself, however, in a large forest. In the darkness he saw a glimmering light, which he walked to, and found a small house. He entered, and saw an old woman sitting by the fire,

quite alone. She appeared frightened when she saw him, and said: 'Where do you come from, and what do you want?'

'I am come from the mill,' he replied, 'and I am carrying a letter to the wife of the king, and, as I have lost my way, I should like very much to stay here during the night.'

'You poor young man!' she replied, 'you are in a den of robbers, and when they come home they may kill you.'

'They may come when they like,' said the youth; 'I am not afraid, but I am so tired that I cannot go a step farther to-night.'

Then he stretched himself on a bench and fell fast asleep.

Soon after the robbers came home and asked angrily what that youth was lying there for.

'Ah,' said the old woman, 'he is an innocent child, who has lost himself in the wood, and I took him in out of compassion. He is carrying a letter to the queen, which the king has sent.'

Then the robbers went softly to the sleeping youth, took the letter from his pocket, and read in it that as soon as the bearer arrived at the palace he was to lose his life. Then pity arose in the hard-hearted robbers, and their chief tore up the letter and wrote another, in which it was stated that as soon as the boy arrived he should be married to the king's daughter. Then they left him to lie and rest on the bench till the next morning, and when he awoke they gave him the letter and showed him the road he was to take.

When the queen read the letter, she acted in accordance to what was written. She ordered a grand marriage feast, and had the princess married at once to the fortunate youth, and as he was very handsome and amiable, the king's daughter soon learnt to love him, and was quite happy with him.

Not long after, when the king returned home to his castle, he found the prophecy respecting the child of fortune fulfilled, and that he was married to a king's daughter.

'How has this happened?' said he; 'I had in my letter given very different orders.'

Then the queen gave him the letter and said, 'You may see for yourself what is stated there.'

The king read the letter, and saw clearly that it had been changed. He asked the youth what he had done with the letter he had intrusted to him, and why he had brought another.

'I know not,' he replied, 'unless it was changed during the night I slept in the forest.'

Full of wrath, the king said, 'You shall not get off so easily, for whoever marries my daughter must first bring me three golden hairs from the head of the Demon. If you bring them to me before long, then you shall keep my daughter as a wife, but not otherwise.' The king thought thus to be rid of him.

Then said the child of fortune, 'I will fetch these golden hairs; I am not the least afraid of the Demon.' Thereupon he said farewell, and started on his travels. His way led him to a large city, and, as he stood at the gate and asked admission, a watchman said to him:

'What trade do you follow, and how much do you know?'

'I know everything,' he replied.

'Then you can do us a favour,' answered the watchman, 'if you can tell why our master's fountain, from which wine used to flow, is dried up, and never gives us even water now.'

'I will tell you when I come back,' he said; 'only wait till then.'

He travelled on still farther, and came by-and-by to another town, where the watchman also asked him what trade he followed, and what he knew.

'I know everything,' he answered.

'Then,' said the watchman, 'you can do us a favour, and tell us why a tree in our town, which once bore golden apples, now only produces leaves?'

'Wait till I return,' he replied, 'and I will tell you.'

On he went again, and came to a broad river, over which he must pass in a ferry-boat, and the ferryman asked him the same question about his trade and his knowledge. He gave the same reply, that he knew everything.

'Then,' said the man, 'you can do me a favour, and tell me how it is that I am obliged to go backwards and forwards in my ferry-boat every day without a change of any kind.'

'Wait till I come back,' he replied, 'then you shall know all about it.'

As soon as he reached the other side of the water, he found the entrance to the Demon's home. It was very dark and gloomy, and the Demon was not at home; but his grandmother was sitting on the stool of care, and she looked up and said, 'What do you want? You don't look wicked enough to be one of us!'

'I just want three golden hairs from the Demon's head,' he replied; 'otherwise, my wife will be taken away from me.'

'That is asking a great deal,' she replied; 'for if the Demon

comes home and finds you here, he will have no mercy on you. However, if you will trust me, I will try to help you.'

Then she turned him into an ant, and said: 'Creep into the folds of my gown; there you will be safe.'

'Yes,' he replied, 'that is all very good; but I have three things besides that I want to know. First, why a well, from which formerly wine used to flow, should be dry now, so that not even water can be got from it. Secondly, why a tree that once bore golden apples should now produce nothing but leaves. And, thirdly, why a ferryman is obliged to row forward and back every day without ever leaving off.'

'These are difficult questions,' said the old woman; 'but keep still and quiet, and when the Demon comes in pay great attention to what he says, while I pull the golden hairs out of his head.'

Late in the evening the Demon came home, and as soon as he entered he declared that the air was not clear. 'I smell the flesh of man,' he said, 'and I am sure that there is someone here.' So he peeped into all the corners, and searched everywhere, but could find nothing.

Then his old grandmother scolded him well, and said: 'Just as I have been sweeping and dusting, and putting everything in order, then you come home and give me all the work to do over again. You have always the smell of something in your nose. Do sit down and eat your supper.'

The Demon did as she told him, and when he had eaten and drank enough, he complained of being tired. So his grandmother made him lie down, so that she could place his head in her lap, and he was soon so comfortable that he fell fast asleep and snored.

Then the old woman lifted up a golden hair, twitched it out, and laid it by her side.

'Oh!' screamed the Demon, waking up; 'what was that for?'

'I have had a bad dream,' answered she, 'and it made me catch hold of your hair.'

'What did you dream about?' asked the Demon.

'Oh, I dreamt of a well in a market-place from which wine once used to flow, but now it is dried up, and they can't even get water from it. Whose fault is that?'

'Ah, they ought to know that there sits a toad under a stone in the well, and if he were dead wine would again flow.'

Then the old woman combed his hair again till he slept, and snored so loud that the windows rattled, and she pulled out the second hair.

'What are you about now?' asked the Demon, in a rage.

'Oh, don't be angry,' said the woman, 'I have had another dream.'

'What was this dream about?' he asked.

'Why, I dreamt that in a certain country there grows a fruit-tree which used to bear golden apples, but now it produces nothing but leaves. What is the cause of this?'

'Why, don't they know,' answered the Demon, 'that there is a mouse gnawing at the root? Were it dead, the tree would again bear golden apples; and if it gnaws much longer the tree will wither. Bother your dreams; if you disturb me again, just as I am comfortably asleep, you will have a box on the ear.'

Then the old woman spoke kindly to him, and smoothed and combed his hair again, till he slept and snored. Then she seized the third golden hair, and pulled it out.

The Demon, on this, sprang to his feet, roared out in a greater rage than ever, and would have done some mischief in the house, but she managed to appease him this time also, and said: 'How can I help my bad dreams?'

'And what did you dream?' he asked, with some curiosity.

'Well, I dreamt about a ferryman, who complains that he is obliged to take people across the river, and is never free.'

'Oh, the stupid fellow!' replied the Demon; 'he can very easily ask any person who wants to be ferried over to take the oar in his hand, and he will be free at once.'

Then the Demon laid his head down once more, and as the old grandmother had pulled out the three golden hairs, and got answers to all the three questions, she let the old serpent rest and sleep in peace till the morning dawned.

As soon as he had gone out next day the old woman took the ant from the folds of her dress, and restored the lucky youth to his former shape. 'Here are the three golden hairs for which you wished,' said she; 'and did you hear all the answers to your three questions?'

'Yes,' he replied, 'every word, and I will not forget them.'

'Well, then, I have helped you out of your difficulties, and now get home as fast as you can.'

After thanking the old woman for her kindness, he turned his steps homeward, full of joy that everything had succeeded so well.

When he arrived at the ferry, the man asked for the promised answer.

'Ferry me over first,' he replied, 'and then I will tell you.'

So when they reached the opposite shore he gave the

ferryman the Demon's advice, that the next person who came and wished to be ferried over should have the oar placed in his hand, and from that moment he would have to take the ferryman's place.

Then the youth journeyed on till he came to the town where the unfruitful tree grew, and where the watchman was waiting for his answer. To him the young man repeated what he had heard, and said: 'Kill the mouse that is gnawing at the root, then will your tree again bear golden apples.'

The watchman thanked him, and gave him in return for his information two asses laden with gold, which were led after him. He very soon arrived at the city which contained the dried-up fountain. The sentinel came forward to receive his answer. Said the youth. 'Under a stone in the fountain sits a toad; it must be searched for and killed, then will wine again flow from it.' The sentinel also ordered two asses laden with gold to be sent after him.

At length the child of fortune reached home with his riches, and his wife was overjoyed at seeing him again, and hearing how well he had succeeded in his undertaking. He placed before the king the three golden hairs he had brought from the head of the black Demon, and when the king saw these and the four asses laden with gold he was quite satisfied, and said: 'Now that you have performed all the conditions, I am quite ready to sanction your marriage with my daughter; but, my dear son-in-law, tell me how you obtained all this gold? It is, indeed, a very valuable treasure; where did you find it?'

'I crossed the river in a ferry-boat, and on the opposite shore I found the gold lying in the sand.'

'Can I find some if I go?' asked the king eagerly.

'Yes, as much as you please,' replied he. 'There is a ferryman there who will row you over, and you can fill a sack in no time.'

The greedy old king set out on his journey in all haste, and when he came near the river he beckoned to the ferryman to row him over the ferry.

The man told him to step in, and just as they reached the opposite shore, he placed the rudder oar in the king's hand. and sprang out of the boat. And so the king became a ferryman as a punishment for his sins.

Does he still go on ferrying people over the river? It is very likely, for no one has touched the oar since he took it.

THE LADYBIRD AND THE FLY.

A LADYBIRD and a fly once lived and kept house together, and they brewed their beer in an egg-shell. One day the ladybird fell in and was burnt. Then the fly set up such a loud scream that the little door of the room asked, 'What are you screaming for, fly?'

'Because ladybird has burnt herself.'

Then began the door to creak. 'Why are you creaking?' asked a little broom in the corner.

'Shall I not creak?

'Lady-bird is burnt,
And little fly weeps.'

Then began the broom to sweep with all its might; and presently a little cart passed the door, and said: 'Why are you sweeping so, broom?'

'Shall I not sweep?' replied the broom:

'Lady-bird is burnt,
Little fly weeps,
Little door jars,
And little broom sweeps.'

Then said the little cart, 'So I will run'; and it began to run rapidly. 'Why are you running so?' asked the ash-heap.

'Shall I not run?' it replied:

'When lady-bird is burnt,
And little fly weeps,
Little door jars,
And little broom sweeps,
While little cart runs.'

Then said the ash-heap, 'So will I burn,' and it burst into a dreadful flame.

A tree grew near the ash-heap, and it said: 'Ash-heap, why do you burn?'

'Shall I not burn,' it replied, 'when

'Lady-bird is burnt,
And little fly weeps,
The little door jars,
And little broom sweeps,
And little cart runs'?

Then said the little tree, 'So will I rustle'; and it began to shake so violently that the leaves fell off.

A maiden came by carrying her little pitcher to the well, and she said: 'Tree, why do you rustle so?'

'Shall I not rustle?' the tree replied:

'Lady-bird is burnt,
Little fly weeps,
Little door jars,
Little broom sweeps,
Little cart runs,
And little fire burns.'

'Then I will break my little pitcher,' said the maiden. So she broke her pitcher.

Then said the spring, as the water flowed out, 'Maiden, why dost break thy pitcher?'

'Shall I not break my pitcher,' she said, 'when

'Lady-bird is burnt,
And little fly weeps,
Little door jars,
And little broom sweeps,
Little cart runs,
Ash-heap burns,
And little tree rustles?'

'Ah!' said the spring, 'then I will begin to flow;' and the water began to flow so rapidly that the maiden, the tree, the ash-heap, the little cart, the broom, the door, the fly, and the ladybird were all drowned together.

THE MAIDEN WITHOUT HANDS.

A MILLER had by degrees become very poor, and had nothing at last left but his mill and a large apple-tree behind it. One day when he went into the forest to gather wood an old man, whom he had never seen before, came towards him, and said, 'Why do you take the trouble to cut down wood? I will give you great riches if you will promise to let me have what stands behind your mill.'

'That can be no other than my apple-tree,' thought the miller, 'I possess nothing else;' so he said to the old man, 'Yes, I will let you have it.'

Then the stranger smiled maliciously, and said, 'In three years I will come to claim what belongs to me;' and he departed.

As soon as the miller returned home his wife came towards him and said, 'Miller, from whence have all these riches come so suddenly to our house? All at once every drawer and chest has become full of gold. No one brought it here, and I know not where it came from.'

'Oh,' replied her husband, 'I know all about it. A strange man, whom I met in the wood, promised me great treasures if I would make over to him what stood behind the mill. We can easily spare the large apple-tree, so I gave him my promise.'

'Oh, husband!' said the wife in alarm, 'that must have been the Demon; he did not mean the apple-tree, but our daughter, who was behind the mill sweeping out the court.'

The miller's daughter was a modest and beautiful maiden, and lived in innocence and obedience for three years, until the day came on which the wicked one was to claim her. She washed till she was pure and clean as snow; then she drew a circle of white chalk, and stood within it.

The Demon made his appearance very early, but he did not dare to venture over the white circle, therefore he could not get near her. In great anger he said to the miller, 'Take away every drop of water, that she may not wash, otherwise I shall have no power over her.'

The frightened miller did as he desired, but on the next morning when the Demon came again her hands were as pure and clean as ever, for she had wept over them. On this account the Demon was still unable to approach her; so he flew into a rage, and said, 'Chop her hands off, otherwise I cannot touch her.'

Then the miller was terrified, and exclaimed, 'How can I cut off the hands of my own child?'

Then the wicked one threatened him and said, 'If you will not do as I desire you, then I can claim you instead of your daughter, and carry you off.'

The father in his fright promised to obey. He went to his daughter, and said to her, 'Oh, my child, unless I cut off your two hands the Demon will take me away with him, and in my anguish I have promised. Help me in my trouble, and forgive me for the wicked deed I have promised to do.'

'Dear father,' she replied, 'do with me what you will; I am your child.' Thereupon she placed her two hands on the table before him, and he cut them off. The Demon came next day for the third time, but the poor girl had wept so bitterly over the stumps of her arms that they were as clean and white as ever. Then he was obliged to give way, for he had lost all right to the maiden.

As soon as the Demon had departed the miller said, 'My child, I have obtained so much good through thy conduct that for thy whole lifetime I shall hold thee most precious and dear.'

'But I cannot stay here, father,' she replied, 'I am not safe; let me go away with people who will give me the sympathy I need so much.'

'I fear such people are very seldom to be found in the world,' said her father. However, he let her go. So she tied up her maimed arms and went forth on her way at sunrise.

For a whole day she travelled without food, and as night came on found herself near one of the royal gardens. By the light of the moon she could see many trees, laden with beautiful fruit; but she could not reach them, because the place was surrounded by a moat full of water. She had been without a morsel to eat the whole day, and her hunger was so great that she could not help crying out, 'Oh, if I were only able to get some of that delicious fruit! I shall die unless I can obtain something to eat.'

Then she knelt down and prayed for help, and while she prayed an angel appeared and made a channel in the water, so that she was able to pass through on dry ground.

When she entered the garden the angel was with her, although she did not know it, so she walked to a tree full of beautiful pears; but they had been counted.

Being unable to pluck any without hands, she went quite close to the tree and ate one with her mouth as it hung. One, and no more, just to stay her hunger. The gardener, who saw her with the angel standing near her, thought it was a spirit, and was too frightened to move or speak.

After having satisfied her hunger, the maiden went and laid herself down among the shrubs and slept in peace. On the following morning the king, to whom the garden belonged, came out, and when he reached the pear-tree and counted the pears, he found one missing. At first he thought it had fallen, but it was not under the tree, so he went to the gardener and asked what had becom. of it.

Then said the gardener, 'There was a ghost in the garden last night who had no hands, and ate a pear off the tree with its mouth.'

'How could the ghost get across the water?' asked the king; 'and what became of it after eating the pear?'

To this the gardener replied, 'Someone came first in snow-white robes from heaven, who made a channel and stopped the flow of the water, so that the ghost walked through on dry ground. It must have been an angel,' continued the gardener; 'and therefore I was afraid to ask questions or to call out. As soon as the spectre had eaten one pear it went away.'

Then said the king, 'Conceal from everyone what you have told me, and I will watch myself to-night.'

As soon as it was dark, the king came into the garden, and brought a priest with him to address the ghost, and they both seated themselves under a tree, with the gardener standing near them, and waited in silence. About midnight the maiden crept out from the bushes, and went to the pear-tree, and ate again a pear from the tree with her mouth, while an angel stood near in white garments.

Then the priest went towards her, and said, 'Art thou come from heaven or from earth? art thou a spirit or a human being?'

Then the maiden answered, 'Oh me! I am no ghost; only a poor creature forsaken by everyone but God.'

Then said the king, 'You may be forsaken by all the world, but I will never forsake you.'

So the maiden was taken to the king's castle, and she was so beautiful and pious that the king learnt to love her with all his heart. He had silver hands made for her, and took her for his wife.

About a year after, the king had to go to battle, and he placed his young wife under the care of his mother, who promised to be very kind to her, and to write to him.

Not long after this the queen had a little son born, and the king's mother wrote a letter to him immediately, so that he might have the earliest intelligence, and sent it by a messenger.

The messenger, however, after travelling a long way, became tired, and sat down to rest by a brook, where he soon fell fast asleep. Then came the Demon, who was always trying to injure the good queen, and took away the letter from the sleeping messenger, and replaced it by another, in which it was stated that the little child was a monster.

When the king read the letter, he was terribly distressed and troubled. However, he wrote in reply to say that the queen was to have every attention and care till his return. The messenger went with the letter, rested at the same place, and fell asleep; the Demon came again and exchanged the king's kind letter for another, in which an order was written to the king's mother to kill both the queen and her child.

The old mother was quite terrified when she read this letter, for she could not believe the king meant her to do anything so dreadful. She wrote again to the king, but there was no answer, for the wicked one always intercepted the messengers, and sent false letters. The last was worse than all, for it

stated that, instead of killing the mother and her child, they were to cut out the tongue and the eyes of the queen.

But the king's mother was too good to attend to these dreadful orders, so she said to the queen, while her eyes streamed with tears, 'I cannot kill you, as the king desires me to do, but I must not let you remain here any longer. Go now out into the world with thy child, and do not come here again.' Then she bound the boy on his mother's back, and the poor woman departed, weeping as she went.

She reached a dense forest. There she knelt down and prayed for help, and the angel appeared to her and led her to a little cottage, on which was hung a small signboard, with these words, 'Everyone who dwells here is safe.' Out of the cottage stepped a maiden dressed in snowy garments, and said, 'Welcome, queen-wife,' and led her in. Then she unfastened the baby from his mother's back, and hushed him in her arms till he slept so peacefully that she laid him on a bed.

The poor woman said, 'How did you know I was a queen?'

The white maiden replied, 'I am an angel sent to take care of thee and thy child.'

So she remained in that cottage many years, and was very happy, and so pious and good that her hands, which had been cut off, were allowed to grow again.

The king returned, and immediately asked to see his wife and child.

Then his old mother began to weep, and said, 'You wicked man, how can you ask me for your wife and child when you wrote me such dreadful letters, and told me to kill two such innocent beings.'

And she said further, 'I have done as you commanded,' and showed him in proof a tongue and eyes, and the letters she had received, which were changed by the wicked one. Then the king began to weep so bitterly for his wife and child that the old woman pitied him and said, 'Do not be so unhappy; they still live, I could not kill them; but your wife and child are gone into the wide world, never to come back for fear of your anger.'

Then said the king, 'I will go to the ends of the earth to find them, and I will neither eat nor drink till I find my dear wife and child, if they have not been starved to death or killed.' Thereupon the king started on his expedition, travelling over rocks and valleys, over mountains and highways, for seven long years; but he found her not, and he thought she was starved to death, and that he should never see her again.

He neither ate nor drank during the whole time of earthly food, but heaven sent him help. At last he arrived at a large forest, and found the little cottage with the signboard, and the words upon it, 'Everyone who dwells here is safe.'

While he stood reading the words, the maiden in white raiment came out, took him by the hand, and led him into the cottage, saying, 'My lord the king is welcome, but why is he here?'

Then he replied, 'I have been for seven years travelling about the world hoping to find my wife and child, but I have not yet succeeded. Can you help me?'

'Sit down,' said the maiden, 'and take something to eat and drink first.'

But he would not eat, he only wanted rest. Then he laid himself down and slept, and the maiden in the white raiment covered his face.

Then she went into an inner chamber where the queen sat with her little son, whom she had named 'Painbringer,' and said to her, 'Go out together into the other chamber; thy husband is come.'

The poor queen went into the room where he lay; the covering fell off his face, and she told her little son to replace it.

The boy went forward and laid the cloth gently over the face of the strange man. But the king heard the voice in his slumber, and moved his head so that the covering again fell off.

'My child,' said the queen, 'cover the face of thy father.'

He looked at her and said, 'How can I cover my father's face, dear mother? I have no father in this world. You have taught me to pray to "Our Father, which art in heaven;" and I thought my father was God. This strange man is not my father; I don't know him.'

When the king heard this, he started up, and asked who they were.

Then said the queen, 'I am thy wife, and this is thy son.'

The king looked at her with surprise. 'Your face and your voice are the same,' he said, 'but my wife had silver hands, and yours are natural.'

'My hands have mercifully been allowed to grow again,' she replied; and, as he still doubted, the maiden in white entered the room, carrying the silver hands, which she showed to the king.

Then he saw at once that this was, indeed, his dear lost

wife and his own little son; and he embraced them, full of joy, exclaiming, 'Now has a heavy stone fallen from my heart.'

The maiden prepared a dinner for them, of which they all partook together; and after a kind farewell the king started with his wife and child to return home to the castle, where his mother and all the household received them with great joy.

A second marriage-feast was prepared, and they lived happily to the end of their lives.

THE THREE LANGUAGES.

In Switzerland there once lived an old count. He had an only son, but he was so stupid that he could not learn anything.

One day his father said: 'My son, your head can retain nothing, do what I will. I must send you away to an excellent master, who shall try what he can do with you.'

So the youth departed to a distant city, where he remained with the master a whole year. At the end of that time he returned home, and his father said to him, 'Well, my son, what have you learnt?'

'Father, I have learnt to understand what the dog says when he barks,' answered he.

'Heaven pity you!' cried the father; 'is that all you have learned? Then I must send you to another master.'

So the youth was again placed under the care of a first-rate master for a year.

On his return, his father asked him the same question.

'Father,' said the boy, 'I can now understand the language of birds.'

Then was his father in a rage, and exclaimed: 'Oh, you lost creature! has all this precious time been wasted in learning nothing, and are you not ashamed to appear in my presence? I will try you once more with a third master, and if you learn nothing this year I will give you up—you shall be no longer my son.'

So the youth went for a year to a third master, and on his return, when his father asked him what he had learned, he replied, 'Dear father, I have this time learnt to understand the croaking of the frogs.'

Then was his father in a greater rage than ever. He started

up, called the household together, and said: 'This youth is my son no longer; he shall not stay here. I order you to chase him from the house, and you are any of you at liberty to take his life.'

The servants drove him out, but they pitied him too much to kill him. So they let him go away unhurt; but they killed a stag, and sent the eyes and the tongue to the old count, to make him believe that his son had been killed, as he commanded.

The youth wandered away far from home in a very sad mood, and came at last to a roadside inn, and asked the landlord if he could give him a night's lodging.

'Willingly,' replied the burgomaster, 'if you do not mind taking up your abode for the night in the old tower; but I warn you that your life will be in danger, for the place is full of wild dogs, who bark and howl, and constantly seize and devour human beings. The whole neighbourhood is kept in fear and terror about these dogs, and no one can do anything to get rid of them.'

But the young man had no fear, and he said: 'Let me go to these barking and howling dogs; only give me something to throw to them, and I'll warrant they won't injure me.'

As he would not do otherwise, they gave him some meat for the wild animals, and then led him to the tower.

As he entered not one of the dogs barked at him, but wagged their tails in the most friendly manner, ate what he had brought for them, and did not ruffle even a hair of his head.

On the following morning the youth, to everyone's astonishment, stood before them safe and sound, and said to the burgomaster, 'I understand the language of dogs, and they have explained to me clearly why they have caused so much trouble in the land. They are kept in the tower by enchantment, to protect a great treasure which is hidden beneath it; and until that treasure is removed, there will be no rest for themselves or others, and the spell will remain unbroken. This I have discovered from their conversation.'

All were overjoyed at the discovery, and the burgomaster said that if the young man should be successful in bringing away the treasure, he would adopt him as his son, for he had no children of his own.

Then the youth went up again to the tower, and having understood well from the conversation of the dogs where to find the treasure, he knew what to do, and very soon returned to the burgomaster's house, carrying a chest full of gold.

The spell was broken ; the howling and barking of the wild dogs ceased from that hour, and the land was freed from the dreadful plague.

A short time after this the young man thought he should like to take a journey to Rome. On the way he came to a marsh, in which a number of frogs were croaking loudly. He stopped to listen, and as he understood their language, what he heard them say made h m quite thoughtful and sad as he continued his journey. He arrived at Rome just in time to hear of the Pope's death, and the great doubts which had arisen as to which of the cardinals should be chosen as his successor.

At last it was decided that whoever received a sign from heaven should be at once elected as Pope.

Scarcely had this decision been arrived at when the young count entered the church, and no sooner did he appear than two snow-white doves flew towards him, and placed themselves one on each shoulder and there remained.

The clergy who were present acknowledged at once that this was a sign from heaven, and asked the young count if he would be Pope.

At first he hesitated to reply, for he could scarcely believe he was suitable for such a high station ; but the doves, whose language he understood, whispered that it was right to do as the people wished, so at last he said 'Yes.'

Then he was anointed and consecrated, and so was fulfilled the prophecy which he had heard in the frogs' croak, and which had made him so unhappy, namely, that before a month had passed he would be a priest.

He had then to sing a mass, although he could not read a word of the Latin. However, the two doves sat continually on his shoulders, and whispered the words into his ears.

CLEVER BESS.

THERE was once a man and woman who had an only daughter, and they thought her so wonderfully clever that they gave her the name of Clever Bess. One day her father said to his wife, 'Our daughter is now grown up, and we must get her married soon.'

'Yes,' replied the mother, 'if we find anyone who will have her.'

Not long after this a young man named Hans came to ask these good people for their daughter, yet he made a decided condition, that Clever Bess should be also really wise.

'Oh,' exclaimed the father, 'she has a good headpiece, you may be sure of that.'

'Yes,' said the mother, 'and she can even see the wind running through the streets, and hear the footsteps of the flies on the ceiling.'

'Well,' said Hans, 'if she is not really clever I will not take her.'

Presently her mother said: 'Bess, go into the cellar, and draw some beer.'

The clever Bess took the jug from the nail and went into the cellar, tapping the lid as she walked to pass the time. When she reached the cellar she fetched a chair and placed it in front of the cask that she might not have to stoop and hurt her back. Then she stood the jug before her, and turned the tap, while the beer ran slowly.

Her eyes were not idle, and while looking round the cellar she observed upon the wall above her a pickaxe, which the mason had by an oversight forgotten to remove.

Then the clever Bess began to weep, and to say that if she married Hans, and they had a child, and sent him into the cellar to draw beer, the pickaxe would fall on his head and kill him, and she sat weeping and wailing over this superstitious fear. Those above at supper waited for the beer, but none came, and at last they sent for the maiden, and said to her:

'Go and see why Bessie is staying so long.'

Then went the maiden and found her sitting before the cask, weeping bitterly.

'Bessie,' she said, 'why do you weep?'

'Ah,' she replied, 'shall I not weep? If I marry Hans and have a son, and he comes to draw beer, the pickaxe may fall on his head and kill him;' and she pointed to the wall as she spoke.

'What a clever Bess!' said the maidservant, beginning to weep and mourn over this misfortune.

When the maiden did not return, her master sent the boy after her. He also began to cry and mourn when he heard what the clever Bess had found out. At last the father and mother came themselves, and on hearing the clever Bess's story, they both joined in the crying and howling, and the

noise became so loud than Hans went himself to discover what was the matter.

When he reached the cellar and heard them all screaming and crying one louder than the other, as if they were trying who could weep the loudest, he exclaimed, 'What dreadful misfortune has happened?'

'Oh, dear Hans,' said Bess, 'look at that pickaxe: if we are married and have a son, and we send him to draw beer, he will be killed by it, for it may fall on his head; no wonder we all weep.'

'Now,' said Hans, 'more cleverness is not necessary for me, and because you are a clever Bess, I will marry you.'

So he took her by the hand and led her away and married her.

Hans said one day, 'Dear wife, I must go to work and earn money; you could go into our little cornfield and cut down the corn, that we may have some flour to make bread.'

'Yes, my dear Hans,' she replied, 'I will.'

As soon as he was gone, his wife made some nice broth for herself and took it with her into the field; but when she arrived there, she sat down and said to herself: 'What shall I do: shall I cut the corn first, or eat first? Ah, I will eat first.'

So she ate up the broth, and then, feeling heavy, she asked herself: 'Now, shall I cut the corn or sleep first? Ah, I will sleep first.'

Then she laid herself down in the corn and was soon fast asleep. Hans returned home, but Bessie had not come in.

'What a clever Bessie she is, to be sure,' he said; 'so industrious that she cannot even come home to her dinner.'

But as the evening came on, and she still remained away, Hans went out to look for her, and to see how much corn she had cut. On reaching the field he found that none had been touched, and Bessie was fast asleep amongst the corn.

Hans went away in great haste and fetched a fowler's net covered with little bells, which he tied round her; but she continued to sleep. Then he returned home, locked the cottage door, and seated himself to work.

At last when the clever Bess awoke out of her long sleep and found it quite dark, she rose to go home, while the bells which hung round her tinkled at every step she took. This alarmed her so much that she began to feel puzzled, and could scarcely tell whether she really was the clever Bess or not.

'Oh dear,' she said, 'am I myself, or am I not?'

She knew not what to answer, and stood a long time in

doubt; at last a thought struck her: 'I will go home and ask Hans whether I am really myself or someone else; he is sure to know.'

She found her way home, but when she reached the front door of the house it was locked. She knocked at the window and cried:

'Hans, is Bess at home?'

'Yes,' he answered, 'she is at home.' Oh, how frightened she felt as she heard this!

'Oh dear,' she exclaimed; 'then I am not the clever Bess, after all.'

Then she went from door to door of the neighbours' houses, but when they heard the bells jingling no one would admit her. At last she ran away from the village, and has not been heard of since.

THE WISHING-TABLE, THE GOLD ASS, AND THE CUDGEL.

ONCE upon a time lived a tailor who had three sons, and only one goat. The goat had to be well fed, and the boys used to take her by turns every day to the meadow. One day the eldest son took her into the churchyard, in which she not only enjoyed the fresh green grass, but frisked about quite merrily. In the evening, when it was time to go home, the boy said to her, 'Have you had enough?' and the goat replied:

'I am so full
I could not pull
Even a blade of grass.
Baa, baa!'

'Then come home,' said the youth; and he took hold of the rope, led her to the stable, and tied her up.

'Well,' said the father, 'has the goat had good fodder?'

'Yes, father; she has eaten till she can eat no more.'

But the father, wishing to make sure, went to the stable himself, and stroking his favourite, said: 'Nanny, have you had enough to-day?' But the goat replied:

'In the churchyard all day
I could frisk and play,
But there was not a leaf to eat.
Baa, baa!'

'What do I hear?' cried the tailor, rushing out and calling to his boy. 'You said the goat had eaten as much as she liked, and she has been starved.'

And in great anger he took up the yard measure and drove him with blows from the house.

On the next day it was the turn of the second son to take the goat out, and he soon found a nice spot near a garden wall full of sweet fresh grass, which the goat ate till there was not a blade left.

In the evening, when it was time to go home, the boy asked the goat whether she had had enough.

'I have eaten so much,
I can eat no more.
Baa, baa!'

was the goat's reply, so the boy led her home, and, taking her to the stable, tied her up.

'Well,' said the father, 'how has the goat fared to-day?' 'Ah!' replied the youth, 'she has eaten so much she can eat no more.' But the tailor, remembering the previous evening, went again into the stable, and asked the goat the same question.

How could I eat
When there was no meat,
Not even a tiny leaf?
Baa, baa!'

'You dreadful child,' cried the tailor, 'to leave such a useful animal to starve!' He ran to the house, and, after beating the boy with his yard measure, he drove him also from the house.

The turn of the youngest son came the next day, and he was determined to give the goat a feast this time. So he took her to a bank where delicious wild-flowers and young leaves grew, and left her to enjoy herself.

When he came to fetch her in the evening, he asked, 'Have you had enough to-day, Nanny?' She replied:

'I am so full
That I could not pull
Even a blade of grass.
Baa, baa!'

'Then come home,' he said; and after leading her to the stable, he tied her up, and went in to his father, and told him how well he had fed the goat; but the tailor could not trust him, and upon going out into the stable and asking the goat, the wicked animal replied:

'How can I be full?
There was nothing to pull,
Not even a blade of grass.'

'Oh dear,' cried the tailor, 'what dreadful boys, one as bad as the other! he shall not stay here to make a fool of me.' He beat the boy with the yard measure in his rage so dreadfully that he rushed out of the house and ran away.

Now the tailor remained at home alone with his goat, and the next morning he went into the stable himself, and said to her: 'Come, my precious animal, I will take you out to-day myself.' So he took her a little distance to some green hedges, near which grew bright tender grass, of which goats are very fond, and said: 'This time you can enjoy yourself to your heart's content.'

He left her there till the evening, and then he asked, 'Have you eaten as much as you like, Nanny?' She replied:

'I have had enough
Of the nicest stuff.
I could not eat any more.
Baa, baa!'

So he led her home, and tied her fast in the stable. He had not, however, gone far from the door when he turned back, and again asked her if she was satisfied. To his surprise, she said:

'How can I be?
For I did not see
A single blade of grass.
Baa, baa!'

When the tailor heard this, he was startled, and saw at once that he had punished his three sons unjustly. 'You ungrateful animal!' he cried. 'It would be a slight punishment to you to send you away as I did my sons. But wait a bit. I will mark you in such a manner that you will never dare to show yourself again amongst honest tailors.' So he seized a razor, soaped the head of the goat, and shaved it as smooth as the back of his hand; and then, as a blow from the yard measure would have been too great an honour, the tailor fetched a whip, and gave the goat two or three such cuts with it that the animal rushed out, and ran away with all its might.

The tailor, being now quite alone in his house, began to feel very miserable. He would have been glad to have his three sons home again, but he knew not where to find them.

The eldest had apprenticed himself to a joiner, and acquired the knowledge of the trade so quickly that his master was quite

pleased with him. When the time came for him to travel,* his master gave him a table. It was nothing to look at, for the wood was of the most common sort, but it possessed one good quality. If anyone addressed it and said, 'Table, prepare for dinner!' immediately the table obeyed, and quickly covered itself with a snowy cloth, on which stood plates, knives, and forks, with dishes and tureens full of good things to eat, and the bright sparkling red wine in glass goblets which makes glad the heart.

The young apprentice thought that with such a table he could want nothing else in the world, and started on his journey without troubling himself to find an inn, either good or bad, or perhaps where he might be unable to get anything to eat at all. And so it happened to him that, travel where he might, whether through wood or meadow, he had only to take his table from his back, place it on the ground, and say, 'Table, prepare thyself!' and immediately it was ready, and covered with all that heart could wish.

At last it came into his mind that he would return to his father, whose anger must have been appeased by this time; and with such a table as he possessed, he was sure to receive a welcome. He therefore turned his steps homewards, and towards evening came to an inn by the roadside, which was full of guests. They asked him in, and invited him to sit and eat with them.

The young joiner said, 'Do you think I am going to be satisfied with such a supper as that? No. Wait a bit; you shall be *my* guests.'

The host laughed, and thought his visitor was making jokes; but he unfastened the little table from his back, placed it on the floor of the room, and said, 'Table, prepare thyself!' In a moment the table was covered with a most splendid supper, as good as, and even better than, the landlord could have provided. The smell was pleasant to the noses of the guests.

Then the joiner said, 'Dear friends, seat yourselves; you are quite welcome.' And when they saw that he was really in earnest, they did not allow themselves to be asked twice, but took their places at the table, and used their knives and forks bravely. Their surprise was increased when they observed that as soon as a dish was empty, it was instantly replaced by a full one.

The landlord stood in a corner watching the affair, but he

* Young tradesmen are obliged in Germany to travel to improve their knowledge of the different branches of their trade.

thought, 'If I had such a cook as that, it would make the fortune of my house.'

The joiner and his guests spent great part of the night enjoying themselves, but at last they went to their rooms; and the young man carried his table with him, and placed it against the wall. But the landlord's thoughts gave him no rest all night. At last he remembered that he had in his lumber-room an old table just like it in appearance; so he rose and went very quietly to fetch it, and changed the tables.

The next morning the youth, after paying for the night's expenses, packed up his table and went his way, quite unaware of having a false one.

About noon he reached home, and the old tailor welcomed him back with great joy. 'Well, my son,' he asked, 'and what have you been learning?'

'Father,' he replied, 'I am a cabinet-maker, and can work well at my trade.'

'It is a good business,' said the tailor; 'but how much have you gained by it?'

'The best thing I have gained,' he said, 'is that little table.'

The tailor examined it on all sides, and then said, 'That cannot certainly be of much value; why, it is old and nearly worn out.'

'Ah,' said the son, 'but it is a table that covers itself. When I stand up and say, "Table, prepare thyself!" it will instantly prepare a splendid dinner, with plates, knives, forks, glasses, and dishes of various kinds, and rich wines that will rejoice your heart. You go and invite all our friends and relations to dinner, and you will soon discover what my table can do.'

The tailor hastened to follow his son's advice; and when the company were all assembled, expecting a splendid feast, the young man placed his table in the centre of the room, and said, 'Table, prepare thyself!' But the table did not move; it stood there as empty as any other table, for it did not understand what was said to it.

When the poor young man discovered that he had been deceived, and his table changed for another, he stood before the company covered with shame, for he felt sure they would look upon him as false. His relations laughed at him, and had all to go home again to get something to eat and drink. After this disgrace and disappointment, the father went back to his needle and thimble, and the son was obliged to work with a master joiner.

The second son had apprenticed himself to a miller, and when his time was up his master said:

'You have worked so well while you have been with me that I mean to make you a present of a wonderful donkey; but I must tell you that he can neither draw a cart nor carry a sack.'

'Then he will be of no use to me,' said the youth.

'But,' said his master, 'he drops from his mouth gold. You have only to lay a cloth on the ground, and lead the donkey on it, and say, "Bricklebrit!" and immediately pieces of gold will drop from his mouth.'

'That is a fine thing,' said the young man, and, thanking his master, he bade him farewell, and started on his travels.

He soon discovered the value of his donkey, for if he wanted money, he could say, 'Bricklebrit!' and gold would cover the ground, which he had only the trouble of picking up. So wherever he went he had the best of everything that money could buy, for his purse was always full.

After he had been for some time travelling he began to think of home. 'For,' he said to himself, 'if I can return with plenty of money, my father will forget his anger and receive me kindly.'

It happened that he came at last to the same inn at which his brother's table had been changed. He led his donkey by the bridle, and the landlord wished to take the animal to the stable; but the young man said, 'Don't trouble yourself, landlord. I always tie up old Grizzle myself, for I like to know where he is.'

The landlord wondered at first, and then he thought that a guest who tied up his donkey himself had not much to spend; but when the stranger put his hand in his pocket, and, pulling out two gold pieces, said he should like a good supper prepared for him, the landlord opened his eyes wide, and ran to order the best he had in the house.

After dinner the young miller asked for his bill, and the host charged two more gold pieces than it really amounted to. The young man, after searching in his pockets, found he had not enough to pay. 'Wait a moment, landlord,' he said; 'I will soon fetch some more;' and he rose up hastily, carrying the tablecloth with him.

The landlord, who could not understand these movements, was curious. So he slipped out and followed his guest, whom he saw enter the stable, and fasten the door behind him; but he found a hole formed in the door, through which he peeped.

Then he saw the stranger stretch out the tablecloth on the ground, lead the donkey on it, and heard him cry, 'Bricklebrit!' At the same moment the animal began to pour a shower of gold pieces from his mouth, which fell on the earth like rain. 'On my word!' cried the landlord, 'these ducats are soon coined. Such a purse of gold wouldn't be bad.'

The young man paid his reckoning and went to bed; but the innkeeper slipped into the stable during the night, led away the gold-coiner, and tied up another donkey in its place. Early the next morning the young man rose, led the donkey away, and thought he had his gold ass with him. He reached home about noon, and received a kind reception from his father, who was glad to see him.

'And what trade have you been learning, my son?' asked his father.

'I am a miller, dear father,' he replied.

'And what have you gained by your travels?' was the next question.

'Only a donkey.'

'We have donkeys enough here already,' said his father. 'Now, if you had brought a goat, it might have been useful.'

'Yes,' said the youth, 'so it might; but not so valuable as the animal I have brought—it is not like a common animal. Why, father, it can coin money. If I say "Bricklebrit," there will fall quite a shower of gold from its mouth on a cloth which I lay under it. Let me show you,' he continued. 'Send for all our relations to come here, and I will give them each money enough to make them rich people.'

'That is good news,' said the father; 'and if this happens, I shall be able to give up stitching, and lay my needle aside for ever.' And away he went to invite his relations.

As soon as they had assembled, the young miller cleared a place on the floor, and spread the cloth over it. Then he went out, and brought the donkey into the room. 'Now, pay attention,' he exclaimed, at the same time saying 'Bricklebrit,' more than once; but no gold pieces fell, the animal not understanding what was said to him. The poor young miller's face fell. He knew now that he had been cheated. He could therefore only, with every apology, send his relations away as poor as they came. His father also was obliged to continue his sewing and cutting out, and the young man obtained work at a miller's close by.

The third brother had bound himself apprentice to a turner, and as this is a difficult trade to learn, he remained longer

than his brothers had done. They wrote to him, however, and told him how unfortunate they had been, and how the innkeeper had stolen from them such valuable possessions.

At last the young brother was free to travel, and his master offered him as a farewell gift a bag, and said, 'I give you this as a reward for your industry and steady conduct, and there is a stick in the bag.'

'I can carry the bag on my shoulders,' replied the youth, 'and it will be of great service to me; but what do I want with the stick—it will only make it heavier?'

'I will tell you,' replied his master. 'If anyone attempts to ill-treat you, you have only to say, "Now, stick, jump out of the bag," and immediately it will spring upon the shoulders of your assailant, and give him such a thrashing that he will not be able to move for days afterwards—unless you stop it—for the stick will go on till you say, "Now, stick, into the bag again."'

The youth, on hearing this, thanked his master for his present, and started on his travels. He found it very useful, for if anyone ventured to molest him, he had only to say, 'Out of the bag, stick,' and out it sprang upon the shoulders of the offender, beating him sharply and quickly, and although he felt the pain, he could not see who struck him.

One evening the young turner arrived at the inn where the landlord had robbed his brothers. He went in, and, laying his bag on the table, began to talk of the wonderful things he had seen and heard in the world during his travels. 'Indeed,' he said, 'some have found tables which could spread themselves with a great feast when ordered to do so, and others have possessed donkeys who could coin gold from their mouths, besides many other wonderful things, which I need not describe; but they are nothing when compared with what I carry in my bag.'

The landlord pricked up his ears. 'What! could nothing in the world be compared to the contents of that bag?' thought he. 'No doubt, then, it is full of precious stones, and I ought in fairness to have it with my other two prizes. All good things go in threes.'

When bed-time came, the young man stretched himself on a bench, and placed the bag under his head for a pillow. The landlord waited in another room till he thought the visitor was fast asleep, then he approached softly, and tried in the most gentle manner to pull the bag from under the sleeper's head, intending to put another in its place. But the traveller was

not asleep. He lay watching the innkeeper's movements, and just as he had nearly succeeded in pulling away the bag, he cried out suddenly, 'Stick, stick, come out of your bag.' In a moment the stick was on the thief's shoulders, thumping away on his back, till the seams of his coat were ripped from top to bottom. In vain he cried for mercy; the louder he screamed, so much the stronger were the blows he received, till at last he fell to the ground quite exhausted.

Then the youth bade the stick desist for a time, and said to the innkeeper, 'It is useless for you to cry for mercy yet. Where are the table and the golden ass that you stole? You had better go and bring them here, for if they are not given up to me, we will begin the same performance over again.'

'Oh, no, no!' cried the landlord feebly; 'I will give everything up to you directly, if you will only make that little imp creep back into the bag.'

'I will do so,' said the young man; 'and I advise you to keep to your word, unless you wish for another thrashing. Into your bag, stick,' he continued; and the stick obeyed, so the innkeeper rested in peace till the next day, when, still smarting with the chastisement he had received, he gave up the stolen goods to the owner of the bag.

The youth arrived at his father's house with the table and the donkey, and was received very joyfully. The tailor asked him about his trade, and whether he had brought home anything worth having. 'I have a bag, and a stick in it, dear father,' he replied.

'That was scarcely worth the trouble of bringing,' said his father, 'for you can cut as many as you like in any wood.'

'Ah, but not like mine, father; why, I have only to say, "Out of the bag, stick," and it will jump out and thrash anyone who attempts to interfere with me, till they cry for mercy. Through this stick I have recovered the table and the donkey which the thievish innkeeper stole from my brothers. Let them both be sent for, and then invite our relations to visit us; I can not only give them a splendid feast, but fill their pockets with gold also.'

The tailor was half afraid to believe all these promises, after having been already so deceived, yet he went out and invited his relations to assemble at his house. Then the young turner laid a cloth on the floor of the room, led the ass upon it, and said, 'Now, dear brother, speak to him.'

'Bricklebrit!' exclaimed the young miller. At the word, down fell the gold pieces on the cloth as thick as rain, and

continued to fall till everyone had gathered up as much as he could possibly carry. (Would not you have liked to be there?) After this, the donkey was led away, and the youngest brother placed the table in the middle of the room, and said to his eldest brother, 'Dear brother, it is your turn to speak now.'.

No sooner had the young cabinet-maker exclaimed, 'Table, prepare the dinner,' than the most splendid dishes appeared upon it, with the richest wines, and every necessary for a feast; and you may fancy how they all enjoyed themselves. Never before had there been such an entertainment in the tailor's house, and the whole company remained together till nearly morning, feasting and making merry. After this, the tailor locked up in a drawer his needle and thread, his yard measure, and his goose, and lived the remainder of his days with his three sons.

But where is the goat all this while, whose deceit caused the tailor to turn his sons out of doors? I am just going to tell you. She was so ashamed of her bald head that she ran and hid herself in a fox's hole, till the hair should grow again.

When the fox came home at night, he saw a pair of great eyes shining upon him out of the darkness like fire. In a great fright he rushed back, and ran away as fast as he could. On the way he met a bear, who, seeing the fox in such a terror, exclaimed:

'Whatever is the matter, brother? Why, you look quite scared!'

'Oh,' he answered, 'there is a dreadful animal at the bottom of my den, who glared at me with such fiery eyes.'

'We'll soon drive him out,' said the bear, quite boldly, as he walked to the hole and looked in; but no sooner did he catch a glimpse of those burning eyes than his terror caused him to take to his heels as the fox had done, rather than have any skirmish with such a fierce animal.

On his way home a bee met him, and, observing that his hair stood on end, she said to him, 'Why, Grandpapa Bear, what is the matter? You have such a woeful face. And where is all your fun gone?' 'It is all very fine talking about fun,' replied the bear; 'but if you had seen the horrid monster with glaring eyes in the fox's den, you wouldn't have had much fun left in you; and the worst is we can't get him out.' Then said the bee, 'I pity you, bear, very much, and I know I am only a poor, weak little creature, that you great animals scarcely notice when we meet. Yet I believe I can help you in this matter.' And away she flew into the fox-hole, and, perching

herself on the goat's head, stung her so fiercely that she rushed out quite frantic, crying, 'Baa, baa!' and has never been heard of since.

LITTLE THUMB.

A POOR peasant was one evening sitting by his hearth, doing nothing but stirring the fire, while his wife sat spinning near him. At last he said, 'How sad and sorrowful it is to think that we have no children! The house is so lonely and still, while in our neighbours' homes everything is cheerful.' 'Ah yes,' replied the wife, 'if I had only a little child not bigger than my thumb, how happy I should be. We should have something to love then with all our hearts.'

Now, it so happened that after a few months the wife's wish was accomplished, for a little baby was born, perfect in all its limbs, but not taller than a thumb. 'Ah,' said she, 'I have got what I asked for, and, small as he is, we will love him dearly.' And, because of his size, they named him Little Thumb.

They fed him on the most nourishing food, yet he did not increase in size, but remained always as small as on the day of his birth. But intellect shone from his eyes, and he soon showed by his cleverness and ability that he would succeed in whatever he undertook.

One day, when his father was getting ready to go to the forest and cut down some trees, he said aloud to himself, 'I wish I had someone who could drive the cart, for I want to go on first by myself.' 'Oh, father,' cried Little Thumb, 'I can do that easily. Leave the cart with me. I will take care to be in good time.' 'Oh yes,' replied the father, laughing; 'it is very likely I should trust you to drive. Why, you are much too little even to lead the horse by the bridle.' 'Never mind how small I am,' said the boy; 'only you go as soon as you like, and if mother will harness the horse, I will seat myself on his ear, and tell him which way to go.' 'Well,' replied his father, 'I'll try for once what you can do.' So he went off to the forest, and, when the hour to start arrived, the mother harnessed the horse in the cart, and seated Little Thumb on his ear.

'Gee up,' shouted the little one into the ear, and the horse went on immediately.

And so he kept on, using the right words when he wanted the horse to turn to the right or the left, and crying out, 'Gee, woa,' so cleverly that the cart reached the wood as safely as if his master had driven him. Just as the horse and cart were turning into a path through the forest, two strange men came by. They stood still in astonishment, for they heard the voice of the driver, and saw the horse take the right turning, but no one was visible.

'Hallo,' cried one, 'there is something queer about this. Let us follow, and see where the cart stops.'

So they turned, and went after the cart till it came to the place where several trees had been cut down, and there it stopped.

As soon as Little Thumb saw his father, he cried out, 'See, father, I have brought the horse and cart. Can't I drive well? And now, please, lift me down.' The father held the horse by the bridle with one hand, and, lifting his little son from the horse's ear with the other, placed him on the ground. In a few moments the merry little fellow seated himself on a shaving and felt quite comfortable.

When the strangers saw Little Thumb they were much astonished, and scarcely knew what to think. Presently one took the other aside, and said, 'That little chap would make our fortune if we could exhibit him in great towns for money. Suppose we buy him.' So they went up to the father, and said, 'Will you sell this little man to us? We will take the greatest care of him.' 'No,' he replied; 'he is my dear child, and I would not sell him for all the gold in the world.'

But Little Thumb, who had crept into the folds of his father's coat, heard what was said, and, climbing to his shoulder, whispered into his ear, 'Father, let me go with these men. I am sure to come back again.'

So the father gave him up for a large sum in gold.

'Where shall we put you?' they asked. 'Oh,' replied Little Thumb, 'place me on the brim of your hat. I can walk about there, and see where I am going, and I'll take care not to fall off.'

They very willingly did as he wished, and as soon as Little Thumb had taken leave of his father, the men walked away with him.

They travelled until evening; then Little Thumb cried out, 'Stop, lift me down, please.' 'No,' said the man, 'stay where

you are, little one. I don't mind your being there in the least. The birds often perch on my hat without causing me the slightest inconvenience. Stay where you are, my little man.' 'No, no,' cried Little Thumb, 'I know best what to do. I want you to lift me down directly.' Then the man took his hat off, and placed it on the ground by the roadside.

In a moment the little fellow sprang from the hat, ran through the hedge into a field, in and out between the clods of earth, then suddenly slipped into the nest of a field-mouse, which he had seen from his seat on the man's hat. 'Good-evening, gentlemen, you must go home without me now,' he shouted, laughing merrily. They were terribly annoyed, and tried to catch him by poking their sticks into the hole; but it was useless trouble, for Little Thumb crept to the farthest corner of the nest. And so night came on, and the men were obliged to go home in a great rage without him and with empty purses.

As soon as Little Thumb knew they were gone, he crept out of the underground passages; but at first he stood still, and said to himself, 'It will not be safe for me to cross the field in the dark, most likely I shall break my limbs or my neck if I do.'

All at once he saw an empty snail-shell. 'Oh, how lucky!' he exclaimed; 'I can spend the night here in comfort.'

So he crept in; but, just as he was dropping off to sleep, he heard voices and the footsteps of two men who were planning a robbery at the rector's house.

'There is gold and silver in abundance there,' said one; 'but how are we to get at it?'

'I will tell you,' shouted Little Thumb.

'What was that?' cried one of the thieves, in a fright. 'I am certain I heard someone speak.'

They stood still to listen, and Little Thumb spoke again. 'Take me with you; I will help you,' he said.

'Where are you, then?' asked one.

'Look for me on the ground, where my voice comes from,' said he.

On this they began to search, and at last found him, and one of the thieves lifted him up, and said, 'You little mite, how can you help us?'

'Try me,' cried Little Thumb. 'Why, I can creep between the iron bars of the window into the rector's room, and pass out to you whatever you want."

'Oh well,' they replied, 'we will see what you can do.'

When they came to the rectory, it did not take him long to creep through the bars into the room, but no sooner was he inside than he cried out as loud as he could, 'Will you have everything from the room you can get?'

'Hush!' cried the thieves, in a fright. 'Speak lower; you will wake everybody in the house.'

But Little Thumb, as if he did not understand, kept crying out as loud as ever, 'What shall I give you first? do you want all?'

In the room adjoining slept one of the servants, and the noise woke her. She sat up in bed to listen, and heard what Little Thumb said.

The thieves, who had run away in terror when Little Thumb cried out, ventured back when all was quiet, and said: 'Come now, this is not a time for joking; get us what we want, and pass it through the window to us.'

Then cried the little man, 'Oh, you want everything, do you? Now then, hold out your hands.'

The maidservant heard this plainly enough. She jumped out of bed, and, being in the dark, stumbled against the door. On hearing the noise the thieves took to their heels, and ran as if wild hunters were behind them. The girl, who had gone to fetch a light, quickly returned, and determined to examine every part of the room. As soon as Little Thumb saw her coming, he slipped out of the window, and hid himself in a barn, so that she did not even see him. After a good search in every corner, and finding no one there, she went back to bed, and fancied that she must have been dreaming.

Little Thumb found a snug bed in a truss of hay, and made up his mind to sleep comfortably there till morning, and then return home to his parents. But there were other troubles for him. This is a world of trouble.

At daybreak the next morning the maidservant rose and went out to give the cattle their fodder. Her first visit was to the hay-loft, and unluckily the truss of hay nearest the opening was the one in which Little Thumb lay sleeping, and in pulling out an armful she carried him away with it. So soundly did he sleep that he knew nothing of what had happened till he awoke, and found himself in the mouth of a cow, who had taken him up with the hay.

'Oh dear, I might as well be in a crushing machine!' he cried, as soon as he found out where he was. But he had little time for reflection, as he shifted from side to side to avoid the teeth of the cow, and presently he slid downwards into her stomach.

'This is a room without any windows, at all events,' he exclaimed. 'The sun cannot shine here, and to light a candle is out of the question.'

Most certainly he had fallen into unpleasant quarters, and, worse than all, fresh quantities of hay kept coming in at the door, till there was scarcely room to move. At last he could bear it no longer, and cried out, 'No more hay, please—no more hay!'

Now, the maid, who was milking the cow, no sooner heard someone speak, than she recognised the voice which had disturbed her in the night. In great alarm she screamed out, threw down her stool, upset the milk-pail, and ran to her master, exclaiming, 'Oh, sir, the cow has been talking!'

'Nonsense, girl,' replied the rector. However, he went himself to the stable to find out what was going on. No sooner had he set his foot within the door, than Little Thumb cried out, 'No more hay; I don't want any more hay.'

Then was the rector himself alarmed, and thought that the cow was possessed by an evil spirit, so he ordered it to be killed. The poor animal was slaughtered and cut up, and its stomach, in which Little Thumb lay hidden, thrown on the dunghill. It gave him no little trouble to work his way out; but he had scarcely succeeded in popping up his head, when a new misfortune presented itself. A hungry wolf rushed up, and, seizing the cow's stomach, swallowed it up at one gulp.

Little Thumb did not lose his courage. He called out to him from his uncomfortable lodgings, 'Friend wolf, I know where you can get such a beautiful dinner.'

'And where am I to find it?' he asked.

'Oh, at a house not far from here. I will tell you the way to get in. You must creep through a large hole into the kitchen, and there you will find the best of everything in the way of eating and drinking, and can take what you like.'

Then he described to the wolf his father's house.

The wolf did not need to be told twice, and in a very short time had found his way into the kitchen, through the hole, and a famous feast he made of the good things he found in the larder.

But after he had supped to his heart's content he wanted to creep out by the same hole, but he had eaten so much that it was impossible to squeeze himself through. This was just what Little Thumb had expected, and he began to jump about inside the wolf and make such a disturbance and noise that the wolf said: 'Will you be quiet? You will wake all the people in the house.'

'All very fine,' said the little one; 'you have been eating

and enjoying yourself, and now it is my turn;' and then he began to scream and shout with all his might, and at last woke his father and mother.

In great alarm they ran to the room and peeped through the keyhole. As soon as they caught sight of the wolf the husband fetched a hatchet and the wife a scythe. 'You keep behind me,' said the man to his wife, as they opened the door; 'if I don't kill him with the first blow you must rush in and cut at him with the scythe.'

Little Thumb, on hearing his father's voice, cried out, 'Dear father, here I am, in the wolf's body.'

'Thank heaven!' he cried; 'here's our child again come back to us;' and he called to his wife not to use the scythe for fear of hurting their son. Then he raised the axe, and with one blow struck the wolf dead at his feet. A knife and a pair of scissors were soon found, and with this they ripped open the wolf's body and set Little Thumb free. 'Ah,' said the father, 'what trouble we have suffered about you!'

'Yes, father, I dare say; but I have been out in the world, and shut up in strange places, and I am very thankful to find myself again in the fresh air.'

'Where have you been, then?' he asked.

'Oh, father, I have been in a mousehole, I have been swallowed by a cow, and just now I was shut up in the body of a wolf; but I don't care, for I am safe at home at last.'

'And we will never sell you again for all the riches in the world,' said his parents, as they kissed him and pressed him to their hearts, and called him their dear Little Thumb. They gave him something to eat and drink, and the next day he had new clothes, for those he had on were quite old and worn out on his travels.

THE WEDDING OF WIDOW FOX.

Once upon a time there lived an old fox with nine tails, who was jealous of his wife, and thought she was not true. At last he determined to find out by stratagem.

So he lay down on a bench, stretched himself out at full length, held his breath, and kept as motionless as if dead. When Mrs. Fox came into the room she thought he was dead, so she locked herself in a room with her maid, a young cat, who sat by the fire and did the cooking.

The news of poor old fox's death soon spread in the neighbourhood, and even before the funeral several lovers came to sue for the hand of Widow Fox.

The young cat heard a knock at the door, so she went out to see who it could be, and there stood a young fox. 'Oh, it is you, Miss Kitty' he said; 'are you asleep or awake, and what are you doing?'

'Oh,' she replied, 'I'm wide awake, never fear; and do you want to know what I'm doing? Well, I'm getting supper ready, and warming some beer with a piece of butter in it for my mistress. Will you come in, sir, and have supper with me?'

'Thank you, my dear,' said the fox; 'but what is Widow Fox doing?'

'Oh,' replied the cat, 'she does nothing but sit in her room all day and cry her eyes out, because Mr. Fox is dead.'

'Then go and tell her, youngster, that a young fox is here who wishes to become her suitor.'

'Very good, young sir,' said the cat, as she turned away to go to her mistress.

She tripped upstairs, and, opening the room door, exclaimed:

'Are you there, dear Mother Fox?'

'Yes, little puss; what is the matter?'

'There is a suitor come already.'

'Nonsense, child! What is he like?'

'Oh, he is a handsome young fox, with a bushy tail, and such whiskers!'

'Ah!' sighed the widow; 'but has he nine beautiful tails, like my poor old husband had?'

'No,' answered the cat; 'he has only one.'

'Then I won't have him,' cried the widow.

The young cat went down, gave the message to the suitor, and sent him away. But soon after there came another knock at the door, and when the cat opened it, there stood another fox who wished to court Widow Fox. He had two tails, but had no better success than the first wooer.

And so they kept coming, each with one tail more, till at last a fox made his appearance who had nine tails like the widow's dead husband.

When the widow heard that, she said joyfully to the cat:

'Now open the gates wide
And turn Mr. Fox outside.'

But just as the wedding was going to take place, old Mr. Fox came from under the bench, cudgelled the rabble, and drove them with Mrs. Fox out of the house.

THE WEDDING OF WIDOW FOX.

(SECOND STORY.)

When old Mr. Fox was dead the wolf came as a suitor and knocked at the door, and the cat who served Mrs. Fox opened to him.

The wolf greeted her, and said :

'Good-day, Mrs. Cat of Kehrewit ;
Why is it that alone you sit ?
And what are you making good ?'

The cat answered :

'Of rolls and bread I have the best,
Will the gentleman be my guest ?'

'Thank you, Mrs. Cat ; but is not Mrs. Fox at home ?'

The cat replied : 'She sits in her room bewailing old Mr. Fox, who is dead.'

The wolf said :

'If she will have another husband now,
She may at once come down below.'

The cat ran upstairs till she came to the large saloon, and knocked at the door with her fine gold rings.

'Mrs. Fox, are you within ?
If you want a husband now,
Down the stairs you'll have to go.'

Mrs. Fox asked, 'Has the gentleman a pointed nose ?'

'No,' answered the cat.

'Ah, then, he won't do for me,' she said.

By-and-by came a dog, a stag, a bear, and even a lion, but she would have nothing to do with any of them ; they all wanted some of the qualities the old fox had had, and the cat was obliged to send them all away. At last came a young gentleman fox, and Mrs. Fox asked, 'Has he red stockings and a pointed nose ?'

'Yes,' said the cat.

'That is just the husband for me, pussy,' said Widow Fox, 'and we'll have a splendid wedding. But first open all the doors and windows, and throw the old fox out and bury him.'

The wedding with the young fox took place, and they are dancing now if they have not stopped.

THE ELVES.

A SHOEMAKER once became so very poor, not by any fault of his own, that at last he had only just enough leather left to make one pair of shoes. So one evening he cut out the shoes and laid them in readiness to begin work early the next morning. He had a clear conscience, so he lay down on his bed and slept in peace.

In the morning he rose and went to his work, but how surprised he was to find the shoes on the table beautifully made! In his wonderment he knew not what to say. He took the shoes in his hand, and examined them inside and out; there was not a false stitch in either of them, they were quite a masterpiece.

Soon after a customer came in, who was so pleased with them that he offered to purchase them at more than the usual price. The shoemaker could, therefore, with this money buy leather enough to make two pairs of shoes. He cut out and prepared the leather in the evening, that he might begin to work at them next morning. But he had no need, for on entering his workshop there stood two pairs of shoes beautifully finished. He had no lack of customers now, for two came in and paid such a good price for the two pairs that he had money enough to buy leather for four pairs. This he cut into four pairs of shoes, which he laid ready for work the next morning; but on coming down, as usual, there were the shoes quite finished and ready for sale. And so it went on—what he cut out at night was always completed by the morning, till he had nothing to do but buy the leather and cut out shoes. In fact, so much money came pouring in, that the poor shoemaker soon overcame all his difficulties, and became, as he had formerly been, a wealthy tradesman.

Now it happened one evening, not long before Christmas, that after the shoemaker had been cutting out several pairs of shoes, instead of going to bed he said, 'My dear, I should like to find out who they are who help us in this way. Suppose we sit up and watch?'

The wife was overjoyed at the thought, and, leaving the candle burning, they hid themselves in a corner of the room behind their clothes, which hung there, and watched. As the clock struck twelve there came into the room two little manni-

kins without clothes, and seating themselves on the shoemaker's table, they took up the leather which he had cut out, and set to work so nimbly, stitching, sewing, and hammering with such swiftness, that the shoemaker became quite bewildered, although he could not take his eyes off them. They did not stop work for a moment till all the shoes were completed and placed on the table; then they skipped off the table and vanished.

The next morning the wife said to her husband, 'These little men have made us so rich that we ought to do something for them in return for their kindness. I will tell you what I have thought of. I am sure they must be almost frozen, running about naked as they do. So I mean to make them little shirts, trousers, waistcoats, and coats; and if you will get a pair of little shoes ready for each of them, I will knit some stockings.'

'I shall only be too glad to help you,' said the husband.

So they set to work busily, and in a very few days the clothes were quite ready. In the evening, instead of cutting out any more shoes, the man and woman laid out their gifts on the table in the workshop, and hid themselves, as before, in a corner, to see what the little men would do. At midnight they came bounding in, and jumped on the table, expecting to see the leather cut out for them to begin work. But nothing was to be seen excepting these beautiful little clothes. At first they were much surprised, but they began to dress themselves in eager haste, and were so delighted that they danced and jumped about the room, over stools and chairs, singing,

'Happy little men are we,
Smartly dressed, as you can see,
No more shoemakers to be.'

And at last they danced out of the room through the door, and never came back to work any more.

But after this the shoemaker, who had been kind to those who helped him, prospered in everything as long as he lived.

THE ELVES.

(SECOND STORY.)

THERE was once a poor servant-maid who was neat and industrious. She swept and dusted and kept the house in beautiful order.

One morning while she was busy at her work she found a letter on the doorstep, and not being able to read the address, she placed her broom in a corner and carried the letter to her master. She was greatly surprised to find that it was addressed to herself, and that it contained an invitation for her to attend at the christening of one of the pixie's children. She knew not what she should do

At last, after much talk with her master and mistress, who said that they could not dare to allow her to refuse, she consented to go. No sooner had she done so than three of these good little people arrived and carried her away with them to a mountain, where the baby lived.

What a beautiful place it was, all glittering, very tiny, but so wonderfully elegant that it cannot be described. The little lady was lying on a beautiful bed made of shining ebony, with pearl ornaments; the counterpane was of embroidered gold; the baby's cradle of carved ivory, and the font of burnished gold.

The maiden stood godmother to the baby, and then asked the fairies to take her home; but they begged her to remain for three days. These three days were passed in the most delightful manner, but they came to an end, and then she requested to be taken home, so they stuffed her pockets full of money and sent her home through the mountain back into the world. When she reached her old home, being willing to begin work, she took the broom which stood in the corner and began to sweep.

Then a stranger came and asked her what she was doing, and she found that, instead of being only three days absent as she thought, she had been seven years with the good people in the mountain, and her former master had died during the time.

THE CHANGELING.

(THIRD STORY.)

A POOR woman had a pretty little child carried away by the fairies, and a changeling with a thick head and staring eyes left in its place, which did nothing but eat and drink. In her trouble the mother went to a neighbour and asked her advice.

The neighbour said: 'Take the changeling into the kitchen, seat him on the hearth, make up a good fire, and then fill two eggshells with water, and place them on the fire to boil. That, perhaps, will make him laugh, and if he laughs you will get rid of him.'

So the woman went home and did as her neighbour advised, and when the changeling saw her fill the eggshells with water and set them on the fire, he said:

'Now I am as old
As a mine of gold,
Yet I never saw
In my life before,
Water in eggshells boiled.'

And he began to laugh.

The moment he laughed, one of the men from the fairy mountain came into the kitchen; he brought the woman's own child with him, seated him on the hearth, and carried away the changeling.

THE ROBBER BRIDEGROOM.

A MILLER once had a beautiful daughter, and as soon as she was grown up, his great wish was to see her well married and happy. So he decided that, if a suitable wooer came whom his daughter could love, he would give his consent.

Not long after a suitor came for his daughter's hand. He appeared to be very rich, and the miller could find nothing to say against him. So he promised him his daughter. But the maiden did not love this suitor as a bride should love her bridegroom. She had no confidence in him, and when she looked at or thought of him, she shuddered.

One day he said to her; 'You are my affianced bride, but you have never once paid me a visit.'

Then said the maiden: 'I don't know where your house is.'

But when he told her he lived in the depths of the forest; she made excuses, and said she should never find the way.

'Yes, you will,' he said; 'and you must come next Sunday. I expect company on that day; and to enable you to find your way through the wood to my house, I will strew ashes along the pathway.'

So on Sunday, when the maiden had to set out on the way, she felt very anxious, though she knew not why. But so fearful was she of not being able to retrace her steps, that she filled her pockets full of peas and linseed to drop on the path. And as she walked along the road, which was strewed with ashes, she dropped peas right and left on the ground at every step. And thus she walked for hours, till she came to the darkest part of the forest, and there she found a solitary house, which did not please her at all—it looked gloomy, and not at all homelike. The door was open, so she walked in, but there was no one to be seen, and the deepest silence reigned. Suddenly a voice cried out:

'Return, return, thou youthful bride!
A murderer's house this is inside.'

The maiden glanced up and saw that the voice came from a bird, whose cage hung on the wall; again it cried:

'Return, thou youthful bride, return!
This is a murderer's house—return!'

Yet still her curiosity led her on from room to room, till she had been all over the house, which was quite empty—not a single human being could be seen. At last she found, in a cellar or a cave behind the house, a very old woman seated, who nodded at her.

'Can you tell me,' asked the maiden, 'if my bridegroom resides here?'

'Alas! poor child,' answered the old woman, 'how did you find your way here? this is a robbers' den. You imagine that you are a bride, and that your wedding will soon take place; but there will be no marriage for you but with death. Do you see that large kettle? Well, when once the robber gets you in his power, he will cut you in pieces without mercy, and I shall have to fill it with water and boil you in it, for he is a man and woman eater. Unless I take pity on you and save you now, you will be lost.'

So the old woman hid the young girl behind a large cask, where no one could see her.

'Keep as still as a mouse,' she said to her; 'if you move or stir in the slightest, I know not what will happen to you; but in the night, while the robbers sleep, we will make our escape: I have long waited for an opportunity of doing so.'

Scarcely had she finished speaking when the whole gang of robbers returned home. They brought in another young girl

whom they had decoyed in their toils, and they were deaf to her cries and lamentations. They gave her wine to drink, three glasses full, one of white, one of red, and one golden, which caused her to swoon away. Then they tore off her clothes, laid her on a table, cut up her beautiful form into pieces, and strewed salt over them. The poor bride behind the cask trembled with horror at what she saw, for she knew now to what a fate she had been destined by her pretended bridegroom. One of the robbers noticed on the finger of the dead maiden a gold ring, and as he could not get the ring off, he took a hatchet and chopped off the finger. But as he did so the finger sprang up in the air, over the cask behind which the bride was hidden and fell into her lap! The robber took a light and searched for it everywhere, but could not find it. Then said one of them: 'Have you looked behind the cask?'

'Nonsense,' cried the old woman, 'come to supper; you can look for it in the morning; the finger cannot run away.'

'The old woman is right,' said their chief; 'leave off searching, and come to supper.'

As the old woman waited upon them, she was able to pour a sleeping draught into the wine, and they were soon lying fast asleep on the ground, and snoring loudly.

As soon as the maiden heard this she came out from behind the cask, but when she saw that she had to step over the sleepers who lay stretched on the ground, she was in dreadful terror lest she should awaken them. But God helped her, so that she escaped without arousing them. The old woman stepped over with her, opened the doors, and they both hastened away as quickly as they could from the murderers' den. The strewed ashes had been scattered away by the wind, but the peas and the linseed had germinated, and little plants were springing up all over the pathway, so that in the moonlight they could easily find their way.

They walked all night, and arrived next morning at the mill. And the maiden immediately described to her father all the horrors she had seen. When the day came which had been fixed for the wedding, the miller invited all his relations and acquaintances to be present.

As they sat at the table, the miller requested one or two of the guests to relate any wonderful circumstance which had occurred to them on their travels. After one or two interesting incidents had been told, the bridegroom said to the bride, who sat in silence, 'Now, my love, have you nothing to relate? do tell us something.'

'I will tell you a strange dream, if you like,' she replied.

'Oh yes,' they all cried, 'let us have it.'

'It was a horrible dream,' she said. 'But, still, I will describe it. I dreamt that I went through a forest for a long way, till at last I came to a lonely house in the densest and darkest part; there was not a single human being in sight, but on the wall outside hung a cage with a bird in, and the bird cried:

'"Return, return, thou youthful bride!
This is a murderer's den.'

And the bird kept repeating these words; yet I would not believe it, but went on through all the rooms, which were empty and gloomy. At last I came to a cellar, where sat a very old woman, who shook her head mournfully when she saw me. I asked her if my bridegroom dwelt in that house, and she answered, "Alas! poor child, he does dwell here, but this is a murderer's den."'

And then she went on to relate how the old woman had hidden her behind a cask, and the horrors she had seen. At last, after describing the manner in which one of the robbers had chopped off the poor girl's finger, because he could not get at the ring, she said: 'The finger with the ring flew up as he chopped, and fell behind the cask right into my lap. And there is the finger and the ring.'

At these words she placed it on the table, rose up, and pointed it out to everyone present. The robber bridegroom, who during this description had been gradually becoming pale as death, sprang up and would have fled, but the guests held him fast and took him at once before the justices. Soon the whole gang were arrested, and he and they were executed for their shameful deeds.

DR. KORBES.

A COCK and hen determined one day to go for a little trip into the country; so they built a very pretty carriage, which had four red wheels, and harnessed to it four mice. Then they seated themselves in it and drove away together.

They had not travelled far when they met a cat, who said to them, 'Where are you going?'

The hen replied, 'We are going to see Dr. Korbes.'

'Take me with you,' said the cat.

'With all my heart,' she replied; 'but you must get up behind, for if you sit in front you will fall; and take care that you do not dirty my little red wheels.'

'Little red wheels roll,
Little white mice pull,
Till we reach Dr. Korbes' house.'

Then there came by a millstone, then an egg; after that a duck and a darning-needle, and at last a pin, who were allowed seats in the carriage; and they all drove away together. When they arrived at Dr. Korbes' house, he was not at home. The mice drew the little carriage into the barn. The cock and hen flew to a perch; the cat seated herself in the fireplace; the duck waddled to the spring; while the egg rolled itself up in the towel. The darning-needle stuck point upwards in the chair cushion; the pin, jumping on the bed, fixed itself in the pillow; while the millstone placed itself over the entrance door.

Dr. Korbes came home in a short time after this, and went into the room to light the fire; but, while attempting to do this, the cat threw a quantity of ashes into his face. He ran into the kitchen to wash them off, and the duck splashed so much water over him that he was obliged to run into the house for his towel; but as he took it up, the egg rolled over his face, broke, and, filling his eyes, stuck them together like glue. After this he wished to rest; but, as he seated himself in his armchair, the darning-needle ran into him. Up he jumped in a rage, and threw himself on his bed; but this was quite as bad, for no sooner did he lay his head on the pillow than the pin scratched his face. At this last attack he cried out in great trouble, and declared that the things must all have been bewitched, and that he would run away. But as he opened the front-door to go out, down fell the millstone on his head, and killed him. This Dr. Korbes must really have been a very wicked man.

THE GODFATHER.

A MAN once had so many children that all his friends had been asked to become sponsors; so when another child was born he had no one to ask, and knew not what to do.

One night when he had laid himself down to sleep in great trouble, he had a wonderful dream. He dreamed that a voice said to him, 'Go out early to-morrow morning, and the first person you meet, ask him to be godfather.' On awaking he determined to follow the advice given, and went out, met a man, and asked him to be sponsor for his child.

The stranger presented the man with a little glass of water, and said, 'This is most wonderful water, with which you will have the power of curing sick persons; you have only to observe where Death stands. If he stands by the head of the sick person, then give him the water, and he will be soon well; but if he stands by the feet, all your trouble will be useless—the sick person must die.'

From this time the man could always tell whether the sick person would recover or not, and by this he made a great deal of money, and his fame spread far and wide. Even the king sent for him for one of his children; and as he entered he saw Death standing at the head of the bed, and knew that the child would recover; and so he did. The second time the same occurred; but on his third visit the doctor saw Death seated at the foot of the bed, and he told the parents that the child must die. After a while the man thought he should like to see his child's godfather, and tell him how he was getting on. But when he reached the house the domestic arrangements quite startled him. On the first step a mop and a broom were quarrelling together and fighting furiously. 'Where shall I find the master of this house?' he asked.

'A flight higher,' answered the broom.

But when he arrived on the second flight of stairs, he saw a number of dead fingers lying together; and he inquired again, 'Where is the master?'

'A flight higher,' replied one of the fingers.

On the third flight lay a heap of human heads, who directed him to go a flight higher. On the fourth flight he saw some fish frizzling in the pan, and cooking themselves. They told him to go a flight higher. On he went; and at last, on the fifth flight, he came upon the door of a room, and, peeping through the keyhole, saw the godfather; and, to his surprise, he had large horns. But as soon as he opened the door and went in, the strange man with the horns rushed away suddenly, laid himself on the bed, and drew the clothes over him. Then said the man, 'What is the meaning of this strange management in your house, good sir? On the stairs I met with all sorts of strange things, and was told to go up higher; and when

I came to the door of this room, I peeped through the keyhole and saw you with a pair of horns on your head.'

'That is not true!' cried the pretended godfather, in such a terrible voice that the man, in a fright, turned to run away; but no one knows what has become of him, for he has never been heard of since.

GODFATHER DEATH.

THERE was once a poor man who had twelve children, and had to work night and day to get even bread for them. When, therefore, a thirteenth child came, he did not know what to do, but ran out into the street, and resolved to ask the first person who met him to be its godfather. The first who met him was a good angel, who knew what was in his heart, and said to him, 'Poor man! I pity you. I will hold the child at the font, and will take care of it, and make it happy on earth.' 'Who art thou?' asked the man. 'I am an angel.' 'Then I do not wish you to be godfather,' said the man; 'you give to the rich, and leave the poor to suffer hunger.' The man said this because he did not know how wisely God distributes riches and poverty. He turned, therefore, away from the angel and went further. Then the devil came to him, and said, 'What are you seeking? If you will take me as the godfather of your son, I will give him gold in plenty, and all the pleasures of the world besides.' The man asked, 'Who are you?' 'I am the devil.' 'I do not want you for a godfather,' said the man; 'you deceive and betray men.' He went further; and then came to him death, with the withered bones, and said, 'Take me for godfather.' The man asked, 'Who art thou?' 'I am Death, who make all things equal.' Then said the man, 'You are the right one: you take away the rich as well as the poor, without distinction. You shall be the godfather.' Death answered, 'I will make thy child rich and famous, for he who has me for a friend will never want.' The man said, 'Next Sunday is the baptism; come in good time.'

Death appeared, as he had promised, and stood like an ordinary godfather. When the boy was grown up, the godfather came one day, and bade him go with him. He led him into the wood, and showed him a herb which grew there, and said, 'Now you shall receive your godfather's present. I make

you now a famous physician. When you are called to a patient, I will always appear to you. If I stand at the head of the patient, you may say boldly that you will cure him. You will give him then of this herb, and he will recover. But if I stand at the patient's feet, he is mine, and you must say that no one could save him—that no physician on earth could cure him. But take care, and do not use the herb against my will, or it may be the worse for you.' It was not long before the youth became the most famous physician in the world. 'He needed only to see the patient, and he knew directly whether he would get well or if he would die,' they said of him; and the people came from far and wide, and brought him those that were ill; and he became a rich man. Now, it happened that the king became ill. The physician was called, and desired to say whether cure was possible. As he came to the bed, Death stood at the foot, and therefore there was no herb grown to cure him.

'If I could only deceive Death once,' thought the physician, 'he will be sure to be angry, but, as I am his godson, he might overlook it. I will venture.' He therefore took the patient and reversed his position on the bed, so that Death was thus at the head. Then he gave him of the root, and the king recovered. But Death came to the physician, looked angrily at him, threatened him with his finger, and said, 'You have got the better of me; I will forgive it this time, as you are my godson, but if you dare to do it again, I will take you with me and break your neck.'

Soon after the daughter of the king fell dangerously ill. She was an only child, and the king wept night and day, so that his eyes were nearly blinded; and he let it be known that whoever would save her from death should have her to wife and inherit the kingdom. The physician, when he came to the bed of the patient, saw Death at her feet. He should have remembered the warning of his godfather, but the great beauty of the princess, and the happiness of becoming her husband, so befooled him that he threw all caution to the winds. He did not see that Death was casting angry glances at him, raising his hand and threatening him with his bony fist. He lifted up the princess and laid her head where her feet had lain. Then he gave her the herb, and immediately her cheeks became red and life moved in her afresh.

Death, when he saw himself a second time cheated out of his property, went with long strides up to the physician, and said, 'It is all up with you, and the lot has fallen on you,' seized him

with his icy hand, so that he could not resist, and led him into a subterranean cave. There he saw thousands and thousands of lights burning in countless rows: some tall, others half-sized, others short. Some were extinguished every minute, and others burnt up. Thus the flames seemed to leap hither and thither in constant change.

'Do you see?' said Death; 'these lights are the lives of men. The tall ones belong to children, the half-sized to married people in their prime, the short ones to old men. Still, children and young people have often only a short light.' 'Show me mine,' said the physician. He thought it would still be a tall one. Death showed him a little end that was just threatening to go out. 'Behold it there.' 'Oh, dear godfather,' said the frightened physician, 'light a new one for me; do it for love of me, that I may enjoy my life, be king, and the husband of the beautiful princess.' 'I cannot,' answered Death; 'I must first extinguish one before a new one is lighted.' 'Then put the old one on the top of a new one, that it may at once go on burning when the other is finished,' begged the physician. Death acted as if he were going to fulfil his wish, and took down a fresh tall light; but, because he wished to revenge himself, he made a mistake on purpose in fixing it, and the little piece fell over and was extinguished. Immediately the physician sank to the ground, and was himself in the hands of Death.

THUMBLING'S TRAVELS.

A TAILOR had a son who was so very small, that he gave him the name of Thumbling. The little mite was, however, courageous, and said to his father, 'Father, I must go out into the world.'

'Very well, my son,' he replied. Then he took a darning-needle, and made a top to it with sealing-wax, and said, 'There is a sword to help you on your way.'

Before he started, the little fellow thought he should like to have something to eat, so he hopped into the kitchen to see what his mother could give him. He was just in time, for a dish stood on the hearth.

'Good mother, what can you give me to eat to-day?' he said.

'See for yourself,' she replied.

Away sprang Thumbling to the hearth, and peeped into the dish, but, as he was stretching his neck over, the steam caught him and drove him up the chimney.

For a time he floated on the steam in the air, but at last he sank down again to the earth, and found himself in the wide world. He went and engaged himself to a master tailor, but the food did not please him; and one day he went to his master's wife and said, 'Mistress, if you don't give me something better to eat, I shall go away early to-morrow morning, and write with chalk on your house-door, "Too many potatoes, too little meat. Adieu, Sir Potato King."'

'You little grasshopper,' cried the mistress angrily, 'what wouldst thou have?' And she seized a duster, and was going to beat him with it, but he crept nimbly under her thimble, which stood on the table, and put out his tongue at her. She lifted up the thimble, and tried to catch hold of him, but the little dwarf hopped into the duster, and as his mistress unrolled it to seek for him, he jumped on the table and called out, 'He, he! Madame Mistress, here I am,' and, when she tried to strike him, he slipped into the table drawer. At last, however, she caught him, and drove him from the house.

The little tailor wandered on till he came to a large forest, and here he met some robbers on their way to steal the king's treasures. As soon as they saw the little man, they said to themselves, 'A little fellow like that would make a capital picklock, he could creep through the keyholes.'

'Hi!' cried one; 'come here, you Giant Goliath. Will you go with us to the king's treasure-chamber? You can easily slip in and throw out the gold to us.'

Thumbling thought for awhile, and then said, 'Yes, I will go with you to the treasure-chamber.'

When he reached the door, he examined it well, but there appeared not a hole or a crevice under or above it. At last he discovered one just wide enough for him to creep through. He was standing ready to get through, when one of the sentinels who stood before the door noticed him, and said to the other, 'Look at that ugly little spider creeping there. I shall just crush it to death with my foot.'

'Let the poor animal go,' said the other; 'it has done you no harm.'

Thumbling crept through into the treasure-chamber, opened the window under which the robbers stood, and threw out dollars to them one after the other.

In the midst of this work he heard the king coming to visit his treasures, and quickly hid himself. The king very soon missed a number of dollars, but he could not imagine how they had been stolen, for the locks and bolts were in perfect order, and all appeared carefully guarded. Thereupon he went out and said to the sentinels, 'Watch carefully; there is someone after the money.'

When the king was gone, Thumbling set to work again, and the sentinels could hear someone moving, as well as the clink of money. They rushed into the room quickly to seize the thief, but Thumbling was as quick as they were; he ran into a corner, and covered himself with one of the dollars, so that he could not be seen.

Then he began to tease the sentinels, and cried, 'Here I am.' But by the time they had reached the place from whence the sound came, he had jumped into another corner, under another dollar, and cried, 'Hi, here I am.' And so he kept them rushing about from one corner of the room to another, making fools of them till they were quite tired out, and went away. After they were gone, he again threw dollars out of the window one after another as swiftly as possible, and then with a spring jumped after them.

The robbers were so pleased that one of them said, 'You are quite a mighty hero. Will you be our captain?'

Thumbling reflected for awhile, and then said he should like to see a little more of the world first. On this they divided the spoil into shares, but Thumbling only had a kreutzer, for he could not carry any more. Thumbling again took his sword by his side, wished the robbers good-bye, and walked away on foot.

First he engaged himself as workman to other masters, but they did not fancy him, so at last he became servant at an hotel. The maids did not like him at all, for, without being seen himself, he found out all their secrets, and told the master of what they took from the plates, or fetched from the cellar. Then they said, 'Only wait; we'll catch you some day, and drown you.' And they made an agreement among themselves that they really would serve him out.

One morning a maid went into the garden to mow the grass, and she saw the dwarf jumping and creeping about. Then she cut the grass quickly round him, wrapped it up in a cloth, and threw it to the cows, and one of them gobbled him up with the grass. Here he found himself in great darkness, but the cow had not hurt him. When the cow was milked, he cried out

with all his might, 'Let me out! let me out!' The herdsman who heard the voice was much alarmed, and sent for his master, who also distinctly heard the words, 'Let me out! let me out!'

'Where are you?' he asked.

'In the dark,' replied the dwarf.

'The cow is bewitched,' said the master, and, after ordering it to be slaughtered, he went away.

The next morning the cow was killed, and, fortunately, while it was being cut up, Thumbling was not hurt, but, to his terror, he found himself with that part of the cow that was to be made into sausages. When the butcher began to chop, Thumbling screamed out with all his strength, 'Don't cut too deep! don't cut too deep! I am just under.' But the man did not hear, because of the noise made by the chopping-knife. Now was poor little Thumbling in great trouble and danger, but the danger made him sprightly. He jumped aside and between the chopping-knives so quickly and nimbly that he got no hurt, and came off with a whole skin.

But he could not save himself from being mixed with the sausage-meat and forced into the skin, where he was obliged to remain for a long time; for the sausages were hung in the chimney to be smoked.

At last, in winter, he was taken down, because sausages were wanted for a guest, and when the landlord's wife took them down to divide them, Thumbling kept himself carefully out of the way of her knife, for if he had stretched out his neck his head most certainly would have been cut off. But he managed to escape when the opening was made at the end of the sausage without being hurt, and no sooner did he breathe the fresh air, than he sprang out again to freedom.

He did not care to remain at a house where he had been so badly served, and soon, therefore, started again on his travels. But his freedom did not last long, for a fox snapped him up.

'Oh, Mr. Fox,' cried the little tailor, 'it is I that stick in your throat. Let me out!'

'You are right,' said the fox; 'you are not worth much. Promise me your father's chickens, and I will let you go.'

'Willingly,' answered Thumbling, 'you shall have the chickens.'

And when the father saw his son, he gave the fox all the chickens he had.

'I have brought you a beautiful piece of money,' said Tom; 'as much as I could carry;' and he offered him the kreutzer.

'If that is all you have gained by your travels, you might as well have remained at home,' replied his father, but his son was dearer to him than all the chickens in the yard.

FITCHER'S BIRD.

THERE was once a wizard who took the form of a poor man, went before houses and begged, and entrapped pretty girls. No one knew where he took them, for they never came back again. One day he appeared before the door of a man who had three beautiful daughters, and looked like a poor, weak beggar, and carried a basket on his back, as if he wished to collect in it charitable gifts. He begged for something to eat, and when the eldest came out and offered him a piece of bread, he only touched her and she was obliged to jump into his basket. He at once hastened away with long strides, and carried her to his house, which stood in the midst of a dark wood. Everything in the house was magnificent. He gave her everything she wished, and said, 'My treasure, you ought to be well pleased here with me, as you have everything your heart can desire.' This lasted for a few days; then he said, 'I must travel, and leave you alone for a short time. Here are the house-keys. You can go about the house and look at everything, except into a room which this little key opens. I forbid you to go there on pain of death.' He also gave her an egg, and said, 'Preserve the egg carefully, and carry it constantly with you, for if it is lost a great misfortune will happen.' She took the keys and the egg, and promised to obey him.

When he was gone, she went over the house from the top to the bottom, and looked at everything. The rooms shone with silver and gold, and she thought that she had never seen such splendour. At last she came to the forbidden door. She wished to pass it by, but curiosity left her no rest. She looked at the key; it seemed just like any other. She put it in, and then turned it a little, and the door sprang open. But what did she see when she entered? A large basin full of blood stood in the middle of the room; in it there lay human beings hacked to pieces, and by it stood a wooden block, and a shining axe lay thereon. She was so frightened that the egg which she held in her hand fell into the basin. She picked it

out and wiped off the blood, but in vain; it appeared again in a minute. She washed and scrubbed it, but she could not get it off.

Not long after the man returned, and the first things he asked for were the key and the egg. She handed them to him, but she trembled as she did so, and he at once saw by the red spots that she had been in the death-chamber. 'You went into that room against my will,' he said; 'now you will go back to it against your own. Your life is ended.' He threw her down, dragged her along by her hair, cut her head off on the block, and hacked at her so that her blood flowed on the ground; then he threw her into the basin with the rest.

'Now I will go and fetch the second,' said the wizard, and he went again in the form of a poor man to the house and begged. The second brought him a piece of bread; he caught her as he had the first by simply touching her, and brought her away. Things went no better with her than with her sister, for she allowed herself to be guided by her curiosity, opened the door of the fatal chamber and looked in, and had, on the man's return, to pay for it with her life.

He went next and carried away the third sister, but she was wise and cunning. When he had given her the key and the egg, and had departed, she first put away the egg with great care; then she looked over the house, and at last went into the forbidden chamber. Ah! what did she see? Her two sisters lay there in the basin murdered, and cut in pieces; but she raised them up, and sought for all the limbs, and laid them in right order—head, body, arms, and legs. And as nothing was wanting, the limbs began to move themselves and joined themselves together, and the two girls opened their eyes and were again alive.

Then were they joyful, and kissed and embraced one another.

On his return the man demanded both key and egg, and as he could discover no trace of blood on them he said, 'You have stood the test; you shall be my bride.'

He had now no more power over her, and had to do whatever she wished. 'Very well,' answered she, 'you must first take to my father and mother a basketful of gold, and you must carry it yourself on your back, while I will prepare for the wedding.' Then she ran to her sisters, who were hidden in a room, and said, 'The time is at hand when I can save you! The good-for-nothing man shall himself carry you home; but as soon as you get there send me help.' She placed both in a basket and covered them completely with gold, so that nothing

could be seen of them. Then she called in the wizard and said, 'Now carry away the basket, but you must not stay and rest on the road, for I will look through my little window and watch you.'

The wizard raised the basket on his back and went away with it. It weighed on him till the perspiration ran down his face, and he sat down and wished to rest awhile, but immediately one of the girls in the basket cried, 'I am looking through my little window and see that you are resting; will you go on!' He thought the bride had called to him, and got up. Again he wished to rest, but at once she called out, 'I am looking through my little window and see that you are resting; go on.' And as often as he stood still the girl called, and he was obliged to go on, until at last, groaning and out of breath, he brought the basket and the two girls to their parents' house.

At home, however, the bride arranged the marriage-feast, and invited the friends of the wizard. Then she took a death's head with grinning teeth, placed on it ornaments and a wreath of flowers, and took it up to the garret window and let it look down from there. When all was ready she got into a barrel of honey, and cut up the bed and rolled herself in it, so that she looked like a wonderful bird, and no one could recognise her. Then she went out, and on the way there met her some of the wedding guests, who asked her:

'"Oh, Fitcher's Bird, whence comest thou?"
"From Fitcher's house I came just now."
"What is the young bride doing there?"
"Making the house both clean and fair;
From cellars to the top she sweeps,
And from the garret window peeps."'

By-and-by she met the bridegroom, who was wandering slowly back. He asked, as the others had:

'"Oh, Fitcher's Bird, whence comest thou?"
"From Fitcher's house I came just now."
"What is the young bride doing there?"
"Making the house both clean and fair;
From cellars to the top she sweeps,
And from the garret window peeps."'

The bridegroom looked up and saw the adorned death's head, and thought it was his bride; he beckoned to her, and greeted her kindly.

As soon, however, as he and his guests had gone into the house, the brothers and relatives of the bride who were sent to

save her arrived. They shut all the doors, so that no one could escape, and then set it on fire, and thus the wizard and all his companions were burnt to death.

THE JUNIPER-TREE.

A LONG while ago, quite two thousand years, there was a rich man who had a beautiful wife, of whom he was very fond; but they had no children, though he wished for them very much. In the garden before their house stood a juniper-tree, and one day in winter the lady was standing under it peeling an apple. She cut her finger, and drops of blood trickled down on the snow. 'Ah,' she said, sighing heavily, 'how happy I should be if I had a little child as white as snow and as red as blood!' And as she said this she grew quite cheerful, and felt sure that her wish would be fulfilled. After a while the snow was gone, and everything was green; the flowers came up on the earth, the trees put forth their leaves, the young branches shed their blossoms on the ground, and the little birds sang in the groves. The sweet-smelling leaves of the juniper-tree began to unfold, and the lady's heart leapt for joy, and she fell on her knees. A month passed by, and the fruit was thick and fine; she ate of the berries, and then grew sad and ill, and said to her husband, 'If I die, bury me under the juniper-tree.' Then she was comforted and joyful, and when another month was passed she had a child as white as snow and as red as blood, and when she looked on it she was so joyful that she died.

Then her husband buried her under the juniper-tree, and wept and mourned for her; but after awhile he grew calmer, dried his tears, and married another wife. This second wife had a daughter; the child of the first wife was a son, who was as red as blood and as white as snow. The mother loved her daughter, but hated the little boy, and thought continually how she could get all the money for her own child; so she used him harshly, pushed him about from one corner to another, and thumped him and pinched him, so that the poor child was afraid of her. When he came from school he had nowhere to rest. One day when the mother was in the store-room her little daughter came up and said, 'Mother, give me an apple.' 'Yes, my child,' she answered, and gave her a

beautiful apple out of the chest. The chest had a great heavy lid, and a great sharp iron lock. 'Mother,' said the little daughter, 'shall not brother have one also?' This vexed the woman, but she said, 'Yes, when he comes from school.'

Then, as she looked out of the window, she saw him coming, and just as if the Wicked One had entered into her, she snatched the apple from her daughter and said, 'You shall not have it before your brother.' And she threw the apple into the chest and shut it. When the little boy came to the door, the Wicked One made her say quite pleasantly, 'My son, will you have an apple?' But she looked so wickedly at him. 'How kind you are!' said the little one. 'Yes, I should like to have an apple.' It seemed as if she were forced to say, 'Come with me, then.' And she lifted the lid and said, 'Take out an apple for yourself;' and as the boy stooped to take one out she let the lid fall crash, and his head flew off and fell among the red apples. Then she was greatly terrified, and thought how she could lay the blame on someone else. So she went up to his bedroom and took a white handkerchief out of a top drawer, fitted the little boy's head on his shoulders, and tied the handkerchief round it so that no one could see what had happened, and seated him on a stool before the door with an apple in his hand. Soon afterwards Margery came into the kitchen to her mother, who stood by the fire stirring a pot of hot water.

'Mother,' said Margery, 'my brother is sitting before the door with an apple in his hand. I asked him to give it to me, but he did not answer me, and he looked so pale that I was frightened.'

'Go again,' said the mother, 'and if he does not answer you give him a box on the ear.' Margery went back, and said: 'Brother, give me the apple;' but as he was still silent, she gave him a box on the ear, and his head fell off. At this she was frightened, and began to cry and scream, and ran to her mother, and said: 'Mother, I have knocked my brother's head off!' and she wept and wept and would not be comforted. 'Margery,' said the mother, 'what have you done? However, what is done cannot be undone. We must put him out of the way, so that no one may know it.' Then the mother cut the little boy into pieces and put him in the pan, and made him into black-puddings. Margery stood and wept and wept, so that her tears fell into the pan, and it needed no salt.

When the father came home to dinner, he said: 'Where is my boy?' The mother served up a dish of black-puddings, and

Margery wept and could not stop. Then said the father again, 'Where is my son?' 'Ah,' said the mother, 'he is gone across the country to his mother's great-uncle; he will stay there some time.' 'And what is he going to do there? He did not even say good-bye to me.'

'Oh, he wished to go; he will stay six weeks. He is well taken care of there.' 'Oh,' said the man, 'I am sorry; it does not seem right. He should have said good-bye to me;' and he began to eat, and said: 'Margery, why do you weep? Brother will soon be back. Ah, wife,' he added, 'how good this food tastes! give me more.' And the more he ate the more he wanted. Margery slipped out of the room and went to her drawers and took her best silk handkerchief and picked up all the boy's bones from under the table and wrapped them in the silk handkerchief and went out of the door and wept bitterly. Then she laid them on the grass under the juniper-tree, and her heart felt lighter and she wept no more. Then the juniper-tree began to move, and the branches parted asunder and came together again, as if one were clapping one's hands for joy. A mist came out of the tree, and the centre of it burned as if on fire, and out of the fire there flew a beautiful bird, singing merrily. The juniper-tree remained as before, and the handkerchief with the bones was taken away. Margery felt quite happy, just as if her brother were alive. She went into the house and ate her dinner; but the bird flew away and perched on the roof of a goldsmith's house, and sang:

'My mother slew her little son,
My father thought me lost and gone;
But pretty Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper-tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a beautiful bird am I!'

The goldsmith was sitting in his workshop, making a golden chain, when he heard the bird singing on his roof. He started up so suddenly that he lost one of his slippers. Then he went out into the middle of the street with one slipper on, with his apron on and his pincers in one hand, and the gold chain in the other, and the sun shone brightly on it. He stood and said to the bird, 'Bird, how beautifully you sing! sing me that song again.'

'No,' said the bird, 'I can't sing twice for nothing. If you will give me that gold chain I will sing it again.' 'There,' said the goldsmith, 'take the chain, only pray sing that song

again.' So the bird flew down, and, taking the chain in its right claw, perched nearer to the goldsmith, and sang:

'My mother slew her little son,
My father thought me lost and gone;
But Sister Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper-tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a beautiful bird am I!'

Then the bird flew away to a shoemaker, and, sitting on the roof, sang the same song. When the shoemaker heard the song he ran to the door in his shirt-sleeves, and looked up at the roof; but he was obliged to hold his hand before his eyes, as the sun shone so brightly. 'Bird,' said he, 'how sweetly you sing!' Then he called into the house, 'Wife, come out here and hear the bird how beautifully it can sing.' Then he called his daughters and his workmen, and they all ran out to see the bird. Beautiful indeed it was, with red and green feathers, and round its neck was a ring of gold, and its eyes glittered like stars. 'Bird,' said the shoemaker, 'sing me that song again.'

'No,' said the bird; 'I do not sing twice for nothing. You must first give me something.'

'Wife,' said the man, 'go into the shop and bring a pair of new red shoes.' The woman went and brought the shoes.

'There, bird,' said the shoemaker, 'now sing me that song again.'

Then the bird came down and took the shoes in his left claw, and flew again to the roof, and sang:

'My mother slew her little son,
My father thought me lost and gone;
But Sister Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper-tree;
And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a beautiful bird am I!'

And when he had done singing he flew away, holding the shoes in one claw and the chain in the other, and he flew on till he came to a mill. And the mill went clipper-clapper, clipper-clapper, clipper-clapper. In the mill were twenty millers, who were at work hewing a millstone. And the millers hewed pick-hack, pick-hack, and the mill went on clipper-clapper, clipper-clapper. Then the bird perched on a lime-tree which stood before the mill, and sang:

'My mother slew her little son—'

Then one man gave up working.

'My father thought me lost and gone—'

Then two more gave up work and listened.

'But Sister Margery pitied me—'

Others left off.

'And laid me under the juniper-tree—

And now all but one left off work.

'And now I rove so merrily,
As over the hills and dales I fly:
Oh, what a beautiful bird am I!'

The last miller started up and said: 'Bird, what is it you are singing so sweetly? Let me hear it all—sing it again.'

'No,' said the bird; 'I cannot sing twice for nothing. Give me that millstone, and I will sing it again.'

'Yes,' said he, 'if all agree, you shall have it.'

'Yes,' said the others, 'if he will sing it again he shall have it.'

Then the bird came down and the twenty fetched poles to raise up the stone. 'Heave ho! heave ho!' The bird put its head through the hole and took it up as a collar, and flew up on the tree and sang the same song again.

And when he had finished he spread his wings, and with the chain in one claw, and the shoes in another, and the millstone round his neck, flew to his father s house.

In the room sat the father, the mother, and Margery at the table. The father said: 'I feel so light and cheerful.'

'I do not,' said the mother; 'I feel so frightened, as if a heavy storm were coming on.' Margery said nothing, but wept and wept. Just then the bird came and perched on the roof. 'Ah,' said the father, 'how happy I am! I feel as if I were going to see an old friend again.' 'Ah!' said the mother, 'I am so frightened; my teeth chatter, and it is as if there were fire in my veins;' and she tore her dress open. But Margery sat in a corner and wept, and her plate, which was on her lap, was filled with tears. Then the bird flew to the top of the juniper-tree, and sang:

'My mother slew her little son—'

Then the mother covered her ears and shut her eyes, as if she would not see or hear; but there was a roaring in her ears like a storm, and her eyes burned and glared like lightning.

'My father thought me lost and gone—'

'Oh, wife,' said the man, 'there is a beautiful bird, who sings so sweetly. His feathers shine in the sun like so many spangles.'

'But Sister Margery pitied me,
And laid me under the juniper-tree—'

Then Margery laid her head on her knees, and wept without ceasing. But the man said: 'I must go out and look at the bird nearer.' 'Oh, do not go!' said the wife; 'it seems to me as if the whole house is in flames.' But the man went out and looked at the bird.

'But now I rove so merrily:
Oh, what a beautiful bird am I!'

With this the bird let the golden chain fall, and it fell on the man's neck. It fitted so nicely and was so beautiful that he went back and said: 'See what a wonderful bird it is! It has given me this gold chain, which suits me so well.'

But his wife was so frightened that she fell down on the floor, and her cap fell off her head. Then the bird sang again as before, and Margery said: 'I will go out and see if the bird will give me anything.'

So she went out, and the bird threw the shoes to her. And when she had put on the red shoes she at once became light and happy and jumped about. 'Ah,' said she, 'I was so sad when I went out, and now I feel so light. See what fine shoes the bird has given me!'

Then the mother said: 'Well, if the world should go to pieces I must go out and try if it will make me better.' Now, as she came out of the door, the bird let the millstone fall on her head and crushed her. The father and Margery, hearing the noise, ran out, but saw nothing but smoke and fire rising up. When it passed away there stood the little boy beside them. And he took his father and Margery by the hand, and they went into the house well pleased and ate their dinners.

OLD SULTAN AND HIS FRIENDS.

A COUNTRYMAN had a faithful hound, called Sultan, that had grown old in his service. He had lost all his teeth, and could no longer follow with the pack.

One day the countryman stood before the door with his wife and said to her, 'Old Sultan is no longer of any use. I shall shoot him to-morrow.'

But the mistress, who had pity for the faithful animal, exclaimed, 'How can you destroy him, after he has served us so many years? I am sure we could spare him some allowance.'

'No, no,' replied her husband, 'that is not just reasoning. He has not a tooth in his head, and the thieves are not afraid of him, so he may as well go. If he has served us well, so has he also been well fed.'

The poor dog, who was lying stretched out in the sun, not far off, heard all that was said, and it made him sad to know that the morrow would be his last day.

Now, Sultan had a good friend, a wolf; so in the evening he slipped out into the forest to visit him, and complained to him of the fate which awaited him.

'Listen, gossip,' said the wolf; 'take courage. I will help you out of your trouble. I have thought of something. To-morrow morning early your master and his wife are going out into the fields haymaking, and they will take their little child with them. While they are at work, they will lay the child under the hedge in the shadow. You lay yourself by him, as if you meant to watch him. I will wait till all is quiet, and then I will run out of the wood and seize the child. Then you must spring after me, as if you would seize it from me. I will let the child fall, and you shall bring it back to its parents again, and they will believe that you have saved it from me, and will be the more thankful because they intended to kill you. Instead of that, you will be in full favour, and nothing will ever cause them to give you up.'

The dog followed this advice, and, as it had been planned, so it was accomplished. The father screamed as he saw the wolf run away with his child through the wood; but when poor old Sultan brought it back, his joy and gratitude knew no bounds. He stroked and patted the old dog, saying, 'Nothing shall ever hurt you now, you dear old dog, and you shall never want for food and shelter as long as you live.'

To his wife he said, 'Go home at once, wife, and cook some bread and milk for poor old Sultan. It is soft, and will not require teeth to bite it. And bring the pillow from my arm-chair. He shall have it for a bed.'

And so from this time old Sultan had every comfort and contentment that his heart could wish. By-and-by Sultan went to pay the wolf a visit, and told him of his good fortune.

'Gossip,' he said slyly, 'I suppose now you will shut your eyes, and not see if I carry away a fat sheep from your master's flock. It is very hard to get food nowadays.'

'I can't help that,' said the dog. 'My master trusts in me, and I dare not allow you to do so.'

The wolf, however, did not believe the dog spoke in earnest, so he came in the night, slipped into the fold, and would have carried off a sheep, if Sultan had not forewarned his master of the wolf's intention.

He watched for him, and gave him a good combing with the flail, till he was almost bare of hair.

So he was obliged to rush away, crying out, however, to the dog, 'Only wait a little, you false friend! You shall pay for this.'

The next morning the wolf sent a challenge to the dog by his friend the wild boar, who had promised to stand second. They appointed to meet in the wood, and poor old Sultan had no one to stand by him but a cat, who had only three legs. Puss hobbled along on her three legs with great pain, and her tail stood erect. The wolf and the wild boar were already on the appointed spot, but when they saw their adversaries approaching, they thought that the cat's tail was a sabre, and that each time puss humped her back, as she hopped, it must be a large stone which Sultan intended to throw at them. They were both so frightened that the wild boar crept in among the dried leaves, and the wolf sprang up a tree.

The dog and the cat were much surprised when they reached the place to find no one there, but the cat espied something on the ground which she took for a mouse.

Now, the wild boar, when he crept among the dried leaves to hide himself, left his gray ears sticking out; and, when the cat began to smell about, she saw the ears move, and, taking one of them for a mouse, sprang forward, caught tne ear in her teeth, and bit it in half. The wild boar started up with a terrible scream, exclaiming, 'There is the real offender up in the tree,' and ran away as fast as he could. The dog and the cat looked up and saw the wolf, who was so ashamed of his cowardice that he came down from the tree and made friends with the dog again.

THE SIX SWANS.

A KING once hunted in a large forest with such eagerness that none of his people could keep up with him. When evening came, he stopped and looked around him, but found that he had lost his way. He sought a path out, but could find none. Then he saw an old woman, with a head always nodding, coming towards him ; but she was a witch.

'My good woman,' said he to her, 'can you not show me the way through the forest?'

'Oh yes, sir king,' she answered, 'I can; but on one condition; and, if you will not fulfil it, you will never get out of the forest, and will die of hunger.'

'What is the condition?' asked the king.

'I have a daughter,' said the old woman, 'who is as beautiful a girl as is to be found in the world, and well deserves to be your wife. If you will make her your queen, I will show you the way out of the wood.' The king, in the anguish of his heart, consented, and the old woman led him to her hut, where her daughter sat by the fire. She received the king as if she expected him, and he saw that she was very beautiful; but she did not please him, and he could not look at her without a secret shuddering. After he had raised the girl on to his horse, the old woman showed him the way, and the king reached his royal castle, where the wedding was celebrated.

The king had already been married once, and had of his first wife seven children, six boys and a girl, whom he loved above everything in the world. Now, as he feared that the stepmother might not treat them well, but do them some harm, he placed them in a solitary castle which stood in the midst of a wood. It lay so concealed, and the way to it was so difficult to find, that he himself could not have found it, if the wise woman had not given him a ball of yarn of wonderful properties. If he threw it down before him, it unwound itself and showed him the way. The king, however, went so often to his dear children that the queen noticed his absence. She was curious, and wanted to know what he had to do all alone in the wood She gave his servants much money, and they betrayed to her the secret, and told her also of the ball of yarn which alone could show the way. She had now no rest until she had found out where the king kept the ball, and then she made

little white silk shirts, and, as she had learnt witchcraft of her mother, she sewed in them a charm. And when the king had ridden to the hunt, she took the little shirts and went into the wood, the ball of yarn showing her the way. The children, who saw someone coming in the distance, thought that it was their father, and, full of joy, ran to meet him. Then she threw over each of them a shirt, and as it touched them they were turned into swans, and flew away over the forest. The queen went home quite pleased, and thought that she was free of them; but the girl had not run out with her brothers, and she knew nothing of her. The next day the king went to visit his children, but found no one except the girl.

'Where are thy brothers?' asked the king.

'Ah, dear father,' answered she, 'they are away, and have left me alone.' And she told him that she had seen out of her window how her brothers had flown away as swans over the wood, and showed him the feathers which they had let fall in the yard, and which she had picked up. The king mourned, but he never thought that the queen had done this bad deed; and, because he feared that the girl would be stolen from him, he wished to take her with him. But she was frightened at the stepmother, and begged the king that she might stay in the forest castle just one more night.

The poor girl thought, 'As I cannot stay here longer, I will go and look for my brothers.' When night came, she fled and ran straight into the wood. She walked the whole night through, and also the next day, without stopping, until she could go no farther from weariness. Then she saw a hut, went in, and found a room with six beds, but she did not trust herself to lie down, but crept under one and lay on the hard ground, intending to pass the night there. But just as the sun was about to set she heard a rustling, and saw that six swans had flown in at the window. They placed themselves on the ground, and blew at each other and blew all their feathers off, and their swans' skins they stripped off like a shirt. Then the girl looked at them, and recognised her brothers. She was glad, and crept out from under the bed. The brothers were not less rejoiced when they saw their sister, but their joy was of short duration.

'You cannot stay here,' said they to her; 'this is a shelter for robbers; if they come home and find you, they will murder you.'

'Could you not protect me?' asked the sister.

'No,' answered they; 'for we can only lay aside our swans'

skins for a quarter of an hour every evening, and have our human shape, and then we are again changed into swans.'

The sister wept, and said, 'Can you not be redeemed?'

'No,' answered they; 'the conditions are too severe. You must neither speak nor laugh for six years, and must make for us six shirts of asters sewn together. If but a single word escaped from your mouth, your labour would be lost.

As the brothers spoke, the quarter of an hour was past and they flew again, as swans, out of the window.

The maiden, however, took a firm resolution to redeem her brothers, even should it cost her her life. She left the hut, went into the midst of the wood, lay down under a tree, and passed the night there. On the next morning she went out, collected asters, and began to sew them together. She could speak with no man, and she had no desire to laugh; she sat there and only looked at her work. When she had already spent a long time there, it happened that the king of the country hunted in the forest, and his huntsmen came to the tree in which the maiden sat. They called her and said, 'Who art thou?' But she gave no answer. 'Come to us,' said they; 'we will do you no harm.' She merely shook her head; as they pressed her further with questions, she threw down to them her golden necklace, thinking that they would be content with it. They did not, however, stop. She then threw down her girdle, and when that was of no use her garters, and by-and-by everything she could spare, so that she retained nothing but her skirts. The huntsmen would not be refused; they climbed the tree, brought down the maiden, and led her before the king. The king asked: 'Who art thou? what art thou doing on the tree?' But she answered not; he put these questions to her in all the languages that he knew, but she remained as dumb as a fish. Yet, because she was so beautiful, the king's heart was moved, and he fell greatly in love with her. He wrapped her in his cloak, took her before him on his horse, and brought her into his castle. Then he had her dressed in rich clothes, and she shone in her beauty as the bright day; but no word could be forced from her. He placed her at table beside him, and her modest manners and demeanour pleased him so much that he said: 'I desire to marry her, and no one else on earth;' and after a few days he married her.

