

FAIRY TALES

TOLD

AGAIN

ILLUSTRATED

by

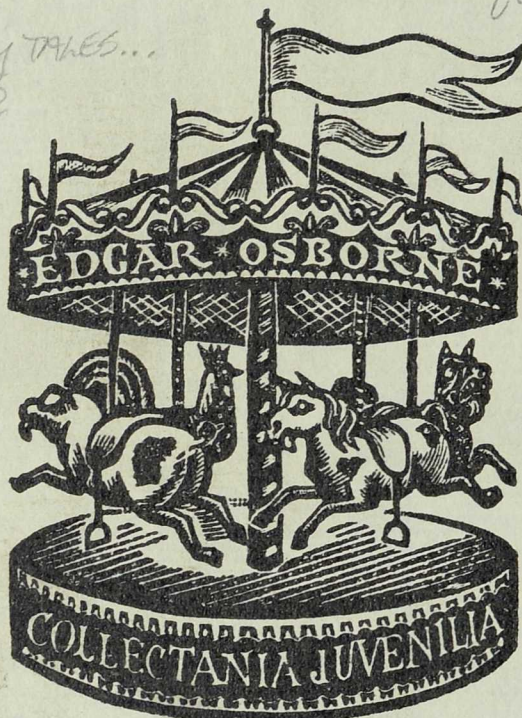
GUSTAVE DORE.

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Frontispiece.]

FAIRY TALES TOLD AGAIN.

BY

The Author of "Little Red Shoes," &c.

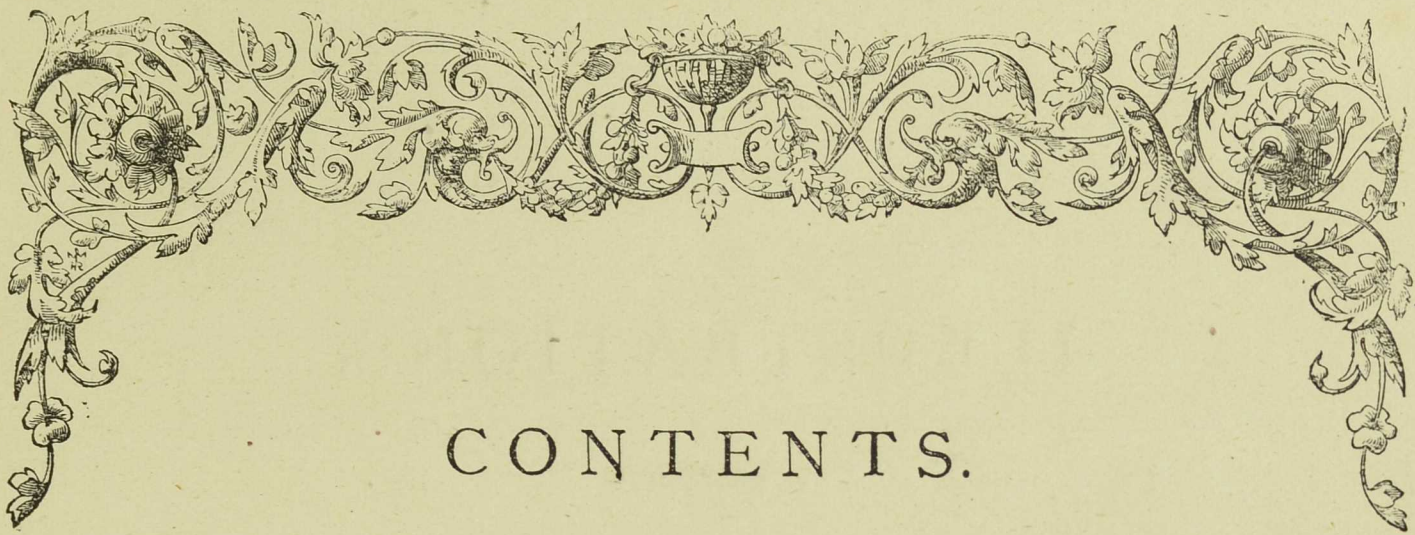
ILLUSTRATED BY GUSTAVE DORÉ.

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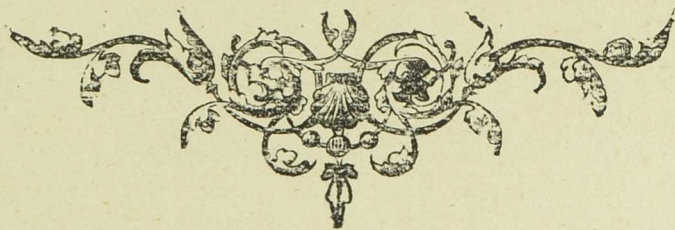
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	5
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY	8
THE THREE WISHES	26
THE WITCH OF THE WOOD	29
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD	34
THE WONDERFUL STORY OF LITTLE BRIDGET	43
HOP-O'-MY-THUMB	49
ORANGE AND LEMON	63
OLD MOTHER GOOSE	67
JACK'S LUCK	71
CINDERELLA; OR, THE GLASS SLIPPER	77
PUSS IN BOOTS	85



ILLUSTRATIONS.



FRONTISPIECE.

"What beautiful white wool you are making there!"	<i>To face Page</i>	18
"The ruins of what appeared to have been a magnificent building"		19
"For round the doorway was gathered a group of huntsmen"		20
"'Halloa!' he exclaimed, as he caught sight of a sleeping form stretched across the doorway"		21
"A melancholy sight indeed—a large banqueting-hall, filled with sleeping figures"		22
"And at last he ran with all his might towards the Sleeping Beauty"		23
"'Which way are you going?' inquired the Wolf, when they came to a place in the wood where two pathways met"		39
"But this did not protect her long, for the Wolf pulled them off again, and leaping on to a stool placed by the bed-side, jumped from thence on to the bed"		41
"She could not help noticing how strangely her grandmother seemed to be altered"		42
"The husband and wife sat some time longer, gazing moodily into the fire"		53
"He soon filled his pockets with the pebbles within reach"		55
"He dropped one of his little white pebbles, and so left a trail behind him by which to find his way back"		56
"The next moment he was mounted on a high branch, anxiously scanning the surrounding country"		58
"The figure of a very big woman appeared at the top of a long flight of stone steps which led up to the door"		59
"'Ho, ho!' he exclaimed, gleefully, as he dragged all the youngsters from their hiding-place"		60
"And with a tremendous tug, which threw him on to his back, succeeded in pulling off one of the Seven League Boots"		63
"Then the old woman took the pumpkin, and cutting a piece off the top, began scooping out the pithy inside"		80
"The Prince seemed mightily taken with the beautiful stranger"		81
"It slipped on quite easily, and fitted perfectly"		85
"Then Puss ran wildly to and fro on the banks of the stream"		89
"The labourers, one and all, took their sickles from out the grass, and prostrated themselves almost to the ground"		91
"Situated on a wooded eminence, and peeping out here and there among the trees, a magnificent castle"		92
"'What do you want here?' thundered the ogre, when he perceived Puss bowing and scraping before him"		93

FAIRY TALES TOLD AGAIN.

INTRODUCTION.

“OME, my dears, come and listen to me!”

No sooner did Grandmamma say this, than all the little people in the nursery left their pretty little games, and swarmed around Grandmamma's great big chair.

First, little Lina, with the large blue eyes, whose pretty round chin just came up comfortably above her Grandmother's knee, at which she sat herself down, with her mouth ready to receive every precious word.

Next, flaxen-haired Johnny, leading along his big dog on four wheels—a genuine Maltese terrier, with real wool on his back—and led by a strap of leather, which was as real as a strap can possibly be.

Then came handsome young Maudie, who had long golden hair that went in large curls all down her shoulders and back. The vain little puss had been trying on a grand white feather, and had been much engaged in the delicious thought of how she would have looked in the glass up-stairs, but at the magic words, “Come and listen!” she instantly forgot her own charms, for she knew that from her dear old Granny's lips she should hear something worth hearing and altogether delightful.

Then bonny little Georgie (and he *was* a bonny little boy), who had been amusing himself and his merry sister beside him with a figure of “Punch,” he too sat down very attentively, with his

long-nosed friend reclining gracefully upon his knees, and merry sister Grace's arms about his neck.

And Master Willie, eight years old last birthday, and quite a man, strode from his corner with a slow and stately step—for was he not (in height and years, at least) above all the others?—came and climbed on to the back of Grandmamma's chair, as being the most dignified position he could find.

And tiny Lily, youngest and baby of them all, was made a queen for the occasion, and had Grandmamma's knee for her throne; for was she not the pet, and the dearest little mite that ever toddled on a floor?

And then Mamma, who was most happy when her dear little children were happy, stood there too, to hear all the stories and fun; and I have no doubt that while she listened, her loving heart went back to the old times when *she* was a little toddler, and sat in the very same beloved lap that tiny Lily was sitting in, and all to hear about the same wonderful things.

And last of all there is—why, you yourself, dear little reader, just as ready to listen as they; and, wonderful to tell, with the whole happy family, Grandmamma and all, upon your own little knees, and with the very book she is reading placed right before your eyes. So don't you think that with these advantages you ought to be the happiest and merriest of them all? I do.

But you are all children, and cannot still your active little tongues all at once and together. In fact, there is quite a hubbub, so that Grandmamma is obliged to say, "S-s-s-h! I did not say, 'Come here and make as much noise as you can;' I said, 'Come and listen to *me*.'"

"But, Grandmamma," says little Lina, "what is it to be about?"

"Wait a little, my dear, and you shall hear."

"And, oh, Grandmamma!" says Maudie, "is it to be about grand ladies with——"

"You shall hear, you shall hear; just listen, my dear."

"And, Gran'ma, dear," cries bonny little Georgie, "will there be any little men with funny noses?"

"You should not ask questions," replies Grandmamma, patting the open pages of the book. "This is a book of wonderful fairy tales, all about people who go to sleep."

"That's not so wonderful!" puts in Master Willie, "*I* go to sleep every night."

"Yes, yes, my boy, but not for——. Now *do* be quiet, like good children, and you'll hear all about it."

"Does it say anything about wild beasts?" asks Johnny, who up to this time had been as quiet as his own little Maltese terrier.

"Yes, my love, that it does; and about strange little boys and girls, and great men and little men, and pretty ladies and ugly ones, and fairies that do good deeds and witches that do bad deeds, and *vice versa*."

"Oh, what's 'vicey verser?'" asks merry sister Gracie, with her little fat arms still round George's neck.

"*Vice versa*, my dear," replies Grandmamma, rather puzzled at the question, "means anything that's just the opposite of what you say at first."

Here all the children open their eyes very wide, and tiny Lily, who all this time has been snuggling in Grandmamma's lap, makes signs of wishing to say something.

"I sink——," she begins.

"Well, my pet?"

"Gran'ma."

"Yes."

"I sink you's goin'——"

"What to do, pet?"

"To tell a taully."

"Why, of course, wicked little puss; that's just what I am going to do. But if you'll not waste the time you shall have more than one story. And although you may be amused, as I am sure you will be, every one of these wonderful stories will have

something in it besides, to teach you what is beautiful and good ; and so each of you must listen attentively to find out all the beautiful things and the good things you can as I go on. Now these are very old, old stories, written years and years before you or I were born, so there must be something very nice about them for them to have lasted so long. Now then, I will tell you about the 'Sleeping Beauty.'"

But here they all grow clamorous again, and Grandmamma is quite bewildered, but at last hits upon a plan to restore order once more.

"Now all say after me," says she, "Hush!"

"Hush!" says Mamma.

"Hush!" says Master Willie.

"Hush!" says Maudie.

"Hush!" says Lina.

"Hush!" says Johnnie.

"Hush!" says merry Gracie.

"Hush!" says little Georgie.

"Hush!" says tiny Lily.

And

"Hush!" say You.



THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

I.—HOW IT ALL BEGAN.



ONCE upon a time, my dears—which means, for anything I know to the contrary, the year one thousand, one hundred, and one, of the age of this beautiful world—there lived a certain great and glorious King, whose dominions stretched for many miles north, south, east, and west of his palace, and were bounded only by the deep, wide, blue sea.

Now this great King had a beautiful Queen to sit at his side ; and both of them had, within a little time of their marriage, a sweet little daughter given them to pet and take all possible care of, and everybody sang the praises of this charming tiny princess—first, because she was such a pretty little mite ; secondly, because she was heiress to the throne of a great kingdom ; and, thirdly, because it pleased the great King and the beautiful Queen to hear them.

In those days lived a wonderful and very powerful race of beings called Fairies, and these Fairies held great control over the destinies of the human race. They had a knack of taking unaccountable likes and dislikes to certain people with whom they took pains to be acquainted. They would attach themselves to the fortunes—good or evil—of such people, and follow them unremittingly to the end of their days. Some of the Fairies were by nature good—others evil. Happy was he who had a good one at his back, for his life was then sure to be all that mortal man could wish ; but unhappy indeed was that one who was followed in his path by a wicked Fairy, for nothing but misfortune would then be his lot in this world.

Most of these Sprites were very fickle and freakish, using their powers at random, and caring but little for the good or bad results of their waywardness. Some of their doings you shall hear of presently.

Of these wonderful beings there were several kinds. There were the little Fairies, who slept in the bells and cups of flowers, and danced in the meadows by moonlight, and I think the queen of fairies must have lived in a violet. There were the Goblins, who took all sorts of queer fantastic shapes, and played all sorts of mischievous tricks upon mankind. Then there were the Gnomes, horrid giants of creatures, the mere sight of whom would frighten an honest man out of his senses—creatures who could topple over whole cities as easily as you could break a throstle's egg. And there were the Kelpies and Brownies, and ever so many other kinds of naughty spirits, who thought

nothing of scaring a poor child out of its wits, and then devouring it with the most heartless satisfaction. So don't you think, on the whole, we are better off for having none of these fairy beings about us nowadays?

But I was nearly forgetting the great King, the beautiful Queen, and the lovely Princess.

About a month after the birth of the little Princess Royal, the King and Queen, her parents, determined to have a grand christening, to which all the nobility of the kingdom should be invited. This of course was an important event, so the royal pair held a long consultation upon it.

After they had been consulting for exactly three days and a quarter, they came to the question of godfathers and godmothers.

"And now," said his Majesty, "what about a godfather?" for the baby being a girl, you know, they wanted only one.

"If your Majesty will not be godfather yourself," replied the Queen, "I do not know a fitter person than my Lord Archbishop of Galopinter."

"Very good," said the King; "it shall be done." ("Very good," by-the-bye, was a pet phrase of the King's, as also was "It shall be done.") "And that being settled," continued his Majesty, "what about the godmothers?"

"To have things as they should be," replied the Queen, "we ought to have twelve godmothers."

"What!" exclaimed the King. "Twelve of them—a dozen! I never heard of such a thing in my life!"

"Is it possible?" returned the Queen, lifting up her beautiful eyebrows; "I had twelve godmothers."

"This is the first time you have mentioned such a thing," said the King. "I call it a great division of responsibility! Never mind, though, if you wish it. Very good, it shall be done."

"I am very much obliged to your Majesty," said the Queen, with a most lovely smile; "and now I may add that my twelve godmothers were Fairies."

"You don't say so!" gasped the bewildered Monarch; "and if I may ask a question so rude, what are you driving at?"

"Simply this, that one of my godmothers has intimated to me in a dream that twelve of her tribe are willing to stand for our little daughter."

"Hum—ha," murmured the Monarch, slowly and thoughtfully; adding, "Well, I must smoke a pipe over this, and let you know." And when he had smoked a pipe over it he let her know by saying, "Very good, it shall be done."

II.—THE MEETING OF THE FAIRIES.

BUT I must tell you all about how the Fairy godmothers were chosen. It was on a beautiful moonlit night—when all the grass and the ferns and the palm-trees above shone like silver, and the little brooks running hither and thither sparkled like millions of diamonds—that the Fairy tribe (all lady Fairies, I must mention) assembled in solemn conclave to decide upon the question of godmothers. Now there were to be two grand christenings on the same day, and at the same hour of the morning; and besides the twelve godmothers who had to be chosen for the Princess I am telling you about, twelve others were to stand for the infant prince who was son and heir to another mighty king, ruling over a vast tract of country, which, for all I can tell, went by the name of Somewhere Else. Now all the Fairies in this particular tribe numbered only twenty-five. There was therefore no little difficulty in selecting the godmothers for both christenings, because, you see, twelve and twelve being twenty-four, it was like a game of odd-one-out, and in this case a very unpleasant game it was, for one of the number must be made to feel very uncomfortable at being left alone; so you will not feel so very much astonished when I tell you there was a very sharp discussion on this point—who was to be left behind? No one was

found self-denying enough to be odd one of her own accord. So, after chattering a good deal, till the moon was just ready to sink, they resolved to settle the question by drawing lots. It was Fairy Crowsfoot who proposed this plan, and what was her horror, dismay, and anger, when all the others were successful, and she herself the one unlucky Fairy.

To witness her frenzy and despair at this unexpected blow was very distressing indeed. She tore her hair that was as fine as thistle-down, until it blinded for a time the eyes of everybody present. She shrieked in such a tone that the very field-cricket quaked in their cases, and quite forgot what part of their tune they had got to ; and she rushed to and fro with such swiftness that the grasses thought it was the early wind getting up, and sleepily nodded their little heads to say "Good morning." But it was all of no avail, her exertions having left her just what she was before—a disappointed, sulky, and, I fear, revengeful little goose of a Fairy.

All at once, however, she was seized with an idea, for she sprung up from the ground like a lark, and flew and flew (the little blue speck that she was) on and onward, onward and on, keeping the palace of the great King in view. And what was this sudden idea of hers? Well, you shall hear.

III.—THE CHRISTENING.

N the morning of the christening, the great King and the lovely Queen sat down to a quiet breakfast, quite by themselves. It can't be said that his Majesty was in the very best of moods. He growled over his smoked tongue and choked over his coffee as though something serious had happened, and he was to be dethroned that day, instead of going to his own daughter's christening.

What was the matter? Simply this—he had been nudged.

He had been most unceremoniously nudged by the Queen at

exactly half-past four that morning, while he was still in the enjoyment of a sweet, sound sleep. Now I may safely say he was not at all accustomed to this sort of thing, and above all things hated to be disturbed in the early morning; so that when the Queen nudged him his good temper was shaken out of him for at least six hours.

“My dear,” she had said softly.

“H’m.”

“My dear,” a little louder this time.

“What now?”

“I am sorry to disturb you, but I’ve had a very strange dream.”

“You’re always having strange dreams,” the King had growled out, and turned to sleep again.

“May I tell it you?”

“There you go again; you won’t let a fellow sleep! Tell it, and have done with it.”

“I dreamt that something whispered in my ear and said, ‘I am the Fairy Crowsfoot, and am left all alone, so do please invite me to the christening. I’ll bring a most lovely present—indeed I will.’ So I said, ‘I’ll ask the King, and if he says “Yes,” you may come and be one of our privileged guests.’ And now, my dear, may she come?”

“No she mayn’t,” the King had snapped in reply; “twelve of them is enough for one party. I don’t want thirteen to the dozen. Now, as you’ve had your answer, you’ll be good enough to let me go to sleep again.”

You will now no longer wonder at the King’s behaviour at the breakfast table, and you will be as thankful as the Queen was that no one was by to see. But the Queen also watched her husband with anxiety, for to tell the truth she would gladly have given the Fairy Crowsfoot another chance of the King’s permission to be present at the feast. By-and-by, however, the King suddenly smiled, and this sent a ray of hope into the Queen’s breast.

“My dear,” said she, “I am glad to see you smile.”

"It was only a joke that just occurred to me, but I fancy I've heard it before. G-r-r-r-humph!"

Notwithstanding the concluding growl, her Majesty took courage.

"May it please your Majesty," she began, and looked perfectly bewitching.

But the king had grown used to all that by this time, so he said shortly, "Well?"

