

THE
ROYAL
TREASURY
of Story and
Song

Part V.

The
Enchanted
Garden

Price 1/6

T. Nelson
and
Sons

M. Foster

Margaret Foster

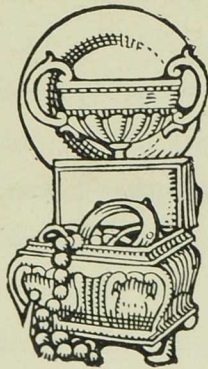


"She put the statue in her garden." (See page 191.)

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OF STORY AND SONG

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THE ENCHANTED
GARDEN



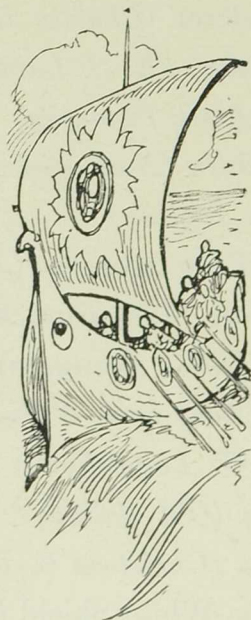
THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
London, Edinburgh, Dublin, & New York

CONTENTS.

The Story of Perseus (<i>Charles Kingsley</i>)	9
The Wooden Horse of Troy (<i>From Dryden's "Virgil"</i>)	54
Ulysses the Wanderer (<i>Charles Lamb</i>)	60
The Maiden Sacrifice (<i>W. S. Landor</i>)	77
The Sea-Fairies (<i>Lord Tennyson</i>)	80
The Tale of Pandora (<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne</i>)	82
Persephonè (<i>Jean Ingelow</i>)	103
The Shepherd of King Admetus (<i>J. R. Lowell</i>)	107
Tristram and Iseult (<i>Told from M. Arnold</i>)	110
Morte D'Arthur (<i>Lord Tennyson</i>)	119
Ogier the Dane (<i>Told from William Morris</i>)	128
Charlemagne (<i>H. W. Longfellow</i>)	146
Sir Patrick Spens (<i>Old Ballad</i>)	148
The Noble Sisters (<i>Christina G. Rossetti</i>)	153
The Knight of the White Shield (<i>Told from Malory and Tennyson</i>)	155
Sir Galahad (<i>Lord Tennyson</i>)	180
The Legend of Sir Guy (<i>Old Ballad</i>)	183

CONTENTS.

The Little Mermaid (<i>Hans Andersen</i>)	189
The Forsaken Merman (<i>M. Arnold</i>)	220
The Barmecide Feast (<i>The Arabian Nights</i>)	225
Jaffar (<i>Leigh Hunt</i>)	230
Abou Ben Adhem (<i>Leigh Hunt</i>)	232
The Sleeping Beauty (<i>Lord Tennyson</i>)	233
The Beech and the Oak (<i>Carl Ewald</i>)	239
Hiawatha's Fasting (<i>H. W. Longfellow</i>)	249
The Story of Ranolf and Amohia (<i>Told from the poem by Alfred Domett</i>)	258





Dawn.
Sir E. Burne-Jones.

THE ROYAL TREASURY.—V.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

THE STORY OF PERSEUS.

I.—How Perseus and his Mother came to Seriphos.

ONCE upon a time there were two princes who were twins. Their names were Acrisius and Proetus, and they lived in the pleasant vale of Argos, far away in Hellas. They had fruitful meadows and vineyards, sheep and oxen, great herds of horses, and all that men could need to make them blest; and yet they were wretched, because they were jealous of each other.

From the moment they were born they began to quarrel; and when they grew up each tried to take away the other's share of the kingdom, and keep all for himself. So first Acrisius drove out Proetus; then the latter went across the seas, and brought home a foreign princess for his wife, and foreign warriors to help him, who were called Cyclopès, and drove out Acrisius in his turn; and then they fought a long while up and down the land, till the quarrel was settled, and Acrisius took Argos and one half the land, and Proetus took Tiryns and the other half. And Proetus and

his Cyclopès built around Tiryns great walls of unhewn stone, which are standing to this day.

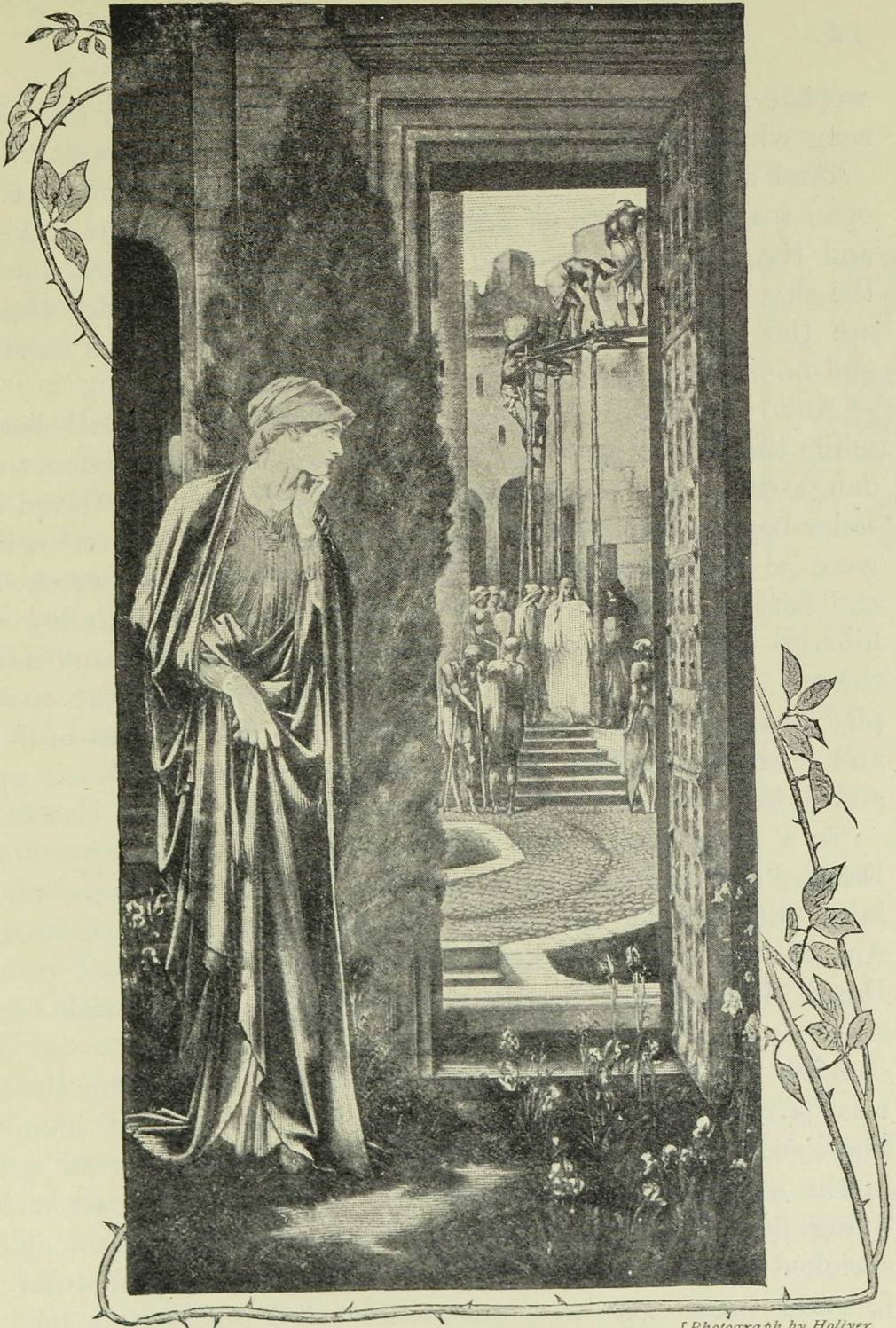
But there came a prophet to the hard-hearted Acrisius and prophesied against him, and said, "Because you have risen up against your own blood, your own blood shall rise up against you; because you have sinned against your kindred, by your kindred you shall be punished. Your daughter Danaë shall bear a son, and by that son's hands you shall die. So the gods have ordained, and it will surely come to pass."

And at that Acrisius was very much afraid; but he did not mend his ways. He had been cruel to his own family, and, instead of repenting and being kind to them, he was now more cruel than ever; for he shut up his fair daughter Danaë in a lofty tower lined with brass, that no one might come near her. So he fancied himself more cunning than the gods; but you will see presently whether he was able to escape them.

Now it came to pass that in time Danaë bore a son; so beautiful a babe it was that any but King Acrisius would have had pity on it. But he had no pity; for he took Danaë and her babe down to the seashore, and put them into a great chest and thrust them out to sea, for the winds and the waves to carry them whithersoever they would.

The north-west wind blew freshly out of the blue mountains, and down the pleasant vale of Argos, and away and out to sea. And away and out to sea before it floated the mother and her babe, while all who watched them wept, save that cruel father, King Acrisius.

So they floated on and on, and the chest danced up and down upon the billows, and the baby slept upon its mother's breast; yet the poor mother could not sleep, but watched and



[Photograph by Hollver

Danae and the Tower of Brass.

Sir E. Burne-Jones

wept. And she sang to her baby as they floated; and the song which she sang you shall learn yourselves some day.

And now they are past the last blue headland, and on the open sea; and there is nothing round them but the waves, and the sky, and the wind. But the waves are gentle, and the sky is clear, and the breeze is tender and low; for these are the days when Halcyonè and Ceyx build their nests, and no storms ever ruffle the pleasant summer sea.

And who were Halcyonè and Ceyx? You shall hear while the chest floats on. Halcyonè was a fairy maiden, the daughter of the beach and of the wind. And she loved a sailor-boy named Ceyx, and married him; and none on earth were so happy as they. But at last Ceyx was wrecked, and before he could swim to the shore the billows swallowed him up. And Halcyonè saw him drowning, and leapt into the sea to save him; but in vain. Then the Immortals took pity on them both, and changed them into two fair sea-birds; and now they build a floating nest every year, and sail up and down happily for ever upon the pleasant seas of Greece.

So a night passed and a day, and a long day it was for Danaë; and another night and day besides, till Danaë was faint with hunger and weeping, and yet no land appeared. And all the while the babe slept quietly; and at last poor Danaë drooped her head and fell asleep likewise, with her cheek against the babe's.

After a while she was awakened suddenly; for the chest was jarring and grinding, and the air was full of sound. She looked up, and over her head were mighty cliffs, all red in the setting sun, and around her rocks and breakers and flying flakes of foam. She clasped her hands together and shrieked aloud for help. And when she cried, help met her; for now there came over the rocks a tall and stately man,

and looked down wondering upon poor Danaë tossing about in the chest among the waves.

He wore a rough cloak of frieze, and on his head a broad hat to shade his face; in his hand he carried a trident for spearing fish, and over his shoulder was a casting-net. But Danaë could see that he was no common man by his stature, and his walk, and his flowing golden hair and beard; and by the two servants who came behind him, carrying baskets for his fish. But she had hardly time to look at him, before he had laid aside his trident and leapt down the rocks, and thrown his casting-net so surely over Danaë and the chest, that he drew it, and her, and the baby, safe upon a ledge of rock.



Then the fisherman took Danaë by the hand, and lifted her out of the chest, and said,—

“O beautiful damsel, what strange chance has brought you to this island in so frail a ship? Who are you, and whence? Surely you are some king’s daughter; and this boy is something more than mortal.”

And as he spoke he pointed to the babe, for its face shone like the morning star.

But Danaë only held down her head and sobbed out,—

“Tell me to what land I have come, unhappy that I am; and among what men I have fallen.”

And he said, “This isle is called Seriphos, and I am a Hellen, and dwell in it. I am the brother of Polydectes the king; and men call me Dictys the netter, because I catch the fish of the shore.”

Then Danaë fell down at his feet, and embraced his knees, and cried,—

“O sir, have pity upon a stranger, whom a cruel doom

has driven to your land ; and let me live in your house as a servant ; but treat me honourably, for I was once a king's daughter, and this my boy (as you have truly said) is of no common race. I will not be a charge to you, or eat the bread of idleness ; for I am more skilful in weaving and embroidery than all the maidens of my land."

And she was going on with her story ; but Dictys stopped her, and raised her up, and said,—

" My daughter, I am old, and my hair is growing gray ; and I have no children to make my home cheerful. Come with me, then, and you shall be a daughter to me and to my wife, and this babe shall be our grandchild. For I fear the gods, and show hospitality to all strangers ; knowing that good deeds, like evil ones, always return to those who do them."

So Danaë was comforted, and went home with Dictys the good fisherman, and was a daughter to him and to his wife till fifteen years were past.

II.—*How Perseus vowed a Rash Vow.*

Fifteen years were past and gone, and the babe was now grown to be a tall lad and a sailor, and went many voyages after merchandise to the islands round about. His mother called him Perseus ; but all the people in Seriphos said that he was not the son of mortal man, and called him the son of Zeus, the king of the immortals.

For though he was but fifteen, he was taller by a head than any man in the island ; and he was the most skilful of all in running and wrestling and boxing, and in throwing the quoit and the javelin, and in rowing with the oar, and in playing on the harp, and in all which befits a man. And he

was brave and truthful, gentle and courteous, for good old Dictys had trained him well; and well it was for Perseus that he had done so. For now Danaë and her son fell into great danger, and Perseus had need of all his wit to defend his mother and himself.

I said that Dictys' brother was Polydectes, king of the island. He was not a righteous man like Dictys, but greedy, and cunning, and cruel. And when he saw fair Danaë, he wanted to marry her. But she would not; for she did not love him, and cared for no one but her boy, and her boy's father, whom she never hoped to see again.

At last Polydectes became furious; and while Perseus was away at sea he took poor Danaë away from Dictys, saying, "If you will not be my wife, you shall be my slave."

So Danaë was made a slave, and had to fetch water from the well, and grind at the mill, and perhaps was beaten, and wore a heavy chain, because she would not marry that cruel king. But Perseus was far away over the seas in the isle of Samos, little thinking how his mother was languishing in grief.

Now one day at Samos, while the ship was lading, Perseus wandered into a pleasant wood to get out of the sun, and sat down on the turf and fell asleep. And as he slept a strange dream came to him—the strangest dream which he had ever had in his life.

There came a lady to him through the wood, taller than he, or any mortal man; yet beautiful exceedingly, with great gray eyes, clear and piercing, but strangely soft and mild. On her head was a helmet, and in her hand a spear. And over her shoulder, above her long blue robes, hung a goat-skin, which bore up a mighty shield of brass, polished like a mirror. She stood and looked at him



with her clear gray eyes; and Perseus saw that her eyelids never moved, nor her eyeballs, but she looked straight through and through him, and into his very heart, as if she could see all the secrets of his soul, and knew all that he had ever thought or longed for since the day that he was born. And Perseus dropped his eyes, trembling and blushing, as the wonderful lady spoke.

“Perseus, you must do an errand for me.”

“Who are you, lady? And how do you know my name?”

“I am Pallas Athenè; and I know the thoughts of all men’s hearts, and discern their manhood or their baseness. And from the souls of clay I turn away, and they are blest, but not by me. They fatten at ease, like sheep in the pasture, and eat what they did not sow, like oxen in the stall. But to the souls of fire I give more fire, and to those who are manful I give a might more than man’s. These are the heroes, the sons of the Immortals, who are blest, but not like the souls of clay. For I drive them forth by strange paths, Perseus, that they may fight the Titans and the monsters, the enemies of gods and men. And some of them are slain in the flower of youth, no man knows when or where; and some of them win noble names, and a fair and green old age; but what will be their latter end I know not. Tell me now, Perseus, which of these two sorts of men seem to you more blest.”

Then Perseus answered boldly, “Better to die in the flower of youth, on the chance of winning a noble name, than to live at ease like the sheep, and die unloved and unrenowned.”

Then that strange lady laughed, and held up her brazen shield, and cried, “See here, Perseus; dare you face such a monster as this, and slay it, that I may place its head upon this shield?”

And in the mirror of the shield there appeared a face, and as Perseus looked on it his blood ran cold. It was the face of a beautiful woman; but her cheeks were pale as death, and her brows were knit with everlasting pain, and her lips were thin and bitter like a snake's; and instead of hair, vipers wreathed about her temples, and shot out their forked tongues; while round her head were folded wings like an eagle's, and upon her bosom claws of brass.

And Perseus looked a while, and then said, "If there is anything so fierce and foul on earth, it were a noble deed to kill it. Where can I find the monster?"

Then the strange lady smiled again, and said, "Not yet; you are too young, and too unskilled; for this is Medusa the Gorgon, the mother of a monstrous brood. Return to your home and do the work which waits there for you. You must play the man in that before I can think you worthy to go in search of the Gorgon."

Then Perseus would have spoken, but the strange lady vanished, and he awoke; and behold it was a dream. So he returned home; and when he came to Seriphos, the first thing which he heard was that his mother was a slave in the house of Polydectes.

Grinding his teeth with rage, he went out, and away to the king's palace, and through all the house till he found his mother sitting on the floor, turning the stone hand-mill, and weeping as she turned it. And he lifted her up and kissed her, and bade her follow him forth. But before they could pass out of the room, Polydectes came in raging. And when Perseus saw him, he flew upon him as the mastiff flies on the boar. "Villain and tyrant!" he cried; "is this your respect for the gods, and your mercy to strangers and widows? You shall die!" And because he

had no sword he caught up the stone hand-mill, and lifted it to dash out Polydectes' brains.



But his mother clung to him, shrieking, "O my son, we are strangers and helpless in the land; and if you kill the king all the people will fall on us, and we shall both die."

Good Dictys, too, who had come in, entreated him. "Remember that he is my brother. Remember how I have brought you up, and trained you as my own son, and spare him for my sake."

Then Perseus lowered his hand; and Polydectes, who had been trembling all this while like a coward, because he knew that he was in the wrong, let Perseus and his mother pass.

Perseus took his mother to the temple of Athenè, and there the priestess made her one of the temple-sweepers; for there they knew she would be safe, and not even Polydectes would dare to drag her away from the altar. And there Perseus, and the good Dictys and his wife, came to visit her every day; while Polydectes, not being able to get back his slave by force, cast about in his wicked heart how he might do so by cunning.

Now he was sure that he could never get back Danaë as long as Perseus was in the island; so he made a plot to rid himself of him. And first he pretended to have forgiven Perseus, and to have forgotten Danaë; so that, for a while, all went smoothly.

Next he proclaimed a great feast, and invited to it all the chiefs and landowners, and the young men of the island, and among them Perseus, that they might all do him homage as their king, and eat of the banquet in his hall.

On the appointed day they all came; and as the custom



"Perseus lifted her up and kissed her." (See page 17.)

was, each guest brought his present with him to the king: one a horse, another a shawl, or a ring, or a sword; and those who had nothing better brought a basket of grapes or of game. But Perseus brought nothing, for he had nothing to bring, being but a poor sailor-lad.

He was ashamed, however, to go into the king's presence without a gift; and he was too proud to ask Dictys to lend him one. So he stood at the door sorrowfully, watching the rich men go in; and his face grew very red as they pointed at him, and smiled, and whispered, "What has that foundling to give?"

Now this was what Polydectes wanted; and as soon as he heard that Perseus stood without, he bade them bring him in, and asked him scornfully before them all, "Am I not your king, Perseus, and have I not invited you to my feast? Where is your present, then?"

Perseus blushed and stammered, while all the proud men round about laughed, and some of them began jeering him openly. "This fellow was thrown ashore here like a piece of weed or driftwood, and yet he is too proud to bring a gift to the king."

So they mocked, till poor Perseus grew mad with shame, and hardly knowing what he said, cried out, "A present! who are you who talk of presents? See if I do not bring a nobler one than all of yours together!"

So he said boasting; and yet he felt in his heart that he was braver than all those scoffers, and more able to do some glorious deed.

"Hear him! Hear the boaster! What is the present to be?" cried they all, laughing louder than ever.

Then his dream at Samos came into his mind, and he cried aloud, "The head of the Gorgon."

He was half afraid after he had said the words; for all laughed louder than ever, and Polydectes loudest of all.

“You have promised to bring me the Gorgon’s head? Then never appear again in this island without it. Go!”

Perseus ground his teeth with rage, for he saw that he had fallen into a trap; but his promise lay upon him, and he went out without a word.

Down to the cliffs he went, and looked across the broad blue sea; and he wondered if his dream had been true, and prayed in the bitterness of his soul:—

“Pallas Athenè, was my dream true? and shall I slay the Gorgon? If thou didst really show me her face, let me not come to shame as false and boastful. Rashly and angrily I promised, but cunningly and patiently will I perform.”

But there was no answer or sign—neither thunder nor any appearance; not even a cloud in the sky.

And three times Perseus called, weeping, “Rashly and angrily I promised, but cunningly and patiently will I perform.”

Then he saw afar off above the sea a small white cloud as bright as silver. And it came nearer and nearer, till its brightness dazzled his eyes.

Perseus wondered at that strange cloud, for there was no other cloud all round the sky; and he trembled as it touched the cliff below. And as it touched it broke and parted, and within it appeared Pallas Athenè, as he had seen her at Samos in his dream, and beside her a young man more light-limbed than a stag, whose eyes were like sparks of fire. By his side was a scimitar of diamond, all of one clear precious stone, and on his feet were golden sandals, from the heels of which grew living wings.

The two looked upon Perseus keenly, and yet they never moved their eyes; and they came up the cliffs towards him more swiftly than the sea-gull, and yet they never moved their feet, nor did the breeze stir the robes about their limbs; only the wings of the youth's sandals quivered, like a hawk's when he hangs above the cliff. And Perseus fell down and worshipped, for he knew that they were more than man.

But Athenè stood before him and spoke gently, and bid him have no fear.

"Perseus," she said, "he who overcomes in one trial merits thereby a sharper trial still. You have braved Polydectes, and done manfully. Dare you brave Medusa the Gorgon?"

And Perseus said, "Try me; for since you spoke to me in Samos a new soul has come into my breast, and I should be ashamed not to dare anything. Show me, then, how I can do this!"

"Perseus," said Athenè, "think well before you attempt; for this deed requires a seven years' journey, in which you cannot repent or turn back or escape; but if your heart fails you, you must die in the Unshapen Land, where no man will ever find your bones."

"Better so than live here useless and despised," said Perseus. "Tell me, then, oh tell me, fair and wise goddess, how I can do but this one thing, and then, if need be, die!"

Then Athenè smiled and said,—

"Be patient and listen; for if you forget my words, you will indeed die. You must go northward to the country of the Hyperboreans, who live beyond the pole, at the sources of the cold north wind, till you find the three Gray Sisters, who have but one eye and one tooth between

them. You must ask them the way to the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star, who dance about the golden tree, in the Atlantic Island of the west.

“They will tell you the way to the Gorgon, that you may slay her, my enemy, the mother of monstrous beasts. Once she was a maiden as beautiful as morn, till in her pride she sinned; and from that day her hair was turned to vipers and her hands to eagle’s claws; and her heart was filled with shame and rage, and her lips with bitter venom; and her eyes became so terrible that whosoever looks on them is turned to stone; and her children are the winged horse and the giant of the golden sword; and her grandchildren are Echidna the witch-adder, and Geryon the three-headed tyrant. So she became the sister of the Gorgons, the daughters of the Queen of the Sea. Touch them not, for they are immortal; but bring me only Medusa’s head.”

“And I *will* bring it!” said Perseus; “but how am I to escape her eyes? Will she not freeze me too into stone?”

“You shall take this polished shield,” said Athenè, “and when you come near her look not at herself, but at her image in the brass; so you may strike her safely. And when you have struck off her head, wrap it, with your face turned away, in the folds of the goat-skin on which hangs the shield. So you will bring it safely back to me, and win for yourself renown, and a place among the heroes who feast with the Immortals upon the peak where no winds blow.”

Then Perseus said, “I will go, though I die in going.”



But how shall I cross the seas without a ship? And who will show me my way? And when I find her, how shall I slay her, if her scales be iron and brass?"

Then the young man spoke: "These sandals of mine will bear you across the seas, and over hill and dale like a bird, as they bear me all day long; for I am Hermes, the messenger of the Immortals who dwell on Olympus."

Then Perseus fell down and worshipped, while the young man spoke again,—

"The sandals themselves will guide you on the road, for they are of the gods and cannot stray; and this sword itself will kill her, for it is also of the gods, and needs to deal no second stroke. Arise, and gird them on, and go forth."

So Perseus arose, and girded on the sandals and the sword.

And Athenè cried, "Now leap from the cliff and be gone."

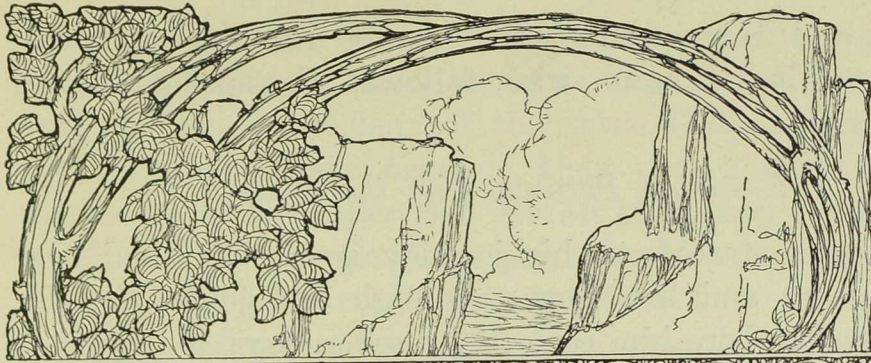
But Perseus lingered.

"May I not bid farewell to my mother and to Dictys? And may I not offer burnt-offerings to you, and to Hermes, and to Father Zeus above?"

"You shall not bid farewell to your mother, lest your heart relent at her weeping. I will comfort her and Dictys until you return in peace. Nor shall you offer burnt-offerings to the Olympians; for your offering shall be Medusa's head. Leap, and trust in the armour of the Immortals."

Then Perseus looked down the cliff and shuddered; but he was ashamed to show his dread. Then he thought of Medusa and the renown before him, and he leapt into the empty air.

And behold, instead of falling he floated, and stood and ran along the sky. He looked back, but Athenè had



[Photograph by Hol yer.

Perseus and the Gray Sisters.
Sir E. Burne-Jones.

vanished, and Hermes; and the sandals led him on northward ever, like a crane who follows the spring toward the fens.

III.—How Perseus slew the Gorgon.

So Perseus started on his journey, going dry-shod over land and sea; and his heart was high and joyful, for the winged sandals bore him each day a seven days' journey.

And he went past Athens and Thebes, and up the vale of Cephisus, and past the peaks of Cæta and Pindus, and over the rich Thessalian plains, till the sunny hills of Greece were behind him, and before him were the wilds of the north. Then he passed the Thracian mountains, and many a barbarous tribe, till he came to the Ister stream, and the dreary Scythian plains. And he walked across the Ister dry-shod, and away through the moors and fens, day and night toward the bleak north-west, turning neither to the right hand nor the left, till he came to the Unshapen Land, and the place which has no name.

And seven days he walked through it, on a path which few can tell; for those who have trodden it like least to speak of it, and those who go there again in dreams are glad enough when they awake; till at last he came to the edge of the everlasting night, where the air was full of feathers, and the soil was hard with ice; and there at last he found the three Gray Sisters, by the shore of the freezing sea, nodding upon a white log of driftwood, beneath the cold white winter moon; and they chaunted a low song together,—

“Why the old times were better than the new.”

There was no living thing around them, not a fly, not a moss upon the rocks. Neither seal nor sea-gull dared come

near, lest the ice should clutch them in its claws. The surge broke up in foam, but it fell again in flakes of snow; and it frosted the hair of the three Gray Sisters and the ice-cliff above their heads. They passed their single eye from one to the other, but for all that they could not see; and they passed their single tooth from one to the other, but for all that they could not eat; and they sat in the full glare of the moon, but they were none the warmer for her beams. And Perseus pitied the three Gray Sisters; but they did not pity themselves.

So he said, "O venerable mothers, wisdom is the daughter of old age. You therefore should know many things. Tell me, if you can, the path to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "Who is this who reproaches us with old age?" And another, "This is the voice of one of the children of men."

And he said, "I do not reproach, but honour your old age, and I am one of the sons of men and of the heroes. The rulers of Olympus have sent me to you to ask the way to the Gorgon."

Then one cried, "There are new rulers in Olympus, and all new things are bad." And another, "We hate your rulers, and the heroes, and all the children of men. We are of the kindred of the Titans, and the giants, and the Gorgons, and the ancient monsters of the deep." And another, "Who is this rash and insolent man who pushes unbidden into our world?" And the first again, "There never was such a world as ours, nor will be; if we let him see it, he will spoil it all."

Then one cried, "Give me the eye, that I may see him;" and another, "Give me the tooth, that I may bite him." But Perseus, when he saw that they were foolish and proud,

and did not love the children of men, left off pitying them, and said to himself, "Hungry men must needs be hasty; if I stay making many words here, I shall be starved."

Then he stepped close to them, and watched till they passed the eye from hand to hand. And as they groped about between themselves, he held out his own hand gently, till one of them put the eye into it, fancying that it was the hand of her sister. Then he sprang back, and laughed, and cried,—

"Cruel and proud old women, I have your eye; and I will throw it into the sea unless you tell me the path to the Gorgon, and swear to me that you tell me right."

Then they wept, and chattered, and scolded; but in vain. They were forced to tell the truth, though, when they told it, Perseus could hardly make out the road.

"You must go," they said, "foolish boy, to the southward, into the ugly glare of the sun, till you come to Atlas the Giant, who holds the heaven and the earth apart. And you must ask the way of his daughters, the Hesperides, who are young and foolish like yourself. And now give us back our eye, for we have forgotten all the rest."

So Perseus gave them back their eye; but instead of using it, they nodded and fell fast asleep, and were turned into blocks of ice, till the tide came up and washed them all away. And now they float up and down like icebergs for ever, weeping whenever they meet the sunshine, and the fruitful summer, and the warm south wind, which fill young hearts with joy.

But Perseus leaped away to the southward, leaving the snow and the ice behind: past the isle of the Hyperboreans, and the Tin Isles, and the long Iberian shore, while the sun rose higher day by day upon a bright blue summer sea.

And the terns and the sea-gulls swept laughing round his head, and called to him to stop and play, and the dolphins gambolled as he passed, and offered to carry him on their backs. And all night long the sea-nymphs sang sweetly, and the Tritons blew upon their trumpets, as they played round Galatea their queen in her car of pearly shells.



Day by day the sun rose higher, and leaped more swiftly into the sea at night, and more swiftly out of the sea at dawn; while Perseus skimmed over the billows like a sea-gull, and his feet were never wetted; and he leapt on from wave to wave, and his limbs were never weary, till he saw far away a mighty mountain, all rose-red in the setting sun. Its feet were wrapped in forests, and its head in wreaths of cloud; and Perseus knew that it was Atlas, who holds the heavens and the earth apart.

He came to the mountain, and leaping on shore, wandered upward, among pleasant valleys and waterfalls, and tall trees and strange ferns and flowers; but there was no smoke rising from any glen, nor house, nor sign of man.

At last he heard sweet voices singing; and he guessed that he was come to the garden of the Nymphs, the daughters of the Evening Star.

They sang like nightingales among the thickets, and Perseus stopped to hear their song; but the words which they spoke he could not understand; no, nor any man after him for many a hundred years. So he stepped forward, and saw them dancing hand in hand around the charmed tree, which bent under its golden fruit; and round the tree-foot was coiled the dragon, old Ladon the sleepless

snake, who lies there for ever, listening to the song of the maidens, blinking and watching with dry bright eyes.

Then Perseus stopped, not because he feared the dragon, but because he was bashful before those fair maids; and when they saw him they too stopped, and called to him with trembling voices,—

“Who are you? Are you Heracles the mighty, who will come to rob our garden, and carry off our golden fruit?” And he answered,—

“I am not Heracles the mighty, and I want none of your golden fruit. Tell me, fair Nymphs, the way which leads to the Gorgon, that I may go on my way and slay her.”

“Not yet, not yet, fair boy; come, dance with us around the tree in the garden which knows no winter, the home of the south wind and the sun. Come hither and play with us a while; we have danced alone here for a thousand years, and our hearts are weary with longing for a play-fellow. So come, come, come!”

“I cannot dance with you, fair maidens; for I must do the errand of the Immortals. So tell me the way to the Gorgon, lest I wander and perish in the waves.”

Then they sighed and wept, and answered,—

“The Gorgon! she will freeze you into stone.”

“It is better to die like a hero than to live like an ox in a stall. The Immortals have lent me weapons, and they will give me wit to use them.”

Then they sighed again and answered, “Fair boy, if you are bent on your own ruin, be it so. We know not the way to the Gorgon; but we will ask the giant Atlas, above upon the mountain peak, the brother of our father, the silver Evening Star. He sits aloft and sees across the ocean, and far away into the Unshapen Land.”



[*Photograph by Hollyer*

The Hesperidean Maidens.
Sir E. Burne-Jones.

So they went up the mountain to Atlas their uncle, and Perseus went up with them. And they found the giant kneeling, as he held the heavens and the earth apart.

They asked him, and he answered mildly, pointing to the sea-board with his mighty hand, "I can see the Gorgons lying on an island far away, but this youth can never come near them, unless he has the cap of darkness, which whosoever wears cannot be seen."

Then cried Perseus, "Where is that cap, that I may find it?"

But the giant smiled. "No living mortal can find that cap, for it lies in the depths of Hades, in the regions of the dead. But my nieces are immortal, and they shall fetch it for you, if you will promise me one thing and keep your faith."

Then Perseus promised; and the giant said, "When you come back with the head of Medusa, you shall show me the beautiful horror, that I may lose my feeling and my breathing, and become a stone for ever; for it is weary labour for me to hold the heavens and the earth apart."

Then Perseus promised, and the eldest of the Nymphs went down, and into a dark cavern among the cliffs, out of which came smoke and thunder; for it was one of the mouths of the Underworld.

And Perseus and the other Nymphs sat down seven days, and waited trembling, till the eldest Nymph came up again; and her face was pale, and her eyes dazzled with the light, for she had been long in dreary darkness; but in her hand was the magic cap.

Then all the Nymphs kissed Perseus, and wept over him a long while; but he was only impatient to be gone. And at last they put the cap upon his head, and he vanished out of their sight.

Then Perseus went on boldly, past many an ugly sight, far away into the heart of the Unshapen Land, beyond the streams of Ocean, to the isles where no ship cruises, where is neither night nor day, where nothing is in its right place, and nothing has a name, till he heard the rustle of the Gorgons' wings and saw the glitter of their brazen talons; and then he knew that it was time to halt, lest the face of Medusa should freeze him into stone.

He thought awhile within himself, and remembered Athenè's words. He rose aloft into the air, and held the mirror of the shield above his head, and looked up into it that he might see all that was below him.

And he saw the three Gorgons sleeping, as huge as elephants. He knew that they could not see him, because the cap of darkness hid him; and yet he trembled as he drew near them, so terrible were those brazen claws.

Two of the Gorgons lay sleeping heavily, with their mighty wings outspread; but Medusa tossed to and fro restlessly, and as she tossed Perseus pitied her, she looked so fair and sad. Her plumage was like the rainbow, and her face was like the face of a Nymph, only her eyebrows were knit, and her lips set, with everlasting care and pain; and her long neck gleamed so white in the mirror that Perseus had not the heart to strike, and said, "Ah, that it had been either of her sisters!"

But as he looked, from among her tresses the vipers' heads awoke, and peeped up with their bright dry eyes, and showed their fangs, and hissed; and Medusa, as she tossed, threw back her wings and showed her brazen claws; and Perseus saw that, for all her beauty, she was as deadly and venomous as the rest.



Then he came down and stepped towards her boldly, and looked steadfastly on his mirror, and struck with his sword Harpè stoutly; and he did not need to strike again.

Then he wrapped the head in the goat-skin, turning away his eyes, and sprang into the air aloft, faster than he ever sprang before.

For Medusa's wings and talons rattled as she sank dead upon the rocks; and her two sisters woke and saw her lying dead.

Into the air they sprang yelling, and looked for him who had done the deed. Thrice they swung round and round, like hawks who beat for a partridge; and thrice they snuffed round and round, like hounds who draw upon a deer. At last they struck upon the scent of the blood, and they checked for a moment to make sure; and then on they rushed with a fearful howl, while the wind rattled hoarse in their wings.

On they rushed, sweeping and flapping, like eagles after a hare; and Perseus' blood ran cold, for all his courage, as he saw them come howling on his track; and he cried, "Bear me well now, brave sandals, for the hounds of Death are at my heels!"

And well the brave sandals bore him, aloft through cloud and sunshine, across the shoreless sea; and fast followed the hounds of Death, as the roar of their wings came down the wind. But the roar came fainter and fainter, and the howl of their voices died away; for the sandals were too swift, even for Gorgons, and by nightfall they were far behind, two black specks in the sky, till the sun sank and Perseus saw them no more.

Then he came again to Atlas, and the garden of the Nymphs; and when the giant heard him coming, he

groaned, and said, "Fulfil thy promise to me." Then Perseus held up to him the Gorgon's head, and he had rest from all his toil; for he became a crag of stone, which sleeps for ever far above the clouds.

Then he thanked the Nymphs, and asked them, "By what road shall I go homeward again, for I wandered far round in coming hither?"

And they wept and cried, "Go home no more, but stay and play with us, the lonely maidens, who dwell for ever far away from gods and men."

But he refused, and they told him his road, and said, "Take with you this magic fruit, which if you eat once, you will not hunger for seven days. For you must go eastward and eastward ever, over the doleful Libyan shore, which lies waste and desert, with shingle, and rock, and sand."

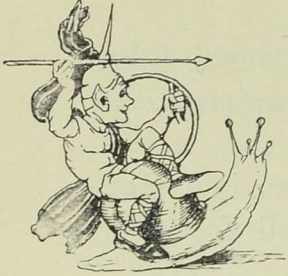
Then they kissed Perseus, and wept over him, and he leapt down the mountain, and went on, lessening and lessening like a sea-gull, away and out to sea.

IV.—How Perseus came to the Æthiops.

So Perseus flitted onward to the eastward, over many a league of sea, till he came to the rolling sand-hills and the dreary Libyan shore.

And he flitted on across the desert—over rock ledges and banks of shingle, and level wastes of sand, and shell-drifts bleaching in the sunshine, and the skeletons of great sea-monsters, and dead bones of ancient giants, strewn up and down upon the old sea-floor. And as he went the blood-drops fell to the earth from the Gorgon's head, and became poisonous asps and adders, which breed in the desert to this day.

Over the sands he went—he never knew how far or how long—feeding on the fruit which the Nymphs had given him, till he saw the hills of the Psylli, and the Dwarfs who fought with cranes. Their spears were of reeds and rushes, and their houses of the egg-shells of the cranes; and Perseus laughed, and went his way to the north-east, hoping all day long to see the blue Mediterranean sparkling, that he might fly across it to his home.



But now came down a mighty wind, and swept him back southward toward the desert. All day long he strove against it; but even the winged sandals could not prevail. So he was forced to float down the wind all night; and when the morning dawned there was nothing to be seen, save the hateful waste of sand.

And out of the north the sandstorms rushed upon him, blood-red pillars and wreaths, blotting out the noonday sun; and Perseus fled before them, lest he should be choked by the burning dust. At last the gale fell calm, and he tried to go northward again; but again came down the sandstorms, and swept him back into the waste, and then all was calm and cloudless as before. Seven days he strove against the storms, and seven days he was driven back, till he was spent with thirst and hunger, and his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. Here and there he fancied that he saw a fair lake, and the sunbeams shining on the water; but when he came near it vanished at his feet, and there was nought but burning sand. And if he had not been of the race of the Immortals he would have perished in the waste; but his life was strong within him, because it was more than human.



“The sandstorms rushed upon him, ...and Perseus fled before them.”
(See page 36.)

Then he cried to Athenè, and said,—

“O fair and pure, if thou hearest me, wilt thou leave me here to die of drought? I have brought thee the Gorgon’s head at thy bidding, and hitherto thou hast prospered my journey; dost thou desert me at the last? Else why will not these immortal sandals prevail, even against the desert storms? Shall I never see my mother again, and the blue ripples round Seriphos, and the sunny hills of Hellas?”

So he prayed; and after he had prayed there was a great silence.

The heaven was still above his head, and the sand was still beneath his feet; and Perseus looked up, but there was nothing but the blinding sun in the blinding blue; and he looked round him, but there was nothing but the blinding sand.

And Perseus stood still a while, and waited, and said, “Surely I am not here without the will of the Immortals, for Athenè would not lie. Were not these sandals to lead me in the right road? Then the road in which I have tried to go must be a wrong road.”

Then suddenly his ears were opened, and he heard the sound of running water.

And at that his heart was lifted up, though he scarcely dared believe his ears; and weary as he was, he hurried forward, though he could scarcely stand upright; and within a bowshot of him was a glen in the sand, and marble rocks, and date-trees, and a lawn of fair green grass. And through the lawn a streamlet sparkled and wandered out beyond the trees, and vanished in the sand.

The water trickled among the rocks, and a pleasant breeze rustled in the dry date branches; and Perseus

laughed for joy, and leapt down the cliff, and drank of the cool water, and ate of the dates, and slept upon the turf, and leapt up and went forward again: but not toward the north this time; for he said, "Surely Athenè hath sent me hither, and will not have me go homeward yet. What if there be another noble deed to be done, before I see the sunny hills of Hellas?"

So he went east, and ever eastward, by fresh oases and fountains, date-palms and lawns of grass, till he saw before him a mighty mountain-wall, all rose-red in the setting sun.

Then he towered in the air like an eagle, for his limbs were strong again; and he flew all night across the mountain till the day began to dawn, and rosy-fingered Eos came blushing up the sky. And then, behold, beneath him was the long green garden of Egypt, and the shining stream of Nile.