The king, however, had a bad mother, who was discontented with the marriage, and spoke evil of the young queen. 'Who knows,' said she, 'who the girl is? she cannot speak; she is not worthy of a king.'

After a year, when the queen's first child was born, the old woman took it away and smeared her mouth with blood while she was asleep. Then she went to the king and accused his wife of being a cannibal. The king would not believe it, and would not suffer anyone to injure her; while she sat constantly sewing at the shirts, and cared for nothing else. When a beautiful boy was born, the wicked stepmother used the same deceit; but the king could not bring himself to believe her. He said: 'She is too pious and good to do such a thing; if she were not dumb, and could defend herself, her innocence would come to light.' But when the old woman stole the newly-born son the third time, and accused the queen, who uttered no word in her defence, the king could not help passing judgment, and condemned her to death by fire.

The day came on which the sentence was to be carried out. It was the last of the six years during which she was not to speak or laugh; and she had delivered her dear brothers from the power of the magic spells. The six shirts were ready, except the left sleeve of the last, which was wanting. When she was led to the stake she placed them on her arm, and when she stood on the pyre, and the fire was just lighted, she looked round and saw six swans flying through the air towards her. Then she knew that her deliverance was at hand, and her heart leaped for joy. The swans rushed towards her, and swept so low that she could throw the shirts over them; and as soon as they touched them the swans' skins fell off, and her brothers stood before her strong and beautiful; but the youngest lacked his left arm, instead of which a swan's wing was on his shoulder. They embraced and kissed each other, and the queen went to the king, who was greatly moved as she said: 'Dearest husband, I may now speak, and reveal to you that I am innocent, and falsely accused.' She then told him of the deceit of the old woman, who had taken away her three children and hidden them. To the great joy of the king they were brought forth, and the wicked mother-in-law was bound to the stake and burnt to ashes. The king, however, and the queen with her six brothers, lived for many years in happiness and peace.

BRIAR ROSE.

ONCE upon a time there lived a king and queen who lamented every day because they had no children. One day, when the queen was in her bath, a frog crept out of the water, and, croaking, said: 'Thy wish will be accomplished; before the end of the year thou shalt have a little daughter.'

And it happened as the frog had prophesied. The queen had a little child, who was so beautiful that the king could hardly contain himself for joy, and ordered a great entertainment. He not only invited his relations, friends, and acquaintance, but also the wise women who could endow his daughter with fairy gifts. There were thirteen of them; but only twelve were invited, as he had only twelve golden plates for them.

The feast was conducted with great pomp, and at the end of it the wise women endowed the king's child with their wonderful gifts. The first gave her virtue, the second beauty, the third riches, and so to the eleventh, with all that can be wished for in the world.

Before the twelfth could speak, in walked the thirteenth. She wished to be revenged for not having been invited; and, without saluting or noticing anyone, cried with a loud voice: 'In her fifteenth year the king's daughter shall prick her finger with a spindle, and fall down dead;' and, without another word, she turned round, and left the hall.

Everyone was alarmed; but the twelfth, who had not yet spoken, stepped forward. She could not undo the wicked decree, but she could soften it. So she said: 'The king's daughter shall not die, but a deep sleep shall fall upon her, in which she shall remain for a hundred years.'

The king, who wished to preserve his child, issued a decree that all the spindles in his kingdom should be burnt.

In every respect the prophecies of the good fairies were fulfilled; for the young princess was so beautiful, so amiable, and so clever, that those who saw her could not help loving her. It happened that on the day when she was just fifteen years old, the king and queen were away, and the maiden was left alone in the castle, and she took a fancy to explore it. So she walked from room to room, through galleries and passages, till she came at last to an old tower.

She ascended the narrow, winding staircase, till at length she

came to a little door. In the lock was stuck a rusty key; and as she turned it the door sprang open, and there, in a small room, sat an old woman spinning flax.

'Good-morning, old lady,' said the princess. 'What are you doing?'

'I am spinning,' she replied, nodding her head.

'And what is this funny thing that springs about so?' the princess asked, at the same time taking the spindle in her hand and trying to spin. Scarcely had she given the wheel one turn when the bad fairy's prophecy was fulfilled—the point of the spindle stuck into her finger. At the same moment the king's daughter fell back on a bed which stood near, while a deep sleep came upon her, and not only on the princess, but on the whole of the inhabitants of the castle—the king and queen, who had returned and were in the state chamber, and all their household with them.

This sleep fell also on the horses in the stable, the dogs in the outer court, the pigeons on the roof, the flies on the wall—yes, and even the fire that flickered on the hearth became still and slept. The meat roasting before the fire stayed its frizzing; the cook in the kitchen, who was just going to box the ears of the scullion, let his hand drop, and sank to sleep; the wind lay at rest, and upon the trees which surrounded the castle not a leaf stirred.

In a few hours there sprung up around the castle a hedge of thorns, which year after year grew higher and higher, till at last nothing could be seen of the castle above it, not even the roof nor the flag on the tower.

A legend spread over the country of the 'sleeping beauty,' as the king's daughter was called. And from time to time the sons of kings came to the spot, and tried to penetrate through the protecting hedge of thorns; but they found it impossible, for the thorns, as if they had hands, seized the young men, and held them so fast that they could not free themselves, and died a miserable death.

Many years passed away, and at length another prince came to that part of the country, and heard an old man relate the story of the thorn-surrounded castle, in which the wonderful sleeping beauty, the king's daughter, lay, who had already slept for nearly a hundred years, with the king and queen and the whole household.

The prince had heard his grandfather talk of the fate of former princes who had tried to force their way through the hedge of thorns, and how they were caught by the bushes, and

died a miserable death. But he said: 'It matters not to me; I have no fear. I will see this beautiful Briar Rose.' The good old man might dissuade him as he would, but he attended not to his words.

Now, the hundred years had come to a close, and the day arrived for Briar Rose to be awaked. When the prince reached the hedge of thorns, he found nothing but large beautiful flowers, which separated from each other to allow him to pass, and closed again behind him like a wall.

In the castle yard he saw horses and staghounds sleeping together. On the roof sat the pigeons, with their heads tucked under their wings.

In the castle the cook, the kitchen-maid, and even the flies on the wall, still slept; and in the saloon he found the king and queen sleeping on their thrones, surrounded by the courtiers and the household, all slumbering peacefully. So deep was the stillness that he could hear his own breathing. However, he wandered on from room to room, till he reached the tower, where the beautiful princess slept. She lay looking so beautiful that he could not turn away his eyes, but stooped and kissed her. At the touch Briar Rose opened her eyes and awoke, and looked smilingly at him.

Then they went down together to the king and queen, who awoke, with the whole court, and looked at each other with surprise; and everybody resumed the employment in which he had been engaged when the enchantment fell upon him. The horse rose and shook himself; the dog sprang up and barked; the pigeons drew out their heads from behind their wings, plumed their feathers, and flew to the field; even the fire aroused itself, and its flickering flame soon burned into a steady blaze, to roast the dinner; and, more than all this, the thorn hedge round the castle sank down and disappeared.

The marriage of the prince and princess was celebrated in a very short time, with great splendour, and they lived happily to the end.

BIRDIE.

A FORESTER went out one day shooting. He had not gone far into the wood when he heard, as he thought, the cry of a child. He turned his steps towards the sound, and at length came to a high tree, on one of the branches of which sat a little child.

A mother, some short time before, had seated herself under a tree with the child in her lap, and fallen asleep.

A bird of prey, seeing the child, seized it in its beak and carried it away, and placed it on a high tree.

The forester said to himself, as he climbed up the tree and brought the child down, 'I will take it home with me, and it shall be brought up with my own little Lena.'

He took it home, and the little foundling grew up with the forester's little daughter, till they loved each other so dearly that they were always unhappy when separated, even for a short time. The forester had named the child Birdie, because she had been carried away by the bird; and Lena and Birdie were happy together.

But the forester had an old cook. One evening the woman took two buckets to the well, and carried them backwards and forwards more than twenty times. 'What are you going to do with all that water?' asked Lena.

'If you will promise not to say a word, I will tell you,' replied the woman.

'I will never tell anyone,' she said.

'Well, to-morrow morning, early, I mean to put all this water into a kettle on the fire; and when it boils, I shall throw Birdie in and cook her for dinner.'

Away went poor Lena, in great distress, to find Birdie. 'If you will never forsake me, I will never forsake you,' said Lena.

'Then,' said Birdie, 'I will never, never leave you, Lena.'

'Well, then,' she replied, 'I am going away, and you must go with me; for old cook says she will get up early to-morrow morning, and boil a lot of water to cook you in, while my father is out hunting. If you stay with me, I can save you; so you must never leave me.'

'No, never, never!' said Birdie.

So the children ran away quickly.

The cook lit her fire, and, as soon as the water boiled, went into the sleeping-room to fetch poor little Birdie and throw her in. But when she came to the bed and found it empty, she was very much frightened to find both the children gone, and said to herself, 'What will the forester say when he comes home if the children are not here? I must go downstairs as fast as I can, and send someone to catch them.' Down she went, and sent three of the farm servants to run after the children, and bring them back.

The children, who were sitting among the trees in the wood,

saw them coming from a distance. 'I will never forsake you, Birdie,' said Lena quickly. 'Will you forsake me?'

'Never, never!' was the reply.

'Then,' cried Lena, 'you shall be turned into a rose-bush, and I will be one of the roses.'

The three servants came up to the place where the old witch had told them to look; but nothing was to be seen but a rose-tree and a rose. 'There are no children here,' they said. So they went back and told the cook that they had found only roses and bushes, but not a sign of the children.

The old woman scolded them well when they told her this, and said, 'You stupid fools! you should have cut off the stem of the rose-bush, and plucked one of the roses, and brought them home with you as quick as possible. You must just go again a second time.'

Lena saw them coming, and she changed herself and Birdie so quickly that when the three servants arrived at the spot to which the old woman had sent them, they found only a little church with a steeple—Birdie was the church and Lena the steeple.

Then the men said one to another, 'What was the use of our coming here? We may as well go home.'

But how the old woman did scold. 'You fools!' she said; 'you should have broken down the church and brought the steeple here. However, I will go myself this time.' So the wicked old woman started off to find the church, taking the three servants with her.

When they saw the three servants coming in the distance, and the old woman waddling behind, Lena said, Birdie, we will never forsake each other.'

'No, no! never, never!' replied the little foundling.

'Then you shall be changed into a pond, and I will be a duck swimming upon it.'

The old woman drew near, and as soon as she saw the pond she laid herself down by it, and, leaning over, intended to drink it all up. But the duck was too quick for her. She seized the head of the old woman with her beak, and drew it under the water, and held it there till the old witch was drowned.

Then the two children went home with the three servants, all happy and delighted; and if they are not dead they all live there still.

KING THRUSHBEARD.

A KING had a daughter who was beautiful beyond measure, but so haughty and proud that she considered no man good enough to marry her. She pretended to accept one after another the suitors who approached her, and then treated them with mockery and scorn. The king made a great feast, and invited all the marriageable men for miles round to be present. They were introduced by their rank. First came a king, then dukes, then princes, and after these nobles.

But the princess, when asked to choose for herself, had some fault to find with each. One was too fat, another too thin, a third was short and thick, and a fourth had a face as pale as a ghost, and so on, till they all went away quite offended, except one son of the king of a neighbouring country—the highest of them all. Now, the princess, in her heart, liked this one of her suitors best, but she made no difference in her manner to him. The young prince had a very good-looking face, but his chin was a little crooked, and he had a rough beard.

'Oh,' said the young princess, when she saw he still waited after the others were gone, 'what a chin he has, to be sure—just like a thrush's beak! I shall call him King Thrushbeard;' and she laughed heartily as she spoke; so people called him King Thrushbeard from that day.

After the feast was over, and the king found that not only had his daughter dismissed all her lovers, but that she had mocked and insulted his guests, he was very angry, and took an oath that his daughter should take as a husband the first poor wayfarer who came to the castle. A day or two after the princess heard the sound of music under her window. The king also heard it, and said, 'Go at once and fetch the musician in.'

The servants obeyed, and presently returned with a wandering minstrel, who played and sang before the castle in hopes of receiving an alms. He was dressed in soiled and ragged clothes, but the king made him stay and sing to them, and when he had finished he asked for a little gift.

'Yes,' replied the king, 'you shall be rewarded. Your song has pleased me so well that I will give you my daughter to be your wife.'

The princess was terrified at her father's words, and would have rushed from the room, but the king prevented her. 'No,'

he said, 'you shall not escape. I took an oath that you should marry the first wayfarer who came to the door, and I will keep my word.'

All objections on the princess's part were useless. The priest was sent for, and she was obliged to plight her troth to a poor minstrel.

As soon as this was accomplished, the king said to his daughter, 'Now that you are the wife of a poor man, you will see how unfit you are to remain in my castle. You must therefore depart at once with your husband.'

The musician took her by the hand as the king spoke, and led her away to travel on foot for a long distance. At length they came to the borders of an extensive forest, which the young wife knew belonged to King Thrushbeard.

'Ah, me!' she cried, 'this wood belongs to the prince that I mocked and insulted. Ah, poor delicate creature that I am! if I had only married him when he wanted me!'

By-and-by they entered a meadow, and she made the same lament, for it belonged to King Thrushbeard. But when at last they came to a large city, near which was his palace, the repeated lamentation at length annoyed her husband.

'It is not pleasant to me to hear you constantly wishing that you had married someone else; am I not good enough for you?'

She made no reply, and they continued to walk on till she was quite tired, and at last her husband stopped before a mean little house.

'What are we stopping here for?' she asked. 'Whose wretched house is this?'

'It is my house and yours,' he replied, 'where we must live together;' and he led her in, but the door was so low that they had to stoop as they entered.

'Where are the servants?' asked the king's daughter.

'What servants?' replied her husband. 'You must wait upon yourself now, and you will have to do all the work—to light the fire, to fetch the water, and cook my dinner—for I am too tired to help you.'

The princess was being punished now for her pride. Her husband, although he could sing, looked so repulsive in his ragged clothes, and with his face tied up as if he had the toothache, that she did not care to do anything for him. Besides, she knew nothing of cooking or lighting fires, so he had to get up and do it himself. After she had taken a little—for she was too sad to eat much—she laid herself down on a miser-

able bed quite tired out. In the morning, however, her husband woke her very early, that she might clean up the house and get breakfast, and she tried to do it to please him, for he was kind and patient with her. Thus they continued for a few days, till their stock of provisions was all gone. Then said the husband, 'Wife, we cannot go on in this way, staying here and earning nothing; you shall learn to plait willow and make baskets—it is not difficult—while I go and earn money some other way.'

So he went out, cut some willow-twigs, and brought them home. She soon learnt to plait, but the hard willow-twigs wounded her soft hands and made them quite sore.

'I see that will not do,' said her husband; 'you must try to spin, dearest—perhaps you may manage that better.'

The king's daughter tried spinning also, but it was of no use; the hard thread soon cut through her soft white fingers till the blood ran down.

'See, now,' said her husband, 'you are good for nothing at work. I am badly off indeed with such a helpless wife, so I must find a trade for you. If I purchase a basketful of different wares, you can sit in the market and sell them.'

'Ah,' thought she, 'when the market-people from my father's kingdom come out and see me sitting there with things to sell, how they will mock me!'

But she could not help herself; she was obliged to go, for she did not want to die of hunger. The first time, however, everything turned out well. People bought goods willingly of such a beautiful woman; all she had was sold, even the basket, and they paid her whatever she asked, so that she went home with plenty of money. They lived on this for some time—as long as it lasted—and then her husband bought another basketful of wares and gave it to his wife, who went again to the market, seated herself in a corner, and spread out her goods for sale. Suddenly a drunken hussar came by on horseback, and, not seeing the basket, rode right into it, breaking the delicate wares into a thousand pieces. Then she began to weep, and knew not in her distress what to do, crying out, 'Oh, what will become of me? what will my husband say?'

She ran home and related to him her misfortune.

'Why did you seat yourself at such a dangerous corner of the market?' he said. 'There, stop your weeping; I see that you are quite unfit to perform the simplest work. I have just been to our king's castle, and they told me they wanted a kitchen-maid. I have promised to send you over every day, and

they are ready to take you; so come and have your supper, and don't weep any more.'

And so the proud king's daughter became a kitchen-maid in the castle of King Thrushbeard. It was dreadfully hard work, as she had to wait upon the cook.

They brought her whatever pieces were left for her to take home for dinner and supper, and she was often very tired. But she could hear what went on in King Thrushbeard's castle, and at last the servants told her that a great festival was about to take place in honour of the young king's marriage.

The poor wife, who remembered that she could once have been his wife but for her pride, felt very sad; yet she could not help going to the door of the grand saloon, that she might see the company arrive.

The room was full of light, and each one who stepped in seemed more elegant and beautiful than the last, and as the glory and splendour surrounded her she thought with a sorrowful heart of her fate, and lamented over the pride and haughtiness which had brought her into such terrible poverty and disgrace.

From the costly supper which was laid out for the guests came the most delicious odours, and the servants who waited threw pieces that were left on the plates as they passed her, which she gathered up and put into her basket to carry home.

All at once a noble-looking prince approached her. He was richly dressed in velvet and silver, and wore a golden chain round his neck. When he saw the beautiful princess at the door, he advanced and took her by the hand, to lead her into the ball-room, saying that she must dance with him. She was in a terrible fright, and struggled to get free, for she knew it was King Thrushbeard, her lover, whom she had treated with contempt. But it was useless to refuse, he held her hand so tightly, and led her in.

In the struggle the band that fastened her basket round her waist broke, and all the broken pieces which the servants had given her were scattered on the floor, and rolled in all directions, while the company looked on and laughed in tones of mockery. Her shame was now complete, and she wished she could at that moment hide herself a thousand fathoms deep in the earth. She rushed to the door to run away, but on the steps, in the dark, she met a man who seized her firmly, and brought her back into the castle; and as soon as he appeared in the light, she saw to her astonishment that it was King Thrushbeard.

'Do not fear,' said he in a gentle tone; 'I and the wander-

ing minstrel with whom you have lived in the wretched house in the wood are the same. My love for you made me disguise myself that I might win you through your father's oath. I was the hussar who upset your basket. I have done it to try if, after all, you really loved King Thrushbeard, whom you refused and mocked; and I hoped that your proud thoughts would be humbled, and your haughty spirit bend, and that it would be as a punishment for having mocked and spurned me.'

Then she wept bitterly, and said, 'I know I have done wrong, and I am not worthy to be your wife.'

But he said, 'Be comforted; all is past now. You are my wife, and we have a splendid festival to celebrate the event, after all.'

Then he took her to a beautiful chamber, where the maidens of the court dressed her in royal robes, and when her husband came and conducted her to the great hall, there was her father and his whole court ready to receive her, and wish her joy on her marriage with King Thrushbeard; and so was there a joyful end to all her troubles. I wish, dear reader, you and I had been there to see.

SNOW-WHITE.

One day in the middle of winter, when the snow-flakes fell from the sky like feathers, a queen sat at a window, the frame of which was of black ebony, and as she sewed and the snow glittered she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell into the snow. The red spots looked so beautiful in the white snow that the queen thought to herself:

'Oh, if I had a little child as fair as snow, as rosy as the red blood, and with hair as black as ebony!'

Very soon after this the queen had a little daughter who was very fair, had rosy cheeks, and hair as black as ebony; and they gave her the name of Snow-white. But at the birth of the little child the queen died.

When Snow-white was a year old the king took another wife. She was very handsome, but so proud and vain that she could not endure that anyone should surpass her in beauty. She possessed a wonderful mirror, and when she stood before it to look at herself she would say:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Am I most beautiful of all?'

Then the mirror would reply:

'Young queen, thou art so wondrous fair,
None can with thee at all compare.'

Then she would go away quite contented, for she knew that the magic mirror could only speak the truth.

Years went by, and as Snow-white grew up she became day after day more beautiful till she reached the age of seven years, and then people began to talk about her, and say that she would be more lovely even than the queen herself. So the proud woman went to her magic looking-glass and asked:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Am I most beautiful of all?'

But the mirror answered:

'Queen, thou art lovely still to see,
But Snow-white will be
A thousand times more beautiful than thee.'

Then the queen was terrified, and turned green and yellow with jealousy. If she had caught sight of Snow-white at that moment, she would have been ready to tear her heart out of her body, she hated the maiden so fiercely.

And this jealousy and envy grew every day in her heart stronger and stronger, like a disease, till she had no rest day or night.

At last she sent for a hunter who lived near a forest, and said to him, 'Hunter, I want to get rid of that child. Take her out into the wood, and if you bring me some proofs that she is dead, I will reward you handsomely. Never let her appear before my eyes again.'

So the hunter enticed the child into the wood; but when he took out his hunting-knife to thrust into Snow-white's innocent heart, she fell on her knees and wept, and said, 'Ah, dear hunter, leave me my life; I will run away into the wild wood, and never, never come home any more.'

She looked so innocent and beautiful as she knelt, that the hunter's heart was moved with compassion: 'Run away, then, thou poor child,' he cried; 'I cannot harm thee.' Snow-white thanked him so sweetly, and was out of sight in a few moments.

'She will be devoured by wild beasts,' he said to himself. But the thought that he had not killed her was as if a stone weight had been lifted from his heart.

To satisfy the queen he took part of the inside of a young fawn, which the wicked woman thought was poor little Snow-white, and was overjoyed to think she was dead.

But the poor little motherless child, when she found herself alone in the wood, and saw nothing but trees and leaves, was dreadfully frightened, and knew not what to do. At last she began to run over the sharp stones and through the thorns, and though the wild beasts sprang out before her, they did her no harm. She ran on as long as she could, till her little feet became quite sore; and towards evening she saw, to her great joy, a pretty little house. So she went up to it, and found the door open, and no one at home.

It was a tiny little house, but everything in it was so clean and neat and elegant, that it is beyond description. In the middle of the room stood a small table, covered with a snow-white table-cloth, ready for supper. On it were arranged seven little plates, seven little spoons, seven little knives and forks, and seven mugs. By the wall stood seven little beds, near each other, covered with white quilts.

Poor Snow-white, who was hungry and thirsty, ate a few vegetables and a little bread from each plate, and drank a little drop of wine from each cup, for she did not like to take all she wanted from one alone. After this, feeling very tired, she thought she would lie down and rest on one of the beds, but she found it difficult to choose one to suit her. One was too long, another too short; so she tried them all till she came to the seventh, and that was so comfortable that she laid herself down and was soon fast asleep.

When it was quite dark the masters of the house came home. They were seven little dwarfs, who dug and searched in the mountains for minerals. First they lighted seven little lamps, and as soon as the room was full of light they saw that someone had been there, for everything did not stand in the order in which they had left it.

Then said the first, 'Who has been sitting in my little chair?'

The second exclaimed, 'Who has been eating from my little plate?'

The third cried, 'Someone has taken part of my bread.'

'Who has been eating my vegetables?' said the fourth.

Then said the fifth, 'Someone has used my fork.'

The sixth cried, 'And who has been cutting with my knife?'

'And someone has been drinking out of my cup,' said the seventh.

Then the eldest looked at his bed, and, seeing that it looked tumbled, cried out that someone had been upon it. The others came running forward and said, 'Someone has been in mine.' But when the seventh approached his bed, and saw Snow-white lying there fast asleep, he called the others, who came quickly, and holding their lights over their heads, cried out in wonder as they beheld the sleeping child. 'Oh, what a beautiful little child!' they said to each other, and were so delighted that they would not awaken her, but left her to sleep as long as she liked in the little bed, while its owner slept with one of his companions, and so the night passed away.

In the morning, when Snow-white awoke and saw all the dwarfs, she was terribly frightened. But they spoke kindly to her, and asked her name.

'I am called Snow-white,' she replied.

'But how came you to our house?' asked one.

Then she related to them all that had happened. How her stepmother had sent her into the wood with the hunter, who had spared her life, and how, after wandering about for a whole day, she had found their house.

The dwarfs said, 'Do you think you could be our little housekeeper, to make the beds, cook the dinner, and wash and sew and knit for us, and keep everything neat and clean and orderly? If you can, then you shall stay here with us, and nobody shall hurt you.'

'Oh yes, I will try,' said Snow-white. So they let her stay, and she was a clever little thing. She managed very well, and kept the house quite clean and in order. And while they were gone to the mountains to find gold, she got their supper ready, and they were very happy together.

But every morning when they left her, the kind little dwarfs warned Snow-white to be careful. While the maiden was alone they knew she was in danger, and told her not to show herself, for her stepmother would soon find out where she was, and said, 'Whatever you do, let nobody into the house while we are gone.'

After the wicked queen had proved, as she thought, that Snow-white was dead, she felt satisfied there was no one in the world likely to become so beautiful as herself, so she stepped up to her mirror and asked:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is most beautiful of all?'

The mirror replied

'Fair queen, at home there is none like thee ;
But over the mountains is Snow-white free,
With seven little dwarfs, who are strange to see ;
She is a thousand times fairer than thee !'

The queen was frightened, for she knew the mirror was truthful, and that the hunter must have deceived her, and that Snow-white still lived. So she sat and pondered, thinking what would be best to do, for as long as she was not the most beautiful woman in the land, her jealousy gave her no peace. After a time she decided what to do. First, she painted her face and whitened her hair ; then she dressed herself in old women's clothes, so that no one could have recognised her.

Watching an opportunity, she left the castle, and took her way to the wood near the mountains, where the seven little dwarfs lived. When she reached the door she knocked, and cried : 'Beautiful goods to sell ! beautiful goods to sell !'

Snow-white, when she heard it, peeped through the window and said : 'Good-day, old lady. What have you in your basket for me to buy ?'

'Everything that is pretty,' she replied—'laces of every colour ;' and she held up one woven of glittering silk.

'I can let in this respectable old woman,' thought Snow-white ; 'she will not harm me.' So she unbolted the door, and bought the laces. Presently the old woman said : 'Child, come here ; I will show you how to lace your stays properly.' Snow-white had no suspicion, so she placed herself before the old woman that she might lace her stays. But no sooner was the lace in the holes than she began to lace so fast and pull so tight that Snow-white could not breathe, and presently fell down at her feet as if dead.

'Now I shall be the most beautiful !' said the woman, and rushed away as quickly as she could.

Not long after the seven dwarfs came home, and they were terribly frightened to see dear little Snow-white lying on the ground without motion, as if she were dead. They lifted her up, and saw in a moment that her stays had been laced too tight. Quickly they cut the stay-lace in two, till Snow-white began to breathe a little, and after a time was restored to life. But when the dwarfs heard what had happened, they said : 'That old market-woman was no other than your wicked step-mother. Snow-white, you must never again let anyone in while we are not with you.'

The wicked queen, when she returned home, went to her looking-glass, and asked :

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Am I most beautiful of all?'

Then answered the mirror:

'Queen, thou art not the fairest now;
Snow-white over the mountain's brow,
A thousand times fairer is than thou.'

When she heard this she was so terrified that the blood rushed to her heart, for she knew that Snow-white was still alive. 'I must think of something else,' she said to herself, 'to get rid of her;' and, with her knowledge of witchcraft, she poisoned a comb. Then she dressed herself again like an old woman, but different to the last, and started off to travel over the mountains to the dwarfs' cottage.

When Snow-white heard the old cry, 'Goods to sell! fine goods to sell!' she looked out of window, and said:

'Go away, go away; I must not let you in.'

'Look at this, then,' said the woman, 'you shall have it for your own if you like;' and she held up the bright tortoise-shell comb, which she had poisoned, before the child's eyes.

Poor Snow-white could not refuse such a present, so she opened the door and let the woman in, quite forgetting the advice of the dwarfs. After she had bought a few things the old woman said: 'Let me try this comb in your hair; it is so fine it will make it beautifully smooth and glossy.'

So Snow-white, thinking no wrong, stood before the woman to have her hair dressed, but no sooner had the comb touched the roots of her hair than the poison took effect, and the maiden fell to the ground lifeless.

'You paragon of beauty,' said the wicked woman, 'now you are done for!' and then she went away quickly.

Fortunately evening soon arrived, and the seven dwarfs returned home. When they saw Snow-white lying dead on the ground, they knew at once that the stepmother had been there again; but on seeing the poisoned comb in her hair they pulled it out quickly, and Snow-white very soon came to herself and related all that had passed.

Again they warned her not to let anyone enter the house during their absence, and on no account to open the door.

The queen went to her looking-glass and inquired:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Who is most beautiful of all?'

But the mirror replied :

'Queen, thou art the fairest here,
But not when Snow-white is near ;
Over the mountains still is she,
Fairer a thousand times than thee.'

As the looking-glass thus replied, the queen trembled and quaked with rage. 'Snow-white shall die,' cried she, 'if it costs me my own life.'

Then she went into a lonely, forbidden chamber, where no one was allowed to go, and poisoned a beautiful apple. Outwardly it looked ripe and tempting, of a pale green with rosy cheeks, so that it made everyone's mouth water to look at it, but whoever ate even a small piece must die.

As soon as this apple was ready, she painted her face, disguised her hair, dressed herself as a farmer's wife, and went again over the mountains to the dwarfs' cottage.

When she knocked at the door Snow-white stretched her head out of the window, and said: 'I dare not let anyone in; the seven dwarfs have forbidden me.'

'But I am all right,' said the farmer's wife. 'Stay, I will show you my apples. Are they not beautiful? Let me make you a present of one.'

'No, thank you,' cried Snow-white; 'I dare not take it.'

'What!' cried the woman, 'are you afraid it is poisoned? Look here now, I will cut the apple in halves; you shall have the rosy-cheek side, and I will eat the other.'

The apple was so cleverly made that the red side alone was poisonous. Snow-white longed so much for the beautiful fruit, as she saw the farmer's wife eat one half, that she could not any longer resist, but stretched out her hand from the window and took the poisoned half. But no sooner had she taken one mouthful than she fell on the ground dead.

Then the wicked queen glanced in at the window with a horrible look in her eyes, and laughed aloud as she exclaimed: 'White as snow, red as blood, and black as ebony, this time the dwarfs will not be able to awake thee.'

And as soon as she arrived at home, and asked her mirror who was the most beautiful in the land, it replied:

'Fair queen, there is none in all the land
So beautiful as thou.'

Then had her envious heart rest; at least, such rest as a heart full of envy and malice ever can have.

The little dwarfs, when they came home in the evening,

found poor Snow-white on the ground; but though they lifted her up, there were no signs of breath from her mouth, and they found she was really dead. Yet they tried in every way to restore her; they tried to extract the poison from her lips, they combed her hair, and washed it with wine and water, but all to no purpose; the dear child gave no signs of life, and at last they knew she was dead. Then they laid her on a bier, and the seven dwarfs seated themselves around her, and wept and mourned for three days. They would have buried her then, but there was no change in her appearance; her face was as fresh, and her cheeks and lips had their usual colour. Then said one, 'We cannot lay this beautiful child in the dark cold earth.'

So they agreed to have a coffin made entirely of glass, transparent all over, that they might watch for any signs of decay; and they wrote in letters of gold her name on the lid, and that she was the daughter of a king. The coffin was placed on the side of the mountain, and each of them watched it by turns, so that it was never left alone. And the birds of the air came near and mourned for Snow-white; first the owl, then the raven, and at last the dove. Snow-white lay for a long, long time in the glass coffin, but showed not the least signs of decay. It seemed as if she slept, for her skin was snow white, her cheeks rosy red, and her hair black as ebony.

It happened one day that the son of a king, while riding in the forest, came by chance upon the dwarf's house and asked for a night's lodging. As he left the next morning, he saw the coffin on the mountain-side, with beautiful Snow-white lying in it, and read what was written upon the lid in letters of gold.

Then he said to the dwarfs, 'Let me have this coffin, and I will give you for it whatever you ask.'

But the elder dwarf answered, 'We would not give it thee for all the gold in the world.'

But the prince answered, 'Let me have it as a gift, then. I know not why, but my heart is drawn towards this beautiful child, and I feel I cannot live without her. If you will let me have her, she shall be treated with the greatest honour and respect as one dearly beloved.'

As he thus spoke, the good little dwarfs were full of sympathy for him, and gave him the coffin. Then the prince called his servants, and the coffin was placed on their shoulders, and they carried it away, followed by the king's son, who watched it carefully. Now, it happened that one of them made a false step and stumbled. This shook the coffin, and caused the

poisoned piece of apple which Snow-white had bitten to roll out of her mouth. A little while after she suddenly opened her eyes, lifted up the coffin-lid, raised herself, and was again alive.

'Oh, where am I?' she cried.

Full of joy, the king's son approached her, and said, 'Dear Snow-white, you are safe; you are with me.'

Then he related to her all that had happened, and what the little dwarfs had told him about her, and said at last, 'I love you better than all in the world besides, dear little Snow-white, and you must come with me to my father's castle and be my wife.'

Then was Snow-white taken out of the coffin and placed in a carriage to travel with the prince, and the king was so pleased with his son's choice that the marriage was soon after celebrated with great pomp and magnificence.

Now, it happened that the stepmother of Snow-white was invited, among other guests, to the wedding-feast. Before she left her house, she stood in all her rich dress before the magic mirror to admire her own appearance, but she could not help saying:

'Mirror, mirror on the wall,
Am I most beautiful of all?'

Then, to her surprise, the mirror replied:

'Fair queen, thou art the fairest here,
But at the palace now
The bride will prove a thousand times
More beautiful than thou.'

Then the wicked woman uttered a curse, and was so dreadfully alarmed that she knew not what to do. At first she declared she would not go to this wedding at all, but she felt it impossible to rest till she had seen the bride, so she determined to go. But what was her astonishment and vexation when she recognised in the young bride Snow-white herself, now grown a charming young woman, and richly dressed in royal robes? Her rage and terror were so great that she stood still and could not move for some minutes. At last she went into the ball-room, but the slippers she wore were to her as iron bands full of coals of fire, in which she was obliged to dance. And so in the red, glowing shoes she continued to dance till she fell dead on the floor.

THE KNAPSACK, THE HAT, AND THE HORN.

Once upon a time in a village lived three brothers, who became so sunk in poverty and want that at last they had not even a morsel of bread to eat. Then they said to each other, 'We cannot remain here to starve; let us go out into the world and seek our fortunes.'

So they begged a few pence of their neighbours and started on their way. They travelled for some distance over fields and meadows, but met with no good fortune till they came at length to a large forest and saw a mountain in the distance. As they approached nearer, they saw that the mountain was entirely of silver, and the eldest brother exclaimed, 'Now have I found the good fortune I hoped for; I can wish for nothing better than this.'

So he gathered up as much silver as he could carry, turned round, and went home. The two younger brothers, however, were not yet satisfied, and one said to the other, 'We want something better for our fortunes than uncoined silver.'

So they continued on their way without attempting to take any. In the course of a day or two the two brothers came to another mountain, which was entirely of gold. Then the second brother stood still and seemed for a time quite undecided.

'What shall I do?' he said; 'shall I take gold enough from here to last my life, or shall I go farther?'

After considering for a long time, he suddenly formed a resolution, and, filling his pockets with as much as they would hold, wished his brother farewell and returned home. After he was gone, the youngest said to himself, 'Silver and gold do not tempt me. I will not give up trying for a fortune yet. Who knows? Very likely mine will be the best after all.'

So he travelled on, and at the end of three days came to another forest, so much larger than the former that it seemed to have no end, and while there he found nothing to eat or drink, so that he was almost starved. At last he climbed to the top of a high tree, hoping to discover a way out of the forest, but, as far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen but the tree-tops. So he began to descend the tree very slowly, for his hunger was becoming painful.

'Oh,' he exclaimed, 'if I could only find something to satisfy this dreadful hunger!'

But when he reached the foot of the tree, what was his surprise and astonishment to see a table laid out with a delicious supper, the odour from which was most tempting.

'This time,' cried he, 'my wish has been fulfilled at the right moment;' and, without asking any questions as to who had brought the supper or who had cooked it, he placed himself at the table and ate till his hunger was appeased. As soon as he had finished, he thought, 'What a pity it would be to leave this nice little tablecloth here in the wood to spoil!'

So he folded it up very carefully, and carried it away with him. He now continued his journey through the wood in comfort, but towards evening, feeling again hungry and tired, he stopped to rest, and thought he would try his little tablecloth again in the hopes of another supper, so he unfolded it and said, 'I wish there could be a good supper for me again this evening.'

The wish had scarcely passed his lips when the table was covered with so many dishes, containing such good things, that there was no room for any more.

'I see now,' he said, 'who is to be my cook for the future; this tablecloth is as precious as the mountains of gold and silver;' and he saw at once that it possessed the magic power of preparing itself. But this good fortune was not enough to satisfy him; he could not rest without seeking farther, for he loved to wander about the world; he had a more restless spirit than his brothers. He travelled on for many days, till one evening he found himself in a lonely part of the wood, and came suddenly upon a black, dusty charcoal-burner, who had made a fire of charcoal on the ground, and was roasting potatoes for his supper.

'Good-evening, Blackbird,' said he; 'how do you get on here in your loneliness?'

'Pretty well, one day with another,' answered the charcoal-burner; 'and potatoes every evening. Do you wish to join me in my supper?'

'Many thanks,' replied the traveller; 'but I will not take your supper from you. There is not more than enough for yourself, but, if you would like to take supper with me, I shall be glad to invite you.'

'How will you prepare a supper?' asked the stranger. 'No one could go to the town and get it under two hours, and I see that you have nothing with you.'

'Yet you shall have a supper,' said the younger brother, 'and a good one, too, though it will cost nothing.'

Thereupon he took the little tablecloth out of his knapsack, unfolded it, and placed it on the ground. Then he said, 'Table, prepare thyself!'

In a moment it was covered with the best of every good thing in the way of eatables and drinkables, all hot and nice, as if they had just been cooked. The charcoal-burner stared, but he did not wait for a second invitation; placing himself before the table, he fell to with a great appetite, stuffing large pieces into his black mouth till he had eaten as much as he could. Then, with a grin of satisfaction, he said, 'Listen, friend; thy tablecloth has my approval, and it would be the very thing for me here alone in this wood, with no one to cook for me. I will make an exchange with you. Yonder in the corner hangs a soldier's knapsack; it is old and unsightly, but it possesses a wonderful power, and, as it is of no more use to me, I will give it to you in return for your tablecloth.'

'First, I must know what this wonderful power is,' said the young fortune-seeker.

'I will tell you,' replied the charcoal-burner. 'If you knock upon it with your hand, there will instantly appear before you a corporal with six men, all in full uniform, and whatever you order them to do, they will perform it.'

'It's all the same to me,' replied the youth; 'I don't mind which I have, so we will make the exchange.'

He gave him the table as he spoke, slung the knapsack on his back, wished the charcoal-burner farewell, and went on his journey. He had not gone far, however, before he had a strong desire to try what this wonderful knapsack could do, so he put his hand over his shoulder and knocked.

In a moment there stood before him seven great warriors; and the corporal, with a military salute, said, 'What is my lord and master's pleasure?'

'Quick step, march! to the charcoal-burner in the forest,' he replied, 'and demand my wish-tablecloth back.'

They put their best foot foremost, and in a very short time returned with what he required, which they had obtained from the charcoal-burner without much difficulty. Then he told them to march off, as he wanted nothing more at present, and continued his way, hoping that such good fortune would still continue to shine upon him.

At sunset next day he came up to another charcoal-burner, who sat by his charcoal fire preparing his evening meal.

'Will you eat with me?' said the sooty fellow. 'Potatoes and salt are wholesome food; so seat yourself by me.'

'No,' answered the other; 'for this once you must be my guest.' And, without waiting for a reply, he arranged his tablecloth, gave it the word of command, and very soon they were both seated at a splendid feast. They ate and drank together, and were very soon good friends.

After supper the charcoal-burner said, 'Over there, on that bank, lies an old worn-out hat, which has a very peculiar quality. If the wearer lifts it up and turns it round above his head, instantly a number of shots are fired, like a discharge of artillery, so that no one could dare to approach. It is useless to me, so you may have it for your tablecloth, if you will make the exchange.'

'I have no objection,' said the young man. So he took the hat, placed it on his head, and left the tablecloth behind him.

He did not go far, however, before knocking on his knapsack; and when his soldiers appeared, he sent them again to fetch the tablecloth.

'It passes from one to another,' he thought; 'but it is mine. It seems as if my luck would never end;' and his thoughts did not deceive him.

After regaining his tablecloth, he travelled on through fields and woods, and one day met with a third charcoal-burner, who, as the former two had done, invited him to share his supper of potatoes and salt. But the traveller, after ordering his table to prepare itself, gave the charcoal-burner such a feast that he also begged for the tablecloth, and offered to give him in exchange a wonderful horn, which had quite a different power to that of the tablecloth or the hat.

'If ever a man were to blow this horn near a town, or a city, or village, the walls, the fortresses, the houses, and all they contained, would be thrown down in one heap of confusion and ruin.'

For this wonderful horn, therefore, he was quite ready to give up his tablecloth to the charcoal-burner, but made his soldiers get it back, so that he had possession of the knapsack, the hat, and the horn.

'Now,' said he, 'I am a mighty man, and it is time for me to go home and see how my brothers are getting on.'

By the time he reached his home, he found that his brothers had, with their gold and silver, built two beautiful houses, and were living in grand style.

Without thinking of his ragged coat, shabby hat, and the knapsack on his shoulders, he presented himself to his brothers.

They would not, however, acknowledge him, but mocked and insulted him, and said, 'You pretend to be our brother, who despised gold and silver, and left us to seek a higher and a better fortune. Why, we shall expect him to arrive in pomp and splendour, like a mighty king, not in the dress of a poor beggarman;' and so they drove him from their doors.

Then he fell into a passion, and knocked on his knapsack so many times that a hundred and fifty warriors in rank and file stood before him. He ordered them to surround his brothers' houses, and sent two of their company, with hazel switches, to flog them till they acknowledged that he was their brother.

All this caused a great noise and disturbance in the town: the people ran together, and wanted to render some assistance to the two brothers; but they could not, because of the soldiers. At last information was sent to the king. He was very indignant, and sent a captain and his troop to drive the peace-disturber from the town.

But the man with the wonderful knapsack had very soon a larger number of soldiers at his command, who drove back the king's captain and his company in no time, so that they were obliged to retreat in disgrace.

Then said the king, 'This vagabond fellow must be put down.' And the next day he sent a larger troop than before, but all in vain. A great many people and soldiers now came forward, ready to oppose the peace-destroyer, and to drive him from the town; but he quickly put an end to the disturbance himself: he took off his hat, and whirled it twice round his head. In an instant the shots fell among the people like hail; many were slain, and the soldiers fled in alarm.

'Tell your king,' said the young fortune-seeker to the captain of the soldiers, 'that there shall be no peace till he gives me his daughter as a wife, or power to rule the whole kingdom in his name.'

The king, seeing what the consequences would be if he did not agree to these requests, went to his daughter, and told her what the man required to keep him quiet.

'There remains no other way for me,' he said, 'and if you will do this, then I shall keep my kingdom, and peace will be restored.'

The king's daughter had no objection to a husband, so the marriage took place very quickly, and for a time everything was peaceable.

But the princess, who could not endure that the people should think of her husband as a common man, was much annoyed at his persisting to wear such a shabby hat, and to carry an old knapsack about with him. All her anxiety now was to get rid of these odious things, and she thought day and night of the best way to manage it. At last it occurred to her that perhaps his wonderful power was contained in the old knapsack, and she determined to find out.

So she pretended to be very fond of him, and coaxed him till his heart was softened towards her, and then she said: 'I wish you would not wear that ugly old knapsack; it disfigures you so much, and makes me quite ashamed of you.'

'Dearest child,' he replied, 'that knapsack is my greatest treasure; as long as I have it, I fear no power in the world.'

Then she threw her arms round his neck, as if she were going to kiss him, and with great cleverness unfastened the knapsack from his shoulder and ran away with it.

As soon as she was alone, she knocked on it; and when the soldiers appeared, she ordered them to arrest their former master, and carry him out of the king's palace.

They obeyed; and the false wife called to a number of people to follow her, that her husband might be carried away out of the country.

Then would he have been lost if he had not had the wonderful hat. No sooner were his hands free than he raised it and waved it twice over his head. In a moment the shots fell so thick and fast that the soldiers and the people were glad to escape, and even the king's daughter herself was obliged to ask for pardon before the shooting was allowed to cease.

After this she was so gentle and affectionate, and spoke so kindly to him, that he allowed himself to be talked over, and willingly forgave them all. She behaved to him for a long time very kindly, and as if she loved him dearly, for she knew she could at any time deceive him. And as he had trusted her about the power he possessed in the knapsack, she hoped he would do the same about the hat; and she knew she could not get rid of him as long as he kept it. She soon knew that secret also, and only waited till he was asleep to take the hat away and throw it into the street.

But he still had his horn, and when he woke and missed the hat, in a great rage, he seized it and blew it with all his strength; and had he not ceased blowing, the whole town, walls, palace, fortress, and neighbouring villages, would have fallen together with a loud crash. As it was, the king and his

daughter were crushed beneath the ruins. And if he had not ceased blowing the palace would have been all in a heap, not one stone remaining upon another. Now there was no one to oppose him any more, and he proclaimed himself king and reigned over the whole kingdom.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN.

THERE was once a miller who was very poor, but he had a beautiful daughter. Now, it happened that he met the king, and to show that he was somebody, he told him that he had a daughter who could spin straw into gold.

'Then,' said the king, 'that is a quality which pleases me well. If your daughter is, as you say, so very skilful, bring her to the castle to-morrow, and I will try what she can do.'

When she arrived, the king led her into a chamber which was quite full of straw, and, placing a spinning-wheel before her, said: 'Now set to work, for if all this straw is not spun into gold before sunrise, you shall die.' Then he locked the door himself, and left her alone.

The poor maiden sat in despair. She had not the least idea how to turn straw into gold. Every moment her fear became greater, and at last she began to weep bitterly.

All of a sudden the door opened, and a little man entered who said: 'Good-evening, young woman. Why do you weep so sadly?'

'Oh!' she replied, 'I have all this straw to spin into gold, and I know not how to do it.'

'What will you give me,' said the little man, 'if I spin it for you?'

'My necklace,' she said.

The man took the necklace, seated himself before the spinning-wheel, and as the wheel went whirr, whirr, whirr, three times, the spool was full of gold. Then he fastened on more straw, and after three turns of the wheel the spool was a second time full; and so he went on all night, and before the morning dawned the straw was all spun and the spools full of gold.

At sunrise the king came to the chamber, but when he caught sight of the glittering gold he was astonished and full of joy.

But his heart was greedy for gold, so he led the miller's daughter into another chamber full of straw, and much larger than the former, and ordered her, as she valued her life, to spin that into gold.

The maiden, when left alone, could only weep. But the little man again appeared, and said: 'What will you give me if I spin all this straw into gold?'

'My ring from my finger,' answered the maiden.

The little man took the ring, set to work at the spinning-wheel, and before morning the whole of the straw was spun into gold.

The king was delighted at the glittering heap, but he was not yet satiated with gold. So he led the maiden into a still larger room full of straw, and said: 'You must spin for me during one more night, and if all this straw is spun into gold by the morning, then you shall be my wife.'

'Although she is a miller's daughter,' thought the king, 'I could not find a richer wife in the whole world.'

No sooner was the maiden alone, than the mannikin again appeared for the third time, and said: 'What will you give me if I spin the straw for you this time?'

'I have nothing more that I can give,' answered the maiden.

'Then promise when you are queen to give me your first child,' said the little man.

'Who knows if I shall ever be queen,' thought the maiden; and she knew also that there was no other help for her. So she promised what he wished, and the mannikin soon spun all the straw into gold.

In the morning, when the king came and found that what he required was done, he ordered preparations to be made for a splendid wedding, and in a few days the miller's beautiful daughter became a queen.

About a year after this a beautiful little child was born to the queen, who never thought of her promise to the little man, till one night he stepped suddenly into her chamber, and said: 'Now give me what you have promised.'

In great terror, the queen offered him all the treasures in the kingdom if he would leave her the child.

But the little man said, 'No; something living I like better than all the treasures in the world.' Then the queen began to mourn and weep so bitterly that the little man had compassion on her, and said: 'I will give you three days, and if in that time you can find out my name, then you shall keep your child.'

After he was gone, the queen lay awake till morning, think-

ing over all the names she had ever heard of, and determined to send a messenger all over the country to inquire far and wide what names had been given to people formerly.

The next night the little man came again, and she repeated all the names she could think of, Casper, Melchior, Balzar, and many others. But the little man said at each; 'No, I am not so called.'

The next day she made every inquiry among the neighbours, and when the little man came at night for the second time, she mentioned most unearthly names, such as Brown-ribs, Dicky-calf, and Spindle-leg. But he answered always, 'No, that is not my name.'

On the third day the messenger returned and related his adventures. He had not been able to find a single new name, but on his way home he crossed a high mountain, and came to the borders of a wood, in which the foxes and the hares wished themselves 'good-night.' After this he came to a tiny little house, and saw before it a fire burning, and hopping round it, on one leg, was a ridiculous-looking little man, who cried:

'To-day I brew, to-morrow I bake,
Next morning I shall the queen's child take;
How glad I am that she does not dream
That Rumpelstiltskin is my name!'

You can imagine how joyful the queen was when she heard this name; and as soon as the little man appeared and asked, 'Now then, queen, what is my name?'—'Well,' she replied, 'are you called Conrad?'

'No.'

'Henry?'

'No.'

'Then your name is Rumpelstiltskin.'

'The fairies must have told you that! the fairies must have told you that!' screamed the little man, and in his rage he struck the ground so fiercely with his right foot that it sunk deeply into the earth, dragging his body after it. Then, in his fury, he laid hold of his left foot with both hands, and tore himself in halves.

DEAREST ROLAND.

A WOMAN who was a witch had two daughters living with her. Her own daughter, who was ugly and wicked, she loved; but her stepdaughter, who was beautiful and good, she hated.

Once the stepdaughter had a pretty apron, which pleased the other very much, and made her jealous. So she said to her mother, 'I must and will have that apron.'

'Keep quiet, my child,' said her mother, 'you shall have it. Your stepsister ought to have been dead long ago. To-night, while she is asleep, I will cut off her head. Be careful when you go to bed to get in first, and push her right in front of you.'

Now, it would have been all over with the poor girl if she had not fortunately stood in a corner of the room, unseen, and heard it all. She dared not go out of the house the whole day, for she knew that when bedtime came she must get into bed before her stepsister. However, she kept awake till the other slept, and then she got behind her, next the wall, and pushed her stepsister in front. In the middle of the night, her stepmother entered the room with an axe in her right hand, and with her left felt about the bed for the one outside. And presently she took the axe in both hands, lifted it up, and cut off the head of her own child.

When she was gone, the maiden got up and went to her lover, who was named Roland, and knocked at the door. As soon as he opened it, she exclaimed, 'Oh, dearest Roland, we must take flight quickly. My stepmother intended to kill me, and she has killed her own daughter by mistake. When daylight comes, and she sees what she has done, we are lost, if we stay here.'

'But I would advise you,' said Roland, 'first to take away her witch's staff. Otherwise she will pursue and overtake us.'

The maiden fetched the magic wand, and then took the dead head, and three drops of blood fell from it: one on the bed, another on the stairs, and one in the kitchen. Then she hastened back to her lover.

In the morning, when the old witch rose, she called to her daughter to get up, as she had got the apron for her. But she did not come. 'Where are you?' she cried.

'Out here on the step,' answered one blood-drop.

The woman went out, but there was no one on the step, so she asked again, 'Where are you?'

'Here in the kitchen, warming myself,' cried the second drop of blood.

She went into the kitchen, but on seeing nobody there, she called out angrily a third time, 'Where are you?'

'In bed, asleep,' answered the third drop of blood.

Then she went to the sleeping-chamber, and approached the

bed, and what did she see there—her own child weltering in her blood, whose head she herself had cut off. In a terrible fury, the old witch sprang to the window, from which she could see to a very great distance, and soon espied her stepdaughter going hastily away with her lover Roland.

'It is useless to try to escape from me,' she cried; 'however far they may be, I can overtake them.' So she put on her one-mile shoes, in which she could travel an hour's walk in one step, and it was not very long before she had overtaken them both.

But as soon as the maiden saw her coming, she touched her dear Roland with the magic wand, and he was immediately turned into a lake; then she transformed herself into a duck, and swam upon its surface.

The witch stood on the shore, and threw bread-crumbs to the duck and took a great deal of trouble to decoy her, but the duck would not allow herself to be enticed. So the old woman was obliged to return home.

When she was gone, the maiden and her lover resumed their natural forms, and travelled during the whole night, till the day dawned. Then she transformed herself into a beautiful flower, growing in a hedge of thorns, and her lover into a fiddler.

Not long after, the witch stepped up, and said, 'Dear fiddler, may I pick the beautiful flower for myself?'

'Oh yes,' answered he, 'and I will play you a tune.'

Now, just as she had crept into the hedge of thorns to break off the flower, for she knew well who it was, the fiddler played a magic tune, to which she was obliged to dance. The faster he played, the higher she had to spring and dance in the thorn hedge, while the thorns tore the clothes from her back, scratched her skin till the blood came, and, as he would not stop playing, she was obliged to dance till she fell down dead.

As they were now free from the power of the witch, Roland said, 'Now I will go to my father, and arrange about our marriage.'

'And I will stay here and wait for you, and, that no one may recognise me, I will turn myself into a red landmark.'

Then Roland went away, and the maiden placed herself as a red stone in the field, and waited for her lover.

But when Roland returned home, he met with another girl, who so ensnared him that he quite forgot the maiden to whom he was betrothed.

The poor forsaken one waited a long time, but, when she found that he did not come again, she was so sorrowful that

she turned herself into a flower, and said to herself sadly, 'Perhaps he may come this way by-and-by, and crush me with his foot.'

Now, it happened after a time that a shepherd, who was watching his sheep in the field, saw the flower, and, as it was very pretty, he plucked it, carried it home, and laid it in his drawers. From that moment everything that was wonderful occurred in the shepherd's house. When he got up in the morning, all the work was done, the fire was lighted, the room swept, table and chairs dusted and placed in order, and water fetched from the well. At noon, when he came home to dinner, the cloth was laid and a nice dinner placed ready for him. He could not imagine how it all came to pass, for he never saw any human creature in his house, and no one could have concealed himself in the shepherd's little hut.

The careful housekeeping and care pleased him very much, but at last he began to feel uneasy, so he went to a wise woman and asked her advice. 'There is witchcraft concealed behind all this,' said the wise woman. 'On some morning, when you wake early, lie quite still and pay great attention; if you hear any movement, look out cautiously, and, whatever you see, let it be what it may, quickly throw a white cloth over it. Then will the enchantment be broken.'

The shepherd did as he was advised. The next morning, at daybreak, he saw his drawer open, and the flower he had plucked come out. Quickly he sprang up and threw a white cloth over it. In a moment the transformation took place, and a beautiful maiden stood before him, who confessed that she had been the flower he had plucked, and that she had taken care of his household.

She related to him all that had happened to her, and the shepherd was so pleased with her that he asked her to marry him. But she said 'No.' For although her dear Roland had forsaken her, she would still be true to him. She promised the shepherd, however, that she would not go away, but continue to keep house for him.

The time came for Roland's marriage to take place; and it was a custom in that country that all the maidens that could be found should be present, and sing in honour of the bridal pair. The faithful maiden, when she heard of it, was so overcome with sorrow that she thought her heart would break, and she would not go thither; but at length several came and persuaded her to join them. When it came to her turn to sing, she stepped back till she was the only one left, and then she

could not refuse. But as soon as the song began, and the voice reached the ears of Roland, he started up, crying, 'I know that voice! That is the right bride; I desire no other.' All the old memories which had been forgotten and vanished from his thoughts now came home to his heart again. Then was the marriage held with the true maiden, and all her sorrow was turned into joy.

THE GOLDEN BIRD.

ONCE upon a time there lived a king who had a beautiful pleasure-garden behind his castle, in which grew a tree which bore golden apples. As the apples ripened they were counted, but every morning one would be missing. This was told to the king, who ordered that every night watch should be kept under the tree.

The king had three sons, and he sent the eldest to watch for the first night in the garden, but when midnight came he could not keep himself awake, and the next morning another apple was missing. On the following night the second son tried to watch, but he succeeded no better. After struggling to keep awake, when it struck twelve he fell asleep, and in the morning, as usual, an apple was missed.

Now came the turn of the third son to watch, but at first the king did not trust him—he thought he would be as unsuccessful as his brothers. At length he gave him permission. The youth laid himself down under the tree and watched, but he did not allow sleep to gain the mastery over him, and as the clock struck twelve he heard a sound of rushing wings through the air, and presently a bird flew by with plumage that glittered like gold. The bird alighted on the tree, and was plucking an apple when the young man raised his gun and fired. The bird escaped, but the shot had touched its plumage and one of its golden feathers fell to the earth.

The youth picked it up, and the next morning carried it to the king, and related to him what he had seen during the night. The king assembled his counsellors, and laid the whole case before them, and they all declared that such a feather as the bird had dropped was of more value than the whole kingdom. 'If one feather is so costly,' cried the king, 'whether I have help or not, I must and will have the whole bird.'

Then the eldest son, relying on his own cleverness, set out on a journey to find the bird, and felt sure he should do so very quickly. He had not gone far, when he came to the borders of a wood, where he saw a fox, and immediately presented his gun at him. 'Do not shoot me,' cried the fox; 'I can give you good advice. I know you are searching for the golden bird, and if you keep straight on you will arrive towards evening at a little village in which there are two inns, on exactly opposite sides of the road. You will find one lighted up brightly, and with all sorts of amusement and gaiety going on, but do not enter there; go to the other inn, however dark and dismal it may appear to you.'

'How can an ignorant animal give advice?' thought the young man, and fired; yet he missed the fox, who stretched out his bushy tail and darted off quickly through the wood.

After walking for some time, he came towards evening to a village, and there stood both the inns as the fox had said. In one, which was brilliantly lighted up, he heard music and dancing, but the other had a dark, gloomy, sorrowful appearance.

'I should be a fool indeed,' said the young man, 'if I went to such a dismal old lumber-place as that, instead of to this, which looks so bright and cheerful.'

So he walked into the attractive house, and lived there in such sumptuous luxury and dissipation that he soon forgot, not only the golden bird, but his father, and all good advice.

As time went on, and the eldest son did not return home, the second son offered to do what he could. So he set out on his way to find the golden bird. As the eldest had done, he also met a fox, who gave him the same advice, to which he paid no attention.

When he arrived at the two hotels, his brother, who was standing at one of the windows, from which sounds of merriment issued, saw him pass, and called to him to come in.

He could not withstand this invitation, so he entered, and was very soon like his brother, living only a life of pleasure and luxury. Again the time passed on, and the youngest brother, finding the others did not return, offered to go and seek for them. But his father would not give him permission.

'You are less likely to find the golden bird than your brothers,' he said, 'for if any misfortune should happen to them, they know how to take care of themselves, and will not fail to act for the best.'

But at last, as the brothers did not return, and the king became anxious, he allowed the youngest to go. At the

entrance to the wood the fox again appeared, begged to have his life spared, and offered the third brother the same advice. The youth had plenty of courage, and he said, 'Make yourself quite easy, dear fox; I will do thee no harm.'

'Neither shall you repent of your kindness,' answered the fox; 'and to enable you to go very fast on your journey, just climb up behind on my tail.'

No sooner was the youth seated, than the fox began to run, and they went so fast over sticks and stones that the wind whistled through his hair. As soon as they arrived near the village, the young man slipped from the fox's back, and, following his good advice, turned, without being seen, into the humble-looking inn, and remained there the night.

The next morning he rose, and went out into the fields, and there was the fox waiting for him. 'I will tell you what to do next,' he said, when the youth appeared. 'You must go straight on from here till you come to a castle, before which you will find a whole band of soldiers lying down; but do not trouble yourself about that, for they will all be asleep and snoring. So pass in between them and enter the castle, and go through all the rooms. At last you will reach a chamber in which hangs a golden bird in a wooden cage. Near it stands an empty cage made of gold for show. But be careful while you are taking the golden bird out of his common cage to put him in the handsome one, or he may do you some harm.'

At these words the fox again stretched out his tail, the king's son seated himself on it, and away they went like the wind.

As soon as they arrived at the castle, the young prince found all as the fox had told him. He passed the sleeping soldiers safely, entered the castle, and walked from room to room till he reached the chamber in which hung the golden bird in its wicker-cage. The gilded cage also hung close by, and on the floor lay the three golden apples.

The young man thought it absurd that the beautiful bird should be in the mean-looking wicker-cage, so he opened the door, took hold of it, and put it in the gilded cage; but it uttered such a heartrending scream that the soldiers awoke. Rushing into the room, they took the king's son off to prison.

The next morning a council was held, and as he confessed everything, he was condemned to death. The king, however, said that he would spare the young man's life on condition that he brought him the golden horse, which could run faster than the wind, and then he should, in addition, have the golden bird as a reward. The king's son started on his way,

but felt very sorrowful, and sighed deeply, for where should he find this golden horse? At this moment, who should he see sitting by the roadside but his old friend, the fox!

'Look you,' he said, 'this has happened because you have not obeyed me. Keep up your courage; I will tell you how you may find the golden horse, and lead you to it. You must go straight on till you come to a castle, in one of the stables of which the horse stands. Near the stable many grooms and stable-boys will be lying about; but they will be asleep and snoring, and you can quietly lead the golden horse out. But you must be careful to place on the horse the common saddle, made of wool and leather—not the gilded one which hangs near it, or some harm will happen to you.' Then the fox stretched out his tail, and the king's son seated himself upon it, and away they went again like the wind.

Everything occurred as the fox had said, and he soon reached the stable where the golden horse stood; but as he was going to put on the common leather saddle, he thought to himself, 'Such a beautiful horse as this ought not to have a common saddle on his back; it is not suitable for him.' But no sooner had he touched the golden saddle than the horse began to neigh as loud as he could.

The grooms and stable-boys awoke, seized the young man, and carried him off to prison. The next morning he was again brought before the council, and condemned to die; but the king promised to grant him his life, and to give him the golden horse, if he could bring the beautiful princess from the golden castle.

With a heavy heart the young man started on what appeared to him a hopeless journey, when, to his good fortune, he again met the faithful fox.

'I ought to leave you to your fate,' said he; 'but I feel compassion for you, and once more I will help you out of your trouble. To find the golden castle, you must keep straight on, and you will arrive there about sunset. The princess, when all is still, will go alone to the bath; as she passes spring out upon her, and give her a kiss; then she will follow you, and you can easily carry her away; but on no account allow her to say farewell to her parents; if you do so, evil will befall you.' Then the fox stretched out his tail, the king's son seated himself upon it, and away they went like the wind.

When he came to the castle, he found everything as the fox had described. He waited till midnight, when everyone slept, and then, as he heard the footsteps of the beautiful young

princess coming towards the bath, he sprang out and gave her a kiss. She promised to go away with him, if he would only allow her to take leave of her parents. He refused at first, but she prayed and wept so piteously, and fell at his feet, that at last he could not withstand her tears, and gave his consent.

No sooner, however, had the young maiden entered her parents' chamber, than every inhabitant of the golden castle awoke, and the young man was taken prisoner.

The next morning the king sent for him, and said: 'Your life is forfeited, and you can only obtain pardon by removing that mountain which lies before my window, and over which I cannot see the distant country; and this task must be finished in eight days. If you succeed, then you shall have my daughter as a reward.'

The king's son went out directly, and began digging and shovelling with all his might. Night and day he worked without any success; all he did seemed lost, and when the seventh day arrived he gave up hope, and was overcome with sorrow.

On the evening of the seventh day the fox presented himself to the mourner: 'You do not deserve that I should take any notice of you,' he said; 'but go away now, and get a little sleep; I will finish your task for you.'

The next morning, when he awoke and looked out of the window, the mountain had vanished.

The young man hastened, full of joy, to the king, and informed him that he had completed the conditions imposed upon him. The king therefore, whether he would or not, was obliged to keep his word, and give him his daughter.

Then the two went out together, and they did not wait long before the faithful fox came to them.

'Now you have the best,' said the fox; 'but the golden horse belongs also to the young lady of the golden castle.'

'How am I to get it?' asked the prince.

'I will tell you,' he replied. 'First take the beautiful princess to the king who sent you to the golden castle; he will be so overjoyed that he will at once give you the golden horse as he promised. When the horse is brought to the door, hold out your hand to everyone present to say farewell, and leave the princess till the last. Then, as soon as you take her hand, with a spring, lift her on your horse, and ride away with her. None will overtake you, for the golden horse runs swifter than the wind.'

All this happily came to pass, and the young prince galloped off with the beautiful maiden far away from all pursuers.

But the fox was not far behind. He came up, and said: 'Now I will help you to get the golden bird. When you approach the castle where it is, you must leave the young lady under my protection, and ride into the castle court with your golden horse. They will all be so delighted that they will bring out the golden bird to you; and as soon as you have the cage in your hand, then ride back to us and fetch the beautiful princess.'

Everything happened as they expected, and the king's son was quite ready to ride home with his lady.

'Now,' said the fox, 'what reward am I to have for my assistance to you?'

'What do you wish for?' asked the young man.

'I wish,' he replied, 'that when you reach the wood where you first saw me you will shoot me dead, and cut off my head and feet.'

'That would be fine gratitude,' said the king's son; 'but it is an impossibility for me to do.'

'Then,' replied the fox, 'if you will not do it, I must leave you here; but before I go I will give you once more good advice. Be very careful of two things. On no account sit on the edge of a well, and do not buy gallows meat.' After saying these words the fox ran away into the wood.

'What a wonderful animal that is!' said the young man to himself, 'and what curious whims he has! Whoever would think of buying gallows flesh? And the wish to sit on the edge of a well would never occur to me.'

So he rode away with the beautiful princess. The road led him through the village in which his two brothers were staying, and on arriving there they heard a great noise, and saw the people running about. Upon inquiring what was the matter, they were told that two people were going to be hung; and as they drew nearer he saw that they were his two brothers, who had committed all sorts of wicked actions, and wasted all their property.

Eagerly he asked if he could not set them free and save them.

'If you will pay a ransom for them, you can,' answered the crowd; 'but why should you give your gold for two wicked men who deserve to be hung?'

But the younger brother did not listen to this; he paid the ransom for them, set them free, and told them to travel home with him.

When they reached the wood where each of them had first met the fox, it was so cool and pleasant, and so sheltered from

the burning sun, that the elder brother said: 'Let us stay here and rest for a time, while we take something to eat and drink.' The younger brother consented, but whilst they were talking he forgot the warning, and sat down upon the edge of the well. He had scarcely seated himself, when his two brothers pushed him backwards into it, took possession of the young princess, the golden horse and the golden bird, and travelled quickly home to their father.

'We have brought home not only the golden bird,' they said, 'but the golden horse and the young princess from the golden castle as booty.'

There was great rejoicing on their arrival at first; but it caused much anxiety when it was found that the horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the young maiden only sat and wept.

The younger brother, however, was not dead. Fortunately the well was dry, and he fell on soft moss, without receiving the least injury. He could not, however, get out without help, and help was at hand, for in his trouble the faithful fox did not forsake him. He came to the well, and scolded him for having forgotten his advice.

'I cannot, however, leave you here,' he said; 'I will help you again into the daylight.'

So he told the young man to lay hold tightly by his tail, and then the fox climbed up, and dragged the young man after him. 'You are still in danger,' he said; 'for your brothers, not being sure of your death, have placed watchers about the wood to kill you if they see you.'

But a poor man was sitting under a tree, with whom the youth changed clothes, and then went to his father's castle. No one recognised him, but the bird began to sing, the horse ate his corn, and the beautiful young maiden ceased to weep.

'What is the meaning of this?' asked the king in wonder.

Then said the maiden, 'I cannot tell why, but I have been so sad, and now I feel quite happy. It is as if my real bridegroom had returned.' She told the king all that had occurred, although the other brothers had threatened to kill her if she betrayed them.

The king, upon this, ordered everyone in the castle to appear before him, and among them came the poor man in ragged clothes. The princess recognised him immediately, and fell on his neck and wept for joy. Then the brothers were brought to justice and punished, while the youngest married the beautiful princess, and was named as the king's successor.

What became of the poor fox? Not long after the king's son met him, and the fox said: 'You have everything that you can wish for in the world, but to my misfortunes there appears no end, although you have the power of setting me free;' and once more he begged so earnestly to be shot dead, and to have his head and feet cut off, that the king's son at last, with sorrow, consented. As soon as he had finished the painful task, the fox became a man, and was no other than the brother of the beautiful princess, at last set free from the enchantment that lay upon him.

After this nothing ever happened to interfere with their happiness and good fortune for the rest of their lives.

THE DOG AND THE SPARROW.

A SHEPHERD'S dog had a master who was not good to him, but let him suffer hunger. When he could no longer bear it he went sadly away. On the road he met a sparrow, who said, 'Brother dog, why are you so sad?'

'Because,' answered the dog, 'I am hungry, and have nothing to eat.'

Said the sparrow, 'Dear brother, come with me into the town, and I will find you plenty.'

So on they went together to the town, and when they came to a butcher's shop the sparrow said to the dog, 'Stand there a little while, and I will peck you down a piece of meat.'

And the sparrow perched on the shelf, and having looked around to see that no one was watching, pecked and scratched at a piece that lay at the edge till it fell down. The dog snapped it up, ran into a corner, and ate it up. The sparrow then said, 'Come to another shop, and I will peck you down another piece, so that you may be satisfied.'

When the dog had eaten up the second piece the sparrow asked, 'Brother Dog, are you satisfied?'

'Well,' answered he, 'I have had plenty of meat, but I have had no bread.'

Then the sparrow said, 'You shall have some; come with me,' and he led him to a baker's shop, and pecked at a couple of little buns until they rolled down together; and as the dog still

wished for more, she led him to another stall and got him some more. When that was consumed the sparrow asked him whether he had had enough now. 'Yes,' said he; 'now we will walk a little out of the town.' Then they both went on the highroad. But it was warm weather, and when they had gone a little way the dog said, 'I am tired, and would like to sleep.'

'Very well, go to sleep,' said the sparrow; 'in the meanwhile I will perch on that bush.'

The dog stretched himself on the road and fell fast asleep. While he lay there and slept a carter came by with a waggon with three horses laden with two casks of wine. The sparrow, seeing that he did not turn aside, but remained in the track in which the dog lay, called out, 'Carter, stop, stop, or it will be the worse for you.' The carter, however, grumbling to himself, said, 'You can't make it the worse for me,' cracked his whip, and drove the waggon over the dog, so that the wheels killed him. Then the sparrow called out:

'You have killed my brother the dog; it shall cost thee thy cart and horses.' 'Oh, cart and horses!' said the carter; 'how can you hurt me?' and drove on. Then the sparrow crept under the tilt of the cart and pecked at one of the bungs so long that the bung was loosened. Then all the wine ran out without the carter seeing it. But when he did look round he saw that the waggon was dripping and one of the casks quite empty. 'Oh, unlucky man that I am!' he called out. 'Not unlucky enough,' said the sparrow, and flew at the head of one of the horses, and pecked out his eyes. When the carter saw that, he took out his axe, intending to kill the sparrow; but the sparrow flew away, and the carter struck his horse on the head instead, so that he fell down dead. 'Ah, poor man that I am!' said he.

'Not yet poor enough,' said the sparrow, and when the carter went on with the other two horses the sparrow crept again under the tilt and pecked the bung out of the second cask, so that all the wine ran out. When the carter became aware of it he called out again, 'Ah, poor man that I am!' But the sparrow answered, 'Not yet poor enough,' and placed himself on the second horse's head and pecked out his eyes. The carter ran and struck at her again with his axe, but the sparrow flew away and the blow struck his horse so that he fell dead.

'Ah, poor man that I am!' he said.

'Not yet poor enough,' said the sparrow, and placed herself

on the third horse's head, and pecked at his eyes. The carter struck again in his wrath without looking at the sparrow, but did not hit her, and struck his third horse dead.

'Ah, poor man that I am!' said he.

'Not yet poor enough,' answered the sparrow; 'now will I make thee poor at home,' and she flew away. The carter was obliged to leave his waggon standing, and went home furious with rage and vexation.

'Alas!' said he to his wife, 'what ill-luck I have had! My wine is all spilt, and my horses all three dead.' 'Alas! husband,' replied she, 'and a wicked bird has come into the house, and has brought with her all the birds in the world. They have fallen on our corn in the loft, and are eating it up.' Then up he went, and saw thousands of birds sitting on the floor eating up his corn, with the sparrow in the midst.

'Ah, wretch that I am!' cried the carter.

'Not wretch enough yet,' answered the sparrow. 'Carter, it will cost you your life,' and she flew away.

The carter, who had thus lost all he had, went down to the kitchen and sat behind the stove, still angry and sulky. The sparrow, however, sat outside the window, and cried, 'Carter, it shall cost you your life.' Then the carter seized the hatchet and threw it at the sparrow, but it missed her and only broke the window. The sparrow now hopped in, sat at the fireside, and said, 'Carter, it shall cost you your life.' Then he became mad and blind with rage, and struck at her with his hatchet, and split the stove in two; and as the sparrow flew from place to place the carter and his wife were so furious that they broke all their furniture, glasses, chairs, benches, the table, and at last the walls, without touching the bird. At last he caught her in his hand. Then the wife said, 'Shall I kill her at once?'

'No,' said he, 'that would be too gentle; she must die a more cruel death. I will swallow her.' So he took and swallowed her. The sparrow began to flutter, and fluttered into his mouth. Then she stretched out her neck, and cried, 'Carter, it shall cost thee thy life.' The carter handed his wife the hatchet, and said, 'Wife, strike the bird dead in my mouth.' The wife struck, but missed her aim and struck the carter in the head, so that he fell dead. The sparrow flew out and away.

FREDERICK AND CATHERINE.

THERE was once a man called Frederick; he had a wife whose name was Catherine, and they had not long been married. One day Frederick said, 'I am going to work in the fields; when I come back I shall be hungry, so let me have something nice cooked and a good draught of ale.'

'Very well,' said she, 'it shall be all ready.'

When dinner-time drew near she fetched a sausage from the chimney, and put it on the fire to fry. The sausage soon began to look brown and to crackle in the pan, while Catherine stood by holding its handle. Then she thought, 'As the sausage is nearly ready, I might be drawing the ale.' Then she made the pan firm on the fire, took a can and went into the cellar to draw the ale. The beer ran into the can, and Catherine was watching it, when suddenly she thought, 'The dog is upstairs and not shut up, he might take the sausage out of the pan; luckily, I thought of it!' So she ran up the cellar steps. The dog had already the sausage in his mouth, and was dragging it along the ground. Away went Catherine after it, and away went the dog across the field; but the dog was swifter than she was, and ran away with the sausage. 'What is gone, is gone,' said Catherine. She turned round, and as she had run a good way and was tired, she walked home leisurely to cool herself.

Now, all this time the ale was running too, for Catherine had not turned the tap; and when the can was full, it ran into the cellar, and did not stop until the cask was empty. Catherine saw even from the steps what had happened.

'Oh dear,' said she, 'what is to be done to prevent Frederick from seeing it?'

She thought a little, then she remembered that there was a sack of fine meal in the garret bought at the last fair, and that if she sprinkled this over the floor it would suck up the ale.

'How lucky,' said she, 'that we kept that meal! what one saves comes in use in time of need.' She then went for it, brought down the sack and threw it just on the can of beer so that it upset, and Frederick's draught was also swimming in the cellar.

'All right,' said she; 'when one goes, another may as well follow.'

Then she strewed the meal all over the cellar, and was quite pleased with her work, and said: 'How very neat and clean it looks!'

At noon Frederick came home. 'Now, wife, what have you for dinner?' 'Oh, Frederick,' answered she, 'I was cooking a sausage; but while I was drawing the ale the dog ran away with it, and while I ran after the dog the ale all ran out, and when I went to dry up the beer with the meal I upset the can; but be content, the cellar is now quite dry.'

'Kate, Kate,' said he, 'you should not have done that! Why did you leave the sausage to be stolen, and the beer to run away, and then shake over it our fine meal?'

'Why, Frederick, I did not know; you should have told me.' The husband thought to himself: 'If my wife manages matters thus, I must look sharp myself.' Now, he had a good deal of gold in the house, so he said to Catherine:

'See, here are pretty yellow buttons, which I will put in a pot and bury in the stable; but take care that you do not touch them.'

'No, Frederick,' said she, 'I will not.'

Now, when Frederick was gone some pedlars came, who had earthenware dishes and plates to sell, and asked the young wife to buy them. 'My dear people,' said Catherine, 'I have no money, so I cannot buy; but if you could use yellow buttons I could buy of you.' 'Yellow buttons!' said they; 'why not let us see them?'

'Go into the stable and dig, and you will find the yellow buttons; I dare not go myself.' So the rogues went: they dug and found pure gold. They took all and ran away, leaving behind their plates and dishes. Catherine thought she must use the new dishes, and as there was no want in the kitchen, she set them up all round the house as ornaments. When Frederick came home and saw the new ware, he said: 'Catherine, what have you been about?'

'I have bought them with the yellow buttons which you put in the stable: I did not go there, the pedlars dug them up themselves.'

'Ah, wife, what have you done! They were not buttons, but pure gold, and all we had. How could you have done such a thing!'

'Oh, Frederick, I did not know; you should have told me.' Catherine stood awhile thinking, and then said: 'Hark ye, Fred: we will get back the gold; let us run after the thieves.'

'Come,' said Frederick, 'we will try; but take some butter

and cheese with you, that we shall have something to eat on our way.'

'Yes, Fred, we will.'

They set out, and as Frederick walked the fastest, Catherine was some way behind. 'It does not matter,' thought she; 'when we turn back I shall be nearer home.' She now came to a hill, and on both sides of the way were deep ruts.

'Ah, see now,' said Catherine, 'how the poor earth is torn up and pressed down; it cannot get well again.' And, full of compassion, she took the butter and smeared the ruts right and left, so that they should not be hurt so much by the wheels; and as she stooped in her pity, a cheese rolled out of her pocket down the hill. Then said Catherine: 'I have been that way once; I will not go down again: another cheese can go and fetch it.' So she took another cheese and rolled it down the hill. But the cheese did not come back, so she threw a third one, saying: 'Perhaps they are waiting for company, and will not go alone.' When all three stayed still, she said: 'I do not know what I should do, yet it may be that the third has not found his way, and has lost itself: I will send a fourth, that it may call it.' But the fourth did no better than the third. Then she became angry, and threw down the fifth and sixth, and they were the last. For some time she stood still, and watched if they would come; but as they did not, she said: 'Oh, you are staying long enough; do you think that I will wait longer for you? I go on my way; you can run after me, as you have younger legs than I have.' So Catherine went on, and found Frederick standing waiting for her, as he wanted something to eat.

'Now give me what you have brought.' She handed him the dry bread. 'Where are the butter and cheese?' asked the husband. 'Oh, Fred,' said Catherine, 'with the butter I have smeared the cart-ruts, and the cheeses will soon come; one ran away, so I sent the others after it to call it back.' Frederick then said: 'You should not have done that, Kate; you should not have smeared butter in the road, and rolled the cheeses down the hill.'

'Oh, Fred, you should have told me!'

They then ate the dry bread together, and Frederick said, 'Kate, did you fasten up the house when you came away?'

'No, Fred; you should have told me to do so.'

'Well, return home before we go further, and bring also something to eat. I will wait for you here.' Catherine went back, and thought, 'Fred will like something else to eat; he

does not care for butter and cheese. I will take him a bag full of nuts, and a jug of vinegar to drink.' Then she bolted the upper door, but the lower one she took out, and put it on her shoulder, and thought that if the door were kept safely the house would be well secured. Catherine did not hurry herself; she thought, 'Frederick will rest himself so much the longer.' When she met him, she said, 'Here is the house door for you, Frederick, and now you can take care of the house yourself.'

'Oh,' said he, 'what a clever wife I have! She takes away the lower door, so that everyone may run in that wishes, and bolts the upper one. It is too late now to go back, but as you have brought the door, you must carry it.'

'I will carry the door, Fred; but the nuts and vinegar will be too heavy for me. I will hang them on the door; that can carry them.' They now went into the wood, and sought for the rogues, but did not find them. Now, as it was dark, they climbed up into a tree, to spend the night there. Hardly had they done so when the fellows came there who find things before they are lost. They settled under the very tree in which Frederick and Catherine were sitting, made a fire, and were going to divide their booty. Frederick slipped down on the other side, and picked up some stones, climbed up again, and meant to hit the thieves on the head. But the stones did not hit them, and the rogues called out, 'It will soon be morning; the wind is shaking down the fir-apples. Catherine still had the door on her shoulder, and because it pressed her, she thought it was the fault of the nuts, and said, 'Fred, I must throw down the nuts.'

'No, Kate, not yet; it might betray us.'

'Oh, Fred, I must, they hurt me so!'

'Well, do it.' Then the nuts rolled down through the boughs, and the rogues below said, 'It is hailing.' Soon after, because the door pressed her heavily, she said that she must throw out the vinegar. 'No, Catherine, you must not; it would betray us.'

'Oh, Fred, I must, it is so heavy!'

'Well, then, do so.' She shook out the vinegar, so that it sprinkled the rogues. They said one to the other, 'What a heavy dew there is!' At last Catherine thought it must be the door which was so heavy, and said to Frederick:

'I must throw it down.'

'No, Kate, not yet; it would betray us.'

'Oh, Fred, I must, it is so heavy!'

'No, Catherine; hold it firm.'

'Oh, Fred, I must let it fall!'

'Oh,' said Frederick angrily, 'then let it fall.' It fell with such a clatter upon the thieves that they cried that the demon was coming, and ran away as fast as they could, and left all the gold. In the early morning, as the two came down, they found all their gold, and took it home with them.

When they were again at home Frederick said:

'Kate, you must now be very diligent and work.'

'Yes, Fred, I'll do it; I will go in the field and cut the corn.'

When Catherine went to the field, she said, 'Shall I eat before I cut, or shall I sleep before I cut? I will eat first.' Then Catherine ate and became sleepy, and began to cut, and, half asleep, cut all her clothes in two, apron, frock, and all. As Catherine, after a long sleep, again awoke, she was standing half naked, and she said to herself:

'Am I myself, or am I not? Oh, I am not myself.' In the meantime it was night, and Catherine ran into the village and knocked at her husband's door, and called, 'Fred!'

'What is it?'

'I would like to know if Catherine is in?'

'Yes, yes,' answered Frederick; 'she will be lying asleep.'

So she said, 'I must be at home,' and ran away.

Outside Catherine met some rogues who wished to steal, so she said to them that she would help them. The rogues thought she knew the locality, and were pleased; but Catherine went in front of the houses, and called out, 'People, have you anything? We wish to steal.' The rogues thought, 'That is a queer way,' and wished to get rid of her. Then they told her that the parson had some beetroots in his field. 'Go,' they said, 'and pull them up for us.' Catherine went to the field, but was too lazy to pull the beetroots quite out. A man was passing who thought she was a demon, so he ran to the parson and said, 'A demon is in your beetroot field, and pulling up the roots.' 'Oh,' said the parson, 'I have a lame foot; I cannot go and drive him away.' The man said that he would carry him but when they came to the field Catherine stood upright. 'Oh, a demon!' said the parson; and both ran away, and the parson ran faster with his lame foot than the man who had carried him with his sound one.

THE TWO BROTHERS.

THERE were once two brothers, one of them rich, the other poor. The rich brother was a goldsmith, and had a wicked heart. The poor brother supported himself by making brooms, and was good and honest. He had two children, twin brothers, who resembled each other as closely as one drop of water resembles another. The two boys went sometimes to the house of their rich uncle to get the pieces that were left from the table, for they were often very hungry.

It happened one day, while their father was in the wood gathering rushes, that he saw a bird with golden plumage. He had never seen any bird like it. He picked up a stone and threw it at the bird, and hit it; but only a golden feather fell, and the bird flew away.

The man took the feather and brought it to his brother, who, when he saw it, exclaimed, 'That is real gold,' and gave him a great deal of money for it. Another day, as the man climbed up a birch-tree, in order to cut off a few branches, the same bird flew over his head, and on searching he found a nest, and in it lay a golden egg. He took the egg home and showed it to his brother, who said again, 'This is real gold,' and gave him what it was worth. At last the goldsmith said, 'You may as well get me the bird, if you can.'

So the poor brother went again to the wood, and after a time, seeing the bird perched on a tree, he knocked it down with a stone and brought it to his brother, who gave him a heap of money for it. 'Now,' thought he, 'I can support myself for the future,' and went home to his house full of joy.

The goldsmith, however, who was clever and cunning, knew the real value of the bird. So he called his wife, and said, 'Roast the gold bird for me, and be careful that no one comes in, as I wish to eat it quite alone.' The bird was, indeed, not a common bird; it had a wonderful power even when dead. For any person who ate the heart and liver would every morning find under his pillow a piece of gold. The goldsmith's wife prepared the bird, stuck it on the spit, and left it to roast.

Now, it happened that while it was roasting, and the mistress absent from the kitchen about other household work, the two children of the broom-maker came in, and stood for a few moments watching the spit as it turned round.

Presently two little pieces fell from the bird into the pan underneath. One of them said, 'I think we may have those two little pieces, no one will ever miss them, and I am so hungry;' so the children each took a piece and ate it up.

In a few moments the goldsmith's wife came in, and saw that they had been eating something, and said, 'What have you been eating?'

'Only two little pieces that fell from the bird,' they replied.

'Oh,' exclaimed the wife, in a great fright, 'they must have been the heart and liver of the bird;' and then, that her husband might not miss them, for she was afraid of his anger, she quickly killed a chicken, took out the heart and liver, and laid them on the golden bird.

As soon as it was ready, she carried it in to the goldsmith, who ate it all up, without leaving her a morsel. The next morning, however, when he felt under his pillow, expecting to find the gold pieces, nothing was there.

The two children, however, who knew nothing of the good fortune which had befallen them, never thought of searching under their pillow. But the next morning, as they got out of bed, something fell on the ground and tinkled, and when they stooped to pick it up, there were two pieces of gold. They carried them at once to their father, who wondered very much, and said, 'What can this mean?'

As, however, there were two more pieces the next morning, and again each day, the father went to his brother and told him of the wonderful circumstance. The goldsmith knew well that these gold pieces must be the result of the children having eaten the heart and liver of the golden bird, and in order to be revenged, and because he was hard-hearted and jealous, he said to him, 'Your children are in league with the evil one; do not touch the gold, and on no account allow your children to remain in your house any longer, for the evil one has power over them, and could bring ruin upon you through them.'

The father feared the evil one, and, sad as it was to him, he led the twins out into the forest and left them there with a heavy heart.

The two children ran here and there in the wood to try and discover the way home, but they wandered back always to the same place. At last they met a hunter, who said to them, 'Whose children are you?'

'We are a poor broom-maker's children,' they replied, 'and our father will not keep us any longer in the house because every morning there is a piece of gold found under our pillows.'

'Ah,' exclaimed the hunter, 'that is not bad; well, if you are honest, and have told me the truth, I will take you home and be a father to you.' In fact, the children pleased the good man, and as he had no children of his own, he gladly took them home with him.

He taught them to hunt in the forest, and the gold pieces which they found every morning under their pillows they gave to him, and he kept them for future need.

As soon as the twins were grown up their foster-father took them one day into the wood, and said, 'To-day you are going to make your first trial at shooting, for I want you to be free of your apprenticeship and to be hunters.'

Then they went with him to lie in wait, and stayed there a long time, but no game appeared. Presently the hunter saw flying over his head a flock of wild geese, in the form of a triangle, so he said, 'Aim quickly at each corner, and fire.' They did so, and their first proof-shot was successful.

Soon after another flock appeared in the form of the figure 2. 'Now,' he exclaimed, 'shoot again at each corner and bring them down.' This proof-shot was also successful, and the hunter directly said, 'Now I pronounce you free; you are quite accomplished sportsmen.'

Then the two brothers went away into the wood together to hold counsel with each other.

In the evening, when they sat down to supper, one of them said to their foster-father, 'We will not eat one bit till you have granted us our request.'

'And what is your request?' he asked.

'You have taught us to hunt, and to earn our living,' they replied, 'and we want to go out in the world and seek our fortune. Will you give us permission to do so?'

The good old man replied joyfully: 'You speak like brave hunters; what you desire is my own wish. Go where you will, you will be sure to succeed.' Then they ate and drank together.'

When the appointed day came, the hunter presented each of them with a new rifle and a dog, and allowed them to take as much as they would from his store of the gold pieces. He accompanied them for some distance on the way, and before saying farewell he gave them each a white penknife, and said: 'If at any time you should get separated from each other, the knife must be placed cross-ways in a tree, one side of the blade turning east, the other west, pointing out the road which each should take. If one should die, the blade will rust on one side; but as long as he lives it will remain bright.'

The two brothers travelled till they came to an immense forest, so large that it was impossible to cross it in one day. They stayed there all night, and ate what they had in their game-bags; but for two days they walked on through the forest without finding themselves any nearer the end.

By this time they had nothing left to eat, so one said to the other: 'We must shoot something, or we shall starve.' So he loaded his gun, and looked about him. Presently an old hare came running by; but as he raised his rifle, the hare cried:

'Dearest hunters, let me live;
I will to you my young ones give.'

Then she sprang up into the bushes, and brought out two young ones, and laid them before the hunters. The little animals were so full of tricks, and played about so prettily, that the hunters had not the heart to kill them; they kept them, therefore, alive, and the little animals soon learned to follow them about like dogs.

By-and-by a fox appeared, and they were about to shoot him, but he cried also:

'Dearest hunters, let me live,
And I will you my young ones give.'

Then he brought out two little foxes, but the hunters could not kill them, so they gave them to the hares as companions, and the little creatures followed the hunters wherever they went.

Not long after, a wolf stepped before them out of the thicket, and one of the brothers instantly levelled his gun at him, but the wolf cried out:

'Dear, kind hunters, let me live;
I will to you my young ones give.'

The hunters took the young wolves, and treated them as they had done the other animals, and they followed them also.

Presently a bear came by, and they quite intended to kill him, but he also cried out:

'Dear, kind hunters, let me live,
And I will you my young ones give.'

The two young bears were placed with the others, of whom there were already eight.

At last, who should come by but a lion, shaking his mane! The hunters were not at all alarmed; they only pointed their guns at him. But the lion cried out in the same manner:

'Dear, kind hunters, let me live,
And I will you two young ones give.

So he fetched two of his cubs, and the hunters placed them with the rest. They had now two lions, two bears, two wolves, two foxes, and two hares, who travelled with them and served them. Yet, after all, their hunger was not appeased.

So one of them said to the fox: 'Here, you little sneak, who are so clever and sly, go and find us something to eat.'

Then the fox answered: 'Not far from here lies a town where we have many times fetched away chickens. I will show you the way.' So the fox showed them the way to the village, where they bought some provisions for themselves and food for the animals, and went on farther.

The fox, however, knew quite well the best spots in that part of the country, and where to find the hen-houses; and he could, above all, direct the hunters which road to take.

After travelling for a time in this way, they could find no suitable place for them all to remain together, so one said to the other: 'The only thing for us to do is to separate;' and to this the other agreed. Then they divided the animals so that each had one lion, one bear, one wolf, one fox, and one hare. When the time came to say farewell, they promised to live in brotherly love till death, stuck the knife that their foster-father had given them in a tree, and then one turned to the east, and the other to the west.

One of them soon arrived at a large town, in which the houses were all covered with black crape. He went to an inn, and asked the landlord if he could give shelter to his animals. The landlord pointed out a stable for them, and their master led them in, and shut the door.

But in the wall of the stable was a hole, and the hare slipped through easily and fetched a cabbage for herself. The fox followed, and came back with a hen; and as soon as he had eaten it, he went for the cock also. The wolf, the bear, and the lion, however, were too large to get through the hole. Then the landlord had a cow killed and brought in for them, or they would have starved.

The hunter was just going out to see if his animals were being cared for, when he asked the landlord why the houses were so hung with mourning crape.

'Because,' he replied, 'to-morrow morning our king's daughter will die.'

'Is she seriously ill, then?' asked the hunter.

'No,' he answered, 'she is in excellent health; still, she must die.'

'What is the cause of this?' said the young man.

Then the landlord explained

'Outside the town,' he said, 'is a high mountain, in which dwells a dragon, who every year demands a young maiden to be given up to him, otherwise he will destroy the whole country. He has already devoured all the young maidens in the town, and there are none remaining but the king's daughter. Not even for her is any favour shown, and to-morrow she must be delivered up to him.'

'Why do you not kill the dragon?' exclaimed the young hunter.

'Ah!' replied the landlord, 'many young knights have sought to do so, and lost their lives in the attempt. The king has even promised his daughter in marriage to whoever will destroy the dragon, and also that he shall be heir to his throne.'

The hunter made no reply to this; but the next morning he rose early, and, taking his animals with him, climbed up the dragon's mountain.

There stood near the top a little church, and on the altar inside were three full goblets, bearing this inscription: 'Whoever drinks of these goblets will be the strongest man upon earth, and will draw the sword which lies buried before the threshold of this door.'

The hunter did not drink; he first went out and sought for the sword in the ground, but he could not move it. Then he returned, and drank up the contents of the goblets. How strong it made him feel, and how quickly he found the sword, which, heavy as it was, he could now wield easily!

Meanwhile the hour came when the young maiden was to be given up to the dragon, and she came out, accompanied by the king, the marshal, and the courtiers.

They saw from the distance the hunter on the mountain, and the princess, thinking it was the dragon waiting for her, would not go on. At last, to save the town from being lost, she went on her sad journey. The king and the court returned home full of great sorrow, but the king's marshal was to remain and see from a distance all that took place.

When the king's daughter reached the top of the mountain, she found, instead of the dragon, a handsome young hunter, who spoke to her comforting words, and telling her he had come to rescue her, led her into the church and locked her in.

Before long, with a rushing noise and a roar, the seven-

headed dragon made his appearance. As soon as he caught sight of the hunter, he wondered to himself, and said at last, 'What business have you here on this mountain?'

'My business is a combat with you,' replied the hunter.

'Many knights and nobles have tried that, and lost their lives,' replied the dragon; 'with you I shall make short work.' And he breathed out fire as he spoke from his seven throats.

The flames set fire to the dry grass, and the hunter would have been stifled with heat and smoke, had not his faithful animals run forward and stamped out the fire. Then the dragon attacked the hunter, but he swung his sword on high, so that it whizzed through the air and cut off three of his heads.

Then was the monster furious; he raised himself on his hind-legs, spat fiery flames on the hunter, and tried to overthrow him. But the young man again swung his sword, and, as the dragon approached, he, with one blow, cut off three more of his heads. The monster, mad with rage, sunk on the ground, still trying to get at the hunter; but the young man, exerting all his remaining strength, had no difficulty in cutting off his seventh head and his tail; and then, finding he could resist no more, he called to his animals to come and tear the dragon in pieces.

As soon as the combat was ended, the hunter unlocked the church door, and found the king's daughter lying on the ground; for during the combat all sense and life had left her, from fear and terror.

He raised her up, and as she came to herself and opened her eyes, he showed her the dragon torn in pieces, and told her that she was saved.

She rejoiced, and said 'Now you will be my dear husband, for my father has himself promised me in marriage to whoever should kill the dragon.'

Then she took off her coral necklace of five strings, and divided it between the animals as a reward, the lion's share being in addition the gold clasp. Her pocket-handkerchief, which bore her name, she presented to the hunter, who went out and cut the seven tongues out of the dragon's heads, which he wrapped up carefully in the handkerchief.

After all the fighting and the fire and smoke the hunter felt so faint and tired that he said to the maiden, 'I think a little rest would do us both good, after all the fight and the struggles with the dragon that I have had, and your terror and alarm. Shall we sleep for a little while?'

'Yes,' she replied; 'I can sleep peacefully now.'

So she laid herself down, and as soon as she slept, the hunter

said to the lion, 'You must lie near, and watch that no one comes to harm us.' Then he threw himself on the ground, quite worn out, and was soon fast asleep.

The lion laid himself down at a little distance to watch; but he was also tired and overcome with the combat, so he called to the bear, and said, 'Lie down near me; I must have a little rest; and if anyone comes, wake me up.'

Then the bear lay down; but he was also very tired, so he cried to the wolf, 'Just lie down by me; I must have a little sleep; and if anything happens, wake me up.'

The wolf lay down near him; but as he was also tired, he called to the fox, and said, 'Lie down near me; I must have a little sleep; and if anything comes, wake me up.'

Then the fox came and laid himself down by the wolf; but he, too, was tired, and called out to the hare, 'Lie down near me; I must sleep a little; and whatever comes, wake me up.'

The hare seated herself near the fox; but the poor little hare was very tired, and, although she had no one to ask to watch and call her, she also went fast asleep.

And now the king's daughter, the hunter, the lion, the bear, the wolf, the fox, and the hare were all in a deep sleep, while danger was at hand.

The marshal, who, from the distance, had to see what was going on, when he perceived that the dragon had not yet flown away with the king's daughter, and that all was quiet on the mountain, took courage, and ventured to climb up to the top. There he saw the mangled and headless body of the dragon, and at a little distance the king's daughter, the hunter, and all the animals sunk in a deep sleep. He knew in a moment that the stranger hunter had killed the dragon, and, being wicked and envious, he drew his sword, and cut off the hunter's head. Then he seized the sleeping maiden by the arm, and carried her away from the mountain.

She awoke and screamed; but the marshal said, 'You are in my power, and therefore you shall say that I have killed the dragon.'

'I cannot say so,' she replied, 'for I saw the hunter kill him, and the animals tear him to pieces.'

Then he drew his sword, and threatened to kill her if she did not obey him, so that, to save her life, she was forced to promise.

Thereupon he took her to the king, who knew not how to contain himself for joy at finding his dear child still alive, and that she had been saved from the monster's power.

Then the marshal said, 'I have killed the dragon, and freed the king's daughter; therefore I demand her for my wife, according to the king's promise.'

'Is this all true?' asked the king of his daughter.

'Ah yes,' she replied, 'I suppose it is true; but I shall refuse to allow the marriage to take place for one year and a day. For,' thought she, 'in that time I may hear something of my dear hunter.'

All this while on the dragon's mountain the animals lay sleeping near their dead master. At last a large humble-bee settled on the hare's nose, but she only whisked it off with her paw, and slept again. The bee came a second time, but the hare again shook him off, and slept as soundly as before. Then came the humble-bee a third time, and stung the hare in the nose; thereupon she woke. As soon as she was quite aroused, she woke the fox; the fox, the wolf; the wolf, the bear; and the bear, the lion.

But when the lion roused himself, and saw that the maiden was gone and his master dead, he gave a terrible roar, and cried, 'Whose doing is this? Bear, why did you not wake me?'

Then said the bear to the wolf, 'Wolf, why did you not wake me?'

'Fox,' cried the wolf, 'why did you not wake me?'

'Hare,' said the fox, 'and why did you not wake me?'

The poor hare had no one to ask why they did not wake her, and she knew she must bear all the blame. Indeed, they were all ready to tear her to pieces; but she cried, 'Don't destroy my life! I will restore our master. I know a mountain on which grows a root that will cure every wound and every disease, if it is placed in the person's mouth; but the mountain on which it grows lies two hundred more from here.'

'Then,' said the lion, 'we will give you twenty-four hours, but not longer, to find this root and bring it to us.'

Away sprang the hare very fast, and in four-and-twenty hours she returned with the root. As soon as they saw her, the lion quickly placed the head of the hunter on the neck, and the hare, when she had joined the wounded parts together, put the root into the mouth; and in a few moments the heart began to beat, and life came back to the hunter.

On awaking, he was terribly alarmed to find that the maiden had disappeared. 'She must have gone away while I slept,' he said, 'and is lost to me for ever.'

These sad thoughts so occupied him that he did not notice

anything wrong about his head, but in truth the lion had placed it on in such a hurry that the face was turned the wrong way. He first noticed it when they brought him something to eat, and then he found that his face looked backwards. He was so astonished that he could not imagine what had happened, and asked his animals the cause. Then the lion confessed that they had all slept in consequence of being so tired, and that when they at last awoke, they found the princess gone, and himself lying dead, with his head cut off. The lion told him also that the hare had fetched the healing root, but in their haste they had placed the head on the wrong way. This mistake, they said, could be easily rectified. So they took the hunter's head off again, turned it round, placed it on properly, and the hare stuck the parts together with the wonderful root. After this the hunter went away again to travel about the world, feeling very sorrowful; and he left his animals to be taken care of by the people of the town.

It so happened that at the end of a year he came back again to the same town where he had freed the king's daughter and killed the dragon. This time, instead of black crape, the houses were hung with scarlet cloth. 'What does it mean?' he said to the landlord; 'last year when I came your houses were all hung with black crape, and now it is scarlet cloth.'

'Oh,' replied the landlord, 'last year we were expecting our king's daughter to be given up to the dragon; but the marshal fought with him and killed him, and to-morrow his marriage with the king's daughter will take place. This is the cause of our town being so gay and bright: all is joy now, instead of sorrow.'

The next day, when the marriage was to be celebrated, the hunter said, 'Landlord, do you believe that I shall eat bread from the king's table here with anyone who will join me?'

'I will lay a hundred gold pieces,' replied the landlord, 'that you will do nothing of the kind.'

The hunter took the bet, and, taking out his purse, placed the gold pieces aside for payment if he should lose.

Then he called the hare, and said to her, 'Go quickly to the castle, dear Springer, and bring me some of the bread which the king eats.'

Now, the hare was such a little thing that she could not order anyone else to go, so she was obliged to go herself. 'Oh,' thought she, 'when I am running through the streets, suppose the cruel hound should see me!' Just as she thought this there was a hound ready to seize her. But she gave a

start forward, and before the sentinel was aware rushed into the sentry-box. The dog followed, and wanted to bring her out, but the soldier stood in the doorway, and would not let him pass; and when the dog tried to get in he struck him with his staff, and sent him away howling.

As soon as the hare saw that the coast was clear she rushed out and ran to the castle, and, darting in to the princess, hid under her chair. Presently the princess felt something scratching her foot, and, thinking it was the dog, she said, 'Be quiet; go away.' The hare scratched again at her foot, but she still thought it was the dog, and cried, 'Will you go away?' But the hare did not allow herself to be sent away, so she scratched the foot a third time. Then the princess looked down and recognised the hare by her necklace. She took the creature at once in her arms, carried her to her own room, and said, 'Dear little hare, what do you want?'

The hare replied instantly, 'My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and he has sent me to ask for some of the bread that the king eats.'

Then was the king's daughter full of joy; she sent for the cook, and ordered him to bring her some of the bread which was made for the king. When he brought it the hare cried, 'The cook must go with me, or that cruel hound may do me some harm.' So the cook carried the bread, and went with the hare to the door of the inn.

As soon as he was gone she stood on her hind-legs, took the bread in her fore-paws, and brought it to her master.

'There!' cried the hunter; 'here is the bread, landlord, and the hundred gold pieces are mine.'

The landlord was much surprised, but when the hunter declared he would also have some of the roast meat from the king's table, he said, 'I would like to see it,' but he would not bet again.

The hunter called the fox, and said to him, 'My foxy, go and fetch me some of the roast meat such as the king eats.'

The red fox knew the way better than the hare: he went round the corner and slipped in without being seen by the hound. Then he placed himself under the chair of the king's daughter, and touched her foot. She looked down immediately, and, recognising him by his necklace, took him into her room. 'What do you want, dear fox?' she asked.

'My master, who killed the dragon, is here,' he replied, 'and has sent me to ask for some of the roast meat that is cooked for the king.'

The cook was sent for again, and the princess desired him to carry some meat for the fox to the door of the inn. On arriving, the fox took the dish from the cook, and, after whisking away the flies that had settled on it with his tail, brought it to his master.

'See, landlord,' cried the hunter, 'here are bread and meat such as the king eats, and now I will have vegetables.' So he called the wolf, and said, 'Dear wolf, go and fetch me vegetables such as the king eats.'

Away went the wolf straight to the castle, for he had no fear of anything, and as soon as he entered the room he went behind the princess, and pulled her dress, so that she was obliged to look round. She recognised the wolf immediately by the necklace, took him into her chamber, and said, 'Dear wolf, what do you want?' He replied, 'My master, who killed the dragon, is here, and has sent me to ask for some vegetables such as the king eats.'

The cook was sent for again, and told to take some vegetables also to the inn door; and as soon as they arrived the wolf took the dish from him, and carried it to his master.

'Look here, landlord,' cried the hunter, 'I have now bread, meat, and vegetables; but I will also have some sweetmeats from the king's table.' He called the bear, and said, 'Dear bear, I know you are fond of sweets. Now go and fetch me some sweetmeats such as the king eats.'

The bear trotted off to the castle, and everyone ran away when they saw him coming. But when he reached the castle gates, the sentinel held his gun before him, and would not let him pass in. But the bear rose on his hind-legs, boxed his ears right and left with his fore-paws, so that the guards fell away right and left, and he went into the castle. Seeing the king's daughter entering, he followed her and gave a slight growl. She looked behind her, and, recognising the bear, called him into her chamber, and said, 'Dear bear, what do you want?'

'My master, who killed the dragon, is here,' he replied, 'and he has sent me to ask for some sweatmeats like those which the king eats.'

The princess sent for the confectioner, and desired him to bake some sweetmeats and take them with the bear to the door of the inn. As soon as they arrived, the bear first licked up the sugar drips which had dropped on his fur, then stood upright, took the dish, and carried it to his master.

'See now, landlord,' cried the hunter, 'I have bread and

meat, and vegetables, and sweetmeats, and I mean to have wine also, such as the king drinks!' So he called the lion to him, and said, 'Dear lion, you drink a good drink. Now go and fetch me some wine, such as the king drinks.'

As the lion trotted through the streets all the people ran away from him. The sentinel, when he saw him coming, tried to stop the way, but the lion gave a little roar and made him run for his life. Then the lion entered the castle, passed through the king's apartment, and knocked at the door of the princess's room with his tail. The princess, when she opened it and saw the lion, was at first rather frightened; but presently she observed on his neck the gold necklace clasp, and knew it was the hunter's lion. She called him into her chamber, and said, 'Dear lion, what do you want?'

'My master, who killed the dragon,' he replied, 'is here, and he has sent me to ask for some wine such as the king drinks.'

Then she sent for the king's cup-bearer, and told him to give the lion some of the king's wine.

'I will go with him,' said the lion, 'and see that he draws the right sort.' So the lion went with the cup-bearer to the wine-cellar, and when he saw him about to draw some of the ordinary wine which the king's vassals drank, the lion cried, 'Stop! I will taste the wine first.' So he drew himself a pint, and swallowed it down at a gulp. 'No,' he said, 'that is not the right sort.'

The cup-bearer saw he was found out; however, he went over to another cask that was kept for the king's marshal.

'Stop!' cried the lion again, 'I will taste the wine first.' So he drew another pint and drank it off. 'Ah!' he said, 'that is better, but still not the right wine.'

Then the cup-bearer was angry, and said:

'What can a stupid beast like you understand about wine?'

But the lion with a lash of his tail knocked him down, and before the man could move himself found his way stealthily into a little private cellar, in which were casks of wine never tasted by any but the king. The lion drew half a pint, and when he had tasted it he said to himself: 'That is wine of the right sort.' So he called the cup-bearer, and made him draw six flagons full.

As they came up from the cellar into the open air the lion's head swam a little, and he was almost tipsy; but as the cup-bearer was obliged to carry the wine for him to the door of the inn, it did not much matter. When they arrived, the lion

took the handle of the basket in his mouth, and carried the wine to his master.

'Now, master landlord,' said the hunter, 'I have bread, meat, vegetables, sweetmeats, and wines, such as the king has, so I will sit down, and with my faithful animals enjoy a good meal;' and, indeed, he felt very happy, for he knew now that the king's daughter still loved him.

After they had finished the hunter said to the landlord:

'Now that I have eaten and drank of the same provisions as the king, I will go to the king's castle and marry his daughter.'

'Well,' said the landlord, 'how can that be when she has already a bridegroom to whom she will to-day be married?'

The hunter without a word took out the pocket-handkerchief which the king's daughter had given him on the dragon's mountain, and, opening it, showed the landlord the seven tongues of the monster, which he had cut out and wrapped in the handkerchief.

'That which I have so carefully preserved will help me,' said the hunter.

The landlord looked at the handkerchief, and said, 'I may believe all the rest, but I would bet my house and farmyard that you will never marry the king's daughter.'

'Very well,' said the hunter, 'I accept your bet; and if I lose, there are my thousand gold pieces;' and he laid them on the table.

When the king and his daughter were seated at table the king said, 'What did all those wild animals want who came to you to-day, going in and out of my castle?'

'I cannot tell you yet,' she replied; 'but if you will send into the town for the master of these animals you will do well.'

The king sent on hearing this a servant at once to the inn with an invitation to the stranger who owned the animals, and the servant arrived just as the hunter had made his bet with the landlord.

'See, landlord!' he cried, 'the king has sent me an invitation by his servant, but I cannot accept it yet.' He turned to the man who waited, and said: 'Tell my lord the king that I cannot obey his commands to visit him unless he sends me suitable clothes for a royal palace, and a carriage with six horses, and servants to wait upon me.'

The servant returned with the message, and when the king heard it, he said to his daughter, 'What shall I do?'

'I would send for him as he requests,' she replied.

So they sent royal robes, and a carriage and six horses with

servants, and when the hunter saw them coming, he said to the landlord: 'See! they have sent for me as I wished.'

He dressed himself in the kingly clothes, took the handkerchief containing the dragon's tongues, and drove away to the castle.

As soon as he arrived, the king said to his daughter: 'How shall I receive him?'

'I should go and meet him,' she replied.

So the king went to meet him, and led him into the royal apartment, and all his animals followed. The king pointed him to a seat by his daughter. The marshal sat on her other side as bridegroom, but he knew him not.

Just at this moment the dragon's seven heads were brought into the room to show to the company, and the king said: 'These heads belonged to the dragon who was for so many years the terror of this town. The marshal killed the dragon; therefore I give him to-day my daughter as his wife.'

At this the hunter rose, and, advancing, opened the seven throats of the dragon, and said: 'Where are the tongues?'

The marshal turned white with fear, and knew not what to do. At last he said in his terror: 'Dragons have no tongues.'

'Liars should not have any,' said the hunter; 'the dragon's tongues shall prove who was his conqueror!' He unfolded the handkerchief as he spoke; there lay the seven tongues. He took them up, and placed each in the mouth of the dragon's head to which it belonged, and it fitted exactly. Then he took up the pocket-handkerchief, which was marked with the name of the king's daughter, showed it to the maiden, and asked her if she had not given it to him.

'Yes,' she replied, 'I gave it you on the day you killed the dragon.'

He called his animals to him, took from each the necklace, and from the lion the one with the golden clasp, and asked to whom they belonged.

'They are mine,' she replied; 'they are part of my coral necklace, which had five strings of beads, that I divided among the animals because they aided you in killing the dragon.'

'I slept,' he said, 'for I was quite worn out with my combat, and as I lay sleeping the marshal came and cut off my head. Then he carried away the king's daughter, saying that he had killed the dragon; but he lies, as the tongues, the handkerchief, and the necklace will prove.'

Then the hunter related how one of his animals had healed him and restored him to life through the application of a

wonderful root, and how he had been wandering about for a whole year, and had only returned to the town that very day, and heard from the landlord of the marshal's deceit.

Then said the king to his daughter, 'Is it true that this man has killed the dragon?'

'Yes,' she answered, 'quite true; and I can venture now to expose the wickedness of the marshal, for he carried me away that day against my wish, and forced me with threats to keep silent, and on that account I begged to have the marriage put off for a year and a day.'

The king, after this, ordered twelve judges to be summoned to try the marshal, and the sentence passed upon him was that he should be torn to pieces by wild oxen. As soon as the marshal was punished, the king gave his daughter to the hunter, and appointed him to the high position of stadtholder over the whole kingdom.

The marriage caused great joy, and the hunter, who was now a prince, sent for his father and foster-father, and overloaded them with treasures.