"Will your Majesty allow me to venture to allude to——"

"G-r-r-r-humph! I remember it all. Enough. Not a word more I beg. You NUDGED me!"

Poor unfortunate Queen! Poor unfortunate Fairy Crowsfoot! Thus was an invitation to Court lost by a nudge.

Ten o'clock arrived at last, and so did the guests. The twelve Fairy Godmothers were there, arrayed in the beautiful colours of their respective flowers, but they had enlarged themselves to one hundred and forty-four times their natural size, so that now they were nearly as big as ordinary women. Hundreds of ladies were there too, all smiles and silks and satins and velvets, and I don't know what besides. Hundreds of nobles and knights were there as well, and with their silver armour and cloth of gold they looked wonderfully brave and fine.

At a quarter past ten precisely they formed the procession, and in this manner:—

First went the heralds, threescore of them, blowing as loud as they could with their silver trumpets. They were followed by the band of the King's life guards. Then came the King and Queen in their chariot of state, drawn by a hundred white horses. Then came the infant Princess in her nurse's arms in another chariot of state, drawn by fifty white horses. Immediately after this came the Fairy Godmothers in their chariots of state, one to each, and each drawn by fifty white butterflies of the size of a Shetland pony; and the lords and knights and ladies, in the order of their rank, brought up the rear.

Thus they came to the chief temple, where the Archbishop

of Galopinter stood ready to receive them; and oh, dear me! the splendour of that christening service! How can I describe it?

And here I don't mind telling you a secret. I wanted Monsieur Doré to draw a picture of it for you, and when I asked him he told me that he really did not dare attempt such a thing, for the brilliancy of the colours would quite spoil his eyes, and render him unable to do the pictures that came afterwards. So I can only say that the christening went off to perfection, and that the party returned in the same order as before.

By this time—it being now past noon—the King had quite recovered his usual good-humour; but the Queen was too full of the christening to think any more about the disappointed Fairy.

IV.—THE BANQUET.

 THE christening dinner was a triumph of cooking to the cooks, and a labour of love to the eaters. If I were to give you a list of all the things that were put upon the tables it would run over three or four pages, and that, I think, would tire you.

At the chief table sat the King, the Queen, my Lord Archbishop, my Lord Chancellor, and the twelve Godmothers. At the second table sat the Ambassadors and the Officers of State; and at fifty other tables were the rest of the distinguished guests.

When the feast was over the usual toasts were given, and of course the toast of the day was the infant Princess, who, I forgot to tell you, was named Prettipet. Here the Court minstrels came in with a song specially composed for the occasion; and, I am sorry to say, I cannot remember all the words of it. But just as they were singing—

“And may she spin the whitest wool
That ever spinster span,”

there was a sudden sensation in the hall, for who should march

through the door, with her arms a-kimbo and her wrinkled face all inflamed with rage, but an ugly old woman, who I may as well tell you at once was none other than the Fairy Crowsfoot in disguise. Yes, it was the Fairy Crowsfoot! and she stalked up the hall, elbowing her way, until she reached the royal table, when she stopped and made this speech:—

“Hard-hearted and unmannerly King, you refused to invite me here just because you didn’t like thirteen to the dozen, and wouldn’t be nudged. You think a great deal of your royal self, I have no doubt, but if you don’t mind your ‘p’s’ and ‘q’s’ I’ll humble you yet. And I have no doubt you think a fine deal of your daughter too. As I came in your stupid fellows were singing—

‘And may she spin the whitest wool
That ever spinster span;’

but mark my words: if she ever lays hands on a spindle before she’s full twenty years old, I’ll send you all to sleep for a hundred years at least, and I know what will wake you up after that. Only one thing, but I am not going to tell you what it is.” And having finished her speech, the Fairy vanished.

Here was a pretty to-do, to be sure! Nobody thought of any more festivity after such a speech as that. The twelve Fairy Godmothers and the Queen all fainted away, and the Lord Archbishop said he must really be excused. The Lord Chancellor had an important appointment to keep; and all the rest of the company disappeared without saying “Good-bye!”

Left to himself—for the Queen had been carried to her room, and the twelve Fairy Godmothers had somehow vanished—the King, as he looked round the now deserted hall, knitted his brows, used intemperate language, and was altogether in no enviable frame of mind. He could only console himself with hatching such a scheme as should frustrate the evil designs of the Fairy Crowsfoot; and presently he hit on a plan which he thought would be most effective. He determined to banish

every spindle out of the land, whether it belonged to high or low, rich or poor; and, being a person of great determination, he resolved to carry out his purpose at once, and so sent for the Royal Chief Crier.

This eminent man appeared very quickly, and with several large bright tears trickling down his nose. The sight of the tears greatly irritated the king.

"Put an end to your blubbering, man, or it shall be the worse for you."

"Sire," murmured the official, sinking down on his knees in terror, "I am your most noble Majesty's Royal Chief Crier, and I hope I know my duty."

"Get up," said his Majesty, "or you will spoil the knees of your breeches. I beg to inform you that your uniform is expensive."

Thus admonished, the Crier raised himself from the dust, and proceeded to take orders for a royal proclamation.

As soon as he had done so, he went out from the king's presence, and published throughout the country the following decree:—

"O-yes! O-yes! O-yes! This is to give notice, that our sovereign lord the King hath made a decree that every man, woman, or child in this realm who hath possessed, doth possess, or hereafter may possess, a certain article of industry commonly called and known as a spindle, shall destroy the same, or cause it to be destroyed without delay, on pain of instant death."

But at so stern a decree all the people murmured greatly, and spinsters of high and low degree conspired to stir up their husbands, brothers, and lovers against it; so for a time you heard of nothing but mobs and riots, and the life of a courtier was hardly safe. The rioters went even so far as to pelt the palace gates with rotten eggs, but the numbers of offenders that were beheaded every day soon brought the rebels to their senses, and by degrees quiet was restored once more. In short, within three months from the date of this decree there was not a spindle to be seen or heard in all that land.

V.—THE FAIRY'S SPINDLE.

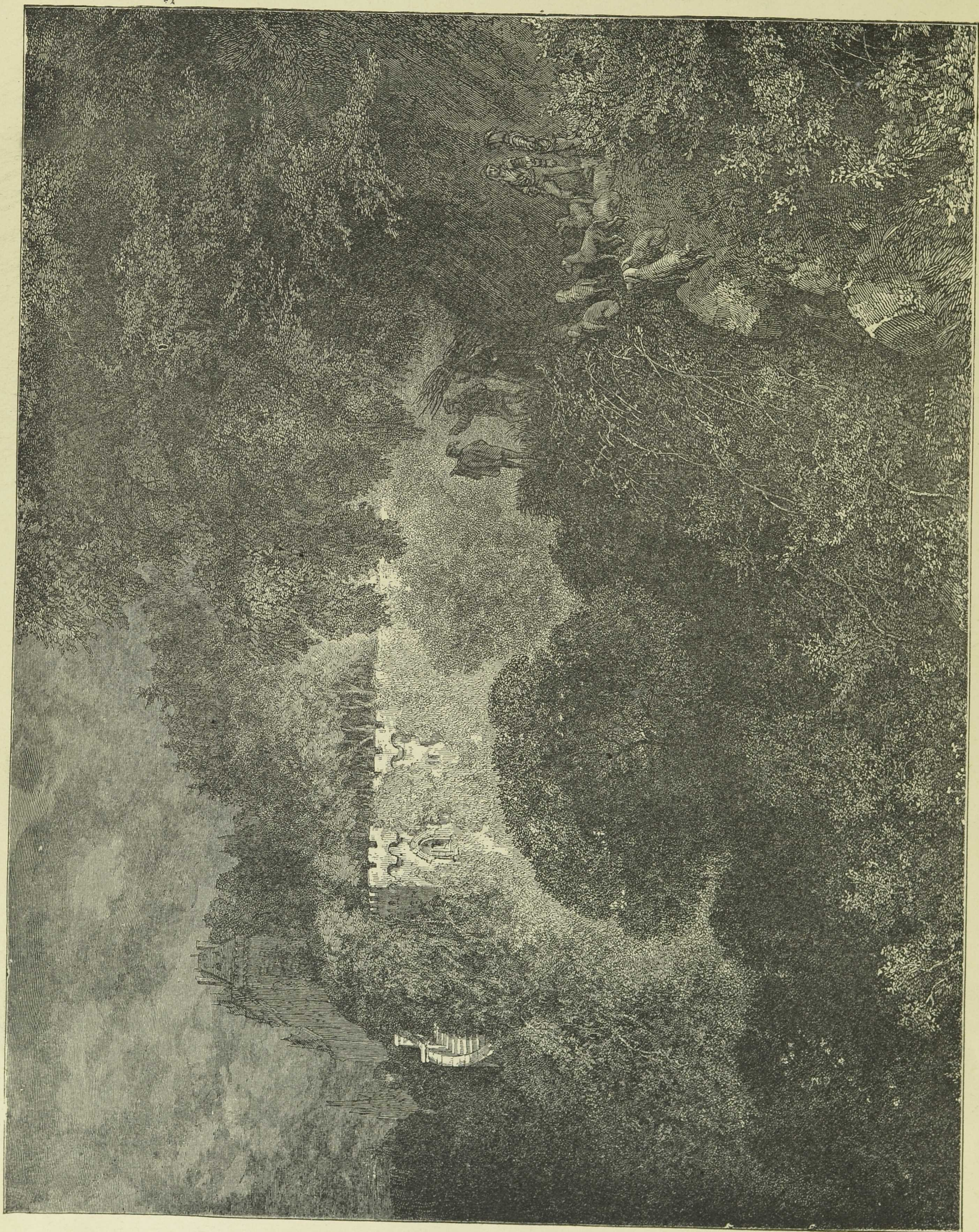
NOW the Princess Prettipet grew from babyhood into girlhood, and from girlhood into womanhood, and became famed as the most beautiful woman in the world, I can only tell you in as many words. Plenty of handsome young princes there were to admire her and try to obtain her for a wife, but for not one of them did Prettipet care in the least. If she did have any preference it was for the Prince who was exactly her age, and had been christened on the very same day (and was heir to the throne of Somewhere Else); yet even he was rejected by the royal damsel, and he left her father's palace in disgust, never dreaming that he could forget Prettipet, marry another princess, and have sons, grandsons, and great grandsons.

Now very shortly after the disappointed Prince left the Court the King ordained that there should be a great hunting day, and all the great folks in the kingdom were invited. The Princess, attended by her gentlewomen, rode out to the meet upon a splendid white horse. She was within a few days of her twentieth birthday, and her beauty had reached its full perfection, so the glory of her appearance put all the other ladies completely in the shade. Her horsemanship was quite charming, and all the royal visitors showered compliments upon it. Presently the hunt began, but, unfortunately, as her favourite was taking his first leap, he stumbled over a large stone and was badly lamed. Prettipet's mortification knew no bounds; and although several horsemen drew up and offered their horses, she would not accept any, but resolutely set her face homeward.

When she reached the palace she found it quite deserted, not a soul was to be seen, so she had to content herself with listlessly rambling through the palace grounds, and this she did for several hours. Ever and anon she could hear the horns of the huntsmen sounding very faintly, and after a long time she could fancy they were coming nearer, and approaching the palace. Then she



“What beautiful white wool you are making there!”



“The ruins of what appeared to have been a magnificent building.”

thought she could hear a low, persistent, rumbling sound, which seemed to come from within. Was it fancy? No; she was not mistaken; she would go and see. So she went within doors just as the hunting party had returned, and, guided by the rumbling noise, made her way up the stairs leading to her own bedroom. She entered, and what was her surprise when she saw a wrinkled old dame seated there quite comfortably, working with some strange implements she had never seen before! At first she was inclined to be angry, so she said, "Old woman, what business have you here?"

"May it please your Royal Highness," said the Fairy (for it was the naughty Fairy Crowsfoot), "I am spinning."

Struck by the self-confident air of her strange visitor, and by the novel things with which she was working, the Princess could only say, "What beautiful white wool you are making there!"

"May it please your Royal Highness," returned the dame, "you may well say so, for it is the whitest wool that ever was spun. Would you like to try?"

"Well," replied Prettipet, "I think I should." And the Princess took the old dame's place and began to spin; but no sooner did she touch the spindle than she fell back into her chair, and sank into a deep sleep.

Then the old dame took Prettipet in her arms and laid her on the bed, saying, with a wicked little laugh, "Sleep there my pretty pet, for a hundred years at least;" and then taking her own form again, Fairy Crowsfoot flew out of the window.

Yes, the Princess Prettipet and everybody else in the palace or its grounds had gone to sleep for a hundred years!

VI.—A MAGICAL KISS.

NE beautiful spring morning his Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Somewhere Else called together his hounds and his men and all to go a-hunting. In the course of a few hours they found fine sport; and carried

away by the spirit of the chase, the Prince rode hither and thither, up hill and down dale, across rivers and through forests, until it suddenly occurred to him that he must have strayed very far away from home. Not a soul was with him, and how long he had been left alone he could scarcely say.

Raising his horn to his lips, he blew a loud blast which lasted for a whole minute; but he heard no reply. He therefore thought it wise that he should turn back. He did so as he thought, but only found the country stranger and wilder than ever. He looked round him in the hope of seeing some wayfarer of whom he could ask his way, but could not distinguish a single sign of humanity anywhere near, so he had to content himself with wandering in search of such luck as he could find.

The day was far advanced when, emerging from the gloom of a vast forest, he caught sight of two of his attendants, followed by some half-score of hounds. The Prince was overjoyed to meet them, and so were they to see their young Prince.

"We have been wandering in search of your Royal Highness," said they, "for we were not a little alarmed to have missed you, but we are totally ignorant of the way back, and must trust to your Royal Highness's wisdom to find it for yourself and us."

"Ah me!" sighed the Prince, "I am just as ignorant of that as yourselves. We can only move onward and see what will become of it."

The ground now became very rough and hilly, and as their horses were weary, they tied them up to three trees that grew together, and proceeded on foot towards what they thought to be two human figures.

In this they were not deceived. In a little time they came upon two ancient-looking wood-gatherers, who were labouring together very earnestly and silently. At the same time they espied farther off, on a slight-wooded eminence, the ruins of what appeared to have been a magnificent building. Struck with this unexpected sight, the Prince forgot all about the way home, and questioned the couple about the ruin.



"For round the doorway was gathered a group of huntsmen."



“ ‘Halloa!’ he exclaimed, as he caught sight of a sleeping form stretched across the doorway.”

"Yes, it was a famous place once," replied the more talkative of the two, "for if you'll believe me it was a king's palace many, many years ago; but it is haunted now, and no one has ever been found bold enough to enter within the building."

"Is it so indeed?" returned the Prince; "then I am no coward, I will go and see what is to be seen. Come," added he to his attendants; but they could not be prevailed upon to accompany their master to a haunted ruin, and notwithstanding the entreaties of all four, he determined to go alone.

Now I think that this is the time to tell you that his Royal Highness was not the very Prince of whom I have before told you, nor yet his son, nor yet his grandson, but his great grandson.

"It is rather dull," said the Prince to himself, as he paced forward through the gloomy shades, and at last found himself entering a long avenue that led to one of the entrances of the palace.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of a sleeping form stretched across the doorway, "who is that, I wonder? Some drowsy porter I have no doubt, who has been fee'd to watch the building by day, and has fallen asleep while on duty. Well, I shall have much pleasure in giving him a gentle cuff on the ear that will wake him effectually." Then he quickened his steps, and soon reached the palace door.

"Why, what do I find here?" he cried in astonishment, as well he might, for round the doorway was gathered a group of huntsmen with their hounds, some standing, some reclining against the wall or on the ground, but all evidently fast asleep.

"The lazy vagabonds!" he exclaimed, "I'll quickly stir them up!" And he rushed into the midst of them, kicking some with his foot and cuffing others with his hands, but all to no purpose, for all remained as soundly asleep as before. This surprised him not a little, I can assure you, and on examining the party closely he was more bewildered than ever. Some had their horns half-way raised to their lips, as though they had been seized with sleep while

in the very act of blowing a blast. Around others the creeping plants that grew upon the walls had twined themselves, as though the forms that seemed so human were in reality parts of the stonework, and had been cunningly carved to imitate the human figure in every respect. Very strange was all this to the Prince, and enough to make any one feel a kind of dread of all this unearthly stillness; but being curious, and brave as well as curious, he went close to one of the sleepers, felt his face, and found it was warm and living, and saw his nostrils quivering with the breath that regularly came and went.

“Never before did I behold anything so marvellous!” said the Prince aloud to himself; and his own voice as he spoke sounded hollow and unnatural in that place.

There was not a braver man living than his Royal Highness the Crown Prince, yet he hesitated before passing through the portal of the ruined palace. If things so strange and almost terrible be met with at the entrance of the ruin, what unexpected horrors might he not find within? But nothing could daunt the Prince for long, and summoning all his courage he entered.

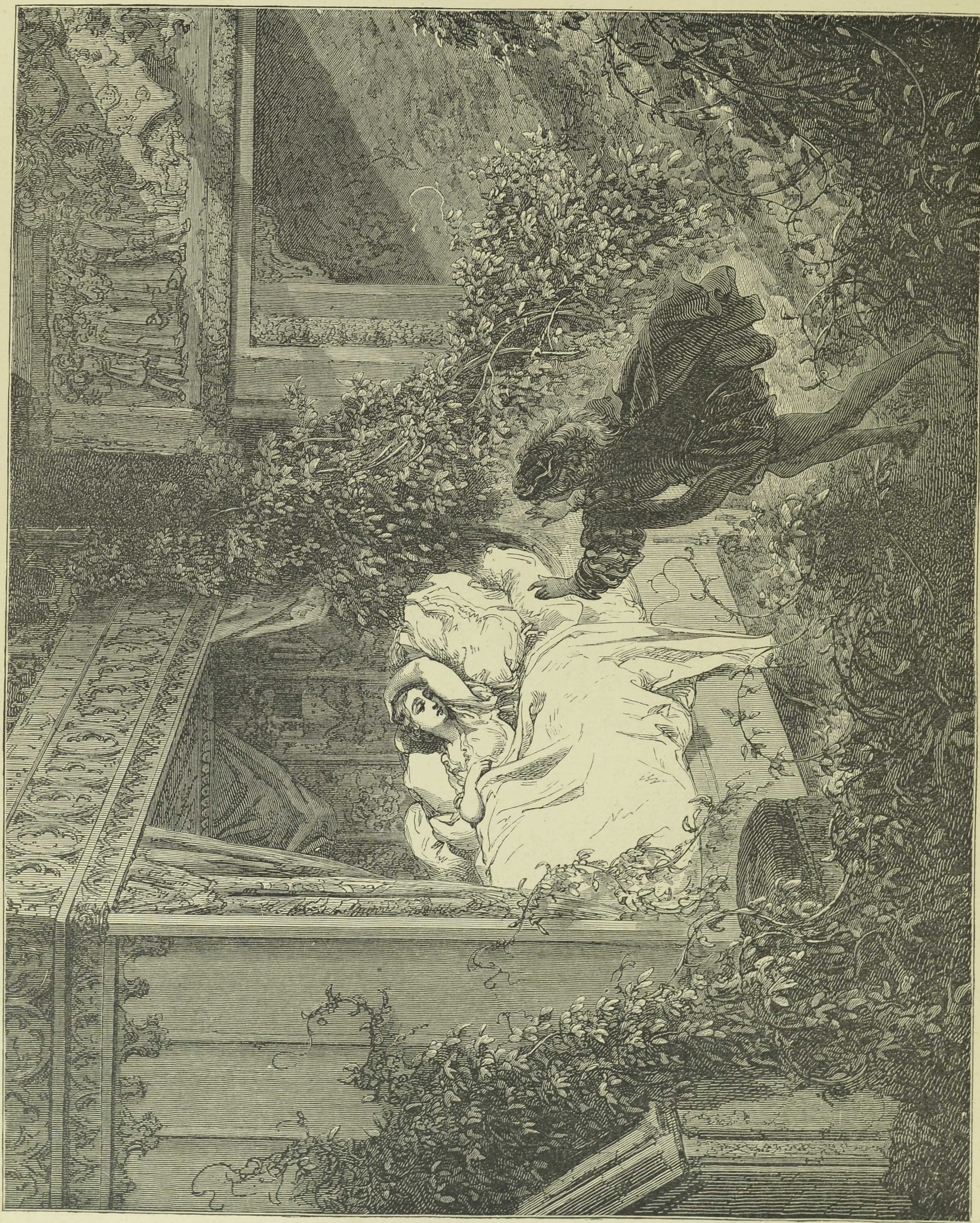
Then what a scene met his eyes! At every turn of the long passages he found men and women in all kinds of life-like attitudes, and all fast asleep!

