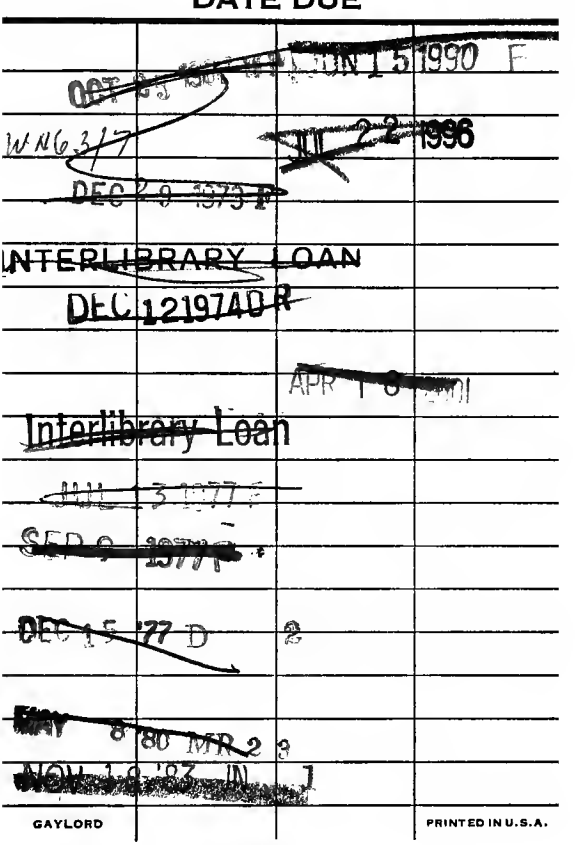

FAIRY TALES OF EASTERN EUROPE

INTRODUCTION

A dual interest attaches to this posthumous work of Jeremiah Curtin,—interest in the noted author no less than in the pleasing tales making up his last contribution to literature.

Our young readers will find their chief delight in the stories, and indeed may never take the trouble to read this introduction at all; but as a matter of record—simple justice to a remarkable man—no book ought to go forth bearing Mr. Curtin's name without some mention of his manifold activities, least of all this final product of his pen, recently brought to light among his papers.

Jeremiah Curtin's gift of tongues—his ability to study many diverse peoples in the intimacy of their own speech—came to him naturally. Dr. Charles W. Eliot, under whom he studied at Harvard says: "Seven months and a half before he entered Harvard, Curtin states that he did not know one word of Latin or Greek, but at the admission examination he offered more of each language than was required. At the time of his death he knew more than sixty languages and dialects, and spoke fluently every language of Europe and several of the languages of Asia." As a further instance of his extraordinary facility in language, Dr. Eliot continues: "In Siberia he studied the Buriat language with a Buriat who knew

Russian, and hard as it was to acquire a strange language without the aid of books, he accomplished the feat in a few weeks. At sixty he learnt a new language as quickly as he did when a Harvard student. Having acquired a language, Curtin always wished to learn the history, principal achievements, myths, folk-lore, and religious beliefs and usages of the people who spoke that language. Hence his great learning, and his numerous publications on myths and folk tales."

Mr. Curtin came honestly by his literary and linguistic genius, for centuries ago, when Ireland was her own, the Mac Curtins were hereditary historians of Thomond. Hugh Og Mac Curtin was a noted patriot poet in the 15th Century, Andrew Mac Curtin a poet and historian of the period of 1700, and reputed "one of the best Gaelic scholars having transcribed from the ancient manuscript the history of the wars of Thomond," and another Hugh Mac Curtin, described by Hyde as a "learned poet and lexicographer," was the author of an important Gaelic dictionary in 1732.

Soon after coming to America the Curtins settled just outside the present city of Milwaukee, Wis., where Jeremiah Curtin was born, in 1838. Milwaukee was then two years old and a conglomerate of immigrants from half the nations of Europe. With such surroundings it is easy to understand how the boy's natural bent for study was turned in the direction of races and languages. Schools were few and rudimentary, the term being limited to three months in the winter and three in the summer. By making friends with the immigrants the

boy learned a good deal of German, French and Norse, and laid the foundation of his later Indian studies by cultivating the acquaintance of the vagrant Potowatomi and Winnebago. No linguistic opportunity ever escaped him. Aside from persistence and hard study his success was largely due to his kindly, sympathetic nature so marked through life. He readily won the confidence of the simplest folk. After the death of his father he entered Carroll College at Waukeshaw, going from there to Harvard, where he was graduated in 1863.

Leaving college in his twenty-fifth year with a trained mind, a rugged constitution and the world before him, Mr. Curtin's life work was already chosen and its plan well matured. It was a purpose magnificently simple, but such as probably never came to a man before or since,—nothing less than to sweep the Aryan field of languages,—in other words to devote his life to a comparative study of the entire Indo-European race from the headlands of Ireland across the Balkans to the Caucasus, and on down to the heart of the Hindu peninsula, and furthermore to study these languages among the people and the tribes in their own homes. This task he actually accomplished. He did not stop with Aryan languages, but studied in the scope of his investigations, Hungarian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Mongol and the Maya of Central America. Nearly half a century was given by this painstaking man to systematic travel and the study of the languages of three continents.

In 1864 he was appointed Secretary of the American Le-

gation to Russia, which office he held for several years, traveling and studying meanwhile. In 1883 he became connected with the Bureau of Ethnology and made a study of Indian languages. He was in active service till 1891; then feeling that he could not carry out his literary plans and work for the Bureau at the same time, he tendered his resignation. The Chief of the Bureau refused to regard it as a final severance of relations and asked him to consider himself an honorary member—which he did.

The final years of his life were spent in traveling, writing, and studying indefatigably. He was equally at home in all lands and climes, and remote the tribes whose speech he did not understand. In 1900 he spent a year or more in Siberia, China, and Japan, making a circuit of the world.

In addition to his books on folk-lore, he wrote an important history of the Mongols. His popular reputation was assured in the nineties by his brilliant translations of the works of Sienkiewicz, especially "Quo Vadis," but scholars and critics have long since recognized the peculiar value of his original work. Mr. Curtin died in 1906.

Theodore Roosevelt, then President of the United States, paid this tribute to him:[1] "The death of Jeremiah Curtin robbed America of one of her two or three foremost scholars. Mr. Curtin, who was by birth a native of Wisconsin, at one time was in the diplomatic service of the Government; but his chief work was in literature. The extraordinary facility with

[1] Introduction to "The Mongols."

which he learned any language, his gift of style in his own language, his industry, his restless activity and desire to see strange nations and out of the way people, and his great gift of imagination which enabled him to appreciate the epic sweep of vital historical events, all combined to render his work of peculiar value. His extraordinary translations of the Polish novels of Sienkiewicz would in themselves have been enough to establish a first-class reputation for any man. In addition he did remarkable work in connection with Indian, Celtic and other folk tales."

The present collection of "Fairy Tales of Eastern Europe" was gathered by him personally in the course of his travels. They were obtained by word of mouth in direct converse with the people in their daily lives—when stopping perhaps in some rude wayside cabin, or mingling as one of them in their festivals. In this way the author has preserved the quaint flavor of the original stories. He did this, as he himself averred, in order to find, back of the story, the common link in mythology uniting the people with other races. Writing on the subject of folk-lore, he says: "Many of these tales are of remarkable beauty. They are of deep interest both to young and old, and nowhere do they enjoy more delicate appreciation than among the educated people in America and England. The delight in a beautiful and wonderful story is the very highest mental pleasure for a child, and great even for a grown man; but the explanation of it (if explanation there be) and the nature of its heroes (if that can be discovered) are dear to

the mind of a mature person of culture. Much has been written touching the heroes of folk tales, as well as the characters in Aryan mythology, but it appears to have produced small effect; for to most readers it seems unproven, and founded mainly on the views of each writer. This is the reason why the chief, almost the only, value found in folk tales as yet is the story itself, with its simple beauty, incomparable grotesqueness, and marvelous adventures.

"The great majority even of the least modified tales of Europe have mainly substituted heroes—sons of kings, tsars, merchants, poor men, soldiers,—so that in most cases the birth, occupation, or name of the present hero gives no clue to the original hero of the tale; but incidents do. The incidents are often an indication of what kind of person the original hero must have been."

"Fairy Tales of Eastern Europe" are drawn from four sources,—the Russian or Slavic, the Hungarian or Magyar, the Bohemian or Chekh, and the Serbian. The table of contents shows the general groups. The stories deal largely with adventurous deeds, and in this respect form an interesting parallel to the stories of "The Thousand and One Nights." The most striking example of this in "The Magic Lamp," which at once suggests our friend Aladdin, yet the author presents it just as he got it by word of mouth from the Hungarian peasants. One wonders if such similarities can be explained by the waves of conquest such as that of the Mongols under Genghis Khan, in the thirteenth century, or whether they date

back centuries further to some common cradle of the race! It is just such secrets as this that Mr. Curtin spent his lifetime in trying to discover; and although such a herculean task must necessarily be left incomplete, the reward comes with the doing, and the thanks of readers into whose hands fall these old world stories of potent charm.

J. WALKER MCSPADDEN

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

FAIRY TALES OF EASTERN EUROPE

FAIRY TALES OF EASTERN EUROPE

THE TWELVE MONTHS

A WOMAN had two daughters, one was her own, the other was a step-daughter. She loved Holena, her own daughter, but hated Marushka, the step-daughter, for she was prettier and smarter than Holena.

Holena sat around in idleness, while Marushka had to cook, wash, spin, weave, bring grass and take care of the cow. She was willing to work, she didn't know why her mother hated her, but she bore reproaches with patience.

At last the step-mother and her daughter thought only of how to get rid of poor Marushka. They tortured her with hunger, and beat her, but she endured it all and grew more beautiful each day.

One day, in the middle of winter, Holena pretended to want violets, and she said to Marushka,—

"Go to the woods and get me some violets, I want to put them in my belt and enjoy their perfume."

"But, sister, what has come to your mind? I have never heard of violets blossoming in winter," answered Marushka.

"How do you dare to question when I command? Worthless creature, toad! If you do not go this minute to the woods and get me violets I will kill you," threatened Holena.

The step-mother seized Marushka, pushed her out of the house, and closed the door. The girl went to the forest, weeping bitterly. Deep snow was on the ground; there was no trace of a path. Long she wandered. She was hungry and cold, and prayed to God to take her out of the world.

At last, off in the distance, she saw a bright light. She went toward it and ascending a hill she came to a fire; around the fire on twelve stones, sat twelve men; three old men with long white beards, three somewhat younger, three in years of manhood, and three beautiful youths. They were sitting in silence and looking calmly on the fire. They were the Twelve Months.

December sat in the first place; his hair and beard were white as snow; he held a scepter in his hand.

Marushka stood in astonishment, but after a time, summoning courage, she drew near, and asked,—

"Kind men, will you let me warm myself at the fire? I am shivering with cold."

December nodded his head. When the maid was warm, he asked, "Why are you here?"

"I am looking for violets," answered Marushka.

"But there are no violets in winter; everything is covered with snow."

"I know that," answered Marushka, sadly; "but my mother and sister have sent me for violets; if I do not get them they will kill me. Tell me, good shepherds, is there any place where I can find violets?"

December rose from his seat, went to the youngest month, and said,—

"Brother March, sit in the first place."

March took the highest place and waved the scepter above the fire; that instant the fire burned more powerfully. The snow thawed; buds appeared on the branches and grass grew green, beneath the trees; flowers began to open—Spring had come. In the thickets violets were blooming; there were so many that they were like a blue carpet.

"Quick, Marushka, pluck them!" said March.

Marushka gathered a great bouquet, thanked the Twelve Months, and hurried home.

Holena and her mother were astonished when they saw Marushka coming with a large bunch of violets in her hand. They opened the door; she entered and the whole house was filled with the perfume.

"Where did you find them?" asked Holena.

"On a hill; there are many of them under the trees."

Holena took the violets, put them in her belt and enjoyed their perfume; she didn't offer even one of them to Marushka.

The next day they sent Marushka for strawberries. Long she wandered around in the cold, praying God to take her out of the world; then she came to the Twelve Months and again met with a kind reception. Learning what she wanted, December left his place and going to the month sitting just opposite, gave him the scepter, and said,—

"Brother June, sit in the first place."

June sat in the highest place and waved the scepter above the fire; that instant the flames leaped high, the snow melted, the earth was covered with grass, the trees with leaves; the birds began to sing; many-colored flowers bloomed in the forest—Summer had come. Little white blossoms gleamed, like stars, in the grass, as if some one had put them there on purpose. Before Marushka's eyes the flowers became fruit, and the berries were ripe. She could not look around before the grass was dotted with them as if some one had sprinkled it with blood-drops.

Marushka gathered many berries and took them to her sister.

Holena ate some of them and gave her mother some, but did not offer even one to Marushka.

The next day Holena wanted apples, and she sent Marushka for them. The unfortunate girl waded through deep snow and wandered around in the cold praying God to take her out of the world. At last she found the Twelve Months sitting in front of their fire as formerly. When she told them what she had been sent for, December gave the scepter to his brother September, who sat in the first place and waved the scepter over the fire. The fire burned brighter and the snow vanished, but Nature had a solemn face; leaves were falling from the trees, a fresh wind drove them hither and thither over the dry and yellow grass. Marushka saw no flowers, but she saw an apple tree loaded with red fruit.

"Shake the tree quickly," said September.

She shook it; one blushing apple fell. She shook it again; another fell.

"Now hurry home," said September.

She obeyed, and carried home the two apples.

Holena wondered at their beauty and so did her mother.

"Where did you get them?"

"On a hill; there are many there yet."

"Why didn't you bring more?" asked Holena, angrily. "No doubt you ate them on the road."

"I did not. I shook the tree once—one apple fell; I shook it again—another fell. They wouldn't let me shake it again; they told me to go home."

"May lightning strike you!" screamed Holena, and she wanted to beat her sister.

The poor girl began to cry. Holena ate an apple; it seemed to her wonderfully sweet. She finished, and said to her mother,—

"Give me my cloak, I'll go into the forest myself. If that good-for-nothing girl goes she will be sure to eat the apples. I'll shake off every apple whether they permit me to or not, it's all the same to me."

She put on her cloak, tied a shawl over her head and went out.

The snow was deep, there was no trace of a human foot anywhere. She wandered long, and at last she came to the Twelve Months. Without asking leave Holena walked straight to the fire and began to warm her hands.

"What do you want; why are you here?" asked December, severely.

"Why ask, old man? What business is it of yours where I am going?" answered Holena, and turned to go into the forest. December frowned and raised his scepter. That moment the fire died down, the heavens

grew dark, snow fell in great flakes, as if some one were shaking feathers out of a tick; and a cutting, all-chilling wind whistled through the forest. Holena could not see one step before her; she felt that her limbs were growing stiff. She cursed Marushka, and stumbled on.

The mother, waiting at home, looked through the window, and ran to the gate; but hours passed by, one after another, and no Holena came.

"Most likely she found the apples so good that she can't stop eating them. I'll go myself and look for her," said the mother.

She put on her cloak, threw a shawl over her head and went in search of her daughter.

Time passed. Marushka got supper ready, and fed the cow, but neither Holena nor her mother came.

"Where are they stopping so long?" thought Marushka, and she sat down to spin. The spinning was finished, then night came, but still they were not at home.

"Lord be merciful to us! What has happened to them?" said the kind-hearted girl.

She looked out. The heavens were gleaming with stars, the earth glittering with snow, but no human being was visible anywhere. She closed the door, made the sign of the cross, repeated "Our Father" for her

step-mother and sister, and then lay down to sleep. The next day she looked for them at breakfast, waited for them at dinner; but in vain—they came not again to the house of living man.

THE CAT AND THE FOX

ONCE there was a peasant who had a cat so mischievous that there was no living with him. The peasant was tired of him; he put him in a bag, tied the bag up firmly and carried it to the forest. There he opened it, pulled the cat out and throwing him away, said: "Let the wretch perish!"

The cat wandered about till he came to a forester's cabin. As there was no one living in the cabin he crawled into the garret and lay there at his ease. If he wished to eat he went into the forest and caught birds and mice, and after eating his fill went back to the garret.

Once when he was strolling around in the forest a fox met him. She looked at him and wondered, thinking to herself, "How many years have I lived in this forest, and I have never seen such a beast!" She bowed down before him and said,—

"Tell me, good youth, who you are; by what chance you come here, and how you are honored by name."

The cat raised the hair on his back, and said, "I am from the Siberian forests; I have been sent here to be Mayor of the place, and Kotofei Ivanovitch is my name."

"Oh, Kotofei Ivanovitch," said the fox, "I had not heard of your arrival, but come and dine with me. Be my guest."

The cat went home with the fox and she entertained him with every kind of game. At last she asked, "Kotofei Ivanovitch, are you married or single?"

"I am single," answered the cat.

"And I am a maiden," said the fox. "Will you marry me?"

The cat consented and they had a wedding with feasting and gladness.

The next day the fox went out to get provisions that she and her husband might have something to live on—but the cat stayed at home.

As the fox was running through the forest she met a wolf. The wolf spoke loving words to her, and said, "I have looked everywhere for you, but could not find you. Where have you been all this time?"

"Stop!" said the fox; "none of your soft words to me, I was a maiden, but now I am married."

"Whom have you married, Lisevata Ivanovna?"

"Haven't you heard that Kotofei Ivanovitch from the Siberian forests has come to us as Mayor? I am the Mayor's wife."

"I had not heard of it, Lisevata Ivanovna. How can I get a look at him?"

"Oh, my Kotofei Ivanovitch is terribly fierce. If you don't please him at first sight he will eat you. See that you get a sheep ready and make him a present. Put the sheep down near our place and hide lest he sees you. If he sees you, you will come to grief."

The wolf hurried off to get the sheep.

The fox went farther and met a bear, who spoke loving words to her.

"Stop! bow-legged Mishka," said she. "I was a maiden, but now I am married."

"Who is your husband, Lisevata Ivanovna?"

"The Mayor who has been sent to us from the Siberian forests. His name is Kotofei Ivanovitch."

"Could I have a look at him?" asked the bear.

"Oh, my Kotofei Ivanovitch is very fierce. If you don't please him at first sight he'll eat you. But bring an ox as a present; the wolf is going to bring a sheep. You must be careful. Put the ox down near our house, then hide so that Kotofei Ivanovitch will not see you. If he sees you, you'll come to grief."

The bear went for the ox.

The wolf brought the sheep, put it down and stood in deep thought. He looked, and behold a bear was coming along tugging an ox.

"Good morning, brother Mihail Ivanovitch," said the wolf.

"Good morning, Levon," answered the bear. "Have you seen Lisevata Ivanovna and her husband?"

"No, I am waiting to have a look at him."

"Go, and call them."

"No, Mihail Ivanovitch, I am afraid; you go, you are braver than I am."

"No, brother Levon, I'll not go."

All at once, from wherever he came, a hare ran along. The bear shouted, "Come here, you crooked-legged rascal!"

The hare, terrified, ran up.

"See here, crooked legs, do you know where Lisevata Ivanovna lives?"

"I know, Mihail Ivanovitch."

"Well, go quickly and tell her that Mihail Ivanovitch and his brother, Levon Ivanovitch, have come to pay their respects and have brought an ox and a sheep."

When the hare started off at full speed the bear and the wolf began to think about hiding themselves.

"I'll climb this pine tree," said the bear.

"But what can I do? Where shall I go?" asked the wolf. "I can't climb a tree. Hide me somewhere, brother. Help me in my trouble."

The bear hid the wolf in bushes, covered him with dry leaves, and then climbed to the top of the pine tree.

Once safe he looked around to see if Lisevata Ivanovna and her husband were coming.

Meanwhile the hare had knocked at Lisevata Ivanovna's door and delivered the message. "We'll be there directly," said she.

As the cat and the fox walked out from among the trees, the bear saw them and called to the wolf. "They are coming, brother. But don't be afraid; Kotofei Ivanovitch is a little fellow."

When the cat saw the carcass of the ox, his hair stood straight on his back. He sprang onto the carcass and began to tear the flesh with teeth and claws, crying, "Small, small!"

The bear thought, "He's a little fellow, but what a stomach he has; four bears couldn't eat that ox, and it's small, not enough for him. If we are not careful he'll eat us, too."

The wolf, wanting to see Kotofei Ivanovitch, began to move the leaves to get an opening for his eyes. The cat heard the rustling and, thinking it was a mouse, sprang onto the leaves and fastened his claws and teeth onto the wolf's nose.

The wolf jumped up and, praying God to give him swift legs, ran into the forest. The cat, frightened half to death, ran up the tree where the bear was.

The bear thought, "This terrible Kotofei Ivanovitch has seen me; there is no time to slip down. My death is coming!"

Resigning himself to the will of God he dropped to the ground. It nearly shook the liver out of his body, but he sprang up and ran off for dear life.

The fox screamed after them,—"Oh, my Kotofei Ivanovitch will settle with you! Wait awhile, you'll find out who my Kotofei Ivanovitch is!"

But they ran all the faster.

From that time, all of the beasts of the forest were in mortal terror of the cat. Lisevata Ivanovna and her husband had provisions for the whole winter and probably they are still living in affluence.

DAWN, TWILIGHT, AND MIDNIGHT

IN a certain kingdom lived a king who had three beautiful daughters. The king guarded them more carefully than his own eyes. He built an underground palace in which he placed them, like birds in a cage, so that neither the boisterous winds might blow on them, nor the bright sun burn them with its rays.

Once, by some chance the princesses read in some book that there was a wondrous white world, and when the king came to visit them, they straightway began to implore him: "Gosudar, our father, let us look upon the white world, let us walk in the green garden."

The king tried to dissuade them; but the more he refused the more they insisted. Nothing to be done! He granted their prayer.

The princesses went into the garden to walk. They beheld the bright sun, the trees and the flowers. They were unspeakably delighted that the white world was free to them. They ran through the garden, amused themselves, admired every little blade of grass, but all at once, a stormy whirlwind seized them and bore them high up and far away, it was unknown whither.

The nurses and governesses were in terror. The king sent his most trusty servants in every direction, promising a great reward to him who would find his daughters.

The king's messengers journeyed and traveled, but discovered nothing. With what they went, with that they came back.

The king summoned a council and asked his boyars if any of them would undertake to find his daughters. He asked once, all was silent; a second time—no answer; a third time; not half a word.

The king wept bitter tears, and said, "It is evident I have no friends or defenders." Then he ordered a proclamation to be made to the whole kingdom, hoping that some one might be found among common men to do the deed.

In a certain village there lived a poor widow, who had three sons, strong, mighty heroes. They were all born in one night; the eldest at twilight, the second at midnight and the third at dawn. On this account they were named Twilight, Midnight and Dawn.

As soon as they heard of the king's proclamation they took their mother's blessing and set out for the capital city. They came to the king, bowed down before him, and said,—

"Hail, Gosudar! be well for many years. We have

come, not for the sake of feasting, but to do a good deed. Permit us to go and find your daughters."

"Honor to you, good youths. How do men call you by name?"

"We are three brothers—Dawn, Twilight and Midnight."

"What can I give you for the road?"

"We need nothing for ourselves, Gosudar, but we pray you not to desert our mother. Care for her in her poverty and old age."

The king sent for the old woman, lodged her in the palace, and gave orders that meat and drink should be furnished her from his own table, and clothing from his own storehouses.

The three young men went their way. They traveled one, two and three months, till they came to a broad desert steppe. Beyond the steppe there was a forest, at the edge of the forest, a hut. They knocked, no answer. They went in, but no one was there.

"Well, brothers," said Twilight, "let us stop here for a time; let us rest after the road."

They said their prayers and lay down to sleep. The next morning the youngest brother, Dawn, said to Twilight, the eldest,—

"Midnight and I will go out hunting, but do you stay here and get something ready to eat."

Twilight consented. Near the hut was a pen full of sheep; so, not thinking long, Twilight took the best sheep, and killed, dressed, and roasted it, for their dinner. When everything was ready he lay down on a bench to rest.

All at once there was a thumping and thundering, the door opened and a little old man came in, an ell tall himself, his beard seven ells long. He looked angrily at Twilight and screamed,—

"How did you dare to play the master in my house? How did you dare to kill my sheep?"

"Grow up first," answered Twilight, "I can't see you. I'll take a spoonful of soup and a bit of bread and blind you."

The little old man was terribly enraged.

"I am small, but I am strong," said he.

He seized a club and began beating Twilight with it. He beat him till he was almost dead, then he threw him under the bench; ate the roasted sheep and went into the forest.

Twilight bound up his head with a cloth and lay down on the bench, groaning. His brothers came home and asked,—

"What has happened?"

"Oh, brothers," said he, "I heated the stove and my

head began to ache from the great fire; I could neither roast nor stew, the heat wouldn't let me."

The next day Dawn went to hunt with Twilight, and left Midnight at home to cook the dinner. He made a fire, picked out the fattest sheep, killed, dressed and roasted it, then lay down on the bench. Suddenly there was a thumping and thundering and a little old man entered, himself an ell in height, his beard seven ells long.

"How dare you play the master in my house and kill my sheep?" screamed he, and flying at Midnight, he beat and pounded him, till he was barely alive; then he ate the sheep and went into the forest. Midnight bound up his head and lay groaning under the bench. When his brothers came home they asked,—

"What has happened?"

"When I kindled a fire in the stove, the heat stifled me. I could neither roast nor stew, so there is nothing to eat."

The third day the eldest brothers went to hunt, and Dawn stayed at home. He selected the best sheep, killed, dressed and roasted it for dinner, then lay down on the bench. Suddenly there was a thumping and thundering and the little old man walked into the yard with a bundle of hay on his head and a pail of water in his hand. He put down the pail, scattered the hay over the yard, and

went to count his sheep. Soon he found that one was missing. He flew into a rage, rushed to the hut, hurled himself at Dawn and struck him heavily on the head. Dawn sprang up, seized the little old man by the beard and pulled and dragged him over the floor. As he tugged he kept saying,—

"Before sounding the ford, don't jump in."

The old man himself an ell in height, his beard seven ells long, began to beg and pray,—

"Have mercy on me, mighty hero, do not give me to death. Let my soul repent."

Dawn dragged him to the yard, took him to an oak post, to which he fastened his beard with a great iron wedge, then he went into the hut and waited for his brothers. When they came Dawn said,—

"I have caught 'heat' and fastened it to a post."

They went to the yard and found that the little old man had run away, but half his beard was there on the post. Along the path he had gone there were drops of blood. The brothers followed till they came to a deep opening. Dawn made a long rope, from the inner bark of trees, and commanded his brothers to let him down to the under world. They did so. When he reached the underworld he freed himself from the rope and went whither his eyes looked.

After traveling for a long time Dawn saw out before

him a copper palace. When he came to the palace a young princess met him with kindly greeting, and asked,—

"How have you come here, was it of your own free will, or against your will?"

"The king sent us to find you and your sisters," said Dawn.

Straightway she seated him at a table, gave him to eat and to drink, and brought a flask of the Water of Strength.

"Drink of this water," said she. "Your strength will increase."

Dawn emptied the flask and felt in himself mighty strength.

"Now," thought he, "I can overcome anything."

That moment a terrible wind rose up. The princess was frightened.

"The serpent that stole me from my father will fly in here directly," said she.

She took Dawn by the hand and hid him in another room. A three-headed serpent came, hit the damp earth, and cried out,—

"There is a Russian odor here. Who is visiting you?"

"Who could come to this place?" asked the princess. "You have been flying through Russia, there's where you got the odor."

The serpent asked for meat and drink. The princess brought him different kinds of food and drink, and into the wine she poured a few drops of the Water of Sleep. The serpent ate and drank his fill, then fell asleep. The princess called to Dawn. He came and straightway he drew his sword and cut off the serpent's heads. Then they burned up the body and scattered the ashes over the open field.

Dawn left the princess and journeyed till he saw a silver palace. In that palace was the second princess. There Dawn killed the six-headed serpent, scattered his ashes and went farther. Whether it was long or short he made his way to a golden palace, and there he found the eldest princess, and killed the twelve-headed serpent. The princess rejoiced and made ready to go home with the hero. She went to the broad court and waved her bright kerchief; the golden kingdom folded into an egg, she put the egg into her pocket and went with Dawn for her sisters. They did as she had done; they folded the silver kingdom and copper kingdom into eggs and put them into their pockets, and set out for the opening. Twilight and Midnight drew up their brother and the princesses.

When the brothers came to their own country, the sisters unrolled the three eggs on a broad, open space,

and behold the three kingdoms appeared—the copper, the silver and the golden.

The king was so delighted that his joy could not be told. Straightway he had Twilight, Midnight and Dawn married to his three daughters, and he made Dawn heir of his Kingdom.

THE WORLD'S REWARD

ONCE upon a time when a peasant was carrying wood from a forest he got tired and throwing the wood on the ground he sat down on a stone to rest. That minute he heard a cry, and some one called,—

"Oh, good man, take pity on me! Roll off the stone and save my life. Free me, and I will pay you as the world pays best!"

The peasant rolled the stone away, and out of the hole a great snake crawled, wound himself into a spiral, raised up his head, and said,—

"Know, man, that I am Yaza! Get ready, you must die."

The peasant was terribly frightened, and lamenting he reproached the snake with ingratitude.

"Didn't you call for help? Haven't I saved your life?" asked he.

"Of course," replied the snake, "but I am only doing what I promised; I am paying you as the world pays best."

After a long discussion the snake agreed to let another settle the dispute, and they went together in search of

a judge. After a while they came to where an old dog was tied to a fence.

"How are you, faithful guardian of a house?" asked the peasant.

"As you see," replied the dog.

"Be so kind as to be our judge; we have a dispute." And the peasant told the whole story. "Wasn't it so and so?" asked he, turning to the snake.

"It was," answered the snake.

The dog thought a while, then said to the man, "My friend, you must die, for this is just how the world pays best. When I was young I was my master's favorite. He wore the skins of the wolves and foxes which I caught; I guarded his house from thieves. My master was fond of me. When offered a carriage and horses he refused to sell me. But now, when I am old and weak and can neither run nor bark, he has led me out here and tied me to the fence to stay till some man kills me for my skin. This is the world's reward."

The peasant, seeing that he had lost his case, begged to look for another judge. The snake consented and they went through forests and across fields till they came to an old half-starved horse. His head was hanging down, his sides had fallen in, and he was covered with flies which he had not strength to drive away.

"How are you, noble beast?" asked the peasant.

"As you see," replied the horse.

The peasant told him the story and begged him to decide for them.

The horse listened patiently to the man's complaint, then decided in favor of the snake, saying: "This is the world's reward."

"When I was young," said he, "I had every comfort. When I was led out of the stable every one admired me. I carried my master to war. More than once, by my swiftness, I saved his life and helped him to fame. Two men cared for me; they curried me twice each day and gave me the best of oats and hay. My stable was like a parlor. In summer they covered me with a net that flies might not bite me. My master wouldn't have sold me for a whole village. But when I grew old he starved me, didn't even give me straw to eat. And now he has led me out to this barren field to be killed by the wolves. This is how the world pays best."

"What more do you want, man?" asked the snake.

The peasant begged the snake to let him try a third and last judge. He consented and they went on till at the edge of a forest they saw a fox, running along.