Neither did he forget the landlord, but sent for him to come to the castle, and said: 'See, landlord, I have married the king's daughter, and your house and farmyard belong to me.'

'That is quite true,' replied the landlord.

'Ah,' said the prince, 'but I do not mean to keep them. They are still yours, and I make you a present of the thousand gold pieces also.'

For a time the young prince and his wife lived most happily together—he still, however, went out hunting, which was his great delight, and his faithful animals remained with him. They lived, however, in a wood close by, from which he could call them at any time; yet the wood was not safe, for he once went in and did not get out again very easily.

Whenever the prince had a wish to go hunting, he gave the king no rest till he allowed him to do so. On one occasion, while riding with a large number of attendants in the wood, he saw at a distance a snow-white deer, and he said to his people, 'Stay here till I come back; I must have that beautiful creature, and so many will frighten her.'

Then he rode away through the wood, and only his animals followed him. The attendants drew rein, and waited till evening; but as he did not come they rode home, and told the young princess that her husband had gone into an enchanted forest to hunt a white deer, and had not returned.

This made her very anxious, more especially when the

morrow came and he did not return; indeed, he could not, for he kept riding after the beautiful wild animal, but without being able to overtake it. At times, when he fancied she was within reach of his gun, the next moment she was leaping away at a great distance, and at last she vanished altogether.

Not till then did he notice how far he had penetrated into the forest. He raised his horn and blew, but there was no answer, for his attendants could not hear; and then as night came on he saw plainly that he should not be able to find his way home till the next day, so he alighted from his horse, lit a fire by a tree, and determined to make himself as comfortable as he could for the night.

As he sat under the tree by the fire, with his animals lying near him, he heard, as he thought, a human voice. He looked round, but could see nothing. Presently there was a groan over his head; he looked up, and saw an old woman sitting on a branch, who kept grumbling, 'Oh, oh, how cold I am! I am freezing!'

'If you are cold, come down and warm yourself,' he said.

'No, no,' she replied; 'your animals will bite me.'

'Indeed, they will do no such thing. Come down, old mother,' he said kindly; 'none of them shall hurt you.'

He did not know that she was a wicked witch, so when she said, 'I will throw you down a little switch from the tree, and if you just touch them on the back with it they cannot hurt me,' he did as she told him, and as soon as they were touched by the wand the animals were all turned to stone. Then she jumped down, and, touching the prince on the back with the switch, he also was instantly turned into stone. Thereupon she laughed maliciously, and dragged him and his animals into a grave where several similar stones lay.

When the princess found that her husband did not return, her anxiety and care increased painfully, and she became at last very unhappy.

Now, it so happened that just at this time the twin brother of the prince, who since their separation had been wandering in the East, arrived in the country of which his brother's father-in-law was king. He had tried to obtain a situation, but could not succeed, and only his animals were left to him.

One day, as he was wandering from one place to another, it occurred to his mind that he might as well go and look at the knife which they had stuck in the trunk of a tree at the time of their separation. When he came to it there was his brother's side of the knife half rusted, and the other half still bright.

In great alarm he thought, 'My brother must have fallen into some terrible trouble. I will go and find him; I may be able to rescue him, as the half of the knife is still bright.'

He set out with his animals on a journey, and while travelling west came to the town in which his brother's wife, the king's daughter, lived. As soon as he reached the gate of the town, the watchman advanced towards him, and asked if he should go and announce his arrival to the princess, who had for two days been in great trouble about him, fearing that he had been detained in the forest by enchantment.

The watchman had not the least idea that the young man was any other than the prince himself, especially as he had the wild animals running behind him. The twin brother saw this, and he said to himself, 'Perhaps it will be best for me to allow myself to be taken for my brother; I shall be able more easily to save him.' So he followed the sentinel to the castle, where he was received with great joy.

The young princess had no idea that this was not her husband, and asked him why he had remained away so long.

He replied, 'I rode a long distance into the wood, and could not find my way out again.' But she thought he was very cold and distant to her.

In a few days he discovered all about his brother that he wished to know, and was determined to go and seek him in the enchanted wood. So he said, 'I must go to the hunt just once more.'

The king and the young princess said all they could to dissuade him, but to no purpose, and at length he left the castle with a large company of attendants.

When he reached the wood, all happened as it had done with his brother. He saw the beautiful white deer, and told his attendants to wait while he went after it, followed only by his animals, but neither could he overtake it; and the white deer led him far down into the forest, where he found he must remain all night.

After he had lighted a fire, he heard the old woman in the tree crying out that she was freezing with cold, and he said to her, 'If you are cold, old mother, come down and warm yourself.'

'No,' she cried; 'your animals will bite me.'

'No, indeed they will not,' he said.

'I can't trust them,' she cried. 'Here, I will throw you a little switch, and if you gently strike them across the back, then they will not be able to hurt me.'

When the hunter heard that, he began to mistrust the old woman, and said, 'No; I will not strike my animals. You come down, or I will fetch you.'

'Do as you like,' she said; 'you can't hurt me.'

'If you don't come down,' he replied, 'I will shoot you.'

'Shoot away,' she said; 'your bullet can do me no harm.'

He pointed his gun, and shot at her. But the witch was proof against a leaden bullet; she gave a shrill laugh, and cried, 'It is no use trying to hit me.'

The hunter knew, however, what to do; he cut off three silver buttons from his coat, and loaded his gun with them. Against these he knew all her arts were vain; so, as he drew the trigger, she fell suddenly to the ground, with a scream. Then he placed his foot upon her, and said, 'Old witch, if thou dost not at once confess where my brother is, I will take thee up and throw thee into the fire.'

She was in a great fright, begged for pardon, and said, 'He is lying with his animals, turned to stone, in a grave.'

Then he forced her to go with him, and said, 'You old cat, if you don't instantly restore my brother to life, and all the creatures that are with him, over you go into the fire.'

She was obliged to take a switch and strike the stones, and immediately the brother, his animals, and many others—traders, mechanics, and shepherds—stood before him, alive, and in their own forms.

Thankful for having gained their freedom and their lives, they all hastened home; but the two brothers, when they saw each other again, were full of joy, and embraced and kissed each other with great affection. They seized the old witch, bound her, and placed her on the fire; and, as soon as she was burnt, the forest became suddenly clear and light, and the king's castle appeared at a very little distance.

After this, the two brothers walked away together towards the castle, and on the road related to each other the events that had happened to them since they parted. At last the one told his brother of his marriage to the king's daughter, and that the king had made him lord over the whole land.

'I know all about it,' replied the other; 'for when I came to the town they all took me for you, and treated me with kingly state; even the young princess mistook me for her husband, and made me sit by her side.'

But, as he spoke, his brother became so fierce with jealousy and anger that he drew his sword and cut off his brother's head. Then, as he saw him lie dead at his feet, his anger was

quelled in a moment, and he repented bitterly, crying, 'Oh, my brother is dead, and it is I who have killed him;' and, kneeling by his side, he mourned with loud cries and tears.

In a moment the hare appeared, and begged to be allowed to fetch the life-giving root, which she knew would cure him. She was not away long, and when she returned the head was replaced, and fastened with the healing power of the plant, and the brother restored to life, while not even a sign of the wound remained to be noticed.

The brothers now walked on most lovingly together, and the one who had married the king's daughter said, 'I see that you have kingly clothes, as I have. Your animals are the same as mine. Let us enter the castle at two opposite doors, and approach the old king from two sides together.'

So they separated; and as the king sat with his daughter in the royal apartment, sentinels approached him from two distant entrances at the same time, and informed him that the prince, with his animals, had arrived.

'That is impossible,' cried the king; 'one of you must be wrong, for the gates at which you watch are quite a quarter of a mile apart.'

But while the king spoke, the two young men entered at opposite ends of the room, and both came forward and stood before the king.

With a bewildered look the king turned to his daughter, and said, 'Which is your husband? for they are both so exactly alike, I cannot tell.'

She was herself very much frightened, and could not speak; at last she thought of the necklace that she had given to the animals, and, looking earnestly among them, she saw the glitter of the golden clasp on the lion's neck. 'See,' she cried, in a happy voice, 'he whom that lion follows is my husband.'

The prince laughed, and said, 'Yes, you are right.'

So they sat down happily together, and told the king and the young princess all their adventures.

When the king's daughter and her husband were alone, she said to him, 'I thought you did not love me the other day, when you came home from the wood, for you never even kissed me.'

Then the prince knew how true and honourable his brother had been.

THE QUEEN BEE.

A KING once had two sons, who went out in search of adventures; but they wasted their time and money in folly and dissipation, and never came home again. Their youngest brother, who was called Simpleton, set out to seek them, but when at length he found them, they mocked him for thinking that such a simpleton as he would fight his way through the world, when they, with all their cleverness, found it a very difficult matter.

They went on, all three together, and on their way they met with an ant-hill. The two elder brothers wanted to overturn the hill, that they might see the little ants running and creeping about in their fright, and carrying their eggs away to a place of safety; but Simpleton said, 'No, no; leave the little creatures in peace; I do not like to see them disturbed.'

They then went on quietly till they came to a lake, on which a large number of ducks were swimming, and the brothers wished to catch one or two for roasting, but the Simpleton said, 'Leave the poor birds in peace; I cannot endure that you should kill any of them.'

At length they came to a bees' nest in a tree, with so much honey that it ran over on the trunk. The two brothers wanted to light a fire under the tree to smother the bees, that they might take away the honey; but the youngest brother held them back. 'Leave the poor insects in peace,' he said; 'I cannot bear to think of their being burnt.'

At last they came to a castle, where in the stables stood horses of pure stone. They went all over the rooms and through the castle, till they reached a door to which were three locks. The centre of this door was glass, through which one could see into the room. They looked, and saw a little gray man sitting at a table. They called to him more than once, but he did not hear till they called a third time. Then he rose up, opened the three locks, and came out. Even then he uttered not a word, but led them to a richly-prepared table, and after they had eaten and drank as much as they wished, he led them each to his own chamber.

The next morning the gray little man came to the eldest brother, made signs to him to follow, and led him to a stone table, on which were engraved three tasks, by the performance

of which the castle could be delivered from the spell it was under. The first was:

'In the wood under the moss are scattered the pearls of the king's daughter; they are a thousand in number, and whoever can find them all in one day, before the sun goes down, will release the castle from its enchantment; but if at sunset one single pearl should be wanting, he who sought for them would be turned into stone.'

The eldest brother searched for the whole day, but when the hour of sunset arrived, he had only found a hundred pearls, and, according to the writing on the table, he was turned into stone.

The next day the second brother made an attempt, and began his task in the evening, so that he searched all night and all day, but with very little more success than his brother. By sunset next day he had found only two hundred pearls; he was, therefore, turned into stone.

At last came the turn of the Simpleton to seek amongst the moss; but it was so difficult to find the pearls, that he sat down on a stone and wept. As he sat there weeping, he saw coming towards him the ant-king, whose kingdom and life he had saved, with five thousand of his ants, and it was not long before they had found all the pearls, and piled them up in a large heap. The second task was to fetch the key of the princess's sleeping-chamber from the bottom of the lake into which it had been thrown. When the Simpleton went to the shore of the lake, the ducks whom he had saved dived to the bottom, and in a few moments brought up the key and gave it to him.

The third task was the most difficult of all. He had to go into the room where the king's three daughters were sleeping, find out which was the youngest and most beloved, and wake her. The sisters exactly resembled each other; the only thing by which they could be distinguished was that before they went to sleep the eldest had eaten barley-sugar, the second a little syrup, and the youngest a spoonful of honey. Then came the queen bee, whose community he had saved from the fire, and she went to the mouths of the three sleepers, and quickly discovered the youngest, that had eaten honey. She remained sitting on her mouth, and the youth knew by this which of the king's daughters to awaken. No sooner had he done so than the castle was disenchanted, and all who had been turned to stone resumed their proper forms.

The simple brother married the youngest daughter of the king, and became king after her father's death. His brothers married her two sisters.

THE THREE FEATHERS.

THERE was once a king who had three sons. Two of them were considered wise and prudent; but the youngest, who said very little, appeared so silly that he was called Simple. When the king became old and weak, and began to think that his end was near, he knew not to which of his sons to leave his kingdom.

So he sent for them, and said, 'Go forth! and he who brings me the finest carpet shall be king after my death.'

And, that there might be no dispute between them, he led them out of the castle, and blew three feathers into the air, saying, 'You will travel in whatever direction these feathers take.' One flew to the east and the other to the west; but the third soon fell on the earth, and remained there. Then the two eldest brothers turned one to the right and the other to the left, and they laughed at Simple, because where his feather fell he was obliged to remain.

Simple sat down, feeling very sad; but soon he noticed, near where his feather lay, a trap-door. He lifted it up, and saw a flight of steps, down which he descended, and reached another door. Hearing voices within, he knocked hastily. The voices were singing:

'Little frogs, crooked legs,
Where do you hide?
Go and see quickly
Who is outside.'

At this the door opened of itself, and the youth saw a large fat frog, seated with a number of little frogs round her.

On seeing him, the large frog asked what he wanted.

'I have a great wish for the finest and most beautiful carpet that can be got,' he replied. Then the old frog called again to her little ones:

'Little frogs, crooked legs,
Run here and there;
Bring me the large bag
That hangs over there.'

The young frogs fetched the bag, and when it was opened the old frog took from it a carpet so fine, and so beautifully worked, that nothing on earth could equal it. This she gave to the young man, who thanked her, and went away up the steps.

Meanwhile, his elder brothers, quite believing that their foolish brother would not be able to get any carpet at all, said one to another, 'We need not take the trouble to go farther, and seek for anything very wonderful; ours is sure to be the best.' And, as the first person they met was a shepherd, wearing a shepherd's plaid, they bought the large plaid cloth, and carried it home to the king.

At the same time the youngest brother returned with his beautiful carpet, and when the king saw it he was astonished, and said, 'If justice is done, then the kingdom belongs to my youngest son.'

But the two elder brothers gave the king no peace; they said it was impossible for Simple to become king, for his understanding failed in everything, and they begged their father to make another condition.

At last he said, 'Whoever finds the most beautiful ring, and brings it to me, shall have the kingdom.'

He then led out the brothers a second time, and blew three feathers into the air to direct their way. The feathers of the two eldest flew east and west, but that of the youngest fell, as before, near the trap-door, and there rested. He at once descended the steps, and told the great frog that he wanted a most beautiful ring. She sent for her large bag, and drew from it a ring, which sparkled with precious stones, and was so beautiful that no goldsmith on earth could make one like it.

The elder brothers had again laughed at Simple, and said, 'As if he could ever find a gold ring!' So they gave themselves no trouble, but merely took a plated ring from the harness of a carriage-horse, and brought it to their father.

But when the king saw Simple's splendid ring, he said at once, 'The kingdom belongs to my youngest son.'

His brothers, however, were not yet inclined to submit to the decision; they begged their father to make a third condition, and at last he promised that he would give the kingdom to the son who brought home the most beautiful woman to be his wife.

They all were again guided by the feathers, and the two elder took the roads pointed out to them. But Simple, without hesitation, went at once to the frog, and said: 'This time I am to take home the most beautiful woman.'

'Hey-day!' said the frog, 'I have not one by me at present; but you shall have one soon.' So she gave him a carrot, which had been hollowed out, and to which six mice were harnessed.

Simple took it quite sorrowfully, and said: 'What am I to do with this?'

'Seat one of my little frogs in it,' she said.

The youth, on this, caught one up at a venture, and seated it in the carrot. No sooner had he done so, than it became a most beautiful young lady; the carrot was turned into a gilded coach, and the mice were changed to horses.

He kissed the maiden, drove away to the castle, and led her to the king.

His brothers came also. They had taken no more trouble than before, and merely chose the handsomest peasant maidens they could find to bring to their father.

When the king saw the beautiful maiden his youngest son had brought, he said, 'The kingdom must now belong to my youngest son after my death.'

But the eldest brothers deafened the king's ears anew with their cries, 'We cannot consent to let our stupid brother be king; give us one more trial. Let a ring be hung in the hall, and let each woman spring through it.' For they thought the peasant maidens would easily manage to do this, because they were strong, and that the delicate lady would, no doubt, kill herself. To this trial the old king consented.

The peasant maidens jumped first, but they were so heavy and awkward that they fell, and broke arms and legs. But the beautiful lady whom Simple had brought home sprung as lightly as a deer through the ring, and thus put an end to all opposition.

The youngest brother married the beautiful maiden, and after his father's death ruled the kingdom for many years with great wisdom.

THE GOLDEN GOOSE.

THERE was a man who had three sons, the youngest of whom was considered very silly, and everybody used to mock him and make fun of him. The eldest son wanted to go and cut wood in the forest, and before he left home his mother prepared beautiful pancakes and a bottle of wine for him to take with him, so that he might not suffer from hunger or thirst.

As he entered the forest he met a gray old man, who bade

him 'Good-morning,' and said: 'Give me a little piece of cake out of your basket and a drop of wine out of your bottle, for I am very hungry and thirsty.'

But the clever son replied: 'What, give you my cake and my wine! Why, if I did, I should have none for myself. Not I, indeed, so take yourself off!' and he left the man standing and went on.

The young man began cutting down a tree, but it was not long before he made a false stroke: the axe slipped and cut his arm so badly that he was obliged to go home and have it bound up. Now, this false stroke was caused by the little gray old man.

Next day the second son went into the forest to cut wood, and his mother gave him a cake and a bottle of wine. As he entered the wood the same little old man met him, and begged for a piece of cake and a drop of wine. But the second son answered rudely: 'What I might give to you I shall want myself, so be off.'

Then he left the little old man standing in the road, and walked on. His punishment soon came; he had scarcely given two strokes on a tree with his axe, when he hit his leg such a terrible blow that he was obliged to limp home in great pain.

Then the stupid son said to his father, 'Let me go for once and cut wood in the forest.'

But his father said: 'No, your brothers have been hurt already, and it would be worse for you, who don't understand wood-cutting.'

The boy, however, begged so hard to be allowed to go that his father said: 'There, get along with you; you will buy your experience very dearly, I expect.'

His mother, however, gave him a cake which had been made with water and baked in the ashes, and a bottle of sour beer.

When he reached the wood the very same little old man met him, and after greeting him kindly, said: 'Give me a little of your cake and a drop from your bottle, for I am very hungry and thirsty.'

'Oh,' replied the simple youth, 'I have only a cake, which has been baked in the ashes, and some sour beer; but you are welcome to a share of it. Let us sit down, and eat and drink together.'

So they seated themselves, and, lo and behold, when the youth opened his basket, the cake had been turned into a beautiful cake, and the sour beer into wine. After they had

eaten and drank enough, the little old man said: 'Because you have been kind-hearted, and shared your dinner with me, I will make you in future lucky in all you undertake. There stands an old tree; cut it down, and you will find something good at the root.'

Then the old man said 'Farewell,' and left him.

The youth set to work, and very soon succeeded in felling the tree, when he found sitting at the roots a goose, whose feathers were of pure gold. He took it up, and, instead of going home, carried it with him to an inn at a little distance, where he intended to pass the night.

The landlord had three daughters, who looked at the goose with envious eyes. They had never seen such a wonderful bird, and longed to have at least one of its feathers. 'Ah,' thought the eldest, 'I shall soon have an opportunity to pluck one of them;' and so it happened, for not long after the young man left the room. She instantly went up to the bird and took hold of its wing, but as she did so, the finger and thumb remained and stuck fast. In a short time after the second sister came in with the full expectation of gaining a golden feather, but as she touched her sister to move her from the bird, her hand stuck fast to her sister's dress, and neither of them could free herself. At last, in came the third sister with the same intention. 'Keep away, keep away!' screamed the other two; 'in heaven's name keep away!'

But she could not imagine why she should keep away. If they were near the golden bird, why should not she be there? So she made a spring forward and touched her second sister, and immediately she also was made a prisoner, and in this position they were obliged to remain by the goose all night.

In the morning the young man came in, took the goose on his arm, and went away without troubling himself about the three girls, who were following close behind him. And as he walked quickly, they were obliged to run one behind the other, left or right of him, just as he was inclined to go.

In the middle of a field they were met by the parson of the parish, who looked with wonder at the procession as it came near him. 'Shame on you!' he cried out. 'What are you about, you bold-faced hussies, running after a young man in that way through the fields? Go home, all of you.'

He placed his hand on the youngest to pull her back, but the moment he touched her he also became fixed, and was obliged to follow and run like the rest. In a few minutes the clerk met them, and when he saw the parson running after the

girls, he wondered greatly, and cried out, 'Halloa, master parson, where are you running in such haste? Have you forgotten that there is a christening to-day?' And as the procession did not stop, he ran after it, and seized the parson's gown.

In a moment he found that his hand was fixed, and he also had to run like the rest. And now there were five trotting along, one behind the other. Presently two peasants came by with their sickles from the field. The parson called out to them, and begged them to come and release him and the clerk. Hardly had they touched the clerk when they also stuck fast as the others, and the simpleton with his golden goose travelled with the seven.

After awhile they came to a city in which reigned a king who had a daughter of such a melancholy disposition that no one could make her laugh; therefore he issued a decree that whoever would make the princess laugh should have her in marriage.

Now, when the simple youth heard this, he ran before her, and the whole seven trotted after him. The sight was so ridiculous that the moment the princess saw it she burst into a violent fit of laughter, and they thought she would never leave off.

After this, the youth went to the king, and demanded his daughter in marriage, according to the king's decree; but his majesty did not quite like to have the young man for a son-in-law, so he said that, before he could consent to the marriage, the youth must bring him a man who could drink all the wine in the king's cellar.

The simpleton went into the forest, for he thought, 'If anyone can help me, it is the little gray man.' When he arrived at the spot where he had cut down the tree, there stood a man with a very miserable face.

The youth asked him why he looked so sorrowful.

'Oh,' he exclaimed, 'I suffer such dreadful thirst that nothing seems able to quench it; and cold water I cannot endure. I have emptied a cask of wine already, but it was just like a drop of water on a hot stone.'

'I can help you,' cried the young man; 'come with me, and you shall have your fill, I promise you.'

Upon this he led the man into the king's cellar, where he opened the casks one after another, and drank and drank till his back ached; and before the day closed he had quite emptied the king's cellar.

Again the young man asked for his bride, but the king was annoyed at the thought of giving his daughter to such a common fellow, and to get rid of him he made another condition. He said that no man should have his daughter who could not find someone able to eat up a whole mountain of bread.

Away went the simpleton to the forest as before, and there in the same place sat a man binding himself round tightly with a belt, and making the most horrible faces. As the youth approached, he cried, 'I have eaten a whole ovenful of rolls, but it has not satisfied me a bit; I am as hungry as ever, and my stomach feels so empty that I am obliged to bind it round tightly, or I should die of hunger.'

The simpleton could hardly contain himself for joy when he heard this. 'Get up,' he exclaimed, 'and come with me, and I will give you plenty to eat, I'll warrant.'

So he led him to the king's court, where his majesty had ordered all the flour in the kingdom to be made into bread, and piled up in a huge mountain. The hungry man placed himself before the bread, and began to eat, and before evening the whole pile had disappeared.

Then the simpleton went a third time to the king, and asked for his bride, but the king made several excuses, and at last said that if he could bring him a ship that would travel as well by land as by water, then he should, without any further conditions, marry his daughter.

The youth went at once straight to the forest, and saw the same old gray man to whom he had given his cake. 'Ah,' he said, as the youth approached, 'it was I who sent the men to eat and drink, and I will also give you a ship that can travel by land or by sea, because when you thought I was poor you were kind-hearted, and gave me food and drink.'

The youth took the ship, and when the king saw it he was quite surprised; but he could not any longer refuse to give him his daughter in marriage. The wedding was celebrated with great pomp, and after the king's death the simple woodcutter inherited the whole kingdom, and lived happily with his wife.

THE PRINCESS IN DISGUISE.

A KING once had a wife with golden hair, who was so beautiful that none on earth could be found equal to her. It happened that she fell ill, and as soon as she knew she must die, she

sent for the king, and said to him, 'After my death, I know you will marry another wife; but you must promise me that, however beautiful she may be, if she is not as beautiful as I am, and has not golden hair like mine, you will not marry her.'

The king had no sooner given his promise than she closed her eyes and died.

For a long time he refused to be comforted, and thought it was impossible he could ever take another wife. At length his counsellors came to him, and said, 'A king should not remain unmarried; we ought to have a queen.'

So he at last consented, and then messengers were sent far and wide, to find a bride whose beauty should equal that of the dead queen. But none was to be found in the whole world; for, even when equally beautiful, they had not golden hair.

So the messengers returned without obtaining what they sought.

Now, the king had a daughter who was quite as beautiful as her dead mother, and had also golden hair. She had all this while been growing up, and very soon the king noticed how exactly she resembled her dead mother. So he sent for his counsellors, and said to them, 'I will marry my daughter; she is the image of my dead wife, and no other bride can be found to enable me to keep my promise to her.'

When the counsellors heard this, they were dreadfully shocked, and said, 'It is forbidden for a father to marry his daughter; nothing but evil could spring from such a sin, and the kingdom will be ruined.'

The king's daughter was still more frightened at her father's proposition, but she hoped to dissuade him from carrying out his intention, so she said to him, 'Before I consent to your wish, I shall require three things—a dress as golden as the sun, another as silvery as the moon, and a third as glittering as the stars; and besides this, I shall require a mantle made of a thousand skins of rough fur sewn together, and every animal in the kingdom must give a piece of his skin towards it.'

'Ah,' she thought, 'I have asked for impossibilities, and I hope I shall be able to make my father give up his wicked intentions.'

The king, however, was not to be diverted from his purpose. All the most skilful young women in the kingdom were employed to weave the three dresses—one to be as golden as the sun, another as silvery as the moon, and the third as glittering as the stars. He sent hunters into the forest to kill the wild

animals, and bring home their skins, of which the mantle was to be made, and at last, when all was finished, he brought them and laid them before her, and then said: 'To-morrow our marriage shall take place.'

Then the king's daughter saw that there was no hope of changing her father's heart, so she determined to run away from the castle.

In the night, when everyone slept, she rose and took from her jewel-case a gold ring, a gold spinning-wheel, and a golden hook. The three dresses of the sun, moon, and stars she folded in so small a parcel that they were placed in a walnut-shell; then she put on the fur mantle, stained her face and hands black with walnut juice, and committing herself to the care of heaven, she left her home, and travelled the whole night until she came at last to a large forest, and feeling very tired, she crept into a hollow tree and went to sleep. The sun rose, but she still slept on, and did not wake till nearly noon.

It happened on this very day that the king to whom the wood belonged was hunting in the forest, and when his hounds came to the tree, they sniffed about, and ran round and round the tree, barking loudly. The king called to his hunters and said: 'Just go and see what animal the dogs are barking at.'

They obeyed, and, quickly returning, told the king that in the hollow tree was a most wonderful creature, such as they had never seen before, that the skin was covered with a thousand different sorts of fur, and that it was fast asleep.

'Then,' said the king, 'go and see if you can capture it alive, then bind it on the waggon, and bring it home.'

While the hunters were binding the maiden, she awoke, and, full of terror, cried out to them: 'I am only a poor child, forsaken by my father and mother; take pity on me, and take me with you.'

'Well,' they replied, 'you may be useful to the cook, little Roughskin. Come with us; you can at least sweep up the ashes.'

So they seated her on the waggon, and took her home to the king's castle. They showed her a little stable under the steps, where no daylight ever came, and said: 'Roughskin, here you can live and sleep.' So the king's daughter was sent into the kitchen to fetch the wood, draw the water, stir the fire, pluck the fowls, look after the vegetables, sweep the ashes, and do all the hard work.

Poor Roughskin, as they called her, lived for a long time most miserably, and the beautiful king's daughter knew not

when it would end or how. It happened, however, after a time that a festival was to take place in the castle, so she said to the cook: 'May I go out for a little while to see the company arrive? I will stand outside the door.'

'Yes, you may go,' he replied; 'but in half an hour I shall want you to sweep up the ashes, and put the kitchen in order.'

Then she took her little oil lamp, went into the stable, threw off the fur coat, and washed the nut stains from her face and hands, so that her full beauty appeared before the day. After this she opened the nutshell and took out the dress that was golden as the sun, and put it on. As soon as she was quite dressed, she went out and presented herself at the entrance of the castle as a visitor. No one recognised her as Roughskin; they thought she was a king's daughter. The king went to receive her, offered her his hand, and while they danced together he thought in his heart, 'My eyes have never seen any maiden before so beautiful as this.'

As soon as the dance was over she bowed to the king, and before he could look round she had vanished, no one knew where. The sentinel at the castle gate was called and questioned, but he had not seen anyone pass.

But she had run to her stable, quickly removed her dress, stained her face and hands, put on her fur coat, and was again Roughskin. When she entered the kitchen and began to do her work and sweep up the ashes, the cook said: 'Leave that alone till to-morrow; I want you to cook some soup for the king, for I wish to go upstairs and take a look; but do not let one of your hairs fall in, or you will get nothing to eat in future rom me.'

Then the cook went out, and Roughskin made the king's soup as nicely as she could, and cut bread for it, and when it was ready, she fetched from her little stable her gold ring, and laid it in the dish in which the soup was prepared.

After the king had left the ball-room, he called for the soup, and while eating it, thought he had never tasted better soup in his life. But when the dish was nearly empty, he saw to his surprise a gold ring lying at the bottom, and could not imagine how it came there. Then he ordered the cook to come to him, and he was in a fright when he heard the order: 'You must certainly have let a hair fall into the soup; if you have, I shall thrash you,' he said.

As soon as he appeared, the king said: 'Who cooked this soup?'

'I cooked it,' he replied.

'That is not true,' said the king; 'this soup is made quite differently and much better than you ever made it.'

Then the cook was obliged to confess that Roughskin had made the soup.

'Go and send her to me,' said the king.

As soon as she appeared, the king said to her, 'Who art thou, maiden?'

She replied, 'I am a poor child without father or mother.'

He asked again, 'Why are you in my castle?'

'Because I am trying to earn my bread by helping the cook,' she replied.

'How came this ring in the soup?' he said again.

'I know nothing about the ring,' she replied.

When the king found he could learn nothing from Roughskin he sent her away. A little time after this there was another festival, and Roughskin had again permission from the cook to go and see the visitors; 'but,' he added, 'come back in half an hour and cook for the king the soup that he is so fond of.'

She promised to return, and ran quickly into her little stable, washed off the stains, and took out of the nutshell her dress, silvery as the moon, and put it on. Then she appeared at the castle like a king's daughter, and the king came to receive her with great pleasure, he was so glad to see her again, and while the dancing continued the king kept her as his partner. When the ball ended she disappeared so quickly that the king could not imagine what had become of her. But she had rushed down to her stable, made herself again the rough little creature that was called Roughskin, and went into the kitchen to cook the soup

While the cook was upstairs she fetched the golden spinning-wheel and dropped it into the soup as soon as it was ready. The king again ate it with great relish; it was as good as before, and when he sent for the cook and asked who made it, he was obliged to own that it was Roughskin. She was also ordered to appear before the king, but he could get nothing out of her, excepting that she was a poor child, and knew nothing of the golden spinning-wheel.

At the king's third festival everything happened as before. But the cook said: 'I will let you go and see the dancing-room this time, Roughskin, but I believe you are a witch, for although the soup is good, and the king says it is better than I can make it, there is always something dropped into it which I cannot understand.' Roughskin did not stop to listen; she ran quickly to her little stable, washed off the nut-stains, and this time

dressed herself in the dress that glittered like the stars. When the king came as before to receive her in the hall, he thought he had never seen such a beautiful woman in his life. While they were dancing, he contrived, without being noticed by the maiden, to slip a gold ring on her finger, and he had given orders that the dancing should continue longer than usual. When it ended, he wanted to hold her hand still, but she pulled it away, and sprang so quickly among the people that she vanished from his eyes.

She ran out of breath to her stable under the steps, for she knew that she had remained longer away than half an hour, and there was not time to take off her dress, so she threw on her fur cloak over it, and in her haste she did not make her face black enough, nor hide her golden hair properly; her hands also remained white. However, when she entered the kitchen the cook was still away, so she prepared the king's soup, and dropped into it the golden hook.

The king, when he found another trinket in his soup, sent immediately for Roughskin, and as she entered the room he saw the ring on her white finger which he had placed there. Instantly he seized her hand and held her fast, but in her struggles to get free the fur mantle opened and the star-glittering dress was plainly seen. The king caught the mantle and tore it off, and as he did so her golden hair fell over her shoulders, and she stood before him in her full splendour, and felt that she could no longer conceal who she was. Then she wiped the soot and stains from her face, and was beautiful to the eyes of the king as any woman upon earth.

'You shall be my dear bride,' said the king, 'and we will never be parted again, although I know not who you are.'

Then the marriage was celebrated, and they lived happily till their death.

THE HARE'S BRIDE.

THERE was once a woman and her daughter who lived in a pretty cabbage-garden. But a hare came into it in the winter, and ate the cabbages all up.

Then said the mother to the daughter, 'Go into the garden and drive away the hare.'

The maiden said, 'Shoo, shoo, little hare, you are eating up all our cabbages.'

The little hare said, 'Maiden, seat thyself on my tail and come with me to my little hut.' But the maiden would not. The next day the hare came again and ate the cabbages.

Then the woman said to her daughter, 'Go into the garden and drive the hare away.'

The girl said to the little hare, 'Shoo, shoo, you little hare; you eat up all the cabbages.

Said the little hare, 'Come, maiden, sit on my tail and go with me to my little home.' But the maiden would not.

On the third day the little hare came again and ate the cabbages. Then said the woman to her daughter, 'Go into the garden and drive out the hare.'

The girl went and said, 'Shoo, shoo, you little hare, you still eat all the cabbages.' The hare said, 'Maiden, sit on my tail and come with me into my little hut.' The girl seated herself on the hare's tail, and the hare took her away to his little hut, and said, 'Now cook green cabbages and millet seed, and I will invite the wedding guests.' Then all the wedding guests assembled. (Who were the wedding guests? I can tell you, as it was told to me. They were all hares; but the crow was there, too, to marry the bridal pair, and the fox as clerk, and the altar was under a rainbow.) The girl, however, was sad, for she was all alone. The little hare came and said, 'Open the doors, open the doors; the wedding guests are merry.' The bride said nothing, but wept. The little hare went away, but came back, and said, 'Open, open; the wedding guests are waiting.' The bride said nothing, and the little hare again went away. Then the bride made a doll of straw, dressed it in her clothes, put a stick in her hand to stir with, placed her at the kettle with the millet seed, and went back to her mother. The little hare came once more, and said, 'Take off the lid, take off the lid,' and struck the doll on the head so that her cap flew off.

Then the little hare saw that it was not his bride, and went away sorrowful.

THE TWELVE HUNTSMEN.

THERE was once a king's son who was betrothed to a maiden, and he loved his bride very much. One day, as they were

sitting very happily together, there came information that his father lay ill and dying, and wished to see him for the last time before his death. 'I must go and leave you, darling,' said the king's son; 'but I will give you this ring as a memory token, and when I am king I will come and fetch you home.'

Then he rode away, and when he reached the castle, he found his father dying and his end very near. But he was able to speak, and said, 'Dearest son, I have sent for you because I want you to promise to do as I wish about your marriage.'

And then he named to him a king's daughter who was well known, and asked him to take her as his wife. The son was so sad at these words that he hardly knew at first what to say; still, he could not refuse his dying father, so he replied, 'Dear father, whatever your will is shall be done.'

Then the king closed his eyes and died. As soon as the son became king, and the mourning was over, he remembered that he must keep the promise which he had given to his father. He sent, therefore, to the king's daughter, and as she was willing to be his bride, they were betrothed to each other.

The first bride very soon heard of what he had done, and she grieved so bitterly over her lover's unfaithfulness that her life seemed passing away. At last her father, who was also a king, said to her, 'Dearest child, why are you so sad? If anything you wish can be done, I will do it for you.'

She roused herself in a moment, and said, 'Dear father, I should so like to have as companions eleven maidens exactly like myself in countenance, shape, and size.'

Her father replied, 'As soon as possible your wish shall be fulfilled.'

He sent messengers all over the kingdom to find eleven maidens who should resemble his daughter in face, figure, and size.

When they came to the king's daughter, she ordered twelve hunting-dresses to be made exactly alike, and each of the eleven maidens put one on, and she did the same. Then she bid her father farewell, and rode away to the castle of her former bridegroom, whom she still loved. On arriving, she sent a message to the king asking if he required any huntsmen, and if he would take them into his service.

He came out to see them, but did not recognise his former bride; and he was so pleased with their appearance that he said he should like them to serve him very much, and so they all became the king's huntsmen.

But the king had a lion who was a wonderful animal, for he ound out every concealment or secret.

So it happened one evening that he said to the king, 'You think that you have engaged twelve young huntsmen?'

'Yes,' said the king, 'I have engaged twelve huntsmen.'

'You are mistaken,' replied the lion; 'they are maidens.'

'Well,' said the king, 'that cannot be true; or, if it is, how can you prove it?'

'Oh, easily,' said the lion; 'strew peas in the ante-chamber, and you will soon see. A man has a firm step; he will either crush the peas or pass over without moving them, but maidens will come tripping or shuffling along, and set the peas rolling.'

The king was pleased with this advice, and ordered the room to be strewed with peas.

But one of the king's own servants was kind-hearted, and as he had overheard the lion's advice, he went at once and told the young huntsmen how they were to be put to the proof, and said also, 'The lion wants the king to believe that you are women.'

The king's daughter thanked him, and when she spoke afterwards to the maidens, she said, 'Step down strongly, and with a firm foot, on the peas.'

The next morning the king sent for the twelve huntsmen, and met them in the ante-chamber; but as they passed through where the peas lay, they stepped upon them so heavily, and had such a firm, strong walk, that not a single pea rolled or even moved.

After they were gone, the king said to the lion, 'You have spoken falsely to me; they walk like men.'

'Yes,' answered the lion; 'they knew that the peas were put there to prove them, so they exerted all their strength. But now give them another trial: have twelve spinning-wheels placed in the ante-room, and when they see them, they will look delighted, whereas no man would notice them.'

The king was pleased with this advice also, and gave orders for twelve spinning-wheels to be placed in the ante-room.

The servant, however, who really believed in the truthfulness of the young huntsmen, disclosed the plan to them. When they were alone, the king's daughter cautioned them not even to glance at the spinning-wheels, and to walk firmly.

The next morning the king sent for his twelve huntsmen, but as they passed through the ante-room with a firm step, not one of them took the slightest notice of the spinning-wheels.

'Wrong again, lion,' said the king; 'they must be men, for they did not even see the spinning-wheels.'

'Because,' answered the lion, 'they knew that you were trying them.' But after this the king would not believe the lion.

The twelve huntsmen generally followed or accompanied the king when he went hunting, and the more he knew of them, the more he liked them.

It happened one day, while they were out hunting, that information was brought of the approach of the king's bride. As soon as the first bride heard the news, such a pang of grief came upon her that her heart seemed to stop, and she fell to the ground insensible. The king, who supposed that his favourite huntsman had met with an accident, ran to help him; and in raising him up his glove fell off. Then the king saw a ring which he had given to his first bride, and looking in her face, he recognised her. Then was his heart so moved that he kissed her, and, as she opened her eyes, he exclaimed, 'Thou art mine, and I am thine, and no one in the world can alter it.'

To his other bride he sent a messenger to say that he had a wife already whom he had chosen before he knew her, and that he prayed her to return to her own country.

Soon after the marriage was celebrated, and the lion was again taken into favour, for, after all, he had spoken the truth.

THE THIEF AND HIS MASTER.

John wished to put his son to learn a trade, so he went into the church and prayed to know what would be best for the lad. Then the clerk got behind the altar, and said, 'Stealing, stealing.' So John went back to his son and told him that he must learn to steal, for he had heard it in the church; and they both went to seek a man who could teach him to steal. They went a long way, and came at last to a great wood where there was a little hut with an old woman in it. John asked her, 'Do you know a man who can teach stealing?'

'You can learn it well here,' said the woman; 'my son is a master of it.'

So he spoke to the son and asked him whether he knew stealing well. The master thief answered, 'I will teach your son well, so that, if you come in a year and recognise him, I

will have no apprentice fee; but if you don't recognise him then you must give me two hundred dollars.'

The father went home, and the son learned witchcraft and stealing. When the year ended, the father was anxious to find out how to recognise his son. As he went grumbling along, a little mannikin met him, and said, 'Man, what grieves you? What is troubling you?' 'Oh,' said John, 'a year ago I placed my son with a master thief who told me to go back when the year was out, and that then, if I did not know my son when I saw him, I was to pay two hundred dollars; but, if I did know him, then I should pay nothing. Now, I fear I shall not know him, and I don't know where to get the money.'

Then the mannikin told him to take a basket of bread with him and to go and stand near the fireplace. 'There,' he added, 'on the cross-beam, is a basket, out of which a little bird is peeping; that is your son.'

So John took a basket of black bread and put it in front of the basket with the bird in it. Then the bird came out, and looked up. 'Hallo, my son, are you there?' said the father. And the son was glad to see his father, but the master said, 'The devil must have told you, or how did you know your son?' 'Father, let us go,' said the young man. Then the father and son went homewards. On the way a carriage came driving fast by. The son said to his father, 'I will change myself into a large greyhound, and then you can earn much money with me.' Then the gentleman in the carriage called out: 'My man, will you sell your dog?' 'Yes,' said the father. 'How much do you ask for him?' 'Thirty dollars.' 'Why, that is too much, but as it is a fine dog I will have it!'

The gentleman took the dog into his carriage, but when they had driven on a little way it leaped out of the carriage window, was no more a dog, and went back to his father.

They went home together. The following day there was a market in the next town; and the young man said: 'I will now change into a beautiful horse, and you can sell me; but when I am sold you must take off my bridle, or I cannot become a man again.' Then the father took the horse to the market, and the master thief bought it for a hundred dollars; but the father forgot to take off the bridle. The man went home with his horse and put it in the stable. When, by-and-by, the maid crossed the threshold, the horse said to her: 'Take off my bridle; take off my bridle!' The maid stood still, and whispered: 'What! can you speak?' Then she went and took off the bridle, and the horse became a sparrow and flew over

the roofs. The wizard became a sparrow also, and flew after him; then they came together and cast lots, and the master lost, and went into the water and became a fish. The young man also became a fish, and they cast lots again, and the master lost. Then the master changed himself into a cock, and the young man became a fox and bit his master's head off; so he died, and remains dead to this day.

FLORINDA AND YORINGAL.

THERE stood once, in the middle of a thick forest, an old castle, in which dwelt an aged woman, quite alone, who was a great sorceress. By day she took the form of a cat, during the night she was an owl, and in the evening she assumed her proper form of a human being. She could entice game and birds to her, and then she killed and cooked them

If anyone came within a hundred steps of her castle, there he was obliged to remain, unable to move, till she spoke and set him free. If a young maiden came within the enchanted circle, the witch changed her into a bird, fastened her up in a basket, and carried her to a chamber in the castle, where she had more than seven thousand of these rare birds shut up.

Now, there was once a young maiden, named Florinda, who was more beautiful than all the other maidens. She was betrothed to a very handsome young man, whose name was Yoringal. They were in their bridal days, and had great delight in the society of each other.

When they wanted to talk together confidentially they would go into the wood to walk. 'We must be careful not to go too near the castle,' Yoringal had often said.

One beautiful evening, however, they went to take their walk. The sun shone between the trunks of the trees, and brightened the dark leaves of the forest, while the cooing of the turtle-dove sounded mournfully from the beeches. Florinda wept; indeed, they both felt as if something dreadful was about to happen to them, or as if they were going to die.

Meanwhile, the sun was setting behind the trees, and in their desponding mood they scarcely noticed it, but wandered on, forgetting that they must not go near the castle. Presently Florinda looked up, and saw the walls of the castle close by,

and was almost dead with terror. The next moment Yoringal missed Florinda; she had been turned into a nightingale, and began to sing 'jug, jug, jug,' with the sweetest music. Just then a night owl with glowing eyes flew over them three times, each time screeching loudly. Then Yoringal found he could not move; there he stood like a stone. He could neither speak nor cry, nor move hand or foot.

The sun went down, and the owl flew into a bush, and thence presently came forward a crooked old woman, thin and sallow, with great red eyes, and a hooked nose that almost touched her chin. Muttering to herself, she took hold of the nightingale, and carried it away on her hand. In a little while she returned, and said, in a hollow voice: 'I greet thee, Zachiel; if the moon shines, let him loose Zachiel at once.'

Then was Yoringal free, and he threw himself upon his knees before the woman, and prayed her to give him back his Florinda; but she told him he would never have her back again, and went away. Yoringal cried and wept, and wailed by turns: 'What, oh! what shall I do?' he exclaimed, but all to no purpose.

At last he went away to a distant town, and hired himself to tend the sheep. He sometimes went round by the castle—not too near—but there were no signs of Florinda.

At length he dreamed one night that he had found a blood-red flower, in the middle of which was a large and beautiful pearl. He had plucked the flower, and while carrying it to the castle he knew he was safe from all witchcraft or sorcery. He dreamed also that through this flower he had got back his dear Florinda.

In the morning, when he awoke, he hurried away over mountain and valley to seek for such a flower as he had dreamed of. He had begun to give up all hope, when on the ninth day, early in the morning, he found the blood-red flower, and in the centre was a dewdrop, as large and as beautiful as a pearl.

With this flower he travelled day and night till he came to the castle, and when he arrived within a hundred paces, he found to his great joy that he was free to walk on even to the castle gate. He went in through the court, and stood still to listen, hoping that he might find out where the birds were kept by their twittering. At last he heard, and went on till he reached the hall in which the wicked old woman had shut up the birds in the seven thousand wicker basket cages. As soon as she saw Yoringal she was very spiteful; she scolded and

hissed, and spit poison and venom at him; but she could not hurt him.

He did not turn back, however, but went on still farther, till he had found the nightingales. There were several hundred, and how, among so many, was he to find Florinda?

As he stood looking and considering, he saw the old woman moving stealthily away towards the door with a cage containing a bird in her hands. Swiftly he sprang upon her, and on touching the cage and the old woman with the flower, her power over Florinda was over; she could do them no more harm. In a moment the young girl stood before him in her own proper form, as beautiful as ever, and clasped him round the neck with her arms.

Then he touched all the other birds with his flower, and set the young women free from the spell. After this he went home with Florinda, and it was not very long before they were married, and lived in great happiness for the rest of their lives.

THE FORTUNE-SEEKERS.

A FATHER once sent for his three sons, and gave to the first a cock, to the second a scythe, and to the third a cat. 'I am old,' he said, 'my death is near, and I wish to prepare for my end. I have no money to leave you; and what I now give you is very little: it depends upon yourselves to turn it to some good account, if you understand how to employ it rightly. Seek a country where such things as these are unknown, and you will each make a fortune.'

After the father's death the eldest son started on his enterprise, and went through many towns where the cock was a well-known bird. Sometimes he saw at a distance one even sitting on the top of a tower and turning round with the wind.

In the villages it was the same. He heard the cocks crowing, and no one thought his bird at all wonderful. There seemed, therefore, no prospect of a fortune being made through the cock.

At last he chanced to visit an island where the bird was unknown, and they had no division of time. They knew when it was morning and evening; but at night if they did not sleep they had no way of finding out the hour.

'See!' said he, 'what a proud creature this is! It has a ruby-red crown on its head, and wears spurs like a knight; it also calls out three times in the night to tell the hour, and the third time is just before sunrise. If it should call out during the day-time we may be sure of a change in the weather.'

The people of the island were so pleased that none of them slept all night, and as they lay awake they heard the cock call out the time quite loudly and clearly at two, four, and six o'clock. They asked the owner if the creature was to be sold, and how much he wanted for it.

'About as much gold as an ass could carry,' he replied.

'A very low price for such a valuable creature,' they said, as they collected the money and gave him willingly what he asked.

When he returned home with all his wealth his brothers wondered, and the second said, 'I think I may as well go and try if I can make as good a bargain for my scythe.'

At first, however, on starting, he did not meet with much encouragement. The farmers and labourers whom he met had on their shoulders scythes as good as his own.

At last he succeeded in reaching an island where the people had never heard of a scythe. When they wanted to reap their corn they brought out cannons and shot it down. It certainly was a very singular proceeding, for many ears of corn fell outside, and others were struck off and shot away, so that few fell on the ground to be gathered up; and, above all, the cannons made a dreadful noise.

On seeing all this the young man placed himself in a cornfield, and cut it down so quietly and swiftly with his scythe that the people were struck dumb with wonder, and were willing to give him whatever he asked for his scythe. Then he said he would be satisfied with as much gold as a horse could carry, and this they readily gave him.

The youngest thought he would also try his fortune with puss, if he could find the right way. It was the same with him as with the others: as long as he remained inland it was all useless. There were cats in every town, and in some places so numerous that the kittens were always drowned as soon as they were born.

At last he took ship and crossed over to an island, and came luckily to a place where they had never even seen a cat, and the mice had so gained the upper hand that they did as they pleased. They scampered over the tables and chairs whether the master was present or not.

The people complained terribly of this plague. The king,

even, in his castle, could do nothing to remove them, for in every corner, whether of cottage or castle, the mice picked and gnawed everything which their teeth could lay hold of. Then the young man sent the cat amongst them, and she soon cleared several houses of the mice, by killing them or driving them away.

The people begged the king to buy the wonderful animal for the sake of his kingdom. The king was quite willing to give what the owner asked, and the young man returned home with the largest treasure of them all—he had as much gold as a mule could carry. The cat made herself quite at home in the king's castle; she had mice to her heart's desire, and killed more than they were able to count. At last such hard work made her thirsty, so she stood still, lifted up her head, and cried, 'Mew—mew.'

The king immediately sent for all his attendants, and, as puss again uttered the same cry, they were quite frightened, and rushed away from the castle.

Then the king held a council as to what was best to be done. At last it was resolved to send a herald to the cat to request her to leave the castle, or, if she would not go, to expel her by force.

'For,' said the judge, 'it would be better to dwell as we did before, plagued by mice, and endure the evil, than have our lives sacrificed to such a monster.'

A page was therefore told to go to the cat, and ask her if she would leave the castle of her own free will; but the cat, whose thirst had become still greater, merely answered, 'Mew—mew.

The page, who understood her to say 'Not in the least,' carried the answer to the king.

'Now,' said the council, 'we must use force.' So the cannon were brought out, and the first shot fired into the room where the cat was sitting. In a great fright, she flew through the window and made her escape. The besiegers, however, did not know she was gone, and continued to fire upon the castle till it was completely razed to the ground.

THE WONDERFUL TRAVELLERS.

THERE once lived a man who was clever in all kinds of trades. He had been a soldier, but when the war was over they dis-

charged him with the paltry pittance of threepence to help him on his way. 'Wait a bit,' said he to himself; 'this treatment does not please me, and if I can only get the proper people to help me, I will make the king give me all the treasures in his kingdom.'

So he went first in his vexation into a forest, and there saw a man pull up six trees as if they were blades of grass. He spoke to the man and said, 'Will you enter my service, and travel with me?'

'Yes,' was the reply; 'but I must first carry home to my mother these few faggots of wood.' Then he took one of the trees, twisted it like a twig round the other five, lifted them as if they had been a bundle of real faggots on his shoulder, and carried them away. Very soon he returned to his new master, and as they walked on together he said, 'We two shall get on in the world splendidly, I fancy.'

After awhile they came upon a sportsman who was kneeling on one knee, and pointing his loaded gun at some object.

'What are you aiming at?' asked the soldier.

'Oh,' he replied, 'there sits a fly on the branches of an oak two miles off, and I wish to shoot him in the left eye.'

'Ah,' exclaimed the soldier, 'you had better come with me; three such as we are will soon make a noise in the world.'

The sportsman was quite ready to join the party, so the three went on together till they came to seven windmills. The sails were turning round with wonderful rapidity, although there was not wind enough even to stir a leaf.

'I cannot think what turns the windmills,' said the soldier, 'for there is not a breath of air stirring.' So he and his two servants continued their journey.

About two miles further on they saw a man perched on a tree, who closed one nostril with his finger, and blew out of the other.

'My friend,' asked the soldier, 'what are you about up there?'

'Can't you see?' he replied. 'Two miles off there stand seven windmills, and I am blowing to make their sails turn round.'

'Oh, come along with us,' he replied; 'when four such fellows as we go together in the world, we may do wonders.'

So the blower came down from the tree and went with them. After a time they passed a man standing on one leg, who had taken off the other, and laid it on the ground near him.

'Well,' exclaimed the master, 'you have a queer way of resting yourself, certainly.'

'I am a courier,' he replied, 'and as I do not wish to run too fast I have taken off one of my legs. When they are both on I can run as swiftly as a bird flies.'

'Oh, then you must come with us,' was the reply; 'five such as we can carry the world before us.'

So they set off again, and before long met another curious being, who wore a hat, but it hung quite on one side over his ear. Then the chief said to him, 'Pardon me, sir, but you should not hang your hat on your ear, it makes you look like a fool.'

'I dare not alter it,' he replied, 'for if I place it on my head there is such a dreadful frost that the birds in the air freeze, and fall dead on the ground.'

'Oh,' cried the master, 'come with us, you are the very man, and we six will do wonders in the world.'

After a time the six travellers arrived at a city, in which the king had made a proclamation that if any man would run a race with his daughter and win he should have her for a wife, but if he was beaten he would lose his head. Then the soldier came forward and informed the king that he should like to win the race, if one of his servants might be allowed to run for him.

'Certainly,' replied the king, 'but you must pledge your own life as well as his; and if he fails you will both lose your heads.'

As soon as matters were arranged the courier quickly screwed on his other leg, while his master said to him, 'Do your best, friend, and help us to win.'

It had been decided that whichever of the runners brought back water in a cup from a distant well first should be declared the winner. The courier and the king's daughter each received a cup for this purpose, and then started at the same moment. But the princess had scarcely run any distance before the courier was out of sight as completely as if the wind had carried him away.

On reaching the fountain he filled his cup full of water and turned to go back, but when he arrived about half-way he began to feel overcome with fatigue, so he placed his cup of water on the ground, laid himself down, and was soon asleep. He had placed, however, a horse's skull which he found near under his head for a pillow. Being hard, it would not let him sleep long. In the meantime the princess, who could really run very fast, arrived at the well. Hastily filling her cup, she

turned back, and very soon came to the place where her rival lay sleeping. She was overjoyed, and said, 'Ah, my enemy is in my power now.' So she emptied the water from his cup, and continued her rapid footsteps homeward with greater speed than ever.

Now, all would have been lost but that the sportsman, who stood on the castle wall, saw with his keen eyes what had occurred.

'The princess must not be allowed to win,' he said, and, raising his gun, he took such a correct aim that the skull was shot away from under the courier's head without injuring him in the least. The noise awoke him, and, starting up, he saw that his cup was empty, and the princess far ahead of him. But he did not lose courage; running back to the spring, he refilled his cup with water, and then with a few rapid strides overtook the princess, passed her, and arrived home ten minutes before her.

The king and the princess were dreadfully mortified when they found that she was beaten, for he could not endure to think of his daughter marrying a discharged common soldier. So they held a council together as to the best means of freeing themselves from him and his companions. At last the king said, 'Don't be uneasy, my child; I have thought of a plan: they shall not come near to you again.'

Then he sent for the six travellers to a feast, and when they arrived led them to a room in which stood a table covered with every delicacy, and left them to enjoy themselves.

But this room had an iron floor, iron doors, and iron-bound windows, and as soon as they were inside he had all the doors bolted and locked. When this was done the king sent for the cook, and ordered him to light a fire under the room and keep it blazing until the iron became red-hot. This the cook did, and it was not long before the six travellers seated at the table began to feel very warm. At first they thought it arose from the steam of their dinner, but as the heat increased they determined to leave the chamber. Then they found that all the doors and windows were barred and locked. At once they knew that it had been the wicked king's intention to shut them in and suffocate them.

'Don't fear, he shall not succeed,' cried the man with the little hat to his companions; 'I will make it so cold and freezing that the fire shall creep away and hide itself for shame.'

He placed the little hat on his head as he spoke, and it became immediately so bitterly cold and freezing that the heat

vanished, and the provisions left on the dishes began to freeze. After two hours had passed, the king, supposing that by this time they must all be dead, opened the door and looked in himself. But what was his surprise when the six men came forward, safe and sound, and said they should be glad to get out to warm themselves, for the room was so very cold that the dishes were even frozen to the table.

Away went the king, full of anger, to the cook, whom he scolded well, and asked him why he had not obeyed his orders. But the cook, pointing to the fire under the room, said, 'It is hot enough there.'

The king saw an immense fire burning under the iron room, and knew at once that he should not be able very easily to get rid of the six visitors. However, he thought he would try another plan, so he sent for the soldier, and said, 'If you will resign your claim to my daughter I will give you as much gold as you like.'

'Oh yes, my lord king, I am quite ready to do so,' he replied, 'if you will give me as much gold as one of my servants can carry.'

The king was delighted, and the soldier said he would come for the money in fourteen days. Thereupon the soldier sent for all the tailors in the kingdom, and desired them to make him such an immense sack that it took the whole fourteen days to finish it. As soon as it was ready, he called the strong man, who was one of the six, and who could pull up trees by the roots, and telling him to take the sack on his shoulders, they went together to the king. The king asked: 'Who is this powerful fellow with a linen sack on his shoulders as large as a house?' and when they told him that the sack was to take away gold, he was greatly alarmed. 'My money will all be swallowed up,' he thought. However, he ordered a ton of gold to be brought, and it took sixteen strong men to carry it. But the servant took it up with one hand easily and threw it into the sack.

'Fetch some more,' he said; 'that only just covers the bottom.' So the king ordered more to be brought, which the strong man threw into the sack also, yet still it was not half full. 'Bring more,' he cried; 'these crumbs are nothing at all.' So at last they brought seven hundred cart-loads of gold from all parts of the kingdom, and these the strong man stuffed into his sack, gold and waggons, with even the oxen that drew them. 'I can't stay much longer,' he said at last, 'so bring me all you can to fill my sack.' But when he had got every-

thing in that they could find, he said: 'The sack is not near full, but I must make an end of the matter, so it does not signify.' Then he hoisted the sack on his shoulders, and went away with his companions.

When the king saw that all the riches of the country had been taken away by one man, he was in a rage, and ordered all his cavalry to pursue the travellers, and to bring back the man with the sack.

Two regiments, therefore, rode after the six travellers, and soon overtook them and cried, 'You are our prisoners; lay down the sack of gold immediately, or we will cut you in pieces.'

'What did you say?' asked the blower, 'that we are prisoners? Sooner than that you shall dance in the air.' Then he closed up one nostril, and with the other blew the two regiments up into the air, right over a mountain, sending one to the right and the other to the left. One old sergeant-major begged for mercy; he had received nine wounds, and was a brave fellow, who did not deserve to be so disgraced. The blower therefore sent him only a little way, so that he came back quite safely to the ground. Then he said to him, 'Now go home to the king, and tell him that if he sends any more cavalry regiments here, they will be blown away into the air in the same manner.'

When the king received the message, he said, 'Let the rascals go; they will meet their reward.' So the six travellers carried the treasure home, divided it among themselves, and lived upon it contentedly ever after.

THE WOLF AND THE MAN.

A FOX was one day speaking to a wolf of the great strength of men. 'No animal can stand against them,' he said, 'unless he employs cunning.'

'Then,' said the wolf, 'I only wish I could see a man. I know he should not escape me.'

'I can help you to do that,' said the fox. 'If you come to me early to-morrow morning, I will show you one.'

The wolf took care to be early enough, and the fox led him to the road where he knew huntsmen passed every day.

First came by an old pensioner.

'Is that a man?' asked the wolf.

'No,' answered the fox; 'not now: he was once.'

Then a little child passed, who was going to school.

'Is that a man?' he asked again.

'No, not yet,' said the fox; 'but he will be one by-and-by.'

At last a hunter appeared, with his double-barrelled gun on his shoulder, and his hunting-knife by his side.

'There!' cried the fox, 'see, there comes a man at last! I will leave him to you to manage, but I shall run back to my hole.'

The wolf rushed out upon the man, but the hunter when he saw him said to himself, 'What a pity my gun is not loaded with ball!'

However, he fired the small shot in the animal's face as he sprang at him; but neither the pain nor the noise seemed to frighten the wolf in the least. The hunter fired again; still the wolf made another spring—this time furiously—but the hunter, hastily drawing his bowie-knife, gave him two or three such powerful stabs that he ran back to the fox all covered with blood.

'Well, brother wolf, how did you succeed with a man?'

'Oh,' he cried, 'I had not the least idea of a man's strength; first he took a stick from his shoulder, and blew something in my face, which tingled dreadfully; he puffed again through his stick, and there came a flash of lightning, and something struck my nose like hailstones. I would not give in, but rushed again upon him. In a moment he pulled a white rib out of his body, and gave me such dreadful cuts with it that I believe I must lie here and die.'

'See, now,' said the fox, 'how foolish it is to boast. You have thrown your axe so far that you cannot fetch it back.'

THE WOLF AND THE FOX.

A WOLF once made friends with a fox, so that whatever the wolf wanted the fox was obliged to do, because he was the weaker, and could not, therefore, be master. It happened one day that they were both passing through a wood, and the

wolf said, 'Red fox, find me something to eat, or I shall eat you.'

'Well,' replied the fox, 'I know a farmyard near, in which there are two young lambs; if you like I will go and fetch one.' The wolf was quite agreeable, so the fox went to the field, stole the lamb, and brought it to the wolf, and went away.

The wolf soon ate up the lamb, but he was not satisfied, and wanted the other lamb, so he went to fetch it himself. But he managed so awkwardly that the mother of the lamb saw him, and began to cry and bleat fearfully; and the farmer came running out and found the wolf, who got so terribly beaten that he ran limping and howling back to the fox. 'You have led me into a pretty mess,' he said. 'I wanted the other lamb, and because I went to fetch it the farmer has nearly killed me.'

'Why are you such a glutton, then?' replied the fox.

Next day, as they were in a field, the greedy wolf exclaimed, 'Red fox, if you don't find me something to eat, I shall eat you up.'

'Oh! I can get you some pancakes, if you like,' he said; 'for I know a farmhouse where the wife is frying them now.'

So they went on together, and the fox sneaked into the house, sniffed, and smelt about for some time, till he at last found out where the dish stood. Then he dragged six pancakes from it, and brought them to the wolf.

'Now you have something to eat,' said the fox, and went away.

The wolf, however, swallowed the pancakes in the twinkling of an eye, and said to himself, 'They taste so good I must have some more.' So he went into the farm kitchen, and, while pulling down the pancakes, upset the dish, and broke it in pieces.

The farmer's wife heard the crash, and came rushing out; but when she saw the wolf, she called loudly for the farm servants, who rushed in, and beat him with whatever they could lay their hands on, so that he ran back to the fox in the wood with two lame legs, howling terribly.

'How could you serve me such a dirty trick?' he said. 'The farmer nearly caught me; and he has given me such a thrashing.'

'Well, then,' replied the fox, 'you should not be such a glutton.'

Another day, when the wolf and the fox were out together, and the wolf was limping with fatigue, he said, 'Red fox, find me something to eat, or I shall eat you.'

The fox replied, 'I know a man who has been slaughtering cattle to-day; and there is a quantity of salted meat lying in a tub in the cellar. I can fetch some of that.'

'No,' said the wolf; 'let me go with you this time. You can help me if I cannot run away fast enough.'

'You may come for aught I care,' replied Reynard, and showed him the way; and at last they reached the cellar safely.

There was meat in abundance. The wolf made himself quite at home, and said, 'There will be time to stop when I hear any sound.'

The fox also enjoyed himself; but he kept looking round now and then, and ran often to the hole through which they had entered to try if it was still large enough for his body to slip through.

'Dear fox,' said the wolf, 'why are you running about and jumping here and there so constantly?'

'I must see if anyone is coming,' replied the cunning animal, 'and I advise you not to eat too much.'

The wolf replied, 'I am not going away from here till the tub is empty.'

At this moment in came the farmer, who had heard the fox jumping about in the cellar. The fox no sooner saw him than with a spring he was through the hole. The wolf made an attempt to follow him; but he had eaten so much, and was so fat, that he stuck fast. The farmer on seeing this fetched a cudgel and killed him on the spot. The fox ran home to his den full of joy that he was at last set free from the old glutton's company.

THE WOLF AND GODFATHER FOX.

THE she-wolf had a young cub, and invited the fox to be godfather. 'He is nearly related to us,' said she, 'has good sense and much skill, and can teach my son how to get on in the world.' The fox also appeared quite honest, and said, 'My dear Lady Gossip, I thank you for the honour you have done me. I will so behave that you will have cause to be pleased.' At the feast he enjoyed himself, and became quite jolly; afterwards he said, 'Dear Mrs. Gossip, it is our duty to take care of the child; she must have good nourishment in order that she may

get strong. I know a sheepfold from which I can easily fetch a nice piece.'

This saying pleased the wolf, and she went with the fox to the farmyard. He showed a fold in the distance, and said, 'You can creep in there unseen, and I will look about on the other side to see if I can perceive a dog.'

However, he did not go there, but went to the entrance of the wood and rested. The wolf crept into the stable, where lay a dog, who made such a noise that the peasants came running out and caught Mrs. Gossip, and poured a strong caustic mixture, which had been prepared for washing, over her skin. At last she escaped, and got away.

The fox began to complain, and say, 'Oh, dear Gossip, how badly I have been treated! The servants have attacked me, and broken all my limbs. If you do not wish me to lie here and die you must carry me away.'

The wolf could hardly drag herself along; still, she had great anxiety about the fox, so she took him on her back, and carried the godfather (who was safe and sound) slowly to her house.

Then he called out, 'Farewell, dear Gossip, and may the roasting you have had do you good!' laughed heartily, and ran away.

THE FOX AND THE CAT.

One day a cat met a fox in the wood. 'Ah,' she thought, 'he is clever, and sensible, and well spoken of; I will speak to him.' So she said, quite in a friendly manner, 'Good-morning, dear Mr. Fox; how are you? and how do affairs go with you in these expensive times?'

The fox, full of pride, looked at the cat from head to foot, and knew hardly what to say to her for a long time. At last he said, 'Oh, you poor little whisker-cleaner, you old gray tabby, you hungry mouse-hunter, what are you thinking about to come to me, and to stand there and ask me how I am going on? What have you learnt, and how many tricks do you know?'

'I only know one trick,' answered the cat meekly.

'And pray what is that?' he asked.

'Well,' she said, 'if the hounds are behind me, I can spring up into a tree out of their way, and save myself.'

'Is that all?' cried the fox; 'why, I am master of a hundred tricks, and have, over and above all, a sackful of cunning; but I pity you, puss, so come with me, and I will teach you how to baffle the hounds.'

At this moment a hunter with four hounds was seen approaching. The cat sprang nimbly up a tree, and seated herself on the highest branch, where, by the spreading foliage, she was quite concealed.

'Turn out the sack, Mr. Fox; turn out the sack!' cried the cat; but the hounds had already seized him, and held him fast.

'Ah, Mr. Fox,' cried the cat, 'your hundred tricks are not of much use to you; now, if you had only known one like mine, you would not have so quickly lost your life.'

THE TULIP.

THERE lived a queen once who had no children, and she prayed every day that she might have either a son or a daughter.

One day, when she was walking in the garden, an angel came to her, and said, 'Be happy; thou shalt have a son with a wonderful power; whatever he wishes for in the world he will have.'

Then she went to the king, and told him the joyful news; and after a time a little son was born, to the great happiness of his parents.

Every morning the queen took her child into a park, in which was a menagerie, and washed herself in a clear fountain which flowed there.

One day, when he was a few months old, the queen seated herself on a garden seat with the child in her lap, and fell asleep. In the castle was a covetous cook, who knew what a wonderful power the child possessed; and he came to the park where the queen was sleeping, and stole the child from her lap. Then he killed a chicken, cut off the head, and sprinkled the blood about on the grass, and on the queen's apron and dress. He carried the child away to a place of concealment, where he

had a wet nurse ready for him, and then ran to the king, and accused the queen of allowing the wild beasts to destroy the child.

The king, when he saw the blood on the apron, believed the cook's story, and, in his wrath against the queen, ordered a high tower to be built, in which the sun and moon could never shine, in which tower the poor queen was to be shut up for seven years, without food or water, to die of starvation. But two good angels were sent to her, in the form of white doves, who brought her meat and drink twice a day until the seven years were up.

After a time, the cook thought, 'If the child should wish anything while I am here it would be unlucky for me.' So he went to the place where the child was concealed, and said to him, 'Why don't you wish for a beautiful castle, and garden, and furniture, and all that is necessary to make it complete?'

The boy uttered the wish, and the words were no sooner out of his mouth than his wish was accomplished.

Again the cook said to the boy, 'Why don't you wish to have a pretty little girl as a companion?'

No sooner was the wish expressed, than a little girl made her appearance, who was so beautiful that no painter could have painted her.

The children played together, and were very happy, and the cook went out hunting as if he had been a nobleman. A fear now arose in his mind that if the boy should one day wish for his father, it would bring great trouble upon him.

So he called the little maiden to go out with him, and said, 'To-night, while the boy is asleep, you must take a knife, and thrust it into his breast, and bring me his heart and tongue; if you do not you shall die.'

Then he went away; but in the morning she had not done the deed. 'I could not do it,' she said, with tears; 'why should I take away his innocent life, for he has never injured anyone?'

'Very well,' he said; 'if you don't kill him to-night, you shall die yourself.'

Then the poor child went out in the dark, and was obliged to kill a fawn, and take out its heart and tongue, and put them in a plate. And when she saw the man coming, she said to the boy: 'Lie down in the bed, and draw the clothes over you.'

Then the wicked man came, and said: 'Where is the heart and tongue of the boy?'

The girl handed him the plate. Then the prince threw off

The girl handed him the plate. Then the prince threw off the cover, and said: 'You old sinner! now, as you wanted to kill me after all the good things I have obtained for you, I will pronounce your fate. You shall be turned into a large black dog, with a golden chain round your neck, and have only ashes to eat;' and as he uttered the wish the wicked cook became a black dog with a golden chain.

The boy now began to think of his mother, and to wonder whether she was alive. So he said to the maiden: 'I should like to return to my fatherland; will you go with me? I will provide for all you want.'

'Ah,' she replied, 'it is such a long way, and what will become of me in a strange land where I am unknown?'

So, as he saw she could not bear to be separated from him, he wished that she might be changed into a beautiful carnation, and then he placed the flower in his coat, and took it with him.

The boy had a long distance to travel, and the black dog was obliged to follow, and go also into his own country. They went first to the tower where the queen was shut up, and as it was so high, the boy wished for a ladder which should reach to the top. Then he climbed up and looked in and cried: 'Dearest mother, queen wife, art thou living or dead?'

She thought the angels spoke to her, and said: 'I have enough to eat; I am quite satisfied.'

But he spoke again, and said: 'I am thy dear son, whom they say was stolen from thy lap by wild animals; but I am still alive, and I will rescue thee very soon.'

He descended the ladder, and went to the king and informed him that he was a hunter from a foreign country, and wished to be taken into his service. The king replied that he would readily employ him, if he would tell him where the game could be found, for that he had hunted the whole country round for years, without once obtaining any.

The young huntsman immediately promised that he would very quickly bring him as much game as would cover the royal table. He went out after this, and called all the king's hunters together, and asked them to join him in the chase. As soon as they reached the entrance to the wood, he requested them to form a great circle, with an opening at one end. Then he placed himself in the centre, and wished. In a moment about two hundred head of game rushed into the circle, and these the hunters were not long in bagging. The dead game was then placed upon sixty farm waggons, and carried home to the king,

who could now ornament his table with game, after being for many years without it.

The king was much pleased at the result of the young hunter's promise, and gave orders that the next day there should be an assembly of the whole court to dine with him, and to hold a great festival.

As soon as they were assembled, the king said to the hunter: 'You have been so skilful and clever in this affair, that you shall sit by me.'

But he answered: 'My lord king, your majesty is doing me too much honour; I am only a plain hunter.'

The king, however, stood up, and said: 'I desire you to sit by me till the feast is ended.'

The youth obeyed, but as he sat there in the place of honour, he could not help thinking of his lady mother, and wished that even now one of the king's chief courtiers would get up and ask about the queen in the tower, and whether she was still living or not.

No sooner had he wished, than the king's marshal rose, and said: 'Your majesty the king, while we are here enjoying ourselves, may I ask what has become of our lady queen in the tower? Is she still alive, or has she been starved to death?'

But the king replied haughtily: 'She allowed the wild animals to tear my little son to pieces, therefore I will not hear a word about her.'

Then the young hunter stood up, and said: 'My honoured lord and father, the queen is still alive, and I am your son. The wild beasts did not touch me. A wicked wretch—your old cook—carried me away from her lap while she slept, and sprinkled the blood of a chicken over her apron to deceive you.'

As he spoke, he led the black dog forward by his chain, and said: 'This is the wicked creature, who has been turned into a fierce dog as a punishment; shall I wish that he may be restored to his proper shape?'

The king, in surprise, consented, and no sooner was the wish expressed, than the old cook appeared before them with his white apron on and his knife by his side. The king recognised him at once, and was so exceedingly wrath that he ordered him to be thrown into the deepest dungeon of the castle.

Then the hunter related to the king all that had occurred since he had been stolen from his mother, and said: 'Will you, dear

father, see the beautiful maiden who saved my life at the risk of her own?'

'Yes,' he replied; 'I am quite anxious to see her.'

'Honoured king and father,' said the youth, 'I will first show her to you in the form of a flower.'

He searched in his pocket as he spoke, brought out the beautiful carnation and laid it on the table, and they all acknowledged that it was indeed a rare flower. But no sooner had he wished that she should resume her own form, than a beautiful maiden stood before them, whose beauty was beyond the painter's art to portray.

After this the king sent two waiting-maids and two attendants to the tower to fetch the queen, and bring her to the royal table. But as soon as she appeared, and was seated at the table, she could not eat. From that hour she ate nothing, and in three days died quite happily.

After she was buried, the two angels in the form of white doves, who had fed her daily while she was in the tower, placed themselves on her grave. The old cook was torn in pieces. In due time the son married the beautiful maiden, whom, as a flower, he had brought home in his pocket, and became king of the country, as his father soon died of grief.

CLEVER MAGGIE.

THERE was once a cook named Maggie who had shoes with red heels, and when she went out of doors, she would draw herself up and walk proudly, and say to herself, 'I really am a handsome maiden.' When she came home she would drink a glass of wine, and as wine and air gave her an appetite, she would eat up all the best things till she was satisfied, and say to herself, 'The cook ought to know the taste of everything.'

One day her master said to her, 'Maggie, I have invited some friends to supper; cook me two chickens.'

'That will I do, master,' she replied. So she went out and killed two fowls and prepared them for roasting.

In the afternoon she placed them on the spit before the fire, and they were all ready, and beautifully hot, and brown by the proper time, but the visitor had not arrived. So she went to

her master, and said, 'The fowls will be spoilt if I keep them at the fire any longer. It will be a pity and a shame if they are not eaten soon.'

Then said her master, 'I will go and fetch the visitor myself,' and away he went.

As soon as his back was turned, Maggie put the spit with the birds on one side, and thought, 'I have been standing by the fire so long that it has made me quite thirsty. Who knows when they will come? While I am waiting I may as well run into the cellar, and have a little drop.' . So she seized a jug, and said, 'All right, Maggie, thou shalt have a good draught. Wine is so tempting,' she said again, 'and it does not do to spoil your draught;' and then she drank without stopping till the jug was empty.

After this she went into the kitchen, and placed the fowls again before the fire, basted them with butter, and rattled the spit round so that they browned and frizzled with the heat. 'They would never miss a little piece,' she said to herself. Then she dipped her finger in the dripping-pan to taste, and cried, 'Oh, how nice these fowls are! It is a sin and a shame that there is no one here to eat them.'

She ran to the window to see if her master and the guest were coming; but she could see no one. So she went and stood again by the fowls, and thought, 'The wing of that fowl is a little burnt. I had better eat it.' She cut it off, as she thought this, and ate it up, and it tasted so nice that when she had finished it, she thought 'I must have the other. Master will never notice that anything is wanting.'

After the two wings were eaten, Maggie again went to look for her master, but there were no signs of his appearance. 'Who knows?' she said to herself; 'perhaps the visitor is not coming at all, and they have kept my master to supper, so he won't be back.'

'Hi! Maggie, there are good things left for you, and that piece of fowl has made me thirsty. I must have another drink before I eat the rest.' So she went into the cellar, took a large draught of wine, and, returning to the kitchen, sat down, and ate the remainder of the fowl with great relish.

There was now one fowl gone, and, as her master did not return, Maggie began to look at the other with longing eyes. At last she said, 'Where one is, there must the other be; for the fowls belong to each other, and what is right for one is also fair and right for the other. I believe, too, I want some more to drink. It won't hurt me.' The last draught gave her

courage. She came back to the kitchen, and let the second fowl go after the first.

As she was enjoying the last morsel, home came her master. 'Make haste, Maggie,' he cried. 'The guest will be here in a few minutes.'

'Yes, master,' she replied. 'It will soon be all ready.'

Meanwhile, the master saw that the cloth was laid, and everything in order. So he took up the carving-knife, with which he intended to carve the fowl, and went out to sharpen it on the stones in the passage.

While he was doing so, the guest arrived, and knocked gently and courteously at the house-door. Maggie ran out to see who it was, and when she caught sight of the visitor, she placed her finger on her lips, and whispered, 'Hush, hush! go back again as quickly as you came. If my master should catch you, it would be unfortunate. He did invite you to supper this evening, but with no other intention than to cut off both your ears. Listen, you can hear him sharpening his knife.'

The guest heard the sound, and hastened as fast as he could down the steps, and was soon out of sight.

Maggie was not idle. She ran screaming to her master, and cried, 'You have invited a fine visitor!'

'Hi! Why, Maggie, what do you mean?'

'Oh!' she exclaimed, 'he has taken my two beautiful fowls, and run away with them.'

'What strange conduct!' said her master, who was sorry to lose his supper. 'If he had left me one, or at least enough for my own supper!' He ran after the guest and called to him to stop. But the more he cried to him, the faster he ran; and when he saw him with the knife in his hand, and heard him say, 'Only one! only one!' (he meant, if he had left him 'only one fowl'), he thought he spoke of 'only one ear,' which he intended to cut off, and so he ran as if fire were burning around him, so that he might reach home with both ears untouched.

THE OLD GRANDFATHER AND HIS GRANDSON.

THERE was once a very old man whose eyes were dim, whose knees tottered under him when he walked, and who was very deaf. As he sat at table, his hand shook so that he would often spill the soup over the table-cloth, or on his clothes, and sometimes even he could not keep it in his mouth when it got there. His son and daughter-in-law were so annoyed at this, that they placed a chair for him in a corner behind the screen, and gave him his meals in an earthenware basin. He would often look sorrowfully at the table with tears in his eyes.

One day the earthenware basin, which he could scarcely hold in his trembling hands, fell to the ground and was broken. The young wife scolded him well for being so careless, but he did not reply, only sighed deeply. Then she bought him a wooden bowl for a few pence, and gave him his meals in it.

They were once sitting thus, when they saw their little boy of four years old sitting on the ground and fastening some pieces of wood together.

'What are you making, my boy?' asked his father.

'I am making a little bowl for papa and mamma to eat their food in when I grow up,' he replied.

The husband and wife looked at each other without speaking for some minutes. At last they began to shed tears, and went and brought their old father back to the table, and from that day he always took his meals with them, and was never again treated unkindly.

THE WATER SPRITE.

A LITTLE brother and sister were once playing together by the side of a well, and both fell in. Under the water they found a fairy, who said: 'Now I have caught you. Now you shall work for me.'

So she carried them both away. She set the maiden to spin

hard, tangled flax, and gave her a cask full of holes to fill with water; and she sent the boy to cut wood with a blunt axe, and they got nothing to eat but hard dumplings.

The children became at last so impatient that they waited till one Sunday, when the fairy was at church, and ran away. But when church was over, the fairy saw that they were flown, and went after them with great strides. The children saw her coming in the distance, and the maiden threw behind her a great bush, which instantly became a mountain covered with prickly points, over which the fairy had the greatest trouble to climb. But the children saw that she had managed to get over, and was coming near.

The boy then threw a comb behind him, which became a mountain of combs, with hundreds of teeth sticking up; but the fairy knew how to hold fast on this, and soon clambered over it.

The maiden next threw a looking-glass behind, which became a mountain also, and was so slippery that it was impossible to get over it.

Then thought the fairy: 'I will go home and fetch my axe, and break the looking-glass.'

But when she came back and had broken the looking-glass, the children had been for a long time too far away for her to overtake them, so she was obliged to sink back into the well.

THE DEATH OF THE LITTLE HEN.

Once upon a time a little cock and a little hen went to a nut mountain to gather nuts, and they promised each other that whoever found the first nut, it should be divided between them.

Now, the little hen found a very large nut, but she said nothing about it, for she wanted to eat it all herself. But the kernel was so large that when she tried to swallow it, it stuck in her throat, and, fearing she should be choked, she screamed out loudly, 'Little cock, water, quick! or I shall be choked!'

Away ran the cock as fast as he could to the spring. 'Spring!' he cried, 'pray give me some water; my little hen has swallowed a kernel, and she is choking.'

'Go first to the bride,' answered the spring, 'and ask her for a piece of red silk.'

The poor cock ran to the bride, and said: 'Dear bride, pray give me a piece of red silk for the spring, that I may get some water for my little hen, who has swallowed a large nut kernel, and will be choked.'

The bride answered: 'Run first and fetch me my wreath which hangs on the willow yonder.'

Then ran the cock to the willow, and fetched the wreath. The bride gave him the red silk, which he took to the spring, and got some water at last. But it was too late; when he brought the water to the hen he found her lying dead on the ground, for the nut had choked her.

The cock was in such distress that he gave a loud scream; then all the animals came and mourned for the hen, and six mice offered to build a little carriage for the funeral, and when it was finished they harnessed themselves to it, and started for the grave, while the cock followed. On the way they met a fox, who asked where they were going.

'I am going to bury my little hen,' replied the cock.

'May I go with you?' asked the fox.

'Yes, if you follow behind; for my little horses could not draw the carriage with you on it.'

So the fox placed himself behind, and then came up a wolf, a bear, a stag, and a lion, and many other beasts of the forest, and joined the procession. They had not gone far when they came to a brook.

'How are we to get over here?' asked the cock.

There was a stalk of straw lying on the brook, and it said: 'I will place myself across from one side to the other, and you can easily get over me.'

But when the six mice stepped on the bridge, it broke under them, and they all fell in and were drowned. This was a new trouble; but presently a coal came by and said: 'I think I am big and strong enough to carry you over safely.'

So the coal placed himself in the water, but unfortunately just touched it, was extinguished, and drowned.

At last a large stone took compassion on them, and laid itself across the stream from one side to the other. Over this the cock drew the waggon with his dead hen upon it, and landed it quite safely on the opposite shore.

The rest of the procession wished to follow, so the empty carriage was sent back for them; but it was very small, and as they all crowded upon it at once, it upset, and they fell into the water and were drowned. The cock was therefore left

alone with his dead hen, so he dug a grave and laid her in it, and raised a mound over her. On this he seated himself, and grieved so much and so long that at length he died of grief.

HANS IN LUCK.

HANS had served his master seven years, and at last said to him: 'Master, my time is up; I should like to go home and see my mother, so give me my wages.'

And the master said: 'You have been a faithful and good servant. As the service was, so shall the reward be;' and he gave him a piece of silver as big as his head.

Hans took out his pocket-handkerchief, wrapped the lump in it, threw it over his shoulder, and set out homewards. As he went on, putting one foot before the other, a man came in sight, trotting gaily on a capital horse. 'Ah,' said Hans aloud, 'what a fine thing it is to ride! There one sits as in a chair; one trips over no stones, one saves one's shoes, and yet gets on one hardly knows how.'

The horseman heard this, and said: 'Well, Hans, why do you go on foot, then?'

'Ah!' said he, 'I must; I have this load to carry home. To be sure, it is silver, but I can't hold my head straight for it, and it hurts my shoulder.'

'We will exchange,' said the horseman; 'I will give you my horse, and you shall give me your lump.'

'With all my heart,' said Hans; 'but I tell you you'll have to drag it along.'

The horseman got off, took the silver, helped Hans up, gave him the bridle into his hand, and said: 'If you want to go very fast, you must click your tongue, and cry "Jup, jup!"'

Hans was delighted as he sat on the horse and rode merrily on. After a time he thought it ought to go faster, so he began to click with his tongue, and cried 'Jup, jup!' Away went the horse full gallop, and before Hans knew what he was about, he was thrown off, and lay in a ditch by the roadside. His horse would have run away if a countryman who was coming along the road, driving a cow, had not stopped it. Hans soon got upon his legs again, but he was vexed, and said

to the countryman: 'This riding is no joke when a man gets on a mare like this, that kicks and flings one off, so that there is a chance of breaking one's neck. Never again will I mount it. I like your cow, for one can walk behind her at one's leisure, and have milk, butter, and cheese every day into the bargain. What would not I give to have such a cow!'

'Well,' said the countryman, 'if you are so fond of her, I will change my cow for your horse.'

Hans agreed with delight, and the countryman jumped upon the horse and rode quickly away. Hans drove off his cow quietly, and thought his bargain a very lucky one.

'If I have only a piece of bread (and I certainly shall be able to get that), I can, whenever I like, eat butter and cheese with it; and when I am thirsty I can milk my cow and drink the milk: what can I wish for more?'

When he came to an inn, he halted, ate up all the food he had with him, and gave away his last penny for a glass of beer. Then he drove his cow towards his mother's village. The heat grew greater as noon came on, and he found himself on a wide heath that would take him more than an hour to cross. He began to be so hot and parched that his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth. 'I can find a cure for this,' thought Hans; 'I will milk my cow now, and quench my thirst with the milk.' So he tied her to the stump of a tree, and, as he had no pail, he held his leather cap to milk into; but not a drop came. While he was trying his luck and managing the matter very clumsily, the uneasy beast gave him a kick on the head that knocked him down, and there he lay, and for a long time did not know where he was.

Luckily, a butcher came by, with a pig in a wheelbarrow. 'What is the matter with you?' said the butcher, as he helped him up.

Hans told him what had happened, and the butcher gave him a flask, saying: 'Take a drink and refresh yourself; your cow will give you no milk; she is an old beast, good for nothing but the plough or the butcher.'

'Alas! alas!' said Hans. 'Who would have thought it? If I kill her what will she be good for? I hate cow-beef; it is not tender enough for me. If it were a pig, now, one could do something with it; it would, at any rate, make some sausages.'

'Well,' said the butcher, 'to please you, I'll change, and give you the pig for the cow.'

'Heaven reward you for your kindness!' said Hans, as he

gave the butcher the cow and took the pig off the wheelbarrow, and drove it off, holding it by the string that was tied to its leg. So on he jogged, and all seemed now to go right with him; he had met with some misfortunes, to be sure, but he was now well repaid for all.

The next person he met was a countryman carrying a fine white goose under his arm. They said good-morning to each other, and Hans told him about all his luck, and how he had made so many good bargains.

The countryman said he was going to take the goose to a christening. 'Feel,' said he, 'how heavy it is; it has been fattened for the last eight weeks. Whoever roasts and eats it may cut plenty of fat off it.'

'You're right,' said Hans, as he weighed it in his hand; 'but my pig is not a bad one.'

Meantime, the countryman began to look grave and shook his head. 'Hark ye,' he said, 'my good friend; your pig may get you into a scrape. In the village I have just come from, the mayor himself has had one stolen out of his sty. I was dreadfully afraid, when I saw you, that you had got that pig. It will be a bad job if they catch you; the least they'll do will be to shut you up in the dark hole.'

Poor Hans was sadly frightened. 'Good man,' cried he, 'pray get me out of this scrape! You know this country better than I; take my pig and give me the goose.'

'I shall risk something by the bargain,' said the countryman; 'however, I will not bear hard upon you, as you are in trouble.'

Then he took the string in his hand, and drove off the pig by a side path, while Hans went on the way homewards with the goose under his arm. 'After all,' thought he, 'I have the best of the bargain: first, there will be a capital roast; then the fat will find me in goose-grease for four months; and then there are all the beautiful white feathers. I will stuff them into my pillow, and then I am sure I shall sleep soundly without rocking. How happy my mother will be!'

As he came to the last village, he saw a scissors-grinder with his wheel working away, and singing:

'I sharpen scissors, I grind knives well;
My coat blows out as my things I sell.'

Hans stood looking at him, and at last said: 'You must be well off, Master Grinder, you seem so happy at your work.'

'Yes,' said the other, 'mine is a golden trade; a good

grinder never puts his hand in his pocket without finding money in it. But where did you get that beautiful goose?'

'I did not buy it, but changed a pig for it.'

'And where did you get the pig?'

'I gave a cow for it.'

'And the cow?'

'I gave a horse for it.'

'And the horse?'

'I gave a piece of silver as big as my head for that.'

'And the silver?'

'Oh, I worked hard for that seven long years.'

'You have thriven well in the world hitherto,' said the grinder; 'now, if you could find money in your pocket whenever you put your hand into it, your fortune would be made.'

'Very true; but how is that to be managed?'

'You must become a grinder as I am,' said the other. 'You only want a grindstone; the rest will come of itself. Here is one that is a little the worse for the wear; I would not ask more than the value of your goose for it. Will you buy?'

'How can you ask such a question?' replied Hans. 'I should be the happiest man in the world could I have money whenever I put my hand in my pocket. What could I want more? There's the goose!'

'Now,' said the grinder, as he gave him a common rough stone that lay by his side, 'this is a capital stone; do but manage it cleverly, and you can sharpen an old nail on it.'

Hans took the stone and went off with a light heart; his eyes sparkled for joy, and he said to himself: 'I must have been born in a lucky hour; everything that I want or wish for comes to me of itself.'

Meantime he began to be tired, for he had been travelling ever since daybreak; he was hungry, for he had eaten all his food and given away his last penny in his joy at getting the cow. At last he could go no further, and the stone tired him terribly. He dragged himself to a well in a field that he might drink some water and rest awhile, and he laid the stone carefully by his side on the bank; but as he stooped down to drink he forgot it, pushed it a little, and down it went plump into the well.

When he saw it sinking in the deep water, he jumped for joy, and again fell upon his knees, and thanked Heaven with tears in his eyes for its kindness in taking away his only plague —the ugly, heavy stone. 'How happy am I!' cried he. 'No

mortal was ever so lucky as I am.' Then up he got with a light heart, and, free from all his troubles, ran till he reached his mother's house.

HANS MARRIED.

THERE was once a young peasant called Hans whose cousin wished to marry him to a rich woman. He seated Hans behind the stove, and had it heated; then he fetched a pot of milk and plenty of white bread, and gave him a newly-coined bright farthing in his hand, and said: 'Hans, hold the farthing firmly, and the white bread, which you must crumble into the milk, and remain sitting there; do not move until I come back.'

'Yes,' said Hans, 'I will do so.'

Then the suitor put on an old pair of patched trousers, went into another village to a rich peasant's daughter, and said: 'Will you not marry my cousin Hans? You will get an honest and sensible man, who will please you.'

Then the miserly father asked: 'How is it with his means? Has he bread to break?'

'Dear friend,' said the suitor, 'my young cousin sits in a warm place, has a nice bit of money in his hand, and has plenty of bread to break. He can also count as many patches' (plots of land were thus called in that part of the country) 'as I,' slapping at the same time his patched trousers. 'If you will take the trouble to go with me, I will show you that it is as I have said.'

The miser did not wish to lose the opportunity, and said: 'If that is the case, I have nothing further to say against the marriage.'

Now, the marriage was celebrated on the appointed day, and when the young woman wished to go into the fields, and see the property of the bridegroom, Hans first took off his Sunday coat and put on his patched smock-frock, and said: 'I must not spoil my good coat.' Then they went together into the fields, and where the signpost pointed the way, or where fields and meadows were divided, Hans pointed with his finger, and then struck on a large or small patch of his smock, and said:

'This patch is mine, and that also, my treasure; look at it,' wishing to say that his wife should not look at the fields, but on his coat, which was his own.

'Were you at the wedding?'

'Yes, I was there, and in full state. My head was adorned with snow, when the sun came and melted it; my dress was of cobwebs, and I came by some thorns which tore it; my slippers were of glass, I knocked against a stone, they said "klink," and were broken.'

THE GOLD CHILDREN.

THERE lived in a little cottage a poor fisherman and his wife, who had nothing to live upon but the fish the husband caught. One day as he sat by the water throwing his net, he took a fish which was quite golden. As he examined it with wonder, it said, 'Listen, fisherman: if you will throw me again in the water I will change your little hut into a splendid castle.'

The fisherman replied, 'What would be the use of a castle to me when I have nothing to eat?'

'Of that,' said the gold fish, 'I will take care: there is a cupboard in the castle, in which, when you unlock it, you will find dishes containing everything to eat that heart can wish.'

'If it is so,' said the man, 'then I am quite willing to do as you please.'

'There is, however, one condition,' continued the fish: 'you must not mention to a living creature, be it who it may, the source of your good fortune; if you utter a single word, it will at once be at an end.'

The man, upon this, threw the fish back into the water, and went home. But where his little hut had once stood now rose a large castle.

He stared with astonishment, and then stepped in, and saw his wife dressed in costly clothes, and sitting in a handsome room. She seemed quite contented, and said: 'Husband, how has all this happened? I am so pleased.'

'Yes,' said the man, 'it pleases me also; but I am so hungry, give me something to eat.'

'Oh, dear,' she replied, 'I have nothing, and I don't know where any is to be found here.'

'It does not matter,' he replied. 'Do you see that great cupboard? just unlock it.'

When the cupboard was opened, they saw in it bread, meat, vegetables, cake, wine, and fruit.

'Dear husband,' cried the wife, full of joy, 'what more can we desire than this?'

Then they sat down, and ate and drank together in great comfort.

After they had finished, the wife said: 'Husband, where do all these good things and riches come from?'

'Ah!' he replied, 'do not ask me; I dare not tell you. If I disclose anything, all our good fortune will come to an end.'

'Very well,' she replied, 'if I am not to be told, I shall not desire to know;' but this was merely pretence, for she gave her husband no peace night or day, and she tormented and worried the poor man so terribly that she exhausted his patience, and he told her at last.

'This good fortune,' he said, 'all comes from a wonderful gold fish which I caught, and afterwards gave it freedom by throwing it back into the water.'

No sooner had he uttered these words than the castle with its wonderful cupboard disappeared, and they were again sitting in the fisherman's hut.

The husband was now again obliged to follow his trade and go fishing, and, as luck would have it, he again caught the golden fish.

'Listen,' cried the fish, 'if you will again throw me into the water, I will once more give you a castle and a cupboard full of good things; but be firm this time, and reveal to no one from whom it comes, or all will be again lost.'

'I will keep it to myself,' answered the fisherman, and threw the fish into the water.

Everything at home now was in its former splendour, and the fisherman's wife joyful over their good fortune; but her curiosity gave her no peace, and two days had scarcely passed before she began to ask how it all happened, and what was the cause.

Her husband kept silence for a long time, but at last she made him so angry than he incautiously revealed the secret. In a moment the castle and all that it contained vanished, and they were again sitting in their little old hut.

'See what you have done!' he said; 'we shall have again to starve with hunger.'

'Oh, well,' she replied, 'I would rather not have such riches

if I am not to know where they come from; it destroys my peace.'

The husband again went fishing, and after a time pulled up the gold fish for the third time.

'Listen,' cried the fish: 'I see I am always to fall into your hands; therefore, you must take me to your house, and cut me in six pieces. Give your wife two of them to eat; two to your horse; and two you must place in the ground, and you will have seed from them.'

The man took the fish home, and did exactly as he had been told.

It happened, after awhile, that from the pieces of the fish placed in the earth two golden lilies sprung up, the horse had two golden fillies, and his wife had two little children, but they were both golden. The children grew tall and beautiful, and the lilies and the foals grew also.

One day the children said to their father: 'We should like to ride out and see the world on our golden steeds.'

But he answered sorrowfully: 'How shall we be able to endure the thought that you are far away from us, and that we know not where you are?'

'Oh,' they replied, 'the two golden lilies will remain, and by them you can always tell how we are going on. If they are fresh, we are in health; if they fade, we are sick; and when they fall, we shall die!'

So they rode away till they came to an inn where a number of people were staying. But when they saw the two gold children, they began to laugh and make a mockery of them.

As soon as one of them heard the laughter and mocking words, he would not go any farther, but turned back and went home to his father. The other, however, rode on till he came to a large forest. As he was about to enter the forest, some people came by and said: 'You had better not ride there, for the wood is full of robbers, who will overcome you and rob you, especially when they see that you and your horse are golden, and you will both be killed.'

He would not, however, be frightened, but said: 'I must and will ride through!'

He took bearskins and threw them over himself and his horse, that the gold might not be seen, and rode confidently into the wood. He had not ridden far when he heard a rustling in the bushes, and voices speaking audibly to each other.

'That is one,' said a voice; but the other said: 'No; let

him alone—he has nothing on but a bearskin, and is, I dare say, as poor and cold as a church mouse. What do we want with him?'

So the gold child rode through the wood, and no harm happened to him.

One day he came to a town in which he saw a maiden who appeared to him so beautiful that he did not think there could be another so beautiful in the world.

And as his love became stronger for her, he went to her and said: 'I love you with my whole heart. Will you be my wife?'

The maiden was so pleased that she answered willingly: 'Yes; I will be your wife, and be true to you as long as I live.'

Very soon after they were married, and just as they were enjoying themselves with the guests on the wedding-day, the bride's father returned home. When he found his daughter already married, he was much astonished, and said: 'Where is the bridegroom?' He was pointed out to him, and he still wore the bearskin dress. On seeing him, he exclaimed, in great anger: 'My daughter shall never have a bearskin-wearer for her husband!' and wanted to murder him.

But the bride interceded for him as much as she could, and said: 'He is already my husband, and I shall always love him with my whole heart.' And at last her father was appeased.

However, he could not help thinking about it all night, and in the morning, when the bridegroom was dressing, he peeped into his room, and saw a noble-looking golden man, and the bearskin lying on the ground. Then he went back to his own room, and said to himself: 'How fortunate it is that I restrained my anger last night, or I should have committed a great crime!'

The same morning the gold child told his wife that he had dreamed of being in the hunt, and catching a beautiful stag, so that he must go out hunting.

She was very uneasy at the thought, and said: 'Pray don't go; a misfortune might so easily happen to you.'

But he replied: 'I will and must go.'

As soon as he was ready he rode out into the wood, and had not been there long before he saw just such a stag as the one in his dream. He raised his gun to shoot it, but the stag sprang away, and he followed it over hedges and ditches the whole day without feeling tired. At last, as night came on, it vanished from his eyes.

Then the gold child looked round him, and saw close by a

small house in which sat an old woman, who was a witch, but he did not know it. He knocked at the door, and she came out and asked him what he wanted so late as that in the middle of the wood.

He said: 'Have you seen a stag pass this way?'

'Yes,' she replied; 'I know the stag well.'

And while she spoke, a little dog, that had come out of the house with the old woman, began to bark furiously.

'Be quiet, will you,' he cried, 'you spiteful cur! or I will shoot you.'

'What! you will kill my dog?' cried the old witch in a rage. 'Ah, I'll soon stop that;' and in a moment he lay on the ground turned into stone.

His bride waited for his return in vain, and thought: 'Something has certainly happened to him, or else why am I so anxious and troubled in my heart?'

On the same evening the brother, who was at home, was standing by the golden lily, when it suddenly fell drooping on its stem.

'Ah me!' he exclaimed, 'there has some misfortune happened to my brother. I must go to him; very likely I shall be able to save him.'

Then said his father: 'No, no; stay here. If I were to lose both of you, what should I do?'

But the youth answered, 'I must and will go and find my brother.'

Then he mounted his golden horse, and rode away quickly to the wood where his brother lay turned to stone.

The old witch saw him in the distance, and came out of her house, and tried to mislead him about his brother, and called to him to come in. But he would not go near her, and, raising his gun, he cried: 'If you do not this moment restore my brother to life, I will shoot you dead.'

She moved unwillingly towards the stone, and touched it with her finger, and immediately the gold child stood before his brother in his own form. They were both overjoyed to meet again, and kissed and embraced each other. Then they rode together out of the wood, and there they parted—the one to hasten back to his bride, the other home to his parents.

'Ah,' said his father, 'we knew that your brother had been released from his trouble, for the golden lily is again erect and in full bloom.'

And after this they lived in happiness and contentment for the rest of their days.

THE FOX AND THE GEESE.

A FOX came once to a meadow, where a herd of fine fat geese were enjoying themselves. 'Ah,' he said, laughing, 'I am just in time. They are so close together that I can come and fetch them one after another easily.'

The geese, when they saw him, began to cackle with fear, sprung up, and, with much complaining and murmuring, begged for their lives.

The fox, however, would not listen, and said: 'There is no hope of mercy—you must die.'

At last one of them took heart, and said: 'It would be very hard for us poor geese to lose our young, fresh lives so suddenly as this; but if you will grant us only one favour, afterwards we will place ourselves in a row, so that you may choose the fattest and best.'

'And what is this favour?' asked the fox.

'Why, that we may pray before we die.'

'Well, that is only fair,' replied the fox; 'it is a harmless request. Pray away, then, and I will wait for you.'

Then the first began a long prayer, for ever saying, 'Ga, ga!' and because he would not stop, the second began, without waiting his turn, 'Ga, ga!' The third and fourth followed her, and soon they were all cackling together.

This story shall be continued when they have stopped, but they still continue praying.

THE SINGING SKYLARK.

A MERCHANT once, who had three daughters, was obliged to go on a long journey. Before he started he asked each of them what he should bring them. The eldest asked for diamonds, the second for pearls, but the youngest said:

'Dear father, if you would bring me a little skylark, I should like it better than anything else.'

'If I can catch one you shall have it,' he replied. Then he wished them good-bye, kissed them all three, and left them.

A long time passed, and the father of the maidens was on his way home. He had the pearls and diamonds for his two elder daughters, but he had not yet found a lark for the youngest, although he had searched and inquired everywhere on the way. This made him very unhappy, for she was his favourite child.

However, he had to pass through a wood, in which stood a magnificent castle, and near it, on a tree, he saw a lark, fluttering and singing.

'Just the very thing I want,' he said, in a satisfied tone; and calling to his servant, he desired him to go cautiously to the spot he pointed out, and catch the lark.

But before he could reach it a lion sprang out from the thicket, shook his mane, and roared so loudly that the leaves on the trees trembled.

'Whoever dares to steal my singing, fluttering lark,' he said, 'never leaves this place alive!'

The traveller replied: 'I did not know that the bird belonged to you; but I will rectify the mistake, and pay you with a large amount of gold if you will spare my life.'

The lion replied: 'I do not want gold. You can only save yourself by at once promising to give up to me whatever shall first meet you on your return home. If you do this, I will grant your life, and give you the bird for your daughter.'

The merchant at first refused; for his youngest daughter, who loved him dearly, generally ran out to meet him on his return home, and he said so to his servant.

But the man, who was terribly frightened, begged his master to promise, and said: 'It might be a cat or a dog who came to meet you first, and not your daughter.'

So he allowed himself to be persuaded, took the lark, and promised to send the lion whatever first met him on his return home. But when he reached it, who should come running out to meet him but his youngest daughter, laughing and happy! She kissed him, and welcomed him home with all her heart, and when she saw the lark she was beside herself with joy.

But her father could not join in her pleasure. He began to weep, and said: 'Ah, my child, that bird has cost you dear. I have promised to send you to a fierce lion, who will, I fear, tear you in pieces the moment he sees you.' And then he related all that had happened, and what he had promised, and ended by begging her not to go, let the consequences be what they might.

She consoled him, however, and said: 'Dearest father, what

you have promised must be performed. I will go to this lion, and soften and appease him so completely that I shall soon come back to you safe and sound.'

The next morning she got ready to leave home, and after a sorrowful farewell took her way to the wood with great confidence.

The lion was a king's son under the spell of enchantment. By day he and all his servants were changed to the form of lions; but at night they were allowed to resume their proper shapes.

On her arrival at the castle, the maiden was received very kindly by the lion and the servants, and led into the castle. But at night the lion changed to a handsome young prince, and their marriage was celebrated with great magnificence.

They lived happily together. One day the prince told her that her eldest sister was going to be married, and that if she liked to go to the wedding, one of the lions should accompany her. So she said she would be delighted to see her father again; and the lion conducted her to her home in safety.

When they arrived there was great joy, for they all supposed she had been torn to pieces. But when she told them of the handsome prince whom she had married, they were all very happy, and she stayed with them till the marriage festivities were over, and then travelled back to the wood.

After a time the marriage of her second sister was to take place, and she was invited to the wedding; but she told the lion she would not go unless he went with her.

'Ah,' he replied, 'that would be dangerous for me, for if while there one ray of a burning light should fall upon me, I should be changed into a dove, and for seven long years I should have to fly about with them.'

'Oh!' she cried, 'only go with me, and I will take care to hide you from all light.'

So they set out together, and took their little child with them. She had a room built for him, of which the walls were so thick that no ray of light could penetrate, and here he was to remain when the torches were lighted for the wedding feast. The door, however, owing to the wood not being properly seasoned, had a small crack which no one noticed.

On the return of the marriage procession, however, many torches and lamps were carried into the hall, and so it happened that through the crevice in the door a ray of only a hair's breadth fell upon the prince, and, as it rested upon him, he was changed in a moment.

After the festival was over, his young wife came to seek for him, but there was nothing in the room excepting a white dove!

'Ah me!' said the dove, 'I must now fly about the world for seven years; but you must follow me, and at every seventh step you will see on your path a white feather and a drop of blood, which I will let fall to show you the way; and, if you keep on that track, you will at last be able to set me free.'

Then the dove flew out at the door, and the poor young wife sadly followed, carefully observing where the white feathers and the blood-drops fell, and following the track carefully.

Steadily she kept on her way through the world as the dove flew, not looking to the right hand or the left. At last, the seven years drew towards a close, and she was full of joy, for she thought the time was near when she should be able to break the enchanter's spell.

But in the midst of this hope she was one day alarmed at finding that the feathers and the blood-drops had ceased to fall, and when she raised her eyes to look, the dove had vanished.

'Oh,' she said to herself, 'man cannot help me now.' So she climbed up to the Sun, and said to him: 'Oh, Sun! thou shinest everywhere, and thy rays penetrate the smallest crevice and gild the highest pinnacle; hast thou seen a white dove flying?'

'No,' replied the Sun, 'I have seen no dove; but I will give you this little casket, which you may open when you are in great trouble.'

She thanked the Sun, and went away, wandering about till evening came on. She saw the Moon shining at last.

So she said to her: 'Moon, thou shinest the whole night over field and meadow; hast thou seen a white dove flying?'

'No,' said the Moon, 'I have seen no dove; but here is an egg for you, which you may break when you are in any great trouble.'

She thanked the Moon and went on farther, and presently the Night-wind arose and blew upon her, so she spoke to him, and said: 'Night-wind, thou wavest with thy breath the summits of the forest trees, and the boughs bend and toss beneath thy power; hast thou seen a white dove flying near?'

'No,' said the Night-wind, 'I have not seen it; but I will ask the three other winds: probably they may have seen it.'

The East-wind and the West-wind were both questioned, but they had seen nothing. The South-wind, however, said:

'Yes, I have seen the white dove; it has flown to the Red Sea, and has again become a lion, for the seven years are over. The lion is at this moment in combat with a dragon, who is a bewitched king's daughter.'

'Then,' said the Night-wind, 'if this is the case, I can give you some good advice. Go to the Red Sea, and on the right shore you will see several large reeds; count them, cut the eleventh off, and strike the dragon with it, then the lion will conquer, and they will both return to their human shape. After this look round quickly, and you will see a griffin near you with wings like a bird, sitting by the Red Sea; leap on his back with the greatest swiftness, and the bird will carry you over the ocean to your home. I will also give you this nut,' continued the North-wind, 'and while you are crossing the ocean, you must drop it into the sea; as soon as it reaches the bottom, a great nut-tree will grow out of the water, on which the griffin can rest, for without rest he would not be strong enough to carry you over. Should you forget to drop the nut, he will let you fall into the sea.'

On hearing this, the young wife took the nut, the egg, and the casket, and went on her way to the Red Sea. Here she found it all as the Night-wind had told her. She counted the reeds by the sea, cut off the eleventh, took it with her, and struck the dragon. Immediately the lion became the conqueror, and they both appeared in their own proper forms. But no sooner was the enchanted princess released from the sorcerer's spell, than she seized the king's son, who had been a lion, by the arm, sprung with him on the griffin's back, and was soon carried away far out of sight.

There stood the poor wife, who had wandered so far in search of her husband, again left alone. She could at first only sit and weep, but presently her courage returned, and, rousing herself, she said: 'I will again travel as far as the wind blows, and as long as the cock crows, till I find him.'

She started again, and after travelling a long, long time, came at last to the castle where they both were living together. She heard of the preparations for a great feast, and knew that he was going to marry another.

'Heaven help me now!' she said.

Then she opened the casket that the Sun had given her, and in it lay a dress which glittered like the Sun itself. She took it out, arrayed herself in the shining robe, and entered the castle. All the guests and the bride herself looked astonished, and the dress pleased the bride so much that she thought she

should like it for her wedding dress, and asked the stranger if she would sell it.

'No,' she said, 'not for gold or silver; but for flesh and blood.'

The bride asked her what she meant.

'Well,' she said, 'let me sleep one night in the room where the bridegroom sleeps.'

The bride at first refused, but as she wanted the dress so much, she was obliged to consent. She told his servant, however, to give him a sleeping-draught, so that when the poor wife entered the room he was fast asleep, and she did not like to disturb him. She sat still for some time, only murmuring: 'I have followed you for all these seven years; I went to the Sun and the Moon, and the four Winds to find you. It was I who struck the dragon, and helped you; and will you quite forget me now?'

But the prince slept so heavily that he heard only a sound like the rushing of the wind through the fir-trees.

When morning came she was obliged to leave the room, although he still slept, and the bride claimed the beautiful dress.

The poor wife seemed now to have no hope left, and, going out into the meadows, she sat down and wept. Presently she remembered the egg which the Moon had given her; taking it out of her pocket, she broke it, and out came a hen, with twelve beautiful little chicks, looking like balls of gold. They ran here and there, chirped and pecked, and then crept under their mother's wings in the prettiest manner possible. It was a most beautiful sight. At last she stood up, and drove the hen and her chickens gently, till they came in front of a window where the bride sat. As soon as she saw them she wanted to buy them, but she was told, as before, they were not to be sold for silver or gold.

'Then what will you let me have them for?' asked the bride.

'For permission to stay another night in the bridegroom's chamber,' she replied.

The bride agreed, intending to deceive her as before; but the prince asked his servant what the noise was he had heard the night before, and the servant told him all, and said that his evening slumber had been caused by a sleeping-draught, which he had been forced to give him, and that while he was asleep a poor maiden had come secretly to his room, and that she was coming again that evening.

'If you have another sleeping-draught for me,' said the prince, 'throw it away.'

At night the poor wife crept into the room, and began to talk of her trouble in a mournful tone.

But the prince recognised the voice, and, starting up, exclaimed: 'Now I really am released. I appear as if I had been in a dream. I must have been bewitched by the strange king's daughter, to make me forget thee, my dearest; but the infatuation has been taken from me just in time.'

Then they both left the castle secretly in the night, for the prince was afraid of the new bride's father, who was a wizard.

They seated themselves on the griffin, which carried them over the Red Sea. When they reached half-way, she threw the nut into the water, and immediately a great nut-tree grew up, on which the griffin rested, and afterwards carried them safely home to her father's house. Here she found her little child, who had grown tall and beautiful, and from this time they were happy to the end of their lives.

THE GOOSE-GIRL.

THERE was once an old queen whose husband had been dead many years, and she had a beautiful daughter. This daughter had been for some time betrothed to the son of a king who lived many miles away. She was now grown up, and the queen knew that very soon her child must leave her, and travel into distant lands, to be the wife of the king's son, so she began to collect many costly things which were to be sent with her as marriage presents—dresses and trinkets, gold and silver, goblets and jewels; indeed, everything suitable for the treasures of a royal bride, for she loved her child dearly.

She gave her also a waiting-maid to ride with her, and to place her hand in that of the bridegroom. The queen also provided each a horse for the journey, and the bride's horse, which was named Falada, could speak.