There were primly-attired maids and grandly-robed ladies, cooks in their white aprons, and soldiers in their uniforms, gentlemen in hunting dress, and pages in blue cloth and buttons. Some looked as though they were running, some walking, others lounging against the walls, as though waiting patiently for an audience, and others still in little groups of two or three, as if conferring together on some important private business. Yet all were motionless, and silent as the grave.

Hurrying, but yet treading very softly, as though it were a sin to disturb the sleepers, the Prince soon discovered through a great gap in the crumbling walls a melancholy sight indeed—a large banqueting-hall, filled with sleeping figures of the same kind; some in seats at the tables, with knives and forks in their



"A melancholy sight indeed—a large banquetting-hall filled with sleeping figures."



“And at last he ran with all his might towards the Sleeping Beauty.”

hands, and some apparently serving, with dishes and trays in their arms and on their heads. At the chief table sat a beautiful woman with a crown on her head, and nearly opposite her a king reclined in his chair, and his crown had fallen to one side, and within the circle of it grew a great wide mushroom! Indeed, on venturing within the hall, he found it full of growths of all kinds—toadstools, mushrooms, climbing plants—and there were cobwebs besides without number. But the very flies on the table had gone to sleep!

“If I stay and look much longer I shall fall asleep too,” said the Prince, with a sigh, as he turned and left the hall.

Dare he venture up the great stair? Yes, it seemed firm enough. Up he went, yet very cautiously, peeping into all the dark corners by the way, though he laughed at himself for doing this in a place where everything was asleep and could not be waked, and therefore could do him no hurt.

Presently he came to a closed door. His heart beat quickly, for he felt that he must open it; why, he did not know in the least. The hinges creaked and groaned loudly as he did so and went in.

Then what a sight met his view! On a large and beautiful bed lay the most lovely maiden he had ever seen, lulled in the same deep slumber. The room was a perfect bower, so luxuriant were the growths of delicate plants all around it. As he gazed the lady slept very peacefully, and now and then a sweet smile came and went on her face; and, oh, she did look so pretty!

How could he help it; the Prince took a step nearer, and another, and at last he ran with all his might towards the Sleeping Beauty, bent over her lovingly, and—kissed her.

Wonder of wonders! The Princess Prettipet **AWOKE!** As she slowly raised the lids that covered her blue eyes the young Prince thought he had never seen anything one half so lovely in all his life, and in his heart of hearts he made a vow that no other damsel should ever claim his hand and share his throne but this charming Princess, who had already caught his heart in a net from which it might never escape.

His meditations were disturbed by a sudden clamour outside the room, which spread and spread until it surged throughout the vast castle. The Prince, casting one loving look at his beautiful Princess, ran out to see what it might mean.

VII.—PRETTIPET'S WEDDING.

WID ever so strange a thing happen before? Throughout the whole palace there was a bustle of stir and life—men and women running hither and thither with dismayed faces. The Prince caught hold of a terrified housemaid. “Why are you looking so alarmed?” he asked.

“Oh, sir,” she replied, “I have fallen asleep, and forgotten to sweep the stairs for my lord the King’s grand hunting-feast, and see how dirty they are! What *will* become of me, I wonder; and however could I have done such a thing?”

“Never mind about it, my pretty child,” replied the Prince, graciously; “I will undertake that his Majesty the King will not be very angry.”

The Prince next accosted the King’s cup-bearer.

“Oh, sir,” he exclaimed, “pray do not delay me, for I have fallen asleep as I was bearing wine to the royal table, and know not how long I may have slept. Oh, dear! what will his Majesty do to me?”

It was everywhere the same. Every one seemed to think that he alone had fallen asleep, and that things were standing still on his account. The guests in the banqueting-hall, as they awoke, were full of apologies to each other for having committed such an unwarrantable breach of good manners; and the King, starting up, said to the Queen, “My dear, what can we have been thinking of? Our guests are waiting our example to begin their repast, which I am sure they must require after such a morning’s hunting.”

But what was the surprise of all, when they saw that every

object around them was in a state of decay, and that even the white satin which they wore was yellow, as with age! It was beyond all comprehension.

Then the Prince stepped forward and explained all that he had found when he entered the palace, and how he had been the means of restoring to their present state the sleeping inhabitants.

The King, who, with the Queen, could not fail to recognise the work of the Fairy Crowsfoot, made a speech to the young Prince, which ran as follows:—

“Handsome and brave Prince, you have conferred on my subjects, my guests, and myself an inestimable boon. I would fain bestow upon you some mark of acknowledgment, and but await the expression of your desire in order to do so.”

And how do you think the Prince replied? He made a low bow, and thus spoke: “Revered and noble King, there is but one thing which I desire, and which it is in your power alone to grant. Your favourable reply to the honour I crave will make me the happiest of mortals.”

“Name it,” said the King, “and it shall be done.”

The young Prince cast down his handsome eyes for a moment, and then raising them fearlessly made reply: “It is that I may have your gracious permission to pay my humble addresses to the beautiful and amiable Princess your daughter.”

“Your wish is granted,” replied the King, with a pleased smile, for he was mightily taken with the young Prince, and had been secretly wishing that he might gain him for a son-in-law. “Bring her Royal Highness the Princess Prettipet hither,” continued the King, turning to some attendants who stood near.

They hastened to obey the royal command, and disappeared. Soon, however, they returned, conducting the blushing Princess. The Prince sprang to meet her, and clasping both her hands in his, exclaimed, “Lovely and beloved Princess, your father has graciously given me permission thus to address you; will you make me happy by confirming it?”

The Princess made no reply, but her downcast eyes and blushing cheeks told plainly what she would have said. At least, the guests seemed to think so, for filling their glasses with the wine which stood on the tables, they unanimously rose and drank, "Long life and health to the noble Prince and the lovely Princess!"

As soon as the palace could be restored, guests were bidden to another great feast—that held in honour of the nuptials of the Princess Prettipet and the Crown Prince of Somewhere Else.

On the death of the Prince's father, which took place shortly afterwards, the young King and Queen were crowned amid great rejoicings and splendour. They reigned wisely and well for many years, and then, leaving the kingdom to their eldest son, took their departure into Fairyland, where they lived happily ever afterwards.



THE THREE WISHES.

IT is not always the richest people that are the handsomest; very often it is quite the contrary, as my story will show. The man about whom I am going to tell you was nothing but a poor labourer, but for all that his wife was one of the prettiest women to be seen for miles round. They were, however, miserably poor, and often envied their more fortunate neighbours. One evening the wife said to her husband, "If I could have all that I wished, I know what I should wish for."

"So do I," replied the husband; "but unfortunately we can't, for I am afraid there are no good fairies nowadays."

As he spoke, a moonbeam stole across the dark room, and they perceived a beautiful little lady standing in it.

"There *are* fairies nowadays," she said, "for I am one; and I

have come to tell you that three wishes of yours shall be gratified. Mind you, though, I can give you no more than three, so you had better make a good use of them."

The fairy then disappeared, leaving the room dark as before, but the fire, which had seen the beautiful little creature, set to and burnt its fiercest, so that the room was yet bright and cheerful.

"How kind of the fairy!" exclaimed the pretty wife, delightedly. "I know what I shall wish for. I wish——"

"Stop!" cried her husband, excitedly. "What are you about? We have only three wishes, and here you are wishing for the first thing that comes into your head."

"Indeed," replied the wife, "I was only going to wish——"

"Stop!" cried the husband, in alarm.

"Silly fellow! I am not wishing now; I was only going to tell you what my wish would have been."

"Let us discuss the matter," said her husband, peremptorily.

"Oh, I think nothing could be nicer than to be rich, and have plenty of fine clothing, and jewels, and carriages."

"Don't be foolish," said her husband; "what's the good of such things to folks like us? Much better have good health and a long life."

"I don't see the good of long life when one hasn't food to eat. For my part, I'd sooner die than live a long life such as we are living now."

"There's something in that, too," replied the husband, scratching his head. "What a pity it is we have only three wishes!"

The two sat by the fire, silently thinking. The unusual brightness of the fire attracted the wife's attention. "What a lovely fire!" she exclaimed; "and what a pity we haven't any supper to cook by it! I wish we had a good large black pudding."

The words were no sooner out of her mouth than a black pudding at least half a yard long came tumbling down the chimney, right on to the hearth.

"That's a fine wish, upon my word!" cried her husband, angrily. "See what you have done. Thrown away a wish on a paltry black pudding. What a pity it is that a woman can never keep her tongue in her head! It would serve you right if the black pudding were to stick to your nose, and I wish it would, I'm sure."

No sooner said than done. The black pudding rose slowly from the hearth, and fastened itself on the poor woman's nose. She pulled at it, and her husband pulled at it, first singly, and then both together, but in vain, it was not to be moved.

"You wicked, bad, wretched man," she cried, "to disfigure your poor wife like that. What a pity it is that a man can't keep a quiet tongue in his head, but must go wishing a wicked thing like that, when we had only two wishes left! Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

"My dear," replied her husband, soothingly, "I can assure you I wasn't thinking of what I was saying when I made that unlucky wish, or I wouldn't have said it for the world."

"I thought it was only women who spoke without thinking beforehand," said his wife, tauntingly.

"We have only one wish left now," he continued. "I have been thinking we had better ask for great riches, and then you could have a golden case made for the black pudding, and ride about in your carriage like the finest lady in the world."

"Indeed," replied the wife, who was not willing that her beauty should be spoiled by such a disfigurement, "I shall not consent to anything of the kind; and if you ask for it I will throw myself out of the window and kill myself."

"Then what shall we wish for?" asked the husband, in some perplexity.

"There is only one thing left to wish for," she replied, "and that is that this black pudding may drop off my nose, and that I may never see it again." At that moment the pudding fell to the ground, and lifting itself slowly up, disappeared up the chimney.

"You may depend," said his wife, "this is to teach us not to wish for what we can't get, so let us take things as they come and make the best of them."

"You always were a wise woman, my dear," replied her husband; and never from that day did they waste their time in envying their neighbours.

THE WITCH OF THE WOOD.



LONG, long while ago, there lived near the borders of a large dark forest in Prussia a peasant and his wife. They were honest, hard-working, industrious people, and besides that very fond of each other, so that altogether they managed to live very comfortably and happily in their little forest home. The good wife while her husband was away tended her house and children, spun their clothing and house linen, knitted her good man's socks, cared for the pig, and sometimes sent a bundle of homespun garments to the nearest town, where they generally found a ready sale. No loom ever produced such sheets as those spun by the clever hands of the peasant's wife. Trust them to wear well; you could hardly wear them out.

So things went on for twelve long years, but at the end of that time misfortune came upon the peasants; the year had been wet and miserable, and the poor man's harvest was entirely ruined. His piece of ground was all he had to depend upon; so when he found that his crops had all failed, and he couldn't pay even the money he owed, he became dull and mopish, and soon fell dangerously ill of an aguish fever. His poor wife tended him night and day, but her heart was full of sorrow at the plight they were in, and she hadn't the courage to battle against the approaches of so terrible a disease, so that when her husband got better she fell ill, and took to her bed and died.

I had forgotten to tell you that the peasant and his wife had two dear little children, Grethel and Hansel. Grethel, the eldest, was a merry little fair girl, with blue eyes, golden hair, and pretty pink and white cheeks; while Hansel was a bright, dark-haired boy, with black eyes that sparkled with fun and roguishness. Now while their mother was alive these children were a picture to see, in their clean frocks and pinafores; and when their father came home at night it gave him the greatest pleasure to take them on his knee, by the bright cosy fireside, and tell them all sorts of wonderful fairy tales.

But when the poor woman had gone all was changed. No blazing fire welcomed the tired labourer; the house was dirty, the children ragged, and the pig starving: so, after a great deal of consideration, the peasant determined to look out for another wife, "for," he said to himself, "if I don't the children will grow up anyhow, and Grethel will turn out a dirty slut, instead of a thrifty housewife like her poor mother; and Hansel will run wild, and grow up a ne'er-do-well."

The peasant being a good-looking man, soon found somebody ready to take him for a husband. A nice kind woman she seemed, and very fond of the children; so that little Grethel's father comforted himself by thinking how kind she would be to them and how fond they would be of her.

But somehow or another, things didn't turn out as he had expected they would. No sooner were they married than her whole conduct altered. Instead of loading the little ones with sweetmeats and fruit, she bestowed upon them only cuffs and blows, till poor little Grethel's face lost all its pretty colour, and both the children looked quite weak and ill. One morning the cruel stepmother said to herself, "I know my husband loves those brats of his a great deal better than he does my sweet little darling, and if I don't get rid of them he won't care for either me or my children at all soon." So she resolved to take them both into the wood and lose them.

Very early one morning she pulled the sleeping children out

of bed, and giving them each a dry crust, bade them follow her. They were too frightened to disobey, so they trotted along after her, she looking round every now and then to see that they were there. By-and-by they entered the forest, but still their stepmother went on and on, farther than they had ever been before, and it was so dark and cold that the children began to cry. Still the cruel stepmother went on till the children were ready to faint with fatigue, and they had reached the very heart of the forest. Then she lighted a fire with some dry sticks, and told the children to sit down by it and wait till she came to fetch them.

The poor tired little creatures soon fell asleep in each other's arms, and slept so long that when they woke up it was nearly dark, but nobody came to fetch them. At this they got very frightened, but Hansel said bravely, "Never mind, Gret, wait till the moon shines, and I'll soon take you home." So when the moon began to shine they got up and started off; but unfortunately they couldn't find a trace of the way, and only wandered deeper and deeper into the wood.

Thus the night passed away, and at last the children became so hungry that they were obliged to pick some berries to eat; and when they had done this they were so tired that they laid down under a bush and went to sleep.

When they awoke they saw a beautiful white bird perched up in a tree, and singing more sweetly than they had ever heard a bird sing before. Hansel tried to catch it, but it flew away, and then the children followed it till it settled on a cottage. I can tell you the children were very much pleased at seeing a house after they had been quite alone so long, so they went up to it and to their delight found it was made of sweetmeats and cakes. The walls were of gingerbread, the roof of toffee, the pillars of the door of barley sugar, and the windows of spun sugar.

"Oh!" cried Hansel, "here's a beautiful house, Grethel; oh! isn't this lovely? There, you have a piece of this gingerbread, and I'll have a bit of barley sugar; and as he spoke he began

demolishing the walls and windows. He had just broken a large piece out of one of the windows and given it to Grethel, when they heard a sweet voice from within say, "Rap-a-tap, rap-a-tap; who is that knocking?" Then the children were very frightened and said, "The wind, the wind that blows from heaven."

Presently the door opened, and an old woman peeped out. She was leaning on crutches, and was very ugly, so that the children were more frightened than ever. But the old woman looked at them very kindly, and said, "Ah, my pretty little dears, how pleased I am to see you! Come in and see the inside of my house, which is far better than the outside." So the children went in with her, and she laid before them a repast of cakes and milk; and when they had eaten as much as they wanted she took them and showed them a pretty little white bed, that looked quite tempting after the hardships they had undergone.

Now although this old woman appeared to be so kind, she was in reality a horrid witch, who had built the sweet house in order to entice little children that way; and when she had got them safely inside, the wicked old witch would fatten them, and kill them, and eat them up.

The next morning, when she went to look at them, the two children appeared so fat and rosy that she could have eaten them up there and then, but she thought she had better fatten them a little more. So she only smacked her lips, and mumbled, "Oh, here's a dainty mouthful, and there's a rich bit!" and then she lugged Hansel out of bed, and threw him into an iron cage to get fat. Then she said to Grethel, "You little hussey, go and fetch some water that I may boil something to make your brother fat, or he'll never be ready for me to eat." So poor little Grethel was obliged to fetch the water, although there were so many tears in her eyes that she could hardly find her way.

Every morning the old witch would say to Hansel, "Stretch out your finger and let me see if you are fat enough yet."

But Hansel put out a bone, and the old woman could not tell the difference; but when she found how lean and tough it was she

got very angry, and one day she told Grethel to heat the oven, for she wouldn't wait any longer.

Then poor little Grethel was very sorrowful indeed as she made up the fire to heat the oven, and went about it so slowly that the old witch came behind her and said, "What a time you are! Jump in and see if the oven's hot enough." But Grethel saw what was in the old woman's heart, so she said, "I don't know the way, please."

"Don't know the way," cried the witch; "the way's easy enough. Look at me;" and as the old woman spoke she thrust her head into the oven. As quick as thought Grethel tumbled the old crone right in, and popped to the door. Then she ran and let Hansel out of the cage, and clapped her hands and told him the old witch was dead, and the two children cried together for joy. They rummaged the witch's house over, and found plenty of precious stones. "These are better than pebbles," said Hansel, and filled his pockets full. "I will have some, too," said Grethel; so she filled her pockets full.

Then the children started off; but before they had gone far they came to a large piece of water which was very deep.

"What shall we do now?" said Hansel; and as he spoke a white duck sailed up to them. As the duck came towards them they sang—

"Two little childrer, here we stand,
Who know not how to gain the land;
So, pretty duck, your aid pray give,
And we will bless you while we live."

Then the kind duck carried them across and landed them in safety, and showed them the right way. So they soon reached home, and their father was so glad to see them that he wept for joy. Then the children showed their father the treasures they had got, and he was very pleased, and said, "Now we have enough to keep us as long as we live."

So they lived on very happily, for the cruel stepmother was dead, and their father never took another wife.

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD.



AND now," said Grandmamma, "we have come to a story about an old woman, like me, and her little granddaughter."

"Was she a nice Grandma, like you are?" asked little Georgie.

"And did she tell her little granddaughter any nice stories, I wonder?" said Maudie, thoughtfully.

"Did she wear spectacles, Grandmamma?" asked Lina.

"I think she did, and took snuff as well," replied Grandmamma.

"What a funny old woman!" struck in Johnny, contemptuously.

"Did anything particular happen to her or her little granddaughter?" asked Willie.

"That's just what I am going to tell you about," answered Grandmamma; "so now silence, and I'll begin."

The children settled themselves comfortably in very much their old positions, and Grandmamma began.

* * * * *

Very many years ago——

"I say, Grandma," broke in Johnny, "all your fairy-tales are about long, long ago."

"Of course they are," answered Grandmamma. "There are no fairies now. I never saw one, even in my *young* days. They had all disappeared long before that."

"How unkind of them!" said Lina, mournfully; "I should so like to see one."

"Am I to go on with my story?" asked Grandmamma, somewhat sternly for her.

"Oh, please, please," chorused the children; and silence having been once more gained, the old lady began her story again.

I.—A PRESENT FOR GRANNY.

ERY many years ago, before you or I were born, there lived in a cottage beside a wood, a woodcutter, and his wife, and little daughter.

The man gained his livelihood by cutting trees in the forest, on the borders of which he lived; while his wife reared poultry and kept cows, sending eggs, cream, milk, butter, and cheese to market.

Now in this particular part of the world the women, when they mounted up behind their husbands' backs on Dobbin, or Bobby, and started off to market to see their own commodities well disposed of, and to lay in a stock of necessaries for their own homes, wore, as a rule, a long red cloak, which reached down to their heels, and was made with a comfortable and natty little hood, which drew closely round their faces, protecting them from wind and weather, and which was at the same time useful and becoming.