"Oh, Master Fox, wait and be our judge!" called the peasant. "We have a question to decide."

The fox, a cunning fellow, listened to the story, then

winked to the peasant, and whispered, aside, "If you will give me all of your hens I will help you out of your trouble."

"What are hens!" said the man. "I will give you the geese too, and if need be all I have in the world."

The fox, pretending to be an impartial judge, said: "This is an important case: one of life and death. The first who judged, judged lightly. In justice the case can only be decided on the spot where everything took place. We will go there."

When they came to the place, the fox said: "We must begin at the beginning. Do you, man, sit down on the stone, and you, snake, crawl into the hole where you were lying."

When they had done as he told them, and the snake was back in the hole, he winked at the man, and said: "Roll the stone over, quickly."

The peasant didn't wait to be told twice. When the hole was covered, and the snake couldn't get out, the peasant thanked the fox for salvation from death.

The fox answered: "But do not forget that I have earned the hens. To-morrow before daylight, I will come for my breakfast."

The peasant went home as delighted as if he had been born a second time. He told his wife what had

happened, praised the wisdom of the fox, and added that he had promised him all the hens, and that the next morning he would come for them.

The woman was glad that her husband was saved, but she was very sorry to lose her hens.

The next morning, early, she went to the window and seeing a fox in the yard she called to her husband: "Do you hear, old man? There is a fox in the yard!"

"Oh, that is the fox that saved me. He has come for the hens!"

"Just as if I were crazy enough to give him my hens!" cried the woman. "The Lord be praised that you are alive; but take the gun and kill the fox. You will get good money for his pelt."

The peasant obeyed his wife. He took the gun and firing from the window killed the fox.

Dying, the fox said in a mournful voice: "This is how the world pays best."

THE TOWN OF NOTHING

THERE was a very rich merchant and he had a grown-up son. When the merchant died the son remained with his mother and began to manage his father's business; but he had luck in nothing. What the father had gained in three years the son lost in three days. He traded everything away. Of all his wealth there was left only one old house. He was born luckless to be sure.

When the fine fellow saw that he had nothing to live on, nothing to eat, he sat down on a bench under the window, scratched his stormy head, and thought,—

"With what shall I nourish myself, and with what nourish my own mother?"

He sat not long; he rose, begged a blessing of his mother, and said,—

"I will go and hire with a rich peasant, as a laborer."

The mother consented, and behold the son hired with a rich peasant for fifty rubles for the whole summer. He began to work; though he had plenty of good will he understood nothing; how many axes did he break, how many scythes did he dull? He brought thirty rubles'

loss to his master. The peasant was hardly able to keep him till mid-summer.

The good youth went home, sat on a bench under the window, scratched his stormy head, and wept bitterly. "How shall I keep the life in my own head," thought he, "and how in my mother's?"

"Why art thou weeping, my child?" asked his mother.

"Why should I not weep when I have no luck in anything? Give me thy blessing, I will go and hire as a herdsman."

His mother consented. In a certain village he engaged to herd a drove of cows, for a hundred rubles for the summer. He did not stay till mid-summer; he lost more than ten of the cows and then people drove him away.

He went home, sat on the bench under the window, scratched his stormy head, and cried bitterly. He cried a long time, then he asked a blessing of his mother, and said,—

"I will go wherever my head will take me."

His mother dried cakes for him, put them in a bag, and blessed him to go in all four directions. He took the bag, and went whithersoever his eyes looked. Whether it was near or distant, he went to another kingdom. The Tsar of that land saw him, and asked,—

"Whence dost thou bear thyself?"

"I am looking for work, all the same what kind, I am glad to do anything."

"Hire with me to work in my distillery; the work will be to carry wood and put it under the cauldrons."

The merchant's son was glad, and he hired with the Tsar for one hundred and fifty rubles a year. Half a year was not spent and he had burned up almost all of the distillery. The Tsar summoned him to his presence, and asked,—

"How did it happen that the distillery was burned?"

The merchant's son told how he had spent his father's property, and how he had no luck in anything. "Wherever I hire," said he, "I cannot stay more than half my time."

The Tsar took pity on the poor fellow; he did not punish him for his offense, but calling him Bezdolni (Luckless), he gave command to put a stamp on his forehead so that wherever he went no tribute or tax could be demanded, and food, drink and lodging would be given him, but in no place was he to be kept longer than twenty-four hours.

Straightway the Tsar's officers put a stamp on Bezdolni's forehead, and the Tsar dismissed him. "Go," said he, "wherever thou wilt, know that no one will arrest thee, and that thou wilt be fed and no pay will be asked."

Bezdolni went his way. Wherever he came no one

asked a question; he was given food, drink and lodging for one night, but the next morning he was driven away.

Whether he wandered long or short over the white world it happened to him to go into a dark forest; in that forest stood a cabin and in the cabin an old woman was living. He went to the cabin; the old woman gave him food and drink, and then proper directions.

"Walk along the path," said she, "and thou wilt reach the blue sea; thou wilt see a large house. Go in and do this way, and that way."

The merchant's son started along the path and did what he had been told to do, as if it had been written down. He reached the blue sea and saw a great house. He entered the first chamber. In that chamber a table was laid and on the table was a piece of white bread. Bezdolni took a knife, cut off a bit of the bread and ate it, then he climbed on the stove, hid himself under the wood, and waited for night to come. As soon as it began to grow dark thirty-three beautiful maidens, full sisters, came in, all equal in stature, all dressed in like garments, all equal in beauty. The eldest sister went first to the table, she looked at the bread, and said,—

"It seems that the odor of Russia is here."

"Why sayest that, sister?" cried the youngest of the thirty-three maidens. "We have traveled over Russia and have caught the Russian odor."

The maidens sat down at the table, supped, talked, and then went to different chambers. In the first chamber only the youngest sister remained. She undressed, lay on the bed and slept soundly; then the good youth crept down from the stove and stole her clothes.

Early the next morning the maiden rose up and looked for something to dress in; she rushed here and there but in no place were her clothes. The other sisters dressed, turned to doves, flew out over the blue sea and left her alone. Then she called in a loud voice,—

"Whoever has taken my clothes give answer, fear not. If an old man be my grandfather; if an old woman be my grandmother; if a man of ripe years be my uncle; if a woman of ripe years be my aunt; if a youthful young man be my fated one."

The merchant's son came down from the stove and gave her the clothes. She dressed, took him by the hand, kissed him and said,—

"Now, my heart's friend, no time for us to sit here. Time for us to make ready for the road, and arrange our own house."

She gave him a bag for his back, took another for herself and led him to a cellar. She opened the door; the cellar was full of copper coins. Bezdolni was happy; he seized a handful of coins and thrust them into the bag.

The fair maiden burst into laughter, caught hold of the bag, emptied the coins out, and closed the cellar.

"Why didst thou throw the coins back?" asked Bezdolni. "They would have served us."

"What sort of money is that? We shall find better." She led him to another cellar and opened the door. The cellar was full of silver. Bezdolni rejoiced more than before, and hurried to put silver into the bag.

Again the maiden laughed. "What sort of money is that?" asked she. "Pour it out; we will find something better."

She led him to a third cellar and opened the door; the cellar was full of gold and pearls.

"This is best," said the maiden; "we will fill our bags."

They took gold and pearls, and went their road and way. Whether it was near or distant, high or low, a story is soon told, but a deed is not soon done; they came to that same kingdom where the merchant's son had worked in the distillery. The Tsar knew him, and said,—

"Ah, that is thou, Bezdolni, and thou hast a wife. See what a beauty thou hast found! If it please thee, live in my kingdom."

The merchant's son took counsel with his wife, and she said,—

"Do not hasten to honor, do not flee from honor. It is all the same to us where we live. If it please thee we will stay here."

They furnished a little house and lived in harmony.

Soon a voevoda, a friend of the Tsar, grew envious. He went to an old witch, and said,—

"Listen to me, grandmother; tell me how to put an end to the merchant's son. He is called luckless, but he lives twice as well as I; the Tsar favors him more than boyars and men of his counsel; and his wife is a beauty beyond admiration."

"This affair can be remedied," said the witch. "Go to the Tsar and say that Bezdolni promises in this way and in that way to go to the Town of Nothing and bring back No One Knows What."

The voevoda went to the Tsar, and the Tsar sent for the merchant's son.

"How is it, Bezdolni, that thou art boasting to strangers and say not a word to me? To-morrow thou wilt take the road, go to the Town of Nothing and bring back No One Knows What. If thou doest not this service thou shalt lose thy wife."

Bezdolni went home and cried bitterly. His wife, seeing him, asked,—

"My heart's friend, why art thou weeping? Has

some one put offense on thee, or has the Tsar sent a cup around thee, not seated thee in thy place, or has he put upon thee difficult service?"

"Oh, such a service!" cried Bezdolni, "that to think of it is hard, much more to accomplish it. He has ordered me to go to the Town of Nothing and bring back No One Knows What."

There is no help; there is no arguing. She brought a towel and a ball, gave them to her husband, and told him how and where to go.

The ball rolled straight toward the Town of Nothing. It rolled over open fields and mossy swamps, along rivers and lakes, and after it walked Bezdolni. Whether it was near or far, low or high, he came to a cabin standing on a hen's foot on a dog's leg.

"Cabin, cabin!" said he, "turn thy back to the woods, with thy front to me."

The cabin turned; he opened the door and entered. On a bench sat a gray-haired old woman.

"Fu! fu!" said she, "hitherto nothing Russian has been heard with hearing or seen with sight, and now the Russian odor is present of itself. Well, good youth, thou hast come in time, I am hungry. Knowest thou that I want to eat? I'll kill thee and eat thee up, I'll not let thee off alive."

"What, thou old fiend! wilt thou go to eating a man

on the road? A man on the road is bony and black. First of all, heat the bath, let me steam and wash myself, then eat me to thy good health."

Bezdolni washed himself, took out the towel his wife had given him, and began to wipe his face.

"Whence hast thou that towel!" cried the old woman. "My niece embroidered that towel!"

"Thy niece is my wife."

"Oh, dear son-in-law, with what can I entertain thee?"

The old woman put all kinds of food on the table, all kinds of wine and mead. Bezdolni neither hesitated nor stood on ceremony; he sat down at the table and food disappeared. When he lay down to sleep the old woman sat at the bedside and questioned him,—

"Where art thou going, good youth? Art going of thy own will or against thy will?"

"What sort of will! The Tsar has commanded me to go to the Town of Nothing and bring back No One Knows What."

The next morning the old woman roused Bezdolni, and called her dog. "Here," said she, "is a dog for thee; he will lead thee to that town."

The dog started off and Bezdolni followed. After traveling a whole year he came to the Town of Nothing. There wasn't a living soul in that town, everywhere emptiness. He made his way into the castle and hid behind

the stove. In the evening an old man came, a nail in length, his beard an ell long.

"Ei No one!" cried he, "feed me!"

In one moment every kind of food and drink was there. The old man ate and drank his fill, then went away. Bezdolni crept out from behind the stove and called,—

"Ei No one! Give me to eat!"

No one gave him food.

"Ei No one! Give me to drink!"

No one gave drink.

"Ei No one! Come with me!"

No one did not refuse.

Bezdolni turned for his homeward journey; he traveled and traveled. All at once a man was in front of him, leaning on a club.

"Stop!" cried the man to the merchant's son. "Give food and drink to a traveler."

"Ei No one, give us a dinner," commanded Bezdolni.

That moment a table appeared and on the table all kinds of food, wines and meads, as much as the soul desired.

The stranger ate and drank his fill, then said,—

"Give me No one in exchange for my club."

"What is thy club good for?"

"Only say to it; 'Ei, dear Club, overtake and beat that

man to death.' That moment the Club overtakes and kills the man, no matter how strong he is."

Bezdolni exchanged No one for the Club, went off a short distance, then said,—

"Ei, dear Club, overtake that man, beat him to death and bring back my No one."

The Club went like a wheel, from end to end it turned, overtook the man, struck him on the head, killed him and came back. Bezdolni took the Club and traveled on; he traveled and traveled. All at once a man, with a dulcimer in his hand, came toward him.

"Stop!" cried the man to the merchant's son. "Give food and drink to a traveler."

He gave him food and drink in abundance.

"God save thee, good youth," said the stranger. "Give me thy No one in exchange for my dulcimer."

"But what is thy dulcimer good for?"

"My dulcimer is not a common one. If thou touchest one string the blue sea will come; if thou touchest a second string ships will sail; if thou touchest the third string men will fire cannon from the ships."

Bezdolni had faith in his Club. "Very well," said he, "let us trade."

He traded and went his way. But soon he said, "Ei, dear Club, overtake and beat that man to death; bring back my No one."

The Club turned like a wheel, overtook the man and beat him to death.

When Bezdolni was near his own town he thought he would play a trick: He opened the dulcimer and touched one string; the blue sea was there; he touched a second string; ships were sailing near the town; he touched a third string and from all the ships cannonading began.

The Tsar, greatly alarmed, gave orders to collect an army to drive back the enemy.

Bezdolni came now, and said to the Tsar,—

"Your majesty, I know how to save the city. Give command to cut the right foot and the left hand from thy friend, the voevoda, and the moment that is done the ships will disappear."

At the Tsar's word they cut off the hand and foot of the voevoda. Bezdolni closed his dulcimer—that moment, wherever they went to, neither sea nor ships were there. The Tsar gave a great feast; there was nothing to be heard but "Ei, No one, give us this, give us that."

The voevoda hated the merchant's son more than ever and tried in every way to undermine him. He took counsel of the old witch, then went on crutches to the palace, and said,—

"Your majesty, Bezdolni is boasting that he can go to

the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom and bring from there the tale-telling Tom Cat that sits on a pillar seventy-two feet high, and kills a multitude of people."

The Tsar called Bezdolni, gave him a glass of green wine, and said,—

"Go to the thrice ninth land, to the thirtieth kingdom and get me the tale-telling Tom Cat. If thou doest not this service thou shalt lose thy wife."

The merchant's son went home and wept bitterly, whereupon his wife asked,—

"Why art thou weeping? Has some one given thee offense? Has the Tsar passed thee by with the cup, seated thee in the wrong place, or put a difficult service on thee?"

"He has given such a service that it is hard, not only to do it, but to think of it. He has commanded me to get for him the tale-telling Tom Cat."

"Well, pray to the Savior, and lie down to sleep."

Luckless lay down to sleep and his wife went to the blacksmith's shop and forged three iron caps; prepared three iron cakes, three iron claws, and three rods, one iron, one copper and one tin. In the morning she roused Bezdolni, and said,—

"Here are three caps for thee, three iron cakes, and three rods. When thou art within three versts of the tale-telling Tom Cat he will send powerful sleep to over-

come thee. Be on thy guard, sleep not; throw out thy arms, draw foot after foot, sometimes roll like a cylinder, for if thou sleepest the cat will kill thee."

Whether it was long or short, near or distant, Bezdolni came to the thirtieth kingdom. When three versts away sleep began to overpower him; he put on the three iron caps, threw out arm after arm, and rolled like a cylinder. In one way and another he held out and reached the pillar. The tale-telling Tom Cat sprang on to his head, broke one iron cap, broke the second, and was about to break the third, when the good hero caught him with claws, pulled him to the earth, and began to belabor him with the rods. He cut him with the iron rod; the rod broke; he cut him with the copper rod; the rod broke; then he took the tin rod; that bends and doesn't break, but winds over his back. The Cat began to tell tales about deacons and priests, but the merchant's son did not listen. The Cat could not endure the blows and when he could not stop Bezdolni with stories, he entreated him,—

"Leave off, good man, I will do for thee all that thou wishest."

"Wilt thou go to the Tsar's palace with me?"

"Wherever thou pleasest I will go."

Bezdolni loosened his hold. The Cat invited him as

a guest, seated him at a table and placed bread before him. The merchant's son ate three or four pieces; that was enough, more would not enter his throat. The Cat grumbled and found fault.

"What kind of hero art thou if thou canst not eat as much bread as I?"

"I am not used to thy bread," said Bezdolni. "I have in my pack Russian cakes for the road. They are the things for a hungry stomach." He took out an iron cake and acted as if he were about to eat it.

"Let me see what Russian cakes are like," begged the Cat.

The merchant's son gave him an iron cake; he ate it. He gave him a second; he gnawed that; he gave him the third; he gnawed till he broke his teeth, then he threw the cake on the table, and said,—

"Thy Russian cakes are very hard."

Bezdolni made ready and started for home; the Cat followed him. They went and went, and went and went till they came to the Tsar's palace.

When the Tsar saw the Cat he said,—

"Now, tale-telling Cat, show me a great terror."

The Cat put out his savage claws, aimed them at the Tsar, was going to tear his white breast in two and take out his living heart.

The Tsar was terrified, and began to entreat Bezdolni to take away the tale-telling Cat. "Take away the Cat, I'll do everything for thee," cried he.

"Wilt thou have the voevoda buried alive?"

"I will."

That moment they took the wicked voevoda, bore him to the court and buried him alive in the damp earth. Bezdolni and his wife lived in the palace, with the Tsar. No one served them; the Cat obeyed them, and they lived long and happily. This is the story; no more can be told.

THE AMBITIOUS OLD WOMAN

IN a poor little cabin an old man lived with his old wife. One day the man went into the forest to cut firewood. He sought out a large tree and raised his ax to strike. That instant the tree spoke with a human voice, saying,—

"Do not cut me, old man; what you want that I will give."

"Will you make me rich?" asked the old man.

"I will. Go home; you will have everything in abundance."

When the old man reached home, he found, in place of his cabin, a large house as well furnished as a full cup, grain stored up to last for years, and so many cows, horses and sheep that you couldn't count them in three days.

"Where did all this come from?" asked the old woman.

"You see, wife, off in the forest I found a tree that whatever you ask for, it gives."

For a few weeks the old couple rejoiced in their new abundance; then life became irksome for the woman and she said to her husband,—

"Though we live richly, what sense is there in it all if people don't show us honor? If the village elder wishes he can send us to work, or, if he takes it into his head, he can arrange to have us flogged. Go to the tree and ask to be village elder."

The man went to the tree and raised his ax as if to strike at the roots.

"What do you want?" asked the tree.

"Make me village elder."

"Very well," said the tree. "Go your way with God."

When the old man reached home soldiers were waiting for him. "Where have you been?" cried they. "Give us quarters at once, and good ones too. Stir around, old man!" ordered they, pushing and striking him.

The old woman saw that an elder was not always sure of honor, so she said: "What profit is there in being an elder's wife? The soldiers beat you. But to a noble nothing can be said. What he commands is done. Go to the tree and ask to be a noble."

The old man took his ax and went to the tree as if to cut it down.

"What do you want?" asked the tree.

"Make me a noble."

"Very well. Go your way with God."

The old woman lived a while as a lady, then she grew dissatisfied and said to her husband:

"What good is it for me to be a lady? If you were a Colonel, it would be another thing, every one would envy us," and she drove him off again to the tree.

When he raised his ax as if to strike, the tree asked:

"What do you want?"

"Make me a Colonel."

"Very well. Go your way with God."

He went home and was appointed Colonel.

"What good is there in all this?" said the old woman. "If the General wants to, he can put you under arrest. Go to the tree and ask to be a General."

The old man went to the tree and asked. As soon as he reached home he was raised to the rank of General.

Some time passed, then the woman grew tired of being a General's wife.

"A great affair indeed to be a General!" said she. "If the Tsar wishes he can send you to Siberia. Go to the tree and ask to be made Tsar."

He went and raised the ax.

"What do you want?" asked the tree.

"Make me Tsar and my wife Tsaritsa."

"Very well. Go your way with God."

When the old man reached home deputies were al-

ready there. They saluted him with profound respect and said:

"Our Tsar is dead. You have been chosen to fill his place."

The old man and woman did not reign long. To be a sovereign seemed too small a matter to the woman.

"A great affair indeed to be a Tsar!" said she. "If God wishes He can send death to us, then people will hide us away in the damp earth. Go to the tree and ask it to make us gods."

The old man went to the tree, which, as soon as it heard his senseless request, shook its leaves and said:

"Be you a male bear, and your wife a female bear!"

That minute the old man and woman became bears and ran off into the deep woods.

IVAN TSAREVICH AND BAILOI POLYANYIN

IN a certain kingdom, in a certain land, there lived a Tsar who had three daughters and one son, Ivan Tsarevich.

The Tsar grew old and died and Ivan Tsarevich took the crown. When neighboring kings heard of this they collected a countless army and went against him with war.

Ivan Tsarevich knew not what to do; he went to his sisters and asked, "My dear sisters, what am I to do? All of the neighboring kings have risen against me."

"Oh, thou brave warrior!" said the oldest sister. "Why dost thou fear? Look at Bailoi Polyanyin; he is fighting with Baba Yaga, Golden Leg, thirty years; he never gets off his horse, he lives without rest, but thou art frightened at nothing."

Ivan Tsarevich saddled his good steed, put on his armor of war, took his sword, Kladyenets, his lance of long measure, and his silken whip, prayed to God, and rode out to meet the foe.

He killed not so many with the sword as he trampled with his steed. He destroyed the hostile army, went

home, lay down to rest, and slept three days and nights without waking. On the fourth day he woke up and went out to look at the open field. The kings had collected more men than before; their army was under the walls of the city.

Ivan Tsarevich knew not what to do; he went to his sisters, and asked, "Oh, my sisters, what am I to do? I destroyed one army, now another stands under the city walls and threatens me worse than the first one did."

"What sort of a warrior art thou, to fight one day and sleep three days and nights without waking? Look at Bailoi Polyanyin; he fights with Baba Yaga, Golden Leg, thirty years; he never gets off his steed, he lives without rest, but thou art frightened at nothing."

Ivan Tsarevich went to the white-walled stable, saddled his good steed, his heroic steed, put on his battle armor, and girded on his magic sword. In one hand he took his lance of long measure, in the other, a silken whip. He prayed to God, and went to meet the foe.

Not a bright falcon flies on a flock of geese, swans and gray ducks as Ivan Tsarevich bore down on the enemy's army. He killed not so many himself as his steed trampled. He slew a great warrior force; then he went home and lay down and slept six days and six nights without waking.

On the seventh day he rose and went out to look on the open field. The kings had collected a greater force than before and had surrounded the city. It was a fearsome sight.

Ivan Tsarevich went to his sisters, and asked, "Dear sisters, what am I to do? I have destroyed two mighty forces, now the third one stands under the walls and threatens me worse than the first and the second did."

"Oh, what a brave warrior! Thou hast fought one day and slept six days and nights without waking. Look at Bailoi Polyanyin; he wars with Baba Yaga, Golden Leg, thirty years; he never gets off his steed, he lives without rest."

This was bitter for the Tsarevich to hear. He hastened to the white-walled stables, saddled his good steed, put on his battle armor, girded on his magic sword, took in one hand his lance of long measure, in the other, his silken whip, prayed to God, and rode out to meet the foe.

That was not a bright falcon flying on a flock of geese, swans and gray ducks, but Ivan Tsarevich coming down on the hosts of the enemy. Not so many did he slay himself as his good steed trampled. He killed a mighty warrior force, then returned to his castle, lay down to sleep, and slept nine days and nine nights with-

out waking. On the tenth day he rose up, called his ministers and officers, and said,—

"My ministers and officers, I have decided to visit strange lands. I am going to look for Bailoi Polyanyin. I ask ye to give judgment, govern and settle all questions in truth."

Then he took leave of his sisters, mounted his steed and rode forth on his way and path. Whether it was long or short he came to a dark forest, in that forest was a cabin, and in the cabin lived an old man. Ivan Tsarevich went to him and said,—

"Hail, grandfather!"

"Hail, Russian Tsarevich! Whither is God bearing thee?"

"I am seeking Bailoi Polyanyin; dost thou know where he is?"

"I know not myself, but I will summon my faithful servants and ask."

The old man went to the door of the cabin and began to play on a silver flute. Straightway birds flew to him from every side; there flew together seen and unseen of them; they covered the heavens with a dark cloud. The old man cried with a sounding voice and whistled a hero's whistle,—

"My faithful servants, passing birds, have ye not seen, have ye not heard of Bailoi Polyanyin?"

"With seeing we have not seen, with hearing we have not heard," answered they.

"Well, Ivan," said the old man, "thou must go now to my brother; maybe he will tell thee something. Take this ball, let it go before thee, and whither it rolls there turn thy horse."

Ivan Tsarevich mounted his good steed and dropped the ball to the ground. It rolled on and he rode after it. Whether it was long or short he came to a cabin; in the cabin sat an old man as gray as a kite.

"Hail, grandfather!" said Ivan.

"Hail, Russian Tsarevich, whither art thou holding thy way?"

"I am seeking Bailoi Polyanyin. Knowest thou where he is?"

"I know not, but I will call my trusty servants and ask them."

The old man went to the door and blew his silver horn; straightway beasts gathered to him from all sides. He whistled a hero's whistle, then cried with a mighty voice,—

"My faithful servants, racing beasts, have ye heard of Bailoi Polyanyin?"

"With sight we have not seen him, with hearing we have not heard of him," answered the beasts.

"Count up, maybe ye are not all here."

The beasts counted themselves; the crooked she-wolf was not there. The old man sent a messenger for her and soon she came.

"Tell me, crooked she-wolf, dost thou know where Bailoi Polyanyin lives?"

"Why should I not know if I live near him. He slays armies and I feed on the dead."

"Where is he now?"

"He is on a great mound in the open field, sleeping in his tent. He has been fighting with Baba Yaga, Golden Leg, and after the fight he has laid down to sleep for twelve days and twelve nights."

"Guide Ivan Tsarevich to him."

The she-wolf ran on and after her galloped Ivan. He came to the great mound and entered the tent. Bailoi Polyanyin was resting in a firm sleep. Ivan said,—

"My sisters told me that this hero fought without rest, but he has lain down to sleep for twelve days and nights. Shall I sleep meanwhile?"

He thought and thought, and at last he lay down at the side of Bailoi Polyanyin. A small bird flew into the tent, fluttered around the pillow, and said these words,—

"Rise! wake up, Bailoi Polyanyin, and give my brother, Ivan Tsarevich, to a cruel death. If not he will slay thee!"

Ivan Tsarevich sprang up, caught the bird, tore off her right leg, threw her out of the tent, and again lay down at the side of Bailoi Polyanyin.

He had not fallen asleep when another small bird flew in, fluttered around, and said,—

"Rise! wake up, Bailoi Polyanyin, and give my brother, Ivan Tsarevich, to a cruel death. If not he will slay thee!"

Ivan Tsarevich sprang up, caught the bird, tore off her right wing, threw her out of the tent, and lay down again.

A third small bird came flying and fluttering around, and said,—

"Rise! wake up, Bailoi Polyanyin, and give my brother, Ivan Tsarevich, to a cruel death. If not he will slay thee!"

Ivan sprang up, caught the bird, tore off her bill, threw her out, and then lay down and slept soundly as before.

The time came, and Bailoi Polyanyin woke up. He saw that at his side was lying an unknown hero. He seized his sharp sword and was going to give him to a cruel death, but he halted.

"No," thought he, "this hero came while I was sleeping, and he did not put blood upon his sword. It would not be honor and praise to me to destroy him now. A

sleeping man is the same as a dead one. I will rouse him."

He roused Ivan Tsarevich, and asked, "Art thou a good or a bad man? Speak! How do they call thee by name, and why hast thou come?"

"They call me Ivan Tsarevich, and I have come to look at thee and try thy strength."

"Thou art bold, Ivan Tsarevich; unbidden thou hast entered my tent, without asking thou hast slept at my side; I might have given thee to death for that."

"Ah, Bailoi Polyanyin, boast not before thou hast cleared the ditch. Thou mayest stumble; thou hast two hands, and my mother did not bear me with one. We will fight."

They mounted their heroic steeds, rushed at each other, and struck with such force that their lances flew into splinters and their good steeds fell on their knees. Ivan Tsarevich knocked Bailoi Polyanyin out of his saddle and raised his sharp sword above him. Bailoi Polyanyin implored,—

"Give me not to death, give me life. I will call myself thy younger brother, I will honor thee in place of a father."

Ivan Tsarevich took him by the hand, raised him from the earth, kissed him and called him younger brother.

"I have heard, my brother," said he, "that thou art fighting thirty years with Baba Yaga, Golden Leg. Why this war?"

"She has a daughter, a beauty. I want to marry her."

"If we are friends, then one should give aid to the other. Let us go against Baba Yaga."

They mounted their steeds and rode to the field. Baba Yaga, Golden Leg, had put out a numberless fighting force. Those two were not bright falcons flying at a flock of doves, they were strong mighty heroes rushing down on an army of enemies. Not as many did they slay with swords as they trampled with their steeds. Baba Yaga rushed off in flight, but Ivan Tsarevich pursued her. He had almost caught her, when suddenly she ran into a deep ravine, raised an iron slab and disappeared under the earth.

Ivan Tsarevich and Bailoi Polyanyin bought a great herd of oxen, killed them, took off their hides and made straps of them. They fastened the straps together and made a strap so long that one end of it was in this world and the other in the underground world.

Ivan said to Bailoi Polyanyin, "Let me down quickly and don't pull up the rope till I jerk it."

Ivan reached the underground world, looked around,

and went in search of Baba Yaga. He journeyed an traveled, walked and walked on, looked, and lo! behin a grating tailors were sitting.

"What are ye doing there?" asked Ivan.

"We are sitting and sewing an army for Baba Yaga Golden Leg."

"How do ye sew an army, brothers?"

"This is how. What we prick with a needle is a Cos sack with a pipe. He mounts his horse, stands in line and goes to make war on Bailoi Polyanyin."

"Oh, brothers, ye do it quickly, but not firmly. Stan in a row and I will show ye how to sew firmly."

They stood in a row. Ivan Tsarevich drew his swor and the heads flew. He killed the tailors and walke on and on. Whether it was long or short he came to grating and lo! behind it shoemakers were sitting.

"What are ye doing?" asked Ivan Tsarevich.

"We are sitting and making an army for Baba Yaga Golden Leg."

"How do ye make an army, brothers?"

"This is how. What we prick with an awl is a war rior with a sword. He mounts a horse, stands in line and goes to war against Bailoi Polyanyin."

"Oh, brothers, ye do it quickly, but not well. Stand i a row and I'll show you how to do better."

They stood in a row. Ivan Tsarevich drew his swor

and the heads flew. He killed the shoemakers and went on. Whether it was long or short he came to a great city. In the city was a Tsar's castle, and in the castle sat a maiden of indescribable beauty; when she saw Ivan, his dark curls, his falcon eyes, and his heroic bearing pleased her. She asked whence he came and why.

"I am seeking Baba Yaga, Golden Leg," said Ivan.

"Know, Ivan Tsarevich, that I am her daughter. She has lain down to rest for twelve days and nights."

Ivan Tsarevich went to Baba Yaga, Golden Leg; he found her asleep, struck her with his sword and cut off her head. The head rolled, and said,—

"Strike again, Ivan Tsarevich."

"A single blow from a hero is enough," answered the Tsarevich and went back to the castle to see the beautiful maiden. He sat with her at the oaken table at the spread cloth; they ate and drank, then he asked her,—

"Is there in the world any one stronger than I, or fairer than thou?"

"Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, what sort of a beauty am I? Beyond the thrice ninth land in the thirtieth kingdom lives, with the Tsar of the Serpents, a maiden of unspeakable beauty; she washed her feet and I bathed in that water."

Ivan Tsarevich took the white hand of the maiden and led her to the palace where the rope was hanging.

He gave the sign, and Bailoi Polyanyin pulled and pulled, and drew out the Tsarevich and the maiden.

"Hail, Bailoi Polyanyin!" said Ivan Tsarevich, "here is thy bride. Live and be happy. I am going to the Serpent Kingdom."

He mounted his heroic steed, took farewell of Bailoi Polyanyin and his bride, and galloped away beyond the thrice ninth land to the thirtieth kingdom.

Whether it was long or short, high or low, a tale is soon told, but a deed is not soon done. Ivan Tsarevich came to the Serpent Kingdom, slew the Tsar of the Serpents, liberated the beautiful Tsarevna and married her. After that he came home, lived with his young wife and won wealth.

THE APPLES OF YOUTH

THERE was once a king who ruled, wisely and well, over broad lands. That king had a wife and three sons, but he was not happy. When Spring came and the earth grew young he was sad beyond measure, because the spring time of his life had long since passed and would never return. On the contrary, his face was growing paler and his arm weaker.

As time went by, his life became so dear to the king that day and night he was thinking how to prolong it. You can imagine his joy when he heard that in a certain land there were golden apples of such virtue that if a man ate three of them he regained his youth as if born anew.

Straightway the king sent messengers to every country of the world to search for those golden apples, but one messenger after another returned empty-handed. When the last one came the king cried out in anguish,—

"Oh, is there no man in the kingdom who can bring me the golden apples?"

"We will go for them," said his two elder sons.

"You cannot go," said the king. "Who would reign in my place if I should die in your absence?"

"Our brother Yanek is here."

"What of that," said the king, shaking his head, as if to say that Yanek was of no account.

The princes explained how useful it would be for the kingdom if the king grew young and strong, and they talked till the good father was persuaded.

The princes could not conceal their joy. For them it was not so much a question of restoring their father's youth as it was of gaining liberty to lead a dissolute life from which they were restrained by the stern old king. They were soon ready for the road, but in their hurry they did not forget to take as much gold as possible, and the best horses, with the richest trappings in the king's stable.

They set out quickly, for they were afraid that their father might change his mind. When outside of the city they forgot the golden apples; they thought only of how to have the most pleasure. As they knew of no great city they went wherever chance led them. They rode at a swift gallop until they came to the boundary of their father's kingdom where the road branched off in three directions. They didn't know which road to take.

"Maybe," said the younger brother, in whom a spark of love for his father was still smoldering, "we had better part here; we might find the apples more quickly."

"We should have a joyous meeting!" said the elder brother. "It might please you to go alone, but I'll not let you."

The younger yielded. They took the left-hand road and traveled many days. At last they saw some great object gleaming in the distance. On drawing nearer they found that it was a castle made of ruddy gold inlaid with precious stones. Since they were born they had not seen such wealth, but all was nothing compared with the beauty of the princess who appeared on the balcony and, smiling graciously, beckoned them in.

Returning her salute the princes sprang from their horses and, tying them to a pillar of gold, hurried up the broad marble steps. The princess conducted them straightway to a banquet hall where the choicest of food and drink was served. Wine was poured for the brothers till they lost their wits; then the princess, taking the elder brother by the hand, led him to the next chamber and seated him on a downy couch. She pressed a spring hidden in the floor; the couch flew apart and the prince fell into a deep dungeon.

Smiling with satisfaction the princess conducted the other brother to the chamber and treated him in like manner.

The brothers were not alone in the dungeon; many other princes were there, but most of them were too

feeble to speak, for the wicked princess gave them very little to eat; no one could escape, for the doors of the dungeon were of iron and the vaults were of mighty strength.

The old king waited with anxious desire for the return of his sons. Every evening he stood for a long time gazing in the direction which they had taken when going away; each day his sadness increased and at last he was sick from anxiety.

The youngest son, Yanek, sat whole days by his father's bedside and comforted him with the assurance that his sons would come soon, and would bring the golden apples.

When they came not and the illness of the old king increased, Yanek said, "I will go for my brothers and the golden apples."

The king consented, for he thought that when Yanek got to the boundary he would turn back.

But Yanek had resolved to find his brothers and the apples. Straightway he made ready for the road. He chose the most wretched horse in the stable, one kept there from pity; he took no rich armor or weapons, and only a little gold. He parted from his father and mother and rode away leisurely.

When Yanek was outside of the city the horse spoke to him in a human voice, and said,—

"Get down, Yanek, I will feed a little in this field."

Yanek was greatly surprised when the horse spoke, and, thinking at once that it was no common horse, he dropped the bridle and sprang to the ground. The horse went to the field, ate eagerly and then came back. Yanek could not believe his own eyes. Instead of the wretched little nag which could barely stand on its legs, a powerful crow-black steed stamped the earth impatiently, with his golden shoes; his hair was like satin, his mane was like silk, sparks of fire seemed to flash from his eyes.

"Thou didst well to choose me," said he. "Sit on my back and we will fare farther."

Yanek was not long in deciding; he sprang to the saddle and the crow-black steed rushed on with such speed that his golden shoes scarcely touched the earth, and soon they were at the boundary where the road branched off in three directions. Yanek was about to ask which road to take, but before he could do so the steed turned to the right and rushed on still more swiftly.

Yanek and the steed spent the night in a cave and in the morning went farther. Before the sun went down on the third day they came to a great city draped in black. As it was getting dark Yanek stopped at a lone cottage on the edge of the city. An old grandmother

came to meet him and was not a little surprised whe Yanek asked for a night's lodging.

"I haven't much," said she, "but what I have I give

Yanek left his horse in the yard and followed th grandmother to a room where she placed before hi what she had.

"Why is the city draped in mourning?" asked Yanel

"A terrible misfortune has come to us," sighed the ol woman. "Not long ago three dragons came here, Gc knows whence, and those monsters have destroye many people. To-night the king's daughter will be d voured. If any man could kill the dragons and fr the princess he would get her in marriage with half th kingdom, and the whole kingdom after the death of th king."

Hearing these words Yanek grew thoughtful, ar soon he started off toward the city. In the distance h saw a light. As it drew nearer he saw that attendan were conducting the princess outside the city to be d voured by the dragons. When the attendants lef Yanek went up to the maiden and saluting he said,—

"Go home in health, I will kill the dragon."

The princess obeyed. That moment a nine-heade dragon rushed at Yanek. Yanek drew his sword ar with three blows cut off the nine heads of the drago

then he went to the old woman's cottage and lying down slept soundly.

The next morning the old grandmother told him, with great joy, that some brave knight had killed one of the three dragons, and that most likely he would kill the other two.

Yanek said nothing, but when night came he went again to the place where the dragons came for their prey. Again attendants led out the princess and hastened away. Yanek sprang from his hiding place and told her to go home. Straightway a dragon with eighteen heads stormed at him furiously. Yanek's hand was beginning to fail, but he summoned his last strength and struck so mightily that he cut off the dragon's heads. Then he went to the cottage and slept soundly.

In the morning the old grandmother could not sufficiently praise the courageous knight who had killed the second dragon, and would, she was sure, kill the third one. Yanek smiled, but he was afraid of the third one; he hung his gloves over the old woman's bed, and said,—

"I must go out to-night. If blood drops from these gloves loosen my crow-black steed."

When night came Yanek went out against the last dragon. The princess came and he sent her home. That moment a twenty-seven headed dragon rushed at

him with such force that he could scarcely keep on hi feet. He fought manfully, but he might have failed i his good steed had not come to his aid. The stee stamped on the dragon so fiercely, with his golden shoe that he stunned him and Yanek was able to cut off hi heads. Yanek was about to go to the old woman's cot tage when the princess stood before him.

"My liberator," said she, "if thou carest not for m at least let my father thank thee."

Yanek saluted the princess, placed her on his stee and went to the palace.

Now there was rejoicing. The black drapings wer taken down and a rich feast was ready in the king' palace. At that feast the first places were occupied b the princess and Yanek. But Yanek determined not t marry the princess till he found his brothers and th golden apples.

When the feast was over Yanek wanted to go awa at once.

"Dost thou refuse the hand of my daughter?" aske the king, standing before him.

"No," answered Yanek, "but I am bound by a dut which I cannot neglect."

"Whenever thou mayest come I shall be glad to giv thee my blessing," said the king and taking a ring fro the princess's finger he put it on Yanek's finger.

"If I come not before a year and a day the princess will be free from every promise," said Yanek, and taking a friendly leave he sprang on his steed and galloped to the cottage on the edge of the city. He rewarded the old grandmother and rode away.

"Thou didst well not to marry the princess," said the steed. "Now we will go for the golden apples."

Yanek was surprised when his crow-black steed took the road by which they had come. When they reached the boundary of the kingdom, where the roads branched off in three directions the steed turned, took the middle road, and before the sun had reached the mountains on the third day the steed stood in front of a golden castle. On the southern side of the castle was a beautiful garden, and in the middle of that garden was a tree on which the golden apples of youth were hanging.

When Yanek saw the apples he sprang to the ground and wished to pluck them at once.

"Hurry not," said the steed, "for from every apple goes out an invisible string which makes a terrible noise as soon as any one touches the apple. Take my bridle and go to the castle. In one of the chambers thou wilt find a beautiful princess who will greet thee with kindness beyond measure. Be not enticed by her beauty; bind her feet together with my bridle, otherwise she will pursue and kill thee."

Yanek took the bridle and went to the castle. He had never seen such splendor before, but he forgot it all when he opened the door of the third chamber and saw a golden-haired princess. He was as if gazing at the sun; his eyes were dazzled. When he recovered his senses he drew near and bowed down before the maiden. She smiled on him graciously and greeted him with welcoming words. Remembering the command of his steed he paid no heed to her words, but catching hold of her feet he bound them with the bridle and hastened away. He mounted his steed; the steed sprang over the wall into the garden and told Yanek to pluck three apples.

As soon as Yanek touched the apples there was such a noise that it was a wonder he did not lose his hearing, but the good steed sprang over the wall and rushed on like a whirlwind. At last he stopped and said,—

"Now we have nothing to fear; we are beyond the boundary of the princess's land."

Yanek heard not these words, for the princess was so beautiful that he was sorry for having treated her so cruelly. When he remembered the golden apples he strove to drive her face from his mind, but could not.

The steed rested, then they went farther and in no long time reached the place where the road branched off in three directions. Yanek was so sunk in thought that he did not notice that the steed turned and took the

left-hand road. It was only when they had gone a good distance that he saw this and asked,—

"Where are we going?"

"For thy brothers," answered the steed.

When they came to the castle in which his brothers were imprisoned the steed said,—

"Here also thou wilt find a beautiful princess, but she is cruel. The princess will entertain thee, then she will conduct thee to a chamber and tell thee to sit on a couch that is there. Do thou, as a gallant knight, ask her to be seated first. When she sits down press a spring in the floor in front of the couch. She will drop to the dungeon where thy brothers are; then go thou to the rear chamber and bring away the largest key that is there."

When Yanek rode up to the castle a beautiful maiden appeared on the balcony, but Yanek thought that he knew a more beautiful maiden. He tied his steed to a golden pillar and went up the broad marble steps. He returned the maiden's greeting then followed her to the banquet hall. He partook of the food and drink moderately, then let the princess lead him to the next chamber; when she asked him to sit on the couch he said,—

"How could I be so rude?"

He took her by the hand and seated her on the couch, and the same moment he pressed the spring in the floor.

In the twinkle of an eye the couch opened and the princess fell to the dungeon below.

Yanek went to the rear chamber, took the largest key he could find there and returned to his steed.

"We will go now," said the steed, "to the rear of the castle and dig down till we find the door of the dungeon."

Yanek dug for a long time, then the steed pawed and dug with him till an iron door was seen.

"When the door is open," said the steed, "the princess will try to come out, but do not let her. Liberate only thy brothers and the other princes."

Yanek, after a long struggle, opened the door. The first person who tried to push out was the princess, but Yanek drove her back without mercy and called to his brothers and the other princes. They didn't wait for a second call. When all were free Yanek, not heeding the prayers of the princess, locked the iron door and carried the key away.

The strange princes thanked Yanek for their deliverance, and sat on their horses and hurried toward home; but Yanek's brothers looked at each other and were ashamed of themselves in presence of Yanek.

"Now let us go home," said Yanek, "I have the golden apples of youth."

The brothers were frightened, but they mounted their

horses and followed Yanek. On the way the eldest brother said to the second,—

"We must get those apples."

The second brother said,—

"When we come to an inn we will make Yanek drunk, then we'll get the apples."

When they came to an inn they offered Yanek wine to drink; he would not take it, but, being tired from the road, he lay down on a bench and straightway fell asleep. The brothers were not long in taking the golden apples from his bosom and putting others in their place. When Yanek woke up, they traveled on till they came to their father's city.

The steed said to Yanek, "Stop outside and let me eat a little grass."

Yanek did this, but when the horse came from the field he was no longer a fiery steed, he was the same wretched little nag that Yanek took from the king's stable. Yanek sat on him and wished to overtake his brothers, but they were already in the palace. They gave the apples to the king and boasted not a little of having overcome numberless perils before getting them.

The king ate the apples and straightway became as young and handsome as when he had married the queen. From joy he knew not what to do first. All the courtiers

and the people of the city came to congratulate their king and wish him happiness. The king went to the balcony and, presenting his two sons to the people, declared that both would reign after his death. The people greeted the deceitful princes and praised their bravery.

When Yanek appeared on his wretched little nag the people laughed secretly, but they roared loudly when, with great enthusiasm he cried out,—

"Rejoice, my father, I have brought the apples of youth which thou hast so much desired."

The king was ashamed of Yanek, and his brothers ridiculed him.

Taking the apples from his bosom he presented them to the king, who refused to touch them and appeared to be enraged beyond measure. The queen sent for Yanek, and, since she was no less anxious for youth than the king was, she ate the apples with greediness. But an hour passed, two hours, a whole day, three days, and she did not grow young. The king was angry in earnest, but after a while he began to laugh at poor Yanek.

The deceitful brothers enjoyed their father's love and the praise of the people; but their glory was short-lived. The story of the renewed youth of the king went far and

wide, and at last it came to the ears of the princess from whom Yanek had stolen the apples.

She summoned a great army and set out to find Yanek, not to get the apples back but to offer her hand to him, for he was a handsome youth and his bravery had pleased her.

When the king heard that an army was approaching his capital he was alarmed, and he sent swift messengers to ask the reason of its coming.

"Tell your king," said the princess, "to send me the man who took the apples of youth from my garden; if he does not I will turn his capital into dust and ashes."

The messengers hastened back to the king and told him what the princess had said, adding that her army was numerous beyond calculation.

The king sent his two elder sons to the princess. They were greatly frightened, and the princess was astonished when she saw two instead of one.

"Were ye both at my palace?" asked she.

"We were," answered one of the brothers, with a trembling voice.

"Then ye both know how to go there?"

"We do," answered they.

The princess went with them to the boundary of the kingdom where the road branched off in three directions.

There she halted and told the princes to go on toward her castle—but they were so confused that one turned to the left, the other to the right.

"Deceivers!" cried the princess, angrily, and she ordered them to be seized and bound. Then she returned to the city and announced to the king that unless he sent that prince who had been at her castle she would destroy his capital that very day.

The king was frightened, and sending for Yanek he ordered him to go to the princess.

Yanek mounted his miserable little nag; he let it feed in the meadow till it became a fiery crow-black steed, then he hastened to the princess.

"Thou didst come to me for the apples of youth," said the princess, with welcoming voice.

"I did," said Yanek, looking at her timidly.

"I think that thou art speaking the truth," said she, "but I must try thee."

Then she went with him to the boundary of the kingdom and told him to go to her castle.

Yanek, putting spurs to his steed, took the middle road.

"Come back," cried the princess.

Yanek obeyed.

"What punishment shall I put upon thee?" asked she in a threatening voice.

"I'll submit to anything," answered Yanek.

"I sentence thee to give me thy heart and hand!"

"Oh, beautiful princess," answered Yanek, "my heart was thine long ago, and my hand I am glad to give thee now. But one favor I beg: judge not my brothers, let me judge them."

She granted the favor. They put spurs to their horses and were soon at the king's palace.

In good truth the king was angry when the princess told him that it was Yanek and not his brothers who stole the apples of youth. She had the brothers called and they confessed.

"Wretches!" cried the king in a rage. "Now I will pass such a sentence as never before."

"Not so," said the princess, "they are my prisoners. It is for me to judge them, but I have given them to my bridegroom. Let him judge them."

Yanek went to his chamber and returning with an enormous key and a ring, said,—

"I will not treat you as ye have treated me. On the boundary of my father's kingdom, as ye know, the road branches off in three directions. Do thou, my elder brother, take this ring and go by the right-hand road, and thou, my second brother, take this key and go by the left-hand road. Ye will each arrive at a castle in which you will find a princess waiting for me."

The brothers shed tears and embraced him. Not only the brothers, but the king and queen and, above all, the princess were delighted with kind-hearted Yanek.

Feast followed feast, then Yanek with his princess and his brothers, started off. When they came to the boundary, Yanek and the princess took the middle road, one brother took the right-hand road, the other the left.

The princess whom Yanek saved from the dragons was not a little grieved when the eldest brother gave her Yanek's ring, but when she knew that Yanek was married she gladly gave her hand to his brother. The princess whom Yanek left in the dungeon lost forever, during the time she was there, her desire to delude and imprison people. When Yanek's brother liberated her she gladly married him.

THE WORLD-BEAUTIFUL SHARKAN ROJA

THERE was once in the world a great myth kingdom, and in that kingdom a sorrowful king, who had a still more sorrowful wife. The king and queen were sorrowful because the Lord had not given them children; though it was written word for word in the magic book that the Lord would give them a son with golden teeth and magic power.

"God be good to me!" cried the queen once. "If I had a golden-toothed son with magic power none other would be his wife save the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja."

Seven years later the Lord gave her a golden-toothed son of magic power. No sooner was the boy born when he spoke, saying,—

"Father, I want to learn; send me to school, and give me a master."

When the boy was seventeen years old he had finished every school in the world, and then he said to his mother,—

"My mother, knowst thou what thy promise was before I was born?"

The queen had forgotten the promise, she remembered nothing about it.

"Well, mother," repeated the magic youth, "try to think what thou didst promise before I was born. I will ask thee once more. What didst thou promise before I was born?"

The third time the queen gave no answer, for think as hard as she could, she couldn't remember what she had promised.

"Well, mother," said the magic youth, "I cannot help it, I must bring thee to thy memory."

He took an ax in his hand, struck the chief pillar of the palace and split it open with a blow; then he fastened his mother's hair in the crack of the pillar and left her there, saying,—

"Well, my mother, thou wilt stay there until thou dost tell me what thou didst promise before I was born."

No one opposed the magic youth, though the king was there, and with him were renowned heroes, for it was known that a thousand fold woe would come to the man who dared to raise a word, for the mighty youth had strength to crush them all with his little finger.

At last it came to the queen's mind what she had promised before her son was born, and she said,—

"Now, my dear son, I know what I promised; I cried out: 'God be good to me, if I had a golden-toothed son

of magic power none other should be his wife save the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja.' "

"Well, mother, thou shouldst have told that before to save disgrace, but I could not help it; now forgive me."

Then the magic youth drove the ax into the pillar, spread it open, and took out his mother's hair, and liberated her.

"But, my dear mother, why didst thou promise what thou art not able to give? Why promise me the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja who possesses immortal youth and unfading beauty, and who is in the great dragon kingdom with her husband the King of the Dragons, who carried her off with violence from beautiful Wonderland? My own mother and my father who reared me, this is my word and speech to you. I shall travel, if I wear my legs to the knees, while I see with my eyes, till I find the Dragon Kingdom. I shall bring hence the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja, or ye will never rejoice at sight of me, for easily I may leave my life in that kingdom."

Then in the midst of tear-shedding the golden-toothed magic youth took leave of his own father and of the mother who bore him and of his dear friends, and set out to look for the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja. He journeyed and traveled across forty-nine kingdoms till once, when darkness had settled down, he saw a light

in the midst of a slough. He went toward the shining and beheld a wondrously fair woman sitting in a little golden coach to which six white squirrels were attached, but the coach was fast in the mud, the squirrels could pull it neither one way nor the other.

The king's son was not slow; he went quickly to help the six white squirrels, and with his aid they got the coach out of the slough. When the golden coach was on the dusty road, the wondrously fair lady turned to the magic youth and found this to say,—

"Well, fair son of the king, expect good in return for good. What dost thou wish of me, the Queen of Wonderland?"

"I wish only this," answered the king's son. "Give me as wife the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja."

"Ah, prince, thou art moving a big tree, for if thou hast not said who thou art still I know. Great is thy power, great thy knowledge, but thou wouldst be a small breakfast for the King of the Dragons, for know that he kneads iron as I do dough, and crushes a rock as I do a bit of fresh cheese, and breaks down the largest tree of the forest with a stroke of his fist as easily as I break a hemp stalk. Therefore, thou art moving a great tree; thou wilt break thy knife in it, and may easily lose thy life."

"I am not concerned about my life. If the Dragon

King were seventy-seven times as strong, still I would measure strength with him for Sharkan Roja."

"If thou art so determined then, know that Sharkan Roja is my daughter, and that dog's meat, the King of the Dragons, stole her from me. And know also that if thou canst bring her thence, I will take thee as son and beautiful Wonderland will be thy dwelling place; thou wilt sit in the first seat, and the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja will be thy wife. Here are three golden hairs and a ragged strip of linen. Strike the three golden hairs with the ragged strip of linen and thou wilt see what a splendid wind-bred, fire-eating, magic steed thou wilt have to carry thee to the great Dragon Kingdom. The ragged bit of linen will become such a golden saddle that thou wouldst have to search for the like of it and then not find it. When on thy good steed, go to such and such a place where from the foot of a great mountain a spring is gushing forth; bathe in that spring and thou wilt find that though thou wert strong thou wilt be seven times stronger; no weapon will wound thy body and thy hair will be golden. When thou hast finished bathing thou wilt find, in the grass near the spring, a sword grown of the earth, point upward; pluck this sword, for it has the virtue that if thine arm grows weary from great fighting it strikes, thrusts and kills of itself. If thou dost all this perhaps thou wilt conquer the King of

the Dragons. But if thou shouldst feel thy strength decreasing here are three vials, in each of them is a strengthening mixture; drink from the smallest first, then from the middle, and then from the largest one. From this drink thou wilt regain thy seven-fold strength.

The Queen of Wonderland struck her squirrels with a golden whip and vanished from the eye, like a dream-vision, like a breath.

The prince struck, with the ragged piece of linen, the three hairs grown from one root, and behold like to swiftest lightning there stood before him an iron-gray, six-legged, dragon-suckled, fire-eating, wind-bred magic steed; the ragged linen became a golden saddle.

The king's son sat on the good steed and never stopped till he reached the foot of the great mountain where he found a spring gushing forth. He bathed in the spring and his strength increased seven-fold. When he had finished bathing he looked for the sword growing out of the earth and found it. Then he sat on his good steed and went in search of the great Dragon Kingdom.

He traveled and journeyed across forty-nine kingdoms, till he came to a copper bridge. That bridge led to the kingdom and on it two dragons stood guard.

The king's son rested his good steed, then rushed to the bridge. The dragons met him, but it was not long

till the golden-haired, golden-toothed youth sent them to the other world; they were that much for him that they would have been small for his breakfast.

Now the magic steed danced on the copper bridge and his golden shoes clattered. In this manner the golden-toothed hero entered the great Dragon Kingdom, but that no created thing might see him he said, "Cloud before me, cloud behind me that no one might see me."

And no one saw him though he saw all things. Each dragon had his own palace of granite or marble, one more beautiful than another. Each dragon had a wife stolen from a king, a count, or from Wonderland. In those palaces were great mountains of plundered treasure; gold, silver, precious stones, all kinds of costly weapons, swords with golden hilts, axes with boxwood handles—three days would not suffice were I to enumerate the plundered things piled up in the Dragon Kingdom.

In the middle of the kingdom stretched out a silken meadow, in the meadow was a garden where all the flowers of the round earth bloomed without fading. Just then dragons were cutting the silken grass with golden scythes, turning it with silver forks and gathering it with golden rakes. The silken grass was to be eaten by golden-haired steeds. In the middle of the garden

was the golden-pillared diamond palace of the King of Dragons.

The king's son found the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja under a weeping willow. With eyes and mouth he could not gaze on her shining beauty sufficiently. How could he? Her golden hair, plaited in two braids, touched her white feet and reached the earth; her form was like a bending reed; her mild look, like the look of a dove; when she smiled roses opened on her tender face; when she wept true pearls fell from her eyes, and when she took a step gold streamed from her heel.

The king's son put spurs to his good steed, rushed to Sharkan Roja, and said,—

"Why dost thou grieve, my heart's beautiful love? I have come to liberate thee."

With that they kissed each other, saying: "I am thine, thou art mine."

"My heart's heart," asked the king's son, "is that dog of a dragon here?"

"My heart's beautiful love," answered Sharkan Roja, "he is not here, but he will come at midday."

"If he were here I would measure strength with him, but, my heart's heart, wilt thou answer one question of mine?"

"I will answer," said Sharkan Roja.

"Ah, my heart's golden love, my question is nothing else save this, canst thou tell me where the dragon's strength is?"

"O, no! my heart's beautiful love, had I known where it was thou wouldst not have found me here."

"Canst thou tell me where his strengthening drink is?"

"In the cellar is a stone barrel. What it contains I do not know, surely, but I can say on my true faith that each midday the King of the Dragons goes to that barrel and drinks."

"My heart's beautiful love, if I were to ask thee entreatingly wouldst thou bring me some of that drink?"

Sharkan Roja took a golden cup in her hand, ran to the cellar and brought it back full of wine from the stone barrel. The prince took a good draught and if he had been strong before he was now seven times stronger.

At midday the King of the Dragons came home with a mighty clatter. When still far away he shouted, "I smell a strange odor! I smell a strange odor!" When he stopped in the court foam was dripping from his horse; it couldn't have dropped faster. He did not enter his palace, but called out in great anger, "I have always heard the fame of the golden-toothed magic prince, I should like to fight with him were he here."

"I am here!" cried the prince.

"If you are here, you find me in good humor. Come

to my lead pavement and we will make trial of each other."

They went to the lead pavement. The King of the Dragons took a piece of rock and cut it in two with a wooden knife; one-half he kept himself and the other half he gave to the prince, saying,—

"If thou canst crush this stone as I do, then I shall believe that thou art strong."

Here the dragon squeezed the stone till it was like flour.

"That is nothing!" cried the golden-toothed hero, "I will squeeze the rock so that not only will it become flour, but water will drop from it."

With that he squeezed the rock till it was not merely dust, but water dropped from it.

"Now I see," said the dragon, "that thou art strong and worthy to fight me. I'll go to the cellar for my sword, then we'll meet."

"Thou wilt not carry thy dog shirt out of here! If thou hast no sword, I'll throw mine away and we'll fight unarmed."

What was the dragon to do? He saw with sight that he had come upon a man. He seized the king's son by the waist and struck him into the lead pavement so that he sunk to his knees, but the prince was not slow. He

sprang out of the hole, caught the dragon by the waist and thrust him into the lead pavement up to his knees.

The dragon was not slow; he sprang out of the hole, caught the golden-toothed hero by the waist and thrust him in up to his chin. But the golden-toothed hero was not slow; he sprang out of the hole, caught the dragon by the waist and thrust him in up to the tip of his nose.

When the dragon could not get out the hero said to him,—

"Well, King of the Dragons, dost thou believe now that I am strong? I can take thy life, but I'll spare thee on one condition."

"What is it?"

"That thou wilt give me the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja."

"Let her be thine," said the dragon.

The golden-toothed hero wanted no more. In a moment he sprang on his good steed, took Sharkan Roja in his arms, and rode away. But he had barely reached the gate when the King of Dragons, who was out of the hole, and had taken a good drink from the barrel, called,—

"Come back, golden-toothed hero, the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja is not thine yet. I was playing with thee, now we'll have a true trial."

The prince's chin fell, for then did he know with whom

he had to deal. He turned back and they closed with one another, but first the prince took a good drink from the three vials given to him by the Queen of Wonderland. Much time had not passed when the King of the Dragons bit the dust. Then the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja struck the diamond palace three times with a golden rod which she had in her hand, and all the treasures, the flowery garden, and the silken meadow turned into a diamond apple. She hid the apple in her bosom and sat on the magic steed by the side of her true love.

The golden-toothed magic youth took Sharkan Roja to his father's kingdom. Great was the joy in that broad kingdom when the hero returned with his bride, but it was still greater when the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja took the diamond apple from her bosom, put it down in the most beautiful part of the kingdom, struck it three times with the golden rod, and behold, in a flash, the silken meadow stretched out before them, in the middle of the meadow was the garden where all the flowers of the round world bloomed without fading, and in the middle of the garden was the gold-pillared diamond palace.

Then there was a wedding. And the golden-toothed magic hero and the world-beautiful Sharkan Roja live in that palace yet, if they are not dead.

THE GOLDEN FISH, THE WONDER-WORKING TREE, AND THE GOLDEN BIRD

BEYOND distant times reigned somewhere a powerful king. Yarboi, his son, was heir to the throne, and the young man was trained befittingly in all things needful to a king in governing his land and making his people happy.

Every man, even the simplest, takes delight in some special thing; Prince Yarboi loved fish beyond measure. Each day he walked along his fishpond, which was not far from the king's castle, and watched the fish as they darted around here and there, up and down in the water, or sprang out to catch flies. He brought food and was delighted when the fish splashed near him and took crumbs, almost from his hand.

Though a prince, Yarboi did not lead a holiday life; his father kept him at work and the more strictly because it was a question of the happiness of his people.

One day Yarboi went as usual to the fishpond; the fish darted here and there, up and down in the water, but to no purpose; Yarboi remained thoughtful and, without looking at his beloved fish, lay down under the thick

bushes that skirted the pond. He knew that something afflicted him, but what it was he could in no way imagine.

All at once he heard glad conversation beyond the bushes. He rose quietly and still more quietly opened the bushes. In the field, where young wheat was as green as pond grass, he saw three maidens. The first was as beautiful as a spring day, the second was still more beautiful, but the third was three times as beautiful as the first two together.

The maidens had been cutting grass, the sun was high and they were weary from heat as well as from work, they were resting and talking. They were young and naturally they talked about marriage, for they thought that no one was listening. But the prince listened carefully, scarcely breathing.

"It was foretold me," said the first maiden, "that I would marry a widower, but that I would have golden times with him."

"It was foretold me," said the second maiden, with a sad voice, "that I would never marry and that I would have an evil time."

"And what will be thy fate?" asked the first laughingly of the third maiden.

"The prince will marry me," said she in a serious voice, "and God will give us twins, a prince and princess.

The boy will have a golden sun on his breast and the girl a golden moon."

The maidens, without saying another word, took up the grass they had cut and putting it on their shoulders went to their homes, in a neighboring village.