And he saw cities walled up to heaven, and temples, and obelisks, and pyramids, and giant gods of stone. And he came down amid fields of barley, and flax, and millet, and gourds; and saw the people coming out of the gates of a great city, and setting to work, each in his place, among the water-courses, parting the streams among the plants cunningly with their feet, according to the wisdom of the Egyptians. But when they saw him they all stopped their work, and gathered round him, and cried,—

"Who art thou, fair youth? and what bearest thou beneath thy goat-skin there? Surely thou art one of the Immortals; for thy skin is white like ivory, and ours is red like clay. Thy hair is like threads of gold, and ours is black and curled. Surely thou art one of the Immortals;" and they would have worshipped him then and there, but Perseus said,—

“I am not of the Immortals, but of the Hellenes. And I have slain the Gorgon in the wilderness, and bear her head with me. Give me food, therefore, that I may go forward and finish my work.”

Then they gave him food and wine, but they would not let him go. And when the news came into the city that the Gorgon was slain, the priests came out to meet him, and the maidens, with songs and dances, and timbrels and harps; and they would have brought him to their temple and to their king, but Perseus put on the cap of darkness, and vanished out of their sight.

Therefore the Egyptians looked long for his return, but in vain, and worshipped him as a hero, and made a statue of him, which stood for many a hundred years; and they said that he appeared to them at times, with sandals a cubit long; and that whenever he appeared the season was fruitful, and the Nile rose high that year.

Then Perseus went to the eastward, along the Red Sea shore; and then, because he was afraid to go into the Arabian deserts, he turned northward once more, and this time no storm hindered him.

He went past the Isthmus, and Mount Casius, and up the shore of the land which we now call Palestine, where the dark-faced Æthiops dwelt.

He flew on past pleasant hills and valleys, like Argos itself, or Lacedæmon, or the fair Vale of Tempe. But the lowlands were all drowned by floods, and the highlands blasted by fire, and the hills heaved like a bubbling cauldron before the wrath of King Poseidon, the shaker of the earth.

And Perseus feared to go inland, but flew along the shore above the sea; and he went on all the day, and the sky was

black with smoke ; and he went on all the night, and the sky was red with flame.

Then at the dawn of day he looked toward the cliffs ; and at the water's edge, under a black rock, he saw a white image stand. "This," thought he, "must surely be the statue of some sea-god ; I will go near and see what kind of gods these barbarians worship." So he came near ; but when he came, it was no statue, but a maiden of flesh and blood, for he could see her tresses streaming in the breeze ; and as he came closer still, he could see how she shrank and shivered when the waves sprinkled her with cold salt spray. Her arms were stretched out, and fastened to the rock with chains of brass, and her head drooped on her shoulder, either with sleep, or weariness, or grief. But now and then she looked up and wailed, and called her mother ; yet she did not see Perseus, for the cap of darkness was on his head.



Full of pity and indignation, Perseus drew near and looked upon the maid. Her cheeks were darker than his, and her hair was blue-black like a hyacinth ; but Perseus thought, "I have never seen so beautiful a maiden ; no, not in all our isles. Surely she is a king's daughter. Do barbarians treat their kings' daughters thus ? She is too fair to have done any wrong. I will speak to her."

And, lifting the cap from his head, he flashed into her sight. She shrieked with terror, and tried to hide her face with her hair, for she could not with her hands ; but Perseus cried,—

"Do not fear me, fair one. I am a Hellen, and no barbarian. What cruel men have bound you ? But first I will set you free."

And he tore at the fetters, but they were too strong for him; while the maiden cried,—

“Touch me not; I am accursed, devoted as a victim to the sea-gods. They will slay you if you dare to set me free.”

“Let them try,” said Perseus; and drawing his sword Harpè, he cut through the brass as if it had been flax.

“Now,” he said, “you belong to me, and not to these sea-gods, whosoever they may be.” But she only called the more on her mother.

“Why call on your mother? She can be no mother to have left you here. If a bird is dropped out of the nest, it belongs to the man who picks it up. If a jewel is cast by the wayside, it is his who dare win it and wear it, as I will win you. I know now why Pallas Athenè sent me hither. She sent me to gain a prize worth all my toil and more.”

And he clasped her in his arms, and cried, “Where are these sea-gods, cruel and unjust, who doom fair maids to death? I carry the weapons of Immortals. Let them measure their strength against mine! But tell me, maiden, who you are, and what dark fate brought you here.”

And she answered, weeping,—

“I am the daughter of Cepheus, King of Iopa, and my mother is Cassiopœia of the beautiful tresses, and they called me Andromeda. And I stand bound here, hapless that I am, for the sea-monster’s food, to atone for my mother’s sin. For she boasted of me once that I was fairer than the Queen of the Fishes; so she in her wrath sent the sea-floods, and her brother the Fire King sent the earthquakes, and wasted all the land, and after the floods a monster bred of the slime, who devours all living things. And now he must devour me,



guiltless though I am—me who never harmed a living thing, nor saw a fish upon the shore but I gave it life, and threw it back into the sea; for in our land we eat no fish, for fear of their queen. Yet the priests say that nothing but my blood can atone for a sin which I never committed.”

But Perseus laughed, and said, “A sea-monster? I have fought with worse than that. I would have faced Immortals for your sake; how much more a beast of the sea?”

Then Andromeda looked up at him, and new hope was kindled in her breast, so proud and fair did he stand, with his glittering sword in his hand. But she only sighed, and wept the more, and cried,—

“Why will you die, young as you are? Is there not death and sorrow enough in the world already? It is noble for me to die, that I may save the lives of a whole people; but you, why should I slay you too, who are better than them all? Go you your way; I must go mine.”

But Perseus cried, “Not so; for the lords of Olympus, whom I serve, are the friends of the heroes, and help them on to noble deeds. Led by them, I slew the Gorgon, the beautiful horror; and not without them do I come hither, to slay this monster with that same Gorgon’s head. Yet hide your eyes when I leave you, lest the sight of it freeze you also to stone.”

But the maiden answered nothing, for she could not believe his words. And then, suddenly looking up, she pointed to the sea and shrieked,—

“There he comes, with the sunrise. I must die now. How shall I endure it? Oh, go! Is it not dreadful enough to be torn piecemeal, without having you to look on?” And she tried to thrust him away.

But he said, "I go; yet promise me one thing ere I go: that if I slay this beast you will be my wife, and come back with me to my kingdom in fruitful Argos, for I am a king's heir. Promise me, and seal it with a kiss."

Then she lifted up her face and kissed him; and Perseus laughed for joy, and flew upward, while Andromeda crouched trembling on the rock, waiting for what might befall.

On came the great sea-monster, coasting along like a huge black galley, lazily breasting the ripple, and stopping at times by creek or headland to watch for the laughter of girls at their bleaching, or cattle pawing on the sand-hills, or boys bathing on the beach. His great sides were fringed with clustering shells and seaweeds, and the water gurgled in and out of his wide jaws as he rolled along, dripping and glistening in the beams of the morning sun.

At last he saw Andromeda, and shot forward to take his prey, while the waves foamed white behind him, and before him the fish fled leaping.

Then down from the height of the air fell Perseus like a shooting-star—down to the crests of the waves, while Andromeda hid her face as he shouted; and then there was silence for a while.

At last she looked up trembling, and saw Perseus springing toward her; and instead of the monster she saw a long black rock, with the sea rippling quietly round it.

Who, then, so proud as Perseus, as he leapt back to the rock, and lifted his fair Andromeda in his arms, and bore her to the cliff-top?

Who so proud as Perseus, and who so joyful as all the Æthiop people? For they had stood watching the monster from the cliffs, wailing for the maiden's fate. And already a messenger had gone to Cepheus and Cassiopœia, where they

sat on the ground, in the innermost palace chambers, awaiting their daughter's end. And they came, and all the city with them, to see the wonder, with songs and with dances, with cymbals and harps, and received their daughter back again, as one alive from the dead.

Then Cepheus said, "Hero of the Hellens, stay here with me and be my son-in-law, and I will give you the half of my kingdom."

"I will be your son-in-law," said Perseus, "but of your kingdom I will have none, for I long after the pleasant land of Greece, and my mother who waits for me at home."

Then Cepheus said, "You must not take my daughter away at once, for she is to us like one alive from the dead. Stay with us here a year, and after that you shall return with honour."

And Perseus consented; but before he went to the palace he bade the people bring stones and wood, and built three altars, one to Athenè, and one to Hermes, and one to Father Zeus, and offered bullocks and rams.

And some said, "This is a picus man;" yet the priests said, "The Sea Queen will be yet more fierce against us, because her monster is slain." But they were afraid to speak aloud, for they feared the Gorgon's head. So they went up to the palace; and when they came in, there stood in the hall Phineus, the brother of Cepheus, chafing like a bear robbed of her whelps and with him his sons and his servants, and many an armed man; and he cried to Cepheus,—

"You shall not marry your daughter to this stranger, of whom no one knows even the name.



Was not Andromeda betrothed to my son? And now that she is safe again, has he not a right to claim her?"

But Perseus laughed, and answered, "If your son is in want of a bride, let him save a maiden for himself. As yet he seems but a helpless bridegroom. He left this one to die, and dead she is to him. I saved her alive, and alive she is to me, but to no one else. Ungrateful man! have I not saved your land, and the lives of your sons and daughters, and will you requite me thus? Go, or it will be worse for you." But all the men-at-arms drew their swords, and rushed on him like wild beasts.

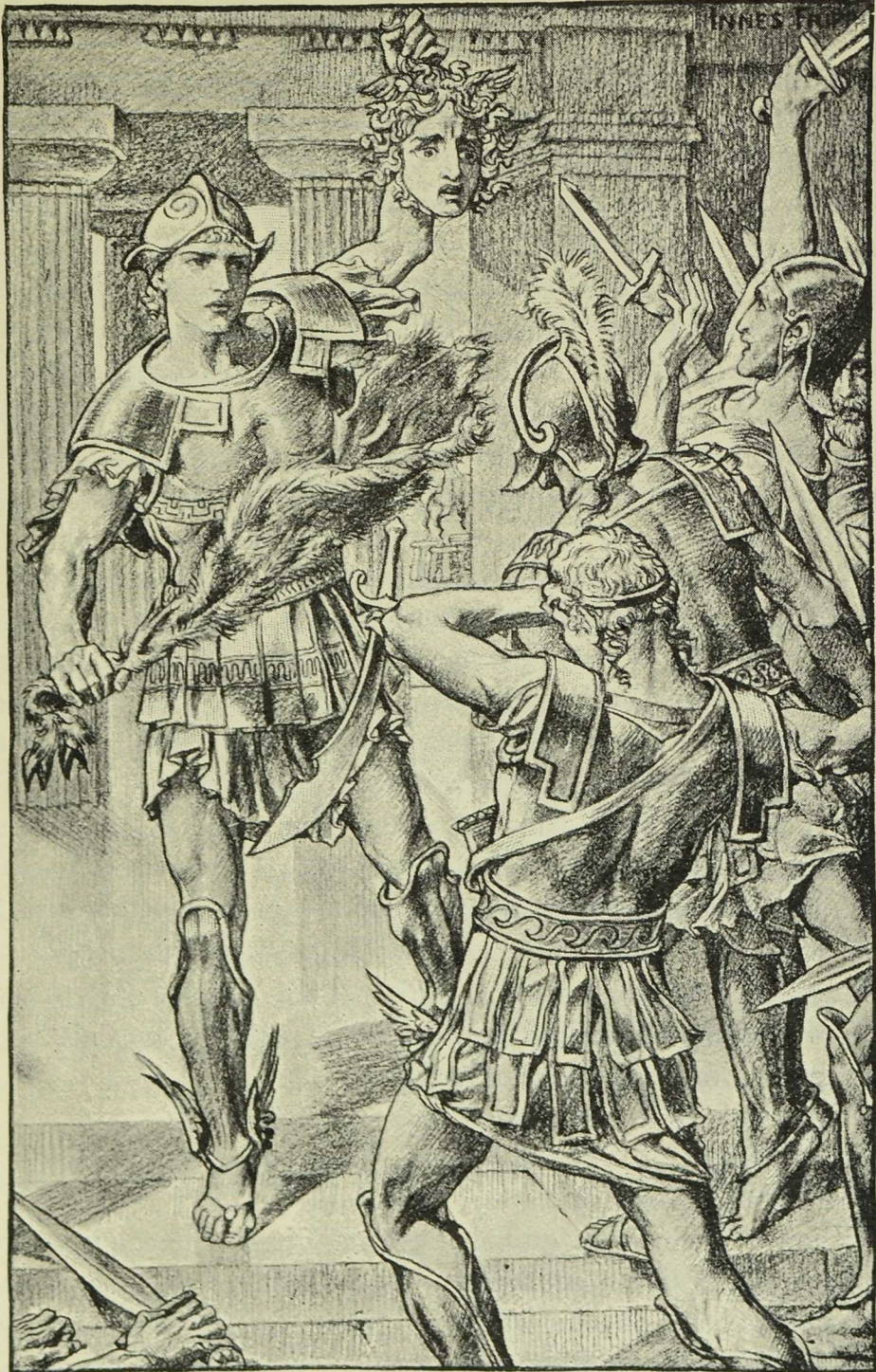
Then he unveiled the Gorgon's head, and said, "This has delivered my bride from one wild beast; it shall deliver her from many." And as he spoke Phineus and all his men-at-arms stopped short, and stiffened each man as he stood; and before Perseus had drawn the goat-skin over the face again, they were all turned into stone.

Then Perseus bade the people bring levers and roll them out; and what was done with them after that I cannot tell.

So they made a great wedding feast, which lasted seven whole days, and who so happy as Perseus and Andromeda?

But on the eighth night Perseus dreamed a dream, and he saw standing beside him Pallas Athenè, as he had seen her in Seriphos, seven long years before; and she stood and called him by name, and said,—

"Perseus, you have played the man, and see, you have your reward. Know now that the gods are just, and help him who helps himself. Now give me here Harpè the sword, and the sandals, and the cap of darkness, that I may give them back to their owners. But the Gorgon's head you shall keep a while, for you will need it in your land of Greece. Then you shall lay it up in my temple at Seri-



"Then he unveiled the Gorgon's head." (See page 46.)

phos, that I may wear it on my shield for ever, a terror to the Titans and the monsters, and the foes of gods and men. And as for this land, I have appeased the sea and the fire, and there shall be no more floods or earthquakes. But let the people build altars to Father Zeus and to me, and worship the Immortals, the lords of heaven and earth."

And Perseus rose to give her the sword, and the cap, and the sandals; but he woke, and his dream vanished away. And yet it was not altogether a dream, for the goat-skin with the head was in its place, but the sword, and the cap, and the sandals were gone, and Perseus never saw them more.

Then a great awe fell on Perseus; and he went out in the morning to the people and told his dream, and bade them build altars to Zeus, the father of gods and men, and to Athenè, who gives wisdom to heroes; and to fear no more the earthquakes and the floods, but sow and build in peace. And they did so for a while, and prospered; but after Perseus was gone they forgot Zeus and Athenè, and worshipped again Atergatis the queen, and the undying fish of the sacred lake, and they burnt their children before the Fire King, till Zeus was angry with that foolish people, and brought a strange nation against them out of Egypt, who fought against them and wasted them utterly, and dwelt in their cities for many a hundred years.

V.—How Perseus came Home again.

When a year was ended Perseus hired Phœnicians from Tyre, and cut down cedars, and built himself a noble galley; and painted its cheeks with vermilion, and pitched its sides with pitch; and in it he put Andromeda, and all her dowry

of jewels, and rich shawls, and spices from the East; and great was the weeping when they rowed away. But the remembrance of his brave deed was left behind; and Andromeda's rock was shown at Iopa till more than a thousand years were past.

So Perseus and the Phœnicians rowed to the westward, across the sea of Crete, till they came to the blue Ægean and the pleasant isles of Hellas, and Seriphos, his ancient home.

Then he left his galley on the beach and went up as of old; and he embraced his mother, and Dictys his good foster-father, and they wept over each other a long while, for it was seven years and more since they had met.

Then Perseus went out, and up to the hall of Polydectes; and underneath the goat-skin he bore the Gorgon's head.

And when he came into the hall, Polydectes sat at the table-head, and all his nobles and landowners on either side, each according to his rank, feasting on the fish and the goat's flesh, and drinking the blood-red wine. The harpers harped and the revellers shouted, and the wine-cups rang merrily as they passed from hand to hand, and great was the noise in the hall of Polydectes.

Then Perseus stood upon the threshold and called to the king by name. But none of the guests knew Perseus, for he was changed by his long journey. He had gone out a boy and he was come home a hero; his eye shone like an eagle's, and he stood up like a wild bull in his pride.

But the wicked Polydectes knew him, and hardened his heart still more; and scornfully he called,—

“Ah, foundling! have you found it more easy to promise than to fulfil?”

“Those whom the gods help fulfil their promises; and

those who despise them reap as they have sown. Behold the Gorgon's head!"

Then Perseus drew back the goat-skin and held aloft the Gorgon's head.

Pale grew Polydectes and his guests as they looked upon that dreadful face. They tried to rise up from their seats; yet from their seats they never rose, but stiffened, each man where he sat, into a ring of cold gray stones.

Then Perseus turned and left them, and went down to his galley in the bay; and he gave the kingdom to good Dictys, and sailed away with his mother and his bride.

And Polydectes and his guests sat still, with the wine-cups before them on the board, till the rafters crumbled down above their heads and the walls behind their backs, and the table crumbled down between them, and the grass sprang up about their feet; and Polydectes and his guests sit on the hillside, a ring of gray stones until this day.

Then Perseus rowed westward toward Argos, and landed, and went up to the town. And when he came, he found that Acrisius his grandfather had fled. For Prætus had made war against him afresh, and had come across the river from Tiryns and conquered Argos.

Then Perseus called the Argives together, and told them who he was, and all the noble deeds which he had done. And all the nobles and the yeomen made him king, for they saw that he had a royal heart; and they fought with him against Argos, and took it, and killed Prætus, and made the Cyclopès serve them and build them walls round Argos, like the walls which they had built at Tiryns; and there were great rejoicings in the vale of Argos, because they had got a king from Father Zeus.

But Perseus' heart yearned after his grandfather, and he

said, "Surely he is my flesh and blood, and he will love me now that I am come home with honour. I will go and find him, and bring him home, and we will reign together in peace." So Perseus sailed away till he came to the town of Larissa.

And when he came there all the people were in the fields, and there was feasting and all kinds of games; for Teutamenes their king wished to honour Acrisius, because he was the king of a mighty land.

So Perseus did not tell his name, but went up to the games unknown; for he said, "If I carry away the prize in the games, my grandfather's heart will be softened toward me."

So he threw off his helmet and his cuirass, and stood among the youths of Larissa, while all wondered at him, and said, "Who is this young stranger, who stands like a wild bull in his pride?"

And when the games began they wondered yet more; for Perseus was the best man of all at running, and leaping, and wrestling, and throwing the javelin; and he won four crowns, and took them, and then he said to himself, "There is a fifth crown yet to be won: I will win that, and lay them all upon the knees of my grandfather."

And as he spoke, he saw where Acrisius sat by the side of Teutamenes the king, with his royal staff in his hand; and Perseus wept when he looked at him, for his heart yearned after his kin; and he said, "Surely he is a kingly old man, yet he need not be ashamed of his grandson."

Then he took the quoits, and hurled them five fathoms beyond all the rest; and the people shouted, "Farther yet, brave stranger! There has never been such a hurler in this land."



Then Perseus put out all his strength, and hurled. But a gust of wind came from the sea and carried the quoit aside, and far beyond all the rest; and it fell on the foot of Acrisius, and he swooned away with the pain.

Perseus shrieked and ran up to him; but when they lifted the old man up he was dead, for his life was slow and feeble.

Then Perseus rent his clothes and cast dust upon his head, and wept a long while for his grandfather. At last he rose, and called to all the people aloud, and said,—

“The gods are true, and what they have ordained must be. I am Perseus, the grandson of this dead man, the far-famed slayer of the Gorgon.”

Then he told them of the prophecy that he should kill his grandfather, and all the story of his life.

So they made a great mourning for Acrisius, and burnt him on a right rich pile; and Perseus went to the temple, and was purified from the guilt of the death, because he had done it unknowingly.

Then he went home to Argos, and reigned there well with fair Andromeda; and they had four sons and three daughters, and died in a good old age.

And when they died, the ancients say, Athenè took them up into the sky, with Cepheus and Cassiopœia. And there on starlight nights you may see them shining still; Cepheus with his kingly crown, and Cassiopœia in her ivory chair, plaiting her star-spangled tresses, and Perseus with the Gorgon's head, and fair Andromeda beside him, spreading her long white arms across the heavens, as she stood when chained to the stone. All night long they shine for a beacon to wandering sailors, but all day they feast with the gods on the still blue peaks of Olympus.

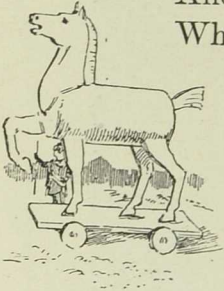
CHARLES KINGSLEY.



"It fell on the foot of Acrisius." (See page 52.)

THE WOODEN HORSE OF TROY.

By destiny compelled, and in despair,
 The Greeks grew weary of the tedious war ;
 And by Minerva's aid a fabric reared
 Which like a steed of monstrous height appeared ;
 The sides were planked with pine, they feigned it made
 For their return, and this the vow they paid.
 Thus they pretend, but in the hollow side
 Selected numbers of their soldiers hide ;
 With inward arms the dire machine they load,
 And iron bowels stuff the dark abode.



In sight of Troy lies Tenedos, an isle
 (While fortune did on Priam's empire smile)
 Renowned for wealth, but since a faithless bay,
 Where ships exposed to wind and weather lay.
 There was their fleet concealed. We* thought for Greece
 The sails were hoisted, and our fears release.
 The Trojans cooped within their walls so long,
 Unbar their gates, and issue in a throng,
 Like swarming bees, and with delight survey
 The camp deserted, where the Grecians lay ;
 The quarters of the several chiefs they showed :
 Here Phœnix, here Achilles made abode,
 Here joined the battles, there the navy rode.
 Part on the pile their wondering eyes employ
 (The pile by Pallas raised to ruin Troy),
 Thymætēs first ('tis doubtful whether hired
 Or so the Trojan destiny required)
 Moved that the ramparts might be broken down,
 To lodge the monster fabric in the town.

* Æneas, son of Priam, King of Troy, is telling the tale.

But Capys, and the rest of sounder mind,
 The fatal present to the flames designed,
 Or to the watery deep ; at least to bore
 The hollow sides, and hidden frauds explore ;
 The giddy vulgar, as their fancies guide,
 With noise say nothing, and in parts divide.

Laocoön, followed by a numerous crowd,
 Ran from the fort, and cried from far aloud :
 “ O wretched countrymen, what fury reigns ?
 What more than madness has possessed your brains ?
 Think you the Grecians from your coasts are gone ?
 And are Ulysses’ arts no better known ?
 This hollow fabric either must enclose,
 Within its blind recess, our secret foes ;
 Or ’tis an engine, raised above the town,
 To o’erlook the walls, and then to batter down.
 Somewhat is sure designed, by fraud or force ;
 Trust not their presents, nor admit the horse.”

Thus having said, against the steed he threw
 His forceful spear, which, hissing as it flew,
 Pierced through the yielding planks of jointed wood,
 And trembling in the hollow body stood.
 The sides transpierced, return a rattling sound,
 And groans of Greeks enclosed come issuing through the
 wound.

And had not heaven the fall of Troy designed,
 Or had not men been fated to be blind,
 Enough was said and done to inspire a better mind ;
 Then had our lances pierced the treacherous wood,
 And Ilian towers and Priam’s empire stood.
 Meantime, with shouts the Trojan shepherds bring
 A captive Greek in bands before the king ;

Taken, to take ; who made himself their prey,
 To impose on their belief, and Troy betray ;
 Fixed on his aim, and obstinately bent
 To die undaunted, or to circumvent.
 About the captive tides of Trojans flow ;
 All press to see, and some insult the foe.
 Now hear how well the Greeks their wiles disguised,
 Behold a nation in a man comprised.

Trembling the miscreant stood, unarmed and bound ;
 He stared and rolled his haggard eyes around ;
 Then said, " Alas, what earth remains, what sea
 Is open to receive unhappy me ?
 What fate a wretched fugitive attends,
 Scorned by my foes, abandoned by my friends."
 He said, and sighed, and cast a rueful eye—
 Our pity kindles, and our passions die.
 We cheer the youth to make his own defence,
 And freely tell us what he was, and whence ;
 What news he could impart we long to know,
 And what to credit from a captive foe.

His fear at length dismissed, he said : " Whate'er
 My fate ordains, my words shall be sincere ;
 I neither can nor dare my birth disclaim ;
 Greece is my country, Sinon is my name ;
 The Grecian hopes, and all the attempts they made
 Were only founded on Minerva's aid.
 But from the time when impious Diomede,
 And false Ulysses, that inventive head,
 Her fatal image from the temple drew,
 The sleeping guardians of the castle slew :
 From thence the tide of fortune left their shore,
 And ebb'd much faster than it flow'd before ;

Their courage languished as their hopes decayed
And Pallas, now averse, refused her aid.
Then Calchas bade our host for flight prepare,
And hope no conquest from the tedious war ;
Till first they sailed for Greece, with prayers besought
Her injured power, and better omens brought.
And now their navy ploughs the watery main,
Yet soon expect it on your shores again,
With Pallas pleased, as Calchas did ordain.
But first, to reconcile the blue-eyed maid,
For her stolen statue, and her tower betrayed,
Warned by the seer, to her offended name
We raised and dedicate this wondrous frame ;
So lofty, lest through your forbidden gates
It pass, and intercept our better fates.
For, once admitted there, our hopes are lost ;
And Troy may then a new palladium boast.
For so religion and the gods ordain,
That if you violate with hands profane
Minerva's gift, your town in flames shall burn
(Which omen, O ye gods, on Græcia turn) ;
But if it climb, with your assisting hands,
The Trojan walls, and in the city stands,
Then Troy shall Argos and Mycenæ burn,
And the reverse of fate on us return."

Laocoön, the priest of Neptune, then sacrificed a steer to the god, when suddenly two huge serpents were seen riding upon the waves and quickly approaching the shore. Brandishing their tongues and licking their hissing jaws, they crept up the sand, and making their way towards the two young sons of the priest, encircled their bodies in a deadly grip. The distracted father ran to their rescue, but was himself drawn within the writhing coils, and in a few dreadful moments the three were crushed to death.

Amazement seizes all. The general cry
Proclaims Laocoön justly doomed to die,

Whose hand the will of Pallas had withstood,
And dared to violate the sacred wood.
All vote to admit the steed, that vows be paid,
And incense offered to the offended maid.
A spacious breach is made, the town lies bare,
Some hoisting levers, some the wheels prepare,
And fasten to the horse's feet ; the rest
With cables haul along the unwieldy beast.
Each on his fellow for assistance calls.
At length the fatal fabric mounts the walls,
Big with destruction. Boys with chaplets crowned,
And choirs of virgins sing and dance around.
Thus raised aloft, and then descending down,
It enters o'er our heads and threatens the town.
O sacred city, built by hands divine !
O valiant heroes of the Trojan line !
Four times he stuck ; as oft the clashing sound
Of arms was heard, and inward groans rebound.
Yet mad with zeal, and blinded with our fate,
We haul along the horse in solemn state,
Then place the dire portent within the tower.
Cassandra cried, and cursed the unhappy hour ;
Foretold our fate. But, by the gods' decree,
All heard, and none believed, the prophecy.
With branches we the fanes adorn, and waste
In jollity the day ordained to be the last.

Meantime, the rapid heavens rolled down the light,
And on the shaded ocean rushed the night.
Our men secure, nor guards nor sentries held,
But easy sleep their weary limbs compelled.
The Grecians had embarked their naval powers
From Tenedos, and sought our well-known shores,
Safe under covert of the silent night,
And guided by the imperial galley's light ;

When Sinon, favoured by the partial gods,
 Unlocked the horse and oped his dark abodes,
 Restored to vital air our hidden foes,
 Who joyful from their long confinement rose.
 Tysander bold, and Sthenelus their guide,
 And dire Ulysses down the cable slide ;
 Then Thoas, Athamus, and Pyrrhus haste
 Nor was the Podalyrian hero last,
 Nor injured Menelaus, nor the famed
 Epeus, who the fatal engine framed.
 A nameless crowd succeed. Their forces join
 To invade the town, oppressed with sleep and wine.
 Those few they find awake first meet their fate,
 Then to their fellows they unbar the gate.

* * * * *

Now peals of shouts come thundering from afar,
 Cries, threats, and loud laments, and mingled war
 The noise approaches, though our palace stood
 Aloof from streets, encompassed with a wood.
 Louder, and yet more loud, I hear the alarms
 Of human cries distinct, and clashing arms ;
 Fear broke my slumbers ; I no longer stay,
 But mount the terrace, thence the town survey,
 And hearken what the fruitful sounds convey.
 Thus when a flood of fire by wind is born,
 Crackling it rolls, and mows the standing corn ;
 Or deluges, descending on the plains,
 Sweep o'er the yellow year, destroy the pains
 Of labouring oxen, and the peasant's gains,
 Unroot the forest oaks, and bear away
 Flocks, folds, and trees, an undistinguished prey ;
 The shepherd climbs the cliff, and sees from afar
 The wasteful ravage of the watery war.

From Virgil's "Æneid" (translated by DRYDEN).

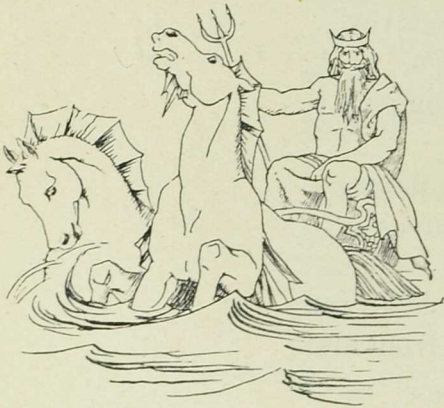
ULYSSES THE WANDERER.

I.—The Storm.

AT the stern of his solitary ship Ulysses sat and steered right artfully. No sleep could seize his eyelids. He beheld the Pleiads, the Bear which is by some called the Wain, that moves round about Orion, and keeps still above the ocean, and the slow-setting sign Boötes, which some name the Waggoner. Seventeen days he held his course, and on the eighteenth the coast of Phæacia was in sight. The figure of the land, as seen from the sea, was pretty and circular, and looked something like a shield.

Neptune, returning from visiting his favourite Æthiopians, descried Ulysses ploughing the waves, his domain. The sight of the man he so much hated for the sake of Polyphemus, his son, whose eye Ulysses had put out,* set the god's heart on fire; and snatching into his hand his horrid sea-sceptre, the trident of his power, he smote the air and the sea, and conjured up all his black storms, the billows rolling up before the fury of all the winds that contended together in their mighty sport.

Then the knees of Ulysses bent with fear, and then all his spirit was spent, and he wished that he had been among the number of his countrymen who fell before Troy, and had their funerals celebrated by all the Greeks, rather than to perish thus, where no man could mourn him or know him.



* For this story, see Part IV. of the Royal Treasury, page 27.



Neptune, the Monarch of the Sea.
(From the sculpture by Adam in the Louvre.)

As he thought these melancholy thoughts, a huge wave took him and washed him overboard. Ship and all were upset amidst the billows, he struggling afar off, clinging to her stern broken off which he yet held, her mast cracking in two with the fury of that gust of mixed winds that struck it. Sails and sail-yards fell into the deep, and he himself was long immersed under water; nor could he get his head above, wave so met with wave, as if they strove which should depress him most, and the gorgeous garments given him by Calypso * clung about him, and hindered his swimming.

Yet neither for this, nor the overthrow of his ship, nor his own perilous condition, would he give up his drenched vessel, but, wrestling with Neptune, at length got hold of her again, and then sat in her hulk, insulting over death, which he had escaped. His ship, striving to live, floated at random, cuffed from wave to wave, hurled to and fro by all the winds; now Boreas † tossed it to Notus, Notus passed it to Eurus, and Eurus to the west wind, who kept up the horrid tennis.

II.—*The Sea-Bird's Gift.*

The winds in their mad sport Ino Leucothea beheld—Ino Leucothea, now a sea-goddess, but once a mortal; she with pity beheld Ulysses the mark of their fierce contention, and rising from the waves alighted on the ship, in shape like to the sea-bird which is called a cormorant. In her beak she held a wonderful girdle made of sea-weeds which grow at the bottom of the ocean, and this she dropped at his feet.

* During his wanderings Ulysses visited the goddess Calypso in the island of Ogygia, and she offered him immortality if he would remain with her. But he refused, wishing only to return to his wife Penelopè.

† Boreas, the North wind; Notus, the South wind; Eurus, the East wind; Zephyrus, the West wind.

Then the bird spake to Ulysses and counselled him not to trust any more to that fatal vessel against which Neptune had levelled his furious wrath, nor to those ill-befriending garments which Calypso had given him, but to quit both it and them, and trust for his safety to swimming.

“And here,” said the seeming bird, “take this girdle and tie about your middle, for it has virtue to protect the wearer at sea, and you shall safely reach the shore; but when you have landed cast it far from you back into the sea.”

He did as the sea-bird instructed him; he stripped himself, and fastening the wondrous girdle about his middle, cast himself into the seas to swim. Then the bird dived past his sight into the fathomless abyss of the ocean.

III.—Buffeting the Waves.

Two days and two nights he spent in struggling with the waves, though sore buffeted and almost spent, never giving himself up for lost, such confidence he had in that charm which he wore about his middle, and in the words of that divine bird. But the third morning the winds grew calm, and all the heavens were clear.

Then he saw himself nigh land, which he knew to be the coast of the Phæacians, a people good to strangers, and abounding in ships, by whose favour he doubted not that he should soon obtain a passage to his own country. And such joy he conceived in his heart, as good sons have that esteem their father's life dear, when long sickness has held him down to his bed, and wasted his body, and at length they see health return to the old man, with restored strength and spirits, in reward of their many prayers to the gods for his safety.

Very precious was the prospect of home-return to Ulysses, that he might restore health to his country, that had long languished so full of distempers in his absence. And then for his own safety's sake he had joy to see the shores, the woods, so nigh and within his grasp as they seemed, and he laboured with all the might of hands and feet to reach with swimming that nigh-seeming land.

But when he approached near, a horrid sound of a huge sea beating against rocks informed him that here was no place for landing, nor any harbour for man's resort. For through the weeds and the foam which the sea belched up against the land he could dimly discover the rugged shore all bristled



with flints, and all that part of the coast one impending rock that seemed impossible to climb; and the water all about so deep, that not a beach was there for any tired foot to rest upon, and every moment he feared lest some wave more cruel than the rest should crush him against a cliff, rendering worse than vain all his landing; and should he swim to seek a more commodious haven farther on, he was fearful lest, weak and spent as he was, the winds would force him back a long way off into the main, where the terrible god Neptune, for wrath that he had so nearly escaped his power, having gotten him again into his domain, would send out some great sea-monster to swallow him up alive; with such malignity the god of the sea still pursued him.

While these thoughts distracted him with diversity of dangers, one bigger wave drove against a sharp rock his naked body, which it gashed and tore, and wanted little of breaking all his bones, so rude was the shock. But in this extremity she prompted him who never failed him at need.

Minerva (who is wisdom itself) put it into his thoughts no longer to keep swimming off and on, as one dallying with danger, but boldly to force the shore that threatened him, and to hug the rock that had torn him so rudely; which with both hands he clasped, wrestling with extremity, till the rage of that billow which had driven him upon it was past. But then again the rock drove back that wave so furiously, that it reft him of his hold, sucking him with it in its return, and the sharp rock (his cruel friend) to which he clung for succour rent the flesh so sore from his hands in parting, that he fell off, and could sustain no longer: quite under water he fell, and past the help of fate, and there had the hapless Ulysses lost all portion that he had in this life, if Minerva had not prompted his wisdom in that peril to essay another course, and to find some other shelter, ceasing to attempt that landing-place.

She guided his wearied and nigh-exhausted limbs to the mouth of a fair river, which not far from thence disbursed its watery tribute to the ocean. Here the shores were easy and accessible, and the rocks, which rather adorned than defended its banks, so smooth, that they seemed polished of purpose to invite the landing of our sea-wanderer, and to atone for the uncourteous treatment which those less hospitable cliffs had afforded him.

And the god of the river stayed his current and smoothed his waters, to make the landing of Ulysses more easy; for sacred to the ever-living deities of the fresh waters, be they mountain-stream, river, or lake, is the cry of erring mortals that seek their aid, by reason that being inland-bred these gods partake more of the gentle humanities of our nature than those marine deities, whom Neptune trains up in tempests in the unpitying recesses of his salt abyss.

IV.—*The Sleep in the Woods.*

So by the favour of the river's god Ulysses crept to land half-drowned; both his knees faltering, his strong hands falling down through weakness from the excessive toils he had endured, his cheek and nostrils flowing with froth of the sea-brine, much of which he had swallowed in that conflict, voice and breath spent, down he sank as in death.

Dead weary he was. It seemed as if the sea had soaked through his heart, and the pains he felt in all his veins were little less than those which one feels that has endured the torture of the rack. But when his spirits came a little to



themselves, and his recollection by degrees began to return, he rose up, and unloosing from his waist the girdle or charm which that divine bird had given him, and remembering the charge which he had received with it, he flung it far from him into the river. Back it swam with the course of the ebbing stream till it reached the sea, where the fair hands of Ino Leucothea received it to keep it as a pledge of safety to any future shipwrecked mariner that

like Ulysses should be cast into those perilous waves.

Then he kissed the humble earth in token of safety, and on he went by the side of that pleasant river till he came where a thicker shade of rushes that grew on its banks seemed to point out the place where he might rest his sea-wearied limbs. And here a fresh perplexity divided his mind, whether he should pass the night, which was coming on, in that place, where, though he feared no other enemies, the damps and frosts of the chill sea-air in that exposed

situation might be death to him in his weak state; or whether he had better climb the next hill, and pierce the depth of some shady wood, in which he might find a warm and sheltered though insecure repose, subject to the approach of any wild beast that roamed that way. Better did this last course appear to him, though with some danger, as that which was more honourable and savoured more of strife and self-exertion, than to perish without a struggle, the passive victim of cold and the elements.

So he bent his course to the nearest woods, where entering in, he found a thicket, mostly of wild olives and such low trees, yet growing so intertwined and knit together that the moist wind had not leave to play through their branches, nor the sun's scorching beams to pierce their recesses, nor any shower to beat through, they grew so thick and as it were folded each in the other. Here creeping in, he made his bed of the leaves which were beginning to fall, of which was such abundance that two or three men might have spread them ample coverings, such as might shield them from the winter's rage, though the air breathed steel and blew as if it would burst.

Here creeping in, he heaped up store of leaves all about him, as a man would billets upon a winter fire, and lay down in the midst. Rich seed of virtue lying hid in poor leaves! Here Minerva soon gave him sound sleep; and here all his long toils past seemed to be concluded and shut up within the little sphere of his refreshed and closed eyelids.

V.—*The Princess Nausicaa.*

Meantime Minerva, designing an interview between the king's daughter of that country and Ulysses when he should

awake, went by night to the palace of King Alcinous, and stood at the bedside of the Princess Nausicaa in the shape of one of her favourite attendants, and thus addressed the sleeping princess,—

“Nausicaa, why do you lie sleeping here, and never bestow a thought upon your bridal ornaments, of which you have many and beautiful, laid up in your wardrobe against the day of your marriage, which cannot be far distant; when you shall have need of all, not only to deck your own person, but to give away in presents to the virgins that honouring you shall attend you to the temple?

“Your reputation stands much upon the timely care of these things; these things are they which fill father and reverend mother with delight. Let us arise betimes to wash your fair vestments of linen and silks in the river; and request your sire to lend you mules and a coach, for your wardrobe is heavy, and the place where we must wash is distant, and besides it fits not a great princess like you to go so far on foot.”

So saying she went away, and Nausicaa awoke, full of pleasing thoughts of her marriage, which the dream had told her was not far distant; and as soon as it was dawn, she arose and dressed herself and went to find her parents.

VI.—*The Washing.*

The queen her mother was already up, and seated among her maids, spinning at her wheel, as the fashion was in those primitive times, when great ladies did not disdain housewifery; and the king her father was preparing to go abroad at that early hour to council with his grave senate.

“My father,” she said, “will you not order mules and



"Alcinous readily gave consent." (See page 70.)

a coach to be got ready, that I may go and wash, I and my maids, at the cisterns that stand without the city?"

"What washing does my daughter speak of?" said Alcinous.

"Mine and my brothers' garments," she replied, "that have contracted soil by this time with lying so long in the wardrobe. Five sons have you, that are my brothers; two of them are married, and three are bachelors; these last it concerns to have their garments neat and unsoiled; it may advance their fortunes in marriage; and who but I their sister should have a care of these things? You yourself, my father, have need of the whitest apparel, when you go, as now, to the council."



She used this plea, modestly dissembling her care of her own nuptials to her father, who was not displeased at this instance of his daughter's discretion; for a seasonable care about marriage may be permitted to a young maiden, provided it be accompanied with modesty and dutiful submission to her parents in the choice of her future husband; and there was no fear of Nausicaa choosing wrongly or improperly, for she was as wise as she was beautiful, and the best in all Phæacia were suitors to her for her love.

So Alcinous readily gave consent that she should go, ordering mules and a coach to be prepared. And Nausicaa brought from her chamber all her vestments, and laid them up in the coach, and her mother placed bread and wine in the coach, and oil in a golden cruse, to soften the bright skins of Nausicaa and her maids when they came out of the river.

Nausicaa, making her maids get up into the coach with her, lashed the mules, till they brought her to the cisterns

which stood a little on the outside of the town, and were supplied with water from the river.

There her attendants unyoked the mules, took out the clothes, and steeped them in the cisterns, washing them in several waters, and afterwards treading them clean with their feet, venturing wagers who should have done soonest and cleanest, and using many pastimes to beguile their labour such as young maids use, while the princess looked on.

When they had laid their clothes to dry, they fell to playing again, and Nausicaa joined them in a game with the ball, used in that country, which is performed by tossing the ball from hand to hand with great expedition, she who begins the pastime singing a song.