Whether it was that the woodcutter's wife had an old cloak which had become too small for her or not I can't tell, but, for some reason or another, she had, from her child's tenderest years, dressed her in a little red hood, such as the women wore when they went riding. As in plenty of other places in the world, the neighbours were very ready to notice and make remarks upon anything that was at all out of the common way. So when the pretty little healthy child flitted about in their midst with her red cloak and rosy cheeks, one neighbour standing at her cottage door would say to another, "What a queer little thing that child looks in her riding hood, for all the world like an old woman cut shorter!" This was the neighbour who was fond of finding fault, and whom some people called Madam Sharptongue.

"Ay, but she's a dear little pretty soul," answered another. This was the neighbour who had always a good word for anybody.

Pretty or plain, nobody could help noticing the little girl; and

in the morning, when it was time to prepare for school, the mothers would say to their lazy boys and girls, "There goes Little Red Riding Hood; she's always in time." And so it was that the child was known all over the village by that name.

Now you must not think that Red Riding Hood's father could have sent her to school had he been only a woodcutter, for woodcutting is by no means the most lucrative profession in the world. He had also a good-sized patch of ground, where he raised crops of corn, potatoes, and what not.

When the wheat had been threshed it was sent to the miller's to be ground, and when it came back converted into sacks of soft white flour, the woodcutter's wife deftly kneaded it up into cakes, which, when they had been baked on the hearth, and cut open and buttered, made as capital an addition to a steaming hot cup of tea as you might wish to taste.

"I thought you said the story was about a little girl and her Grandmamma," here interrupted Master Willie.

"So it is," answered Grandmamma; "but I haven't got to that part of it yet. I've only just begun it, and must beg you not to interrupt me again, or I shall never get to the end."

"Oh!" said Willie, apologetically, and somewhat indignantly, for he thought himself too old for correction.

As the woodcutter's wife always had her little girl up by day-break in the summer mornings, there was plenty of time before the school hour in which to run errands for her mother. So every morning Little Red Riding Hood was sent through the wood to her grandmother's cottage, for the poor old woman was bedridden, and must have starved if her granddaughter had not come each day to bring her some food.

One morning the woodcutter's wife discovered that there was plenty of honey in the hive, so she put some into a jar and said to herself, "To-morrow morning poor mother shall have this pot of sweet new honey, which I am sure 'll be a treat to her with some nice soft cakes, for better honey than this isn't to be got for love or money."

So the next morning the good woman was down-stairs even earlier than usual ; and, having seen father off to the forest for his morning's work before breakfast, she went down to the garden to the hen-house, where the noisy hens were lifting up their voices to let all the world know the very thing that they wanted to keep a secret.

Poor foolish things ! What was the good of hiding their eggs in all sorts of out-of-the-way places, when they were so conceited that they could not keep a quiet tongue in their heads ? In spite of their clever hiding, their mistress had soon discovered the newly-laid treasures, and bore back to the house at least half a dozen beautiful fresh eggs. Then she went to milk the cow, and brought back a pail of warm yellow milk. By this time the fire had burnt up beautifully, and heated the hearth, so that when Little Red Riding Hood came down-stairs her mother was just putting some cakes down to bake.

II.—THE POLITE WOLF.

“Y, mother, you have been busy!” exclaimed Red Riding Hood, as she looked round and saw the pail of milk standing in the swept-up kitchen, and sniffed out the delicious smell of baking.

“And I am afraid my little girl has been rather idle,” replied her mother. “The sun has been up and at work for ever so long, and so has father. Molly was waiting for me when I went to her, and the hens have been cackling away for a good hour, and only one person was lazy. I don't think I need say who it was.”

Little Red Riding Hood ran up to her mother and kissed her, saying, “I really couldn't help it, mother; I never woke.”

“Ah, but you must wake to-morrow,” said her mother. And then setting a cup of new milk and some bread and butter on the table, she added, “Now be quick and get your breakfast, for the cakes will soon be done for Granny's breakfast.”

While Little Red Riding Hood was eating and drinking, her mother took a little basket and laid in it some eggs and butter and a fine fat chicken. Then, when the little girl was ready to start, she took the cakes up off the hearth, and, folding them in a clean white cloth, placed them in the top of the basket, which she gave into Red Riding Hood's hand, together with the jar of honey.

"Now be off to Granny's as quick as you can, and say, 'Mother's love, and she's sent you some eggs and butter, and a nice fat chicken, a jar of sweet new honey, and some hot cakes.' And mind you don't stop on the way to speak to anybody, or pick flowers, or the cakes will be cold before you get there, and you'll be late for school."

The little girl promised, and then started off. The bright morning sun shining on the dewy flowers made them sparkle like diamonds, and she looked wistfully at the foxgloves, and harebells, and bright buttercups, as she passed them by. Putting down her basket and jar, she stayed to gather a little bunch; but even in that short time some thief had stolen her basket, chicken, eggs, butter, and all, leaving behind only one already half cold cake. Taking this in one hand and the jar of honey in the other, she went on soberly enough for some little time. Presently she heard a rustling amid the brushwood that abounded in the forest, and on looking round she perceived an old grey Wolf making straight towards her. At first she was terribly frightened, but the sound of her father's axe at no great distance reassured her. "Father'd soon come and kill the wolf if he were to try to do anything to me." So she tripped gaily along without any fear.

Now the Wolf heard the sound of the axe too, and, being a cunning old fellow, he did not attempt to molest the little girl, knowing that if he did he would perhaps be killed himself. So he thought, "I'll make friends with little miss, and await a more favourable opportunity."

He stepped very politely up to little Red Riding Hood, and said to her as gently as he was able, "Good morning, little girl;



“Which way are you going?” inquired the Wolf, when they came to a place in the wood where two pathways met.”

what a pretty bright cloak you have on, and what rosy cheeks you have !”

“What a nice old fellow he is !” thought Little Red Riding Hood ; “I’d no idea Wolves were so polite.”

“Where are you going, my little girl ?” asked the Wolf, as he walked along by her side.

“Mother sends me to Granny’s every morning, to take some breakfast ; I’m going there now,” answered the child.

“Let me carry that heavy jar for you,” said the Wolf.

“No, thank you,” replied Little Red Riding Hood, thinking she had better not trust her new friend too far.

“Does your Grandmother live far from here ?” asked the Wolf.

“Not very,” replied the little girl ; “but she’s very old and bedridden, and so I go to her every morning.”

“But if she’s bedridden how does she let you in ?” asked the Wolf.

“Oh, I knock at the door till she cries out, ‘Who’s there ?’ Then I say, ‘It’s me, Granny ; I’ve come to bring you some breakfast, with mother’s love.’ Then she always says, ‘Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fly up.’”

“And then you go in, I suppose ?” said the Wolf.

“Yes,” answered the little girl.

“Which way are you going ?” inquired the Wolf, when they came to a place in the wood where two pathways met.

“I am going this way,” answered Red Riding Hood.

“Oh, then, I must wish you good day, for I am going this way,” said the Wolf, and off he started as quick as he could trot.

You see Little Red Riding Hood had quite forgotten her mother’s warning about staying to chatter to anybody ; and I am sadly afraid she must have forgotten that her mother told her to make haste and not to loiter on the way, for on spying a pretty butterfly she again set down her jar and cake, and chased it from flower to bush. But the butterfly was not to be caught, and when she gave up the pursuit in despair and returned to the place

where she had left the honey, she found that the cake had been stolen. "What shall I do now?" thought she. "Whatever will Granny say?"

But at this moment something else attracted the little girl's attention, and she was off in a trice. When at last she was quite tired with running about, she sat down on the grass to get cool, and amused herself by picking the flowers to pieces that were within her reach.

Presently she started up. "I really must be quick or I shan't be back in time for school," she exclaimed, as she perceived the shadows creeping closer and closer to the trees and bushes. But what was her dismay when she found that the jar was perfectly empty!

"Oh, how foolish I was to run away and leave the things here!" thought Red Riding Hood to herself. "How cross Granny will be at not having any breakfast; and how mother will scold me when she finds out all about it! I had better get on now as quickly as I can." And this time she started off in good earnest.

III.—WHAT BECAME OF RED RIDING HOOD.

IN the meantime the Wolf trotted on through the wood, and soon found the cottage. He rapped at the door, but his claws made a great noise, and the old woman started up in bed, and said, "How loudly Red Riding Hood knocks this morning! It can't be her." So she made no reply.

In a minute or two, the Wolf rapped again, but still the old woman did not answer. He was getting terribly impatient, for he was afraid that Red Riding Hood would be there before he could get in.

"She does sleep heavily," thought he to himself; "I must knock louder. So he rapped again, louder than before, and the old woman thought that perhaps her granddaughter had been



“But this did not protect her long, for the Wolf pulled them off again, and leaping on to a stool placed by the bedside, jumped from thence on to the bed.”

knocking some time before she was awake, and that was the reason she made so much noise.

"Who's there?" she cried.

"It's me, Granny," answered the Wolf, speaking as softly as he could. "Mother's love, and she's sent you some cakes and some honey for breakfast."

"Oh, what a treat!" thought the old woman; "it's a long time since I tasted any honey. Then she called out, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fly up."

So the Wolf pulled the bobbin, and up flew the latch. Then the old wretch crept softly up-stairs into the room where the old lady was lying in bed, and thinking what a nice breakfast she should have this morning.

When the poor old lady saw what sort of a visitor she had got, she uttered a faint scream, and smothered herself up in the bed-clothes; but this did not protect her long, for the Wolf pulled them off again, and leaping on to a stool placed by the bed-side, jumped from thence on to the bed, and ate up the old woman in no time.

Then he slipped into bed, and popped on the poor old woman's night-gown and cap, so that he might be ready for little Red Riding Hood when she came; for although he had eaten up the old woman, he was looking forward with great relish to the meal he should make off the plump, rosy child.

Red Riding Hood ran swiftly along through the forest, feeling very ashamed and sorry to think she should so have forgotten her mother's warning. When she got to her grandmother's cottage she was almost crying, and she knocked so faintly that the old Wolf scarcely heard her.

"Who's there?" he cried out, when Red Riding Hood had knocked a second time, making his voice sound as much like the old woman's as he could.

"It's only Red Riding Hood come to see you," sobbed the little girl, wondering whatever she should say about the breakfast.

"Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fly up," said the Wolf.

So Red Riding Hood pulled the bobbin, and up went the latch. She opened the door, and went in and up-stairs.

"Where's my breakfast?" asked the Wolf.

"Mother forgot it," answered the little girl.

"Did she?" replied the Wolf. "Well, it doesn't matter, for I feel very unwell. Jump into bed with me and keep me warm."

"Very well," replied Red Riding Hood; and as she was undressing herself she said, "Do you know, Grandma, as I was coming through the wood I met such a kind Wolf. He talked so politely to me that I wasn't frightened a bit."

"You are a foolish little girl, to stop and talk to anybody, when you are sent on an errand," said the Wolf.

"You are not angry with me, are you, granny?" asked the little girl.

"No, my dear, I only wish you to be an obedient little girl. But be quick and come into bed, for I am very unwell."

As soon as Red Riding Hood had got into bed, she could not help noticing how strangely her grandmother seemed to be altered, so she said—

"Granny, granny, how long your arms are!"

"All the better to cuddle you with, my dear."

"But, granny, granny, what big ears you've got!"

"All the better to hear your pretty voice, my dear."

"Granny, granny, how bright your eyes are!"

"All the better to see you with, my dear."

"But, granny, granny, what huge teeth you've got!"

"All the better to eat you with, my dear;" and when he had said that he sprang upon the child and ate her up.

The Wolf then fell asleep; but he was not allowed to rest long, for the father of Red Riding Hood coming with some other men to see what had become of his little daughter, soon found out what had taken place. Then they fell on the Wolf and soon killed him with axes; so he was punished for his cruelty.



"She could not help noticing how strangely her grandmother seemed to be altered."

THE WONDERFUL STORY OF LITTLE BRIDGET.

NCE upon a time there lived an old woman whose only thought from morning to night was what she should do to get rich. She loved the sight of gold better than anything else in the world ; but though she had been scraping, and pinching, and striving after it all her lifetime, she had never managed to save up so much as one single piece. A very strange event had happened to the old woman during her search for riches, which was that one day, although she never knew it, her heart suddenly fell out of its right place, and did not get back again, so that it was to all intents and purposes just as if she had none at all.

One morning, as she was putting her room to rights and getting her breakfast, before going out for the day, she felt a very sharp pain in her left leg.

“Dear me!” she exclaimed, “I’ve got a dreadful bone in my leg. I must sit down a little while.”

So the old woman sat down by the side of the fire ; but she had no sooner done so than she felt a sudden twinge in her arm.

“Oh dear me!” she cried, “I declare I’ve got a bone in my arm ; I must put it in a sling.”

So she got up out of her chair to fetch a handkerchief, when she found that she had a pain in both her legs, and that she could hardly walk.

Having tied up her arm, she went to sit down, but found that she was quite stiff, and had such a pain in her back that she could hardly bend it.

“I must have caught a bad cold,” she exclaimed ; “I must have a cup of hot tea.”

So the old woman took up the kettle, but her fingers were so shaky that she dropped it, and all the boiling water ran out on to the hearth, and though she tried very hard to save it, she could not ; for what with the bones in her legs, the bones in her arm,

and the cold she had caught in her back, she couldn't stoop at all.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" cried the old woman; "whatever shall I do! I am afraid I'm not very well."

Now the truth of the matter was simply that she was growing very old.

After a great deal of consideration, the old woman made up her mind that she would take her dead son's little orphan child to live with her, and then, she thought, she can mind the house, and sew, and bake, and wash for me while I rest; "and perhaps," she added to herself, "if I do this kindness to the child, some good fairy may show me the way to find gold without my having to toil for it from morning till night."

So she sent a messenger to her daughter-in-law to say that she would take the eldest of her seven children to live with her, if she pleased; and the poor widow, although she did not at all like parting with her little Bridget, was still very thankful to her husband's mother for taking one off her already overburdened hands.

In a very short time Bridget came back, bringing on her arm a little bundle containing all the clothes she possessed.

As soon as Bridget had taken off her bonnet and smoothed her hair, the old woman said to her, "Child, child, take the pail and the brush, and scrub the floor."

So the little girl took the pail and the brush, and began to scrub the floor, and the old woman sat and looked into the fire.

By-and-by the child came to the old woman and said, "Granny, granny, I've scrubbed the floor, and it's as white as milk."

Then the old woman said, "Child, child, take a cloth and clean the window."

So the little girl took a cloth and rubbed the window till it had not a spot upon it. Then she went to the old woman and said, "Granny, granny, I've rubbed the window and it's as clear as water."

Then the old woman said, "Child, child, take a brush and black the grate."

So the little girl took the brush and brushed away till the stove looked quite beautiful. And when she had finished she went to the old woman and said, "Granny, granny, I've blacked the stove, and it's as bright as glass."

Then the old woman said, "Child, child, go to the spring and fill the kettle, and go to the field and fetch some potatoes, and peel them, and boil them for dinner."

So the little girl went to the spring and filled the kettle, and went to the field and fetched the potatoes, and came back and peeled them, and boiled them for dinner, and when they were all ready she went to the old woman and said, "Granny, granny, I've boiled the potatoes, and they're just like flour."

So the old woman went to the table and ate up all the potatoes but one, which was all Bridget had for her dinner after her morning's work. And when the kettle boiled, the old woman had some tea, but never thought of offering Bridget any, which was all owing to her heart having got out of its right place.

When the little girl had cleared the dinner away, the old woman brought out a bundle of old sheets, and gave them to Bridget, telling her to cut out the bad parts and turn the sides to the middle.

So Bridget worked at the sheets till it grew dark, and then the old woman gave her a crust of bread, and sent her to bed.

When she got up the next morning the ground all round about the cottage was white with snow, though there was none anywhere else. At this Bridget was very much astonished, and, going to the old woman, told her about it.

"That must be fairy work," thought the old woman; and, turning to Bridget, she said, "Child, child, go out and look very carefully over the snow, and if you find anything bring it to me."

By-and-by the little girl came in and said, "Granny, granny, I've found a little book."

Then the old woman was very much pleased, and began to read the book, singing to herself—

“If I read, read, read, from morning till night,
I shall have gold so bright, so bright.”

So the old woman read the book, and Bridget did the work; but when night came the old woman threw the book upon the ground, saying there was nothing in it to teach any one how to get rich; and Bridget picked it up and hid it under her bed.

The next morning the ground round the house was again covered with snow, and the old woman sent Bridget out again to see what she could find. When she came back, she said to the old woman, “Granny, granny, I’ve found a needle.” Then the old woman got some calico, and began stitching, all the while singing to herself—

“If I stitch, stitch, stitch, from morning till night,
I shall have gold so bright, so bright.”

But when night came she threw it away, saying, “it was no different from any other needles;” but Bridget picked it up, and hid it away with the book.

The next morning the ground was again covered with snow, and Bridget was sent out to see what she could find.

When she came back, she said, “Granny, granny, I’ve found this pen.”

So the old woman took the pen, and began to scribble with it as fast as she could, all the while singing to herself—

“If I write, write, write, from morning till night,
I shall have gold so bright, so bright.”

But when the night came she threw down the pen, saying “it was no good at all;” and gave poor Bridget a beating into the bargain for bringing her such trash. But Bridget held her tongue, and picked up the pen, hiding it away with the book and the needle.

The next morning the ground was again covered with snow, and Bridget was sent out to see what she could find. Presently

she came in bringing with her a beautiful white cow, which seemed as gentle as a lamb; and going up to the old woman, said, "Granny, granny, I've found a white cow." Then the old woman was very pleased, and said to herself—

"If I milk, milk, milk, from morning till night,
I shall have gold so bright, so bright."

So she got all the pans and pails she could find, and milked the cow till they were all full; but before she could make it into butter or cheese it all went sour.

Then the old woman was very angry, and drove the cow quite away, saying it was not worth a straw. She was so angry with poor Bridget that she beat her till the child fell down on the floor in a fainting-fit. And all this time Bridget had worked so hard that her fingers had great sore patches on them, where she had knocked them against the grate; and she looked quite lean and hungry, from only having one potato a day.

The next morning the ground was again covered with snow, and the old woman bade Bridget go and see what she could find; but the child was so weak and ill that she could scarcely walk, and went so slowly that the old woman cried out, "If you are not going to walk quicker than that, I must go myself, you wicked, ungrateful child."

But when she got up off her chair, she caught her foot in her gown, and rolled over on to the floor, giving her head a tremendous bump in her fall.

At this accident kind-hearted little Bridget was very much shocked, and did all she could to restore her granny to her senses. When the old woman came to, she helped her up, and laid her down on the little couch, bathing her wounded head as tenderly and carefully as a woman. And when the old woman had quite recovered, and was able to sit up, she expressed so much sorrow for the fall, and was so anxious to hear her granny say she felt better, that the old woman was quite overcome; and wondering how she could have been so unkind to the child, kissed her quite tenderly.

At that moment the old woman's heart jumped back into its right place, which made her feel so agreeable that she never so much as said another cross word to her little granddaughter.

When Bridget went to bed that night she got out the book and began to read; and the tales in it were so wonderful, that she could not leave off reading, but sat up all night; and the print was so fine that the book contained as many tales as would fill fifty large volumes of ordinary books.

While she was turning over the leaves of this wonderful book, she came to a place where it said that whoever copied out those stories and got them printed would make enough money to last them a lifetime, and plenty to spare.

So the little girl got out her pen and began copying out the first story; and the pen wrote so quickly that she finished enough for a large book in one evening; and when she took it to a shop in the town near which her granny lived, and asked the people to print it, they were so delighted with the story that they gave her a great bag full of gold, and told her if she liked to bring them another they would give her as much again.