When the farewell hour arrived, the queen repaired to her sleeping-room, took a small knife, and cut her finger till it bled. Then she laid a piece of rag on the table, let fall three drops of blood on it, gave it to her daughter, and said: 'Dear child,

take care not to lose this, and no harm will happen to you on the way.'

The queen took a sorrowful leave of her daughter, who had placed the piece of rag in her bosom before she seated herself on her horse, to ride away to her bridegroom.

After journeying about an hour, the heat made the princess very thirsty, and, stopping her horse, she said to her waiting-maid: 'Please alight, and draw me some water in one of my little cups which the queen, my mother, gave me; I must have something to drink, I am so thirsty.'

'If you are thirsty,' replied the waiting-maid, 'get down from your horse yourself, and lie down by the brook and drink; I am not going to be your servant!'

The princess got off her horse, for her thirst was very great, and, lying down, she drank from the stream, for she durst not ask for the cup. But she could not help sighing, and then she heard the rag in her bosom say: 'If the queen-mother knew this, she would break her heart.' But the young bride was humble; she said nothing, and again mounted her horse and rode away for several miles. The heat still continued, and the princess again suffered from thirst, and presently they came to a running stream. She once more asked her maid to alight and fetch her a little water in the cup. Again the other replied haughtily that she might get it herself; she was not going to be her maid.

She was therefore obliged to get down and drink from the flowing stream as she had done before. This time she wept, and heard the voice in her bosom say, 'Ah, if your mother knew this, she would break her heart.' But as she stooped over the edge of the stream to drink, the piece of cloth, on which were the blood-drops, fell from her bosom into the water, and floated away without her noticing it in her sorrow and trouble.

Her companion, however, saw it, and rejoiced that now the bride had become weak and powerless.

As she turned round to mount her horse again, her companion said to her, 'Falada belongs to me, you must ride on my horse.' Then, with harsh and cruel words, the woman obliged her to take off her royal dress, and put on her own common one, and made her swear that when they reached the king's court she would not reveal that she was a princess. And if she had not taken this oath, she would have killed her on the spot. But Falada saw and heard all that passed, and took care to remember it.

The lady's-maid rode after this on Falada, and the true bride on the inferior horse, and so they travelled farther, till at last they arrived at the royal castle. Their arrival was announced with great joy. The king's son hastened forward to receive them, and assisted the lady's-maid to alight from her horse, thinking that she was his bride. He led her up the steps into the castle, while the real bride remained behind.

Presently the old king looked out of a window, and saw her standing in the court, and he could not help noticing that she looked refined and delicate, and was very beautiful. He went out, and with kingly gentleness asked her why she was staying there, and what she wanted, and who she was.

She replied: 'I came all this way as a companion, and I have no other employment.'

'I am sorry there is no situation for you,' replied the king; 'but I know a little maiden who has a number of geese; she is called Kürdchen; you may help her.'

So the real bride went to take care of the geese.

Soon after this the false bride said to the king's son, 'Dearest prince, will you do me a favour?'

'Certainly, I will do it,' he replied.

'Well, then, I want you to have the horse that I rode on, in my journey here, destroyed, for it provoked me.'

She knew that the horse could speak, and feared he would some day tell the prince she was not the real bride.

The order to kill Falada came to the ears of the true bride, and she found out the man, and promised him a piece of gold if he would do her a service.

In the town was a large, gloomy-looking door, through which the geese had to be driven morning and evening, and she told the man who was going to kill Falada to fasten the head on this gloomy door that she might see it every day as she passed through.

The man promised to comply, so poor Falada's head was cut off and nailed to the door.

Early the next morning, when she and Kürdchen passed through she spoke to the head, and said, 'Falada, dost thou know me?'

'Ah, yes,' replied the head; 'you are the young princess, and if your mother knew, she would break her heart.'

Then she joined Kürdchen, and they drove the geese into the field. As soon as they could sit down, the young princess unfastened her hair that she might comb it and make it neat.

Kürdchen was quite delighted when she saw the hair, for it

was bright and golden, and the princess had always hitherto worn it hidden under a cap, so she came over to cut off a lock for herself. But the princess did not wish to lose her hair, so she cried out:

'Blow, blow, wind; take Kürdchen's hat in the air,
And do not let her catch it till I have done my hair.

Then there came such a strong wind that Kürdchen's little hat was carried away, so she had to run a long distance, and before she could get back from fetching it, her companion had finished combing her hair, and she could not cut any off. Kürdchen was so cross that she would not speak to her all day till they went home.

Next day the princess, when they drove the geese out from the gloomy door, spoke to the horse's head; and Falada again replied that she was the queen's daughter, and that her mother, if she knew, would break her heart. Also when they reached the field, and Kürdchen wanted a lock of her hair while the princess was combing it, she again said

'Blow, blow, wind; take Kürdchen's hat in the air,
And do not let her catch it till I have done my hair.'

This happened several times, and at last Kürdchen went to the old king, and said: 'I cannot have this maiden to help me to watch the geese any longer.'

'Why, what has she done?' asked the king.

'Oh! she worries me the whole day, and every morning when we drive the herd out through the dark gate, she stops to talk to a horse's head which is nailed there, and says: "Falada, dost thou know me?" and the head answers, "You are a king's daughter, and if your mother knew, she would break her heart."'

And then Kürdchen told the king what happened in the field, and how the wind blew her hat away.

The king commanded Kürdchen to go again the next day, and as soon as morning came he placed himself near the dark gate, and heard the stranger speak to the head of Falada. After this, he hastened to the field, hid himself in the bushes, and as the maiden unfastened her hair, he saw with his own eyes that it was very beautiful, and glittered like gold. He heard the maiden call upon the wind to blow away Kürdchen's hat, and saw what trouble she had to catch it.

The king went back to the castle unnoticed, but in the

evening he sent for the strange maiden, and asked her the meaning of all he had seen.

'I dare not tell,' she replied, 'neither can I venture even to complain of my trouble to anyone: for I have sworn in the sight of heaven that I will divulge nothing, or else my life would have been forfeited!'

The king pressed her very much to tell him, but he could get nothing out of her. Then he said: 'Go and complain of your trouble to that iron closet;' and he went away.

Then she crept into the iron closet, and began to lament and weep, and said aloud: 'I am now forsaken by the whole world, and yet I am a king's daughter. A false lady's-maid got me into her power, made me take off my royal dress and give it to her, and has taken my place with my bridegroom, while I must serve as a tender of herds of geese. Oh, if my mother knew, she would break her heart!'

The king, who had been standing near the closed door listening, heard all she said; so he opened the door, and called her to come out. Her royal clothes were put on, and he was astonished to find her so beautiful.

The old king now sent for his son, and disclosed to him that he had a false bride, who was merely the lady's-maid, and that the maiden who had been obliged to keep the geese was the real bride.

The prince was rejoiced at seeing how beautiful the true bride was, and his friends and acquaintances were invited to a feast.

When the day arrived, the bridegroom placed the king's daughter on one side of himself, and the lady's-maid on the other; but the lady's-maid did not recognise the princess in her rich and glittering dress.

When the feast ended, and they were all in good spirits and merry, the old king asked the lady's-maid: 'What does she deserve who betrays her master?' And then he related the circumstances he had learnt from the princess. 'Pronounce her sentence,' cried the king, as he finished.

'She deserves nothing better,' said the false bride, 'than to be torn to pieces by wild horses, and rolled down a hill in a cask full of spikes till she is dead!'

'You have pronounced your own doom,' said the king; 'you are the guilty person.'

So the false bride was led away to punishment, and very soon after the young king married the right bride, and they both ruled the kingdom in peace and happiness.

THE YOUNG GIANT.

A COUNTRYMAN had a son who was no taller than his father's thumb, and year after year grew not a hair's breadth bigger. One day, when the father was going into the fields to plough, the little dwarf said: 'Father, I want to go with you; do take me.'

'No, no,' replied his father; 'you stay here. You would be useless yonder, and you would soon be lost.'

Then the little creature began to cry, and for the sake of peace the father put him in his pocket and carried him away. As soon as they reached the field, the father took him out of his pocket, and seated him in a fresh furrow.

While he sat there, who should be seen coming over the mountain but a great giant!

'See, there comes a big man,' cried the boy's father, who wanted to frighten the child, and prevent him from being troublesome; 'he is coming to fetch you away.'

The giant, however, with his long legs, had only two steps to take before he reached the furrow. He lifted the little dwarf with two fingers, looked at him earnestly, and then without a word carried the little creature away. The father, who stood by, could not utter a sound for fright, and thought that he had lost his child, and should never see him again.

The giant took the little dwarf to his home and gave him such wonderful food that he grew big and strong after the manner of giants. When two years had passed, the giant took the boy into the wood, and said to him: 'Cut a switch for yourself;' but the boy was so strong that he took a young tree and tore it up by the roots.

The giant was not, however, yet satisfied; he took the boy home for another two years, and at the end of that time his strength was so great that he was able to pull up an old oak-tree in the forest with ease.

But the giant considered he could make the boy still stronger, so he continued to feed him with giants' food, and at the end of another two years he led him to the forest and told him to break off a large bough for a switch.

The young giant, however, pulled up the thickest trunk of a tree that he could find, and it was to him a mere trifle.

'That will do,' said the giant, 'your education is finished,'

and he sent him back to the ploughed field from which he had taken him.

His father was behind the plough, and the young giant, going up to him, said: 'See, father, what a man your son has become.'

'No,' cried the father in terror, 'you are not my son! I don't want you! go away from me!'

'Indeed I am your son,' he replied. 'Let me do your work; I can plough as well as you, and better.'

'No, no!' he cried. 'You are not my son; you cannot plough; go away!'

He was, however, in such terror of the big creature that he removed his hands from the plough and stepped out of his way. Then the youngster took hold of the handles of the plough and pressed them so heavily that the shares sunk quite deeply in the ground. The father, seeing this, cried out: 'If you will plough, you need not use so much force; that will make the work bad.'

The young man, without listening to his father, unyoked the horses and drew the plough himself, saying, 'Go home, father, and tell my mother to get a plentiful dinner ready for me while I plough this piece of ground for you.'

The countryman went home and carried the message to his wife, while the youngster ploughed the whole field of quite two acres. Then he harnessed himself to the harrow and harrowed it, drawing two harrows at a time. When it was finished he went to the wood and pulled up two oak-trees, laid one on each shoulder, and suspended from one the harrows, and from the other the horses, and carried them home just as easily as if they had been a truss of straw.

As he entered the yard, his mother saw him, and cried: 'Who is this frightful giant coming in?'

'That is our son,' said the peasant.

'No, it cannot be,' she cried; 'our son is no more; we never had such a son as that; ours was a very little creature. Go away,' she cried as he approached; 'we don't want you here.'

The young man did not reply; he took the horses into the stable, gave them plenty of oats and hay, and made them quite comfortable. When this was done, he went in, seated himself on a bench, and said: 'Mother, is dinner nearly ready? I am very hungry.'

'Yes,' she replied, as she brought two immense dishes containing enough to have lasted his parents for a week, and

placed them before him. The youngster ate it all up and asked if she had any more.

'No,' she said; 'that is all I have.'

'That was only a taste,' he answered; 'I must have something more.'

She was afraid to refuse him, so she placed a large kettle full of soup on the fire, and when it was ready brought it in.

'Ah, this is better than nothing,' he said, as he broke some bread into it and quickly ate it all. Yet still his hunger was not appeased. By-and-by he said: 'Father, I can see very well that there is not enough at home to supply me with food; but if you will get me a bar of iron too strong for me to break over my knee, I will go away and travel about the world on my own account.'

The peasant was rejoiced at the thought of getting rid of him, so he harnessed two horses to a waggon and fetched from the smith a bar of iron so large and thick that his two horses could scarcely draw it. The young giant took hold of it, laid it across his knee, and, crash! it broke like a bean-prop in the middle, and he threw the pieces away.

Then the father harnessed four horses to the waggon and fetched another bar of iron stronger and thicker than before, and so heavy that it was as much as his four horses could do to draw it. But his son snapped it across his knee with very little trouble, and said: 'Father, this is of no use at all; you must harness your horses again and fetch me something better and stronger than this.'

So the father harnessed eight horses to his waggon this time, and even they could scarcely draw the immense bar of iron he brought. When the son took it in his hand he broke a piece off it, and said: 'Father, I see you cannot procure a bar of iron such as I want, so I will not stay here any longer.'

He went away, and after travelling some distance came to a town in which lived a blacksmith. He was a covetous man who gave nothing away, but kept all he earned to himself. The young man walked into the smithy and asked the smith if he wanted an assistant.

'Ah,' thought the smith, 'this is a strong, clever fellow, no doubt; he has an arm for the forge, and will earn his bread well.' So he asked, 'What wages do you require?'

'None,' replied the youngster; 'only every fortnight, when you pay the others, you must agree to let me strike you twice.'

The avaricious smith was quite overjoyed at the thought of saving his money, and as to the blows, why, he could easily

return them if that was all; his arm was very strong, and though the youngster was such a giant, he was not afraid of him.

On the following morning the new workman had to take his place at the forge, and when the master brought out the red-hot iron bar and placed it on the anvil, the young giant's first blow shivered the iron into a thousand pieces, and drove the anvil so deep into the ground that it could not be got out again.

The smith was terribly angry, and exclaimed, 'This won't suit me, young man; such blows as that do more harm than good, so take yourself off: and what am I to pay you?'

'I don't ask for payment; all I want is to give you one tap, that's all;' and, lifting his foot, he gave him a kick that sent him flying over three haystacks. Then he picked out the strongest iron bar he could find for a walking stick, and went on his way.

After travelling some distance he came to a farm, and asked the bailiff if he wanted a head-man amongst his labourers.

'Well, yes, I do,' he replied; 'and as you seem likely to suit me, I may as well engage you; but what do you ask a year?'

He replied that he did not care for wages, but only to be able by right to give his master three hard knocks at the end of the year; and he must promise him this. The bailiff readily agreed to this proposal, for he also was avaricious.

The following morning the men had to rise early to fetch timber from the forest, but the stranger lay still in bed. One of the men called to him, 'It is time to get up; we are going to the forest, and you must come with us.'

'Be off!' he cried quite roughly; 'I shall be there as soon as you.' Then one of them went to the master and told him that the new man was in bed, and would not get up to go with them to the forest.

'Go and tell him I say he is to get up directly and harness the horses to the waggons.' But it was all useless: the great fellow wouldn't move, and told them to go by themselves. He remained in bed after they were gone for two hours, and then got up, went into the garden, picked two dishes full of peas and boiled them into soup, and ate them for his breakfast quite contentedly.

When he had finished, he harnessed the horses and drove them to the forest. Not far from the spot where the forest lay was a narrow lane. Through this lane he led his horses, and

when they reached the other end he made them stand still, while he went back, broke down great boughs and stems of trees, and laid them across the lane, forming barriers over which neither horses nor waggons could pass.

When he reached the forest, the other labourers were just going home with their loaded waggons. He said to them: 'Go home, all of you, as fast as you please; I shall be there as soon as you are.' Then, without going farther, he tore up two full-grown trees from the ground, threw them on his waggon, and turned to go home.

On arriving at the end of the lane, he found the others standing there with their waggons, not knowing how to get over the barriers thrown across the road. 'See,' cried he, 'you might as well have stayed and had another hour's sleep, for I shall be at home after all as quickly as you.' Then, as his own horses could not get over the barriers, he unharnessed them, placed them on the top of the trees which lay on the waggon, and, taking hold of the shafts himself, drew the whole as if it had been laden with feathers. Then he called out to the men: 'You see, I shall be home first, after all,' and he was right, for they had to set to work to clear the lane of the obstruction before they could lead their horses through it. On reaching the farmyard, he took one of the trees in his hand, and, showing it to the bailiff, said: 'Is not that a beautiful flagstaff?'

The bailiff said afterwards to his wife: 'That is a clever fellow; after all, if he does sleep longer than the others, he gets back before them.'

The young giant served at the farmyard for a year, and when the other labourers went up for their wages he said it was also time for him to take his. The bailiff by this time had found out the young man's strength, and he was rather afraid of a blow from such a hand, and he knew he dared not quarrel with him. So he tried to get off his bargain, and even offered to make the young man bailiff instead of himself, or to give him anything he asked for, but all to no purpose. Then the bailiff begged for a fortnight's respite, that he might think the matter over, and the young giant promised that the fortnight he should have.

Then the bailiff assembled all his farm people and neighbours, and asked for their advice. The clerks considered for a long time, and then they said that, with a labourer on the estate who with one blow could crush them as easily as a man would crush a gnat, no man's life was in safety. So they

decided at last that he should be sent to clean out a dry well, and while he was down they were to throw millstones upon his head, that he might never again see daylight. This counsel pleased the bailiff, and he sent the young man down into the well to clean it.

While he was down, they rolled great stones upon him, and thought that he must be crushed to death; but he cried out: 'Drive those hens away; they are scratching in the sand by the well, and throwing it into my eyes, so that I cannot see what I am doing.'

'Hish! hish!' cried the bailiff, as if he were driving away the hens.

And presently, having finished his work, the young giant climbed up, and said: 'See what a handsome necklace I have got!' and there was one of the millstones hanging on his neck.

After this he again asked if he might take his wages, but the bailiff begged for another fortnight to consider, and assembled once more his clerks and people for their advice. So they proposed that he should send the young man to the enchanted mill, to grind corn in the night, for no man who went there ever lived to come out again. The advice pleased the bailiff; he sent for the young giant, and told him to carry eight sacks of corn to the mill to be ground during that day, as the flour was wanted greatly.

Away went the young man to the barn, put two sacks in his right pocket, two in his left, and four he placed in his wallet, half in front and half behind, and thus laden walked off to the enchanted mill.

'You must grind them all before dark,' said the miller; 'for the mill is enchanted, and no man ever comes out alive who stays there all night.'

'Oh, that doesn't matter,' said the youngster; 'you make yourself quite comfortable and go to sleep.'

'Ah,' thought the bailiff, 'he will never be able to grind all that corn before dark, so there is an end of him.'

Away went the giant to the mill, shook out the corn into the mill-troughs, and when the clock struck eleven he went into one of the rooms of the mill, and seated himself on a bench. After he had been seated a little while, the door opened, and he saw a large table come in all by itself, and on it were placed bread, wine, and many dishes of good things, but no one could be seen carrying them. He drew his stool back a little, and watched till at last he saw fingers, and then

hands holding knives and forks, and laying pieces on the plates, but still he saw no one.

At last, as he felt hungry, and the supper looked very tempting, he seated himself at the table, and ate, and enjoyed himself very much. As soon as he had finished, and the other plates and dishes were also empty, all at once the lights were blown out with a puff which he heard quite plainly, and in the darkness he suddenly felt something like a blow on the face.

'Oh,' cried he, 'if they do that again I shall give it them back!'

And when a second blow came, he returned it quickly, and then a third, and so they kept on the whole night; for every blow from the unseen hands he struck out right and left, and was not idle till the day broke, and then all became suddenly still.

When the miller rose in the morning he went in to the mill, and was quite surprised to see the young man still living.

'Oh,' he said, 'I have had a good supper, and some terribly hard blows, but I have given them back without mercy.'

On hearing this, the miller was overjoyed, for the mill was now freed from enchantment, and he offered him a large amount of money as a reward.

But he refused, saying: 'I do not want money; I have enough.'

Then the young giant took the sacks of flour on his back, and returned to the farm, and told the bailiff that now the matter was all settled he would have the stipulated wages. When the bailiff heard this he was in a terrible fright, and knew not what to do. He walked up and down the room for some time, while the drops of perspiration stood on his forehead from terror. Presently he opened the window that the fresh air might blow upon him, and before he was aware the young giant was behind him, and with one kick sent him through the window flying in the air still higher and higher, till at last he was out of sight.

The young man then turned to the bailiff's wife, and said: 'The second blow must be for you, as your husband does not return.'

'No, no,' she cried, 'it is impossible! I could not bear it.'

And she ran to the open window; for the perspiration also stood on her forehead in great drops from fear.

He was not, however, to be deterred from his purpose. With one kick, though more gentle, he sent her flying through the

air after her husband, and, as she was lighter, she rose higher. Her husband saw her, and called to her to come to him ; but, as she could not, she kept begging him to come to her. All to no purpose. They remained floating in the air unable to reach each other, and, for aught I know, they may be floating there still.

As for the young giant, he took up his iron walking-stick, and went on his way.

THE ELVES.

THERE was once a rich king who had three daughters that went every day to walk in the palace garden. The king was very fond of all kinds of fine trees, and of one of these he was so fond that if anyone plucked an apple from it he wished him a hundred fathoms underground. Now, when it was harvest the apples of this tree were all as red as blood. The three daughters went every day under the tree to see if the wind had blown any apples down, but they found none, though the tree was so full of them that it was almost breaking, and the branches hung down to the ground. Then the youngest of the princesses desired one very much, and said to her sisters, 'Our father, who loves us so much, would not wish us underground ; I think he would only do that to strangers.'

And the child plucked a very large apple, and ran to her sisters, and said, 'Just taste, my dear sisters ; I have never in my life tasted so fine a one.' The two other sisters tasted the apple, and then all three sank into the ground, where no cock crows.

Now, when it was mid-day the king wished to call them to dinner, but they were not to be found. He sought them everywhere in the castle and in the garden, but he could not find them. He was much troubled, and made known to the whole country that whoever brought his daughters back should have one of them for his wife. Many young people went to seek for them about the country—more than can be counted, for everyone loved the three children, because they were friendly to all and very beautiful. Three young huntsmen also went, and when they had travelled for eight days they came to a large castle in which were beautiful rooms. In one room was

a table covered with delicate food, so warm that the dishes still smoked; in the whole castle no man was to be seen or heard. They waited half a day, and the food still remained warm; at last they were so hungry that they sat down and ate, and agreed that they would stay and live at the castle; that they should draw lots for one to remain in it, and the other two go and seek for the king's daughter. This they did, and the lot fell on the eldest; the next day the two youngest sons went out, while the eldest stayed in the castle. At mid-day a little mannikin came and asked for a bit of bread. The hunter took the bread which he had found and cut off a round, and was about to give it to him, when, as he was handing it to him, the mannikin let it fall and asked him to be good enough to give him the piece again. As he was going to do so and stooped, the mannikin took a stick, seized him by the hair, and gave him a dozen blows. The next day, when the second brother stayed at home, he fared no better. When the two others came home in the evening, the eldest asked, 'Well, how have you got on?'

'Oh, very badly!'

Then they complained together, but said nothing to the youngest, for they did not care for him, and called him stupid Hans, because he did not really belong to the forest. On the third day the youngest stayed behind; then came the little mannikin again and asked for a piece of bread, and as it was being handed to him he let it fall, and begged Hans to be good enough to hand him the piece again. But he said to the little mannikin, 'What! can you not pick it up yourself? If you will not take so much trouble for your daily bread, you are not worthy of what you eat.' Then the mannikin became very angry, and said that he must do it; but Hans would not, and took the dear little mannikin up and beat him thoroughly.

The mannikin screamed very much, and said, 'Stop! stop! and let me go, and then I will tell you where the king's daughters are.'

When Hans heard that he left off beating him, and the mannikin told him that he was an earth mannikin, and that there were more than a thousand of them; that if he would go with him he would show him where the king's daughters were. Then he showed him a deep well, but there was no water in it. The mannikin told him that he knew his companions did not intend to deal honourably with him, therefore if he wished to release the princesses he must do it alone. The two other brothers would willingly recover the king's daughters, but they would not take

any trouble or endure danger. Hans was to take a great basket, and seat himself in it with his knife and a bell, and be let down. There were below three rooms, in each of which sat a princess, who had a dragon with many heads to look after. He must cut off the heads of these dragons. When the elf had said this he disappeared. When it was evening the two others returned, and asked him how he had got on, and he said, 'Very well, so far. He had seen no one until mid-day, when a mannikin came and asked for a bit of bread; as he gave it him the mannikin had let it fall, and said he must pick it up; but, as he would not do it, the mannikin had been angry and had done what he ought not, so he beat him; and then the mannikin said where the king's daughters were.' Then they were so much annoyed that they turned yellow and green.

The next morning they went together to the well, and cast lots for who was to sit in the basket first, and the lot fell on the eldest; he was to sit in, and take the bell. 'If I ring,' he said, 'you must pull me up quickly.' When he had gone down a little he rang, and was brought up; then the second sat in, and did just the same. Now it came to the turn of the youngest, who let himself be lowered quite down. When he got out of the basket he took his hunting-knife and went and stood outside the first door, where he heard the dragon snoring loudly. He opened the door slowly, and there sat one of the princesses, who had on her knee nine dragon heads, and was combing them. He took his knife and cut at them, and the nine heads fell off. The princess started up and fell on his neck, praised and kissed him repeatedly, and took her stomacher, which was of red gold, and hung it round his neck. Then he went to the second princess, who had a dragon with seven heads to comb, and delivered her; and next to the youngest, who had a dragon with four heads. They all rejoiced greatly, and embraced and kissed him without stopping, and he rang so loudly that those above heard it. He put the princesses one after the other into the basket, and had them all drawn up; but when it came to his own turn he remembered the words of the elf, 'that his companions did not mean well to him,' so he put a great stone into the basket, and when it was about half-way up his false brothers cut the ropes, so that the basket, with the stone, fell to the ground. They, thinking he was dead, ran away with the three princesses, and made them promise that they would tell their father that it was they who had delivered them;

then they went to the king, and each demanded a princess in marriage.

In the meantime the youngest huntsman went quite sadly through the three rooms, thinking that he must die here, when he saw a flute hanging on the wall. Then he said, 'Why do you hang there? One cannot be merry here.' He looked on the dragon's head, and said, 'You cannot help me now.' And he walked up and down so often that the ground became quite smooth. But at last other thoughts occurred to him; he took down the flute and played a few notes, and at once very many elves came; at every note he sounded one more appeared. Then he played until the room was quite full. They all asked him what he wanted; he said he wished to be above ground, in the light of day. Then they seized him by every hair that he had on his head and flew up to the earth. When he was up he went at once to the king's palace, just as the wedding of one of the princesses was to take place, and to the room where the king was with his three daughters. As soon as the princesses saw him they fainted. The king was angry, and ordered him to prison, as he thought he must have done his children some harm. But when the princesses were come to themselves, they begged much that the king would set him free. The king asked why, and they answered that they must not tell; so the father said that they should tell it to the stove. Then he went and listened at the door and heard all. He caused the two eldest brothers to be hung, and to the youngest he gave his youngest daughter; and then he put on a pair of glass slippers, and knocked them on a stone, and they said, 'Klink,' and were broken.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN.

A MERCHANT had two children, a boy and a girl, who were both so very young that they could not run alone. About this time the merchant sent two richly-laden ships to sea, which contained the whole of his possessions, and while he was expecting to receive a large amount of profits, news came that his ships

had both been wrecked. Thus, instead of being a rich man, he was a poor one, for he had nothing left but one field.

One day, when he wished to divert his thoughts from his misfortunes, he went out to walk in his field. As he wandered along, he saw a dark little man standing near him, who asked him what made him so sad. 'If you could help me,' replied the merchant, 'I might be inclined to tell you.'

'Who knows, perhaps I may,' replied the little man.

Then the merchant described the great loss he had sustained in the wreck of his two ships, adding, 'All my possessions are lying at the bottom of the sea.'

'Do not make yourself unhappy,' replied the dark man. 'If you will promise that whatever comes first to meet you on your return home, and rubs itself against your knees, shall be brought to this spot in twelve years, I will give you as much gold as you like.'

'Well,' thought he, 'my dog is the only one who can do that;' but he thought not of his children.

So he promised and gave the little strange man a written agreement, sealed with his own seal, and returned home. As he came into the house, his little son was so delighted that he let go the chair by which he was holding, and toddling towards him caught him by the knees. In a moment the father with terror remembered his promise, and knew now what his written agreement would cost him.

But on finding that his chests and coffers were still empty, he thought after all it might only be a joke on the part of the little man. A month, however, passed, and one day, when he again went out to try and dissipate the old sad thoughts about money, he saw lying on the barn-floor a large heap of gold. Now he was again all right, and able to trade so well with the money that he became after a time a richer merchant than before.

In the meantime the boy grew tall as well as clever and good; but when the end of the twelve years approached, the merchant became so full of care that it showed itself on his countenance.

One day his little son asked him what was the cause of his being so sad. At first his father would not tell him, but day after day he so persisted in his questions, that at length he told him what he had done.

'I wrote down my promise and sealed it,' he said, 'and, therefore, when the twelve years are at an end I shall lose you.'

'Oh, father,' said the boy, 'do not allow yourself to be uneasy; it will be all right. The black man will have no power over me.'

The boy, however, went to a clergyman, and asked him for his blessing, and when the hour came the father and son went to the field, and stood at the spot where the promise had been made. Then the boy made a cross on the ground, placed his father and himself on it, and waited.

Presently the little black man appeared, and said to the father: 'Have you brought me what you promised?' but he did not reply.

Then said the son: 'What do you want here?'

The dark man replied: 'I am here to speak to your father, not to you.'

'You have betrayed and misled my father!' answered the boy fearlessly; 'give up the bond!'

'No,' he replied, 'I will not give up my right!'

They talked together for a long time, and at last it was arranged that the son, as he did not belong to the enemy, and yet did not any longer belong to his father, should place himself in a little ship, and that his father should with his own foot push it away, that the boy might be given up to the water.

Then he took leave of his father, and stepped into the ship; his father pushed it off with his foot, when it turned over, so that the keel was uppermost, and the father, believing that his son was lost, went home and mourned for him deeply.

The little ship, however, did not sink, but righted itself again, and the boy clung to it closely.

At length it reached an unknown shore, and immediately became fast. The youth stepped out on the land, and seeing before him a beautiful castle, he walked up to it. But the moment he entered he was under a sorcerer's power. He went, however, from room to room, and found them all empty, except the last, in which lay a snake coiled round in rings on the floor.

The snake, however, was a bewitched maiden, who was delighted when she saw him, and said: 'Are you come, my deliverer? I have waited for you for twelve years, and you must deliver this kingdom, which is bewitched!'

'How can I do so?' he asked.

She replied, 'To-night there will come here twelve dark men bearing chains and fetters, who will ask you what you are doing here. Then must you be silent, and not answer a word

in reply, let them do what they will to you. They will beat and torment you dreadfully; but whatever happens, do not speak, and at twelve o'clock they will be obliged to go away. To-morrow night another twelve men will come, and on the third night twenty-four. These last will cut off your head; but at twelve o'clock, if you have not spoken a word during the three nights, their power is over, and I am free. Then I shall be able to restore you to life, for I have a bottle of water which can cure everything, and if I touch you with this you will soon be well.'

Then said he: 'I am quite willing to release you.'

It all happened exactly as she had said. The dark men came, but they could not make him speak a word, and so on the third night the snake was changed to a beautiful princess. The moment she was free, she opened the bottle of wonderful water, and, after anointing the youth with it, he was restored to life. There was then great joy over the whole castle.

They were soon after married, and the husband of the princess became king of the golden mountain.

Eight years passed in great happiness, and the young queen had one little son; when her husband began to think of his father, and wished to go home and see him.

The queen, however, would not let him leave her, and said: 'I am sure that some misfortune will happen to me if you do;' but he allowed her no rest, till she at last consented.

When they parted she gave him a wishing-ring, and said: 'Take that ring, and put it on your finger, and whenever you desire to change your place, you have only to touch it and wish, and you are there; but promise me that you will not use it to desire me away from here to your father's house.'

He promised what she asked, placed the ring on his finger, and wished himself at the town where his father lived. Immediately he found himself there; but when he reached the gates, the sentinels would not let him pass, for he still wore his splendid and kingly robes.

Then he went to a hill close by, where a shepherd was keeping his sheep, changed clothes with him, and, putting on the shepherd's coat, walked into the town unnoticed.

When he appeared before his father, he did not recognise him at all; he could not believe he could be his son, and said he had had a son, but he was dead. Still, seeing that the poor shepherd looked tired and hungry, he brought him something to eat.

Then the shepherd said to his parents: 'I am in very truth

your son. Is there not any mark on my body by which you might know me?'

'Yes,' cried his mother, 'our son had a curious raspberry mark under his right arm.'

Instantly he turned up the sleeve of his shirt, and there was the mark of the raspberry. So they could no longer doubt that he was their son.

Thereupon he told them that he was now king of the golden mountain, and that a princess was his wife, and that he had a little son nearly seven years old. But his father remarked, 'Grand kings do not wear ragged clothes and a shepherd's coat.'

Upon this the son became very angry, and, quite forgetting his promise to his wife, turned the ring on his finger, and wished both the queen and her son to be present.

In a moment they were there; but the queen wept, and complained, and said, as he had broken his word, that misfortune would be the consequence.

'I did it inadvertently,' he said, 'and not with any wrong intention,' and tried so much to persuade her to forgive him, that at last she made it appear that she did so, but she was still angry in her heart.

He led her out through the town to the field, and showed her where the little ship had been upset; and presently he said, 'I am tired now; sit down for a little while, and let me lay my head in your lap and sleep.' She seated herself, and, lying down, he placed his head in her lap, and was soon asleep.

While he slept, she first slipped the ring off his finger and placed it on her own, then she quietly drew away her foot that was under him and left only her slipper, took her child by the arm, and wished herself and her boy back in her kingdom.

When he awoke, he found himself quite forsaken, his wife and child gone, the ring taken from his finger, and only the slipper left as a token. 'I cannot go home to my parents after this,' he said to himself; 'they will say truly that I am a sorcerer. No; I must try and get back to my kingdom.'

He travelled on after this for a long time, till he came to a mountain, before which stood three giants, contending about the division of their father's property.

As soon as he appeared, they called to him, and said that little men were often very clever, and that they would leave it to him to divide their inheritance fairly.

It consisted of a sword, which when one took it in his hand,

and said, 'All heads down but mine,' all the heads would lie on the ground. Secondly of a cloak, which made everyone who wore it invisible; and thirdly of a pair of boots—those who wore them had only to wish themselves in any particular spot, and they would be there immediately.

Then the king said, 'Give me the three things that I may see if they are in good condition!'

They gave him the cloak, and the instant he put it on he was invisible, and changed into a fly. He quickly resumed his own shape, and said, 'The cloak is good; now give me the sword.'

'No,' they replied, 'we cannot give you that; for if you said, "Heads down, all but mine," you would have power over us, for your head would be the only one erect.' They gave it to him at last on condition that he would try it on a tree.

He did so, and the sword cut the trunk of the tree in two, as if it had been a stalk of straw. Then he wanted the boots, but they again refused, 'Because,' they said, 'if you put them on, and should wish yourself over this mountain, we should be down here, and have nothing.'

But he told them he would not, so they let him try the boots; but the moment he had them on he forgot everything but his wife and child, and said to himself, 'Oh, if I were only on the golden mountain!' In a moment he had vanished from the eyes of the giants, and with him all their shares of the inheritance.

As soon as he arrived at the castle, he heard sounds of merry-making, the flute and violin playing joyous music, and he was told that his wife was celebrating her marriage with another. 'The false one!' he exclaimed angrily; 'she has betrayed and forsaken me while I slept.' He threw on his cloak, and went into the castle invisible.

When he entered the dancing-saloon, he saw a table richly spread for the feast, and the guests eating, drinking, laughing, and joking. His wife sat among them, splendidly dressed, on a royal seat, and with a crown of gold on her head.

He placed himself behind her, but no one saw him, and presently, when a piece of cake or a glass of wine was placed before her, he took the cake from her plate and drank the wine from her glass. The company were always giving her some of the rich things on the table; but it was useless: her plate and her glass always vanished immediately.

At last she became alarmed, rose up, and went to her own chamber, and thither her husband followed. She wept and

said, 'What can it be? am I not yet delivered from the wizard's spell?'

He struck her in the face, invisible as he was, and said, in a deep tone of voice, 'Thou wilt never be free, thou betrayer; the spell is over thee still.' Then he assumed his own shape, went into the saloon, and cried, 'The marriage is at an end; the real king has returned.' The kings, princes, and councillors there assembled laughed and defied him; but he merely answered them shortly, in a few words, 'Will you leave this house or not?'

Instead of going, they crowded round him, and tried to seize him; but he drew his sword, and said, 'All heads down but mine.' In a moment all the heads were rolling on the ground and he was alone, master of the castle, and king of the golden mountain.

THE RAVEN.

THERE lived once a queen who had a little daughter still so young that she had to be carried in arms. One day the child was naughty, and do what the mother might she could not make her quiet.

At last she became impatient, and just as a raven flew over the castle she opened the window, and cried, 'I wish you were a raven, and would fly away; then I should have peace.'

No sooner had she uttered the words than her child became a raven, and flew away from its mother's arms through the window to a dark wood, and remained there a long time, during which the parents heard nothing of her.

But one day a man travelling through the wood heard a voice calling him, and on going to the place from whence it came he saw a raven on a tree. 'I am a king's daughter by birth,' said the raven, as he came near, 'and have been changed by magic; but it is in your power to let me free.'

'What am I to do?' he asked.

'Go farther into the forest,' she replied, 'and there you will see a tiny house, in which lives an old woman who will offer you something to eat and drink, but you must not take anything; if you do you will fall into a deep sleep, and be unable

to set me at liberty. In the garden behind the house is a large tanyard, and there you must stand and wait for me. I shall come to you at two o'clock each day, for three days, and each time in a carriage—on the first day drawn by four white horses, on the second by four brown horses, and the third time four black horses. If, however, you should not be awake, but sleeping, then I shall not be free.' The man promised to do all she desired, but the raven said, 'Ah, I know already that you will not deliver me; you are sure to take something the old woman offers you.' The man promised again that he would not touch anything, either to eat or to drink.

As he approached the house the woman came out to him, and said, 'Poor man, you seem tired out; but come in and refresh yourself, and have something to eat and drink.'

'No,' he replied; 'I do not want anything.'

But she gave him no peace till he came in, and then she said, 'If you won't eat, perhaps you will just drink a little from this glass; once is nothing at all.'

At last he allowed himself to be persuaded, and drank from the glass. Next day at noon he went out to wait for the raven till two o'clock at the tanyard. But while he stood there a feeling of fatigue came upon him that he could not overcome. 'I must lie down,' he said, 'but I will not sleep.'

No sooner, however, had he stretched himself on the ground than his eyes closed involuntarily, and presently he slept so soundly that nothing on earth could awake him.

At two o'clock came the raven in her carriage, drawn by four white horses; but she was already full of grief, and said, 'Ah, I know he will be asleep.'

When she entered the garden, there he lay in a deep sleep by the tanyard. She descended from the carriage, went to him, shook him, and tried all she could to wake him, but it was quite useless.

The next day, at noon, the old woman came again, and brought him meat and drink. He refused to take any, but she would not leave him alone; she did and said all she could to persuade him, and at last he drank a second time from her glass. At the hour of two he went out again to stand by the tanyard, for he wanted to keep awake for the raven. But he found himself again so overcome with fatigue that his limbs would not support him; he could not help himself, but was obliged to lie down, and soon fell fast asleep.

In the meantime the raven drove up in a carriage, drawn by four brown horses, but she was still sorrowful. 'I know he

sleeps,' she said; and so she found him lying in a deep sleep, from which nothing could awake him.

The next day the old woman said to him, 'If you do not eat or drink you will die.'

He replied, 'I will not, and I dare not eat or drink.'

However, she brought a dish with something very nice on it, and a glass of wine, and when the smell reached him he could withstand it no longer, and ate a good meal. When the time came for him to go out to the tanyard and wait, he was as tired as on the previous day, and, laying himself down, slept as soundly as if he had been a stone. At two o'clock came the raven again, this time with four black horses, and the carriage and all the harness were black also. She was, however, already sorrowful, and said, 'I know that he sleeps, and cannot set me free.' And she found her fears verified; there he lay, fast asleep. She shook him, and called to him, but he did not awake.

Then she placed a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a bottle of wine by his side, from which he could take what he liked. She also took a gold ring from her finger, on which her name was engraven, and placed it on his. And, last of all, she laid a letter on the ground, in which she told him what she had given him, and that it would never be finished; she added, 'I see that you cannot release me here, but come to the golden castle of Stromberg, for I know that my freedom can only be obtained through you.' After this, she seated herself in her carriage and drove away to the golden castle of Stromberg.

When the man awoke, and found that he had been sleeping, he was deeply grieved, and said, 'Certainly now she has passed, and I have not set her free.' Then his eyes fell on the things that lay near him, and he took up and read the letter, which stated what she expected him to do.

He rose and went away, wishing to go to the golden castle, but the way was unknown to him. The first thing, however, was to get out of the wood; but this was not easy, for after wandering for fourteen days he could find no outlet. One evening he felt so tired that he laid himself down in the copse and slept. Another day he went on farther, and again lay down to rest, but he heard such crying and howling this time that he could not sleep.

After awhile he saw the reflection of light, and, going towards it, he came in front of a house that appeared small, because before it stood a great giant. Then thought he to

himself, 'If I go in and the giant gets a glimpse of me, my life may not be safe.' However, he did venture to show himself.

As soon as the giant saw him he said, 'It is well that you have come. I have eaten nothing for some time, and I will at once swallow you for my supper!'

'Leave my life alone,' said the man. 'I should not willingly allow myself to be swallowed, but if you are hungry I have quite enough with me to satisfy your appetite.'

'If that is true,' replied the giant, 'I will leave you in peace; I don't want to eat you if there is enough without it.'

So they went in and seated themselves at a table, and the man brought out bread and meat and wine.

'This pleases me well,' said the giant, and ate away to his heart's content.

After he had finished the man said to him, 'Where is the golden castle of Stromberg?'

The giant replied, 'I will fetch my map, in which all the towns, villages, and houses are easily found.' He brought the map from another room, and searched for the castle, but it was not there. 'This won't do,' said he. 'However, there is a larger map in that cupboard.' He brought out this map also, but it was as useless as the other—the castle was not mentioned.

After this the man wished to go, but the giant begged him to stay for a day or two longer, till his brother came home, who, he said, was gone out to fetch provisions. As soon as the brother returned, the man asked after the golden castle of Stromberg.

'After I have eaten my supper,' he replied, 'then I will look in the map.'

As soon as he had finished they went with him into his room, and searched on his map, but it could not be found even there. He then brought out another very old map, and would not give up the search, till at last they found the golden castle of Stromberg, but it was many thousand miles away.

'How shall I ever get there?' asked the man.

'Well,' said the giant, 'I have two hours to spare, and will carry you, if you like, to the neighbourhood of the castle; but after that I must return and look after my child.'

The man was glad of the help, and the giant took him up, and carried him in the two hours to a spot that was not a hundred leagues from the castle, and said, 'The rest of the way you can easily find for yourself.'

He turned away without waiting for thanks, and the man went forward day and night, till at last he came to the golden castle of Stromberg. It stood on a mountain of glass, and as he was looking at it he saw the enchanted king's daughter riding in her carriage to the castle, which she entered. He was delighted when he saw her, and began eagerly to climb the mountain; but he only went a few steps and then slid backwards, for the glass was so slippery.

When he found that it was impossible for him to reach the castle, he felt quite unhappy, and at last said to himself, 'I will remain down here and wait for her.' He built himself a little hut, in which he lived for a whole year, and every day saw the enchanted princess drive round the mountain, but could not get near her.

One day he saw outside his hut three robbers who were fighting with each other, and he cried out, 'Heaven defend us!' They stopped for a moment at the cry, but, seeing no one, they returned to the fight in the most terrible manner. Then cried he a second time, 'Heaven defend us!' They heard the sound again; but after looking about in every direction, and seeing no one, continued their furious battle. Then he called a third time, and thought, 'I must see what these three men are about.' So he went and asked them why they were fighting with each other.

Said one: 'I have found a stick, which when you knock with it at any door it will instantly fly open.' Another said he had in his possession a cloak which would make anyone who wore it invisible. A third had a horse on which a man could ride over every sort of ground, even over the glass mountain. And now, as they could not agree, they scarcely knew what to do—whether to continue in partnership or to separate.

Then said the man: 'I will make an exchange with you for these three things. I have not money to buy them, but what I have is still more valuable. However, before I make the exchange, I should like to try whether what you have said of them is true.'

They allowed him, as he wished, to mount the horse, gave him the stick in his hand, and threw the cloak over him.

Immediately he became invisible, and, giving each of them a sharp cut with the stick, said, 'You dolts, you have just got what you deserve, and I hope you are contented.' Then he rode quickly up the glass mountain and arrived at the castle. The door was locked, but he struck it with the stick and it flew open instantly.

He entered, and went up the steps into the saloon, and there sat the princess with a golden cup of wine before her. She could not see him, for he still wore the invisible cloak. But he went near to her, and taking the ring which she had given him from his finger, threw it into the cup, where it clinked against the side.

'That is my ring!' she cried; 'and the man to whom I gave it must be here, and will be able to break the enchanter's spell.'

She rose as she spoke, and went all over the castle, but could find no one. Meanwhile he had gone out and seated himself on the horse, and as she approached the open door he threw off the cloak; then she saw him, and screamed out for joy. He alighted from his horse, took the king's daughter in his arms, and she kissed him, and said, 'Now you have broken the spell, and I am free, and to-morrow morning we will celebrate our marriage.'

THE PEASANT'S CLEVER DAUGHTER.

THERE was once a poor peasant who had a small house, but no land. He had an only daughter, and she said one day: 'We should ask the king for a little piece of waste land.'

When the king heard how poor they were, he presented the peasant with a piece of ground. The father and daughter dug it up carefully, for they wished to sow a little corn and make the place fruitful. But while they were digging the earth they found a mortar of pure gold. On seeing it the father took it up eagerly, and said to his daughter, 'As the king has been so kind as to give us the field, we ought to send him this mortar.'

But the maiden was not willing to do so. 'Father,' she said, 'if we have the mortar without having the pestle as well, we shall have to find the pestle; therefore we had better keep silent.'

He would not listen, however, to her advice, but took up the mortar, carried it to the king, told him where he had found it, and asked if he would accept it as a token of his respect and gratitude. The king took the mortar, and asked if he had not found more. The peasant replied truthfully, 'No.' But he was not believed. 'I must have the pestle also,' said the king

In vain the peasant assured the king that he had not found it; it was as if he spoke to the winds, and at last the poor honest fellow was placed in confinement, and told that he must remain there till he gave up the pestle. The servants were told to take him bread and water every day, which were all the provisions allowed to prisoners; but he would neither eat nor drink, and was constantly crying out, 'Oh that I had listened to my daughter! oh that I had listened to my daughter!'

Then the servants went to the king and told him what the prisoner was always crying out, and that he would neither eat nor drink. So the king sent for him, and asked him what his daughter had said which he wished he had listened to.

'She prophesied,' he replied, 'that if I took the mortar to the king we should have to get the pestle.'

'Have you such a clever daughter?' said the king. 'Then send for her at once, that I may see her.'

So the peasant's daughter was obliged to come, and the king said: 'People tell me that you are very clever; I will give you a riddle to guess, and if you solve it you shall be my wife.'

Then she said at once that she would try. So the king said, 'Come to me neither clothed nor naked, neither riding nor walking, neither on the road nor on the path; and if you can do all this I will marry you.'

The maiden immediately went home, quickly stripped herself, got a large hank of yarn, placed herself in it, and wound it round and round her body till she was quite covered. Then a neighbour, for a small payment, lent her an ass, and she tied the end of the yarn to the ass's tail, so that he dragged her along behind him; therefore she neither rode nor drove. The ass also walked so that she was dragged along in a carriage-wheel rut, and only her great toe touched the ground, and thus she appeared before the king—neither clothed nor naked, neither riding, walking, nor driving, and neither on the road nor on the path.

When the king saw her he said she had guessed the riddle, and fulfilled the contract, and therefore he was ready to make her his wife. Her father was immediately released from confinement, and the king married his daughter, and bestowed upon them all the necessary kingly honours.

Some years passed, and one day the king went out on the parade. It happened just then that a number of peasants, who sold wood, stood with their waggons before the castle. To some of the waggons oxen were harnessed, and to others

horses; among them was a peasant who had two horses and a young foal, and while they stood there the foal ran away and laid itself down between two oxen who were yoked in the waggon of another peasant. On this a quarrel arose among the peasants. The owner of the oxen said the foal belonged to one of his beasts, and the peasant declared it was the foal of one of his horses, and that it was his. The noise and the fighting became at last so great that the matter was brought before the king, and he gave as his decision that where the foal was found lying there it should remain; and as that was with the oxen, therefore to the owner of the oxen the foal belonged, and might be taken by him. The other went home mourning and lamenting over the loss of his foal. Now, he had heard that the queen was very kind and gracious, because she had been herself a peasant. So he went to her and begged her to help him to get back his foal. She readily agreed to do so, on condition that he would promise not to betray her. 'To-morrow morning, early,' she said, 'when the king goes on the parade, place yourself in the road by which he passes. Take with you a fishing-rod, and act as if you were fishing in the ditch, which will be dry; but never mind, pull in your line, and jerk it up and down just as if you had a bite; and if the king or anyone asks you what you are doing, give the answer that I will tell you.'

So the next day the peasant seated himself by the road, and began to fish in a dry ditch. As soon as the king came by he saw him, and sent his attendants to ask the foolish man what he was about. The peasant, on being questioned by the attendant as to what he was doing, replied, 'I am fishing.'

'Fishing!' he replied; 'why, you will get none if you fish for a year; there is no water.'

'Ah,' said the peasant, 'it is quite as easy for me to get fish without water as for an ox to be the parent of a horse's foal.'

The attendant went back with this answer to the king. The king desired the peasant to be brought before him, and told him he was quite sure that he could not have thought of such an answer himself, and desired him instantly to tell him from whom he had it.

But the peasant refused to admit that the answer was not his own; and he was therefore taken away from the king's presence and beaten, and ill-treated, and bound in fetters, till at last he was obliged to disclose that the queen had told him what to say and do.

As soon as the king returned home, he went to his wife in

great anger, and said: 'You have been false to me, and have been plotting with a peasant to insult me; now go home to where you came from—to your peasant's home; you shall not be my wife any longer.'

He told her, however, to take with her from the castle whatever she loved best in the world, and that should be her farewell gift from him.

'Dear husband,' she replied, 'if you wish it, I will do so.'

Then she threw her arms round his neck, kissed him, and said she was ready to wish him good-bye, if he would take one parting cup with her. Some wine, into which she had poured a sleeping-draught, was brought, and the king drank a large cupful off at once. In a few minutes he sank into a deep sleep, and then the queen, after covering him with a beautiful white linen cloth, called a servant, and desired him to carry the king out and place him in a carriage that stood at the door. The queen then got in and drove the king to her father's little cottage, and on arriving there he was laid on the bed. The king slept for many hours, but at last he awoke, and, finding himself alone, exclaimed, 'Where am I?' and called his servants, but none were there.

At last his wife came in and approached the bed, and said: 'Dear lord and king, you told me to take with me from the castle whatever was best and dearest; now, I have nothing in the world better or dearer than you, therefore I have brought you with me.'

On hearing this, tears stood in the king's eyes. 'Dearest wife,' he said, 'from this hour we belong to each other.'

So he took her back to the royal castle; she was again his dear wife, from whom nothing but death could divide him.

THE THREE LITTLE BIRDS.

A THOUSAND years or more ago there were in this land many little kings, and one of them, who lived on the Keuterberg, was fond of hunting. Once when he left the castle with his huntsmen, they met three maidens keeping cows, and when they saw the king with his people, the eldest called out, pointing to the king, 'If I do not marry him I will have no other!' Then the second, pointing to the man on the king's right hand,

answered, 'If I do not marry him I will have no other!' Then the youngest, pointing to the man on the king's left hand, said, 'If I do not have him I will have no other!' These last were the two ministers.

The king heard all, and when he returned home he sent for the girls, and asked them what they had said on the hill. They would not tell him; but the king asked the eldest if she would have him for a husband. She said yes. And the two ministers married the two sisters, for they were beautiful and fair, especially the queen, who had hair like flax.

The two sisters had no children; and when the king went on a journey, he asked them to stay with the queen to cheer her. Soon after she had a little boy, who brought a red star with him into the world. Then the two sisters said to each other that they would throw the beautiful boy into the water. As they threw him in (I think it was into the Weser), a little bird flew up in the air and sang:

'To death art thou sent,
Till God's destined hour;
The place of thy rest's
The white lily flower.'

When they heard that they were afraid, and hastened home. When the king returned, they told him that the queen had given birth to a dog. Then said the king, 'What God does is well done.'

But a fisherman who lived near the water had fished up the little one; and as he was still alive, and his wife had no children, he brought him up.

When the year had passed, the king went again on a journey, and the queen had another boy. Then the two false sisters took it and cast it also into the water. But a little bird flew up again and sang:

'To death art thou sent,
Till God's destined hour;
The place of thy rest's
The white lily flower.'

When the king returned, the sisters told him again that the queen had had a dog; and he said again, 'What God does is well done.' But the fisherman took this one also out of the water, and brought him up.

Then the king travelled again, and the queen had a little girl, whom the false sisters threw also into the water. Then again a little bird flew up in the air and sang:

'To death art thou sent,
Till God's destined hour;
The place of thy rest's
The white lily flower.'

But the fisherman also saved the girl.

When the king came home they told him that the queen had given birth to a cat. Then the king grew angry, and ordered his wife to be put in prison, where she was shut up for many years.

The children had in the meantime grown up. Then the eldest went out with some other youths to fish; but they would not have him with them, and said, 'Thou foundling, go thy way!' He was much troubled at this, and asked the old fisherman if it was true. The man told him that he had pulled him out of the water when fishing. The boy then declared that he would go and find his father. The fisher entreated him to stay, but, as he could not persuade him, he let him go; so the boy went on his way, and travelled many days, until he came to a great endless piece of water, by which an old woman stood and fished. 'Good-day, mother!' said the boy

'Many thanks,' she answered.

'You will fish long before you catch anything.'

'And you will seek long before you find your father. How can you get across this water?' said the woman.

'God knows!' replied he.

Then the old woman took him on her back and carried him through; and he sought a long time, but could not find his father.

Now, when the year was over, the second started to seek his brother, came to the water, and crossed it just as his brother had.

There was only the daughter left at home, who grieved so much over her brothers that she begged the fisherman to let her go and seek them. She also came to the great water, and said to the old woman: 'Good-day, mother!'

'Many thanks,' replied the old woman.

'God help you in your fishing!' said the girl.

When the old woman heard that, she was very friendly, took her over and gave her a rod, and said, 'Now go, my daughter, always upwards by this way, until you come to a great black dog. You must go by it quietly, without laughing or looking at it. You will then come to a great tall castle, on the threshold of which you must let your rod fall, and go straight through and out on the other side. There you will see an

old fountain, out of which a great tree has grown, whereon hangs a bird in a cage. You must take it. Take also a glass of water from the fountain, and go with these back by the same way; pick up the rod from the threshold, take it with you, and when you come to the dog strike him in the face, but be sure that you hit him, and then come back to me.'

The maiden found everything just as the old woman had said, and on coming back found her two brothers, who had been searching for each other over half the world. They went together to the place where the black dog lay in the road. The girl struck him in the face, and he turned into a handsome prince, and went with them to the water. There the old woman still stood: she rejoiced to see them all, carried them over the water, and then went away, for now she was freed. The others, however, went to the old fisherman, and all were glad that they had found each other. They hung the bird on the wall.

The second son could not rest at home, but took his cross-bow and went out hunting; when he was tired, he took his flute and played on it. The king, however, who was also hunting, heard it, and went thither. When he met the youth, he said, 'Who has permitted you to hunt here?'

'Oh, no one!'

'To whom do you belong?'

'I am the fisherman's son.'

'But he had no children.'

'If you do not believe me, come with me.'

The king went with him, and questioned the fisherman, who told him everything; and the bird on the wall began to sing:

'The mother sits alone,
Within the prison drear;
Oh, king of royal blood,
These are thy children dear.
The two false sisters threw
The infants in the stream,
The fisher found them there,
His children they but seem.'

They were all astonished, and the king took the bird, the fisherman, and the three children with him to his castle, and ordered his wife to be brought out of prison. She had grown quite ill and weak; but the daughter gave her of the water of the spring to drink, and she became bright and well. The two false sisters were burnt, and the daughter married the prince.

THE WATER OF LIFE.

A KING was once taken ill, and everyone expected he would die. His three sons were so full of sorrow that they went into the garden of the castle and wept bitterly.

There they saw an old man approaching, who asked them the cause of their grief. They replied that their father was ill and expected to die, and that they wished to help him, and knew not how.

The old man replied, 'I know. He must drink a draught of the water of life. He will soon be well; but to find it is a very difficult task.'

'I will try,' said the eldest son; and he went at once to the sick king and begged for permission to go and seek this wonderful water, which could alone heal him.

'No,' replied the father; 'the risk is too great. I would rather die than allow you to incur such danger.'

But the prince begged so hard that at last the king unwillingly consented. The prince thought, 'If I bring this water I shall be my father's favourite son, and inherit his kingdom.'

In a very short time he was able to start on his journey, and after riding for some distance he at last saw in the road a dwarf, who stopped him and cried, 'Where are you riding in such haste?'

'Stupid little pigmy!' replied the prince proudly. 'Where I am going is not for you to know;' and away he rode. He had, however, made the little man in a rage; and he uttered a bad wish against the king's proud son.

He continued his journey, and came at last to a pass between two mountains; but as he rode on it appeared as if the mountains were closing together, and at last the way became so narrow that his horse could not possibly proceed a step either backwards or forwards, neither could he dismount from the saddle; so that he found himself a prisoner enclosed in the mountains.

The sick king anxiously expected his son day after day, but he did not return. Then the second son begged to be allowed to seek this wonderful remedy; and he also thought selfishly, 'If my brother is dead, the kingdom will belong to me.'

The king was as unwilling as before to let his son go; but he gave way at last; and the prince started and travelled by the same road which his brother had taken.

After awhile he, too, met the dwarf, who stopped him, and asked him where he was going in such haste. 'You want to know, I dare say,' said he; 'but, my little mannikin, I shan't tell you.' And he rode away as he spoke.

The dwarf threw also over this prince the sorcerer's spell, and he rode away, as his brother had, down to the mountain pass, where he quickly found himself enclosed on all sides, and unable to move backwards or forwards; and this is how it often happens to the proud.

As the second son also remained away, the youngest entreated his father to let him go and fetch the healing water, and the king was at last obliged to consent. He also was met by the dwarf with the question: 'Where are you riding in such haste?'

But at the words he halted, and said, 'I am seeking for the water of life to cure my father, who is near to death.'

'Do you know where to find it?' asked the dwarf.

'No,' answered the prince.

'Well, then,' replied the little man, 'as you have behaved properly to me, and not proudly, as your false brothers did, I will give you the information you require, and tell you where this wonderful water flows. It flows from a well in the court of an enchanted castle, into which you could not enter unless I gave you an iron wand and three loaves of never-failing bread. With the iron wand you must strike three times on the gate of the castle, and it will immediately spring open. Within the gate lie three lions, who will stand before you with open mouths. If you can then, with one effort, throw a loaf into each open throat, they will be quite quiet for a time, and you must as quickly as possible rush to the fountain, and draw off some of the water before it strikes twelve, or the door will shut and you will be imprisoned.'

The prince thanked the dwarf, took the iron rod and the bread, and started again on his journey. And it all happened as the dwarf had said. The gate sprang open at three strokes from the wand, and the bread stopped the lions' mouths, and the young prince walked into the castle till he came to a splendid hall, in which sat enchanted princes; he took the rings from their fingers, and seeing a sword and loaf, he carried them both away with him.

A little farther on he came to a room in which stood a beautiful maiden. She was full of joy when she saw him, kissed him, and said he had set her free from the enchantment, and that now she should have her kingdom restored to her,

and if he would come again in a year to fetch her, she would be his wife.

She then told him where to find the well from which flowed the wonderful water, and cautioned him not to delay, for the water must be obtained before the clock struck twelve at midnight. He continued to explore the castle, till he came to a chamber in which stood a beautiful bed; the hangings were new and elegant, and the bed looked so tempting that, tired as he was, he could not help lying down for a little while to rest.

So he laid himself down and slept till the clock struck three-quarters past eleven. He sprang up in terror at the sound, ran out to the well, and as quickly as he could dipped in the bucket which stood by, drew out the water, and hastened away.

When he reached the iron door, the clock struck twelve, and it swung to so violently that it grazed a piece of skin off his heel. He was, however, full of joy to think that he had obtained the water of life for his father, and hastily turned his footsteps towards home.

On his way he met the dwarf; and when the little man saw the sword and the bread, he said: 'You have indeed gained a valuable possession: with that sword you will be able to slay great hosts, and the bread will not come to an end.'

But the prince could not bear to continue his journey and return home to his father without his brothers, so he said: 'Dear dwarf, will you not tell me where I can find my two brothers? They set out on a journey to discover the water of life long before I did, but they have not returned.'

'They were proud and haughty in their behaviour to me,' said the dwarf, 'so I threw a spell over them, and they are now shut up between two mountains, and cannot get out.' On this the young prince begged so hard for them that the dwarf at last promised to set them free, but he said: 'Take care of them, for their hearts are wicked.'

When his brothers arrived, the youngest was delighted to see them, and related all that had happened to him, and how he had obtained a bucketful of the wonderful water from a well, and he told them of the beautiful princess whom he had set free in the enchanted castle. He said also that she had promised to be his wife, and that he was to fetch her at the end of a year, when she succeeded to her kingdom. After this they travelled towards home, and on the road came to a kingdom in which the people were suffering from the effects of war and famine,

and the king himself was on the point of starvation—indeed, there was great trouble.

The young prince, on hearing this, went to the king, gave him the bread which never failed, and with it the whole kingdom was fed and satisfied; he also lent him the sword, with which he soon slew the enemy's hosts, and the land was restored to peace and joy.

The young prince, after reclaiming the sword and the never-failing bread, rode away with his two brothers. On their way they heard of two other countries suffering from war, and these he also rescued from death and suffering with his sword and the wonderful bread. They travelled far out of their way to help these cities, therefore to reach home quickly they were obliged to take ship and cross the sea.

During the voyage the elder brothers held a secret consultation, and the eldest said: 'Now that our youngest brother has obtained the healing water which we could not find, our father will be sure when he dies to give him the kingdom which belongs to us, and he will take away all our good fortune from us.'

These jealous thoughts made them determined at last to destroy his hopes. They waited, however, till one day when he lay fast asleep on the deck of the vessel, then one of them fetched the goblet containing the water of life, and emptied it into a jar of their own. They then filled their brother's goblet with the salt sea-water, and replaced it safely. On reaching home, the youngest son hastily produced his goblet and offered some of its contents to his sick father, but no sooner had he drunk a very little of the bitter sea-water than he became more sick than before. And while he was complaining over it, the brothers came forward, declaring that the youngest must have poisoned the water, and producing the true water, which they had stolen from him, they offered it to their father.

He had no sooner drunk a small quantity than he felt his sickness vanish, and was as well and strong as he had ever been in his young days. On this the two brothers went to the youngest, and said to him in a tone of mockery: 'You, no doubt, are the one who discovered the water of life, but you had all the trouble, and we have gained the reward. You have been very clever, but you should have kept your eyes open; we changed the water at sea while you were asleep, and now in a year's time one of us will be at liberty to go and claim the beautiful princess. But take care not to betray us. Our father does not believe in you now, and if you say the least

word you shall lose your life into the bargain. Remain silent, and you are safe.'

The king was, in truth, very angry with his youngest son, for he believed he had had a design on his life. He even called a council together, and himself pronounced a sentence upon him that he should be secretly shot. It was arranged, therefore, that when the prince went out hunting, and suspected nothing wrong, the king's hunter should accompany him and take his life. On the appointed day, the prince and the hunter were riding together, and the prince, noticing that the hunter looked sad, said:

'Dear hunter, what is the matter?'

The hunter replied, 'I cannot, I dare not tell you yet.'

'Yes,' said the prince; 'tell me at once; it will ease your mind.'

'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'I may well be sad; the king has ordered me to shoot you and kill you.'

On hearing this the prince was not alarmed, but he said: 'Dear hunter, spare my life, and I will give you my royal robes in exchange for your forester's dress.'

The hunter was glad to escape from his unkind task so easily, and said: 'I will do that willingly; I could not bear to take away your life.'

Then they exchanged clothes; the hunter went home, and the prince remained in the forest. After awhile there arrived at the old king's castle three waggon-loads of gold and precious stones as a present to his youngest son, from the three kings whose countries he had rescued with his sword and bread, as proofs of their gratitude. The account of all he had done which the messengers brought made the old king very unhappy. Perhaps, after all, his youngest son might be innocent. 'Oh that he were still alive!' he said to his people. 'Oh that I had not allowed him to be killed!'

'He lives still,' said the hunter. 'I had not the heart to carry out your orders to kill him.'

And then he related to the king all that had passed. On hearing this the king felt as if a stone had fallen from his heart, and he caused a proclamation to be made all over his kingdom, that if his son would return home he should have a free pardon. Meanwhile, the beautiful princess began to prepare for the return of the prince, so she ordered a pathway to be made in front of the castle, which glittered with gold, and told her people that whoever came to see her on horseback by that road was the prince whom she expected, and they should admit him;

but whoever approached the castle by another road was a stranger, and unknown to her.

The year was drawing to a close, and the eldest brother thought he would be beforehand with the king's daughter, who had been freed from enchantment by his brother, and declare himself her deliverer, and by this deceit obtain her for a wife, and her kingdom also.

So he rode away, but as he approached the castle, and saw the glittering golden road, he thought to himself, 'It would be a thousand pities to ride over such a beautiful road;' so he turned aside, and rode to the castle another way.

When he appeared, however, before the door, the people of the court told him he would not be admitted, as he was not known to the princess, so he was obliged to ride home again. Thereupon the second brother thought he would try; but when he came to the golden path, and the horse was about to place his foot upon it, he drew him quickly back, thinking, as his brother had done, that it was a pity to ride on such a beautiful road. So he approached the castle gate another way; but he was refused admittance, and obliged to ride away, for the people told him he was not the right person.

By this time a year had quite passed, and the third son determined to leave his forest home, and proceed to the castle where his betrothed lived, and with her forget his trouble.

So he set out on horseback, and, on approaching the castle, his thoughts were so absorbed in thinking of the love of the princess, and wishing to be with her, that he never noticed the golden road, but rode his horse right over it, up to the gate.

It was opened to him immediately, and the princess came out herself, and received him joyfully, and told him he was her deliverer, and the master of her whole kingdom, and soon after the marriage was performed amid great splendour and rejoicing. At length he told the young queen how his father had sent him away and discarded him.

She immediately rode over to the old king and told him all; and how his elder sons had deceived and betrayed their brother, and made him keep silence by threats. The king wished to punish his eldest sons, but they had already sailed across the sea, hoping to reach another country, out of the way of justice; the ship was wrecked, and they were never heard of after.

DOCTOR KNOW-ALL.

THERE lived once a poor peasant named Krebs, who drove with two oxen and a cart containing a load of wood through the town, and sold it to a doctor for two dollars. When he went in to receive his money the doctor was at dinner, and the peasant looked at all the good things on the table till he began to long for some of them, and to wish he had been a doctor.

He remained standing for awhile after he had received his money, and at last asked if he could not also become a doctor.

'Oh yes,' was the reply; 'that can easily be managed.'

'What must I do?' asked the peasant.

'You must first buy an A B C book, one in which there is a picture of a cock. Secondly, you must turn your waggon and oxen into money, and buy a suit of clothes such as a doctor should wear. Thirdly, have a sign painted for yourself with the words, "I am Doctor Know-all!" and have it nailed above your house-door.'

The peasant followed the doctor's advice, and after awhile obtained patients, but not many.

About this time a rich nobleman was robbed of some money. It was told to this nobleman that a clever doctor, named Doctor Know-all, lived in the town, who would most likely tell him where to find the lost treasure, and who had stolen it. So the nobleman ordered his carriage, and drove into the town. On seeing him he asked him if he were Dr. Know-all. 'Yes, I am,' he said.

'Will you, then, go with me and discover the thief, and get back the stolen property?'

'I am willing to accompany you, my lord,' he replied, 'if my wife, Grethel, may go also.'

The nobleman was quite agreeable to this request, and, desiring them to take seats in his carriage, they drove away together.

As soon as they arrived at the house dinner was laid, and Doctor Know-all and his wife seated themselves at the table, and the servants waited upon them. When the first servant placed a dish on the table containing some delicacy, the doctor touched his wife with his elbow, and said in a low voice, 'Grethel, that is the first.'

He only meant the first servant to bring the different courses. The man thought, however, that he was speaking of him as the first of the thieves; and, as this was the truth, he was in a dreadful fright, and when he got out into the hall, he said to his companions: 'That doctor knows everything we have been doing; he has just said that I am the first!'

On hearing this the other servants felt almost afraid to go into the dining-hall; but they were obliged to perform their duty, especially as their master was present. Another servant, therefore, appeared at the second course.

The moment he placed a dish on the table, he heard the doctor say to his wife, 'That is the second!'

The man was as much alarmed as his fellow-servant, and got out of the room as quickly as he could. It was the same with the third, for as each appeared the doctor spoke of him to his wife, and they were all obliged to assist in waiting at table. When the fourth servant brought in a dish, and placed it on the table, the nobleman, wishing to prove the cleverness of his visitor, asked him to say what was under the cover.

Now, it happened to be a crab, which, of course, the doctor did not know, so he looked at the covered dish, and felt that he was in a great dilemma, from which he could not escape; so he said in a low tone: 'Krebs! Krebs! what will you do?'

But the nobleman only heard the word Krebs,* and he cried eagerly: 'Yes, it is a crab! Ah, I see now that you know everything, and you will be able to tell me where my money is, and who has stolen it!'

The servants were all terribly alarmed, and winked at the doctor to come out to their offices. As soon as he could get away from the table, he went out, and they all came round him, owned that five of them had stolen the money, and offered him in their terror money to any amount if he would only not betray them. He promised on condition that they would show him where they had hidden the money; and they took him to the spot at once.

On this the doctor was quite satisfied, and, returning to the dining-room, seated himself at the table, and said: 'My lord, I will now consult my book, and discover where the money is concealed.'

The fifth servant, who wanted to hear whether the doctor knew any more about them, crept into the hall, and hid himself to listen. Not thinking of a listener, the doctor pulled out

* Krebs is the German for *crab*.

his book, and turned over leaf after leaf, pretending to find the necessary information. At last, addressing the pretended advice in his book, he exclaimed: 'You are there, but you will have to come out!'

The hidden man, supposing that the doctor spoke to him, sprang out full of terror, crying: 'The man knows everything!'

Doctor Know-all at last took the nobleman to the place where the money was concealed; but he did not tell who had stolen it. So, in addition to the reward offered for the discovery, he received also a good sum from the servants in return for not betraying them, and became a man of great renown.

THE BOTTLE SPIRIT.

THERE lived once a poor wood-cutter, who worked hard from morning till night, and at last contrived to lay by a good sum of money. He had an only son; so he called the boy to him one day, and said: 'My son, you are my only child, and I wish the money I have saved by the sweat of my brow to be spent in your education, and if you learn something valuable, in my old age, when my limbs are stiff, and I am obliged to sit still at home, you may be able to support me.'

So the youth was sent to the High School, and studied so diligently that his teachers commended him, and begged for him to remain another year.

But this education was so expensive that at the end of the second year the father said all his hard earnings were dwindling away so fast that the boy must return home, and give up his school. 'I cannot give you any more education,' said his father sorrowfully, 'for I have now only just enough left to supply us with daily bread, and not even a penny to spare for anything else!'

'Dear father,' said the boy, 'make yourself quite happy about it. I am satisfied with what I have learnt, and I will do my best.'

One day—the boy had been at home some little time—his father talked of going to the forest to cut some wood for the wood market.

'I will go with you,' said the son, 'and help you.'

'No, no, my son,' said the father; 'the work would be too

rough for you to attempt. You have not been accustomed to it, and could be of no help to me. Besides, I have only one axe, and no money to buy another.'

'Go to one of our neighbours,' said the boy; 'he will lend you an axe till I am able to buy one for myself.'

So the father borrowed an axe of a neighbour, and the next morning at daybreak they went off together to the wood.

The youth worked well, and was a great help to his father, and quite lively and cheerful. As noon drew near, the wood-cutter said: 'Come, my son, let us sit down and eat our dinner, otherwise we shall not get on so well with our work by-and-by.'

But the boy took up his share of the dinner, and said: 'Rest yourself, father, it will do you good; I am not in the least tired. I will go farther into the wood to look for birds' nests, and eat my dinner as I go along.'

'Oh, you silly boy!' said his father. 'If you go running about the wood, you will be too tired by-and-by to lift your arm. Stay here, and sit by me.'

The boy, however, went off to the wood, ate his dinner, and was soon running along full of spirits, for he saw in the green branches here and there the form of a nest. He went on for some distance, however, till at last he came to an immense weird-looking oak, which was certainly many hundred years old, and its trunk so large that five men, with their hands joined together, could not have spanned it.

The boy stood still and looked at it, and thought: 'How many birds must have built their nests in that oak!'

Presently he thought he heard a voice. He listened, and it sounded again in smothered tones, and cried: 'Let me out; let me out!' He looked about, but could discover nothing. Still, it appeared to him as if the voice came from under the ground.

At last he cried: 'Where are you?'

The voice answered: 'Here I am, just under the roots of the oak. Let me out! let me out!'

The scholar at once commenced clearing away the underwood from the roots, and searching carefully, till at last he discovered in a corner a glass bottle. He took it up, and held it against the light, and saw something in the shape of a frog springing up and down, and crying: 'Let me out! let me out!' The scholar, suspecting no harm, took the cork out of the bottle, and instantly a spirit rose in the air, and, spreading as it rose,

became in a very few moments a frightful looking creature half as high as the tree.

'Knowest thou,' he exclaimed to the youth, in a terrible voice, 'what will be thy reward for this?'

'No,' answered the youth fearlessly, 'how should I?'

'Well, then, I will tell you,' cried the ghost: 'I shall have to break your neck!'

'If you had told me that before,' said the scholar, 'I should certainly have left you stuck fast in your bottle. As for my head, that shall remain on my shoulders for all your threats. There are more people to consult than myself in the matter.'

'More people coming! more people here!' cried the giant. 'Do you think that after being shut up so long I can have any inclination to mercy? No, indeed, I have had my punishment, and I will be revenged! I am the great and mighty Mercury, and you have set me free; therefore must I break your neck!'

'Gently,' replied the scholar; 'there need not be such haste as this. First, I must be sure that you are the same little spirit which was shut up. If you can make yourself small enough to go back into the bottle, then I will believe you, and you shall do as you like with me.'

The spirit replied, full of haughty courage: 'That is a mere trifle for me to do,' and immediately drew himself together, made himself as thin and small as he was before, so as to enter the opening of the bottle, and crept in.

No sooner had he done so than the scholar popped in the drawn cork, pushed it down tightly, and threw the bottle in its old place among the roots of the oak, and so the spirit was entrapped.

He was turning to go back to his father, when the ghost cried out again most pitifully: 'Oh, let me out again! let me out again!'

'No,' answered the scholar; 'it is not likely I shall let you out a second time, after you have threatened my life. What should I expect if I did?'

'If you will set me free,' cried the ghost, 'I will give you more than enough money to last your life!'

'No,' said the scholar; 'you would deceive me as you did the first time.'

'You are throwing away your luck,' said the spirit; 'I will indeed do you no harm this time; but you shall be richly rewarded.'

The scholar thought to himself: 'I will venture it; most likely he may keep his word, and will not injure me.'

Then he took out the stopper, and, the spirit rising up as before, spread itself outwards, and was soon as large as a giant.

'Now you shall have your reward,' he said, 'as I promised;' and he handed him a small piece of rag like a plaster, and said: 'If you use one end to strap on a wound, it will heal it directly; and if you spread the other half on steel and iron, they will immediately be changed into gold and silver.'

'I must just prove it first,' said the youth. So he went to a tree, and with a stroke of the axe split the bark, and then spread the rag over it. Immediately it closed together again, and was healed. 'It is all right,' said he to the spirit, 'and now we may as well part.'

The spirit, on this, thanked him for setting him free, and the scholar, after thanking him for his gift, went back to his father.

'Where have you been running,' said his father, 'forgetting all about helping me? I said you would not work for an hour without getting tired.'

'Never mind, father,' said the boy. 'Do not be uneasy. I will soon make up for it.'

'Make it up, indeed!' said the father angrily; 'that is not the way to get on in the world.'

'Have patience,' said the youth. 'See, father, I will give this tree one stroke that shall crack it.'

As he spoke, he took up the plaster, spread it over the axe; then, lifting it, struck a heavy blow on the tree; but as the axe had been changed into silver, the blow turned the edge at once.

'Oh, look here, father,' said the boy, 'what a bad axe they have given you for me! See how it is turned on one side!'

'Ah, what have you done?' cried the father, in a great fright. 'Now I shall have to pay for the axe, and I know not how I am to do so; and this is all the use your work has been to me.'

'Don't be angry, father,' answered the boy. 'I can easily pay for the axe.'

'You idiot!' cried his father. 'How are you to pay for it, I wonder? You have nothing but what I give you. There are plenty of schoolboy tricks in your head, I can see. But you know nothing about wood-cutting.'

Presently the youth said to him, 'Father, I cannot work any more. Let us go home, and keep holiday this evening together.'

'Eh, what?' he cried. 'Do you think I can go home to sit

with my hands in my lap as you do? No, indeed, I must still work; but you may pack off home, if you like.'

'Father,' he replied, 'I have only been into the wood once, and I don't know my way home alone. Do go with me.'

As his anger became a little appeased, the father allowed himself to be talked over, and went home with the boy.

When they reached the house, he said, 'Now go and sell the defaced axe, and see what you can get for it; but remember that our neighbour must be paid, whatever you bring home.'

The boy took up the axe, and went into the town to a goldsmith, who proved it, and, laying it on the scales, said, 'This is worth four hundred dollars, but I have not so much cash in the house.'

The scholar said, 'Give me what you have; the overplus I will lend you.'

The goldsmith then gave him three hundred dollars, and there remained one hundred owing.

Thereupon the scholar went home to his father, and said, 'Father, I have money now. Go and ask our neighbour how much he wants for his axe.'

'I know that already,' he replied. 'One dollar and six groschens.'

'Ah! well; then, you can give him two dollars and twelve groschens. That is just double, and I am sure it is enough. See here, I have money in abundance.'

And as he gave his father one hundred dollars, he said: 'We shall never miss the two dollars, for there is still quite enough for us to live at our ease.'

'Good heavens!' cried the father, 'where have all these riches come from?'

Then the boy related what had happened to him in the wood, and how he had trusted the bottle spirit, and what a good fortune he had made. With all this money the scholar was again able to go to the High School, and continue his education; and as he was not only clever, but had in his possession a plaster that could heal every wound, he became the most renowned doctor in the whole world.

BEARSKIN.

THERE was once a young fellow who enlisted as a soldier; he was brave and courageous, and always foremost in the thick of the battle. As long as the war continued he got on very well; but when peace was proclaimed, he received his discharge, and the captain told him he might go where he pleased.

He had, however, no home, for his parents were dead; so he went to his brothers, and asked them to give him a home till war broke out again.

But his brothers were hard-hearted, and said, 'What could we do with you here? You cannot help us; go and provide for yourself.'

The soldier had nothing but his gun, so he placed it on his shoulder, and went out into the world. He came to a heath, on which only a few trees were to be seen, and these grew in a circle. So he sat down under the trees, and began to reflect upon his fate. 'I have no money,' he said to himself; 'I have never learnt anything but soldiering, and now peace is proclaimed I am not wanted. I can see that there is nothing before me but starvation.'

At that moment he heard a rustling sound, and looking round, he saw a strange man standing before him; he wore a green coat, and looked stately, but had an ugly cloven foot. 'I know very well what you want,' said he to the soldier, 'and money and possessions you shall have, as much as you can spend, however extravagant you may be. But I must discover first whether you are a coward, that my money may not be thrown away.'

'A soldier, and afraid! who can put those two words together?' he replied. 'You can try me if you like.'

'Willingly,' answered the man; 'now just look behind you.'

The soldier turned and saw an immense bear, who was growling, and trotting towards him. 'Oho!' cried the soldier; 'I will tickle your nose for you presently, my friend, and stop your growling;' and, raising his gun, he shot the bear in the head so surely that he fell all of a heap on the ground, and moved no more.

'I see clearly,' said the stranger, 'that you are not wanting in courage; but there is one more condition you must agree to.'

'If it does not harm me in the future,' replied the soldier, who knew well to whom he was talking, 'I promise to do anything.'

'You can tell for yourself whether the conditions are likely to injure you in the future,' was the reply; 'they are these: you must neither wash yourself, nor comb your hair, nor cut your nails nor beard, nor say your prayers, for the next seven years, and I will give you this coat and cloak, which you must wear the whole time. Should you die during the seven years, you are mine; but if you live beyond that time, you will be rich and independent for the rest of your life.'

The soldier sat for some minutes thinking of the great poverty in which he then was, and how often he had faced death, and decided to accept the conditions.

The old demon took off the green coat, and, offering it to the soldier, said, 'Whenever you have that coat on your back, you will find plenty of money in the pocket, if you put your hand in it.' Then he pulled off the skin of the dead bear, and, giving it to him, said, 'This is to be your cloak and bed; you must not, for the whole seven years, dare to sleep in any other, nor to wear any other cloak, and on this account you shall be called Bearskin.' Having said this, the stranger vanished.

The soldier put on the coat, and, putting his hands in the pockets, found that the money was a reality. Then he hung the bearskin on his shoulders, and went out into the world rejoicing in his good fortune, and buying all he wished for with his money.

For the first year, his unwashed face, his uncombed and uncut hair and beard, did not disfigure him so very much; but during the second year he began to look like a monster. The hair covered the whole of his face, his beard looked like a piece of coarse blanket, his fingers had claws instead of nails, and his face was so covered with dirt that if mustard and cress had been sown there, it must have grown on it.

Those who saw him ran away; but wherever he went he gave money to the poor, to pray that he might live for the seven years, and as he paid well for everything, he was always sure of a shelter.

In the fourth year he came to an inn, but the landlord would not take him in, nor even let him sleep in the stables, for he thought such a monster would frighten the horses.

However, when Bearskin put his hand in his pocket and pulled out a handful of gold pieces, the landlord began to soften, and gave him a room in one of the out-buildings, but he made

him promise that he would not allow himself to be seen, for fear of getting the house into bad repute.

In the evening, when Bearskin was sitting by himself, and wishing that the seven years were over, he heard in an adjoining room loud lamentations. The soldier had a pitying heart, so he opened the door, and saw an old man with his hands clasped over his head weeping bitterly.

Bearskin advanced towards him, but the old man sprang up to run away. When, however, he heard a kind, human voice speaking to him in friendly tones, he was inclined to remain; and the soldier's soothing words at last encouraged him to disclose the cause of his grief. His property, he said, had dwindled away by degrees, and now his daughters must starve. He had not, he said, even money enough to pay the landlord, and supposed he should be sent to prison.

'If you have no other trouble,' replied Bearskin, 'I can help you, for I have plenty of money.' Then he sent for the landlord, paid the old man's bill, and gave him a purse full of gold to put in his pocket.

When the old man found himself so quickly relieved from his present anxieties, he knew not how sufficiently to express his thanks. 'Come home with me,' he said; 'my daughters are wonders of beauty, and you can have one for a wife. When they hear all you have done for me, they will not refuse you. You are certainly a strange-looking man, but that is easily got over.'

Bearskin was very much pleased with this invitation, and went home with the old man quite readily. No sooner, however, did the eldest daughter catch sight of him, than with a scream of terror she rushed away. The second stood still and looked at him from head to foot.

'How could I accept such a man for a husband?' she said; 'why, he has not the slightest resemblance to a human being. Why, the grizzly bear who called himself a man pleased me much better; for he did wear a hussar's cap and white gloves. If he were only ugly I might get used to him.'

The youngest, however, said, 'Dear father, that must be a good man, if he has helped you out of your trouble; and if you have promised him a bride, you must keep your word.'

It was a pity that Bearskin's face was so covered with dirt and hair, or she would have seen how happy he looked at these words. However, he took a ring from his finger, broke it in half, gave her one half, and kept the other for himself. On one half he wrote her name, and on the other his own, and begging

her to take care of it, he said, 'For three years longer I must travel about, but at the end of that time I will return; if I do not you will be free, for I shall be dead. But pray to God that my life may be preserved.'

After he was gone the bride dressed herself in black, and when she thought of her bridegroom the tears would come into her eyes. Her sisters did nothing but mock and jeer her now. 'You must take care how he touches your hand,' said the eldest, 'for his claws may be sharp.'

'And take care,' said the other, 'that he does not eat you up if you please him, for bears are fond of sweet things.'

'Ah, yes,' continued the eldest; 'and you must always do as he pleases, or he will growl at you.'

'Well,' said her sister, 'we shall have a merry wedding at all events, for bears are noted for their dancing.' The bride kept silence, and her sisters soon found that they could not make her angry with anything they said to her.

Meanwhile, Bearskin was travelling about from one place to another, doing good on every opportunity, and relieving the poor; so that he had many to pray for him.

The last day of the seventh year dawned, and Bearskin went out to the heath and seated himself under the ring of trees. He did not wait long, for with a rush of wind came the demon who had appeared to him just seven years before, and looked at him with a most ill-tempered and disappointed face. He threw down the soldier's own coat, and asked him for his green coat and bearskin cloak.

'Stop a bit,' said the soldier, 'you are going too fast; you must wash me first.'

So the demon was obliged, whether he liked it or not, to fetch water and wash and shave the soldier, and afterwards to comb his hair and cut his nails. When this was done, the brave soldier looked himself again, and, indeed, much handsomer than before.

As soon as his unpleasant companion had happily left him, he rose with a light heart, and went to the town, bought a magnificent velvet suit, and seated himself in a carriage drawn by four splendid white horses, and drove to the house of his bride. No one recognised him. The merchant took him for a noble field officer, and led him into the room where his three daughters sat. He was obliged to sit between the two eldest at dinner. They helped him to wine, and placed all the choicest dishes before him, while they thought they had never seen such a handsome man before.

The bride, who sat opposite to him, in her black dress, with downcast eyes, did not utter a word. At last he asked the father if he would give him either of his daughters. On hearing this, the two eldest ran away to their rooms to change their dresses; and both arrayed themselves in the gayest attire they possessed, for each fancied she would be the chosen one.

The stranger, as soon as he found himself alone with his bride, took out the half of the ring which he had kept from his pocket, and threw it into a glass of wine which stood on the table, and presented it to her. As she took it she saw at the bottom of the glass the half of the ring. With a beating heart she lifted a ribbon which hung round her neck, to which the other half was suspended. She placed the two halves together, and found that they exactly joined.

Then he exclaimed, 'I am your bridegroom, whom you once knew as Bearskin. Through the mercy of Heaven I have recovered my natural shape, and am cleansed.' Then he went over to her, took her in his arms, and embraced her fondly.

Just at this moment the sisters entered the room in full dress; but when they discovered that this handsome young soldier belonged to their sister, and heard that he was called Bearskin, they were so overcome with rage and vexation that one went and drowned herself in the well, and the other hanged herself on a tree in the garden.

In the evening there was a knock at the door, and when the bridegroom opened it there was the demon in a green coat, and he said to him, 'See, now, I have gained two souls instead of thy one.'

THE WREN AND THE BEAR.

One summer's day a bear and a wolf were taking a walk together in the wood, when the bear heard a very beautiful song, and he said: 'Brother wolf, what bird is that singing so splendidly?'

'That is the king of the birds,'* replied the wolf; 'and we must treat him with great respect.' But it was only the willow wren.

* In German the word for wren is Zaun-könig—*hedge-king*. On the word König, *king*, this tale is founded.

'If it is the king of the birds,' said the bear, 'he certainly ought to have a palace. Come and show it to me.'

'That is not a very easy task,' replied the wolf. 'At all events, we must wait till the queen comes home.'

At this moment Jenny Wren appeared with her husband, and they both carried food in their beaks for their little ones. The bear wanted to follow them, but the wolf held him back, and said: 'No! we must wait till the king and his wife go out again.'

They took particular note of the place where the nest was, and went farther. But the bear could not rest till he had seen the royal palace. So in a short time they went back to it again.

The parent birds were absent, and the bear, climbing up to peep in, saw five or six little creatures lying in the nest.

'Is that a palace?' cried the bear. 'Why, it is a wretched place; and if you are the king's children, you are miserable little creatures.'

When the wrens heard this they were terribly angry, and one of them cried out, 'We are not. Our parents are noble people, and you shall pay dearly for insulting us.'

The bear and the wolf were much alarmed at this threat, and, turning round, ran back quickly to their holes. But the young wrens kept on crying and lamenting till their parents returned with food for them. Then they said, 'We will not eat a morsel, not even a fly's leg, till you have taught the bear to know that we are noble children; for he has been here, and insulted us dreadfully.'

'Make yourselves quite easy, children,' said the wren. 'We will do what you wish.' Then the father-bird, with Jenny Wren, flew to the bear's hole, and cried, 'Old growler, why have you insulted our children? You shall suffer for it. War to the knife shall be declared between us.' And saying this, they flew away.

Upon hearing this declaration of war the bear started off to summon to his aid all the four-footed animals—the ox, the cow, the ass, the stag, the roe, and all that he could find on the earth. The wren assembled the creatures that fly in the air—not only the birds, great and small, but also flies, gnats, bees, and hornets.

When the time arrived for this great battle, the wren sent out spies to discover who was the general of the enemy's army. The gnat, being the most crafty, wandered into the wood where the enemy were assembled, and hid himself under a leaf on a

tree near which they were holding counsel together, and heard all they said. The bear first stood up, and, calling the fox, said to him: 'Fox, you are the most cunning of all the animals; so you shall be our general, and lead us to battle.'

'Good,' said the fox, 'but what signal shall we agree upon?'

No one knew. So he said: 'I have a beautiful, long, bushy tail, that looks at a distance almost like a red plume of feathers, and you must remember that as long as I hold it up everything is going on right, and you will advance to victory. But if I lower it, then run away as fast as you can.'

The gnat listened attentively without being seen; then flew back and told the wren everything that had passed. At day-break, when the battle was to begin, the four-footed animals rushed to the field with such fury that the earth trembled. The wren also appeared in the air with his army, some buzzing and croaking, and others hovering about wildly enough to make anyone giddy and scared who saw them, till the two armies met for conflict.

The wren sent for a hornet, and told him to go and settle on the fox's tail, and the moment he raised it in the air to sting it with all his might. Away went the hornet, and presently in the midst of the battle, when the fox felt the first sting, he could not help leaping up, yet he still kept his tail erect. At the second stab he was forced to lower it for a moment. But when a third time the hornet stung him he could bear it no longer. He dropped his tail between his legs with a great scream, and rushed away.

As soon as the animals saw this, they made sure that all was lost. A panic ensued, and they began flying and running to their dens in the greatest confusion. And so the birds won the battle.

The wrens returned to their nest in great haste. 'Be joyful, children,' they cried, 'and eat and drink to your hearts' content; for we have won the victory.'

But the young wrens said, 'No, we will not eat or drink till the bear comes and makes an apology, and acknowledges that we are nobly born.'

Upon this the wren flew to the bear's den, and said: 'Old growler, unless you come to the nest, and apologize to my children, and tell them they are of noble descent, you will have every rib in your body broken.'

The bear in great alarm crawled to the nest, and made the most humble apology. After this the little wrens were quite satisfied. They ate and drank, and made themselves merry till quite late in the evening.

SWEET PORRIDGE.

THERE was once a poor, gentle girl who lived alone with her mother, and they had nothing to eat. So the child went into the wood, and met there an old woman who already knew her trouble, and gave her a small pot, and told her, 'You must say to it, "Little pot, boil," and then it will boil sweet porridge; and when you say, "Little pot, stop," it will stop boiling.' The girl brought the pot home to her mother, and now they were free from poverty and hunger, and ate sweet porridge as often as they wished. But once, when the girl had gone out, the mother said, 'Little pot, boil;' and it did boil, and she sat and ate till she was satisfied. 'Now I will tell the little pot to stop,' she said; but she did not know what to say, and it went on boiling till the porridge rose over the edge and boiled over. The kitchen and the whole house were soon full, and then the next house, and then the street, as if it would feed the whole world; and there was great distress, for no one knew how to stop it. At last, when there was only one house remaining, the child came home, and only said, 'Little pot, stop,' and it ceased boiling; but whoever wished to return to the town had to eat his way back.

CLEVER FOLK.

ONE day a countryman fetched his hazel stick out of the field, and said to his wife, 'Irine, I am going away into the country, and shall return in three days. If the cattle-dealer should come to trade with us, and wish to buy our three cows, you can let him see them; but you must not allow them to go for less than two hundred dollars—not a farthing less, do you hear?'

'Be off with you, if you are going,' she replied. 'I will do as you say.'

'I hope you will,' he cried. 'But you are little better than a child who has fallen on its head. You'll forget all I have told you in an hour. But I can only promise you that if you make a stupid mess of this business I will stripe your back till

it is black and blue, and that without any colour, but with this bare stick that I hold in my hand; and the marks shall last for a whole year. Therefore you had better not forget.'

The next morning the cattle-dealer came, and the wife had no occasion to say much to him. When he had seen the cows, and had asked the price, he said, 'I am quite willing to take the animals. They are very cheap.' Then she unfastened the chain, and drove them out of the stable.

But when they reached the yard-gate, and the driver wished to lead them out, the wife seized him by the sleeve, and said, 'You must first give me the two hundred dollars, or I cannot let them go with you.'

"All right,' answered the man. 'But I have forgotten to buckle on my money-pouch this morning. Do not be uneasy. You shall have security till I pay. I will take two cows with me, and leave the third behind with you, so that will be a good guarantee for my return.'

The woman was deceived. She allowed the man to march off with the two cows, and said to herself, 'How pleased Hans will be when he sees how cleverly I have managed!'

The farmer came home as he had said on the third day, and asked immediately whether the cows had been sold.

'Yes, most certainly, dear Hans,' answered the wife, 'and for two hundred dollars, as you told me. They are scarcely worth so much, but the man took them without the slightest objection to the price.'

'Where is the money?' asked the farmer.

'I have not got it yet,' she replied. 'He had forgotten his money-bag; but he will bring it soon, and he has left good security behind him.'

'What has he left?' asked the farmer.

'One of the three cows,' she said. 'He would not take that one till he had paid for the other two. I have managed very cleverly. I have kept back the smallest cow because it eats the least.'

In a rage and fury, the man lifted his stick to inflict upon his wife the stripes with which he had threatened her. Suddenly he let it fall again without touching her, and said, 'You are the most stupid goose that ever waddled about on this earth! but I pity you. However, I am going again into the country for three days, and if I find anyone during that time as silly as you are, then you will escape; but if I do not, then you shall receive your well-deserved reward without mercy.'

Then he went out into the high road, seated himself on a

stone, and waited for something to pass. Presently he saw a waggon coming along, in the middle of which a woman stood, instead of sitting, on a truss of straw which lay near the oxen, in order to guide them better. 'Ah,' thought the man, 'here is what I seek.' He sprang up as he spoke, and ran before the waggon, here and there, as if he was undecided which way to go.

'What do you want, gossip?' said the woman. 'I do not know you; where do you come from?'

'I have fallen from heaven,' he replied, 'and have no idea how to get back again; can you take me there?'

'No,' said the woman, 'I do not know the way; but as you have come from heaven, can you tell me how my husband is going on? He has been there these three years; you must have seen him.'

'I have seen him, certainly,' replied the man; 'but it is not every man that is contented. Your husband has to watch the sheep, and the dear animals give him plenty of work. They run on the mountains, and wander into the wilderness, and he has to run after them and bring them home. In consequence of this, his clothes are torn to rags, and are falling off his back, and there are no tailors there; they are not admitted, as you know we are told in the story.'

'Now, who would have thought of that?' cried the wife. 'But stay, I'll tell you what I'll do: I'll go and fetch my husband's Sunday coat, which hangs in the wardrobe, then he will look respectable; that is, if you will be good enough to take it.'

'No use at all,' said the farmer; 'no one can venture to take clothes to heaven, they are always taken away at the door.'

'Well, then,' cried the woman, 'I sold yesterday my beautiful meadow, and a fine lot of money I got for it. I will send him that. If you stick a purse of money in your pocket, no one will notice it as you go in.'

'If nothing else can be done,' said the man, 'I will oblige you in this matter.'

'Stay here, and sit down for awhile, then,' said the woman; 'I will go and fetch the purse, and be back again very soon. I shall not sit on the truss of straw; but stand up, so that I can guide the oxen better.'

Away she drove as she spoke, and the man thought to himself: 'She has a good stock of folly, at all events, and if she really brings the money, my wife will be lucky, and escape

without a single stripe.' He had not waited long before he saw her running back to him with the purse of money in her hand, which she herself placed in his pocket. Then she thanked him a thousand times for his kindness, and went away.

But on reaching home she met her son coming from the field, and told him what an unexpected thing had happened to her. 'I am so delighted,' she continued, 'that I have found the opportunity to send something to my poor husband, who suffers from want of clothes and money. Who would have thought that there was any want in heaven?'

The son was full of wonder at this account; but presently he exclaimed, 'Mother, men do not come from heaven every day. I will go out immediately and try to find this man, for I should like to see him; he will be able to tell me how it looks up there, and what work there is to do.' So he went out, saddled his horse, and rode away quickly.

He had not gone far before he saw the farmer sitting under a willow-tree, counting the money that was in the purse. 'Have you seen a man pass here who has just come from heaven?' asked the youth.

'Yes,' answered the farmer; 'but he has set out to return, and has taken the road over yonder mountain, which is rather a nearer way. You could overtake him, if you rode quickly.'

'Ah,' said the young man, 'I have been the whole day hard at work, and the ride here has tired me. You know the man, so will you be so good as to seat yourself on my horse, and overtake him, and bring him back here?'

'Ah,' thought the farmer, 'here is another with no wick in his lamp. Why should I not do you this favour?' said he aloud, as he mounted the horse, and rode away at a rapid trot.

The young man remained sitting where the farmer had left him till night came on, but he did not return. 'Ah, well,' he thought, 'the man was, no doubt, in a great hurry to get back to heaven, and the farmer has lent him the horse to take to my father.' He went home, and told his mother what had happened, and finished by saying, 'The man has, no doubt, sent the horse to my father, that he may not have to run about so much on foot after the sheep.'

'It is all right,' she replied, 'for your legs are still young, and you can easily go about on foot.'

As soon as the farmer returned home, he placed the horse in the stable, near the remaining cow, and then went in to his wife. 'Irine,' he said, 'you are very lucky. I have found two who are still more silly fools than you are; this time, therefore, you

will get off without one stripe. I will reserve them for another occasion.'

Then he took out his pipe, lighted it, seated himself in the old arm-chair, and said : 'This has been a good speculation—a sleek horse for two poor lean cows, and a purse full of money into the bargain. If stupidity always brought me so much as this, I should be willing to honour it.' So thought the farmer, but you no doubt prefer the simple folk.

STORIES ABOUT SNAKES.

I.

THERE was once a little child whose mother gave him every night a small bowl of milk and broken bread, and the child sat himself down in the yard with it. But when he began to eat, there came from a crevice in the wall a house-snake, plunged his head into the milk, and ate with him. The child was so pleased that when he sat down with his dish, and the snake had not come, he would call out :

'Snake, snake, come quickly, snake,
And of my bread-and-milk partake.'

Then came the snake, and took the food.

It showed itself grateful also, for it brought the child out of its homely treasure all sorts of pretty things, sparkling stones, pearls, and gold playthings. But the snake drank only the milk and left the bread. Then the child took his little spoon and hit it gently on the head with it, and said, 'Little thing, eat also some bread.' The mother, who was standing in the kitchen, heard the child speaking to someone, and when she saw that it was hitting a snake with a spoon, she ran out with a piece of wood, and killed the good little animal. From that time a change came over the child. As long as the snake had eaten with him, he was strong and big, but now he lost his beautiful red cheeks, and grew thin. In a short time the death-bird began to cry in the night, and the redbreasts gathered together twigs and leaves for a funeral garland for the child who lay on his bier

II

An orphan child sat on the town wall spinning. There she saw a snake come from an opening in the bricks. She quickly spread out her blue silk neckerchief close beside her; this the snakes like much, and will creep only on it.

As soon as the snake saw it, it went back, came again and brought a small golden crown, which it laid on the neckerchief, and went away. The girl took up the crown; it glittered, and was the finest spun gold. Not long after, the snake came again, but as it did not see the crown, it crept back to the wall, and struck its head from grief against it, as long as it had strength to do so, until it lay dead. If the maiden had not taken the crown, the snake would have brought her more of its treasures out of the hole.

THE MILLER'S BOY AND HIS CAT.

A miller once lived in an old mill; he had neither wife nor children, and three miller's apprentices worked for him. When they had been with him some years, he said to them one day: 'I am getting old, and I shall soon want to sit in the chimney-corner without work. Whichever of you, therefore, brings me the best horse shall have the mill, and only have to support me till my death.'

The youngest of these apprentices was the drudge, and the others considered him silly; they were also envious at the thought that he might have the mill, so they determined to prevent him from trying for it. They started, however, together on their expedition, but when they got outside the town, the two said to him: 'Silly Hans, you had better stay here; you would never find a horse, if you were to try for your whole life.'

Hans, however, would go with them, and as night came on they arrived at a cave, in which they laid themselves down to sleep. The two elder youths, who fancied themselves very clever, waited till Hans was asleep, and then rose up and ran away as fast as they could, leaving him behind alone, and thought they had managed most cleverly to get rid of him.

Hans awoke with the sun, and found himself lying in a deep hole, and after looking all about him, and seeing no one near, he exclaimed: 'Oh dear! where am I?' Then he roused him-

self and scrambled out of the hole, and wandered into the wood. 'Ah,' he thought, 'here I am in the wood, quite forsaken and alone. How am I ever to find a horse?'

As he walked on in deep thought, a little tabby cat met him, and said to him in a most friendly manner: 'Hans, what can I do for you?'

'Ah,' he replied, 'you can't help me, puss.'

'Well,' she said, 'I know exactly what you are longing for: you want a beautiful horse. Come with me, then, and be my true knight for seven years, and I will give you one more beautiful than you have ever seen in all your life.'

'This is a wonderful cat,' thought Hans; 'however, I will see if what she says is true.'

Then she took him with her to a little enchanted castle, in which there were nothing but cats as servants, who waited upon the tabby cat. They sprang nimbly up the steps before the visitor, and seemed good-natured, merry creatures.

In the evening, while the mistress and Hans sat at supper, three of them came in and performed music. One played the violin, another the bass-viol, and the third blew out his cheeks as much as possible in playing the bugle. When supper was ended, the other cats cleared the table and moved it away.

Then said the mistress cat: 'Come, Hans, we will have a dance: will you dance with me?'

'No,' he replied; 'I could not dance with a pussy-cat—I never did such a thing in my life.'

'Oh, well, never mind,' she said, and told the other cats to take him to bed.

They lighted him to a little sleeping-room; and then one pulled off his shoes, another his stockings, and as soon as he was in bed they blew out the light and left him.

The next morning they came again and helped him out of bed; one pulled on his stockings, another tied on his garters, and a third washed his face, while a fourth dried it with her tail.

'That is certainly a very soft towel,' he said to himself.

But he had also to serve the cat, and to cut up wood into little pieces. For this purpose he had an axe and a wedge, and a saw of silver, and a chopper of gold. So he chopped the wood small, remained in the house, had plenty of good eating and drinking, and saw no one but the tabby cat and her domestics.

At last one day she said to him: 'Go out into my meadow, Hans, and mow the grass, and make it into hay;' and for

this purpose she gave him a silver scythe, and a gold whetstone, and told him to be sure to bring them back again safely.

Away went Hans, and soon accomplished his task, bringing home the hay and the tools to the house as he had been told.

'Am I to have my reward now?' he asked.

'No,' she replied; 'you must do something else for me first. You will find timber outside, and carpenter's tools all of silver, and everything necessary for building, so I want you to build me a house.'

Hans set to work and soon built the house, and when it was finished he said: 'I have done all you told me, but still there is no horse for me.'

By this time the seven years had really gone by, so the cat asked him if he would like to see his horse.

'Yes, indeed,' he replied.

So she led him to a small house, and when the door was opened he saw twelve horses. Ah, how proud and spirited they looked! and their skins shone and glittered so brightly that his heart was in his mouth for joy.

And now the cat took him into the castle, gave him a good dinner, and said: 'I shall not give you the horse yet; but you must go home, and in three days I will come myself and bring it to you.'

So she started him off, and herself showed him the way back to the mill.

During the time he had stayed with her, however, she had given him no new clothes, so that he was obliged to wear those he had brought with him, and a smock-frock, which was too short and small for him. When he reached home he found the two other lads had returned and brought their horses with them; but one was lame and the other blind.

'Well, Hans,' they said, when they saw him, 'where is your horse?'

'It will be here in three days,' he replied.

They laughed at him, and said: 'Ah, that is very likely! just catch any fine horses coming here for you!'

Hans said nothing, but went into the room; and when the miller saw him, he cried: 'You shall not sit at the table with us in such a torn and ragged condition! If anyone should come in I should be ashamed to see you here.'

So they gave him something to eat outside.

When evening came, the other apprentices would not let him

sleep in the same room with them, so he was obliged to go out and creep into the hen-house and lie down on the straw.

The third morning came, and very early, not long after they were all up, a splendid carriage drawn by six horses drove to the door. The horses were as beautiful and as sleek as those Hans had seen, and their harness glittered in the light. But with the carriage were several servants, and one of them led a most beautiful horse, which was for the poor miller's boy.

The carriage stopped, and a beautiful princess alighted, who was no other than the tabby cat, whom Hans had released from enchantment by serving her willingly for seven years. She entered the mill and asked the miller where his youngest apprentice was.

'We cannot have him in the mill now,' he replied, 'he is so torn and ragged; he is outside in the hen-house.'

'I will fetch him myself, then,' said the princess.

So she called her servants, and they followed her with new and elegant clothes, and she told them to lead him to the house and desire him to throw off the rags and the old smock-frock, and wash and dress himself in the new attire; and when he had done so no prince could have looked more elegant.

Meanwhile, the princess returned to the mill, and asked to see the horses which the other apprentices had brought, and she found that one was blind and the other lame. Then she desired her servants to bring the horse which was intended for Hans; and when it was brought into the court, and the miller had looked at it, the princess said: 'That horse is for your youngest apprentice.'

'Then,' said the miller, 'he must have the mill.'

'No,' said the princess, 'he will not need it; you may keep the mill and the horse also.'

And then Hans appeared splendidly dressed, and she desired him to take a seat in her carriage, and they drove away together.

They went first to the small house which Hans had built with the silver tools: it was now a beautiful castle, all shining with gold and silver. They were soon after married, and Hans became so rich that he never wanted anything again as long as he lived. No one, therefore, can ever say that because a man is silly he will never be rich.

THE TWO WANDERERS.

Mountain and valley do not meet, but the children of men do, both good and wicked. It happened once that a shoemaker and a tailor met on a journey. The tailor was a good-looking little fellow, always good-tempered and merry; he saw the shoemaker coming towards him from the other side, and perceived that he carried his box of tools with him, so he cried out jocosely, in the words of a merry song:

'Sew well your seams,
Draw out your thread,
Rub it right and left with wax,
Work till 'tis time to go to bed.'

The shoemaker, however, could not bear a joke. He made a wry face as if he had been drinking vinegar, and looked as if he were going to collar the tailor. The merry little fellow, however, only laughed, and, holding up a bottle to him, said: 'I did not mean any harm, friend; just have a drink, it will help you to swallow down the bile.'

The shoemaker took such a large draught that the thunder-clouds on his face began to disperse. He gave back the bottle to the tailor, and said: 'I have often heard it said that men speak better after drinking than when they are thirsty. Shall we travel together?'

'With all my heart,' said the tailor, 'if your inclination is to go to a large town, where we may most likely find plenty of work.'

'That is just what I should wish to do,' replied the shoemaker. 'In a little nest like our village there is no work to be had, and in the country people like to go bare-footed.'

So they agreed to travel together, and went away on their journey, always placing one foot before the other like a weasel in the snow. They had plenty of time for walking, but very little to eat and drink; so when they arrived at a town they both tried for work in their different trades, and the tailor looked so fresh and lively, and had such bright, rosy cheeks, that he readily obtained work; and when he had the luck, his master's daughters would give him a kiss behind the door, as he went away. Generally, when he again joined the shoemaker, he had the most money in his purse.

The peevish shoemaker would make a long face, and say: 'The greater the rogue, the greater the luck.' But the little tailor only laughed and sang, and shared all that he earned with his comrade. If he had only a couple of pence jingling in his pocket, he would take them out and throw them on the table so joyfully that the glasses would dance again, and it might be said of him: 'Easily earned, easily spent.'

They had been travelling for some time, when they arrived near a large forest, through which lay the road to the chief town. Two footpaths led to this town, one of which would occupy seven days to traverse, and the other only two; but neither of them knew which was the shorter way.

The two wanderers seated themselves under an oak tree, and began to consult respecting what quantity of food they should take with them.

The shoemaker said: 'A man ought always to prepare for the future. I shall take bread enough to last seven days.'

'What!' cried the tailor, 'drag bread enough for seven days on your back, like a beast of burden, and not be able to look about you? I shall trust to Providence, and not trouble myself. The money in my pocket will keep as good in summer as in winter, but bread will become dry in the heat, and mouldy in the damp weather. My coat is also a little out at elbows; besides, after all, why should we not find the right way? Two days' provisions is all I shall carry.'

So each took what he chose, and they started with hope into the wood.

The forest was as still as a church when they entered it; not a breath of air stirred, no brook murmured, the song of the birds was hushed, and through the thick foliage not a sunbeam could penetrate. The shoemaker said not a word, but the pressure of the weight of bread on his shoulders obliged him every now and then to wipe off the drops of perspiration from his morose and sullen countenance. The tailor, however, was quite lively, sprang here and there, picked off a leaf or sang a song, and thought that heaven itself must be pleased to see him so happy.

Two days passed, but on the third day the end of the forest seemed as far off as ever, and the tailor had eaten all his bread. By this time his spirits had sunk an ell lower; he did not lose his courage, however, but still trusted to Providence and his own good luck. On the evening of the third day he laid himself down hungry and tired under a tree, and rose again next morning still hungry; and so he went on till the fourth day,

and when the shoemaker sat down on the stump of a fallen tree to eat his supper, the tailor could not help looking at him. But when he begged for a piece of bread, the other laughed scornfully, and said: 'You that have always been so merry can now know what it is to feel miserable. The birds sing in the morning early, but in the evening they become the prey of the hawk.' In short, he was quite without pity or sympathy.

But on the fifth morning the poor tailor could not hold out any longer, and from exhaustion could scarcely utter a word; his cheeks were white, and his eyes quite red.

Then said the wicked shoemaker: 'I will give you a piece of bread to-day, if you will let me put out your right eye.'

The unhappy tailor, whose only thought then was how to save his life, felt that he had no other means of doing so, and that he could not help himself. He wept once more with his two eyes, and then submitted to the cruel shoemaker, who must have had a heart of stone.

There came into the mind of the poor tailor at this moment something that his mother had once said when he had stolen something nice out of the store-room: 'Eat as much as you may, and suffer what you must.'

As soon as he had eaten his dearly-bought bread, he was able again to get on his legs, forgot his misfortune, and comforted himself with the reflection that he could still see well enough with the eye that was left. But on the sixth day the hunger was fiercer than ever, and seemed as if it were consuming his very vitals. In the evening he fell under a tree, and on the morning of the seventh day was unable to rise from exhaustion, while death stared him in the face.

Then the wretched shoemaker spoke again: 'I will have compassion on you, and give you another piece of bread, if you will consent to lose your left eye also; but you can do as you like.'

Then the tailor recalled his light-hearted, thoughtless life, and praying to God for pardon, said to his comrade: 'Do what you will; I will endure what I must, but remember that every moment of your life is judged, and an hour will come when your wicked acts to me will be requited. In my best days I have always shared with you what I had earned. My trade is an art that requires to be carried on stitch by stitch, and if I lose both eyes I shall be unable to work any more, and shall be obliged to beg; but if I am to be blind, do not leave me here alone in the forest, or I must die of starvation.'