It chanced that the princess, whose turn it became to toss the ball, sent it so far from its mark that it fell beyond into one of the cisterns of the river; at which the whole company, in merry consternation, set up a shriek so loud as waked the sleeping Ulysses, who was taking his rest, after his long toils, in the woods not far distant from the place where these young maids had come to wash.

VII.—*Ulysses Discovered.*

At the sound of female voices Ulysses crept forth from his retirement, making himself a covering with boughs and leaves as well as he could. The sudden appearance of his weather-beaten form so frightened the maidens that they scudded away into the woods and all about to hide themselves, only Minerva (who had brought about this interview to admirable purposes, by seemingly accidental means) put courage into the breast of Nausicaa, and she stayed where she was, and resolved to know what manner



Nausicaa.

After Lord Leighton, P.R.A.

of man he was, and what was the occasion of his strange coming to them.

He not venturing to approach and clasp her knees as suppliants should, but standing far off, addressed this speech to the young princess,—

“Before I presume rudely to press my petitions, I should first ask whether I am addressing a mortal woman or one of the goddesses. If a goddess, you seem to me to be likeliest to Diana, the maiden huntress, the daughter of Jove. Like hers are your lineaments, your stature, your features, and air divine.”

She making answer that she was no goddess, but a mortal maid, he continued,—

“If a woman, thrice blessed are both the authors of your birth, thrice blessed are your brothers, who even to rapture must have joy in your perfections, to see you grown so like a young tree, and so graceful. But most blessed of all that breathe is he that has the gift to engage your young neck in the yoke of marriage.

“I never saw that man that was worthy of you. I never saw man or woman that at all parts equalled you. Lately at Delos (where I touched) I saw a young palm which grew beside Apollo’s temple; it exceeded all the trees which ever I beheld for straightness and beauty; I can compare you only to that. A stupor past admiration strikes me, joined with fear, which keeps me back from approaching you to embrace your knees.

“Nor is it strange; for one of freshest and firmest spirit would falter, approaching near to so bright an object: but I am one whom a cruel habit of calamity has prepared to receive strong impressions. Twenty days the unrelenting seas have tossed me up and down coming from Ogygia, and

at length cast me shipwrecked last night upon your coast. I have seen no man or woman since I landed but yourself. All that I crave is clothes, which you may spare me, and to be shown the way to some neighbouring town. The gods who have care of strangers will requite you for these courtesies."

She, admiring to hear such complimentary words proceed out of the mouth of one whose appearance was so rough and unpromising, made answer: "Stranger, I discern neither sloth nor folly in you, and yet I see that you are poor and wretched; from which I gather that neither wisdom nor industry can secure felicity; only Jove bestows it upon whomsoever he pleases. He perhaps has reduced you to this plight. However, since your wanderings have brought you so near to our city, it lies in our duty to supply your wants. Clothes and what else a human hand should give to one so suppliant and so tamed with calamity you shall not lack. We will show you our city and tell you the name of our people. This is the land of the Phæacians, of which my father Alcinous is king."

Then calling her attendants, who had dispersed on the first sight of Ulysses, she rebuked them for their fear, and said: "This man is no Cyclop, nor monster of sea or land, that you should fear him; but he seems manly, staid, and discreet, and though decayed in his outward appearance, yet he has the mind's riches—wit and fortitude—in abundance. Show him the cisterns where he may wash him from the seaweeds and foam that hang about him, and let him have garments that fit him out of those which we have brought with us to the cisterns."

Ulysses, retiring a little out of sight, cleansed him in the cisterns from the soil and impurities with which the rocks

and waves had covered all his body, and clothing himself with befitting raiment, which the princess's attendants had given him, he presented himself in more worthy shape to Nausicaa. She wondered now to see what a comely personage he was. She thought him some king or hero, and secretly wished that the gods would be pleased to give her such a husband.

Then causing her attendants to yoke her mules and lay up the vestments, which the sun's heat had sufficiently dried, in the coach, she ascended with her maids, and drove off to the palace; bidding Ulysses, as she departed, keep an eye upon the coach, and to follow it on foot at some distance: which she did, because if she had suffered him to ride in the coach with her, it might have subjected her to some blame of the common people. So discreet and attentive to appearance in all her actions was this admirable princess.



VIII.—The Court of Phœacia.

Ulysses, as he entered the city, wondered to see its magnificence, its markets, buildings, temples; its walls and ramparts; its trade and resort of men; its harbours for shipping, which is the strength of the Phœacian state. But when he approached the palace, and beheld its riches, the proportion of its architecture, its avenues, gardens, statues, fountains, he stood rapt in admiration, and almost forgot his own condition in surveying the flourishing estate of others; but recollecting himself, he passed on boldly into the inner apartment, where the king and queen were sitting at dinner with their peers, Nausicaa having prepared them for his approach.

To them, humbly kneeling, he made it his request, that since fortune had cast him naked upon their shores, they would take him into their protection and grant him conveyance by one of the ships, of which their great Phæacian state had such good store, to carry him to his own country. Having delivered his request, to grace it with more humility, he went and sat himself down upon the hearth among the ashes, as the custom was in those days when any man would make a petition to the throne.

He seemed a petitioner of so great a state and of so superior a deportment that Alcinous himself arose to do him honour, and causing him to leave that abject station which he had assumed, placed him next to his throne upon a chair of state, and thus he spake to his peers,—

“Lords and counsellors of Phæacia, ye see this man, who he is we know not, that is come to us in the guise of a petitioner. He seems no mean one; but whoever he is, it is fit, since the gods have cast him upon our protection, that we grant him the rites of hospitality while he stays with us, and at his departure a ship well manned to convey so worthy a personage as he seems to be, in a manner suitable to his rank, to his own country.”

This counsel the peers with one consent approved; and wine and meat being set before Ulysses, he ate and drank, and gave the gods thanks who had stirred up the royal bounty of Alcinous to aid him in that extremity. But not as yet did he reveal to the king and queen who he was, or whence he had come; only in brief terms he related his being cast upon their shores, his sleep in the woods, and his meeting with the Princess Nausicaa; whose generosity, mingled with discretion, filled her parents with delight, as Ulysses in eloquent phrases adorned and commended her virtues.

But Alcinous, humanely considering that the troubles which his guest had undergone required rest, as well as refreshment by food, dismissed him early in the evening to his chamber; where in a magnificent apartment Ulysses found a smoother bed, but not a sounder repose, than he had enjoyed the night before, when he slept upon leaves which he had scraped together in his necessity.

CHARLES LAMB.

THE MAIDEN SACRIFICE.

[Agamemnon, king of the Argives, on one occasion vowed to Diana (Artemis) to offer up in sacrifice to her the most beautiful thing that came into his possession within the next twelve months. This was an infant daughter; but the king deferred making the offering till the child Iphigenia was full-grown. The Greek fleet on its way to Troy being wind-bound at Aulis, the prophet Calchas told Agamemnon this was because his vow had not been fulfilled, and that the maiden Iphigenia must be offered up before a favouring wind would arise.]

IPHIGENIA, when she heard her doom
 At Aulis, and when all beside the king
 Had gone away, took his right hand and said,
 "O Father! I am young and very happy.
 I do not think the pious Calchas heard
 Distinctly what the goddess spake. Old-age
 Obscures the senses. If my nurse, who knew
 My voice so well, sometimes misunderstood
 While I was resting on her knee both arms
 And hitting it to make her mind my words,
 And looking in her face, and she in mine,
 Might he not also hear one word amiss,
 Spoken so far off, even from Olympus?"

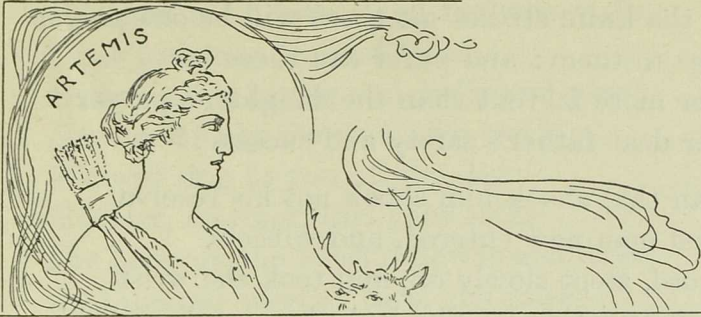
The father placed his cheek upon her head,
 And tears dropt down it, but the king of men
 Replied not. Then the maiden spake once more,

O Father ! say'st thou nothing ? Hear'st thou not
 Me, whom thou ever hast, until this hour,
 Listened to fondly, and awakened me
 To hear my voice amid the voice of birds,
 When it was inarticulate as theirs,
 And the down deadened it within the nest ?”

He moved her gently from him, silent still,
 And this, and this alone, brought tears from her,
 Although she saw fate nearer : then with sighs,
 “ I thought to have laid down my hair before
 Benignant Artemis, and not have dimmed
 Her polished altar with my virgin blood ;
 I thought to have selected the white flowers
 To please the nymphs, and to have asked of each
 By name, and with no sorrowful regret,
 Whether, since both my parents willed the change,
 I might at Hymen's feet bend my clipt brow ;
 And (after those who mind us girls the most)
 Adore our own Athena, that she would
 Regard me mildly with her azure eyes.
 But, father ! to see you no more, and see
 Your love, O Father ! go ere I am gone. . . .”

Gently he moved her off, and drew her back,
 Bending his lofty head far over hers,
 And the dark depths of nature heaved and burst.
 He turned away ; not far, but silent still.

She now first shuddered ; for in him, so nigh,
 So long a silence seemed the approach of death,
 And like it. Once again she raised her voice.
 “ O Father ! if the ships are now detained,
 And all your vows move not the gods above,



[By permission of the Berlin Photographic Co.]

Iphigenia looking out to sea.
Nonnenbruch.



When the knife strikes me there will be one prayer
 The less to them : and purer can there be
 Any, or more fervent than the daughter's prayer
 For her dear father's safety and success ?”

A groan that shook him shook not his resolve.
 An aged man now entered, and without
 One word, stept slowly on, and took the wrist
 Of the pale maiden. She looked up, and saw
 The fillet of the priest and calm cold eyes.
 Then turned she where her parent stood, and cried,
 “O Father ! grieve no more : the ships can sail.”*

W. S. LANDOR.

THE SEA-FAIRIES.

Slow sailed the weary mariners † and saw,
 Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
 Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
 To little harps of gold ; and while they mused,
 Whispering to each other half in fear,
 Shrill music reached them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away ? fly no more.
 Whither away from the high green field, and the happy blos-
 soming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls ;
 Down shower the gambolling waterfalls
 From wandering over the lea :
 Out of the live-green heart of the dells
 They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,
 And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea :

* Iphigenia was laid on the altar for sacrifice, but at the last moment Artemis interposed, carried away the victim, and substituted a hind in her place. The maiden became a priestess at the temple of Artemis in Tauris.

† Ulysses and his men, who wandered far across the sea after the fall of Troy.

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,
 Come hither to me and to me :
 Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;
 Here it is only the mew that wails ;
 We will sing to you all the day :
 Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
 For here are the blissful downs and dales,
 And merrily merrily carol the gales,
 And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
 And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
 Over the islands free ;
 And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;
 Hither, come hither and see ;
 And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
 And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,
 And sweet shall your welcome be :
 O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
 For merry brides are we :
 We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 With pleasure and love and jubilee :
 O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
 When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
 Runs up the ridgèd sea.
 Who can light on as happy a shore
 All the world o'er, all the world o'er ?
 Whither away ? listen and stay : mariner, mariner,
 fly no more.

LORD TENNYSON.



THE TALE OF PANDORA.

I.—The Playmates.

LONG, long ago, when this old world was in its tender infancy, there was a child, named Epimetheus, who never had either father or mother; and, that he might not be lonely, another child, fatherless and motherless like himself, was sent from a far country to live with him and be his play-fellow and helpmate. Her name was Pandora.

The first thing that Pandora saw when she entered the cottage where Epimetheus dwelt was a great box. And almost the first question which she put to him after crossing the threshold was this,—

“Epimetheus, what have you in that box?”

“My dear little Pandora,” answered Epimetheus, “that is a secret, and you must be kind enough not to ask any questions about it. The box was left here to be kept safely, and I do not know myself what it contains.”

“But who gave it to you?” asked Pandora. “And where did it come from?”

“That is a secret too,” replied Epimetheus.

“How provoking!” exclaimed Pandora, pouting her lip. “I wish the great ugly box were out of the way!”

“Oh, come, don’t think of it any more,” cried Epimetheus. “Let us run out of doors, and have some nice play with the other children.”

It is thousands of years since Epimetheus and Pandora were alive; and the world, nowadays, is a very different sort of place from what it was in their time. Then everybody was a child. There needed no fathers and mothers to take care of the children, because there was no danger, nor

trouble of any kind, and no clothes to be mended, and there was always plenty to eat and drink. Whenever a child wanted his dinner, he found it growing on a tree; and if he looked at the tree in the morning, he could see the expanding blossom of that night's supper; or at eventide, he saw the tender bud of to-morrow's breakfast. It was a very pleasant life indeed. No labour to be done, no tasks to be studied; nothing but sports and dances, and sweet voices of children talking, or carolling like birds, or gushing out in merry laughter, throughout the livelong day.

What was most wonderful of all, the children never quarrelled among themselves; neither had they any crying fits; nor, since time first began, had a single one of these little mortals ever gone apart into a corner and sulked. Oh, what a good time that was to be alive in! The truth is, those ugly little winged monsters, called Troubles, which are now almost as numerous as mosquitoes, had never yet been seen on earth. It is probable that the very greatest disquietude which a child had ever experienced was Pandora's vexation at not being able to discover the secret of the mysterious box.



This was at first only a faint shadow of a Trouble; but every day it grew more and more substantial, until, before a great while, the cottage of Epimetheus and Pandora was less sunshiny than those of the other children.

“Whence can the box have come?” Pandora continually kept saying to herself and to Epimetheus. “And what in the world can be inside of it?”

“Always talking about this box!” said Epimetheus at last; for he had grown extremely tired of the subject. “I wish, dear Pandora, you would try to talk of something else.”

Come, let us go and gather some ripe figs, and eat them under the trees for our supper. And I know a vine that has the sweetest and juiciest grapes you ever tasted."

"Always talking about grapes and figs!" cried Pandora pettishly.

"Well, then," said Epimetheus, who was a very good-tempered child, like a multitude of children in those days, "let us run out and have a merry time with our playmates."

"I am tired of merry times, and I don't care if I never have any more!" answered our pettish little Pandora. "And, besides, I never do have any. This ugly box! I am so taken up with thinking about it all the time. I insist upon your telling me what is inside of it."

"As I have already said, fifty times over, I do not know!" replied Epimetheus, getting a little vexed. "How, then, can I tell you what is inside?"

"You might open it," said Pandora, looking sidewise at Epimetheus, "and then we could see for ourselves."

II.—*The Wonderful Box.*

"Pandora, what are you thinking of?" exclaimed Epimetheus.

And his face expressed so much horror at the idea of looking into a box which had been confided to him on the condition of his never opening it, that Pandora thought it best not to suggest it any more. Still, however, she could not help thinking and talking about the box.

"At least," said she, "you can tell me how it came here."

"It was left at the door," replied Epimetheus, "just before you came, by a person who looked very smiling and intelligent, and who could hardly forbear laughing as he put it



"It was Quicksilver." (See page 86.)

down. He was dressed in an odd kind of a cloak, and had on a cap that seemed to be made partly of feathers, so that it looked almost as if it had wings."

"What sort of a staff had he?" asked Pandora.

"Oh, the most curious staff you ever saw!" cried Epimetheus. "It was like two serpents twisting around a stick, and was carved so naturally that I, at first, thought the serpents were alive."

"I know him," said Pandora thoughtfully. "Nobody else has such a staff. It was Quicksilver, and he brought me hither as well as the box. No doubt he intended it for me; and most probably it contains pretty dresses for me to wear, or toys for you and me to play with, or something very nice for both of us to eat!"

"Perhaps so," answered Epimetheus, turning away. "But until Quicksilver comes back and tells us so, we have neither of us any right to lift the lid of the box."

"What a dull boy he is!" said Pandora, as Epimetheus left the cottage. "I wish he had a little more enterprise!"

For the first time since her arrival Epimetheus had gone out without asking Pandora to accompany him. He went to gather figs and grapes by himself, or to seek whatever amusement he could find in other society than his little play-fellow's. He was tired to death of hearing about the box, and heartily wished that Quicksilver, or whatever was the messenger's name, had left it at some other child's door, where Pandora would have never set eyes on it. So perseveringly did she babble about this one thing! The box, the box, and nothing but the box! It seemed as if the box were bewitched, and as if the cottage were not big enough to hold it without Pandora's continually stumbling over it

and making Epimetheus stumble over it likewise, and bruising all four of their shins.

Well, it was really hard that poor Epimetheus should have a box in his ears from morning till night, especially as the little people of the earth were so unaccustomed to vexations in those happy days, that they knew not how to deal with them. Thus a small vexation made as much disturbance then as a far bigger one would do in our times.

After Epimetheus was gone, Pandora stood gazing at the box. She had called it ugly above a hundred times; but, in spite of all that she had said, it was positively a very handsome article of furniture, and would have been quite an ornament to any room in which it should be placed. It was made of a beautiful kind of wood, with dark and rich veins spreading over its surface, which was so highly polished that little Pandora could see her face in it.

As the child had no other looking-glass, it is odd that she did not value the box merely on this account.

The edges and corners of the box were carved with most wonderful skill. Around the margin there were figures of graceful men and women, and the prettiest children ever seen, reclining or sporting amid a profusion of flowers and foliage; and these objects were so exquisitely represented, and were wrought together in such harmony, that flowers, foliage, and human beings seemed to combine into a wreath of mingled beauty. But here and there, peeping forth from behind the carved foliage, Pandora once or twice fancied that she saw a face not so lovely, or something or other that was disagreeable, which stole the beauty out of all the rest. Nevertheless, on looking more closely, and touching the spot with her finger, she could discover nothing



of the kind. Some face that was really beautiful had been made to look ugly by her catching a sidewise glimpse at it.

The most beautiful face of all was done in what is called high relief, in the centre of the lid. There was nothing else save the dark, smooth richness of the polished wood, and this one face in the centre, with a garland of flowers about its brow. Pandora had looked at this face a great many times, and imagined that the mouth could smile if it liked, or be grave when it chose, the same as any living mouth. The features, indeed, all wore a very lively and rather mischievous expression, which looked almost as if it needs must burst out of the carved lips, and utter itself in words.

Had the mouth spoken, it would probably have uttered something like this:—

“Do not be afraid, Pandora! What harm can there be in opening the box? Never mind that poor, simple Epimetheus! You are wiser than he, and have ten times as much spirit. Open the box, and see if you do not find something very pretty!”

The box, I had almost forgotten to say, was fastened; not by a lock, nor by any other such contrivance, but by a very intricate knot of gold cord. There appeared to be no end to this knot, and no beginning. Never was a knot so cunningly twisted, nor with so many ins and outs, which roguishly defied the most skilful fingers to disentangle them. And yet, by the very difficulty that there was in it, Pandora was the more tempted to examine the knot and just see how it was made. Two or three times already she had stooped over the box and taken the knot between her thumb and forefinger, but without positively trying to undo it.

“I really believe,” said she to herself, “that I begin to see how it was done. Nay, perhaps I could tie it up again,

after undoing it. There would be no harm in that, surely. Even Epimetheus would not blame me for that. I need not open the box, and should not, of course, without the foolish boy's consent, even if the knot were untied."

III.—*Pandora's Curiosity.*

It might have been better for Pandora if she had had a little work to do, or anything to employ her mind upon, so as not to be constantly thinking of this one subject. But children led so easy a life before any Troubles came into the world that they had really a great deal too much leisure. They could not be for ever playing at hide-and-seek among the flower shrubs, or at blindman's buff with garlands over their eyes, or at whatever other games had been found out while mother earth was in her babyhood. When life is all sport, toil is the real play. There was absolutely nothing to do. A little sweeping and dusting about the cottage, I suppose, and the gathering of fresh flowers (which were only too abundant everywhere) and arranging them in vases—and poor little Pandora's day's work was over. And then for the rest of the day there was the box.

After all, I am not quite sure that the box was not a blessing to her in its way. It supplied her with such a variety of ideas to think of and to talk about whenever she had anybody to listen. When she was in good humour, she could admire the bright polish of its sides and the rich border of beautiful faces and foliage that ran all around it. Or, if she chanced to be ill-tempered, she could give it a push, or kick it with her naughty little foot. And many a kick did the box—but it was a mischievous box, as we shall see, and deserved all it got—many a kick did it receive.

But certain it is, if it had not been for the box, our active-minded little Pandora would not have known half so well how to spend her time as she now did.

For it was really an endless employment to guess what was inside. What could it be, indeed? Just imagine, my little hearers, how busy your wits would be if there were a great box in the house which, as you might have reason to suppose, contained something new and pretty for your Christmas or New Year's gifts. Do you think you should be less curious than Pandora? If you were left alone with the box, might you not feel a little tempted to lift the lid? But you would not do it. Oh, fie! No, no! Only, if you thought there were toys in it, it would be so very hard to let slip an opportunity of taking just one peep. I know not whether Pandora expected any toys; for none had yet begun to be made, probably, in those days, when the world itself was one great plaything for the children that dwelt upon it. But Pandora was convinced that there was something very beautiful and valuable in the box, and therefore she felt just as anxious to take a peep as any of the little girls who read her story would have felt. And possibly a little more so, but of that I am not quite so certain.

On this particular day, however, which we have been so long talking about, her curiosity grew so much greater than it usually was that at last she approached the box. She was more than half determined to open it, if she could. Ah, naughty Pandora!

First, however, she tried to lift it. It was heavy, quite too heavy for the slender strength of a child like Pandora. She raised one end of the box a few inches from the floor, and let it fall again with a pretty loud thump. A moment afterwards she almost fancied she heard something stir in-

side the box. She applied her ear as closely as possible, and listened. Positively, there did seem to be a kind of stifled murmur within! Or could it be the beating of her heart? The child could not quite satisfy herself whether she had heard anything or not. But, at all events, her curiosity was stronger than ever.

As she drew back her head her eyes fell upon the knot of gold cord.

“It must have been a very ingenious person who tied this knot,” said Pandora to herself. “But I think I could untie it, nevertheless. I am resolved at least to find the two ends of the cord.”

So she took the golden knot in her fingers and pried into its intricacies as sharply as she could. Almost without intending it, or quite knowing what she was about, she was soon busily engaged in attempting to undo it. Meanwhile the bright sunshine came through the open window, as did likewise the merry voices of the children playing at a distance, and perhaps the voice of Epimetheus among them. Pandora stopped to listen. What a beautiful day it was! Would it not be wiser if she were to let the troublesome knot alone, and think no more about the box, but run and join her little playfellows and be happy?

All this time, however, her fingers were half unconsciously busy with the knot; and happening to glance at the flower-wreathed face on the lid of the enchanted box, she seemed to perceive it slyly grinning at her.

“That face looks very mischievous,” thought Pandora. “I wonder whether it smiles because I am doing wrong. I have the greatest mind in the world to run away.”

But just then, by the merest accident, she gave the knot



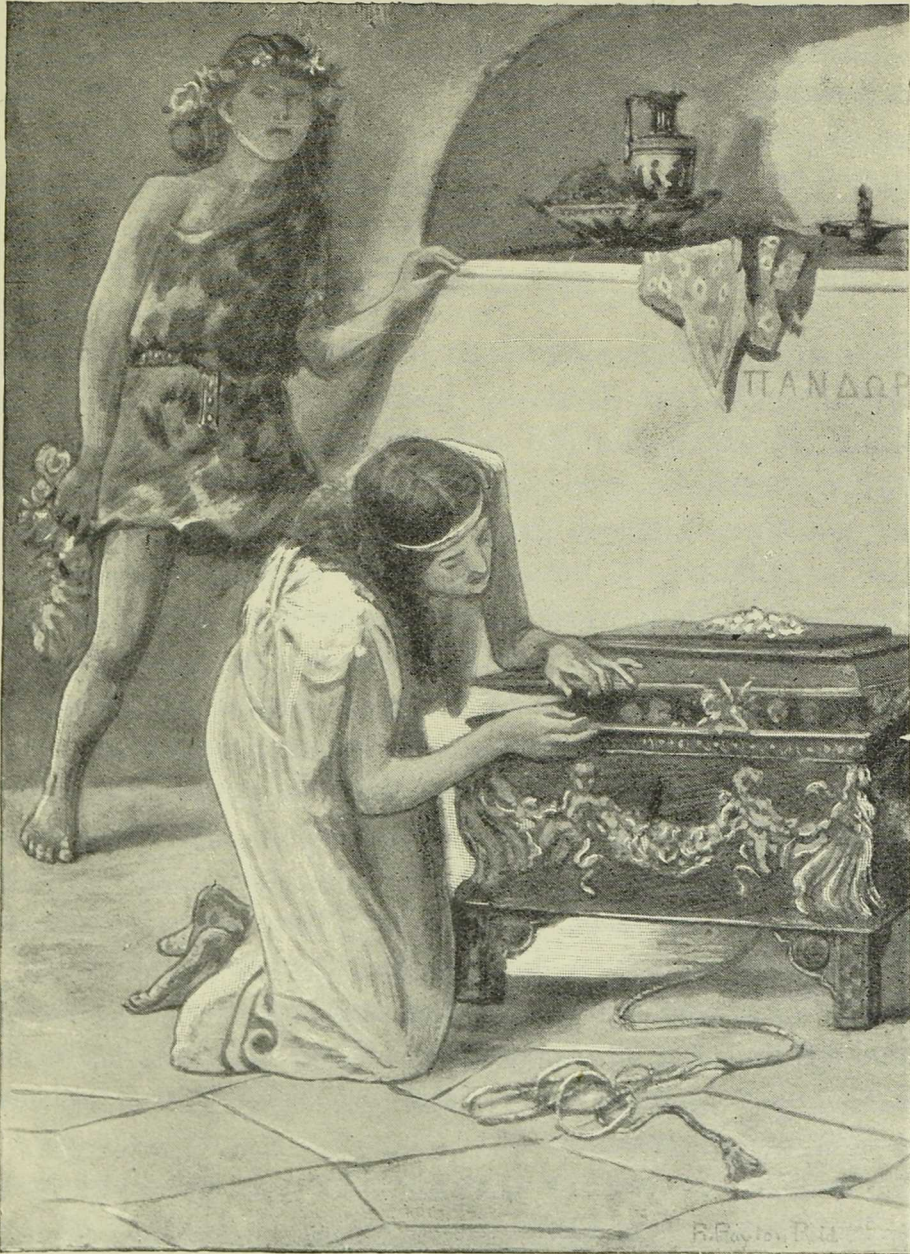
a kind of twist, which produced a wonderful result. The gold cord untwined itself as if by magic, and left the box without a fastening.

“This is the strangest thing I ever knew!” said Pandora. “What will Epimetheus say? And how can I possibly tie it up again?”

She made one or two attempts to restore the knot, but soon found it quite beyond her skill. It had disentangled itself so suddenly that she could not in the least remember how the strings had been doubled into one another; and when she tried to recollect the shape and appearance of the knot, it seemed to have gone entirely out of her mind. Nothing was to be done, therefore, but to let the box remain as it was until Epimetheus should come in.

“But,” said Pandora. “when he finds the knot untied, he will know that I have done it. How shall I make him believe that I have not looked into the box?”

And then the thought came into her naughty little heart that, since she would be suspected of having looked into the box, she might just as well do so at once. Oh, very naughty and very foolish Pandora! You should have thought only of doing what was right, and of leaving undone what was wrong, and not of what your playfellow Epimetheus would have said or believed. And so perhaps she might, if the enchanted face on the lid of the box had not looked so bewitchingly persuasive at her, and if she had not seemed to hear, more distinctly than before, the murmur of small voices within. She could not tell whether it was fancy or not; but there was quite a tumult of whispers in her ear, or else it was her curiosity that whispered, “Let us out, dear Pandora; pray let us out! We will be such nice pretty playfellows for you! Only let us out!”



Pandora and the Mysterious Box.
(From a drawing by R. Payton Reid.)

“What can it be?” thought Pandora. “Is there something alive in the box? Well, yes! I am resolved to take just one peep! Only one peep! and then the lid shall be shut down as safely as ever. There cannot possibly be any harm in just one little peep!”

But it is now time for us to see what Epimetheus was doing.

IV.—Epimetheus Returns.

This was the first time since his little playmate had come to dwell with him that he had attempted to enjoy any pleasure in which she did not partake. But nothing went right; nor was he nearly so happy as on other days. He could not find a sweet grape or a ripe fig (if Epimetheus had a fault, it was a little too much fondness for figs); or, if ripe at all, they were over ripe, and so sweet as to be cloying. There was no mirth in his heart, such as usually made his voice gush out of its own accord and swell the merriment of his companions. In short, he grew so uneasy and discontented that the other children could not imagine what was the matter with Epimetheus. Neither did he himself know what ailed him any better than they did. For you must recollect that, at the time we are speaking of, it was everybody's nature and constant habit to be happy. The world had not yet learned to be otherwise. Not a single soul or body since these children were first sent to enjoy themselves on the beautiful earth had ever been sick or out of sorts.

At length, discovering that somehow or other he put a stop to all the play, Epimetheus judged it best to go back to Pandora, who was in a humour better suited to his own. But, with a hope of giving her pleasure, he gathered some

flowers and made them into a wreath, which he meant to put upon her head. The flowers were very lovely—roses and lilies and orange blossoms, and a great many more, which left a trail of fragrance behind as Epimetheus carried them along; and the wreath was put together with as much skill as could reasonably be expected of a boy. The fingers of little girls, it has always appeared to me, are the fittest to twine flower wreaths; but boys could do it in those days rather better than they can now.

And here I must mention that a great black cloud had been gathering in the sky for some time past, although it had not yet overspread the sun. But just as Epimetheus reached the cottage door this cloud began to intercept the sunshine, and thus to make a sudden and sad obscurity.

He entered softly; for he meant, if possible, to steal behind Pandora and fling the wreath of flowers over her head before she should be aware of his approach. But, as it happened, there was no need of his treading so very lightly. He might have trod as heavily as he pleased—as heavily as a grown man—as heavily, I was going to say, as an elephant—without much probability of Pandora's hearing his footsteps. She was too intent upon her purpose. At the moment of his entering the cottage, the naughty child had put her hand to the lid, and was on the point of opening the mysterious box. Epimetheus beheld her. If he had cried out, Pandora would have probably withdrawn her hand, and the fatal mystery of the box might never have been known.



But Epimetheus himself, although he said very little about it, had his own share of curiosity to know what was inside. Perceiving that Pandora was resolved to find out the secret,

he determined that his playfellow should not be the only wise person in the cottage. And if there were anything pretty or valuable in the box, he meant to take half of it to himself. Thus, after all his sage speeches to Pandora about restraining her curiosity, Epimetheus turned out to be quite as foolish and nearly as much in fault as she. So whenever we blame Pandora for what happened, we must not forget to shake our heads at Epimetheus likewise.

As Pandora raised the lid the cottage grew very dark and dismal; for the black cloud had now swept quite over the sun, and seemed to have buried it alive. There had for a little while past been a low growling and muttering, which all at once broke into a heavy peal of thunder. But Pandora, heeding nothing of all this, lifted the lid nearly upright and looked inside. It seemed as if a sudden swarm of winged creatures brushed past her, taking flight out of the box, while at the same instant she heard the voice of Epimetheus, with a lamentable tone, as if he were in pain.

“Oh, I am stung!” cried he. “I am stung! Naughty Pandora! why have you opened this wicked box?”

V.—The Contents of the Box.

Pandora let fall the lid, and, starting up, looked about her to see what had befallen Epimetheus. The thunder cloud had so darkened the room that she could not very clearly discern what was in it; but she heard a disagreeable buzzing, as if a great many huge flies or gigantic mosquitoes were darting about. And as her eyes grew more accustomed to the imperfect light, she saw a crowd of ugly little shapes with bats' wings, looking abominably spiteful, and armed with terribly long stings in their tails. It was one of these

that had stung Epimetheus. Nor was it a great while before Pandora herself began to scream, in no less pain and affright than her playfellow, and making a vast deal more hubbub about it. An odious little monster had settled on her forehead, and would have stung her, I know not how deeply, if Epimetheus had not run and brushed it away.

Now, if you wish to know what these ugly things might be which had made their escape out of the box, I must tell you they were the whole family of earthly Troubles. There were evil Passions; there were a great many species of Cares; there were more than a hundred and fifty Sorrows; there were Diseases, in a vast number of miserable and painful shapes; there were more kinds of Naughtiness than it would be of any use to talk about. In short, everything that has since afflicted the souls and bodies of mankind had been shut up in the mysterious box, and given to Epimetheus and Pandora to keep safely, in order that the happy children of the world might never be molested by them. Had they been faithful to their trust, all would have gone well; no grown person would ever have been sad, nor any child have had cause to shed a single tear from that hour until this moment.

But—and you may see by this how a wrong act of any one mortal is a calamity to the whole world—by Pandora's lifting the lid of that miserable box, and by the fault of Epimetheus, too, in not preventing her, these Troubles have obtained a foothold among us, and do not seem very likely to be driven away in a hurry. For it was impossible, as you will easily guess, that the two children should keep the ugly swarm in their cottage. On the contrary, the first thing that they did was to fling open the doors and windows in hopes of getting rid of them; and, sure enough, away flew the

winged Troubles all abroad, and so pestered and tormented the small people everywhere about that none of them so much as smiled for many days afterward. And what was very singular, all the flowers and dewy blossoms on earth, not one of which had hitherto faded, now began to droop and shed their leaves after a day or two. The children, moreover, who before seemed immortal in their childhood, now grew older day by day, and came soon to be youths and maidens, and men and women by-and-by, and aged people before they dreamed of such a thing.

Meanwhile the naughty Pandora, and hardly less naughty Epimetheus, remained in their cottage. Both of them had been grievously stung, and were in a good deal of pain, which seemed the more intolerable to them because it was the very first pain that had ever been felt since the world began. Of course, they were entirely unaccustomed to it, and could have no idea what it meant except that it hurt. Besides all this, they were in exceedingly bad humour, both with themselves and with one another. In order to indulge it to the utmost, Epimetheus sat down sullenly in a corner with his back towards Pandora; while Pandora flung herself upon the floor, and rested her head on the abominable box, sobbing as if her heart would break.

VI.—*The Coming of Hope.*

Suddenly there was a gentle little tap on the inside of the lid.

“What can that be?” cried Pandora, lifting her head.

But either Epimetheus had not heard the tap, or was too much out of humour to notice it. At any rate he made no answer.

“You are very unkind,” said Pandora, sobbing anew, “not to speak to me!”

Again the tap. It sounded like the tiny knuckles of a fairy’s hand knocking lightly and playfully on the inside of the box.



“A smiling little personage hovered about the room.” (See page 101.)

(From a drawing by R. Payton Reid.)

“Who are you?” asked Pandora, with a little of her former curiosity; “who are you inside of this naughty box?”

A sweet little voice spoke from within, “Only lift the lid and you shall see.”

“No, no,” answered Pandora, again beginning to sob; “I have had enough of lifting the lid. You are inside of the box, naughty creature, and there you shall stay! There are plenty of your ugly brothers and sisters already flying about

the world. You need never think I shall be so foolish as to let you out!"

She looked towards Epimetheus as she spoke, perhaps expecting that he would commend her for her wisdom. But the sullen boy only muttered that she was wise a little too late.

"Ah," said the sweet little voice again, "you had much better let me out. I am not like those naughty creatures that have stings in their tails. They are no brothers and sisters of mine, as you would see at once if you were only to get a glimpse of me. Come, come, my pretty Pandora! I am sure you will let me out!"

And, indeed, there was a kind of cheerful witchery in the tone that made it almost impossible to refuse anything which this little voice asked. Pandora's heart had insensibly grown lighter at every word that came from within the box. Epimetheus, too, though still in the corner, had turned half around, and seemed to be in rather better spirits than before.

"My dear Epimetheus," cried Pandora, "have you heard this little voice?"

"Yes, to be sure I have," answered he, but in no very good humour as yet; "and what of it?"

"Shall I lift the lid again?" asked Pandora.

"Just as you please," said Epimetheus; "you have done so much mischief already that perhaps you may as well do a little more. One other Trouble, in such a swarm as you have set adrift about the world, can make no very great difference."

"You might speak a little more kindly," murmured Pandora, wiping her eyes.

"Ah, naughty boy!" cried the little voice within the box in an arch and laughing tone. "He knows he is longing to

see me. Come, my dear Pandora, lift up the lid. I am in a great hurry to comfort you. Only let me have some fresh air, and you shall soon see that matters are not quite so dismal as you think them."

"Epimetheus," exclaimed Pandora, "come what may, I am resolved to open the box!"

"And as the lid seems very heavy, I will help you," cried Epimetheus, running across the room.

So with one consent the two children again lifted the lid. Out flew a sunny and smiling little personage, and hovered about the room, throwing a light wherever she went. Have you never made the sunshine dance into dark corners by reflecting it from a bit of looking-glass? Well, so looked the winged cheerfulness of this fairy-like stranger amid the gloom of the cottage. She flew to Epimetheus, and laid the least touch of her finger on the inflamed spot where the Trouble had stung him, and immediately the anguish of it was gone. Then she kissed Pandora on the forehead, and her hurt was cured likewise.

After performing these good offices, the bright stranger fluttered sportively over the children's heads, and looked so sweetly at them that they both began to think it not so very much amiss to have opened the box, since otherwise their cheery guest must have been kept a prisoner among those naughty imps with stings in their tails.

"Pray, who are you, beautiful creature?" inquired Pandora.

"I am to be called Hope!" answered the sunshiny figure. "And because I am such a cheery little body, I was packed into the box to make amends to the human race for that swarm of ugly Troubles which was destined to be let loose



among them. Never fear, we shall do pretty well in spite of them all."

"Your wings are coloured like the rainbow!" exclaimed Pandora. "How very beautiful!"

"Yes, they are like the rainbow," said Hope, "because, glad as my nature is, I am partly made of tears as well as smiles."

"And will you stay with us," asked Epimetheus, "for ever and ever?"

"As long as you need me," said Hope, with her pleasant smile—"and that will be as long as you live in the world—I promise never to desert you. There may come times and seasons now and then when you will think I have utterly vanished. But again, and again, and again, when perhaps you least dream of it, you shall see the glimmer of my wings on the ceiling of your cottage. Yes, my dear children, and I know something very good and beautiful that is to be given you hereafter."

"Oh, tell us," they exclaimed; "tell us what it is!"

"Do not ask me," replied Hope, putting her finger on her rosy mouth. "But do not despair, even if it should never happen while you live on this earth. Trust in my promise, for it is true."

And so they did; and not only they, but so has everybody trusted Hope that has since been alive. And to tell you the truth, I cannot help being glad—though to be sure it was an uncommonly naughty thing for her to do—but I cannot help being glad that our foolish Pandora peeped into the box. No doubt—no doubt—the Troubles are still flying about the world, and have increased in multitude rather than lessened, and are a very ugly set of imps, and carry most venomous stings in their tails. I have felt them already,

and expect to feel them more as I grow older. But then that lovely and lightsome little figure of Hope! What in the world could we do without her? Hope spiritualizes the earth; Hope makes it always new; and, even in the earth's best and brightest aspect, Hope shows it to be only the shadow of an infinite bliss hereafter.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE.

PERSEPHONE.

I.

SHE stepped upon Sicilian grass,
 Demeter's daughter, fresh and fair;
 A child of light, a radiant lass,
 And gamesome as the morning air.
 The daffodils were fair to see,
 They nodded lightly on the lea,
 Persephone—Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth
 Than orchis or anemone;
 For it the maiden left them both,
 And parted from her company.
 Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,
 And stooped to gather by the rill
 The daffodil, the daffodil.

What ailed the meadow that it shook?
 What ailed the air of Sicily?
 She wandered by the brattling brook,
 And trembled with the trembling lea.
 "The coal-black horses rise—they rise:
 O Mother, Mother!" low she cries—
 Persephone—Persephone!



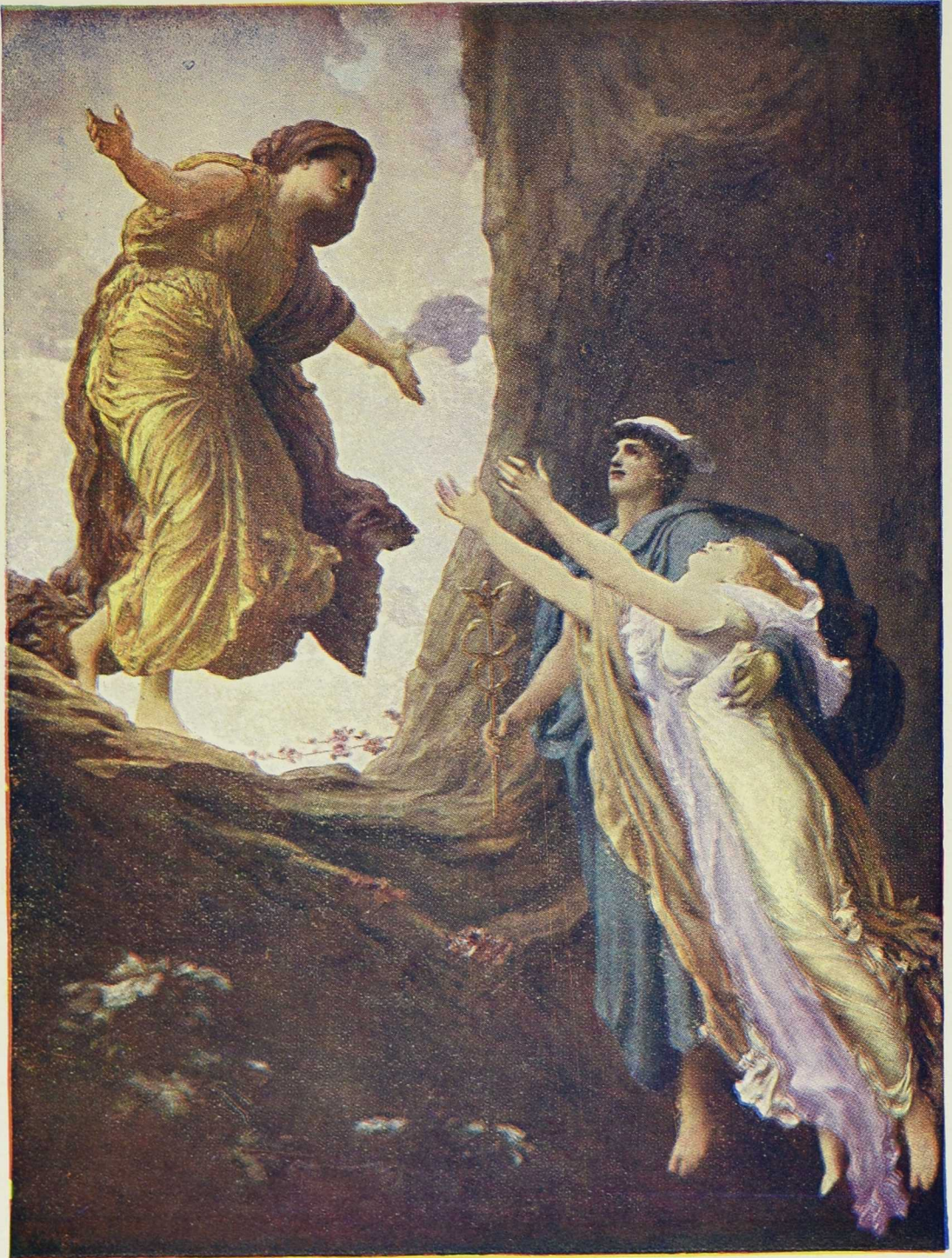
“O light, light, light!” she cries, “farewell;
 The coal-black horses wait for me.
 O shade of shades, where I must dwell,
 Demeter, Mother, far from thee!
 Ah, fated doom that I fulfil!
 Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!
 The daffodil, the daffodil!”