When she had told her granny the good news she sat down to work with her needle, when she found that it went of its own accord in the most beautiful patterns that ever you could see. So she bought some fine muslin, and worked away; and when she had finished one piece she took it to a shop, and the people were so pleased that they paid her well, and asked her to bring some more; and in a little while she became so famed for her beautiful embroidery that people came from miles round to buy it of her.

Then she took a large house, and had her mother and six brothers and sisters to live with her; and she begged her granny to consider as much money as she liked her own.

And so the old woman was rich at last. And I am glad to say that, her heart being now in the right place, she made good use of the money, and helped the poor and needy.

HOP-O'-MY-THUMB.

I.—A SMALL BOY.

THERE once lived a poor man and his wife who were very miserable because they had no children. They were sitting one evening by the fire, and listening to the stormy weather outside, when the husband started from a reverie into which he had fallen, and exclaimed, "How miserable we are without any children! If we only had one I should be perfectly satisfied."

"So should I," replied his wife, "even if he were no bigger than my thumb."

Some time after this a little child was born to these two; but how was the good woman surprised when, on taking the child in her hands, she found that he really was very little bigger than her thumb!

"See," she said to her husband, "I have got what I asked for; but if he is small he is a dear, pretty little fellow after all, and if he grows quickly and thrives well may turn out a fine child yet."

But unfortunately the little sprite did not grow quickly at all, and so, when his parents saw that he would be a dwarf all the days of his life, they christened him Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

Now little Hop-o'-my-Thumb, although he was so small, was no fool, but while he was quite young showed signs of shrewdness and ready wit by no means common among the class to which he belonged.

One day when his father was going to the forest he said, "I wish I had somebody to mind the horse for me while I'm about my work."

"I'll do that for you, father," said Hop-o'-my-Thumb, springing up from the corner in which he was breakfasting off the leg of a sparrow and a picnic biscuit.

"You," replied his father; "you mind the horse! Why, you are not big enough for him to see."

"Never mind that, father; I'll manage it if you'll only trust me."

So his father took him with him to the forest, and left him and the horse and cart under a tree. Then Hop-o'-my-Thumb jumped into a branch that was waving close to the old mare's ears, and spoke to the creature so skilfully that she never once attempted to move.

Presently a rollicking schoolboy came by, swishing a cane as he went, and scattering the ground with the little branches and leaves he whisked from the trees. As ill luck would have it, the tender green branch on which Hop-o'-my-Thumb was perched came in his way, and before you could have said "Jack Robinson," it had been cut off and thrown across the boy's shoulder, with the little dwarf holding tightly on.

"I must look out sharper than this, next time," thought Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

Just then they emerged from the forest, and soon came to an orchard. This the schoolboy soon entered, by clambering over the wall, thereby greatly endangering Hop-o'-my-Thumb's life. The boy then climbed up an apple tree, when Hop-o'-my-Thumb, seizing the opportunity that presented itself, jumped on to a fine golden pippin, and, seated across it, felt more comfortable than he had done for some little time.

"Well, I'm high enough in the world now," thought he. "Halloa! what's up?" he exclaimed, as, with a sudden jerk, he felt himself rapidly falling through the air. Presently the apple on which he was seated, and to which he had held tightly during its rapid descent, touched the ground.

"I wonder how many miles I came then," thought the little fellow.

There he stayed till it was nearly dark, and he had just fallen comfortably asleep, when he felt himself raised up as suddenly as he had fallen.

"Halloa! what have I got here?" exclaimed a rough voice. I thought I'd got an apple, and I find I've got hold of a pigmy." I

must tell you that in the waning light Hop-o'-my-Thumb perched upon the apple appeared to the man like a piece of the tree and a few leaves, and he was not a little surprised to find, on catching hold of the supposed stem, that he had left the apple behind.

"You had better let me go," said Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

"Not I," replied the man, putting the little fellow into his greatcoat pocket.

These were by no means comfortable quarters, for Hop-o'-my-Thumb found himself among a great many odd things, such as stale tobacco-pipes, hard bits of bread and cheese, and several others of the same kind, that were not quite to his liking.

As they were going along the man stooped and picked something up. He seemed to have found a treasure, for he kept on gloating over it, and saying, "My eye, what a beauty! I wonder what that'll be worth, now," and so on. Presently something came tumbling on to Hop-o'-my-Thumb's head, and must have done him some damage had he not managed with a good deal of dexterity to get out of the way.

Before long the man entered a public-house, and taking the thing he had found out of his pocket, he exclaimed, "There, my comrades, what do you think of that bracelet? Isn't it a beauty?"

"Where did you get that from?" asked several voices.

"My Lady Florella took it off her own fair wrist and gave it to me, in consideration of my saving her from falling out of her carriage."

"You thief, you stole it!" cried out Hop-o'-my-Thumb, from the depths of his hiding-place.

"Who says I stole it?" asked the man, angrily. "It's a lie; I didn't."

"You did; you know you did," cried Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

"It's no use for you to try to tell lies about it, my man, when you've got a conscience that speaks as loudly as that," exclaimed the landlord; and the man, who had forgotten all about the little creature he had got in his pocket, really believing that it must be his conscience that had served him this trick, made the best of his

way out of the inn, for fear anybody should attempt to molest him as a thief.

By-and-by he thrust his hand into his pocket, and finding our hero, the whole thing occurred to him. "You little wretch, I'll kill you!" he exclaimed.

"You'd better not," replied Hop-o'-my-Thumb, with the most perfect coolness.

"Why not?" asked the man, angrily.

"Because of what would happen to you afterwards," answered Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

"Well, then, I'll have nothing more to do with you," said the man. Whereupon he took the little fellow out of his pocket and placed him by the roadside.

"That's capital; just what I wanted. And now I'll be off home, for mother and father will wonder where I've got to," thought Hop-o'-my-Thumb, and there and then started off.

By-and-by he heard two dogs talking. "You know the man that's got a son no bigger than his thumb?" said one.

"Yes," replied the other.

"Well, he's lost the little fellow; and it seems he's offered a reward to any one who will bring him back, so I am going to see what he'd offer, and if it's worth my while I'll undertake to find him."

"Am I not in luck's way?" laughed Hop-o'-my-Thumb to himself, springing on to the puppy's back.

Off trotted the dog as nimbly as possible, and in this way Hop-o'-my-Thumb reached home.

The poor man and his wife were quite delighted to see the little fellow back again, for they were sadly afraid they should have lost him altogether; and when he told them his adventures they patted him on the back and laughed heartily.



“The husband and wife sat some time longer, gazing moodily into the fire.”

II.—HOP-O'-MY-THUMB'S DREAM.

NOW after Hop-o'-my-Thumb was born his mother had plenty of other children, and each baby as it was born was so much finer than the last one that when it came to the seventh the youngster was bigger at five years old than most children are at twelve, and our little hero, who was the eldest of all his father's and mother's children, was by far the smallest.

But although the labourer and his wife had been very anxious to have one son, they had never bargained for seven; and they soon found that to provide food and clothing for so many was no joking matter.

Each year made matters worse, for things were not so prosperous with these poor people as they had been formerly, till at length one miserable year came when they were all like to starve. Despite their mother's endeavours to make ends meet, she found one evening that they had only a few roots left in the pantry.

"Alas!" said she, "we must all starve, for when these are gone where shall we get more?"

"How foolish we were to wish for any children!" said her husband, moodily. "If we'd never had any, we shouldn't have come to this plight."

"Don't say that!" exclaimed his wife; "I would not have been without my children on any account."

"What are we to do with them?" asked the father. "We can't see them starve."

"God forbid!" replied the poor mother.

The husband and wife sat some time longer, gazing moodily into the fire. By-and-by the woodcutter started up, and exclaimed, "Yes, I will, I must do it!"

"Do what?" inquired his wife.

"An idea's come into my head," he replied, "and it is that I should start off early to-morrow morning, and take the children with me."

"I don't see how that will help us."

"What, not if I leave them there?"

"You would not do that, surely?" said his wife.

"I had rather do that than see them starve before my eyes. Who can tell whether some kind person might not take pity on them and give them food? And even if they do die, we shall not be obliged to look on without being able to help."

"You say truly," replied his wife, tearfully.

Then they arranged that next morning the children should be waked earlier than usual, and after having had their scanty breakfast should accompany their father to the forest and be left behind.

"Now somehow or another little Hop-o'-my-Thumb couldn't manage to get off to sleep at all, and hearing a great deal of talking going on in the kitchen, he crept down-stairs. On peeping in at the door, he perceived his mother and father seated by the fire, engaged in earnest conversation. He also noticed that tears were streaming down his mother's face, so popping under her chair, he quietly listened to the whole plot.

"This is a pretty go!" thought Hop-o'-my-Thumb; "I must see if I can't prevent this piece of business."

But although he thought and thought it all over, he fell asleep at length without having concocted any scheme by which to save himself and his brothers.

While he was asleep he dreamed a strange thing; he thought he was walking by the side of a stream, whose bed was composed of round white pebbles, and that the pebbles called out to him, "Come, Hop-o'-my-Thumb, pick us up, and fill your pockets with us, and we will show you the way out of your difficulty."

Before the day had fairly broken, Hop-o'-my-Thumb crept down-stairs, and out of the house. He wended his way along, through meadow and field, till he came to the stream that had been pictured to him in his dream. All here was as he had then seen it. A gleam of early sunshine broke through the trees, and



“He soon filled his pockets with the pebbles within reach.”

flung itself across the stream, discovering on its way a thousand lovely flowers. Through the transparent water, Hop-o'-my-Thumb could see the white stones shining, and a few were laying scattered about on the bank. He soon filled his pockets with the pebbles within reach, and having returned home, slipped up-stairs and into bed without his absence having been discovered.

An hour or so later some one knocked at the door.

"Who's there," and what do you want?" asked Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

"It's me?" replied his mother. "Be quick and get up; father's going to take you to the forest with him?"

"What's that for?" he asked.

His mother did not reply, but went straight down-stairs into the kitchen.

A miserable meal had been provided for the children, made from the few roots that hung in the cupboard and a few dry crusts.

This having been despatched, their father put on his cap, and taking his axe in his hand, bade them follow him.

"Good-bye, my children," exclaimed the poor mother, with tears in her eyes.

"What are you crying for, mother?" asked Hop-o'-my-Thumb; anybody would think we were going away altogether, instead of coming back this evening.

At these words, the poor woman only cried the more; and as she turned into the house to hide her tears, she could not help thinking what a strange thing it was under the circumstances that her little son should have said what he did.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" she sobbed; "can it be possible that I have seen my dear children for the last time?" Then, when she grew calmer, she remembered how cleverly her firstborn had found his way back to her when he was quite a young child; and she could not help thinking that his clever brains would preserve him from evil on this occasion, and perhaps bring him safe home again. But there were the six other children who were not so clever as

Hop-o'-my-Thumb; and the poor woman thought sadly of her next eldest son, who had been lame from his birth.

"At any rate," she exclaimed, starting up, "if I must part with my sons, I will see the last I may of them." So, putting on her jacket and hood, she ran along till she caught sight of the little party. Hastening her footsteps, she soon overtook them, and saying that, as the day was so fine, she thought she would come too, she took her place between her husband and the seven children who followed, one after the other, from the tallest to the shortest, Hop-o'-my-Thumb coming last.

In this order they entered the forest, Hop-o'-my-Thumb all the while singing to himself as unconcerned as if he had known nothing whatever about the fate in store for him; but, cunning little fellow, every now and then he dropped one of his little white pebbles, and so left a trail behind him by which to find his way back. Thus they traversed hill and valley, dell and dale, and at last entered a part of the forest so overgrown with huge fir trees as to be almost dark. When they had penetrated some distance farther into this dismal place, their father called to them to stop, and asking them if they were not rather tired, told them they might rest themselves on the grass or play about as they pleased.

While the youngsters were enjoying a game of hide-and-seek, their father and mother slipped off and ran as quickly as they could down the hill.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb, who had been looking out for this moment, started from behind a large dock where he had hidden himself; and, presenting himself before his parents, exclaimed, "Halloa, father! where are you going to in such a hurry?"

"I shall soon be back," answered the woodcutter, evasively.

"Oh, you needn't trouble," said Hop-o'-my-Thumb, indifferently; "I'll bring the boys home, never fear."

"Very well," replied his father; but in his own mind he said, "I very much doubt it."

"By-and-by the six brothers discovered that their parents were nowhere to be found. They ran hither and thither, searching



"He dropped one of his little white pebbles, and so left a trail behind him by which to find his way back."

behind bushes and trees, and calling loudly to their parents, but all in vain. No sound came to them except the echo of their own voices. Then the poor boys were in a great way for fear they had lost themselves, but none of them suspected the truth.

All this while Hop-o'-my-Thumb had been looking on and enjoying the fun; but seeing that in the sombre wood it was already getting dark, he thought it high time they should see about getting back.

Calling his brothers together, he said to them, "Now, I don't know what you think, but my opinion is that if we wait here for father and mother to come to us, we may wait till doomsday."

At this the younger ones began to cry, and the elder ones said, "Let's go back by ourselves, then."

"All right," replied Hop-o'-my-Thumb. "Who knows the way?"

None of them spoke a word. They had not thought of this, and now they all hung their heads in despair. They must have come at least twelve miles through the forest, six of which were entirely new ground to them.

When Hop-o'-my-Thumb thought they were sufficiently despondent, he exclaimed, with a knowing look, "Well, I think I know the way; so, if you like to follow me, I'll undertake to bring you safely home."

The brothers were very glad to hear this, and followed their little brother cheerfully. The little white pebbles shone up brightly under Hop-o'-my-Thumb's feet, and guided him easily back along the circuitous route by which their father had purposely brought them.

The moon had risen brightly, and was shining in on the hapless couple in the cottage. The poor mother rocked herself to and fro, and her husband sat looking at her without speaking a word.

Rat-tat-tat-tat! came at the door.

"Who can that be at this time of night?" exclaimed the woodman, in some surprise.

He got up and unbarred the door, when, lo and behold, there stood his seven sons, with Hop-o'-my-Thumb at their head!

"However did you find your way?" he asked.

"Oh, I found it as easily as possible," replied Hop-o'-my-Thumb, unconcernedly.

The tired boys soon sought their beds, and, worn out with the day's adventures, fell into a sound sleep.

III.—THE GIANT.

 HE next morning the woodcutter called his children up betimes, and giving them each a crust of bread, led them to another part of the vast forest. Hop-o'-my-Thumb, who had been expecting this, slipped his crust of bread into his pocket, and as they went along strewed the way with crumbs.

But for once Mr. Sharpshins was outwitted by some very simple opponents, for the birds picked up the scattered crumbs, and thus destroyed the clue he thought he had left safely behind him.

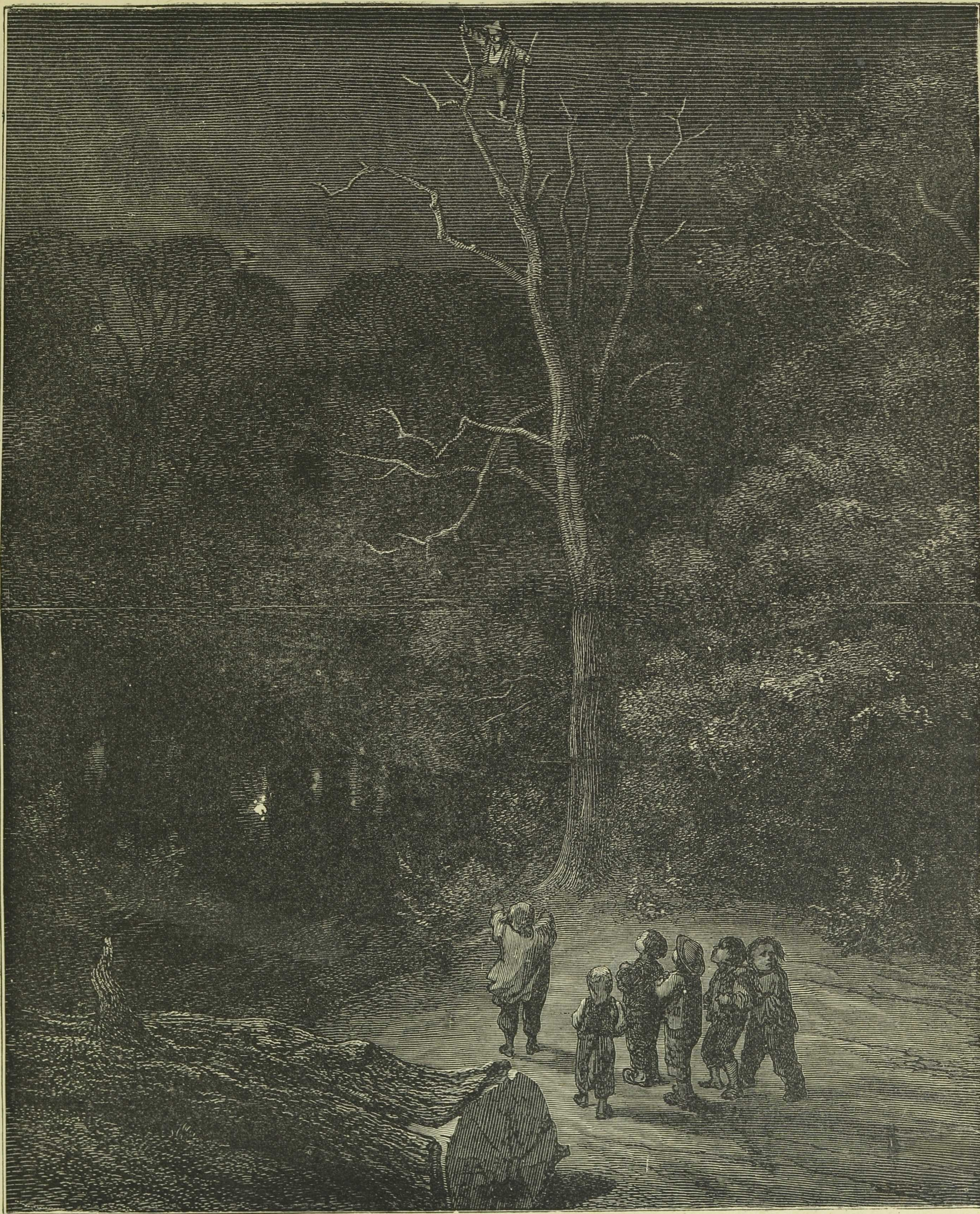
Poor Hop-o'-my-Thumb was certainly at a loss when he discovered the trick he had been served. His brothers had depended upon him, and therefore felt no fear; but when night came on, and they found themselves still wandering about in the very midst of the forest, they were terribly alarmed.

Not so Hop-o'-my-Thumb. He didn't know what fear meant, but marched bravely on at the head of his six shrinking brothers.

Presently he noticed a large bare-looking tree, which seemed to tower above the rest.

"You stay here," he said to his brothers, while I go and see what is to be seen.

The next moment he was mounted on a high branch, anxiously scanning the surrounding country. Far away in the distance he perceived a ray of light glimmering through the trees.



“The next moment he was mounted on a high branch, anxiously scanning the surrounding country.”



"The figure of a very big woman appeared at the top of a long flight of stone steps which led up to the door."

"He decided to follow it till he came to the cottage or house from which it proceeded, and then beg a night's shelter for himself and his brothers.

On they went, pursuing the ray of light, with many a weary footstep, when, at length, emerging from the denser part of the forest, they found themselves at the gate of a beautiful mansion.

They entered the enclosed ground in which the castle stood, and Hop-o'-my-Thumb, discovering a trumpet, blew so loud a blast that in a few seconds bolts and bars were drawn back, and the figure of a very big woman appeared at the top of a long flight of stone steps which led up to the door.

"Who are you, and what do you want?" she inquired.

"We are seven brothers lost in the forest," answered Hop-o'-my-Thumb; "and we beg of you to give us some supper and a night's lodging."

"Poor children," replied the woman, compassionately, "that I would willingly do, but I am the wife of a giant, and if I were to take you in he would soon find it out, and eat you all up."