The shoemaker, who had driven all good thoughts out of his

heart, would not listen; he took his knife and put out the poor tailor's left eye, and then, after placing a piece of bread in his hand, gave him a stick, and led him away. About sunset they came out of the forest, and in a field near stood a gallows. To this the shoemaker led the blind tailor, laid him down under it, and went away and left him.

Overcome with fatigue, pain, and hunger, the unfortunate man sunk to sleep, and slept the whole night. At daybreak he awoke, but knew not that above where he lay hung two poor criminals, and that on each of their heads sat a crow.

Just as he awoke, one of the crows began to speak to the other. 'Brother,' he said, 'are you awake?'

'Yes, I am awake,' replied the other.

'Then I will tell you something,' said the first again. 'The dew which has fallen around us to-night will restore the eyesight to any blind person who washes with it. If the blind only knew it, how many could be restored to sight by this dew, who never believed that it is possible!'

When the tailor heard this, he took out his pocket-handkerchief, dragged it over the grass, and when it was well saturated with the dew, he washed out the cavities of his eyes with it. Almost at the same moment was fulfilled what he had heard, and a pair of new, perfect eyes filled up the empty sockets. A little longer, and then the tailor looked up, and saw the sun rising behind the mountain-top, and on the plain before him lay the great city, with its noble gates and its towers, while the golden pinnacles and crosses that crowned their summits glittered in the sun's first morning rays. He could distinguish every leaf on the trees, he saw the birds fluttering among the branches above him, and the gnats dancing in the morning air. Then he took a sewing-needle out of his pocket, and when he found that he could thread it as well as ever, his heart bounded for joy. He threw himself on his knees, and thanked God for the unmerited mercy, and sang his morning song of praise. He did not forget to pray for the two poor criminals who hung there, like clock-weights, swinging to and fro as the wind moved them. Then he took his bundle on his back, and, soon forgetting his past pain and sorrow, continued his journey, singing and whistling as he went.

The first living thing he met was a brown foal, running and frisking in freedom in the field. He caught him by the mane, for he wished to mount and ride to the city; but the foal begged for his freedom.

'I am still young,' said he, 'and even a lighter tailor than

you would break my back. Leave me to run free till I become strong. Very likely a time may come when I shall be able to repay your kindness.'

'Run away, then,' said the tailor; 'I see you are a wild young colt.' He gave him one gentle stroke with a switch over his back, which sent him kicking up his hind-legs with joy at his freedom, and galloping over hedges and ditches.

The tailor, however, had not eaten anything since the day before. 'The dew,' he said, 'has filled my eyes, but bread has not filled my mouth; the first that I meet of anything eatable I must keep for food.'

At this moment a stork stepped quite gravely across the meadow. 'Stop, stop!' cried the tailor, and caught him by the leg. 'I do not know whether you are good to eat, but my hunger allows me no time to inquire. I must cut off your head and roast you.'

'Do not do that,' answered the stork. 'I am a sacred bird, whom no one ever thinks of injuring, and I am of very great use to man; leave me my life, and I may be able, at some time or other, to recompense you for it.'

'Take yourself off, then, Cousin Long-legs,' said the tailor.

The stork rose, let his long legs hang down, and flew gently away.

'What shall I do now?' said the tailor to himself; 'my hunger is constantly increasing, and my stomach is getting more empty; whatever comes in my way next is lost.' Almost as he spoke, he came to a pond where two young ducks were swimming about. 'You have come at my call,' said he, seizing one of them; and he was just going to wring its neck, when an old duck, who stood among the rushes on the bank, began to quack loudly, and, swimming towards him with stretched-out beak, begged him most earnestly to spare her dear children.

'Think, now,' she said, 'how your own mother would have grieved if you had been taken away from her to be killed.'

'Be still, now,' said the good-natured tailor; 'you shall keep your children.' And he placed the captive again in the water.

As he turned away, he saw before him an old tree, partly hollow, and from the hole wild bees were flying in and out. 'Here I shall find a reward for my kind actions,' said the tailor; 'the honey will refresh me.'

But the queen bee came out in great displeasure, and said: 'If you disturb my people, and destroy my nest, we will use our stings upon you, and they will be in your skin like ten

thousand red-hot needles; but if you leave us in peace, and go your way, at some time or another we may be able to do you a service.'

The tailor saw at once that there was nothing to be got from the hollow tree. 'Three empty dishes,' he said, 'and out of the fourth nothing; this is a bad dinner-time.' So he dragged himself on with his hungry stomach to the town, at which he arrived about noon. At the inn he found a dinner already cooked for him, and he lost no time in seating himself at the table.

As soon as his hunger was appeased, he determined to go out and seek for work, and very soon found a master and good situation. He had, however, learnt the groundwork of his trade so thoroughly that it was not long before he became quite a noted tailor. Everyone wanted to have his coat made by the clever little man. Each day gained him fresh employment, and although he would say, 'I cannot rise any higher now,' at last he was appointed by the king to be tailor to the court.

However, as it often happens in the world, on the very same day his former comrade was made court shoemaker. When he caught sight of the tailor, and saw that he had again two perfect eyes, his conscience so tormented him that he thought to himself: 'I must dig a pit for this man ere he takes revenge on me.'

But those who dig a pit for another generally fall into it themselves.

So in the evening, when he had finished the day's work, and twilight drew on, the shoemaker slipped quietly in and obtained an audience of the king, and said: 'My lord king, the tailor who is appointed to the court is, no doubt, a very clever man; but he has boasted that he can recover the golden crown belonging to the kingdom, which was lost in days gone by.'

'Indeed!' replied the king, 'that is very pleasant news. Let the tailor know that I expect him to set about finding this crown to-morrow morning, and unless he succeeds he is to leave this city for ever.'

'Oho!' cried the tailor, 'a fellow cannot give more than he has; if this surly king desires what it is not possible for anyone to perform, I shall not wait for to-morrow morning, but take myself out of the town at once.'

He corded his bundle; but as he went out of the gate he was sorry that he had to give up his good fortune and leave the town where it had gone so well with him.

He came to the pond where he had made acquaintance with the ducks. The old duck was on the shore; she had left her young ones, and was pluming her feathers with her beak. She recognised him immediately, and asked him what made him hang down his head.

'You would not wonder if you knew what has happened to me,' he said; and then he told her of his fate.

'If that is all,' said the duck, 'we can advise you what to do. The crown was thrown into the water of this pond, and there it now lies at the bottom. We can soon fetch it for you. In the meantime, spread your pocket-handkerchief on the shore.'

She, with her young ones, quickly dived down under the water, and in less than five minutes appeared again, carrying the crown on her wings, and the twelve young ones swimming round her, each supporting it with its beak. Then they came to land, and laid the crown on the pocket-handkerchief.

You would have been surprised to see how beautiful it looked when the sun shone upon it, for it glittered with thousands of precious stones. The tailor tied the crown up in his handkerchief, and carried it to the king, who was so overjoyed at seeing it again that he hung a gold chain round the tailor's neck.

When the shoemaker found that he had made a false move, he thought of something else to ruin the tailor. So he went to the king, and said: 'My lord king, the tailor is still boasting. He says that the royal castle, complete in every way, both inside and out, can be modelled in wax.'

On this the king sent for the tailor, and commanded him to model the castle in wax, and said that if he did not bring it in a few hours, or if there should want even a nail on the wall, he would be confined underground for the remainder of his life.

'Oh,' thought the tailor, when he heard this, 'it gets worse and worse; that is more than mortal man can do.'

So he again took his bundle on his back, and wandered away.

When he came again to the hollow tree, he seated himself with his head drooping, and feeling very sad. Presently the bees came out, and amongst them the queen-bee, who, when she saw him, asked him if he had a stiff neck, as he held his head so low.

'Ah, no,' answered the tailor, 'something else.' Then he told her what the king required him to do.

Immediately the bees began to buzz and to hum, and the

queen-bee said to him: 'Go back to your house, and come again in the morning; bring a large cloth with you, and you will find it is all right.'

So he turned his steps homewards. But the bees flew to the king's castle, in at the windows, and examined every corner, and saw exactly how everything was arranged.

Then they hastened back, and reproduced the castle in wax in the most perfect manner, so that it appeared to grow before the eye. By evening it was finished, and when the tailor made his appearance in the morning, there stood the beautiful building quite ready for him—not a nail on the wall missing, nor even a tile on the roof. It was delicately white like snow, and yet sweet as honey. The tailor packed it up carefully in his handkerchief, and carried it to the king.

The king could not sufficiently admire it. He placed it in a saloon, and presented the tailor with a large stone house. The shoemaker, however, was not yet satisfied.

A third time he appeared before the king, and said: 'My lord king, it has come to the ears of the tailor that in the court of the palace there is not a well or a fountain, and he boasts that he could cause water to flow there as clear as crystal, and to the height of a tall man!'

So the king sent for the tailor, and said to him: 'If by to-morrow morning you do not cause a stream of water to flow in my court as you have promised, then shall the executioner in the same court make you shorter by a head!'

The poor tailor did not take long to decide what to do. He hastened away from the town with the tears rolling down his cheeks, for this time his life was at stake.

As he walked along full of grief, the foal to which he had granted liberty came springing towards him. It had now grown to a beautiful brown horse.

'Now is the time,' he said, as he saw the tailor, 'to requite your kindness to me. I know already what you want, and I shall soon be able to help you. Jump up,' he continued; 'my back could carry two such as you now.'

The tailor, on hearing this, took heart, sprung with one leap on the horse, which started off at full speed, and did not stop till he reached the castle-yard. Then he galloped round the court as quick as lightning three times. The third time he plunged violently; and as he did so, a terrible crack appeared in the ground under his feet, and in the same moment a quantity of earth was shot into the air and over the castle, and after it rose a stream of water as high as the man and the

horse. The water was as clear as crystal, and the sun's rays sparkled on it in various colours.

When the king saw it, he stood still in wondering amazement, and then embraced the tailor in the presence of all his people.

But this happiness did not last long. Now, the king had several daughters, each very beautiful, but no son; so the wicked shoemaker came a fourth time to the king, and said to him: 'My lord king, there is no end to the tailor's haughty boasting; he is declaring now that he can bring a little son to the king through the air.'

Upon this the king sent for the tailor, and said to him: 'If within nine days a little son is brought to me through your means, then you shall have my eldest daughter to wife.'

'That is really a tempting reward,' thought the tailor, 'but it is out of the power of any man to accomplish. The cherries hang too high for me; if I attempt to climb for them the branch will break under me, and I shall have a fall.' He went home, seated himself cross-legged on his work-table, and reflected on what would be the best way to act. 'It is no use,' he said at last. 'I will go away; they will not let me live here in peace.' He got down from the table once more, tied up his bundle, and hastened to the gates.

When he reached a meadow he saw his old friend the stork, standing like a philosopher contemplating a frog which croaked near him, and which he at last swallowed. Then he turned, saw the tailor, and advanced to greet him. 'I see,' he said, raising himself, 'that you have your knapsack on your back. Why are you leaving the town?'

Then the tailor told him that the king required of him what it was impossible for him to do, and then began to mourn over his unhappy fate.

'Don't let any gray hairs grow out of that trouble,' said the stork; 'I will help you in your difficulty. I have already brought many babies to your town, and I can just as well bring a little prince out of the well this time as any other child. Go home, and make yourself quite comfortable; in nine days from to-day go up to the king's castle, and I will be there.'

The tailor went home, and was careful to be at the castle at the appointed time. He had not been long there when the stork appeared flying through the air, and quickly tapped at the window with his beak. The tailor opened it, and Cousin Long-legs stepped cautiously in, and walked gravely across the smooth marble floor. He had a little child in his beak,

who was as beautiful as an angel, and it stretched out its little hands to the queen. The stork advanced and laid the child on the queen's lap, and she kissed it, and pressed it to her heart, and was almost beside herself with joy.

Before he flew away, the stork took his travelling pouch from his shoulder and presented it to the queen. It contained a horn full of coloured sugar-plums to be divided among the young princesses. The eldest, however, had not any, as she was going to be married to the merry tailor.

The tailor said: 'It seems to me as if I had been drawing lots and winning. My mother was right: she said that if we trusted to Providence, and acted honestly, we should never want.'

After this the shoemaker was ordered to leave the town; but before he went he was obliged to make the shoes in which the tailor was to dance at his wedding. His way to the forest led him to the gallows. Full of rage and fury, and tired with the heat of the day, he threw himself down under it; and while he slept the two crows, who still sat on the heads of the hanging men, flew down and picked out his eyes. He rose and ran blindly into the wood, where it is supposed he died of starvation, for he has never been seen or heard of since.

HANS THE HEDGEHOG.

Once upon a time there was a peasant who had plenty of money and enough land; but rich as he was, he still wanted one thing to make him happy—he had no children. Often when he went to the town with the other peasants they would laugh at him, and ask why he had no child. At last he became angry, and said, 'I *will* have a child, even if it be a hedgehog.'

Then his wife had a child, the upper part of whose body was that of a hedgehog, the lower part that of a boy. When she saw the child she was terrified, and said, 'See, thou hast brought a curse on us.' The man answered, 'It can't be helped; we must have the boy christened, but we shall not be able to get a godfather for him.'

The woman said, 'We cannot christen him anything but Hans, my Hedgehog.'

When he was christened the parson said, 'He will not be able to lie in an ordinary bed on account of his quills.' So they put a little straw behind the stove, and laid Hans the Hedgehog on it. His mother also could not nurse him because of his quills. So he lay for eight years behind the stove, and his father was weary of him, and thought, 'If he would only die!' But he did not die; he still lay there. Now, there was a market in the town, and the peasant was going to it. He asked his wife what he should bring from it for her. 'A little meat, and some white bread for the household,' she said. Then he asked the servant what she wanted, and she said a pair of slippers, and some stockings with clocks on them. Lastly, he said: 'Hans, my Hedgehog, what wilt thou have?' 'Father,' replied he, 'bring me bagpipes.'

As soon as the peasant returned home, he gave his wife that which he had bought for her, meat and bread; then he gave the maid the slippers and stockings with clocks; and lastly, he went behind the stove and gave Hans the Hedgehog the bagpipes. And when Hans the Hedgehog had them, he said, 'Dear father, go to the forge and have the cock shod for me; then I will ride away and never come back again.' The father was so pleased to get rid of him that he had the cock shod, and when it was ready Hans mounted it and rode away; but he also took swine and asses with him to keep in the wood. When he reached the forest he made the cock fly up on a high tree, and there he sat and watched the asses and swine for many years, until the herd had grown very large; but his father knew nothing of him. As he sat in the tree he played his bagpipes, and made very beautiful music.

Once a king came past who had lost his way, and, hearing the music, wondered where it came from, and sent his servant to discover. He looked about, but saw nothing but a small animal sitting high up in the tree that looked like a cock with a hedgehog on his back, which made this music. Then the king said to the servant, 'Ask him why he sits there, and if he knows the road back to my kingdom.'

Then Hans the Hedgehog came down and said that he would show them the way if the king would give him a written promise that whatever he first met in the royal courtyard as soon as he reached home should be given to him—Hans. The king thought, 'I can easily do that; Hans the Hedgehog understands nothing, and I can write what I like.' So he took pen and ink and wrote something, and when he had done it Hans showed him the way, and he reached home safely.

And his daughter, who saw him from afar, was so full of joy that she ran to meet him, and kissed him. Then the king remembered Hans the Hedgehog, and told her what had happened; that he had been obliged to promise a wonderful animal to give him whatever should first meet him when he got home; that the animal sat on a cock as on a horse, and made beautiful music, but that he had written instead that Hans the Hedgehog should *not* have whatever met him, for Hans could not read. The princess was glad, and said that he had done well, for she would not have gone away with a hedgehog.

Hans the Hedgehog, however, kept the asses and sheep, was always happy, and sat on a tree and blew on his bagpipes.

Now, it happened that another king was travelling with his servants and attendants, and he also lost his way and knew not how to get home, because the forest was so large. Then he also heard the beautiful far-off music, and sent his attendants to see what it was. They came under the tree and saw the cock in it, with Hans the Hedgehog sitting on him. The servants asked him what he was doing up there. 'I am keeping my asses and my pigs; but what do you want?' The attendants said that they had lost their way, and could not get back to their own kingdom, and asked if he would show them the road thither. Then Hans came down on his cock from the tree and told the old king that he would show him the way if the king would give him whatever first met him when he arrived at his royal castle. The king said 'Yes,' and wrote a promise to Hans the Hedgehog that he should have it. When this was done Hans rode in front on the cock, and showed them the way, and the king reached his kingdom safely. When he came to the court there was great joy. Now, he had an only daughter who was very beautiful, and she ran to meet him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, rejoiced that her old father had come back again. She asked him where he had been so long in the world. He told her that he had lost his way, and was nearly not coming back at all; but when he was passing through a great forest, a creature half like a hedgehog, half like a man, riding on a cock and seated on a high tree, making beautiful music, had helped him and shown him the road; but he had promised him that he would give him whatever first met him at the royal castle, and it was she, and he was very grieved. But she promised that for love of her old father she would willingly go, if Hans the Hedgehog came for her.

Hans the Hedgehog, however, herded his pigs, and they multiplied till the whole forest was full of them. Then Hans did not wish to live any longer in the forest, and sent word to his father that he should have every sty in the village emptied, for he was coming with so large a herd of pigs that anyone might kill them who wished to do so. When his father heard this he was troubled, for he thought that Hans the Hedgehog had long been dead. Hans seated himself on his cock, drove his pigs before him into the village, and ordered them to be killed. Hi! there was a killing and a chopping that could be heard two miles off. Then Hans the Hedgehog said: 'Father, let me have my cock shod by the smith; then I will ride away and never return.' The father had the cock shod again, and was glad that Hans would not return.

Now, Hans the Hedgehog rode away to the first kingdom; there the king had commanded that if anyone came riding on a cock with bagpipes he should be shot, or in some way killed, before he reached the castle. When, therefore, Hans came riding thither, they all pressed towards him with fixed bayonets, but he put spurs to his cock, who flew over the gates in at the king's window. He there got off, and called on the king to give him his daughter, or he would take both their lives. Then the king spoke soft words to the princess, and begged her to go away with Hans to save her own and his life. So she dressed herself in white, and her father gave her a carriage with six horses and grand servants, together with gold and possessions. She departed with Hans the Hedgehog, his cock and bagpipes, and the king thought that he should never see her again. But he was mistaken; for when they were at a short distance from the town Hans took off her beautiful clothes and stabbed her with his hedgehog bristles, till she was all covered with blood, and said: 'This is the reward of your falsehood; go, I will not have you,' and hunted her home, so that she was dishonoured for all the rest of her life.

Then Hans the Hedgehog rode farther on his cock and with his bagpipes to the dominions of the second king, to whom he had shown the way. Orders here, however, had been given that when he appeared the guards should present arms, that he should be cheered and brought into the royal palace.

When the king's daughter saw him she was frightened, because he looked so strange; but she thought that she could not object to him, because she had given her promise to her father. So Hans was welcomed by her, and was married to her, and sat with her at the royal table, and ate and drank.

When evening came and they had to go to rest, she was afraid of his quills; but he told her that she need not fear, for no harm would happen to her; and he told the king to order four men to watch before the chamber door, and that when he went to bed he would creep out of his hedgehog skin and leave it by the bedside, that the men were to run to it, throw it into the fire, and stay beside it till it was consumed.

As the clock struck eleven he went into his room, stripped off his hedgehog skin, and laid it down beside the bed. The men came, took it up quickly and threw it into the fire. When it was consumed Hans was freed from the curse, and lay on the bed just like a man in form, but coal-black, as if he had been burnt. The king sent for his physician, who washed and anointed him with precious ointment, so that he became white, and even a handsome young man.

When the princess saw this she was glad, and the next morning they arose joyfully, ate and drank, and the wedding was properly performed, and Hans the Hedgehog received the kingdom from the old king.

After some years he went with his wife to his father, and told him that he was his son; but the father said he had no son, he had had but one, who had been born like a hedgehog, with quills, and had gone into the world. Then Hans made himself known, and the old father rejoiced, and went with him to his kingdom.

THE SHROUD.

A MOTHER had a little son of seven years old, who was so beautiful and gentle that no one could look at him and not love him, and she herself worshipped him. He suddenly became ill, and God took him. For this loss the mother could not be comforted, but wept both day and night. Soon after the child had been buried it appeared by night in the places where it had lived and played during its life, and if the mother wept it wept also; at daylight it disappeared. As, however, the mother still never ceased weeping, it came one night in the little white shroud in which it had been placed in its coffin, and with its wreath of flowers round its head, and said: 'Oh, mother, stop

weeping, or I shall never fall asleep in my coffin, for my shroud will not dry because of thy tears.'

The mother, when she heard this, was afraid, and wept no more.

The next night the child came with a little light in its hand, and said: 'Look, mother, my shroud is nearly dry, and I can rest in my grave.'

Then the mother gave her sorrow to God, and bore it patiently and quietly, and the child came no more, but slept in its little bed in the earth.

THE JEW AMONG THE THORNS.

A RICH man once had a servant who always served him honestly and faithfully. He was the first to rise in the morning, and the last to go to bed at night, and if any difficult work arose, which no one else could manage, he was ready to undertake it. Added to this, he never complained, but was contented with everything, and always merry.

At the end of his first year of service his master paid him no wages, for he said to himself, 'It is the most prudent way, and I shall save the money. He will remain in my service, I know, and work as pleasantly as ever.'

The servant made no complaint, and during the second year continued to work well and faithfully, yet at the end he was kept without any wages. Still he worked on the third year, and then the master put his hand in his pocket, but drew it out empty. At last the young man spoke.

'Master,' he said, 'I have served you well for three years, and now I want to go out and see the world; will you give me what it is right for me to have?'

'Yes,' answered the greedy old man; 'you have served me with the greatest willingness, and I am ready to reward you liberally.' He put his hand into his pocket as he spoke, and drew out three pence, and, counting them into the servant's hand, he said: 'There are three pence—one for each year—and those are as liberal wages as you would get from any master.'

The young man, who knew very little of the value of money, took up his earnings, and said to himself: 'Now that my

pocket is full, I need not trouble myself any longer with hard work.'

Away he went, over hill and dale, singing and dancing with joy at his freedom, till he came to a road with thick bushes on one side.

Out of these bushes stepped a little man, who said to him: 'Where are you going, you merry fellow? Cares don't appear to trouble you much.'

'Why should I be sad?' answered the youth. 'Have I not three years' wages jingling in my pocket?'

'How much is your wonderful treasure?' asked the dwarf.

'How much? Why, three bright pennies, good coin, rightly told.'

'Listen,' said the stranger, in reply: 'I am a poor, destitute man, too old to work; but you are young, and can easily earn your living: will you give me those three pennies?'

The young man had a kind heart, and could not help pitying those who were old, so he offered him the money, and said: 'Take it, in heaven's name; I shall never miss it.'

The little man took the money, and said: 'I see you have a kind and generous heart, therefore I will grant you three wishes —one for each penny—and each wish shall be fulfilled.'

'Aha!' cried the youth, 'you are a magician, I see. Well, if what you say is true, I will wish first for a gun which shall hit everything at which I aim; secondly, for a fiddle which, when I play it, shall oblige everyone to dance who hears it; and thirdly, that whoever I make a request to shall not be able to refuse me.'

'All these you shall have,' said the little man. Then he thrust his hand into the bush, separated the branches, and there lay a beautiful fiddle and gun, all in readiness, as if they had been ordered.

He gave them to the young man, and said: 'Whatever request you may make, no man on earth will be able to refuse.'

'What more do I want now?' said he, as the little man left him. And he continued his way, feeling more light-hearted and merry than ever. In a short time after this he met a Jew with a long beard like a goat's, who stood listening to the song of a bird perched on the branch of a tree.

'How wonderful,' he cried, 'that such a little creature should have such a powerful voice! I wish it was mine. Oh, if I could only sprinkle a little salt on its tail, and bring it down!'

'If that is all,' cried the youth, 'the bird shall soon come

down.' And, raising his gun, he aimed so correctly that the bird fell into the hedge of thorns beneath the tree.

'Go and fetch out your bird, you knave!' said he to the Jew.

'Mine?' he replied. 'Oh, I will get the bird out for myself, as you have hit it.'

Then he laid himself on the ground, and began to work his way into these bushes till the thorns held him fast. The young man, seeing him in this position, felt inclined to tease the Jew, so he took up his fiddle and began to play.

In a moment the Jew was on his legs, dancing and springing in the bush, and the longer the violin continued to play, the faster the Jew danced; and as the thorns tore his shabby coat, pulled out his long beard, and at last scratched him all over terribly, he cried out: 'Master, master, stop playing! leave off playing! I don't want to dance.'

But the youth would not listen or stop, for he thought: 'You have fleeced others often enough, my friend, and now you shall see how you like it yourself;' and as he played, the Jew danced higher and higher, till his rags were torn off and hung on the bush.

'Ah, woe is me!' cried the Jew. 'Master, master, I will give you whatever you ask me—even a purse full of gold—if you will leave off playing.'

'If you are really going to be so generous,' said the young man, 'I will stop my music; but indeed I must praise your dancing: your style is perfection.' So saying, he put up his fiddle, took the purse of money the Jew had promised him, and went on his way.

The Jew stood and watched him till he was out of sight; then he screamed after him as loud as he could: 'You miserable musician! you wretched fiddler! wait till I can catch you alone; I will hunt you then till you lose the soles of your shoes, you ragamuffin! I dare say you were not worth sixpence till you got all that money out of me.' And so he went on calling him all the dreadful names he could think of. At last he stopped for want of breath, and, making his way quickly to the next town, he went before the magistrate.

'My lord judge,' he said, in a woful voice, 'I have been robbed and cruelly treated on the king's highway, by a rascally fellow who met me on the road. The very stones on the ground might pity me for what he made me suffer: my clothes torn to rags, my body all scratched, and my little bit of savings taken with my purse—bright golden ducats, each as beautiful

as the other. For the love of heaven let the man be put in prison.'

'Was it a soldier,' asked the judge, 'who cut you about in this manner with his sword?'

'No, no,' replied the Jew, 'he had not even a dagger with him; but he had a gun on his shoulder and a violin which hung round his neck; the rascal can easily be recognised.'

So the judge sent his people out to find the offender, and it was not long before they met him walking along quite wearily, and upon searching they found upon him the purse of gold. When he was brought before the judge, he said: 'I never touched the Jew, nor his gold, but he gave me the purse of his own free will because I stopped my fiddling when he asked me, and said he could not endure it.'

'Heaven defend us!' cried the Jew; 'his lies swarm like flies on a wall.'

But even the judge refused to believe the young man's assertion. 'It was not likely,' he said, 'that the Jew would act so foolishly.'

Therefore the good servant was condemned to be hanged for having committed a robbery on the king's highway. As he was being led away to the scaffold the Jew screamed after him, 'You dog of a fiddler! you thief! you are justly paid out.'

The young man calmly ascended the steps to the scaffold, but on the last step he turned round and said to the judge: 'Grant me but one request before I die.'

He replied: 'You must not ask for your life; any other request I will accede to.'

'I shall not ask for my life,' replied the prisoner; 'I only request to be allowed once more to play on my violin.'

The Jew raised a loud outcry. 'I beg, I entreat you not to allow it; pray, pray don't!' he almost howled in his terror.

But the judge said: 'Why should we not grant him this short pleasure? it is the last he will have, therefore it is granted.'

Indeed, the judge could not have refused the young man, because of the power which had been given him by the dwarf in the wood. No sooner was permission granted, however, than the Jew cried: 'Oh, oh! bind me tight, tie me fast.'

But it was too late: the young man had quickly turned his violin round, and at the first chord the man who was going to bind the Jew let the rope fall, the judge, the clerk, and the officers of the court began to move and to tremble, and presently, as the full tones of the violin struck out, they all

jumped up and began dancing with all their might; even the hangman dropped the rope and joined in the dance, and he and the judge and the Jew were the chief performers.

Soon the sounds of the fiddle reached the market-place, and many who came from curiosity to listen were soon among the dancers, fat and lean, young and old, capering madly away among the rest. Even the dogs who ran by stood upon their hind-legs and began dancing about; and the longer he played the faster they all danced and the higher they sprang in the air, till at last they knocked each other's heads together and began to scream and cry out. At length the judge, quite out of breath cried: 'I will give you your life if you will stop your fiddling.'

The young man on hearing this was quite ready to stop his playing, and, hanging his violin again on his neck, he stepped down from the ladder, and approaching the Jew, who lay panting on the ground, he said: 'You rascal! now confess where you got that purse of money that you gave me, or I will begin fiddling again.'

'Oh me, oh me, I stole it, I stole it,' cried the Jew, 'and you earned it honestly.'

Then the judge had the Jew led to the scaffold and hanged as a thief.

THE LEARNED HUNTER.

THERE was once a young lad who had learnt the business of a locksmith, and he told his father he should like to go out into the world and seek his own living. His father said that he might do so, and gave him money for his journey. So he went and sought work. But after a time he got tried of his trade, and wanted to be a hunter. One day in his wanderings he met a hunter in a suit of green, who asked him where he came from and where he was going. He replied that he was a locksmith's apprentice, but that he did not like the trade, and had a desire to be a hunter, and asked the man if he would take him as a pupil. 'Oh yes,' replied the hunter, 'if you will go with me.'

So the youth hired himself to the hunter, and remained for some years with him, and learnt the art of hunting. After this

he wished to travel, and the hunter gave him for wages only an air-gun, which had, however, one good property—whoever shot with it never missed his aim. Then he went away farther till he came to a great wood, in which, after wandering about for a whole day, he could not find a way out. When evening came on, he climbed up a high tree to be out of reach of the wild beasts, and about midnight thought he saw the glimmer of a small light in the distance; he looked cautiously through the foliage to see where it was. But he first took off his hat and threw it in the direction of the light, so that when he came down from the tree it might show him which way to turn. Then he scrambled down, went to where his hat lay, picked it up, and, placing it on his head, turned his steps towards the light.

The nearer he approached, the larger the light appeared, till at length he saw an immense fire with an ox roasting on a spit, and three giants sitting round it. As he drew near, he heard one of the giants say, 'I must just see if this meat is ready for eating.'

So he cut off a piece, and was just going to put it into his mouth, when the hunter shot it out of his hand. 'Now then,' cried the giant, 'the wind has blown that piece away, I must have another.'

But before he could get even a bite this also was shot away. The giant in a rage turned to the one who sat next to him, and, boxing his ears, cried: 'What did you snatch that piece away for?'

'I didn't snatch it away,' said the other; 'it must have been some sharpshooter on the road.'

The giant cut off a third piece, but it was scarcely in his hand before the hunter shot it out again. 'That must be a good shot, whoever he is,' said the giants one to another, 'to shoot pieces out of one's mouth in that way; he might be useful to us.'

So they called aloud, 'Come here, you sharpshooter; come and sit down by our fire with us, and have some supper; we will do you no harm. If you won't come, we will fetch you by force, and then good-bye to you.'

The youth, on this, stepped forward and said: 'I am a trained hunter, and wherever I aim with my gun I am sure to hit.'

So they asked him to join them, and said he should have the best of everything they had. They told him also that not far from where they sat was a large piece of water, and beyond it stood a castle, in which lived a beautiful princess, whom

they wished to carry off. 'Oh, that is easily managed,' he replied. But they said again, 'It is not so very easy, for the princess has a sharp little dog, which begins to bark loudly when anyone approaches the tower in which she sleeps, and the moment he barks everyone in the royal household wakes, and we cannot therefore get in. Do you think you could undertake to shoot that dog?'

'Oh yes,' he replied; 'that would be to me a mere trifle.'

He went down to the water and seated himself in a boat, and was soon across. As he approached the shore, out ran the little dog, but before he could utter a single bark, the hunter with his air-gun shot him dead. When the giants saw this they were mightily pleased, and thought now they were certain to have the princess; but the hunter wished to see first how the affair was to be managed, so he told them to remain outside till he called them.

Then he entered the castle alone and found everything as still as a mouse, for they all slept. In the first room he entered there hung upon the wall a sword of pure silver with a golden star upon it, in which was inscribed the king's name. On a table near lay a sealed letter; the hunter took it up, broke open the seal, and read that whoever wielded that sword could take the life of anyone who came in his way.

He took the sword from the wall, fastened it on, and went farther. Presently he came to the chamber where the princess lay sleeping, and she was so beautiful that he stood still and held his breath as he looked at her. 'Ah,' thought he to himself, 'I dare not allow this innocent maiden to fall into the power of those wild giants, who have wickedness in their thoughts.'

Then he looked round the room, and saw a pair of slippers; on the right slipper was embroidered a star, with the king's name, and on the left another star with the princess's name. There was also a silk neckerchief, embroidered with gold, on which her father's and her own name were worked, and all in gold letters. The hunter took a pair of scissors, and cut a strip off the silk neckerchief, and put it in his knapsack; he also took the slipper with the king's name on it, and placed it with the strip of silk. And all this while the princess slept peacefully, and she did not even wake while he cut a piece from the sleeve of her nightdress, which he also placed in his bag, and went away without disturbing anyone.

Outside the door he found the three giants waiting impatiently. and wondering that he did not bring the princess

He called to them, however, to come in. 'One at a time,' he said, 'for I cannot open the door for you, but there is a hole through which you can creep.'

Then the first giant came near, and in an instant the hunter seized him by the hair, dragged the head through, cut it off with the silver sword at one blow, and pulled the rest of the giant's body in after it. He then called up the second and third, and served them exactly in the same manner, and then, feeling joyful at having freed the beautiful young maiden from such enemies, he left the castle.

'Ah,' thought he, 'I will now go home and tell my father what I have already done, and afterwards go out again into the world, to see what other good fortune awaits me.'

On arising in the morning and going to the door of the castle, the king saw with surprise the three dead giants. He instantly went to his daughter's room, woke her, and asked her if she knew who had killed the giants.

'Dear father,' she replied, 'indeed I do not know; I have slept all night.'

However, when she got up and began to dress, she first missed her right slipper, then she noticed that a strip had been cut off her silk necktie, and at last that her nightdress sleeve had a piece cut off.

On hearing of this, the king called together the whole household, soldiers, servants, and all who were there, and inquired if they knew who had destroyed the giants and delivered his daughter from their power. Now, the captain of the soldiers was a wicked and ugly man, with one eye, and he came forward and said he had done it.

'Then,' said the king, 'as you have accomplished this, I will give you my daughter in marriage.'

But the maiden said: 'Dear father, why should I be married? I would rather go out in the world and travel about on foot till I could walk no farther, than marry that man.'

The king replied: 'If you will not be married as I wish, you shall take off all your royal robes, and put on peasant's clothes, and I shall send you to a potter to learn how to be useful in selling earthenware vessels.'

Then the princess took off her beautiful clothes, dressed herself as a peasant, and went to a potter, and hired of him a basket of earthenware goods, and promised him that if she had sold any by the evening she would pay him for the hire. Her father, however, made her go and stand in a corner of the market-place to sell her goods, and he ordered some peasants

to drive their carts over them, so that her goods would be broken into a thousand pieces.

The poor maiden took her basket to the corner, as the king had desired her to do. The waggons drove by, and smashed her goods to atoms. Then she began to weep and cry: 'Oh, how shall I pay the potter?'

The king, however, who still wanted her to marry the captain, sent for the potter, and asked him not to lend her another basket of goods, and so when she went to him the next morning, he refused to let her have any more. Then she went to her father weeping and lamenting sadly, and declaring that she would go out into the world and wander about by herself, rather than be married to the captain. Her father then told her that he would have a small cottage built for her in the wood, where she could live all her life by herself, and cook for anyone who passed by, but receive no money for it.

As soon as the house was finished, a sign was hung up over the door, on which was written: 'For nothing to-day, to-morrow we pay.' She lived in this cottage for a long time, and it was soon noised abroad in the world that a maiden lived there who cooked for nothing, and that over the door of her cottage hung a sign. The hunter who had killed the giants heard of this, and thought to himself: 'That is the very place for me to have my dinner cooked; I am hungry, and have not much money.'

So he took his air-gun and his knapsack, wherein everything still remained which he had taken from the castle as proofs of what he had done, and, going to the forest, soon found the tiny house and read the words upon the sign, 'For nothing to-day, to-morrow we pay.' He carried also the sword with which he had cut off the heads of the three giants. So he went in like a traveller, and asked for something to eat.

He was delighted with the beautiful maiden there; for she was as beautiful as a picture. She asked him where he came from; and he replied that he was travelling about the world. She asked him where he had got the sword with her father's name on it, and in reply he asked her if she was the king's daughter, and she answered, 'Yes.'

'With this sword,' he said, 'I cut off the giants' heads. And here,' he continued, opening his knapsack, 'is the slipper, and the pieces of the silk neckerchief and the nightdress. I have also the tongues of the giants, which I cut out after they were dead; so that I have every proof.'

Then how happy she was; for she knew that he had been the one to set her free. After this they went together to the

old king; and the princess led her father away to her chamber, and told him that this was the man who had slain the giants. When they showed him the proofs, the king could no longer doubt, and told the hunter it was a great pleasure to him to know how it all happened, and that he would give him his daughter as a wife.

The princess heard this, and was happy. Thereupon the hunter was presented with a dress, and the king gave orders for a grand entertainment. The hunter was placed at the right hand of the princess. On her left sat the captain, who supposed the huntsman to be only a visitor.

After dinner the king told the captain he wished to ask him a question. 'If anyone should assert that he had killed three giants,' said the king, 'and on examining the heads they were found to be without tongues, how could you account for it?'

'Perhaps they had no tongues,' replied the captain.

'That is an impossibility,' said the king. 'Every creature has a tongue.' And he continued, 'What should be done to the man who claims an unmerited honour and reward?'

'He deserves to be torn in pieces,' was the reply.

'You have pronounced your own sentence,' replied the king. 'Here is the man who killed the giants, and cut out their tongues, which he has, with other proofs, in his possession.'

So the captain was made a prisoner, and led away to punishment, and the hunter married the young princess. He soon after sent for his father and mother, and they lived with their son in great happiness till the king's death, and then he became king.

THE FLAIL FROM HEAVEN.

A PEASANT once went out with a pair of oxen to plough. As soon as they were in the fields, the horns of the two animals began to grow, and kept on growing all day, till by the time they returned home they had grown too large to get in at the stable-door. Luckily, a butcher came by, to whom the oxen were soon made over, and the bargain settled in this manner. The peasant agreed to carry to the butcher a quart of rape-seed, and for every seed the butcher promised to pay a dollar.

The peasant went home, and very soon returned with the

rape-seed for the butcher, but on the way he dropped one seed. The butcher counted the seeds, and paid for them justly; but if the peasant had not lost that one seed he would have had another dollar. However, he set out to return home quite satisfied, but on reaching the place where the seed had dropped, what was his surprise to find that it had taken root and grown into a tree, the top of which reached to heaven!

Then thought the peasant: 'I should like to have a peep at what they are about up there, and see what the angels are doing, and here is a splendid opportunity.'

So he climbed up the tree, and, peeping in, saw the angels at work threshing oats, and stood watching them for some time.

Presently, as he stood there, he felt the tree on which he stood totter under him. He looked through the branches, and saw that they were cutting it down. 'If I should fall from such a height as this, it would be terrible,' he thought; and in his trouble he scarcely knew what to do.

There seemed, however, nothing better than to take a piece of cord which lay near the heaps of chaff, and let himself down by it. But before he did so he laid hold of a hatchet and a flail which the angels had left behind them, and, tying them both to the rope, slid gently down from the tree.

When he reached the earth, however, he sank into a hole so deep that it was fortunate he had a hatchet with him, for with it he was able to cut steps in the side of the hole, and climb once more into daylight.

He took the hatchet and the flail with him, that no one might doubt his story.

THE TWO KINGS' CHILDREN.

THERE was once a king who had a little boy, of whom there was a prophecy that he should be killed by a stag when he was sixteen years old. When he had gained that age he went out with the huntsmen hunting. In the forest the prince was separated from the others, and suddenly saw a great stag, which he wished to shoot, but could not hit. He chased the stag so long that they were both quite out of the wood, when, instead of the stag, there stood all at once before him a very

tall man, who said: 'Now, it is well that I have you. I have already worn out six pairs of skates in hunting you, and have not been able to get you.'

Then he took the king's son with him, and dragged him through a great lake to a large royal castle, and then made him sit down and eat with him. After they had taken food, the king said: 'I have three daughters. You must watch with the eldest for one night, from nine o'clock in the evening till six o'clock in the morning. I will come every hour, as the clock strikes, and call you, and if you give me no answer you shall be killed the next morning; if you answer, you shall have her for your wife.'

When the young people went to the bedroom, there stood in it a stone image of St. Christopher, and the king's daughter said to it: 'At nine o'clock my father will come, and every hour after until it strikes three. When he calls, give him an answer instead of the prince.'

The stone St. Christopher nodded its head quite quickly, and then slower and slower until it stood still.

The next morning the king said to him: 'You have done this task well, but I cannot give you my daughter; you must watch a night with my second daughter, then I will consider if you can have my eldest daughter for your wife. But I shall come every hour myself; when I call, answer me, and if, when I call, you do not answer me, your blood shall flow.'

Then the prince and princess both went into the sleeping-room, and there stood a still larger stone image of St. Christopher.

The king's daughter said to it, 'If my father calls, do you answer him.'

Then the great stone image of St. Christopher again nodded its head quickly, and then more and more slowly, till it stood still again.

And the prince lay down on the threshold, put his hand under his head, and fell asleep. The next morning the king said to him: 'You have done this task really well, but I cannot give you my daughter. You must watch a night with my youngest daughter, then I will consider if I can give you my second daughter to wife. But I shall come every hour, and when I call, answer me; and if you do not answer, your blood shall flow.'

Then the prince and princess went again together to the bedroom, where was a much larger and much fatter St. Christopher than the two first had been.

To it the king's daughter said: 'When my father calls, do you answer.'

The great tall stone St. Christopher nodded his head for half an hour, until at length the head stood still.

Then the prince lay down on the threshold and fell asleep.

The next morning the king said: 'You have truly watched well, but I cannot give you my daughter yet. If you can cut down my great forest and make a lake for me there between six in the morning and six in the evening I will think of it.'

Then he gave him a glass axe, a glass wedge, and a glass mallet.

When the prince came into the wood he began to cut, but the axe broke in two; then he took the wedge and struck it once with the mallet, and it became as short and as small as sand. Then he was much troubled, and thought he would have to die, so he sat down and wept.

Now, when it was mid-day, the king said, 'One of you girls must take him something to eat.'

The two eldest refused, and the youngest had to go and take him something. When she came into the forest she asked him how he was getting on. 'Oh,' said he, 'I am getting on very badly.' Then she told him to come and eat a little. 'No,' he said, 'I cannot; I shall have to die, so I will not eat any more.' But she spoke kindly to him, and begged him to try, till he came and ate. When he had eaten, she said, 'I will comb your hair a little, and then you will feel brighter.' So she combed his hair, and he fell asleep. Then she took her handkerchief, made a knot in it, and struck with the knot three times on the ground, and said, 'Earth-workers, come forth.' At once a great many little earth-workers came, and asked what she required. She said, 'In three hours the forest must be cut down, and the site of it must be a lake, that one may be able to see one's self in, as in a glass, and fish must be in it.' The earth-workers went and brought together their relations to help, and in two hours it was done. Then they came to the king's daughter, and said, 'We have done as we were commanded.' She took her white handkerchief again and struck three times on the earth, and said, 'Earth-workers, go home;' and they all disappeared.

When the prince awoke it was all done, and the princess said, 'Come home when it has struck six.' Then she went home.

When he returned home the king asked, 'Have you levelled the forest?'

'Yes,' said the prince.

'That is well.' But as they were sitting at table, the king said, 'You have done your task, but I cannot give you my daughter yet; you must do something more.'

'What is it?' asked the prince. The king said that there was a great mountain, and on it were thousands of bushes, which he must cut down, and on the top build a great castle that must be finer than man can think, and all the furniture that belongs to a castle must be in it.

When he rose the next morning, the king gave him a glass axe and a glass gimlet, and said that he was to have his task done by six o'clock. When he chopped at the first thorn-bush the axe broke off quite short, and so small that the pieces flew all around, and the gimlet also he could not use. Then he was quite miserable, and waited for his dearest, in case she would come and help him. When it was mid-day she came, and brought him something to eat. He went to meet her and told her everything, and then let her comb his hair, and he slept. Then she once more made a knot and struck the earth, and said, 'Earth-workers, come forth.' Many earth-workers appeared, and asked what she required. She replied, 'In the space of three hours all the bushes must be cut down, and on the top of the mountain must stand a castle, which must be as beautiful as can be imagined, and all the furniture must be therein.'

The earth-workers went and fetched their relations to help them, and when the time was up all was done. Then they came to the princess and told her, and she took her handkerchief and struck the knot thrice on the earth, and said, 'Earth-workers, go home;' and they all disappeared.

Then the prince awoke and saw everything, and he was as happy as a bird in the air. When it struck six they went together home. Then the king said, 'Is the castle ready?' 'Yes,' replied the prince; but while they sat at table the king said, 'I cannot give you my youngest daughter till the two eldest are married.'

Then the prince and princess were very sad, and the prince did not know what to do. So he came at night to the princess, and ran away with her. When they had gone a little distance the king's daughter looked back and saw her father behind her. 'Oh,' said she, 'what shall we do? My father is behind us, and will take us back. I will change you into a briar, and myself into a rose, and I will shelter myself in the midst of the bush.'

When the father came to the spot there stood a briar with one rose on it; he was going to gather the rose, but the thorns pricked his fingers so that he had to go home. His wife asked why he had not brought his daughter back with him. He said that he was close to them, but all at once he lost sight of them, and where they had stood was a briar with a rose growing on it.

Then said the queen: 'If you had broken off the rose the briar must have come also.'

So he went back to fetch the rose; but meantime the pair were already far over the fields, and the king ran after them.

When the daughter looked round and saw him coming, she said: 'Oh, what must I do? I will make you into a church, and myself into a pastor, and I will stand in the pulpit and preach.'

When the king came to the place there stood a church, and in the pulpit a pastor was preaching, so he listened to the sermon and then went home. The queen asked him why he had not brought them.

He answered: 'I ran so long after them that I should soon have been with them, when a church stood there, and in the pulpit a parson who preached.'

'You should have brought the parson, and the church would have come also. It is of no use to send you; I must go myself.'

When the queen had gone some distance she saw them both from afar. But the daughter looked back and saw her mother coming, and said: 'How unfortunate! my mother is coming herself. I will change you into a pond, and myself into a fish.'

When the mother came to the spot there was a great pool, and in the middle of it a fish sprang around, and peeped with his head above the water, and was quite gay. The queen wanted to catch the fish, but she could not. Then she was angry, and drank up the whole pool that she might get the fish; but it made her so ill that she was obliged to bring up the pool again. Then she cried, 'I see well that I can do nothing now;' and she said that they might come back to her. Then they went back together, and the queen gave her daughter three walnuts, and said, 'These can help you when you are in the greatest need.' So the young people went away again together, and when they had gone quite ten miles they arrived at the castle from which the prince came, and close by it was a village.

When they reached it the prince said: 'Stay here, my

dearest; I will go up first to the castle, and then I will come and fetch you with the carriage and servants.'

When he arrived at the castle they were all rejoiced at having the king's son back again, and he then told them that he had a bride, who was in the village, and that he wished them to go with the carriage and fetch her. They at once harnessed the horses, and many attendants mounted on the carriage. When the king's son was about to get in, his mother gave him a kiss, and he forgot all that had happened, and also what he was just going to do. Then his mother ordered the horses to be taken out of the carriage, and everyone went back to the house.

But the maiden sat in the village, and watched and watched, and thought he would fetch her, but no one came. Then the king's daughter took service at the mill which belonged to the castle, and was obliged every day to sit by the water and clean the dishes.

The queen came one day from the castle, and was walking by the water, when she saw the fine-looking maiden sitting there, and said: 'What a fine girl that is! She pleases me well.' Then she and all who were with her looked at the maiden, but nobody knew her.

A long time passed by, during which she served the miller honourably and faithfully. Meanwhile, the queen had been seeking a wife for her son, who came from a far-off part of the world. When the bride arrived they were at once to be married, and many people came running together who wished to see everything.

Then the maiden said to the miller that she would like to go also, and the miller said, 'Yes, go, then.' When she was about to go she opened one of the three walnuts, and there lay in it a beautiful dress. She put it on, and went into the church and stood by the altar.

Suddenly the bride and bridegroom came and placed themselves before it, and when the pastor was going to marry them the bride looked sideways and saw the maiden standing there. Then she stood up again and said that she would not be given away until she had as fine a dress as the lady there. So they went home again, and sent to ask the lady if she would sell the dress. No, she would not sell it, but the bride might perhaps earn it.

Then the bride asked her what she should do. She replied that if she might sleep one night before the door of the prince the bride might have it. So the bride said, yes, she might

do so. But she commanded the servants of the prince to give him a sleeping-draught. The maiden lay on the threshold and lamented all night long. She had had the forest cut down; she had had the fish-pond made; she had had the castle built for him; she had changed him into a briar, then into a church, and at last into a pond, and yet he had forgotten her so soon.

The prince heard nothing of all this, but the servants had been awakened, had listened to it, and did not know what it meant. The next morning, when they were all up, the bride put on the dress, and went with the bridegroom to the church. Then the handsome maiden opened the second walnut, and there was a still more beautiful dress inside it, which she put on and went again to the church, and stood by the altar, and everything happened as it had happened the time before. The maiden lay again all night on the threshold of the prince's room, and the servant was ordered to give him a sleeping-draught again. The servant, however, gave him something to keep him awake, and when he lay on his bed the miller's maiden lamented as before, and told all that she had done. The prince heard it all and was much troubled, for he remembered all that had happened; then he wanted to go to her, but his mother had locked the door. The next morning, however, he went straight to his dearest and told her all that had happened to him, and prayed her not to be angry that he had forgotten her so long. Then the princess opened the third walnut, and there was in it a still more splendid dress; that she put on, and went with the bridegroom to the church, and numbers of children gave them flowers and offered them gay ribbons to bind about their feet, and the priest blessed them, and they had a happy wedding. The false mother and bride had to depart. The mouth of him who told this last is still warm.

THE CLEVER LITTLE TAILOR.

THERE once lived a princess so very haughty that, when a suitor came, she would have nothing to do with him unless he could solve one of her riddles, and if he did not succeed he was dismissed with mockery and contempt. She allowed it to be generally known, however, that the man who could find out her riddle should be her husband.

Now, it happened that three tailors came together. The two eldest had done so many fine stitches, and guessed all sorts of puzzling riddles, that they were sure of being able to guess what the princess propounded.

The third was a useless little fellow, who knew scarcely anything of his trade; yet he fancied he might be lucky as well as any of them, and wished to try. But the other two said to him: 'You had better stay at home with your half-witted head; you will never guess anything.'

The little tailor, however, was not to be diverted from his purpose. He said he had set his heart upon it, and he would go as well as everybody else. They all three, therefore, informed the princess that they were ready to receive the riddle if she would lay it before them. They said that the right people had arrived at last—people who had fine understandings, and could thread a needle with anyone.

The princess said: 'I have two different sorts of hair on my head; what colour are they?'

'If that is all, black and white, like the clothes people call pepper and salt,' replied one.

'You are wrong,' said the princess, and she turned to the second.

'The hairs are neither black nor white,' he replied; 'they are brown and red, like my father's holiday coat.'

'Wrong again,' said the princess; 'let the third answer; most certainly he knows.'

Then the little tailor stepped boldly forward, and said: 'The princess has a silver and a golden hair on her head, and they, of course, are of different colours!'

When the princess heard this, she turned pale, and almost fell down with fright. The little tailor had guessed her riddle, and she had firmly believed that not a man upon earth could do so.

When she at last recovered herself, she said: 'You have guessed my riddle, but I am not won yet; you must do something more than this before I can be your wife. Down in the stable there lives a bear; you must spend the night with him, and if in the morning you are still alive, I will be your wife.'

She thought as she said this that she should easily get rid of the little tailor; for the bear had never yet allowed any to escape alive when once he had them in his power. The tailor, however, did not allow himself to be frightened; he went away, feeling quite contented, and saying, 'Boldly ventured is half won.'

When evening arrived, the little tailor was taken down to the bear. The bear was quite ready to bid him welcome with a pat of his paw.

'Gently, gently, friend; I will soon make you quiet!' thought the tailor. So he sat down, made himself quite comfortable, as if he had no care, pulled some nuts out of his pocket, cracked them, and ate the kernels quite at his ease.

When the bear saw this, he began to wish for nuts also, and asked the tailor to give him some. The tailor put his hand in his pocket, and brought out a handful of what appeared to be nuts, but were really pebbles. The bear stuck them in his mouth, and rolled them about in his teeth, but he could not crack them, try as he would.

'What a stupid blockhead I certainly must be,' thought the bear, 'not to be able to crack a nut!' So he said to the tailor, 'Crack my nuts for me, will you?'

'Now what a fellow you are,' said the tailor, 'with such a great mouth as yours, and yet not to be able to crack a nut!'

He took the pebble from the bear, and, quickly changing it for a nut, put it in his mouth, and in a moment crack it went.

'I really must try to do that myself,' said the bear.

So the little tailor gave him again more pebbles, and the bear worked hard, and bit with all his strength, but, as you may be sure, without success, the tailor, meanwhile, keeping him in a good humour, by pretending to crack the stones for him, but always cleverly changing them for real nuts.

Presently the little tailor took a violin from under his coat, and began to play upon it. When the bear heard the music, he could not help standing up and beginning to dance, and, after he had danced for a little while, he was so pleased with the music that he said to the tailor: 'Is it very difficult to learn to play upon that fiddle?'

'Oh no; quite easy,' replied the tailor. 'Look here, I lay my left hand on the strings, and with my right I draw the bow across them, making all sorts of sounds.'

'I must learn to play it,' said the bear, 'for then I shall be able to dance whenever I like. What do you think about it; will you undertake to teach me?'

'With all my heart!' replied the tailor, 'if you have the ability for it; but first show me your paws; the nails are tremendously long, and I must cut them a little before you begin to play.'

In a corner of the stable stood a vice, which the tailor brought out, and told the bear to place his foot upon it. As

soon as he did so, the tailor screwed it so tight that he could not move. Then he left the bear grumbling, and said, 'Wait a little while till I bring the scissors.'

The bear might grumble as he liked now, the tailor did not care; he felt quite safe, so he laid himself down in the corner on a bundle of straw, and went fast asleep.

During the night the princess heard the growling, and she made sure that the bear was growling for joy over the little tailor, of whom he was making a meal. So she rose in the morning quite contented and careless; but when she went to the stable, and peeped in, she felt quite astonished. There stood the tailor, quite lively, and as safe and sound as a fish in the water!

She could not say a single word against him, for she had promised, and the king ordered a carriage to take her to the church to be married to the tailor. Meanwhile, the other tailors, who envied his good fortune, went to the stable and set the bear's feet free from the vice, and no sooner did he regain his liberty than he immediately set off in a rage to run after the carriage. The princess heard him growling and snorting behind it, and in her terror she cried out, 'Oh, the bear is behind, and if he overtakes us we shall be lost!'

The tailor was quite prepared and self-possessed; he stood on his head, and, sticking his legs through the window, cried out, 'Bear, do you see the vice? if you don't go away now, you shall be screwed down and never again set free.'

When the bear heard this he turned round and ran away. Our young tailor travelled with his bride to church, where he was happily married, and on their return the princess took him by the hand and led him into the castle, where they continued to live in peace and were as happy as skylarks. Whoever will not believe this story must pay a forfeit of one dollar.

THE BRIGHT SUN BRINGS IT TO LIGHT.

A TAILOR'S apprentice was travelling about the world seeking for work, but he could not find any, and his poverty was so great that he had not a farthing. One day he met a Jew, and as he thought that he would have much money about him, the

tailor put God out of his mind, attacked the Jew, and said, 'Give me money, or I will kill you.'

The Jew said: 'Spare my life; I have no money except eight farthings.'

The tailor, however, said: 'You have money, and you must produce it;' and he used violence, and struck the Jew so heavily that he was nearly dead. As he was dying his last words were, 'The bright sun will bring it to light.' Then he died. The tailor's apprentice searched his pockets, seeking for money, but found no more than the eight farthings which the Jew had said he had. Then he lifted him up, carried him behind a clump of trees, and went on again to seek work.

After travelling for a long time he got employment in a town with a master who had a beautiful daughter, with whom he fell in love. He married her and lived happily. After a long time, when they had two children, the wife's father and mother died, and the young people kept house alone. One morning, as the man sat at the table before the window, his wife brought him some coffee, and when he had poured it into the saucer, and was about to drink it, the sun shone on it, and the reflection gleamed hither and thither on the wall and made circles. The tailor looked up, and said, 'He would gladly bring it to light, but cannot.'

The woman said: 'Dear man, what was it? What do you mean by that?'

He answered: 'I must not tell.'

But she said: 'If you love me you must tell me,' and used the most loving words, saying that she would tell no one, and left him no rest.

Then he told her how long years ago, when he was quite worn out and without money, he had killed a Jew, and that the Jew had said, in his death agony, 'The bright sun will bring it to light.' And now the sun wanted to bring it to light, but was not able. Then he ordered her particularly not to tell anyone, or he would lose his life, and she promised him. But when he had sat down to work she went to her godmother and told her the story, begging her never to mention it to anyone; but before three days were past the whole town knew it, and the tailor was brought to trial and condemned. Thus the bright sun did bring it to light.

THE BLUE LIGHT

THERE once lived a soldier who had served the king faithfully for many years; but when the war ceased, and the soldier, who had many wounds, was disabled, the king said to him, 'You can go home now, I do not want you any more; you have had all your pay, and only those can receive wages who serve me for them.'

The soldier knew not how he should get his living, and he wandered about for a whole day, full of care, until at evening he entered a wood, and as soon as it grew quite dark he saw at a distance a light, and on going towards it he found a house in which dwelt an old witch. 'Give me a night's lodging,' he said to her, 'and something to eat and drink; I am almost starved.'

'Ah!' she cried, 'who ever gives anything to a runaway soldier? But I will take pity on you if you will do as I wish.'

'What do you want me to do?' asked the soldier.

'First I want you to dig my garden.'

To this the soldier readily agreed, and worked all the following day as hard as he could; but though he exerted all his strength, it was not finished by the evening.

'Ah, I see plainly,' said the witch, 'that you cannot do any more to-day; well, I will give you another night's lodging, and to-morrow you shall split up a cartload of wood into firewood.'

Next day the soldier worked hard at wood-cutting till evening, and then the witch again proposed that he should remain the night. 'You shall do one more little task for me,' she said; 'behind my house is an old empty well, into which my light has fallen; it burns blue, and will not go out, and you shall go down and fetch it up for me.'

The next day the old woman took him to the well, and let him down in a basket. He soon found the blue light, and made signs to her to pull him up again. She drew him up till he was near the brink, and stretched out her hand to take the light from him.

'No,' said he, perceiving her wicked intentions; 'I do not give up the light till I am standing with both feet on the ground.'

On this the witch flew into a rage, let him fall back again

into the well, and went away. The poor soldier fell, without taking any harm, on the moist ground of the well; the blue light was still burning, but how could that help him? He saw plainly that death must come to him at last, and he sat for a while feeling quite sorrowful. By chance he put his hand in his pocket and found his tobacco pipe half full of tobacco. 'That shall be my last comfort,' thought he; and, taking it out, he lighted it at the blue light, and began to smoke.

The smoke had no sooner ascended in the air than he saw standing before him a little dark man, who said, 'Master, what is your pleasure?'

'What commands have I to give thee?' answered the soldier, in wonder.

'I must do all that you bid me,' he replied.

'Good,' said the soldier; 'then first help me out of this well.'

The little man took him by the hand and led him through an underground passage, but he did not forget to take the blue light with him. Then he showed him the hidden treasures which the witch had collected together and concealed underground, and the soldier took away as much gold as he could carry. As soon as they were above ground again he said to the little man, 'Now go in and bind the witch, and carry her before the judge.'

Not long after out she came, riding swift as the wind on a wild cat, and screaming frightfully. In a very short time, however, the little man returned, and said, 'It is all right, and the witch is already hanging on the gallows. Now, master, what is your pleasure?'

'At this moment nothing,' replied the soldier; 'you can go home, but be at hand to answer when I call you.'

'It is not necessary to call me,' he said; 'you have only to light your pipe at the blue light and I shall immediately stand before you.' Then he vanished from his eyes.

The soldier went back into the town from which he had wandered. He took up his abode at the best inn, ordered new clothes, and desired the landlord to have a room furnished for him as elegantly as possible.

When it was ready, and he had taken possession of it, he summoned the little man, and said to him, 'I have served the king faithfully for many years, but he sent me away and left me to starve, therefore now I will have my revenge.'

'What am I to do?' asked the mannikin.

'Late in the evening,' he replied, 'when the princess is in

bed and asleep, fetch her from the castle and bring her here; she shall be my maid-servant.'

Then said the little man, 'For me this is a very trifling task, and I will do it; but for you it is a very dangerous thing to do, for if it should be found out you will suffer for it.'

As the clock struck twelve the door sprang open, and the little man appeared, carrying the king's daughter. 'Aha! there you are,' cried the soldier, 'fresh to your work; go and fetch the broom and sweep the floor.' When this was finished he called her to his chair, stretched out his foot towards her, and said, 'Pull off my boot.' When she had done so he threw it in her face, and told her to pick it up and clean and polish it. She did all that he told her without resistance, mutely, and with half-closed eyes. At the first cockcrow the little man carried her back to the castle, and placed her again in her bed.

The next morning, when she rose, she went to her father and told him she had had such a wonderful dream! She said she had dreamed that she was carried through the streets as quick as lightning to a room in which was a soldier, who made her wait upon him, and do all kinds of menial work, such as sweeping the room and cleaning his boots. 'It was only a dream,' she said, 'and yet I feel as tired as if I had really done it all.'

'The dream could not possibly have been true,' said the king; 'however, to make sure, I will advise you what to do. Fill your pocket full of peas, and make a little hole in it, so that, if you are really carried away in the night, they will fall out and leave a trace behind you in the street.'

While the king spoke, the little man, who was invisible, stood by him, and heard all he said.

That night, when he carried the sleeping princess through the streets, the peas fell out of her pocket; but they left no trace, for the cunning little man had strewed peas beforehand in all the streets. And she was obliged, therefore, again to be servant to the soldier till the cock crowed.

The following morning the king sent his servants out to find the track; but it was quite impossible, for the streets were crowded with poor children gathering up cans full of peas, and saying: 'It has been raining peas all night!'

'We must think of something else,' said the king. 'You had better keep on your shoes when you go to bed, and before you come back, if you are carried away, leave one of them behind wherever you are, then I am sure to find it.'

The little man heard of the king's plan, and in the evening, when the soldier desired him to fetch the princess, he advised him not to do so again.

'Against this there is no way to avoid discovery,' he said, 'and if the shoe is found here the king can do you great injury.'

'Do as I tell you!' cried the soldier; and so the princess was for the third night brought to work as a servant-maid.

Before she was carried back, however, she took off her shoe, and placed it under the soldier's bed.

The next morning the king ordered search to be made all over the town for his daughter's shoe, and it was found in the soldier's room. The soldier, who had at the request of the little man opened the door, was seized and carried off to prison. In his fright he forgot to take with him his best and most valuable possessions, the blue light and the gold, and he had, therefore, only a ducat in his pocket. As he stood loaded with chains at the window of his prison, he saw one of his old comrades pass by, and he tapped on the window-pane, and beckoned him over.

When the man came nearer, he said to him: 'Will you be so kind as to fetch for me a little parcel that I have left at the inn, and I will give you a ducat for your trouble?'

Away ran his comrade, and fetched him what he wanted.

As soon as the soldier was again alone, he took out his pipe, lit it, and began to smoke, and immediately the little man stood before him.

'Do not be afraid,' said he to his master; 'go with them wherever they lead you. Let what will happen, only remember to take your blue light and your pipe with you.'

The next day the trial of the soldier took place, and, although he had really done nothing very wicked, he was sentenced to death.

As he was being led away, he begged the king to grant him one last favour.

'What is it?' asked the king.

'That I may smoke one pipe on my road,' he replied.

'You may smoke three if you like,' said the king; 'but do not suppose I shall grant you your life.'

The soldier, on this, took out his pipe, lit it, and began to smoke; and, as a pair of rings of smoke ascended in the air, the little man appeared with a little cudgel in his hand, and said: 'What is my master's pleasure?'

'Knock down the false judges and their abettors to the

ground,' said the soldier, 'and do not spare the king for treating me so shamefully!'

Away flew the little man like lightning, striking right and left, here and there, and so scaring them that, if the cudgel merely touched them, they fell to the ground and remained there, not daring to move.

The king was terribly alarmed, and at last obliged to beg for his life. His prayer was not granted till he had promised to give his kingdom to the soldier, and his daughter to be his wife.

THE THREE ARMY SURGEONS.

THREE army surgeons were travelling through the world; they thought they knew their art perfectly, and they came to an inn, where they wished to pass the night. The landlord asked them whence they came and whither they were going.

'We are going round the world to practise our art.'

'Show me for once what you can do,' said the landlord.

Then the first said that he would cut off his hand and put it on again early the next morning; the second said that he would tear out his heart and put it in again all right on the morrow early; the third said that he would take out his eyes, and to-morrow put them in again.

'If you can do that,' said the landlord, 'you have learned something.'

They, however, had a salve which joined together whatever they smeared with it, and they kept constantly with them the bottle that contained it.

Then they cut the hand, heart, and eyes from their bodies, as they had said, and laid them together on a plate and gave it to the landlord, who again gave it to the servant, who was to put them in the cupboard and take care of them.

The girl, however, had in secret a lover, who was a soldier. When the innkeeper, the three army surgeons, and all the people in the house were asleep, the soldier came, and wanted something to eat. The girl opened the cupboard, and brought him some food, and in her love forgot to shut the cupboard door again, and sat with her sweetheart at the table, and they chatted together.

While they were thus enjoying themselves, and thinking of no misfortune, the cat came creeping in, found the cupboard open, took the hand, the heart, and the eyes of the three surgeons, and ran away with them.

When the soldier had finished his meal, and the girl was putting away the dishes and going to fasten the cupboard, she saw that the plate which the master had given her to take care of was empty. Then she said in alarm to her sweetheart: 'Unhappy girl that I am! What can I do? The hand is gone, so is the heart, and so are the eyes! What will become of me in the morning?'

'Be easy,' said the soldier; 'I will help you. There is a thief outside hanging on the gallows; I will cut off his hand—which was it?'

'The right.'

Then the girl gave him a sharp knife, and he went and cut off the hand of the poor sinner and brought it in; then he seized the cat and cut out its eyes; now there was only the heart missing.

'Have you not killed lately? and are not the dead pigs in the cellar?'

'Yes,' replied the girl.

'Now, that is good,' said the soldier. 'Go and fetch me a pig's heart.'

The girl put them all together on a plate, and placed it in the cupboard, and when after this her lover took his departure she went quietly to bed.

In the morning, when the surgeons got up, they told the girl to bring them the plate on which lay the hand, heart, and eyes. Then she brought it out of the cupboard, and the first received the thief's hand, smeared it with his salve, and immediately it grew on; the second took the cat's eyes and put them in; and the third fixed in the pig's heart.

The innkeeper stood by, wondered at their art, and said that he had never seen anything like it; he would tell everybody, and recommend them.

Then they paid him their bill and travelled on. As they went along, the one with the pig's heart did not keep up with them, but where there was a corner he ran to it, and sniffed about as pigs do. The others tried to hold him back by the tails of his coat, but it was of no use; he tore himself loose, and ran where the dust was thickest.

The second, also, behaved strangely; he rubbed his eyes, and

said to the others: 'These are not my eyes; I can see nothing! Guide me, lest I fall.'

Then with difficulty they journeyed on until the evening, when they came to another inn. They entered it together, and there in the corner of the room sat a rich man at a table, counting money.

The one with the thief's hand walked round, and moved suddenly once or twice with his arm, and at last, when the gentleman turned away, he snatched at the pile of money and took a handful.

One of them saw this, and said: 'Comrade, what are you doing? You must not steal. Shame on you!'

'Oh!' said he, 'what can I do? My hand moves suddenly, and I must seize something whether I will or no.'

After this they lay down to sleep, and while they were lying there it was so dark that one could not see one's own hand before one's eyes.

All at once the one with the cat's eyes woke the others, and said: 'Brothers, look! Do you see the white mice which are running about?'

The two sat up, but could see nothing.

Then he said: 'It is not right with us; we have not got back our own things. We must go back to the innkeeper who has deceived us.'

The next morning they went back, and told the landlord that they had not got back their own things; that one had a thief's hand, the second cat's eyes, the third a pig's heart.

The innkeeper said that it was the maid's fault, and went to call her, but when she had seen the three coming, she had run out of the back door and did not come back.

Then the three said that he must give them money, or they would burn down his house. He gave them what he had, and what he could get together, and the three went away with it.

They had enough money for their lives, but they would much rather have had their own property.

THE SEVEN SWABIANS.

ONCE upon a time there lived seven Swabians together, and they all had different names. After much consultation, they decided to travel together through the world to seek adventures

and to perform great deeds. When they first started, each walked separately; but as they considered it best to keep all together, they procured a long spear, which was very strong. This spear kept them all seven together, as they each clasped it with one hand. The cleverest and manliest, who was of course the eldest, walked first, and the others followed in a row, the youngest last.

Now, it happened that one day, in the haymaking month, after walking a long distance, they found themselves still some leagues from the town in which they intended to pass the night. Twilight was coming on as they crossed a meadow, and sometimes a cockchafer or a hornet would fly from behind a shrub or a bush and buzz or hum round their heads. The one who walked first, named Schultz, was terribly afraid of these intruders, and when one of them buzzed close to his face he let fall the end of the lance, while the perspiration broke out all over him from fear. 'Listen!' he cried to his companions; 'listen, I hear a drum!'

The second, who held the spear behind him, and had a very keen nose, exclaimed: 'Something is without doubt near us, for I smell powder and matches.'

At these words Schultz prepared to fly, and, springing forward, quickly jumped over a hedge, and on the prongs of a rake which the haymakers had left there, and the steel prong struck him an ugly blow in his face. 'Oh dear, oh dear!' he cried. 'Take me prisoner. I give myself up! I give myself up!'

The other six, running after him in confusion, one over the other, screamed out, 'If you give yourself up, so do we! if you give yourself up, so do we!'

And, after all, no enemy was there to bind them or carry them away, and at last they discovered that they had made a great mistake. In their fear of being laughed at and called fools by the people of the town, they swore among themselves not to open their mouths to anyone of what had happened, but to keep it quiet. Then they again started on their journey. The second danger which they encountered could not certainly compare with the first. After some days, on passing through an unploughed field, they saw a hare lying asleep in the sun, with her large ears raised, and her glassy eyes wide open. They were so terrified at the sight of the wild and horrible creature that they held a council together as to the least dangerous way of passing it. At first they wished to fly from it, but if they did, most likely the monster would follow them,

seize them, and swallow them up. 'But,' said one, 'as we must go on, it is better to prepare for a great combat. To venture is half to win.'

Then they all seven seized the spear, and walked on cautiously, the eldest foremost and the youngest behind. Schultz wished to continue holding the spear, but the youngest, feeling courageous, broke away and began to sing. The rest followed his example, one after another, till it came to Schultz's turn, and he said very gravely:

'In the town, from roof and steeple,
Soon they'll see some clever people.'

They went together to the dreadful dragon, and Brother Schultz crossed himself. As, however, this was not much help, and they were approaching nearer to their dreaded enemy, they all screamed out in alarm, 'Hie! hie! ho ho! ho hi!' The noise woke the hare, who started up in a fright, and sprang away like the wind. When Brother Schultz saw her flying through the field, he cried, full of joy:

'See, brothers, just see what is there!
The frightful monster is a hare!'

The band of seven Swabians sought fresh adventures, and at length arrived at the Moselle, with its calm and deep waters, over which are so few bridges. It must be crossed in boats. When the seven Swabians had reached the shore they called to a man who was at work on the opposite side, and asked him how they were to get over.

The man did not understand, on account of the distance, and because of their strange dialect. So he cried out, 'What! what!' Then Brother Schultz thought the man meant that they were to wade across through the water. So, as he was foremost, he advanced to the edge of the bank and at once stepped into the water; the next moment he sank in the mud and was drawn down by the deep waves. His hat, however, was carried by the wind to the opposite shore, and a frog, seating himself upon it, croaked, 'What! what! what!' The other six heard it, and said one to another, 'Our companion, Brother Schultz, is calling us; if he can wade across, why should not we also?'

Then they jumped into the water in great haste, and were soon drowned; so the frog was the cause of the death of six, for not one of the seven Swabians ever returned to his home.

THE THREE APPRENTICES.

THERE were once three apprentices who had agreed to remain together on their journeys, and to work always in the same town. At one time, however, they found no more work at their master's, so that at last they were quite in rags, and had nothing to live upon.

Then one of them said, 'What shall we do? We cannot remain here any longer; we will travel again, and if we find no work in the town to which we are going, we will arrange with the innkeeper there that we will write to him and tell him where we are staying, so that we can always have news of each other, and then we will separate.' This appeared best to the others also. They set out, and on the way met a richly-dressed man, who asked them who they were.

'We are apprentices, and are looking for work; we have hitherto kept together, but if we cannot find work we must separate.'

'There is no necessity,' said the man; 'if you will only do what I tell you, you shall not want either money or work; in fact, you shall be great lords, and drive in your carriages.'

One of them said, 'If there is no danger to our souls or our salvation we will do it.'

'No,' said the man, 'I have no claim on you.'

One of the others had, however, looked at his feet, and when he saw a horse's hoof and a man's foot, he would have nothing to do with him.

But the demon said, 'Be content; I do not want to take yours, but another soul which is half mine already, and whose measure will soon run over.'

They consented, being thus reassured, and the demon told them what he wanted. The first was to answer 'All three of us' to every question; the second was to say, 'For money'; and the third, 'Quite right.' They were always to say this, but they were not to say another word, and if they disobeyed the order all their money would disappear; as long as they obeyed him, however, their pockets should be always full. As a beginning, he gave them as much as they could carry, and told them to go to the town, and to such and such an inn. They went to it, and the innkeeper came towards them and said, 'Do you wish for something to eat?' The first

answered, 'All three of us.' 'Yes,' said the innkeeper, 'that is what I mean.' The second said, 'For money.' 'That is understood,' said the landlord. The third said, 'Quite right.' 'Certainly it is right,' said the innkeeper.

Good food and good drink were set before them, and they were well served. Afterwards payment must be made, and the landlord handed the bill to the one, who said 'All three of us;' the second said, 'For money'; and the third added, 'Quite right.' 'Certainly it is right,' said the landlord; 'all three pay, and without money I can give nothing.' They paid him, however, more than he asked.

The other guests looked on, and said, 'The fellows must be mad.'

'Yes, they must,' said the innkeeper; 'they are not quite wise.' They remained for some time at the inn, and said nothing else but 'All three of us,' 'For money,' and 'Quite right.' But they looked as if they knew all that was going on.

It happened that a great merchant came to the inn with a large sum of money, and said, 'Sir host, take care of my money for me; here are three crazy apprentices who may steal it from me.'

The innkeeper did as he was asked. As he lifted the bag into his room he felt that it was heavy with gold. Then he gave the three apprentices a lodging downstairs, but the merchant went upstairs to a private room. When it was midnight, and the innkeeper thought that all were sleeping, he came with his wife, and they had an axe, with which they killed the rich merchant. After the murder was done they lay down to sleep. When it was day there was a great outcry; the merchant was dead, and was lying in his blood. Then all the guests came running together, but the host said, 'The three mad apprentices have done this.'

The guests confirmed it, and said, 'It could have been no one else.'

The innkeeper, however, had them called, and said to them, 'Did you kill the merchant?'

'All three of us,' said the first; 'For money,' said the second; 'Quite right,' said the third.

'Now hear them,' said the host; 'they confess it themselves.'

They were put in prison, and were to be tried. When they saw their danger they became very anxious, but at night the demon came to them, and said, 'Only keep up one day more. Do not throw away your fortune. You shall not lose a single hair.'

The next morning they were brought up for judgment, and the judge asked them, 'Are you the murderers?'

'All three of us.'

'Why did you kill the merchant?'

'For money.'

'You wicked ones,' said the judge, 'have you no horror of your sins?'

'Quite right.'

'They have acknowledged it, and are still stubborn,' said the judge; 'lead them at once to death.'

They were brought out, and the innkeeper had to go with them into the circle. As they were being bound by the executioner's men, and led up to the scaffold where the executioner stood with drawn sword, there came a coach drawn by four blood-red steeds, which was driven at a speed to make the fire come from the stones, and out of the window of which a man was waving a white handkerchief. Then said the executioner, 'It is a pardon;' and 'Pardon, pardon!' was called from the carriage. Then the demon stepped out, as a very noble gentleman, handsomely dressed, and said, 'You three are innocent. You may now speak and tell what you have seen and heard.'

Then the eldest said, 'We did not kill the merchant. There stands the murderer in the circle,' and he pointed to the innkeeper. 'For proof go into his cellar, where there are hanging many others whose lives he has taken.'

Then the judge sent the executioner's men thither, who found it to be as the apprentice had said; and when this was reported to the judge, he ordered the innkeeper to be taken and to be beheaded.

Then the demon said to the three, 'Now I have the soul that I wanted. You are free and have money for as long as you live.'

THE FEARLESS PRINCE.

THERE was once a king's son so courageous that his father's house did not please him, and he thought if he could go out into the world it would not be long before he met with some wonderful adventures. So he took leave of his parents and

started, and kept wandering on farther and farther, for it mattered not to him which way the road led him.

At last he came to a giant's house, and feeling very tired, he seated himself before the door to rest; but he was not inclined to sleep, so he let his eyes wander about here and there, and at last they rested on an immense ball, and skittles as tall as a man, which lay in the outer court, and were the giant's playthings.

After a time a longing came over him to try and play a game. So he rose, placed the skittles up, and rolled the great ball at them with all his might. He was delighted, and cried aloud when the ninepins fell, and was happy. The giant, hearing the noise, stretched out his neck from the window to see what was the matter.

As soon as he saw a little fellow not bigger than other men playing with the skittles, he was astonished, and cried out: 'You little worm, do you suppose you have the strength to play with our skittles?'

The prince looked up, and when he saw the giant, he exclaimed: 'Oh, you clodhopper! you think that no one has any strength but yourself. I can do anything I like.'

The giant came down, and was astonished when he saw the skittles, and said: 'You child of man, as you are so clever, go and fetch me an apple from the tree of life.'

'What do you want it for?' asked the youth.

'Oh, not for myself,' he replied, 'but I have a sweetheart who wishes for one very much; I have been all over the world, but I could never find the tree.'

'I will find it,' said the king's son, 'and I should like to see anyone try to prevent me from getting an apple.'

'Ah,' said the giant, 'it is not so easy as you think. I have heard that the garden in which the tree grows has iron railings all round it, and outside these railings lie a number of wild beasts close together, who keep watch, and allow no one to enter.'

'They will let me pass,' he said.

'Even if they do,' replied the giant, 'and you see the apple on the tree, the thing is not done. On the tree hangs a ring, through which you must put your hand to reach the apple you wish to pluck, or else you will not succeed.'

'I mean to succeed,' said the prince.

He then took leave of the giant, and went away over hill and valley, through fields and woods, till at last he found the wonderful garden. Wild animals were crouching round it, but

their heads were lowered, for they slept. He had to step over them, however, but he did it so cautiously that they did not wake; so he climbed over the railings, and found himself in the garden.

In the middle of the garden stood the tree of life, and the rosy golden apples glittered on its boughs. He climbed up the stem, and just as he discovered the apple he wanted, he saw the ring hanging before him. He put his hand through it without trouble, and broke off the apple; but on drawing it back he found that the ring closed tightly over his arm, and he felt through every vein a rush of new strength. He climbed down from the tree, and now did not jump over the railings, but went to the great gate, and had only to give it one shake, and it opened wide immediately for him to pass through.

As he went out, a lion, who appeared to be lying there waiting for him, sprang up, not in anger or wildness, but to follow him meekly, as a dog follows his master. The prince took to the giant the promised apple, and said to him: 'See, I have brought it for you without any trouble.'

The giant, who was very much pleased that his wish had been accomplished, hastened to his sweetheart, and gave her the apple which she so desired to have. But she was a clever as well as a beautiful maiden, and she saw that the ring was not on the giant's arm. So she said: 'I will not believe that you have fetched the apple unless you can show me the ring on your arm.'

'Oh,' said the giant, 'I need only go home and fetch it for you.'

He thought it was a very easy thing for him to take it away by force from the weak little man, whether he was willing or not. But the king's son refused to give it up.

'Where the apple is, there must the ring be,' said the giant; 'and if you do not give it up willingly you must fight for it.'

On this a struggle commenced, and continued for a long time; but the giant could not overcome the prince, because of the strength given to him by the enchanted ring. So the giant tried stratagem.

'This fighting has made me very warm,' he said, 'and you appear heated also. Suppose we go down to the river and bathe; that will cool us.'

The king's son, who suspected nothing, was taken off his guard, and went down with the giant to the water, threw off his clothes, and with them the ring from his arm, and jumped into the water. In a moment the giant seized the ring and

ran off with it, but the lion, who had followed them unseen, quickly observing the theft, sprang after him, tore the ring from his hand, and carried it back to his master.

The giant on this placed himself behind an oak, and while the prince was engaged in putting on his clothes, he struck him from behind a violent blow, that blinded him in both eyes.

The poor prince now stood helpless; for he was blind, and knew not how to help himself. The giant, however, approached, and, seizing his hand as if he were going to lead him home, dragged him to the top of a high rock, and left him standing near the edge. 'Ah,' thought the giant as he went away, 'two steps more, and he will fall headlong and kill himself, and then I shall get the ring.' But the faithful lion had not left his master; he now held him fast by the clothes, and pulled him gradually back.

When the giant returned, expecting to find the prince dead, he saw that all his cunning had been fruitless. 'Is a little weak child of man to conquer me like this?' said the giant, in a rage with himself; so he seized the king's son, and dragged him again to another precipice. But the lion knew his wicked intentions, and also here saved his master from the danger. When they came near the edge of the precipice, the giant let fall the hand of the blind prince, and turned to go back alone; but the lion gave the giant a push, and over he went, fell on the ground below, and was smashed to pieces.

The faithful lion now drew his master again back from the edge of the abyss, and led him to a tree by which flowed a clear brook. The prince seated himself under the tree, and the lion, lying down by his side, splashed the water in his master's face with his paws. A few drops fell on the injured eyes, and presently he could see, but indistinctly, a bird that flew near him, and struck himself against the tree, as if his eyes also were dim. Immediately the bird flew down to the brook, and bathed himself in it; after this, he again flew up to a branch of the tree, this time without striking himself, but like one whose sight has been restored.

Then the prince understood what to do; he stooped over the water, and washed and bathed his face and eyes with it, and when he rose up his eyes were as clear and bright as they had ever been.

With his heart full of thankfulness for this great mercy, he travelled on farther through the wood, his faithful lion following, and after a time they approached an enchanted castle.

At the gate of the castle stood a maiden with a beautiful face and form, but she was quite black. She spoke to him, and said: 'Ah, if you could only set me free from the sorcerer's spell which is over me!'

'How am I to do it?' asked the youth.

'It is difficult,' said the maiden; 'you will have to stay for three nights in the large hall of the enchanted castle; but you must have no fear in your heart. And if you can be firm enough to endure all that occurs, without a sound, for no one can dare to take your life, then I am free.'

'I have no fear,' said the king's son, 'and I will make the attempt, with God's help.'

He went into the castle full of spirits, and, as it grew dark, seated himself in the great hall, and waited. About midnight he heard suddenly a great noise, and presently from every nook and corner rushed out little imps. They appeared for a time not to see him; but, after lighting a fire, they seated themselves in the middle of the room, and began to gamble.

After awhile one of the losers cried out: 'I am sure someone is here who does not belong to us, and it is his fault that I lose.'

'Wait you there, behind the stove,' cried another; 'I am coming.'

On this, the noise became so tremendous that without shrieking no one could have made himself heard. The prince sat calm and still, and had no fear, till at last they all rushed upon him suddenly, and they were so many that he could not avoid them. They pulled him down on the ground, and then pinched, and pricked, and thumped, and tormented him; but he uttered not a sound.

At the first dawn of morning, however, they all vanished, and he lay still, quite worn out, for he could scarcely move his limbs. At sunrise the black maiden came in. She carried in her hand a little flask, containing healing water, and with this she washed him and all his pain vanished, and he felt new strength coursing through his veins.

'You have luckily kept firm for one night,' she said; 'but there are still two nights more before you.' As she left him, he noticed that her feet were already white.

On the following night the little imps came again, and began their game anew, and with fresh violence. They beat and tormented the king's son much more cruelly than on the former night, so that he was covered with wounds; but he bore it all in silence, till they were at last obliged to leave

him, and at the first blush of morning the young maiden appeared with her healing water, which soon restored him.

As she turned to go away, he saw that her skin had already become white on her arms and neck; only the face still remained black, and he determined to hold out for one more night, and this proved the worst of all.

'So you are still here!' screamed the imps, when they saw him. 'Well, you shall be tormented this time till there is no breath left in your body.' They beat and pinched him, threw him from one place to another, and dragged him about by the arms and legs, as if they meant to tear him to pieces; but he endured it all, and uttered no sound.

At last the imps vanished, leaving him on the ground quite exhausted, and not even able to open his eyes when the maiden came in. However, after bathing his limbs, and pouring the healing water on his eyes, all the pain was relieved, and he felt quite well and strong, as one just awakened out of sleep; and when at last he opened his eyes, he saw the young maiden standing near, snow white, and bright and beautiful as the day.

'Stand up,' she said, 'and swing your sword three times over the steps of the castle; then the enchantment will be over.'

He had no sooner done so than the castle was free from enchantment, and the maiden was a rich princess.

Servants came and said that the table was already prepared and dinner served up. The prince and princess seated themselves in the great hall, where he had suffered so much, and were very happy together; and in the evening their marriage was solemnized with great rejoicings.

THE WONDERFUL PLANT.

A YOUNG hunter went once into a forest, to lie in wait; he was brave and light-hearted, and as he went on his way whistling an ugly little old woman met him, and said, 'Good-day, dear hunter; you are full of health and contentment, but I am suffering from hunger and thirst; pray give me something to buy food.'

The hunter did not delay to help the poor old woman; he put

his hand in his pocket, and pulled out as much as he could afford and gave it to her.

He would have passed on, but the old woman held him by the coat. 'Stay, dear hunter,' said she; 'hear what I have to say to you; for your kind good-nature, I will give you some information as a reward. Go on for a little way, and you will come to a tree on which are perched nine birds, with a cloak in their claws, about which they are quarrelling. Take aim amongst them with your gun, and shoot; the cloak will then fall, and one of the birds drop dead at your feet. Take up the cloak, for it possesses a wonderful power, and if you place it on your shoulders and wish yourself in any place, there you will be in that moment. You must also carry the dead bird with you, open it, and take out the heart, which you must carry in your pocket carefully; for while it is there you will find a piece of gold under your pillow every morning.'

The hunter thanked the wise woman, and thought to himself, 'It is good fortune she has promised if it come true.' He had not walked a hundred steps, when he heard in a tree above him a screaming and twittering. He looked up, and saw a whole host of birds tearing a cloth to pieces with their beaks and talons, and chirping, screaming, and pecking each other, as if each wanted to have it.

'Well,' cried the hunter, 'this is wonderful; it has just happened as the old woman said.' So he levelled his gun, and shot in amongst them. Oh, what a screaming and fluttering there was, and how the feathers flew about as the flock took flight! One, however, dropped down dead, and the cloak also fell down. The hunter did as the old woman had told him; he took out the heart, wrapped it up carefully, and put it in his pocket; then he carried the cloak home.

The next morning, when he awoke, he wished to prove whether the promise of the woman would be accomplished. So he lifted his pillow, and there was the piece of gold sparkling. The next morning it was the same, and the next, and so it continued, as she had said it would. At last he gathered the gold into a heap, and thought: 'What is the use of all this gold if I remain here? I will go out and see the world.'

So he took leave of his parents, hung up his game-bag and his gun, and set out on his travels. It so happened that one day he passed through a dense wood, to which there seemed no end; but he saw in the distance a noble-looking castle. At the window stood two women, looking out; one very old, the other a wonderfully beautiful maiden.

The old woman, however, was a witch, and she said to the maiden: 'Yonder comes one through the wood who has a wonderful treasure about him; we must therefore entrap him, my heart's life, and get it from him. He has in his possession a bird's heart, and therefore every morning finds a piece of gold under his pillow.'

Then she explained how she wished her daughter to act, and the sort of game she had to play, and at last threatened her, and said, with angry eyes, 'And if you do not obey me, misfortune will follow you.'

As the hunter drew near he espied the maiden, and said to her: 'I have been wandering about for a long time, and if I might be allowed to rest in this beautiful castle I have plenty of money to pay for it.'

The reason, however, of his wish to stay was in reality that he had seen the beautiful maiden. He was received into the house in a very friendly manner, and entertained most courteously, and in a very short time found himself so much in love with the bewitching maiden that he could not bear her to be out of his sight, and whatsoever she wished he was ready to agree to.

Then the old woman said: 'Now is the time to get the bird's heart. He will not discover who has taken it when he misses it.'

So she prepared a sleeping-draught, and gave it to the maiden in a goblet, and told her she must coax him to drink it.

So the maiden took the cup, and said to the hunter: 'Dearest, drink to me!'

Instantly he took the glass, and drank, and fell into a deep sleep.

Then she took the heart and carried it to the old woman, who fastened it at once round the maiden's neck. The next morning the hunter found no money under his pillow; for the piece of gold lay under the pillow of the maiden, from whence the old woman fetched it every morning. But the hunter was so completely in love, and so foolishly fond of the maiden, that he cared for nothing else so long as he had her by his side.

Then said the old woman: 'We have the bird's heart, and now we must also have the wishing-cloak from him.'

'We must leave him that,' said the maiden; 'for he has lost all his riches already.'

At this the old woman was angry, and said: 'The cloak is a wonderful thing, seldom found in this world, so I must and

will have it.' She gave the maiden a slap as she spoke, and said: 'If you do not obey me it will be dreadful for you.'

Then she agreed to obey, but went and stood by the open window, and looked out on the wide prospect, feeling very sad.

The hunter asked: 'Why are you standing here and looking so sad, my treasure?'

'Ah!' she replied, 'in yonder mountain of granite are most costly precious stones. I have such a great longing to see them; but it is too far, and it makes me very sad when I think of it. We could not fetch any; for only birds can fly there—human beings never.'

'Have you nothing more to complain of?' said the hunter. 'I will soon remove this sorrow from your heart.'

Immediately he threw on his cloak, seized her in his arms, and wished himself over on the granite mountain; and in a moment they were both there. The glittering and sparkling stones lay around them on every side, so that it was quite a joy to see them; and the hunter and the maiden gathered the most beautiful and costly ones together.

Now, the witch by her witchcraft had caused the eyes of the hunter to become so heavy that he could not keep them open.

So he said to the maiden: 'We will sit down here and rest; I am so tired that I can scarcely put one foot before the other.'

Then they sat down, and he placed his head in her lap, and was very soon fast asleep.

While he slept she unfastened the cloak from his shoulders, and hung it on her own, gathered up the precious stones from the granite mountain, and wished herself at home.

When the hunter had finished his sleep, and awoke, he found that his beloved had betrayed him, and left him alone on the wild mountain. 'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'was ever such deceit in the world as this?' and sat still, his heart so overwhelmed with sorrow and care that he knew not what to do.

The mountain, however, belonged to wild and monstrous giants, who resided within it, and it was not long before he saw three of them striding towards him. He laid himself down again, as if in a deep sleep. Up came the giants, and the first pushed him with his foot.

'What worm is this lying here?'

'Crush him with your foot,' said the second.

'Ah!' said the third scornfully, 'he is not worth the trouble. Let him live; he cannot remain here and live; and if he

attempts to climb higher, to the top of the mountain, the clouds will soon take him up, and carry him away.'

On this the giants passed on, and as soon as they were out of sight, the hunter, who had heard every word, stood up, and climbed at once to the mountain summit.

After he had been seated there a little while, a cloud, floating by, caught him up and carried him away through the air for a long time; till at last it sank down and left him on the ground in a large vegetable garden, surrounded by walls.

The hunter looked round.

'I am very hungry,' he said, 'but what is there here to eat? No apples or pears, or fruit of any kind; nothing but vegetables.'

At last he thought that in a time of need a salad was better than nothing, especially when it was fresh.

So he searched for a beautiful cabbage, and began to eat. No sooner had he swallowed two mouthfuls than a strange sensation came over him, and he felt himself quite changed. His arms were growing to legs, his head became thicker, and out of it grew two long ears, and he discovered with terror that he had been changed into an ass. Still his hunger urged him to go on eating the juicy vegetable, which to his new nature tasted so good, till it was all gone. Then he turned to another part of the garden and commenced eating another, but he had scarcely swallowed any of this one, when he found himself changed anew, and presently he recovered his former shape as a man.

After this the hunter laid himself down and slept, from exhaustion and fatigue, till the morning. When he awoke, he broke off one of the good and one of the bad vegetables, and carried them away with him, and thought: 'These shall be the means by which I shall be able to punish those who were so unfaithful to me.'

Then he concealed the two cabbage heads under his coat, climbed over the wall, and went away to seek the castle where his sweetheart lived.

After wandering about for a few days, he luckily found it again; but before entering he stained his face, neck, and hands with brown juice, so that his own mother could not have recognised him; then he went up to the door of the castle, and begged for a night's lodging.

'I am so tired,' he said, 'I cannot go any farther.'

The witch on this came out, and said: 'Countryman, who are you? and what is your business?'

'I am a messenger of the king,' he replied, 'and have been sent to seek the costliest salad that grows under the sun. I have been also fortunate enough to find what I sought and to bring it with me; but the burning heat of the sun dries up the costly vegetable, and I know not how to carry it any farther without placing it in water.'

When the old woman heard of this delicate salad, she longed so much to taste it that she said: 'Dear friend, let me see this beautiful salad.'

'With all my heart,' he said; 'I have two heads, and you are quite welcome to one.' So he opened the bag, and gave her the bad one. The old witch never thought of anything wrong, and her mouth watered so much at the thought of such a dish that she went at once to the kitchen to prepare it.

When it was ready, she could not wait till it was placed on the table, but took two or three leaves and put them in her mouth. No sooner had she swallowed them than her human form was lost, and she ran out, in the shape of an ass, into the yard of the castle.

Meanwhile, the maid-servant came into the kitchen, and, seeing a beautiful salad standing on the table, she could not resist tasting it. The consequences were the same: after eating a few leaves, she also was changed into an ass, and ran out after her mistress, while the dish of salad fell to the ground.

In the meantime, the pretended messenger sat with the beautiful maiden, and as no one came with the salad, and she wished very much to taste it, she said: 'I wonder why they don't bring in the salad.'

'Oh,' thought the hunter, 'it must by this time have produced its wonderful changes.' So he said: 'I will go into the kitchen and inquire.' When he reached the kitchen, he saw the two asses running about the yard, and the salad lying on the ground.

'All right,' said he; 'those two have had their share.' Then he gathered up from the floor the scattered leaves, laid them on a dish, and brought them to the maiden. 'I have brought you some of this delicate dish,' said he, 'that you might not wait any longer.'

She ate some of the wonderful leaves, and in a moment her delicate form was changed, and she also was an ass, and ran out to the court of the castle with the other two.

After this the hunter washed the dark stain from his face, and, that they might recognise the change, he went out into the court, and said: 'This is now your reward for your

treacherous conduct to me.' Then he tied them all together with a rope, and led them away till they came to a mill. He knocked at the window, and the miller put his head out, and asked what was his pleasure. 'I have three troublesome animals here,' he replied, 'and I cannot keep them any longer. Will you take care of them for a time, and provide them with fodder and shelter, and I will pay you whatever you ask for your trouble?'

'Well,' said the miller, 'I am quite willing; but how am I to manage them?'

'Oh,' replied the hunter, 'that one'—pointing to the old witch—'requires good flogging and little food; the dark one'—which was the maid—'you may feed pretty well, and perhaps she will require a little chastisement sometimes; but this delicate one requires good food and no beating.' After this he went back to the castle, and whatever was necessary for his own comfort he found there.

In a few days came the miller, and said that the old ass who required so much beating was dead. 'The other two,' he added, 'who have had as much to eat as they like, are not quite dead, but they are so unhappy that I do not think they will live long.'

Then the hunter allowed his anger to cool. He pitied the two young girls whom he had punished, and he told the miller to bring them back immediately. The moment they arrived, he gave them some of the good salad to eat, and they at once recovered their human shape.

The maiden then fell on her knees before the hunter, and exclaimed: 'Forgive me, dearest, for all the wicked things I did to you; my mother forced me to do them all against my will, for I have always loved you from my heart. Your wishing-cloak hangs in the cupboard, and I will find the bird's heart for you.'

Then the hunter's thoughts of revenge were changed.

'Keep it now,' he said; 'it is all the same, for you shall be my own dear wife.'

The marriage took place soon after, and they lived in happiness with each other till their death.

THE OLD WOMAN IN THE WOOD.

A POOR servant-maid was once travelling through a wood with her master and mistress, when they were attacked by robbers, who came out of the thicket and murdered all that passed that way. None of the party escaped, excepting the maid-servant, who had sprung aside, and hidden herself behind a tree.

As soon as the robbers had made off with their booty, she ventured out of her hiding-place, and saw what dreadful trouble had happened. Then she began to weep bitterly, and said: 'What shall I, a poor maiden, do now? I know not how to find my way out of the wood, for not a living creature dwells here, and I shall certainly be starved to death.'

She tried to find a way out of the wood, however, but without success. At evening she seated herself under a tree, and determined to remain there, whatever might happen, without attempting to go away, and trust in Heaven to help her.

After she had been sitting there a short time, a white dove flew down from the tree, and he carried in his beak a little golden key. This golden key he placed in the hand of the maiden, and said: 'Do you see yonder a large tree? On it is a little lock, which can be opened with that key. If you open it, you will find plenty to eat and drink, and will suffer no more hunger.'

She went to the tree, unlocked it, and found to her surprise a basin full of white bread-and-milk, so that she could eat and be satisfied. When she had finished, she said to herself: 'This is the time for the chickens to go home to roost; I am so tired, I wish I had a bed to lie on.'

Again the white dove flew down, and brought another key, and said: 'Unlock the tree with this, and you will find a bed.'

She did as she was told, and there she found a pretty little white bed, and, praying to Heaven to watch over her during the night, she laid herself down and slept.

In the morning came the dove the third time, and brought her another little key, and said: 'Unlock the tree again, and you will find clothes.' And when she did so, there she saw beautiful dresses embroidered with gold and precious stones, such as none but a king's daughter could wear.

She remained after this for a long time in the wood, and the

dove came every day and took care of her. She was poor, but it was a peaceable and happy life.

At last the dove came one day, and said to her: 'Will you do something for me, only for love?'

'With all my heart,' she replied.

Then said the dove: 'I will take you to a small cottage. Go in. Inside it sits an old woman. She will say "Good-day" to you; for your life give her no reply, let her do what she may, but turn away to the right, and you will see a door, which you must open, and in the room on a table lies a heap of rings of all sorts and descriptions, some of them set with beautiful and glittering precious stones. But leave all these alone, and look only for a plain gold ring which must be among them, and bring it to me as quickly as you can.'

The maiden went to the house, and stepped in.

There sat the old woman, and said: 'Good-day, my child.' But she gave no reply, and went on to the other door. 'Where are you going?' cried the old woman. 'This is my house—no one can enter there without my permission;' and she seized her by the dress, and tried to hold her fast. But the maiden kept silent, freed herself from the old woman's grasp, and went right into the room.

There on the table lay an immense number of rings that shone and glittered before her eyes; but she threw them on one side, and searched for the plain one, which, however, she could not find.

While she was searching, she happened to look up, and saw the old woman slipping away with a bird-cage in her hand. The maiden followed her out quickly, took the cage from her, and, as she opened it, and looked inside, there was a bird with the plain ring in its beak.

She took the ring, and went away full of joy from the house, and was soon back to the tree, where she expected to see the white dove waiting for her; for she expected him to fetch the ring, but he did not come. While she waited, she leaned against the tree, and, as she so stood, she felt that the tree became soft and flexible, and the branches sank down.

All at once two of the branches wound themselves round her, and they were the arms of a human being; and, as she looked up, she saw that the tree had changed to a handsome man, who kissed her, and said: 'You have broken the spell, and delivered me from the power of the old woman, who is a wicked witch. She changed me into a tree, and every day for

two hours I was a white dove; but so long as she kept the ring I could not recover my human form.'

At the same time the horses and servants were set free from the witchcraft, for they also had been changed into trees, and stood near their master.

Then they all travelled away to his kingdom, for he was a king's son, and they married and lived happily.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

THERE was once a man who had three sons and nothing to leave them but the house in which they lived, and he was rather puzzled which to make his heir. He did not wish to sell the house, because it had belonged to his ancestors, or he could have divided the money between them; but at last he determined to call them together, and talk over the matter. So he said to them: 'I think you had better each go out into the world and learn some trade, and on your return whoever shall bring the greatest masterpiece shall have the house.'

The young men were very much pleased with this proposal. The eldest chose the trade of blacksmith; the second of a barber; and the third determined to become a fencing-master. So they appointed a time to meet together again at the house, and set out on their journey.

Fortunately they all fell in with first-rate masters, who taught them the higher branches of their trade. The eldest son was at last appointed to shoe the king's horses, and thought to himself, 'After this I am sure to get the house.'

The second son, who was a barber, had first-rate appointments at the houses of noblemen, and thought of the house as already his.

The fencing-master had received many hard knocks, but he clenched his teeth, and did not complain; for he thought to himself, 'If I am afraid of being knocked about, I shall never be able to claim the house.'

At length the time came for them to meet again at home, for their father to decide; but they could not at first find an opportunity to make their cleverness known. So they sat down together in the field to consider the matter. As they

thus sat they saw a hare running across the field towards them.

'Hi!' exclaimed the barber, 'here comes an opportunity for me.' So he hastily filled his basin with lather, and as the hare ran by, he shaved off a piece of his beard without cutting him or shortening another hair besides.

'I like that,' said the father; 'and unless your brothers can do something more wonderful still, the house is yours.'

Before long, another opportunity occurred to display the skill of the second son. A gentleman drove by at a rapid rate in a carriage drawn by four horses. 'Now you shall see what I can do, father,' said the farrier; so he sprang out, took off the shoes of the leader, and replaced them with new ones, without stopping the carriage.

'Well,' exclaimed his father, 'you are a clever fellow; you have performed your task as skilfully as your brother; and I am puzzled now to know which of you ought to have the house.'

'Father,' said the youngest son, 'let me try, before you decide.' At this moment it began to rain, and the fencing-master, looking up, cried, 'Here is my opportunity.' As he spoke he raised his fencing-stick, and made such rapid passes with it over and across their heads that not a drop of rain fell upon them, although it poured faster and heavier, as if the sky was being emptied with buckets; but where the father and his sons sat the ground remained as dry as if they had been under their own roof.

When the father saw the effect of this fencing, he was astonished, and said: 'Most certainly you have performed the best masterpiece; the house must be yours.'

The elder brothers were quite content; they had already received praise for their work, and they were all so attached to each other that they readily agreed to live together in the house, and follow their different trades. These trades had been so well learnt, and were so skilfully performed, that they soon made a great deal of money, and lived for many years in great contentment till old age came upon them. At last, one of them was taken ill and died, and the other two grieved so greatly that they did not long survive him; and, as they had lived together in love and harmony, so, after their death, they were buried in the same grave.

THE DRAGON'S GRANDMOTHER.

A KING who was at war with a neighbouring country had a large number of soldiers; but he paid them so badly that they could scarcely manage to live. At last, three of them determined to run away on the first opportunity. 'If we are caught, we shall be hanged on the gallows, without mercy,' said one who was fearful.

'Nonsense,' replied another; 'do you see that great cornfield in the distance? We can hide ourselves safely there; the army will not dare to pass through a field of standing corn; besides, they are to march to-morrow morning.'

They deserted that night, and hid themselves in the standing corn, but the army still remained encamped near to the cornfield in which they had concealed themselves.

For two days and nights they were obliged to remain there, not daring to move, till they were nearly starved, and death appeared inevitable. Then said one of them: 'What is the use of our deserting, if we are to die of hunger? We may as well give ourselves up at once.'

At this moment a great dragon appeared in the air above them, and, gradually sinking down to the place where they lay, asked them why they were concealing themselves.

'We are three soldiers who have deserted,' was the reply, 'because our pay was so small; but now we must die of hunger, for if we return we shall be hanged on the gallows.'

'Will you serve me for seven years?' said the dragon. 'I will carry you safely through the army, and no one shall see you.'

'We have no choice,' they replied, 'and must therefore accept your proposal.'

The dragon, on this, seized them in his claws, and carried them through the air, over the heads of their comrades, and landed them safely on the ground, at a great distance. He then gave each of them a whip, and said: 'When you crack these whips smartly, money will flow around you as much as you desire. You can then live like great lords, and have horses and carriages, and every luxury; but at the end of seven years you will belong to me.' At these words he handed them a book, in which they were expected to sign their names.

After this was done, he said: 'I will, however, give you one

chance to escape me. If at the end of the time you are able to guess a riddle which I shall then propound to you, my power will be over and you will be free.' The dragon then flew away, and the three soldiers immediately began to crack their whips joyfully, and soon had money enough and to spare. They had horses and carriages, and could travel all over the world, and they ate and drank, lived and dressed like gentlemen, happy and contented, but did nothing wicked or wrong.

Time, however, passed on quickly, and as the end of the seven years approached, two of the soldiers became very sad and uneasy; the third, however, who was naturally light-hearted, said to them: 'Brothers, do not fear; I have my wits about me still. I will find out the riddles.'

They went into the fields, and the two fearful ones sat down with most woful faces.

Presently an old woman passed them, and said: 'Why are you two looking so miserable?'

'What does it matter to you?' they replied. 'You cannot help us.'

'How do you know that?' she replied. 'Trust me with your sorrow.'

Then they told her about the dragon, and how he had given them the means of making gold like hay for seven years, but that they had signed their names to be his servants at the end of that time, which had nearly arrived, unless they could guess a riddle.

'If I am to help you,' replied the old woman, 'one of you must go into the forest. There he will find a steep, overturned rock, which is used as a house. If he enters this house, he will obtain help.'

The two desponding soldiers thought, 'That cannot help us,' so they remained seated; but the third went merrily at once into the forest, till he came to the overturned rock which formed a hut. In the hut sat a very old woman, who was the dragon's grandmother, and when she saw the soldier, she asked him what he wanted and where he came from. He answered all her questions, and told her his business so pleasantly that she was quite pleased with him, and so full of pity that she promised to help him.

Then she lifted up a great stone in the floor, and showed him a cellar beneath it, and said: 'You can hide yourself there, and listen to all that passes up here. When the dragon comes home, you must remain quite still without moving. I will then

ask him about the riddle, and if you pay attention, you will find out the answer.'

At about twelve o'clock the dragon came flying home with rushing wings, and crying out for his supper. The grandmother quickly laid the cloth, and brought out plenty of good things to eat and drink, and they supped together.

The dragon enjoyed his supper so much that he was quite in a good humour, and the old woman began to question him.

'Well,' she said, 'what success have you had to-day? How many poor creatures have you caught?'

'I have not had much luck,' he replied; 'but there are three soldiers who cannot escape me; I have them fast enough.'

'Ah, indeed—three soldiers? I suppose you have given them some impossible task to perform?'

'Yes, I have,' he said, with a chuckle; 'the riddle I shall ask them they will never find out. They are mine safe enough.'

'What is the riddle?' she asked.

'Oh, I don't mind telling you,' he replied. 'In the great North Sea lies a dead sea-cat, this will serve them for roast meat; the ribs of a whale shall be their silver spoon; and an old hollow horse's hoof they shall use for a wine-glass.'

When the dragon went to bed, the old grandmother lifted up the stone and set the soldier free.

'Have you listened attentively?' she asked.

'Indeed I have,' he replied; 'I know quite enough now to help us out of all our difficulties.'

Then he had to get out of the window cautiously, and go back in haste to his comrades.

The two soldiers listened with surprise as he told them of the dragon's cunning old grandmother; and when they heard the riddle and its solution, they were full of joy, and, taking up their whips, began to crack them so fast that the floor of the house was soon covered with gold.

A few days afterwards the seven years came to an end, and the dragon appeared with his book under his arm, and, pointing to the signatures of the soldiers, said: 'You will have to go with me to my kingdom, and a festival shall be held to celebrate the event, unless you can solve my riddle. You will have to tell me what your roast meat will be on that occasion.'

'Oh, that is easy enough,' replied the first soldier quickly. 'In the great North Sea lies a dead sea-cat; that will be our roast meat.'

'Hem! hem!' said the dragon in a rage; and then asked the second what would be their spoon.

'One of the ribs of a whale shall be our silver spoon.'

The dragon made a wry face, and snarled again three times, 'Hem! hem! hem!' and then said to the third: 'And pray what will your wineglass be?'

'An old horse's hoof shall our wineglass be,' he cried joyfully.

With a cry of rage the dragon spread his wings and flew away, for his power over them was now quite gone; but they had kept their whips, and continued to whip money till they had as much as they wanted, and on this they lived happily together for the rest of their lives.

FERDINAND FAITHFUL AND FERDINAND UNFAITHFUL.

THERE once lived a man and his wife who, as long as they were rich, had no children, but as soon as they were poor they had a little boy. They could, however, find no godfather for him; so the man said he would go to another place and see if he could get one.

As he was walking, a poor man met him, who asked him where he was going. He said that he was going to see if he could get a godfather; that he was poor, so no one would stand godfather for him.

'Oh,' said the poor man, 'I am poor, and you are poor. I will be godfather for you; but I am so poor that I cannot give anything to the child. Go home and tell the nurse she is to come to the church with the infant.'

When they came together to the church, the beggar was already there, and he gave the child the name of Ferdinand Faithful.

As they came out of church the beggar said: 'Now go home. I cannot give you anything, and you should not give me anything.'

He, however, gave a key to the nurse, and told her that she might give it to the father when they got home, and tell him to keep it till the child was fourteen years old; then he should

go on the heath, where there was a castle that the key would fit, and that all that was in it should be his.

When the child was seven years old, and had grown strong, he went to play with some other boys, who each of them boasted that he had got more from his godfather than the other; but the child could say nothing, and was troubled, and went home and said to his father: 'Did I get nothing from my godfather?'

'Oh yes,' said the father; 'you have a key, and if there stands a castle on the heath, go to it and open it.'

The boy went, but there was no castle to be seen.

After seven years more, when he was fourteen years old, he went thither again, and there stood the castle. When he had opened it there was nothing within but a horse—a white horse.

Then the boy was so full of joy because he had a horse. that he mounted it and rode back to his father.

'Now I have a fine white horse I will travel,' said he.

So he started, and as he was on the road there lay in his path a pen. He was going to pick it up, but then he thought that he would let it lie, as he would easily find a pen where he was going if he wanted one.

As he was riding away, a voice called after him: 'Ferdinand the Faithful, take it with you.'

He looked around, but saw no one. However, he went and picked it up.

After he had ridden a little farther, he came to some water, and a fish was lying on the shore, panting for breath; so he said: 'Wait, my little fish; I will help you to get into the water;' and he took hold of it by the tail and threw it into the lake.

Then the fish lifted his head out of the water, and said: 'As you have helped me out of the mud, I will give you a flute; if you are in any need, play on it, and I will help you; and if you ever let anything fall into the water, play on it, and I will fetch it out.'

Then he rode away, and there came a man who asked where he was going.

'Oh, to the nearest place.'

'What is your name?'

'Ferdinand the Faithful.'

'Then we have nearly the same name, for I am Ferdinand the Unfaithful.'

And they went together to the inn of the next town.

Now, it was unlucky that Ferdinand the Unfaithful knew

everything the other thought or was going to do; he knew this by means of all kinds of wicked arts.

There was in the inn an honest girl, who had a bright face and behaved well; she fell in love with Ferdinand the Faithful, for he was a handsome man, and she asked him where he was going.

'I am going to travel about,' he answered.

Then she said he ought to stay there, for the king of that country wanted a servant or outrider, and he might enter the royal service.