What ails her that she comes not home?
 Demeter seeks her far and wide,
 And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam
 From many a morn till eventide.
 “My life, immortal though it be,
 Is nought,” she cries, “for want of thee,
 Persephone—Persephone!”

“Meadows of Enna, let the rain
 No longer drop to feed your rills,
 Nor dew refresh the fields again,
 With all their nodding daffodils!
 Fade, fade and droop, O liliated lea,
 Where thou, dear heart, wast reft from me—
 Persephone—Persephone!”

II.

She reigns upon her dusky throne,
 'Mid shades of heroes dread to see;
 Among the dead she breathes alone,
 Persephone—Persephone!
 Or seated on the Elysian hill
 She dreams of earthly daylight still,
 And murmurs of the daffodil.



(1,340)

The Return of Persephone.
Sir F. Leighton, P.R.A.

7*

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,
 The shadows mourn and flit below ;
 It cries—"Thou Lord of Hades, hear,
 And let Demeter's daughter go.
 The tender corn upon the lea
 Droops in her golden gloom when she
 Cries for her lost Persephone.

"From land to land she raging flies,
 The green fruit falleth in her wake,
 And harvest fields beneath her eyes
 To earth the grain unripened shake.
 Arise and set the maiden free ;
 Why should the world such sorrow dree
 By reason of Persephone ?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds,
 "Love, eat with me this parting day ;"
 Then bids them fetch the coal-black steed—
 Demeter's daughter, wouldst away ?
 The gates of Hades set her free ;
 "She will return full soon," saith he—
 "My wife, my wife Persephone."

Low laughs the dark king on his throne—
 "I gave her of pomegranate seeds ;"
 Demeter's daughter stands alone
 Upon the fair Eleusian meads.
 Her mother meets her. "Hail !" saith she ;
 "And doth our daylight dazzle thee,
 My love, my child, Persephone ?"

"What moved thee, daughter, to forsake
 Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn,
 And give thy dark lord power to take
 Thee living to his realm forlorn ?"

Her lips reply without her will,
 As one addressed who slumbereth still—
 ‘The daffodil, the daffodil!’

Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,
 And sunny wafts that round her stir,
 Her cheek is on her mother’s breast,
 Demeter’s kisses comfort her.
 Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she
 Who stepped so lightly on the lea—
 Persephone, Persephone?

* * * *

Demeter sighs, but sure ’tis well
 The wife should love her destiny ;
 They part, and yet, as legends tell,
 She mourns her lost Persephone ;
 While chant the maids of Enna still—
 “O fateful flower, beside the rill—
 The daffodil, the daffodil!”

JEAN INGELOW

THE SHEPHERD OF KING ADMETUS.

THERE came a youth upon the earth,
 Some thousand years ago,
 Whose slender hands were nothing worth,
 Whether to plough, or reap, or sow.

Upon an empty tortoise-shell
 He stretched some cords, and drew
 Music that bade men’s bosoms swell
 Fearless, or brimmed their eyes with dew.



Then King Admetus, one who had
 Pure taste by right divine,
 Decreed his singing not too bad
 To hear between the cups of wine :

And so, well pleased with being soothed,
 Into a sweet half-sleep,
 Three times his kingly beard he smoothed,
 And made him viceroy o'er his sheep.

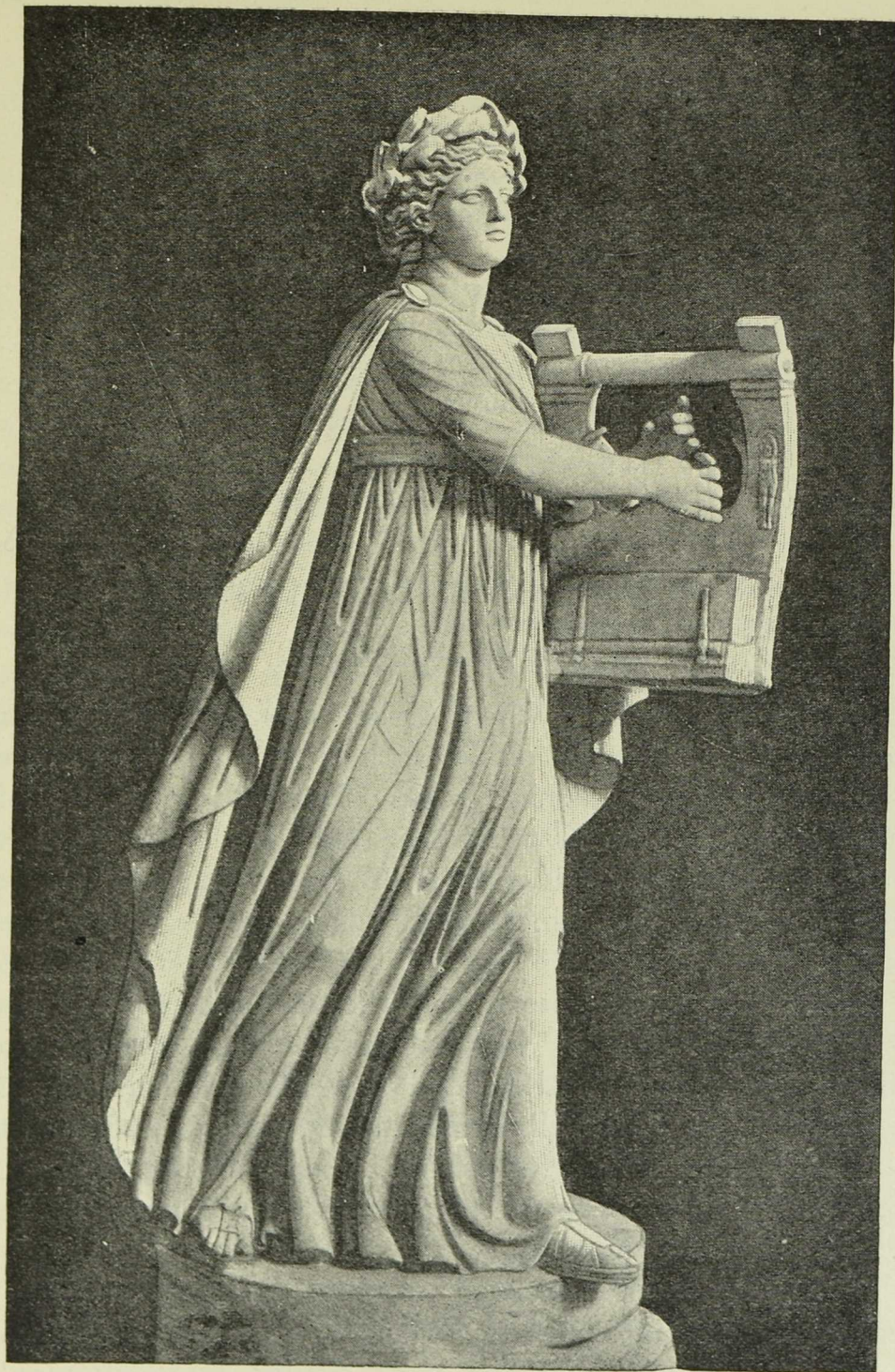
His words were simple words enough,
 And yet he used them so,
 That what in other mouths was rough
 In his seemed musical and low.

Men called him but a shiftless youth.
 In whom no good they saw ;
 And yet, unwittingly in truth,
 They made his careless words their law.

They knew not how he learned at all,
 For idly hour by hour
 He sat and watched the dead leaves fall,
 Or mused upon a common flower.

It seemed the loveliness of things
 Did teach him all their use,
 For in mere weeds, and stones, and springs,
 He found a healing power profuse.

Men granted that his speech was wise,
 But when a glance they caught
 Of his slim grace and woman's eyes,
 They laughed, and called him good-for-naught.



Apollo with his Lyre.
(From the sculpture in the Vatican.)

Yet after he was dead and gone
 And e'en his memory dim,
 Earth seemed more sweet to live upon,
 More full of love because of him.

And day by day more holy grew
 Each spot where he had trod,
 Till after-poets only knew
 Their first-born brother was a god.

J. R. LOWELL.

TRISTRAM AND ISEULT.

I.—Iseult of Ireland.

LONG ago, at the time when Arthur was King of Britain, there lived at the court of her father, the King of Ireland, a beautiful princess named Iseult. Her hair was of a soft blue-black, and her eyes were deep gray in colour; and she was renowned far and wide as being the most beautiful lady in all that land, where the women were renowned for beauty.

Iseult had many suitors, and the one accepted for her by her father the king was a certain prince named Marc, who was the most wealthy and powerful of them all, for he was King of Cornwall, which was at that time a separate country. So it was arranged that Iseult should leave her home in the green isle of her birth, and sail over the sea to be the bride of King Marc.

At the court of Cornwall at this time there lived a nephew of the king's named Tristram, who was the bravest of all the knights, and the most skilled in every manly

exercise; and Tristram was chosen by King Marc to go over the sea to Ireland and escort his bride, the Princess Iseult, to Cornwall.

In due time Tristram arrived at the Irish court, and the Princess Iseult bade a sorrowful farewell to her father and her mother, and to her dear native land. Then she and her attendant maidens set sail with Tristram for the new land of which she was to be queen. They sailed in a magnificent ship, gaily painted and bright with gold in honour of the bride, and when the first pain of parting was over, Iseult began to look forward with happy anticipation to the new life before her. All went well as the vessel glided over the sparkling waters, but before it reached the coast whither it was bound a strange thing happened to the princess and her attendant knight, which changed the whole of their future lives and brought deep sorrow to either heart.

The vessel made but slow progress, for the weather was fair and there was little wind to waft them on; and at last, off the coast of Wales, they were quite becalmed. Not the least breath of air stirred the sails which hung loosely and idly from the mast, and the princess began to grow somewhat weary of the sea.

As the ship lay motionless on the smooth water, with the bright sun shining from the cloudless May sky, Iseult gazed longingly over the dazzling expanse of water to the fresh green fields and hills which were near enough to be visible in all their spring beauty. But it was not possible for a princess bound for the Cornish court to land in the country of another king, and she could do nothing but wait for a friendly breeze to come and speed the vessel on its way.

And now, to beguile the weary time of waiting, Iseult sent for the brave young knight who was escorting her, and together they sought to pass the time in pleasant talk. It was at this point that the misfortune of which I am about to tell overtook them.

When Iseult was about to start on her journey, her mother, the Irish queen, had confided to a faithful attendant who was to accompany the princess a wonderful draught which had magic properties; for it formed what was known in those days as a love-potion, and it had the power of making any man and maiden who drank of it fall in love with each other. The queen gave the most careful instructions that this draught was to be given to the princess as soon as she was married to King Marc, the queen's object, of course, being to cause Iseult to fall in love with her own husband. It would have been a good plan if all had worked out as intended, for Iseult had never seen her future husband, and she could hardly have been in love with him beforehand. But things did not work out as the mother queen had planned. Indeed, by a most unlucky mischance, they all worked out in a quite different manner.

How it came about I do not know. But by some accident the magic draught was poured into a beautiful golden cup which stood on a bench at the princess's side. And now, as she talked and jested with Tristram, it suddenly occurred to her to pledge him out of this cup. So, still laughing and jesting, Tristram and Iseult each drank a deep draught of the love-potion, and each fell in love with the other at once and for all their lives. From that moment the happiness of both was at an end. It was too late, of course, for Iseult to take back her word, and she was obliged to fulfil her promise and marry the King of Cornwall; and so

she was as unhappy as people are likely to be when they marry without love, and have to be always pretending what they do not really feel.

II.—*Iseult of Brittany.*

Iseult acted her part well, wearing her honours with queenly dignity, and striving to hide the aching of her heart under a constant gaiety of mien; but it cost her much to do this. As for Tristram, he found it impossible to hide the great love that he felt for the queen, and at last King Marc found it out; and this made the monarch so angry and jealous that Tristram was in danger of his life, and had to escape secretly from the court.

He wandered far and wide, and had many strange and wonderful adventures, as brave knights always had in those days when the world was young and full of unknown marvels. After a long time he arrived, weary and wounded, at the castle of the King of Brittany in France. This king had a lovely daughter who, by a curious coincidence, bore the same name as that of the Queen of Cornwall, though to distinguish the one from the other she is known as Iseult of Brittany, or Iseult of the White Hands. She was very unlike the other Iseult in appearance, though both were beautiful; for her hair, instead of being black, was of a bright gold, and her eyes were a clear blue.

But she resembled the Cornish Queen in one other respect besides her name, and that was in her love for Tristram. When he arrived ill and weary at her father's court, it was she who nursed him back to health. It was her far-famed white hands which smoothed his pillow and handed him his healing draught. And Tristram was touched by all this

gentle care, and grew very fond of the sweet princess; and when he was strong again he married her.

They dwelt together by the wild coast of her native land, and spent many an hour wandering on the shore where the great breakers of the Atlantic swept with muffled roar up the firm yellow sands, or strolling through long summer days in the deep forest glades inland. Husband and wife were happy in each other's company, with their faithful hound by their side; and both preferred these calm delights to the excitement of the chase in which the other knights and ladies of the court would often share. So for a time Tristram seemed to forget his old sorrow.



But it was only for a time. Once more the old pain awoke, and he felt that to allay it he must go forth into the world and try to forget the past. So he bade farewell for a time to his wife, and went off to the wars. He travelled a long way, for he left France and crossed the Alps into Italy, where war was at that time raging; and there he fought valiantly and well, like the brave knight that he was; while in Brittany, Iseult, with her two children at her side, grew pale with watching the distant seas for the sign of his returning sails. He came back at last—back to the place where he had so long enjoyed the quiet delights of home, and to the loving care of his wife, which he needed sorely now; for it was as a dying man that he came back.





"It was she who nursed him back to health." (See page 113.)

III.—The Sick Knight.

One stormy winter night Tristram lay on his bed weak and weary, listening to the roaring waves and driving sleet without. By his side was his faithful page, and before the fire stood his wife Iseult, watching him with sad and anxious eyes. Now and again the sick man fell into an uneasy sleep, and dreams from his past life came over him. Again he fancied that he was sailing over the waters with the dark-haired Iseult of Ireland by his side; again he saw her offer him the fatal pledge which had destroyed their happiness. Then the scene would change, and he was in the thick of the battle, charging fiercely the ranks of the enemy, but conscious even then of the fair face graven for ever on his memory. Then suddenly he awoke and saw his gentle wife bending over him, her eyes dim with sorrow. And his tenderness for her overcame him, and he bade her watch no longer, since the fever had left him for the time, and he wished her to go and take the rest she so sorely needed. So Iseult went to her own chamber.

It was with a heavy heart that she left her beloved lord; but she had one consolation left her, even though she knew the time would soon come when they would have to part for ever in this world. In a distant part of the castle, sheltered from the sounds of the storm outside, as their young lives were protected from those other storms which beat round the lives of men and women, the two children of Tristram and Iseult lay sleeping. The clear moonlight flooded their chamber, making the place almost as light as day. It shone on the white walls, and



on the snowy pillows, and on the two little sleeping heads with their close-fitting caps, which permitted only a stray lock or two of their bright golden hair to be seen.

Very still lay the two tiny figures, wrapt in the deep sleep of childhood, but one little dimpled hand which rested outside the coverlet began to clasp and unclasp, as if the baby dreamer were busy again in her sleep at the sport of chasing butterflies. Meanwhile the storm had sunk, and if the little ones had awakened and looked forth from the windows, the sight outside would surely have lured them to their favourite haunts, which were even more beautiful now than when they frolicked there by day.

For in the soft moonlight the boughs of the giant trees in the forest glades shone silvery white, and on their leaves sparkled, like countless jewels, the half-frozen raindrops. Far away on the one hand spread wild mysterious stretches of open heath; and on the other lay the most tempting little inlets of the sea, where the water slumbered in deep pools filled with wonderful unseen treasures; farther away still, the smooth sands, wet with the recent tide, spread glimmering in the white moonlight. But the little ones slept on, and they did well, for not even the fair prospect without was so fair as their innocent dreams.

Meanwhile, in contrast to this scene of quiet peace, voices eager and anxious were now heard without; and inside the castle precincts lights and hurrying footsteps broke the darkness and the silence of the night.

Can you imagine who had arrived at this late hour, whose hushed and anxious voice it was that asked with tragic eagerness for news, as the great gates of the castle opened to let the travellers in? It was no other than Iseult, the Cornish queen, who had crossed the many miles of sea

between her home and that of Tristram in order to see him once more before he died.

Some time before, when Tristram had felt himself smitten with mortal sickness, he had sent a trusted messenger to Cornwall to tell Queen Iseult, and to ask her to grant him this one favour ere he died; but he had hardly expected that she would come. And now, as time had gone by and brought him no answering message, he had given up all hope that his heart's wish would be granted to him.

But Iseult had not been heedless of his prayer; she had only been waiting for an opportunity to escape from the court whose gaiety fell with such painful discord on her heart, and to come to the man whom she still loved. And now, weary and travel-stained as she was, she sought at once the sick-chamber, and Tristram's weary eyes now beheld her once more.

Some of her early beauty had left her, and she was pale and worn by the toils of her voyage and the years of heart-sickness which had passed. But as she stood before him in the pale moonlight, Tristram thought that she had never been more fair. They had much to say to each other, but Tristram was too weak to speak for long. He begged Iseult to stay near him; and she, in her turn, promised that she would be his nurse and never leave him more. And now, as he felt his end coming nearer, Tristram bade Iseult seek his wife—that other Iseult—for he wished these two women who both loved him so well to learn to love each other and to be friends; and he hoped that when he was gone they would live together and be a comfort one to the other. But though Iseult was ready to grant anything that he asked from her, this meeting was not to be; for ere she could go to do his bidding, the

queen saw a sudden change come over Tristram, and in a moment he was dead. And as he passed away, her own heart was so wrung with grief that she flung herself on her knees by his bedside; and while she knelt thus, with her arms outstretched over his lifeless body, she too died of a broken heart.

So, though in life they had been separated, in death these lovers were not divided. For their bodies were taken back to Cornwall, and there King Marc buried them with great honour in a chapel of his own.

MORTE D'ARTHUR.

So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea ;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur : then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
On one side lay the ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.
Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :
“ The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,

Walking about the gardens and the halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I made,—
 Though Merlin sware that I should come again
 To rule once more—but let what will be, be ;
 I am so deeply smitten through the helm
 That without help I cannot last till morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
 Which was my pride : for thou rememberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
 Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
 Holding the sword—and how I rowed across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a king :
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known :
 But now delay not : take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle mere :
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word.”

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten through the helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word.”

So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept
 And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
 By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,

Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt .
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled, as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw : but at the last it seemed
Better to leave Excalibur concealed
There in the many-knotted waterflags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere :

“Hast thou performed my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?”

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

“I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag.”

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale :

“Thou hast betrayed thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseemed
Thy féalty, nor like a noble knight :
For surer sign had followed, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word.”

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixed in thought,
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud.

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
 Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
 Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,
 Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
 What good should follow this, if this were done?
 What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,
 Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
 Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
 An act unprofitable, against himself?
 The king is sick, and knows not what he does.
 What record, or what relic of my lord
 Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
 And rumours of a doubt? but were this kept,
 Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
 Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
 Saying, 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
 Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake.
 Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
 Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
 So might some old man speak in the aftertime
 To all the people, winning reverence.
 But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
 And hid Excalibur the second time.
 And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spake King Arthur, breathing heavily :

"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
 And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath :

"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
 Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
 Authority forgets a dying king,

Laid widowed of the power in his eye
That bowed the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt,
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence :
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush-beds, and clutched the sword,
And strongly wheeled and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirled in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the northern sea.
So flashed and fell the brand Excalibur :
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath :
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out : what is it thou hast heard, or seen ?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere :
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not though I live three lives of mortal men,

*“So like a
shattered
column*



*lay the
king.”*
(See page 126.)



So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him
But when I looked again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandished him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard :
"My end draws nigh ; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin ; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded through his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words ;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising, bore him through the place of tombs.

But, as he walked, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sighed the king,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick !
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walked
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—
And on a sudden, lo! the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them ; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream—by these
Three queens with crowns of gold—and from them rose
A cry that shivered to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind, that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmured Arthur, "Place me in the barge,"
And to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the king, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shattered casque, and chafed his hands,
And called him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood : for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the withered moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east ;
And all his greaves and cuisses dashed with drops
Of onset ; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne—were parched with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixed with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shattered column lay the king ;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,

Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere :

“ Ah ! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go ?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes ?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have not been since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole ROUND TABLE is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world ;
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds.”

And slowly answered Arthur from the barge :

“ The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself : what comfort is in me ?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure ! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend ?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—

(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt)
 To the island-valley of Avilion ;
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it lies
 Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
 And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,
 Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.”

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
 Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
 That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
 Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
 With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
 Revolving many memories, till the hull
 Looked one black dot against the verge of dawn,
 And on the mere the wailing died away.

LORD TENNYSON.

OGIER THE DANE.

I.—The Fairy Gifts.

ONCE upon a time there was grief and lamentation in a certain Danish city by the sea. For the Angel of Death had visited the palace of the king, and had borne away to Paradise the soul of his beloved queen.

The monarch sat in an inner chamber bowed down by unkingly misery, while not far from him stood a cradle in which slept peacefully his new-born son. The evening was calm and fair. The sea lay as if wrapped in silent slumber, and in the beechwood near the palace the only sounds were those made by the nesting birds among the leaves. But within the heart of the king grief and anguish raged like a storm.



"The monarch sat in an inner chamber." (See page 128.)

Round the cradle of the sleeping infant were gathered the nurses to whose care the baby prince had been confided. They whispered among themselves as they passed to and fro in waiting upon the child. But though the night came on, and the moon sent her pale beams into the chamber, the king still sat absorbed in his grief. At last, weary with watching and sorrow, both the king and the nurses fell fast asleep.

As the next day was dawning light footsteps were suddenly heard upon the stairs, followed by the sound of silken garments trailing along the floor. Then the door opened to admit six ladies in gorgeous raiment, who arranged themselves in a shining circle round the cradle of the sleeping infant.

One of them stepped up to the child, kissed him gently, and said, "O noble prince, take thou this gift from Gloriande. To the end of thy life no fear of death or shame, no weariness of good shall stain thy soul."

Then another came forward who wore a crown of rubies and was clad in a golden hauberk. Taking the prince in her arms, she said, with a slight frown upon her brow, "This gift I give to thee; thy life shall be spent in continual warfare, that thou mayest do noble deeds and win great fame."

A third now stepped up to the cradle and said, with a smile, "My gift to thee, O prince, is victory in the warfare which my sister has promised as thy lot."

"Thou shalt be gentle in speech, and in courtesy the first of men," said the fourth lady in her turn.

The fifth gently laid her fingers upon the child and said, "Thou shalt win the love of many fair maidens in the days that are to come."

Then came forward the last, who was the fairest of them all; and she promised that the prince should never die, but that after he had won much fame upon the earth

she would take him home to dwell with her in a happy country far away. Having said this, she turned, and, followed by her sisters, glided quietly from the room

II.—*The Survivor.*

On the shore of a lonely islet there sat one evening a white-haired man clad in royal raiment, rich with cloth of gold, but tarnished by the waves and the salt sea air. He was a man of mighty frame and kingly mien, though his cheeks and brow were furrowed with marks of toil and age. As he sat there, gazing out across the sea, he said to himself,—

“Seven weeks have passed since we were wrecked upon this rocky islet. Five days have dragged along since the last of my companions died. And yet *I* am not dead. What matter? Soon all will be past and gone. Seek for yourself another leader, Charlemagne my king, when you march once more against the heathen hordes who trouble the fair lands of your Franks.

“And now, O God, I am alone with Thee! I am ready to yield up my life. I thank Thee that of Thy mercy Thou dost sweeten my last moments. For no fear of coming death disturbs my spirit.”

So spoke Ogier the Dane, the mighty warrior who had received in his cradle the rich gifts of the fays; to whom all strife, however desperate, had been but as wine to stir the blood; who had won fame in many a well-fought field; who had never known fear or doubt, and whose powers of mind and body were as great in old age as they had been in his fiery youth.

Soon the moon shone with a brighter light, and, bowing his head, the warrior slept as peacefully as a little child. Just before the dawn he suddenly woke, and while he sat

waiting for the sunrise a rosy light streamed across the barren rock behind him, and gentle music fell upon his ears.

“This is death,” he whispered to himself. “My God, I praise Thee for its gentleness.” But as he spoke he thought he heard his own name whispered, and, rising to his feet, he stood erect, but with his head bent in reverence. “Lord, I am ready,” he said. “Whither shall I go?”

Then he turned, and saw in the east a light that shone as bright as day. Something seemed to impel him to move forward in the direction of this light, and he walked onward till he had crossed the islet and stood on its farther shore.

As he stood there gazing out across the sea, he saw in the distance as in a dream a palace of gold set amid green meadows and groves of pleasant trees. But even as he looked the vision faded from his sight. “Alas!” said Ogier, “must I be always dreaming of life, and grieving for it? Here I will sit and wait until death comes to me.”

So he seated himself upon a rock and covered his face with his hands. Before long, however, he was pacing the brow of the cliff impatiently, and gazing seaward in the hope of seeing the gleaming palace once again. Then suddenly he stopped his pacing, swung himself over the edge of the precipice, and clambered down the steep face of the rock until his feet rested unsteadily upon the wreck of his vessel which floated below.

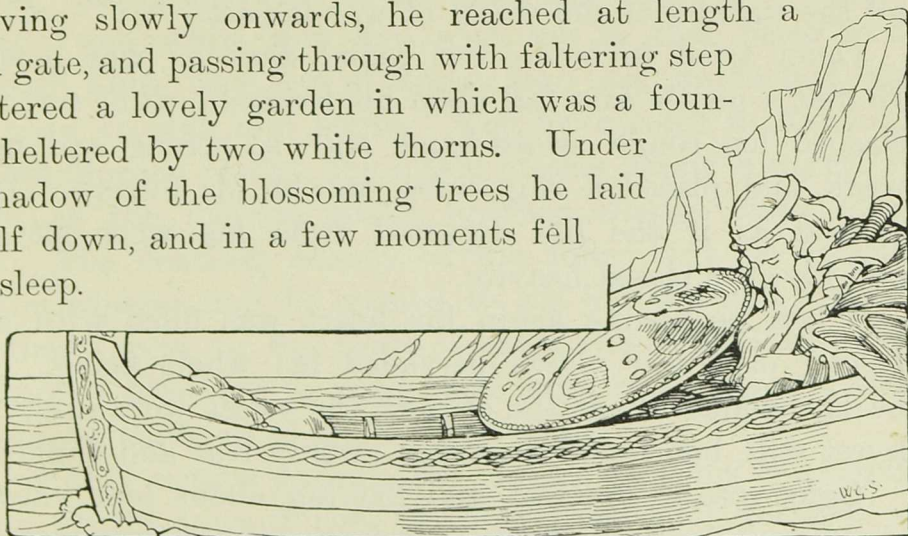
From this he leapt, heedless of danger, upon other pieces of wreckage lying near, for many a noble vessel had foundered upon the shore of this rocky islet. Quickly he passed from wreck to wreck until he reached the outermost. Then, unsheathing Courtain, his trusty sword, he stood ready to leap into the sea and force that meeting with death for which he had waited so long.

But as he stood poised and ready for the final plunge, he heard across the water a strain of heavenly music; and soon he saw something bright moving towards him over the waves. Nearer and nearer it came, until he saw that it was a boat, gilded within and without, and provided with the softest of cushions.

"It may be I am to light on something new before I die," he said as he leapt into the boat. Then he stepped over the cushions to the stern, but found there neither oars nor rudder; and while he sat and pondered with knit brows the boat began to move from the wreck, and he fell into a state of drowsiness.

When he awoke, he found that his boat was moored to a tree by a bank of greenest verdure. Wondering if this were Paradise, he stepped ashore; but in order not to be taken by surprise he drew his sword. The place was beautiful beyond description; but as soon as his feet touched the fair, green turf under the sheltering trees a strange feeling of languor again came over him. His steps became slow and faltering, and often he had to lean on his sword.

Moving slowly onwards, he reached at length a gilded gate, and passing through with faltering step he entered a lovely garden in which was a fountain sheltered by two white thorns. Under the shadow of the blossoming trees he laid himself down, and in a few moments fell fast asleep.



III.—The Vale of Avallon.

When Ogier awoke, sounds of heavenly music fell upon his ears. He raised himself with pain and stood trembling, while all things around him seemed to his tired eyes to be shrouded in a heavy mist. But the sweet music went on, and in spite of his bodily feeling of utter weakness, a sense of joy and peace seemed to fill his heart.

Yet in a few moments he sank once more to the earth; and as he did so the rattle of his sword in its scabbard seemed a farewell voice from his past life. After a while he fell into a dream, and before his dim eyes there seemed to pass a lovely face framed in golden hair, while a voice like sweetest music sounded in his ears.



“Ogier,” it said, “thy hundred years of strife and wrong are over.” Then the warrior felt his head gently raised, while the voice continued: “At last thou art come to me, and all the turmoil of the world of war is past.”

Ogier tried to move, but found that he was powerless. He felt a gentle kiss fall upon his forehead, while soft fingers clasped his rough sword-hand, once so strong and now so weak, and placed a ring upon one of his fingers. Then it seemed as if the life departed from his worn-out frame, and his eyes closed heavily.

When he awoke again his heart was filled with a new feeling of power which pervaded his whole being. While he lay wondering at the change, the sweet voice said, “Thou livest still, but free from every earthly fear and danger.”

Ogier rose to his feet, and looking about him, knew that

he was still in the beautiful garden to which he had come from far across the sea. Then he saw a lady standing by the side of the fountain, and her beauty filled him with wonder. She seemed a maiden of some eighteen summers, yet there was in her eyes a light of wisdom such as comes only to riper years. She wore a robe of delicate tissue, and on her head rested a wreath of fresh roses.

As the warrior looked at her she held out her snow-white arms.

“Ogier,” she said, “draw nigh to me. Many years ago, in a palace by the sea, where you lay as a babe in a forsaken cradle, I plighted troth with you. Come near, and let me take your hand; then I will show you wherein lies the spell which has renewed your strength and the vigorous beauty of your early manhood.”

Ogier moved forward and their hands met.

“Mark this ring,” said the maiden, “which now encircles your finger. It was given to me by my father, and by its virtue alone you have regained your youth. Now I,” she went on, “am of the race of the fays, and live their changeless life; and while you live with me in this place you also shall know the joy of those who are untouched by the world’s trouble and strife. You have come to Avallon, and I am Morgan le Fay, the queen of this happy country.”

Now, as the maiden spoke, another change came over Ogier. The dazzling beauty of the fairy lady no longer held him captive, and he seemed to see her through a mist. Then there arose in his heart a great desire to leave the place behind him, and to share once more in the danger and the storm of battle as in the days of old.

Seeing this change in him, the maiden took his hand and led him gently onward over the fair green lawn towards a

wonderful palace, before which was a great crowd of people gaily dressed and laughing merrily as those who had never known the weight of care. A band of lovely maidens came to meet him and their queen; but in spite of all the beauty around him, the heart of Ogier still longed for the old world of strife and effort, and a deep sigh escaped from his lips.

The queen now led him onward through the doorway of the palace into a wide hall in which stood a royal throne. Upon this she caused Ogier to be seated; then, at a signal from the queen, one of the fairest of the attendant maidens brought a crown of gold and gave it to her mistress.

The queen, holding the crown in her hands, spoke gently.

“Ogier,” she said, “what avail your miserable days of strife and trouble? Those days are passed and gone.” And as she spoke she placed the crown upon his brow.

At these words the heart of the hero seemed instantly to change, and the memory of his years of pain and effort was lost in deep forgetfulness. Rising from his seat, he cast himself upon his knees before the lovely queen and vowed to be henceforth her servant and her slave.

Thereafter Ogier lived in that happy land, and the years glided quickly by unheeded. There he saw many whom the world thought dead, and amongst them the great King Arthur, now healed of his grievous wound.

In Avallon there was no fear of death, nor any talk of what was right or wrong, for no traitors had entrance to this place of peace. All was bright and happy; discontent and pain were unknown; nor did any one need to struggle after wealth and fame. And, most wonderful of all, the people of this happy country did not weary of their never-ending joy and peace.

IV.—The Return of Ogier.

A hundred years had passed since Ogier came to dwell in Avallon, and now the fair land of France was once more laid waste with bitter war.

One day towards evening a company of the people of Paris stood near one of the gates of the city, talking of the troublous times that had come upon them. Suddenly they saw on the road before them a mounted stranger, richly clad and well armed, in a curious, old-world fashion, and attended by two stout serving-men. His face was bronzed as though by long exposure to the sun, but beautiful as the image of a god. His eyes were solemn, and as gray as glass, and his hair was like ruddy gold. He was a giant in stature, beside whom the men of the place appeared like dwarfs.

The warders challenged him as he drew near to the gate. But he showed a token which at once gave him access to the city; and having given his name as "The Ancient Knight," he passed within the battlements and rode onward down the street. As he went he eyed the people of the place with some contempt.

"Do such men as these," he said, "contend with the pagans who waste the land? It was not so a hundred years gone by."

Soon a small crowd of idlers gathered round him, and one cried out in mockery, "Be of good courage, citizens, for surely this is Charlemagne himself, who has come from the grave to fight for our city, and to save it from destruction."

"Yes, indeed," cried another, "the great king has come from the very tomb itself. And in spite of his age he is a youthful monarch still."

The stranger knight, who was none other than Ogier himself, knit his brows, and seemed about to speak; but with a

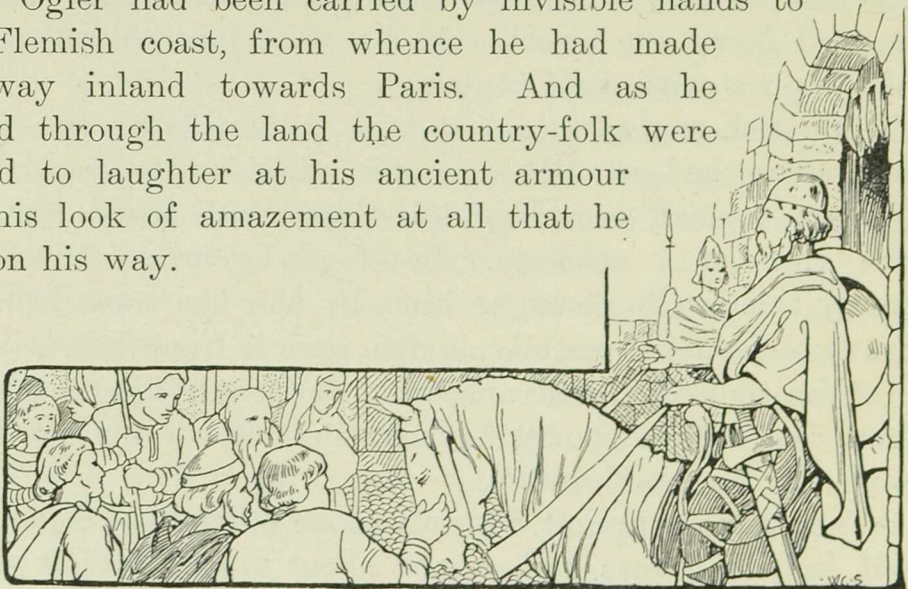
half-drawn sigh he checked himself and rode silently on his way. And as he went he pondered over the words that Morgan le Fay had spoken to him when she sent him upon this errand.

For one day she had come to him and said, "Ogier, your name and your fame grow dim among the men and women of the world. A new race of men has arisen—small, and weak, and mean—and the fair places of the earth are insecure in their weak hands. Go down among them, give your banner once more to the winds of heaven, and win glory in battle against the pagan hordes."

"Choose for me," he had said to her, "for you are wisest of all."

"I have chosen," answered the queen. "And now I will take from your brow this Crown of Forgetfulness, and you shall be once more the warrior who came to me in my magic boat from far across the sea. But keep my ring, for as long as it encircles your finger death cannot touch you."

So Ogier had been carried by invisible hands to the Flemish coast, from whence he had made his way inland towards Paris. And as he passed through the land the country-folk were moved to laughter at his ancient armour and his look of amazement at all that he saw on his way.



V.—The Ancient Knight.

As he rode through the city, the stranger came to a hostelry, where he stayed for the night. The next morning he found in his room a dusty chronicle of the achievements of the warriors who had lived in the land in the olden days, and among the tales of daring he found descriptions of many of his own warlike deeds, and scenes from the past came crowding into his memory.

Now at this time the queen was gathering men to send to the relief of the king, who was beset by the pagans in Rouen. When he heard of this, Ogier made his way to the royal palace, where he found in the courtyard a great company of men-at-arms, and the sight of them stirred his warrior heart.

Soon the queen came out and took her seat beneath a gay canopy. Then the knights came forward to take the oath of fealty; and while they were kneeling in turn before the royal lady, Ogier made his way towards her through the throng of men, who gave way before him without a word.

He knelt before her, and, according to custom, took her hand within both his own to swear the oath of fealty. As he did so he felt her hand tremble in his, and when his promise of loyal service had been duly made, she said in a low, sweet voice,—

“Your name and style you do not tell, nor from what land you have come to my aid.”

“Lady,” he said, “call me the Ancient Knight, and let me go.”

“Come to me alone,” said the queen, “when this ceremony is ended, and I myself will give into your charge a company

of the bravest, upon whom I can rely to free this land from its pagan foes."

At a word from the queen a page now conducted Ogier to the banquet hall, the hall where he had often feasted with Charlemagne in bygone days, and where he now ate and drank as one in a dream. Then, wishing to be alone with his thoughts and memories, Ogier made his way to the garden, where he found a shady spot, and, lying down, soon fell fast asleep.

Before long the queen, with one of her women, came to seek him; and when she saw him lying wrapt in the deepest slumber she thought that never before had she seen such a goodly man.

"His armour is of a fashion now unknown," said the queen's attendant, stooping over the sleeping figure. "I am afraid of him, as of some one from another world. See what a strange ring he wears upon his finger. God grant he may not be some evil spirit sent here to bring more misery to this unhappy land."

"You speak foolishly," said the queen. "This man has come to fight for us against our foes."

Without speaking a word in reply, the attendant knelt down beside the knight and drew the ring from his finger.

Then before the wondering eyes of the queen a change came over the sleeping warrior. His golden locks became as white as driven snow, wrinkles appeared on his cheek, which had been so smooth and youthful in appearance, his lips turned pale, and instead of breathing evenly he struggled and gasped for breath like an old man whose rest is troubled sorely.



Upon this the queen began to weep, and the sound of her grief awoke the warrior, who

tried to speak but could not utter a word. He stretched his trembling hand towards the queen's attendant as though to beg for the return of his ring; but the woman, with an evil smile, turned from him and addressed herself to her royal mistress.

"Weep not, my lady," she said. "Keep this ring, and while the rest of the world grows old you may retain for yourself eternal youth."

The queen put out her hand and took the ring. Then, kneeling down, she replaced it on the finger of Ogier, who forthwith rose to his feet as young and fresh as he had been before he lay down to rest.

"O Ancient Knight," said the queen, as though she had not seen the double change take place, "do you sleep while the heathen rage throughout this land of mine? Now let me see what can be done by the help of your mighty sword."

"Queen," said Ogier, "I ask your pardon for sleeping. As for myself, I would be glad never again to close my eyes in slumber if I am to be visited by such unhappy visions as have lately troubled me."

"Were you troubled, then, with dreams?" said the queen gently, regarding the face and figure of the knight with a look of wondering admiration. "I, too, have dreamt. Last night I seemed to see you sitting upon the throne of France."

Ogier looked steadily at the queen, and thought he could read some hidden meaning in her words. But when she turned and marked the mocking smile upon the face of her attendant, the royal lady looked away from Ogier, and said, somewhat carelessly,—

"If I interpret my dream aright, you have been sent to us by the goodness of Heaven to restore my husband to his throne and kingly power. Come then with me to the

council of my lords and barons, and there I will give you a charge worthy of your courage and your powers of leadership."

So saying, the queen turned and led the way to the council chamber, where among those who gave advice on the management of the war Ogier was easily foremost in wisdom. Then the queen gave to him the leadership of one wing of the great army which had been assembled. Next morning Ogier rode forth at the head of his men to save the kingdom of France from its fierce invaders.