Prince Yarboi was astonished at the maiden's words, but he was well pleased and willing that the prophecy should be fulfilled. He followed the maidens cautiously to discover where the third one lived. When he found out he returned to the castle, but a longing seized him and increased continually; nothing made him either sad or joyful; he was indifferent to everything. Each day he went to the fishpond, lay down under the bushes and listened, but no maiden came to the field.

The king and queen noticed the change in their son, but could not discover the cause, therefore they called him to their presence and asked what ailed him. "Tell me," said the king, "and I promise by my crown that thou shalt have it."

"I wish not to force thee to anything," said the prince, "but if I receive not the maiden whom I love I will remain free forever."

The king looked at the queen, and when she had assented, he said,—

"It will be as thou wishest."

"I want to marry a maiden from the neighboring village."

The king and queen were silent for a while, then the king said,—

"Thou art man grown; act according to thy mind."

The prince kissed the hands of his father and mother, and soon set out, in a carriage drawn by six horses, for the village. When the people saw the king's carriage they were not surprised, for the king often passed through the village, but when it stopped in front of one of the cottages all heads were puzzled.

The prince got out of the carriage and asked the man and woman sitting by the door:—

"Where is your daughter?"

Instead of answering they gazed at him. He went into the cottage and found the maiden at work. He took her hand, placed a ring on her finger, kissed her on the forehead and led her to the carriage. "This is my bride," said he to the astonished parents. "Ye will not refuse your consent and blessing?"

The parents stretched forth their hands and blessed them. Yarboi, with his chosen one entered the carriage, and soon they were at the king's castle.

When the king saw the bride he was satisfied; in his eyes were clear tears, for he thought, "My son has chosen well."

Straightway the bride was arrayed in rich robes and messengers were sent to the four sides of the world to invite kings and princes to the wedding. When all had assembled there was a joyous feast, then the wedding, and again feasting. Prince Yarboi was happy. He wished for no more in this world. But this unspeakable happiness was the cause of long suffering. In thinking of his bride he forgot to invite a neighboring king and this so offended the king that he declared war. At this time the old king died; Yarboi inherited the throne and he had to defend it.

How unwillingly did he go to war, not because he was a coward, but because he had to leave his young wife. But when he heard how his enemy was destroying the country and slaying the people he did not delay. He gave his power to his mother and with tears in his eyes, begging her to love his wife as her own daughter, he set out for the field. He fought bravely, but the fortune of war turned now to one side, now to the other.

Yarboi did not lose courage; he fought unceasingly. He thought that his cherished wife was safe in the care of his mother. Happy was Yarboi in having such thoughts, but how his hands would have dropped if he had known the truth.

The old queen was skilled in the black art. She had

only an assumed love for the young wife. When the king was at home she could not injure the queen with even a word, but now the best chance possible came to ruin her completely.

The Lord gave the queen twins, as had been foretold, a boy and a girl; the boy had a golden sun on his breast, and the girl had a golden moon. The old queen stole the children and told the mother that they died at birth. Who can describe the sorrow of the poor mother? No one suspected the awful deceit. The old witch had a wicker basket; she put the children into it, together with gold and a letter saying, "Whoso finds these children let him keep the money and rear the children; they are not christened," then she pushed the basket out onto the wide sea.

She did not care so much for the destruction of the children; the queen was the thorn that pricked her eye. Therefore she wrote a letter to the king in which she told only lies about his young wife. When the messenger came the king was in battle and the victory inclined to his side, but when he read the letter his courage fell and the battle was lost. He wrote to his mother to do nothing before his return.

This answer did not please the old queen, so she wrote another letter in which she used all of her power to destroy her daughter-in-law, and she succeeded. The

king wrote to put the young queen in prison. His orders were carried out at once.

The war lasted long, but at last Yarboi conquered his enemy. Mournfully did he return to his castle, mournfully did he remain there. The old queen tried in every way to remove the image of his wife from his memory, but he was unable to forget her. Meanwhile the guiltless woman was groaning in prison.

But what had become of the children?

Not far from the sea shore was a cottage and in the cottage lived a fisherman and his family. One night the fisherman had a wonderful dream: A woman came to his cot, took him by the hand, and said: "Go to the island where to-day thou hast caught a big fish; great fortune awaits thee there."

The fisherman wakened and wondered not a little at his strange dream. He had never succeeded in anything. He worked the whole blessed day; he drank only pure water, and was so thankful when he had a chance to sleep that he slept soundly; no dream had ever come to him before, hence he was sure that this dream had significance. Unable to interpret it with his own mind he roused his wife to take counsel with her. But, angry because he snatched her from sleep, she did nothing but scold. At last she pushed him rudely and told him to keep still and go to sleep. The fisherman obeyed.

Scarcely was he asleep when again it seemed to him that a woman was standing by his bed and begging him to go to the island. He wakened and wanted to take counsel with his wife; he was afraid to rouse her, but he tumbled around so long that she wakened of her own accord. He told her the dream again; she snarled at him angrily, ordered him to give her peace, and was so cross that the poor man was glad to keep quiet and go to sleep.

Again he was barely asleep when the pale woman stood by his bed and begged him to go to the island. The moment the vision disappeared the fisherman wakened; he slipped out of bed, with both feet, quietly, so as not to disturb his wife, stole out of the house and hastened to the sea. He seized the oars and sprang into his boat; the boat went, almost of itself, to the island.

As soon as the fisherman touched land he heard the wailing of a child. He went toward the sound and saw, by the light of the moon, a basket, and in the basket he found two children. "This is fine luck," thought he. "My wife does nothing now but what our children want, and since we have three it will not be so bad when we have five."

He put the basket in his boat, and, thinking how the pale woman had promised him good luck, he rowed for the mainland. Just as he touched the sand of the beach

he saw a package in the bottom of the boat; he opened it quickly and found a large number of gold pieces. The dream had come true; luck had met him.

The woman was standing on the threshold when her husband came back. When she saw the basket and the two children she greeted him angrily, but the moment he showed her the gold she changed completely. She kissed the orphans and knew not what to do first for them.

"First," said the fisherman, "thou must take them to be christened, then I will go and report to the authorities."

The woman did as her husband proposed. The fisherman went to the authorities and said that he had found two children, a boy and a girl, but he did not mention the gold pieces. They decided to let him keep the children.

The children were christened in proper form, but he who christened them knew not that he was christening the children of a king.

The brother and sister grew as if growing out of water, and when six years old they began to go to school with the fisherman's son. They learned so easily that the teacher had only joy from them. The fisherman loved them as well as he did his own children, but his wife, whenever she forgot the gold, turned her heart

from them, gave them poor food and clothing, and crossed them in all things.

The fisherman's son was a dunce at school, at home he did nothing but mischief. Once, on the way to school, the orphans reproached him for this. He said nothing, but that night he complained to his mother. "The next time they reproach thee," said the mother, "tell them that they are foundlings, that they need not boast."

The worthless son resolved to obey his mother. To do so quickly he played in school till the teacher flogged him. On the way home the orphans reproached him a second time, and that was what he wanted.

"Oh, foundlings," sneered he. "Ye wish to command me. Ye are foundlings; my father picked up a basket and ye were in it."

"We know," said the boy, "that we do not belong to thy family." Though they were young they had more sense than other children of their age. "We will go away."

The fisherman's son ran home to tell his mother what had happened and when the orphans reached the cottage the hard-hearted woman had tied up their scant clothing; she gave them the bundle and said,—

"Be off! Maybe ye want me to ask you to stay longer, but I'll not do it."

The children thanked the woman for rearing them;

looked once and a second time at the cottage, then walked on, hand in hand, into the wide world. The fisherman met them and asked where they were going. They told him everything and said that they could not stay longer. They thanked him for rearing them, and then wished to go. The fisherman cried and begged them to stay, but they insisted so firmly that at last he let them go.

The fisherman went home and reproached his wife for her action, but the orphans went where their eyes led them.

In the evening they came to a forest through which they hoped to pass quickly, but hope deceived them; they went hither and thither, lost the road, and night came on; everywhere there was darkness. The children were so tired they could scarcely bend a knee. They sat down on soft moss, put their arms around each other, nestled up closely, and right away they were fast asleep and they slept till the white morning; then, freshened by sleep, they went on their way. They had gone only a short distance when they saw under a rock an enormous number of gold pieces.

"Brother, that is gold!" cried the girl.

"It must be," said the boy, and he took up a piece and weighed it in his hand.

"Can we take some of it?"

"Why not? If it belonged to any man surely he would not leave it here."

They took some of the coins and went on. Soon the forest began to grow thin and in a short time they came to a town. The children seemed larger and older than when they left the fisherman's cottage. The boy went to an inn and said to the innkeeper, "I want two chambers, one for myself, and one for my sister, I will pay thee well," and he gave him a gold piece as earnest money. When he had the chambers the boy said to the innkeeper,—

"Get ready a wagon and strong horses."

The boy drove to the forest and put all of the gold into the wagon—the horses were barely able to draw it. He took the gold to the inn and his chamber.

Now the brother and sister lived grandly; the boy soon became a splendid youth and the girl a glorious maiden.

Reports of the youth and his wealth spread over the whole land; everybody wanted to know him. The owner of a vast domain had a special desire to know him, for the domain, in fact, belonged to creditors. This man made a feast and invited the youth and his sister. When all of the guests had gone away except the brother and sister the host said that nothing gave him pleasure; he did not care for the domain or the palace. The youth

offered to buy the domain and, because he gave three times what it was worth, the bargain was concluded.

The youth and his sister went to the palace to live and soon they gave a splendid feast. An invitation was sent to Yarboi, the king; but the old queen, by means of her knowledge and magic was able to gain true tidings, and thus she knew that that rich youth was none other than the son of the king, and she tried in every way possible to dissuade the king from going. But all of her arguments were without effect. Some mysterious feeling urged the king to go to the feast. Then the queen had recourse to other means. She prepared a potion and when the king partook of food she put it secretly into his wine. He had barely drunk it when he dropped on a chair and fell asleep.

Then the old queen disguised herself in the king's clothes and went to the feast. She entered the banquet hall just as the guests were sitting down to the table. The youth led her to the place intended for King Yarboi and no one suspected that she was the mother of the king.

They feasted till the sun went behind the mountains, then the guests departed and each went to the place he had come from, only the old queen stayed behind. The youth conducted her through the palace and the garden, and at last to the fishpond, for above all things he loved fish and fishponds.

The old queen praised everything beyond measure, but when she came to the fishpond she contracted her eyes and said,—

"Oh, what is this beautiful fishpond good for, when there are no golden fish in it?"

"But could I get golden fish?" asked the youth.

"You could," answered the queen, twisting her face with a malicious smile. "In the Glass Mountain beyond the Crimson Sea there are plenty of them."

The youth grew thoughtful and the queen prepared to go. She had barely left the palace when, by means of her magic, she was in the king's chamber. The king was still sleeping, but barely had she taken off his clothes when he wakened, and was not a little astonished that he had slept so long; the queen said, "It is better for thee to sleep than to weary thyself on the road."

After the feast the youth was thinking night and day about the golden fish and at last he determined to go for them. He gave the management of the palace to his sister and taking but one servant, set out on the journey.

He traveled and traveled till he reached the Crimson Sea. So far he had good luck, but when he looked at the unquiet sea and saw how high the waves were his courage fell; he wanted to turn back with work undone. All at once he heard a strange voice say,—

"I greet thee, rich youth."

Looking around he saw a hermit on whose face were the marks of former faults and the penitence of years.

"I know thee well," said the hermit, "but what art thou seeking?"

"I am going to the Glass Mountain for golden fish, but I know not how to cross the sea."

"Be satisfied with what thou hast," urged the hermit.

But the youth implored him for assistance till he led him to a boat and they started for the Glass Mountain. They crossed the Crimson Sea and drew up the boat on land, then the hermit gave the youth a rod, and said,—

"Go directly east till you come to an immense rock. Strike the rock thrice with the rod and the Glass Mountain will open to thee. But give now a careful ear to what I say, and guard thyself to a hair according to my words, otherwise it will go ill with thee.

"Thou wilt go on great steps to the Glass Mountain. First thou wilt pass through a pear garden; where the trees will be covered with golden pears, but do not pluck even one. Then thou wilt come to an apple orchard, the trees will be covered with golden apples, but touch them not. Beyond the orchard is a lake, in that lake are the golden fish. On the shore thou wilt find a small earthen vessel; take up water in it, but be careful not to take even one tiny fish, they will come to thy hand, but be not confused. I will wait for thee here."

When the youth came to the rock he lashed it three times with the rod; the rock opened, and, on broad white steps, he went down to the underground world. When he came to the pear trees he wanted to stretch forth his hand and pluck the golden fruit, but he remembered the hermit's words. When he came to the apple orchard, involuntarily he stretched forth his arm, but it dropped to his side and he went on.

At the edge of the lake he found the earthen vessel and filled it with water; though the fish were beautiful and came to his hand as if wanting to go with him, he left them and hurried back; barely had he reached the white world when the rock closed behind him.

The hermit was waiting on the shore, he greeted the youth joyfully, seated him in his boat, and they crossed the Crimson Sea. On the way the hermit said,—

"When thou shalt reach home pour this water into thy fish lake, leave the vessel on the shore. On waking in the morning go to the lake and look in the water."

The youth took farewell of the hermit, and hurried home. Whether it was long or short he reached his castle, poured the water into the lake and went to tell his sister of the events of the journey. Early the next morning he hurried to the lake to see if the hermit had spoken the truth. How rejoiced was he when from a distance he saw a golden gleam on the lake. When he

drew near and saw the beauty of the fish he could rest his eyes on them.

Straightway he sent messengers to the four sides of the world to invite kings and princes to come and gaze on his golden fish. He sent an invitation to King Yarboi. Again the old queen tried in every way to dissuade the king and when all of her arguments failed she had recourse to a sleeping draught; then instead of the king the queen went to the feast disguised in his clothes.

She entered the banquet hall as the guests were sitting down to the table; straightway all began to talk about the golden fish. After the banquet the kings and princes went to the lake and were unable to admire sufficiently the beauty of the golden fish. After that the guests dispersed, only the old queen stayed behind. "Now I have everything," said the youth, triumphantly.

"You have much, it is true," answered the queen, "but what are golden fish when they do not dance?"

"Can fish dance?" asked the youth, eagerly.

"Of course they can," said the queen.

"But how?"

"If you had the music tree it would play to the fish and they could not help dancing."

"Can I get that tree?"

"You can. It grows beyond the Crimson Sea, in the Glass Mountain."

The youth grew thoughtful, and the queen went home. In one moment she was in King Yarboi's chamber, but she barely had his clothes off when he wakened. Again he was angry that instead of going to the feast he had slept.

Without delay the youth started in search of the music tree.

On the shore of the Crimson Sea he found the hermit.

"Why comest thou?" asked the hermit.

"Beyond the Crimson Sea there is a music tree; I want that tree."

"Be satisfied with what thou hast," said the hermit. But when the youth implored him unceasingly he took him to the boat and in silence they crossed the sea; when they reached the farther shore the hermit said,—

"Take this rod again and do as thou didst before. When thou hast crossed the gardens and the lake thou wilt see the music tree; take a knife and cut a rod from it. Then start back, walk quickly and look neither to the right nor to the left, nor behind thee. All thy friends and acquaintances will call thee, but be not deceived, they will not be there. Leave that underground world without stopping, otherwise it will be ill for thee."

The youth went on and everything happened as the hermit foretold: The rock opened, he descended the white steps, and passed the gardens with the golden

fruit. From a distance he heard beautiful music and when he had passed the lake he saw the wonder-working tree. He cut a rod from it, and turned back; then he heard his sister calling behind him, he heard his foster-father, the fisherman, and his family; he heard the inn-keeper; he heard his friends; above all he heard King Yarboi, as he thought, but it was not the king's voice, it was the voice of the old queen; each voice called him emphatically, alluringly, plaintively. A hundred times he wanted to turn, but remembering the words of the hermit he resisted every temptation and at last reached the steps. There his sister called once more, so beseechingly that he was going to turn, but some unseen power pushed him forward; he sprang into God's white world, the rock came together with a noise like thunder, and the illusion vanished.

The hermit was sitting in his boat; he was gloomy, for he was thinking that the youth would not return. How delighted was he when he saw him and saw also, in his hand, a branch of the wonder-working tree!

"Thou hast borne thyself bravely," said he; "when thou art home plant that branch in the ground at the edge of the lake, and look there the next morning."

They reached the opposite shore of the Crimson Sea; the youth gave heartfelt thanks to the hermit, and hastened home. When he reached his palace he went to the

lake and planted the branch of the music tree. Early the next morning he went to see if the hermit had spoken the truth. From a distance he heard delightful music and when he came to the lake he saw that his golden fish were dancing.

Straightway he sent messengers to the four sides of the world to invite the kings and princes to gaze at the music tree. He sent an invitation to King Yarboi. The king wished to see the golden fish and the music tree, but the old queen gave him a sleeping draught, put on his clothes and went in his place.

The youth was joyful beyond measure, for he thought that now he had everything that his heart could desire.

After the feast the guests went to listen to the music of the wonder-working tree, and to see the golden fish dance and there was no end to their astonishment; then they said good-by to the king and each went to the place he had come from, but the old queen stayed behind.

"Thou hast obtained the music tree," said she, "but the tree is not a living thing. It does not play for the fish according to their desire."

"Who could do that?" asked the youth.

"The golden bird in the golden cage," answered the queen.

"Where is that bird? Can I get it?"

"You can get it. It is beyond the Crimson Sea, in the Glass Mountain."

The youth became thoughtful and the queen set out for home; in a twinkle she was in the king's chamber. The king wakened, but pretended to be asleep; he saw that the queen was wearing his clothes and that she undressed in a hurry; the mist fell from his eyes, he knew that his mother had deceived him.

"Oh, how long I have slept," said he at last, and the queen was sure of her safety.

Now the youth bade his beloved sister farewell, and set out to find the golden bird so that nothing in the world should be wanting to him. When he came to the Crimson Sea the hermit was there, on his face appeared at one moment joy, at the next moment sorrow.

"Be satisfied with what thou hast!" urged he.

But the youth begged till at last the hermit led him to the boat and took him to the opposite shore. On the way the hermit was one moment joyful and the next moment sad and when they touched the shore, he said,—

"Ill hast thou done to come for the golden bird in the golden cage. I will help thee with what's in my power, but swerve not a hair from what I tell thee: With this rod thou wilt enter the Glass Mountain by the road which thou knowest; when thou hast passed the gardens

and the lake thou wilt see on the right a splendid castle. In the first chamber thou wilt not find anything, in the second thou wilt see a cat; she will rub up to thee; mind her not, speak not to her, touch her not, but go to the third chamber. On the right-hand wall of that chamber hangs a golden cage, in that cage is the golden bird. Just before midday the cage will open of itself and the bird will fly around the room till wearied it falls on the table; catch it that moment, pull from its left wing a quill, and with it touch thrice each of the ten stones thou wilt see there on the floor."

The youth promised to do everything to a hair, and started off. He reached the Glass Mountain; went through the gardens unharmed, passed the lake, entered the castle and went to the third chamber; there he saw the golden cage and in it the golden bird. It was early and he had to wait, that tormented him greatly, but at last the cage opened and the bird flew out and flew so quickly through the room that the youth's eyes danced. It flew till drops of foam were coming out of its beak, then suddenly it dropped to the table, as if dead. But, as the youth reached out to pick it up, it rose on the wing and flew away; the youth turned to stone and rolled on the ground toward the ten other stones.

The hermit waited long; he was gloomy and sad. At last when the sun went down, he lost all hope of the

youth's return and exclaiming, "Unfortunate, Unfortunate!" he went alone to the opposite shore.

The youth's servant was waiting; when the hermit told him what had happened he set out for home.

The sister had barely heard the servant's story when she took the road to free her brother. She came safely to the Crimson Sea and from a distance saw the hermit whom her brother had told her about. As he approached she saw that he was sad beyond measure.

"I greet thee, sister of the good youth," said he. "Thy brother has perished; put not thyself in danger from which thou wilt hardly escape."

"Dear father," said the sister, with decision, "I am glad to give my life for my brother, and if I perish I shall at least lie near him. Only give me counsel and aid such as thou hast given to him."

When the sister ceased not to implore aid the hermit took her by the hand and led her to the boat. Laboriously he worked the oar, laboriously he reached the opposite shore, then he told the girl what she must do if she wished to liberate her brother. Not one word was lost. She reached the Glass Mountain, in safety she went through the gardens, in safety she passed the lake. It did not occur to her to look at anything, not to mention taking anything. She entered the castle, in the second chamber the cat sidled up to her coaxingly, tried

in every way to attract her attention, but the loving sister was so occupied with the liberation of her brother that she did not notice the cat. In the third chamber she found a golden cage and in it a golden bird.

Just before midday the cage opened of itself and the bird flew through the chamber, back and forth, like a flash, but the maiden didn't look at it, she looked only at the table and held her apron in readiness; when the bird fell she covered it quickly, grasped it firmly and pulled out a quill, then she put the bird in the cage and tied the cage up in her apron.

She took the quill and full of expectance, struck the first stone with it three times. She had barely struck the third blow when a beautiful prince stood before her. He inclined courteously and with heartfelt words thanked her for his liberation, then he fled from the castle and from the Glass Mountain. So it happened with the second and the third, and all ten of the stones; they became princes, bowed courteously, and, thanking the maiden with heartfelt words for their liberation, hurried out of the castle and away from the Glass Mountain.

But what good was this to the poor sister since she had not freed her brother? She saw no other stone. Weighed down with grief she sank to the floor and then she saw, under the table, another stone; she struck it

three times with the quill and her brother stood before her.

They embraced each other, then the sister grasping the golden cage, and seizing her brother by the hand hastened with him from the castle and the Glass Mountain. Only when they were in God's white world did they begin to talk, and hand in hand they hurried to the hermit to thank him for his counsel and his aid.

The hermit knew that the maiden had liberated her brother, for all those princes whom she had liberated he had taken across the Crimson Sea; they no longer wanted the golden bird. When the brother and sister came to him, he said,—

"Ye have what ye want, and for the ages of ages desire no more, when you get home hang the golden cage on a tree near the lake and look that way in the morning."

They wished to fall at his feet, but the hermit raised them, and said,—

"I have aided you, now aid me. I have suffered here for fourteen years, every hope of liberation had vanished, but ye have fulfilled all of the conditions, therefore my suffering will end, if ye are thankful enough to do me a small service."

They promised in one voice and begged him to tell what he wanted.

He took a sword from under his garment, handed it to the brother and said, with an imploring voice,—

"Cut off my head."

The sister turned away, but the brother, taking the sword, cut off the hermit's head with a blow. From the body there flew out a white bird which, after flying three times joyfully around the brother and sister, rose to the sky and disappeared. Then the brother took his sister by the hand, led her to the boat and they crossed the Crimson Sea.

When they reached home they were greeted with great joy. The brother hung the golden cage on a tree by the lake, and the next morning he heard such music as he had never heard before.

Straightway he sent to all four sides of the world to invite kings and princes to come and hear the golden bird sing, and learn how a sister liberated a brother. He sent an invitation to King Yarboi also. The old queen knew what had happened and with all her living power she tried to keep the king at home, but the king sat on his horse and galloped away as if the castle were falling on him.

Before the feast began the guests went to look at the golden bird; the bird sang, the tree played, and the fish danced. Every one declared that their host was the

happiest man under the sun, and at the banquet one interrupted another in drinking to his health.

But King Yarboi was silent, he watched his host carefully. When the young man was responding to the good wishes of his guests the clothing on his breast fell apart and King Yarboi saw there a golden sun. Rising from the table the king called the young man "son," kissed him ardently and shed tears of delight.

All present wondered greatly, the young man more than others, for he was not aware that he had a golden sun on his breast and that his sister had a golden moon on her bosom. He wished to ask questions, but the king would not permit him to utter a word; he said,—

"Thou art my son; no one but a son of Yarboi can have a golden sun on his breast."

"If I am your son," said the young man, and he took his sister by the hand, "then this maiden is your daughter, for she is my sister."

"My dear children!" said the king, and he embraced one after the other.

When the first onrush of feeling had passed, the young man related his adventures, even down to his life in the fisherman's cottage. When he had listened to everything King Yarboi prepared for the road to free his wife from prison as soon as possible, but before he

started he invited all the guests present to come to his palace. He also sent messengers to persons not present telling them to appear at once, for he was going to celebrate the home-coming of his children. But in his own mind the king determined that the assembled kings and princes should sentence his mother for the misery she had caused. Meanwhile he had her thrown into the same prison from which he liberated his wife.

Who can describe the poor mother's joy when she saw God's light and her children, after twenty years of imprisonment?

On the appointed day the kings and princes came together. The feast could not have been more splendid, all were beside themselves, as it were, with joy, but King Yarboi was dignified and gloomy. After the feast was over he brought a sheet of paper, placed it before himself on a table, and said,—

"Mighty kings and princes, what punishment would the person deserve who, with evil intent and magic should break up a happy marriage, put innocent children out on the sea to perish, and, with deceitful tongue, induce a husband to put his innocent wife in prison?"

The kings and princes decided that such a person should be burned on the public square. The king then asked that each man should write his opinion and confirm it with his name and seal.

The kings and princes did as requested, then they asked what reason he had for making the request. King Yarboi was silent a moment, then he said, "My mother is the unhappy person against whom ye have uttered sentence. I, as king, must act with justice. My mother with evil words and magic separated me from my wife, and had her thrown into prison. My innocent children she pushed out onto the broad sea."

Then Yarboi told in detail his life from the time of his marriage till he recognized his son. When he ended some of the princes begged mercy for the old queen, but the king, taking the paper they had signed, pointed to it, and said,—

"Here ye have given your judgment and strengthened it with your names and seals, now it must be executed, no matter whom it may touch."

The old queen was brought to the square and executed. King Yarboi was gloomy, but in time he regained his cheerfulness at the sight of the happiness of his wife and children.

Whenever the young prince gave a feast his guests stood by the lake, and marveled at the beauty of the golden fish, at the music of the wonder-working tree, and the enchanting songs of the golden bird.

When King Yarboi died his son became king.

MIKLOSH AND THE MAGIC QUEEN

WHERE it was, or where it was not, there was once in the world a magic kingdom. In the center of that kingdom was a great forest, in the center of the forest was a flowery meadow, in the center of the meadow was a silvery river, and in the center of the silvery river was a velvety island, and in the center of the velvety island was an old well from which I took out a story brought from the Operantsia Sea, and whoever will not listen to the story with attention, or interrupts it without request, may he be struck by lightning as many times as there are sand grains in the Danube and the Tisa.

There was once a poor man who had as many children as there are trees in the forest or stars in the sky; he had so many that he couldn't find god-parents for them.

"Well," thought he, "if I cannot find god-parents in my own village, the world is wide, maybe I'll find them somewhere else."

The poor man put a loaf in his basket and went out

into the world, but he didn't go far, for God brought to him a rich merchant who hadn't as many children as there are lumps on swamp grass.

"Where art thou going, poor man?" asked the merchant.

"I am seeking a god-father for my twins."

"If thou wilt accept of my services, don't trouble thyself to go farther."

"I'll accept not only with one hand but with both, for there has been a birth in my cabin, and if I didn't care whether the god-father were a gipsy or a pagan, I couldn't find one in my village."

The merchant became the god-father of the poor man's twins, a boy and a girl, then he took them home and reared them as his own children.

When it was, when it was not, I cannot tell exactly, but it is enough that on a certain day when neither the merchant nor his wife was at home, the brother and sister sat down to play cards. They played till the brother won all of his sister's money and she began to cry.

"Don't cry," said the brother, "I'll give thee thy money and some of my own, too." And he did so.

Again they played. The dice turned, for luck has wings and to whom it flies he is all right, this time the girl was the winner; she won her brother's last coin, but

she was not tender-hearted; she wouldn't give back the money.

"Give me my money," said the brother.

"I'll not do it," answered the girl.

"Didn't I give back thine?"

"What do I care? thou wert a fool."

"Give it back."

"I won't."

"Then I'll take it."

Word followed word till the brother and sister caught each other by the hair, then the sister cursed the brother, and said,—

"Thou art not my brother."

"If thou deniest me then I'll deny and curse thee," screamed the brother.

At these words a dragon appeared, seized the girl, and bore her away.

The brother could not stay at home; he was afraid of his foster parents, and he wanted to find his sister whom he loved, therefore he put on his traveling boots, had a talk with Paul Wind and set out to wander around the world. He traveled and journeyed across forty-nine kingdoms till he came to a king's castle. He went to the king and spoke to him as was fitting,—

"God give a good day to your majesty."

"God receive thee, serving man, what journey art thou on?"

"I am looking for service; will your majesty take me?"

"Thou hast come in good time, my son, I need a herder. I'll hire thee and thou wilt have nothing else to do but to take care of three vicious horses. Each morning thou wilt go with them across the water to an island, but thou must not lead them over a bridge or swim them through the water; the horses must not have a drop of water on them. Each evening thou must bring them back by the same road and in the same manner."

Well and good, the poor man's son became a horse-herder. In the morning he drove out the three vicious horses, sat on the mare, and led them to the water. When they came to the edge of the water he began to wonder how he could lead them so that they should not go on a bridge, should not swim, and there would not be a wet spot on them the size of a small nail. But he needn't have wondered about it, for the three horses crossed of themselves so that not even their feet were wet, but there was no wonder in that, for they were magic horses; as true as I live, I was there where they were, and I had my eyes as I have them now.

Miklosh, for that was the name of the poor man's

son, took off the horses' bridles, fettered their feet, and let them out to graze on the silken meadow, then he lay down at the foot of a golden apple-tree to sleep for a while. But all at once he heard a beautiful song. Where could it come from? He looked around and saw thirteen snow-white swans flying toward him. They settled down on the silken meadow near the golden apple-tree, shook themselves and became maidens.

Twelve of the maidens were beautiful, but the thirteenth was far more beautiful. She went to Miklosh and sat down on the silken grass, near him.

"Thou art here, my world beautiful love, Miklosh," said the maiden. "Long have I waited for thy coming, my heart has yearned for thee, and this I find to say. During the circle of the year that thou art serving the king thou must not let any one, not even the king, know that I come to meet thee. Here is my soft white hand, it will be thine, and this silken meadow and the golden apple-tree on it will be thine and mine, but if thou betrayest me, thou wilt not see me again on the silken meadow, or in any other place."

Our Miklosh promised by all that is in heaven and on earth that he would be as silent as a fish, that he would not say a word to any man.

And who was happier than Miklosh, for who had so beautiful a sweetheart? Every God-given day when he

drove the horses to the silken meadow and let them out to graze, the thirteen swans appeared and, shaking themselves, became beautiful maidens.

'Pon my word, what came of the affair and what didn't, the king gave a great ball to his household. When he came among the rejoicing people and did not see Miklosh, he asked,—

"Where is my dear horse-herder, Miklosh?"

"He's in the corner near the door," said some one.

Then the king saw that Miklosh was alone and as sad as an orphan.

"Well, Miklosh," said he, "how is it that thou dost neither eat nor drink, nor dance when the music is sounding?"

