


FAIRY TALES FROM HANS ANDERSEN



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FAIRY TALES

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Fairy Tales
from
Hans Christian Andersen



The travelling companion flew behind her.—P. 413.

FAIRY TALES
FROM
HANS ANDERSEN

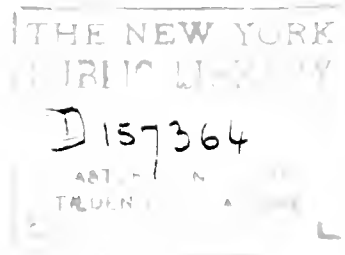


With Introduction by
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Introduction

WHILE the world lasts, the art of the story-teller will know no decay, nor will his listeners weary of the tale. And while, save for the half-dozen great novels to which Gibbon's famous prediction concerning *Tom Jones* may be applied, the great harvest of fiction which each generation of caterers provides for Mudie's subscribers is but for a season, there is one class which is not for an age, but for all time, and for every zone. *Beauty and the Beast*, *Cinderella*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Cap o' Rushes*, *Tom Tit Tot*, *The Giant who had no Heart in his Body*—the very titles are appetising—these, and a hundred other folk and fairy tales, told in the twilight on the laps of nurses, and by the knees of grandams, have been the delight of unnumbered generations of children, and will remain the delight of generations while tears and laughter abide. The interest which all things personal and human, especially when cast into narrative or dramatic form, arouses in young and old, is perennial. But perhaps the secret of the endless charm of the nursery tale is to be found largely in the appeal which it makes to the feeling of wonder, a feeling which the "rough-and-tumble" of life, pushing out thoughts that would assert themselves in the pauses of working-hours, may suppress, but which can never wholly die. For a thousand sources keep it fresh in youthhood,

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and when the fairest dreams give place to realities, more is won than lost while the craving to reach the meaning of things, the why as well as the how, remains existent though unsatisfied. Great, therefore, is the world's debt to the ballad-singer and the story-teller of times ago; great its debt to him who resets the old, or transfuses it with new meaning, or who, with creative touch, weaves fresh stories for the delight of the young and of those who wisely keep their hearts young.

Among such no name has higher honour than that of Hans Christian Andersen, some outline of whose life, "a lovely story, happy and full of incident," as he speaks of it in his delightful, ingenuous autobiography, may fitly preface this selection from his masterpieces.

He was born on April 2, 1805, at Odense (so-called as a traditional dwelling-place of Odin—some said that the god had been burgomaster there!), a town on the island of Funen, in Denmark. His parents were poor folk, and his education was so imperfect that up to his eighteenth year he could neither spell correctly nor write grammatically. His father, compelled by family misfortunes to take to shoemaking, was a man of dreamy type, withal a lover of books and of nature. "He lived for me," says Andersen, making the little fellow the companion of his rambles, and feasting him on such reading as the slender shelves afforded, chiefly that of the plays of Holberg, a great writer of comedy, and the *Arabian Nights*. When Hans was eleven years old, his father, whose hero was Napoleon, Denmark being then in alliance with France, enlisted. But ere he could reach Holstein, peace was proclaimed, and the cobbler returned to his "last." He had caught fever while in camp, and came home to die. One of the poor man's pleasures had been to make puppets for Hans to dress, and the deftness with which he clothed the dolls convinced the boy's mother, who seems to have been a shiftless, foolish body, that he

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was born to be a tailor. But he had been stage-struck from the time that Holberg's plays were read to him ; his puppets were the *dramatis personæ* of his own little comedies, and in decking them in divers colours he was qualifying for other "boards" than those on which a tailor crosslegs himself. The father's death meant an empty cupboard, so the mother "went out washing," and Hans was put to work in a cloth factory. He had a rich voice ; he could recite whole scenes from Holberg and Shakespeare, whom he had read "in a bad translation" ; and as a sort of prodigy, he was sent for here and there to entertain his betters. One of these, the widow of a poet-clergyman, named Bunkeflod, had made him free of her library, and there he had been incited to write a play, based on an old song about Pyramus and Thisbe. Meantime his mother had remarried ; he was taken from the factory because of rough usage, and "confirmed, prior to being apprenticed to a tailor." But just before this, a theatrical company from Copenhagen had come to Odense ; the singers and performers were to him "as earthly divinities" ; he had, through the influence of the bill-poster (!), not only been behind the scenes, but had taken a minor part on the stage itself in the opera of *Cinderella*. His mind was made up : he could sing ; he could recite ; he would become a great actor. His top-hamper of assurance must have been tremendous, but it was steadied by mental ballast. He was barely fifteen ; he had saved thirteen rix-dollars (about thirty shillings) while at the factory ; he implored his mother to let him go to Copenhagen, whence in due time he told her that he would return famous. After consulting a wise woman, who divined the lad's future by coffee-grounds and cards, she yielded, and on September 5, 1819, he "entered the city with a little bundle in his hand." He called on a solo-dancer, who thought he was out of his mind, and was glad to be quit of him ; he offered himself