VI.—*The King of France.*

Now before the army could reach the city of Rouen the King of France had been slain by an arrow from the host of the besiegers; and in the hearts of his captains hope had perished with the death of their royal master. Then when despair seemed to have taken possession of the city, Ogier fell at last upon the foe, and in a short space of time scattered them completely, and marched in triumph within the gates of Rouen.

Many other great deeds were done by the Ancient Knight in that campaign, but of these we have no space to tell; and when at last he returned to Paris he was received with acclamation by the rejoicing citizens, who hailed him openly as King of France. Before long the hero stood at the foot of the throne on which the queen was seated; and when the royal lady looked at his noble face, tears of mingled grief and joy welled up into her eyes and coursed down her cheeks. "See how she mourns for her dead lord," said those who stood near.



“Amid all the joy of deliverance she needs must think of him. But before long her grief will be assuaged. She will wed again.”

For the space of a year Ogier was occupied in freeing the land completely from the heathen hordes which had troubled it so long. And when his work was over the queen met him on a great and joyous day of festival, and laying her hand in his she took him for lord and master. By this time all memory of Avallon had faded from his mind. He was once more a man among men, moved by human joys and human fears.

On the morning of his wedding-day he lay upon his bed half awake. Faintly there fell on his ear the noise of hammering; workmen were erecting the wooden stages from which the people were to witness the great pageant of his marriage.

Suddenly he heard a voice, which cried, “Ogier, Ogier!” He opened his eyes, raised himself on his elbow, and gazed about him. “Whom do you call?” he demanded. “I am Charles of France, and shall be crowned as king to-day. Who is this you name Ogier, and who is it who calls?”

As he finished speaking he heard a deep-drawn sigh, as from some one near by who was in absorbing grief. In a few moments the voice, soft and gentle, was heard again.

“That Ogier whom I call was once the noblest among men, and performed such deeds of greatness as have never since been equalled. Then when the world could afford him no greater honour, he left it and lived with me in joy and peace in a far-off happy land. Ogier, have you indeed forgotten me?”

Then the warrior beheld a woman of more than earthly beauty, who stood beside his bed.

“My knight,” she said in tones of tender entreaty, “you have done well all that you came back to earth to accomplish. Come now with me before men tire of singing your praises, before the queen herself ceases to love you.

“But alas!” she went on, “I see that your heart is set upon these changing, fleeting joys of earth. Take then from me this gift that I have brought from far away. Thus you will remember once again the happy days of which I spoke.”

Ogier trembled as he gazed upon the speaker, and saw that she held a glittering crown in her right hand.

“Rise,” she said, “and array yourself as a king.”

Hereupon he rose from his couch and put on the glittering tunic once worn by the great Charlemagne himself. Then on his feet he set the shoes of gold, and threw over his shoulders the royal mantle. Upon his shining hair he placed the golden crown of France; and having done so, he sat down as if in a dream, looking straight before him through the window of his chamber across the waters of the Seine, now golden with the level rays of the rising sun.

The fairy visitor drew near to him, and taking the royal crown from his head she laid it upon his pillow.

“Lie there,” she said, “O crown of Charlemagne. I have a better crown for the head of my beloved, one which will give him life when all others whom his strong right hand has helped are dead and forgotten in the silent grave.”

Then on his head she set that other crown, and whispered softly in his ear,—

“Forget, forget! Forget the weariness and all the pain.”

At the touch of that wondrous crown he rose to his feet with a deep light of happiness within his eyes. Then, as if smitten with a sudden rush of memories, he cried,—



“‘Come, then,’ cried Morgan le Fay.” (See page 146.)

“O my beloved, how came we here? What have *we* to do with this world of pain and effort, doubt and sore misgiving? Let us return. I have been troubled with dreams—dreams of a land of strife and turmoil.”

“Come, then,” cried Morgan le Fay, for it was she; and, turning, she led him through the silent palace and past the gate which looked towards the rippling Seine. Then for a moment she paused, while Ogier gazed upon the gray city as the sun rose upon what was to have been his day of complete triumph. For a short time he stood in silence, with Morgan le Fay by his side, and then in a moment the place where they had stood was empty, nor was Ogier the Dane ever seen on earth again.



CHARLEMAGNE.

OLGER the Dane and Desiderio,
 King of the Lombards, on a lofty tower
 Stood gazing northward o'er the rolling plains,
 League after league of harvests, to the foot
 Of the snow-crested Alps, and saw approach
 A mighty army, thronging all the roads
 That led into the city. And the king
 Said unto Olger, who had passed his youth
 As hostage at the court of France, and knew
 The emperor's form and face: “Is Charlemagne
 Among that host?” And Olger answered: “No.”

And still the innumerable multitude
 Flowed onward and increased, until the king
 Cried in amazement: “Surely Charlemagne
 Is coming in the midst of all these knights!”

And Olger answered slowly : " No ; not yet ;
 He will not come so soon." Then much disturbed
 King Desiderio asked : " What shall we do,
 If he approach with a still greater army ?"
 And Olger answered : " When he shall appear,
 You will behold what manner of man he is ;
 But what will then befall us I know not."

Then came the guard that never knew repose,
 The Paladins of France ; and at the sight
 The Lombard king, o'ercome with terror, cried :
 " This must be Charlemagne !" and as before
 Did Olger answer : " No ; not yet, not yet."

And then appeared in panoply complete
 The bishops and the abbots and the priests
 Of the imperial chapel, and the counts ;
 And Desiderio could no more endure
 The light of day, nor yet encounter death,
 But sobbed aloud and said : " Let us go down
 And hide us in the bosom of the earth,
 Far from the sight and anger of a foe
 So terrible as this !" And Olger said :
 " When you behold the harvests in the fields
 Shaking with fear, the Po and the Ticino
 Lashing the city walls with iron waves,
 Then may you know that Charlemagne is come."
 And even as he spake, in the north-west,
 Lo ! there uprose a black and threatening cloud,
 Out of whose bosom flashed the light of arms
 Upon the people pent up in the city ;
 A light more terrible than any darkness :
 And Charlemagne appeared ;—a Man of Iron !



His helmet was of iron, and his gloves
 Of iron, and his breastplate and his greaves
 And tassets were of iron, and his shield.
 In his left hand he held an iron spear,
 In his right hand his sword invincible.
 The horse he rode on had the strength of iron,
 And colour of iron. All who went before him,
 Beside him and behind him, his whole host,
 Were armed with iron, and their hearts within them
 Were stronger than the armour that they wore.
 The fields and all the roads were filled with iron,
 And points of iron glistened in the sun
 And shed a terror through the city streets.

This at a single glance Olger the Dane
 Saw from the tower, and turning to the king
 Exclaimed in haste: "Behold! this is the man
 You looked for with such eagerness!" and then
 Fell as one dead at Desiderio's feet.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

SIR PATRICK SPENS.

I.—The Sailing.

THE king sits in Dunfermline town
 Drinking the blude-red wine;
 "O whare will I get a skeely * skipper
 To sail this new ship o' mine?"

* Skilful.



The King sits

in Banfermaline town
drinking the blade-red wine.

O up and spak an eldern knight,
 Sat at the king's right knee ;
 "Sir Patrick Spens is the best sailor
 That ever sail'd the sea."

Our king has written a braid letter
 And seal'd it with his hand,
 And sent it to Sir Patrick Spens,
 Was walking on the strand.

"To Noroway, to Noroway,
 To Noroway o'er the faem ;
 The king's daughter o' Noroway,
 'Tis thou must bring her hame."

The first word that Sir Patrick read
 So loud, loud laugh'd he ;
 The neist word that Sir Patrick read
 The tear blinded his e'e.

"O wha is this has done this deed
 And tauld the king o' me,
 To send us out, at this time o' year,
 To sail upon the sea ?

"Be it wind, be it weet, be it hail, be it sleet,
 Our ship must sail the faem ;
 The king's daughter o' Noroway,
 'Tis we must fetch her hame."

They hoysed their sails on Monenday morn
 Wi' all the speed they may ;
 They hae landed in Noroway
 Upon a Wodensday.

II.—The Return.

“ Mak ready, mak ready, my merry men a' !
 Our gude ship sails the morn.”
 “ Now ever alack, my master dear,
 I fear a deadly storm.

“ I saw the new moon late yestreen
 Wi' the auld moon in her arm ;
 And if we gang to sea, master,
 I fear we'll come to harm.”

They hadna sail'd a league, a league,
 A league but barely three,
 When the lift grew dark, and the wind blew loud
 And gurly grew the sea.

The ankers brak and the topmast lap,*
 It was sic a deadly storm :
 And the waves cam owre the broken ship
 Till a' her sides were torn.

‘ Go fetch a web o' the silken claith,
 Another o' the twine,
 And wap them into our ship's side,
 And let nae the sea come in.”

* Sprang.

They fetched a web o' the silken claith,
 Another o' the twine,
 And they wapp'd them round that gude ship's side
 But still the sea came in.

O laith, laith were our gude Scots lords
 To wet their cork-heel'd shoon ;
 But lang or a' the play was play'd
 They wat their hats aboon.

And mony was the feather bed
 That flatter'd * on the faem ;
 And mony was the gude lords' son
 That never more came hame.

O lang, lang may the ladies sit,
 Wi' their fans into their hand,
 Before they see Sir Patrick Spens
 Come sailing to the strand.

And lang, lang may the maidens sit
 Wi' their gowd kames † in their hair,
 Awaiting for their ain dear loves !
 For them they'll see nae mair.

Half-owre, half-owre to Aberdour,
 'Tis fifty fathoms deep ;
 And there lies gude Sir Patrick Spens,
 Wi' the Scots lords at his feet.

Old Ballad.

* Tossed afloat.

† Golden combs.



THE NOBLE SISTERS.

“ Now did you mark a falcon,
 Sister dear, sister dear,
 Flying toward my window
 In the morning cool and clear ?
 With jingling bells about her neck,
 But what beneath her wing ?
 It may have been a ribbon,
 Or it may have been a ring.”—



“ I marked a falcon swooping
 At the break of day ;
 And for your love, my sister dove
 I 'frayed the thief away.”

Or did you spy a ruddy hound,
 Sister fair and tall,
 Went snuffing round my garden bound,
 Or crouched by my bower wall ?

With a silken leash about his neck ;
 But in his mouth may be
 A chain of gold and silver links,
 Or a letter writ to me."—

" I heard a hound, my sister,
 Stood baying at the moon ;
 I rose and drove him from your wall
 Lest you should wake too soon."

" Or did you meet a pretty page
 Sat swinging on the gate ;
 Sat whistling whistling like a bird,
 Or maybe slept too late ;
 With eaglets broidered on his cap,
 And eaglets on his glove ?
 If you had turned his pockets out,
 You had found some pledge of love."—

" I met him at this daybreak,
 Scarce the east was red.
 Lest the creaking gate should anger you,
 I packed him home to bed."

" O patience, sister. Did you see
 A young man tall and strong,
 Swift-footed to uphold the right
 And to uproot the wrong,
 Come home across the desolate sea
 To woo me for his wife ?
 And in his heart my heart is locked,
 And in his life my life."—

" I met a nameless man, sister,
 Who loitered round our door.
 I said : Her husband loves her much,
 And yet she loves him more."

“Fie, sister, fie, a wicked lie,
 A lie, a wicked lie;
 I have none other love but him,
 Nor will have till I die.
 And you have turned him from our door,
 And stabbed him with a lie;
 I will go seek him through the world
 In sorrow till I die.”

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

THE KNIGHT OF THE WHITE SHIELD.

I.—The Siege Perilous.

+MANY, many years ago, at the court of the great King Arthur of Britain, there was a knight whose name was Galahad. He was much younger than any of the other knights, most of whom were men of tried valour, and had already fought in many battles; and yet, in spite of his youth and his want of experience in war, it was given to Galahad to do great deeds which these men could not accomplish. X

Sir Galahad first made his appearance at the court of Arthur in this wise. One Whitsuntide the king was feasting with his chosen knights at the Round Table in the great hall of his castle at Camelot, the chief city of his realm. Each of these knights had his own special seat or “siege” at the great board, and for this reason they were called the Knights of the Round Table.

There were eleven of these knights at this time, and they had been specially chosen by the king as his close friends

and most faithful followers; and they were bound by sacred oaths of knighthood to maintain a high standard of virtue and honour, to fight against all evil and wrong, to succour the oppressed, and at all times to uphold the right. It was a very high ideal that the great King Arthur thus placed before his knights—too high, alas! for all to follow; and that they did not steadfastly uphold it was afterwards the cause of great grief and bitter sorrow to the king.

Now, though the number of the knights was eleven, this was not the full number intended. There were twelve seats at the Round Table, but one of these had so far been unoccupied. This vacant seat was known at the court as the Siege Perilous, and it was said that any one who sat on it would do so at great risk and peril; and none amongst the knights had dared to attempt it. The seat was carved with strange figures, and round it was a scroll of writing in a tongue no one could understand; and the story was that Merlin the magician had fashioned it, and that he himself had sat upon it, and had thereby lost his life. It was therefore little wonder that no one else cared to take the risk of sitting there.

But as Arthur and the knights sat at their feast on this Whitsun-day, there suddenly appeared in the hall an aged knight clad in white, and with him a fair youth named Galahad, of a bright and noble countenance. No one knew who they were, or whence they came; but Arthur, always the most chivalrous and courteous of knights, at once bade the strangers welcome.

Then the aged knight turned to Galahad and told the youth to follow him. He led him straight to the Siege Perilous, and, to the amazement of all, Galahad sat down in the seat without a moment's hesitation. So the king and



(1,340)

"A fair youth named Galahad." (See page 156.)

10*

all the knights knew from this sign that in spite of his tender age Galahad was the knight destined to fill the empty place at the Round Table, and they welcomed him gladly as one of themselves. The old man who had brought him there, having now fulfilled his mission, kissed Galahad and went on his way alone.

And now another proof was to be given that Galahad was no ordinary knight. Earlier in that same day a wonderful thing had happened. Just as the king and the court were returning to the palace after hearing morning service in the minster, a squire had come to the king with a marvellous story. He said that he had seen floating on the river near by a great red stone, and fixed into it a wondrous sword set with precious stones and ornamented with letters of gold. Thereupon the king said he would himself go at once to see this wonderful thing, so he and all his knights went down to the river-side. There indeed were the stone and the sword, as described by the squire; and when the inscription on the sword was read it was found to be this:—

“Never shall man take me hence except he by whose side I ought to hang; and he shall be the best knight in the world.”

When the king heard this, he turned to Lancelot, his most famous and best-beloved knight, and said that surely the sword must belong to him. But Lancelot replied sadly that this was not so; for he knew in his heart that he was not the true and perfect knight that the king judged him to be. He also told the king that grievous harm would come to any one who, not being the perfect knight, should attempt to draw the sword from the stone. He also gave this warning to two other of the knights named Gawaine and Percivale,

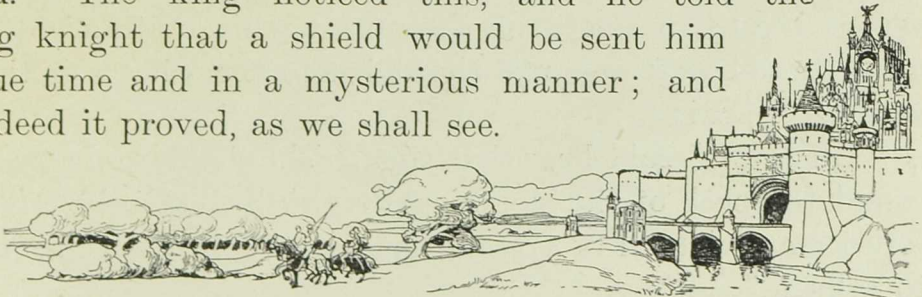
who were brave enough to try to take the sword, but neither of them could move it.

And now to return to Galahad. After he had taken his place in the Siege Perilous, and had partaken of food, the king raised a cloth which he had ordered to be placed over the writing on the back of the seat; and there, to the surprise of all, was found the name of Galahad. So now there was no possibility of doubt that Galahad was the knight destined to occupy the vacant seat; and the king next thought he would show him the stone with the sword that no one could move.

Leaving the hall, therefore, accompanied by his knights, Queen Guinevere, and her ladies, he conducted Galahad to the river-side. But when the king pointed out the sword to him and told him that no knight of his company could move it, Galahad showed no surprise.

“Sir,” he said to the king, “it is no marvel that the other knights could not move the sword, for the adventure was intended for me alone. For this reason, as you see, I have brought no sword;” and hereupon he pointed to the empty scabbard by his side. Then, taking the hilt of the sword in his hand, he drew the blade out of the stone with ease.

So now Galahad was armed with a sword; but even yet he was not fully equipped for fight, for he had no shield. The king noticed this, and he told the young knight that a shield would be sent him in due time and in a mysterious manner; and so indeed it proved, as we shall see.



II.—The White Shield.

Some little time afterwards Galahad was riding in the country outside Camelot, and at eventide he came to a beautiful abbey, where he decided to rest for the night. He was made welcome by the monks, and to his surprise he found two other knights of the Round Table staying at the abbey also. So they all went to supper together.

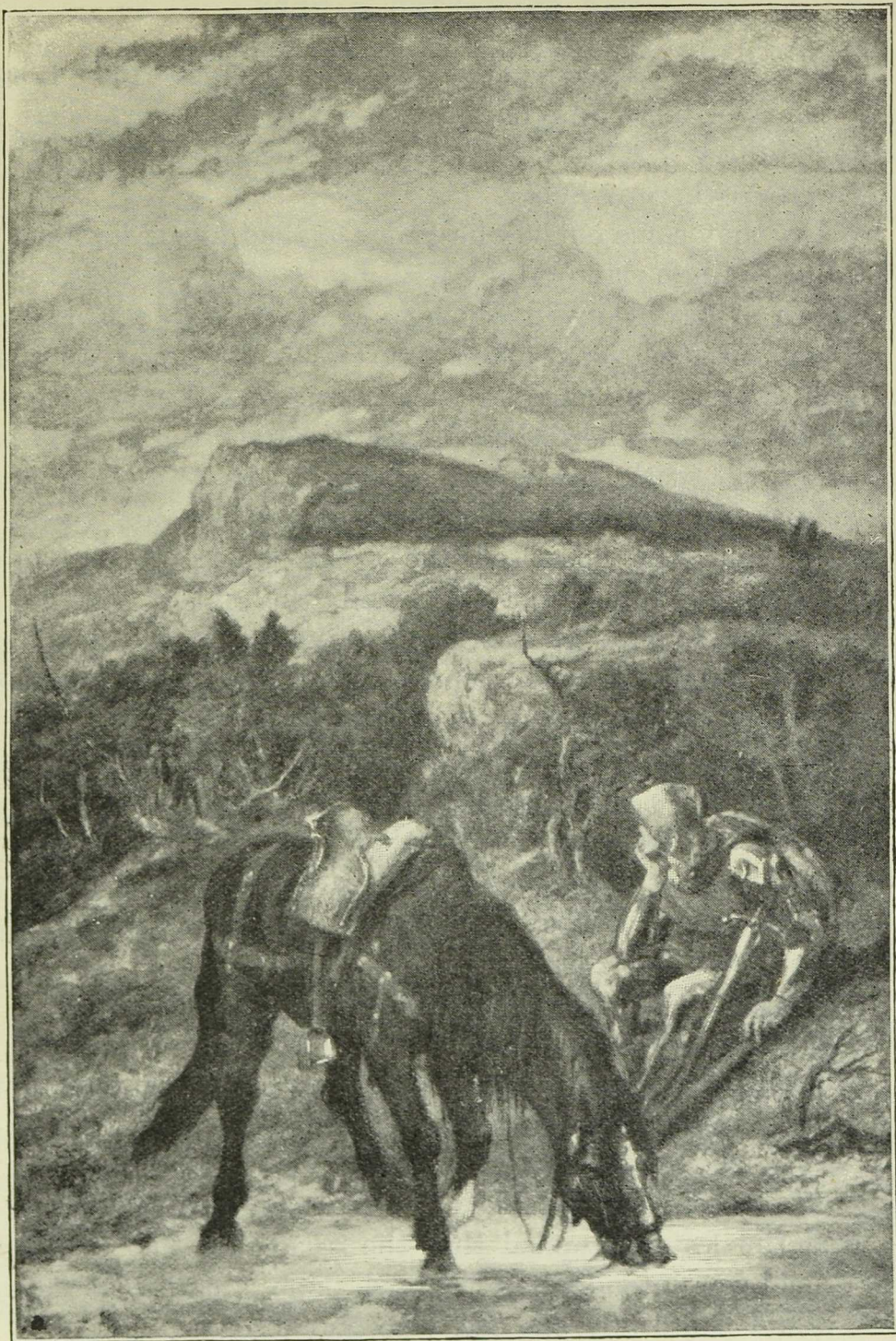
As they sat at this meal Galahad asked his companions what had brought them to the place; and one of them, named Bagdemagus, replied that they had come to make trial of a great shield which was reported to be there, and of which it was said that any man who fastened it round his neck would suffer grievous injury or meet with his death within three days.

"And," said Bagdemagus, "I mean to try it myself to-morrow, and prove whether this be true or not. If I suffer injury or meet with death," he continued, "then you, Galahad, may try, for I feel sure that to you, if not to me, it will be given to succeed in this adventure."

"Sir," replied Galahad, "I agree thereto most readily, for I have no shield."

Next morning the two knights heard prayers together in the great abbey church, after which one of the monks led them to where the great shield hung behind the high altar. It was a beautiful shield of the purest white with a red cross upon it, and as the monk showed it to them he gave them a word of warning.

"Know ye," said he, "that this shield should only be hung round the neck of the worthiest knight in the world. Therefore I counsel both of you to consider well before you attempt to take it."



The Knight Errant.
Sir John Gilbert.

“Well,” said Bagdemagus, “full well I know that I am not the worthiest knight in the world. Nevertheless I intend to try for the shield.” And with this he took it down from where it hung.

When they came outside he bade Galahad await his return or tidings of him ; and taking with him a squire he rode forth in search of adventure in which to prove his new possession.

When he had gone about two miles he spied another knight approaching clad in white armour, and mounted on a goodly horse, who, when he saw Bagdemagus, rode at him full tilt with his spear. Bagdemagus thrust at him in return, and broke his own spear against his enemy’s armour ; but the spear of the other smote Bagdemagus right through his breastplate, and the shield failed to protect him, so that he was sorely wounded in the shoulder. Then the knight in white armour, after lifting his wounded enemy from his horse, took the shield from him.

“Sir,” said he, “you have committed great folly against yourself, for this shield should only be borne by the worthiest knight in the world.” He then handed it to the squire in attendance on Bagdemagus, and said, “Take it, I pray, to the good knight Galahad who awaits you in the abbey, and greet him well from me.”

“Sir,” said Bagdemagus, as the squire took the shield, “I pray you tell me your name.”

But this the stranger knight would not do, since his name, he said, was not to be revealed to any earthly man.

“Then, sir,” entreated the squire in his turn, “tell me, I pray, the reason why the shield does harm to any that bear it.”

And the knight replied that the reason for this was that the shield was intended for Galahad alone, and that therefore evil would befall any one else who bore it.

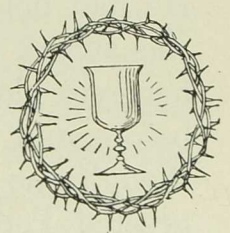
So the squire returned to Galahad bearing the white shield, and bringing with him the wounded knight Bagdemagus, who was laid in bed at the abbey and tended by the monks till he recovered.

Then Galahad hung the white shield round his neck, and mounting his horse he rode forth praising God, and vowing to use his sword only in the cause of right. Thus Galahad became the Knight of the White Shield.

III.—The Holy Grail.

And now the story of the most wonderful of all Galahad's adventures must be told. I have already said that, though he was the youngest and least tried of Arthur's twelve knights, for him was reserved honour above all the rest; and in the story of the Holy Grail will be seen how he succeeded when all others failed.

But you must first hear the legend of the Holy Grail before you read of the part it played in the lives of Sir Galahad and the other Knights of the Round Table. The Holy Grail was said to be the actual cup out of which Christ drank at the Last Supper; and, according to the legend believed by Arthur's knights, it was brought to England by St. Joseph of Arimathea, and placed in the abbey he founded at Glastonbury.



There for a time it remained as a source of blessing, held in great veneration by all, and the healer of any ill suffered by those who touched it. But when evil times befell, and heathen hordes overran the land, this sacred treasure was borne away by unseen hands and caught up to heaven. And now that Arthur had trodden down the evil in the land,

and steadily promoted peace and justice, it was hoped by his knights that the Holy Grail would be restored to them again; and each one cherished the secret ambition that he should be found worthy to behold it.

But as time went on and no sign of the sacred vessel was vouchsafed, many of the knights ceased to think much about it; and the record of the Holy Grail might have faded from the minds of men had it not been at this time given newness of life by the vision of a certain holy nun.

Among the knights of the Round Table there was one whom I have already mentioned, named Percivale, a youth of a sweet and noble nature which endeared him to all. Percivale had a sister who was a nun in a convent not far from Camelot; and one day a message came to him bidding him pay her a visit because she had something important to tell him.

Sir Percivale did so without delay, for, though he could not often see his sister, he loved her dearly, both for her own sake and because of the sweet and holy life which she led, and for which she was famed even outside the convent. He had not seen her for some time, and when they met he was struck by the wonderful change in her appearance; for her eyes glowed with a deeper and more spiritual light than before, and her frail, fair body seemed to float before him as though she was no longer bound down to earth. But she greeted Percivale with the same sisterly affection as of old, and then, with a bright glow of rapture on her face, she told him her wonderful news.

“Brother, sweet brother,” she said, holding his hand in hers, “I have seen the Holy Grail!”

Then she told him how one night, when the moonlight flooded her cell, she was awakened by a sound as of silver

horns on the distant hillside, which, as it drew nearer, became sweeter than any earthly music she had ever heard. Then into her cell there streamed a wonderful beam of light, and in the midst of the beam she saw the rose-red Grail throbbing as if alive, and casting a ruddy glow on the white-washed wall.

Percivale was deeply impressed by his sister's story, and he hoped that if he fasted and prayed as she had done, to him also the blessed vision would be granted. He told his brother knights about it, and amongst them, of course, he told Galahad; and in the eyes of the youthful knight he saw shining the same wonderful light he had seen in those of his sister. Then Percivale took Galahad to see his sister, and when she saw him the nun also recognized something in his eyes which told her that this young knight was ready for the holy vision.

Then she cut off her long hair, which fell almost to her feet, and of this she plaited a wonderful belt interwoven with a device representing the Holy Grail in crimson and silver thread. This she bound round the waist of Galahad; and she told him that if he always followed the right the vision he craved would be granted to him, and he would be crowned as king in a far-off spiritual city.

One sweet summer evening not long after this had occurred, Arthur's knights were assembled in the hall at Camelot. The evening light was shining on them through the twelve great windows of the hall as they sat at the board; but suddenly all grew dark, a crash of thunder echoed above them, and with it came a mighty blast which seemed to rend the roof.



Then, as the knights sat awestruck and motionless, a beam of light, seven times brighter and more dazzling than that of the sun, streamed into the hall; and amidst this light appeared the Holy Grail, borne by an invisible hand, but veiled in white samite so that none might see it; and then the holy vessel departed suddenly. In the wonderful light each knight beheld the face of his fellow illumined as it were in a glory; then the radiance faded, and all was as before; but each knew that the Grail had passed, and that he had only seen it veiled.

Then in the silence which followed Percivale found voice. Springing to his feet he made a vow that, because he had not seen the Grail uncovered, he would spend a twelvemonth and a day in quest of it until he should see it unveiled, even as his sister the holy nun had seen it. Galahad, too, sprang to his feet and took the same solemn oath; and nearly all the other knights, fired with the same burning wish, took the vow which Percivale and Galahad had taken.

King Arthur himself was not present with his knights that evening. He had been called away from the castle by a report of the distress of a beautiful lady who had escaped from some robbers, and who had come to his palace gate to throw herself on his protection. Arthur had placed the lady in safety, and had then, according to his custom, ridden forth to punish the robbers, and prevent them from molesting innocent ladies any more.

44 ✓ As he rode home in the soft light of the summer evening with his task accomplished, the good king saw his city of Camelot before him, its high-pitched roofs, its watch-towers and spires, making a fair sight beneath the light of the setting sun as they clustered on the hillside. At the very

summit was the great castle with the hall where the knights were assembled, surrounded by walls covered with wonderful sculptured devices; and at the entrance to the city stood a mighty statue in the semblance of Arthur himself wearing a golden crown, and with great gold wings pointing to the heavens. The statue faced to the east, so that at dawn it seemed clothed with living fire, and the early labourers in fields some miles away could see it, and were reminded that a great and good king ruled the land.

As Arthur rode home on this summer evening with his eyes turned towards his royal city, he saw a sudden cloud as of smoke cover the roof of the hall; and, seized with a fear that it had been struck by lightning, he put spurs to his horse, and did not draw rein until he had entered the hall itself. There he found a strange confusion and excitement prevailed. The knights had all risen from the board, and their eager faces and shining eyes still spoke of some unusual event, while even the entrance of the king did not stop the tumult of talk with which they discussed what had happened. Some were still eagerly repeating their vows to start on the quest of the Grail, while others as eagerly protested and opposed such a mad course.

Then the king turned to Percivale, who happened to be near him, and asked him the cause of the commotion; and Percivale, with eager utterance, told him all the wonderful tale, beginning with the story of his sister's vision, and ending with an account of what had just happened.

The king sat motionless on his horse, calm and dignified amidst the excited crowd around him; and as he listened to the young knight's words, a dark cloud gathered on his



countenance. He had thought that all his chosen knights were faithful to himself and devoted to the cause of protecting his realm from the many evils which threatened it; and now that he had left them but for a day, he found them all filled with a burning desire to leave him and go in search of visionary adventures far away.

"Alas! my knights," he said, turning from one to the other, "had I been here you had not sworn the vow."

Then Percivale, fired with the courage of enthusiasm, made answer, —

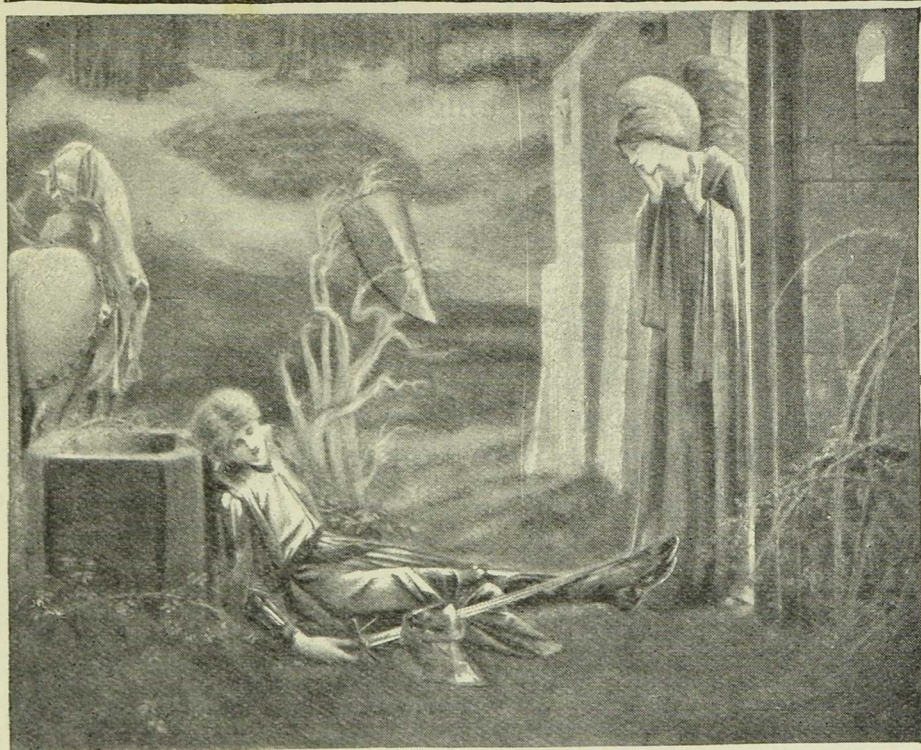
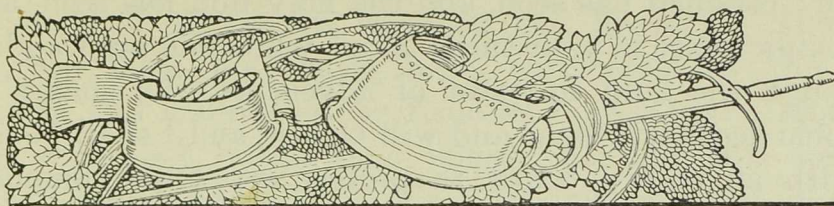
"Not so, my king. Had you been here you would yourself have sworn it."

Upon this the king turned kindly to the youth, and asked him whether he had seen the Grail; and Percivale replied that he only heard the sound and saw the light, and that therefore had he vowed to follow till he saw the Grail unveiled.

Then the king asked the other knights one by one if they had seen it, and one and all made the same reply as Percivale; but Galahad was not asked, and of a sudden his voice rang out clearly through the hall and reached even to the place where Arthur stood.

"But I saw the Holy Grail, my king," he said. "I saw the Holy Grail, and heard a voice say, 'Galahad, O Galahad, follow me.'"

"O Galahad," said the king, "for such as thee, and for the holy nun, and for Percivale, these spiritual visions are intended; but for the rest of you," he said, turning sadly to the knights, "who have fought great battles and helped to secure this realm from the heathen hordes, are you not forsaking your duty to follow wandering fires? Lancelot is the bravest and strongest of our knights, and every unproved



Photograph by Hollyer.



Sir Lancelot.
Sir E. Burne-Jones.

HOLLYER

squire thinks he may some day be a Lancelot. And so it is with you; Galahad has seen, and the holy nun has seen, and you all think to see in your turn. Alas! while you are wandering through the land in quest of adventure, the chance of doing noble deeds will come and will be lost, and I shall be left alone with an empty board to protect my realm unaided. Yet your vow must be held sacred, and you must go."

Then Arthur turned sadly and left the hall, for well he knew that if once his knights dispersed, the old Order of the Round Table could never be as before.

The next day a great tourney was held in the open field near the castle, for the king wished once more to see the strength and skill of his knights displayed before him ere they started on their quest.

All the knights came out and closed in combat with each other, and the king and queen and all the court watched the joust. Many lances were broken that day, but the two youngest knights, Galahad and Percivale, overthrew the most, for their enthusiasm was so great that it gave them an unwonted strength. Knight after knight went down before their spears, till all the air re-echoed with the cry of the onlookers of "Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale!" and the people nearly broke down the barriers in their attempts to get near the two victorious knights.

But the following day a great sadness fell on Camelot as the bravest knights of the king's Round Table sallied forth from the gates of the city. Down the steep streets, from which the overhanging roofs on either side almost shut out the summer sky, they rode in quick succession, and from roofs and windows the citizens beheld them pass; and as each knight went by, his name was shouted from one to another down the street, and a hearty God-speed sent after him.

There rode Sir Lancelot, the king's trusted friend, and the favourite of all for his strength and bravery. There rode, too, Sir Bors, his cousin, who, with none of the courtly bearing and manner of Sir Lancelot, had a brave, stout heart—a square-set, honest man, whose eyes and lips smiled together when he spoke. Sir Gawaine followed, a careless, easy-going knight, riding his horse with loose rein, and exchanging jests even now with those he greeted, as though he were merely sallying forth for a day's pleasure.

Last came the two young knights Percivale and Galahad, and when they passed the shouts of the people grew louder than before as they hailed the victors in the jousts of the previous day. Sir Percivale's face flushed with eager pleasure in response, and a proud smile played on his lips; but Sir Galahad heard the shouts unmoved, for his thoughts were far away from his own triumphs, and his eyes glowed with the same deep spiritual light which Percivale had seen in those of his sister.

But if the people from the roofs and windows shouted and acclaimed as the little band of knights rode forth, at the gateway where the king and queen and all the court were assembled sights and sounds of grief prevailed. Brave knights and fair ladies wept to see the heroes depart, and the poor, who had flocked there, wept with the rich. Even the king could hardly speak, and Queen Guinevere shed many bitter tears.

So out from Camelot that summer's day rode the little band of knights, leaving the Round Table deserted and the good king's heart filled with gloom and misgiving.

He knew only too well that all the strength and bravery of his noble followers were sorely needed in the work of righting the many abuses which had crept into the kingdom during the reigns of former kings. And in spite of

his knightly sympathy with the holy quest on which his comrades had now departed, he still felt that it would have been better for them to spend their energies in righting those wrongs and averting those dangers which required no long quest to discover. But the word of his knights had been pledged, and now he could only await their return in patience.

IV.—*The Return of the Knights.*

The year of the quest had passed, and on his throne in the great hall at Camelot Arthur sat and awaited the return of his knights. And now, slowly and sorrowfully, a little band of men with worn and wasted appearance entered the gateway of the city which they had left so proudly. All who had gone forth were not there, but among the company could be seen Percivale, and Lancelot, and honest Bors, and light-hearted Gawaine.



As they approached the hall a scene of devastation awaited them, for a mighty gale had arisen and thrown down broken pieces of stone carving from the buildings upon the roadway before them; it had also rent one of the golden wings from the giant statue of Arthur, and caused even the hall itself to rock to its foundations, so that those who felt it had whispered in awestruck tones to each other that surely this great tempest was of evil omen. And now the knights stood once more before their great king, while with eager interest he began to question them as to their fortune.

Many and strange were the adventures which had befallen them during that year of wandering; but to only two of those who came back had the vision of the Grail been

granted, and to those not more than a fleeting glimpse had been vouchsafed. Good Sir Bors was one of these. The blunt, simple knight had seen the vision, which had been denied even to the heroic Lancelot, although the latter desired it greatly, while Bors cared little for it himself, if only Lancelot might behold it. Perhaps in this lay the secret of his success, for those who crave a blessing for another achieve the truest blessedness, while those who seek a good thing for themselves alone are rarely blessed.

How Sir Bors came to see the vision was in this wise. He came in his wanderings to a wild, remote region, where some of the original inhabitants of the country still lived. These people practised heathen rites, and believed in magic and many things which Christianity had shown to be false. When Bors told them of his quest and what it was he sought, they mocked at him as a foolish person, and this led to a dispute between the knight and their priest. Then the people grew very angry, and seizing the knight, bound him fast in a dungeon.

As he lay there in total darkness, one of the stones which formed his dungeon wall fell to the ground. This was little less than a miracle, because, though a strong wind was raging at the time, the stone was too heavy to be blown from its place. Through the gap in his prison wall Bors could catch a glimpse of the dark sky and of the stars, for it was night. Then across the gap he saw the Holy Grail itself glide slowly, while a sound as of thunder struck upon his ears. Bors could hardly believe that he had been so favoured, for he deemed himself unworthy of the vision; but this, as I have said, was in truth the very reason why he deserved to see the Grail. Soon after this he was secretly released from his dungeon by a maiden

of that country, who, unknown to her friends, had become a follower of Christ.

Now, when the knights stood before the king, the good Sir Bors had seized the hand of Lancelot in his and had placed himself somewhat behind him ; for it gave him small pleasure that he had succeeded in his quest, since he knew that Lancelot had failed and could not share his joy. But Arthur saw him in his hiding-place, and called to him across the hall.

“ Hail, Bors ! ” he said, “ hast thou beheld the Grail ? Surely, if ever loyal knight and true were worthy to do so, thou art the man.”

And Bors simply replied that he had indeed seen it, but begged that he should not be questioned on the matter ; and then, brave knight though he was, he turned his face aside, for the tears were in his eyes.

The king now turned with anxious affection to Lancelot.

“ And thou, Lancelot, my friend, the mightiest of our knights,” he said, “ hath the quest availed for thee ? ”

Then a groan burst from Lancelot, for, though he had sinned much, he was still so noble in mind that the king's unmerited praise caused him the severest agony ; and it was with bitter pain that he told the king how the quest was not for him, because his sin was too great. The king heard this confession with grief and surprise, and he was greatly puzzled as to what the faults of Lancelot could be which prevented him from seeing the Holy Grail. For a few moments he pondered deeply over the matter. Then he came to the generous conclusion that, like many modest men whose ideals are lofty, his favourite knight was judging himself too harshly.

Lancelot told the king how he had sought to free himself from his faults, and how, mad with the pain and the conflict

in his soul, he had come to a wild country inhabited by a race of men smaller and weaker than himself. At one time he could easily have frightened them by the mere waving of his spear, but now, weakened by his remorse, he had been beaten down and put to shame by them.

Soon after this he came to the coast, where he found an empty boat, in which he embarked. After seven days out on the open waters he saw before him the great castle of Carbouch, built on a solid rock, and approached by steps which came down to the edge of the sea. There were no sentinels to guard the entrance, but instead, Lancelot saw by the light of the full moon a lion on either side. Out sprang the knight from his boat, and as he stepped on shore both the great beasts stood up on their hind legs like gigantic men, and each seized him by one of his shoulders.



Lancelot was about to draw his sword and slay them, when he heard a voice which told him to doubt not but go forward, and that if he doubted the beasts would tear him to pieces. As the voice ceased, the sword was dashed with violence from his hand by some unseen force. So Lancelot pressed forward into the castle, and found himself in a large, empty hall, through the great oriel window of which he saw the quiet moon shining on the sea below; and in the stillness there broke on his ear the sound of a sweet voice, clear as a lark, singing in the topmost tower of the castle.

Up a great flight of steps sped Lancelot towards the place whence the sound proceeded, and at last he reached the door from within which came the singing. "Glory and joy and honour to our Lord, and to the holy vessel of the Grail,"



"Along this pathway rode Galahad." (See page 179.)

sang the voice as Lancelot pushed against the door, which gave way before him. In the blinding glare and heat within he thought to see the Holy Grail guarded by great angels, but the sacred vessel was closely veiled, and Lancelot sank to the ground in a swoon, for by this token he knew that the quest was not for him.

When he had finished this strange story Lancelot passed out of the hall with downcast glances of shame; and the king watched him go in sorrow, but spoke no word.