"Your majesty," said Miklosh, "I do not dance for I have no fitting partner."

"Do not grieve, I'll soon send thee a partner."

The king went to his daughter, and said,—

"My daughter, go to the ball and dance with Miklosh, who guards the magic horses, for he is very sad."

The king's daughter didn't let this be said twice; one reason was that her feet were itching to dance, the other was that she could dance with Miklosh, for he was not a handsome fellow for nothing, and the heart of the princess was not stone. She dressed in a minute and went to the ball.

"Miklosh, I am here," called she. "Come, let us dance together."

"I'll not dance," said Miklosh, shrugging his shoulders; "I have a sweetheart a hundred times fairer than thee."

The king's daughter, as if she had received a cuff on the ear, drew up her mouth, and weeping went with a complaint to her father.

"Why art thou crying?" asked the king.

"Why should I not cry, why should I not weep, when Miklosh says he will not dance with me, for he has a sweetheart a hundred times fairer than I?"

"Did he say that?"

"He said nothing else."

"Don't cry, my daughter. I'll make what Miklosh said so bitter to him that he won't say it again."

With that the king called: "Come forth, Miklosh."

"Here I am," said Miklosh, respectfully.

"Didst thou tell my daughter that thou wouldst not dance with her, for thou hadst a sweetheart a hundred times fairer than she is?"

"What is the use of denying? I did indeed find that to say to the princess. Come to the island to-morrow at the hour I will set, and your majesty will see with your own eyes that it is not otherwise, for my sweetheart is a magic queen."

The king made no answer to this, but the next day, to know what was in the affair and what was not, he went to the island.

He saw that a magic queen, white as a dove, red as an opening rose and as beautiful as the dawn, was talking to Miklosh, and that on the silken meadow twelve maidens were playing ball with a golden apple.

The magic queen saw that she had been betrayed.

"Well, Miklosh," said she, "God be with thee, whether thou wilt ever see me again the good God alone knows, for since thou hast betrayed me I must go hence. Wait for me no more on the silken meadow or under the golden apple-tree."

"But," said she, turning to the king, "let not a hair of this young man's head fall, for it was not for thee that I made this silken meadow, not for thee that I planted the tree that bears golden apples, but for him."

The magic queen and the twelve maidens shook themselves, became swans, and flew away.

There was a magic queen, there is no magic queen; there was, but there is not. Only then did Miklosh drop his chin, only then did he shake his head, and where he wasn't sore he was sorry.

Therefore he hung the world on his neck with the intention of traveling till he found his magic queen.

Miklosh journeyed and traveled across forty-nine

kingdoms till he came to a magic mill. The mill was turned by the river of kindness. He saluted the miller, saying,—

"God's good day to thee, master miller."

"God receive thee, Miklosh, whither art thou going?"

"I am seeking the magic kingdom; hast thou heard the fame of it, my friend?"

"Have I not heard of it? Perhaps not when I grind flour for that kingdom. But, Miklosh, as long as the world stands, as thou art now thou wilt not get there, for that place is farther from here than the sky is from the earth. But don't grieve, I will remedy thy trouble. A griff bird carries flour from my mill to the magic kingdom. The bird takes two sacks at a time. I'll put thee into one sack, and the same weight of flour into the other, for the sacks must be of equal weight, otherwise the bird couldn't carry them."

The miller packed Miklosh in one sack and in the other he put an equal weight of flour. When the griff bird came it took a sack in each claw and rose in the air, but the bird could not fly rapidly, for it carried a heavier burden than usual. A black cloud was drawing near and the beautiful magic kingdom was still far away. The griff bird flew faster and faster, but the black cloud overtook the bird, and rain fell as if it were poured from a cask. The sack holding the flour became

heavier than the other sack, that side of the griff bird sank lower and lower. What could the bird do? It couldn't carry the two sacks to the magic kingdom; it put down the lighter one in a great wild wood and went on with the other.

Now Miklosh was in trouble; he took out his gleaming knife, cut the sack open and went into the great wild wood. He traveled on and on till he came to a tree under which a youth was sleeping. He pushed the youth with his foot, to rouse him; the youth was up at once, and when he saw Miklosh, he said,—

"You have come, my dear master. I have waited long. If you do not say it still I know where you are going. Only follow me; I will lead you where your heart wishes."

The youth led Miklosh to a great forge.

"Is the master at home?" asked the youth.

"I am here," answered the blacksmith.

"Canst thou make for us four and twenty pairs of iron shoes and four and twenty pairs of iron gloves; twelve pairs for my master and twelve for me?"

While the blacksmith was making the gloves and shoes, Miklosh and his armor-bearer, for he made him that, went into the blacksmith's house, where his wife, who it may be said, was a witch, busied herself with getting food and drink for her guests. Our fair Miklosh

pleased her, therefore she wanted him for her pock-marked daughter. When the little armor-bearer went outside she followed him and put questions in this manner,—

"Wilt thou tell me, little servant, where thou art going?"

"Why shouldn't I tell! I think no good or harm will come of it. Dost thou see that great mountain there before us, which holds up the sky? Well, we are going there, for every God-given day the magic-queen, who is my master's sweetheart, comes to that mountain to bathe in magic milk."

"If thou wilt do as I tell thee," said the witch, "thou canst make the magic queen love thy master seven times as well as she does now. I will give thee a blow-pipe and a vase of ointment. When thy master reaches the mountain top and sits down to wait for his sweetheart, take out the pipe and blow a whiff toward him. When the queen goes away anoint his forehead with the ointment that is in the vase. Do this for three days in succession, but tell not a living soul about it, for if thou dost, such and such things will happen."

The youth, for one reason or another, took the blow-pipe and the vase, and promised the witch that he would do as she told him.

The blacksmith finished the four-and-twenty pairs of

shoes and the four-and-twenty pairs of gloves. Miklosh and his armor-bearer took them and began to climb the unmercifully high mountain. When they reached the top of the mountain the four-and-twenty pairs of shoes and the four-and-twenty pairs of gloves were worn out, but Miklosh wasn't troubled about that. They crossed three forests; the first was of copper, the second of silver, the third of gold, then they came to a silken meadow; in the center of the silken meadow was a golden apple-tree and under the tree was a golden tub and in the tub was sweet fresh milk, for the magic queen's bath. Miklosh had long been striving to reach that spot, and when at last he was there he was so tired that he lay down under the apple-tree to wait for the beautiful queen. While he was thinking that she was long in coming, the youth blew from the blow-pipe a light whiff of wind, and that minute Miklosh fell asleep so that of himself he would not have wakened till the day of judgment. Just then, in the distance, were seen thirteen swans. When they reached the golden apple-tree they settled on the silken meadow, shook themselves, and became maidens.

The magic queen only then saw that her dear Miklosh was there. She spoke to him, but he did not hear; she pushed him, but he did not waken; she kissed him, but he did not feel the kiss. At last she cried out,—

"Wake up, my heart's beautiful love! Rise up from thy dream, my golden one! For I can only come twice more, another time I cannot come."

But Miklosh did not waken; he slept heavily. When the time came for the queen to go she kissed her sweetheart, the thirteen maidens shook themselves, became swans, and flew away.

The little armor-bearer rubbed Miklosh's temples with ointment he took from the vase the witch gave him, and straightway Miklosh sprang up saying,—

"Oh, I slept well and I had a beautiful dream! I dreamed that the magic queen came and sat by me; that she spoke to me, but I did not answer; that she pushed me, but I did not waken; that she kissed me, but I did not feel the kiss. At last she cried out, 'Wake up, my heart's beautiful love! Wake up from thy deep sleep! Rise up from thy dream, my golden one! For I can only come twice more, another time I cannot come.' Isn't it true that that was a beautiful dream?"

"It was not a dream, my dear master," said Yanchi, for that was the armor-bearer's name, "the magic queen was here, she spoke to thee, pushed thee and kissed thee, but thou didst not waken."

Miklosh was confused and sad; he couldn't explain why he had not wakened, but he resolved not to lie down again lest sleep should overpower him.

The next day Miklosh did not lie on the soft grass under the branches of the golden apple-tree, but he walked up and down on the silken meadow. Suddenly he felt a gentle breath strike his face; his eyelids grew heavy, his knees knocked together, he dropped to the ground, stretched out slowly on the soft grass, and fell asleep.

The thirteen swans came to the tree, shook themselves, and became maidens. The magic queen spoke to Miklosh, he did not hear; she shook him, but he did not waken; she kissed him, but he did not feel the kiss. At last she cried out,—

"Wake up, my heart's beautiful love! Wake up, my heart's heart, fair Miklosh! For only once more can I come, after that I come not."

But Miklosh did not waken; he slept heavily. When the magic queen saw that in no way could she reach the soul of Miklosh, she kissed him, shook herself, became a swan and flew away.

The armor-bearer rubbed Miklosh's temples with the ointment the blacksmith's wife had given him. Straightway Miklosh sprang up and found this to say,— "Oh, I slept well and I had a beautiful dream!" Then he told what he had seen.

"My dear master," said the armor-bearer, "that was not a dream, that happened."

Miklosh was confused and sad, but he comforted

himself with the thought that the magic queen would come once more, and this time he would not sleep. But his poor head could do nothing, for when the hour came a gentle breath struck his face, his eyelids grew as heavy as stones; his knees came together; he fell, and slowly stretched out on the soft grass.

Again the thirteen swans came to the golden apple-tree, shook themselves and became maidens. The queen went to Miklosh, she spoke to him, but he did not answer; she pushed him, but he did not waken; she kissed him, but he did not feel the kiss. At last she cried out, "Wake up, my heart's beautiful love! Wake up, fair Miklosh, for I am here for the last time!" But Miklosh did not waken.

When the queen saw that in no way could she reach the soul of Miklosh she turned to the youth and found this to say,—

"Tell thy master that I take kind farewell of him, that if he had hung his arms from a smaller nail onto a larger, he would not have to wander again in a strange land."

The queen kissed Miklosh, shook herself, became a swan and flew away, followed by the twelve other swans.

She had barely gone when the youth rubbed Miklosh's temples with the magic ointment. That moment he sprang up, saying,—

"Oh, I've slept well, and I've had a beautiful dream!"

"That was no dream," said the youth, "that all happened. The magic queen came, and when she could not waken thee she found this to say, 'Tell thy master that I take a kind farewell of him, that if he had hung his arms from a smaller onto a larger nail he would not have to wander again in a strange land.' "

Only then did the scales fall from Miklosh's eyes, only then did he understand why he had slept, only then did he know that the youth was at fault. Therefore, drawing his good sword, he shouted at him in great anger,—

"Thou son of a beast! What didst thou do to me?"

"Have mercy on my head!" cried the youth. "I am the cause of nothing. The blacksmith's wife deceived me; she gave me this little pipe and told me to blow a soft breath on thee, and when the magic queen went away to rub thy temples with ointment from this vase."

Miklosh was so angry that he would not have spared his own brother. He drew his sword and punished the wicked youth. Then he went down the unmercifully high mountain and again he hung the world on his neck and gave his head to wandering.

Miklosh journeyed and traveled across forty-nine kingdoms, and beyond the Operantsia Sea, and beyond the Glass Mountain, and still beyond that till he reached

a broad valley in the middle of which was a king's castle. In a window of the castle he saw a beautiful woman, and she was no other than his own sister, Tlonka, whom the dragon had carried away. They recognized each other at once.

Miklosh needed no more; he ran up the twelve marble steps, took the golden key, opened the boxwood door, and greeted his sister. Tlonka had just become the mother of a wonderful boy. As soon as he came into the world he could talk and walk, but that wasn't strange, for he was a magic boy.

"My mother," said he, "I will free thee from the dragon, for I know well where his strength is. Give me the key of the cellar. In the seventh niche of the cellar is a stone jar; in the stone jar is an iron jar; in the iron jar is a copper jar; in the copper jar is a silver jar; in the silver jar is a golden jar; in the golden jar is a crystal jar; in the crystal jar is a diamond jar, and in that jar is the wine of life. If I pour it out the dragon will lose his strength and die."

The mother found the key, the magic boy took it, and the three went to the seventh niche of the cellar. The boy, where he got it or where he didn't, took a large hammer, and saying, "Stone hoops burst, stone jar empty!" struck the jar such a blow that it fell apart; he struck the iron jar, saying, "Iron hoops burst, iron

jar empty!" The iron jar fell apart. Saying, "Copper hoops burst, copper jar empty!" he struck the copper jar a hero's blow and it fell apart. The silver, the golden, the crystal and the diamond jar were broken in the same way. In the diamond jar the wine of life was seething.

Where it came from or where it didn't the magic boy had a dipper; he took a good draught of the wine of life and then he gave some to his mother and uncle, and what little was left he drank himself. From this drinking the magic boy, his mother and Miklosh were seven-fold stronger than before. They closed the seventh niche of the cellar and went out under the clear sky.

The dragon was struggling home, so weak that he could barely move, just as if he were not his own, but had borrowed himself.

"Thy day is finished!" said the magic boy. "Thou wilt not torment my mother longer, and thou wilt not torture a living soul."

"Leave me my life!" begged the dragon.

"I'll not destroy thy life, but I'll nail thee up as a spectacle," said the boy. He pulled the dragon to the three hundred and sixty-sixth chamber of the castle and nailed him to the wall. He put one nail in the right wing of the dragon, another in the left wing, and a

strong one in the tail; then he closed the great iron door, locked it seven times with the key, and fastened it with nine bolts.

To Miklosh the boy found this to say, "Now I'll tell thee where to find the magic queen. She has been enchanted, but if thou wilt act according to my words we can waken her. If thou dost not thou wilt never see the bright sun again. Thou seest that unmercifully high mountain which holds up the sky. In the very middle of that mountain sleeps the magic queen. When we are walking along inside of the mountain do nothing but step in my tracks. If thou steppest elsewhere, the entrance will close behind us and we shall fall under the same spell that is over the magic queen. On the road we travel are every kind of creeping, crawling things, snakes and toads. Take care not to step on one of them, for if one hisses we are lost. In the middle of the mountain are thirteen couches, on each couch a beautiful maiden is lying. Thy mind will tell thee which one of the thirteen maidens is the queen. Thou wilt kiss her three times, the first time she will move, the second time she will breathe, the third time she will waken. In the room where the thirteen are sleeping there is a cupboard, open the door and take out a golden rod which thou wilt find there. With the rod strike each one of the maidens saying: 'Rise up! Rise

up, dawn is coming!' They will spring to their feet. In like manner strike the first snake or toad which thou dost see and say to it, 'Wake up! Rise up! Come out of thy snake or toad skin!' One after another will cast off their skins and take human forms, for they are all magic youths and maidens who are under a spell."

The boy turned and circled around and wherever he got them, it is enough that in his arms were three hundred and sixty-six pitch-pine torches; he gave half of the torches to his uncle, and then they traveled toward the unmercifully high mountain.

When they reached the mountain the magic boy, after searching for a certain place, struck the rocks, and said, "Open before us!"

In the twinkle of an eye the rocks opened with a crash, then Miklosh and the boy went in. There was such darkness in the passage that it might be bitten, but what was the ocean-great number of torches for, if not to light up the place? The boy went ahead and after him walked Miklosh, who strove unceasingly to step in his nephew's footprints. On every side, and almost under their feet, were snakes and toads which they had to avoid, for had they stepped on any one of them it would have hissed or made a noise.

After crawling and climbing a long distance they came to the center of the mountain and found there a spacious

chamber. In the chamber slept the thirteen maidens.

The magic boy vanished, as if the earth had swallowed him. Miklosh kissed the magic queen once, she moved; he kissed her a second time; she began to breathe; he kissed her a third time; she opened her eyes and saw at her side none other than her sweetheart, Miklosh the fair.

Miklosh went to the cupboard, opened the door and took out the golden rod. Then he struck each maiden three blows, saying, "Wake up! Rise up; for dawn is coming!" The maidens wakened and sprang to their feet. Miklosh struck the first snake that came near him, and the first toad, and said, "Wake up! Rise up! Come out of thy snake, toad skin, take thy human form!" All the snakes and toads shook themselves and became men and women.

Miklosh found himself in a wonderful palace. The magic people bathed him in milk, wiped him with a golden towel and deftly combed his golden hair. They clad him in a purple robe and crowned him king of the magic people. On his right stood the magic boy, on his left the magic queen. So the son of the poor man became a king, and such blessings came on his old father and mother that they couldn't have been better.

FATE

TWO brothers lived together. One of them worked all of the time, and the other did nothing but lie around and eat and drink what was prepared for him, still God blessed him in everything.

At last the industrious brother thought, "Why should I work so hard for that lazy fellow? I'll work for myself, and let him do as he likes."

That evening he said to his brother, "It is not well to live in this way. I do everything, and you do nothing but eat and drink. I will go away."

"Don't go," said his brother. "We are well off as we are. You manage our affairs, and I am satisfied with what you do."

When the other would not listen, they divided their property and each took his own.

The indolent brother hired herdsmen, shepherds and pigdrivers, and saying to them, "I leave everything to God and to you," he stayed at home as before.

The industrious brother worked hard, but did not prosper. Each day things grew worse till be became so poor that he was barefoot. Then he said to himself,

"I will go and see how my brother is getting along."

On the road he came to a pasture where a flock of sheep were grazing. He saw no shepherd, but a beautiful maiden was sitting there spinning golden thread.

"God save you," said he, and then he asked, "Whose sheep are these?"

"They and I belong to the same man," answered the maiden.

"And who are you?"

"I am your brother's fortune."

"Where is my fortune?" asked the man.

"Your fortune is far away from you."

"Can I find it?"

"Yes, if you search for it."

He saw that his brother's sheep were fine, they could not be better. He looked no farther but went directly to him.

His brother wept, and asked, "Where have you been all of this time?" And seeing his bare feet and his ragged clothes he gave him shoes and money.

After they had spent some days eating and drinking the poor brother went home. He put a bag on his back, took a stick in his hand, and went out into the world to seek his fortune.

When he had traveled a long time he came to a great

forest, where he found a gray-haired woman sleeping under a clump of bushes. He raised his stick and struck her on the back. She moved, and opening her bleared eyes, said,

"You may thank God that I was asleep, for had I been awake you would not have those shoes."

"Who are you that you should take my shoes from me?"

"I'm your fortune."

When the man heard this he beat his breast, and cried, "If you are my fortune, may God kill you. Who gave you to me?"

"Fate gave me."

"Where is Fate?"

"Go and find him," answered the woman. She disappeared and the man went in search of Fate.

After traveling a long time he came to a house where a fire was burning and over the fire a huge kettle was boiling. The master of the house sat by the fire. The man entered and said, "Good evening, God be with you." The master greeted him and enquired whence he came and whither he was going.

The man told him how he had been a proprietor, and how he had grown poor and was now going to Fate to find out what made him so unfortunate. Then he asked his host why he was cooking such a quantity of food.

"Oh, brother," answered he, "I have plenty of everything but I cannot give my servants enough to eat. Every one of them eats like a dragon, as you will see when supper begins."

Presently the servants came in and sat down to eat. One snatched food from another, and in no time the great kettle was empty, and they had not enough to eat. After supper came the housekeeper, who gathered up the bones and threw them behind the stove. Then two old, withered figures appeared and began to suck the bones.

"Who have you there behind the stove?" asked the man.

"My father and mother, they are as if chained to this world; they will not leave it."

In the morning as the man was starting his host said,—

"If you find Fate, think of me and ask him why I cannot give my men enough to eat, and why my father and mother do not die."

"I will ask," said the man, and he went farther to look for Fate.

After traveling a long time he came to another village. At a large house he asked for a night's lodging and received it. When his host enquired where he was going he told him just as it was, what and how, then the

host implored him, "For God's sake, brother, when you find Fate ask him why my cattle do not thrive, but grow worse each year."

He promised, and the next day continued his journey. After a long time he came to a dense forest and there he found a hermit. He asked the hermit if he could tell him where Fate lived. The hermit answered, "Cross that mountain over there and you will see his palace. But when you are in Fate's presence say nothing, do whatever he does, and wait for him to speak to you."

The man thanked the hermit, and crossed the mountain. When he came to Fate's house he found something worth looking at. It was like the palace of a great king; there were attendants and servants of every kind. Fate himself sat at the table and supped; the man sat down at the table and began to eat.

When through eating, Fate lay down to sleep. The man lay down, too. At midnight there was a terrible racket and some one called in a loud voice, "Fate, Oh, Fate! so many and so many souls were born into the world to-day. Give them what you like."

Thereupon Fate rose up, opened a chest, and began to throw golden ducats around the room, saying: "As I fare to-day let them fare till death."

When daylight came the great palace had vanished. In its place stood a large house and in that house was an

abundance of everything. When evening came Fate sat down to eat, and the man sat with him, but spoke not a word. At midnight there was a terrible racket and a voice called, "Fate, Oh, Fate! so many souls were born into the world to-day. Give them what you like."

Fate rose up, opened a chest and took out, not ducats, but silver coins, and here and there a ducat. As he threw them around the room he said, "As I fare to-day, let them fare till death."

When daylight came the large house had disappeared, and a smaller one stood in its place. Fate acted in like manner each night, and each morning his dwelling was smaller till at last it was only a hut. Then Fate took a spade and began to dig. The man took one, too, and dug all day. In the evening Fate took a crust of bread, broke it in two and gave the man half; that was their supper. At midnight there was a terrible racket, and a voice was heard calling, "Oh, Fate, Oh, Fate! so many souls were born into the world to-day. Give them what you like."

Then Fate opened the chest and scattered around a few coins such as laborers receive as wages, saying, "As I fare to-day, let them fare till death."

When morning came the hut had disappeared and in its place stood the magnificent palace of the first day. Then Fate asked the man: "What do you want?"

He told him all from beginning to end, and said that he had come to ask why misfortune had been given to him.

Then Fate said, "The first night you saw how I threw ducats around, and you saw what happened afterward. As I fare on the night any one is born, so he fares till death. You were born on a poor night and will remain poor till your death; your brother was born on a rich night and will be rich till his death. But since you have been so resolute and have endured so much I will tell you how to help yourself. Your brother has a daughter, Militsa; she, like her father, was born on a rich night. Take Militsa to your house and whatever you get say that it belongs to her."

The man thanked Fate, and said, "In a certain village there is a rich man. He has an abundance of everything but he can never give his servants enough to eat, no matter how much he cooks. That man's father and mother are as if chained to this world, they are old and black and withered, but they cannot die. I spent a night at his house and he begged me to ask you the reason for all this."

Fate answered, "It is because he does not honor his father and mother; he throws their food behind the stove. If he seated them at the head of the table and gave them the first glass of liquor and the first glass of

wine, his men would not eat half so much as they do now, and the two old people would go to rest."

Then the man said to Fate, "In a certain village there is a man whose cattle do not thrive, but grow poorer each day. I promised to enquire of you why this is."

Fate answered, "On festivals he kills the worst animals he has. If he would kill the best his cattle would thrive."

The man thanked Fate and bade him good-by. When he came to the village of the man whose cattle did not thrive, the man cried out, "For God's sake, brother, did you remember me?"

"I did, and Fate said that on festival days you kill the worst animals you have. If you kill the best the rest will thrive."

Hearing this the man said, "Stay with me, brother; my name's day will come soon; if what you say is true I will pay you well."

He remained. When the festival came the man killed his best ox. From that moment his cattle began to thrive. He made the poor man a present of five oxen, and thanked him for his aid.

When the poor man reached the village of the rich man who could not feed his servants enough, the rich man cried out, "For God's sake, brother, how is it, what did Fate say?"

"Fate said that you do not honor your father and mother. You throw their food behind the stove. If you put them at the head of the table, and give them the first glass of liquor and the first glass of wine, your servants will not eat half so much, and your father and mother will go to rest."

When the man heard this he told his wife to wash, comb, and dress her father-in-law and mother-in-law, and at supper he seated them at the head of the table and gave them the first glass of liquor and the first glass of wine. From that moment the servants were not able to eat half so much as before, and the next day the old people died.

The rich man gave the poor man two oxen; he thanked him and drove them home. When he came to the village and his friends asked, "Whose cattle are these?" he answered, "They belong to my niece, Militsa."

To his brother he said, "You have many children, give me Militsa, let her be my daughter."

His brother said, "I am willing that she should go with you."

He took Militsa home and afterward acquired much property, and always said that it belonged to Militsa. But one day, when he was in the field looking at his grain which was so fine that it couldn't be better, a certain poor man, who was going along the road, asked, "Whose

grain is this?" he forgot, and answered, "It is mine."

No sooner were the words spoken than the grain was on fire. He ran after the poor man, and cried, "Stop, brother, the grain is not mine. It belongs to Militsa, my brother's daughter."

Right away the grain stopped burning. The man never forgot again. He shared Militsa's good fortune.

THE WATERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

THERE was once a king who had a son of whom even envious men could only speak well, and every one loved him as a pigeon loves pure wheat, or even better. The king's son had such a kind heart that he was always called the "good youth." People named and called him in this way till at last they forgot his title and his real name.

Now, 'pon my soul, the queen died and the good youth was an orphan, and the king a widower. Soon courtiers began to advise the king to marry the widow of a neighboring king who had recently died. "Marry her," said they. "She has but one son and the kingdoms can be ruled together." So the marriage took place.

But, creator of my soul, the widow had barely come to the palace when she saw that everybody loved the good youth, while everybody talked over the shoulder with her dunce of a boy; hence she conceived a terrible hatred for her step-son and began to endeavor in every way to injure him and turn his father's heart from him.

And what didn't she invent against him? She told

the king that his son had done this kind of disgraceful thing, and that kind of disgraceful thing. The king was enraged and straightway he told the good youth not to come before his eyes again, to leave the kingdom within twenty-four hours, and never return.

What was the good youth to do? He could not appear before his father, for the step-mother kept the door closed against him. He started out to wander over the world. As he journeyed and traveled he came to a nice shady place at the edge of a forest, and since he was tired he put down his bundle, stretched himself out on the grass, and went to sleep quietly.

He was sleeping and sleeping, when from wherever he came there appeared a magic steed which stood by him and stamped the earth gently. Thereupon the good youth wakened, sat up and looked at the steed.

"Rise up, my dear master," said the steed, "for there is a long road before us. Sit on my back and tell me how I shall go with thee; shall it be as a roaring whirlwind, or as the swiftest bird of flight can go?"

"Only that way, my dear horse, only that way so that there should be no fault in me and none in thee."

"This I must say to thee," said the magic steed, "that till we get to the farthest boundary of the kingdom through which we are traveling, thou must not see anything, must not hear anything, must not say or know

anything, but must always look around my two ears."

The good youth sat on the back of the magic steed and they journeyed and traveled across forty-nine kingdoms, through the air. Once, as they were going and traveling, the good youth forgot and looked down, and he saw, lying on the ground, a beautiful diamond plume.

"Oh, dear horse," said he, "I see a beautiful plume set in gold; shall we pick it up or leave it?"

"I told thee not to see anything, not to hear anything, say anything, or know anything, but only look around my two ears. It is misery if we take up the plume but it is still greater misery if we leave it."

The good youth picked up the plume and they traveled farther and still farther. Again the good youth forgot and looked down to the earth, again he saw a diamond plume so beautiful that the first plume couldn't be its child.

"My dear horse," said he, "I see a beautiful plume set in gold. Shall we take it or leave it?"

"I told thee," said the magic steed, "that thou must not see anything, must not hear anything, must not say or know anything, but must always look around my two ears. It is misery if we take up the plume, but it is still greater misery if we leave it."

The good youth took up the second plume, and they went farther, they traveled and traveled, and again the

king's son looked down and he saw a diamond plume lying on the ground.

"My dear horse," said the good youth, "I see a beautiful diamond plume lying on the ground. Shall we take it up or leave it?"

"I told thee," said the magic steed, "that thou must not see anything, must not hear anything, must not say or know anything, but must always look around my two ears. It is misery if we take up the plume, but it is still greater misery if we leave it."

The good youth took up the third plume and they went farther, again they crossed forty-nine kingdoms, and then they came to a great town.

"My dear master," said the magic steed, "a hunter lives in this town. Go to him in a hunter's dress and tell him thou art seeking service. He will go with thee to the king, who will employ thee as a hunter. Take service with him, but do not forget me; beg the king to let me live on the dirt heap, and if need be let him take pay for it out of thy wages."

The good youth went to the ocean-great town. Meanwhile the magic steed shook himself and turned into such a shaggy, mangy colt that a dog wouldn't have eaten him; then he went to the edge of the town and lay down on a dirt heap.

The king's son found the hunter, stood before him and saluted him properly:

"God give a good day to my lord, the hunter," said he.

"God receive thee, good youth. What journey art thou on?"

"I am seeking service."

"You are here in good time. The king is looking for a hunter. I will conduct thee to the palace, but first thou must put on a rich dress."

The hunter gave the good youth fine clothing and went with him to the king, who gave him service at once.

The youth did not forget his horse, he made the condition that, even if pay for it were taken out of his wages, the king would permit the shaggy colt to make himself comfortable on the dirt heap.

Here, 'pon my word, what came of the affair or what didn't, the Blue King, for it may be said between us that this was the name of the good youth's master, ordered a great hunt so that his new hunter might show what he could do. They hunted and hunted, but the Blue King and his guests found nothing, and though the short rib of a wild beast isn't much, they didn't get that much; they couldn't discharge their guns unless they wanted to shoot the air. But the new hunter, our good youth, found so many wild beasts that he couldn't shoot them,

he had to kill them with the butt of his gun. At last he captured them, empty handed, and tied them to a tree. But it was no wonder; the magic steed in the form of a hound was driving them toward him.

When the Blue King and his guests saw what the new hunter had done they didn't cease glorifying him. The Blue King made the good youth master of hunters and seated him at his own table. But we all know that it is not well to eat cherries from one dish with great lords, and so it was now, for what came of the affair or what didn't, the king, during a hunt, lost the plume from his hat and therefore gave his head to great sorrow; he neither ate nor drank, but sat alone, like a man whose father and mother are dead.

The good youth was sorry for the Blue King, and he said,—

"If I do not offend your majesty, will you tell me what has caused you so much grief?"

"Oh, my good man, why should I not grieve when I have lost my diamond plume?"

"If that is your majesty's only trouble," said the good youth, "then we can cure it, for I have three diamond plumes set in gold, let your majesty choose the one that suits you best."

With this the good youth took the three diamond plumes from his bosom and placed them before the king.

The eyes and mouth of the Blue King gaped, for neither his father nor his grandfather had seen such plumes as those three were.

"Where did you get these plumes, the price of which cannot be known?" asked the king.

"I got them in my traveling and wandering. I found them here and there."

The king looked and looked and he saw that a golden hair was wound around the stem of each plume. Then this thought rose in his head: "If a single hair is so beautiful what must be the beauty of its owner?" He wrinkled his brow in anger, turned to the good youth, and said,—

"Dost hear, this kind and that kind of a hunter, if thou dost not bring me the owners of these three hairs, if thou hadst a thousand lives, thou wouldst die an evil death."

The good youth was as if he had received a blow; he rose up sadly and crying bitterly, wandered off to his magic steed.

"Why dost thou cry and why dost thou weep so bitterly, my dear master?" asked the steed.