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to a theatre-manager, who told the lank, ungainly, plain-featured boy that he was too ignorant and "too thin"; he tried his hands at carpentering, but failed at that; he walked the streets till, as he says, "death seemed a better thing than life." Then, remembering what delight his beautiful voice had given to the people of Odense, he sought and secured an interview with Signor Serboni, Director of the Academy, who was struck with his singing, and took him into his house for training. But in the middle of his studies his voice failed him, and he was thrown upon such precarious work as he could get at the theatres. Through these vicissitudes he had kept his pen busy; there was ingenuity and power in what he composed, but his lack of education told against him. He could write, but he could not write grammatically. He was advised, in plain English, to go to school, and, through the influence of Councillor Jonas Collin, Director of the Theatre Royal, he was sent to a grammar school at Slagelse, and his maintenance secured by a grant from King Frederick the Sixth, to whom Collin recommended him. So, at eighteen, he started on the lowest rung of the ladder, enduring numberless annoyances from school-mates who were his juniors in years, but his seniors in knowledge; in the long result, however, assuring his future. During his curriculum at Slagelse, and afterwards at Helsingör—a miserable time under a tyrant rector—he wrote one of his best-known and most widely-circulated poems, *The Dying Child*, and a satirico-humorous book, *A Journey on Foot to Amack*, the island kitchen-garden of Copenhagen. The success of the book tempted him to try his luck upon the stage, but *Love on the Nicholas Tower, or What says the Pit*, ran, mainly through friendly help, for three nights only. Nevertheless, as he tells us, he "was now a happy human being"; in September 1829 he passed his *Examen philologicum et philosophicum*, and issued the first collected edition of his poems.

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With the modest stipend continued from the royal purse, Andersen, whose love of travel was a passion throughout life, started in 1831 on a tour in Germany, whereby his intellectual horizon was widened, and valued friendships formed. Among these was that of Tieck, the brilliant romanticist ; and Chamisso, the lyric poet, best known to us by his *Peter Schlemihl*, the story of "the man who lost his shadow." When in Berlin he called on the brothers Grimm, but it was not till some time after that he became intimate with men with whom he had so very much in common. He must have been familiar with their famous *Household Tales* (*Kinder und Hausmärchen*), collected in the course of thirteen years among the peasantry of Hesse and Hanau, and first published in 1812. But of the influence of these upon certain of his own stories, more anon. In 1833 he visited Paris, where he met Heine, whose "sarcastic smile" ("that smile was Heine," says Matthew Arnold) he dreaded, and Victor Hugo ; but he was glad to shut his ears to the excitement of the city ; in the midst of it he "lived in the spirit of the Danish folk-songs," composing his poem of *Aguete and the Merman*, the theme of which Matthew Arnold has made dear and familiar in his exquisite *Forsaken Merman*. Thence he passed to Italy, his sojourns at Rome, Naples, and Venice resulting in the *Improvvisatore*, a book that "raised his sunken fortunes." Book after book now came in quick succession from his pen. The recital of their titles need not detain us ; it suffices to refer to the *Eventyr fortalte for Born*, or *Wonder Tales for Children*, which was published in 1835 at the modest sum of fourpence-halfpenny. It was the earliest of the series of stories which have placed Hans Christian Andersen in the first rank among writers for the young. Of this volume and its successors, containing in all 156 tales, he says :

"I had, like Musäus, but in my own manner, related old

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stories which I had heard as a child. The book concluded with one which was original, and which seemed to have given the greatest pleasure, although it bore a tolerably near affinity to a story of Hoffinan's. In my increasing disposition for children's stories, I therefore followed my own impulse, and invented them mostly myself. In the following year a new volume came out; and soon after that a third, in which the longest story, *The Little Mermaid*, was my own invention. This story, in an especial manner, created an interest which was only increased by the following volumes. One of these came out every Christmas, and before long no Christmas-tree could exist without my stories."—(*The True Story of my Life*, p. 194. London: 1847.)

As he adds, when speaking of his early years, "every circumstance around me tended to excite my imagination." Odense was then so isolated that "a person might have fancied himself living hundreds of years ago, because so many customs prevailed then which belonged to an earlier time." The district was rich in unspoiled folk-tales such as the Grimms collected from the cowherd's wife of Niedezwehrn, whose memory "kept a firm hold of all sagas"; and many a kindred tale Andersen was told at that supple age when the memory is "wax to receive and marble to retain." The home cupboard had its shelf of chap books and the like; the demented cronos of an asylum, whose garden Andersen's grandmother tended, told him story after story, "and thus," he says, "a world as rich as that of the *Thousand and One Nights* was revealed to me." Reference has been made to the consulting of a fortune-teller by the mother, and what superstition ruled in the shoemaker's cottage is further shown in the incident that when he lay in the delirium which accompanied his fever, Hans was sent by his mother to a wise woman to learn what the issue would be. She asked him many questions,

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measured his arm with a woollen thread, made cabalistic signs, and then laid upon his breast a green twig, which she told him came from the same kind of tree on which Christ was crucified. Then she said that if on his way home he met his father's wraith, that would be a sign of death. He did not meet the spectre, but, nevertheless, his father died on the third day after the boy's return.