Arthur turned next to Gawaine; but the tale of the light-hearted, pleasure-loving knight was quickly told, for he had soon grown weary of the quest, and made up his mind it was not for him. Then he found a gay pavilion filled with merry girls; and there, feasting and laughing with them, he had passed his time. He wound up by saying that henceforth he intended to be deaf to all stories of holy nuns; but to this the king replied reproachfully,—

“O Gawaine, think not to become more blind and deaf than you are now, since you are already too blind to what is highest and noblest even to wish to see it.”

So now there remained only Percivale to tell his tale. He too had met with strange adventures, but the most interesting part of what he had to tell was what had befallen the missing Galahad; for Percivale alone knew all the story.

At first Percivale had not succeeded in the quest, for he had not started forth with the singleness of aim and the forgetfulness of self which was required of him and of all the rest. He was too much puffed up by the thought of his victories in the tourney on the day before he left Camelot; and the consequence was that his moral power was weakened, and he fell an easy prey to temptation.

At one time it seemed as if he would surely fail in the quest, for he met a beautiful lady whom he had once loved. She had married some one else, and now her husband was dead and she was left with great possessions. And when Percivale came to the place where she dwelt with many fair maidens, she made him welcome and feasted him more and more sumptuously each day; and Percivale became lost in thoughts of pleasure, and for a time his sacred vow was almost forgotten. But one night he woke with a burning recollection of his promise and filled with an overwhelming sense of shame, whereupon he rose and fled from the castle.

In the course of his wanderings Percivale came to a hermitage where dwelt a holy man, to whom he confessed everything; and the holy man told him that what he lacked was humility, and that he had not lost all thought of himself as Galahad had done.

Even as the hermit spoke Galahad himself appeared at the door of the hermitage clad in shining silver armour, and when he saw Percivale within he laid aside his spear and entered. Then the two young knights went to prayers with the hermit, and when the service was over Galahad said that he had plainly seen the Holy Grail. But Percivale had seen nothing unusual.

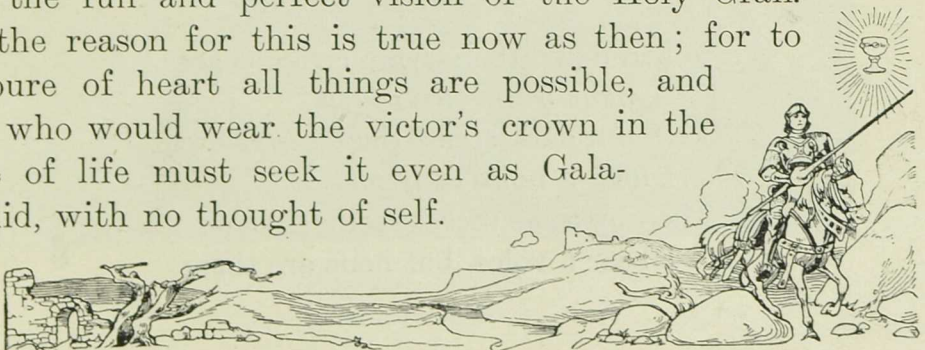
"I," said Galahad again, "saw it descend on the altar and disappear. But never yet since your sister taught me to see the vision have I failed to do so. The Holy Grail is ever with me as I journey—fainter by day and blood-red in the night. In the strength of it I have prevailed everywhere with my spear, shattering evil, destroying the heathen, and proclaiming the right. But now, brother, my time is well-nigh at hand, and I go to a spiritual city which awaits

me. Come thou with me, for thou too shalt see the vision when I go."

So the two young knights started forth together, but it was not long before they were to part. Soon they came to a high hill surrounded by a dark and evil swamp, across which an ancient king had built a pathway linked with many a bridge. Along this pathway rode Galahad, and each bridge as the hoofs of his charger touched it caught fire behind him and vanished in flame, so that, much as Percivale longed to follow him, he could not do so. He could only rein in his horse at the edge of the swamp and watch Galahad's silver armour gleam fainter and fainter as he went on his wondrous way. But when Galahad reached the great sea on the farther boundary of the swamp there was a wonderful sound as of angels singing, and for one moment Percivale saw him stand out clear as a star, while above his head there hovered the Holy Grail, redder than any rose.

For that one moment the veil was withdrawn for Percivale, and in the glory around him he saw in a brief vision the pearl gateways and golden walls of the spiritual city where Galahad, the spotless Knight of the White Shield, was to reign as king.

So the youngest and bravest knight had succeeded where all others failed, and to Galahad of the White Shield alone came the full and perfect vision of the Holy Grail. And the reason for this is true now as then; for to the pure of heart all things are possible, and those who would wear the victor's crown in the battle of life must seek it even as Galahad did, with no thought of self.



SIR GALAHAD.

My good blade carves the casques of men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure,
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splintered spear-shafts crack and fly,
The horse and rider reel :
They reel, they roll in clanging lists ;
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favours fall !
For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall :
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bowed in crypt and shrine :
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and thrill ;
So keep I fair through faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns :
Then by some secret shrine I ride ;
I hear a voice, but none are there ;



Fair St. George.
Sir John Gilbert.

The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain meres
 I find a magic bark ;
 I leap on board : no helmsman steers :
 I float till all is dark.
 A gentle sound, an awful light !
 Three angels bear the Holy Grail :
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision ! blood of God !
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
 Through dreaming towns I go,
 The cock crows ere the Christmas morn,
 The streets are dumb with snow.
 The tempest crackles on the leads,
 And, ringing, spins from brand and mail ;
 But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
 And gilds the driving hail.
 I leave the plain, I climb the height ;
 No branchy thicket shelter yields ;
 But blessed forms in whistling storms
 Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given
 Such hope, I know not fear ;

I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odours haunt my dreams ;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armour that I wear,
 This weight and size, this heart and eyes,
 Are touched, are turned to finest air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And through the mountain walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear :
 "O just and faithful knight of God !
 Ride on ! the prize is near."
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange ;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

LORD TENNYSON.

THE LEGEND OF SIR GUY.

WAS ever knight for lady's sake
 So tost in love as I, Sir Guy,
 For Phelis fair, that lady bright
 As ever man beheld with eye?



She gave me leave myself to try,
 The valiant knight with shield and spear,
 Ere that her love she would grant me ;
 Which made me venture far and near.

Then provèd I a baron bold,
 In deeds of arms the doughtiest knight
 That in those days in England was,
 With sword and spear in field to fight.

An English man I was by birth :
 In faith of Christ a Christian true :
 The wicked laws of infidels
 I sought by prowess to subdue.

Nine hundred twenty year and odd
 After our Saviour Christ his birth,
 When King Athélstone wore the crown,
 I livèd here upon the earth.

Sometime I was of Warwick earl,
 And, as I said, of very truth
 A lady's love did me constrain
 To seek strange ventures in my youth ;

To win me fame by feats of arms
 In strange and sundry heathen lands ;
 Where I achievèd for her sake
 Right dangerous conquests with my hands.

For first I sailed to Normandy,
 And there I stoutly won in fight
 The emperor's daughter of Almaine,*
 From many a valiant worthy knight.

* Germany.

Then passèd I the seas to Greece,
To help the emperor in his right,
Against the mighty Soldan's host
Of puissant Persians for to fight :

Where I did slay of Saracens,
And heathen pagans, many a man ;
And slew the Soldan's cousin dear,
Who had to name doughty Coldràn.



Eskeldered, a famous knight,
To death likewise I did pursue ;
And Elmayne, King of Tyre, also,
Most terrible in fight to view.

I went into the Soldan's host,
Being thither on embassy sent,
And brought his head away with me ;
I having slain him in his tent.

There was a dragon in that land
Most fiercely met me by the way,
As he a lion did pursue,
Which I myself did also slay.

Then soon I passed the seas from Greece,
And came to Pavia land aright ;
Where I the Duke of Pavia killed,
His heinous treason to requite.

To England then I came with speed,
To wed fair Phelis, lady bright ;
For love of whom I travelled far
To try my manhood and my might.

But when I had espousèd her,
 I stayed with her but forty days,
 Ere that I left this lady fair,
 And went from her beyond the seas.



All clad in gray, in pilgrim sort,
 My voyage from her I did take
 Unto the blessed Holy Land,
 For Jesus Christ my Saviour's sake.

Where I Earl Jonas did redeem,
 And all his sons, which were fifteen,
 Who with the cruel Saracens
 In prison for long time had been.

I slew the giant Amarant
 In battle fiercely hand to hand,
 And doughty Barknard killèd I,
 A treacherous knight of Pavia land.

Then I to England came again,
 And here with Colbrond fell I fought ;
 An ugly giant, which the Danes
 Had for their champion hither brought

I overcame him in the field,
 And slew him soon right valiantly ;
 Whereby this land I did redeem
 From Danish tribute utterly.

And afterwards I offered up
 The use of weapons solemnly
 At Winchester, whereas I fought,
 In sight of many far and nigh.

But first, near Windsor, I did slay
 A boar of passing might and strength ;
 Whose like in England never was
 For hugeness both in breadth and length.

Some of his bones in Warwick yet
 Within the castle there do lie ;
 One of his shield-bones to this day
 Hangs in the city of Coventry.

On Dunsmore heath I also slew
 A monstrous wild and cruel beast,
 Called the Dun-cow of Dunsmore heath ;
 Which many people had opprest.

Some of her bones in Warwick yet
 Still for a monument do lie,
 And there exposed to lookers' view,
 As wonderous strange, they may espy.

A dragon in Northumberland
 I also did in fight destroy,
 Which did both man and beast oppress,
 And all the country sore annoy.

At length to Warwick I did come,
 Like pilgrim poor, and was not known ;
 And there I lived a hermit's life
 A mile and more out of the town.

Where with my hands I hewed a house
 Out of a craggy rock of stone,
 And livèd like a palmer poor
 Within that cave myself alone :



THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

And daily came to beg my bread
 Of Phelis at my castle gate ;
 Not known unto my lovèd wife,
 Who daily mournèd for her mate.

Till at the last I fell sore sick,
 Yea, sick so sore that I must die ;
 I sent to her a ring of gold
 By which she knew me presently.

Then she repairing to the cave,
 Before that I gave up the ghost,
 Herself closed up my dying eyes ;
 My Phelis fair, whom I loved most.

Thus dreadful death did me arrest,
 To bring my corpse unto the grave,
 And like a palmer dièd I,
 Whereby I sought my soul to save.

My body that endured this toil,
 Though now it be consumed to mould,
 My statue, fair engraven in stone,
 In Warwick still you may behold.

Old Ballad.



THE LITTLE MERMAID.

I.—The Palace under the Sea.

FAR out in the wide sea, where the water is blue as the loveliest corn-flower, and clear as the purest crystal, where it is so deep that very, very many church towers must be heaped one upon another in order to reach from the lowest depth to the surface above, dwell the Mer-people.

Now you must not imagine that there is nothing but sand below the water: no, indeed, far from it! Trees and plants of wondrous beauty grow there, whose stems and leaves are so light that they are waved to and fro by the slightest motion of the water, almost as if they were living beings. Fishes, great and small, glide in and out among the branches, just as birds fly about among our trees.

Where the water is deepest stands the palace of the Mer-king. The walls of this palace are of coral, and the high, pointed windows are of amber; the roof is formed of mussel shells, which, as the billows pass over them, are continually opening and closing. This looks exceedingly pretty, especially as each of these mussel shells contains a number of bright, glittering pearls, any one of which would be the most costly ornament in the diadem of a king in the upper world.

The Mer-king who lived in this palace had been for many years a widower; his old mother managed the household affairs for him. She was, on the whole, a sensible sort of a lady, although extremely proud of her high birth and station, on account of which she wore twelve oysters on her tail, whilst the other inhabitants of the sea, even those of distinction, were allowed only six. In every other respect she merited

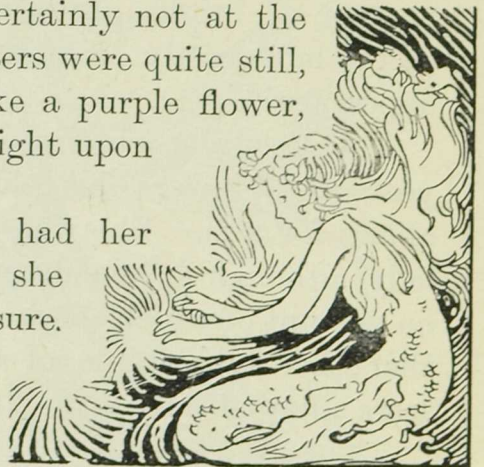
unlimited praise, especially for the affection she showed to the six little Princesses, her grand-daughters.

These were all very beautiful children; the youngest was, however, the most lovely. Her skin was as soft and delicate as a rose leaf, her eyes were of as deep a blue as the sea, but, like all other mermaids, she had no feet; her body ended in a tail like that of a fish.

The whole day long the children used to play in the spacious apartments of the palace, where beautiful flowers grew out of the walls on all sides around them. When the great amber windows were opened, fishes would swim into these apartments as swallows fly into our rooms; but the fishes were bolder than the swallows—they swam straight up to the little Princesses, ate from their hands, and allowed themselves to be caressed.

In front of the palace there was a large garden, full of fiery red and dark blue trees; the fruit upon them glittered like gold, and the flowers resembled a bright burning sun. The sand that formed the soil of the garden was of a bright blue colour, somewhat like flames of sulphur; and a strangely beautiful blue was spread over the whole, so that one might have fancied oneself raised very high in the air, with the sky at once above and below—certainly not at the bottom of the sea. When the waters were quite still, the sun might be seen looking like a purple flower, out of whose cup streamed forth light upon the world.

Each of the little Princesses had her own plot in the garden, where she might plant and sow at her pleasure. One chose hers to be made in the shape of a whale, another



preferred the figure of a mermaid, but the youngest had hers quite round like the sun, and planted in it only those flowers that were red, as the sun seemed to her.

She was certainly a singular child, very quiet and thoughtful. Whilst her sisters were adorning themselves with all sorts of gay things that came out of a ship which had been wrecked, she asked for nothing but a beautiful white marble statue of a boy which had been found in it. She put the statue in her garden, and planted a red weeping-willow by its side. The tree grew up quickly, and let its long boughs fall upon the bright blue ground, where ever-moving shadows played in violet hues, as if boughs and root were embracing.

Nothing pleased the little Princess more than to hear about the world of human beings living above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her everything she knew about ships, towns, men, and land animals, and was particularly pleased when she heard that the flowers of the upper world had a pleasant fragrance (for the flowers of the sea are scentless), and that the woods were green, that the *fishes* fluttering among the branches were of various gay colours, and could sing with a loud, clear voice. The old lady meant birds, but she called them fishes, because her grandchildren, having never seen a bird, would not otherwise have understood her.

“When you have attained your fifteenth year,” added she, “you will be permitted to rise to the surface of the sea; you will then sit by moonlight in the clefts of the rocks, see the ships sail by, and learn to distinguish towns and men.”

The next year the eldest of the sisters reached this happy age, but as for the others—alas! the second sister was a year younger than the eldest, the third a year younger than the second, and so on. The youngest had still five whole years

to wait till that joyful time should come when she also might rise to the surface of the water and see what was going on in the upper world. However, the eldest promised to tell the others about everything she might see, when the first day of her being of age arrived; for the grandmother gave them but little information, and there was so much that they wished to know.

II.—The Sisters see the World.

But none of all the sisters longed so ardently for the day when she should be released from childish restraint as the youngest—she who had longest to wait, and was so quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she sat by the open window,



looking up through the clear blue water, whilst the fishes were leaping and playing around her. She could see the sun and the moon; their light was pale, but they appeared larger than they do to those who live in the upper world. If a shadow passed over them, she knew it must be either a whale, or a ship sailing by full of human beings. Never could these last have imagined that, far beneath them, a little mermaid was passionately stretching forth her white hands towards their ship's keel.

The day had now arrived when the eldest Princess had attained her fifteenth year, and was therefore allowed to rise up to the surface of the sea.

When she returned she had a thousand things to relate. Her chief pleasure had been to sit upon a sand-bank in the moonlight, looking at the large town which lay on the coast, where lights were gleaming like stars, and where music was

playing. She had heard the distant noise of men and carriages, she had seen the high church towers, had listened to the ringing of the bells; and just because she could not go on shore she longed all the more after these things.

How attentively did the youngest sister listen to her words! And when she next sat, at night time, by her open window, gazing upward through the blue waters, her thoughts dwelt so eagerly upon the great city, full of life and sound, that she fancied she could hear the church bells ringing.

Next year the second sister received permission to swim wherever she pleased. She rose to the surface of the sea just when the sun was setting; and this sight so delighted her that she declared it to be more beautiful than anything else she had seen above the waters.

“The whole sky seemed tinged with gold,” said she; “and it is impossible for me to describe to you the beauty of the clouds. Now red, now violet, they glided over me; but still more swiftly flew over the water a flock of white swans, just where the sun was descending. I looked after them, but the sun disappeared, and the bright rosy light on the surface of the sea and on the edges of the clouds died away gradually.”

Before long it was time for the third sister to visit the upper world. She was the boldest of the six, and ventured to go up a river. On its shores she saw green hills, covered with woods and vineyards, among which arose houses and castles. She heard the birds singing, and the sun shone with so much power that she was continually obliged to plunge below the water, in order to cool her burning face.

In a little bay she met with a number of children, who were bathing and jumping about. She would have joined in

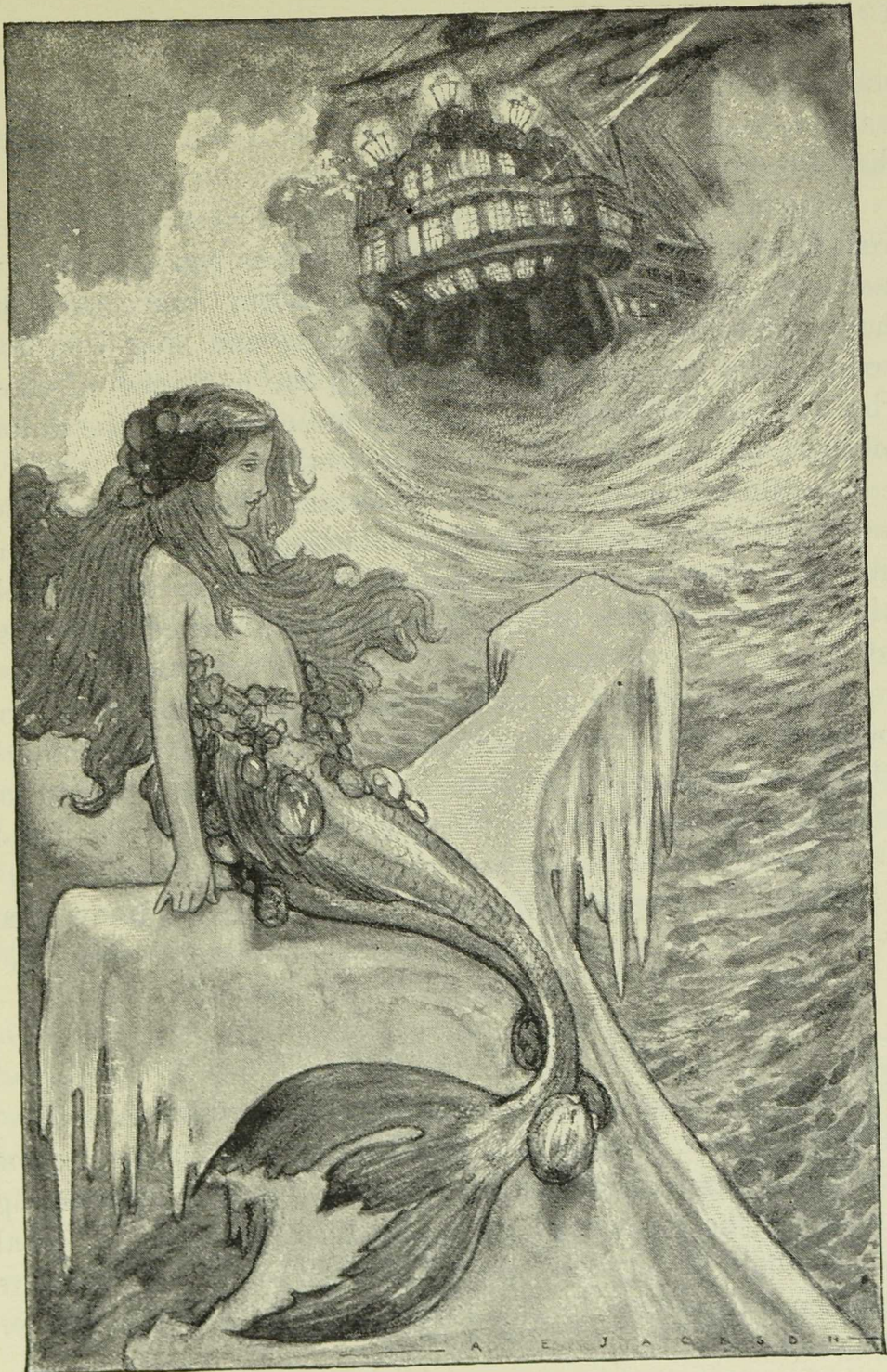
their gambols, but the children fled back to land in great terror, and a little black animal barked at her in such a manner that she herself was frightened at last and swam back to the sea. But never could she forget the green woods, the verdant hills, and the pretty children, who, although they had no fins, were swimming about in the river so fearlessly.

The fourth sister was not so bold; she remained in the open sea, and said, on her return home, she thought nothing could be more beautiful. She had seen ships sailing by—so far off that they looked like sea-gulls; she had watched the merry dolphins gambolling in the water, and the enormous whales sending up into the air a thousand sparkling fountains.

The year after, the fifth sister attained her fifteenth year—her birthday happened at a different season from that of her sisters; it was winter, the sea was of a green colour, and immense icebergs were floating on its surface. These, she said, looked like pearls, although all were much larger than the church towers in the land of human beings. She sat down upon one of these pearls, and let the wind play with her long hair; but then all the ships hoisted their sails in terror, and escaped as quickly as possible.

In the evening the sky was covered with clouds; and whilst the great mountains of ice alternately sank and rose again, and beamed with a reddish glow, flashes of lightning burst forth from the clouds, and the thunder rolled on, peal after peal. The sails of all the ships were instantly furled, and horror and affright reigned on board; but the Princess sat still on the iceberg, looking unconcernedly at the blue zig-zag of the flashes.

The first time that each of these sisters rose out of the sea she was quite enchanted at the sight of so many new



"The Princess sat still on the iceberg." (See page 194.)

and beautiful objects ; but the novelty was soon over, and it was not long ere her own home appeared far more attractive than the upper world.

Many an evening would the five sisters rise hand in hand from the depths of the ocean. Their voices were far sweeter than any human voice, and when a storm was coming on they would swim in front of the ships and sing—oh, how sweetly they would sing!—describing the happiness of those who lived at the bottom of the sea, and entreating the sailors not to be afraid, but to come down to them.

But the mariners did not understand their words—they fancied the song was only the whistling of the wind—and thus they lost the hidden glories of the sea ; for if their ships were wrecked, all on board were drowned, and none but dead men ever entered the Mer-king's palace.

Whilst the sisters were swimming at evening time, the youngest would remain motionless and alone in her father's palace, looking up after them. She would have wept, but mermaids cannot weep, and therefore, when they are troubled, they suffer more than human beings do.

“ Oh ! if I were but fifteen ! ” sighed she ; “ I know that I should love the upper world and its inhabitants so much ! ”

III.—The Young Prince.

At last the time she had so ardently longed for arrived.

“ Well, now it is your turn,” said the grandmother : “ come here that I may adorn you like your sisters.” And winding around her hair a wreath of white lilies, whose every petal was the half of a pearl, she commanded eight large oysters to fasten themselves to the Princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

“But that is so very uncomfortable!” said the little Princess.

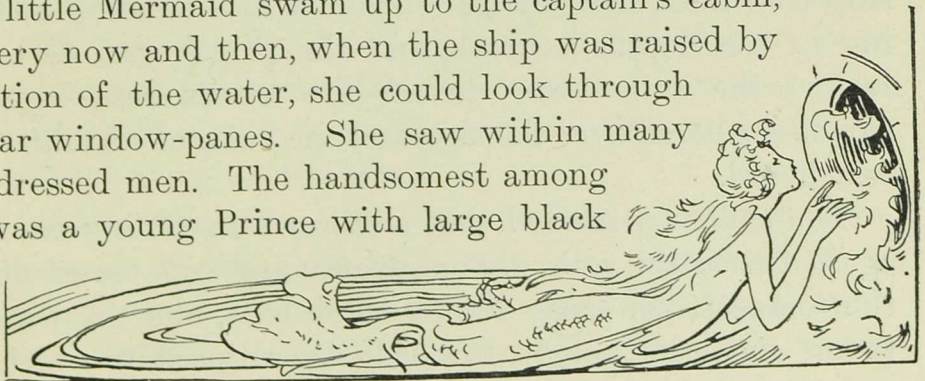
“One must not mind a little discomfort when one wishes to look well,” said the old lady.

How willingly would the Princess have given up all this splendour, and exchanged her heavy crown for the red flowers of her garden, which were so much more becoming to her. But she dared not do so. “Farewell!” said she; and she rose from the sea, light as a flake of foam.

When, for the first time in her life, she appeared on the surface of the water, the sun had just sunk below the horizon, the clouds were glowing with bright golden and rosy hues, the evening star was shining in the pale western sky, the air was mild and refreshing, and the sea as smooth as a looking-glass.

A large ship with three masts lay on the still waters; one sail only was unfurled, for not a breath was stirring, and the sailors were quietly seated on the deck and the rigging of the vessel. Music and song resounded from the ship, and after it grew dark hundreds of lamps all of a sudden burst forth into light, whilst innumerable flags were fluttering overhead.

The little Mermaid swam up to the captain's cabin, and every now and then, when the ship was raised by the motion of the water, she could look through the clear window-panes. She saw within many richly-dressed men. The handsomest among them was a young Prince with large black



eyes. He certainly could not be more than sixteen years old, and it was in honour of his birthday that a grand festival was being celebrated.

The crew were dancing on the deck, and when the young Prince appeared among them a hundred rockets were sent up into the air, turning night into day, and so terrifying the little Mermaid that for some minutes she plunged beneath the water.

However, she soon raised her little head again, and then it seemed as if all the stars were falling down upon her. Such a fiery shower she had never seen before; never had she heard that men possessed such wonderful powers. Large suns revolved around her, bright fishes floated in the air, and all these marvels were reflected on the clear surface of the sea. It was so light in the ship that everything could be seen distinctly. Oh, how happy the young Prince was! He shook hands with the sailors, and laughed and jested with them, whilst sweet notes of music mingled with the silence of the night.

It was now late, but the little Mermaid could not tear herself away from the ship and the handsome young Prince. She remained looking through the cabin window, rocked to and fro by the waves. The sails were now unfurled, and the ship continued her voyage. There was a foaming and frothing in the depths beneath, and the ship began to move on faster; the sails were spread, the waves rose high, thick clouds gathered over the sky, and the noise of distant thunder was heard.

The sailors perceived that a storm was coming on, so they again furled the sails. The great vessel was tossed about on the tempestuous ocean like a small boat, and the waves rose to an immense height, towering over the ship, which alternately sank beneath and rose above them.

To the little Mermaid this seemed most delightful, but the ship's crew thought very differently. The vessel cracked, the stout masts bent under the violence of the billows, the water rushed in. For a minute the ship tottered to and fro, then the main-mast broke as if it had been a reed; the ship turned over, and was filled with water.

The little Mermaid now perceived that the crew was in danger, for she herself was forced to beware of the beams and splinters that were torn from the vessel, and floating about on the waves. At the same time it became pitch-dark, so that she could not distinguish anything; presently, however, a dreadful flash of lightning disclosed to her the whole of the wreck.

Her eyes sought the young Prince; the same instant the ship sank to the bottom. At first she was delighted, thinking that the Prince must now come to her abode; but she soon remembered that man cannot live in water, and that therefore, if the Prince ever entered her palace, he must first lose his life as a mortal.

"Die? no, he must not die!" She swam through the fragments with which the water was strewn, regardless of her own danger, and at last found the Prince all but exhausted, and with great difficulty keeping his head above water. He had already closed his eyes, and must have been drowned had not the little Mermaid come to his rescue. She seized hold of him and kept him above water, suffering the waves to bear them on together.

Towards morning the storm was hushed; no trace, however, remained of the ship. The sun rose like fire out of the sea; his beams seemed to restore colour to the Prince's cheeks, but his eyes were still closed. The Mermaid kissed his high forehead and stroked his wet hair away from his

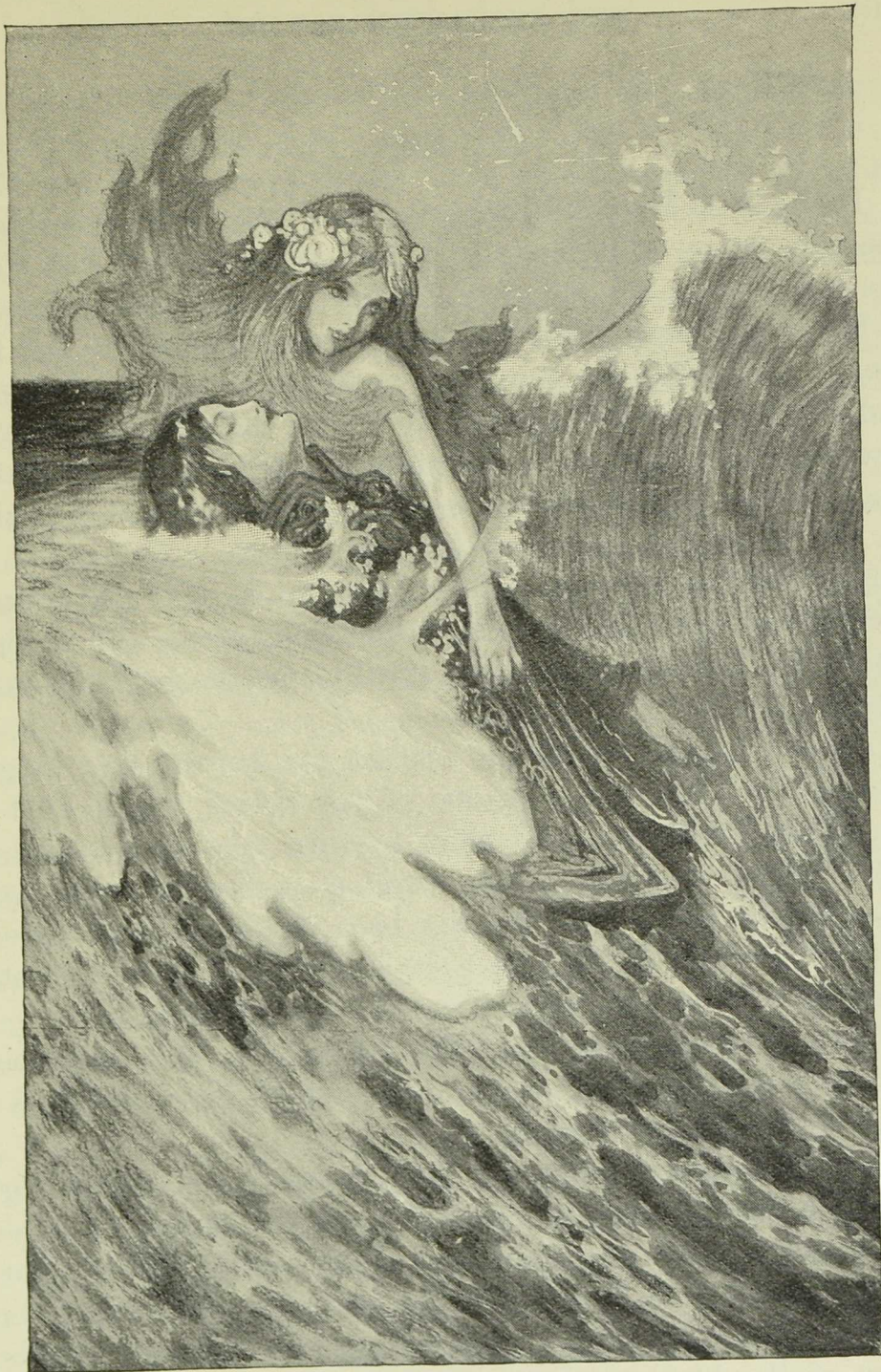
face. He looked like the marble statue in her garden. She kissed him again, and wished most fervently that he might recover.

She now saw the dry land with its mountains glittering with snow. A green wood extended along the coast, and at the entrance of the wood stood a chapel or convent, she could not be sure which. Orange and citron trees grew in the garden adjoining it, and an avenue of tall palms led up to the door.

The sea here formed a little bay, in which the water was quite smooth, but very deep, and under the cliffs there were dry firm sands. Hither swam the little Mermaid with the seemingly dead Prince. She laid him upon the warm sand, and took care to place his head high, and to turn his face to the sun.

The bells began to ring in the large white building which stood before her, and a number of young girls came out to walk in the garden. The Mermaid went away from the shore, hid herself behind some stones, covered her head with foam, so that her little face could not be seen, and watched to see what would become of the Prince.

It was not long before one of the young girls approached. She seemed quite frightened at finding the Prince in this state, apparently dead. Soon, however, she recovered herself, and ran back to call her sisters. The little Mermaid saw that the Prince revived, and that all around smiled kindly and joyfully upon him. For her, however, he looked not; he knew not that it was she who had saved him; and when the Prince was taken into the house, she felt so sad that she immediately plunged beneath the water, and returned to her father's palace.



With great difficulty she kept his head above water.” (See page 199.)



IV.—The Royal Palace.

If the little Mermaid had been quiet and thoughtful before, she now grew still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen in the upper world, but she made no answer.

Many an evening she rose to the place where she had left the Prince. She saw the snow on the mountains melt away, and the fruits in the garden ripen, but the Prince she never saw; so she always returned sorrowfully to her home under the sea. Her only pleasure was to sit in her little garden, gazing on the beautiful statue so like the Prince. She cared no longer for her flowers. They grew up in wild luxuriance, covered the steps, and entwined their long stems and tendrils among the boughs of the trees, until her whole garden became a bower.

At last, being unable to conceal her sorrow any longer, she revealed the secret to one of her sisters, who told it to the other Princesses, and they in turn told it to some of their friends. Among them was a young mermaid who knew about the Prince, having been an eye-witness herself of the festivities in the ship; she knew also in what country the Prince lived, and what was the name of its king.

"Come, little sister," said the Princesses; and, embracing her, they rose together arm in arm out of the water, just in front of the Prince's palace.

This palace was built of bright yellow stone, and a flight of white marble steps led from it down to the sea. A gilded cupola crowned the building, and white marble figures, which might almost have been taken for real men and women, were placed among the pillars surrounding it. Through the clear glass of the high windows one might look into magnificent

apartments hung with silken curtains, and adorned with beautiful paintings.

It was a real treat to the little royal mermaids to behold so splendid an abode. They gazed through the windows of one of the largest rooms, and in the centre saw a fountain playing, whose waters sprang up so high as to reach the glittering cupola above, through which fell the sunbeams, dancing on the water, and brightening the pretty plants which grew around it.

The little Mermaid now knew where her beloved Prince dwelt, and henceforth she went there almost every evening. She often approached nearer the land than her sisters had ventured, and even swam up the narrow channel that flowed under the marble balcony. Here, on bright moonlight nights, she would watch the young Prince, whilst he believed himself alone. Sometimes she saw him sailing on the water in a gaily-painted boat, with many-coloured flags waving above. She would then hide among the green reeds which grew on the banks, listening to his voice; and if any one in the boat noticed the rustling of her long silver veil, when it was caught now and then by the light breeze, they only fancied it was a swan flapping his wings.

Many a night, when the fishermen were casting their nets by the beacon's light, she heard them talking of the Prince, and relating the noble actions he had performed. She was then very happy, thinking how she had saved his life when struggling with the waves, and remembering how his head had rested on her bosom, and how she had kissed him when he knew nothing of it, and could never even dream of her existence.



Human beings became more and more dear to her every day; she wished that she were one of them. Their world seemed to her much larger than that of the Mer-people; they could fly over the ocean in their ships, as well as climb to the summits of those high mountains that rose above the clouds; and their wooded domains extended much farther than a mermaid's eye could penetrate.

V.—*The Grandmother Explains.*

There were many things that the little Mermaid wished to hear explained, but her sisters could not give her any satisfactory answer. She was again obliged to have recourse to the old Queen-mother, who knew a great deal about the upper world, which she used to call "the country above the sea."

"Do men, when they are not drowned, live for ever?" she asked one day. "Do they not die as we do, who live at the bottom of the sea?"

"Yes," was the grandmother's reply, "they must die like us, and their life is much shorter than ours. We live to the age of three hundred years; but when we die we become foam on the sea, and are not allowed even to share a grave among those that are dear to us. We have no immortal souls; we can never live again, and are like the green rushes which when once cut down are withered for ever. Human beings, on the contrary, have souls that continue to live when their bodies become dust; and as we rise out of the water to admire the abode of man, even so these souls ascend to glorious unknown dwellings in the skies, which we are not permitted to see."

"Why have not *we* immortal souls?" asked the little Mermaid. "I would willingly give up my three hundred

years to be a human being for only one day, thus to become entitled to enter that heavenly world above."

"You must not think of that," answered her grandmother: "it is much better as it is; we live longer, and are far happier than human beings."

"So I must die, and be dashed like foam over the sea, never again to rise and hear the gentle murmur of the ocean, never again to see the beautiful flowers and the bright sun! Tell me, dear grandmother, are there no means by which I may obtain an immortal soul?"

"No!" replied the old lady. "It is true that if thou couldst so win the affections of a human being as to become dearer to him than either father or mother—if he loved thee with all his heart, and promised to be always faithful to thee—then his soul would flow into thine, and thou wouldst become partaker of human bliss. But that can never be; for what in our eyes is the most beautiful part of our body, the tail, the inhabitants of the earth think hideous: they cannot bear it."

The little Mermaid sighed and looked mournfully at the scaly part of her form, otherwise so fair and delicate.

"We are happy," added the old lady; "we shall jump and swim about merrily for three hundred years—that is a long time—and afterwards we shall repose peacefully in death. This evening we have a court ball."

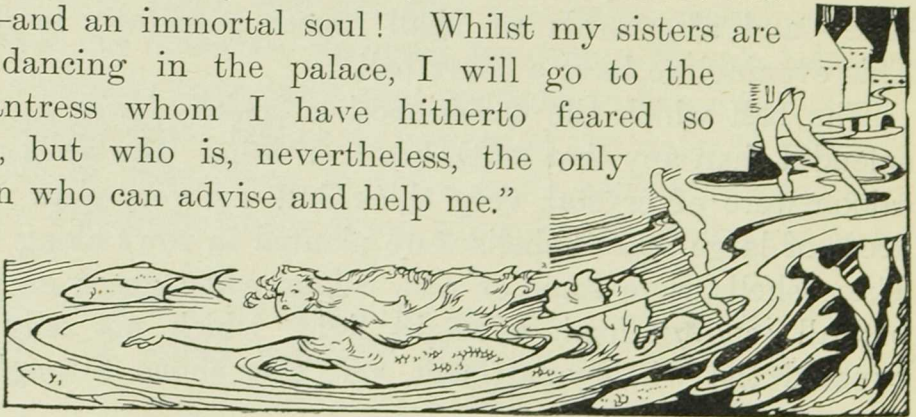
The ball which the Queen-mother spoke of was far more splendid than any that earth has ever seen. The walls of the saloon were of crystal, very thick, but yet very clear; hundreds of large mussel shells were planted in rows along them. These shells were some of rose colour, some green as grass, but all sending forth a bright light, which not only illuminated the whole apartment, but also shone through the

glassy walls so as to light up the waters around, and making the scales of the numberless fishes, great and small, crimson and purple, silvern and golden, appear more brilliant than ever.

Through the centre of the saloon flowed a bright, clear stream, on the surface of which danced mermen and mermaids to the melody of their own sweet voices—voices far sweeter than those of the dwellers upon earth. The little Princess sang most sweetly of all, and they clapped their hands and applauded her. For a moment it pleased her to be thus reminded that there was neither on the earth nor in the sea a more beautiful voice than hers.

But her thoughts soon returned to the world above her. She could not forget the handsome Prince; she could not control her sorrow at not having an immortal soul. She stole away from her father's palace, and whilst all was joy within she sat alone, lost in thought, in her little neglected garden.

On a sudden she heard the tones of horns resounding over the water far away in the distance, and she said to herself, "Now he is going out to hunt—he whom I love more than my father and my mother, with whom my thoughts are constantly occupied, and to whom I would so willingly trust the happiness of my life! All, all! will I risk to win him—and an immortal soul! Whilst my sisters are still dancing in the palace, I will go to the enchantress whom I have hitherto feared so much, but who is, nevertheless, the only person who can advise and help me."



VI.—*The Enchantress.*

So the little Mermaid left the garden and went to the foaming whirlpool, beyond which dwelt the enchantress. She had never gone this way before. Neither flowers nor sea-grass bloomed along her path. She had to traverse a waste of bare, gray sand till she reached the whirlpool, whose waters were eddying and whizzing like mill-wheels, tearing everything they could seize along with them into the abyss below.

She was obliged to make her way through this horrible place in order to arrive at the territory of the enchantress. Then she had to pass through a boiling, slimy bog, which the enchantress called her turf-moor. Her house stood in a wood beyond this, and a strange abode it was. All the trees and bushes around were polyps, looking like hundred-headed serpents shooting up out of the ground; their branches were long, slimy arms with fingers of worms, every member, from the root to the uttermost tip, ceaselessly moving and extending on all sides. Whatever they seized they fastened upon so that it could not loosen itself from their grasp.

The little Mermaid stood still for a minute looking at this horrible wood. Her heart beat with fear, and she would certainly have returned without attaining her object, had she not remembered the Prince—and immortality.