"Why shouldn't I cry, why shouldn't I weep when my master commands me to bring to him the owners of the three golden hairs wound around the diamond plumes, or if I had a thousand lives, I would die an evil death?"

"I told thee when we were crossing the thrice ninety-nine kingdoms not to see anything, not to hear anything, not to say or know anything, but always to look around my ears. Now that we are in trouble let not tears flow from thy eyes, but go back to the Blue King and tell him to make ready for thee a ship in which there will be provisions for seven years, and for me seven measures of glowing coals."

The good youth went back to the Blue King, and said:

"Your majesty, it is needful to do by me as by one going to die. If I must bring the owners of those three golden hairs, then let your majesty have such a ship made that it will hold provisions for seven years, and have measured out for my shaggy colt seven measures of glowing coals."

The Blue King straightway ordered his ship builders to make a ship which would hold provisions enough to last for seven years, then he told his attendants to measure out to the shaggy colt seven measures of glowing coals.

The colt swallowed down the coals at seven breaths, as if the earth had swallowed them, so that for gold it would have been impossible to find a coal the size of a poppy-seed eye.

When the ship was ready the good youth went on board, taking his trusty steed with him, then they moved

across the world to seek the owners of the three golden hairs.

"If I stamp once," said the magic steed to his master, "come to me even if thou hast to rise from the table."

They traveled and journeyed on the smooth sea till the magic steed stamped once. The good youth heard this and hurried straightway to the stable.

"My dear master," said the steed, "dost thou hear a roaring coming to us, of the noise and traveling of the twelve Truths? They are coming to thee, and thou must do everything according to their desire. If they ask for food give them food, if they ask for drink give them drink, but if they ask, 'How much shall we pay?' let this be thy word and speech: 'It is already paid for.' Then they will offer gold and silver, but take not even one coin."

Well, what came of the affair or what didn't, I was there where they were speaking and was looking as I am now. All at once, with great thundering and rattling and noise, the twelve Truths came onto the ship like birds, and asked for food and drink. The good youth gave them all their skins could hold, so much that the provisions for seven years disappeared. Then they asked,—

"How much do we owe thee, good youth?"

"Nothing," answered he, "all is paid for."

"Ask as much gold and silver as thy ship will hold, we will pay it," said the twelve Truths.

"What use would gold and silver be to me? My trouble would only increase with it."

"Well," said the twelve Truths, "here is a little whistle, blow it, and whatever thy trouble may be, we will come to thy assistance straightway."

The twelve Truths with a great stamping and rattling and noise, went away and the good youth put the whistle in his pocket.

After this he traveled and journeyed through forty-nine kingdoms till he came to an island. On the island lived the three binders of the three diamond plumes. When the ship came to the shore of the island the magic steed stamped once, and the good youth hastened to the stable, and asked,—

"What is the trouble, my dear horse?"

"I have no trouble," answered the horse, "only that there should be none for thee. Thou must go to the castle that is here on the island. The door is closed, but it will open before thee and close of itself after thee. Go to the banquet hall and there thou wilt find a table spread for two persons. Sit down in whichever place pleases thee. The second place will be empty, but not long, for above the table a ring is circling: it will turn three times, strike the floor and become a maiden.

"The maiden will sit down in front of thee and ask in kind speech what thou wilt eat and drink with relish, but answer not a single word, sit silent and speechless. The maiden will speak to thee three times, then she will pull thy hair and beat thee, so that thou wilt be barely able to leave the room on thy own feet. Only when thou art out of the castle wilt thou notice that the ring is on thy nameless finger."

The youth went to the castle; the door opened before him and closed behind him. He passed through one room after another till he came to one in which a table was spread for two persons. The good youth sat down and began to eat. A gold ring circled above the table three times, struck the floor and became a maiden, such a maiden as the king's son had not seen before, and like a sheep, he opened his mouth and eyes, and the knife and spoon dropped out of his hands. He would not allow himself to utter a sound.

"Hip, hop! I am here, my heart's beautiful love," said the maiden. "I've been waiting long to delight my eyes with looking at thee. I know, even if thou dost not say so, that thou hast come for me."

The youth moved uneasily on the golden chair; he said not a word, but kept eating. The maiden, with fair words, said,—

"Eat, drink and enjoy thy food, for I know, even if

thou dost not say so, that thou hast come from a distant land."

The good youth moved and twisted on the golden chair, but said not a word.

When the dinner was over the maiden said,—

"Thou hast come for me and I am thine, my heart's beautiful love."

When the youth made no answer, the maiden flew at him, pulled out his hair, struck him on the head and beat him as no maiden ever beat a man. He fell to the floor and she disappeared. When the youth came to his senses he staggered out of the room and out of the castle, and only then did he see that the ring was on his finger.

When in some fashion he had dragged himself to the ship, he went to the stable and dropped down on the straw in the corner. The good steed took pity on his master; he breathed three times on him and all of his pain disappeared, as if cut in two, and a quiet sleep came to him. In the morning when the steed roused him he found this to say,—

"Why art thou troubled when I have slept so well and dreamed so beautifully?"

"Well, dream here, dream there, but now listen," said the horse. "Thou must go a second time to the castle, the door will open of itself before thee and close behind thee; go to the banquet hall and there thou wilt find a

table spread for two persons. Sit in whichever place pleases thee, the second place will be empty, but not long; a ring will circle three times above the table, then strike the floor and become a maiden; the maiden will sit in front of thee and with fair speech urge thee to eat, and to drink with relish; but answer not a word, sit silent and speechless. She will speak to thee three times, then she will fly at thee, pull thy hair and beat thee so unmercifully that thou wilt barely be able to crawl out of the room and the castle. Only when thou art out wilt thou notice that the ring is on thy index finger."

The good youth went to the castle, the maiden beat him more unmercifully than before. When he came to his senses he tottered out of the room and stumbled out of the castle. Only when outside did he see that the ring was on his index finger.

In some fashion he dragged himself to the ship, went to the stable and fell on the straw in the corner. The magic steed breathed on him three times and his pain vanished as if it had been cut in two, and a quiet sleep came to him.

In the morning the steed roused the good youth, and he found this to say,—

"My dear horse, why art thou troubled when I fell asleep so easily and dreamed so beautifully?"

"Dream here, dream there," said the steed, "but now

listen to me. Go to the castle the third time in the same way and manner as the first and second time. Everything will happen as before. When the maiden speaks to thee, do not answer. If thou speakest, even one word, thou and I, and all the people on the ship, will be destroyed without mercy. But take people with thee to bring thee back to the ship."

All pleasure in the journey departed from the youth, and his face was as sour as if he had bitten a wild apple. But whether he wanted to go, or not, he went. He reached the castle, and the room where the table was spread for two and he sat down and began eating. A gold ring rolled on the table, fell to the floor, and became a maiden. The first two maidens were beautiful, but this one was seven times more beautiful.

"Hip, hop! here I am, my heart's beautiful love," said she. "I have waited long to delight my eyes with the sight of thee, for I know, even if thou dost not say it, that thou hast come for me."

The youth uttered no word, but kept on eating and drinking. She urged him with fair speech, saying,—

"Eat and drink, my heart's beautiful love, for thou hast come from a distant land and art hungry."

When the maiden spoke to him the third time and he said not a word she flew at him and beat him till he was senseless.

When their master did not return to the ship the sailors went to the castle and brought him out as they would have brought out a block of wood. They carried him to the ship and placed him on his straw bed. The magic steed took pity on his master; he blew on him four times and his pain vanished, as if cut in two or better than that, and a quiet sleep came to him.

When the magic steed roused the good youth he found this to say,—

"Why didst thou rouse me, my dear steed, when I slept so quietly and dreamed so beautifully?"

"Dream here or dream there, but now we must work. We must strike our tent tree and move toward home. When we can say that we are there, then take the three rings off thy fingers, turn each one three times, and thou wilt see what beautiful maidens will stand before thee."

And thus it happened, they struck their tent tree and sailed homeward. On the seventh day they were able to say, "We are at home." Then the good youth took the rings from his fingers, turned each one of them three times and they became beautiful maidens.

"Oh, thou, this kind and that kind of a man!" said the middle maiden, who was the most beautiful, "thou hast brought us from our home. But now tell me, was it for thyself or for another?"

"It was for the Blue King."

"We will never be his, therefore we will play tricks with thee."

Well, so it was. When the red hunter heard that the good youth had returned, though he had taken supplies for seven years, he stood before the king.

"Your majesty," began he, "I bring you news, and great news. The good youth is here, though he took provisions for seven years."

"Go to the harbor and if he has the three maidens let him bring them straight to my castle."

The red hunter hastened to the harbor and told the youth what the king had said. The good youth, who was stretched on his straw bed, found this to say,—

"Go back and tell the king that if he had put such a long road on his neck he too would like to rest."

The red hunter returned to the king and complained mercilessly of the good youth, that for this reason he would not come, and for that reason he would not come; for this reason he would not obey, and for that reason he would not obey. The king was enraged, and was off with great steps, toward the ship. There the good youth brought before him the three world-beautiful maidens, at the sight of whom the king became as mild as a sheep.

The king took the three world-beautiful maidens to

his castle. He wished to marry one of them, but she turned from him, saying,—

"We shall not be thine till our own palace is brought hither."

"But how can I bring it? Who will undertake such a task?"

"Let that wretch do it who brought us hither."

The king sent for the good youth, and when he came he found this to say to him,—

"Dost thou hear, chief huntsman. Do not stop, do not eat, do not drink till thou hast brought the palace of the three princesses and put it on the top of my castle on three golden hairs. Otherwise, though I don't say it, know that there will be a thicker end to the affair."

The youth went sadly out of the castle, and to his good steed.

"What is thy trouble, my dear master, what saddens thy heart?" asked the magic steed.

"Better if thou hadst not asked. Great is my sorrow, greater than the tallest mountain, for the king has ordered me not to stop, not to eat or drink till I bring the palace of the three princesses and put it on top of his castle, on three golden hairs."

"If that is thy only trouble," answered the steed, "think less of it and the more will come. Go back to the

king and ask of him provisions for half a year, and one measure of glowing coals for me."

The good youth went to the king and the king gave him the provisions and the coals. Then the youth and the magic steed began a long journey. They traveled and journeyed till the steed stamped once. The youth hastened to him, and asked,—

"What is the trouble, dear horse?"

"Nothing is the trouble with me except that nothing should trouble thee, but if thou heed my advice not a hair of thy head will fall. Take out the little whistle which the twelve Truths gave thee, blow it and the Truths will appear. They will ask: 'What dost thou command, dear master?' Let this be thy word and speech: 'Nothing, but that you should carry the palace of the three princesses to the domain of the Blue King and put it on top of the king's castle, on three golden hairs.' But first entertain the twelve Truths with what thou hast on the ship, and when they ask thee what they owe, and offer thee gold and silver, take not a coin from them."

As the steed said so the youth did and straightway the palace of the three world-beautiful maidens was on top of the castle of the Blue King.

Now the report went out that the good youth had returned, though he had taken provisions for half a year.

Again the red hunter calumniated him, again the king went, in a rage, to the harbor and when the good youth stood before his face, he said,—

"Thou this and that kind of a scoundrel, hast thou done what I told thee to do?"

"Your majesty, look at your castle."

The king looked at his castle and saw that the palace of the three princesses was standing on it, on three golden hairs. That was all that he wanted; he thanked the good youth and went straight to the three princesses, and said to one of them,—

"Well, my heart's beautiful love, thy wish is fulfilled, now thou art mine."

"Not yet," answered the maiden, "first we must move into our palace." With that the three took down their tent pole and went up to their palace, on a golden staircase. But, 'pon my soul, in a twinkle, when the king wanted to follow the maidens, he could not find the staircase; it vanished before his eyes, and he searched for it in vain. The three princesses laughed at him, and one of them called out,—

"We'll not be thine till thou bringest to us the Water of Life and the Water of Death."

"But how can I get them?" asked the king.

"Let that youth who brought us hither go for them."

Here the king called the good youth, gave him pro-

visions for half a year and a measure of glowing coals for his steed, and sent him for the Water of Life and the Water of Death.

When out on the sea the good youth blew his whistle and, when the twelve Truths appeared, he gave them plenty of food and drink, but took no pay. Then they asked,—

"What is thy wish, dear master?"

"Nothing else than to bring a flask of water from the fountain of Life and a flask of water from the fountain of Death."

The command was barely uttered when there stood before the good youth two flasks. In one was the Water of Life, in the other was the Water of Death. Then he turned the ship toward home and on the third day he could say: "We are here."

Now the news went about that the ship was back. Again the red hunter calumniated the youth, and, 'pon my word, the Blue King took his staff in his hand, put on his long cloak and hastened to the ship. When he was on board the good youth stood before him holding two flasks in his hands.

"Thou this and that kind of a scoundrel, hast thou got what I sent thee for? The red hunter said this, and said that about thee."

"He is jealous,—why is unknown."

"I'll punish him for lying to me," said the Blue King, and he did as he said. The earth drank the blood of the red hunter.

The Blue King took the two flasks and called out to the world-beautiful princesses: "My heart's beautiful love, thy desire is accomplished, here is the Water of Life and the Water of Death; now thou art mine."

"Ha! ha! Blue King. I shall not be thine till thou art cut up and one of us sprinkle thee with this water."

"But, my heart's beautiful love, who will cut me up?"

"He who brought us hither. But that thou shouldst see all that another would see, so that there will be no fear in thy heart, let the good youth cut up his magic steed."

What was the good youth to do? He led out his magic steed, stabbed him in the heart and killed him; he collected all of the blood in an earthen jar, cut the flesh bit from bit, piled up the pieces and poured the blood over them; then one of the princesses ran down the golden staircase with a flask in her hand. In the flask was the Water of Life; she sprinkled a few drops on the flesh and blood of the magic steed, and behold from the flesh and blood sprang up a delightful charm-given twenty-four year old youth, with golden hair and golden teeth. The maiden turned from him and sped,

like an arrow, up the golden staircase, but she could not refrain from looking back and calling to him,—

"Oh, beautiful youth, thou didst not sit in the first place. Not to thee belongs the choice, but to him who brought us hither."

The beautiful youth turned to the good youth and found this to say,—

"Listen, my faithful comrade, I owe thee much, for thou hast liberated me from the form of a horse. I was just as I am now, but a witch enchanted me, turned me into a horse. Now there is this word, with my hand, I shall ever be a faithful comrade, never will I leave thee in trouble, for I am just such a king's son as thou art. But this is my word: Undress and stab thyself in the heart. I will gather up thy blood and cut thy flesh into pieces, then a princess will sprinkle the blood and pieces with the Water of Life. Thou art a beautiful youth, but then thou wilt be seven times more beautiful."

What was the good youth to do? He stabbed himself in the heart. The king's son, once the magic steed, gathered his blood and cut his flesh into pieces, then one of the princesses hastened down the golden staircase, with a flask in her hand, and sprinkled the flesh and blood with the Water of Life, and behold a pearl-given charming youth with golden hair and golden teeth stood before them. The good youth had been beautiful hitherto, but

now he was seven times more beautiful. The princess ran up the golden staircase, but she looked back, and called out,—

"Ah, my heart's beautiful love, thou didst sit in the first place, now the first place belongs to thee, thou canst have thy choice of the three of us."

The Blue King saw, from the window of his castle, how the magic steed became a beautiful young man, and how the good youth became seven times more beautiful. Then he wanted to become young and beautiful also and so he consented to be stabbed in the heart.

They stabbed him, collected his blood, cut up his flesh, put the pieces in one pile and poured the red blood over them, and then the princess ran down the golden staircase with a flask in her hand. But in the flask was the Water of Death. She sprinkled the flesh and blood, and behold the flesh and blood of the Blue King were consumed and his bones became ashes.

Then the three princesses joined hands and stood before the good youth, saying,—

"Now choose one of us."

The world-beautiful princess on the right pointed with a motion of her head to the middle one, as if to say, "thou shouldst choose her." And the good youth chose her, and she was the most beautiful of the three. It was hard to select, for in beauty they were much alike.

The prince, who was once the magic steed, selected the princess on the right, for she pleased him best. The third princess gave her hand to a general of the Blue King's army. Then they had a wedding. There was plenty of soup and still soup, and happy was the man who went there with a spoon.

The Blue King was dead, so they made the good youth king of that country, and he is living there yet with his wife, if he isn't dead.

THE WATER OF ENDLESS YOUTH

THERE was once a king who was strangely marked. One of the king's eyes was always crying and the other was always laughing. This king had three sons, and when the three sons had reached manhood they agreed to ask their father why one of his eyes was always laughing and the other always weeping.

The eldest son went to the king, and said,—

"My dear father, will you tell me why one of your eyes is always laughing and the other is always weeping?"

The king made no answer, but in great anger he seized a knife and hurled it at his son. The young man was frightened; he turned and ran out of the white chamber. The knife stuck in the threshold. His brothers were waiting in the garden. When they saw him they asked,—

"What did our father say?"

"I couldn't talk with him, for he was eating, but do you, my second brother, go to him, maybe you will have better luck."

The second son went to the white chamber; his father was still at the table eating.

"My dear father," said the young man, "will you tell us why one of your eyes is always laughing, and the other is always weeping?"

The old king in a rage took up a knife that lay on the table and threw it at his son. The king's son was terrified; he moved the wheels of his feet out of the room. The great knife stood in the door.

The eldest and the youngest brother were walking up and down in the garden waiting, but they had not long to wait.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the two at a breath.

"He said not one thing and he said it slowly, for he was eating. Now do you go, brother," said he to the youngest, "maybe you will have better luck."

The youngest of the king's sons went to the white chamber; he, too, found his father eating.

"My dear father," began he, "will you tell us why—"

The king was enraged; he caught up a knife and threw it at his son. The knife stuck in the young man's foot, but he didn't run out of the white chamber; he drew the knife from his foot and put it back on the table, saying,—

"My dear father, will you tell us why one of your eyes—"

"Well, my son," said the king, "I will tell thee, for of all my sons thou art the boldest and bravest, for thou

didst not run away. One of my eyes laughs because in thee it finds delight, the other weeps because I am growing old, because I have eaten the best of my bread, and the salt and pepper of my food, and am near the grave. But I hear that in such and such a place there springs up the Water of Endless Youth, and there, too, can be found a sweetly singing Goldfinch. If I could drink even one drop of that water, and hear the cheering song of the sweetly singing Goldfinch both of my eyes would laugh."

When the king's youngest son had listened to the end of his father's speech he went to the garden to find his brothers.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the two in a breath.

"Our father found this to say, that one of his eyes laughs because he finds pleasure in us, the other weeps because he has grown old and must soon wander forth from this world of shadows. But in such and such a place there springs up the Water of Endless Youth, and there too the sweetly singing Goldfinch is found. If our father could drink even one drop of that water and could hear the cheering song of the sweetly singing Goldfinch his second eye would laugh as well as the other. Therefore, my dear brothers, this is my word and speech,—

"Let us tell our father that we will go for the Water of Endless Youth, and the sweetly singing Goldfinch."

The king's sons, with bitter tear-dropping, took farewell of the father who had reared them and made ready to go out into the world in search of the Water of Endless Youth and the sweetly singing Goldfinch.

Of the numberless steeds in the king's stables the two older brothers chose the finest, most fiery, golden-haired ones. As the youngest brother was passing near a wretched, ragged colt the colt struck him with its tail and said,—"Choose me, king's son."

As he led the mangy colt out of the stall his brothers laughed at him, but he laughs best who laughs last. The mangy, shaggy colt, as true as I live, for I was there when they were talking and I saw as I see now, was a magic steed.

The three brothers mounted their horses and moved forward on the road. When they had gone a short distance the two older ones left the youngest brother. As soon as they were out of sight the mangy colt asked,—

"Why art thou sad? Why art thou sorrowful, my dear master? Art grieved because those poppy flowers have left thee here? That is not trouble, my dear master, but luck. Let them go their own way and we will go ours. They will not go far; they will rest at the first inn that they find on the road, and there await them twelve robbers dressed in monk's robes. Thy brothers

will sit down to play cards with the monks and that will be the end of their journey, for the twelve will win their money, their horses and their weapons, even the clothes that are on their backs. They'll not have the price to pay for the wine they have drunk, and the hay and oats their horses have eaten, and the innkeeper will make them work till they have paid for the wine, the hay and the oats. We'll not go that road, we'll not go to the right, but to the left."

When he had finished his speech the mangy colt shook himself and became a golden-haired steed conceived of wind-eating glowing coals; such a magic steed rose out of him that his equal could not be found.

"Now, my dear master," said he, "we suit each other, I thee and thee me, therefore sit on my back. How shall we travel? Shall I go like thought, or like lightning, or as the swiftest flying bird goes?"

"Only so, my dear horse, that neither I in thee nor thee in me should find fault."

Thereupon the magic steed rose in the air and traveled and journeyed across forty-nine kingdoms and the Operantsia Sea, and beyond the sea, and beyond that to where the little short-tailed pig roots, and beyond that and still farther on till he came to a great wild-wood where neither heaven nor earth could be green, and there he came down in front of a little cabin.

The king's son entered the cabin and found a woman so old that she was older than the king's highway.

"God give thee health, my dear old mother," said the youth.

"If thou hadst not called me mother I would have killed thee, but why art thou journeying in this strange country where even a bird doesn't come?"

"I am going for the Water of Endless Youth and the sweetly singing Goldfinch. Hast thou heard of the fame of them?"

"To hear I have heard, where they are I cannot tell, but go over this great mountain, and there, under a little hill at the edge of a round wood, lives my sister. If she doesn't know, then no one knows. But, king's son, I do not speak of that, but of this. Here is a flask for thee. Bring some of the Water of Endless Youth to me, for I, too, would like to be young again. And here is a horseshoe, put it away, maybe it will be of service to thee."

The king's son thanked the old woman, put the horseshoe in his bag, tied the flask to his saddle-bow, and mounted his steed. The magic steed jumped once, sprang twice, and was beyond the mercilessly high mountain and in front of the little cabin at the edge of the round forest.

The king's son went into the cabin and found there a woman older than the first old woman.

"God give thee a good day, my dear old mother," said he.

"God receive thee, my dear son. If thou hadst not called me mother I should have snuffed out thy life quickly. Why art thou journeying in this strange land where even a bird does not come?"

"I am going for the Water of Endless Youth and the sweetly singing Goldfinch. Hast thou ever heard of them, dear mother?"

"To hear I have heard, but where and in what way thou canst find them I cannot tell. Why should I deny, when there would be more profit than harm to me if thou shouldst find them? But beyond this mercilessly high mountain, which stands before us and holds up the sky, under a little hill at the edge of a round forest, lives my eldest sister. If she knows nothing about the Water of Endless Youth and the sweetly singing Goldfinch, then no one in the world knows. But, king's son, I will say one thing and two will come of it. Here is a flask. If thou findest the Water of Endless Youth bring me a little, for I, too, would like to be young again. And here is a golden towel. Put it away, for it may be of use to thee."

The king's son thanked the old woman, put the towel in his bag, hung the flask on his saddle-bow, and mounted his steed.

The magic steed jumped once, sprang twice, and was beyond the unmercifully high mountain which held up the sky, and in front of the little cabin at the edge of the round forest.

The king's son entered the cabin and found there a woman so old that her nose was continually kissing her mouth.

"God give thee a good day, my dear old mother," said he.

"God receive thee, my dear son. If thou hadst not called me mother I should have snuffed out thy life, but where art thou going?"

"I am going for the Water of Endless Youth and the sweetly singing Goldfinch. Hast thou heard of them, dear mother?"

"Of course I have heard. In the castle of wondrous fair Ilona thou wilt find them both, for in truth they are there. Beyond this mercilessly high mountain, which stands here before us and holds up the sky, thou wilt find the blue sea. On the seventy-seventh island of that sea stands, on golden duck legs, the castle of wondrous fair Ilona. The castle turns unceasingly, like a whirlwind. Thou canst not enter it from the earth. Thou

hast a magic steed that can spring in at the top, but have a care that his tail is tied up, so that when he springs in and when he springs out, not one hair of it shall remain unbound, for if even one hair should touch the top of the copper castle, the castle would give out a loud sound and all the magic people would pursue thee and without mercy or pity would tear thee to pieces. In the very center of the copper castle is the chamber of wondrous fair Ilona, she is sleeping there now. The couch of fair Ilona is neither on the earth, nor in the sky, but is in the air between the earth and sky, and a stairway goes up to it. Above the couch hangs a golden cage, and in the cage is the sweetly singing Goldfinch. Thou must entwine its bill with a golden hair so that it cannot sing. In the corner of the chamber gush forth two fountains. In one is the Water of Endless Youth, in the other is the Water of Death. Take water from each fountain. Here is a flask. Fill it for me from the fountain of Youth, for I, too, would like to be young again. And here is a golden curry-comb, put it away carefully, for it may be of use to thee."

When the old woman had finished her speech, the king's son thanked her, put the curry-comb in his bag, hung the flask on the bow of his saddle, and sat on his good steed.

The magic steed jumped once, sprang twice, and was

beyond the unmercifully high mountain that held up the sky, and at the shore of the blue sea. Then he rose in the sky and, like a whirlwind, carried the king's son to the seventy-seventh island of the sea. The king's son dismounted, tied up the tail of the magic steed so that not one hair remained unbound, then sat on him again. The steed rose in the air and sprang in at the very center of the copper-topped castle of wondrous fair Ilona.

The king's son took the flasks that he had brought and went straightway to the maiden's chamber. She was lying on a couch that was neither on the earth nor in the sky, but was between earth and sky, and she was sunk in a deep sleep. The king's son went up the stairway of flowers, and took down the golden cage and with a golden hair bound together the bill of the sweetly singing Goldfinch, then he descended the stairway of flowers, and filled the flasks with the Water of Youth, but one flask he filled with the Water of Death.

When he had finished he went out as he came in. He bound up the tail of his steed, sat on him and was just springing out of the castle, but, whether from great haste, or from something else, he had not bound the horse's tail well, one hair was loose, and as the horse was going over the edge of the top of the castle that hair struck it. The whole castle rang like a great bell. All

of the magic people were on their feet at once and after the king's son.

They were catching up with him when the magic steed said,—

"Oh, my dear master, my right ear is tingling. Look back, what dost thou see?"

The king's son looked back and saw that a crowd of magic people were about to pull him from his horse, and he cried,—

"Our end has come, my dear horse, they will be at us in a moment."

"They will not; throw down the curry-comb."

The king's son threw the curry-comb, and from it sprang up a forest as thick as the hairs are thick on a brush.

While the magic people were struggling through the forest, the magic steed went a long distance over ditches and brushes.

Next the left ear of the good steed tingled so that he could not keep silent.

"Oh, my dear master," said he, "my left ear tingles. Look back, whom dost thou see?"

The king's son looked back, and saw the magic people were so near that they would soon pull him out of the saddle.

"Our end has come, my dear horse, they will soon be at us."

"They will not. Drop down the golden towel."

The king's son dropped the golden towel and from it rose a wide sea. While the magic people were struggling across the sea, the steed left a good stretch of land behind him. Then both ears began to tingle, and he said,—

"Oh, my dear master, both of my ears are tingling. Look back. Who is following us?"

The king's son looked back and saw that a multitude of magic people were swarming around him and that straightway they would pull him from the horse.

"Our end has come, my dear horse. They will finish us now."

"They will not; throw down the golden horseshoe."

The king's son threw the golden horseshoe, and from it rose a knotty branchy forest.

The magic people were not able to struggle through that forest. What were they to do? Willingly or unwillingly they had to turn back.

Thus the king's son was freed from the magic people. When he came to the cabin where the oldest of the old women lived he stopped and gave her a flask of the Endless Water of Youth. She had barely swallowed

two drops of it when, in the twinkle of an eye, she became young.

The king's son stopped at the cabin of the second sister and she became young in like manner. He stopped at the cabin of the youngest sister. She drank from the flask, shook herself, and turned into such a beautiful, eighteen-year-old maiden, that she was not only so, but just so. The king's son took farewell of her and traveled and journeyed homeward across forty-nine kingdoms, beyond the Operantsia Sea and the Glass Mountain, and beyond where the little short-tailed pig roots, and farther on and still farther till he stood before an inn.

He went into the yard of the inn and saw there his two brothers, who were splitting wood to pay for the wine they had drunk. He went into the inn. The twelve robbers in monk's robes were playing cards at a long table. They asked the king's son to sit with them, but he, as if he had not heard, turned to the inn-keeper and redeemed his brothers, their horses and their weapons. Then the three started for home. On the way the two planned how to get rid of their brother, for what kind of a disgrace would it be when they got home and then told what had happened to them!

When they came to an old well they pulled him from

his horse, cut off his feet and hands, and threw him in the well. The Goldfinch and the two flasks of water they took with them, as if they had brought them from the beautiful magic kingdom, from the castle of wondrous fair Ilona.

When they reached home who was louder mouthed than they? Who boasted more than they? They had been in the beautiful magic kingdom. What had they not seen there? What human tongue was not spoken there?

But the Goldfinch would not sing, and of the two flasks of water the brothers could not tell which was the Water of Endless Youth, and which the Water of Death. Therefore, one of the king's eyes was still laughing and the other weeping.

Now the youngest son of the king, while he was crawling around in the old well, found a little water and from that wonder-working water his hands and feet grew out again. He washed himself in it, and if he were beautiful before, he was seven times more beautiful then. With great labor he climbed out of the well, and in the dress of a laborer, went to his father's palace. No one recognized him and the king hired him as a stable boy.

Now the old king announced throughout the whole kingdom that whoever could tell one flask of water from the other, and could bring the sweetly singing Goldfinch

to his voice should receive a great reward and great honor.

Many people assembled, but no one in the kingdom dared to try to win the reward, except the stable boy. When he appeared, people laughed and called him the wandering block-head. But as soon as the Goldfinch saw him he began to sing, and whoso heard that song would have laughed even if his father and mother had been lying on the table. Then the king's son, taking the two flasks in his hand, told at once which held the Water of Youth. The old king drank two drops, shook himself, and turned into such a twenty-year-old youth that it would be needful to search for his equal, and both of his eyes laughed. But when his youngest son came to his mind tears started.

But, 'pon my soul, what came of the affair and what didn't, fair Ilona assembled a great army and started from her castle. As soon as she reached the city where our king lived she halted, pitched her tent, and surrounded the city with her army. Then she announced to the king that if he did not send out that son of his who plundered her castle, she would not leave one stone upon another, and would put every person to the sword without pity or mercy.

The king was terrified. He called his two sons and told them of the message of the wondrous fair Ilona.

The eldest son went first—but I forgot to say that the magic queen had thrown a magic bridge from her tent to the king's castle. The bridge was covered with purple velvet. The king's son was afraid to walk on the golden bridge lest he might injure the precious purple velvet, so he walked at the edge of it. When he stood before wondrous fair Ilona she found this to ask,—

"Well, king's son, hast thou been in my castle?"

"I have, indeed, magic queen."

"Answer the questions I ask, then I shall know that thou wert there."

"I will answer."

"Tell me where my castle stands."

"On the ground, like other castles."

"Where is my well?"

"In the ground, like other wells."

"Where stands my couch?"

"On the floor, like other couches."

"Thou hast never seen my castle, my well, or my couch."

"Take him out," commanded Ilona the fair, "and give him fifty blows of a whip."