He answered that he could not go and ask for the place.

Then said the maid: 'I will do it for you;' and she went straight to the king, and said that she knew of a handsome servant for him.

He was well pleased and had Ferdinand brought to him, and wished to make him his servant. He, however, would rather be an outrider, for where his horse was there he would always be; so the king made him an outrider.

When Ferdinand the Unfaithful heard of it, he said to the girl: 'What! do you help him and not me?'

'Oh,' said the girl, 'I will also help you.' She thought: 'I must keep friends with him, for he is not to be trusted.'

She went to the king and offered him as a servant, and the king was willing to take him.

Now, when the king met his lords in the morning, he complained: 'Oh, if I only had my sweetheart with me!'

Ferdinand the Unfaithful was always hostile to Ferdinand the Faithful, so once, when the king complained, he said: 'You have the outrider, send him; he must find her, and if he does not, his head should be taken off.'

Then the king ordered Ferdinand the Faithful to come to him, and told him that there was in some place or other a lady he loved, that Ferdinand must bring her to him; if he did not do so, he must die.

Then Ferdinand the Faithful went into the stable to his white horse, and groaned and moaned.

'Oh, what an unlucky man am I!'

Then someone behind him cried: 'Ferdinand the Faithful, why weepest thou?'

He looked round, but saw no one, and he continued complaining: 'My dear little white horse, you will be forsaken, for I must die!'

Then there came a voice again: 'Ferdinand the Faithful, why weepest thou?'

Then he became aware that it was his horse that asked the question.

'Is that you, my little horse? Can you speak?' And he went on: 'I am to go to this place and to that, and am to bring the bride. Do you know how I should begin?'

The horse answered: 'Go to the king, and say that if he will give you all you want you will get her for him. If he gives you a ship full of meat and a ship full of bread you will succeed; for there are great giants on the water who will tear you to pieces if you do not bring them meat, and there are great birds who will peck out your eyes if you have no bread for them.'

Then the king ordered the butchers to kill and the bakers to bake, so that the ships might be full.

When they were filled, the horse said to Ferdinand the Faithful: 'Now get on me, and go with me into the ship, and when the giants come, say:

'"Still, still, my dear little giants!
For of you I have thought,
And some meat have I brought."

And when the birds come, say again:

'"Still, still, my dear little birds!
For of you have I thought,
And some bread have I brought."

Then they will do nothing to you, and when you come to the castle the giants will help you. There the princess is lying asleep; you must not awake her. The giants will take her up in the bed, and carry her into the ship.'

And it all happened as the white horse had said, and Ferdinand the Faithful gave the giants and the birds what he had brought for them; therefore the giants were willing to help him, and carried the princess in the bed to the king.

When she came to the king, she said that she could not live —she must have her writings which were left in the castle.

Then, by the persuasion of Ferdinand the Unfaithful, Ferdinand the Faithful was again called and commanded by the king to fetch the writings from the castle, or he must die.

Then he went once more into the stable, and said: 'Oh, my dear little white horse, I am to go away again! How can I do this?'

Then the horse said: 'The ships must be again laden.

So he went as before, and the giants and birds were satisfied

by the food and pacified. When they came to the castle, the horse told Ferdinand that he must go into the princess's bedroom, and on the table lay the writings; and Ferdinand went in and got them.

When they were on the lake he let his pen fall into the water; then the white horse said: 'I cannot help you now.'

But he remembered his flute and began to play on it, and the fish came with the pen in his mouth and gave it to him. So he took the writings to the castle, where the marriage was celebrated.

The queen could not love the king, because he had no nose, but she would have liked to love Ferdinand the Faithful.

Once when all the lords of the court were together, she said she could do magical tricks—that she could cut off a head and put it on again, and that one of them ought to try it. No one, however, would be first, so Ferdinand the Faithful, at the instigation of Ferdinand the Unfaithful, undertook it.

She cut off his head and put it on again, and he was cured directly, but it looked just as if he had a red thread round his neck.

Then said the king to his wife: 'My child, how have you learnt that?'

'Well,' said she, 'I understand the art. Shall I try it on you?'

'Oh yes,' said he.

Then she cut off his head, but did not put it on again. She said she could not get it on right—that it would not keep fixed.

Then the king was buried, and she married Ferdinand the Faithful.

He still continued, however, to ride his white horse, and once it told him that he was to go on the heath and ride round it three times.

When he had done so, the white horse stood up on its hind-legs, and was changed into a king's son.

THE IRON CHEST.

In olden times, when wishing still had power, a king's son was placed under enchantment by an old witch, and shut up in an iron chest in the forest.

Years rolled by, but no one was able to set him free. At length a king's daughter, who had been wandering through the wood and lost her way, after nine days came to the iron chest, and a voice proceeding from it said: 'Where do you come from? and what are you doing here?'

'I have missed my way to my father's kingdom, and cannot find my way home.'

Then the voice from the iron chest replied: 'I will help you to reach your home by a very short road, if you will promise to do as I wish. I am the son of a great king, and you are a princess: you shall be my wife.'

She was quite frightened at this, and said to herself: 'What can I do with this iron chest?' However, as she wanted to get home, she promised to do all he asked.

'Very well,' he replied; 'come back here again to-morrow, and bring with you a knife to scrape a hole in this iron.' He then gave her a companion, who went beside her without speaking, and led her to her home in two hours.

When the king's daughter arrived at the castle there was great joy, and the old king clasped her in his arms and kissed her. But the princess was very mournful, and said: 'Dear father, such a strange thing has happened to me. I should never have returned out of the wood if I had not come to a large iron chest, and given my word of honour to return and set the owner of it free, and marry him.'

This account so alarmed the old king that he nearly fell into a swoon, for this was his only daughter. So, after some reflection, he decided to send the miller's daughter to the place instead. They led her there, gave her a knife, and told her to scrape a hole in the iron chest. She scraped away at one spot for a whole day and night, but not the slightest hole could she make.

At daybreak a voice came from within the chest, and said: 'Is not the day breaking?'

'Yes,' she replied, 'I believe it is, for I can hear the click of my father's mill.'

'What! are you a miller's daughter?' cried the voice. 'Then go back at once and send the king's daughter here.'

She went and told the old king that whoever was shut up would not have her there, but wanted the king's daughter.

The good king was still more alarmed, and his daughter wept. However, they thought of the swineherd's daughter, who was even more beautiful than the miller's daughter. They

resolved to give her a piece of gold, if she would go to the iron chest instead of the princess.

She readily agreed to go; but after working for many hours till daybreak without any result, the voice said, 'Is it not morning?'

'Yes,' she replied; 'it must be, for I hear my father blowing his horn.'

'What! are you a swineherd's daughter?' said the voice. 'Then go away directly and send the princess; and tell her that if she does not come back here as she promised, the whole of her father's kingdom will be destroyed, and the castle thrown down till not one stone remains upon another.'

When the princess heard this she began to weep; but there was nothing else to be done. She must keep her promise. She therefore took leave of her father, and, with a knife in her hand, went away into the forest where the iron chest stood.

As soon as she arrived she began at once to scrape away with all her might; and in less than two hours she had succeeded in making a small hole. Through this hole she peeped in, and to her great surprise saw a handsome young man, whose dress glittered with gold and precious stones.

She was so pleased with her discovery that she went on scraping, and in a very short time the hole was large enough for him to creep out.

'Now you have set me free, and broken the spell,' cried the king's son; 'and you shall be my bride, for we belong to each other.' He wanted to take her to his father's kingdom at once; but she begged him to let her go and say farewell to her father. The king's son gave her permission; but he cautioned her on no account to speak to her father more than three words.

She went home quickly; but she spoke more than the three words, and in consequence the iron chest was lifted up, and carried away from the forest over rocky mountains and snow-clad peaks. The king's son, however, was still free, and could never again be locked up in the iron chest. After taking leave of her father, the king's daughter took a little money in her pocket, and turned her steps to the wood, to seek for the iron chest; but it was gone. For nine days she searched the forest round, and at last became so faint with fatigue and hunger that she felt ready to die.

One evening she climbed up as usual into a tree to be safe during the night, for she was afraid of the wild beasts. At

midnight she saw a light at a little distance. 'Oh!' she thought, 'perhaps I may find help now.'

She descended from the tree and turned her steps towards the light, and on coming nearer she found a small old house, surrounded by high grass, with a little heap of wood before it.

She thought, 'Whither am I come,' peeped through the window, and saw no living creature inside but frogs of all sizes, big and little. There was, however, a supper-table richly spread with bread and wine, and the plates and cups were of silver.

Then she took heart and knocked at the door. At this she heard an old frog say, 'Go quickly, and see who is outside.' A little frog came immediately and opened the door; and as the king's daughter entered, they all bade her welcome, asked her to sit down, and inquired where she came from, and what she wanted.

Then she related all that had happened, and that, in consequence of her having transgressed the order not to utter more than three words, the iron chest and the king's son had both disappeared. But she said, 'I mean to seek him over hill and valley till I find him.'

Then the old frog desired the little ones to bring her the large bag, and while they dragged it across the room she told the king's daughter to sit down to the table and eat her supper.

After she had finished the little frogs led her to a beautiful bed, which was of velvet embroidered with gold, and on it she laid herself, and slept.

In the morning when she rose the old frog told her that she would have to climb one high slippery mountain, to cross three snowy peaks and a great lake. She then gave her some articles from the bag, namely, three large needles, one ploughshare and three nuts, of which she was to take the greatest care, and to use them when necessary.

Promising to attend to the frog's advice, the king's daughter started on her journey, and very soon came to the glassy mountain. Here she stopped, took off her shoes, and stuck the needles into the soles. This enabled her to clamber without difficulty over the slippery mountain.

On reaching the other side she pulled out the needles, and stuck them carefully in a corner that they might not be lost. She came after this very quickly to the snow-clad peaks. Across these she passed easily with the help of the plough-

share, and at length reached the large lake, over which she crossed in a ferryboat and saw before her a noble castle.

She went up to the gate, and asked to be engaged as a servant, for she knew that the prince was there whom she had delivered out of the iron chest in the forest. She was hired for the kitchen at low wages. The prince had now another maiden by his side whom he was going to marry, for he thought she had long been dead.

In the evening, when she had washed up and was ready, she felt in her pocket and found the three nuts that the old frog had given her. She cracked one with her teeth, but as she was going to eat the kernel she found a beautiful royal robe. When the bride heard it, she came and wanted to buy the dress, saying that it was not a fit dress for a servant. The princess would not sell it; but she said that the bride might have it if she would permit one thing, and that was to let her sleep one night in the bridegroom's room. The bride permitted it because the dress was so beautiful and she had none like it. When it was evening she said to the bridegroom: 'The foolish maiden wishes to sleep in your room.'

'If you are content so am I,' said he.

She gave him a glass of wine in which she had placed a sleeping-draught. Then they went into the bedroom, but he slept so soundly that she could not wake him. She wept the whole night, and called out: 'I have saved you from the wild forest and the iron chest; I have sought you and have gone over a glass mountain, over three sharp peaks, and over a great lake, before I found you, and you will not hear me!' The servants in the ante-chamber heard what she said, and told their lord. The next night she opened another nut and found a still finer robe, which the bride wanted, and had on the same conditions. The bride gave the prince again a sleeping-draught, and he slept the whole night. The servants, however, heard what the kitchen-maid said again and told their lord. On the third evening she opened the third nut and the dress was still finer, and shone like gold; when the bride saw it she wished for it also, and received it on the same conditions. The prince, however, did not take the sleeping-draught, and when the maid began to weep, and said: 'Dearest treasure, I saved you from the iron chest!' he sprang up and said: 'You are the right maiden; you are mine and I am thine.' Then, while it was still night, he got into a carriage with her, and they took away the clothes of the false bride so that she could not get up. When they came to the great water they took a boat

across, and they passed over the great peaks with the help of the plough-share, and over the glass mountain by the help of the three needles. At last they came to the wood in which once stood the house with the frogs; but now they found on its site a noble castle. On entering, instead of the young frogs, a number of princes and princesses advanced to receive them. The spell over them had been broken, and they were full of joy.

At this castle the marriage festival was held, and they wished to reside there, as it was much larger than the other castle. The old king, however, complained of being left alone, so they returned to him, united the two kingdoms, one to be ruled over by the old king, and another by his son-in-law, whose married life was very happy.

THE LAZY SPINNER.

In a village there lived a man and his wife, and the wife was so lazy that she would never work; that which her husband gave her to spin, she did not spin, and what she did spin she did not wind, but let it all lie entangled in a heap. If the man scolded her she was always ready with her tongue, and said: 'How can I wind it if I have no reel? go into the wood and get me one.'

'If that is all,' said the man, 'I will go to the wood and get some wood for reels.'

Then the wife was afraid that if he had wood he would make a reel of it, and she would have to wind and spin more. So she thought a little, and a good idea occurred to her, and she ran secretly to the wood after her husband. When he had climbed a tree to select the wood and to cut it down, she crept into the bush where he could not see her, and cried out:

'Who cuts down wood for reels dies;
Who winds perishes.'

The man listened, laid down his axe, and wondered what it could mean. 'What,' said he at last, 'what can it have been that sounded in my ears! Make thyself no unnecessary fear.'

Then he seized the axe afresh, and was about to hew the wood, when again a voice from below cried:

'Who cuts wood for reels dies;
Who winds shall perish.'

He stopped, became anxious, and thought over the matter. But after awhile he took courage a third time, stretched out his hand for the axe, and was going to hew. But for the third time the voice said:

'Who cuts wood for reels dies;
Who winds *shall* perish.'

He had had enough, and all desire to cut was past, so he hastily got down and went home. The woman ran home by side ways and so came to the house before him. When he entered the room she appeared as if nothing had happened, and said: 'Do you bring good wood for reels?'

'No,' he said; 'I see that winding does not do,' and he told her what had occurred in the wood, and henceforth left her in peace.

Soon after the man began again to get angry about the disorder in the house.

'Wife,' said he, 'it is a shame that the yarn which is spun should lie about in a heap.'

'I tell you what,' said she: 'as we have no reel, you go upstairs and I will stay down; then I will throw the yarn up to you, and you will throw it down to me, and then we will have a skein.'

'Very well,' said the man.

So they did it, and when it was done the man said: 'It is now in skeins, but it must be boiled.' The woman was again anxious about it, but said: 'We will do it early to-morrow morning;' but she was thinking of some other trick. She got up early, lighted the fire and put on the kettle, but instead of the yarn she put in a lump of tow, and let it boil. Then she went to her husband, who lay in bed, and said to him: 'I must go out; get up and see after the yarn which is in the kettle on the fire; but you must do it in time: take care, for if the cock crows before you look after it the yarn will become tow.' The man was willing, and did not delay; as quickly as he could he went into the kitchen. When he came to the kettle and looked in, he saw with fright nothing but a lump of tow. The poor man was silent; he thought that he had delayed, and that it was his fault, and in future said nothing about yarn or spinning. But you must allow that his wife was a wicked woman.

THE FOUR CLEVER BROTHERS.

A POOR man had four sons, who were nearly grown up, and one day he called them to him, and said: 'Dear children, you must now go out into the world. I have nothing to give you, so you had better choose some trade at which you can work, and you may make a fortune.'

Then the four brothers took each a traveller's staff, said farewell to their father, and went away from the door together. When they had travelled some little distance, they arrived at a point where four roads met. Then said the eldest, 'Here we had better separate, and this day four years we will again meet together in this spot, and in the meantime seek our fortune.'

So each went his way, and the eldest presently met a man who asked him where he was going, and what he wanted. 'I wish to learn a trade,' he replied.

'Oh,' said the man, 'go with me, and learn to be a thief.'

'No,' replied the youth; 'that would unfit me for any respectable trade afterwards, and the end is trouble, or to swing at last, like a clapper in a bell.'

'Oh,' replied the man, 'there is no fear of the gallows in my trade; I will only teach you to accomplish what other people cannot do, and so cleverly that no man can ever find it out.'

So he allowed himself to be persuaded, and was instructed by the man so well that he became quite skilful in sleight of hand, and at last in his presence no one knew if what he held belonged to him or not.

The second brother also met a man, who asked him, in a similar way, what he would like to learn in the world.

'I do not know,' he replied.

'Ah, well, then go with me,' said he, 'and become a star-gazer. There is no trade better than that, for nothing can be hidden from you.'

So the second brother became an astronomer, and so very clever that his master, when he left him, made him a present of a beautiful telescope, and said to him: 'With this you can discover whatever is going on both in heaven and earth; nothing can be hidden from you.'

A hunter took the third brother under his tuition, and taught

him everything that a clever hunter should know, and gave him such good instruction that very few hunters could equal him.

On parting, his master presented him with a gun, and said, 'Whatever you aim at with this, you will not fail to hit.'

The youngest brother also met with a man who entered into conversation with him about his future, and asked him if he should like to be a tailor.

'I think not,' replied the youth: 'the cramped position from morning till night, and the constant in-and-out sewing with the needle-and-thread, and the ironing with the tailor's goose, would not suit me at all.'

'Ah, indeed,' replied the man, 'you are talking of what you do not understand; with me you would learn something far more respectable and seemly; quite another description of tailor's work, in which you could take an honourable part.'

So he allowed himself to be talked over, and went with the man, who taught him to sew so neatly that he could make old articles look new, for not a stitch was visible.

When his master took leave of him, he gave him a needle, and said: 'You can with that needle repair whatever comes in your way, were it as soft as an eggshell or as hard as steel, and it will join anything so beautifully that not even the seam will be visible.'

At the end of the appointed four years the brothers met together at the cross-roads, and embraced and kissed each other, and then turned towards home to visit their father.

He was quite pleased to see them, and said: 'It is a pleasant wind which has blown you all back to me again.' Then they each related to him how they had got on, and what they had learnt.

They were all seated in front of the house, under a great tree, and their father said: 'I should like to put you to the proof and see what you can all do.' He looked up as he spoke, and said to his second son: 'Among the branches of this tree, near the top, sits a bullfinch on her nest; tell me how many eggs are there.'

The star-gazer took his glass, looked up, and said, 'There are five.'

Then the father said to the eldest, 'Go and fetch the eggs, without disturbing the bird who sits brooding upon them.'

The accomplished thief climbed up the tree, took the five eggs from under the bird so quietly that she did not notice it, but remained sitting in her nest quite peacefully, and brought

them down to his father. The father took them, placed them on a table, one at each corner, and the fifth in the middle, and said to the hunter: 'Can you with one shot divide those five eggs in half?'

The hunter pointed his gun, and shot the eggs as his father desired—all five with one shot.

'Now,' said the father to the youngest, 'it is your turn. Can you join those eggs together so that the young birds may suffer no injury from the shot?'

The tailor took out his needle, and sewed up the eggs as his father wished. When they were finished the thief had again to climb up the tree, and lay the eggs under the bird without disturbing her or attracting her notice. The little creature continued to brood over her eggs, and in a few days the young ones crept out of the shell uninjured, excepting that where the tailor had sewn the eggs together a red streak appeared on their necks.

Then the old man said to his sons: 'I must praise you for the cleverness of the trades you have learnt. You have employed your time most usefully, and I cannot tell which deserves the preference. If an opportunity would only arise to employ these talents, and prove them, it might be the making of you.'

And it was not long before such an opportunity did occur. A great outcry arose in the country—the king's daughter had been carried away by a dragon. Day and night the king mourned her loss, and made a proclamation that he would give his daughter in marriage to whoever would bring her back. The four brothers talked together about this, and said it really was an opportunity for them to prove their skill, and they determined to go together and try to release the princess from the dragon.

'I will first find out where she is,' said the star-gazer; so he raised his telescope, looked through it, and said: 'I can see her already; she is far away from here, sitting on a rock in the sea, and near her is the dragon, who watches her.' Then he went to the king, and begged him to let them have a ship for him and his brothers; and they sailed away over the sea till they came to the rock.

There sat the king's daughter, looking very sad, and the dragon, who was fast asleep, had his dreadful head in her lap.

The hunter said: 'I dare not shoot lest I should kill the beautiful princess.'

'I will try my luck,' said the thief; so he climbed up the

rock and stole the princess away from under the dragon's head so lightly and nimbly that the monster did not move, but went on snoring hideously. They hastened away full of joy with her, and steered for the open sea.

But the dragon soon after awoke, and, missing the princess, was in a terrible rage. He rose in the air and followed, snorting vengeance as he hovered over the ship. But at this moment the hunter levelled his gun and shot him through the heart.

He fell dead upon the ship, crushing it beneath his great weight, and making it a complete wreck. Happily they contrived to catch hold of a few planks, on which they were able to float on the waves, but they were still in great danger.

The tailor, however, took out his wonderful needle, and with a few great stitches sewed the planks quickly together, so that they formed a raft; then they seated themselves upon it, and gathered up the fragments of the ship. These, also, the masts and sails, he sewed cleverly together, so that in a very short time the ship was again ready for sea, and they were able to get home safely.

When the king again saw his daughter, his joy knew no bounds, and he said to the four brothers: 'One of you shall have my daughter, but which it is to be you must decide among yourselves.' Then arose a violent contention amongst them, for each claimed his right to the princess.

The star-gazer said: 'If I had not discovered first where the king's daughter was, all your art would have been useless, so she must be mine.'

Then said the thief: 'And after you had seen her, what would have been the use of that if I had not taken her away from under the dragon's head? therefore she is mine.'

'Ah,' exclaimed the hunter, 'even then the king's daughter would have been torn to pieces by the dragon, had I not killed him with my bullet; therefore she is mine.'

'And,' exclaimed the tailor, 'if I had not been there with my skill to sew together the planks and sails of the ship, you and the princess would all have been drowned; therefore she is mine.'

Upon this the king spoke: 'Each of you,' he said, 'has an equal claim; but as you cannot all have the maiden, I shall not give her to either of you, but you shall for a reward have the half of my kingdom.'

The brothers were much pleased with this decision, and

they said: 'It is better so, than that we should be at variance.' So they shared the half of the kingdom between them, and lived with their father in happiness for the rest of their lives.

ONE EYE, TWO EYES, THREE EYES.

THERE was once a woman who had three daughters, of whom the eldest was named One Eye, because she had only one eye in the middle of her forehead. The second had two eyes, like other people, and she was called Two Eyes. The youngest had three eyes, two like her second sister, and one in the middle of her forehead, like the eldest, and she bore the name of Three Eyes.

Now, because little Two Eyes looked just like other people, her mother and sisters could not endure her. They said to her, 'You are not better than common folks, with your two eyes; you don't belong to us.'

So they pushed her about, and threw all their old clothes to her, and gave her only the pieces that were left to eat, and did everything that they could to make her miserable. It so happened that Two Eyes was sent into the fields to take care of the goats, and she was often very hungry, because her sisters had given her so little to eat. So one day she seated herself on a mound in the field, and began to weep and cry so bitterly that two little rivulets flowed from her eyes. Once, in the midst of her sorrow she looked up, and saw a woman standing near her, who said, 'What are you weeping for, little Two Eyes?'

'I cannot help weeping,' she replied; 'for, because I have two eyes, like other people, my mother and sisters cannot bear me. They push me about from one corner to another, and make me wear their old clothes, and give me nothing to eat but what is left. To-day they gave me so little that I am nearly starved.'

'Dry up your tears, little Two Eyes,' said the wise woman; 'I will tell you something to do which will prevent you from ever being hungry again. You have only to say to your own goat:

'"Little goat, if you're able,
Pray deck out my table"

and immediately there will be a pretty little table before you full of all sorts of good things for you to eat, as much as you like. And when you have had enough, and you do not want the table any more, you need only say :

'"Little goat, when you're able,
Remove my nice table,"

and it will vanish from your eyes.'

Then the wise woman went away. 'Now,' thought little Two Eyes, 'I will try if what she says is true, for I am very hungry.' So she said :

'Little goat, if you're able,
Pray deck out my table.'

The words were scarcely spoken, when a beautiful little table stood really before her ; it had a white cloth and plates, and knives and forks, and silver spoons, and such a delicious dinner, smoking hot as if it had just come from the kitchen. Then little Two Eyes sat down and said the shortest grace she knew—'Pray God be our Guest for all time. Amen'—before she allowed herself to taste anything. When she had finished, she said, as the wise woman had taught her :

'Little goat, when you're able,
Remove my nice table.'

In a moment the table and everything upon it had disappeared. 'That is a pleasant way to keep house,' said little Two Eyes, and felt quite contented and happy. In the evening, when she went home with the goat, she found an earthenware dish with some scraps which her sisters had left for her, but she did not touch them. The next morning she went away with the goat, leaving them behind where they had been placed for her. The first and second times that she did so the sisters did not notice it, but when they found it happened every day, they said one to the other, 'There is something strange about little Two Eyes : she leaves her supper every day, and all that has been put for her has been wasted ; she must get food somewhere else.'

In order that they might find out the truth, they arranged that when Two Eyes took her goat to the field, One Eye should go with her to take notice of what she did, and discover if anything was brought for her to eat and drink.

So, when Two Eyes started with her goat, One Eye said to her, 'I am going with you to-day to see if the goat gets her food properly while you are watching the rest.'

But Two Eyes knew what she had in her mind. So she drove the goat into the long grass, and said, 'Come, One Eye, let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you.'

One Eye seated herself. She was tired with the walk in the heat of the sun, and as little Two Eyes kept on singing, she closed her one eye, and fell fast asleep.

When Two Eyes saw this, she knew that One Eye could not betray her, so she said:

'Little goat, if you are able,
Come and deck my pretty table."

She seated herself when it appeared, and ate and drank very quickly, and when she had finished, she said:

'Little goat, when you are able,
Come and clear away my table.'

It vanished in the twinkling of an eye; and then Two Eyes woke up One Eye, and said, 'Little One Eye, you are a clever one to watch goats; for while you are asleep they might be running all over the world. Come, let us go home.'

So they went to the house, and little Two Eyes again left the scraps on the dish untouched, and One Eye could not tell her mother whether little Two Eyes had eaten anything in the field; for she said to excuse herself, 'I was asleep.'

The next day the mother said to Three Eyes, 'You must go to the field this time, and find out whether there is anyone who brings food to little Two Eyes; for she must eat and drink secretly.'

So, when little Two Eyes started with her goat, Three Eyes followed, and said, 'I am going with you to-day, to see if the goats are properly fed and watched.'

But Two Eyes knew her thoughts; so she led the goat through the long grass to tire Three Eyes, and at last she said, 'Let us sit down here and rest, and I will sing to you, Three Eyes.'

She was glad to sit down, for the walk and the heat of the sun had really tired her; and as her sister continued her song she was obliged to close two of her eyes, and they slept, but not the third; in fact, Three Eyes was wide awake with one eye, and heard and saw all that Two Eyes did; for poor little Two Eyes, thinking she was asleep, said her speech to the goat, and the table came with all the good things on it, and was carried away when Two Eyes had eaten enough, and the cunning Three Eyes saw it all with her one eye. But she pre-

tended to be asleep when her sister came to wake her, and told her she was going home.

That evening, when little Two Eyes again left the supper they placed aside for her, Three Eyes said to her mother, 'I know where the proud thing gets her good eating and drinking.' And then she described all she had seen in the field. 'I saw it all with one eye,' she said; 'for she had made my other two eyes close with her fine singing, but luckily the one in my forehead remained open.'

Then the envious mother cried out to poor little Two Eyes, 'You wish to have better food than we, do you? You shall lose your wish.' She took up a butcher's knife, went out, and stuck the good little goat in the heart, and it fell dead.

When little Two Eyes saw this, she went out into the field, seated herself on a mound, and wept most bitter tears.

Presently the wise woman stood again before her, and said: 'Little Two Eyes, why do you weep?'

'Ah!' she replied, 'I must weep. The goat who every day spread my table so beautifully has been killed by my mother, and I shall have again to suffer from hunger and sorrow.'

'Little Two Eyes,' said the wise woman, 'I will give you some good advice. Go home, and ask your sister to give you the inside of the slaughtered goat, and then go and bury it in the ground in front of the house-door.'

On saying this the wise woman vanished.

Little Two Eyes went home quickly, and said to her sister: 'Dear sister, give me some part of my poor goat. I don't want anything valuable. Only give me the inside.'

Her sister laughed, and said: 'Of course you can have that, if you don't want anything else.'

So little Two Eyes took the inside; and in the evening, when all was quiet, buried it in the ground outside the house-door, as the wise woman had told her to do.

The next morning, when they all rose, and looked out of the window, there stood a most wonderful tree, with leaves of silver, and apples of gold hanging between them. Nothing in the wide world could be more beautiful or more costly. They none of them knew how the tree could come there in one night excepting little Two Eyes. She supposed it had grown up from the inside of the goat, for it stood over where she had buried it in the earth.

Then said the mother to little One Eye: 'Climb up, my child, and break off some of the fruit from the tree.'

One Eye climbed up, but when she tried to catch a branch,

and pluck one of the apples, it escaped from her hand, and so it happened every time she made the attempt, and, do what she would, she could not reach one.

'Three Eyes,' said the mother, 'climb up, and try what you can do; perhaps you will be able to see better with your three eyes than One Eye can.'

One Eye slid down from the tree, and Three Eyes climbed up. But Three Eyes was not more skilful; with all her efforts she could not draw the branches, nor the fruit, near enough to pluck even a leaf, for they sprang back as she put out her hand.

At last the mother was impatient, and climbed up herself, but with no more success, for, as she appeared to grasp a branch, or fruit, her hand closed upon thin air.

'May I try?' said little Two Eyes. 'Perhaps I may succeed.'

'You indeed!' cried her sisters. 'You, with your two eyes, what can you do?'

But Two Eyes climbed up, and the golden apples did not fly back from her when she touched them, but almost laid themselves on her hand, and she plucked them one after another, till she carried down her own little apron full.

The mother took them from her, and gave them to her sisters, as she said little Two Eyes did not handle them properly; but this was only from jealousy, because little Two Eyes was the only one who could reach the fruit, and she went into the house feeling more spiteful to her than ever.

It happened that, while all three sisters were standing under the tree together, a young knight rode by. 'Run away, quick, and hide yourself, little Two Eyes; hide yourself somewhere, for we shall be quite ashamed for you to be seen.' Then they pushed the poor girl, in great haste, under an empty cask, which stood near the tree, and several of the golden apples that she had plucked along with her.

As the knight came nearer, they saw he was a handsome man, and presently he halted, and looked with wonder and pleasure at the beautiful tree with its silver leaves and golden fruit.

At last he spoke to the sisters, and asked, 'To whom does this beautiful tree belong? If a man possessed only one branch he might obtain all he wished for in the world.'

'This tree belongs to us,' said the two sisters, 'and we will break off a branch for you, if you like.' They gave themselves a great deal of trouble in trying to do as they offered; but all

to no purpose, for the branches and the fruit evaded their efforts and sprang back at every touch.

'This is wonderful,' exclaimed the knight, 'that the tree should belong to you, and yet you are not able to gather even a branch.'

They persisted, however, in declaring that the tree was their own property. At this moment little Two Eyes, who was angry because her sisters had not told the truth, caused two of the golden apples to slip out from under the cask, and they rolled on till they reached the feet of the knight's horse. When the knight saw them, he asked in astonishment where they came from.

The two ugly maidens replied that they had another sister, but they dared not let him see her, for she had only two eyes, like common people, and was named little Two Eyes.

But the knight felt very anxious to see her, and called out, 'Little Two Eyes, come here.' Then came Two Eyes, quite comforted, from the empty cask, and the knight was astonished to find her so beautiful.

Then he said, 'Little Two Eyes, can you break off a branch of the tree for me?'

'Oh yes,' she replied, 'I can, very easily, for the tree belongs to me.' And she climbed up, and, without any trouble, broke off a branch with its silver leaves and golden fruit, and gave it to the knight.

He looked down at her as she stood by his horse, and said, 'Little Two Eyes, what shall I give you for this?'

'Ah!' she answered, 'I suffer from hunger and thirst, and sorrow, and trouble, from early morning till late at night; if you would only take me with you, and release me, I should be so happy.'

Then the knight lifted the little maiden on his horse, and rode home with her to his father's castle. There she was given beautiful clothes to wear, and as much to eat and drink as she wished; and as she grew up the young knight loved her so dearly that they were married with great rejoicings.

Now, when the two sisters saw little Two Eyes carried away by the handsome young knight, they were overjoyed at their good fortune. 'The wonderful tree belongs to us now,' they said; 'even if we cannot break off a branch, yet everybody who passes will stop to admire it, and make acquaintance with us, and, who knows? we may get husbands after all.'

But when they rose the next morning, lo! the tree had vanished, and with it all their hopes. And on this very morn-

ing, when little Two Eyes looked out of her chamber window of the castle, she saw, to her great joy, that the tree had followed her.

Little Two Eyes lived for a long time in happiness; but she heard nothing of her sisters, till one day two poor women came to the castle, to beg for alms. Little Two Eyes saw them, and, looking earnestly in their faces, she recognised her two sisters, who had become so poor that they were obliged to beg their bread from door to door.

But the good sister received them most kindly, and promised to take care of them and give them all they wanted. And then they did indeed repent and feel sorry for having treated her so badly in their youthful days.

THE FOX AND THE HORSE.

A PEASANT once had a faithful horse who had grown old and could not serve his master any longer, and therefore he did not care to provide him with food, so he said to him: 'I really do not want you any more, for you are of no use to me; but if you can prove your strength by bringing me a lion, I will keep you as long as you live; but now just walk out of my stable and go and make yourself a home in the fields.'

The horse, feeling very sad, wandered away till he came to a wood, so that he might shelter himself under the trees in bad weather. A fox met him, and said: 'Friend, why do you hang your head and look so lonely?'

'Ah,' replied the horse, 'avarice and fidelity cannot dwell together in one house. My master has forgotten for how many years I have served him and borne him safely from place to place, and now that I am unable to plough any longer he will not provide me with food, and has sent me away.'

'Without any consolation?' asked the fox.

'The consolation was worthless,' he replied. 'He told me that if I was strong enough to bring him a lion he would take me back and keep me, but he knows very well that I could not possibly do that.'

Then said the fox, 'Don't be downhearted, I can help you; so just lie down here, stretch yourself out as if you were dead, and do not move.'

The horse did as the fox desired him, while the fox went to

a lion, whose den was not far off, and said to him, 'Yonder lies a dead horse; come with me, and you can have a good feast.'

The lion went with him, but when they reached the spot the fox said, 'You cannot make a meal comfortably here; I'll tell you what I will do: I will tie the horse on to you by the tail, and then you can drag him to your den and consume him at your leisure.'

The lion was pleased with this advice; he placed himself near the horse, and stood quite still to enable the fox to tie the tail securely. But in doing so he contrived to twist it round the lion's legs so tightly that, with all his strength, he could not move them. When the fox had accomplished this feat, he struck the horse on the shoulder, and cried, 'Gee up, old horse, gee up.'

Up sprang the horse, and started off at full speed, dragging the lion with him. As they dashed through the wood the lion began to roar, and roared so loud that all the birds flew away in a fright. But the horse let him roar, and dragged him along over field and meadow to his master's door. As soon as the master saw what his horse had done, he said to him, 'As you have accomplished what I required, you shall now stay with me and have food and shelter as long as you live.'

THE DANCING-SHOES.

A KING once had twelve daughters, one quite as beautiful as another. They slept together in a large hall, where their beds stood side by side. Every evening, when they retired to rest, the door of the saloon in which they slept was locked by the king himself. The princesses had dancing-shoes, and when the king unlocked the door in the morning, the shoes were worn out.

No one could imagine how it happened, for the princesses could not possibly get out of the bolted and barred doors and windows. It occurred so often, and so many shoes were worn out, that the king at last made known his determination, that whoever would discover where his daughters went in the night to dance, and how they got out of the room, should have one of them for a wife, whichever he liked best, and the kingdom after the king's death.

But he also announced that whoever did not succeed, after trying for three nights, should forfeit his life. Notwithstanding this, it was not long before a king's son presented himself, and begged to be allowed to take his chance. He was well received, and placed in a chamber adjoining the sleeping-hall, to enable him to see all that took place, and whether they went out to dance, and, if they did go, to follow them. The door leading into the sleeping-hall was left open, and his bed was placed opposite to it.

But, when he laid down, it was as if lead had been placed on his eyelids; he could not keep awake, and in the morning the dancing-shoes were found more worn than ever; they had even holes in the soles, proving that they had been to a dance somewhere. The second and the third night it was the same, and then the head of the poor prince was cut off without the least pity.

Even this did not prevent others from trying, and they all lost their lives.

Now, it happened that a poor soldier who had been wounded, and could not serve any more in the army, was passing on his way to the town in which this king dwelt, and an old woman met him.

'Why are you going to this town?' she asked.

'I hardly know myself,' he replied, and then added in joke, 'unless I felt inclined to find out where the king's daughters go to wear out their dancing-shoes, and then become the future king!'

'That is not so very difficult, after all,' said the old woman. 'All you have to do is to keep awake, and therefore on no account drink the wine that is brought to you in the evening, or you will sleep without waking.' She then gave him a little cloak, and said: 'When you wear that you will be invisible, and can slip after the twelve dancers easily.'

As she gave the soldier this good advice, she was so earnest with him that he took courage, and determined to go before the king and present himself as a suitor. He was as well received as the others had been, and royal robes were given to him to wear.

In the evening, when sleeping-time arrived, he was led to the little ante-chamber, and when the princesses came to bed, the eldest brought him a goblet of wine; but he had fastened a piece of sponge under his chin, so that as he put the cup to his lips he let it all run into the sponge, and drank not a drop. Then he laid himself down, and after a little while began to snore as if he were fast asleep.

When the twelve princesses heard this they began to laugh, and the eldest said: 'There is another that does not care for his life!'

Thereupon they all got up, opened wardrobes, and drawers and boxes, and took out the most elegant dresses, in which they arrayed themselves before the glass, and jumped and danced about for joy, except the youngest, who said: 'I don't know how it is, but I feel quite miserable, as if something were going to happen.'

'What a goose you are!' cried the eldest; 'you always fear without a cause. Do you forget how I have always managed the kings' sons already? The soldier has had his sleeping-draught, and such a clown as he is not likely to wake!'

When they were all ready, they came in and looked at the soldier; but he had his eyes fast closed, and neither moved nor stirred; so they believed he was quite sound asleep.

The eldest, on this, went up to her own bed, and struck it gently. Immediately it sank down into the earth, and through the opening the princesses disappeared one after the other, the eldest leading the way.

On seeing this, the soldier sprang out of bed, threw on his invisible cloak, and followed the youngest, who went last, unseen. About half-way down he trod lightly on her dress, which so frightened her that she screamed out: 'What was that? Who is pulling my dress?'

'Don't be so silly,' cried the eldest; 'I dare say you have a hook hanging down, which has caught in something.'

When they all arrived at the lowest step, the soldier saw before him a most beautiful avenue of trees with silver leaves, which shone and glittered in the light of many lamps.

'Well,' thought the soldier, 'it will be a proof that I have really followed the king's daughters if I take a branch with me.'

So he broke one off and put it in his pocket; but the branch made such a crack that the youngest again cried out: 'I'm sure there is something wrong; did you not hear that crack?'

'It is the first salute-gun from the princes for joy that we are coming,' said the eldest sister.

They went on till they came to another avenue, where all the leaves were golden, and at last to a third on which sparkled diamonds. From each of these trees the soldier broke off branches, and the youngest, when she heard them crack, seemed terribly afraid, although her eldest sister persisted in calling them salute-guns.

After awhile they reached the borders of a large lake, to

which lay twelve pretty little boats, and in the boats sat twelve handsome young princes, who were waiting for the king's daughters. Each of them took one in his boat, and the soldier, unseen, seated himself with the youngest.

As this prince rowed away, he said: 'I cannot tell how it is, but the boat seems heavier to-day than it has ever been before. I am obliged to use all my strength to keep up with the rest.'

'It cannot really be heavier,' she replied; 'it must be the heat which makes you weaker; it is most oppressive weather.'

On the opposite shore stood a noble castle brilliantly lighted up, and from the rooms came sounds of soul-stirring music from fife and drum. The boats were rowed towards it, and the princes, assisting their companions to land, led them to the ball-room of the castle, and they were all very soon joining in the dance with great spirit.

The soldier danced among them unseen, and often when a glass of wine was brought and placed on the table he would empty it while they turned their heads, and by so doing greatly alarm the youngest sister, whose fears, however, were always silenced by the eldest.

They danced till three o'clock in the morning, when all their shoes were completely worn out. The princes accompanied the king's daughters to the boats, and rowed them back again over the lake, and this time the invisible soldier seated himself in the boat with the eldest.

On reaching the shore they said farewell to each other, and promised to be there on the following night. As soon as they reached the steps, the soldier ran on before them and laid himself on his bed, so that when the twelve princesses, tired and sleepy, came slowly tripping back, he snored so loudly that they all heard him, and said: 'From him we are quite safe.' Then they took off their beautiful clothes, put them away, and, after placing their dancing-shoes under the bed, laid themselves down and slept.

The soldier next morning, however, said not a word of what he had seen; he wished to go again to those wonderful places, and so on the second and third nights he was with them as before. All was the same as at the first, and they danced till their shoes were worn out. On the third night, however, he took away with him a goblet as another proof of his visit.

When the hour arrived in which he was expected to give his answer, he took the three branches which he had broken off, and the goblet, and appeared before the king. The twelve

princesses placed themselves secretly behind the door to listen and hear what he would say.

The king asked the question: 'Where have my twelve daughters worn out their dancing-shoes during each night?'

'By dancing with twelve princes,' replied the soldier, 'in a subterranean castle.' And then he described all that he had seen, and pointed to the proofs he had brought with him.

On hearing this, the king sent for his daughters, and asked them if what the soldier had said was true. They saw at once that all was discovered, they could deny nothing, and must therefore take the consequences of their conduct. Thereupon the king asked the soldier which of them he would have for a wife, so he replied: 'I am no longer young, so give me the eldest.'

On that very day the marriage was celebrated, and the kingdom promised to the soldier after the king's death. The princes were placed under the spell of enchantment for as many days as they had danced nights with the princesses in the enchanted castle.

THE SIX SERVANTS.

A long time ago there lived an old queen who was a witch; and her daughter was the most beautiful maiden under the sun. The old woman thought of nothing but how she might lure men to destruction, and when a suitor came she said that whoever wished to have her daughter must first perform a task or die.

Many, blinded by the beauty of the girl, ventured, but they could never accomplish what the old woman demanded of them, and then no mercy was shown: they were made to kneel down, and their heads were cut off.

A prince, who had heard of the great beauty of the girl, said to his father, 'Let me go, I wish to win her in marriage.'

'Never!' said the father. 'If you went you would go to your death.'

Then the son was sick unto death, and lay thus for seven years, and no physician could heal him. When the father saw that there was no hope of his life, he said to him, full of sadness, 'Go, then, and try your luck; I know no other cure for you.'

When the son heard that, he got up from his bed, was well

again, and went joyfully on his way. It happened that, as he was riding over a heath, he saw from afar something lying on the ground like a heap of hay, and as he drew near it he perceived that it was the stomach of a man who had stretched himself out there, but the stomach looked like a little hill. The fat man, when he saw the traveller, stood up and said, 'If you need anyone, take me into your service.'

The prince answered, 'What can I do with such an awkward man?'

'Oh,' said the fat one, 'this is nothing; when I stretch myself out more, I am three thousand times fatter.'

'If that is the case,' said the prince, 'I can use you, so come with me.'

Then the fat one followed the prince, and after a little while they found another man lying on the ground, and with his ear to the turf. The prince asked, 'What are you doing there?'

'I am listening,' answered the man.

'Why are you listening so attentively?'

'I am listening to what is going on in the world, for nothing escapes my ears. I can hear the grass grow.'

The prince asked, 'Tell me what do you hear at the court of the queen who has the beautiful daughter.'

Then he answered, 'I hear the sword whizzing which is taking off the head of a suitor.'

The prince said, 'I can use you; come with me.'

They went on farther, and saw a pair of feet lying, and also something of a pair of legs, but more they could not see. When they had gone on for a great distance, however, they came to the body, and at last to the head.

'Oh,' said the prince, 'what a tall fellow you are!'

'Oh,' answered the tall man, 'that is nothing; if I really stretch out my limbs, I am three thousand times as tall, and am taller than the highest mountains on earth. I will willingly serve you if you will take me.'

'Come with me,' answered the prince; 'I can use you.'

They went farther, and found a man who sat by the wayside, and had his eyes bound up. Said the prince to him, 'Have you weak eyes that you cannot look on the light?'

'No,' answered the man; 'but I must not take the bandage off, for whatever I look at splits in pieces, my glance is so powerful. If I can be of use to you, I will serve you.'

'Come with me,' answered the prince; 'I can use you.'

They went farther, and found a man who lay in the midst of

the hot sunshine and was trembling and shivering over his whole body, so that not a limb was still.

'How can you shiver thus,' said the prince, 'when the sun shines so warm?'

'Ah,' answered the man, 'my nature is of another kind to yours: the hotter it is, the more I freeze, and the colder it is, the hotter am I; in the midst of the ice I cannot bear the heat, and in the midst of fire I suffer from the cold.'

'You are a wonderful fellow,' said the prince; 'if you want to serve me, come with me.'

They went farther, and saw a man standing, who craned his neck and looked about him, and could see over all the mountains. The prince asked, 'What are you looking at so earnestly?'

The man answered, 'I have such sharp eyes that I can see out over the woods and fields and valleys and mountains, and through the whole world.'

The prince said, 'Will you come with me?—for I still want another servant.'

Now, the prince with his six servants came to the town where the old queen lived. He did not tell her who he was, but he said, 'If you will give me your daughter I will perform any task that you set me.'

The witch rejoiced that so handsome a young man had again fallen into her net, and said, 'I will give you a task three times, and if you accomplish it each time, you shall be master here, and shall have my daughter to wife.'

'What is the first to be?' asked he.

'That you should bring me a ring that I have let fall into the Red Sea.'

Then the prince went to his servants, and said, 'The first task is not easy; a ring is to be brought out of the Red Sea; give me your advice.'

Then said he with the bright eyes, 'I will see where it lies.' He looked down into the sea, and said, 'There it hangs on a sharp stone.'

The tall man came, and said, 'I would fetch it out if I could only see it.'

'Is that all?' said the stout man, and he laid himself down, and put his mouth to the water. The waves fell into it as if into a pit, and he drank the whole sea up, so that it was dry like a meadow. The tall man stooped and picked up the ring with his hand. Then the prince rejoiced when he had the ring and took it to the old woman. She was astonished, and said, 'Yes,

it is the right ring; you have accomplished the first task correctly; but now comes the second. Do you see in the meadow before my castle three hundred fat cattle which are feeding there? These you must eat up with skin and hair, bones and horns; and below in the cellar there lie three hundred casks of wine: these you must drink up. If there remain one hair of the oxen or one drop of the wine, your life will be forfeited.'

The prince said, 'May I not invite some guests? A meal does not taste well without company.'

The old woman laughed wickedly, and said, 'You may invite one, so that you can have companionship, but no more.'

The prince went to his servants, and said to the fat one, 'You must be my guest and have a good meal to-day.'

Then the fat one stretched himself out, ate the three hundred oxen, so that not a hair was left, and asked if there was nothing else for his breakfast; the wine he drank out of the casks without thinking it necessary to take a glass, and finished the last drop. When the meal was at an end, the prince went to the old woman, and told her, 'The second task is accomplished.'

She wondered, and said, 'So far has no one else gone, but there is still one task left;' and she thought, 'You cannot escape me, and will not be able to keep your head.' 'To-night,' she continued, 'I will bring my daughter into your room, and you must take her in your arms; and if you sit together take care that you do not sleep. I shall come when the clock strikes twelve, and if she is not then in your arms, you are lost.'

The prince thought the task was light. 'I can well keep my eyes open,' he said. Still, he called his servants, told them what the old woman had commanded, and said, 'Who knows what trick lies behind? Foresight is good; keep watch, and take care that the girl does not get out of my room.'

When it was night the old woman came, and led her daughter into the arms of the prince, and the tall man curved himself and surrounded them as in a circle; the stout man placed himself at the door, so that no living soul could get in. Then they sat together, and the maiden said not a word; but the moon shone through the window on her face, so that he could see her wonderful beauty. He did nothing but look at her, was full of joy and love, and no weariness came to his eyes. This lasted until eleven; then the old woman cast a spell over them all, so that they fell asleep, and in a moment the girl was away.

Now, they slept until close upon a quarter to twelve, when the spell was powerless and they all awoke. 'Oh, grief and

misfortune!' called out the prince; 'now am I lost!' His faithful servants began also to lament, but the listener said: 'Be still; I will listen.' Then he listened a moment, and said: 'She is sitting on a rock three hundred miles from here bemoaning her fate. You, tall one, can alone help us; if you were to stretch yourself you would be there in a few steps.'

'Yes,' answered the tall one; 'but he with the sharp eyes must go with me in order that we may remove the rock.'

Then the tall man took hold of the one with the bound-up eyes, and in a moment, as soon as one could stretch out a hand, they were on the desired rock. As soon as the tall man took away the bandage from the other's eyes he looked, and the rock sprang into a thousand pieces. Then the tall one took the maiden in his arm, carried her back in a minute, fetched as quickly his comrades together, and before it struck twelve they were all sitting as before, and were quite joyful and happy. When it struck twelve the old witch came gliding in with a mocking face, as if to say, 'He is mine,' for she thought her daughter was three hundred miles away on the rock. But when she saw her in the arms of the prince she was frightened, and said: 'Here is one who can do more than I.' But she could not help it, and had to give her daughter to him. Then she whispered in her ear, 'Shame on you, that you must obey common people, and not be able to choose a husband after your own wishes!'

Then the proud heart of the girl filled with rage, and she thought of revenge. She caused the next morning three hundred bundles of wood to be collected, and said to the prince, who had accomplished the three tasks, that she would not be his wife unless someone was ready to place himself in the midst of the wood and remain in the fire.

She thought that none of his servants would be willing to be burnt for him, but that for love of her he would go in himself, be burnt, and then she would be free. But the servants said: 'We have all done something, only the frosty one has not yet been useful; he must go;' and they placed him in the midst of the wood and kindled it. Then the fire began to burn, and burnt for three days until all the wood was consumed; and when the flames were over the frosty one stood among the ashes trembling like an aspen leaf, and saying: 'I have never experienced such a frost in my life, and if it had lasted any longer I should have been frozen.'

Now, as there was no other excuse to be found, the beautiful maiden had to take the unknown youth for her husband.

But when they were going to the church, the old woman said, 'I cannot bear the shame,' and sent her army after him, that they should cut down all who opposed them, and bring back her daughter.

The listener had, however, pricked up his ears, and had understood the secret speeches of the old woman. 'What shall we do?' said he to the stout man. But he knew what to do, and spat out of his mouth behind the carriage part of the sea-water which he had drunk, and there arose a great sea, in which the warriors were drowned. When the witch perceived that, she sent her armed knights; but the listener heard the rattling of their armour, and unbound the eyes of his companion, who looked fixedly at the enemy, and they sprang to pieces like glass. Then the youth and the maiden went on undisturbed, and when both had been blessed in church, the six servants took their departure, and said to their lord: 'Your wishes are fulfilled; you have no more need of us; we will go farther and try our fortune.'

Half a mile from the royal castle was a village, before which a swineherd was keeping his flock; and when they came thither the prince said to his wife, 'Do you know who I really am? I am no prince, but a swineherd, and he with the flock yonder is my father; we two must stay here and help him.'

Then he alighted with her at the inn, and told the innkeeper secretly to take away the princess's royal robes in the night. So when she awoke in the morning she had nothing to put on; and the hostess gave her an old frock and a pair of old woollen stockings, as if it had been a great present, and said: 'If it had not been for your husband I should not have given them to you.'

The princess then believed that he really was a swineherd, and kept the flock with him, and thought, 'I have deserved this for my pride and haughtiness.'

This lasted a week, and then she could not stand it any longer, as her feet had become sore. Some people then came to her, and asked her if she knew who her husband was. 'Yes,' answered she, 'he is a swineherd, and has just gone out with ribands and laces to drive a little trade.'

They answered: 'Just come with us, we will lead you to him;' and they brought her to the palace.

And when she entered the hall there stood her husband in royal garments. She did not recognise him until he fell on her neck, kissed her, and said: 'I suffered much for you, and

now you have suffered for me.' Then the marriage was celebrated, and he who tells this story wishes that he had been there.

THE WHITE AND THE BLACK BRIDE.

A WOMAN one day was going to a field with her daughter and her step-daughter to cut clover for their cattle, when the Lord came walking towards them in the form of a poor man, and said: 'Will you show Me the way to the town?'

'If you want to know, find out for yourself,' said the mother.

'As you are so very anxious to find the way,' said her daughter, 'you had better engage a guide.'

But the step-daughter said: 'Poor man, come with me; I will take you a little way and show you.'

Then the Lord in anger turned His back on the mother and daughter, leaving upon them a spell by which they both became as black as night and as ugly as sin.

He then accompanied the step-daughter, and as they drew near the town, He said: 'Choose for yourself three things, and I will grant them.'

Then said the maiden: 'I should like to become as pure and beautiful as the sun.' Immediately she became fair and beautiful as the daylight. 'Then I should like to have a purse of money which would never be empty.' This the Lord gave her, and said: 'Do not forget what is good.' And then, as her third request, the maiden asked that she might reach heaven when she died. This was also granted, and immediately the Lord vanished.

When the mother and daughter came home, and saw that they had both become coal-black and ugly, while the step-daughter was fairer and more beautiful than ever, wicked envy rose in their hearts, and they thought only of how they could injure her.

The step-daughter, however, had a brother named Reginer, whom she loved very much, and she told him everything that happened to her. One day her brother said to her, 'Dear sister, I love you so much that I mean to have your likeness taken, and then I shall have your face always before my eyes.'

'Very well,' she replied; 'but pray do not let anyone else see the picture.'

So he had her picture painted, and hung up in his room at the king's castle where he lived, for he was coachman there.

Every day he stood before it, and thanked God for his dear sister. Not long before this time the queen had died, and the king was full of grief, for she had been so beautiful that none like her could be found anywhere.

The court servants observed that the coachman stood daily before the beautiful picture, and, being envious of him, informed the king.

Upon this the king desired the picture to be brought to him, and when he saw how it resembled his dead wife, only that it was still more beautiful, he fell desperately in love with it. He sent for his coachman, and when he appeared asked him whose likeness it was. The coachman replied that it was his sister. Upon hearing this the king resolved that no other woman should be his wife, and gave him a royal carriage and horses, and beautiful clothes embroidered with gold, and sent him to fetch his sister to be the king's bride. When Reginer arrived with this message his sister was full of joy.

But her black sister was overpowered with jealousy at this good fortune, and, vexed beyond measure, said to her mother: 'What is the use of all your cleverness if you can't get me such luck as this?'

'Be quiet,' said the old woman; 'I will manage it all for you.' And through the power of her witchcraft she dimmed the eyes of the coachman so that he could hardly see, and deadened the sound in the ears of his sister till she became almost deaf.

Then they all got into the carriage—the fair maiden in her beautiful dress, and the mother with her daughter—while Reginer sat on the box and drove. After they had travelled a little way, Reginer said to his sister: 'Take care, dear sister, that you do not crush your clothes; I want you to look well when you are taken to the king.'

But the maiden could not hear distinctly, so she said to her mother: 'What does my dear brother say?'

'Oh,' she replied, 'he says you must take off your gold-embroidered clothes and give them to your sister.'

She immediately did as her step-mother said, and the black maiden dressed herself in the royal clothes, and gave her dark gray frock to her beautiful step-sister.

Then they travelled on still farther, and Reginer again told

his little sister to take care of her clothes, that she might appear beautiful before the king; but she could not hear, and said: 'What does my brother say?'

'He says now,' replied the step-mother, 'that you are to give your sister your golden cap.'

So the cap was taken off, and the beautiful maiden's hair was without ornament. And so they travelled on, and again her brother said something to her which she could not hear, and asked her step-mother.

'He says,' replied the wicked woman, 'that you must get down here.'

They were driving over a bridge where the water was deep. The maiden stood up to get out of the carriage, when the cruel woman gave her a push which sent her into the water. At the moment she sank, a snow-white duck appeared on the surface of the water, and swam about. The brother, who had not noticed what happened, drove on till they came to the castle. They alighted, and the coachman, who thought the black maiden was his sister, when he saw the sparkle and glitter of her dress, led her to the king. When the king caught sight of the dreadful ugliness of the maiden, he was so angry with the coachman that he ordered him to be thrown into a dungeon full of snakes and vipers. The old witch, however, bewitched the king and blinded his eyes, so that he allowed her and her daughter to remain at the castle, and at last he did not notice her ugliness, and appeared inclined to make her his wife.

One evening, when the king was sitting with the black bride, there came to the kitchen-door a beautiful white duck, and said to the kitchenmaid: 'Please make a fire here that I may warm and dry my feathers.'

So the kitchenmaid lighted a fire on the hearth, and the duck came in, and, seating herself by it, plumed and stroked her feathers with her beak. Presently she said: 'What is my brother Reginer doing now?'

'Nothing,' said the maid; 'Reginer is shut up in a dungeon with snakes and adders.'

'And what is the black witch doing, and where is her daughter?'

'They are both with the king, and he will marry the daughter.'

'Heaven forbid!' said the duck, and she went out and swam away. The next evening she came again, and said the same words. But when this happened a third time, the kitchen-

maid felt that she ought to tell the king, so she went to him and described what the duck had said and done. 'I will come and see for myself,' he said; and the next evening, when the duck pushed her head through the kitchen-door, the king drew his sword and cut it off. The next moment there stood before him a beautiful maiden, exactly like the picture which his coachman had shown him. So he sent for beautiful clothes, and told her to put them on, and led her into the castle quite joyfully. She then told him of the falsehood and cunning which had been used to betray her, till at last she had been pushed into the water of the brook. She begged, as her first request, that her brother should be released from the dungeon.

When the king had granted this petition, he went to the old witch and her daughter, and ordered them to be dragged to death by horses in a cask full of spikes. The king then married the beautiful maiden, and rewarded her brother, so that he became quite a rich man.

IRON HANS.

Near the castle of a king stood once a large forest, inhabited by wild beasts of every kind. One day the king sent a hunter into the forest to kill a stag, but the hunter did not return again. 'He has met with some accident,' said the king, and sent two hunters to search for him, but they remained away also. On this the king summoned his staff of hunters and said: 'Go and search through the wood in every direction, and do not give up till you find the three men.'

But of all this number none returned, and not one of the pack of hounds that went with them was ever seen again. After this, no one would venture into the wood. The still and lonely place seemed uninhabited, excepting that sometimes an eagle or a hawk would fly over the tree-tops.

Many years had passed when a foreign hunter announced himself to the king as seeking a situation, and offered to go into the dangerous wood. He only asked for support during the enterprise. The king, however, was unwilling to grant him permission, and said: 'The wood is haunted, and I fear you will not fare better than others, and will never come back.'

'My lord king,' he replied, 'I will venture; I know not what fear is.'

The hunter started for the wood with his hound. It was not long before the hound saw some game and wished to run after it. He had, however, scarcely taken two steps when a dark pool rose before him, a naked arm was stretched out of the water, and the dog was seized and quickly drawn under.

On seeing this, the hunter went back quickly and fetched three men, whom he told to bring pails to empty the pool. When they reached the bottom, there lay a wild-looking man, whose body was brown, like rusty iron, while his long tangled hair hung over his face, and reached to his knees.

They bound him with cords, and led him away to the castle. Everyone was astonished at the wild man; the king had him locked up in an iron cage, and placed in the court, and forbade any person to open the cage door under pain of death; and the queen herself was to keep the key. After this, the forest was quite safe to walk in.

The king had a son, eight years old, who often played in the court, and one day, while tossing his gilded ball, it fell into the iron cage. The boy ran fearlessly to the wild man, who was called Iron Hans, and said, 'Give me my ball.'

'No,' he replied; 'not unless you open the door of my cage.'

'I must not do that,' said the boy; 'the king has forbidden it;' and he ran away.

The next day he came again, and asked for his ball; but the wild man replied: 'Open the door, and you shall have it.' The boy still refused, and went away.

On the third day, while the king was out hunting in the forest, the boy came again, and said: 'You may as well give me my ball, for I cannot open the door, even if I wanted to, for I have not the key.'

'It is under your mother's sofa pillow; you can easily fetch it,' was the reply.

The boy, who wanted very much to have his ball, threw to the wind all thought, went in, fetched the key, and unlocked the cage door.

It opened with difficulty, and the boy pinched his finger; but when the door was opened the wild man came out of the cage, gave up the ball, and rushed away. The boy, in a terrible fright, called after him, screaming: 'Wild man, wild man, don't go away! I shall be beaten if you do.' The wild creature turned round, lifted up the boy, seated him on his shoulder, and walked with hasty steps to the forest.

On the king's return he noticed the empty cage, and asked the queen how it had happened.

'I do not know,' she replied; and she sought for the key, but it was gone.

She called the boy, but he did not answer.

The king sent messengers to seek him in the fields, but he was not to be found; and then they rightly guessed what had happened, and the whole castle was thrown into deep sorrow.

When the wild man reached the dark wood, he lifted the boy from his shoulder, and, placing him on his feet, said: 'You will never see your father and mother again; but I will take care of you, because you set me free, and I have some gratitude and pity. If you do all I tell you, I will make you very happy, and I have more gold and richer treasures than anyone in the whole world.' He then made the boy a nice bed in the moss, where he slept peacefully all night.

The next morning the man led him to a well, and said: 'See how bright and golden this water is, and yet it is as pure as crystal. Now you must sit here, and take care that nothing falls into it, otherwise it will be disturbed. In the evening I will come and see if you have followed my instructions.'

The boy seated himself on the brink of the well, and saw that many gold fish and golden snakes were swimming about in the water, and was very careful to let nothing fall in. While he thus sat, his finger began to ache so terribly that he could not help putting just the tip into the water, to cool it. He pulled it out again very quickly, and, oh, how surprised he was to find it covered with gold! In great trouble, he tried to wipe it off, but without success.

In the evening came Iron Hans, and when he saw the boy he said: 'What is the matter with the well?'

'Nothing, nothing,' he answered, holding his finger behind his back, that Iron Hans might not see it.

But the man said: 'You have dipped your finger in the water. This time it does not matter; but be careful in future not to let anything fall in.'

The boy went to the well early the next morning to watch, as before. The finger was again painful, and to avoid touching the water he raised his hands above his head, and in so doing, unluckily, a hair fell into the water of the well. He took it quickly out, but it was already covered with gold.

When Iron Hans came in the evening, he knew at once what had happened. 'You have let a hair fall into the well,' he said. 'I will try you once more; but if it happens again, the

well is disgraced, and you will not be able to remain any longer with me.'

On the third day the boy again seated himself by the well, and would not even move his finger, although it was still painful. But the time seemed so long that he tried to amuse himself by looking at his face reflected on the surface of the water. While stooping lower, to examine it better, his long hair drooped over his face, and fell into the water. He raised his head quickly, but the hair had already become golden, and shone like the sun.

You cannot imagine how terrified the poor child was. He took his pocket-handkerchief and bound it round his head, hoping that the man would not see it.

But when Iron Hans came, he knew all that had happened, and said: 'Take off that handkerchief.' And as the boy did so the golden hair fell on his shoulders, and, excuse himself as he might, it was all useless.

'You have not been able to stand the test,' said the man, 'therefore you cannot remain here. You must go out into the world and learn by experience what it is to be poor. But as you have not a bad heart, and I have a kind feeling for you, I will allow you to call upon me to help you. If you fall into trouble, come to the forest and cry, "Iron Hans!" and I will render you assistance immediately. My power is great—greater than you think—and gold and silver I have in abundance.'

The king's son on hearing this left the wood, and travelled for a long time over beaten paths and unfrequented roads till he came to a large town. Here he sought for employment, but as he had not been taught any trade, he found it very difficult to obtain. At last he went to the castle, and asked the people of the court to take him in. They were rather puzzled to know what the boy was fit for, but they were very much pleased with his appearance, and told him he might stay.

The cook said he might make the boy useful in the kitchen, to cut wood, and draw water, and sweep up the ashes. Once, however, after he had been some time at the castle, the cook told him to go and lay the cloth for the king and wait upon him. He went to the king's chamber, but, wishing to hide the golden hair, he kept on his hat.

The king, noticing this, said to him: 'If you come to a royal table you should take off your hat.'

'Ah, my lord king, I cannot,' he replied; 'I have a sore head.'

The king on hearing this sent for the cook, scolded him well, and asked him how he could take such a youth as that into his service, and ordered that he should be immediately dismissed. The cook, however, pitied the boy, and exchanged him with the gardener's helper. In the garden the boy had to dig and rake, and plant and sow, let the weather be as bad as it might.

One day in summer, while he was in the garden at work, the heat was so great that he was obliged to take off his hat to cool himself. As he did so, the sun shone upon his gold-covered hair, and it glittered and sparkled in its light so brightly that the reflection was thrown into the sleeping-chamber of the king's daughter, and she started up to see what caused it. She was surprised to find that the bright locks belonged to a youth at work in the garden. She, however, called him, and said, 'Bring me a bunch of flowers, will you?'

In all haste the youth put on his hat, and then gathered wild-flowers to make a bouquet for the princess. As he was ascending the steps, he met the gardener, who said to him: 'How can you take such a nosegay as that to the princess, with nothing but common field flowers? Go away quickly and fetch others — the rarest and most beautiful in the garden.'

'Ah, no,' said the youth; 'wild-flowers are stronger, and will please her better.'

When he entered the room in which the princess sat, she said: 'Take your hat off; you don't appear to know how to behave yourself before me.'

'I dare not,' he replied; 'pray do not ask me.'

Without another word she rose, and, coming towards him, seized the hat and pulled it off. Down rolled the golden hair over his shoulders—the most beautiful that ever was seen. He wanted to run away, but she held him by the arm and gave him a handful of ducats. He thanked her, but he did not care for the money, and as he left the castle he met the gardener, and said to him: 'See, here is all this money; I don't want it; give it to your children to play with.'

The next day the princess again desired him to bring her a nosegay of fresh flowers, and when he entered her room she suddenly caught hold of his hat to pull it off, but he held it firmly with both hands, and she could not remove it. However, she gave him again a handful of ducats, which he would not keep, but sent them to the gardener's children.

The third day the same thing occurred. He took the princess

a nosegay; she tried to pull off his hat, but without success, and he would not keep the money.

Not long after this war was declared, and the king assembled his people; but he knew not if he could offer resistance to the enemy's forces, which were superior in strength to his own: they had a great array.

Then the gardener's boy said: 'I am grown-up now, and I should like to go to battle, if I could have a horse.'

The soldiers laughed at him, and said: 'When we are gone, then you go and look in the stable; we will leave a horse there for you.'

He went to the stable, as they had told him, and found a horse, certainly; but it was lame in one foot, and halted as it walked. He mounted his sorry steed, however, and rode away to the forest, and called out three times, 'Iron Hans!' so loud that the trees echoed the sound.

In a moment the wild man appeared, and said: 'What do you wish for?'

'I want a strong horse to carry me to the battle,' he replied.

'That you shall have, and more than you want.' On saying this the wild man went back into the forest; and presently appeared a groom leading a beautiful horse, snorting and curvetting, which could scarcely be held in; and behind him followed a troop of warriors clothed in bright steel, their swords glittering in the sun.

The youth gave up to the groom his three-legged horse, mounted the other, and rode away at the head of his troop of warriors. When they reached the battle-field, they found that a large number of the king's troops had already fallen, and it would not have taken much to make the others yield.

Then the young man rode into the field with his troop of steel-clad warriors, drove like a storm at the enemy, and overpowered all resistance. They took to flight; but he attacked them, and left none alive. Instead, however, of going to the king, he turned and led his troop back to the wood, and called for Iron Hans.

'What do you wish for now?' said the wild man, when he appeared.

'Take back your horse and your warriors, and give me my three-legged nag again.' His wish was complied with, and he rode home on his three-legged horse.

Meanwhile, the king returned to the castle, and his daughter came to him and congratulated him on his good fortune.

'It is not my victory at all,' he said; 'but owing to a strange knight who came to our help with steel-clad warriors.'

The princess wanted to know who this strange knight was, but the king could not satisfy her. He told her that he and his soldiers had followed the flying enemy, and had not been seen since. The princess also inquired of the gardener where his garden assistant was gone.

The gardener laughed, and said: 'He has been away, and returned again on his three-legged horse, and the other servants have been jeering and laughing at him, and crying out: "Here comes our Hunkypuns back again!" And they asked which hedge he hid behind. He said he had done better than any of them, and that the victory would not have been won without him! And at this they laughed more than ever.'

The king told his daughter a few days after that he intended to celebrate the victory in a festival which should last three days. 'And you shall have a golden apple to throw among the visitors,' he said, 'and perhaps this unknown warrior may be there.'

As soon as the invitations were sent out, the young man went into the forest, and called Iron Hans.

'What do you wish for now?' he asked.

'I want to catch the golden apple when the princess throws it.'

'You may be as sure of it as if you had it now,' said Iron Hans. 'And you shall have a red suit of armour and a chestnut horse to ride on.'

The appointed day arrived, the young man presented himself at the castle, and mixed with the other knights, and no one recognised him. During the entertainment the princess stepped forward, and threw among the knights a golden apple. It was caught by the stranger, who immediately slipped out and disappeared.

On the second day Iron Hans provided him with a white suit of armour, and he rode a gray horse. Again he caught the apple, and after doing so did not stop a moment, but rode quickly away. At this the king became angry, and said he could not allow it, and that whoever caught the apple ought to show himself and give up his name. He therefore gave orders that if this strange knight again caught the apple, and left in such haste, he was to be pursued and brought back; and if he would not return willingly they were to use force.

The third day of the festival arrived, and the young knight this time appeared in black armour, and riding a splendid

black horse with which Iron Hans had supplied him. Again he caught the apple, and instantly rode away, followed by the king's people; but it was not possible to overtake that fleet horse, although one approached near enough to wound the young knight in the leg with the point of his sword. He kept his seat, however; but his horse started so violently that his helmet fell off, and they could see the golden hair that lay scattered on his shoulders. So they rode back, and told the king all that had happened.

The next day the princess asked the gardener where his young assistant was. 'He is at work in the garden to-day,' he replied. 'But the wonder to me is that he should have been at the festival, and only came back last night; and he has also shown to my children three golden apples, which he says he has won.'

On hearing of this the king ordered him to be sent for; and he made his appearance as usual with his hat on. But the princess went quickly towards him, and as she pulled it off, down fell the golden hair on his shoulders, making him look so beautiful that they were all astonished.

'Are you the knight,' asked the king, 'who has attended the feast each day in a different coloured armour, and caught the three golden apples?'

'Yes,' he replied; 'and there are the apples,' he continued, taking them out of his pocket, and offering them to the king. 'If you wish for farther proof, I can show you the wound which one of your people inflicted with his sword when they followed me. I am also the knight who helped you to conquer the enemy.'

'If you can perform such deeds as these,' said the king, 'you cannot be a common gardener. Who is your father?'

'My father is a mighty king,' he replied; 'and I have money quite as much as I want.'

'I see plainly,' said the king, 'that I owe you more than thanks. Can I do anything to show my gratitude?'

'Yes, indeed,' replied the young knight. 'You can give me your daughter to be my wife.'

The young maiden laughed as she said, 'I shall raise no obstacle; for I knew by his golden hair that he was no gardener's son.' And then she went forward and kissed him.

To the marriage came his father and mother, who were overjoyed, for they had given up all hopes of seeing their dear son again.

On the day of the marriage, while they sat at the wedding-feast, all at once the music ceased, the door opened, and a

noble-looking king stepped into the room, followed by a magnificent retinue. He approached the bridegroom, embraced him, and said, 'I am Iron Hans. I was once a wild man while under the sorcerer's spell; but you have set me free. All the treasures that I possess shall now be yours.'

THE THREE BLACK PRINCESSES.

East India was besieged by an enemy who would not retire until he had received six hundred dollars. Then the townspeople had it proclaimed that whoever would give the money should be burgomaster. Now, there was a poor fisherman who fished in the sea with his son, and the enemy came and took his son prisoner and gave the father six hundred dollars for him. Then the father went and gave them to the lords of the town, and the enemy went away and the fisherman became burgomaster. It was proclaimed then that whoever did not say 'Mr. Burgomaster' should be sentenced to the gallows.

The son escaped from the enemy, and came to a great wood on a high hill. The mountain opened up, and he beheld a large enchanted castle, in which chairs, tables and benches were all hung with black; and three princesses came, who were dressed all in black except that they had a little white on their faces. They told him not to be afraid, they would not hurt him, and he could deliver them. He said he would willingly do it if he only knew how. They told him that he must not speak to them, nor look at them, for a whole year. What he wanted to have he should ask for; and if they dared give him an answer they would.

When he had been there some time, he said he would like to see his father; they replied that he might, and they gave him a purse of gold; he was to put on some clothes they presented to him, and in eight days he was to be back again.

He was then caught up, and was immediately in the East Indies. He could not find his father in the fisher's hut, and asked the people where the poor fisherman could be. They said that he must not say that, or he would come to the gallows. Then he came to his father, and said, 'Fisherman, how did you come here?'

Then the father said, 'You must not say that, for if the lords

of the town were aware of it, you might come to the gallows.' He, however, would not stop, and was brought to the gallows.

When he was there, he said, 'Oh, my lords, give me leave to go to the old fisher's hut.' Then he put on his smock-frock, and came again to the lords, and said, 'Look well at me; am I not the son of the poor fisherman? In this dress did I gain bread for my father and mother.'

And now his father recognised him, and asked his pardon and took him home; then he told them all that had happened to him: that he had come to a forest on a high mountain, that the mountain had opened, and that he had come to an enchanted castle where all was in black, and three princesses had come to him, who were all black except a little white on their faces, and they had told him not to fear, that he could deliver them. Then his mother said that it might not be right; he should take some holy water with him and drop some boiling water on their faces.

He went back again, but he was afraid, and dropped water on their faces as they slept, and they all turned half white. Then all three princesses sprang up, and said, 'You wicked fellow! our blood shall cry for vengeance on thee, and there is no man born or will be born who can deliver us. We have still three brothers, who are bound in chains; they shall tear thee to pieces.'

Then there was a noise over the whole castle: he leapt out of the window and broke his leg; the castle sank into the ground, and the mountain was shut up, and no one knows where and what it was.

THE LAMB AND THE FISH.

THERE lived once a little brother and sister, who were very fond of each other. Their own mother was dead, and they had a stepmother who did not love them at all, and tried secretly to injure them.

It happened one day that the two children were playing in a meadow near the house, with several other children. In this meadow was a pool that came up to one side of the house, and on its banks the children were singing:

'Encké Bencké, that's the word,
Will you be my little bird?
Birdie a sugar-stick will give,
That will I to the good cook give;
The cook will give to me some milk;
The milk I will to the baker take,
And he will make me a sugar-cake;
The cake I then shall give to puss,
And she will quickly catch a mouse!
I shall hang it up in the house,
And then it is mine.'

While singing this, the children held hands, and danced round in a circle. One who stood in the middle pointed with her finger to each child at each word, and when the word *mine* occurred, the child who was pointed at ran from the circle, and the others had to run after him to catch him.

As the children were thus amusing themselves, and chasing each other about merrily, the stepmother looked out of window, and when she saw them so happy, wicked envy rose in her heart, and, in her spite, she used her power of witchcraft, and changed them both: the boy into a fish, the girl into a lamb.

A sorrowful little fish might now be seen swimming about in the stream, while near its banks, in the meadow, stood a pretty little lamb, too sad to eat even a blade of grass.

It happened, not long after, that the stepmother had visitors at her house, and she thought it would be a nice opportunity to get rid of the children. So she called the cook, and told her to fetch the lamb from the meadow and kill it, 'as we have nothing else for our guests.'

Then the cook fetched the lamb, and brought it into the kitchen; and she took up the knife to kill it, when she saw a fish swimming in the water in the front of the kitchen sink, and the lamb cried out:

'Ah! little brother in the sea,
Sadly my fond heart weeps for thee;
The cook is whetting the cruel knife
To take away my life.'

Then the little fish answered:

'Ah! little sister, my heart is sad,
And, oh! my fate will be quite as bad,
Down in the deep, deep sea.'

When the cook heard the lamb speak these sorrowful words, and the fish answer them, she was frightened, and knew that

it was not a natural lamb, but some human being whom her wicked mistress had bewitched. So she said: 'Do not fear; I will not hurt you.' And she fetched another lamb from the field, and prepared it for the visitors.

She then took the bewitched lamb to a peasant's wife, and told her all about it. This woman had been wet-nurse to the little girl, and guessed who it was, and took her to a wise woman.

The wise woman pronounced some good words over the lamb and the fish, and at once the spell was broken, the children returned to their proper shapes, and went away together to a great forest, in which stood a small but very pretty house. Here they lived, although lonely, yet contented and happy, for the rest of their lives.

MOUNTAIN SESIMA.

THERE once lived two brothers—one was poor, the other rich; but the rich brother gave the poor one nothing, and he had to work hard for his living. Times were sometimes so bad that his wife and children had not even bread to eat.

One day he was driving his cart through a wood, and noticed at the side of the path an opening through the trees, and behind them a large barren mountain which he had never observed before. So he stood still, and looked at it with surprise.

As he so stood he saw twelve fierce-looking men coming towards him. Thinking they were robbers, he drew his cart behind the bushes, and climbed up a tree to see what would happen. The twelve men went and stood before the mountain, and cried: 'Mountain Sesima, Mountain Sesima, open thyself.' Immediately the sides of the mountain parted asunder, and the twelve men walked in, and immediately it closed after them.

In a short time, however, it again opened, and the twelve men came out carrying heavy sacks on their backs, and as soon as they were all in the open air they turned to the mountain and said: 'Mountain Sesima, Mountain Sesima, close thyself.'

The sides instantly came together, and there was no longer any entrance to be seen, and the twelve men went away.

As soon as they were out of sight the poor man came down from the tree, and felt very curious to know what could be concealed in the mountain. So he placed himself before it, and said: 'Mountain Sesima, Mountain Sesima, open thyself;' and the mountain stood open before him. He stepped in, and found that the whole interior was a mine full of silver and gold, and behind the gold lay heaps of pearls, and sparkling, precious stones like hoarded grain.

The poor man hardly knew what to do, or whether he dare take anything from these treasures. At last he filled his pockets with gold, leaving the pearls and precious stones lying untouched. When he came out of the mine, he remembered to say, 'Mountain Sesima, Mountain Sesima, close thyself.' And immediately the mountain closed, and the poor man took his cart from behind the bushes, and drove it home to his house.

He now wanted for nothing, care had fled, and he could buy beer and wine, and all he required for his wife and children. They lived for a long time in happiness and peace, but he did not forget to give to the poor, and was kind to everyone.

When the money was spent, however, he borrowed of his brother a bushel measure, and fetched some more gold and silver; but the rich treasure he did not touch. At his third visit he also borrowed the bushel of his brother.

The rich brother had for a long time been jealous of his brother's fortune and his happy household, and he could not imagine where he obtained these riches, and what he wanted the bushel for. Then a cunning thought came into his head: he would spread pitch over the bottom of the bushel; and when the measure came back there was a piece of gold sticking to it.

Immediately he went to his brother, and asked him: 'What have you been measuring with my bushel?'

'Wheat and barley,' said the other. Then he showed him the piece of gold, and threatened him that if he did not tell the truth he would complain of him to the justices. And the poor man told his brother all that had occurred.

On this, the rich brother had the horses harnessed to a waggon, and drove away, quite determined to make good use of the opportunity, and bring away richer treasure than mere gold and silver. When he came to the mountain, he cried: 'Mountain Sesima, Mountain Sesima, open thyself.' The mountain obeyed; and as he went in the mountain closed upon him.

There lay the riches all before him, and he for a long time was in doubt what first to lay hold of. At last he selected as many precious stones as he could carry, and turned to go out of the mountain with his load.

But his heart and thoughts had been so full of the riches and treasures that he had forgotten the words, and said: 'Mountain Simeli, Mountain Simeli, open thyself.' But that was not the right word, and the mountain did not move itself, but remained closed.

He became terribly frightened; but the longer he thought over the word, the more puzzled he became, and all his treasures now were useless to help him. Evening came, and then the mountain opened, and the twelve robbers came in. They quickly saw him, and laughed as they said: 'Have we caged you at last, little bird? did you think that your visits were not noticed? The first and second times we could not touch you; but this is the third time, and you shall not escape.'

Then he cried out piteously: 'It was not I, indeed it was not I until to-day; it was my brother.'

But he might beg for his life, and say what he would, all was useless; they cut his head off.

THE LITTLE ASS.

THERE lived once a king and queen who had riches and everything they wished for except a little child, and at last this wish also was granted to them, and a little prince was born into the world.

Now, it looked like an ass and not like a baby, and the mother, when she saw it, was quite frightened; she even wanted to have it thrown into the water and drowned, for she said it was only fit to be food for fishes.

But the king said: 'No. Ugly as the child may be, he is my son, and after my death this kingdom and my crown will be his.'

So the little ass was taken care of, and grew up healthy and strong, and not so very frightful after all, although he had such large ears. He was a lively, good-tempered little fellow —jumping and running here and there like a squirrel. But the most remarkable of his tastes was a love of music, and when

he grew old enough he went to a first-rate professor, and asked to be taught to play on the lute.

Now, unfortunately, one of the young prince's defects was the form of his fingers, and the professor of music said to him: 'My lord prince, I fear I could never teach you to play the lute; your fingers are too thick and clumsy.'

The boy, however, was not to be daunted, and he persevered with so much determination that he soon played as well as his master. One day the young prince went out walking, and came to a spring; looking into it, he saw in its mirror-like water his donkey's form, and he became so sad and miserable that he went out into the world with only one faithful companion.

After travelling about for some time they came at last to a country the king of which was a powerful monarch, who had an only daughter, a most beautiful maiden.

'We will stay here for awhile,' said the ugly prince. So he knocked at the door of the king's castle, and cried: 'Here is a visitor outside; open and let him in.' But the gates were not opened; and then the prince seated himself on the steps, took out his lute, and began to play in the most delightful manner.

On hearing the music the guard looked out, and, seeing the player, whose face was so like an ass, he ran to the king and told him that there was a strange animal before the door playing music like a first-rate musician.

'Let him come in,' said the king. But as soon as he appeared everyone began to laugh, and some of them told him to sit with the servants.

'No, indeed,' he said; 'I may be ugly, but I am nobly born.'

'Well, then, take your place among the soldiers.'

But to this he would not consent, and exclaimed: 'I mean to sit by the king.'

On hearing of this the king laughed, and said good-naturedly: 'So you shall, if you wish it; come here by me.' After awhile the king said to him: 'Well, how do you like my daughter?'

The ugly prince turned and looked at her earnestly; then he nodded his head, and said: 'Very much indeed; she is the most beautiful maiden I ever saw in my life.'

'Well, then, you shall sit by her side if you will.'

'That will be my right place,' he replied, seating himself by the princess; and he treated her so kindly and politely that she quite forgot how ugly he was, and began to like him very much.

They kept him at the castle for some time, till he said to himself at last: 'What is the use of staying here? I may as well go home.' But the thought of leaving the princess made him look very sorrowful when he went to bid the king farewell.

He had by this time, however, won the love of the king, and he said to him: 'Why, my friend, you look as sour as a vinegar-cruet! Why do you wish to go away? Stay with me, and I will give you whatever you wish. Will you have money?'

'No,' he replied, shaking his head.

'Do you want jewels or trinkets?'

'Oh no.'

'Shall I give you half of my kingdom?'

'No; oh no!' he cried earnestly.

'I wish I knew what would really content you,' said the king, and then exclaimed suddenly: 'Ah, perhaps you want to marry my beautiful daughter?'

What a change came over the ugly face as the young prince said: 'Ah, yes; that is all I crave, if I only thought she could love me!' And he became joyful, for that was what he wanted.

So the marriage was celebrated with great pomp and splendour; and at the wedding, instead of an ugly bridegroom with the face and long ears of an ass, there stood before them a handsome young prince.

For then the ass's skin had fallen off, and he was restored to his natural shape and form.

The young princess was overjoyed to think that she had loved him for his good qualities alone. The king, however, could scarcely believe him to be the same till he showed him the ass's skin which had fallen off.

The king ordered a large fire to be lighted, into which he threw the skin, and watched it till it was burnt to ashes.

There was great joy in the whole household after this, and the king gave to his son-in-law the government over half his kingdom, and at his death he became king. In a short time his own father died, and so he was king of both countries, and he and his queen lived in great happiness and splendour. It is better, therefore, to be good than handsome.

THE TURNIP.

THERE were once two brothers who had both served in the war as soldiers; one was rich, the other poor. The poor brother was determined to work for his living, so he took off his soldier's uniform and became a farmer. In one of his fields, after he had dug and ploughed it well, he sowed turnip seed. After a time, when the seed sprang up, one turnip grew to such an enormous size, and continued to increase, and become so thick and large, that it almost seemed as if it would never stop growing at all.

People called it the prince of turnips, for none had ever been seen like it before, nor ever would again. At last it grew so big that it would have quite filled a waggon, and would have required two oxen to draw it. The farmer hardly knew what to do with it, or whether it would bring him luck or misfortune.

At last he thought to himself, 'Suppose I sell it. I should not get much, certainly, for such a great thing, and why should I eat it myself when little turnips do just as well? No; I think the best thing I can do is to carry it to the king, and make him a present of it.' So he laid the turnip on his waggon, harnessed the oxen to it, carried it to the castle, and presented it to the king.

'What a strange-looking thing!' said the king, when he saw it. 'Many most wonderful things have passed before my eyes, but never such a monster as this. From what kind of seed did you grow it? or has it come to you as a favourite of fortune?'

'Ah, no!' replied the farmer. 'I am no child of fortune, only a poor soldier; and, as I had nothing to live upon, I hung up my soldier's coat on a nail, and took to tilling the land. I have a brother who is rich; but, my lord king, you yourself know that those who have nothing are forgotten by all the world.'

Then the king felt so much sympathy for the poor man that he promised to present him with enough, not only to overcome his poverty, but to make him as rich as his brother. So the king gave him money, and fields, and meadows, and made him so very rich that his brother's possessions could not be compared with his.

When the brother heard of these riches, and that they had all been acquired through a large turnip, he was envious, and thought over every possible way in which he might be able to obtain such luck. He decided at last to present to the king fine horses and gold, and thought that, of course, he would give him pure, really valuable presents in return. If the king had given so much to his brother for a turnip, what might he not expect for these beautiful things?

The king accepted the presents, and said he could think of nothing better or more uncommon to offer him in return than the large turnip. So the rich brother was obliged to hire a waggon and oxen, lay his brother's turnip on it, and drive the waggon home.

In his anger and rage at the king's treatment, he knew not what to do, till at last his wicked thoughts excited him to go and shoot his brother.

He hired murderers, who were to lie in ambush, and then he went to him, and said: 'Dear brother, I have discovered a hidden treasure. Let us go together to dig it up, and divide it.'

Without the least suspicion the brother agreed to go with him. While they were on their way, however, the murderers fell on him, bound him, and would have hanged him on a tree; but there sounded in the distance a voice singing merrily, and the clatter of horse's hoofs.

In great terror the intended murderers pushed the bound body into a sack, and took to flight. The brother, however, struggled till he worked a hole in the sack, through which he could push his head. Just as he had done so, there came along the road a travelling scholar, a young fellow full of life and joy, singing a song as he rode through the wood. As he came near the sack the farmer called out: 'I wish you good-day, traveller.'

The scholar looked about in every direction to see where the sound came from. At last he said: 'Who calls me?'

'Raise your eyes,' cried the voice from above. 'Here sits Wisdom in a sack. I have in a very little while learnt great things, in comparison to which all scholars are vanity; and I have ascertained also that everyone who climbs up here may quickly become wiser than other men. I understand the stars and the heavenly bodies, the way the wind blows, the sand of the sea, the healing of sickness, and the strength of vegetables, birds, and stones. Were you once in my position you would feel how gloriously wisdom flows out of a sack.'

The scholar, when he heard all this, was astonished, and

cried: 'Blessed be the hour that we have met! Cannot I come into the sack for a little while now?'

This was just what he up above wanted; so he said: 'I will let you stay here for a little while presently as a reward for your kind words; but you can remain only an hour. I have learnt all I know in less time than that.'

The scholar waited; but the time appeared so long to him that he begged to be allowed to go into the sack at once, his thirst for wisdom was so great.

The man in the sack hesitated a little longer, and at last said: 'Well, then, let me down, and unbind me, and you shall get in.'

The scholar lowered the sack, and set him free. 'Now, then,' he cried, 'draw me up quickly,' and prepared to step into the sack.

'Stop, stop!' cried the other; 'not so fast.' He seized him by the head as he spoke, stuck him into the sack head foremost, drew the string tight, and raised the searcher after wisdom to the bough of the tree till he swung in mid-air. Then he said to him: 'Stay there, my dear fellow, for awhile. Do you not already feel something of the wisdom that comes from experience? Sit there, and rest till you become clever.'

Thereupon he mounted the scholar's horse, and rode away; but he sent someone in an hour to let him down and release him.

THE THREE SLUGGARDS.*

THE king of a country a long way off had three sons. He loved them all equally, and did not know to which to leave his kingdom after his death. When he was dying, he called them all to his bedside, and said, 'Dear children, the laziest sluggard of you three shall be king after me.'

'Then,' said the eldest, 'the kingdom is mine; for I am so lazy that when I lie down to sleep, and a drop falls into my eye, I will not open it, but go on sleeping.'

The second said, 'Father, the kingdom is mine; for I am so lazy that, when I sit by the fire to warm myself, I would sooner have my toes burnt than draw back my legs.'

* From Grimm's 'Goblins.'

The third said, 'Father, the kingdom is mine; for I am so lazy that if I were going to be hanged, and had the rope already round my neck, and somebody were to put a sharp knife into my hands with which to cut it, I would rather be hanged than raise my hand to do it.'

When the father heard this, he said, 'You shall be king, for you are the fittest man!'

THE TWELVE IDLERS.

Twelve farm servants, who had been doing nothing the whole day, were still as unwilling to exert themselves when evening came, but lay down in the grass and boasted of their idleness.

The first spoke, and said, 'What is your laziness to me? I have to do for myself, and my chief anxiety is to take care of my body and to eat and drink as much as I can. I can have four meals a day, but I like best to fast for awhile after eating, till I feel really hungry, and then I can enjoy my food better. I don't like early rising. When I am up at noon, I find a resting place and lie down, and if my master calls me I will not hear, neither the first time nor the second. And if at last I am obliged to rouse myself, I go as slowly as I can; and so I pass my life away.'

Said the second: 'I have a horse to take care of, but I leave his bit in his mouth, and go to sleep in the hayloft for hours. Sometimes I forget to give him his corn, but I always say he has had it. And when I wake up I put my best foot foremost, and comb him down once or twice with the currycomb, to make him look a little clean and polished. Why should I take much trouble over that? My work is not very hard.'

'Why should we plague ourselves with work?' said the third; 'no good comes from it. I often lie in the sun and sleep; or if it rains, and the drops fall on me, don't suppose I get up. No, I just lie and let it dry of itself. Once there came down such a large splash of rain that it tore the hair from my head and made a hole in my skull; but I laid a plaster on the place, and it was soon all right, and no harm done.'

'Before I begin my work,' said the fourth, 'I always dawdle about for an hour, to spare my strength; and even after this

I move very slowly, and ask for others to help me. I manage to let them do the chief of my work, and just look on; but that is more than enough.'

'Oh, that is nothing to my idleness,' cried the fifth. 'Only think, I have to remove the manure from the stables, and load a waggon with it. I take it very easy, for when I toss the manure on a pitchfork, I raise it only half-way in the air, and then rest for a quarter of an hour before I throw it quite into the cart. It is as much as I can do to load a cart in a day. I have no wish to kill myself with work.'

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself,' said the sixth. 'I am not afraid of work, but I lie down and do not take my clothes off for weeks. And suppose I have no strings to my shoes, what does it matter if they fall off my feet? There is no harm done. When I wish to get upstairs, I drag one foot after the other slowly up the first step; and I count the other steps so that I know when I can rest.'

'That will not do for me,' said the seventh. 'My master looks after my work, but he is away from home all day. I neglect nothing, however. I run as fast as it is possible for one who creeps. If I am to get on, four mighty men must push me with all their strength. I came to a bed where six men were sleeping beside one another; I lay down and slept too, and was not to be awakened, and when they wanted me to go home they had to carry me.'

'Ah,' said the eighth, 'I see plainly that I am the only wide-awake chap amongst you. Why, if a stone lies before my path, I never trouble myself to lift my leg and step over it. If I lie down on the ground, and get wet or covered with mud and dirt, I do not stir, but remain there till the sun has dried up the wet or the mud. At the very most I only turn myself, so that it can shine on me.'

'I can beat you all,' said the ninth. 'This very day my bread lay before me, but, although I was starving with hunger, I was too lazy to reach my hand and take it. A jug stood by, and because it was heavy I endured thirst rather than lift it. Indeed, rather than move, I remained the whole day lying still, like a log of wood.'

'Well,' said the tenth, 'my laziness has obtained for me a broken leg and a swelled calf. Three of us were lying on the roadway, and I had my legs stretched out. A waggon came along the road, and the wheels went over them both. I could easily have drawn them back, for I heard the waggon coming, but I was too lazy. Besides this, the flies buzzed in my ears,

crept up my nose, and into my mouth, but who would give himself the trouble to drive away a fly?'

The eleventh then spoke. 'Yesterday,' he said, 'I gave my master warning. I was tired of carrying his heavy books backwards and forwards, and working from morning till night. But, truth to tell, he discharged me because I let his clothes lie in the drawer uncovered till they were all moth-eaten.'

At last the twelfth spoke, and said: 'To-day I was sent with a waggon to the field. The goods in it were covered with straw, in which I made a capital bed and slept soundly. The reins slipped out of my hand, and when I awoke I found the horse, the traces, the collar, the bit, and most of the harness gone. Someone had come by and taken them all away while I slept. The waggon had also fallen into a rut, and stuck fast. I left it standing as it was, stretched myself again on the straw, and went to sleep. My master came at last himself, and dragged the waggon out of the rut. But for this I should not have been here, but lying there and sleeping peacefully.'

THE SHEPHERD BOY AND THE KING.

THERE was once a shepherd boy who was known far and wide for his clever answers to every question. The king of the country heard of his wisdom, but he could not believe it, so he sent him an order to appear at court.

When he arrived, the king said to him: 'If you can answer wisely three questions which I will give you, then you shall be as my own child, and dwell with me in my royal castle.'

The shepherd boy replied: 'Will your majesty ask me the three questions?'

On this the king said: 'First, I want to know how many drops of water there are in the ocean.'

'My lord king,' said the boy, 'if you could have all the rivers in the world stopped up, so that not a drop could run into the sea, and I could count them, then I might be able to tell you how many drops the ocean contains.'

The king said, 'This is the next question: How many stars are there in the heavens?'

The shepherd boy replied: 'Give me a large sheet of paper.' Then he made a number of points with a pen, close together,

so that they were hardly to be seen, and certainly not to be counted; anyone who looked at them would have lost his sight. Then he said: 'Count these points, for there are as many stars in the heavens as points on the paper.'

No one could count them, so the king asked his third question: 'How many seconds of time are there in eternity?'

The shepherd boy replied: 'In Pomerania there is a diamond mountain, one league high, one league broad, and one league deep. If a little bird could go once in every hundred years, and with his little beak peck away a morsel from the mountain until the whole mountain was removed, not even then would one second of eternity be passed!'

Then the king replied: 'You have answered all my questions wisely, and shall from this time dwell with me in my royal castle, and be to me as my own son.'

THE STAR DOLLARS.

Once upon a time lived a poor little maiden whose father and mother were both dead, and she was so very poor that she had no little room to live in nor even a bed to lie on. At last all her clothes were gone excepting those she wore, and she had nothing to eat but a piece of bread, given to her by someone who had a kind, pitying heart. Still, she was good and pious, and although forsaken by all the world, she knew that God would take care of her, and she went out into the fields and prayed to Him to help her. Then she met a poor man, who said to her, 'Pray give me something to eat, for I am so hungry.'

She handed to him the whole of her bread, said, 'God bless you!' and went onwards.

Presently she saw a little child sitting by the roadside crying, and as she passed the child exclaimed: 'Oh, my head is so cold; do give me something to cover it.'

Instantly the poor maiden took off her own cap and gave it to the child. A little farther she met another child, who said she was freezing for want of a jacket, so she gave up her own. Another begged for her petticoat, and that she gave also. At last she entered a wood, where it was quite dark, and here

she intended to sleep. But she had not gone far before she found another little child with scarcely any clothes at all, and who appeared to be almost dying with cold. The good child thought to herself, 'It is quite dark night now; no one will see me.'

So she took off all her clothes, covered the poor little shivering child with them, and went away. This pious child had now nothing left in the world at all, and she was turning to go into the wood and cover herself with the fallen leaves, when all at once a golden shower fell around her from heaven. At first she thought that the stars, which look like golden money in the heavens, were falling; but when the drops reached the ground they were real golden dollars, and as she stood still under the golden shower she found herself covered from head to foot with warm and beautifully fine clothes. She gathered up the golden dollars, carried them away, and was rich all the rest of her life.

THE TRIAL OF BRIDES.

THERE was a young shepherd who wished to marry. He was acquainted with three sisters, who were equally beautiful, so that his choice was a difficult one, and he could not resolve to which to give the preference. He asked his mother for advice, who said: 'Invite all three, and place cheese before them, and watch how they eat it.' The young man did so; the first ate the cheese with the rind on; the second cut the rind off so carelessly that she left some good cheese with it, which she threw away also; the third cut the rind off carefully, neither too much nor too little. The shepherd told all this to his mother, who said: 'Take the third for your wife.' This he did, and lived happily with her

FLAX LEAVINGS.

THERE lived once a young maiden who was very beautiful, but idle and careless. When she was required to spin a certain quantity of flax she was too idle to untie the little knots in it,

but would break the thread and throw down whole handfuls of flax on the floor to be wasted. This idle young lady had a little servant-maid, who was as industrious as her mistress was idle; she collected these little pieces of flax, disentangled them, spun them into fine thread, and had them made into a beautiful dress for herself.

A young man had asked the idle maiden to be his wife, and the marriage-day was fixed. But a few evenings before it took place the bride and bridegroom were walking together near the village green, where several young people were dancing. 'Look,' exclaimed the bride with a laugh, 'that is my little maid-servant; how merrily she is dancing, and thinks herself so fine in my leavings.'

'What do you mean?' asked the bridegroom.

Then she told him that her little servant had made that dress out of the tangled pieces of flax which she had thrown away, because it was so much trouble to unravel the knots. When the bridegroom heard this, and noticed her laziness, and the diligence of the young maiden, he broke off the engagement, and married the industrious servant-maid.

THE SPARROW AND HIS FOUR YOUNG ONES.

A SPARROW had four little ones in a swallow's nest; just as they were all fledged some bad boys knocked in the nest and destroyed it. The birds were all, however, fortunately able to fly away; but the old bird was very sad because her children had been driven into the world so young, and before she had warned them of its dangers, and taught them how to escape. In the autumn a large number of sparrows met together in a ploughed field, and there the old birds met their children, and, full of joy, led them home. 'Ah, my dear children,' said the mother bird, 'you cannot think how anxious I have been about you all the summer, for you were carried away by the wind before I could teach you. Now listen to my advice, and follow the example of your father, for little birds have many great dangers to withstand.'

Then she asked the eldest how they had fared during the summer, and if they had found plenty of food.

'Oh yes,' said he; 'we stayed in a garden and sought for worms and caterpillars till the cherries were ripe.'

'Ah, my son,' said the father bird, 'it is not wrong to indulge in good things; but there is danger, and you require to be careful, especially when people are walking in these gardens. Sometimes you will find a long green twig like a perch placed ready for you, but inside it is hollow, and underneath is a little hole.'

'Yes, my father, and little green leaves are stuck all over the hole with bird-lime,' said the son.

'Where have you seen this?' asked the old bird.

'In a merchant's garden,' replied the young one.

'Ah, my child,' cried the father, 'merchants are sharp people. If you had been brought up in the world you would have learned enough of their smooth, deceitful ways; however, you must take care how to use your knowledge, and not be too confident.'

Then the old bird questioned another of his children. 'Where have you been living?' he asked.

'At court,' was the reply; 'sparrows and other simple birds are of no use where there is so much gold, velvet, silk, harness, hawks, and all sorts of good and wonderful things. We keep to the stables. There they measure oats and thresh wheat, so that we are always lucky enough to find a few grains of corn for breakfast, and every day; indeed, more than we can eat. Yes, father, and when the stable-boys measure out the corn, or make a mash for the horses, we have such a feast!'

'Where did you find all this?' asked the old bird.

'Oh, in the court with the stable-boys.'

'Oh, my son, stable-boys are often unkind and wicked; but if you have been to court and associated with great people without losing a feather, you may think yourself well off. You have also learnt a great deal of the ways of the world, which will help you to defend yourself; but take care, the wolf often eats the most sensible little dog.'

The father after this called the third son before him, and asked: 'Where have you been trying your fortune, little one?'

'On the streets and highways,' he replied, 'for there they draw up large sacks full of corn by ropes, and a few grains of wheat or barley are sure to be dropped for us.'

'I can quite understand,' said the father-bird; 'but still you must keep a sharp look-out, for otherwise, if a stone should be thrown, there would be an end of you.'

'I am aware of that,' said the young bird, 'especially if you

are near a wall, or see anyone put his hand in his pocket or his bosom.'

'Where have you learnt your wisdom, then?' asked the father.

'Among the mountaineers, dear father, who when they travel carry stones secretly with them.'

'Mountain people! working people! striking people! Have you been with the mountain lads? Then indeed you have seen and learnt something.'

At last the father called over his youngest son, and said to him, 'My dear little nestling, you, who were always the simplest and weakest, stay here with me now. In the world are many rough and wicked birds, with crooked beaks and long claws, who lie in wait for little birds to gobble them up, so you had better stay here with your own relations, and pick up the spiders and caterpillars from the trees or houses, and you will be safe and contented.'

'My father,' replied the little bird, 'you have lived and been fed in safety all your life; people have never hurt you, nor has any hawk or kite, or other bird of prey, been near you to do you injury; and this is because the great God has sent you food morning and evening. For He is the Creator and Preserver of all the birds of the forest or the city, and He hears the young ravens when they cry, and not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without His permission.'

'My son,' said the old bird, 'where did you learn all this?'

'I will tell you,' he replied. 'When the wind separated us from you, I was driven into a church, and remained there all the summer, living upon the flies and spiders. Once I heard these words preached, that it was the Father of all the sparrows who gave me food during the summer, and preserved me from injury and from fierce birds.'

'Truly, my son,' replied his father, 'if you fly to a church, and help to clear it from spiders and summer flies, and chirp to God like the young ravens do, and will trust in Him as your own Creator, then you will be safe, even if the whole world were full of ravenous and malicious creatures.'

THE TALE OF THE SCHLAURAFFEN-LAND.

In the time of Schlauraffen I went there, and saw Rome and the Lateran hanging by a single thread, and a footless man who outran a quick horse, and a keen sharp sword, which cut through a bridge. I saw there a young ass with a silver nose which hunted after two swift hares, and a lime-tree which was very broad, on which grew hot cakes. There saw I a lean old goat which carried a hundred loads of fat on its body, and sixty loads of salt. Are these enough falsehoods? Then I saw a plough ploughing without horses or cattle; and a child of one year threw four millstones from Ratisbon to Treves, and from Treves to Strassburg; and a hawk swam over the Rhine, which it had a right to do. There I heard the fishes begin to make such a noise with one another that it sounded up in the sky, and sweet honey flowed like water from a deep valley up a high hill. These were rare tales. There were two crows mowing a meadow, and I saw two gnats building a bridge, and two doves tore a wolf to pieces; two children bore two kids; but two frogs were threshing corn together. There I saw two mice consecrating a bishop, and two cats which were scratching out a bear's tongue. Then a snail came running up and killed two wild lions. Then there stood a barber who shaved a woman's beard off, and two baby children told their mother to be silent. There I saw two greyhounds bring a mill out of the water, and an old hack stood by, who said that it was right. And in the court there stood four horses, threshing corn with all their might, and two goats which heated the stove, and a red cow shot the bread into the oven. Then a cock crowed cock-a-doodle-doo, and my story is told.

SNOW-WHITE AND RED-ROSE.

Once upon a time there lived in a lonely cottage, surrounded by a garden, a poor widow. In the garden grew two rose-trees; one of which bore white roses, the other red.

Now, the widow had two daughters, who so much resembled the rose-bushes that she gave the name of Snow-white to one, and to the other Red-rose.

These two children were the best, the most obedient, and most industrious children in the world. Snow-white was quiet and gentle; Red-rose was fond of running about the fields and meadows, in search of flowers and butterflies.

Snow-white would often stay at home with her mother, help her with the housework, and then read to her after it was done. The two children were very fond of each other, and whenever they walked out together they would hold each other's hand, and when Snow-white would say, 'We will never leave each other,' her sister would reply, 'No, never, as long as we live.'

The mother added, 'Whatever is given to one of you must be shared with the other.'

They frequently rambled together alone in the wood, to gather berries; and not a creature ever did them any harm, but all were quite friendly with them.

The little hares ate cabbage-leaves out of their hands, the deer would graze by their side, the stag bound merrily near, while the birds would remain sitting and singing on the branches.

No danger ever threatened them, even if they stayed in the forest till night-fall. They would lie down on the mossy bed, and sleep safely till morning, and their mother knew there was no cause for fear.

Once, when they had remained in the wood all night, they did not awake till the rising sun had reddened the eastern sky, and as they opened their eyes they saw near them a beautiful little child, whose clothes were white and shining. When he saw they were awake, he looked kindly at them, and, without a word, vanished from their sight.

When they looked around, they found that they had been sleeping on the edge of a precipice, down which they must have fallen, had they moved in the dark. Their mother said it must have been one of the angels who watch over good children.

Snow-white and Red-rose kept their mother's cottage so neat and clean that it was quite a pleasure to look at it. Every morning, in summer, Red-rose took care always to place a bouquet of fresh flowers by her mother's bed, in which was a flower from each of the rose-trees. In winter Snow-white lighted the fire, filled the kettle, and placed it over the

bright blaze, where it shone and glittered like gold, for it was of burnished copper, and was always kept bright and polished.

In the evening, when the snow was falling, and the door closed and locked, they would seat themselves round the fire, in the bright, snug little room, and knit busily, while their mother would put on her spectacles, and read to them out of the Good Book.

Beside them was a lamb sleeping on the hearth, and above them, on a perch, a white dove, with its head behind its wing.

One evening there came a knock at the door, and the mother said: 'Red-rose, open it quickly; no doubt some poor traveller, lost in the snow, wants shelter.' Red-rose went and unbolted the door, when instead of a poor man a great bear pushed his great black head in.

Red-rose screamed aloud, and started back; the lamb bleated, the dove flew wildly about the room, and Snow-white hid herself behind her mother's bed.

The bear, however, began to speak very gently: 'Do not fear,' he said; 'I will not hurt you. I only want to warm myself by your fire, for I am half frozen.'

'Poor bear,' said the mother; 'come in and lie down by the fire, if you want to; but take care not to burn your furry coat.'

Then she called out: 'Snow-white and Red-rose, come here; the bear is quite gentle; he will do you no harm.'

So they both came near to the fire, and by degrees the dove and the lamb got over their fright.

The bear said: 'Dear children, will you sweep off the snow from my fur?'

So they got the broom, and cleaned the bear's skin, till it looked quite smooth, and then he stretched himself at full length before the fire, grunting now and then, to show how contented and comfortable he felt. In a very short time they lost all fear of their unexpected guest, and even began to play with him. They jumped on his back, rolled him over on the floor, tapped him with a hazel twig, pulled his thick fur, and when he growled they only laughed.

The bear allowed them to do as they liked, only saying, when they were too rough with him: 'Leave me my life, dear children, and don't quite kill your old sweetheart.'

When bed-time came, the mother said to him: 'You can stay here by the fire all night, if you like. I will not turn you out in this dreadful weather; and here you will at least be sheltered from the cold

In the morning, when they all rose, the two children let him out, and he trotted away over the snow into the wood.

After that he came each evening at the same hour, laid himself on the hearth, and allowed the children to play with him just as they pleased. They became so used to his visits that no one thought of bolting the door till the black fellow arrived. The winter passed, and spring was again covering the meadows and forest trees with her robe of green, and one morning the bear said to Snow-white: 'I am going away now, during the summer, and you will not see me again till the end of autumn.'

'Where are you going, dear bear?' asked Snow-white.

'I must go to the forest,' he replied, 'to hide my treasures from those wicked dwarfs. In winter these treasures are safe under the frozen earth, but now, when the sun has warmed and softened the ground, it is easy for them to break it and dig up what I have buried, and when once anything valuable is in their hands it is not easy to recover it. They will take care that it does not see daylight again.'

Snow-white felt quite sorrowful when the bear said good-bye, but as he passed out of the door the latch caught his fur and tore a little piece off. Snow-white thought she saw something glittering like gold under the skin, but she was not sure, for the bear trotted away very quickly, and was soon lost to sight amongst the trees. Some time after this the mother sent the children into the forest to gather brushwood, and they found a large tree which had fallen to the ground. As they stood looking at it they saw something jumping up and down on the other side of the trunk; but they could not think what it was till they went nearer, and then they saw a little dwarf with a shrivelled face, whose long white beard had been caught in the cleft of the tree. The dwarf was jumping about like a puppy at the end of a string, but he could not get free. He glared at the children with his red fiery eyes, and cried:

'Why are you standing there staring, instead of offering to assist me.'

'Poor little man,' said Red-rose, 'how did you do this?'

'You stupid goose!' he replied angrily. 'I wanted to split up the tree that I might get some shavings for our cooking. A great coal fire burns up our little dinners and suppers; we don't cram ourselves with food as your greedy people do. I drove my wedge into the tree and it seemed all right, but the horrid thing was so slippery that it sprung out again suddenly, and the tree closed so quickly that it caught my long white beard, and now holds it so fast that I cannot extricate it. See

how the white milk-faced creatures laugh!' he shouted. 'Oh, but you are ugly!'

Notwithstanding his spiteful words and looks, the children wished to help him, and they went up to him and tried to pull out the beard; but all to no purpose.

'I will run home and call somebody,' said Red-rose.

'What,' snarled the dwarf, 'send for more people! Why, there are two too many here already, you sheep-headed madcaps!'

'Don't be impatient,' said Snow-white; 'I think we can manage to release you.'

She took her scissors out of her pocket as she spoke, and cut the dwarf's beard off close to the trunk of the tree. No sooner was he at liberty than he caught hold of a bag full of gold which was lying among the roots, grumbling all the time about the dreadful children who had cut off his magnificent beard, a loss which nothing could repay him. He then swung the bag across his shoulders, and went away without one word of thanks to the children for helping him.

Some time after this Snow-white and Red-rose went out one day to catch fish. As they came near the banks of the stream they saw something like a large grasshopper jumping about, as if it were going to jump into the water. They ran forward, and recognised the dwarf.

'What are you doing here?' asked Red-rose. 'Why do you wish to jump into the water?'

'Do you think I am such a fool as that?' he cried. 'Don't you see how this dreadful fish is dragging me?'

The little man had been angling, but unfortunately the wind caught his beard, and entangled it in the line, so that when a large fish came up and swallowed the bait he had not strength to extricate himself, and the fish, in its efforts to escape, was dragging the dwarf into the water. He held tightly by the reeds and rushes that grew on the bank, but with very little use, and the children were only just in time to save him from being dragged in by the fish. They both pulled him back with all their might, but as long as the beard remained entangled in the line their efforts were useless, and they could not disentangle it. There remained no other means of saving him than by cutting off his beard, and this time so much of it that only a short piece remained.

When he saw this the dwarf was in a dreadful rage; he screamed out: 'Is it your custom, you wretches! to disfigure people's faces in this way? Not satisfied with cutting off a

large piece the other day, you must now deprive me of nearly all. I dare not show myself such a fright as this. I wish you were obliged to run till you had lost the soles off your shoes.'