The thought gave her new courage. She bound up her long, waving hair, that the polyps might not catch hold of it, crossed her delicate arms over her bosom, and swifter than a fish can glide through the water, she passed these unsightly trees, which stretched their eager arms after her in vain.

She could not help seeing, however, that every polyp had something in its grasp, held as firmly by a thousand

little arms as if enclosed by iron bands. The whitened skulls of a number of human beings who had been drowned in the sea, and had sunk into the abyss, grinned horribly from the arms of these polyps. Rudders, chests, skeletons of land animals were also held in their embrace. Among other things might be seen even a little mermaid whom they had seized and strangled! What a fearful sight for the unfortunate Princess!

But she got safely through this wood of horrors, and then arrived at a slimy place where immense fat snails were crawling about; and in the midst of this place stood a house built of the bones of unfortunate people who had been shipwrecked. Here sat the witch caressing a toad in the same manner as some persons would a pet bird. The ugly fat snails she called her chickens, and she permitted them to crawl about her.

“I know well what you would ask of me,” said she to the little Princess. “Your wish is foolish enough, yet it shall be fulfilled, though its accomplishment is sure to bring misfortune on you, my fairest Princess. You wish to get rid of your tail, in order that a young Prince may fall in love with you, and that you may obtain an immortal soul—is it not so?”

Whilst the witch spoke these words, she laughed so violently that her pet toad and snails fell from her lap. “You come just at the right time,” continued she. “Had you come after sunset, it would not have been in my power to help you before another year. I will prepare for you a drink with which you must swim to land. You must sit down upon the shore and swallow it, and then your tail will fall and shrink away and you will be formed as human beings are.

“This transformation will, however, be very painful; you will feel as though a sharp knife passed through your body. All who look on you, after you have been thus changed, will

say that you are the loveliest child of earth they have ever seen. You will retain your graceful, undulating movements, and no dancer will move so lightly, but every step you take will cause you pain all but unbearable; it will seem to you as though you were walking on the sharp edges of swords. Can you endure all this suffering? If so, I will grant your request."

"Yes, I will," answered the Princess, with a faltering voice; for she remembered her dear Prince, and the immortal soul which her suffering might win.

"Only consider," said the witch, "that you can never again become a mermaid when once you have received a human form. You may never return to your sisters, and your father's palace; and unless you shall win the Prince's love to such a degree that he shall leave father and mother for you, that you shall be mixed up with all his thoughts and wishes, and unless you become man and wife, you will never obtain the boon you seek. The morrow of the day on which he is united to another will see your death; your heart will break with sorrow, and you will be changed to foam on the sea."

"Still I will venture!" said the little Mermaid, pale and trembling.

"Besides all this, I must be paid, and it is no slight thing that I require for my trouble. You have the sweetest voice of all the dwellers in the sea, and you think by its means to charm the Prince. This voice, however, I demand as my recompense. The best thing you possess I require in exchange for my magic drink."

"But if you take my voice from me," said the Princess, "what have I left with which to charm the Prince?"

"Your graceful form," replied the witch, "your undulating

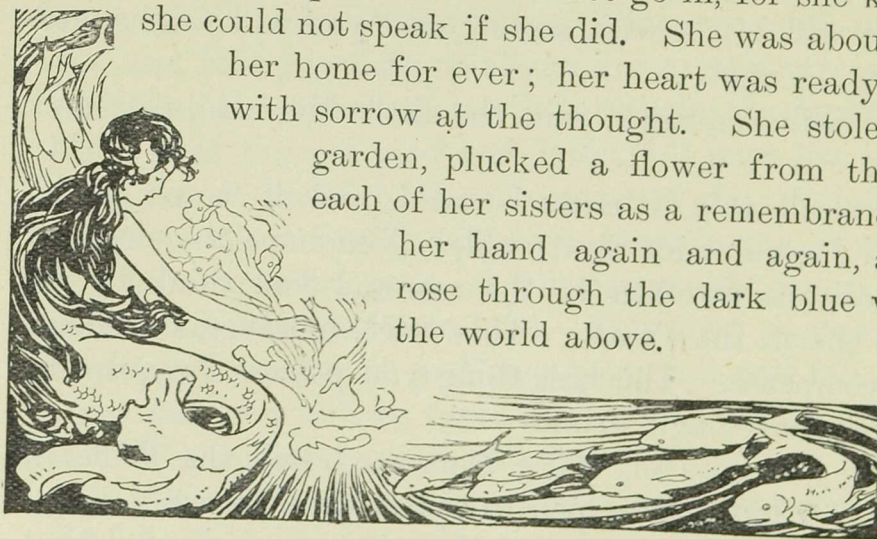
motion, and speaking eyes. With such as these it will be easy to win a vain human heart. Well now, have you lost courage?"

"No; I agree to your terms," said the Princess; and the witch took up her cauldron in order to mix her potion.

"Here it is," said the witch to the Princess, when the magic drink was ready. The poor little Mermaid was now, alas! quite dumb—she could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polyps should attempt to seize you as you pass through my little grove," said the witch, "you have only to sprinkle some of this liquid over them, and their arms will burst into a thousand pieces." But the Princess had no need of this counsel, for the polyps drew hastily back as soon as they perceived the bright phial that glittered in her hand like a star. Thus she passed safely through the formidable wood, over the moor, and across the foaming mill-stream.

She now looked once again at her father's palace. The lamps in the saloon were extinguished, and all the family were asleep. She would not go in, for she knew that she could not speak if she did. She was about to leave her home for ever; her heart was ready to break with sorrow at the thought. She stole into the garden, plucked a flower from the bed of each of her sisters as a remembrance, kissed her hand again and again, and then rose through the dark blue waters to the world above.



VII.—*The Royal Palace.*

The sun had not yet risen when she arrived at the Prince's dwelling and ascended those well-known marble steps. The moon still shone in the sky when the little Mermaid drank off the wonderful liquid contained in her phial. She felt it run through her like a sharp knife, and she fell down in a swoon.

When the sun rose she awoke, and felt a burning pain in all her limbs, but—she saw standing close to her the handsome young Prince, whose coal-black eyes were fixed inquiringly upon her.

At once he asked who she was, and how she had got there; and she, in reply, smiled and gazed upon him with her bright blue eyes, for, alas! she could not speak. He then led her by the hand into the palace. She found that the witch had told her true; she felt as though she were walking on the edges of sharp swords, but she bore the pain willingly. On she passed, light as a zephyr, and all who saw her wondered at her graceful movements.

When she entered the palace, rich new clothes of muslin and silk were brought to her to replace her torn and soiled garment, which seemed to have been made from foam of the sea. She was lovelier than all who dwelt there, but she could neither speak nor sing. Some female slaves, gaily dressed in silk and gold brocade, sung before the Prince and his royal parents; and one of them distinguished herself by her clear, sweet voice, which the Prince applauded by clapping his hands. This made the little Mermaid very sad, for she knew that she used to sing far better than the young slave. "Alas!" thought she, "if he did but know that for his sake I have given away my voice for ever!"

The slaves now began to dance. Our lovely little Mermaiden then arose, stretched out her delicate white arms, and hovered gracefully about the room. Every motion displayed more and more the perfect symmetry and elegance of her figure; and the expression which beamed in her speaking eyes touched the hearts of the spectators far more than the song of the slaves.

All present were enchanted, but especially the young Prince, who called her his dear little foundling. And she danced again and again, although every step cost her excessive pain.

The Prince now caused a riding dress to be made for her, in order that she might accompany him in his rides; so together they traversed the fragrant woods, where green boughs brushed against their shoulders, and the birds sang merrily among the fresh leaves. With him she climbed steep mountains; and although her tender feet bled, so as to be remarked by the attendants, she only smiled, and followed her dear Prince to the heights, whence they could see the clouds chasing each other beneath them, like a flock of birds migrating to other countries.

During the night, when all in the palace were at rest, she would walk down the marble steps in order to cool her burning feet in the deep waters; she would then think of those beloved ones who dwelt in the lower world.

One night, as she was thus bathing her feet, her sisters swam together to the spot, arm in arm and singing, but, alas! so mournfully. She beckoned to them, and they immediately recognized her, and told her how great was the mourning in her father's house for her loss. From this time the sisters visited her every night; and once they brought with them the old grandmother, who had not seen

the upper world for a great many years; they likewise brought their father, the Mer-king, with his crown on his head; but these two old people did not venture near enough to land to be able to speak to her.

The little Mermaiden became dearer and dearer to the Prince every day; but he only looked upon her as a sweet, gentle child, and the thought of making her his wife never entered his head. And yet his wife she must be ere she could receive an immortal soul; his wife she must be, or she would change into foam, and be driven restlessly over the billows of the sea!

“Dost thou not love me above all others?” her eyes seemed to ask, as he smoothed her lovely brow.

“Yes,” the Prince would say, “thou art dearer to me than any other, for no one is so good as thou art! Thou lovest me so much, and thou art so like a young maiden whom I have seen but once, and may never see again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked by a sudden tempest; the waves threw me on the shore near a holy temple, where a number of young girls are occupied constantly in prayer. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her only once, but her image is vividly impressed upon my memory, and her alone can I love. But she belongs to the holy temple, and thou, who resemblest her so much, hast been given to me for consolation. Never will we be parted!”

“Alas! he does not know that it was I who saved his life,” thought the little Mermaiden, sighing deeply. “I bore him over the wild waves into the wooded bay where the holy temple stood. I sat behind the rocks, waiting till some one should come. I saw the pretty maiden approach whom he loves more than me”—and again she heaved a deep sigh,



for she could not weep. "He said that the young girl belongs to the holy temple; she never comes out into the world, so they cannot meet each other again—and I am always with him, see him daily. I will love him, and devote my whole life to him."

VIII.—*The Prince's Journey.*

"So the Prince is going to be married to the beautiful daughter of the neighbouring king," said the courtiers; "that is why he is having that splendid ship fitted out. It is announced that he wishes to travel, but in reality he goes to see the Princess. A numerous retinue will accompany him." The little Mermaiden smiled at these and similar conjectures, for she knew the Prince's intentions better than any one else.

"I must go," he said to her; "I must see the beautiful Princess. My parents require me to do so; but they will not compel me to marry her, and bring her home as my bride. And it is quite impossible for me to love her, for she cannot be so like the beautiful girl in the temple as thou art; and if I were obliged to choose, I should prefer thee, my little silent foundling with the speaking eyes.

"Thou art not afraid of the sea, art thou, my sweet child?" asked he tenderly, as they stood together in the splendid ship which was to take them to the country of the neighbouring king. And then he told her of the storms that sometimes agitate the waters, of the strange fishes that inhabit the deep, and of the wonderful things seen by divers. But she smiled at his words, for she knew better than any child of earth what went on in the depths of the ocean.

At night-time, when the moon shone brightly, and when

all on board the ship were fast asleep, she sat on the deck, looking down into the sea. It seemed to her, as she gazed through the foamy track made by the ship's keel, that she saw her father's palace and her grandmother's silver crown. She then saw her sisters rise out of the water, looking sorrowful, and stretching out their hands towards her. She nodded to them, smiled, and would have explained that everything was going on quite according to her wishes, but just then the cabin-boy approached, upon which the sisters plunged beneath the water so suddenly that the boy thought that what he had seen on the waves was nothing but foam.

The next morning the ship entered the harbour of the King's splendid capital. Bells were rung, trumpets sounded, and soldiers marched in procession through the city with waving banners and glittering bayonets. Every day witnessed some new entertainment; balls and parties followed each other. The Princess, however, was not yet in the town; she had been sent to a distant convent for her education, there to be taught the practice of all royal virtues. In due time, however, she arrived at the palace.

The little Mermaid had been anxious to see this unparalleled Princess; and she was now obliged to confess that she had never before seen so beautiful a creature.

The skin of the Princess was so white and delicate that the veins might be seen through it, and her dark eyes sparkled beneath a pair of finely-formed eyebrows.

"It is herself!" exclaimed the Prince, when they met; "it is she who saved my life when I lay like a corpse on the seashore!"

"Oh, I am all too happy!" said he to his dumb foundling. "What I never dared to hope for has come to pass. Thou must rejoice in my happiness, for thou lovest me more than

all others who surround me." And the little Mermaid kissed his hand in silent sorrow; it seemed to her as if her heart was breaking already, although the morrow of the marriage day, which must inevitably see her death, had not yet dawned.

Again the church bells rang, whilst heralds rode through the streets of the capital to announce the approaching bridal. Fragrant flames burned in silver candlesticks on all the altars; the priests swung their golden censers, and bride and bridegroom joined hands whilst the holy words that united them were spoken.

The little Mermaid, clad in silk and cloth of gold, stood behind the Princess and held the train of the bridal dress; but her ear heard nothing of the solemn music, her eye saw not the holy ceremony: she remembered her approaching end; she remembered that she had lost both this world and the next.

That very same evening bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. Cannon were fired, flags waved with the breeze, and in the centre of the deck was raised for the princely pair a magnificent pavilion of purple and cloth of gold, fitted up with the richest and softest couches. A favourable wind swelled the sails, and the ship glided lightly over the blue waters.

IX.—The End of the Tale.

As soon as it was dark, coloured lamps were hung out, and dancing began on the deck. The little Mermaid was thus involuntarily reminded of what she had seen the first time she rose to the upper world. The spectacle that now presented itself was equally splendid, and she was obliged

to join in the dance, hovering lightly as a bird over the boards of the deck. All applauded her, for never had she danced with more enchanting grace.

Her little feet suffered extremely, but she no longer felt the pain, for the anguish her heart suffered was much greater. It was the last evening she might see him for whose sake she had forsaken her home and family, had given away her beautiful voice, and suffered daily the most violent pain—all without his having the least suspicion of it.

It was the last evening that she might breathe the same atmosphere in which he, the beloved one, lived—the last evening when she might behold the deep blue sea and the starry heavens. All was joy in the ship; and she, her heart filled with thoughts of death, smiled and danced with the others till past midnight.

Soon all was still; the steersman alone stood at the ship's helm. The little Mermaid leaned her white arms on the bulwark, and looked towards the east, watching for the dawn; she knew well that the first sunbeam would witness her dissolution. She saw her sisters rise out of the sea. Deadly pale were their features, and their long hair no more fluttered over their shoulders: it had all been cut off.



“We have given it to the witch,” said they, “to induce her to help thee, so that thou mayest not die. She has given to us a penknife—here it is. Before the sun rises thou must plunge it into the Prince’s heart; and when his warm blood trickles down upon thy feet, they will again be changed to a fish-like tail, thou wilt once more become a mermaid, and wilt live thy full three hundred years ere thou changest to foam on the sea.

“But hasten! either he or thou must die before sunrise. Our aged mother mourns for thee so much that her gray hair has fallen off through sorrow, as ours fell before the scissors of the witch. Kill the Prince, and come down to us! Hasten! hasten! Dost thou not see the red streaks on the eastern sky, announcing the near approach of the sun? A few minutes more and he rises, and then all will be over with thee.” At these words they sighed deeply and vanished.

The little Mermaid drew aside the purple curtains of the pavilion where lay the Prince. Bending over him, she kissed his forehead, and then, glancing at the sky, she saw that the dawning light was every moment brightening. The Prince’s lips unconsciously murmured the name of his bride, whilst the fatal penknife trembled in the hand of the unhappy Mermaid.

All at once she threw far out into the sea that instrument of death. The waves rose like bright blazing flames around, and the water where it fell seemed tinged with blood. With eyes fast becoming dim and fixed, she looked once more at her beloved Prince, then plunged from the ship into the sea, and felt her body slowly dissolving into foam.

The sun rose from his watery bed; his beams fell so softly and warmly upon her that our little Mermaid was scarcely sensible of dying. She still saw the glorious sun, and over her head hovered a thousand beautiful transparent forms—so transparent were they that through them she could distinguish the white sails of the ship and the bright red clouds in the sky. The voices of these airy creatures had a melody so sweet and soothing that a human ear would be as little able to catch the sound as the eye to discern their forms. They hovered around her without wings, borne by their own lightness through the air. The little Mermaid

at last saw that she had a body as transparent as theirs, and felt herself raised gradually from the foam of the sea to higher regions.

“Where are they taking me?” she asked, and her accents sounded just like the voices of those heavenly beings.

“Speak you to the daughters of air?” was the answer. “The mermaid has no immortal soul, and can only acquire that heavenly gift by winning the love of one of the sons of men. Neither do the daughters of air possess immortal souls, but they can acquire them by their own good deeds. We fly to hot countries, where the children of earth are wasting away under sultry pestilential breezes: our fresh, cooling breath revives them.

“We diffuse ourselves through the atmosphere, we perfume it with the delicious fragrance of flowers, and thus spread joy and health over the earth. By doing good in this manner for three hundred years we win immortality, and receive a share of the eternal bliss of human beings. And thou, poor little Mermaid! who, following the impulse of thine own heart, hast done and suffered so much, thou art now raised to the airy world of spirits, that by performing deeds of kindness for three hundred years thou mayest acquire an immortal soul.”

The little Mermaid stretched out her transparent arms to the sun, and for the first time in her life tears moistened her eyes.

And now again all were awake and rejoicing in the ship. She saw the Prince with his pretty bride. They had missed her. They looked sorrowfully down on the foamy waters, as if they knew she had plunged into the sea. Unseen, she kissed the bridegroom's forehead, smiled upon him, and then, with the rest of the children of air, soared high above the rosy cloud which was sailing so peacefully over the ship

“After three hundred years we shall fly in the kingdom of heaven!”

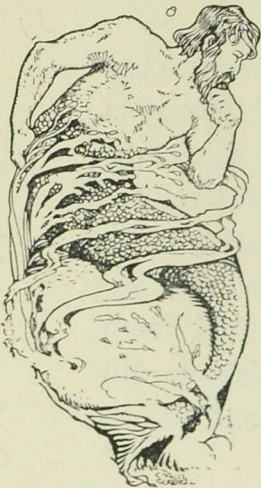
“We may arrive there even sooner,” whispered one of her sisters. “We fly invisibly through the dwellings of men, where there are children; and whenever we find a good child, who gives pleasure to his parents and deserves their love, the good God shortens our time of probation. No child is aware that we are flitting about his room, and that whenever joy draws a smile from us a year is struck out of our three hundred. But when we see a rude, naughty child, we weep bitter tears of sorrow, and every tear we shed adds a day to our time of probation.”

*From Hans Andersen, translated by
CAROLINE PEACHEY.*

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN.

COME, dear children, let us away—
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,
Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go—
Call once yet,
In a voice that she will know,—
“Margaret! Margaret!”
Children’s voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother’s ear;



Children's voices, wild with pain—
 Surely she will come again!
 Call her once and come away;
 This way, this way!
 "Mother dear, we cannot stay!
 The wild white horses foam and fret."
 Margaret! Margaret!

Come, dear children, come away down;
 Call no more!
 One last look at the white-walled town,
 And the little gray church on the windy shore;
 Then come down!
 She will not come though you call all day;
 Come away! come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
 We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
 In the caverns where we lay,
 Through the surf and through the swell,
 The far-off sound of a silver bell?
 Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
 Where the winds are all asleep;
 Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
 Where the salt weed sways in the stream;
 Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
 Feed in the ooze of their pasture ground;
 Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
 Dry their mail, and bask in the brine;
 Where great whales come sailing by,
 Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
 Round the world for ever and aye?
 When did music come this way?
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
 (Call yet once) that she went away?
 Once she sat with you and me,
 On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
 And the youngest sate on her knee.

She combed its bright hair, and she tended it well,
 When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
 She sighed, she looked up through the clear green sea;
 She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
 In the little gray church on the shore to-day.
 'Twill be Easter-time in the world—ah me!
 And I lose my poor soul, Merman, here with thee."
 I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
 Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
 She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
 Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
 "The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
 Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say.
 Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
 We went by the beach, by the sandy down
 Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-walled town;
 Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
 To the little gray church on the windy hill.

From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
 But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
 We climbed on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
 And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded
 panes.

She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear.
 "Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!"



Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone ;
 The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan.
 But, ah, she gave me never a look,
 For her eyes were sealed to the holy book !
 Loud prays the priest ; shut stands the door.
 Come away, children, call no more !
 Come away, come down, call no more !

Down, down, down—
 Down to the depths of the sea !
 She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
 Singing most joyfully.
 Hark what she sings : "O joy, O joy,
 For the humming street and the child with its toy ;
 For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well ;
 For the wheel where I spun,
 And the blessed light of the sun !"
 And so she sings her fill,
 Singing most joyfully,
 Till the spindle drops from her hand,
 And the whizzing wheel stands still.
 She steals to the window and looks at the sand,
 And over the sand at the sea ;
 And her eyes are set in a stare ;
 And anon there breaks a sigh,
 And anon there drops a tear,
 From a sorrow-clouded eye,
 And a heart sorrow-laden—
 A long, long sigh,
 For the cold, strange eyes of a little mermaid,
 And the gleam of her golden hair.



Come away, away, children,
 Come, children, come down !

The hoarse wind blows colder,
 Lights shine in the town.
 She will start from her slumber
 When gusts shake the door ;
 She will hear the winds howling,
 Will hear the waves roar.
 We shall see, while above us
 The waves roar and whirl,
 A ceiling of amber,
 A pavement of pearl—
 Singing : “ Here came a mortal,
 But faithless was she !
 And alone dwell for ever
 The kings of the sea.”

But, children, at midnight,
 When soft the winds blow,
 When clear falls the moonlight,
 When spring-tides are low ;
 When sweet airs come seaward
 From heaths starred with broom,
 And high rocks throw mildly
 On the blanched sands a gloom,—
 Up the still, glistening beaches,
 Up the creeks we will hie,
 Over banks of bright seaweed
 The ebb-tide leaves dry.
 We will gaze from the sand-hills
 At the white sleeping town,
 At the church on the hillside,
 And then come back down—
 Singing : “ There dwells a loved one,
 But cruel is she !
 She left lonely for ever
 The kings of the sea.”



MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE BARMECIDE FEAST.

The Story of the Barber's Sixth Brother.

I HAVE now to relate the story of my sixth brother, called Schacabac, whom a reverse of fortune forced to beg his bread. One day, as he passed by a magnificent house, whose high gate opened on a very spacious court, where there was a multitude of servants, he went to one of them and asked him to whom that house belonged. "Good man," replied the servant, "whence do you come that you ask me such a question? Does not all that you behold point out to you that it is the palace of a Barmecide?" My brother, who very well knew the liberality and generosity of the Barmecides, addressed himself to one of the gatekeepers (for there were more than one), and prayed him to give him an alms. "Go in," said he, "nobody hinders you, and address yourself to the master of the house; he will send you back satisfied."



My brother, who expected no such civility, thanked the porter and entered the palace. He went on till he came into a hall richly furnished, and adorned with foliage painted in gold and azure, where he saw a venerable man with a long white beard sitting at the upper end on a sofa, whence he concluded him to be the master of the house; and, in fact, it was the Barmecide himself, who said to my brother, in a very civil manner, that he was welcome, and asked him what he wanted.

"My lord," answered my brother, "I am a poor man who

stands in need of help. I swear to you I have not eaten anything to-day." "Is it true," demanded the Barmecide, "that you are fasting till now? Alas! poor man, he is ready to die for hunger! Ho, boy!" cried he with a loud voice, "bring a basin and water immediately, that we may wash our hands."

Though no boy appeared, and my brother saw neither water nor basin, the Barmecide fell to rubbing his hands as if one had poured water upon them, and bade my brother come and wash with him. Schacabac judged by this that the Barmecide lord loved to be merry; and he himself understanding raillery, and knowing that the poor must be complaisant to the rich if they would have anything from them, came forward and did as he was required.

"Come on," said the Barmecide; "bring us something to eat, and do not let us wait." When he had spoken, though nothing appeared, he began to cut, as if something had been brought him upon a plate, and putting his hand to his mouth, began to eat; and said to my brother, "Come, friend, eat as freely as if you were at home; you said you were like to die of hunger, but you eat as if you had no appetite!"

"Pardon me, my lord," said Schacabac, who perfectly imitated what he did, "you see I lose no time, and that I play my part well enough." "How like you this bread?" said the Barmecide; "do you not find it very good?" "Oh, my lord," replied my brother, who saw neither bread nor meat, "I have never eaten anything so white and so fine." "Eat your fill," said the Barmecide. "I assure you the woman who bakes me this good bread cost me five hundred pieces of gold to purchase her."

The Barmecide, after having boasted so much of his bread, which my brother ate only in idea, cried, "Boy, bring us

another dish;" and though no boy appeared, "Come, my good friend," continued he, "taste this new dish, and tell me if ever you ate better mutton and barley broth than this." "It is admirably good," replied my brother, "and therefore you see I eat heartily."

"You oblige me highly," resumed the Barmecide. "I conjure you then, by the satisfaction I have to see you eat so heartily, that you eat all up, since you like it so well." A little while after he called for a goose and sweet sauce. He then called for several others, of which my brother, who was ready to die of hunger, pretended to eat; but what he boasted of more than all the rest was a lamb stuffed with pistachio nuts, which he ordered to be brought up in the same manner. "I knew you would like it," said the Barmecide. "There is nothing in the world finer," replied my brother; "your table is most delicious."

"Come, bring the ragout. I fancy you will like that as well as you did the lamb. Well, how do you relish it?" "Oh, it is wonderful," replied Schacabac; "for here we taste all at once amber, cloves, nutmeg, ginger, pepper, and the most odoriferous herbs, and all these delicacies are so well mixed that one does not prevent our tasting the other." "How pleasant! Honour this ragout," said the Barmecide, "by eating heartily of it. Ho, boy! bring us another ragout." "No, my lord, if it please you," replied my brother, "for indeed I can eat no more."

"Come, take it away then," said the Barmecide, "and bring the fruit." He stayed a moment, as it were to give time for his servants to carry it away; after which he addressed my brother, "Taste these almonds; they are good and fresh gathered." Both of them made as if they had



peeled the almonds and eaten them. After this the Barmecide invited my brother to eat something else.

“Look,” said he, “there are all sorts of fruits, cakes, dry sweetmeats, and conserves. Take what you like.” Then stretching out his hand, as if he had reached my brother something, he still bade my brother eat, and said to him, “Methinks you do not eat as if you were as hungry as you said you were when you came in.” “My lord,” replied Schacabac, whose jaws ached with moving and having nothing to eat, “I assure you that I cannot eat one bite more.”

“Well, then, friend,” resumed the Barmecide, “we must drink some wine now, after we have eaten so well.” “I will drink, then, out of complaisance,” said Schacabac, “for I see you will have nothing wanting to make your treat complete; but since I am not accustomed to drink wine, I am afraid I shall act contrary to the respect that is due to you; therefore I pray you to excuse me from drinking any wine. I will be content with water.”

“No, no,” said the Barmecide, “you shall drink wine,” and at the same time he commanded some to be brought, in the same manner as the meat and the fruit had been served before. He made as if he poured out wine, and drank first himself, and then pouring out for my brother, presented him the glass, saying, “Drink my health, and let me know if you think this wine good.”

My brother made as if he took the glass, and looked as if the colour was good, and put it to his nose to try the flavour. He then made a low salute to the Barmecide, to signify that he took the liberty to drink his health; and lastly, he appeared to drink with all the signs of a man who drinks with pleasure. “My lord,” said he, “this is very excellent wine, but I think it is not strong enough.”

“If you would have stronger,” answered the Barmecide, “you need only speak, for I have several sorts in my cellar. Try how you like this.” Hereupon he made as if he poured out another glass for himself and one for my brother, and did this so often that Schacabac, feigning to be intoxicated with the wine, and acting the part of a drunken man, lifted up his hand, and gave the Barmecide such a box on the ear as made him fall down.

He was going to give him another blow, but the Barmecide, holding up his hand to ward it off, cried, “Are you mad?” Then my brother, making as if he had come to himself again, said, “My lord, you have been so good as to admit your slave into your house and give him a treat. You should have been satisfied with making me eat, and not have obliged me to drink wine; for I told you beforehand that it might occasion me to fail in my respect to you. I am very sorry for it, and beg a thousand pardons.”

Scarcely had he finished these words, when the Barmecide, instead of showing anger, began to laugh with all his might. “I have been long,” said he, “seeking a man of your character. I not only forgive the blow you have given me, but I desire henceforward we should be friends, and that you take my house for your home. You have had the complaisance to accommodate yourself to my humour, and the patience to keep up the jest to the last; we will now eat in good earnest.”

When he had finished these words, he clapped his hands, and commanded his servants, who then appeared, to cover the table, which was speedily done, and my brother was treated with all those dishes in reality which he ate of before in fancy. At last they cleared the table and brought in the wine; and at the same time a number of handsome slaves, richly appavelled, came and sang some agreeable airs to their

musical instruments. In a word, Schacabac had all the reason in the world to be satisfied with the Barmecide's bounty; for the great man treated him as his friend, and ordered him a robe of honour from his wardrobe.

The Barmecide found my brother to be a man of so much wit and understanding that a few days afterwards he entrusted him with the care of his household; and my brother acquitted himself very well in that employment for twenty years.

The Arabian Nights.

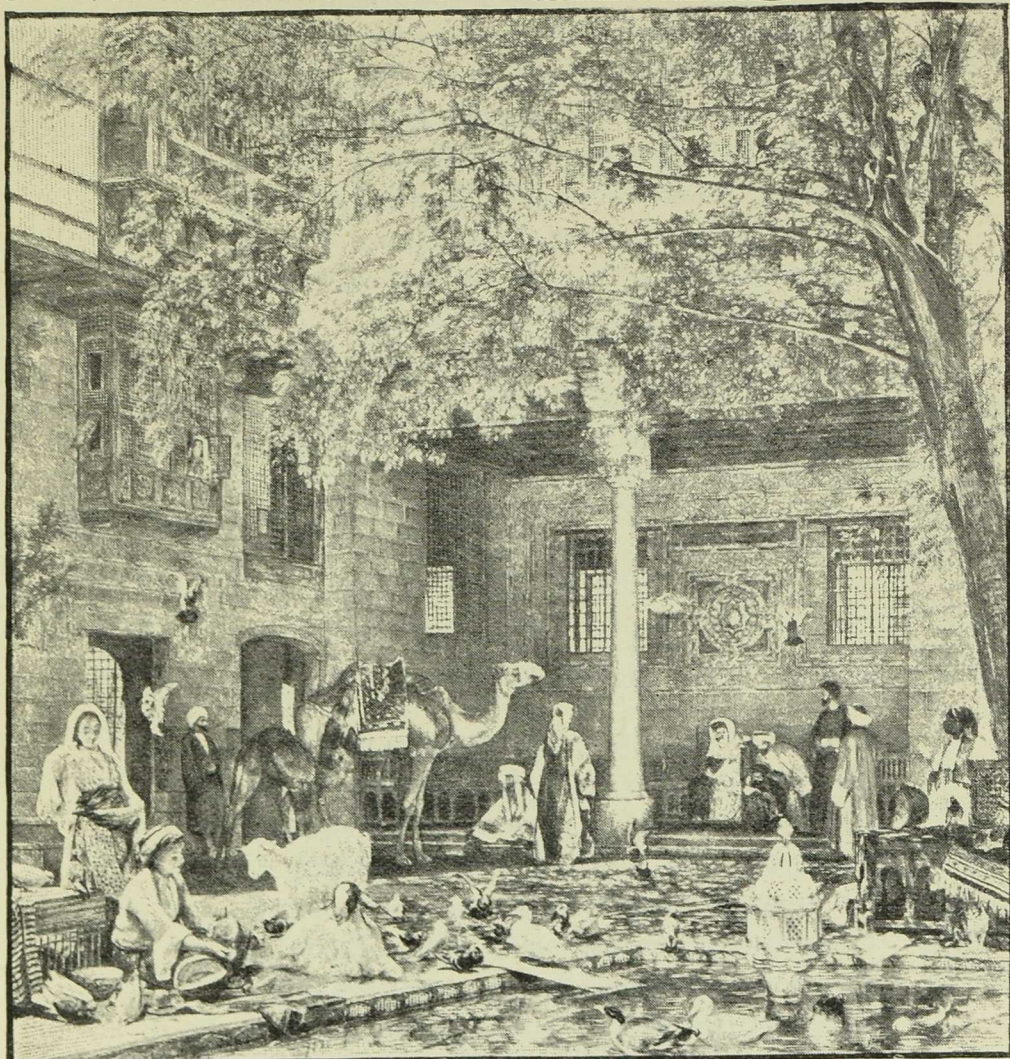
J A F F À R.

JAFFÀR, the Barmecide, the good Vizier,
The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer,
Jaffàr was dead, slain by a doom unjust;
And guilty Hârain, sudden with mistrust
Of what the good and e'en the bad might say,
Ordained that no man living, from that day,
Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.—

All Araby and Persia held their breath.
All but the brave Mondeer.—He, proud to show
How far for love a grateful soul could go,
And facing death for very scorn and grief
(For his great heart wanted a great relief),
Stood forth in Bagdad, daily, in the square
Where once had stood a happy house; and there
Harangued the tremblers at the scimitar
On all they owed to the divine Jaffàr.

"Bring me this man," the caliph cried. The man
Was brought—was gazed upon. The mutes began
To bind his arms. "Welcome, brave cords," cried he;
"From bonds far worse Jaffàr delivered me;
From wants, from shames, from loveless household fears;





The Courtyard of the Caliph.
(From the picture by Lewis in the Birmingham Art Gallery.)

Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears
 Restored me—loved me—put me on a par
 With his great self. How can I pay Jaffâr?"
 Hàrain, who felt that on a soul like this
 The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,
 Now deigned to smile, as one great lord of fate
 Might smile upon another half as great.
 He said, "Let worth grow frenzied if it will;
 The caliph's judgment shall be master still.
 Go: and since gifts thus move thee, take this gem,
 The richest in the Tartar's diadem,
 And hold the giver as thou deemest fit."
 "Gifts!" cried the friend. He took; and holding it
 High tow'rd's the heavens, as though to meet his star,
 Exclaimed, "This too I owe to thee, Jaffâr."

LEIGH HUNT.



ABOU BEN ADHEM AND THE ANGEL.

ABOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)
 Awoke one night from the deep dream of peace,
 And saw within the moonlight in his room,
 Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
 An angel, writing in a book of gold:—
 Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
 And to the presence in the room he said,
 What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
 And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
 Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord"
 "And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
 Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
 But cheerly still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
 Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
 It came again with a great wakening light,
 And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
 And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

LEIGH HUNT.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

THE SLEEP.

I.

YEAR after year unto her feet,
 She lying on her couch alone,
 Across the purpled coverlet,
 The maiden's jet-black hair has grown,
 On either side her tranced form
 Forth streaming from a braid of pearl :
 The slumbrous light is rich and warm,
 And moves not on the rounded curl.



II.

The silk star-broidered coverlid
 Unto her limbs itself doth mould
 Languidly ever ; and, amid
 Her full black ringlets downward rolled,
 Glows forth each softly-shadowed arm
 With bracelets of the diamond bright :
 Her constant beauty doth inform
 Stillness with love, and day with light.

III.

She sleeps : her breathings are not heard
 In palace chambers far apart.
 The fragrant tresses are not stirred
 That lie upon her charmed heart.

THE ENCHANTED GARDEN.

She sleeps : on either hand upswells
 The gold-fringed pillow lightly prest :
 She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever dwells
 A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL.

I.

All precious things, discovered late,
 To those that seek them issue forth ;
 For love in sequel works with fate,
 And draws the veil from hidden worth.
 He travels far from other skies—
 His mantle glitters on the rocks—
 A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
 And lighter-footed than the fox.

II.

The bodies and the bones of those
 That strove in other days to pass,
 Are withered in the thorny close,
 Or scattered blanching on the grass.
 He gazes on the silent dead :
 "They perished in their daring deeds."
 This proverb flashes through his head,
 "The many fail ; the one succeeds."

III.

He comes, scarce knowing what he seeks :
 He breaks the hedge : he enters there :
 The colour flies into his cheeks :
 He trusts to light on something fair ;

SWEET
INDUSTRY



*“Take the broidery
frame and add
A crimson to the
quaint macaw.”*

Lady Laura Alma Tadema
in the Manchester Art Gallery

For all his life the charm did talk
 About his path, and hover near
 With words of promise in his walk,
 And whispered voices at his ear.

IV.

More close and close his footsteps wind :
 The Magic Music in his heart
 Beats quick and quicker, till he find
 The quiet chamber far apart.
 His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops—to kiss her—on his knee.
 “Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must be !”

THE REVIVAL.

I.

A touch, a kiss ! the charm was snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing cocks ;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze through all the garden swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt.

II.

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward scrawled,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot screamed, the peacock squalled,
 The maid and page renewed their strife,
 The palace banged, and buzzed and clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dashed downward in a cataract.



III.

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself upreared,
 And yawned, and rubbed his face, and spoke,
 "By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap."
 The barons swore, with many words,
 'Twas but an after-dinner's nap.

IV.

"Pardy," returned the king, "but still
 My joints are something stiff or so.
 My lord, and shall we pass the bill
 I mentioned half an hour ago?"
 The chancellor, sedate and vain,
 In courteous words returned reply:
 But dallied with his golden chain,
 And, smiling, put the question by.



THE DEPARTURE.

I.

And on her lover's arm she leant,
 And round her waist she felt it fold,
 And far across the hills they went
 In that new world which is the old:
 Across the hills and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 And deep into the dying day
 The happy princess followed him.

II.

"I'd sleep another hundred years,
 O love, for such another kiss ;"
 "O wake for ever, love," she hears,
 "O love, 'twas such as this and this."
 And o'er them many a sliding star,
 And many a merry wind was borne,
 And, streamed through many a golden bar,
 The twilight melted into morn.

III.

"O eyes long laid in happy sleep !"
 "O happy sleep, that lightly fled !"
 "O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep !"
 "O love, thy kiss would wake the dead !"
 And o'er them many a flowing range
 Of vapour buoyed the crescent-bark,
 And, rapt through many a rosy change,
 The twilight died into the dark.



IV.

"A hundred summers ! can it be ?
 And whither goest thou, tell me where ?"
 "O seek my father's court with me,
 For there are greater wonders there."
 And o'er the hills, and far away
 Beyond their utmost purple rim,
 Beyond the night, across the day,
 Through all the world she followed him.

LORD TENNYSON.

THE BEECH AND THE OAK.

It all happened long, long ago.

There were no towns then, with houses and streets and church steeples domineering over everything. There were no schools; for there were not many boys, and those that there were learnt from their father to shoot with the bow and arrow, to hunt the stag in his covert, to kill the bear in order to make clothes out of his skin, and to rub two pieces of wood together till they caught fire. When they knew this well, they had finished their education.

There were no railways either, and no cultivated fields, no ships on the sea, and no books, for there was nobody who could read.

There was hardly anything except trees; but trees there were in plenty. They stood everywhere from coast to coast, they saw themselves reflected in all the rivers and lakes, and stretched their mighty branches up towards heaven. They leaned out over the shore, dipped their boughs in the black sea-water, and from the high hills looked out proudly over the land.

They knew each other, for they belonged to a great family, and were proud of it.

"We are all *oak* trees," they said. "We own the land and rule over it."

And they were right. There were very few human beings there in those days, and those that there were seemed little better than wild animals. The bear, the wolf, and the fox went out hunting, while the stag grazed by the edge of the fen. The field-mouse sat outside his hole and ate acorns, and the beaver built his artistic house by the river-banks.





One day the bear came trudging along and lay down at full breadth under a great oak tree.

“Are you there again, you robber?” said the oak, and shook a lot of withered leaves down over him.

“You should not squander your leaves, my old friend,” said the bear, licking his lips; “that is all the shade you can give against the sun.”

“If you are not pleased with me, you can go,” answered the oak proudly. “I am lord in the land, and whatever way you look you find my brothers and nothing else.”

“True,” muttered the bear, “that is just what is so disgusting. I have been for a little tour abroad, I may tell you, and am just a little bit spoilt. It was in a land down towards the south—there I took a nap under the beech trees. They are tall, slim trees, not crooked old things like you; and their tops are so dense that the sunbeams cannot creep through them. It was a real pleasure there to take a midday nap, I assure you!”

“Beech trees?” said the oak inquisitively; “what are they?”

“You might well wish you were half as pretty as a beech tree,” said the bear. “But I don’t want to chatter any more with you just now. I have had to trot a mile on account of a hunter, who struck me with an arrow on one of my hind legs. Now I should like to have a sleep, and perhaps you will be kind enough to let me have rest, since you cannot give me shade.”

The bear stretched himself out and closed his eyes, but he got no sleep that time. For the other trees had heard his story, and they began chattering and talking and



*“ To shoot with the bow and arrow, to hunt the stag in his covert.”
(See page 239.)*

rustling their leaves in a way never known in the wood before.

“What on earth can those beech trees be?” said one of them.

“It is, of course, a mere story; the bear wishes to impose on us,” said the other.

“What kind of trees can they be whose leaves sit so close together that the sunbeams cannot creep between them?” asked a little oak, who was listening to what the big ones were talking about.

But by its side stood an old gnarled tree, who gave the little oak a blow on the head with one of his lowest boughs.

“Hold your tongue,” he said, “and don’t talk till you have something to talk about. You must none of you believe a word of the bear’s nonsense. I am much taller than you, and I can see far out over the wood; but as far as ever I can see there is nothing but oak trees.”

The little oak was shamefaced and held his tongue, and the other big trees spoke to one another in low whispers, for they had great respect for the old one.



But the bear got up and rubbed his eyes. “Now you have disturbed my midday nap,” he growled angrily, “and I declare that I will have my revenge. When I come back I will bring some beech nuts with me, and I vow you will all turn yellow with jealousy when you see how pretty the new trees are.” Then he made off. But the oaks talked the whole day long one to another about the funny trees he had told them about. “If they come I will kill them,” said the little oak tree; but directly afterwards he got another blow on the head from the old oak.

“If they come you shall treat them politely, you young dog,” said he. “But they will not come.”

* * * * *

But in this the old oak was wrong, for they did come.

Towards autumn the bear came back and lay down under the old oak.

“My friends down there wish me to present their compliments,” he said; and he picked some funny things out of his shaggy coat. “Here you shall see what I have for you.”

“What is it?” asked the oak.

“That is a beech,” answered the bear; “a beech nut, as I promised you.”

Then he trampled it into the ground, and prepared to go back.