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! What shall we do?" cried the six brothers, mournfully, when they heard the words of the giantess.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb stood and considered the state of affairs for a few seconds. "If we stay in the forest we shall die of cold and starvation, or perhaps be devoured by wild beasts, and worse can't happen to us if we go in here. We shall at any rate get a supper, and I'll see if I can't outwit Mr. Giant.

"Would you be so kind as to let us have some supper, ma'am?" asked Hop-o'-my-Thumb.

The giantess hesitated some minutes; then she replied, "You may come and have some supper if you like, but mind, I have warned you of what you may expect."

"All right, ma'am," answered our hero, fearlessly, as he marched up the steps, closely followed by the others.

The woman pushed back the door, and led them through a spacious hall into a square, lofty room. She then spread some food before them, and the poor hungry creatures fell to with right

good will. They were thus pleasantly engaged when a key sounded in the door outside, and a heavy footstep was heard in the hall. "Get under the bed," exclaimed their kind hostess, quickly; and under the bed they all scrambled as quickly as their trembling limbs would allow them.

Only just in time, for they were barely hidden when the giant entered.

"H'm, h'm!" exclaimed the giant, sniffing the air, "what is it that I smell?"

"Smell?" asked his wife, in a surprised tone.

"Yes, smell," replied the giant, in a tone which made the little people under the bed quake. "I smell some children hereabouts."

"Then they are your own, I should think," returned the giantess.

"Halloa! What do all these dirty plates mean?" asked the giant, in a tremendous voice, as he caught sight of the table at which the seven brothers had been feasting.

"I suppose they mean that the children have had their supper."

"Don't tell me!" thundered the giant; and with that he began to search in every nook and cranny of the room.

He was not long in coming to the bed. "Ho, ho!" he exclaimed, gleefully, as he dragged all the youngsters from their hiding-place.

The monster then began to sharpen his knife, while the poor boys begged and implored him not to take their lives.

The giantess, who had been looking wistfully on, was suddenly struck with an idea. Taking up little Hop-o'-my-Thumb in her hand, she exclaimed, "See here what little shrivelled-up morsels they are. Leave them to me to fatten them up; have for your supper to night the half sheep that I have roasted for you."

"Your advice is good," replied the giant. "They are, as you say, but lean morsels at present. We will fatten them up for a



“ ‘Ho, ho!’ he exclaimed gleefully, as he dragged all the youngsters from their hiding-place.”

week, and see what they will be like by that time. And now let them get to bed."

So the poor little fellows were safe for the present; but Hop-o'-my-Thumb determined that with a week's respite they must be fools indeed if they did not escape altogether. While his brothers were sleeping he got up and began peeping cautiously about, to see what plans he had better form. He soon discovered a bed close to their own, on which were sleeping seven boys, the sons of the giant, each wearing on his head a crown of gold.

"This is lucky," thought he, as he carefully removed the seven crowns, placing one on each of his brothers' heads; then placing the baby's crown on his own, he jumped into bed by the side of his sleeping brethren.

IV.—A RACE.

BY-AND-BY the giant, who had not tasted any children for some time, became so impatient that he felt he could wait no longer. Creeping stealthily up-stairs in the dark, for fear of disturbing them, he came to the bed where Hop-o'-my-Thumb and his brothers lay. Passing his hand over their heads, he discovered the crowns, and then turning away to the other bed, he took his large knife and slew every one of his own children.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb, who had been wide awake all this while, and heard everything that had taken place, saw that they must make good their escape as soon as possible, before the giant should find out what he had done. Rousing his brothers, he bade them follow him as quietly as possible, and not utter a word.

They crept silently down-stairs, and were fortunate enough to discover a broken window. Through this Hop-o'-my-Thumb shoved each of his brothers, following last of all himself.

Once fairly outside they took to their heels, and never stopped running till the sun had broken through the clouds, and not so

much as a tower of the giant's castle was visible. Then they stayed a minute or two to rest.

"I wonder," said little Jack, "whether the giant has missed us yet."

"Oh, look, look, look there!" shrieked one of the brothers, in an agony of terror.

They looked round, and beheld the giant in the distance, striding after them at a fearful rate. Hop-o'-my-Thumb perceived, from the length of each stride, that he must have on a pair of Seven League Boots.

Here was a to-do. It was impossible to escape from the giant by running away. There was but one thing to be done, and that was to draw back into a cave that stood by the way, and trust that the horrid monster might by some fortunate accident omit to search it.

Even brave little Hop-o'-my-Thumb trembled with fear as the giant approached their hiding-place. He came nearer and nearer, and made straight for the cave. Seven hearts inside it went pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat.

"I am dreadfully tired!" exclaimed the giant; "I will sit down here and rest." So he threw himself down on the grass, and leaned against the walls of the cave in which the fugitives were hidden.

Presently the cave shook, and a sound like a distant peal of thunder echoed from wall to wall.

"Now's our time," said Hop-o'-my-Thumb. "The giant is asleep, for I hear him snoring."

The boys crept stealthily out, and shot off in different directions, for they had agreed that this would be the best plan, as by these means the giant could not possibly catch all of them at once, and even should he catch one the rest would have a better opportunity to escape.

Hop-o'-my-Thumb saw his brothers depart, but he did not follow them, for he was determined to make one desperate effort to disarm their enemy. Without making the slightest noise, he



"And with a tremendous tug, which threw him on to his back, succeeded in pulling off one of the Seven League Boots."

crawled along the grass to the giant's feet, and with a tremendous tug which threw him on to his back, succeeded in pulling off one of the Seven League Boots. In an instant he was up again, and pulling off the other, jumped into them, and in two strides placed forty-two miles between himself and his still sleeping adversary.

The first thing he did, now that he knew his foe could not follow him^{*}, was to return to the giant's house and empty it of all its gold and treasures. With these he enriched his parents and brothers, so that there was now no need for the woodman and his wife to wish to get rid of their large family.

They all lived happily together for the rest of their lives, and Hop-o'-my-Thumb became famous all over that country for his bravery and daring exploits.

ORANGE AND LEMON.

IN a lonely cottage on the top of a hill, there lived a man and his wife and two daughters. The eldest daughter was named Orange, and was her father's favourite, because she was so good and gentle; the youngest daughter was named Lemon, and was her mother's pet, for she was very much like her, and possessed her own cruel disposition.

Now Lemon and her mother were very jealous of Orange, for her father would bring her home sweetmeats and toys, and made her come and sit on his knee at supper-time, when he would give her all sorts of dainty bits off his own plate.

So the mother said to herself, "If father doesn't take more notice of my sweet Lemon, but will go pampering up his sour Orange, I'll see that he shan't have the opportunity much longer," and then the old woman smiled to herself in a very meaning way.

One day the mother prepared some meat for her husband's

dinner, and putting her favourite daughter on a very smart frock, she told her to take it to her father and ask him to let her get up on his knee, and have some out of his plate as Orange did.

But when she took the dish in her hands, she was so clumsy that she let it fall, and spilt the gravy all over her frock. Then the father said rather sharply, "How clumsy you are, Lemon; why do you take the dish if you can't hold it tight? Send Orange to me to give me my dinner, and you take off that fine frock which you have quite spoilt."

When the mother heard these words, she flew into a dreadful rage, and had all sorts of wicked thoughts come into her head; and as she did not try to drive them away, they took such a hold upon her that they made her do all sorts of dreadful things, as you will presently hear.

When her husband was away at his work, she treated poor Orange very harshly, making her scrub the floors, and sift the cinders, and do all sorts of hard work. One day she gave her some money and a jug, and told her to go and fetch a pint of milk and some candles, and not to be longer than five minutes, or she would shut her up in the dark cellar.

So the little girl ran down the hill as fast as she could, and bought her candles and milk, but when the milk was put into the jug, it all ran through as quickly as it was poured in. Poor Orange could not tell what to do, for she knew her mother would say that she had broken the jug, and it was her fault. However, it was no good lingering, so she ran up the hill as fast as she could go, but she did not notice a great stone in the path, which Lemon had placed there while her sister was buying the things. Over this stone she fell, and dropped the candles and the jug; and a rat ran out of the hedge and nibbled up the candles while she was lying there stunned by her fall.

When she got up again, she stood and cried with fear; for she did not dare go home. Presently a gentleman came by and asked her what was the matter. When she had told him, he gave her some money to buy another jug, and some more milk and candles.

When she reached home, her mother caught hold of her, and shaking her well, asked where she had been all this time. Orange was afraid to tell her her adventure, so she only said she had been as quick as ever she could ; but her mother would not believe her, and declared that she must have stopped to play. Then she put her into a dark cellar, and left her there all alone.

When night came, Orange's father was very surprised at not seeing his favourite child, and asked where she was. "Gone to fetch a jug of beer for your dinner," replied his wife.

"No I haven't, I'm locked up in here," cried poor Orange, from her dark cellar ; but her father could not hear a word, for just then the fire-irons fell down with a great clatter. He waited a few moments, but as she did not return, he said he would go and search for her. While he was gone, the cruel mother opened the door, and told Orange if she made any noise, she would chop off her head ; so the poor child was obliged to be quiet.

Presently the father came back, and said he had been to the public-house, but they had not seen Orange there. Then the mother said, "Of course not—how silly I am—I sent her to the butter-shop to fetch some butter."

So the father started off again, but he did not find her at the butter-shop, but came home without her.

"Ah ! now I think of it," exclaimed the mother, "I sent her to her aunt's to stay with her for the night."

"Then she shan't stay," said her father, and started off to his sister's house to fetch her.

But when he reached there, his sister told him that she had not even seen Orange for the last three months.

So the father went home again, and said to his wife, "I can't find Orange anywhere, and I believe you have hidden her away somewhere." He then looked all round the house, but he quite forgot to search in the cellar. In the middle of the night, he thought he heard some one moving in the room, and he told his wife of it, but she said it was only the rats in the wainscoting, and turned over on her side and began to snore.

But the father was very distressed about his little girl, and could not get a wink of sleep; and when the morning came, he could hardly tear himself away from the house to go to his work, because of his anxiety.

Before he left he said to his wife: "I believe you have done something with my little Orange; and, mind you, if I don't find her here when I come home, I shall serve Lemon in the same way as you have served her."

So when the evening came and the woman heard her husband's steps outside the door, she opened a large box and made Lemon get into it, for she was really afraid that her husband would keep his word. Then she told Lemon that as soon as she could get her father out of the room she would, and then Lemon must push open the lid, so that she might get some fresh air, but till then she could manage with only the keyhole of the box out of which the key had been taken.

The father came in and asked where Orange was.

"I have not found her yet," replied the hard-hearted woman; but she didn't say she hadn't tried to do so, or it would have been an easy matter.

"Then where is Lemon?" asked the husband angrily.

"She has gone to seek Orange," answered his wife.

"I don't believe it," thundered the angry man. "And what's more, neither you nor I shall leave this room till you tell me where Orange is. As for Lemon, I know you will take care that she is safe;" and as he spoke he turned the lock of the room door, and placed the key in his pocket.

Now this was just what the old woman did not want, for she was anxious to get out of the room so that Lemon might push up the box cover: but she was too obstinate and frightened to let her husband know what she had done with Orange; so she blew out the candle, thinking that Lemon would be sure to seize the opportunity.

So she sat there comparatively easy, as regarded her favourite child, till the morning, when her patience gave way and she let the secret out.

The father went immediately to the cellar, and there he found poor Orange lying in a swoon on the floor from fright and hunger. He took her tenderly up in his arms, and chafed her poor cold hands till she revived, and then he fed her himself with warm bread and milk.

Then he told his wife that she might go where she liked, and take Lemon with her, for she should not stay in his house another day. The old woman went to let Lemon out of the box, but what was her horror when she found that the lid had fallen down and hasped itself, so that Lemon was quite locked in!

She opened the box with fear and trembling, and found her child as nearly dead as it was possible to be; and when she saw that dreadful sight and thought what she should have felt if she had been quite dead, her heart became softened, and she went to her husband and told him how sorry she was for what she had done, and if he only wouldn't turn her out of doors, she would never do anything of the kind again.

At first her husband refused to listen to her petitions, but kind-hearted Orange begged him to forgive her; and so, to please his little daughter, he did so, but he looked after her very sharply for a long time, for of course he could not trust her again. But I am glad to tell you that she became very kind to Orange, and so they all lived happily together.

OLD MOTHER GOOSE.

THERE once lived an old widow-woman and her two daughters. Now the eldest was her step-daughter, and very pretty, while the youngest was her own daughter, and very ugly. The old woman was very cruel to her beautiful step-daughter, and made her go and sit in the road

and spin ; but as for her own daughter, she allowed her to do just what she pleased all day long.

One day the pretty daughter was spinning away to get her task finished before night. She worked so hard that her fingers got covered with blood, which ran on to the spindle. So she went to the well and dipped it into the water to clean it, and in doing so had the misfortune to drop it. She ran home crying to her mother, and told her what had happened ; but the old woman was very angry, and told her that, as she had dropped it, she should go and fetch it, for she was not going to have her shirk her work in that way.

Accordingly, the maiden went back to the well, in order to find it, but being unable to do so, she at last jumped in. She was dreadfully frightened when she found herself falling down, down, down, and lost her senses. When she recovered, she found herself in a beautiful meadow, where the sun lit up all kinds of lovely flowers. She walked along for some time, and by-and-by came to a baker's where there was an oven full of bread. As she drew near, the bread cried, "Draw me out, draw me out, or I shall burn, for I have been baking long enough." So she stayed and drew out the bread, although the heat was very fierce and scorched her neck and face. Then she went on a little farther and came to an apple tree covered with apples, which called out, "Shake us, shake us, for we are quite ripe and tired of hanging here." So she shook all the apples off the tree and piled them up in a heap and went on again.

After some time she came to a little cottage where an old woman was peeping out her head. At first, the maiden was very frightened and ran away, for the old woman looked very fierce ; but the dame cried after her, "Why are you frightened ? Come and stay with me, and if you clean my house well and keep everything in order, I will give you food and clothing ; but you must mind you shake my bed well every morning, for when the feathers fly it snows upon the earth, and the snow covers up the roots and keeps them alive and warm, so that they may spring in

the warmer weather, and that's why they call me Old Mother Goose."

So the maiden went into the old woman's house; and as she kept it very clean and nice, she was very well treated and was very happy. She shook up the bed so well every morning that the little downy feathers flew in showers, and the people on the earth said that there hadn't been so much snow fall for years and years.

By-and-by, the young girl became very desirous to see her home and her mother and sister once more; for though they had been so unkind to her, she was very kind-hearted, and was very anxious to know whether everything had gone well with them since she had been away. So she told her mistress that she wished to go home for awhile, at least; and the old dame said that as she had been such a good girl, she would take her back herself, but first she would give her some wages. So she led her under a large doorway, where the gold poured down in showers, and stuck all over her; so that she carried about her more gold than her pockets could have contained. Then the old woman gave her back the spindle she had dropped down the well, and closed the door behind her. The maiden then found herself upon the earth, not far from her mother's cottage. She ran quickly home, and knocking at the door, begged them to let her in; but nobody answered her, till the cock in the yard cried out—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo !

Our maid with gold comes back again."

Then the old woman and her ugly daughter peeped out and saw the gold, and so they let her in, and asked her with a show of concern where she had been all this time.

When the maiden had told them of her adventures, the widow determined that her ugly daughter should go and try her luck. So she sent her out in the road to spin; but the girl was too lazy to work, so she pricked her fingers, and rubbed the blood about the spindle before throwing it down the well. After she had done

this, she was too much of a coward to jump in, so her mother came behind her with a thick stick, and drove her.

She fell very heavily into the meadow; and when she found herself on her feet she could hardly help crying. However, she went on till she came to the baker's, and the bread in the oven cried out, "Draw me out, draw me out, or I shall burn; for I have been baking long enough." But she turned up her nose and said, "Do you think I am going to scorch my face, and soil my hands about a paltry batch of bread?" and so she passed on. She soon came to the apple tree filled with apples, which cried out as they had done to her sister, "Gather us, gather us, for we are all ripe, and tired of hanging here." But the disagreeable girl exclaimed angrily, "A pretty thing to ask me indeed! Do you suppose I am going to tire myself to death by gathering you?"

A little farther on she came to the old woman's cottage, and going up to the old dame, she told her she had come to be her servant.

"Indeed!" said Old Mother Goose. "How do you know I'll have you?"

"My sister told me you hired her, and so I thought you'd hire me," replied the girl, who was not at all alarmed at the old woman's ugliness, knowing that she had been so kind to her step-sister.

"Oh, very well," replied the woman, "you can come in if you like; but you had better take care to keep the place tidy and shake my bed well, or it will be all the worse for you."

The first day passed very well, and the usually lazy girl really worked hard; but on the second she fell into her old idle habits, and hardly shook the bed at all. This went on for a long time, and so little did she shake the feathers about that on the earth all the green things were nipped up by the frost, for there was no snow to preserve them.

One morning Old Mother Goose said to her, "You are a lazy girl, and will not suit me, so you had better go home."

"Very well," replied the girl, not at all displeased at the idea

of getting back to her former life. "Give me my wages and let me go."

So the old woman took her to the open doorway and bade her stand underneath it; but she had no sooner done so than a shower of pitch descended, completely covering her. She flew into a great passion, and turned round to say something impudent to Old Mother Goose, but found that the door was closed, and that she was standing in a field near her mother's house. She ran home as quickly as ever she could go, for she was afraid people would see her all covered with pitch. As she went in at the gate the cock in the yard cried out—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Our maid with nought but pitch comes back again."

Then her mother opened the door; but when she saw the plight her ugly daughter was in, she was very angry, and beat her step-daughter with a broomstick, declaring it was all her fault.

The poor girl's cries attracted the attention of a young nobleman riding by, who entered the cottage to see what was the matter. He was so struck with the beauty of the poor girl that he ordered his servant to conduct her to his father's castle, and when she had been presented to his parents, and they had expressed their approval of her, the young couple were married with great pomp and splendour.

But the lazy sister would not take the trouble to rub the pitch off, and so she could not be bridesmaid.

JACK'S LUCK.



JACK had been a faithful servant to his master for seven long years, so one morning he said he thought, if master could spare him for a few months, he should like to go home and see his old mother and father.

"All right, Jack," replied his master. "You have

served me well, and I am quite willing you should have a holiday. Here are your wages."

As he spoke, Jack's master handed him a lump of gold as big as his head.

Jack was, of course, very well pleased with this substantial recognition of his services. After having bid his fellow-servants good-bye, he tied his gold up in a handkerchief, and slinging it on to the end of a stick, and placing the stick across his shoulder, he started on foot to find his way home.

The sun was very hot, and before long Jack began to find the weight of the gold very fatiguing. He was soon obliged to sit down and rest. "I shall never get home at this rate," thought he.

Presently a man came in sight riding a fine cream-coloured horse. He rode along gaily humming a song to himself. "Ah!" said Jack, aloud, "what a fine thing it must be to ride along like that, without a chance of getting tired, and no heavy weight to break one's back in pieces! What a splendid animal it is, too!"

"Do you think so?" asked the man, who at this moment rode up, and had already discovered the gleaming of gold through the coarse old handkerchief.

"Ay," replied Jack; "it seems to me a noble beast."

"Well, you're about right there," replied the man, "for this is one of the finest horses that ever was bred. I have been ordered to sell it by my master the Grand Duke, but I don't for a moment think I shall find anybody to give me an offer that I may accept. Beautiful creature, isn't it now?" he added, looking at the horse with conscious pride.

"It is, indeed," replied Jack. "I wish I possessed such a creature; for walking's tiring work this weather, especially with a great lump like this over one's shoulder, going bump, thwack, thwack, bump, against one's back at every step he takes."

"Well," replied the man, "I don't like to be hard on a fellow-creature. You look tired. Now, if you like, I'll take that lump

of yours in exchange for my horse; for I tell you honestly that I perceive that it contains gold."