The soldiers took the king's son by the neck and gave him fifty such blows that he did not forget them while he lived. Then the queen sent him back to the king with the message: "If thou dost not send out that son

of thine who plundered my castle, I will not leave of the city one stone upon another, and I will put every man to the sword without pity or mercy."

The king sent his second son. He, too, was afraid to walk on the bridge, so he walked at the side of it. When he stood before the magic queen she found this to ask of him,—

"King's son, hast thou been in my castle?"

"I have indeed, magic queen."

"Answer my questions, then I shall know that thou wert there."

She asked him the same questions that she had asked his brother, and he gave the same answers, then she said,—

"Thou hast not only not seen my castle, my well, and my couch, but thou hast not even heard of them. Take him out," commanded she, "and cut fifty blows of a rod into him."

The soldiers took the king's son by his twenty nails and gave him fifty such blows that while he lived he did not forget them, even on his death bed they came to his mind.

She sent the second son back to his father with the message that if he would not send the son who had plundered her castle, she would raze his city to the ground, and kill every one, man, woman and child, with-

out pity or mercy. "Let the earth drink the blood of his people, and dogs eat their flesh!"

This merciless message brought the king's head to such sorrow that he neither ate nor drank by night or by day. The youngest son, taking pity on his father, went to him and asked,—

"Your majesty, will you tell me why you give your head to grief, why you neither eat nor drink by night nor by day?"

"Why dost thou ask, my good servant, when thou canst not cure my trouble? But since thou art so faithful that I trust thee as if thou wert my own son, the blood of my blood, and the body of my body, I will say, Why should I not grieve? Why should I not sorrow when the magic queen sends this message to me, 'If thou dost not send out the son who plundered my castle, a stone will not remain upon a stone in the city, and every person will be put to death without mercy.' "

"If this is your majesty's only trouble, be not filled with such grief. Let me saddle the shaggy colt which is lying on the dirt heap, and go to the magic queen. I will answer her, if you will entrust me."

"Choose the best steed in the stable, and wear twelve rich suits, if only thou art master of thy word."

The king's son combed his golden hair, arrayed himself in a purple velvet coat, bound to his side his beautiful

crooked saber, sat on the golden-haired magic steed, and went straight across the magic bridge, which resounded under the hoofs of his horse.

Wondrous fair Ilona was waiting at the end of the bridge, and she said to herself, "This is he, this is the robber of my castle, my hand, and my heart!" When the king's son stood before her she found this to say: "Well, fair son of the king, tell me on thy true soul, wert thou in my castle?"

"I was."

"Answer my three questions, then I shall believe that thou wert there. Where does my castle stand?"

"It stands in the middle of the seventy-seventh island of the blue sea. It rests on golden duck legs and turns unceasingly, like a whirlwind."

"Where does my well stand?"

"In thy chamber are two wells, in one of them is the Water of Youth, in the other is the Water of Death."

"Where is my couch?"

"Neither on the earth nor in the sky, it stands in the air, and is reached by a stairway of flowers."

"That is true. Thou art my dear husband."

Then the king's son and the wondrous fair Ilona said,—

"Thou art mine and I am thine."

There was a wedding feast and there was soup and

still soup. Happy was the man who went there with a spoon. So from great joy came great rejoicing. It was sad for the two bad brothers, but no use—sooner or later a nail will work itself out of a bag.

THE MAGIC LAMP

IN a certain village lived a cottager. When he had squandered all his property he died happily, leaving his wife nothing but a son, ten years old, whose name was Vashichek. The widow lived in poverty, for she had to support herself and Vashichek with the labor of her hands, and the little boy often tasted hunger, though his mother loved him greatly.

One day a stranger came to the widow's cottage and said that he was the brother of her late husband.

"That cannot be," answered the widow, "my husband had no brother."

"No one knew about me, for I was in distant lands," said the stranger, "and why should I visit my brother? But, that you may believe me more quickly, I will take Vashichek home and try to make a prosperous man of him."

"I will not let him go," cried the mother, and she clasped the boy in her arms. "He is my only wealth, my only joy."

"I cannot force you to give me the child," said the

stranger, with apparent indifference, "though you are not wise, for I am rich and I have no children. If the boy goes with me I will educate him, and at my death he will inherit all of my wealth. Meanwhile I will leave this bag of gold for your own support." With that the stranger took from his bosom a large purse and poured out on the table so many gold pieces that the table was covered with them.

The mother clasped her son still firmer, but she looked at the gold and began to think about it: "With that gold she might put an end to her poverty—and it would not be bad for Vashichek to be with such a rich man." But, since she knew that her husband had no brother, she was afraid that this stranger might be a wizard, who wanted to bring evil on her and her son.

The stranger watched her for a while then began to put the gold pieces into the bag.

"Wait!" cried the woman, involuntarily, when the last piece was about to vanish in the bag. "I will give you my son, but—"

"The money is yours," said the stranger and he threw the bag into her lap.

The woman let go of Vashichek, and weighed in her hands the gold, the glitter of which had blinded her utterly. When the stranger took Vashichek by the hand, the boy resisted, and began to cry.

"Go with your uncle, my son," said the mother persuasively, "he will buy you a painted horse and a coach."

The boy paid no heed to his mother's words, so the stranger took him by force. The mother followed them as far as the forest, and, when Vashichek stopped crying, she hurried home to find out how much money she had received. But wasn't she frightened when instead of gold pieces there came from the bag only bits of brass. For a time she was stunned, then she came to her senses and hurried off to take her son from the deceiver. She ran around half the day, but saw no one in the fields or in the neighboring forest. She tore the hair out of her head, but to no purpose; it was too late.

The stranger, who was no uncle, but a vile wizard, hurried on with the weeping Vashichek. When he came to the thickest part of the forest he put the boy on the ground, cut a rod and slashed him mercilessly to make him stop crying.

"This is the way I'll punish you for disobedience," said he, then he threw the boy a bit of dry bread. After eating and resting, he lashed the boy with the rod and drove him on ahead through the forest. That night they slept in a cave, on a bed of dry leaves, and in the morning they went farther.

The third day the wizard told Vashichek to gather dry boughs and branches and put them in a pile. When

the boy had done this the wizard scattered some kind of powder on the wood and set fire to it. Soon the forest was blazing and in a short time a large part of it was burned. When the fire died down the wizard walked here and there over the place till he found a large stone. With great effort he rolled the stone aside, then he commanded Vashichek to go down into the hole which appeared under the stone.

"Down there," said he, "is a beautiful garden, with trees full of golden fruit. In the middle of the garden is a castle; in the castle are bright chambers without number, but look at nothing. Go to a little house which you will see on the right-hand side of the castle. Behind the door of that house you will find a small lamp; take it quickly and hurry back to the hole. I will pull you up."

Vashichek, full of fear, crawled into the hole. Sooner than he expected he was in a garden so beautiful that he forgot everything else in a moment. What fragrant flowers, and wonderful trees with golden fruit! And the castle so gleamed from gold and precious stones that Vashichek could not look at it.

When the boy came to his senses, after the first wonder, he examined everything carefully. Around the castle and through the garden there were paths sprinkled with golden sand. Vashichek walked between rows of

flowers and plucked here and there a blossom or a red berry. He went to the trees and shook golden fruit from them; then he looked through the castle. In one chamber he found food and drink with which he refreshed himself. Most wonderful to tell, in that country it was white day all of the time, though Vashichek did not see the sun.

At last Vashichek felt that he was tired beyond measure; he dropped on the grass under a tree and fell asleep. When he woke up he went to the castle and found food and drink in plenty. In this way he passed delightful hours, and since every minute he found something new, time went quickly just in looking at things. At last he wandered into the little house and behind the door, as the wizard had said, was a small lamp. When Vashichek saw the lamp he remembered his master, and seizing it he ran to the opening by which he had entered that beautiful garden.

The wizard was waiting impatiently and as soon as he heard the boy's steps, he cried,—

"You are a good little fellow, give me the lamp."

"Come down here," said Vashichek when he heard the wizard speak kindly. "It is beautiful here."

"If I had dared to go down there," answered the wizard, "I should not have sent you. Give me the lamp and stay there as long as seems good to you."

Then he held the stone as if in a hurry to close the hole. When Vashichek saw the stone he was frightened not a little, for he thought that his uncle wanted to get the lamp and then shut him in, so he said, "I don't want to live here, I want to come out."

"Give me the lamp," said the wizard, "or I'll not let you out."

They talked a long time, but neither would yield. At last the wizard lost his temper entirely and, throwing down the stone, went away.

Vashichek cried for a long time, then he dropped on the ground and fell asleep. When he woke up he saw that the stone was still down, and he wondered how he was ever to get out. He had the lamp in his hand and since the wizard was so anxious to get it, he thought it must have some value, so he began to wipe the dust from it. When he had passed his hand over the lamp a few times a man stood before him whose garments were glittering with gold and precious stones.

"What is thy wish?" asked the stranger, with great respect.

"To escape from this place," answered the astonished Vashichek.

That instant the man vanished, but the stone was off from the hole and Vashichek was in the white world again. He looked around with wonder, for, instead of a

treeless place, there were trees and thick bushes everywhere. He himself was no longer little Vashichek, but a sturdy young man. And he had a right to be, for while he was in that wonderful garden years had passed. His clothes were so small that when he looked into the first stream he had to laugh at himself. Without thinking long he rubbed the lamp.

At once the man appeared and, bowing courteously, inquired,—

"What is thy wish?"

"To have nice clothes," answered Vashichek.

The man vanished, but in a moment Vashichek was dressed in fine garments. He looked at himself with satisfaction, and walked on farther through the thick forest. When the road seemed long he thought, "Why should I trouble myself for nothing when that man serves me so willingly?" And he rubbed his lamp again.

"What is thy wish?" asked the man, as he stood there before him.

"To be out of this forest," answered Vashichek.

The man disappeared, but Vashichek was out of the forest, and a town was in sight. He hastened on and soon came to an inn where he ate and drank all he wanted. But suddenly he remembered that he must pay. He put his hand to his pocket, involuntarily, and how did he wonder when he took out a handful of gold pieces.

"That man is very considerate," thought Vashichek, "he knows that a full pocket belongs to nice clothes."

Vashichek paid for what he had eaten, then he went out to look at the town. But, though the houses were large and the king's palace very grand, he paid little heed to them since the king's daughter was riding by in a splendid carriage drawn by four black horses. She drove with such speed that she soon vanished from his sight. It was a pity, for such was her beauty that Vashichek could have looked at her all day. She had seen Vashichek and she looked back at him more than once. He walked on in the direction she had taken and when he was outside of the town he threw himself on the grass and thought of her. He lay there a long time, for he was turning over in his mind how to meet the princess and say even a word to her. On a sudden he thought of the lamp; he drew it from his bosom and rubbed it.

That moment the man stood before him, and asked,—

"What is thy wish?"

"To be a prince," answered Vashichek.

The man vanished, but in no time a rich carriage was approaching, with servants in livery embroidered with gold and silver. When they came to Vashichek the prancing horses stopped, the servants sprang down, bowed low before him and assisted him into the carriage.

He ordered them to take him to the best inn in the city, and the horses went so quickly that the prince was there in a very short time.

Now Vashichek led the life of a real prince. His pockets were always full of money, and every day he drove in the neighborhood of the king's palace, from a window of which the princess gazed at him. In a short time every one knew of the handsome prince, and marvelous tales of his wealth went the rounds of the city. The king heard of him and, not a little anxious to know him, consulted the princess.

"Invite him to come to the palace," said she. "It is only just that an exalted prince should be honored by his equals."

"You are right," said the king, and straightway he sent a courtier for the prince. Vashichek did not hesitate long. The king greeted him with expressions of friendship and the princess with gracious words. In a short time he was at home in the palace, but he would never say a word about his parents, though the princess often asked him whence he came. He always answered that he was from a distant country. Gradually she became distrustful and when Vashichek asked for her hand in marriage, she said,—

"If when we are going for the marriage there are silver blossoms on the trees that are along the road from

the palace to the church, and golden fruit on them when we return I will be yours for the ages."

The king looked compassionately at Vashichek, as if to say, "I am sorry for you." But Vashichek said, "I will carry out your wish."

Now came a lively life in the palace, for the wedding was to be celebrated as soon as possible. When everything was ready, the prince went to a secret place in the king's garden, took the lamp from his bosom and rubbed it with his hand. Straightway the man stood before him and, bowing courteously, asked,—

"What is thy wish?"

"That the trees between the palace and the church should have silver blossoms when we are going to the marriage and golden fruit when we are coming back."

The man disappeared and the prince hastened to the princess to say that he wanted the wedding on the morrow. The princess did not believe that what she had asked of her bridegroom would happen, and the next morning she was greatly astonished when she saw that the trees were covered with silver blossoms.

The ceremony did not last long, but when the bride and groom were coming home golden fruit was hanging on the trees. This astonished every one; the king himself was filled with the greatest respect for his son-in-law, and he gave him half of the kingdom, without delay.

When the festivities were over Vashichek asked permission to build a new palace opposite the old one. The king granted the permission, of course. Vashichek went to the garden, took the lamp out of his bosom and rubbed it with his hand. The man appeared and, bowing courteously, asked,—

"What is thy wish?"

"That to-morrow morning the foundations of a palace be ready opposite the old palace."

The man vanished, and the next morning the foundations were ready. On the second day the walls were finished, on the third the palace was complete, and it was so splendid that there was not the equal of it in the whole country.

Now the young king had all that he desired, and for this reason he did not prize the lamp as he had before. Formerly he at all times kept it near his person, but now he left it standing on the stove in his chamber, where it was soon covered with dust. The princess herself seemed less charming to him, and often he spent whole days in the forest, hunting wild beasts.

Once, when Vashichek was visiting a neighboring king, a stranger came to his palace and announced that he was giving new lamps for old ones. The people of the palace brought him a great number of old lamps and got new ones for them. At last the queen's chamber-

maid brought the lamp that the king had left on the stove. The courtiers laughed at her for wanting a new lamp for such a small and very old lamp; but the stranger had barely taken it in his hand when he gave her all the lamps he had left, and vanished in a twinkle.

Now that stranger was no other than the wizard, who by deceit had taken Vashichek from his mother. When night came he rubbed the lamp; straightway the man appeared, but without bowing, and asked,—

"Unrightful master, what is thy wish?"

"That before morning this palace with all that is in it, except the maid who gave me this lamp, should be on the other side of the Crimson Sea."

The man went away, with measured step, and the wizard hid himself in the palace. Every one was sleeping soundly, except the maid. She was still pondering over how easily she had come by so many beautiful lamps. She fell asleep late, and how did she wonder in the morning when she woke up lying on bare ground. She sprang to her feet and looked around for the palace, but there was not a trace of it anywhere. She ran to the old palace and told what had happened. At first the people thought she had lost her mind, but when convinced by their own eyes they ran, with great outcry, to the king. Straightway he sent messengers in every direction to find the palace, but each man came back with

work undone. Then there was wailing, not for the palace, but for the people who were in it, and above all did the king lament for his beloved daughter.

When the young king came home he knew who had stolen the palace, and, without delay, he started in search of it. He traveled the first day and found nothing, he traveled the second and the third day; he traveled a week, a month, and a year, but in vain.

Then he came to a great forest and wandered around in it for days, till from hunger he was barely able to sit on his horse. At last he saw a poor cottage and out of it came an old man who said,—

"I greet thee, O king."

"How do you know me?" asked the king, with surprise.

"I know you just as well as I know that you are looking for your wife, who, with your palace, is beyond the Crimson Sea."

"And where is the Crimson Sea?" asked the king, eagerly.

"I know not," said the old man, shrugging his shoulders, "but to-morrow morning when I feed my birds I will ask them where that sea is. Now pass my threshold that I may entertain you."

The king was glad to gratify the kind old man and, after he had strengthened himself with food, he lay down and slept. In the morning when the old man fed

his birds he asked them about the Crimson Sea, but not one of them knew where it was.

"You must go, O king," said the old man, "to my brother, who is beyond another forest and another river, maybe he will tell you more than I can."

Vashichek thanked him and hurried on, but he had to travel many days before he found the old man's brother.

The second old man received him as kindly as had the first, but he could give no account of the Crimson Sea, for not one of his birds knew where it was. "But go," said he, "to my brother who is beyond the third forest and the third river, maybe he will tell you more than I can."

The king put spurs to his horse and galloped off. After a long time he came to the third brother who, when he had called his birds together, asked if any one of them knew where the Crimson Sea was. Not one of them knew, but as they were going away an old eagle flew up, and when asked if he knew where the Crimson Sea was he said,—

"I know, my master, about the Crimson Sea and about the palace that stands beyond it on the shore. In that palace there is a beautiful princess, who is always sobbing and lamenting."

"I thank you," cried the king and he spurred his

horse to hurry to his wife, but the old man called him back.

"Do not hurry," said he, "what would it avail you to be at the Crimson Sea if you could not cross it? Leave your horse here, the eagle will bear you. I will give you meat to feed him, for the journey will be long."

The king sat on the eagle; it rose in the air and flew long and long. The king had given him a little meat for each day, but at last there was no more meat in the dish and land was not to be seen. When the king dropped the dish the eagle summoned his remaining strength and flew more swiftly; at last he came down on the shore of the Crimson Sea.

Since the king knew that it would not be well for him to fall into the hands of the wizard he hid in thick reeds and waited.

In no long time the palace gate opened and the queen came out attended by her waiting maids. She walked along the sea till she stopped near the king and looked wistfully over the broad, broad sea.

"Will no man free me from this place?" sighed she, and tears flowed from her eyes.

"I will!" cried the king, and he embraced her. When she came to her senses somewhat she said with anxiety, "Oh, flee, my dear husband, the wizard will kill you."

"Where is he?"

"I know not, but he will surely come soon."

"Has he the lamp?"

"He has," said the queen, "he always carries it on his person."

"We must get it," said the king, "or we will have to stay here till death. Take this poison and give it to the wizard." He handed her a vial of subtle poison. The queen hid the vial, but said,—

"He will not eat or drink anything that I give him."

"When he comes be kindly, ask him to drink wine with you; pour a cup for yourself and one for him, put the poison in your cup, when he refuses to drink from his own cup, give him yours, he will drink out of that. If he does not die he will fall into a deep sleep."

When the wizard came home the queen greeted him joyfully.

"Have you changed your mind?" asked he. "When shall we celebrate our betrothal?"

"I will tell you to-morrow," answered the queen, with a smile. "But to-day we can have our first feast together."

"Can we?" asked the wizard, and he looked at her with distrust. But she seemed sincere and he was in doubt what to think. After they had tasted of the savory dishes which the queen had prepared she brought two cups each full of wine. She placed one before the

wizard and the other she kept. When the wizard refused to drink the wine the queen said, reproachfully,—

"You distrust me," and she changed the cups. Then the wizard emptied his at a draught, and soon he dropped to the floor, unconscious.

The queen called to her husband, who came quickly and took the lamp from the wizard's bosom. As soon as he had it in his hand he shouted in triumph, and told all the people in the palace to assemble and celebrate their liberation. Directly a feast was made ready which lasted till the white morning.

The wizard slept without moving and woke only in the morning. But how frightened he was when he saw the king! He reached quickly to take the lamp from his bosom, but the lamp was no longer there. Instead of that the king held it in his hand and rubbed it. In the twinkle of an eye the man appeared and, bowing courteously, asked,—

"Oh rightful master, what is thy wish?"

"First that this vile wizard be torn to pieces and thrown into the sea, and then that I be at home with my palace and all who are in it."

The man vanished, and with him the wizard. The king and the queen went to the window to see him hurled into the sea, but instead of the sea they saw the king's palace and in one of its windows the old king himself.

When the attendants and servants had recovered from astonishment they fell to embracing one another; then followed feasting which lasted for eight days. At this feast they drank to their happy meeting till the hills grew green.

The king valued his wife and the little lamp more than ever before and he lived many years blissfully, so that he waited for his grandchildren.

THE THREE GOLDEN HAIRS OF GRANDFATHER KNOW ALL

WHERE it was or where it was not, there was a king who loved to hunt wild beasts in the forest. One day while chasing a deer, he lost his way. For a long time he wandered around alone, but just as the world was growing dark, he came to a charcoal-burner's cabin.

The king promised the charcoal-burner good pay if he would lead him out of the forest. The man answered,—

"I would go with you gladly, but I cannot leave my wife. And how could we go in the dark? I'll give you fresh hay to lie on, and in the morning I'll show you the way."

That evening a son was born to the charcoal-burner.

The king went to bed in the garret. He lay on the floor and could not sleep. About midnight, through an opening, he looked into the room below. The charcoal-burner and his wife were asleep and near the little child three old women were standing with lighted tapers. The first said, "I will give this boy to meet great dangers." The second said, "I will give him to escape them

all happily and live long." The third said, "I will give him as wife that daughter who was born to-day to the king up there in the loft." Thereupon the three old women put out their tapers, and all was quiet—they were the Fates.

The king was as if a sword had pierced his breast. He did not close his eyes. He was thinking how he could prevent the fulfilment of what Fate had promised.

When daylight came the child began to cry. The charcoal-burner rose up and saw that his wife had gone to sleep for the ages.

"Oh, my poor orphan!" cried he. "What shall I do with you?"

"Give me the child," said the king. "I will so care for him, that he will always be happy, and I will give you so much money that you'll not need to work again as long as you live."

The charcoal-burner was glad and the king promised to send for the child. When he came to his castle his people informed him, with great joy, that a beautiful daughter had been born to him. She was born the night that he had seen the three Fates. The king's face grew dark. He called one of his serving men and said,—

"Go to such and such a place in the forest to a charcoal-burner's cabin; hand him this money and he will give you a little child. Take the child and on your way

home drown it in the river. If you don't you will sip water yourself."

The serving man went to the cabin. The charcoal-burner put the child in a basket and gave it to him. When the man came to a place where the river was deep he threw the basket in.

"Good-by, unbidden son-in-law," said the king when he heard the serving man's story.

The king thought that the child was dead. But it was not, for the basket floated on the water, and in it slept the child as if it were in a cradle and some one were singing lullabies to it.

The basket floated near a fisherman's hut. The fisherman was sitting on the bank, mending his net. Seeing something on the water he sprang into his boat and pulled after it. He caught the basket, opened it, and found the child. He took it to his wife and said,—

"You have always wished for a son, now you have him. The river brought him to us."

The fisherman's wife rejoiced, and she reared the child as her own. They called him Plavachek (Floater), because he had floated to them.

The river flowed on and years passed by. The child became a handsome youth. Far and wide his equal could not be found. One summer day the king, on horseback and alone, chanced to pass the fisherman's hut.

It was hot and wishing to drink he stopped and asked the fisherman for fresh water. When Plavachek brought it to him the king was astonished at his appearance.

"A splendid young man you have got here," said he. "Is he your son?"

"He is and he isn't," answered the man. "Just twenty years ago I caught a basket floating along the river. In it was an infant. I reared it."

The world grew dark before the king's eyes; he was as pale as a sheet. He knew that this was the boy he had told his serving man to drown. Collecting his wits quickly he sprang from his horse, and said, "I need a messenger to carry a letter to my castle. I have none with me. Can this young man go?"

"Command and he will go," said the fisherman.

The king sat down and wrote a letter to the queen, saying: "Let this young man I send to you be pierced with a sword. He is my dangerous enemy. Let it be done before I come. Such is my will." He folded the letter and sealed it with his ring.

Plavachek had to go through a dense forest. He lost the road and went astray. He wandered from one thicket to another till it began to grow dark, then he met an old grandmother who asked, "Where are you going, Plavachek?"

"I am going to the king's castle with this letter, but I

have lost my way. Could you tell me, grandmother, how to find it?"

"You could not reach the castle to-night," said the old woman. "Stay in my cottage. You'll not be with strangers; I am your godmother."

The young man promised to go with her. He had taken only a few steps when a cottage stood before him as if it had risen out of the ground.

That night, while Plavachek was asleep, the old woman took the letter from his pocket and put in another written in the same hand and sealed with the same seal. It read, "Have this young man I send to you married to our daughter at once. He is my chosen son-in-law. Let the marriage take place before I come. Such is my will."

When the queen read the letter she was surprised, but she had the wedding straightway. Neither the queen nor the princess were able to admire the bridegroom sufficiently, and Plavachek was pleased with his bride.

After some days the king came home and when he found out what had taken place he was fiercely angry with his queen.

"But you charged me to have him married to our daughter before your return," said the queen, and she handed him the letter.

The king took it, looked at the writing, the paper, the

seal—all his own. Then he called his son-in-law and asked what happened to him on the road and where he had stopped. Plavachek told how he had gone astray in the forest and spent the night in an old woman's cottage.

The king knew that that old woman was the same person who twenty years before had given his daughter to the charcoal-burner's son. He thought and thought and then said, "What has happened cannot be changed, but you are not to be my son-in-law for nothing. If you wish to keep your wife you must bring us as a price for her three golden hairs of Grandfather Know All."

The king thought that in this way he would surely get rid of his undesirable son-in-law.

Plavachek said good-by to his wife and started. Where he went I know not, but as Fate was his Godmother it was easy for him to find the right road. He traveled long and far, over mountains, through valleys and across rivers and fords till he came to the Black Sea. There he saw a boat and in it a ferryman.

"God give you health, ferryman," called he.

"God give you the same, young traveler. Whither is your road?"

"To Grandfather Know All for three golden hairs."

"Oh," cried the ferryman, "I have been long waiting for such a messenger. Twenty years have I ferried

people across here, and no one has come to relieve me. If you will ask Grandfather Know All when my labor will end, I will ferry you over."

Plavachek promised and the old man ferried him over. Then he traveled on till he came to a town where all the buildings were draped with black. Before the town he met an old man who was barely able to walk.

"God give you health, old man," said Plavachek.

"The same to you, good youth. Whither do you go?"

"To Grandfather Know All for three golden hairs."

"Oh, we are long waiting for such a messenger. I will go with you to our king."

When they came into the king's presence he said, "I hear that you are going on a message to Grandfather Know All. We had here a tree which bore the Apples of Youth. If a man ate one of those apples, even when at the brink of the grave, he became as a youth. But for twenty years the tree has borne no fruit. If you will ask Grandfather Know All if there is any help for us, I will reward you richly."

Plavachek promised to ask, and the king bade him a gracious good-by. Afterward he came to another large city which was in mourning. Not far from the city a son was burying his father. Tears rolled like peas down his face.

"God guard you, sad mourner," said Plavachek.

"God give you health, good traveler. Whither do you go?"

"I am going to Grandfather Know All for three golden hairs."

"It is a pity you didn't come sooner; our king has long been waiting for such a messenger. I will conduct you to him."

When they came into the king's presence he said, "I hear that you are going to Grandfather Know All. We had a spring out of which the Water of Life flowed. When a man drank of it, even if he were dying, straightway he became well. If a man were dead and they sprinkled his body with the water he rose up and walked, was well again. But for twenty years the water has ceased to flow. Will you promise to ask Grandfather Know All if there is any help for us? I will reward you richly."

Plavachek promised and the king bade him a gracious farewell. Afterward he traveled long and far through a dark forest till in the midst of the forest he came to a green meadow covered with beautiful flowers. In the center of the meadow was a golden castle, the castle of Grandfather Know All.

Plavachek went into the castle but no one was there except an old woman who sat in a corner spinning.

"I greet you, Plavachek; I am glad that you have

come," she said. It was Fate, the woman whom he had met in the forest when he was carrying the king's letter to the queen. "What has brought you here?" asked she.

"The king doesn't wish me to be his son-in-law for nothing. He has sent me to Grandfather Know All for three golden hairs."

The woman laughed and said, "Grandfather Know All is my child, the bright sun. In the morning he is a boy, at midday a man, and in the evening an old grandfather. I will get you the three hairs, but you cannot stay where you are now. My son is a good soul, but in the evenings when he comes home hungry, it might happen that he would eat you. There is an empty cask here, I'll put it over you."

Plavachek begged her to ask Grandfather Know All the three questions that he had promised to ask.

"I will," said she, "and do you listen to what he says."

Presently the wind blew at the western window and the sun flew into the room, an old grandfather with golden hair.

"I smell man's flesh," said he. "You have some one here, mother."

"Oh, star of the day, how could I have any one here without your seeing him? You fly all day over God's world, you get the odor of man's flesh. It is no wonder

that when you come home in the evening you still find it."

Grandfather Know All said nothing, but sat down to his supper. After supper he laid his head on his mother's knee and fell asleep. When she saw that he was sleeping she pulled out a golden hair and dropped it on the ground. It sounded as a fiddle string sounds when touched by skilful fingers.

"What do you want of me, mother?" asked he.

"Nothing, my son, nothing. I was slumbering and I had a wonderful dream."

"What did you see?"

"I saw a place where there used to be a fountain of the Water of Life. When a man who was ill drank of that water he became well, straightway. If a dead man was sprinkled with the water he rose up, well again. But for twenty years it has ceased to flow. Is there any way to make it flow again?"

"In the opening of the spring sits a toad; he stops the water. If they kill the toad the water will flow as before."

When Grandfather Know All fell asleep again his mother pulled out a second golden hair and threw it on the ground.

"What do you want of me, mother?" asked the old man.

"Nothing, my son, nothing. I was slumbering and I had a wonderful dream. I saw a place where there was a tree which used to bear the Apples of Youth. When a man was old if he ate one of those apples he became young again. But for twenty years that tree has borne no fruit. Will it ever bear again?"

"Among the roots of the tree there is a worm. If they kill the worm and plant the tree in another place it will bear fruit as before."

Grandfather Know All fell asleep again and the woman pulled out the third golden hair.

"What is it, mother, that you will not let me sleep?" cried he, angry and wishing to stand up.

"Lie down, my son, lie down, I am sorry to waken you, but I had a wonderful dream. I dreamed of an old ferryman who for twenty years goes back and forth over the Black Sea and no one relieves him. When will his labor end?"

"He is the son of a stupid mother! Let him give the oar to another and spring on shore himself; the other will become the ferryman. But let me sleep, for I must be up early and dry the tears which the king's daughter sheds every night for her husband, the charcoal-burner's son whom the king sent for three of my golden hairs."

Toward morning a wind rose up outside, and, instead of an old man, a beautiful golden-haired child, God's

sun, sprang up, bade good-by to his mother and flew out of the eastern window. The mother took the cask off from Plavachek, and said,—

"Here are the three golden hairs. You have heard Grandfather Know All's answer to the three questions. God be with you. You will not see me again, for it is not needful; you will be happy."

Plavachek thanked the old woman, and went his way. When he came to the first city the king anxiously inquired what news he brought.

"Good news," said Plavachek. "Clean out the spring and kill the toad that sits in the opening. The water will flow as before."

The king had this done at once and when he saw the water rush out in a full stream he gave Plavachek twelve horses loaded with as much gold and silver as they could carry. When Plavachek came to the second city the king asked what news he brought.

"Good news," cried Plavachek. "Dig up the tree, you will find a worm at the roots. Kill the worm, then plant the three in another place. It will bear fruit as before."

The king had this done, straightway. The tree was, in one night, covered with blossoms, as if roses had been showered over it. The king rejoiced greatly. He gave Plavachek twelve horses, as black as crows, loaded with as many treasures as they could carry.