“It is a pity I cannot stay and see how angry you will be,” he growled, “but those wretched human beings have begun to press one so hard. The day before yesterday they killed my wife and one of my brothers, and I must see about finding a place where I can live in peace. There is scarcely a spot left where a self-respecting bear can stay. Good-bye, you gnarled old oak trees.”

When the bear had shambled off, the trees looked at one another anxiously.

“Let us see what will be the end of it,” said the old oak.

And after this they composed themselves to rest. The winter came and tore all their leaves off them, the snow lay high over the whole land, and every tree stood deep in its own thoughts and dreamt of the spring.



And when the spring came the grass stood green, and the birds began singing where they had left off last. The flowers came up in multitudes from the earth, and everything looked fresh and gay.

The oak trees alone stood with leafless boughs. "It is the most distinguished thing to come last," they said one to another. "The kings of the wood do not come till the whole company is assembled."

But at last they came. All the leaves burst forth from the swollen buds, and the trees looked at one another and complimented one another on their beauty. The little oak had grown ever so much. He was very proud of it, and he thought that he had now the right to join in the conversation.

"Nothing has come yet of the bear's beech trees," he said jeeringly, at the same time glancing anxiously up at the old oak who used to give him blows on the head.

The old oak heard very well what he said, and the other trees also; but they said nothing. Not one of them had forgotten what the bear had told them, and every morning when the sun came out they peeped down to look for the beeches. They were really a little weary, but they were too proud to talk about it.

And one day the little shoots did at last burst forth from the earth. The sun shone on them, and the rain fell on them, so it was not long before they grew tall.

"Oh! how pretty they are!" said the great oak, and stooped his crooked boughs still more, so that they could get a good view of them. "You are welcome among us," said the old oak, and gracefully inclined his head towards them. "You shall be my foster-children, and be treated just as well as my own."

"Thanks," said the little beeches, and they said no more.

But the little oak could not bear the strange trees. "It is dreadful the way you shoot up into the air," he said in vexation. "You are already half as tall as I am. But I beg you to take notice that I am much older, and of good family besides."

The beech laughed with its little tiny green leaves, but said nothing.

"Shall I bow my branches a little aside, so that the sun can shine better on you?" the old tree asked politely.

"Many thanks," answered the beeches. "We can grow very nicely in the shade."

And the whole summer passed by, and another summer after that, and still more summers.

The beeches went on growing, and at last quite overtopped the little oak.

"Keep your leaves to yourself," cried the oak. "You overshadow me, and that is what I can't endure. I must have plenty of sunshine. Take your leaves away, or I perish."

The beeches only laughed, and went on growing. At last they closed together over the little oak's head, and then it died.

"That was a horrid thing to do," a great oak called out, and shook his boughs in terror. But the old oak took his foster children under his protection.

"It serves them right," he said. "They are paid out for their boasting. I say it, though they are my own flesh and blood. But now you must behave yourselves, little beeches, or I will give you a blow on the head."



Years went by, and the beeches went on growing, and they grew till they were tall young trees, reaching up among the branches of the old oak.

"You begin to be rather pushing," the old tree said. "You should try to grow a little broader, and stop this shooting up into the air. Just see where your branches are soaring. Bend them properly, as you see us do. How will you be able to hold out when a regular storm comes? I assure you the wind gives one's head a good shaking. My old boughs have creaked many a time, and what do you think will become of the flimsy finery that you stick up in the air?"

"Every one has his own manner of growth, and we have ours," answered the young beeches. "This is the way it is done where we come from, and we are perhaps as good as you are."

"That is not a polite way of speaking to an old tree with moss on his boughs," said the oak. "I begin to repent that I was so kind to you. If you have a spark of honourable feeling alive in you, be good enough to move your leaves a little to one side. There have been hardly any buds on my lowest branches this year, you overshadow me so."

"I don't quite understand how that concerns us," answered the beeches. "Every one has quite enough to do to look after himself. If he is equal to his work and is fortunate, it turns out well for him; if not, he must be prepared to go to the wall. That is the way of the world."

Then the oak's lowest branch died, and he began to be seriously alarmed.

"You are pretty things," he said; "is this the way you reward me for my hospitality? When you were little, I

let you grow at my feet, and sheltered you against the storm. I let the sun shine on you as much as ever he would, and I treated you as if you were my own children. And in return for all this you stifle me!"

"Stuff and nonsense!" said the beeches. So they put forth flowers and fruit, and when the fruit was ripe the wind shook the boughs and scattered it round far and wide.

"You are quick people like me," said the wind. "I like you for it, and am glad to do you a good turn."

And the fox rolled on the ground at the foot of the beech trees, and got his fur full of the prickly fruits, and ran with them far out into the country. The bear did the same, and grinned into the bargain at the old oak while he lay and rested in the shadow of the beech tree. The field-mouse was beside himself with joy over his new food, and thought that beech nuts tasted much nicer than acorns. All around new little beech trees shot up, which grew just as fast as their parents, and looked as green and as happy as if they did not know what a bad conscience was.

But the old oak gazed sadly out over the wood. The light green beech leaves were peeping out everywhere, and the oaks were sighing and bewailing their distress to one another.

"They are taking our strength out of us," they said, and shook as much as the beeches around would let them. "The land is ours no longer."

One bough after another died, and the storm broke them off and cast them on the ground. The old oak had now only a few leaves left.

"The end is near," he said gravely.

By this time there were many more human beings in the

land than there had been before, and they made haste to hew down the oaks while there were still some remaining.

“Oak timber is better than beech timber,” they said.

“At last we get a little appreciation,” said the old oak; “but we have to pay for it with our lives.”

Then he said to the beech trees,—

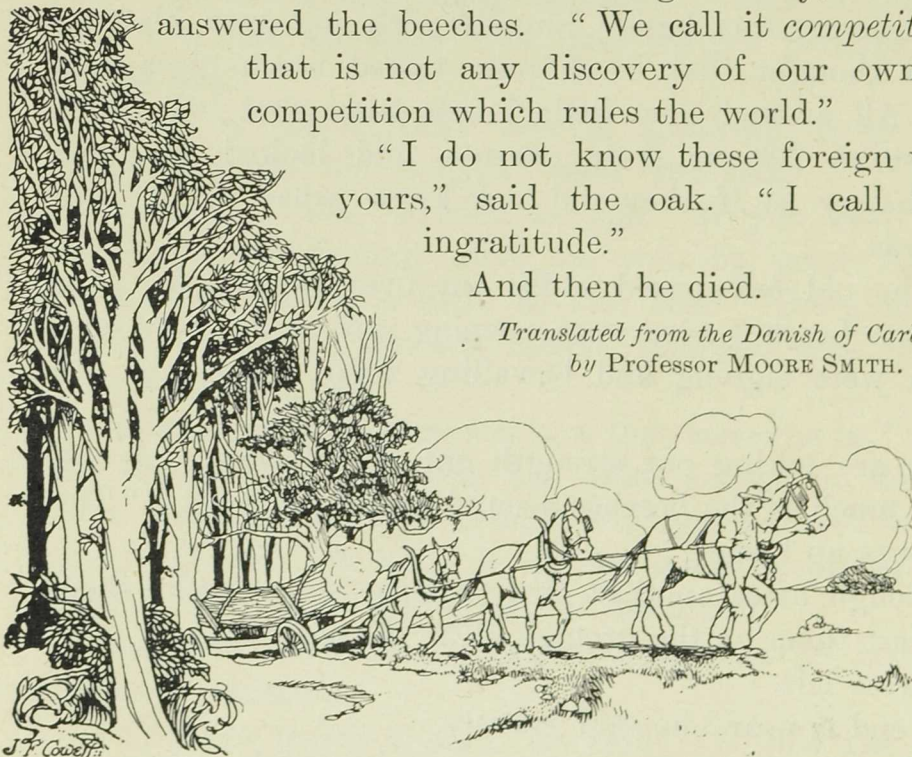
“What was I thinking of when I helped you on in your young days? What an old stupid I was! Before that we oak trees were lords in the land, and now every year I see my brothers around me perishing in the fight against you. It will soon be all over with me; and not one of my acorns has sprouted under your shade. But before I die I should like to know the name you give to such conduct.”

“That will not take long to say, old friend,” answered the beeches. “We call it *competition*, and that is not any discovery of our own. It is competition which rules the world.”

“I do not know these foreign words of yours,” said the oak. “I call it mean ingratitude.”

And then he died.

*Translated from the Danish of Carl Ewald
by Professor MOORE SMITH.*



HIAWATHA'S FASTING

You shall hear how Hiawatha
 Prayed and fasted in the forest,
 Not for greater skill in hunting,
 Not for greater craft in fishing,
 Not for triumphs in the battle,
 And renown among the warriors,
 But for profit of the people,
 For advantage of the nations.



First he built a lodge for fasting,
 Built a wigwam in the forest,
 By the shining Big-Sea-Water,
 In the blithe and pleasant Spring-time,
 In the Moon of Leaves he built it,
 And, with dreams and visions many,
 Seven whole days and nights he fasted.



On the first day of his fasting
 Through the leafy woods he wandered ;
 Saw the deer start from the thicket,
 Saw the rabbit in his burrow,
 Heard the pheasant, Bena, drumming,
 Heard the squirrel, Adjidaumo,
 Rattling in his hoard of acorns,
 Saw the pigeon, the Omeme,
 Building nests among the pine trees,
 And in flocks the wild-goose, Wawa,
 Flying to the fen-lands northward,
 Whirring, wailing far above him.
 "Master of Life!" he cried, desponding,
 "Must our lives depend on these things?"

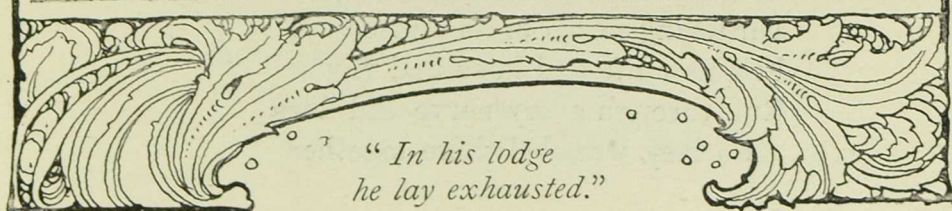
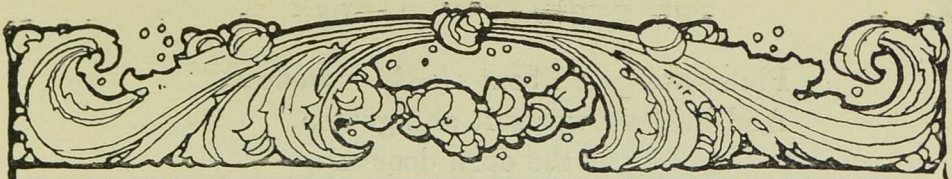
On the next day of his fasting
 By the river's brink he wandered,

Through the Muskoday, the meadow,
 Saw the wild rice, Mahnomonee,
 Saw the blueberry, Meenahga,
 And the strawberry, Odahmin,
 And the gooseberry, Shahbomin,
 And the grape vine, the Bemahgut,
 Trailing o'er the alder branches,
 Filling all the air with fragrance !
 " Master of Life ! " he cried, desponding,
 " Must our lives depend on these things ? "

On the third day of his fasting
 By the lake he sat and pondered,
 By the still, transparent water ;
 Saw the sturgeon, Nahma, leaping,
 Scattering drops like beads of wampum.
 Saw the yellow perch, the Sahwa,
 Like a sunbeam in the water,
 Saw the pike, the Maskenozha,
 And the herring, Okahahwis,
 And the Shawgashee, the craw-fish !
 " Master of Life ! " he cried, desponding,
 " Must our lives depend on these things ? "

On the fourth day of his fasting
 In his lodge he lay exhausted ;
 From his couch of leaves and branches
 Gazing with half-open eyelids,
 Full of shadowy dreams and visions,
 On the dizzy, swimming landscape,
 On the gleaming of the water,
 On the splendour of the sunset.

And he saw a youth approaching,
 Dressed in garments green and yellow,
 Coming through the purple twilight,
 Through the splendour of the sunset ;



*"In his lodge
he lay exhausted."*

Plumes of green bent o'er his forehead,
And his hair was soft and golden.

Standing at the open doorway,
Long he looked at Hiawatha,
Looked with pity and compassion
On his wasted form and features,
And, in accents like the sighing
Of the South-Wind in the tree-tops,
Said he, "O my Hiawatha!
All your prayers are heard in heaven,
For you pray not like the others;
Not for greater skill in hunting,
Not for greater craft in fishing,
Not for triumph in the battle,
Nor renown among the warriors,
But for profit of the people,
For advantage of the nations.
From the Master of Life descending,
I, the friend of man, Mondamin,
Come to warn you and instruct you,
How by struggle and by labour
You shall gain what you have prayed for
Rise up from your bed of branches,
Rise, O youth, and wrestle with me!"

Faint with famine, Hiawatha
Started from his bed of branches,
From the twilight of his wigwam
Forth into the flush of sunset
Came, and wrestled with Mondamin:
At his touch he felt new courage
Throbbing in his brain and bosom,
Felt new life and hope and vigour
Run through every nerve and fibre.

So they wrestled there together

In the glory of the sunset,
 And the more they strove and struggled,
 Stronger still grew Hiawatha ;
 Till the darkness fell around them,
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
 From her nest among the pine trees,
 Gave a cry of lamentation,
 Gave a scream of pain and famine.

“ 'Tis enough ! ” then said Mondamin,
 Smiling upon Hiawatha,
 “ But to-morrow, when the sun sets,
 I will come again to try you.”
 And he vanished, and was seen not ;
 Whether sinking as the rain sinks,
 Whether rising as the mists rise,
 Hiawatha saw not, knew not,
 Only saw that he had vanished,
 Leaving him alone and fainting,
 With the misty lake below him,
 And the reeling stars above him.

On the morrow and the next day,
 When the sun through heaven descending,
 Like a red and burning cinder
 From the hearth of the Great Spirit,
 Fell into the western waters,
 Came Mondamin for the trial,
 For the strife with Hiawatha ;
 Came as silent as the dew comes,
 From the empty air appearing,
 Into empty air returning,
 Taking shape when earth it touches,
 But invisible to all men
 In its coming and its going.

Thrice they wrestled there together



In the glory of the sunset,
Till the darkness fell around them,
Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
From her nest among the pine trees,
Uttered her loud cry of famine,
And Mondamin paused to listen.

Tall and beautiful he stood there,
In his garments green and yellow ;
To and fro his plumes above him
Waved and nodded with his breathing,
And the sweat of the encounter
Stood like drops of dew upon him.

And he cried, "O Hiawatha !
Bravely have you wrestled with me,
Thrice have wrestled stoutly with me,
And the Master of Life, who sees us,
He will give to you the triumph !"

Then he smiled, and said : "To-morrow
Is the last day of your conflict,
Is the last day of your fasting.
You will conquer and o'ercome me ;
Make a bed for me to lie in,
Where the rain may fall upon me,
Where the sun may come and warm me ;
Strip these garments, green and yellow,
Strip this nodding plumage from me,
Lay me in the earth, and make it
Soft and loose and light above me.
Let no hand disturb my slumber,
Let no weed nor worm molest me,
Let not Kahgahgee, the raven,
Come to haunt me and molest me,
Only come yourself to watch me,
Till I wake, and start, and quicken,



Till I leap into the sunshine."

And thus saying, he departed ;
Peacefully slept Hiawatha,
But he heard the Wawonaissa,
Heard the whippoorwill complaining,
Perched upon his lonely wigwam ;
Heard the rushing Sebowisha,
Heard the rivulet rippling near him,
Talking to the darksome forest ;
Heard the sighing of the branches,
As they lifted and subsided
At the passing of the night-wind,
Heard them, as one hears in slumber
Far-off murmurs, dreamy whispers :
Peacefully slept Hiawatha.

On the morrow came Nokomis,
On the seventh day of his fasting,
Came with food for Hiawatha,
Came imploring and bewailing,
Lest his hunger should o'ercome him,
Lest his fasting should be fatal.

But he tasted not, and touched not,
Only said to her, "Nokomis,
Wait until the sun is setting,
Till the darkness falls around us,
Till the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
Crying from the desolate marshes,
Tells us that the day is ended."

Homeward weeping went Nokomis,
Sorrowing for her Hiawatha,
Fearing lest his strength should fail him,
Lest his fasting should be fatal.
He meanwhile sat weary waiting
For the coming of Mondamin,



Till the shadows, pointing eastward,
Lengthened over field and forest,
Till the sun dropped from the heaven,
Floating on the waters westward,
As a red leaf in the Autumn
Falls and floats upon the water,
Falls and sinks into its bosom.

And behold! the young Mondamin,
With his soft and shining tresses,
With his garments green and yellow,
With his long and glossy plumage,
Stood and beckoned at the doorway.
And as one in slumber walking,
Pale and haggard, but undaunted,
From the wigwam Hiawatha
Came and wrestled with Mondamin.

Round about him spun the landscape,
Sky and forest reeled together,
And his strong heart leaped within him,
As the sturgeon leaps and struggles
In a net to break its meshes.
Like a ring of fire around him
Blazed and flared the red horizon,
And a hundred suns seemed looking
At the combat of the wrestlers.

Suddenly upon the greensward
All alone stood Hiawatha,
Panting with his wild exertion,
Palpitating with the struggle;
And before him breathless, lifeless,
Lay the youth, with hair dishevelled,
Plumage torn, and garments tattered,
Dead he lay there in the sunset.

And victorious Hiawatha

Made the grave as he commanded,
 Stripped the garments from Mondamin,
 Stripped his tattered plumage from him,
 Laid him in the earth, and made it
 Soft and loose and light above him ;
 And the heron, the Shuh-shuh-gah,
 From the melancholy moorlands,
 Gave a cry of lamentation,
 Gave a cry of pain and anguish !

Homeward then went Hiawatha
 To the lodge of old Nokomis,
 And the seven days of his fasting
 Were accomplished and completed.
 But the place was not forgotten
 Where he wrestled with Mondamin ;
 Nor forgotten nor neglected
 Was the grave where lay Mondamin,
 Sleeping in the rain and sunshine,
 Where his scattered plumes and garments
 Faded in the rain and sunshine.

Day by day did Hiawatha
 Go to wait and watch beside it ;
 Kept the dark mould soft above it,
 Kept it clean from weeds and insects,
 Drove away, with scoffs and shoutings,
 Kahgahgee, the king of ravens.

Till at length a small green feather
 From the earth shot slowly upward,
 Then another and another,
 And before the Summer ended
 Stood the maize in all its beauty,
 With its shining robes about it,
 And its long, soft, yellow tresses ;
 And in rapture Hiawatha



Cried aloud, "It is Mondamin!
Yes, the friend of man, Mondamin!"

Then he called to old Nokomis
And Iagoo, the great boaster,
Showed them where the maize was growing,
Told them of his wondrous vision,
Of his wrestling and his triumph,
Of this new gift to the nations,
Which should be their food for ever.

And still later, when the Autumn
Changed the long, green leaves to yellow,
And the soft and juicy kernels
Grew like wampum hard and yellow,
Then the ripened ears he gathered,
Stripped the withered husks from off them,
As he once had stripped the wrestler,
Gave the first Feast of Mondamin,
And made known unto the people
This new gift of the Great Spirit.

H. W. LONGFELLOW.

THE STORY OF RANOLF AND AMOHIA.

I.—The Maori Maiden.

ON an islet in the middle of a lake in the North Island of New Zealand lived a young girl named Amohia. Her father was a native chief, and Amohia herself was renowned for her beauty in all the country round about. Her skin was dark, it is true, but those who had the good fortune to see her spoke often of her exquisite grace of form, her large, brilliant



eyes, and her wealth of silky black hair, which enveloped her like a mantle.

Amohia's father was named Tangi, or, in full, Tangi-Moana, a name which meant "the wailing sea." You would have thought him a striking figure had you seen him in his undyed linen robe, ornamented with spots of crimson, half covered by a great mantle of white dog-skin, his dark face, with its flashing eyes, crowned with a mass of snowy-white hair.

Tangi was very fond of his daughter, and very proud of her too; but there was another person living on the island who did not love her, and who had, moreover, a great deal of power to do both good and ill. This was old Kangapo the priest, who arranged most of the tribal affairs. He had made up his mind that Amohia was to marry a certain chief of a neighbouring tribe, and the girl had accordingly been promised to this man. But as she did not love the chief at all, this promise cast a great cloud over Amohia's otherwise happy life.

One glorious day, when the lake was as smooth as a mirror, and reflected clearly in its dark blue surface the lofty peaks of the surrounding mountains, Amohia thought she would like to go out in search of adventure. So taking her little maidservant named Miroa as a companion, she started off in her canoe for the mainland; and here she did indeed meet with an adventure even more exciting than she had expected.

She and Miroa enjoyed themselves greatly at first. They gathered the lovely pink and white blossoms of the convolvulus and twined them into wreaths for their hair; they chased the green and crimson parrots which flitted from tree to tree; and they collected sweet roots and cooked them for their dinner.

Suddenly, however, their mirth was changed to terror. Two youths of a tribe at enmity with that of Tangi caught sight of Amohia; and knowing who she was, they seized her, and with loud shouts of savage mirth bound her fast to a tree. The poor girl felt as if she must die with shame and misery; and when her persecutors with many rude jests mocked at her agony, she felt that it was more than she could bear

While she was standing there, helpless and miserable, sounds of firm footsteps were heard. And as Amohia turned her eyes in the direction from which the sounds came she saw a tall youth emerge from among the trees.

At first she thought he must be some god or spirit of the wood, for never before had she seen any one like him. His complexion was clear white and red, and his head was thickly covered with golden curls, while his eyes, which soon shot forth flashes of angry fire, were as blue as the summer sky.



The stranger's first action was to give one of Amohia's enemies a blow which knocked him down; and while he and his companion were making good their escape in a great fright, the youth began with gentle hands to untie the maiden's bonds. Then as he talked to her in her own language, but with a curious foreign accent, Amohia learnt that he was no spirit, but one of the strangers who came from far across the seas, and of whom she had often heard, though she had never seen one before.

When she was released, Amohia told him her name and all about herself, and in return the stranger also made himself known. He said his name was Ranolf, and that his

home was far away in the northern part of Great Britain, where the white-crested waves from a mighty ocean beat against a rock-bound coast. He also told her how he had always longed to spend his life as a sailor, bounding over that great expanse of water, and travelling to all the distant lands of the earth, and that this wish had been granted.

He had first gone to sea as a little boy, and then, as his father was growing old, he had stayed at home for some time learning many things out of books. Now his father was dead, and he had started out once more, and after sailing for many weeks had reached this land of the Maori, which white men called New Zealand.

Not far from where they were talking his good vessel had struck on the rocks, and after the great breakers had dashed over her for a whole day she at last turned over and sank, and all on board had been cast into the water. Ranolf himself managed to seize a floating spar, and with its help swam to land, but all the others were drowned. His chest, containing all that belonged to him, had been washed ashore later; and now, as his ship was lost and he had no means of returning home, he had built himself a hut, and was living among the natives like one of themselves.

To all this Amohia listened with fixed attention, and then, when she began to thank him for saving her, she tried to say his name; but it seemed as if her tongue would not pronounce the difficult word, so with a merry laugh at her failure, she said she would call him "Ranoro," because it was easier to say.

"And I," said Ranolf, "shall call you Amo, because it is shorter."

By this time Miroa, who had hidden in the thicket when her mistress was seized, had joined them, and Amohia said

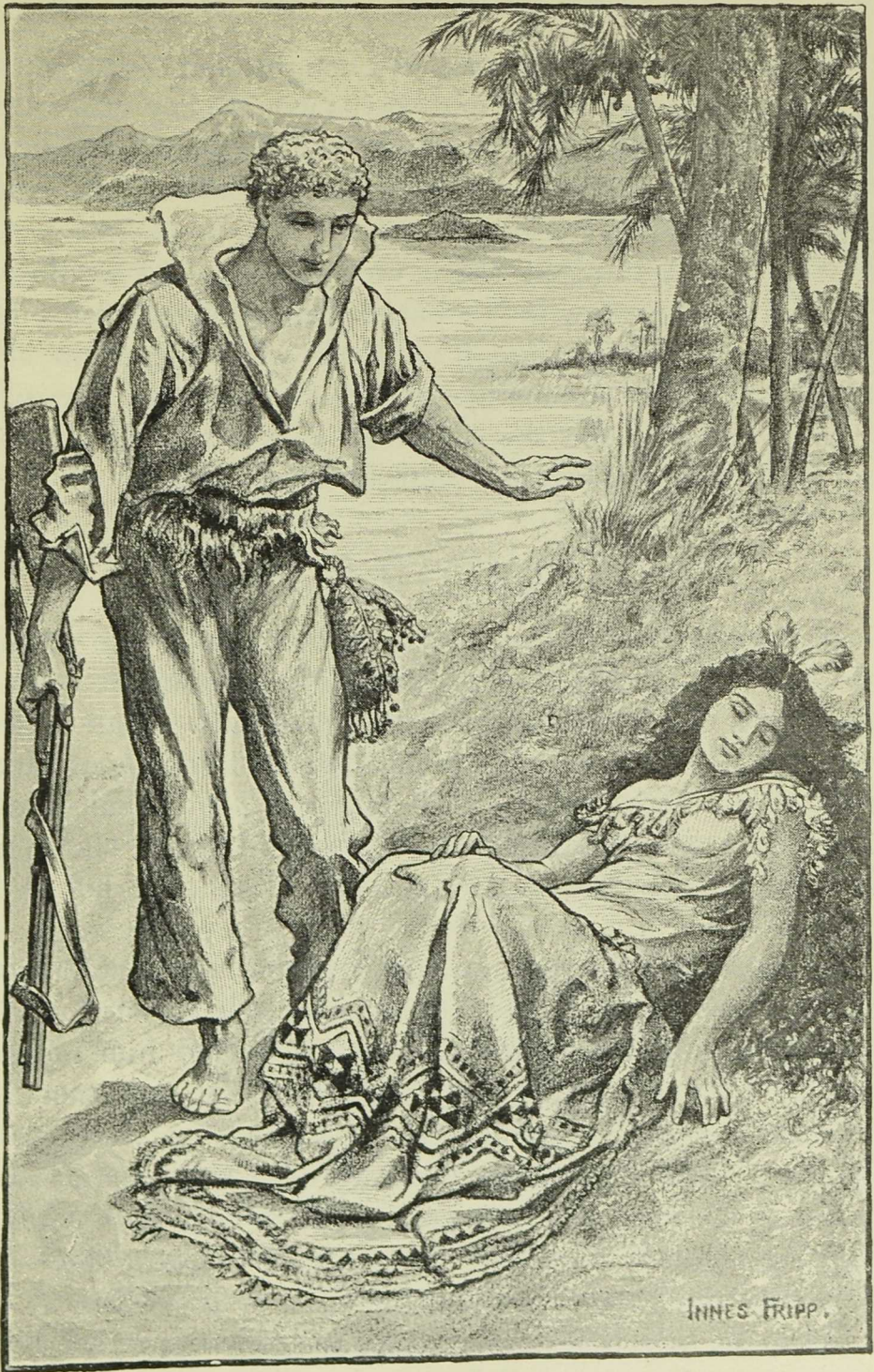
they must go back to the island, or her father would be frightened. After again thanking Ranolf, she bade him farewell, and then she and Miroa entered their canoe and shot out of his sight across the blue water.

Before Amohia and Miroa had gone far from shore the brightness of the day was suddenly overcast, a wind sprang up, great rolling clouds gathered overhead until the sky was covered, the quiet lake became like an angry sea, and soon a terrific thunderstorm broke over them. It took all Amohia's skill to guide the little skiff as it danced on the angry waves; and as she did so, brilliant flashes of lightning played around her, and the thunder pealed almost incessantly.

But Amohia had a brave spirit, and it was not daunted now. Besides, just after leaving Ranolf she had heard some news which made her so happy that she felt indifferent to danger. For another canoe had come alongside of hers, bearing a native youth who greeted Amohia; and when she asked whither he was bound, he said, "O Amohia! I go to your father, the great Tangi-Moana. Terrible news do I bring, for your husband that was to be is dead. The rain loosened the earth, and the earth slipped down the mountain, and he is buried beneath—quite dead."

Then the young man's canoe had shot ahead towards the island. And this was the news that secretly gladdened Amohia's heart; for as she did not wish to marry the chief, she could not help rejoicing that he was dead.

When she reached the island a strange sight awaited her. Tangi had been very anxious at the thought of his daughter being out on the lake in the storm, and he had come to the shore, followed by all his people. There he strode up and down and waved his arms, and shouted to the



"Here Ranolf found her." (See page 270.)



storm to cease; for he thought that, being a chief, even the winds and waves would obey him. Great was his relief when the canoe came in sight, and with much joy he received Amohia as she landed in safety.

That night there was weeping and wailing for the chief who lay buried beneath the fallen mountain; but though Amohia was obliged to share in the mourning and felt a certain amount of sorrow for the death of a brave man, her heart was really filled with great relief and happiness.

II.—Ranolf's Deliverance.

As the days passed Amohia thought often of the stranger who had rescued her, and wondered if she should ever see him again, or if he had quite forgotten her. Ranolf, however, had not done so. He found himself thinking again and again of the dark maiden, of her glowing eyes and graceful movements, and the pretty, gentle way in which she talked. And one day he took a canoe and set off to seek her in her island home.

Amohia was playing at ball on the shore with other maidens when he arrived; but as soon as he landed the ball was dropped, and the maidens clustered round him in a shy group. Now Amohia was a chief's daughter and knew how to behave, so she welcomed her friend with a pretty native dignity. Then Ranolf sat down near her and began to talk, and soon all were at their ease. The young man told the listening maidens stories of his own native land, which were, of course, much too wonderful for them to believe.

When he said that large animals called horses, much bigger

than any dog, were fastened to something like a land canoe, and drew it and the people seated inside for long distances, the maidens whispered and laughed at the strange fairy tale. But when he went on to describe how steam was used to draw a number of little rooms or houses in which people sat, called a railway train, and that this train went very fast—faster than the swiftest man could run—they thought the fairy tale was getting too impossible to be even amusing.

Then Miroa said she could tell him a really true story; and she told him how a maid named Rona, when gathering leaves in a basket, cursed the moon because she hid behind a cloud, and how the moon came out red and angry, and sent forth beams which caught the maid and drew her up and up, until the moon had quite got hold of her. "And that must be true," said Miroa, "because any one who looks at the moon on a clear night can see her there, basket and all."

Thus they talked and chatted gaily, until the sun began to sink and the time for the evening meal drew near; and then Ranolf wandered away to the other side of the island by himself, while the maidens went to prepare supper.

But Ranolf was not after all to join the simple feast, for now a serious misadventure befell him.

While he was wandering alone, some one approached him swiftly from behind; and before he could shout for assistance a thick cloak was thrown over his head, his arms and legs were securely pinioned, and he was dragged through the forest to a place where a sliding-door was pushed aside. Here he was thrust in, the door closed again, and he found himself a helpless solitary prisoner.

For some few minutes Ranolf lay on the ground, too dazed and stupefied to move. Then, as he slowly recovered his senses, he succeeded by a great effort in freeing his head, so

that though his limbs were tied, he was able at any rate to see what his surroundings were like.

The first things that he saw were great eyes which seemed to gaze at him with malignant hate from every direction ; and as his sight gradually grew accustomed to the dim light, he saw that the eyes belonged to large hideous faces above grotesque, dwarf-like bodies, and that these were, in fact, stone supports for the low roof of the room in which he lay. Then at last he knew that he was in the great council chamber of the Maori tribe.

From whose enmity he came to be there was more than he could imagine. The only thing that he did feel sure of was that it could not be Amohia who was to blame for the act of treachery towards him. He could not guess, for he knew nothing of him, that it was Kangapo who had seized him, nor that the wise man was only waiting until it was dark to take him out and drown him in the lake. But though Ranolf knew nothing of this, he was quite certain that he was the victim of an evil plot, and awaited with some dread what might happen next.



Two hours passed in misery ; the light had now quite faded, so that at least Ranolf was no longer haunted by the horrible eyes of the stone figures. After a long time a faint, rustling sound fell on his ear, then a gentle footfall. Some one was coming near. Perhaps his enemies were going to kill him then and there as he lay helpless and bound. Nearer came the gliding footsteps, and then, as his heart beat rapidly with fear of what was about to happen, a soft voice whispered,—

“Stranger, hush ! no word. ’Tis I, Amohia.”

It can be imagined with what a sense of relief Ranolf

heard these words, and realized that instead of a fierce enemy come to slay him it was the gentle maiden Amo who had come to his rescue.

But evidently the danger was not yet completely past. For Amohia would neither speak nor let him do so, as with a sharp-edged shell she deftly cut his bonds. When this was done, she whispered,—

“For your life, no sound. Who knows how near your enemy may be! Follow me in silence.”

Ranolf was only too ready to obey, and soon he was again in the open, following Amohia with cautious steps through the thicket, then past fields of tall, shining flax, past the very hut where Amohia lived, and where they had to go even more cautiously than before, and so at last to the margin of the lake.

Here Amohia briefly told him how he had been the victim of an evil design of Kangapo's; how she had discovered it, and come to save him. Then she pointed out his canoe, which she had told Miroa to bring to the place where they stood in readiness for his departure.

“And now haste, Ranoro!” she implored. “Any minute Kangapo may discover you have fled and start in pursuit. Tarry not, dear stranger, but go!”

She put out her hand to push him from her, so eager was she for his safety, but Ranolf could not leave without thanking her and bidding her farewell. And as he did so, he took her in his arms and kissed her; for he felt that, savage maiden though she was, he loved her very truly for the sake of her pure soul and faithful heart.

When Amohia received his kiss she knew that she too loved Ranolf. But there was no time to be lost. She threw her arms round his neck for one moment, and then

again entreated him to go. So Ranolf entered his boat, which to the watching eyes of the Maori maiden soon looked a mere speck on the dark waters of the lake.

Very dreary days for Amohia followed. She could think of nothing but Ranolf, and her longing to see him again was very great; but of this there seemed little chance, for how could he ever venture to come again to the island where he had been so badly treated, and had indeed nearly lost his life?

III.—The End of the Story.

At last something occurred which caused the maiden to take a very desperate course.

One evening as she sat by the lake lost in sad thought, Miroa came to her, breathless with haste and excitement, to tell her some great news.

Miroa had a friend belonging to a neighbouring tribe, and from him she had discovered that Kangapo was arranging to marry Amohia to Pomare, the son of the chief of that tribe, and had persuaded Tangi to give his consent.

If poor Amohia had been miserable before when her marriage had been arranged, she was far more miserable now; for not only did she not love Pomare, but she loved Ranolf with all her heart and soul. And the thought of being married to another filled her with agony.

And now as night fell the maiden made the desperate resolve that, since Ranolf could not in safety come to her, she would go to him, and thus escape the evil fate before her.

As soon as every one else on the island was asleep she stole with swift, noiseless footsteps to the place where the canoes were kept, thinking to take one across the lake to the place where Ranolf dwelt; but to her dismay she found

that this was impossible. It would almost seem as if some one had guessed her purpose, for the canoes were all lying high and dry on the beach, and to move one down to the water was a task beyond her unaided strength.

What was to be done? Between her and Ranolf stretched five or six miles of water, and she had no boat! There was one way, and one only, of reaching him, and Amohia at once decided on this. Taking off her upper garments, she made them into a bundle which she fastened to her back, and then she stepped into the water and started to swim.

At first the task was a pleasant one, and Amohia had the good sense to go slowly, so as to save her strength. The clear limpid waters of the lake parted easily to the firm strokes of her vigorous young arms, and as she left the island behind her she began to enjoy the sensation of passing rapidly through the water.

Now she laughed softly to herself as some wild waterfowl, startled by so unusual an appearance in the solitude of the night, turned their heads with swift, frightened glances, then sped into the darkness with shrill cries of alarm. Again she watched the tall rushes bend slightly as she passed, and heard with pleasure the faint murmur of the water as it rippled against them. Then fatigue came on her, her limbs began to feel heavy, her sight failed, and with a sense of joy and relief she reached the stump of a tree which stood up above the lake, the last remnant of an island long sunk under the water.

Panting and exhausted, Amohia seized this welcome support, and rested her tired body against it. But not for long. Before her still stretched miles of water, at the other side of which awaited Ranolf, and she soon plunged into it again. Now, however, her swimming was no longer a pleasure, but a

toil. Her eyes could hardly bear to dwell on the dark water before her, nor to seek the shore which seemed so very far away, and instead they sought the sky in which the stars hung like great fairy gems in the dark vault of space. Each stroke now was actual pain to her weary, stiffening limbs, but was not each one taking her nearer and nearer to Ranolf? Encouraged by this thought she pressed bravely on.

And now when at last she ventured to look towards the shore, behold, it was so near that she could see a light on the hillside which showed her where Ranolf's hut was to be found.

A few more strokes and she was in shallow water, and in another minute she sank exhausted on the beach, her journey accomplished at last.

After a short rest Amohia found herself able to move, though she was now stiff and cold.

Not far from where she had landed was a beautiful natural basin of marble, large enough for a bath, and filled with water from a hot spring. To this she now made her way, and when she had bathed in the healing water she felt quite soothed and refreshed. Her clothing, too, she soon dried by means of the heat from the spring, and on a bank of softest moss, sheltered by waving trees, she made a comfortable bed, and soon fell into a deep sleep.

Here Ranolf found her, to his great surprise, on the following morning, and after the first joyful greetings were over she told him all her story. His face grew very tender when he heard how she had swum all that great distance for his sake; and when she wound up by imploring him to save her from marrying Pomare, he said gently,—



“Dear Amohia, you shall never marry any one but me. I will love you and take care of you always.”

But it was not safe to linger where they were, for by this time the alarm would be raised in the island, and any moment boats might be crossing the lake in pursuit; so Ranolf and Amohia set off to seek a place of refuge at some distance.

For some days they remained there in hiding, and except for the dread of being followed they were happy. Ranolf had his gun and shot wild birds for their food, and they caught fish in the lake; and a native boy whom they took with them as servant kneaded a kind of bread from maize or Indian corn. Their cooking was very easily done, for near to where they camped were some springs of water so hot that food laid on a flat stone above one of them was cooked almost at once.

After two or three days, however, the native boy returned from one of the villages to which he had gone for provisions, and brought news which altered all their plans. He had met people from the island, and they gave a piteous account of poor old Tangi's grief at losing his daughter. He was afraid she must have been drowned in the lake, as her footmarks were found close to the water's edge; but he was declaring to every one that if this were not so, and she would come back, he would not only forgive her, but in spite of Kangapo he would never force her to marry any one.

When Ranolf and Amohia heard this they felt they must return to comfort the old man, and they did so; and Tangi wept and laughed over Amohia, and rejoiced greatly.

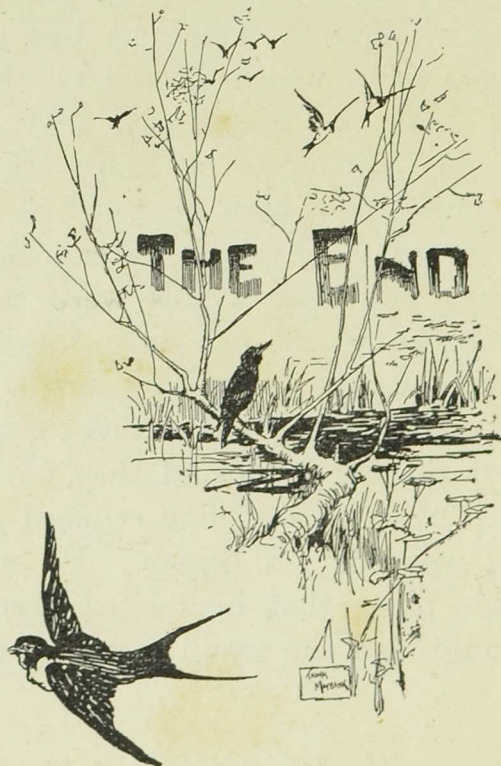
But Kangapo was not yet beaten. He was so angry at the failure of his plans that he incited Pomare's father to make war on Tangi, and the result was a terrible battle.

Bravely and fiercely did Tangi lead his tribe, and himself dealt great blows with his battle-axe; but though he won the battle, he was so badly wounded that soon afterwards he died.

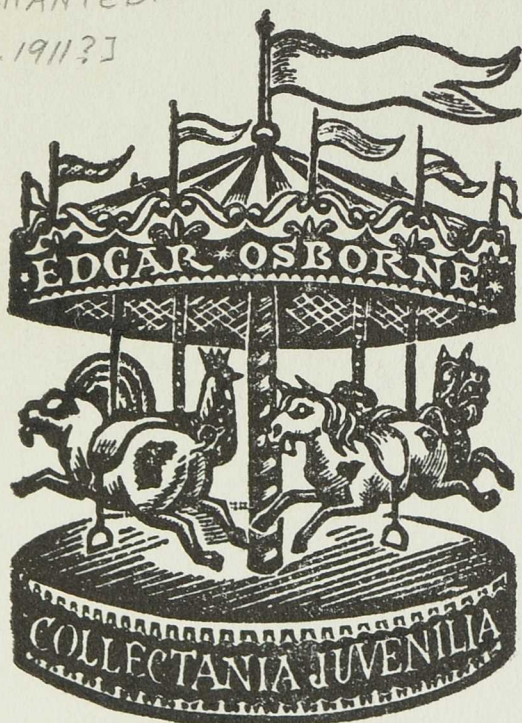
The cunning Kangapo then began to form a plot by which Ranolf should be attacked unawares and killed; but Ranolf found it out, and decided that the only safe course was to escape to his own land. So he asked Amohia if she would go with him to dwell in a strange country far away; and Amohia loved him so much that she consented, even though it meant giving up the home she loved, and crossing the great ocean of which she stood in great fear.

And thus it was settled. Ranolf engaged a ship to meet them at a certain place on the coast; and before Kangapo could stop them, he and Amohia stole away, reached this vessel in safety, and were soon out of his power for ever.

Told from the poem by ALFRED DOMETT.



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