He lifted a bag of pearls which he had hidden among the rushes, and, throwing it on his shoulder without another word, slunk away and disappeared behind a stone. It happened on another occasion that the mother of the two maidens sent them to the town to purchase needles, thread, and ribbon. Their way lay across a heath, on which here and there great rocks lay scattered. Presently they saw a large bird hovering over a certain spot on the heath, till at last he pounced down suddenly to the earth, and at the same moment they heard terrible cries and piteous lamentations close to them. The children ran to the place, and saw with great alarm that a large eagle had got their old acquaintance the dwarf in his talons, and was carrying him away. The good-natured children did all they could; they held the little man fast to pull him back, and struggled so fiercely with the eagle, that at last the bird relinquished his prey and set him free.

But he had no sooner recovered from his fright than the ungrateful little wretch exclaimed, 'What do you mean by catching hold of me so roughly? You clawed at my new coat till it is nearly torn off my back, awkward little clowns that you are!'

Then he took up his sack of precious stones, and slipped away among the rocks. The maidens were accustomed to his ingratitude, and did not care for it. So they went on their way to the town, and made their purchases.

On their return, while crossing the heath, they came unexpectedly again upon the dwarf, who had emptied his sack of precious stones in a quiet corner, not supposing that anyone would pass at such a late hour. The evening sun shone brightly on the glittering jewels, which sparkled and flashed out such beautiful colours in his golden light that the children stood and gazed in silent admiration.

'What are you standing there gaping at?' asked the dwarf, his usually gray face quite red with rage. He was going on with his spiteful words, when suddenly a terrible growl was heard, and a large black bear rushed out of the thicket.

The dwarf sprang up in a great fright, but he could not escape to a place of concealment, for the bear stood just in his way. Then he cried out piteously in his agony: 'Dear Mr. Bear, do spare my life! I will give you up all my treasures, and those jewels that you can see lying there, if you will only

grant me my life. Such a weak little creature as I am would scarcely be a mouthful for you. See, there are two nice little tender bits—those two wicked maidens. They are as fat as young quails. Just eat them instead of me.'

But the bear paid no attention to his complaints. Without a word he lifted up his left fore-paw, and with one stroke laid the ugly, wicked little wretch dead on the ground.

The maidens, in a fright, were running away; but the bear called to them: 'Snow-white, Red-rose, don't be afraid. Wait, and I will go home with you.'

They instantly recognised his voice, and stood still till he came up to them; but as he approached, what was their astonishment to see the bearskin suddenly fall off, and instead of a rough bear there stood before them a handsome young man, with beautiful, gold-embroidered clothes!

'I am a king's son,' he said; 'and that wicked dwarf, after robbing me of all I possessed, changed me into a bear, and I have been obliged to wander about the woods, watching my treasures, but not able to catch the dwarf and kill him till to-day. His death has set me free, and he has met with a well-deserved fate.'

Not many years after this Snow-white was married to the prince, and Red-rose to his brother, with whom he had shared the riches and treasures which the dwarf had stolen and had concealed in his den.

Their mother lived for many years in great happiness with her children.

The two rose-trees were brought to the castle and planted in the garden near the windows of the two sisters; and every year they bore the same beautiful red and white roses.

THE GLASS COFFIN.

No one should say that a poor tailor cannot rise to honour: it is only necessary for him to hit the right nail on the head, and he is sure to be lucky. A polite, pleasant little tailor apprentice was once on his travels, and reached a large forest, where, as he did not know the way, he lost himself.

Night came on, and there seemed nothing for him to do but

to seek a lodging in this dreadful solitude. The soft moss might have made a pleasant bed for him, but the fear of the wild beasts would have disturbed his rest, so he was obliged at last to climb to the top of a tree and sleep there. He mounted a high oak, and was grateful that he had his goose, for the wind, which was very high, and waved the branches about, would otherwise certainly have blown him away.

After having spent some hours in the darkness—not without trembling and shaking—he spied at a little distance the glimmer of a light, and thinking that a human dwelling might be near, where he should find some better night's lodging than on the top of a tree, he descended cautiously and went towards the light.

It led him to a little cottage that was made of reeds and rushes. He knocked courageously; the door opened of itself, and he could see by the light which came forth a hoary-headed old man, dressed in a many-coloured patchwork coat.

'Who are you, and what do you want here?' asked the man, in a snarling voice.

'I am a poor tailor,' he replied, 'and night has overtaken me in this wilderness. I pray you earnestly to take me in till the morning.'

'Go your way,' answered the old man in a surly tone; 'I will have nothing to do with strolling vagabonds; you must find a night's lodging elsewhere.'

At these words he was about to close the door, but the young man held him by the coat, and begged so touchingly not to be sent away that the old man, who was not so bad as he pretended to be, softened at last and took him in. He also gave him something to eat, and pointed him to a corner of the room in which was a comfortable bed.

The tired tailor required no rocking; he slept till morning, but would not have thought of getting up, had he not been frightened by a loud noise—a violent screaming and roaring which pierced through the thin walls of the house, in which he found himself alone.

The tailor was seized with unusual courage; he sprang up quickly, threw on his clothes, and hastened out. There he saw, not far from the house, a great black ox fighting furiously with a stag. Their rage was so fierce, and the tramp of their feet so terrible, that the earth trembled under them.

For a long time it seemed doubtful which would conquer, but at last the stag thrust his horns into the body of his

adversary, and with a terrible roar the ox sank to the ground; and after other stabs from the stag's horns lay dead.

The tailor had been too terrified to move at the sight of the conflict, and when the ox fell dead he stood looking on almost stunned.

In a moment the stag in full spring pounced upon him, and before he could escape picked him up with his horns. The youth had not time to reflect on his position, when he felt himself carried at a rapid rate through wood and meadow, over mountain and valley; he could only hold on with both hands to the end of the horns and give himself up to his fate, for it appeared to him as if he were flying.

At last the stag stood still near a wall of rock and let the tailor sink gently down. Feeling more dead than alive, he required a longer time than that to come to himself. When he was slightly recovered, the stag stuck his horns so violently into a door in the rock that it sprang open, and flames of fire rushed out, followed by smoke, in which the stag disappeared.

The tailor knew not what to do or which way to turn, to get out of this dreadful wilderness and be again amongst men.

While he stood thus irresolute, a voice sounded from the rock, and called him, saying, 'Enter without fear. No harm shall happen to you.'

He hesitated, certainly; but a hidden power seemed to draw him forward. He therefore obeyed the voice, and, passing through the iron door, found himself in a lofty and spacious hall. The ceiling, the walls, and the floor of this hall were formed of square polished stones which glittered, and on which were unknown symbols.

He gazed around him with wonder and fear, and was on the point of going away, when the voice spoke again, and said to him, 'Step on that stone which lies in the centre of the hall, and there wait for good fortune.'

His courage had grown so rapidly that he at once obeyed the command; but no sooner had he placed his feet on the stone than it sunk slowly down into the depths beneath.

When it again became stationary, and the tailor looked about him, he found himself in a spacious hall, quite as large as the one he had just left, but still more wonderful.

In the walls were niches in which stood elegant glass vases full of brightly coloured spirits or blue vapour. On the floor of the hall he observed, one opposite the other, two large glass cases which at once excited his curiosity.

He walked across the hall to one of them, and saw within a

beautiful building—an ancient castle in miniature—surrounded by barns, stables, outhouses, all small, beautifully and artistically arranged, showing the work of a skilful hand, and the most correct eye for elegance and minuteness.

He would have been unable to take his eyes from this wonderful sight if he had not again heard the voice advising him to turn and examine the wonderful chest of glass which stood opposite the castle.

He stepped across the hall at these words, and saw with astonishment through the glass case, in which there lay, as if in a coffin, a maiden of the greatest beauty.

She appeared to be asleep, and her long flaxen hair covered her like a veil of costly material. Her eyes were closed; but the blush tinge on her cheek, and the heaving bosom as she breathed, proved that she still lived.

The tailor stood looking at her with a beating heart, when suddenly her eyes opened, and she gazed at him with a mingled look of joy and terror. 'Righteous Heaven!' she cried at last, 'my deliverance is near. Quick, quick! help me to escape from my prison. Just push aside the bolt of this glass coffin, and I am free.'

The tailor obeyed without a moment's hesitation; and as soon as he raised the coffin lid the beautiful maiden stepped out, and, hastening to a corner of the hall, arrayed herself in a large mantle.

She then seated herself on a stone, called the tailor to her, and as she pressed a friendly kiss on his lips, she exclaimed, 'My long-expected deliverer, kind Heaven has sent you to me to put an end to my sorrow. On the day this happens your good fortune begins. You are chosen by Heaven to be my future husband, and you will receive from me not only my fondest love, but I can lavish upon you every earthly good, so that you may live in happiness to the end of your days. Sit down again, and listen to the story of my fate.

'I am the daughter of a rich count; my parents died while I was still very young. He left me in his last will to the care of my elder brother, who brought me up.

'We loved each other so tenderly, and were so entirely of the same mind in thought and inclination, that we both made a determination never to marry, but to live with each other to the end of our lives. In our home we had no lack of companions. We had neighbours and friends in abundance, with whom we often exchanged friendly visits.

'It happened one evening, however, that a stranger on horse-

back arrived at our castle, and, under the pretext that he could not reach his destination before midnight, begged for a night's lodging.

'We granted his request with ready courtesy, and invited him to join us at supper. During the repast he conversed so pleasantly, and related so many agreeable and amusing adventures, that my brother was quite delighted with him, and asked him to remain with us for a few days.

'The stranger willingly accepted the invitation, and we stayed up talking till quite late. At last, after showing him to his chamber, I hastened to my own room, feeling very tired, and glad to rest my weary limbs on the soft feathers.

'I had just fallen asleep, when I was aroused by the tones of soft and lovely music. I started up at the sounds, but I could not understand where they came from. I was about to rise and call my lady's-maid, who slept in the chamber next mine; but, to my astonishment, I found myself unable to move. It was as if a mountain lay on my breast, and, by some unseen cause, the power of speech was taken from me, and I could not utter a sound.

'At the same time I saw by the light of the night lamp that the stranger had entered my room through two doors which I knew had been locked. He approached, and presently told me that through his knowledge of witchcraft he had not only been able to produce the sweet music, but to pass easily through doors both closely locked, and also to prevent me from moving or arousing the house, and that he was there to offer me his hand and his heart; but I felt so repelled by this account of his evil power that I did not deign to answer him a word.

'He stood for a long time immovable, waiting for my answer, and I could see on his countenance a look that made me shrink from him.

'As I still remained silent, he flew into a rage, declaring that he would have revenge, and find means to punish my pride, and with these words he disappeared through the closed doors, and left me. I passed a restless night, and only slept a little towards morning. On awakening, I rose and hastened to my brother, to tell him the strange things that had happened to me, but he was not in his room, and the servants told me that he had started with the stranger to the hunt at break of day.

'I foreboded some evil from this, and, dressing myself very quickly, ordered my palfrey to be saddled, and rode away at full gallop, attended by one servant, to the forest. The servant's horse stumbled and fell, and in so doing injured his foot, so

that I was obliged to go on alone. After riding rapidly a short distance, I saw the stranger standing near a beautiful white stag, and as soon as I appeared he came towards me, leading the stag by a string.

'I asked him where he had left my brother. And then, as I saw tears flowing from the large eyes of the poor animal, I exclaimed: "Have you changed him to this stag?" Instead of answering me, he burst into a loud laugh.

'On this I became angry, drew a pistol, and fired at the monster; but the ball, rebounding from his breast, struck my horse in the head and killed him, while I fell to the ground, and the stranger, murmuring a few words, deprived me of my senses.

'When I recovered consciousness, I found myself here in this underground tomb, shut up in a glass coffin. The wretch appeared to me once more, and said that he had changed my brother into a stag. My castle, with all belonging to it, had shrunk to a small size, and was now locked up in another glass case, and my servants and people had been changed into vapour or smoke, and were confined in vessels of glass. If, however, even now I would accept his offer, he said it would be very easy for him to put everything back into its former position. It was only for him to open the vessels, and we should all return to our natural form. I made no reply, but remained as silent as before.

'He then vanished, and left me in my prison, and presently I fell into a deep sleep. Among the pictures which have passed before my imagination, whether dreaming or waking I know not, was one which consoled me. I dreamed that a young man would come and set me free, and, when I opened my eyes and saw you, I knew that my dream was accomplished. Help me now to complete the change by doing as I ask you. And first lift the glass chest and place it on this stone.'

The moment the stone felt the weight it raised itself with all upon it, and the young man and the lady were lifted through the opening in the ceiling to the upper hall, and out into the open air. Here they had space to set the castle free, and, as the young lady opened the cover of the glass chest, what followed was wonderful to see, for castle, houses, and courts expanded, and spread swiftly, till they resumed their proper shape and size.

They then returned to the underground hall, and placed on the stone the vessels containing spirits and smoke, and no sooner had the young lady opened them than the vapour and

smoke arose, and in a few moments were changed into living men, in whom the young lady recognised her servants and the people of her household.

Her joy was complete when her brother, who, while a stag, had killed the sorcerer in the form of a bull, came out of the forest in his own manly form, and embraced his sister. And on the very same day the young lady, according to her promise, gave her hand and heart to the lucky tailor at the altar.

LAZY HARRY.

Harry was lazy, and, although he had nothing more to do than to drive his goat daily to the meadow, he sighed when he came home in the evening after his day's work. 'Really, it is a heavy task and troublesome business,' he said, 'to drive a goat in the field year by year till late in the autumn. Oh! if I could only lie down and sleep! But no; one must keep one's eyes open, that it may not injure the young trees, and that it does not run through the hedge into a garden, or run away altogether. How can one get rest, and make one's self happy?' He sat down, collected his thoughts, and considered how he could get free from his burden. For a long time his meditations were in vain; then suddenly he felt as if scales had fallen from his eyes. 'I know what I will do,' he called out: 'I will marry fat Kate, who has also a goat, and who can drive mine with hers; then I need trouble myself no longer.'

Harry got up, put his tired limbs in motion, went across the street (for it was not far from the place where the parents of fat Kate lived), and asked for their industrious and virtuous daughter. The parents did not long hesitate. 'Birds of a feather flock together,' thought they, and they consented.

So fat Kate became Harry's wife, and drove out the two goats. Harry had a good time of it, and needed rest from no work, but from his own idleness. Only now and again he went out with her, and said: 'I only do it that I may enjoy rest better, otherwise one would lose all feeling for it.'

But fat Kate was not less lazy. 'Dear Harry,' said she one day, 'why should we make our lives unnecessarily hard, and trouble our time of youth? Would it not be better to

give away the two goats, which disturb us every morning in our best sleep with their bleating, to our neighbour, who will give us a beehive for them? We will place the beehive in a sunny place behind the house, and trouble ourselves no more about it. The bees do not need to be watched and driven into the field; they fly out, find their way back to the house of themselves, and collect honey without giving the least trouble.'

'You have spoken as a sensible woman,' said Harry, 'we will execute your project without delay; besides, the honey tastes better than goat's milk, and can be kept longer.'

The neighbour willingly gave a beehive for the two goats. The bees flew out and in from early morning till late at evening, and filled the hive with the sweetest honey, so that Harry could take in the autumn a big jug full.

They placed the jug on a board, which was fixed up on the wall in their bedroom, and because they were afraid that it might be stolen from them, or that the mice might get at it, Kate fetched a strong hazel-stick and put it beside her, so that she could without any unnecessary getting up reach it with her hand, and from her bed drive away the unbidden guests.

Lazy Harry did not like to leave his bed until mid-day. 'He who gets up early,' said he, 'wastes his property.' One morning, when it was bright day, and he still lay in bed and rested from his long sleep, he said to his wife: 'Women like sweetness, and you are always tasting the honey; it would be better, before it is all eaten up by you, that we should exchange it for a goose and a gosling.'

'But not before we have a boy to take care of it,' said Kate. 'Should I be troubled with a young goose and spend all my strength unnecessarily?'

'Do you think,' said Harry, 'that a young boy will keep geese? Nowadays the children do not obey any more; they do as they please, because they think themselves wiser than their parents, just as that servant who was sent to seek for the cow, and hunted after three blackbirds.'

'Oh,' said Kate, 'he should suffer if he did not do as I told him. I would take a stick and tan his skin with untold blows. Look, Harry!' she called out in her zeal, seizing the stick with which she was to drive away the mice. 'Look how I would fall on him.'

She reached her arm out to strike, but unfortunately hit the jug of honey above the bed. The jug struck against the wall and broke in pieces, and the beautiful honey streamed on the ground.

'There lie now our goose and gosling,' said Harry, 'and do not need keeping. But it is fortunate that the jug did not fall on my head; we have cause to be grateful for that.' And, as he noticed some honey on a bit of the jug, he reached after it, and said, well pleased: 'The remainder, my wife, we will still eat with a relish, and then, after the fright we have had, we will rest a little. What does it matter if we get up a little later? The day is long enough.'

'Yes,' answered Kate, 'we shall always get to the end of it in due time. Do you know that the snail was once asked to a wedding, set out on his journey, and arrived only in time for the christening of the child. In front of the house it fell over the fence, and said: "It does no good to hurry."'

THE GRIFFIN.

THERE was once a king, but where he ruled and what he was called I know not. He had no son, but he had an only daughter, who was always ill, and no doctor could cure her. It was prophesied to the king that his daughter could be cured by eating an apple. Then he caused it to be proclaimed through the whole country, that whoever brought his daughter an apple which would make her well should have her to wife and become king. A peasant who had three sons heard it. He said then to the eldest, 'Go into the garden, and take a basketful of those beautiful apples with red cheeks, and take them to the court; perhaps they will make the king's daughter well, and then you will marry her, and be king.'

The fellow did so, and started to walk there. When he had gone a little way, he met a little iron man, who asked him what he had in the basket. Uele (for that was his name) answered, 'Frogs' legs.'

Then the little man said, 'They shall be so, and remain so,' and went away.

At last Uele arrived at the castle, and told them that he had brought apples which would cure the princess, if she would eat them. This greatly pleased the king, who had Uele brought before him, but, alas! when the basket was opened, instead of apples, there were frogs' legs in it, which were still moving.

The king was very angry, and had the man driven from the house. When he got home he told the old man how it had gone with him.

Then the father sent the next son, who was called Seame, but to whom the same happened as to Uele. He also met the little man, who then asked him what was in the basket, and Seame said, 'Hogs' bristles,' and the little iron man said, 'Well, let it be so, and remain so.'

When Seame came to the king's palace, and said that he had apples which would cure the king's daughter if she ate one, they did not want to let him in, saying that a man had been there before and made fools of them. Seame, however, maintained that he certainly had apples, and that they ought to let him in. At last they believed him, and led him to the king. But when the basket was uncovered it contained hogs' bristles. The king was dreadfully enraged, so that he had Seame flogged home. When he got there, he told them what had happened.

Then the youngest boy, named Hans (but who was called Stupid Hans), came and asked his father if he might go with apples.

'Oh,' said the father, 'you are the right sort of fellow for it! If the clever ones cannot do it, how can you?'

The boy, however, did not believe him, and said, 'Well, father, I wish to go.'

'Go away, you stupid fellow; you must wait until you are cleverer,' said his father, and turned his back.

But Hans pulled at the back of his smock. 'Indeed, father, I wish to go.'

'Go, then. As far as I am concerned you may go, but you will soon come back again!' answered the old man, in a spiteful tone.

The boy was greatly delighted, and jumped for joy.

'Well, you act now as a fool; you become more stupid day by day,' said the old man again.

Hans did not care for that, and did not let it disturb his joy. But, as it was night, he thought it well to wait for morning, since he could not go to court then. At night, on his bed, he could not sleep, or if he slumbered for a moment, he dreamt of beautiful maidens, of castles of gold and silver, and all sorts of things. In the morning early, he went on his way, and soon after he met the shabby little man in iron clothes, who asked what he had in his basket. Hans answered him that he had apples which would cure the king's daughter if she ate them.

'Well,' said the little man, 'let them be so, and remain so.'

But at the court they would not let Hans in; for they said two had been, and said they had brought apples, and they had had, the one frogs' legs, and the other hogs' bristles. Hans, however, insisted firmly that he had certainly no frogs' legs, but the most beautiful apples in the whole kingdom. As he spoke so civilly, the gatekeeper thought that he must be speaking truth, and let him in; and he was right; for when Hans uncovered his basket before the king, there were golden-yellow apples there. The king rejoiced, and had some taken to his daughter, and waited anxiously for the report to be brought to him as to the effect they had had. And no long time passed before news was brought to him, and who do you think brought it? It was his daughter herself! As soon as she had eaten of the apples she was well, and sprang out of bed. The joy the king felt cannot be described. But now he did not want to give his daughter to Hans for a wife, so he said that Hans must first make a boat which should go quicker on land than on water. Hans agreed to the conditions, and went home and told how he had got on.

Then the old man sent Uele into the forest to make a boat. He worked diligently, and whistled over it. At mid-day, when the sun was at its highest, the little iron man came and asked him what he was making. Uele gave for answer, 'Wooden vessels.' The little iron man said, 'Well, so let it be, and so remain.'

At evening Uele thought he had now made a boat, but when he wished to get in it, he found only wooden bowls. The next day Seame went to the wood, but the same happened to him as to Uele. On the third day the stupid Hans went. He worked very diligently, so that his powerful strokes resounded through the whole forest, and he sang and whistled right merrily. Then at mid-day appeared again the little iron man, and asked what he was making. 'A boat which can go quicker on land than on the water,' replied Hans; 'and when it is finished, I am to have the king's daughter for my wife.'

'Well,' said the little man, 'let it be one, and remain one.'

In the evening, when the sun turned to gold, Hans was ready with his boat, its sails and rudder. He got into it, and rowed to the palace. The boat went as swiftly as the wind. The king saw it from afar, but would not let Hans have his daughter yet, and said he must first take a hundred hares out to pasture from morning till evening, and if one of them got away, he should not have his daughter. Hans was contented, and at once, on the next day, he led his herd to the meadow, and took

care that none of them ran away. Not many hours had passed when a girl came from the castle, and told Hans that he must give her a hare at once, as some visitors had come. But Hans knew what it meant, and said that he would not give her one; the king might get his visitors hare soup on the morrow. The girl, however, would not accept his refusal, and got angry. Then Hans said that, if the king's daughter was to come herself, he would give her a hare. The girl returned to the castle, and told this, and the king's daughter came herself. In the meantime, the little man came again, and asked Hans what he was doing. 'Oh, I must keep a hundred hares so that none of them run away, and then I may marry the king's daughter, and be king,' he said.

'Good,' said the little man; 'here is a whistle, and if one of them runs away just whistle, and it will come back.'

When the princess came, Hans gave her a hare in her apron. But when she had gone about a hundred steps away Hans whistled, and the hare jumped out of the apron and came back to the flock. When it was evening the hareherd whistled again, and when he saw they were all there he drove them to the palace. The king wondered that Hans was able to take a hundred hares to grass without losing one; but still he would not give him his daughter. He said Hans must first take a feather from the griffin's tail. Hans set out at once, and went straight forward on the way. In the evening he came to a castle, and then he asked for a night's lodging, for at that time there were no inns.

The lord of the castle said: 'With much pleasure,' and asked him where he was going.

Hans answered: 'To the griffin.'

'Oh, to the griffin! It is said that he knows everything. I have lost the key to my iron money chest, so you might be so good as to ask him where it is.'

'Yes, indeed,' said Hans; 'that will I do.'

In the morning early he went further and further, and on the way came to another castle, and in it he spent the night. When the people who lived there heard that he was going to the griffin, they said that there was in the house a daughter who was ill, that they had used all means to cure her in vain, and he might be so kind as to ask the griffin what would make the girl well again. Hans said that he would do this, and passed on. Then he came to a lake where, instead of a ferryman, was a great big man, who had to carry all the people over. The man asked Hans where he was travelling.

'To the griffin,' said Hans.

'Well, when you come to him,' said the man, 'ask him why I am forced to carry all the people over this lake.'

Hans said: 'Yes, indeed, I will do that.'

Then the man took him on his shoulder and carried him over. At last Hans arrived at the house of the griffin, but the wife only was at home, and not the griffin himself. The woman asked him what he wanted. Then Hans told her everything: that he must take a feather out of the griffin's tail; and then that there was a castle where they had lost the key of the gold chest, and he was to ask the griffin where was the key; then, at another castle, a daughter was ill, and he must ask what would make her well; and not far from there was a lake, and a man who had to carry the people across, and he wished to know why he was obliged to do so.'

Then the woman said: 'Now see, my friend, no Christian can speak with a griffin, he eats them all up; but if you like you can lie under his bed, and in the night, when he is fast asleep, you can reach out and pull a feather out of his tail. As for the things you wish to know, I will ask about them myself.'

Hans was quite satisfied with this, and crept under the bed. In the evening the griffin came home, and as soon as he had come into the room, he said to his wife: 'I smell a Christian.'

'No,' said the wife; 'there has been one here, but he has gone away;' and after this the griffin said no more.

In the middle of the night, when the griffin was snoring loudly, Hans reached out and pulled a feather out of his tail.

The griffin woke up instantly, and said: 'Woman, I smell a Christian, and it seems to me as if somebody pulled at my tail.'

Then said the woman: 'You must have been dreaming, and I told you before that a Christian was here, but went away. He told me all manner of things: that in one castle the key of the gold chest was lost, and no one could find it.'

'Oh, the fools!' said the griffin; 'the key lies in the wood-house behind the door, under a log of wood.'

'And then he said that in another castle a daughter lay ill, and they knew of no means to cure her.'

'Oh, the fools!' said the griffin; 'under the cellar stairs a toad has made a nest of her hair, and if she gets her hair back she will be well.'

'And then he said that there was a place with a lake, and a man beside it, who had to carry everyone across.'

'Oh, the fools!' said the griffin; 'if he were to put one man into the middle of it, he would then have to carry no one else across.'

In the morning early the griffin got up and went away; then Hans came from under the bed, and he had a beautiful feather. And he had heard what the griffin said about the key and the daughter and the man. The wife of the griffin repeated it all to him again that he should not forget, and then he went away.

First he came to the man at the lake, who asked what the griffin had said; but Hans told him that he must first take him across, and then he would tell him. The man carried him over, and then Hans said that if he put someone in the middle of the lake he would then have to take no one else over. The man was greatly delighted, and said to Hans that, to show his thanks, he would take him across and back again. Hans said no; he would spare him that trouble, he was quite satisfied; and then went further on. Then he came to the castle where the daughter was ill. He took her on his shoulders, as she was not able to walk, and carried her down the cellar steps, and took the toad's nest from under the lowest step and gave it into the daughter's hand, and she sprang off his shoulders, and up the stairs before him, and was quite well. Then the father and mother were very joyful, and made Hans presents of gold and silver, and all that he wished for they gave him. When Hans came to the other castle he went at once to the woodhouse, found the key behind the door under the wood, and brought it to the master. He was not a little pleased, and for a reward gave him of the gold that was in the chest, and all kinds of other things, as cows, and sheep, and goats. When Hans came to the king with all these things, with the money, the gold and silver, and the cows and sheep and goats, the king asked him how he had got them all. And Hans told him that the griffin had given them to him. Then the king thought he would go to the griffin; but when he got to the lake it happened that he was the first who arrived after Hans, and the man put him down in the middle of it and went away, and the king was drowned. Then Hans married the daughter, and became king.

STRONG HANS.

THERE was once a man and his wife who had only one child, and they lived in a far-away valley, quite alone. It happened one day that the mother went into the wood to gather fir twigs, and she took her little son Hans with her. As it was spring-time, and the boy was pleased with the many-coloured flowers, she went far into the wood. Suddenly there sprang out upon them from the bushes two robbers; they seized the mother and the child, and carried them away into the depths of the forest, in which from year to year no human being ever penetrated. In vain the poor woman entreated the robbers to let her and her child go. They had hearts of stone, and would not listen to her prayers and entreaties, but led them both away by force.

After dragging them through dust and thorn-bushes for nearly two hours they came to a rock in which there was a door, and the robbers knocked. It was very quickly opened, and, after passing through a long dark passage, they came into a large cave which was lighted by a fire burning on the hearth. On the sides of the cave hung swords and daggers, and other murderous implements, which glittered in the firelight, and in the middle stood a black table, at which sat four other robbers gambling, and one of these was the robber chief.

He came forward when he saw the woman, addressed her kindly, and told her to be at peace and without anxiety, for that no one should hurt her in his cave; but she must take care of the housekeeping for them, and, if everything was kept in order, her position would not be so bad.

Then they gave her something to eat, and pointed to a bed in which she and her child could sleep. The woman remained for many years with the robbers, while Hans grew tall and strong. His mother told him stories, and taught him to read from an old book of chivalry, which she had found in the cave.

When Hans was about nine years old he made himself a good strong cudgel from a fir branch, and hid it behind his bed. He then went to his mother, and said: 'Dear mother, tell me where my father is. I want to see him.'

But his mother was silent; she would not tell him, because she feared it would create in him a longing for home, and she

knew the wicked robbers would not let him go away from the cave; yet she felt heart-broken to think that Hans could not go to his father.

That night, when the robbers came home from their marauding excursions, Hans fetched his cudgel, and placing himself before the robber chief, he exclaimed: 'I want to know where my father is, and if you won't tell me, I will knock you down!' The chief laughed, and gave Hans such a box on the ear that he rolled under the table like a ball. Hans got up quickly without a word, but he thought to himself, 'I will wait another year before I ask again. I shall manage better next time.'

The year passed away, and Hans prepared himself for another attempt. So he fetched his cudgel, whisked off a little dust from it, and, examining it carefully, said: 'It is a brave, clever little cudgel.'

At night the robbers came home, drank a great deal of wine, bottle after bottle, till at last their heads began to droop.

Then Hans took up his cudgel, and, standing boldly before the chief, asked again where his father was. The chief gave him such a tremendous box on the ear that he rolled under the table; but he was up again in a moment, and struck such rapid blows right and left amongst them all, which they were too tipsy to resist, that he very soon had them on the ground, unable to move arm or leg. His mother stood in a corner watching him, full of wonder at her boy's bravery and strength.

When his work was finished, he went to his mother and said: 'I have been in earnest this time, and now I must know where my father is.'

'Dear Hans,' she replied, 'we will go and search till we find him!'

She took the key of the entrance door from the pocket of the chief, and Hans fetched a great flour-sack, into which they packed gold and silver, and many other beautiful things which they found, till the bag was full, and then the boy took it on his back.

They left the cave, and what a change it was to Hans when he came out from the darkness into the daylight and the green wood! The bright flowers, the song of the birds, and the glorious sun shining in the sky, delighted the boy's heart. He stood looking round him with astonishment, as if he could not understand it.

But his mother sought the way home, and for two hours

they wandered until they arrived at their cottage in the lonely valley, and there the father of Hans was sitting at the door.

When he recognised his wife, and heard that Hans was his son, he wept for joy, for he had long supposed that they were both dead. Hans, however, although he was not twelve years old, was a head taller than his father. They went together into the little room; but as soon as Hans laid the sack on a bench, the walls of the house began to crack. The bench broke first, and then the floor, so that the heavy sack sank into the cellar.

'Bless me!' cried the father, 'what are you doing, Hans? Why the house is falling about our ears!'

'Never mind, father,' said the youth, 'don't let any gray hairs grow over that trouble. There is in my bag more than enough to pay for building a new house!'

Hans and his father quickly began to build a new one. Then they had cattle to purchase, and land to buy, and house-keeping to provide, so they had plenty to do. Hans cultivated the fields, and when he followed the plough, and pushed it through the ground, the oxen had scarcely any weight to draw, he was so strong. The next spring Hans asked his father to keep the money and let him have a heavy walking-stick, as he intended to travel. The wished-for walking-stick was soon ready, and Hans quitted his father's house, and came to a dark forest.

Presently he heard a cracking of branches in one of the trees, and, looking up, he saw a great overgrown fellow winding and twisting the branches like a cord round a fir-tree, and bending the tree as if it had been a willow twig.

'Hi!' cried Hans, 'what are you about up there?'

'Oh,' replied the man, 'I gathered the twigs yesterday, and want a cord to bind them together.'

'I like that,' thought Hans; 'he has plenty of strength, I see.' So he called out to him: 'Leave the tree alone, and come with me.'

The man clambered down at this request, and he was a head taller than Hans, although Hans was a big fellow.

'You shall be called Fir-twister,' said Hans, as they went away together.

After travelling some distance, they heard such violent knocking and hammering that at every stroke the earth trembled, and as they walked on they saw an enormous rock, before which stood a giant striking off large pieces of rock with his fist.

Hans asked him what he was doing, and he replied: 'When I want to sleep at night, the bears and wolves, and all sorts of wild animals, come sniffing and yelping round me, and will not let me even close my eyes, so I am going to build a house, that I may lie at night in peace.'

'This fellow will suit me,' thought Hans; 'I may want him.' So he said: 'Leave your house-building and go with me, and you shall be called Rock-splitter.'

The man was quite willing. So the three rambled on through the wood together, and wherever they came the wild animals fled in terror from their path.

One evening they saw before them an old forsaken castle on a rising ground, up which they ascended; and, entering the great hall, they laid themselves down and slept. The next morning Hans went out into the garden, which was quite a wilderness full of thorns and briars, and suddenly from amidst the brushwood a wild boar sprung upon him; but Hans lifted his staff, and with one blow laid him dead at his feet.

Then he took the dead animal on his shoulder, and carried him into the castle. They roasted a portion of the flesh for dinner, and enjoyed themselves, feeling quite content, for they had now sufficient food to last for some time.

After this they agreed among themselves that two should go out hunting every day, and each take it in turns to stay at home and cook their meals.

The first day the Fir-twister remained at the old castle, while Hans and the Rock-splitter went to the hunt.

While the Fir-twister was in the kitchen busy at his cooking, there came a little withered-up old man to the castle, and demanded meat.

'Be off, you little scamp!' he cried; 'you will get no meat from me.'

To the astonishment of the Fir-twister, the little, insignificant-looking old man sprang upon him, and, before he could prevent him, beat him so terribly with his fist that he fell to the ground and gasped for breath. But the little man did not go away till he had vented his rage fully upon him.

When the two others returned home, the Fir-twister did not tell them of the little man, nor of the thrashing he had given him. He thought, 'When they remain at home, they must take their chance with the little wretch as well as I,' and the thought gave him great pleasure.

The following day the Rock-splitter remained at home, and the same visitor made his appearance. When the little man

found the meat again refused, he attacked the Rock-splitter in the same way, and beat and overpowered him as he had done the other. At last the day came for Hans to stay at home, and though the others knew what he would have to endure, they both remained silent, and thought Hans ought 'to taste the soup' as well as they.

Hans was very busy preparing the dinner in the kitchen, when in walked the little man, and demanded at once a piece of meat.

'The poor little wretch is hungry,' thought Hans, 'I will give him my share, that the others may not come short.' So he offered him a piece of meat.

As soon as the dwarf had devoured it, he asked for more, and the good-natured Hans gave him some a second time, and said: 'That is a beautiful piece, and you must be contented with it.'

But the dwarf asked for a third supply, and, when Hans refused, the wicked little wretch was just going to spring upon him and serve him as he had served the other two, but he was mistaken this time. Hans without much exertion gave him a couple of blows which made him rush down the steps of the castle in surprise and fright. Hans, in his haste to run after him fell down, and, when he had recovered himself, the dwarf was far away. Hans followed him, however, quickly, and saw him slip into a rocky cave; so, after taking particular notice of the place, he returned home.

The other two, when they reached the castle, were astonished to see Hans quite well and unhurt; but he told them all that had happened, and then they could not any longer be silent about the dwarf's visits, and how he had treated them.

Hans laughed, and said: 'It served you right; why should you have been so greedy with your meat? but still it is too bad to think that such great fellows as you should have been thrashed by a dwarf.'

Then they took a large basket and a strong cord, and went to the cave in the rocks, into which the dwarf had slipped. They first let Hans down by a rope in a basket, with his club-staff, and, when he reached the ground, he saw a door, which he opened, and in a kind of room sat a most beautiful young lady, more beautiful than Hans had ever seen, and near her stood the dwarf, grinning at him like a baboon.

The poor young lady was bound with fetters, and she looked at Hans so sadly, that he was touched with pity for her, and

thought: 'I must free her from the power of this wicked dwarf.'

He turned quickly, and with one stroke of his heavy walking-staff the little wretch fell to the ground dead. Immediately the fetters dropped from the maiden, and Hans was enraptured with her beauty.

She told him that she was a king's daughter, who had been stolen from her home by a wicked count, and by him made a prisoner in this rocky cave, with the dwarf to keep guard over her; and terribly he had oppressed and tormented her. Then Hans placed the maiden in the basket, and called to his companions to draw her up. The basket came down again, but Hans did not quite trust his fellow travellers, 'for,' thought he, 'they have been already false in not telling me of the dwarf's visits, and who knows, they may have some design against me.'

So he placed his heavy staff in the basket, and it was fortunate for him that he did so, for, when the basket was half-way up, they let go the cord, and if Hans had been really sitting in it, he must have been dashed to pieces.

It was, however, still a sad difficulty for him to get out of that deep place, and, ponder as he might, there seemed no way of escape.

'It is very hard,' he said to himself, 'to know that I must stay here and be starved.'

But as he wandered in and out, he came again to the room in which the young lady had been sitting, and saw on the finger of the dwarf a ring sparkling and glittering. He drew off the ring, and placed it on his finger, and, as he turned it round, he suddenly heard a rushing sound over his head. He looked up, and saw a spirit of the air hovering over him, who said he was his master, and asked him what his commands were. Hans felt at first quite bewildered, but on saying he wished to be drawn up out of that cave, in a moment he was obeyed, and it appeared to him as if he flew.

When he reached the top, none of his companions were to be seen, and, on going to the old castle, he found it empty. The Fir-twister and the Rock-splitter had gone away, and taken the beautiful lady with them.

Hans turned his ring on his finger, and the spirit of the air appeared, and told him that his two companions were on the sea. Hans ran with all his might down to the sea shore, and was just in time to see at a distance a boat, in which were his false companions.

In his violent rage, and without a thought, he jumped into the water, still carrying his heavy staff, and attempted to swim after them ; but the weight of his staff dragged him down, and he was on the point of sinking when he thought of the ring.

The moment he turned it round, the spirit of the air appeared, and carried him with the speed of lightning to the boat. He sprang in, and with two or three blows of his staff, he gave his false companions the reward they deserved, and threw them into the water.

He then rowed away quickly with the terrified princess, whom he had twice rescued, and, on reaching the shore, he at once took her home to her father and mother. Hans married the beautiful princess, and they all rejoiced greatly.

THE HOUSE IN THE WOOD.

A POOR wood-cutter lived with his wife and three daughters in a little hut on the borders of a lonely forest. One morning, when he was going to his work, he said to his wife : ' Send my eldest daughter out into the wood with my dinner at noon, or I shall not get through my work, and that she may not lose her way, I will take a bag of millet with me, and strew the seeds on the path.'

As soon as the sun was at its height, and just over the wood, the maiden started on her road with a large jug of soup and some bread for her father's dinner. But the field and hedge sparrows, the larks, the finches, and other birds, had long before picked up the seeds, so that the maiden could not find the track.

She went always forward, yet the sun went down, and night came on before she could find shelter. The trees rustled in the darkness, the night owl screamed, and the poor girl was in great fear, when all at once she saw a light twinkling in the distance through the trees. ' There must be people living yonder,' she thought, ' and no doubt they will give me a night's lodging.'

She soon came to a house, through the window of which the light shone.

She knocked at the door, and a rough voice cried from

within, 'Come in.' She stepped into a dark passage, and tapped at the room door. The same voice cried 'Come in,' and when the door opened she saw a very old man sitting at a table; his chin rested on his hands, and his white beard fell over it nearly to the ground. Near the stove lay three animals, a cock, a hen, and a speckled cow. The maiden told the old man of her trouble, and asked if she could have a night's lodging. Instead of answering her the old man turned to the animals and said:

'Little chicks and spotted cow,
Shall we keep her here or no?'

The animals made certain sounds which meant that she was to stay. So the old man said: 'You will find plenty of everything here, so go into the kitchen and cook us some supper.'

The maiden found an abundance of all she wanted, and after cooking a dish full of good food she placed it on the table, and seating herself with the old man ate a hearty meal, but she never thought of the animals. When she was satisfied, she said: 'I am very tired, where is a bed on which I can sleep?' In reply, came a voice:

'You can eat and drink,
But you cannot think
Of poor animals such as we;
You shall have a bed.
Just to rest your head,
But you don't know where it will be.'

Then the old man told her to go upstairs, where she would find a room with two beds in it; she was to shake the beds well, and make them both. The young maiden went quickly upstairs, made her own bed, and without thinking of one for the old man, she lay down and went fast asleep. After awhile the old man came up to his room, and, finding his bed not made, shook his head, and seeing the maiden sleeping, opened a trap-door in the floor, and let down the bed on which she lay into the cellar beneath.

Meanwhile, the wood-cutter returned home in the evening very late, and reproached his wife for having left him the whole day hungry. 'It is not my fault,' she said, 'I sent the maiden with your dinner at noon, and I suppose she must have lost her way; she will be back again to-morrow, no doubt.'

Before day, however, the wood-cutter was obliged to be off to the forest, and he desired his wife to send his second

daughter with his dinner. 'I will carry a bag of linseed with me this time,' he said, 'as the seeds are larger than the millet; she will see them more easily, and will not be likely to lose her way.'

But at noon, when the maiden went with her father's dinner, the linseed had disappeared; the birds of the forest, as on the day before, had picked them all up, so that there were none left. She also wandered about all day, and at last found a good supper and a night's lodging in the old man's cottage; but she also never thought of feeding the animals, or of making the old man's bed, so at night while she slept, he opened the trap-door and let her down into the cellar below as he had done her sister. On the third morning, the wood-cutter told his wife; 'You must send our youngest child with my dinner to-day, she is always good and obedient, she will not lose her way as her sisters have done; they wander about like wild bees when they swarm.'

The mother, however, would not listen. 'No,' she said, 'why should I lose my dearest child now that the others are gone?'

'Don't fear,' he said, 'the maiden will never wander, she is too clever and sensible; besides, I will take a quantity of peas with me and strew them in the way to show her the right path; they are so much larger than linseed, and will be sure to remain.'

So the next day the mother, with much advice and caution, sent her youngest daughter to the forest. She carried a basket on her arm, but there were no peas to guide her; they were all in the crops of the pigeons, and therefore she knew not which path to take. She was very unhappy, and thought how hungry her poor father would be, and how her mother would fret if she remained away all night. However, in her wanderings after dark, she also saw the light, and came, as her sisters had done, to the house in the wood. She went in and begged for a night's lodging so gently that the man with the white beard said to his animals:

'Little chicks and spotted cow,
Shall we keep her here or no?'

The voice answered 'Yes,' and presently the maiden went over to the stove where the animals lay, stroked the smooth feathers of the cock and hen with her hand, and rubbed the spotted cow between the horns. When the old man told her to go and cook some supper she got it ready very quickly; but when she

placed the dishes on the table, she said: 'I am not going to feast myself with all these good things while the poor animals have nothing. There will be plenty left for me, and I shall take care of them first.'

Then she went and fetched some barley, which she scattered before the chickens, and a whole armful of sweet hay for the cow. 'Eat that up, you dear animals,' she said, 'and perhaps you are thirsty, so I will bring you some fresh water.'

Then she brought in a large basin of water, and the cock and hen sprung on the brink, dipped in their beaks, and lifted their heads in the manner that birds always do drink, while the spotted cow took a long draught. After the animals were fed the maiden seated herself at the table, and ate what the old man had left for her. In a very little while the fowls had their heads behind their wings, and the cow began to blink her eyes, so the maiden said: 'Shall we not go to rest?'

And the old man cried:

'Little chicks and spotted cow,
Shall we let her sleep here now?'

And they replied quickly:

'Yes, for she is very good,
She has brought us drink and food.'

Then the maiden went upstairs, shook both beds, and made them up, and presently the old man came to his room, and when he laid himself on the bed his white beard nearly reached to his feet.

The maiden also said her prayers, and lying down slept peacefully till midnight, when a number of strange noises awoke her. The corners of the house were creaking and cracking, the doors sprang open and struck against the walls. The rafters groaned, as if their joints were broken and separated; the stairs were turning upside down, and at last there was a crash, as if the roof and the walls had fallen in together. Then all was still.

The maiden had been too frightened to move, and all had happened so quickly that she would have had scarcely time to do so. But now, finding she was not hurt, and still in her comfortable bed, she lay quiet and went to sleep again.

But in the morning, when the bright sunshine awoke her, what a sight met her eyes! She was lying in a noble room, and everything around her as splendid as the furniture of a royal palace. The walls were covered with golden flowers on

a silken ground. The bed was of ivory, and the covering of red velvet, and on a chair near it stood a pair of slippers embroidered with pearls.

The maiden fancied herself in a dream; but while she wondered three neatly-dressed servants came in, and asked her what they could do for her.

'Nothing,' she replied; 'only go away, and I will get up and cook the old man's breakfast for him, and give those dear animals their food.'

She dressed herself quickly, and went to the old man's room; but what was her astonishment to see lying on the bed a strange man, asleep. While she stood, and saw with surprise that he was young and handsome, he woke, raised himself, and said: 'Don't go away; I am a king's son, and a wicked witch changed me into a bearded, gray old man. My castle was changed into the wooden house, and my servants into a cock, a hen, and a spotted cow. The spell was never to be broken unless a maiden came to visit us who had a kind heart, and who was as careful to feed poor animals as human beings, and you are that maiden. And at midnight, while we slept, we were all through you set free; the old wooden house is again a royal castle, and the animals are restored to their former shape as my servants. I will now send them to fetch your father and mother, that they may be present at our marriage, for you are to be my wife.'

'But where are my sisters?' she asked.

'I have shut them up in the cellar,' he replied; 'but to-morrow I will send them to work in the mines till they have learnt that animals require to be fed and kindly treated, as well as human beings.'

SHARING LOVE AND SORROW.

THERE was once a tailor, who was a quarrelsome man, and his wife, who was good, diligent and pious, could never please him. Whatever she did, he was discontented, grumbled, scolded and struck her. When the authorities at last heard of it, they had him brought before them, and put him in prison in order to improve him. He was kept for a time on bread and water, then he was set free, but he was made to promise that he would not

beat his wife any more, but live peaceably with her, and share his joys and sorrows with her, as married people ought to do. For a time all went well, but then he went back into his old ways, was surly and quarrelsome. And because he dared not strike his wife, he pulled her by the hair and tore it out. The woman escaped him and ran out into the yard, but he ran after her with his yard measure and scissors, chased her about and threw at her the yard measure and scissors and whatever came to his hand. When he hit her he laughed and when he missed he stormed and swore. This continued so long, that the neighbours had to come to the help of the wife. The tailor was called up again before the authorities, and reminded of his promise.

'Dear gentlemen,' answered he, 'I have kept my promise. I have not beaten her, but have shared joy and sorrow with her.'

'How can that be,' said the judge, 'as she again brings such great complaints against you?'

'I have not struck her, I only wished to comb her hair with my hand as she looked so strange; but she escaped me and left me spitefully. Then I hurried after her, and, in order that she might return to her duty, I threw at her as a well meant memento, whatever came to my hands. I have shared joy and sorrow with her, for as often as I struck her, it has been a joy to me, and a sorrow to her; if I have missed her, it has been a joy to her and a sorrow to me.'

The judges were not satisfied with this answer, but gave him the reward he deserved.

THE WILLOW WREN.

In olden times, every sound had a sense and significance of some sort. When the hammer of the smith sounded, it was as if it said: 'Strike! Strike!' The sound of the plane on the table said, 'You have it, you have it.' When the mill-wheel began to clack, it said, 'Help God: help God!' and if the miller was a cheat, it seemed to say, 'Who is there? who is there?' and then to reply, 'The miller, the miller;' and when the mill went very fast, 'Stealing six out of eight! stealing six out of eight!'

In these good old days the birds had a language of their own,

which everyone could understand, although it sounded only like twittering, screaming, and whistling, and was really music without words. An idea rose among the birds that they would be no longer without a master, but would choose one of their number to be king. One voice only was raised against this proposal; the plover declared that he had lived free and he would die free. Full of anxiety, he flew about here and there among the birds, crying, 'Where shall I be? where shall I be?' Then he returned to his lonely home in the marshes, and has never since associated with his fellows.

The birds were determined to have a general meeting on the subject, so one fine May morning they assembled in great numbers from woods, fields, and meadows: the eagle and the bullfinch, the owl and the crow, the lark and the sparrow, and many more that could be named; even the cuckoo was present, and the hoopoe—who is called the cuckoo's clerk, because his note is heard a few days after him—and a very little bird without a name also mixed with the flock.

The hen, who, as it happened, had heard nothing of the whole matter, wondered at such a large gathering. 'Cluck, cluck, cluck, what are they all going to do?' she cackled. But the cock quieted his dear wife, and explained what the birds were about.

Meanwhile, it was decided that the bird who could fly the highest should be chosen as king. A green frog who sat in the bushes, when he heard this, croaked, and said there would be many tears shed. The crow, however, said, 'Caw, caw, it will be all settled in a friendly manner.' They decided to make the experiment of flying the next morning, so that none should be able to say afterwards, 'I could have flown higher had it not been evening, and I was too tired to do any more.'

At the appointed signal, the whole flock rose in the air. There was quite a cloud of dust scattered about, and such a rustling noise and flapping of wings—it was as if a dark cloud had passed over the sun. The little birds, however, remained, they could not fly so high. The large birds kept up for a long time; but none could compete with the eagle, for he went so high that if they had followed him the sun would have put out their eyes.

When the eagle saw that the others could not follow him, he thought to himself, 'I need not go any higher; I am sure to be chosen king.'

And the birds beneath him cried out, 'You must be our king; none can fly as high as you do.'

'Excepting I,' cried the little fellow without a name, who had crept unseen among the wing-feathers of the eagle, and mounted with him, and as he was not tired, he flew in the air still higher and higher till he could almost peep into heaven. When he had reached this height, he folded his wings together and sank gradually down to earth, exclaiming in his shrill but delicate voice, 'I am king—I am king!'

'You our king?' cried the birds in a rage; 'no, no; you have gained your position through trickery and cunning!'

However, they were obliged to make another condition about who should be king, and they decided that it should be he who sank lowest into the earth. The goose, on this, cackled loudly and laid her broad breast on the ground; the cock scratched away quickly to make a hole; the duck, however, got into trouble, for she jumped into an open grave, and sprained her leg so terribly that she was obliged to waddle away to the nearest pond with the cry, 'Rare work, rare work!'

The little bird without a name, however, went in search of a mouse-hole, and as he slipped in, he cried with his shrill voice, 'I am king—I am king!'

'You our king?' cried the other birds, in a rage. 'Do you suppose your cunning tricks can avail you?' So they shut him up and made him prisoner in the mouse-hole to starve, and the owl was placed sentinel to prevent the little rogue from escaping, as he valued his life.

In the evening all the birds felt very tired with the great efforts they had made in flying, so they all went home with their wives and children to bed. The owl alone remained by the mouse-hole, staring into it with her great grave eyes; but at length she also became tired, and said to herself, 'I can easily shut one eye, and if I keep the other open, the little wretch shall not escape.' She closed one eye, and with the other kept a steadfast look on the mouse-hole.

The little fellow peeped out once or twice, and thought, as the owl appeared asleep, that he could slip away; but the owl saw him, and made such a quick step forward that he darted back in a hurry. A little while after the owl thought she would rest one eye and open the other, and so keep on changing all night; but when she closed one, she forgot to open the other, and very soon both eyes were shut up, and she was fast asleep.

The little one soon perceived it, and flew away. From that time the owl has never dared to show herself by daylight, lest the other birds should peck off her feathers and pull her to pieces; so she flies about in the night time, and pursues and

catches the mice who can make such dangerous holes. And the little bird also keeps out of her way, for he fears she will catch him by the neck and soon make an end of him. He lives in the hedges, and is constantly crying out, in a piping voice, 'I am king—I am king!' The other birds, therefore, call him in mockery the *hedge-king*.*

No one, however, was more pleased at not having to obey the wren than the lark. The moment she caught sight of the sun, she would rise in the air, singing, 'Ah, how beautiful that is! how beautiful that is!'

THE SOLE.

THE fish were for a long time discontented because no order prevailed in their kingdom. None turned aside for the others, but all swam to the right or left as it pleased them, darting between those who wished to remain together, and getting in their way; and the stronger gave the weaker a stroke with the tail that drove him away, or else he swallowed him without troubling. 'How happy we should be if we had a king who would enforce right and justice among us!' said they; and they met together to choose for their king the one who could dart through the waves quickest, and give help to the weak.

They placed themselves by the shore in rank and file, and the pike gave the signal with his tail, on which they all started.

Like an arrow the pike darted forward, and with him the herring, the gudgeon, the perch, the carp, and all the rest. The sole also swam with them, and hoped to reach the goal.

All at once the cry was heard, 'The herring is first! the herring is first!'

'Who is first?' cried angrily the flat, envious sole, which was far behind. 'Who is first?'

'The herring, the herring!' was the answer.

'The naked herring?' cried the envious one. 'The naked herring?'

Since then the sole, as a punishment, has its mouth on one side.

* Zaun-könig.

THE BITTERN AND THE HOOPOE.

'WHERE do you like best to feed your flocks?' asked a man of an old cowherd. 'Here, sir, where the grass is not too rich and not too poor, or else it is of no good.' 'Why not?' asked the man.

'Do you hear, then, that melancholy cry from the meadow?' answered the cowherd. 'It is the bittern. He was once a shepherd, and so was the hoopoe. I will tell you the tale.

'"The bittern tended his flock in rich green meadows, where flowers grew in abundance, so that his cows became fierce and wild. The hoopoe drove his cattle in the high barren mountain, where the wind plays with the sand, and his cows became thin and got no strength. When it was evening, and the herds went homewards, the bittern could not bring his cows together, as they were so high-spirited, and ran away from him. He called out, 'Come, cows, come!' but in vain; they did not listen to his call. The hoopoe, however, could not get his cows on their legs, they were so faint and weak. 'Up, up, up!' called he; but it was of no use, they remained lying on the sand." That is the way when one has no moderation. Even now, where they have no herds to keep, the bittern calls, "Come, come," and the hoopoe, "Up, up, up."'

THE OWL.

A FEW hundred years ago, when the people were not nearly so clever and cunning as they are now, a strange event happened in a little town. By accident one of the great owls called horned owls had come out of the neighbouring wood by night into the barn of a citizen, and when day broke did not dare to get out of her retreat for fear of the other birds, who always when they saw it raised a frightful outcry. When the man-servant went in the morning into the barn to fetch some straw, he was frightened at the sight of the owl sitting in a corner, and ran to tell his master that a monster, such as he had never seen in his life, sat in the barn, turned his eyes

round in his head, and could swallow a man without the least trouble.

'I know you,' said his master; 'you have enough courage to run after a blackbird in the field, but if you saw a dead hen you would get a stick before you came near to it. I must myself go and see what this monster is,' added the master, and went boldly to the barn and looked in. But when he saw with his own eyes the strange and frightful animal, he betrayed no less fear than his servant. He sprang out in a few steps, ran to his neighbours, and begged them to help him against an unknown and dangerous animal; otherwise the whole town might be in danger if it were to break loose out of the barn where it was sitting.

There arose a great noise and clamour in all the streets; the citizens came armed with spears, pitchforks, scythes, and axes, as if they were going to attack an enemy. At last appeared the town-councillors, with the burgomaster at their head. When they had arranged themselves in order in the market-place, they advanced to the barn and surrounded it on all sides.

Then one of the boldest came forward and went in with spear lowered, but came running out again with a cry, deadly pale, and unable to utter a word. Then two others dared to go in, but they fared no better. At last stepped forth a great strong man, who was famous on account of his warlike deeds, and said: 'You will not drive out the monster by just looking at it. Here we must be in earnest; but I see that you have all become old women, and no one dares to attack it.'

He had his armour, sword and spear brought him, and armed himself. All praised his courage, although many were anxious for his life. The two barn-doors were opened, and the owl was seen perched in the middle of a great cross-beam. He ordered a ladder to be brought, and when it was set up, and he had prepared to mount it, they all called out to him to be brave, and commended him to St. George who had slain the dragon. When he was nearly at the top, and the owl saw that he had designs on her, and was confused also by the cries of the people, and knew not how to escape, she rolled her eyes, ruffled her feathers, snapped her beak, and cried out in a rough voice: 'Tuwhit, tuwhoo!'

'Strike, strike!' called out the multitude outside to the brave hero.

'Anyone standing where I stand,' answered he, 'would not cry "strike."' He did put his foot a step higher, but then began to tremble, and, half fainting, went back.

Now, there was no one else who would go into such danger. 'The monster,' said they, 'has by only snapping and breathing on him poisoned and deadly wounded the strongest man to be found among us, and shall we others also risk our lives?' They deliberated on what was to be done to prevent the whole town from being destroyed. For a long time all counsel seemed in vain, until at last the burgomaster found an expedient. 'My opinion is this,' said he, 'that we pay the owner out of the common fund for this barn and all that lies in it, the corn, the straw, and the hay, to keep him from loss, and then burn down the whole building, and with it the fearful animal; then no one need risk his life. There is no time to spare, and economy would be ill-applied here.'

All agreed to this, and so the barn was set on fire at all the four corners, and with it was burnt the owl. Whoever does not believe this must go himself there and inquire about it.

THE MESSENGERS OF DEATH.

In olden times a giant was once walking on the great highway, when there sprang out suddenly before him an unknown man, who cried: 'Halt! not a step further.' 'What!' said the giant, 'you imp, whom I can crush between my fingers, will you stop my way? Who are you that dare to speak so boldly?'

'I am Death,' answered the other. 'No one can oppose me, and you also must obey my commands.'

The giant, however, refused, and began to struggle with Death. It was a long, violent battle, and at last the giant got the upper hand, and struck Death with his fist, so that he sank down beside a stone. The giant went his way, and Death lay conquered, and was so powerless that he could not get up again.

'What will happen,' said he, 'if I remain lying in the corner? No one will die in the world, and it will be so filled with men that they will not have room to stand beside one another.' Then a young man came by, strong and healthy, singing a song and casting his eyes about. When he perceived the half-fainting one he went compassionately to him, lifted him up, poured out of his flask a strengthening drink for him,

and waited until he had recovered. 'Do you know,' said the stranger, while he was getting up, 'who I am, and whom you have helped to his feet.'

'No,' answered the young man; 'I do not know you.'

'I am Death,' said he; 'I spare no one, and cannot make an exception even of you. But that you may see that I am grateful, I promise you that I will not come on you unawares, but I will send my messengers before I come and fetch you.'

'Well,' said the young man, 'that is a gain; I shall know when you are coming, and how long I am still safe from you.'

Then he went on, was joyful and merry, and lived without care. But youth and health did not long continue; soon there came pain and sickness, which troubled him by day and took away his sleep at night.

'I shall not die,' he said to himself, 'for Death will send his messengers first; but I wish that these days of illness were over.'

As soon as he felt well he lived joyfully again.

One day someone tapped him on the shoulder; he looked round, and Death stood behind him, and said: 'Follow me; the hour of your departure from the world is come.'

'How?' answered the man. 'Will you break your word? Have you not promised me that you would send your messengers before you came yourself? I have seen none.'

'Be silent,' replied Death. 'Have I not sent one messenger after another to you? Did not the fever come and strike you, shake you and cast you down? Did not dizziness bewilder your head? Did not the gout attack you in all your limbs? Did not your ears sing? Did not the toothache bite your cheeks? Were not your eyes dim? Beside these, did not sleep, my dear brother, remind you every night of me? Did you not lie at night as if you had died already?'

The man knew not what to answer, yielded to his fate, and went away with Death.

THE GOOSE GIRL AT THE WELL.

THERE was once a very old woman, who lived with her flock of geese in a lonely spot between the mountains, in which stood also her little cottage The waste land was surrounded by a

large forest, into which the old woman hobbled with her crutch every morning, for she was very active—more than anyone would have believed, considering her age. She gathered grass for her geese, plucked quantities of the wild fruit that she could reach, and carried it all home on her back.

One might have expected that such a heavy burden would weigh her to the ground, but she always brought it safely home. If she met anyone on her road, she would greet him in a friendly manner, and say, 'Good-morning, farmer; it is beautiful weather to-day. You wonder how I can drag this load, but we must all bear our own burdens on our backs.'

The people, however, did not like meeting her, and went another way; and if a father saw her when he was walking with his children, he would say to them: 'Avoid that old woman; she has mischief behind her ears; she is a witch.'

One morning a very handsome young man was walking in the forest. The sun shone brightly, the birds sang in the branches, a cool breeze rustled the leaves, and he was full of joy.

For a time he met no one, when suddenly he espied the old witch kneeling on the ground and cutting the grass with her sickle. Already she had a large bundle of it packed away into her sack, and by her side stood two baskets filled with wild pears and wild apples.

'Ah, good mother,' said the youth, 'how are you going to carry all that?'

'I must carry it, dear sir,' she replied. 'Rich people's children need not do such hard work, but with us peasants it is different. Will you help me?' she added, as he still stood near her. 'You have a straight back and young limbs: to you it would be a light burden.'

The youth could not help pitying the old woman, so he said: 'My father is certainly not a peasant, but a rich count; but to prove to you that peasants are not the only people who can carry burdens, I will carry yours for you.'

'If you will do this for me,' she replied, 'I shall be very thankful. It is not more than an hour's walk, and there are those baskets to carry, but that will be nothing to you.'

The young man became very thoughtful when he heard of an hour's walk, but the old woman would not let him off; she loaded him with the sack of grass and hung the baskets on his two arms, and said, 'See, now, isn't it very light?'

'No, it is not at all light,' said the young count, making a woful face; 'the bundle weighs as heavy as if it were full of

large pebble stones, and the apples and pears seem like lead; I can scarcely breathe.'

He wished to place the burden on the ground again, but the old woman would not allow him. 'See now,' she said scornfully, 'the young gentleman cannot even support a load which an old woman like me has carried so often. You are very ready with your fine words, but when it comes to the real thing you are as ready with your excuses. Why do you stand there? Come, step out and lift up your legs; no one can take that bundle from your back now.'

So the young count started, and as long as he walked on level ground he got on very well; but when they reached a mountain, and he found he had to climb up, he began to lose strength, and the stones rolled under his feet as if they were alive. Drops of perspiration stood on his forehead and ran down his back, making him feel hot and cold alternately. 'Good mother,' he said, 'I cannot go any farther; I want to rest.'

'You must not rest yet,' replied the old woman; 'by-and-by, when we reach the end of the journey, will be the time to rest; now you must go forward, and it may bring you good fortune.'

'You are a shameless old woman!' said the young count, trying to throw the sack from his shoulders; but he tried in vain, it stuck as fast as if it had grown there, and twist and turn as he might, he could not get free. The old woman only laughed and danced round him on her crutches. 'Don't excite yourself, my dear sir,' she said; 'you are getting as red in the face as a turkey-cock. Carry your burden with patience, and when we get home you shall have a good reward.'

What could he do? He was obliged to submit to his fate with patience, and follow the old woman, who appeared to grow stronger and more active as his burden grew heavier. All at once she made a spring, jumped on the sack and seated herself there, and though she was so thin and withered, she was heavier than the stoutest peasant girl.

The weight was so much increased that the youth's knees trembled under him, and if he stopped for a moment the old woman struck him with a strap and with stinging nettles on the legs. Under this constant goading, he at last ascended the hill, and reached the old woman's cottage just as he was ready to drop with fatigue. As soon as the geese saw the old woman they spread out their wings and ran to meet her, crying, 'Wulle, wulle.'

Behind the flock walked a middle-aged woman with a staff in

her hand, strong and big, but as ugly as night. 'Mother,' she said, 'has anything happened? what makes you so late?'

'Don't be alarmed, my daughter,' replied the old woman; 'nothing wrong has occurred, quite the reverse. This young count has not only carried my burden for me, but when I was tired he actually carried me on his back also. The way has not seemed long, for we have been quite merry together, joking and laughing as we came along.'

At last the old woman slipped the sack from the youth's shoulders and took the baskets from his arms; then, looking at him kindly, she said: 'Now go and sit on that bench before the door and rest yourself; you have honestly earned your reward, and it shall not be kept from you.'

Then she turned to the goose-tender and said: 'Go into the house, my daughter; it is not proper for you to be alone with this young count, or he may fall in love with you. We ought not to pour oil on fire.'

The young count hardly knew whether to laugh or to cry at the idea of falling in love with such a 'treasure.' 'Why, if she were thirty years younger,' he thought, 'she would fail to move my heart.'

Meanwhile, the old woman caressed and stroked her geese as if they had been children, and at last went into the house to her daughter. The youth stretched himself on the bench under a wild apple tree, the breeze blew soft and warm, around spread a green meadow covered with primroses, wild thyme, and a thousand other flowers. Through the meadow flowed a clear stream which reflected the sun's rays, while the white geese swam gently on its surface, or dived beneath its tranquil waters.

'It is delightful here,' he said to himself; 'but I am so tired I cannot keep my eyes open; I think I will sleep for awhile. I hope, however, the wind will not rise and blow away my legs; they seem to have lost all their power.'

After he had been asleep some time, the old woman came and shook him till he woke. 'Stand up,' she said; 'you must not stay here. I certainly did treat you rather badly, but it has not killed you after all, and now you shall have your reward; it is neither money nor property, but something better still.'

Thereupon she placed in his hands a small casket which had been cut out of one emerald. 'Take great care of it,' she said; 'it will bring you good fortune.'

On hearing this, the count jumped up, and feeling himself quite refreshed and strong, he thanked the old woman for her

kindness, and started on his homeward journey without one look at her beautiful daughter, although, after walking for some distance, he could still hear the loud cackling of the geese. The poor young count wandered about for three days before he could discover the right road, which at length led him to a large town. Of course he was unknown, so they took him to the castle, where the king and queen were seated on their thrones. The count knelt on one knee before the queen, and, taking out the emerald casket from his pocket, laid it at her feet.

She requested him to stand up and to let her examine it. But no sooner had he done so than she opened it, and the next moment fell to the ground as if dead.

The count was immediately seized by the king's servants, and would have been led off to prison had not the queen quickly recovered, and, opening her eyes, ordered him to be released.

'Let everyone leave the room,' she said. 'I must speak privately to this stranger.'

When they were alone the queen began to weep, and said: 'I am surrounded by grandeur, and pomp, and show; but what are the use of all these, when I wake every morning to sorrow and care? I once had three daughters, the youngest of whom was so beautiful that all the world looked upon her as a wonder. She was fair as a snow-flake, with a tint on her cheeks like apple blossom, and her hair was as bright as a sunbeam. When she wept, pearls and precious stones fell from her eyes instead of tears. As soon as she reached the age of fifteen, the king sent for his daughters to be presented at court. But when the youngest appeared she attracted all eyes by her great beauty, and the people said it was as if the sun had just risen upon them.

'The king then spoke: "My daughters, I know not when my last hour may come, but to-day I will decide what each of you are to have after my death. You all three love me, I know, but whoever loves me best shall have the best place in my will."

'They each said they loved him best.

'"Well, then, can you express your love for me, that I may judge?"

'Then said the eldest, "I love my father better than the sweetest sugar."

'The second said, "I love him better than the most beautiful of my dresses."

'But the youngest remained silent.

'At last the king said, "And you, my dearest child, how much do you love me?"

'"I know not what to compare my love to," she replied. But her father pressed her to make some comparison, and at last she said, "The best food does not taste good without salt, therefore I love my father as I love salt."

'When the king heard this he fell into a rage, and said, "If you love me like salt, then with salt shall your love be rewarded."

'He then divided his kingdom between the two eldest, and after ordering a bag of salt to be bound on the back of his youngest daughter, she was led out into the wild forest by two servants, and left there. We all prayed and entreated for her,' continued the queen, 'but nothing would soften the wrath of the king. She wept so much when she left us that the whole way she went was strewn with pearls which fell from her eyes. The king soon regretted his cruel harshness, and had the whole forest searched to find her, but she has never been heard of since. When I think she may have been devoured by wild animals, I am overwhelmed with grief, and I can only console myself by the hope that I am wrong, and that she is living concealed in some cavern, or that she has been protected under the care of some charitable person who took pity on her.

'When I opened the emerald casket which you presented to me, you may imagine my surprise at seeing within it one of the pearls which used to fall from my daughter's eyes when she wept; and you will understand how the sight moved my heart. You must now tell me how that pearl came into your possession.'

On this the young count related what had happened in the wood, and described the old woman who had met him, and who had given him the casket. He said this old woman appeared to be a witch, who held the forest under her enchantments; but of the king's daughter he had heard or seen nothing.

On hearing all this the king and queen decided to go and seek the old woman. They thought that where the pearl had been found they should be sure to hear news of their daughter.

The old woman sat by the door of the cottage, spinning at her wheel. It was growing dark, and a burning faggot on the hearth gave but a feeble light. All at once a noise was heard outside: the geese were coming home from the meadows, cackling as loudly as they could. The daughter took them to their roosting place, and then stepped into the cottage; but her mother scarcely thanked her, only nodded her head. She seated herself, however, without a word, to her spinning-wheel, and spun away as fast as any young girl could have done.

They both sat like this for two hours, without speaking a word to each other. At length something rushed against the window, and the fiery eyes of a night owl appeared, and presently screamed her weird note three times.

The old woman slightly raised her head at the sound, and said, 'Now is the time, my daughter, for you to go out and do your work.'

She rose immediately and went to the meadows, which lay far away in the valley, till she came to a fountain, near which stood three old oak-trees. The moon, round and full, shone so brilliantly over the mountain that it would have been easy to pick up a pin. The first thing she did was to take off a skin that covered her face, and then stoop down and bathe in the cool water. After this she dipped the skin into the water, and then laid it on the grass to dry and whiten in the moonlight.

But how the maiden was changed! You could scarcely imagine her to be the same. The gray wig fell off, and her golden hair, sparkling like sunbeams, flowed over her shoulders and enveloped her like a mantle. Her eyes glittered like the stars of heaven, while her cheeks glowed with the soft bloom of the apple blossom.

But the beautiful maiden was sorrowful, for she seated herself on the ground and wept bitterly. Tear after tear fell from her eyes, and trickled through her long hair to the ground.

She sat mourning in this way for some time, and might have remained there longer had she not heard a strange cracking and rustling sound among the trees. She sprang up like a doe that hears the crack of the hunter's gun. A dark cloud at the same moment covered the face of the moon, and in the twinkling of an eye she had disguised herself again in the skin and the gray hair, and disappeared like a light blown out by the wind. Trembling like an aspen leaf, she ran back to the house and told what had occurred to the old woman, who stood at the door; but she only smiled pleasantly, and said, 'I know all about it, my child.'

Then she led her in, and lighted a fresh faggot; but instead of again seating herself to spin, she took a broom, and began sweeping and dusting the room. 'We must have everything clean and neat,' she said to the maiden.

'But, mother,' she replied, 'why do you begin to work at such a late hour as this? What is it for?'

'Well, what o'clock is it?' asked the old woman.

'Not yet midnight,' she replied; 'but the clock has struck eleven.'

'Do you not remember,' said the woman presently, 'that it is three years to-day since you came to me? The time is up, and we cannot remain any longer together.'

'Oh, dear mother,' cried the maiden in alarm, 'are you going to drive me away? What shall I do? I have no friends and no home, and where can I go? I have always done everything you wished, and you have been satisfied with me. Oh, do not send me away!'

But the old woman seemed unwilling to tell the maiden what was going to happen, so she said: 'I cannot stop here any longer, and when I leave this house every room must be in perfect order, so do not hinder me while I work. Don't fear, there will always be a roof to cover you, and the reward I shall give you will be sure to satisfy every wish.

'But tell me what is going to happen,' said the maiden.

'You must not ask,' replied the woman; 'and you will disturb me in my work if you say another word. All you have to do is to go into your own chamber, take the skin off your face, and the wig from your head; then put on the silk dress that you wore when I first saw you, and remain in your room till I call you.'

We must now return, and see what the king and queen have been doing after they set out with the young count. He was separated from them in the forest, where he wandered about for two days before he could find the right road, and it was then quite dark; so he climbed a tree to rest till morning, for he feared losing his way again in the darkness.

When the moon arose and shone brightly over the forest, he saw the figure of a woman coming over the mountain. She did not carry the staff in her hand, but he knew her at once as the goose-tender whom he had met at the old woman's cottage.

'Oho,' he said to himself, 'here comes one of the witches, so the other cannot be very far off!'

How astonished he was, however, to see her come up to the fountain near the tree in which he sat, and take the skin off her face to bathe in the cool water. He saw, also, that when she removed the gray wig, and her own golden hair fell around her like a veil, that she was the most beautiful maiden he had ever seen in the world.

He could scarcely draw his breath as he gazed at her with earnest, wondering eyes; but he stretched his neck so far through the foliage that the branch cracked with his weight. At the same moment a dark cloud passed over the moon, and before he could recover himself the maiden had resumed her disguise and disappeared.

The count quickly descended from the tree, and followed her with hasty strides. He had not gone far when he saw in the dim light two figures crossing the meadow, and knew they were the king and queen. They had seen the light in the distance shining from the window of the old woman's cottage, and were hastening towards it. The count overtook them, and described the wonderful sight he had seen at the fountain, and they did not doubt for a moment that the beautiful maiden was their own lost daughter.

Full of joyful hope, they hastened their steps, and soon arrived at the cottage. Outside they found the geese in a row, standing on one leg, and fast asleep, with their heads behind their wings, but none of them stirred.

They approached, and, looking through the window, saw the old woman seated quietly at her spinning, with her head bent over her work, so that she did not see them. The room, and everything in it, was as clean and neat as if the spirits of the mist had dwelt there, whose feet are never soiled by earth's dust. Their daughter, however, was not to be seen, so, after looking for some time, they at last took courage, and tapped at the window.

It seemed really as if the old woman expected them, for she rose up and cried in a friendly voice: 'You may come in; I know who you are!' As they entered the room, she said: 'You might have been spared this long journey if you had not sent away your dear and sweet-tempered child unjustly. However, she has met with no injury; for three long years she has tended the geese; but she has learnt nothing wicked—her heart is still pure. You have been punished by the anxiety about her in which you have lived ever since you sent her away.'

Then she stepped up to the chamber door, and said: 'Come out, my daughter.'

The room door opened, and the king's daughter came forth in her silken robe, with her long golden hair hanging round her like a veil, and her brilliant eyes cast down. It was as if an angel had descended from the skies.

She ran to her father and mother, threw herself in their arms, and kissed them, while nothing could check their tears of joy. The young count stood by, but when the young princess raised her eyes and saw him, her delicate cheeks became red with blushes, like a moss rose, and she hardly knew why.

Presently the king said: 'Dear child, I have given away my kingdom, and what can I give to you?'

'She wants nothing,' said the old woman. 'I have saved up the tears she has wept, and they are all pearls—far more beautiful than those found in the sea, and worth more than the whole of your kingdom. And as a reward for her services in tending my geese I give her this cottage.'

As the old woman said this, she vanished from their sight. At the same moment a cracking sound was heard in the walls, and, when they turned to look, the whole cottage was changed into a noble palace, a royal banquet was already spread for them, and numerous servants were in attendance.

The story does not finish here, but the old grandmother who related it to us has forgotten the end; and lately her memory has become weak.

It is very probable, however, that the beautiful daughter of the king was married to the count, and that they lived together ever after at the palace in great happiness.

Whether the snow-white geese, whose guardian the princess had been, were really young maidens (in saying this we do not wish to be rude to our lady readers), whom the old woman had brought around her, or whether after they regained their human shapes they became maids of honour to the princess, we cannot say, but it is very probable.

This we do know, that the old woman was not a witch, as people supposed, but a good fairy, who only wished to do good. Very likely it was she who had given the princess at her birth the power of weeping pearls instead of tears. This gift is unknown in the present day, or how very soon the poor would become rich!

THE SPRITE OF THE MILL-POND.

THERE was once a miller and his wife who lived in great happiness; they had money enough and to spare, for it went on increasing year after year. But misfortune often comes at night, or, as the proverb means, when we least expect it; and so it was with the miller. He gradually lost all he had gained, and at last became so poor that he could scarcely call his mill his own.

He was so full of sorrow that, although he worked hard all day, he would lie tossing on his bed all night unable to sleep.

One morning he rose at daybreak, and went out, thinking that the fresh air of the morning would lighten his heart. As he passed along by the mill-dam, the first ray of sunlight glittered upon it, and he heard behind him a strange ripple of the water.

He turned quickly, and saw a beautiful woman rising gently out of the stream. Her long hair hung over her shoulders, and she put it back from her face with her delicate hands, and allowed it to fall over her like a veil. The miller saw at once that it was the water-sprite of the lake, and knew not whether to stay or fly in his fright.

But the fair vision called him by name in her soft voice, and inquired why he looked so sad. The miller had at first been almost stunned; but on hearing her speak so kindly he took courage, and told her that, after having lived in wealth and honour for many years, he was now so poor that he knew not how to help himself.

'Be at rest, then,' said the water-sprite; 'I will make you richer and happier than you have ever been before, if you will promise to give me the first young thing that is born in your house.'

'That will be no doubt a puppy or a kitten,' thought the miller, and at once promised what she asked.

The water-sprite immediately disappeared in the water, and the miller returned with renewed courage to his mill.

He had scarcely reached the house when a maid-servant came from the door, and told him in a joyful voice that his wife had a fine little boy. On hearing this, the miller stood as if thunderstruck. He saw at once that the malicious water-sprite had betrayed him into a fatal promise.

He went into his wife's room, with his head bowed down, and looking so sad that she said: 'Are you not pleased at having a little son?'

Then he was obliged to tell her all that had occurred, and what a terrible promise he had made to the water-sprite.

'What is the use of all the riches and honours in the world,' he said, 'if I am to lose my child?'

And now what could he do? None of his relations who came to wish him joy could give him any advice. However, from that day good fortune came back to the miller's house. Everything he did prospered. It seemed as if his chests and coffers filled themselves, and the money in his desk increased during the night, and in a short time the miller was richer than ever.

But his wealth could not bring him happiness, for the fatal promise to the water-sprite cruelly tormented his heart. Every time he passed by the lake, he expected to see her rise out of the water and claim her debt. He would not allow the child to go near it, and often said to him: 'Take care, my boy; if you ever touch that water, a hand will rise up and drag you under.'

But as days and years rolled by, and the water-sprite never again made her appearance, the miller began to feel more at ease.

When the boy grew up to a young man, he was placed with a gamekeeper, to learn the use of a gun. He was a clever lad, and soon became so expert in the business that a gentleman near the town took him into his service as gamekeeper.

In this town lived a beautiful and true maiden, with whom the young keeper fell in love. His master on hearing this gave them a small but pretty cottage when they were married, and they lived in peace and contentment, loving each other very fondly.

One day, when the keeper was hunting a deer, the animal ran out of the forest into a field, where he overtook it, and with one shot brought it to the ground. So earnest was he over his sport, that he did not notice his nearness to the dangerous water in which lived the water-sprite.

After he had killed and cut up the deer, he went to wash his blood-stained hands in the water. No sooner, however, had he touched it, than the water-sprite rose, and with a smile entwined her arms round him, and drew him down so quickly that the waves closed over him.

When evening came on, and the keeper did not return, his wife was in great trouble, and at last went out to look for him. He had often told her of the danger to which he was exposed by his father's promise to the water-sprite, and how he was obliged to avoid carefully the water of the mill-stream, and to this she hastened at once in great fear.

On arriving at the bank of the stream, she saw the game that her husband had killed lying near the water, and knew directly the fate which had come upon him. Wringing her hands, and with loud lamentations, she called him by name, again and again running from side to side of the water. She reproached the water-sprite for her cruelty with hard words, but there was no reply.

The water remained as smooth as a mirror, in which the face of the half-moon was clearly reflected. The poor young

wife would not leave the mill-stream ; she kept walking up and down without ceasing, sometimes in silence, and at other times complaining in low murmurs, or uttering cries of despair.

At last she became so worn out that she sank to the ground, and fell into a deep sleep, in which she dreamed a wonderful dream. She dreamed that she was walking over rugged rocks, and as she walked thorns and nettles pricked and stung her feet. The rain beat in her face, and the wind blew her long hair in wild confusion. But on reaching the top a very different scene presented itself. The sky was blue, the air soft and warm, while the sides of the mountain sloped downwards to verdant meadows, enamelled with bright flowers, in which stood a charming cottage.

She approached, and opened the door of the cottage, in which sat an old woman with white hair, who looked kindly at her ; but just as she was about to speak the poor wife awoke from her dream.

Day was just breaking, and she resolved to act in accordance with her dream. She immediately turned her steps towards the mountain, and, after climbing up with some difficulty, reached the top, and found all as it had appeared in her dream.

The old woman of the cottage received her very kindly, and, pointing to a chair, asked her to be seated. 'You must be suffering from some great misfortune,' she said, 'or you would not have sought my lonely hut.'

The poor wife then related with tears all that happened.

'Be comforted, poor child,' said the old woman ; 'I will help you. Take this golden comb, and, when the moon is full, go to the mill-pond, seat yourself on the bank, and comb out your long black hair. When you have done this, lay the comb on the shore, and wait and see what happens.'

The keeper's wife returned home, but the time till the moon became full seemed very long. At last, as the luminous disk appeared in the heavens, she went quickly out, seated herself by the mill-pond, and began combing her long black hair with the golden comb. When she had finished, she placed the comb on the brink of the mill-stream, and waited.

In a very short time the water bubbled up from the deep, a wave rose, rolled towards the shore, and carried away the golden comb as it receded. The comb could scarcely have sunk to the bottom, when the water divided, and the head of the gamekeeper appeared just above it.

He did not speak, but looked sorrowfully at his wife, when

a second wave rose with a rushing sound, and covered the man's head. In a few moments the water lay at rest, tranquil and calm as ever, while on its smooth surface nothing could be seen but the face of the full moon reflected on it.

The poor wife returned home with all her hope fled; but during the night she again dreamed of the little cottage in the meadow, and the old woman. So in the morning she hastened to visit the good fairy, and tell her tale of sorrow.

The wise woman comforted her as before, and, giving her this time a golden flute, she said: 'Wait for another full moon, and then take this flute, seat yourself on the shore, and play upon it one of your sweetest songs, and when it is finished lay the flute on the ground near the brink, and you will see what happens!'

The keeper's wife did exactly as the old woman had told her. Scarcely had she finished her music, and placed the flute on the shore, than the water began to bubble and foam as before, and a wave rose and carried the flute away with it.

Almost at the same moment the water divided, and not only the head and shoulders, but nearly half the body, of her husband rose above the surface. He held out his arms towards her with loving eyes; but a second wave rose with a rushing sound, covered the poor man, and drew him under.

'Ah me!' cried the unfortunate wife, 'what is the use of my only having a passing glance at my dear husband, and then to lose him again immediately?'

Sorrow again took possession of her heart, but on dreaming the same dream about the cottage and the old woman, her hopes revived, and she once more paid her a visit.

This time the good fairy gave her a golden spinning-wheel, comforted her, and said: 'You have not done all that is necessary yet; you must wait for another full moon, then take your golden spinning-wheel, seat yourself on the shore, and spin till the bobbins are full, then place the spinning-wheel near the water and wait.'

The wife followed out all these directions correctly, but when she placed the spinning-wheel on the shore the water bubbled up more violently than ever; a mighty wave arose, and in a moment swept it away. No sooner had it disappeared than with a sudden flash the head, and then the whole body, of the gamekeeper rose above the water, and quick as lightning he sprang ashore, seized his wife by the hand and flew.

But scarcely had they gone a few steps, when the whole water raised itself with a rushing noise, and with irresistible

force spread over field and meadow. Already the two fugitives saw nothing but death before them; and just as they gave themselves up for lost, they were in a moment changed—the wife into a toad, the husband into a frog.

The flood reached them, and although they escaped death, the waters separated them one from the other, and carried them in different directions. As soon as the waters receded and left them on dry ground, they each resumed their proper shape, but neither of them knew what had become of the other.

They found themselves among strange people, in a foreign country, and separated from their own home by high mountains and deep valleys which lay between them. To support themselves they were both obliged to keep sheep, and for many years they tended their herds and flocks in field and meadow, weighed down with sorrow and regret at being separated from each other.

Time passed on, and the sweet flowers bloomed at the breath of spring, when one day the two sad ones were tending their flocks, and the husband seeing a flock of sheep grazing on the hillside, in a pleasant green spot, led his own flock towards it, and very soon the two flocks were feeding together; but their keepers did not recognise each other, still they were each pleased to find a companion in their loneliness. From that day they led their sheep to the pasture side by side, and although they did not talk much, there was consolation in each other's society.

One evening, when the full moon was shining in the sky, and the sheep at rest around them, the shepherd took a flute out of his pocket and played a charming though mournful air upon it. When he had finished, he looked at the shepherdess, and saw that she was weeping bitterly.

'Why do you weep so?' he asked.

'Ah,' she replied, 'the full moon was shining as brightly in the sky the last time I played that air on my flute, and my dearest one appeared to me above the water.'

He looked at her earnestly as she spoke; a veil seemed to fall from his eyes, and he recognised his dear and long-lost wife; and the moon, as he looked at her, shone brightly on his face, causing her to recognise him at the same moment. They instantly fell into each other's arms, and kissed each other with joy, and from that happy moment neither of them wanted nor asked any greater good fortune.

THE LITTLE FOLKS' PRESENTS.

A TAILOR and a goldsmith were wandering together one evening as the sun was setting behind the hills, when they heard the sound of distant music, which grew more and more distinct. The tones were rather unearthly, but so charming that they quite forgot their fatigue, and went forward with rapid steps.

The moon was up when they reached the hillside, and presently they caught sight of a crowd of little men and women, holding hands, and dancing merrily in a circle to the strange music they had heard.

In the centre of the ring round which the pixies danced stood a little old man, yet larger and stouter than the rest. He wore a coat of many colours, and his snow-white beard descended to his breast. The travellers stood still and gazed in wonder at the dancers, and presently the old man made signs to them, and the little people separated that they might come within the circle.

The goldsmith, who was a bold fellow, and had a slight hump on his back, stepped in without fear; but the tailor was at first rather timid, and held back. However, seeing how merry and good-natured they all looked, he took heart, and entered the circle. Immediately they closed the ring again, and the little folks danced and sprang about in the wildest manner.

Meanwhile, the old man in the centre took out a large knife which hung at his girdle, sharpened it on a stone, and, feeling the edge with his finger, turned and looked at the strangers in a manner that caused them to tremble with fear.

They were not kept long in suspense, however, for the little man seized the smith, and with the greatest rapidity shaved off his hair and beard clean at one stroke! He then turned to the tailor, and did the same to him.

But their alarm vanished when the old man, after finishing his performance, slapped them on the shoulder in the most friendly manner, as if to tell them that they had done well in submitting to be shaved without resistance. He then pointed with his finger to a heap of coals that lay on one side, and made signs that they should fill their pockets.

They both obeyed, although they could not imagine what

could be the use of coals to them. They then went to find a night's lodging.

Just as they reached the valley, a clock from the neighbouring cloisters struck twelve. Immediately the music ended, the little people vanished, and the hillside lay calm and still in the moonlight.

The two travellers found a shelter and laid themselves down on a bundle of straw, dressed as they were, too fatigued to think of removing the coals from their pockets. But towards morning the heavy weight awoke them earlier than usual, and, on putting their hands into their pockets, they could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw that, instead of coals, their hands were full of pure gold!

Their surprise was as great at finding that their beards had grown again, and that their heads were covered with hair. They had suddenly become very rich; but the goldsmith, who had a greedy disposition, had filled both pockets with coals, so that he possessed twice as much gold as the tailor.

Yet he was not satisfied, and he proposed to his companion that they should stay till the next day, go again in the evening, and get more treasures out of the little old man.

The tailor, however, refused. 'I have enough,' he said, 'and I am quite contented. I only wish to be master of a business of my own, and to marry the charming maiden whom I love, and then I am a happy man.'

However, to oblige his friend, he stayed another day at the inn, and in the evening the goldsmith took two sacks on his shoulders, and went alone to the hillside. He found the little people dancing and singing as on the previous night.

They received him into the ring, and the old man again shaved him, and made a sign as before that he should take as much coal as he liked. He did not hesitate to fill not only his pockets, but the two sacks, and returned home, congratulating himself on his good fortune.

He laid himself down in his clothes, saying: 'I shall know when the gold becomes heavy, for it will wake me;' and at last he fell asleep with the pleasant expectation of waking in the morning a very rich man.

As soon as he opened his eyes, he started up, and began to dive into his pockets; but what was his astonishment at finding they contained nothing but black coals! Handful after handful he pulled out, but no gold.

'Well, I have still the gold I got on the first night,' he said, 'that is safe;' but what was his surprise and alarm to

find it all turned back again to coal, and that he was penniless!

He put up his black hands to his head, and found that it was still bald and his chin smooth and without a beard. But he had not come to the end of his misfortunes, for the hump on his back had grown larger and made him more deformed than ever. When he discovered at last that he was being punished for his covetousness, he began to groan and lament so loudly as to wake up the good tailor. He kindly comforted him in his misfortune, and said generously, 'Don't grieve any more; we have been companions and travellers together, and now you can stay with me and share what I have; it will be enough for us both.'

He kept his word, but the poor goldsmith never could get rid of the hump on his back, and was always obliged to wear a cap to cover his bald head.

THE GIANT AND THE TAILOR.

A TAILOR, who was a great boaster but little doer, took it in his head to go abroad for awhile and look about the world. As soon as he was able, he left his workshop and wandered on his way over bridges and by-paths, now here, now there, but always going forward. Once when he was out, he perceived in the blue distance a steep hill, and behind it a tower reaching to the sky, which rose out of a wild and dark wood.

'Good gracious!' cried the tailor, 'what is that?'

And because his curiosity urged him on, he went boldly towards it. But how he opened his mouth and eyes when he came near, for the tower had legs, and sprang in one leap over the steep hill, and stood as a powerful giant before the tailor! 'What do you want here, you tiny fly's leg?' he called out in a voice which sounded like thunder.

The tailor whimpered, 'I am only looking about to see if I can earn a bit of bread in this wood.'

'If that is what you want,' said the giant, 'you can enter my service.'

'If it is to be, why not? What wages shall I have?'

'What wages shall you have?' said the giant; 'you shall

hear. Yearly three hundred and sixty five days, and if it is leap year, then one more. Is that right?'

'All right,' answered the tailor, and thought within himself. 'one must cut one's coat according to one's cloth. I will try to get away soon.'

Then said the giant to him, 'Go, little ragamuffin, and fetch me a jug of water.'

'Why not rather the well together with the spring?' asked the boaster, and went with the jug for the water.

'What? The well with the spring,' growled the giant, who was a little clownish and silly and began to be afraid. 'The fellow can do more than bake apples, he has a sorcerer in him. Be on your guard, Old Hans, he is no servant for you.'

When the tailor had brought the water, the giant ordered him to go into the forest, cut down a few bundles of wood, and bring them home.

'Why not the whole forest at a stroke? The whole wood with young and old, with all that is in it, rough and smooth?' asked the tailor, and went to cut the wood.

'What? The whole wood with young and old, with all in it, rough and smooth, and the well with the spring,' growled the credulous giant to himself, and was still more frightened. 'The fellow knows more than how to roast apples, he has a sorcerer in him. Be on your guard, Old Hans, he is no servant for you.'

When the tailor had brought the wood, the giant commanded him to shoot two or three wild boars for supper.

'Why not rather at once a thousand at a shot and bring them all here?' asked the ostentatious tailor.

'What?' called out the timid giant, and was greatly frightened. 'Let me alone to-day, and lie down to sleep.'

The giant was so greatly afraid, that he could not close an eye the whole night, and thought of the best way of getting rid of this accursed sorcerer of a servant. Counsel comes with time. The next morning the giant and tailor went to a marsh, round which stood a number of willow trees. Then said the giant: 'Listen, tailor. Sit on one of the willow branches. I would like to see if you can bend it down.'

The tailor sat on it, held in his breath, and made himself heavy, so heavy that the bough bent down. When, however, he had to take breath, it hurried him (as, unfortunately, he had not put his goose in his pocket) so high, that he was no more seen, to the great joy of the giant. If he has never again fallen down, he must still be hovering in the air.

THE NAIL.

A MERCHANT had done good business at the fair; he had sold all his goods and lined his money bags with gold and silver. He wished then to travel homewards, and be there before nightfall. He therefore packed his trunk with the money on his horse and rode on. At mid-day he rested in a town; when he wished to go on, the servant led out his horse but said: 'Sir, the shoe on the left hind foot wants a nail.'

'Let it be wanting,' replied the merchant, 'the shoe will keep on for the six miles which I have to go, I am in a hurry.'

In the afternoon when he again dismounted to have his horse fed, the stable-boy came in the room, and said: 'Sir, your horse has lost a shoe from his left hind foot; shall I take it to the farrier.'

'Let it be wanting,' replied the man, 'for the few miles which are still to be passed the horse will keep up; I am in a hurry.'

He rode on, but before long the horse began to limp. It had not limped long before it began to stumble; and it had not stumbled long before it fell down and broke a leg. The merchant had to leave his horse lying there, to unbuckle the trunk, take it on his shoulder and walk home, which he did not reach till late at night.

'The unlucky nail,' he said to himself, 'is the cause of all this misfortune.' Hasten slowly.

THE POOR BOY IN THE GRAVE.

THERE was once a poor shepherd boy whose father and mother were dead, and the authorities put him under the care of a rich man, who was to feed and educate him. But the man and his wife had bad hearts, were avaricious and envious, and were angry when anyone put a bit of their bread in his mouth. The poor boy might do what he would, he received little to eat and many blows.

One day he had to watch a hen and her chickens. But she

ran with her young brood through a hedge, and down darted a hawk and carried her off. The boy screamed with all his power: 'Thief, thief, rogue!' But it was of no use. The hawk did not give back his prey.

The man heard the cries, and ran to the spot, and when he found that his hen was gone he flew into a rage, and gave the boy such a beating that he could not move for several days. He had now to watch the chickens without the hen, but his trouble was greater, as one ran here and another there. Then he thought it would be wise to tie them together with a string, because then the hawk could not steal one from him, but he was greatly mistaken. After a few days, being tired out with running about and with hunger, he fell asleep, and then the bird of prey came and seized one of the chickens, and as the others were tied to it, he carried them all away, perched on a tree and ate them all up. The farmer was just coming, and when he saw the misfortune he was angry, and beat the boy so unmercifully that he had to lie in his bed for several days.

When he was again up, the peasant said to him: 'You are so stupid that I cannot make you a keeper, you must go as a messenger.'

Then he sent him to the judge with a basket of grapes and a letter with it. On the way, hunger and thirst troubled the poor boy so much that he opened the basket and ate two bunches of the grapes. He brought the basket to the judge, but when he had read the letter and counted the grapes, he said: 'Two clusters are missing.' The boy acknowledged quite honestly that, driven by hunger and thirst, he had eaten the missing ones. The judge wrote a letter to the peasant and ordered again the same number of grapes. The boy had to carry these also with a letter, when he was again so hungry and thirsty, that he ate two bunches of grapes, but first took the letter out of the basket and placed it under a stone, and sat on it so that the letter might not see and betray him. But the judge again spoke of the missing grapes.

'Ah,' said the boy, 'how did you know it? the letter could not have told you, for I put it first under a stone.'

The judge could not help laughing at his simplicity, and sent the man a letter in which he warned him to treat the poor boy better, and not to let him want food, and that he should also teach him what was right and wrong.

'I will soon show you the difference,' said the hard man. 'If you wish to eat you must also work, and if you do anything wrong you must be taught by being beaten.'

On the following day he set him a difficult task. He was to cut two bundles of straw as fodder for the horses, and the man threatened him: 'In five hours,' he said, 'I shall be back again, and if then the straw is not cut into chaff, I will beat you until you cannot move a limb.'

The peasant went with his wife, the man-servant and the maid to the fair, and left the boy nothing but a bit of bread.

The boy sat on the straw seat and began to work with all his power. As he became hot over his work he took off his coat and threw it on the straw. In his anxiety to have finished in time he cut on; and in his haste, without observing it, he cut up his little coat with the straw. When too late, he became aware of his misfortune which he could not set right.

'Ah!' said he, 'now it is all over with me, the wicked man does not threaten in vain. When he comes back and sees what I have done, he will beat me until I am dead; it is better for me to take my life myself.'

The boy had once heard the peasant's wife say that she had a pot of poison under the bed. She had, however, only said that to keep it from greedy people, for there was honey in it. The boy crept under the bed, brought out the pot and ate all that was in it. 'I know now,' said he, 'why, people say that death is better, it tastes sweet to me. No wonder that the peasant's wife often wishes herself dead!'

He sat on a stool and was prepared to die. But instead of feeling weaker, he felt himself strengthened by the nourishing food.

'It cannot have been poison,' said he; 'but the peasant has said, that in his clothes-box there is a bottle of poison for flies; that will be the true poison, and will kill me.'

It was not, however, poison, but Hungarian wine. The boy got out the bottle and drank the wine up. 'This death also tastes sweet,' said he; but as the wine soon after began to mount into his brain and to stupefy him, he thought his end was near. 'I feel that I must die,' said he; 'I will go out into the churchyard and seek a grave.' He staggered out, reached the churchyard and lay in a freshly opened grave. His senses left him.

In the neighbourhood was an inn where a marriage was being celebrated. When he heard the music he thought himself already in paradise, until at last he lost all consciousness. The poor boy did not wake again; the glow of the hot wine, and the cold dew of the night took away his life; and he remained in the grave in which he had laid himself. When

the peasant received the news of the death of the boy, he was afraid of being brought to justice; in fact, the anxiety so powerfully affected him, that he sank fainting to the ground. The woman, who stood with a pan full of hot fat near the fire, ran to give him assistance. But the pan caught fire, and set light to the whole house. In a few hours it lay in ashes. The years which they still had to live, were passed in poverty and misery, tormented by pangs of conscience.

THE TRUE BRIDE.

THERE once lived a maiden, who was young and fair, but she had lost her own mother, and her stepmother did all she could to make her miserable. When she gave her any work to do, she made it as hard and heavy as possible, so that it was often almost beyond her strength. The wicked woman's envious heart made her always discontented with what the poor girl did—it was never enough to please her. The more diligent she was, and the more she had to do, the less thanks she received. It seemed always to her as if she were carrying a great burden, which made her life sad and miserable.

One day her stepmother said to her: 'Here are twelve pounds of feathers for you to sort in three different sizes, and if they are not finished by this evening you may expect a sound thrashing. Do you think you are to waste the whole day in idleness?'

The poor maiden began her task, but the tears rolled down her cheeks, for she knew it was impossible for her to finish such a task by the end of the day. She put several feathers together in heaps, but if she happened to sigh, or clasp her hands in her agony, away flew the feathers, and she had to commence her task anew.

At last she placed her elbows on the table, rested her face in her hands, and cried: 'Is there no one in all this earth who will pity me?'

Immediately she heard a soft voice say: 'Be comforted, my child; I am come to help you.'

The maiden, looked up, and saw an old woman standing near her. She took the maiden's hand, and said kindly: 'Now tell me what is troubling you.'

She spoke so heartily, that the maiden told her all about her unhappy life, and of one burden after another which her stepmother laid upon her, and of the terrible tasks which never would come to an end. 'If I do not finish sorting these feathers by the evening,' she said, 'my stepmother has threatened to beat me, and I know she will keep her word.'

Her tears began to flow as she spoke, but the kind old woman said: 'Be at peace, my child, and go and rest awhile; I will finish your work for you.'

The young girl lay down on her bed, and soon fell asleep.

Then the old woman placed herself at the table by the feathers. Ah, how they flew, and sorted themselves, under the touch of her withered hand! and very soon the whole twelve pounds were finished. When the maiden awoke, there they lay in large snowy heaps, and everything in the room was neat and in order, but the old woman had vanished.

The maiden thanked God, and sat still till the evening, when her stepmother came.

She was astonished when she found the feathers finished. 'See, now,' she said at last, 'what people can do when they are industrious! But why are you sitting there, with your hands in your lap? Can you find nothing else to do?' As she left the room, she said to herself: 'The creature can do more than eat; I must give her some more difficult work.'

On the morrow she called the maiden to her, and said: 'There is a large spoon for you; now go and ladle out the water from the pond that lies near the garden, and if by evening you have not reached the bottom, you know what you have to expect.'

The maiden took the spoon, and saw that it was full of holes; and, even if it had not been, it would have been impossible for her to empty the pond with it.

She made an attempt, however; knelt by the water, into which her tears fell, and began to scoop it out. But the good old woman again made her appearance, and, when she saw the cause of her sorrow, she said: 'Be comforted, my child, and go and rest in the shrubbery; I will do your work for you.'

As soon as the old woman was alone, she merely touched the water; it immediately rose, like a mist, in the air, and mingled itself with the clouds. Gradually the pond became empty, and when, at sunset, the maiden awoke, she saw only the fish writhing in the mud at the bottom. She at once went to her stepmother, and showed her that she had finished her task.

'You should have finished it long ago,' she said; but she was pale with anger, and determined to think of some still more difficult task for the poor girl.

Next morning she again called her, and said: 'To-day I shall expect you to go into the valley, and on the plain build me a beautiful castle, which must be finished by the evening.'

'Oh,' exclaimed the poor maiden in terror, 'how can I ever perform such a great work as this?'

'I will have no excuses,' screamed the stepmother. 'If you can empty a pond with a spoon full of holes, you can build me a castle. I shall expect it to be ready to-day, and if you fail in the slightest thing, whether in kitchen or cellar, you know what is before you.'

She drove the poor girl out as she spoke, and, when she reached the valley, she found it full of rocks, piled one over the other, and so heavy that, with all her strength, she could not move even the smallest.

She seated herself, and began to weep; yet still hoping for the assistance of the kind old woman, who did not keep her waiting long, but greeted her, when she appeared, with words of comfort.

'Go and lie down in the shade and sleep,' she said; 'I will build a castle for you, and, when the happy time comes, you can have it yourself.'

As soon as the maiden had gone away the old woman touched the gray rocks, and immediately they began to move, then to rock together, and presently stand upright, as if they had been walls built by giants. Within these walls the castle rose, as if numberless invisible hands were at work, laying stone upon stone. The earth trembled, as large halls expanded, and stood near each other in order. The tiles on the roof arranged themselves regularly, and before noon the weather-cock, like a golden maiden with flying drapery, stood on the pinnacle of the tower.

The interior of the castle was finished at evening, and how the old woman managed I cannot say; but the walls were covered with silk and velvet, richly embroidered, and decorated chairs and sofas, marble tables, and other elegant articles furnished the rooms. Cut-glass chandeliers hung from the ceilings, and sparkled in the light of many lamps. Green parrots sat in golden cages, and foreign birds, who sang sweetly, were in every room. Altogether, the castle was as magnificent as if built for the king himself.

It was after sunset when the maiden awoke, and, seeing the

glitter of a thousand lamps, she ran with hasty steps, and, finding the gate open, entered the court. The steps leading to the entrance-hall were covered with red cloth, and the gilded balconies were full of rich and blooming flowers. When she saw the magnificence of the room the maiden stood still with astonishment.

She knew not how long she might have remained standing thus, if she had not thought all at once that her stepmother was coming. 'Ah,' said she to herself, 'if she would only be contented with me, and I should be no longer tormented as I am now!' She went and told her stepmother that the castle was finished.

'I will just go and see for myself,' she said, and, rising from her seat, she followed the maiden; but, on entering the castle, the brightness so dazzled her, that she was obliged to cover her eyes with her hand. 'You see how easy this is to you,' she said. 'Ah, yes, I ought to have given you something still more difficult.'

She went into all the rooms, prying into every corner, to see if she could not find something wrong or defective; but this was impossible. 'I will go downstairs,' she said at last, looking at her stepdaughter maliciously; 'it is necessary for me to examine kitchens and cellars also, and if you have forgotten one single thing, you shall not escape punishment.' But nothing was wanting: the fire burned on the hearth, the supper was boiling in the saucepan; brooms, brushes, fenders, fire-irons, were in their proper places, and the walls and shelves were covered with brass and copper, glass and china, which glittered in the lamplight—nothing was wanting, not even the coal-scuttle, or the water-can.

'Where are the steps to the cellar?' cried the woman. 'I want to see if the casks are full of wine of the right sort, or it will be bad for you.'

She raised the trap-door as she spoke, and descended the stairs leading to the cellars; but scarcely had she taken two steps, when the heavy door, which was not pushed back far enough, fell to with a dreadful crash. The maiden heard a scream, and followed as quickly as she could to help her unkind stepmother; but she had fallen to the bottom of the steps, and there the maiden found her dead.

And now the beautiful castle belonged alone to the maiden, who hardly knew, at first, how to understand such good fortune. In the drawers and wardrobes were beautiful dresses, in which she could array herself. There was also a large chest

filled with gold and silver, pearls and precious stones, so that she had not a single wish ungratified.

It was not long before the fame of her beauty and riches got known throughout the world, and the maiden had soon plenty of lovers. But she did not care to accept any of them, till at last a prince, the son of a great king, came to see her. He was the first to touch her heart, and she very soon learnt to love him dearly.

One day, as they sat talking under a linden-tree in the castle garden, the prince said, very sadly: 'My heart's love, I must leave you to get my father's consent to our marriage, but I will not stay away long. I shall be back in a few hours.'

'Be true to me,' said the maiden; 'I will wait under the linden-tree until you come back.'

The maiden remained sitting under the linden-tree until the sunset, but he did not come back. She sat there for three days from morning till evening awaiting him, but in vain. As he had not arrived on the fourth day, she said: 'Surely some misfortune has happened to him. I will go and seek him, and not return until I have found him.'

She packed up three of her most beautiful dresses, one ornamented with shining stars, the second with silver moons, and the third with golden suns, tied up a handful of jewels in her handkerchief, and started. She asked in all places for her bridegroom, but no one had seen him; no one knew of him. She wandered far and wide over the world, but found him not. At last she hired herself to a peasant as a cowherd, and buried her dresses and jewels under a stone.

Now she lived as a herdswoman, kept her herd, was sad and full of longing after her lover. She had a little calf, which she taught to know her, and to feed out of her hand, and if she said 'Little calf, little calf, kneel down by my side; forget not thy herd, as the prince forgot his bride, who sat under the green linden-tree,' then the calf knelt down, and was stroked by her.

When she had lived two years solitary and full of grief, a report was spread that the daughter of the king wished to celebrate her marriage. The way to the town went past the village where the maiden lived, and it happened that as she was keeping her herd, the bridegroom passed. He sat proudly on his horse, and did not look at her, but she looked at him, and recognised her lover. It was as if a sharp sword had cut into her heart.

'Ah,' said she, 'I thought he would have remained faithful to me, but he has forgotten me.'

The next day he came again that way. When he was near, she said to the calf, 'Calf, calf, kneel down; forget not thy herd as the prince forgot her who sat under the green linden-tree.'

When he heard the voice, he looked down and stopped his horse. He gazed into the face of the cowherd, then held his hand over his eyes as if he wished to recall something, but quickly rode on and disappeared.

'Ah,' said she, 'he does not know me.' And her grief was still greater.

Soon after there was to be a great festival at the king's court, for three days, and the whole country was invited to it. 'Now will I try the last thing,' thought the maiden, and when it was evening, she went to the stone under which she had buried her treasures. She brought out the dress with the golden suns, put it on and adorned herself with jewels. Her hair, which she had hidden under a cloth, was let down and fell in long curls about her. She went to the town, and in the darkness was unobserved. When she entered the well-lighted hall, everyone started back full of wonder, but no one knew who she was. The prince went to meet her, but still he did not recognise her. He led her to the dance, and was so enraptured with her beauty that he never thought of the other bride. When the festival was over she disappeared in the crowd, and hastened before the break of day to the village, where she again put on her working dress.

On the next evening she took out the dress with the silver moons, and put a half-moon of precious stones in her hair. When she appeared at the festival, all eyes were turned towards her, and the prince hastened to her, and, filled with love, danced with her alone and looked at no one else. Before she went, he made her promise to come to the last evening of the festival.

When she appeared the third time, she had on the dress with stars, which sparkled at every step, and on her hair-band and girdle were stars of diamonds. The prince had waited for her and hastened to her. 'Tell me only who you are,' said he; 'it seems to me as if I have known you long.'

'Do you not know what I did when you parted from me?' answered she. Then she stepped to him and kissed him on the left cheek; in a moment, as it were, scales fell from his eyes, and he recognised his true bride.

'Come,' said he to her; 'I will not stay here any longer.' He offered her his hand and led her to the carriage. As if they

were harnessed to the wind, the horses hastened to the magic castle. Already in the distance shone out the illuminated windows.

When they drove past the linden-tree, innumerable glow-worms were swarming about it; it shook its branches and sent down its fragrance. On the steps the flowers were blossoming; from the room sounded the song of the foreign birds, and in the hall were assembled all the court, and the priest was waiting to marry the bridegroom and the true bride.

THE HARE AND THE HEDGEHOG.

It was a beautiful morning, about harvest time, the buckwheat was in flower, the sun shining in the heavens, and the morning breeze waving the golden cornfields, while the lark sang blithely in the clear blue sky, and the bees were buzzing about the flowers. The villagers seemed all alive; many of them in their best clothes, were going to the church, and everyone seemed happy, even to a little hedgehog, who stood at his own door. He had his arms folded, and was singing as merrily as little hedgehogs can do on a pleasant morning. While he thus stood amusing himself, his little wife was washing and dressing the children, and he thought he might as well go and see how the field of turnips was getting on, for, as he and his family fed upon them, they appeared like his own property. No sooner said than done. He shut the house door after him and started off.

He had not gone farther than the little hedge bordering the turnip field, when he met a hare, who was on his way to inspect the cabbages, which he also considered belonged to him. When the hedgehog saw the hare, he wished him 'good-morning' very pleasantly.

But the hare, who was a grand gentleman, and very haughty, took no notice of the hedgehog's greeting, but said in a most impertinent manner, 'How is it that you are running about the fields so early this morning?'

'I am taking a walk,' said the hedgehog.

'Taking a walk!' cried the hare, with a laugh. 'I don't think your legs are much suited for walking.'

This answer made the hedgehog very angry. He could bear

anything but a reference to his bandy legs, so he said, 'You consider your legs are better than mine, I suppose?'

'Well, I rather think they are,' replied the hare.

'I should like to prove it,' said the hedgehog. 'I'll wager anything that if we were to run a race I should beat.'

'That is a capital joke,' cried the hare, 'to think you could beat me with your bandy legs. However, if you wish it, I have no objection to try. What will you bet?'

'A golden Louis d'or and a bottle of brandy.'

'Agreed,' said the hare; 'and we may as well begin at once.'

'No, no,' said the hedgehog; 'not in such a hurry as that. I must go home first and get something to eat. In half an hour I will be here again.'

The hare agreed to wait, and away went the hedgehog, thinking to himself, 'The hare trusts in his long legs, but I will conquer him. He thinks himself a very grand gentleman, but he is only a stupid fellow, after all, and he will have to pay for his pride.'

On arriving at home, the hedgehog said to his wife, 'Wife, dress yourself as quickly as possible; you must go to the field with me.'

'What for?' she asked.

'Well, I have made a bet with the hare of a Louis d'or and a bottle of brandy, that I will beat him in a race, which we are going to run.'

'Why, husband,' cried Mrs. Hedgehog, 'what are you thinking of; have you lost your senses?'

'Hold your noise, ma'am,' said the hedgehog, 'and don't interfere with my affairs. What do you know about a man's business? Get ready at once to go with me.'

What could Mrs. Hedgehog say after this? She could only obey and follow her husband, whether she liked it or not. As they walked along together, he said to her: 'Now, pay attention to what I say. You see that large field? Well, we are going to race across it. The hare will run in one furrow, and I in another. All you have to do is to hide yourself in the furrow at the opposite end of the field from which we start, and when the hare comes up to you, pop up your head and say: 'Here I am.'

The hedgehog and his wife reached the place in the field where he wished her to stop, and then he went back and found the hare at the starting-place, ready to receive him.

'Shall we start?' asked the hare.

'Yes,' replied the hedgehog, 'I am quite ready.'

'Then both at once,' and each placed himself in his furrow. The hare counted 'One, two, three,' and started like a whirlwind across the field. The hedgehog, however, only ran a few steps, and then popped down in the furrow and remained still.

When the hare, at full speed, reached the end of the field, the hedgehog's wife raised her head and cried: 'Here I am.'

The hare stood still in wonder, for the wife was so like her husband that he thought it must be he. 'There is something wrong about this,' he thought. 'However, we'll have another try.' So he turned and flew across the field at such a pace that his ears floated behind him.