"Contains gold; it *is* gold!" ejaculated Jack.

"Is it?" replied the man, with a peculiar smile. "I hope you'll find no difficulty in obtaining its worth."

Poor Jack was quite taken aback at this suggestion. "If I have the horse," thought he, "I *shall* know what I have got, at least."

So he said to the man, "I am very much obliged to you for your offer, and I accept it with all my heart."

The man then helped Jack on to the horse's back, and having given him a few instructions he took the lump of gold and trotted off, well pleased with his bargain.

At first Jack got on capitally, and felt as big as bull-beef, but by-and-by the horse, who knew that he had got an inexperienced master, began to gallop and kick furiously. Jack, quite at a loss how to manage him, pulled this way and that at the bridle, till at length the creature made a furious dash, and lodged his master in a wet ditch. Jack soon scrambled out, feeling decidedly wet and uncomfortable, and found that his horse had been caught by a countryman who was driving a cow along the road to market.

"Rather a tricky customer," said the old fellow, touching his hat to Jack.

"That he is," replied Jack. "I'm not going to get on his back again, a wretched brute!"

"The best thing for you to ride, sir, would be a cow; a nice gentle creature, as quiet as a lamb. Such a one as I have here, for instance; pretty creature!"

"Well that certainly would be a good plan," replied Jack, "for besides having an animal to ride, I should be supplied with new milk, cream, and butter."

"Of course you would," replied the man. "Now if you like," continued he, "I will take your horse in exchange for my cow."

"Oh, thank you a thousand times!" replied Jack; and so the

bargain was concluded, and the man rode off as fast as he could, leaving Jack in possession of his cow.

So Jack jumped on the beast's back; but it wouldn't move an inch, so he jumped down again, and drove it along, and determined to wait to ride it till it should know him better. As he walked along it became hotter and hotter, and Jack thought he would refresh himself with a draught of milk.

So he took his cap, in the absence of a pail, and tying her up to a tree, worked away with right good will, but no milk came; and the cow resenting the treatment to which she was being subjected, gave poor Jack a kick which rendered him insensible.

By-and-by a butcher came along driving a pig before him, and seeing Jack's plight he gave him some water from his flask. When the poor fellow had come to, he asked him the cause of his misfortune. When Jack had told him all about it, he examined the cow, and soon discovered that it was far too old to give any milk.

"That is tiresome," said Jack; "for if she is too old to give milk, and too obstinate to let me ride her, and too tough for eating, what am I to do with her? Besides, I can't bear beef at the best of times; what I like is a delicious piece of fat pork. I envy you that fine pig."

"Do you?" replied the butcher. "Well, then, as you seem a good-natured sort of chap, who has been imposed upon, if you are agreeable, I'll let you have my pig in return for your cow."

"You are indeed a good friend!" exclaimed Jack, fervently, as he took the cord to which the pig was attached, in his hand.

He went gaily along for some distance, driving the pig before him, and thinking what a lucky fellow he was to have got such a fine fat pig in exchange for a wretched, dried-up old cow, and what a kind, good-hearted fellow that butcher must be.

Presently a boy came along with a beautiful white goose under his arm.

"Good day!" said Jack; "see what a fine fat pig I have got.

I exchanged an old cow for her;" and here Jack laughed, and looked as much to say, "What do you think of that for a bargain?"

"A fine fat pig, truly," replied the boy, "but not equal to my goose, which has been ordered for a christening-feast. Father has been fattening her up for the last two months; and she is fat, without any mistake. Just feel her weight!"

Jack took the creature in his arms, and while he did so the boy began peering this side and that, over, and under, and all about the pig.

"Do you know that in the town there is a reward offered for a pig that has been stolen from the Lord Mayor's sty? and it strikes me that this is the very pig."

"What!" exclaimed Jack, thunderstruck; "you don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do," returned the boy; "and if I were you I should take and hide it in some hole or ditch, for you may depend that if you are found with it in your possession you will be severely punished."

"Oh, dear! how unfortunate I am!" cried Jack. "What will become of me?"

"Well, look here," replied the boy, "as I know the country better than you, I don't mind getting rid of it for you, if you like, and so that you shan't go home empty handed, I'll let you have my goose in exchange."

So the boy drove the pig off in one direction, and Jack went away in another, carrying the goose under his arm.

"I have made a good exchange now," thought he. "How delicious this goose will eat, nicely roasted, with plenty of rich brown gravy! Won't mother think it a treat!"

As Jack walked along, he came upon a knife-grinder, sitting by the side of the road and singing away as blithely as a lark.

"You seem to be very jolly," said Jack; "what makes you so? Does your trade thrive so well?"

"Yes, indeed it does," replied the tinker; "it's one of the best

trades going ; you can hardly fail to make a fortune at it. But what a beautiful goose ! Where did you buy that ? ”

“ I didn’t buy it at all,” answered Jack, “ I exchanged it for a pig, and the pig I exchanged for a cow, and the cow for a horse, and the horse for a lump of gold that was too heavy for me to carry.”

“ And where did you get the gold from ? ” asked the grinder.

“ That was seven years’ wages,” replied Jack.

“ Ah, I see, you know how to look out for your own interest,” said the man, “ and I should like to see you a grinder, like me ; you only want a grindstone, and as I am in the trade and know where to get plenty more, I’ll let you have mine dirt cheap. The only thing that I’ll take in exchange is that goose ; don’t offer me more, because I won’t have it.”

“ You are too good,” replied Jack.

“ You want a good big flint to straighten your nails upon, now,” said the tinker, picking up one that lay near them ; “ mind you use them carefully, and you will soon have your pocket full of gold.”

“ How lucky I am ! ” thought Jack ; “ I started with only a piece of gold, that wasn’t all gold, and here at the end of my journey I shall have a fortune ; ” but as he was thus meditating, he began to feel very tired, and both hungry and thirsty, and the stones in his pocket were so heavy that he could scarcely crawl. He soon discovered a clear stream of water, so placing the stones beside him on the bank, he stooped down to get some in his hand, but he lost his balance and rolling over on the bank, pushed both the stones into the water.

Then he had his drink, and jumping up, said gaily, “ Now I am the luckiest man in the world, for I have no lump of gold to tire me, or horse to throw me, or cow to kick me, or pig to get me into prison, or goose to flap its wings at me, or big heavy stones to weigh me down to the ground.”

Thus relieved, Jack soon reached home.

CINDERELLA; OR, THE GLASS SLIPPER.

BY the side of the Rhine there once lived a rich and powerful baron. When he had been a young man, he had made a foolish marriage with a sour-tempered woman many years older than himself. After several unhappy years, she died, leaving behind her two little girls. Soon after her death the Baron married, and this time he chose a beautiful modest girl. The next few years which he spent with his young wife were such happy ones, that when she died leaving him another little girl, he could not persuade himself to seek another mother for his three children; for he fancied he should never find the equal of his last wife, and he greatly dreaded that he might get the counterpart of his first one.

The two eldest girls, who by the time their little sister came to them had attained the respective ages of ten and twelve, looked with envy on her paler cheeks and waving golden brown hair; and when she grew into womanhood and became quite a beauty, they, knowing that any good looks they might have had had passed away, determined to keep her out of sight, lest they should lose their chance of a good settlement in life.

So the poor girl was sent down into the kitchen to clean the grates, and cook the dinner, and wash plates and dishes; for the sisters said to themselves they would soon cure her hands of their ridiculous, unhealthy whiteness. Besides, being thus made to work hard, they would give her their old dresses to wear out; and as they dressed themselves in queer fashion, their old things were not particularly becoming to the poor girl, so you will readily see that she had every possible disadvantage on her side.

One day when she was sitting down in the cheerless kitchen to her solitary cup of tea, after having finished her hard day's work, she was startled by hearing a flourish of trumpets which sounded in the direction of the King's palace.

"Ah!" thought poor Cinderella (for so her step-sisters had nicknamed her), "the King is about to give another ball, I suppose."

Cinderella soon found that her conjecture was correct, for her sisters soon after came down into the kitchen and bade her set to work, and wash out and iron all their petticoats and muslins and laces, and be sure they were well done, for they wanted to wear them at the King's ball.

"I wonder how it was Miss Prettyface wasn't asked?" said one sister to the other; "I've no doubt she'd very much like to go."

"I daresay she would," giggled the other.

The two sisters then left Cinderella alone, and she set to work to prepare their finery. There was plenty to do, for the ball was to last three nights, and of course they must have different dresses on each occasion; so Cinderella stood at the wash-tub and rub, rub, rubbed, from morning till night.

At length the day fixed for the ball arrived. The sisters were in a state of feverish excitement, and drove Cinderella hither and thither, up stairs and down, to wait upon them. She laced their corsets, fastened their dresses, arranged the feathers in their hair, buttoned their gloves, fetched their handkerchiefs, searched for anything that was mislaid, and in short waited upon them hand and foot; they, nevertheless, abused her, calling her a lazy thing and all sorts of other names, if she happened not to know where they had left their pearl necklaces or diamond earrings last time they took them off. At last, however, they were dressed, and I think I really must tell you how. The eldest, who considered that she possessed a grand style of beauty which needed very elaborate dressing to set it off, had made her face look young and blooming by the addition of a quantity of rouge and numerous little black patches, which were very much worn at that time. Her arms she powdered well, but they were nevertheless somewhat red and decidedly bony. She wore an underskirt of amber satin striped with green, which was trimmed with flounces and puffs of pink and white. Over this was a train of a

pink and blue brocade, fastened up here and there with amber satin bows. Round her waist was tied a pink silk sash, while her gloves were of light amber to match the bows. On her head she wore a wreath of amber roses ; and in the knot of hair at the back was fastened a large amber feather, which towered about a quarter of a yard above her head, and fell gracefully over on to her forehead.

The other sister, whose style was girlish, she being very slim indeed, wore a crimson and yellow gauze over a crimson silk petticoat. The body of her dress was adorned with numerous sky-blue silk bows. Her hair was powdered and arranged in a crop, and on the top of her head was coquettishly perched, a little to one side, a Spanish hat with a silver buckle and a few peacock's feathers. They both wore pearls and diamonds in their ears and about their throats and wrists.

At last they were dressed and off, and Cinderella, after having thrown their opera-cloaks over them, and not receiving one word of thanks, turned back to the kitchen. She sat down and fell amusing. "Ah me!" she exclaimed aloud, although she scarcely knew that she did so, "what a hard life mine is—nothing but drudge, drudge, drudge, from morning till night, with no reward but scanty food, ragged clothing, and a hard bed, and never a kind word from anybody. I never was at a ball in my life. What a gay scene it must be ; I wish I could go !"

"Do you?" exclaimed a voice.

Cinderella turned sharply round, and perceived an old woman standing in the doorway.

"Who are you?" she asked.

"I am your fairy godmother," replied the old creature. "Your poor mother asked me to watch over you and take care of you, for she feared that no one else would. You have never hitherto expressed a wish aloud, or I should have appeared to you before this. I am come now to grant your wish."

Cinderella looked at her in surprise.

"Didn't you say you wished you could go to the ball?" asked the old woman.

"Yes, I did say so," replied Cinderella; "but it's quite impossible, for I haven't any sort of dress to go in."

"Never mind that," replied her godmother. "Have you any blackbeetles here?"

"There are a few, I have no doubt," replied Cinderella, listlessly, wondering what the old woman could mean by such a silly question.

"Go to the mouse-trap, and if there are any mice in it bring it here."

Cinderella went, and found six mice in the trap.

"Now go and fetch me a couple of lizards out of the garden."

Cinderella did this also. Then the old woman said, "I want now only two things more, and those are a rat and a pumpkin."

So Cinderella went down the garden and fetched a rat and a large pumpkin, which must have been growing there on purpose for her.

Then the old woman waved her wand over five beetles she had caught, and they immediately became five remarkably fine pages, in invisible blue suits with sugar-loaf buttons. The six mice turned into six cream-coloured horses, with resplendent silver harnessings; the rat was converted into a coachman, with a powdered wig and a cockade at the side of his hat; and the lizards became two obsequiously polite footmen.

"Now," said her godmother, "we only want a coach."

Then the old woman took the pumpkin, and cutting a piece off the top, began scooping out the pithy inside.

This done, she waved her wand over it, and it immediately became a beautiful coach, lined with white silk.

"There!" said the fairy. "Now will you go to the ball?"

Cinderella, who had been looking on in bewildered surprise, replied by casting a glance over her tattered attire.

"I see what you are thinking of," replied her godmother; and as she spoke she waved her wand over Cinderella's head.

In a moment, rags and tatters vanished, all redness disappeared from her hard-working hands, and there she stood,



"Then the old woman took the pumpkin, and cutting a piece off the top, began scooping out the pithy inside."



“The Prince seemed mightily taken with the beautiful stranger.”

dressed as beautifully as the richest lady in the land. Jewels sparkled in her hair, her ears, and upon her beautiful white neck and arms.

"Oh, you dear old godmother!" exclaimed Cinderella, delightedly; "this is beautiful!"

"Now jump into your coach, and be off to the ball," laughed her godmother, well pleased to see her favourite's delight; "but mind you don't stay a minute after twelve, for the moment the clock finishes striking, you will find your fine carriage and attendants become just what they were before, and your own finery will turn to the rags you were wearing a minute ago."

"I'll remember," cried Cinderella, as she tripped gaily into her carriage, and drove off to the ball.

Presently the grand equipage drew up at the palace gates. The servants thought she must be somebody very great indeed, and sent for the Lord Chamberlain to conduct her to the ball-room. When she entered, the Prince stepped forward to receive and welcome her, and all eyes were turned to where she stood. She bore the scrutiny with perfect composure, and the ladies thought she must be some powerful and wealthy princess.

The Prince seemed mightily taken with the beautiful stranger, and begged her hand for the next dance. This she granted him, and he was so charmed with her graceful movements, that he stayed by her side, dancing dance after dance with her, till all the grand lords and gentlemen were quite angry, and declared that if it hadn't been the Prince they wouldn't have allowed it; and the ladies were so filled with envy and jealousy that they looked quite ugly.

Cinderella was just sitting down after a dance, when she looked up at the clock, and saw that it wanted but two minutes to twelve. She slipped out of the room, and got to the door just as the clock struck twelve.

The Prince, who missed his fair partner, rushed down the stairs after her, but failing to find her, asked the servants in which direction the lady who had just left had gone.

The servants replied that no lady had left the ball, and

being closely questioned by the Prince, admitted having seen a scullery-maid in tattered clothing pass by, and remembered asking her "what she wanted there" and telling her to "take herself off."

The Prince was quite bewildered, but he determined to find out something about his mysterious partner, if she came to to-morrow's ball.

At half-past four in the morning, the sisters came home, and while Cinderella was assisting them to undress, she heard them talking to each other about the wonderful lady they had seen at the ball that night, "who really was very beautiful," but they couldn't help saying, "very bold as well."

The next night, Cinderella again made her appearance at the ball, much to the delight of the Prince, who had been anxiously watching for her. He was determined now to find out who she really was, so he ordered one of his servants to wait a little way from the palace gates, and watch for her appearance. When she came in sight, he was to follow and find out where she lived.

Cinderella was again the belle of the evening; and after having danced every dance with the young Prince, she managed to escape just as the clock was about to strike twelve. The Prince waited anxiously for the return of his messenger, and as soon as his guests were gone, sent for the man in order to question him. But here he met with a sad disappointment, for the servant had waited until the clock struck two, but had not seen any such grand carriage as the Prince described, at all.

"But did not you see any such lady leave the palace exactly at twelve o'clock?" asked the Prince. No, the man had not seen any lady or carriage or anything of the kind; the only things he had noticed at twelve o'clock were some lizards and mice, and a rat, dragging along a large pumpkin, and a ragged scullery-maid ran by him about the same time.

The poor Prince was utterly bewildered. There was, however, one more night, and he was determined not to let the mysterious lady escape without finding out who she really was.

At three o'clock in the morning the two sisters came home, and found Cinderella sitting among the ashes, crying.

"Well, Miss Crybaby," said they, "I suppose you are crying because you couldn't go to the ball."

Cinderella did not reply, and the sisters went on—"A fine person you are to go to a ball, upon my word, with those coarse hands and awkward manners." Little did they dream that Cinderella, with her coarse hands and awkward manners, was the beautiful stranger about whom every one was talking, and who had completely turned the Prince's head!

The next evening Cinderella again appeared at the ball, and was met at the door by the Prince, who conducted her into the ball-room in so marked a manner, that every one whispered to his neighbour that it was very plain what the Prince meant.

Poor Cinderella, who had been so little accustomed to hear kind words, was so absorbed in listening to the earnest words of her partner that she quite forgot how the time slipped away. Looking up at the clock, she perceived that it was just on the stroke of twelve. She slipped in among the crowd of distinguished guests, and thus managed to gain the ball-room door. Just as the clock struck one—two—three, she was on the staircase; four—five—six, she was half-way down it; twelve, she was just outside the door, shivering with the cold, as the icy wind played roughly amid her tattered garments.

But, as she ran swiftly down the grand staircase, she did not notice that she had lost one of her glass slippers, until, out in the street, she found one foot shoeless, and the other cased in the same slipper as she had worn at the ball. All the rest of her finery had vanished, leaving only this.

The Prince, as soon as he noticed the absence of his beautiful partner, hastened from the room to discover in what direction she had disappeared.

On the stairs he found the little glass slipper. "This," he said, "can belong to no other than the lady I am in search of, for no one else ever possessed so tiny a foot." So he placed it

carefully in his pocket, determined to make it the means of finding the lovely girl he had fallen so desperately in love with during the last three nights.

Accordingly, the next day he ordered the town crier to proclaim that a lady's slipper had been found in the ball-room, and that whoever could prove that it belonged to her, might have the honour of becoming the Prince's bride.

Ladies came from far and near to the King's palace to try on the glass slipper, but not one of them would it fit; in fact, it was so small that they all declared it was a trick, and must have belonged to some little child.

One day Cinderella's two sisters announced their intention of going to the palace to try on this wonderful shoe.

"May I come with you and see it?" asked Cinderella.

"You?" ejaculated the astonished sisters; and then, with the evident idea that it would fit one of them, and that "that impertinent minx" would be there to see their triumph, they gave their consent.

So the three went together to the palace, and were shown into an anteroom where the Prince and a number of lords were assembled. Presently a servant entered, bearing a crimson silken cushion, on which the shining glass slipper lay. Each sister attempted to squeeze her foot into it, but it was so much too small that they could get very little more than their toes in, and they were so squeezed that the unfortunate and enraged women were obliged to borrow sticks to walk home with, and were unable to leave the house for at least three weeks afterwards.

When the two sisters had finished trying on the slipper, Cinderella stepped forward and said quietly, "May I see whether it will fit me?"

The servants laughed, and the baron's two eldest daughters tried to frown her into nothing; but the Prince, who was struck by the gentle beauty of her face, commanded them to let her try it on.

Cinderella sat down, and the servant brought her the tiny



"It slipped on quite easily, and fitted perfectly."

slipper. It slipped on quite easily, and fitted perfectly. Then Cinderella drew the other one out of her pocket and placed it on her other foot, showing beyond a doubt that she was its true owner.

The Prince on looking at Cinderella more closely, soon discovered that she was his partner of the ball, which accounted for the impression her face had made upon him. Taking her hand in his, he announced to all present that he had found the only lady that should ever become his bride.

At that moment the good fairy appeared, and waving her wand over Cinderella, converted her old, worn-out garments into silk and lace bridal attire; and at the same moment the gorgeous silk that the two ugly sisters wore became a mass of rags, such as they had before forced upon their younger sister.

Cinderella and the Prince were married almost immediately, and there never was, before or since, so brilliant a wedding or so happy a bride and bridegroom.

PUSS IN BOOTS.

MANY hundreds of years ago, in a certain town, in a certain country, there lived an old miller and his three sons. The reputation of the old man had spread for miles round, so that the people came from all parts to have their wheat ground, knowing that, if they did so, they would receive their full measure of flour in place of the grain they had entrusted to him. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at that the old miller became very rich.