Plavachek journeyed on until he came to the Black Sea, there the ferryman asked him if Grandfather Know All had told him when the labor would end.

"Yes," said Plavachek, "ferry me over and then I will tell you what he said."

When the ferryman saw that there was no other way to find out, he ferried Plavachek and his twenty-four horses over the sea. Then Plavachek said, "When you ferry another man across, as soon as you touch land put an oar in his hand and spring out of the boat; he will be ferryman in your place."

The king could not believe his eyes when Plavachek gave him the three golden hairs of Grandfather Know All. The king's daughter wept from joy.

"But where did you get these beautiful crow black horses and this great wealth?" asked the king.

"I earned them," answered Plavachek, and he related how he had helped one king to the Apples of Youth, apples that make old men young, and another king to the Water of Life, water that makes infirm men strong, and raises the dead to life.

"Apples of Youth! Water of Life!" repeated the king to himself. "If I could eat one of those apples I would be young. If I were to die that water would bring me to life."

He did not delay; that very day he started off to find

the Apples of Youth and the Water of Life. As he went by way of the Black Sea ferry he has not returned yet.

Thus the charcoal-burner's son became the king's son-in-law, and then king, as Fate had decided. The old king is most likely ferrying people over the Black Sea to this very day.

THE LAUGHING APPLES AND THE WEEPING QUINCES

ONCE upon a time there was a king who had an only son, and he wished greatly that this son should marry as soon as possible, but the more he urged him to find a wife the more did he show his distaste for marriage, saying that women were good for nothing, that they were in the world for the purpose of deceiving men.

When the king saw that his words were fruitless, he led his son to a large hall, where the walls were hung with portraits of women, and said to him,—

"Here, my son, are the portraits of all the unmarried princesses in the world. Look at them and make your choice."

The young man, to gratify his father, examined one portrait after another, but was pleased with none. One was too young, another too old, one too pale, another too red, and so he went on till he came to a portrait that was hung with the face to the wall. Then he said,—

"Tell me, dear father, why is this portrait hung with the face to the wall?"

"Leave it as it is," answered the king. "It represents a beautiful maiden, but she is as averse to marriage as you are. She has ruined every prince who has asked her for her hand."

To this the prince answered, "You brought me here to see all the princesses there are in the world; you have no right to withhold one of them." With these words he turned the portrait around, and examined it more carefully than he had the others.

The maiden that it represented was so beautiful that she won his heart, and he said to his father, "This one or none."

The old king did what he could to dissuade his son. He explained that the maiden's father was a powerful king, that by the tasks she had set she had ruined the most renowned princes in the world, that if he asked her in marriage he would lose his life. "Moreover," said he, "have pity on me; do not make me a victim of misery in my last days."

But his words were useless. The prince clung to his resolution, but said he would go in disguise and not as an open wooer.

When he had gained his father's permission, he put on coarse garments, gave himself as poor an appearance as possible, and set out for the city in which the princess lived.

The road led through a wide, barren field. There he saw two men struggling desperately with each other. He went up to them, and asked,—

"Why are you fighting so fiercely? Can I settle your dispute?"

They repulsed him with rude speech; told him not to mix up in their affairs, but to go his way.

The prince was not to be put off. He said, "Tell me what you are fighting about, and I'll give you its value in money, then you'll have peace."

Thereupon one of them said, "See here, you fool, these are the inheritances left us by our father. It is these we are fighting about," and he showed him a rugged staff and an old cap which lay on the ground near by.

When the prince saw the staff and the cap he laughed heartily, and said,—

"You ought to be ashamed to fight over such trifles. Tell me what they are worth; I'll give one of you the money, the other may take the cap and staff, and you'll both be happy."

"You can settle the price yourself," replied the man, "but only when you know the power of these things. Whoever puts on the cap becomes invisible; whoever strikes three times with the staff is borne wherever he wishes."

"I haven't money enough to pay for such articles,"

said the prince, "but I can settle your dispute. I will hurl a dart at that tree yonder, do you run for the dart; the one who returns it to me shall have the staff and the cap."

They agreed to this. The prince hurled his dart at the tree and both men rushed after it. While they were running the prince put the cap on his head, struck the earth three times with the staff, and wished himself in the palace of the princess.

Scarcely had he uttered the wish when he was there. He went from room to room till he came to where the princess was, and when he saw her he thought she was more beautiful than her portrait. He gazed at her for a while then went to the garden and asked for the head-gardener. When he found him, he offered himself as an assistant and was told that only strong-fisted workmen were needed, that no use could be made of white-handed fools. But when he said that he asked no wages, his food would be sufficient reward, the head-gardener hired him.

The prince worked in the garden one day after another, keeping near the favorite resort of the princess, in order to be able to look at her. She loved the garden, and every afternoon she came there and walked around for a while. Afterward she went to a secluded summer-house and read till late in the night. No one knew at

what hour she returned to the palace. The prince thought that he would find out, so he made a hiding-place, and when night came and the other workmen had gone to bed, he crept into the place and watched.

At last, toward midnight, he heard a rolling noise, like distant thunder; it came nearer and nearer. The princess came out of the summer-house. At that moment a tremendous dragon flew up and dropped to the ground in front of her. She welcomed him and led him in to the summer-house. The prince saw how friendly she was, but he was too far away to hear her words. He wanted to go nearer, but he was afraid of the dragon.

After a time the dragon flew away, with the same thundering, and the same lightning speed which he came, and the princess hurried to the palace.

The prince went to his room, but thoughts of the dragon drove sleep from his eyes. The next day he remembered his staff and cap, and when night came he put on the cap, took the staff in his hand, and went to the summer-house and waited for the dragon. The princess received the dragon as kindly as before, and he began to urge her to go to his castle where a grand banquet was awaiting her. At first she refused, saying that her father had appointed an early hour in the morning for an interview; that the castle was six hundred days' journey away; and she might not return in

time. But when the dragon promised to bring her back before daybreak, she consented, and he took her in his claws and flew away.

The prince struck the earth three times with his staff, wished himself at the dragon's castle, and was there at the same time with the dragon and the princess.

The castle was surrounded with high walls, and was inhabited by a host of serving dragons. The halls, lighted by thousands of lamps, were gleaming in splendor. In the last one, which was the most beautiful of all, a banquet was spread.

The dragon gave the princess a napkin embroidered with such marvelous skill that she wouldn't use it, but hung it on a nail, saying, "I'll take this napkin home, it's too beautiful to use."

When the princess sat down at the feast the prince took the napkin from the nail and put it in his bosom. Then he sat down at the table and ate of every dish that was brought. When a dish of rice was served, the dragon saw that near the holes made by his spoon and that of the princess sitting opposite, a third one appeared. He pointed this out to the princess and asked her how it happened. While she was wondering, the dragon turned the dish around to see if their eyes had deceived them, and behold a fourth hole was made, and it grew larger every minute.

"At that moment a tremendous dragon flew up and dropped to the ground in front of her."

Not understanding how this could be, the princess grew restless and uneasy and urged the dragon to take her home. When she rose from the table and turned to get the napkin, she saw that it was not there. That alarmed her still more and she urged the dragon to hasten. He took her in his claws and bore her home as swiftly as he had borne her to the castle, but the prince kept pace with them, and saw how the princess hurried into her father's palace.

The next morning when the prince went to the garden he saw by the restless running to and fro of people that something had happened. When he met the head-gardener he ventured to ask the cause of the disturbance.

"We are lost beyond redemption," answered the gardener. "A neighboring king, whose army is four times as large as ours, has sent ambassadors to demand our princess in marriage for his son, saying that if the suit is not granted he will declare war against our king and so ravage his kingdom that not one stone shall be left upon another. This morning the princess gave her answer. She declared she would give her hand only to the man who could solve three problems for her, that such had been her terms hitherto, and such they would remain. If the prince wished to marry her let him make his venture. When the ambassadors heard this, they de-

clared war in the name of their king, and departed in haste. And now our king cannot find a commander-in-chief who dares to march against such an enemy."

"I will be commander-in-chief," said the prince. "Go to the king and tell him that if he makes me commander-in-chief I'll bind myself, not only to conquer the enemy, but to take half of his kingdom."

When the gardener heard these words he couldn't believe his ears, and cried out again and again, "The fellow has lost his wits! What, you poor devil, do you mean to say that you have the impudence to offer yourself as commander-in-chief? Not to the king will I go, but to the marshal of the palace, and ask him to lock you up, lest you come to harm with your madness."

But the prince repeated his request with such insistence, and had such a noble, resolute bearing, that by degrees he made an impression on the gardener, and at last he said,—

"I know that they will lock us both up, but you have asked me to do this, and I will undertake it. To the king I'll not trust myself, but I will go to the chancellor and tell him what you say."

When the chancellor heard the message brought by the head gardener he laughed loudly, and said,—

"Fright has made you gardeners crazy, I must lock

you up. But I'll look at the fellow first. Bring him here."

When the prince appeared before the chancellor, his bearing made such an impression on him that he rose and, shaking his head, went to the king and laid before him the gardener's astonishing proposal.

At first the king laughed, but when it was explained to him that the kingdom could be saved only by a miracle, he became thoughtful and asked to have the gardener summoned. The dignity of the prince and his words inspired the king with confidence. He grasped him by the hand and presented him to his warriors as their commander-in-chief, and said, "You must march at once, for our enemy has already crossed the border."

The prince went forward with fifty thousand men and camped in front of the enemy. When they saw the small number of his men, his opponents sent a herald demanding surrender to avoid bloodshed. The prince answered that the following day would show whose blood would be shed.

The generals waited on the prince asking for his plan of battle, but the plan was not given. When night came the prince lay down to rest. He rose up at midnight, put on his cap, and taking his staff wished to be in the enemy's camp. He slipped into the tents where commanders and officers were sleeping and cut off their

heads. He worked till nearly morning, then wished himself back in his own tent.

When day came and the enemy found such a number of their leaders dead, the sentinels were called together, and as they swore in one voice that no one had gone either in or out of camp, the regiments which had lost their leaders began to cry out treason, saying that this explained the unexampled boldness of the enemy. Those suspected collected to defend themselves against the charge of treachery. There could be no thought of battle that day.

The following night the prince went again to the enemy's camp, and if possible killed a greater number of leaders than before.

The next morning the cry of treason was twofold greater. From words they came to deeds, and soon the enemy's legions were fighting with one another.

When the prince heard the uproar he cried out, "Now is the time to strike!" and he rushed forward with his army and slaughtered so many of his foes that but few escaped. Then he marched to the capital and forced the king to a peace by which he gave up half of his kingdom.

When the prince, at the head of his victorious army, returned home, the king received him with great honor

and made him chancellor of the kingdom. He filled the office with such wisdom and prudence that he rose daily in the esteem of the king.

After a certain time the prince went to the king and declared that he could not remain in his service, he must go to his own country. The king was alarmed; he explained to the prince the danger the kingdom would be in if he left, for it was only fear of him that kept the enemy from taking vengeance for his overthrow. He implored the prince to remain and declared that he would gratify his every wish, so far as it lay in his power.

The prince withstood the entreaties of the king till he saw that he was in the greatest embarrassment and trouble, then he told him that he loved his daughter and would remain if he might make her his wife. When the king heard this he said,—

"I would gladly make you my son-in-law, but you know the stubbornness of my daughter. I am afraid she will treat you as she has other men who have wished to marry her."

The king sent for his daughter, told her of the chancellor's desire, and commanded her to accept the proposal.

Upon hearing her father's words, the princess was beside herself with anger, and cried out,—

"Has it come to this that I, who have refused the most mighty princes, must marry a gardener?"

She used every means to change her father's mind, but her prayers were of no avail this time, the king was not to be influenced.

When she saw this, she said, "I will yield to your wishes only on one condition—that this gardener perform three tasks. I will think them over and give him the first one to-morrow morning," and she left her father, without listening to what he might say.

That evening the prince put on his cap and taking the staff in his hand went to the summer-house, and waited for the coming of the dragon. When he came the princess met him, and said,—

"I have another wooer, no other than our new chancellor, the ex-gardener."

When the dragon heard this he laughed till the house trembled.

"Don't take it so lightly," said the princess; "there is something mysterious about the man. I have long suspected him of being intimate with magic. Think well before you tell me what task to give him."

Then the dragon answered: "Tell him to bring you, within twenty-four hours, three laughing apples. The only tree upon which such apples grow is in my garden,

six hundred days' journey from here, and the tree is guarded by a hundred dragons."

When the dragon flew back to his castle, the prince followed him and saw how he posted his servants around the tree and charged them to watch it the whole night, so that not even a bird could approach it. When the sentinels had taken their places, the prince went to the tree and broke off a branch on which there were ten apples. As soon as he touched the branch all the apples on the tree began to laugh, "Ha! ha! ha! ha!" The dragons sprang up, fell over each other, and crowded together, for they knew that some one had touched the apples, but search as they might they couldn't find any one.

The next morning when the princess gave the chancellor his task, he declared that he was ready to accomplish it. To the astonishment of the king and his whole court he transacted his business all day without taking the least trouble about the task. Toward evening he put the ten apples on a plate and gave them to the king. When the princess saw the apples she wondered greatly if they were the laughing apples, for they looked like common apples. The prince told her to touch them, and as she did so the hall rang with loud laughter, and she was obliged to confess that he had accomplished the first task.

That evening the prince listened to the conversation between the princess and the dragon, and heard the dragon tell her that she must ask the chancellor to bring her three weeping quinces, that the only tree on which such quinces grew stood in the court of his castle. He would close the door of the court and place sentinels around the tree.

It happened with the weeping quinces as with the laughing apples.

The prince, wearing his cap of invisibility, followed the dragon to his castle. When the dragon had posted his sentinels and had sat down near the tree, the prince broke off a branch having three quinces on it. That instant all the quinces on the tree began to weep. The dragon and sentinels rushed around in search of the thief. They looked in every nook and crevice, but found no one.

The prince amused himself a while with the mad racing around of the dragons, then wished himself back in the king's garden. The next day he placed the quinces on a dish, as he had the apples. When the princess touched them they began to weep, and she saw with alarm that he had fulfilled the second task.

That night the dragon was very thoughtful. At last he said to the princess, "This task will surely bring the gardener to destruction. Tell him to get you a tooth

from the jaw of the dragon, to whom the tree with the laughing apples and the tree with the weeping quinces belong. If he should try to tear out one of my teeth I would swallow him alive."

When the prince heard this, he wished himself in the tool house. There he got pincers and a basket, and, taking somniferous herbs, returned to the summer-house and followed the dragon to his castle.

There the dragon collected forty of his strongest attendants, and commanded them to watch the whole night through. The prince placed somniferous herbs on each one of the dragons, and soon they were all asleep, snoring, with jaws wide open.

The prince drew a front tooth from the jaw of each dragon, put the teeth in his basket, and was back in the king's garden.

When the dragons woke up, one dragon saw a cavity in the jaw of another, and exclaimed, "Oh, my friend, you have lost a front tooth!" When each dragon discovered that he had lost a front tooth, great fear seized them all; they said, "He who has drawn our teeth can cut our throats!"

The prince used the teeth as he had the apples and the quinces. When he exhibited them before the princess she fainted from terror.

That night when he went to the summer-house he

found the princess there waiting for the dragon. She waited a long time, and when at last he came he looked around anxiously, and said to the princess: "Your suitor has accomplished the third task. He who can draw my teeth can cut my throat or take your life; you will never see me again." And he flew away.

The next morning the prince, taking his cap and staff, went to the palace. He found the whole court assembled, and the princess in a bridal dress. She looked at him kindly, but he passed her and, standing before the king, asked for a private audience. When they were alone he told the king who he was, and related the whole story. He told him that his daughter had been enchanted by a dragon, that now the spell was broken, and the dragon had fled. Then he bade the king farewell, struck the floor three times with his staff, and disappeared.

Back to his father's palace he went, and when he greeted his father, he said, "Here I am, cured of my love, and ready to marry the woman you will give me!"

His father made a great feast, and hastened to find a beautiful wife for his son, and when he was dying a host of grandchildren stood around his bed.

LONG, BROAD, AND SWIFT GLANCE

ONCE upon a time there was an old king who had an only son. One day he summoned that son to his presence and said,—

"You know, my dear child, that ripe fruit falls to make room for green fruit. My head has become so mature that soon the light of day will shine on it no longer. But, before you bury me, I want to see my future daughter, your wife. Marry, my son."

"I would like to please you," answered the prince, "but I have no bride."

The king put his hand in his pocket, and taking out a golden key gave it to his son, and said,—

"Go to the highest room in the tower and look around, then come and tell me what pleases you."

The prince did not delay. He had never been in the tower and did not know what was there. Near the top he came to a small iron door, like a trap. The door was securely locked, but he opened it with the golden key and went on till he came to a large round chamber. The ceiling of the chamber was as blue as the sky in a clear night. Silver stars glittered on it. The floor was cov-

ered with a green carpet. Round about were twelve windows in golden frames, and on the crystal glass of each window was portrayed a maiden with a royal crown on her head. In each window was a different maiden. The prince couldn't take his eyes from them, and while he gazed with wonder, not knowing which to choose, the maidens began to move as if living; they looked at him and smiled, but did not speak.

The prince noticed that one of the windows was concealed by a light drapery. Drawing the drapery aside he saw a maiden in a white dress, a silver girdle around her waist, and a crown of pearls on her head. She was the most beautiful of all, but she was sad, and as pale as if she had risen from the grave.

The prince stood before the picture as before an apparition, and gazed at it till his heart ached. "I will have this one or none," said he.

The moment he uttered these words the maiden bowed her head, grew as red as a rose, and disappeared, then all of the pictures vanished.

When the prince told his father what he had seen and which maiden he had chosen, the old king's face grew dark. He thought a while, then said,—

"You did wrong, my son, to uncover what was concealed. By your word you have put yourself in great peril. That maiden is in the power of a wicked sorcerer

who lives in an iron castle. Of the many men who have gone to free her not one has returned. But what is done cannot be undone. A spoken word is law. Go and try your fortune, and may you come back in health."

The prince bade farewell to his father, mounted his steed and rode away in search of the maiden. He passed through a great forest and traveled on till he missed the road and knew not which way to turn. Then he heard some one calling, "Wait!" and on looking around he saw a tall man hastening after him.

"Wait and take me with you," said the man. "If you take me into your service you'll not be sorry."

"Who are you?" asked the prince, "and what can you do?"

"I am Long. I can stretch myself. On that tall fir tree is a bird's nest. I will get it for you without climbing."

Long began to stretch. His body grew till he was as high as the tree. He took the nest, and in a moment was small again; and gave the nest to the prince.

"You know your business well," said the prince, "but what are birds' nests to me if you cannot lead me out of the forest?"

"That's easily done," said Long, and he stretched till he was three times as tall as the tallest tree. He looked here and there, then said, pointing,—

"On this side we have the shortest road."

He grew small, took the horse by the bridle, and sooner than the prince had expected he was out of the forest. Before them was a broad plain; beyond the plain stood lofty gray cliffs, like the towers of a city; and farther on were mountains grown over with trees.

"Over there, master, is my comrade," said Long, pointing to one side of the plain. "You should hire him, he would serve you well."

"Call him," said the prince, "I will see what he is good for."

"He is far away," answered Long; "he could scarcely hear me, and it would be some time before he could get here, he has a good deal to carry. I will go for him."

Long made himself so tall that his head was hidden in the clouds, then taking two or three steps he reached out and grasping his comrade by the shoulder set him down before the prince. He was a sturdy fellow with a stomach like a great pot.

"Who are you," asked the prince, "and what can you do?"

"My name is Broad, and I know how to spread myself."

"Show me how you do it."

"Gallop off, master, to the forest, at full speed."

The prince didn't know why he should go, but seeing

that Broad was extending toward the forest at a tremendous pace, he put spurs to his horse, and was off.

It was high time for him to go. Broad would have crushed him and his horse, so quickly did he swell out on all sides. In one minute the whole valley was full of him, just as if a mountain had slipped onto it. Then he made himself small.

"You chased me away," said the prince. "But come with me. I couldn't find another such a fellow."

The three went on till they came to the cliffs, and there they found a person whose eyes were bandaged.

"This is my second comrade," said Long, "you should take him into your service. He wouldn't eat bread for nothing."

"What is your name," asked the prince, "and why are your eyes bandaged?"

"My name is Swift Glance. I bandage my eyes because I see too well. I see as well with my eyes covered as others do with their naked eyes. If I take the bandage off and look quickly at anything it bursts into flames, or, if it does not burn, it cracks and breaks to pieces."

He turned, took off the bandage and looked at a cliff. That minute the cliff cracked with a terrible noise; rocks flew in every direction and soon nothing remained but a heap of sand in which something glittered like fire.

Swift Glance brought it to the prince. It was ruddy gold.

"You are a man beyond price," said the prince. "He would be a fool who would refuse your services. But look and tell me if it is far to the iron castle, and tell me what is happening there."

"If you were to go alone, master, you wouldn't reach that castle in a year," said Swift Glance, "but with us you'll be there this evening."

"What is my bride doing?"

"The sorcerer keeps her in a tower, behind iron gratings."

"Who is good, let him aid me in rescuing her!" cried the prince.

Long, Broad, and Swift Glance promised to aid him.

They led him through the lofty cliffs by a gap which Swift Glance opened with his eyes. Beyond those cliffs were high mountains and dense forests. Farther and farther the travelers went. When the sun was sinking in the west the mountains were lower, the forests thinner and the cliffs were covered with thickets. When the sun was near setting the prince saw the iron castle, and when the sun was disappearing he was passing along the iron bridge to the gate. As the sun set, the bridge was raised and the gate closed. The prince and his servants were confined in the iron fortress. When he had looked

around the courtyard the prince put his horse in the stable and went to the castle.

In the halls they saw, in the twilight, many richly dressed princes, attendants, and waiting men, but not one of them moved—all were stone. They passed through a number of halls then came to a chamber that was brilliantly lighted. In the center of the chamber stood a table with abundant food and drink for four persons. They waited for some one to come but when no one appeared they sat down and ate and drank what pleased their palate. When they had eaten enough they looked around for a place to sleep.

All at once the door flew open and the sorcerer entered. An old, bent-over man, his head was bald and his gray beard came to his knees. He wore a long black robe and around his waist instead of a belt were three iron hoops. He led by the hand a beautiful maiden dressed in white. She wore a silver belt, and on her head was a crown of pearls, but she was as pale and sad as if she had just come out of the grave.

The prince recognized her at once. He started up and went toward her, but before he could utter a word the sorcerer said,—

"I know why you have come; you wish to take the princess away. If for three nights you can guard her so that she cannot escape she may go with you. If she

escapes, you with your servants will be turned to stone as have all those who came here before you."

The sorcerer led the princess to a chair and told her to sit down. The prince could not take his eyes off the maiden, she was so beautiful. He spoke to her, but she did not answer, neither did she smile nor look at any one; she was as if made of marble. The prince sat near her thinking to keep watch all night. For greater safety Long stretched out, like a strap, and wound himself around the room. Broad took his place at the door, swelled and filled the doorway so that a fly couldn't have crept through. Swift Glance stood by a pillar in the middle of the chamber, and watched. But after a while all fell asleep and slept the night through. In the morning, when day began to come, the prince woke up, and he felt as if a knife had struck him in the heart, for the princess was gone.

Straightway he roused his three servants and asked what was to be done.

"Have no fear," said Swift Glance, who looked out of the window quickly, "I see her already. A hundred miles from here is a forest, in the middle of the forest is an old oak tree, on the top of that tree is an acorn; the princess is that acorn. Let Long take me on his shoulders, I will get her."

Long took Swift Glance on his shoulders, stretched

out, made himself tall, and went ten miles at a step. Swift Glance showed him the way. As much time had not passed as it would take to walk around a cottage when they were back and Long handed the acorn to the prince.

"Let it drop on the floor, master," said he.

The prince dropped it, and that minute the princess stood at his side.

When the sun began to appear above the mountains the door flew open with a crash and the sorcerer walked in, smiling maliciously. When he saw the princess his face grew dark; a crack was heard—one of the iron hoops around his waist broke and fell off. He took the maiden by the hand and led her away.

All that day the prince had nothing to do but to walk through and around the castle and see what was wonderful there. Everywhere it was as if life had ceased in the twinkle of an eye. In one room he saw a prince who had been turned to stone; in another a knight appeared to have been fleeing, as if in fear; before him some one had stumbled against the threshold and was falling, but did not come to the floor. Near the hearth sat a servant holding in one hand a piece of meat which he had been roasting, with the other hand he was raising a piece of bread to his mouth, but near his lips it had become stone.

Many other men did the prince find turned to stone,

each one in the position in which he was when the sorcerer said, "Be stone!"

In the castle and around it everything was dead. There were trees, but without leaves; there were fields, but they were without grass; there was a river, but it didn't flow. Nowhere was there a singing bird, or a flower the child of the earth; or bright fishes the children of the water.

In the morning, at midday and in the evening the prince and his attendants found rich entertainment. Food came of its own accord, and wine poured itself out. When supper was over the sorcerer came in leading the princess to be guarded a second night.

Though the prince and his attendants resolved to keep awake, they all fell asleep. In the morning when the prince woke and saw that the princess was gone, he sprang up, pulled Swift Glance by the shoulder, and said,—

"Hurry, and see where the princess is!"

"I see her already," said Swift Glance. "Two hundred miles away there is a mountain, on that mountain is a rock, in that rock is a precious stone, that precious stone is the princess. If Long carries me I will bring it."

Long took Swift Glance on his shoulders and went twenty miles at a step. Swift Glance fixed his eyes on

the mountain. It crumbled, split into a thousand pieces and among the pieces glittered the precious stone. They brought it to the prince, he dropped it on the floor and the princess stood before him.

When the sorcerer entered the chamber and saw the princess his eyes flashed with rage. A crash! The second iron hoop flew from his body. He growled angrily and led the princess away.

The second day was like the first. After supper the sorcerer led in the maiden, looked sharply into the prince's eyes, and said with a sneer,—

"It will be seen who conquers, you or I." Then he went away.

This time they all tried diligently to guard against sleep. They did not sit down; they paced the chamber, but one after another fell asleep while walking, and the princess disappeared.

The prince woke first and not seeing the princess he roused Swift Glance, and said, "Get up quickly and see where the princess is!"

He looked long. "Oh," said he, "she is very far away. Three hundred miles from here is the Black Sea, in the middle of the sea, at the bottom, is a shell, in that shell is a gold ring, that ring is the princess. Fear not, I will get her, but to-day Long must take Broad with us, for I shall need him."

Long took Broad on one shoulder and Swift Glance on the other, stretched himself, and went thirty miles at a step. When they came to the Black Sea, Swift Glance showed him where to reach for the shell. Long stretched his arm as far as he was able but could not touch bottom.

"Wait, comrades, wait a minute," said Broad. "I will help you." He swelled out as wide as his stomach would permit, then he lay down on the edge of the sea and began to drink. The sea decreased, and presently it was low enough for Long to touch the bottom. He picked up the shell and took out the ring, then he put his comrades on his shoulders and hurried back to the castle. But it was difficult for him to run swiftly with Broad, who had half of the Black Sea in his stomach.

When Long came to a wide valley he shook Broad off and he flopped to the ground like a leather sack fallen from a high tower. In one moment the whole valley was under water, an enormous lake was formed, and it was as much as Broad could do to get out of it; he was very near drowning.

The prince was frightened when sunlight began to appear and his attendants had not returned. The warmer the rays of the sun the greater was his suffering. Cold sweat stood on his forehead. All at once the sun appeared in the east. The door opened with a crash and

the sorcerer stood on the threshold. He looked around the chamber and, not seeing the princess, laughed and was going away, when the window cracked and in came the ring, and the princess stood before him.

Swift Glance, seeing what danger his master was in, had told Long to throw the ring into the chamber.

The sorcerer bellowed from rage till the castle trembled. With a terrible noise the third iron hoop burst and fell to the floor. The sorcerer turned to a crow and flew through the broken window.

The princess grew ruddy as a rose and thanked the prince for freeing her. In and around the iron castle everybody came to life. The man who held a drawn sword placed it in its sheath. He who stumbled at the threshold fell to the floor and rose up quickly. He who sat at the hearth put the piece of bread to his lips and went on eating. Every one finished what he had begun.

In the stables the horses stamped and neighed joyously. The trees around the castle grew green; the fields were covered with many-colored flowers. High up in the air larks were singing, shoals of fish darted through the swift river. Everywhere there was life and gladness.

Princes and warriors assembled in the chamber and thanked their deliverer.

"You have nothing to thank me for," said the prince.

"Had it not been for my trusty servants, Long, Broad, and Swift Glance, you would be as you were when I came."

Straightway the prince set out for home, with his bride and his attendants, Long, and Swift Glance. On the way they met Broad and took him with them.

When the old king saw his son he wept from joy. And soon there was a rich wedding. All the princes and warriors whom the king's son had liberated were invited.

When the feasting was over, Long, Broad, and Swift Glance declared that they were going to travel the world in search of employment. The prince begged them to stay with him.

"I will give you," said he, "everything you can wish for. You need never work again."

But such an idle life did not suit them. They took leave of the prince and each went his way, and to this time they have not met again.

THE STORK AND THE HERON

ONCE upon a time a stork and a heron lived by a broad swamp, one on one side, one on the other. As it seemed to the stork that his life was very lonely and sad, he decided to marry. "I'll go," thought he, "and propose to heron," and raising himself from the ground he flew straight across the swamp to heron's house. When he reached there he asked,—

"Is heron at home?"

"She is," answered heron.

After conversing with her for a while, he asked,—

"Heron, will you marry me?"

"No," said heron, "I'll not marry you; your legs are too long, your coat is too short, you are a bad flyer, and besides you can't support me. Be off, old long legs, don't bother me!"

No matter how salt and bitter this was, the stork had to swallow it and fly away. When he was gone the heron turned the matter over in her mind till she thought better of the proposal, and said to herself,—

"How can I live here alone? It's a miserable life. I'll not endure it any longer. I'll marry the stork."

The next day she flew across the swamp to stork's house, and said,—

"I've come to see you, stork, and to tell you that I'll accept your proposal. You may marry me."

"No, heron, I can get on without you," answered stork. "You may marry whomever you like, I'll not be your husband."

Heron was so ashamed and mortified that she began to cry, and didn't stop crying till she reached her home on the other side of the swamp.

When she was gone stork said to himself,

"What a fool I was not to take heron at her word. A wretched life I have here alone; I'll go and marry her."

The next day he flew over the swamp and said to heron,—

"I've made up my mind to marry you; we'll have the wedding right away."

"No, stork," said heron, "if you are willing to marry me I'm not willing to marry you; you may go."

The stork flew home, in a rage. When he was gone the heron grew vexed with herself and said,—

"What a fool I was to refuse him. How can I live in this way? I'm a poor unprotected creature with no one to provide for me. I'll marry stork to-morrow, and have done with it."

The next morning she flew over to stork and offered

herself to him. Angry because she had refused him the day before, he said, "I'll not marry you now; you can marry whomever you like."

When she was gone he regretted his words.

And to this hour they are flying over the swamp offering themselves to each other, and they are no nearer the wedding-day than when they began.

THE END

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