The hedgehog's wife, however, did not move, and when the hare reached the other end, the husband was there, and cried: 'Here I am.'

The hare was half beside himself with vexation, and he cried: 'One more try, one more.'

'I don't mind,' said the hedgehog. 'I will go on as long as you like.'

Upon this the hare set off running, and actually crossed the field seventy-three times; and at one end the husband said: 'Here am I,' and at the other end the wife said the same. But at the seventy-fourth run the hare's strength came to an end, and he fell to the ground and owned himself beaten.

The hedgehog won the Louis d'or and the bottle of brandy and after calling his wife out of the furrow, they went home together in very good spirits, to enjoy it together; and if they are not dead, they are living still.

The lesson to be learnt from this story is, first, that however grand a person may think himself, he should never laugh at others whom he considers inferior, until he knows what they can do; and secondly, that when a man chooses a wife, he should take her from the class to which he himself belongs; and if he is a hedgehog she should be one also.

THE SPINDLE, THE NEEDLE, AND THE SHUTTLE.

A YOUNG girl who had lost both parents in her infancy, lived in a little cottage at the end of the village with her grandmother, who supported herself by spinning, weaving, and sewing. The

old woman took care of her and brought her up to be industrious and pious. When she was in her fifteenth year the old woman fell sick, and called her to her bedside and said to her: 'Dear daughter, I feel that my end is approaching, so I will leave you this cottage and all that is in it; here you will have shelter from wind and weather, and with the needle, the spindle, and the shuttle, you can easily earn your bread.'

Then laying her hand on the maiden's head she blessed her, and said: 'Keep God always in your heart, and you will never go wrong.'

Then the old woman closed her eyes and died, and the poor girl followed her to the grave behind the coffin weeping bitterly. After this the maiden lived in the little cottage quite alone, working diligently at her spinning and weaving, and the blessing of the old woman seemed to rest upon all she did.

It was as if the flax in the room would never be exhausted; and no sooner had she finished weaving a piece of cloth or carpet, or had made a shirt, than a purchaser was quickly found who paid her well, so she had as much as she needed for all her wants, and a little also to spare for the poor.

It happened about this time that the son of the king of the country started on his travels to find a bride. He was not to choose a poor one and he did not care for a rich one. So he decided in his heart that he would try and find one who was at the same time both the richest and the poorest.

When he arrived at the village where the maiden dwelt, he inquired first for the richest maiden in the place, and on being told, he then asked: 'And which is the poorest?'

'The poorest is a maiden who lives at the end of the village in a little cottage alone,' was the ready reply. 'Her cottage is easily found, for a winding path through a field leads to it.'

The prince, in going to this cottage, rode through the village, and at the door of a stately house sat a maiden richly dressed, and as the king's son approached she went out and bowed herself before him in a most courtly manner. The prince looked at her, but he said not a word, and rode on till he arrived at the house of the poor maiden.

She was not seated at the door, but in her own little room busily at work. The prince drew rein, alighted from his horse, and peeped into the neat apartment. Just at that moment a ray of sunshine darted through the window, so that he could see the maiden spinning at her wheel with the most earnest diligence.

She glanced up, and seeing the prince looking at her, she

cast down her eyes and continued her spinning, while her cheeks were covered with a rosy blush.

Whether the threads were even and regular at that moment, we cannot say, but she continued to spin without looking up again till the prince remounted his horse and rode away.

Then she rose and opened the window, saying to herself: 'How very warm the room is to-day.' But she looked out and watched the stranger till she could no longer distinguish the white plume in his hat, and not till after he was quite out of sight did she return to her spinning-wheel and work as busily as ever.

Her thoughts were now on the handsome prince, although she knew not who he was. Then came into her head, a verse which the old woman had taught her, and she sang:

'Spindle, spindle, run away;
Fetch my lover here to-day.'

The spindle leaped from her hands that very moment, and rushed out of the house. She followed to the door, and stood looking after it with wondering eyes, for it was running and dancing quite merrily across the field, trailing behind it a bright golden thread, and presently it was lost to her eyes.

Having no longer a spindle, she took up her shuttle, seated herself, and commenced weaving. The spindle, meanwhile, kept on its way, and just as the thread came to an end, it overtook the prince.

'What do I see?' he cried. 'The thread behind this spindle will lead me to good fortune, no doubt.' So he turned his horse and rode back in the trail of the golden thread.

The maiden, who still worked on, sang:

'Shuttle, shuttle, thou art free;
Bring my lover home to me.'

Instantly the shuttle slipped from her hand, and ran to the door, but on the door-sill it stopped and began to weave the most beautiful carpet ever seen. In the centre, on a golden ground, appeared a green creeping-plant, and around it blush roses and white lilies were scattered. Hares and rabbits appeared running upon it; stags and deer stood beneath the foliage, in which were birds of beautiful colours which seemed able to do everything but sing. The shuttle sprang here and there, and the carpet seemed to grow of itself.

As the maiden had now lost both spindle and shuttle, she

was obliged to take out her needle, and while she sewed she sang:

'Needle, needle, while you shine,
Make the house look neat and fine.'

On this the needle sprang from her fingers, and flew about the room as quick as lightning. It was just as if a number of invisible spirits were at work, for the table and benches were quickly covered with green cloth, the chairs with velvet, and curtains were hung to the windows and on the walls of silk damask.

Scarcely had the needle finished the last stitch than the maiden saw through the window the white plume on the prince's hat, for he had followed carefully the golden thread till it reached her cottage.

He alighted from his horse, and quickly stepped in upon the beautiful carpet; when he entered the room he saw the maiden, who even in her homely dress looked blooming and lovely as a wild rose.

'You are,' he said: 'at once the poorest and the richest maiden in the world. Will you come with me and be my bride?'

She did not speak, but she held out her hand to him. He kissed the hand she offered, led her out, lifted her on his horse, and rode away with her to his father's castle.

The marriage was shortly after celebrated with great splendour and rejoicings. The needle, the spindle, and the shuttle were preserved in the treasure-chamber ever after with great honour.

THE CRUMBS ON THE TABLE.

A COUNTRYMAN said one day to his little dogs: 'Come into the room and pick up the crumbs on the table, your mistress has gone out to pay some visits.'

But the little dogs said: 'No, no, we will not go, if the lady gets to know it, she will beat us.'

The countryman answered: 'She will never know it; do come, she never gives you anything good.'

The dogs said again: 'No, no, we must not go.'

But the countryman let them have no rest until at last they went and got on the table, and ate up the breadcrumbs with all

their might. But at that moment the mistress came in, took the stick, and beat them very severely. When they were outside the house the little dogs said to the countryman: 'Do, do, do, do you see?'

Then the countryman laughed and said: 'Did, did, did, did you not know?'

Then they ran away.

THE SEA HARE.

A KING'S daughter once lived in a castle which had, high up under its battlements, a room containing twelve windows. She would often ascend to this lofty room, for if she looked out of the windows she could see all over her kingdom. In the first window she could see more clearly than any living being; in the second, this power was much increased; in the third, her sight could penetrate still farther; and so on, each window excelling the one next it, till at the twelfth she could look out over all the earth, and nothing was hidden from her eyes.

This princess was very proud; she would submit to no one, and was determined to be master. She made it known, however, that she would marry any man who could so completely conceal himself as to make it impossible for her to find him. If, however, anyone attempted to do this, and failed, he would have his head cut off and stuck on a pole.

There stood already ninety-seven poles with heads upon them before the castle, and for a long time no one had ventured to make the attempt.

The princess was quite contented, and thought to herself, 'Now I shall remain free for my whole life,' when three brothers appeared before her, and declared that they were ready to try their fortunes.

The eldest supposed that if he crept into a chalk-pit he would be safe; but he was quickly discovered by the princess from her first window, and his fate soon decided.

The second brother hid himself in the cellar under the castle; but the princess saw him easily from her first window. His head was cut off, and placed upon the ninety-ninth pole.

After seeing this the youngest brother stepped forward, and

begged that he might have a day to consider, and also that the princess would grant him the favour of trying a third time after she had found him twice; if then he failed, he would not expect to save his life. Because he was very handsome, and he begged so earnestly, the princess agreed; but she added: 'You will not be fortunate even then.'

On the following morning the young man tried for a long time to think of the safest way to hide himself; but all to no purpose, so he took his gun and went out. Presently he saw a raven on a tree, and pointed his gun at him.

'Don't shoot me,' said the raven; 'some day I shall be able to repay you.'

He turned away on hearing this, and went farther, till he came to a lake, just as a large fish had risen to the surface.

He took aim, but before he could draw the trigger the fish cried out: 'Don't shoot me; I shall be able to repay your kindness.'

He left the creature to dive in safety, and at a little distance overtook a fox, who was walking lame. He shot, but missed him.

'Oh dear!' cried the fox, 'do come and pull this thorn out of my foot.'

The young man complied, but after doing so he felt inclined to kill the fox for the sake of his skin and fur.

'Spare my life!' cried the fox. 'I may repay you for it some day.'

The young man granted his request, and, as it was now evening, he returned home.

On the following day he had to hide himself; but after racking his brains for a long time, he knew not how to set about it. At last he remembered the raven in the forest, so he went to her and said: 'I spared your life yesterday, now tell me how I can hide myself so that the princess may not find me.'

The raven bowed her head, and thought for a long time. At last she croaked, 'I have it!'

She fetched an egg from her nest, divided it equally in two parts, then, enclosing the young man in the shell, she joined it carefully, placed it in the nest, and sat upon it.

Meanwhile, the princess went to her first window and looked out, but she could discover nothing. She passed on to the second and the third without success, and when she reached the tenth, she began to feel very anxious. At last, at the eleventh window, she succeeded. She immediately ordered

the raven to be shot, and the eggs to be brought to her, and the young man knew he had to come out.

'Ah,' she said, 'I let you off the first time, but if you do not manage better you will be lost.'

The next day he went to the lake, and cried out to the fish: 'I spared your life the day before yesterday, now tell me how I can conceal myself so that the princess may not find me.'

The fish reflected for a time, and then exclaimed: 'I have it; you will be safe in my stomach!'

So the fish swallowed the young man, and carried him down to the bottom of the sea.

The princess looked through all her windows, but not even in the eleventh could she find him. She was really alarmed now, till at last, in looking from the twelfth window, she discovered his hiding-place.

She then ordered the fish to be caught and killed, and the young man had to come forth.

'Twice you have been spared,' she said, 'but your head will certainly be on the hundredth pole!'

On the last day he went with a heavy heart to the field, and met the fox.

'You know all the best hiding-places,' he said to him; 'I spared your life the other day, now advise me where to hide that the princess may not find me.'

'It is a difficult task,' said the fox, putting on a very thoughtful face.

At last he said, 'I know what to do!' and, rising, he led the young man to a spring, and, dipping himself in first, he came up changed into a fish-seller, with his market badge. He then told the young man to dive also, and he was turned into a little sea-hare, which the fish-seller took to the town and showed the little animal.

It attracted so much attention that quite a crowd gathered round him.

At length the princess came, and as she was pleased with it she purchased it for a large sum of money.

Before he parted with it, he said to the young man: 'Creep quickly into the folds of her hair, and lie still while the princess goes to look for you out of her windows.'

Then the time came for the princess to visit her windows. She stepped from one window to the other, till she came to the twelfth, and, not seeing the young man even from thence, she was overcome with rage and fear, and struck the glass so violently with her hand that it broke into a thousand pieces, and the whole castle trembled.

On returning to her room, she felt something in her hair. Seizing it hastily, she threw it to the floor, saying: 'Get out of my sight!'

It ran to the merchant, and both of them hurried to the spring, where they dipped themselves, and were restored to their own proper shape.

The young man thanked the fox, and said: 'The raven and the fish are simpletons compared to you; you know successful tricks right well.'

After this the young man went to the castle. The princess, who had already resigned herself to her fate, was ready for him. The marriage was shortly after celebrated with great pomp, and the young husband became lord and master of the whole kingdom.

He never told her how he had succeeded in hiding himself from her the third time, nor who had helped him; so she believed he had done all by his superior knowledge and skill. She therefore learnt to esteem him, for she thought to herself, 'He can do more than I.'

THE MASTER-THIEF

An old man was sitting one day with his wife in front of a miserable house resting a little from work, when suddenly a handsome carriage, drawn by four horses, drove up, from which descended a richly-dressed gentleman. The peasant rose, went to the gentleman, and asked what he wanted, and how he could serve him. The stranger offered his hand to the old man, and said: 'I wish for nothing more than to enjoy a country dish. Prepare me some potatoes as you are accustomed to eat them; then will I sit at your table and eat them with pleasure.'

The peasant smiled, and said: 'You are a count, or a prince, or perhaps a duke—noble gentlemen have often such a fancy. Your wish shall be fulfilled.'

The woman went into the kitchen and began to wash the potatoes, and to rub them and make them into balls, as peasants eat them. While she stood at her work, the peasant said to the stranger: 'Come with me into my garden; I have

still something to do there.' In the garden he had dug holes, in which he was about to plant trees.

'Have you no children,' asked the stranger, 'who could help you in your work?'

'No,' answered the peasant. 'I had once a son, but he went away into the world a long time ago. He was a good-for-nothing, sharp and clever; but he would not learn anything, and was full of bad tricks. At last he ran away, and I have heard nothing of him since.'

The old man took a young tree, placed it in a hole, and drove in a stake beside it; and when he had shovelled in the earth and had stamped it down, he bound the stem below, above, and in the middle firm to the stake with a rope of straw.

'But tell me,' said the gentleman, 'why do you not bind the crooked knotted tree which lies there in the corner, bent down to the ground, to a stake also, in order that it may grow straight?'

The old man smiled, and said: 'Sir, you speak as you understand it; it is easily seen that you have not been brought up to gardening. The tree there is old and twisted, no one can make it straight now; trees must be trained when they are young,'

'It is as it was with your son,' said the stranger. 'Had you trained him when he was young he would not have run away; now he will have become hard and knotty.'

'True,' answered the old man; 'it is now a long time since he went away; he must have altered.'

'Would you still recognise him if he stood before you?' asked the stranger.

'Hardly by his face,' answered the peasant; 'but he has a birth-mark on him, a mole on his shoulder, which looks like a bean.'

As he said that the stranger took off his coat, bared his shoulder, and showed the peasant the bean.

'Oh!' called out the old man, 'you are really my son;' and love for his child stirred in his heart. 'But,' added he, 'how can you be my son? You have become a great gentleman, and live in riches and in abundance. How have you attained it?'

'Ah, father,' answered the son, 'the young tree was bound to no stake, and has grown crooked; now he is too old; he cannot become straight again. How have I gained all? By being a thief! But do not be frightened; I am a master-thief. Neither lock nor bolt exists for me; whatever I desire is mine.

Do not think that I steal as a common thief; I only take from the superfluity of the rich. Poor people are safe; I give to them rather than take anything from them. Also I touch nothing, unless it requires cunning and skill to take it.'

'Ah, my son,' said the father, 'it does not please me, for a thief remains a thief. I tell you it will come to no good end.'

He led him to his mother, who, when she heard that he was their son, wept for joy; but when he told her that he had become a master-thief two streams flowed down her cheeks. At last she said: 'Even though you have become a thief you are still my son, and my eyes have seen you once again.'

They sat down to dinner, and he ate with his parents again the poor food which he had not eaten for a long time. The father said: 'If our lord the count at the castle finds out who you are, and what you are doing, he will not take you in his arms and rock you as he did when he held you at the font; but he will cause you to swing from the gallows.'

'Be without care, my father; he will do nothing to me, for I understand my work. I will myself go to him to-day.'

When evening was drawing near, the master-thief sat in his carriage and drove to the castle. The count received him courteously, because he took him for a famous man. But when the stranger made himself known he turned pale, and was silent for some time. At last he said: 'You are my god-son, therefore I will let mercy prevail rather than justice, and deal leniently with you. Because you boast of being a master-thief, I will put your art to the proof; but if you do not succeed you must marry the rope-maker's daughter, and the croaking of the ravens shall be your bridal music.'

'Count,' answered the master-thief, 'think of three things as difficult as you wish, and if I do not perform your tasks do with me as you please.'

The count considered some moments, and then said: 'Well, for the first, you are to steal my own riding-horse out of the stable; for the second, you shall take away the sheet from under myself and my wife when we are asleep, without our observing it, and, besides, take the wedding-ring from her finger; for the third and last, you are to steal the parson and the clerk out of the church. Mark well what I say, for your neck depends on it.'

The master-thief went to the neighbouring town. There he bought the clothes of an old peasant woman, and put them on, stained his face brown, and painted wrinkles on it, so that no one would have recognised him. Then he filled a cask with

Hungarian wine, in which he had mixed a strong sleeping drink. He put the cask in a basket, which he took on his back, and went with cautious and tottering steps to the castle of the count. It was already dark when he arrived there; he sat on a stone in the courtyard, and began to cough like an old asthmatic woman, and rubbed his hands as if they were freezing. Before the door of the stable were soldiers before a fire; one of them noticed the woman, and called to her: 'Come nearer, old mother, and warm yourself with us. You have no lodging for the night, so take it where you can find it.'

The old woman tottered up to them, asked them to lift the basket off her shoulders, and sat down with them at the fire. 'What have you in the little cask, old woman?' asked one.

'A good mouthful of wine,' answered she. 'I support myself by trade; I will willingly give you a glass for money and good words.'

'Now out with it,' said the soldier; and when he had tasted a glass he called out, 'When the wine is good I willingly drink another glass,' and had another poured out for him and the others followed his example.

'Hallo, comrades,' called one to those who sat in the stable, 'here is a little mother who has wine which is as old as herself. Take a mouthful; it will warm your stomach better than our fire.'

The old woman carried her cask into the stable. One of the soldiers had seated himself on the saddled riding-horse; another held the bridle in his hand; a third had hold of its tail. She gave them as much as they wanted, until the spring had dried up. It was not long before the bridle fell out of the hand of one; he sank down, and began to snore. The other left hold of the tail, lay down, and snored still louder. He who was seated in the saddle remained indeed sitting, but bent down with his head on to the neck of the horse, fell asleep, and blew with his mouth like a smith's bellows. The soldiers outside were already asleep, and lay on the ground motionless, as if they were of stone. When the master thief saw that he had succeeded, he gave to one a rope in his hand instead of the bridle, and to the other who had held the tail a wisp of straw; but what should he do with him who was on the back of the horse? He would not throw him off, as he might have wakened and have given a cry. He had a good idea: he unbuckled the girths of the saddle, tied a couple of ropes, which hung on the rings on the wall, firmly to the saddle, and raised aloft the sleeping rider with it; then he

fastened the ropes round the posts and made them secure. He soon had the horse loosened from his chain, but if he had ridden over the stone pavement of the yard the noise would have been heard in the castle. He first wrapped the hoofs round with old rags, led it then carefully out, leaped on it, and galloped away.

When the day broke the master-thief rode to the castle on the stolen horse. The count had just risen, and was looking out of the window. 'Good-morning, sir count,' he called out; 'here is the horse which I have got safely out of the stable. Only look how beautifully your soldiers lie there sleeping, and if you go into the stable you will see how comfortable your watchers have made themselves.'

The count could not help laughing; then he said: 'You have succeeded once, but you will not be so fortunate the second time. And I warn you that if you come before me as a thief I will treat you as a thief.'

When the countess had gone to bed she closed her hand with her marriage-ring firmly, and the count said: 'All the doors are shut and bolted. I will stay awake, and will watch for the thief; but if he mounts up to the window I will shoot him.'

The master-thief went out in the darkness to the gallows, cut down a poor sinner who hung there, and carried him on his back to the castle. Then he placed a ladder against the wall of the bedroom, laid the dead man on his shoulders, and began to mount. When he had climbed so high that the head of the dead man reached the window, the count, who was watching from his bed, fired a pistol at him, and immediately the master-thief let the poor sinner fall, sprang down the ladder, and hid himself in a corner.

The night was so brightly lighted by the moon that the master-thief could plainly see how the count came out of the window, descended the ladder, and bore the dead man away to the garden. There he began to dig a hole in which to lay him. 'Now,' thought the thief, 'is the happy moment come,' and he crept quickly out of his corner and mounted the ladder right into the bedroom of the countess.

'Dear wife,' began he with the voice of the count, 'the thief is dead; but he is my godson, and more a scapegrace than villain, so I do not wish to put him to an open shame; besides, I have pity for his parents. I will bury him myself in the garden, in order that the thing may not be spoken about. Give me the sheet, that I may wrap up the body in it and bury him.' The

countess gave him the sheet. 'Well, listen,' pursued the thief; 'I have a desire to be generous; give me also your ring. The unhappy man risked his life for it, so he may take it with him into his grave.'

She did not wish to contradict the count, so she took the ring off her finger and gave it him. The thief made off with both things, and reached home safely before the count had finished his grave-digging in the garden.

It was a very long face that the count drew when the master-thief came the next morning and brought him the sheet and the ring. 'Are you a magician?' said he to him. 'Who fetched you out of the grave in which I myself buried you, and brought you to life again?'

'You did not bury me,' said the thief, 'but the poor sinner on the gallows;' and he told him explicitly how it happened, and the count had to acknowledge that he was a clever and crafty thief.

'But you have not yet finished,' added he; 'you have still your third task to do, and if you do not succeed, all this will not avail you.' The master-thief smiled, but made no answer.

When it was night, he came with a long sack on his back, a bundle under his arm, and a lantern in his hand to the village church. In the sack he had crabs, and in the bundle short wax-lights. He seated himself in the grave yard, took out a crab and fastened on its back a wax-light; then he kindled the light, put the crab on the ground and let it crawl. He took a second out of his sack and did the same with it, and continued to do thus with the others until the sack was empty. Then he put on a long black robe, which looked like a monk's cowl, and fastened a gray beard on his chin. When he was quite unrecognisable, he took the sack in which the crabs had been and went into the pulpit. The tower clock then struck twelve; when the last stroke had sounded, he called out in a loud voice: 'Listen, ye sinful men! the end of all things is come; the last day is at hand. Listen! listen! Whoever wishes to be with me in heaven, let him creep into this sack. I am Peter, who opens and shuts the gates of heaven. See outside in the churchyard the dead wandering and collecting their bones together. Come, come, creep into the sack; the world is at an end!'

The cry resounded throughout the whole village. The parson and the clerk, who lived next the church, were the first to hear it, and when they saw the lights which were moving about in the churchyard, they noticed that something uncommon was happening, and went into the church. They listened for a time

to the sermon, then the clerk nudged the parson, and said, 'It would not be a bad thing for us to use the opportunity and reach heaven in an easy way before the dawning of the last day.'

'Certainly,' replied the parson, 'that is also my opinion; if you wish, we will go together.'

'Yes,' answered the clerk, 'but you have the precedence; I will follow.'

The parson then stepped forward and mounted the pulpit, where the master-thief opened the sack. The parson crept in first, then the clerk. The master-thief at once tied up the sack, seized it by the middle, and dragged it down the pulpit stair. As often as the heads of the two fools struck on the steps, he called out, 'Now we are going over the mountains.' Then he dragged them through the village, and when they passed through puddles, he called out, 'Now we are going through the damp clouds,' and when at last he dragged them up the castle steps, he called out, 'Now we are at the steps of heaven, and will soon be in the outer court.'

When he had reached the top, he pushed the sack into the pigeon-house, and when the pigeons fluttered about, he said, 'Listen how the angels are rejoicing and flapping their wings.' Then he pushed back the bolt and went away.

The next morning he betook himself to the count, and told him that he had accomplished the third task, and had carried away out of the church the parson and the clerk.

'Where have you left them?' asked the count.

'They lie in a sack above in the pigeon-house, and imagine that they are in heaven.'

The count went up himself and convinced himself that the master-thief had spoken the truth. When he had freed the parson and the clerk from their captivity, he said, 'You are an arch-thief, and have won your wager. This time you come out of it with a whole skin, but take care and go out of my country, for if you ever enter it again, you may depend on your elevation to the gallows.'

The arch-thief took his leave of his parents, went again into the wide world, and no one has heard any more about him.

THE DRUMMER.

A YOUNG drummer was one evening walking across the fields, and as he came to a lake, he saw lying on the shore three pieces of white linen.

'What fine linen!' he said; and taking up one piece, he put it in his pocket. He went home, thought no more of what he had found, and went to bed. Just as he was going to sleep, he thought he heard someone call out his name, and heard distinctly a gentle voice say: 'Drummer, drummer, wake up!'

At first in the dark he could distinguish nothing, but presently he saw hovering over his bed a light form.

'What is it?' he asked.

'Give me back my dress,' answered the voice, 'which you took away from the lake yesterday.'

'You shall have it,' said the drummer, 'if you will tell me who you are.'

'Ah,' cried the voice, 'I am the daughter of a mighty king, but I have fallen into the power of a witch, and am confined to a glass mountain. Each day I am obliged to bathe in the lake with my two sisters; but without my dress I cannot fly back to the mountain, and my sisters have already gone away and left me. I pray you, therefore, to give me back my dress.'

'Be at peace, poor child!' said the drummer; 'you shall have your dress.' Then he took the piece of linen out of his pocket, and offered it to her in the darkness. She seized it hastily and was going away. 'Wait one moment,' he said; 'can I not help you?'

'You could only help me,' she replied, 'by climbing on the glass mountain and freeing me from the witch's power. But you could not reach the mountain; or even if you did, you would be unable to climb to the top.'

'What I wish to do I can do,' said the drummer. 'I feel great compassion for you, and I fear nothing; but I do not know the way to the glass mountain.'

'The road lies through a large forest,' she replied, 'where ogres abound. More than this I dare not tell you.'

Then he heard her fly away. By the break of day the drummer was up and ready. He hung his drum on his shoulder and went without fear to cross the forest. After walking for some time, and not meeting any giants, he thought to himself, 'I

must wake up the lazy sleepers.' So he turned his drum before him, and played such a tantara that the birds on the trees flew away screaming.

Not long after, a giant who had been sleeping in the grass rose up and stood before him. He was as tall as a fir-tree, and cried out to the drummer: 'You wretched imp! what do you mean by waking people up out of their best sleep with your horrid drum?'

'I drummed to the many thousands who are following me to show the way.'

'What do they want here in my wood?' asked the giant.

'Well, they wish to free the forest of such monsters as you are!'

'Oho!' cried the giant, 'why, I could crush you beneath my foot as I would crush an ant!'

'Don't suppose you can do anything against them,' cried the drummer. 'If you were to stoop down to catch hold of one of us, he would jump away and hide himself, and when you were lying down to sleep, his people would come from every bush and thicket, each carrying a steel hammer in his girdle. They would creep cautiously upon you, and soon with their hammers beat out your brains!'

This assertion made the giant rather uneasy. 'If I meddle with these cunning little people,' he thought, 'they can no doubt do me some mischief. I can easily strangle wolves and bears, but I cannot defend myself against these earth-worms.'

'Listen, little man,' he said; 'I pledge myself that you and your companions shall for the future be left in peace; and now tell me what you wish, for I am quite ready to do your pleasure.'

'You have long legs,' said the drummer, 'so that you can run more swiftly than I can. Carry me to the glass mountain, and I will give a sign to my people to retire and leave you in peace.'

'Come here, worm,' said the giant; 'seat yourself on my shoulders, and I will carry you wherever you wish.'

The giant then lifted him up, and the drummer soon began to play away on his drum to his heart's content. The giant thought this must be a sign to the rest of the little people to retire.

After awhile a second giant made his appearance, and he took the drummer from the first, and stuck him in the button-hole of his coat. The drummer seized the button, which was as large as a dish, and holding fast by it, looked about him

quite contentedly. Presently came a third, who took him from the button-hole, and placed him on the brim of his hat, from which elevation he could look over the tree-tops, and as he saw in the blue distance a mountain, 'Ah,' thought he, 'that is certainly the glass mountain;' and so it was.

The giant, after a few more steps, reached the foot of the mountain, and then he lifted the drummer to the ground. The little man wished to be carried to the top of the mountain, but the giant shook his head, murmured something in his beard, and went back to the wood.

There stood the poor little drummer at the foot of the mountain, which looked as high above him as if three mountains had been placed one upon another. The sides were as slippery as a mirror, and there seemed no possible means of reaching the top. He began to climb, but he slid backwards at every step.

'If I were a bird, now!' he said to himself: but what was the use of wishing? no wings grew for him.

While he thus stood, not knowing how to help himself, he saw at a little distance two men struggling together. He went up to them, and found that they were quarrelling about a saddle which lay on the ground between them, and which they each wished to have.

'What fools you must be,' he cried, 'to want a saddle when you have not a horse to place it upon!'

'This saddle is worth a contest,' said one of the men, 'for whoever seats himself upon it, and wishes himself somewhere, even were it to the end of the world, he would have his wish accomplished the moment it was uttered!'

'The saddle is our joint property, and it is my turn to ride it; but my companion will not let me,' rejoined the other.

'I will soon put an end to this contention,' said the drummer. He then went to a little distance, and stuck a white staff in the ground; then he came back, and said: 'Now run to the mark, and whoever is there first is to ride first.'

They both started off at a full trot; but scarcely had they taken two steps when the drummer swung himself on the saddle, and wished to be on the top of the mountain, and ere a man could turn his hand there he was.

The top of the mountain formed a plain, on which stood an old stone-built house; in front of it a large fish-pond, and behind it a dark forest. Neither man nor animals could be seen; not a sound disturbed the peaceful stillness, excepting the wind rustling the leaves, while the clouds floated silently overhead.

He stepped up to the door and knocked. When he had knocked a third time the door was opened by an old woman with a brown face and red eyes. She had a pair of spectacles on her long nose, and looked at him very sharply as she asked: 'What is your business here?'

'I want admission, food, and a night's lodging,' he replied.

'All these you shall have,' she replied, 'if you will perform three tasks for me.'

'Willingly,' he replied; 'I do not shrink from work, however difficult it may be.'

The old woman, on this, led him in, gave him a supper, and a good bed in the evening.

Next morning, when he got up, breakfast was ready for him, and after eating it, he expressed his readiness to perform the tasks she had spoken of.

In reply, the old woman took a thimble from her lean finger, and, offering it to him, said: 'Now go, for your first task, and scoop out the water from the fish-pond outside with this thimble, and the work must be finished before night; all the fish, also, that are in the water must be laid together according to their size and species!'

'That is a strange task,' said the drummer. However, he went out to the pond, and commenced his work.

He scooped industriously for the whole morning; but how can a man empty a large quantity of water with only a thimble to dip with at a time? Why, it would occupy a thousand years.

When noontide came, he thought to himself: 'All I am doing is quite useless; it will be just the same whether I work or not.' So he gave it up, and seated himself.

Presently he saw a young maiden coming towards him from the house. She had a basket in her hand containing some dinner for him, and she said: 'Why are you sitting here and looking so sad? What is the matter?'

He looked up at her, and saw that she was very handsome. 'Ah,' he exclaimed, 'I cannot perform the first task which has been given me, and how shall I succeed with the other two? I have come to seek for a king's daughter who dwells here, but I have not found her, so I may as well go away.'

'No, stay here,' she replied; 'I will help you out of your trouble. You are tired now, so lay your head in my lap, and go to sleep. When you awake again your work will be done.'

The drummer did not require to be told twice, and, as soon

as his eyes were closed, the maiden turned a wish-ring on her finger, and said: 'Water, rise out; fish, come out.'

In a moment the water rose in the air like a white mist, and floated away to the clouds, while the fish came springing and jumping on the bank, and laid themselves down near each other, each according to its size and species. When the drummer awoke he saw with astonishment that all had been done for him.

The maiden then said: 'One of the fish is lying away from its own species, quite alone. When the old woman comes this evening to see if all is done as she desired, she will ask why that little fish is left out. Then throw it in her face, and say, "That is left for you, old witch!" '

In the evening she came, and when she asked the question he threw the fish in her face. The old woman stood still, and appeared not to notice what he had done, excepting that she looked at him with malicious eyes.

The next morning she said to him: 'The task I gave you yesterday was too easy, you must have something more difficult to-day. I expect you, therefore, to cut down all the trees of the forest behind this house, to split them into logs and stack them, and when evening comes all must be finished!'

She gave him an axe, a chopper, and two wedges. But the axe was made of lead, and the chopper and wedges of tin, so that when he began his work the axe stuck fast in the wood, and the chopper and wedge struck one against the other, and became useless.

He knew not what to do, but at noon the maiden came again with his dinner and comforted him. 'Lay your head in my lap,' said she, 'and sleep, and when you awake the work will be done.'

While he slept she turned the wish-ring on her finger, and in a moment the whole of the forest trees fell together with a crash. The wood divided itself into logs, and stacked itself in piles; it was as if an invisible giant had accomplished the task. When the drummer awoke, the maiden said: 'You see how all the wood is cut down and stacked, except one little bough. When the old woman comes this evening and asks what the bough is left there for, you must give her a blow with it, and say, "It is for you, old witch." '

The old woman came, and when she saw the work all done, she said: 'Ah, it was an easy task I gave you; but what is that bough left there for?'

'For you, witch,' he replied, giving her a blow with it. But

she appeared not to feel it, laughed scornfully, and said: 'To-morrow you shall place all this wood in a heap, set fire to it, and burn it.'

He was at the forest by daybreak, and began his work of gathering the wood into a heap; but how was it possible for one man to carry the trees of a whole forest into one spot. The work did not get forwards. The maiden, however, did not forget him in his trouble; she brought him his mid-day meal, and, when he had eaten, made him lay his head in her lap and sleep. When he awoke the whole stack of wood was burning in one vast flame, the tongues of which reached to the clouds. 'Listen now,' said the maiden; 'when the witch comes she will give you all sorts of orders. If you perform courageously whatever she desires, she cannot injure you or touch your life. But if you show any fear she will put you in the fire, and you will be consumed. At last, when you have done all she tells you, take her up with both hands and throw her into the flames.'

Then the maiden went away, and presently the witch came sneaking up. 'Ha,' she exclaimed, 'I am so cold, and here is a fire to warm my old bones, and do me good; but there lies a log that will not burn, just fetch it out for me. If you can do that you are free to go where you will. Now be brisk and do as I tell you.'

The drummer did not hesitate long; he sprang into the flames, but they did him no harm, and not even a hair of his head was singed as he drew out the log and placed it before her. Scarcely, however, had it touched the ground, than it was transformed, and the beautiful maiden who had helped him in his trouble stood before him, the silk and gold embroidered clothes she wore proving at once that she was a king's daughter. The old witch laughed spitefully, and said: 'You think you are going to have the princess, but you shan't, I will take care of that;' and she advanced to lay hold of the maiden and carry her away. But the drummer started forward, seized the old witch with both hands, and threw her into the very midst of the flames, which gathered over her as if in joy at being able to consume a witch.

The king's daughter looked earnestly at the drummer, and saw that he was really a handsome youth, and remembered that he had saved her life, and set her free from the witch's spell. So she held out her hand to him, and said: 'You have risked everything for me, therefore I will now do something for you. Promise to be true to me, then shall you be my

spouse. I have plenty of riches and possessions which the old witch has accumulated.'

She led him into the house and showed him chests and boxes which were full of treasures. They left the gold and silver, took only the precious stones, and prepared to leave the mountain of glass. Then the drummer said to her: 'Seat yourself with me on my saddle, and we can fly through the air like birds.'

'The old saddle is useless to me,' she said; 'I only require to turn my wish-ring over, and we are at home.'

'All right!' he cried; 'then let us wish ourselves at the gate of my native city.'

In a trice they were there, and then the drummer said: 'I will first go and see my parents and tell them all the news; wait here for me in this field, I will soon return.'

'Ah,' said the king's daughter, 'let me beg of you to be careful when you arrive; remember to kiss your parents only on the left cheek, otherwise you will forget me and all that has happened, and I shall be left behind in the field alone.'

'How can I ever forget you?' he said, and pledged her with his right hand to return to her very soon.

When he reached his father's house no one knew who he was, he had so changed, for the three days which he had, as he supposed, spent on the mountain, had been really three long years. At last they recognised him, and his parents were so overjoyed at his return that they fell on his neck and embraced him. He was also so moved in his heart that he kissed them on both cheeks, and thought not once of the maiden's words. As soon as he had kissed them on the right cheek all gratitude to the king's daughter vanished from his heart. He turned out his pockets and threw great handfuls of precious stones on the table, his parents wondering how and where he had obtained all these riches.

The father's first act was to build a beautiful castle, around which were gardens, and woods, and meadows, as if a prince had been going to reside in it.

And when it was finished the mother said to her son, 'I have chosen a maiden to be your wife, and in three days the wedding must take place.' The drummer was quite contented to do as his parents wished.

The poor princess stood for a long time outside the town, waiting for the return of the young man. When evening came, she said to herself, 'No doubt he has kissed his parents on the right cheek, and I am quite forgotten.' Her heart was so full

of grief that she wished herself in a lonely house, in the wood close by.

Every evening she went into the town, and wandered about the grounds of his father's castle. She saw him many times; but he never saw her; and one day she heard people talking of his marriage, and saying that it would take place the following day.

Then she said to herself, 'I will try to win him back again.' So on the first day of the betrothal she wished for a beautiful dress that should shine as the sun; and when it lay before her it glittered like sunbeams. All the guests were assembled when she entered the room; everyone present was surprised at her beauty and her rich dress; but the drummer did not recognise her among so many, and she had disguised herself. That night, however, when all was still, she placed herself outside his window, and sang,

'Drummer, should I forgotten be?
Was it not I who tended thee,
And to your tasks lent all my aid?
When on the mountain-top we strayed
You freed me from the witch's power,
And swore to love me from that hour:
These riches all were gifts from me;
Then why should I forgotten be?'

But the song was all lost; the young man slept soundly, and heard it not. On the second evening she was again at the festival, and afterwards sang her mournful song outside the window.

But she had mistaken the sleeping-room of her lover, and again her complaints would have been useless, had not the servants of the castle told their young master that they had heard a beautiful voice singing during the night. His curiosity was excited, and he determined to listen at the window himself.

In the night after the third day of the betrothal, when the festivities were over, the young man placed himself at the window to listen; but no sooner had he heard the sound of the voice singing,

'Drummer, should I forgotten be?
Was it not I who tended thee,
And to your tasks lent all my aid?
When on the mountain-top you strayed
You freed me from the witch's power,
And swore to love me from that hour:
Your riches all were gifts from me;
Drummer, should I forgotten be?'

than to his memory everything returned. 'Ah!' he cried, 'how nearly have I lost my true and only love! In the joy of my heart I kissed my parents on the right cheek. There is the fault; but I will atone for my conduct.' He started up, as the song still continued in plaintive accents, rushed out, and exclaimed, 'Forgive me, dearest;' and, as he pressed her to his heart, she forgot her sorrow, and forgave him all.

Then he led her to his parents, and said, 'This is the true bride,' and told them what she had done for him, and the cause of his forgetfulness. They were ready to receive her at once as their daughter-in-law, and the other intended bride was made quite contented by being presented with the beautiful dresses which the real bride had worn at the festival.

THE GRAVE MOUND.

A RICH farmer was one day standing in his farmyard, and looking with pride on his possessions. The corn-fields were full of grain, and the trees laden with fruit. The corn of the previous years, carefully preserved in the granaries, lay in large heaps on the floors, the beams bending beneath its weight. His stables, also, were full of fat oxen, milch cows, and well-fed horses.

After looking over all these stores, he returned to the house, and, entering a room, cast his eyes on the iron chest in which his money lay. As he thus stood contemplating his riches, something knocked sharply—not, however, on the door of the room, but on the door of his heart.

It opened, and he heard a voice within say: 'Have you done good with all your gold and possessions? Have you taken care of the poor? Have you shared your bread with the hungry? Are you satisfied with what you possess, or do you long for more?'

His heart and conscience did not hesitate to reply: 'I have been hard and unsympathizing; I have never done anything good for my own relatives. If a poor man came, I turned away my eyes. I have not thought of God, but only how I should increase my riches. Had all which the heavens cover been in my possession, I should still not have had enough!'

When he was aware of this answer, he was greatly alarmed,

his knees trembled under him, and he was obliged to sit down. Then there was another knock, but now it was at the door of the room.

It was his neighbour, a poor man, who had many children whom he could not satisfy with food.

'I know,' thought the poor man as he entered, 'that my neighbour is as hard as he is rich; I do not suppose that he will help me, but my children are crying for bread, and I must venture.'

So he said to the rich man: 'You do not give away readily anything that is yours, but I have come to you in my trouble as a drowning man catches at straws. My children are hungry; will you lend me four measures of wheat?'

The rich man looked long at him, and a beam of pity for the first time melted the ice of avarice.

'I will not lend you four measures,' he said, 'but I will give you eight, on one condition, however, which you must fulfil.'

'What am I to do?' asked the poor man.

'You must watch at my grave for three nights after my death!'

The peasant was secretly troubled by this proposal, but in his present need he would have agreed to anything, so he gave his promise, and carried the corn home with him.

It was as if the rich man had foreseen what would happen, for three days later he suddenly died. It was not known exactly how it happened, but no one grieved for him. After he was buried the peasant remembered his promise. Gladly would he have been free from it, but he thought, 'The man was kind to me; he gave me corn to make bread for my hungry children; even if that had not been the case I made a promise, and I am bound to keep it.'

At nightfall he went to the churchyard, and seated himself on the grave. All was still; the moon threw her soft light over the tomb-stones, and only the hoot of the owl disturbed the peaceful silence. At sunrise he returned home in safety, and the second night also passed peaceably.

When the third evening arrived, however, he felt a kind of foreboding that something would occur, and when he went out he saw a man standing by the churchyard wall whom he had never seen before. He was not young; he had a scarred face, and eyes that were sharp and piercing. He was covered completely with an old cloak, and only his great riding-boots were visible.

'What do you want here?' cried the peasant. 'Are you not afraid of the lonely churchyard?'

'I want nothing,' replied the man, 'and I fear nothing. I am like the young man who went out to learn how to shiver, and had his trouble for nothing, excepting that he married a king's daughter, and obtained great riches. I am always poor. I am a discharged soldier, and I came to the churchyard to pass the night, for I have no other shelter.'

'If you are not afraid,' said the peasant, 'then stay with me and help me to watch by this grave.'

'To keep watch is a soldier's duty,' he replied. 'Whatever happens to us here, good or bad, we will share the consequences.'

The peasant consented, and they seated themselves by the grave together. All remained quiet till midnight, when suddenly a shrill whistling was heard in the air, and the two watchers saw standing before them the Evil One himself, bodily.

'Be off, you ragamuffins!' he cried. 'He who lies in this grave is mine: I have come to fetch him, and if you do not go away at once I will wring your necks.'

'My lord of the red feather,' replied the soldier, 'you are not my captain. I need not obey you, and I have never yet learnt to fear. So take yourself off: we shall remain here.'

On seeing the men so firm, the devil thought he might easily bribe two such poor scamps as these with gold, so, assuming a gentle tone, he asked them if they would resign their position for a purse of gold.

'That is worth hearing,' said the soldier; 'but a purse of gold is not enough. If, however, you will fill my boot with as much gold as it will contain, then we will quit the field and leave the way clear for you.'

'I have not so much money about me,' he replied, 'but I can fetch it. In the neighbouring town lives a usurer; he is a great friend of mine, and he will no doubt lend me the money.'

When the devil had departed, the soldier pulled off his left boot, and said: 'We will lead the black gentleman by the nose this time. Give me your knife, friend.' He then cut off the sole of his boot, and placed it beside the grave in the high grass, on the edge of a hole that was half overgrown. 'All right,' said the soldier; 'now let the black sweep come.'

Then they both seated themselves and waited, but not for long; back came the devil with a bag of gold in his hand.

'Pour it in,' said the soldier, lifting the boot a little. 'But that will not be enough.' The black one emptied the bag, the money fell through, and the boot remained empty.

'Stupid devil!' cried the soldier. 'I told you it was not enough; go and fetch some more.'

The devil shook his head, went, and returned in an hour with a much larger sack full of gold under his arm.

'Now pour it in,' said the soldier; 'but I doubt whether it will fill the boot after all.'

The gold clinked and fell, but the boot remained empty. The devil looked into it with his glowing eyes, and discovered the fact for himself; then he fell into a rage. 'What abominably large calves you must have, to be sure!' he cried, and made a wry face.

'What!' exclaimed the soldier, 'do you suppose I have a cloven foot like yours? And what makes you so stingy all at once? Go and fetch some more money, or there will be no dealings between us.'

The Evil One turned away once more. This time he remained much longer, and at last appeared carrying such a heavy sack on his shoulder that he quite bent under the weight. He poured the contents into the boot, but it remained as empty as before. On seeing this he fell into a furious rage, and was just about to drag the boot from the soldier's hand; but at that moment the first beam from the rising sun appeared in the sky, and with a loud yell the wicked spirit fled. The poor soul was saved.

The peasant wished to divide the gold, but the soldier said: 'No; give to the poor what you please.'

THE CRYSTAL BALL.

A SORCERESS once had three sons, who loved each other with brotherly affection; but the old woman did not trust them, she thought they would rob her of her power. So she turned the eldest into an eagle, who lived on the top of a rocky mountain, and was often seen whirling round in great circles, or soaring high in the heavens. She changed the second son into a whale, who lived in the deep sea, and at times there would be seen a mighty stream of water rising in the air, which the whale spurted up like a waterspout. Each of them could resume his own natural form for two hours each day.

The third son, who thought that his mother might turn him into a wild beast, such as a bear or a wolf, went away secretly from home. He had heard, also, that in a beautiful castle, called the Castle of the Golden Sun, lived a beautiful princess, who was under the spell of the sorcerer, and he longed to set her free.

He knew, however, that he must risk his life, for already three-and-twenty young men had met with most terrible deaths, and now none dared to venture. But the young man's heart knew no fear, so he determined to seek the Castle of the Golden Sun.

He had been travelling for a long time without finding it, when he came to a great forest, in which he lost his way. All at once he saw in the distance two giants, who beckoned to him with their hands, and when he approached they said to him: 'We are both equally strong, and neither can overcome the other, and we have been fighting for a little hat, which is to belong to the one who conquers. Now, you little men are cleverer than we are, and therefore we will let you decide who is to have it.'

'How can you fight for an old hat?' replied the youth.

'Ah,' they replied, 'you don't know its value. It is a wishing-hat, and whoever puts it on can wish himself where he will, and in a moment he is there.'

'Give me the hat,' said the young man. 'I will go on a little way, and when I call you must both run a race to overtake me, and whoever reaches me first, to him the hat shall belong.'

The youth put on the hat and went away; but he was thinking so much of the princess that he forgot the giants and the hat, and continued to go farther and farther without calling them.

Presently he sighed deeply, and said: 'Ah, if I were only at the Castle of the Golden Sun.' The words were scarcely out of his mouth when he found himself on a high mountain, before the door of the castle. He stepped in through the open door, and went from room to room, till he came at last to one in which the princess sat. But how shocked he was when he saw her! She had a complexion as gray as ashes, her face was wrinkled, her eyes dim, and her hair red.

'Are you the king's daughter, whose beauty is so renowned?' he cried.

'Ah,' she replied, 'this is not my own shape. The eyes of mankind can only see me in this hideous form. If, however,

you wish to know what I really am, you must look in the mirror, which never allows itself to be mistaken, but represents my image truthfully.'

She gave him a looking-glass, and he saw in it the representation of the most beautiful maiden in the world, with the tears of sorrow running down her cheeks.

'Tell me how to set you free,' said the young man. 'I shrink from no danger.'

She replied: 'Whoever can obtain the crystal ball, and hold it before the sorcerer, will destroy his power, and I shall instantly regain my proper form and freedom. But,' she continued, 'many have already lost their lives in the attempt, and it pains me to think that your young blood would flow, if you ventured to encounter such great danger.'

'Nothing shall hinder me,' he replied. 'Only tell me what I am to do.'

'You shall know all,' said the princess. 'You must climb to the top of the mountain upon which this castle stands, and there you will find a wild buffalo, standing by a spring. With him you must fight, and if you are so fortunate as to kill him, a phœnix will rise out of him. In it you will find a red-hot egg, and if you break it, instead of a yolk will be seen the crystal ball. But you must be careful not to let the egg fall on the ground. If you do, it will immediately ignite and burn up everything near it. The egg also will melt, and with it the crystal ball, so that all your trouble will be lost.'

The youth went out and found the buffalo at the spring, snorting and bellowing. After a long combat, he thrust his sword into the animal and it fell dead. In a moment there rose a fiery bird from it, who attempted to fly away; but the eagle—the youth's brother who had been changed by the sorceress—and who was flying in the air above their heads, darted swiftly down, drove the bird towards the sea, and so wounded it with his beak that in her distress she dropped the egg. It did not fall into the sea, but on a fisherman's little hut, which stood on the shore, and immediately the hut and all around it were in flames. At this moment there rose from the sea an immense stream of water, which fell on the hut and quickly extinguished the fire.

The second brother, the whale, while swimming that way, had spirted up the water.

No sooner was the fire extinguished than the young man searched for the egg, and luckily found it. It had not melted,

but the sudden rush of the cold water had broken the shell, and he could easily remove the crystal ball.

The youth went immediately to the sorcerer, and held the ball before him. 'My power is now destroyed,' said the latter, 'and you are the king of the Castle of the Golden Sun. You can also restore your brothers to their natural forms.'

The young man, on hearing this, hastened to the princess, and on entering her chamber she stood before him in the full blaze of her beauty; then with joyful hearts they exchanged rings with each other.

PRINCESS MALEEN.

THERE was once a king who had a son, and he fell in love with the daughter of a mighty king who was named Princess Maleen. She was very beautiful, and her father wished her to marry another prince, to whom he had promised her. But they both loved each other so dearly that they would not be separated, and Princess Maleen told her father she would not marry anyone else.

Then her father fell into a great rage, and ordered a dark tower to be built, into which not a sunbeam nor a ray of moonlight could penetrate. When it was finished, he said to his daughter: 'You shall be shut up in that tower for seven years, and then I will come and see if your obstinacy is not cured.'

Provisions for the time were stored in the tower, and then the princess and her maid were led into it, walled up, and cut off at once from heaven and earth, and there they had to remain in total darkness, unable to distinguish day from night.

The prince went often to the tower, and called the princess by name, but no sound could penetrate those thick walls; and what could she do but weep and complain?

Time passed on, and by the decrease in the provisions she knew that the seven years were coming to an end, and she supposed the hour of her release was at hand; but no stroke of a hammer was heard, no stone fell from the walls, and it seemed as if her father had forgotten her.

When the princess knew that their provisions would not last much longer, and that a terrible death threatened them, 'We must,' she said, 'try to break through the walls.' She took

up the bread-knife and dug and scraped at the mortar between the stones for a long time, and when she was tired the maid took her place.

After working very hard they managed to displace one stone, then a second, and a third, and in three days the first ray of light fell upon the darkness, and at last there was an opening large enough for them to look through. The sky was blue, and the fresh air that came into the tower had a sweet fragrance. But how sad everything appeared to the princess! Her father's castle lay in ruins; the towns and villages so far as one could see were burnt. The fields far and wide had been laid waste, and not a living soul could be seen.

When the opening in the wall was large enough for them to creep through, the maid jumped out, and the Princess Maleen quickly followed her; but which way were they to bend their steps? An enemy had destroyed the whole country, driven away the king, and slain all the inhabitants. They wandered on in hopes of reaching another country; but they found neither a shelter nor a human being to offer them a bit of bread; and so great was their hunger that they were glad to eat stinging-nettle stalks.

After wandering about for a long time they came at last to another land, and there they begged to be taken as servants; but wherever they knocked they were refused, and no one would pity them. At last they arrived at a large town, and went to the king's court. But even here they were told to go away, till the cook said she would take them to help her in the kitchen.

The son of the king in whose castle she now worked was, however, her former lover; but his father had chosen for his son another bride, who was ugly in countenance and wicked at heart. The wedding was fixed, and the bride had already arrived.

But she hid her great ugliness from every eye, and shut herself up in her own room and Princess Maleen had to bring her food from the kitchen.

When the day arrived on which the bridegroom was to go with his bride to church, she was ashamed of her ugliness, and afraid that the people in the street would point at her, and make fun of her, so she sent for Maleen, and said to her: 'You are very lucky. I have sprained my foot, therefore I cannot go out into the town to-day; but if you will put on the bridal dress, and take my place, it will be a great honour for you.'

But the Princess Maleen replied: 'I wish for no honour that does not belong to me!'

The bride then offered her gold, but in vain.

At last the ugly maiden got angry, and said: 'If you will not obey me it shall cost you your life, for I have only to say the word, and your head will lie at my feet!'

The Princess Maleen was now obliged to obey. She dressed herself in the bride's clothes, and put on her jewels.

When she entered the royal saloon everyone was astonished at her great beauty, and the king said to his son: 'That is the bride I have chosen for you, and whom you must lead to the church.'

The bridegroom, who had heard that his bride was plain, felt rather surprised, and said to himself: 'She is like my Princess Maleen, and I should believe it was her if I did not know she had been shut up in the tower, and no doubt is dead.'

However, he took her by the hand, and led her to church. On the way there stood a nettle-plant, and she said:

'O nettle-plant,
Little nettle-plant,
What are you doing alone?
I have known the time
When I ate you unboiled,
When I ate you unroasted.'

The prince asked her what she was saying.

'Nothing,' she replied; 'I was thinking of the Princess Maleen.'

The prince did not reply, but he wondered that she should know that name.

When they came to the footplank into the churchyard, she said:

'Footbridge, do not break;
I am not the true bride.'

'What are you saying?' he asked.

'Nothing; I was thinking of Maid Maleen.'

He asked: 'Do you know the Princess Maleen?'

'How should I know her?' she replied. 'I have heard of her.'

As they approached the church, she said:

'Church door, break not;
I am not the true bride.'

Then he asked: 'What are you saying?'

'I am only thinking of Maid Maleen.'

He threw round her neck a costly chain of gold, and fastened it with a gold clasp. Then they entered the church, and stood at the altar while the priest joined their hands and married them.

During their ride back to the castle the princess spoke not one word the whole way, and when she arrived she hastened to the chamber of the bride, took off the rich dress and ornaments, and dressed herself in her old gray gown and kirtle. She kept nothing but the gold chain which the prince had given her.

The ugly bride then arrayed herself in the elegant bridal clothes, and, throwing a thick veil over her face, went to join the company at the marriage-feast.

As soon as the guests were departed, the bridegroom said: 'What did you say to the nettle-plant that stood in the way?'

'What nettle-plant?' said she. 'I spoke to no nettle-plant.'

'If you did not you cannot be the right bride,' he said.

Then she bethought herself, and said: 'I must go to my maid, who keeps my thoughts for me.' She went out and sought Maid Maleen. 'Girl,' she asked, 'what have you been saying to the nettle?'

'I said nothing but

'O nettle-plant,
Little nettle-plant,
What dost thou here alone?
I have known the time
When I ate thee unboiled,
When I ate thee unroasted.'

The bride came back and said: 'I know now what I said to the nettle-plant;' and she repeated the words she had just heard.

'But what did you say to the church footbridge as we passed over it?' asked the prince.

She answered: 'I spoke to no church footbridge.'

'Then you cannot be the true bride.'

She said again: 'I must go to my maid who keeps my thoughts for me.' She ran out and found Maid Maleen. 'Girl,' she asked, 'what did you say to the footbridge in the churchyard?'

'I said nothing but

'Church footbridge, break not;
I am not the true bride.'

'This shall cost you your life!' cried the bride; but she hastened back to the room, and said: 'Now I know what I said to the church footbridge;' and she repeated the words.

'But what did you say at the church door?'

'To the church door! I spoke to no church door.'

'Then you cannot be the right bride.'

She went out and found Maid Maleen, and said: 'Girl, what did you say to the church door?'

'I said nothing but

'Church door, break not;
I am not the true bride.'

'That will break your neck for you!' cried the bride, and flew into the greatest rage; but she hurried back to the room, and said, 'Now I know what I said to the church door,' and repeated the words.

'But where is the chain that I gave you at the church door to-day?'

'What chain?' she answered; 'you gave me no chain.'

'I placed it round your neck myself,' he said, 'and fastened it; therefore, if you know nothing about it, you are not my right bride.'

He pulled the veil from her face as he spoke, and her remarkable ugliness made him start back with surprise and fright, exclaiming: 'Who are you? What do you do here?'

'I am your real bride,' she said, 'the one whom the king, your father, chose for you; but as I feared the people might mock me to-day, I told the kitchen-maid to dress in my clothes, and be proxy for me at the church.'

'Where is that maiden?' he said; 'I must see her. Go and fetch her here!'

'This shall cost her her life,' she thought, as she went out in a great rage, and said to the servants: 'That kitchen-girl is an impostor. Take her out into the court, and cut off her head!'

The servants caught hold of her, and would have dragged her away; but she screamed so loud for help that the prince heard her voice. He hastened out of his chamber, and ordered that the maiden should be instantly set free. When she came into the light of the lamps, he noticed on her neck the sparkle of the gold ornament he had given her.

'This is the right bride,' he said, 'who went with me to the church;' and he led her away as he spoke.

When they were alone, he said to her: 'On the road to church you mentioned the name of the Princess Maleen, who was once my own beloved bride. If I thought it possible, I should say she now stood before me, for you resemble her in every way.'

'I am Maid Maleen,' she said. 'I was shut up for seven years in a dark tower. I have suffered hunger and thirst, and sorrow and poverty; but to-day the sun again shone on me. It was I whom you married to-day at the altar, and I am your real bride.'

Then they kissed each other, and were happy ever afterwards.

The next day the ugly bride had her head cut off.

The tower in which Maid Maleen was enclosed is still standing, and as the children pass by it they sing:

'Kling, klang, gloria,
Who sits in this old tower?
A king's daughter—Maid Maleen.
To leave it she has no power;
The wall cannot be broken;
Nothing will pierce the stone,
Where the young princess Maleen
Sits weeping and alone.
Little Hans, so fine to see,
Come and follow, follow me.'

THE BOOTS OF BUFFALO LEATHER.

A SOLDIER who is afraid of nothing troubles himself about nothing. Such a one had received his discharge, and as he had learnt nothing, and could earn nothing, he travelled about and begged alms of all good people. On his shoulders hung an old waterproof cloak, and he still had a pair of riding boots of buffalo leather. One day he went, without minding the way, into the open country, and reached at length a forest. He knew not where he was, but he saw, sitting on the trunk of a tree that had been cut down, a man who was well dressed, and who wore a green hunting coat. The soldier offered him his hand, sat down beside him on the grass, and stretched out his legs. 'I see you have fine boots on, which are well blacked,'

said he to the huntsman; 'but if you had to walk about as I do, you would not keep them long so. Look at mine; they are of buffalo leather, and have served me for a long time, but with them I go through thick and thin.' After awhile the soldier stood up, and said, 'I cannot stay here any longer, as hunger drives me onwards. But, Brother Brightboots, which is the way out?'

'I do not know myself,' answered the huntsman; 'I have lost my way in this wood.'

'Then you are in the same condition as myself,' said the soldier. '"Birds of a feather flock together"—we will stay together and seek our way.'

The hunter smiled a little, and they went farther and farther until it was night.

'We do not get out of the forest,' said the soldier, 'but I see in the distance a light shining; there will be something to eat there.'

They found a stone house, knocked at the door, and an old woman opened it. 'We seek quarters for the night,' said the soldier, 'and some food, for my stomach is as empty as an old knapsack.'

'You cannot stay here,' answered the old woman; 'this is a robbers' house, and you would do best to take yourself off before they come home, for if they find you here you are lost.'

'It will not be so bad as that,' answered the soldier; 'I have eaten nothing for two days, and so it is all the same to me if I am killed here or die of hunger in the forest. I shall go in.'

The hunter did not wish to follow, but the soldier drew him in by the sleeve. 'Come, my brother, our lives are not so easily lost.'

The old woman had compassion on them, and said, 'Creep behind the stove; if they leave anything and have gone to sleep, I will bring it you.'

Hardly were they in the corner, when twelve robbers came storming in, sat at the table, which was already laid, and demanded their supper with vehemence. The old woman brought in a large roast, and the robbers enjoyed it much. When the smell of the food mounted to the nose of the soldier, he said to the hunter, 'I cannot keep back any longer. I will sit at the table and eat with them.'

'You will cause our deaths,' said the hunter, and held him by the arm. But the soldier began to cough aloud. When the robbers heard him, they threw down their knives and forks, sprang up, and discovered both of them behind the stove. 'Aha,

my gentlemen!' they called out. 'Are you sitting in the corner? What are you doing here? Are you sent out as spies? Just wait, and you shall learn how to fly from a dry bough.'

'Now be civil,' said the soldier; 'I am hungry; give me something to eat; afterwards you can do with me what you wish.'

The robbers were astonished, and their captain said, 'I see you do not fear us; well, you shall have something to eat, and then you must die.'

'That will be seen,' said the soldier, who seated himself at the table and began bravely to cut away at the meat. 'Brother Brightboots, come and eat,' he called out to the hunter; 'you must be hungry as well as I am, and you cannot have better roast at home.'

But the huntsman would not eat. The robbers looked on the soldier with astonishment, and said, 'The fellow takes things coolly.'

After awhile he said, 'The eating was very good; now get me also some good drink.'

The captain was in the humour to be pleased with him, and called out to the old woman, 'Fetch a bottle out of the cellar, and let it be of the best.'

The soldier drew the cork out so that it popped, went with the bottle to the huntsman, and said, 'Pay attention, brother; you will see something wonderful. I will now drink a health to the whole company.' Then he brandished the bottle over the heads of the robbers, and cried out, 'Long life to you all, but with your mouths open and your right hands lifted;' and then he took a hearty draught. Hardly had the words been uttered, when they all sat motionless as if of stone, with their mouths open and their right arms lifted.

The huntsman said, 'Now I see you can do wonders, but, come, let us go home.'

'Oho, good brother, that would be to march away too soon; we have defeated the enemy, and now we must take some booty. There they sit fast with their mouths open in astonishment; they cannot move until I allow them. Come, eat and drink.'

The old woman had to go and fetch another bottle of the best wine, and the soldier did not rise until he had eaten enough for three days. At last, when the day dawned, he said, 'Now it is time to raise our camp, and, in order that we may have a short march, the old woman shall show us the way to the town.' When they had reached it, he went to his old comrades, and said, 'I have found a nest of gallows-birds; come with me, and we will take it.'

The soldier led them, and said to the huntsman, 'You must come back and see how they flutter when we seize them by the feet.' He placed his band of men round the house, then took the bottle, drank a mouthful, brandished it over their heads, and said, 'Long life to you all.' In a moment they were able to move again, but were thrown down and bound hand and foot with cords. Then the soldier ordered them to be thrown like sacks into a cart, and said, 'Carry them at once to prison.' The huntsman, however, took one of the guards aside, and gave him an order.

'Brother Brightboots,' said the soldier, 'we have fortunately routed the enemy and fed ourselves well; now we will march behind them as stragglers in all quietness.'

As they approached the town, the soldier saw a number of men thronging out of the town gate, heard loud cries of joy and saw green branches waved in the air. Then he saw that the whole body-guard was coming up.

'What does that mean?' said he, amazed, to the huntsman.

'Do you not know,' answered he, 'that the king, who has been a long time absent from his empire, returns to-day, and all come to meet him?'

'But where is the king?' said the soldier. 'I do not see him.'

'Here he is,' answered the huntsman. 'I am the king, and have announced my arrival.' Then he opened his huntsman's coat, so that his royal clothes could be seen. The soldier was frightened, fell on his knee, and begged for forgiveness, because in his ignorance he had treated his sovereign as an equal, and had addressed him with such a name. The king, however, offered him his hand, and said, 'You are a brave soldier, and you have saved my life. You shall suffer want no more. I will now care for you, and if at any time you wish to eat a piece of good roast (as good as in the robbers' house), just come into the royal kitchen; but if you wish to drink a health, you must first ask my permission.'

THE GOLDEN KEY.

In the winter time, when the deep snow was lying on the ground, a poor boy had to go out on a sledge to fetch wood. When he had collected it and packed it, he wished—because he felt

frozen—not to go home at once, but to light a fire and warm himself a little. So he scraped away the snow, and as he thus cleared the ground, he found a small golden key. He thought where the key was there would be also the lock for it, so he dug in the ground, and found an iron chest. 'If the key would only fit it,' thought he, 'there are certainly valuable things in the little chest.' He sought, but there was no keyhole; at last he discovered one, but it was so small that it was hardly to be seen. He tried, and the key fitted. Then he turned it once round, and now we must wait until it is completely open and the lid lifted; then we shall know what wonderful things lie in the little chest.

OUR LADY'S CHILD.

Near a large forest lived a wood-cutter with his wife. They had only one child, a little maiden of three years old, and they were so very poor that they could scarcely find bread to eat.

One morning the wood-cutter, full of sorrow, went into the wood to his work, and while he cut down trees with his axe, all at once a tall and beautiful lady stood before him. She had a crown of glittering stars on her head, diamonds sparkled in her hair, and she said to the wood-cutter: 'I am the Virgin Mary, and mother of the Child Jesus. You are poor and miserable; bring me your little child, I will be a mother to her, and provide for her.' The wood-cutter obeyed, brought his child and gave her to the Virgin Mary, who carried her up to heaven with her.

Here she was happy; she had sugared bread to eat, and sweet fresh milk to drink; her clothes were of silk and gold, and the little angels played with her.

When she was of the age of fourteen, one day the Virgin called her to her side, and said: 'Dear child, I have a long journey to take, and while I am absent I intend to leave the thirteen keys of the doors of heaven in your care. You are free to open twelve of these doors and examine the wonderful things which the rooms contain, but the thirteenth, to which this little key belongs, you are forbidden to enter. If you do, great sorrow and misfortune will happen to you.'

The young girl promised, and when the Virgin Mary was gone, she began at once to examine the rooms of the palace. Each day she unlocked one, until she had opened all the twelve. In each of them sat one of the apostles surrounded with a clear and brilliant light, and so much splendour and glory that she, and the little angels who accompanied her, rejoiced.

Now, the forbidden door still remained unopened; but such a longing desire arose in her heart to see what the room contained, that she said to her companions, 'I will just open this door a very little way, and peep in.'

'Oh no!' said the little angels; 'that would be a sin; the Virgin Mary has forbidden it, and something dreadful will happen if you do.'

The young girl was silent, but the longing desire in her heart would not be still, and day after day her curiosity increased so much that she could not rest.

At last, one day when all the angels were absent, she thought to herself, 'Now I shall be able to go in and have a peep, and no one will ever know.'

So she sought the key, and, taking the right one in her hand, placed it in the lock, and turned it round. Then the door sprang open and she saw there the Trinity sitting in fire and splendour. She stood for awhile bewildered with astonishment. Then she moved forwards a little, and placed her finger in the glittering light; and when she drew it back her finger was covered with gold. On seeing this she was seized with a terrible fear, and, shutting the door quickly, she ran away. But she could not overcome her fear, and her heart beat violently when she found that the gold would not come off her finger, although she rubbed and washed it with all her might.

Not very long after this the Virgin Mary came back from her journey, and, calling the maiden to her, requested her to give up the keys.

When the maiden gave her the bunch and the Virgin received them, she looked earnestly into the young girl's eyes, and said: 'Have you opened the thirteenth door also?'

'No,' was the reply.

She laid her hand on the young girl's heart, and knew by its beating, which she felt, that she had been disobeyed, and that the door had been opened. Then she said again: 'Have you opened the thirteenth door?'

'No,' was the reply for the second time.

Then she caught sight of the maiden's finger, which had become golden when she touched the fiery light, and knew

that she was guilty. For a third time she asked the same question, but the young girl still answered, 'No.'

Then the Virgin Mary said to the maiden: 'You have not attended to my commands, nor spoken the truth; you are therefore not fit to remain in heaven.' The maiden fell into a deep sleep, and sank down upon the earth.

When she awoke, she found herself alone in a great wilderness; and on attempting to cry out, her voice could no longer be heard, for she had been struck dumb. Then she sprang up, and tried to make her way out of the wilderness, but wherever she turned the thick thorn-bushes drove her back, and she could not pass through them. In the desert in which she now found herself shut in, there stood an old hollow tree, and this had to be her dwelling-place; therefore, when night came on, she crept in and slept till morning, and during stormy or rainy weather it formed her only shelter. Her life now was indeed miserable, and whenever she thought of those happy days when she had lived in heaven with angels for her companions, she wept bitterly.

Her food consisted of roots and wild berries, which she had to search for, and in autumn she collected all the dry leaves and fallen nuts, and carried them to the hollow tree. In winter the nuts were her food, and when snow and ice came she rolled herself like a poor animal in the leaves, and let her long hair fall round her like a mantle, for her clothes were all in rags. So one year after another passed, during which she endured the greatest want and misery.

One day, when the trees were decked in green leaves, the king of the country was hunting in the forest, and while following a deer he saw it disappear among the thick bushes. To follow the deer he alighted from his horse, and made a way for himself through the bushes with his sword.

When he had thus cleared a path, he saw a beautiful maiden seated under a tree, and clothed from head to foot in her own golden hair. He stood still at first in silent astonishment, and then he said: 'Who art thou, fair maiden, and why dost thou sit here in this wilderness.' But she could not answer him, for her lips were sealed.

Then the king spoke again: 'Will you go with me to my palace?' Then she nodded her head, and the king, taking her in his arms, lifted her on his horse, and rode home with her.

As soon as they arrived at the castle, he gave her beautiful clothing and everything she wanted in abundance; and although she could not speak, she was so beautiful and grace-

ful that the king fell in love with her, and in a very short time they were married.

In a year after the young queen had a little son, and while she was lying on her bed during the night, the Virgin Mary appeared to her, and said: 'Wilt thou now own the truth, that thou didst open the forbidden door? If thou wilt, I will restore to thee the power of speech; but if thou art still obstinate, and persistest in denying thy sin, then I will take thy new-born babe with me.'

Then the power of speech was given to the queen, to enable her to answer; but she remained obdurate, and said: 'No, I did not open the forbidden door.'

On this the Virgin Mary took the new-born baby in her arms and disappeared with it.

In the morning when the child could not be found, a murmur arose amongst the people; they declared that the queen had destroyed her baby. She heard all they said, but she could not explain; however, the king loved her too well to believe a word of evil against her.

In another year the queen had a second son, and again the Virgin Mary appeared to her, and said: 'If thou wilt now confess that thou hast opened the forbidden door, I will restore to thee thy child and set thy tongue at liberty, but if thou wilt persist in thy denial, thou shalt still remain dumb, and I will take away from thee thy second infant also.' But the queen again replied: 'No, I did not open the forbidden door.' Then the Virgin took the second child and carried it away to heaven. The next morning, when the second child also was missing, the people were loud in their complaints against the queen; they even said that she was an ogress, and had eaten it. The king's counsellors also demanded that she should be brought to justice. But the king's love for her was so great that he believed nothing, and even threatened the counsellors, at the peril of their lives, to say a word against her.

But in the third year a beautiful little girl was born to the queen, and the Virgin Mary came a third time, and said to her: 'Follow me.' Then she took her by the hand and carried her to heaven. She led her in and showed her two beautiful boys, who were laughing and playing beyond the stars in the glorious sunlight. Great was the queen's joy at seeing her children, and the Virgin Mary said to her: 'Is thy heart not yet softened? Even now, if thou wilt confess that thou hast opened the forbidden door, I will restore to thee both thy little sons.'

But the queen answered for the third time: 'No, I did not open the forbidden door.'

Then the Virgin allowed her to sink down again to earth, and took away from her the new-born daughter.

When the people discovered the next morning that the third child was missing, they became very angry, and said: 'Our queen is really an ogress; she has eaten her children; she must be condemned to die.' This time the king could not silence his counsellors. The queen was brought before the tribunal, and as she could not answer nor defend herself, she was condemned to be burnt alive. The funeral-pile was formed, and she was fastened to the stake, but when the flames began to spread around her, her pride was melted and she repented; the thought arose, 'Oh! if I could only confess, before I die, that I did open that door!' As she thought this her voice came back to her, and she cried: 'Yes, Mary, I did it; I am guilty.'

The rain at once began to pour down, and quickly put out the flames. A bright light surrounded her, and the Virgin Mary descended leading the boys, and carrying in her arms the little baby girl. The Virgin spoke kindly to her, and said: 'Now that thou hast confessed thy sin and art forgiven, I can restore to thee, not only the power of speech, but also thy three dear children, and promise thee happiness and joy for the remainder of thy life.'

GAMBLING JACK.

THERE was once a man who did nothing but gamble, and the people called him Gambling Jack; and because he would not leave off he gambled away his house and everything. There was no chance of reforming him, so in the end he was destroyed body and soul.

MADAM TRUDE.

THERE was once a little girl who was obstinate and inquisitive, and would not do what her parents told her, so how could she get on well? One day she said to her parents: 'I want to go

to Madam Trude's, as I have heard so much about her. I am curious to see the odd things she has in her house, and people say that there is something strange about herself.'

Her parents forbade her, saying: 'Madam Trude is a bad woman, and does wicked things; if you go to her you can no longer be our child.'

But the girl did not care for what her parents said, and went to Madam Trude's. And when she came to her, Madam Trude said: 'Why are you so pale?'

'Oh!' said she, and began to tremble; 'I am frightened at what I saw.'

'What have you seen?'

'I saw a black man on your steps.'

'That was a charcoal-burner.'

'Then I saw a green man.'

'That was a huntsman.'

'Then I saw a red man.'

'That was a butcher.'

'Oh, Madam Trude, I was terrified! I looked through the window and saw, not you, but the devil with a fiery head.'

'Oh, oh!' said she, 'you have seen the witch in her true shape. I have wanted and waited for you; you shall now give me some light.'

Then she turned the girl into a log of wood, and threw her on the fire. And when it was in full glow she sat down in front of it and warmed herself, and said: 'That shines bright for once.'

THE LITTLE PEASANT.

THERE was a certain village in which mostly rich peasants lived, and just one poor one, whom they called 'the little peasant.' He had not even a cow, and still less money to buy one, and yet he and his wife greatly wished for one. One day he said to her: 'I have a good idea: there is our godfather the carpenter; he shall make us a calf of wood, and paint it brown, so that it may look like any other, and in time it will be big and become a cow.'

This idea pleased the wife, and the carpenter made a calf, painted it as it ought to be, and made its head hanging as if it were eating.

When the cows were being driven out the next morning, the little peasant called the herdsman, and said: 'See, I have also a calf; but it is still small, and must be carried.'

The herdsman said, 'Very well,' took it in his arms, carried it to the meadow, and placed it on the grass. The calf remained always standing, as if it were eating, and the herdsman said: 'It will soon be able to run itself; look how it eats.' In the evening when he was going to drive his cattle home, he said to the calf: 'If you can stand there and eat your fill, you can also go on your four legs; I will not carry you home in my arms.'

The peasant stood at his door and waited for his calf. When the cows drove through the village, and it was not with them, he asked for it. The herdsman answered: 'It is still standing out there eating; it would not leave off and come with us.'

The peasant then said: 'Eh! but I must have my calf.'

Then they went together to the meadow, but someone had stolen the calf; it was gone. The herdsman said: 'It must have run away.'

The little peasant answered: 'It cannot be,' and led the herdsman before the magistrate, who condemned him, for his carelessness, to give the peasant a cow instead of the lost calf.

And now the little peasant and his wife had the long-wished for cow, and they rejoiced greatly. But they had no fodder, and could give it nothing to eat, so it had to be killed. They salted the flesh, and the little peasant went into the town in order to sell the skin, that he might be able to buy a new calf with the proceeds. On the way he came to a mill, on which sat a raven with broken wings. He took compassion on it, and wrapped it in the skin. But as the weather was bad with much rain and wind, he could go no farther, and turned back to the mill and begged for shelter. The wife of the miller was alone at home, and said to the little peasant, 'Lie down on the straw,' and gave him some bread-and-cheese. The little peasant ate and lay down, his skin beside him, and the wife thought, 'He is tired and will sleep.' In the meantime the parson came in, and the miller's wife received him kindly, and said: 'My husband is out; we will give ourselves a treat.' The little peasant listened, and as he heard of 'treating' he was angry that he had had to put up with bread and cheese. Then the woman brought out roast meat, salad, cakes, and wine.

As they were now sitting and just going to eat, there was a knock outside, and the woman said: 'Oh, that is my hus-

band!' She quickly hid the roast meat in the tiled stove, the wine under the pillow, the salad on the bed, the cakes under it, and the parson in the cupboard at the entrance. Then she opened the door for her husband, and said: 'Thank Heaven that you are safe back! What dreadful weather! It looks as if the world was coming to an end.'

The miller saw the little peasant lying on the straw, and asked: 'What is that fellow doing there?'

'Oh,' said the woman, 'the poor fellow came in the storm and rain and asked for shelter, so I gave him some bread and cheese, and showed him the straw.'

The husband then said: 'I have no objection, but get me something to eat.'

The wife said: 'I have nothing but bread and cheese.'

'I am contented with anything,' answered the husband, 'for my part, even with bread and cheese.' Then he looked at the little peasant, and called him to come and eat with him. The peasant did not require to be invited twice, but got up and ate with him. After this the miller saw the skin lying on the ground in which the raven was wrapped up, and asked: 'What hast thou there?'

The peasant answered: 'I have a soothsayer inside that skin.'

'Can he prophesy to me?' asked the miller.

'Why not,' answered the little peasant; 'but he says only four things; the fifth he keeps to himself.'

The miller was curious, and said: 'Let him prophesy, then.'

The little peasant pressed the raven on the head, so that it cawed and said 'Krr, krr!'

The miller said: 'What did he say?'

The little peasant answered: 'In the first place he says there is wine hidden under the pillow.'

'I must go and see,' said the miller, and he went and found the wine. 'Now go on,' said the miller.

The little peasant made the raven croak again, and said: 'In the second place he said there is roast meat in the stove.'

'I must go and see,' said the miller. He went and found the roast meat.

The peasant let the raven prophesy again, and said: 'In the third place he says there is a salad on the bed.'

'I must go and see,' said the miller. He went and found the salad.

At last the little peasant pressed the raven again till he

croaked, and said: 'In the fourth place he says there are some cakes under the bed.'

'I must go and see,' said the miller. He went and found the cakes.

And now the two sat together at the table, but the miller's wife was frightened to death, and went to bed, and took all the keys with her. The miller would have liked to know the fifth prophecy, but the little peasant said: 'We will first quietly eat the four things, for the fifth is a bad one.'

They finished eating, and then they bargained as to how much the miller should pay for the fifth prophecy, until they agreed upon three hundred thalers. Then the peasant pressed the raven's head again, so that he croaked aloud. The miller asked what it said. The little peasant answered: 'He says that outside in the cupboard at the entrance the devil is hiding.'

The miller said, 'The devil must go at once,' and opened the house door, but, as the wife had the keys of the cupboard, the little peasant broke open its door, and the parson rushed out as fast as he could. The miller said, 'It was true; I saw the black fellow with my own eyes.' The little peasant, however, made off next morning by sunrise, with his three hundred thalers.

When the little peasant got home, he did things in grand style; he built a beautiful house, and the peasants said, 'The little peasant has been to the place where the golden snow falls, and people carry it home in shovels.' They took him before the mayor that he might explain from whence his riches came. He answered, 'I sold the skin of my cow in the town, for three hundred thalers.'

When the peasants heard that, they also wished for the same great profits; they went home, killed all their cows, and took off their skins to sell them in the town to the greatest advantage.

The magistrate, however, said, 'My servant must go first.'

But when she came to the merchant in the town, he would not give her more than three thalers for a skin; and when the others came, he would not give them so much, but said, 'What can I do with all these skins?'

They were, therefore, very angry with the little peasant, for thus having deceived them; they desired revenge, and accused him of treachery before the magistrate.

The innocent little peasant was unanimously condemned to death, and was to be rolled into the water in a barrel pierced

full of holes. He was led forth, and a priest was brought to say a Mass for the good of his soul. The other people were made to retire to a distance, and when the little peasant looked in the minister's face, he recognised the man who had been with the miller's wife, and said to him, 'I freed you from the cupboard; free me from the barrel.'

Now, there was just passing, with a flock of sheep, a shepherd, who wished (as the little peasant knew) to be magistrate, so he called out loudly, 'No, I will not; if the whole world wished it, I would not.'

When the shepherd heard this, he came near, and said, 'What is the matter? What will you not do?'

The little peasant answered, 'They want to make me magistrate if I will but get into the barrel, but I will not.'

The shepherd said, 'If there is nothing else required in order to be magistrate, I would get at once into the barrel.'

The little peasant said, 'If you will get into it, you will be a magistrate.'

The shepherd was contented, got in, and the little peasant shut the lid down on him; then he took the flock of sheep for himself, and drove it off.

The parson went to the people, and said that he had read the Mass for the soul. Then they came and rolled the barrel towards the water. When the barrel began to roll, the shepherd cried, 'I am quite willing to be magistrate!'

They thought that it was the little peasant who thus cried out, and said, 'That we well believe, but you must first go down below,' and rolled the barrel into the water. Then the peasants went home, and as they came to the village, the little peasant also came up, driving quietly a flock of sheep, and seemed quite happy. The peasants were astonished, and said, 'Little peasant, how do you come here? Do you come out of the water?'

'Certainly,' answered the little peasant; 'I sank deep down, very deep, until I at last came to the ground. I knocked out the bottom of the cask, and crept from it, and there were beautiful meadows in which a number of lambs were feeding, and of these I brought a flock away with me.'

'Are there more?' asked the peasants.

'Oh yes,' he replied; 'more than you could want.'

Then the peasants determined that they also would fetch some sheep—a flock apiece; but the magistrate said, 'I come first.'

They all went together to the water. There were in the blue sky some of the little fleecy clouds which are called lambs,

and these were reflected in the stream, so the peasants cried, 'We can already see the sheep at the bottom of the water.'

The magistrate said, 'I will go first and look about me; if all is well, I will call you.' So he jumped in—splash! They thought he said 'Come,' and the whole crowd plunged in after him. Thus the entire village died out, and the little peasant was the sole heir, and became a rich man.

BROTHER JOLLY.

THERE had been for some time a great war, which at last came to an end, and several soldiers were discharged. Amongst them was Brother Jolly, who only received a small loaf and four kreutzers in gold, with which he departed.

St. Peter had, however, placed himself in his way, in the shape of a poor beggar, sitting by the roadside, who asked for alms, and Brother Jolly said: 'What shall I give you? I am only a poor discharged soldier, and all they have given me is a loaf of bread and four kreutzers, and when it is all gone, I must beg as well as you. However, I will give you something.' Then he divided the loaf into four pieces, and gave one to the beggar, as well as one of his kreutzers.

The beggar thanked him, and went away, but only to a little distance; for, again changing his appearance and face, he seated himself by the highway, waited for Brother Jolly to pass, and again begged for alms. The good-natured soldier gave this beggar also a fourth of his bread and a kreutzer.

St. Peter thanked him, and, after walking some distance, a third time seated himself in another form to beg of Brother Jolly. This time also he gave him a third piece of the divided loaf and another kreutzer. The beggar thanked him and went away.

The kind-hearted fellow had now only a fourth part of the loaf and one kreutzer left, so he went to an inn, ate the bread, and paid his kreutzer for a jug of beer. As soon as he had finished, he went out, and travelled on for some distance, and there again was St. Peter in the form of a discharged soldier like himself.

'Good-evening, comrade,' he said; 'could you give me a piece of bread, and a kreutzer to buy something to drink?'

'Where am I to get it?' answered Brother Jolly. 'I had

my discharge to-day, and they gave me a loaf of bread and four gold kreutzers. But I met three beggars on the highroad, and I gave them each a fourth part of my bread and a kreutzer, and the last kreutzer I have just paid for something to drink with my last piece of bread. Now I am empty, and, if you also have nothing, we can go and beg together.'

'No,' answered St. Peter, 'we need not do that; I understand a little of medicine and surgery, and can soon earn as much as I shall want.'

'Well,' replied Brother Jolly, 'I don't understand doctoring at all, so I must go and beg alone.'

'No; come with me,' cried the other; 'of whatever I earn, you shall have half.'

'That is good news for me,' said Brother Jolly, so they went away together.

After a time, as they passed a peasant's house, they heard great cries and lamentations, so they went in, and found the husband very ill and at the point of death, and the wife weeping and howling with all her might.

'Leave off that noise,' said St. Peter; 'I will soon cure your husband.' Then he took some salve out of his pocket, and healed the man so quickly that he could stand up and was quite well.

The husband and wife joyfully thanked the stranger, and said, 'What can we give you in return for this kindness?'

But St. Peter would take nothing, and the more they offered the more he refused, although Brother Jolly nudged him, and said, 'Take something, we want it.'

At last the grateful people brought a lamb, and said that he must take it, but he would not. Then Brother Jolly nudged him in the side, and said: 'Take it, you stupid; we do want it.'

Then St. Peter said at last, 'Well, I will take the lamb, but I cannot carry it; you must do that, if you want it.'

'Oh, that will be no trouble to me,' cried the other, and, taking it on his shoulder, they went away together. After a while they came to a wood, and Brother Jolly, who began to feel tired and hungry, for the lamb was heavy, proposed that they should stop and rest. 'See,' he said, 'this is a beautiful place for us to cook the lamb and eat it.'

'It's all the same to me,' replied St. Peter, 'but I can have nothing to do with the cooking; you must do that, if you have a kettle, and I will go away for a little while till it is ready. You must not, however, eat any till I come back; I will be here quite in time.'

'Go along,' said Brother Jolly; 'I understand how to cook, and I will soon have dinner ready.'

Then St. Peter went away, and Brother Jolly killed the lamb, lighted a fire, and threw the meat into the kettle to boil. It was quite ready, however, before St. Peter returned, and Brother Jolly became so impatient that he took out of the kettle a part of the flesh, in which was the heart. 'The heart is the best of all,' he said, tasting it, and, finding it very good, he ate it all.

At last his comrade returned, and said: 'You may eat all the lamb yourself; I only want the heart, so just give it me.'

Then Brother Jolly took a knife and fork and began searching amongst the pieces of meat for the heart, which, of course, he could not find. Then he said: 'It is not there.'

'Then where can it be?' said St. Peter.

'I do not know,' said Brother Jolly; 'but see,' he added, 'why, what a couple of fools we are, searching for a lamb's heart; of course there is not one to be found, for a lamb has no heart.'

'Ah,' said the other, 'that is news; every animal has a heart: why should not a lamb?'

'No, certainly, brother,' he said, 'a lamb has no heart; reflect a little, and you will be convinced that it really has none.'

'Well, certainly, it is quite clear that there is no heart to be found in this one, and as I do not want any other part, you may eat it all yourself.'

'I cannot eat it all,' replied Brother Jolly, 'so what is left I will put into my knapsack.'

When this was done the two started to continue their journey, and St. Peter caused a large quantity of water to rise on the road just across where they had to pass. Said St Peter: 'You go first.'

'No,' answered the other, 'I would rather see you across;' for he thought, 'If the water is very deep I won't go at all.'

So St. Peter stepped over, and the water only came up to his knees. His comrade prepared to follow, but he had not gone far when the water came up to his neck. 'Brother, help me!' he cried.

'Will you confess, then, that you ate the lamb's heart?' he replied.

'No,' he said; 'I did not eat it.'

Immediately the water became deeper, and flowed to his mouth. 'Help! help me, brother!' he cried.

'Will you confess now that you have eaten the lamb's heart?' cried St. Peter.

'No,' he replied; 'I did not eat it.'

Now, St. Peter did not intend to drown him, so he allowed the water to subside, and Brother Jolly crossed over safely. They travelled after this till they reached a foreign land, and in the chief city heard that the king's daughter was very ill, and not expected to live.

'Holloa, brother!' said the soldier, 'that is a good chance for us; if you cure her we shall never know want again.'

But St. Peter did not hurry himself, and when his comrade begged him to put his best foot foremost he went slower than ever. Brother Jolly pushed him and dragged him on, but all to no purpose, and at last they heard that the king's daughter was dead. 'There now,' cried Brother Jolly, 'we have lost our chance all through your sleepy walking.'

'Be quiet,' said St. Peter; 'I can not only cure the sick, but I can restore the dead to life.'

'If that is the case,' replied his comrade, 'you must get at least half of the kingdom.'

They therefore went to the king's castle, and found them all in great grief. But St. Peter said to the king: 'Do not mourn; I can restore the princess to life.'

They were at once led to her room, and he said: 'Bring me a kettle of water.' When it was brought he ordered everyone to leave the room, only Brother Jolly was left. St. Peter then cut up the body, threw it into the water, and let it boil. And when the flesh fell off them he took the beautiful white bones and laid them in their right order on a table. When this was done he said three times: 'In the name of the Trinity, dead woman, arise!' And at the third time the princess arose alive, well, and beautiful.

The king was joyful, and said to St. Peter: 'Name your reward; it shall be yours, even to the half of my kingdom.'

But St. Peter replied: 'No, I will take no reward for what I have done.'

'Oh, you foolish fellow!' thought Brother Jolly to himself. Then he nudged him again in the side. 'How can you be so stupid? If you don't want anything, I do.'

St. Peter, however, still refused, but the king, seeing that his comrade was quite willing to accept something, told his treasurer to fill the soldier's knapsack with gold.

They left the city after this, and travelled on till they came to a wood. Then said St. Peter: 'We may as well divide that gold.'

'With all my heart,' replied the good-natured fellow.

St. Peter took the gold, and divided it into three portions.

'What is that for?' asked Brother Jolly. 'There are only two of us.'

'Oh,' he replied, 'it is all right. One third is for myself, one third for you, and one third for him who ate the lamb's heart.'

'Oh, I ate that!' cried Brother Jolly, gathering the money up quickly. 'I did indeed; can't you believe me?'

'How can it be true?' replied Peter; 'a lamb has no heart.'

'Nonsense, brother,' he said, 'what are you thinking of? A lamb has a heart as well as other animals. Why should he not have one?'

'Well, so be it,' replied St. Peter. 'You may keep all the gold to yourself, but I will go on my way alone in future.'

'As you please, brother,' answered the soldier. 'Farewell.'

Then St. Peter started on another road, and left Brother Jolly to pursue his way by himself. 'It is just as well,' thought he; 'but still he is a most wonderful man.' The soldier had now quite as much money as he wanted, but he knew not how to spend it properly; he wasted it or gave it away, till as time went on he was again almost penniless. At last he arrived at a city where he heard that the king's daughter had just died. 'Holloa,' thought he, 'here is an opportunity; I know how to restore her to life, and they will pay me something worth having this time.' So he went to the king, and told him that he could restore his daughter to life.

Now, the king had heard of the discharged soldier who had lately given new life to a princess, and he thought Brother Jolly was the man; but as he had no confidence in him, he consulted his counsellors as to whether he should venture if the princess was really dead. They said he might give it a trial.

Then Brother Jolly ordered the kettle to be filled with hot water, and went into the room with the dead princess alone. He cut up the body, threw it into the water, and put it on the fire just as St. Peter had done. The water boiled, and the flesh fell off the bones, which he took and put on the table; but he did not know how to arrange them, and placed them all wrong. Then he said 'Arise' three times, but the bones did not move. He repeated it three times more, but in vain. Then he cried out: 'Stand up, will you, or you will get what you don't expect!'

At this moment St. Peter appeared as a discharged soldier, and entered the room through the window.

'You foolish man,' he cried, 'how can you raise the dead to life?'

Thereupon he put the bones in right order, and said three times: 'In the name of the Holy Trinity, dead maiden, arise!' And the princess rose and stood on her feet, and was as well and strong as ever. Then St. Peter went away through the window, and the soldier led the princess to her father. He knew, however, that he was not free to ask for a reward, for St. Peter had forbidden him to take anything, and therefore when the king asked him what he would have, he said he would take nothing, although he wanted it much. Yet the king ordered his knapsack to be filled with gold, and with many thanks he took his departure.

Outside near the castle gate he met St. Peter, who said to him: 'See now, I forbade you to take anything, and yet you have received a knapsack full of gold.'

'What could I do,' he replied, 'when they would put it in for me?'

'Then I can only tell you,' was the reply, 'that if you get into trouble a second time by undertaking what you cannot perform, it will be worse for you.'

'All right, brother; I don't care now I have the gold, and I shall not care about raising dead people.'

'Ah,' said St. Peter, 'your gold will not last long. However, if you do not go into unlawful paths, I will give to your knapsack the power of containing in itself whatever you may wish for. And now farewell; you will see me no more.'

'Good-bye,' said the soldier, as he turned away. 'Well,' he thought, 'I am glad that he is gone; he is a wonderful fellow, no doubt, but I am better without him for a companion.'

Of the wonderful power with which he had endowed his knapsack Brother Jolly never thought then.

He went on his way with his gold from place to place, and spent and wasted it as he did before, and at last he had nothing left but four kreutzers. With this sum he entered an inn by the roadside, and felt that the money must go, so he spent three kreutzers in wine, and one in bread.

As he sat eating his bread and drinking his wine, the fragrant smell of roast goose reached his nose. Brother Jolly looked round and peeped about, and at last saw that the landlady had two geese roasting in the oven.

Then he suddenly remembered what his old comrade had said, that whatever he wished for he would find in his knapsack.

'Holloa,' he said to himself, 'then I must wish for the geese to be there.' Then he went out, and before the door he said: 'I wish that the two geese roasting in the oven were in my knapsack.' When he had said this he took it off, peeped in, and there they both lay. 'Ah!' he exclaimed, 'this is all right; I am a mighty chap after all;' and going farther into a meadow, he sat down to enjoy his good fare.

Just as he had finished eating one goose two farm-labourers came by, and when they saw the remaining goose they stood still and looked at it with hungry eyes. 'Well,' thought Brother Jolly, 'one is enough for me.' So he beckoned the labourers nearer, and said: 'Here, take this goose, and drink my health as you eat it.'

They thanked him and went away quickly to the inn, bought some wine and bread, and then unpacked the goose which had been given them, and began to eat it.

The landlady, when she saw it, went to her husband, and said: 'Those two are eating goose; just see if one of ours is gone from the oven.'

The landlord ran to look, and found the oven empty. 'You thieves!' he exclaimed, running out to them, 'where did you get roast goose to eat? tell me instantly, or I will give you a taste of green hazel juice.'

'We are not thieves!' they cried. 'A discharged soldier gave us this goose yonder in the meadow.'

'You are not going to make me believe that!' cried the landlord. 'That soldier has been here, and a most respectable fellow he is; I watched him when he left the house, and he had nothing with him then. No; you are the thieves, and shall pay for the goose.' But as they could not pay for it, he took a stick and thrashed them out of the house.

Brother Jolly went on his way till he came to a place where stood a beautiful castle, and not far from it a mean-looking inn. The soldier went up to the inn and asked for a night's lodging. But the landlord said: 'There is not room here; the house is full of noble guests.'

'I wonder at that,' said Brother Jolly; 'why should they come here instead of going to that beautiful castle yonder?'

'Ah, yes,' said the landlord, 'many have thought as you do; they have gone to spend a night at the castle, but they have never returned alive.'

'If others have tried it,' said Brother Jolly, 'I will try it too.'

'Do not,' said the landlord; 'it will cost you your life.'

'I am not likely to be killed," said the soldier. 'Now, landlord, give me something to eat and drink and the keys.'

So the landlord brought him a good supper to take with him, and then Brother Jolly set out to go to the castle. On arriving he first sat down and ate with great relish, and when he began to feel sleepy, laid himself on the ground, for there was no bed, and was soon asleep.

In the night, however, he was awoke by a terrible noise, and when he roused himself he saw nine hideous imps in the room dancing in a ring round him. 'Dance away,' he cried, 'as long as you will, but don't come near me!" The imps, however, came nearer and nearer, till one of them trod on his face with his heavy foot. 'Keep away, you wretches!' he cried, but still they came nearer. Then was Brother Jolly in a rage; he started up, seized a chair, and struck with the legs right and left. But nine imps against one soldier is rather too much, and if he struck one before him, another behind would pull his hair most unmercifully. 'You demons!' he cried, all at once. 'I will serve you out; wait a bit—now then, all nine of you into my knapsack!' Whisk! and they were all in. He fastened the bag and threw it into a corner.

Then all was quiet, and Brother Jolly laid himself down again and slept till broad daylight, when the arrival of the landlord of the inn and the nobleman to whom the castle belonged woke him. They were astonished to find him alive and full of spirits, and said to him: 'Have you not seen any ghosts during the night, and did they not try to hurt you?'

'Well, not very much,' answered Brother Jolly; 'I have them all nine in my knapsack. You can dwell in your castle in peace now,' he said to the nobleman, 'they will never trouble you again.'

The nobleman thanked the soldier and loaded him with presents; he also begged him to remain in his service, and promised to take care of him for the remainder of his life.

But the soldier said: 'No; I have a roving disposition. I could never rest in one place; I will go and travel farther.'

Then Brother Jolly went to a smith's, and laying the knapsack containing the imps on the anvil, asked the smith and his man to strike it with their great hammers with all their strength. The imps set up a loud screech, and when at last all was quiet the knapsack was opened. Eight of them were found quite dead, but the ninth, who had laid himself in a fold, was still living. He slipped out when the knapsack was opened, and escaped.

Thereupon Brother Jolly wandered about the world, and whoever knew him could tell much about him. But at last he grew old and thought of his end, so he went to a hermit who was known to be a pious man, and said to him: 'I am tired of wandering, and want to consider the way of getting to heaven.'

The hermit answered: 'There are two ways: one broad and pleasant, the other narrow and rough. It is the last that leads to heaven.'

'I should be a fool,' thought Jolly, 'if I took the narrow and rough road.' So he went the broad and pleasant way, and came at last to a large black gate, which was the gate of hell. Brother Jolly knocked, and the doorkeeper peeped out to see who it was. But when he saw Brother Jolly he was frightened, for he was the ninth devil who had been with the others in the knapsack, and had escaped with a black eye. Therefore he quickly rebolted the door, ran to the chief of the devils, and said: 'Outside is a fellow with a knapsack, who wishes to come in; but do not let him, or he will wish all hell into his knapsack. He had me fearfully hammered in it.' Then Brother Jolly was told to go away, as he should not get in there. 'If they do not wish me to be here,' he thought, 'I will see if I can get into heaven; I must stay somewhere.' He turned back, and went on until he came to the gate of heaven, where he also knocked. St. Peter sat as doorkeeper. Brother Jolly recognised him at once. 'Here,' he thought, 'is an old friend; I shall get on better.'

Then St. Peter said: 'I verily believe you wish to get into heaven.'

'Let me in, brother; I must be somewhere. If they would have let me in below I should not have come here.'

'No,' said St. Peter, 'you cannot enter.'

'Then take your knapsack back, for I will have nothing from you.' And Brother Jolly gave him the knapsack through the bars, and St. Peter hung it beside his seat. Brother Jolly then said: 'Now I wish myself inside my knapsack.'

In a second he was there, and St. Peter was forced to let him stay.

THE POOR MAN AND THE RICH.

In olden times, when the Lord Himself used to walk on the earth amongst men, it once happened that He became tired, and night came on before He could find shelter. At last He saw before Him two houses just opposite to each other—one large and beautiful, which belonged to a rich man; the other, small and mean, which was owned by a poor one.

The Lord thought, 'I shall not be much trouble to the rich man, so I will pass the night with him.' So He knocked at the door. At the sound the rich man opened a window, and asked the stranger what He wanted. 'I beg you to give me a night's lodging,' He replied.

Then the rich man looked at the wanderer from head to foot, and he saw that He was dressed in mean clothes; so he shook his head, and said: 'I cannot take you in; my rooms are full of valuable things, and if I were to admit everyone who knocks at my door, I should soon have to take the beggar's staff myself. You must seek for what you want elsewhere.' Then he shut down the window, and left the Lord standing outside.

He turned His back upon the grand house, and went across to the other. Scarcely had He knocked when the poor man came and opened the door, and begged the wanderer to enter. 'You must remain all night with us,' he said; 'it is already quite dark, and you cannot attempt to go farther.'

That pleased the Lord, and He stepped in; the wife of the poor man welcomed Him, and told Him to make Himself quite comfortable. 'We have not much,' she said; 'but what there is we will give you with all our hearts.'

She placed the potatoes on the fire, and while they were cooking milked the goat, that the visitor might have a little milk. As soon as the cloth was laid the Lord seated Himself at the table and ate with them, and the poor fare tasted good, because it was partaken amid contentment and peace.

After they had finished, and bed-time came, the wife said to her husband privately: 'Dear husband, let us for to-night make up a straw bed for ourselves that the traveller may lie in our bed and rest; after walking the whole day he must be tired.'

'With all my heart,' he replied; 'I will go and ask him to do so.'

The Lord, however, would not at first consent to accept this kind offer, but they were so earnest in their request that at length He could not refuse. The poor man and his wife, therefore, slept on their bed of straw.

In the morning He rose, had breakfast with them, and as He wished them farewell, He said: 'As you have been so kind and compassionate to me when you thought I was poor and in need, therefore I will show you that I have power to reward you. Three times shall your wish be granted you.'

'What greater blessings can I wish for,' said the husband, 'but that we two, as long as we live, may be healthy and strong, and that we may always have our simple daily wants provided for? I cannot think of a third wish.'

'Would you not like a new house instead of this old one?' He asked.

'Oh yes!' they both cried. 'If we have these three wishes granted we shall want nothing more.'

Then the Lord changed the old house into a new one, and, promising them the fulfilment of their other wishes, blessed them, and went His way. About noon the owner of the fine house happened to look out of his window, and saw with surprise opposite to him a pretty new cottage with red tiles, on the spot where the old house once stood. He stared at it for some time, and at last called his wife, and said to her: 'Tell me how this can have happened: yesterday there stood in that place an old wretched-looking hut; to-day this beautiful new cottage. Run over and ask how it has all come about.'

The wife went to ask the poor man. 'Yesterday evening,' he said, 'came a poor traveller to our door and begged for a night's lodging. This morning when He left us He offered us three wishes. We wished for continued health and our daily food, and besides for a beautiful new house instead of our old hut.'

On hearing this the rich man's wife ran hastily back, and related to her husband what she had heard. 'I could tear and beat myself to pieces!' he exclaimed. 'Oh, if I had only known! That stranger came here first, and begged me to give him a night's lodging, but I refused him.'

'Never mind,' said his wife. 'Now make haste, get on your horse and ride after him; if you can but overtake him you can ask him to grant you three wishes also.'

The rich man followed this good advice, saddled his horse, rode after the traveller, and at last overtook Him. He spoke to Him then most gently and kindly, and hoped that He would

not take it amiss that he had not admitted Him the evening before. 'I assure you,' he said, 'I was only looking for the key of the house-door, and in the meantime you went away; if you should pass our way again you must stay with us.'

'Yes,' He replied, 'I will do so, if I ever pass your house again.'

Then the rich man asked Him if He would not grant him three wishes as well as his neighbour. 'I would grant you this willingly,' replied the Lord, 'but I do not think it would be good for you; you have nothing to wish for.'

The rich man replied that he could easily find something to wish for that would bring him good fortune, if he only knew that his wishes would be accomplished.

'Very well then,' replied the Lord, 'ride home, and whatever your three wishes are shall be granted.'

The rich man had obtained his desire, and he rode homewards thinking deeply of what the wishes should be. As he thus thought, he allowed the bridle to hang so loosely that his horse began to caper and dance about till his thoughts were all so scattered that he could not collect them again. He struck the horse, and said: 'Be quiet, Bess;' but the animal pranced and reared till he was nearly thrown off. At last he became angry, and cried out: 'What do you mean by it? I wish your neck was broken.'

No sooner had he spoken the words than his horse fell under him and lay dead, and so was his first wish fulfilled. As he was by nature avaricious, he would not leave the saddle and bridle behind him, so he cut the straps, hung them on his back, and prepared to walk home, as he was now obliged to do on foot. 'We have still two wishes remaining,' he said, and comforted himself with the thought.

As he now walked along through the hot sand with the burning noonday sun shining brightly upon him, he became fretful with the heat and fatigue. The saddle dragged him back, and seemed ready to fall, and he could not decide what to wish for. 'If I were to wish for all the riches and treasures in the world,' he said to himself, 'what would be the use? I should not know which to choose. I will contrive, however, that when I have gained my two wishes I shall have nothing else left to wish for.' Then he sighed, and said: 'If I were only like the Bavarian peasant, who had three wishes offered him! First he wished for a draught of beer; the second time for as much beer as he could drink; and the third time for a

whole cask. Each time he thought he had gained what he wanted, but afterwards it seemed to him too little.'

Presently there came to him a thought of how happy his wife must be, sitting in their cool room at home, and enjoying something very nice. It vexed him so much not to be there with her that, without a thought of the consequences, he exclaimed: 'Ah! I wish this heavy saddle would slip from my back, and that she was sitting upon it, not able to move.'

As the last word fell from his lips the saddle and bridle vanished, and he became aware that his second wish was fulfilled.

Heated as he became at this thought, he yet ran home, for he wanted to sit alone in his chamber, and think of something great for his last wish. But when he opened the room door there sat his wife on the saddle, screaming and lamenting that she was fixed, and could not get down.

'Make yourself quite happy,' he said. 'I can wish for all the riches in the world to be ours; and my wish will be accomplished if you will only remain sitting there.'

'But,' she replied angrily, 'you stupid head! what would be the use of all the riches in the world to me if I am obliged to sit always on this saddle? No, no, you wished me here, and now you must wish me off again.'

He was obliged, therefore, much against his will, to utter as his third wish that his wife might be set free, and able to alight from the saddle, and the wish was immediately granted.

The rich and selfish man had, therefore, no other result from his three wishes than anger, vexation, trouble, hard words from his wife, and the loss of his horse. The poor people lived pious and happy until their blessed end.

OLD HILDEBRAND.

(Abridged.)

THERE was once a peasant and his wife, and the parson of the village wished to spend a whole day pleasantly with the woman. She was quite willing. One day, therefore, he said to the wife: 'Listen, my dear peasant woman; I have thought of a way by which we may spend a whole day happily together.

You must lie in bed on Wednesday, and tell your husband that you are ill, and continue to complain until Sunday. When I preach I will say in my sermon that whoever has a sick child, a sick husband, a sick wife, a sick father, a sick mother, a sick sister, a sick brother, or whomsoever it may be, will get them cured at once if he take a pilgrimage to Göckerly Mountain in Welshland, taking with him a kreutzer, and bringing back with him a peck of laurel leaves.'

The peasant's wife went to bed on Wednesday, saying that she was very ill. Her husband did what he could for her, but nothing did her any good. When Sunday came, she said: 'I feel very ill, as if I were going to die, so I should like to hear the parson preach to-day.'

The peasant answered: 'Do not attempt it; it might kill you. I will go to the sermon, and then tell you all the parson says.'

'Well,' said the woman, 'pay attention, and then tell me all you hear.'

The peasant went to hear the sermon, and the parson said in it that whoever had any sick child, or other relative ill, he should make a pilgrimage to the Göckerly Mountain in Welshland, where a peck of laurel leaves would cost a kreutzer, and then the sick one would be cured; if anyone wished to go he would give him a bag for the laurel leaves and a kreutzer. Then the peasant was rejoiced and went to the parson, who gave him the bag and kreutzer. He went home and said: 'Rejoice, wife, now you will be cured;' and he told her what the parson had said, that he had got the bag and kreutzer from him, and was going on a pilgrimage that she might be cured. And then he went. No sooner was the peasant gone than his wife got up and the parson was with her.

The peasant walked on and met his cousin, who was returning from market, after he had sold his eggs. 'Whither so fast?' asked he.

'To the Göckerly Mountain,' answered the peasant, who then told him all the parson had said.

'Do you believe such nonsense?' said the egg-merchant; 'the parson only wanted to spend a quiet day with your wife by himself.'

'If I believed that,' exclaimed the peasant; 'I would like to know if it is true.'

'Get into my basket,' said the egg-merchant, 'and I will carry you to the house.'

The peasant agreed, got into the egg-basket, and was carried

home. When they got to the house all was going on merrily; the peasant's wife had killed chickens and made pancakes, and the parson was there and had brought his fiddle. The merchant knocked, and the woman asked who was without.

'It is I, friend,' said he; 'give me shelter to-night, as I have not been able to sell my eggs at the market, and have to carry them home, and they are heavy; and I cannot get on, as it is dark.'

'You come at an inconvenient time,' said the peasant-wife; 'but as it cannot be helped, come and sit before the fire.' Then the cousin put his basket down on the bench by the stove.

The parson and the woman were right merry. 'Sing to me, my dear woman,' said the parson.

'Oh,' answered the woman, 'I cannot sing now, though I used to sing in my young days.'

'Come,' said the parson, 'sing just one little song.'

Then she sang:

'I have just sent my husband away,
To the distant hill of Göckerlay.'

Then sang the parson:

'May it be long ere he comes back;
I will not ask for my laurel sack,
Hallelujah!'

The egg-merchant sang (I should say that the peasant's name was Hildebrand):

'What doest thou, my Hildebrand dear,
Close by the stove in the basket here?
Hallelujah!'

And then the peasant in the basket sang:

'I can suffer no more singing to-day;
In the basket I'll no longer stay.'

And he got out of the basket and cudgelled the parson out of the house.

LENGTH OF LIFE.

When God had created the world, and was about to fix the length of every creature's life, the ass came and asked: 'Lord, how long shall I live?'

'Thirty years,' replied God; 'will that content thee?'

'Oh, my Lord,' replied the ass, 'that is a long time! Think of my painful life! From morning to night I have to bear heavy burdens, to carry sacks of corn to the mill that others may eat bread, while I am comforted and refreshed only with blows and kicks. Let me off a portion of the long time.'

Then God had pity, and gave him eighteen years. The ass went away comforted, and the dog appeared. 'How long do you wish to live?' said God to him; 'thirty years were too many for the ass, but you would be content with them.'

'Lord,' answered the dog, 'is that Thy will? Consider how I shall have to run; my feet will never hold out so long; and when I have lost my voice for barking and my teeth for biting, what will be left for me but to run from one corner to another and growl?' God saw that he was right, and released him from twelve years.

Then came the ape. 'You will be willing to live thirty years,' said the Lord to him; 'you do not need to work as the ass and dog, and are always happy.'

'Ah, Lord,' answered he, 'it seems, but is not really so. When it rains porridge I have no spoon; I must always play funny pranks and make faces for people to laugh at, and if they hand me an apple and I bite it, it is sour. How often is sadness concealed behind mirth! I cannot keep it up for thirty years.' God was gracious, and took off ten years.

At last appeared man, joyous, healthy and vigorous, and asked God to fix his time. 'Thirty years shalt thou live,' said the Lord; 'is that enough for thee?'

'What a short time!' exclaimed man. 'When I have built my house and the fire burns on my own hearth, when I have planted trees that blossom and bear fruit, and I wish to enjoy my life, then I shall die; O Lord, prolong my time.'

'I will add to your years the eighteen years of the ass,' said God.

'That is not enough,' replied the man.

'Thou shalt also have the dog's twelve years.'

'Still too little.'

'Well,' said God, 'I will also give you the ten years of the ape; but more you will not receive.' The man went away, but was not contented.

Thus the man lives seventy years. The first thirty are his human years, which go quickly away; then he is healthy, cheerful, works with pleasure, and rejoices in his being. Then follow the eighteen years of the ass, when one burden after

another is laid on him; he must carry the corn that feeds another, and blows and kicks are the reward of his faithful service. Then come the twelve years of the dog, when he lies in corners, growls and has no teeth to bite with; and when this time is over the ten years of the ape make the conclusion. Then man is weak-headed and foolish, does silly things, and becomes a jest for the children.

THE EARS OF CORN.

In olden times, when God still walked the earth, the fertility of the soil was much greater than it is now. Then the ears of corn did not bear fifty or sixty fold, but four or five hundred fold. The corn grew on the stalk from the bottom to the top, and the ear was as long as the stalk. It is men's nature, however, when they have abundance, not to value the blessings that come from God, but to become indifferent and careless. One day a woman was going by a corn-field, and her little child, who was running beside her, fell into a puddle and dirtied his clothes. The mother tore up a handful of the ears of corn and cleaned the dress with them. When the Lord, who was just then passing, saw it, He was angry, and said: 'Henceforth the corn-stalk shall bear no more ears; men are no more worthy of the heavenly gift.' The bystanders, who heard this, were terrified; they fell on their knees and prayed that He would leave something on the stalks, even if they did not deserve it, for the innocent birds, who would otherwise starve. The Lord, who foresaw their suffering, had pity on them, and granted their request. So the ears remained at the top as they now grow.

THE END.

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