Of his three sons, the two eldest helped him in the mill, but the youngest, who had a soul above converting corn into flour, incurred his father's heavy displeasure, by refusing to settle down to a miller's life, and expressing a wish to see the famous things that were to be seen in the far-off cities of the world.

The old man, however, would not hear of such a thing; and as his son was too dutiful to leave home without his father's consent, the result was that the young man spent his time in roaming about the woods, in search of adventures or the pursuit of any wild idea that might enter his head.

At last a time came when the poor old miller felt that his days were rapidly shortening, and that it would be advisable for him to make some disposition of his vast riches; so he called together his two eldest sons to consult with them about it.

"The old mill," began the miller, "which was my father's before me, I have made up my mind to leave to you, John, you being my eldest son. The house near the mill, on my death will become Reuben's, and the rest of my property will be equally divided between you, after having deducted therefrom three thousand pounds for your youngest brother's legacy."

"Three thousand pounds!" cried the brothers, simultaneously. "Three thousand pounds for that ne'er-do-well! What will he do with three thousand pounds, I should like to know?"

"He will have nothing else," replied their father.

"No, I should think not!" replied the brothers. "And what will he do with that, if ever he gets it? Get rid of it in a few months among his boon companions, for we know not what sort of company he keeps; and there will be the precious gold that you have been saving all your life squandered on a set of idle fellows, who would only abuse you because you hadn't left your son more."

"Then what would you advise me to do with it?" asked the old man, meekly. He was rather afraid of his two hard-working, industrious sons.

"It is very plain," replied they, "that the best use you could make of it would be to leave it equally between us, so that we might extend the business, and use it in a way that would do credit to you."

"But then, what is to become of that poor boy?"

"Poor boy, indeed!" exclaimed the indignant brothers.

“Take our advice and leave him nothing at all, and when he finds that he must work or starve, he’ll soon leave his present vagabond life and become an honest, industrious man.”

The miller was very much struck with this speech, and thinking that these two had the welfare of their young brother really at heart, he determined to be guided by their advice. So he made a will leaving everything he possessed to his two eldest sons. I said everything, but he made one reservation in favour of his youngest child. He felt that he must leave him some legacy, if it were only to show that he had regarded him not altogether harshly in his latter moments, so he added a few words to his will, by which he left him—an old cat.

By-and-by the old man died, and his youngest son, who was much affected by his loss, and never doubting that his father had left him the means, resolved to settle down henceforth to the life he so much disliked, but which he knew would have pleased the old man more than anything else.

The day arrived when the will was to be read, and I leave you to imagine the delight of those unnatural brothers and the dejection of the poor destitute one, when they discovered the strange legacy their father had left him. They called it a capital joke, and told him to be off with it as soon as he could. It was in vain he offered to become their servant if they would allow him to stay in the old home. No! go he must, and so taking up the old tom-cat, which was the only thing he possessed in the world, he quitted the mill-house in search of his fortunes.

He walked many miles without stopping, and at last, being thoroughly worn out, he sat down beneath a tree to rest. It was not long before he fell asleep, and when he again awoke he was not a little surprised to hear Mr. Tom quietly purring a beautiful song to himself.

“Ah, poor creature!” he exclaimed, “you have little need to sing, with such a miserable wretch for a master. You had better seek yourself some food, unless you would rather starve.”

“I know all your misfortunes,” replied Puss, sympathisingly,

"and if you will only give me permission I will make your fortune."

"Holloa! what have we here?" cried the young man, in surprise. "A talking cat, I declare!"

"I come," replied Puss, with pardonable pride, "of an illustrious family, and I think I may say that I have inherited most of the talents of my ancestors. Your father knew this when he left me to you, and I am not sure that he didn't leave you a better legacy than either of your brothers. If you will only let me, I promise to make your fortune in a very short time."

"How?" inquired Puss's master.

"That I can't tell you. You must wait and see; but you must make me a present to start with, and then I shall be all right."

"What may that be?" asked his master.

"A new pair of boots. I should prefer the best and most fashionable that you can get."

"A modest request truly," laughed the young man. "Do you know that it would take all the money I have in the world to buy you such a pair as you describe?"

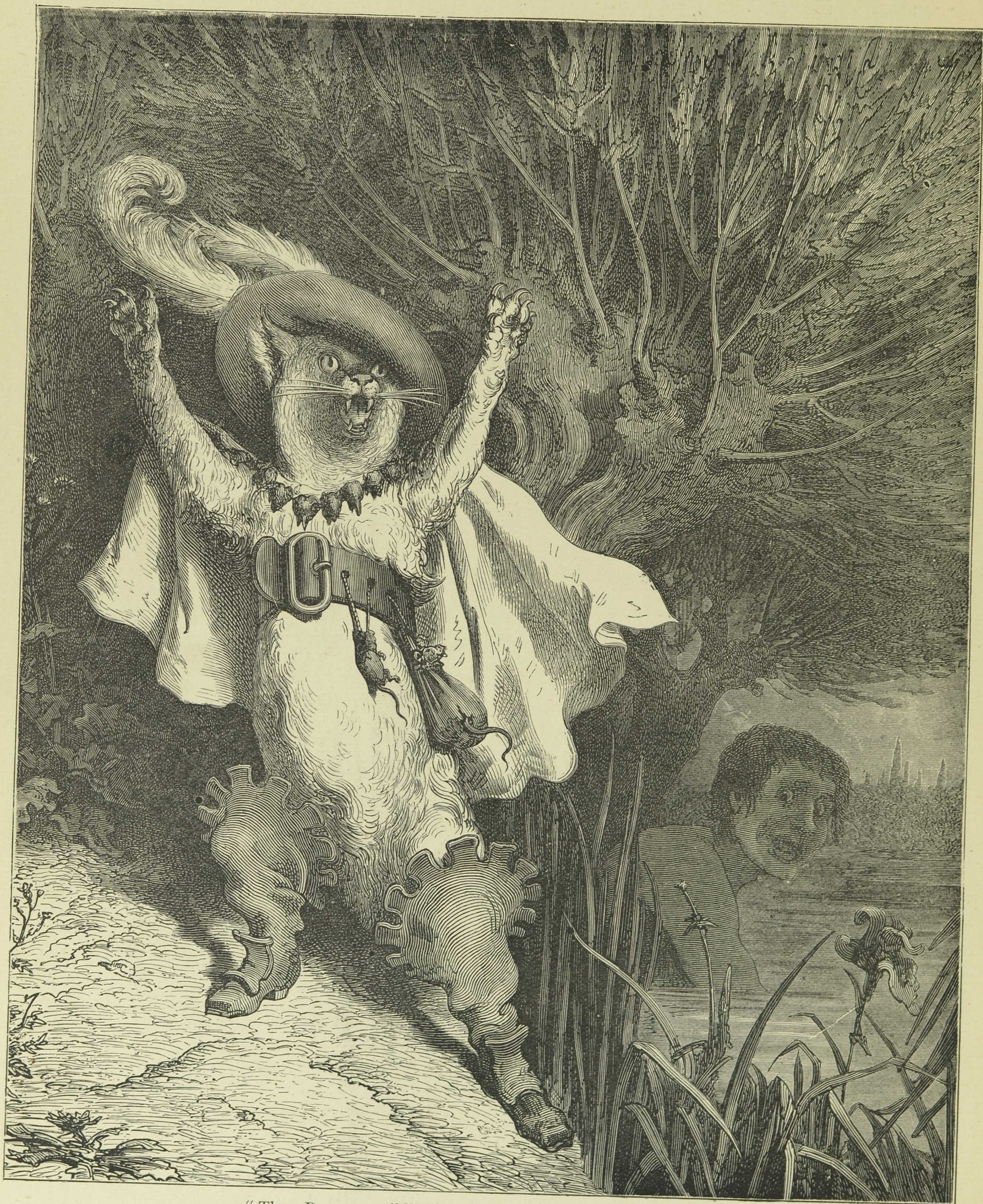
"I know all that," replied Puss, "and all I can say is, that it will be well laid out."

"Well, I will take your word for it," replied his master, "and we will go and buy them."

So the boots were bought. They were as splendid a pair as you might wish to see, and really gave Mr. Tom quite a dignified appearance.

Puss trotted into the wood and laid some snares, before retiring to rest that night, and having found a nice sheltered spot, and recommended his master to follow his example, he curled himself comfortably up and went to sleep.

The next morning he found some fine birds in his snares, so slinging them over his shoulder, he marched off to the King's palace and presented them for his Majesty's breakfast with his master's most loyal respects. At night he again set his snares, and the next morning left a beautiful hare at the palace.



"Then Puss ran wildly to and fro on the banks of the stream."

He did this regularly for some time. One morning the King's servant asked Puss to whom his Majesty was indebted for so many fine presents.

"To the Marquis of Carabas," replied Puss, promptly, who had been anticipating the question.

"His Majesty commands me to say that you are to inform your noble master of the pleasure with which his Majesty has eaten the game," said the servant, and Puss took his departure very well pleased.

The next morning the King himself seized hold of Puss. "I am anxious to know personally so good and loyal a subject," said he. "Pray can you tell me where the Marquis's estates are situated?"

"Your Majesty has given me a difficult question to answer," replied Puss, "for my lord's lands are so extensive that I don't know which part of them to direct you to."

"Indeed," replied the King. "In what direction do they lie?"

Puss waved his paw in the direction of the forest.

"I shall come and see him," exclaimed the King.

Puss started off at the fastest pace he could muster, and running up against his master exclaimed excitedly—

"Pull off your clothes quick, as quick as you can, master, and jump into the water; pull them off I say, pray be quick or it will be too late!"

"But——," protested the bewildered master.

"Don't waste time, pray," urged Puss anxiously, "but pull off your clothes and jump in."

The young man did so wonderingly. Pussy then took his clothes and hid them away. At this moment a carriage surrounded by attendants on horseback came in sight.

Then Puss ran wildly to and fro on the banks of the stream, calling out loudly, "Thieves! thieves! Some one has stolen the Marquis's clothes! Thieves!"

The King hearing the cries, sent one of his attendants on before to ask what was the matter, he himself following in his

carriage. He of course immediately recognised his old friend the cat, and asked him the cause of his distress.

"Ah, your Majesty," replied Puss, "my master came here to bathe, and some rascal has run away with his clothes."

"Is that all?" replied the King. "That is but a small matter;" and turning to his attendants, the King ordered them to bring the Marquis a complete suit.

The servants hastened to obey the monarch's orders, and soon returned bringing with them everything that the Marquis could possibly desire, and of the most gorgeous description; so that our hero presently found himself possessed of a finer wardrobe than he had before even seen.

As soon as the Marquis was thus attired, Puss conducted him into the presence of the King, and said "May it please your Majesty, this is my master, the Marquis of Carabas."

"Ah, my dear Marquis," replied the King, "I am wonderfully pleased to see you. It is a pleasure I have been promising myself for some time past, for really your snipes and partridges are the finest birds I have seen for many years. By-the-bye, will you take a drive with us, and allow me to introduce you to my daughter, the Princess Royal? This is a very fine piece of country; your estate, I suppose?"

"Ahem——" began the Marquis.

"Yes, it is," broke in Puss. "The fact of the matter is, my master's estate is so large that he hardly knows where it ends."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the King; "fortunate dog."

"Perhaps, my lord, you will like me to show his Majesty's coachmen the way to your castle, where his Grace and the Princess would take a little refreshment," said Pussy.

"What do you mean?" asked his master angrily, but Tom was already out of hearing, bidding the coachman to follow him wherever he went. He accordingly started off at a good round pace, taking care to keep a pretty good way on ahead.

Now Puss well knew that the land over which they were passing belonged to a terrible wizard, who besides being a wizard was also



"The labourers, one and all, took their sickles from out the grass, and prostrated themselves almost to the ground."

an ogre, that is to say, he was in the habit of devouring with great relish any man, woman, or child, he could get safely within his clutches. He was in the habit, failing any other supply, of sending for some unfortunate tenant or labourer, who had happened to offend him, and once lodged within his castle walls, there was but a poor chance indeed left him of escape.

All this information Puss had taken great pains to gain, therefore it must be admitted that the game he was playing *was* rather a strange and decidedly a venturesome one.

As they went on, Puss still keeping a good way on ahead, the country gradually became clearer and clearer of trees, and they presently came to meadows and fields, where labourers were busily plying their scythes. Puss, rushing into the midst of them as they bent over their work, exclaimed—

“Your master is coming in a state carriage, and he has the King with him. He bids me command you to bow yourselves down to the ground before him when he approaches, on pain of instant death; and if his Majesty the King asks who employs you, you are to say, ‘Our good and kind master, the most noble Marquis of Carabas.’ See, he is coming now.”

As the King’s carriage drew near, the labourers one and all took their sickles from out the grass, and prostrated themselves almost to the ground before it.

“Your people seem to do you great homage,” said the King, with evident pleasure.

“They do,” replied the Marquis.

“What a splendid old estate!” exclaimed the King. “I should think your tenantry considered themselves lucky, to live and labour in such a lovely place and under such a master.”

“They would be brutes if they didn’t,” murmured the Princess, on whom the pseudo Marquis had made a decided impression.

They came to more labourers and more still, and still all fell down before the Marquis with the utmost respect; to the utter bewilderment of the Marquis himself, who of course knew nothing of Puss’s magic injunction. How it would all end Puss’s master

was afraid even to think, for he felt sure that sooner or later there would be an ignominious exposure; but with a sort of latent faith in Mr. Tom's talents, he made no effort to undeceive the King, but determined to let himself be guided entirely by circumstances.

Gradually the surrounding scenery became wild and desolate. They passed from cultivated fields to bits of thickly-wooded forest, through which the carriage could with difficulty pass, and again emerged on a wild, desolate-looking tract of land. Hilly peaks greeted the eye on every side, while the ear was saluted by sounds of machinery and busy life. Hither and thither heavy waggons drawn by many horses toiled up and down the steep hills.

"My good man," said Puss, addressing a man in charge of a waggon, who was leading his horses along with frantic "woa-up's" and gesticulations, "you seem to have a hard time of it."

"You're right there, master," replied the man; "mining's hard work for man and beast, especially hereabouts. Crafty Puss had gained the knowledge he sought, so running along to where the grimy miners were swarming about like bees round a hive, he exclaimed—

"Your master and the King approach. He bids me tell you, if you value your lives, fall down before him as he passes; and if the king asks you who you work for, you shall say, 'For our good and kind master the most noble Marquis of Carabas.'"

The King's carriage toiled slowly up the difficult steeps, and as it approached the men fell down before it, as they had been directed.

"My good men," said the monarch, addressing the miners, "you seem to have a good master, for though you work so hard, I see no sign of dissatisfaction among you. Who is it that you work for?"

"Our good and kind master the most noble Marquis of Carabas."

The King seemed delighted with this answer; and if before he had any doubts of his new friend the Marquis, they were all dispersed now.



"Situated on a wooded eminence, and peeping out here and there among the trees, a magnificent castle."



“‘What do you want here?’ thundered the ogre, when he perceived Puss bowing and scraping before him.’

They soon left the mining district and came to a part of the Marquis's vast territory from whence they espied, situated on a wooded eminence, and peeping out here and there among the trees, a magnificent castle.

Puss bolted up the hill at the top of which the castle was situated, spurning trees, hedges, and fences. The carriage meanwhile toiled along the road which wound round and round it.

"Now I must be careful how I proceed here," thought Puss. "A single mistake may spoil everything."

At the pace he went, he soon reached the castle door. Here he gave a tremendous rat-tat-tat-tat, and was answered by a terrible-looking servant.

"I want to see your master," said Puss, without a tremor.

The servant conducted him into a beautifully-fitted banquetting-hall, where, seated at a table, he perceived a stout, fierce-looking individual, whom he immediately recognised as the wizard. Numerous servants were waiting on him while he partook of meat, which was carved from whole animals placed on the board. At his elbow stood an immense goblet, into which blood-red wine was being poured by one of the ogre's servants. The dish which most attracted Puss's attention was one placed in the middle of the table, consisting of tender young babies. This dish, which would seem to have been a favourite one with the master of the house, for it occupied the place of honour, so excited Puss's anger and disgust, that he would fain have turned tail and run out of the castle, had not his master's interests been at stake in the game he was playing.

"What do you want here?" thundered the ogre, when he perceived Puss bowing and scraping before him.

"I come," replied Puss, "from a distant land, where men say that this beautiful and famous castle is inhabited by one of the most clever and famous of men. So much have I heard about your extraordinary genius, that I could not rest until I came to pay my respectful homage to so wonderful a being."

"Indeed!" replied the wizard, gruffly, but nevertheless not a

little gratified by Puss's well-timed flattery. "You haven't heard far wrong, for the matter of that."

"They tell me," replied Puss, "that you are able without the slightest difficulty to convert yourself into any form you please."

"They tell you the truth," replied the wizard, "as I will show you. Name any animal you can think of, and I will immediately convert myself into it."

"Would it be possible for you to turn into an elephant?" asked Puss.

"Of course it would," replied the wizard, sharply; and as he spoke, his body began to swell and his skin assume a dark appearance, and in a few seconds Puss was confronted by an enormous elephant.

"Wonderful!" exclaimed Puss, in an amazed tone, "wonderful, indeed! Now what I should like to see would be for that huge animal to turn in as short a time into a little mouse."

"Nothing easier," replied the wizard, speaking through the mouth of the elephant.

As he spoke, his immense form began sensibly to diminish. Smaller and smaller he became so quickly, that in no more than two minutes a little mouse was frisking about on the floor where the elephant had lately stood.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Puss, making a spring at the mouse, and fixing his claws in the creature's back. The mouse uttered a few faint squeaks, which made no impression whatever on Puss, who, in less time than it takes to tell, bolted the wonderful wizard with as much relish as the monster himself was in the habit of despatching one of his cannibal feasts.

"Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" cried the delighted servants. "That's a good deed done, and cleverly done it was."

Puss turned toward them, and bidding them cease their joyful demonstrations, said, "I have ridded you of a tyrannical master, have I not?"

"You have, you have!" they cried with one accord.

"And I am going to do still more for you," replied Puss; "I am going to give you a good, kind master, who will pay you good wages and treat you kindly. He is, now that your former master is dead, the owner of all these estates, and he is now coming with the King and the Princess to review his property. Fly about and lose no time in preparing the best banquet you can muster at so short a notice, for their reception, and when they arrive mind you welcome your new master the Marquis of Carabas."

The servants hastened to obey Puss's commands, and when the royal carriage arrived at the grand entrance, the servants were waiting to welcome their new master and his royal guests. Our hero, following Puss, led the way into the banqueting-hall, where a sumptuous repast was laid out.

"My dear Marquis," exclaimed his Highness, "what a splendid castle! Your ancestors were barons at some period of the family history, I should say."

"A fine castle, truly," replied the Marquis; "it only wants one thing to make it perfect."

"And what is that?" inquired the King.

"A mistress," replied the Marquis. Here the young man sighed and stole a timid look at the Princess, and the Princess sighed and stole a timid look at the Marquis.

"Well, my dear," said the King, "you seem to have taken a fancy to our friend here. Am I right?"

The Princess looked at her father and smiled, and then giving him a sly look, called him a "dear duck of a papa." The King evidently knew what that meant, and turning to the Marquis, said: "You hear what the Princess says. You have my permission to win her if you can, and I don't think you will find much difficulty in doing so."

To tell you the whole story quickly, the Marquis was recognised by the willing tenantry as their new master, and soon after he had taken up his abode at the castle he brought home his bride, the lovely Princess. Puss was rewarded for his valuable services by silken cushions to lie upon and all sorts of delicacies

to eat, and to the day of his death he remained his master's most confidential adviser.

In the course of time the Marquis had a little son, and his mother being the only child, the little fellow, as will be clearly seen, was heir to the throne of his august grandfather.



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