“‘The ice-maiden has fetched him,’ said my mother. I recollect that, in the winter before, when our window-panes were frozen, my father pointed to them and showed us a figure as that of a maiden with outstretched arms. ‘She is come to fetch me,’ he said in jest. And now my mother remarked this, and it occupied my thoughts also.”

Hence, the old apparatus worked the familiar figures in many of Andersen's tales ; it was his imagination which, fed upon the uncanny, provided new combinations. In the *Travelling Companion*, when Hans, starting on his way through the world, comes to the churchyard where his father lies, he sees the little redcapped Nissa in one of the niches of the steeple, and then, reaching another churchyard, there are the roguish flaxen-headed elves no bigger than his finger, playing at sec-saw on the dew-drops that sparkled on leaf and blade ; then, coming to a puppet-show, he watches the wizard as he applies the magic ointment which not only mends the broken dolls, but endows them with life. Then the palace is reached where the lovely princess, whom enchantment by a troll had made cruel, promises her hand to the wooer who can rightly guess her thoughts three times (the tests in Fairyland always run in triplets), and, after one and another had failed, only to be hanged or beheaded, there comes the lucky man who gains entry to the palace by making himself invisible through fern seed, who delivers the princess from her evil spell by sprinkling her three times with three feathers, guesses her three thoughts, and wins her hand.

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The central idea in *The Tinder-Box* agrees with that in Grimms' tale of *The Blue Light*. Three doors at the foot of the tree lead to a treasure-filled chamber, whose contents the soldier can secure if he fetches the magic tinder-box which the witch's grandmother left behind her. He succeeds in this, and, cutting off the witch's head, manages by means of the box to get out of numberless scrapes, and, of course, since all things end happily in Fairyland, marries a princess. For the original of *Great Claus and Little Claus* we must probably also go to Grimms' *Little Peasant*, a blood-relation of the wily Boots of the wonder-tales collected by Asbjörnson and Moe, and translated by Dr. Dasent under the title of *Tales from the Norse*. Little Claus makes his fortune by selling the skin of his horse, which he pretends is an enchanted luck-bringer, to a noodle, and in the German variant the peasant, by like astuteness, sells the skin of his cow at a price which makes him a rich man. Campbell has a West Highland tale with similar incidents (II. 228), and the notes to the *Little Peasant* which Grimm supplies, contain abstracts of variants from Tyrol, Wallachia and elsewhere. Andersen, as might be expected, did not fail to make use of the widespread and beautiful myth' of the transformation of brave men and fair women into swans, a myth whose ultimate source is to be found in the old conception—barbaric, we name it, though the latest science has confirmed the truth at the heart of it—of a community of life between man and animal.

In thus adapting the old machinery of the folk-tale to his own wonder-tales, Andersen showed penetration and wisdom. For in this realm of the imagination, if anywhere, the law of continuity and unity is seen at work. Wherever a story is told, appeal is made to the one human heart that beats within every man. For the folk-tale is of no country, but of all countries ; speaking not in one language, but in

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every tongue. The likenesses, often fundamental as to idea, between stories told in Iceland and in India, in Spain and Russia, in Finland or Zululand, have led to ingenious speculations as to possible intercourse in past times between now widely-sundered peoples. But concerning this, where documents fail us, the truth is not ascertainable, and the fact abides that whether the stories be homegrown or exotic, they evidence, in their acceptance, that the mind of man, being built on the same plan, looks at all things in much the same way. Just as at like low levels of ignorance, man everywhere makes use of the same stone tools and weapons for aid in the supply of his bodily needs, so does he explain his feelings and surroundings in much the same way. Everywhere there are the mighty processes of nature to be witnessed ; everywhere there is birth, and growth, and death ; light and darkness ; storm and calm ; everywhere, for explanation of these phenomena, man fills earth and heaven with quasi-natural and supernatural beings, from demon-possessed witches and sorcerers to the great gods whom none can see, whose name none dare pronounce.

As for the fantastic group of stories which, as Andersen tells us, he "invented," they carry their own credentials. *The Ugly Duckling*, wherein, surely, he portrays himself and his fortunes ; *The Daisy* ; *The Buckwheat* (the pretty old conception of the language of birds is imported into this tale) ; *The Flying Trunk*, with its droll dialogues between matches and saucepans, pitchers and tongs, all running riot in a world of their own ; upon these Time has delivered a verdict that will never be set aside. In the story of *The Snow Queen* there still blossoms the garden which was planted in a great chest that stood in the gutter on the roof between the home in Odense and the neighbouring cottage ; while in *What the Moon Saw* Andersen describes the fancies which came to him as he sat in the little garret when he was a student at Helsingör. So his

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tales are a part of himself, and that is one secret of their undying life. They are pure and wholesome to the core; the sentiment in them is manly, bracing, never nambypamby; and (as the saying goes concerning bishops) they do not suffer by translation. One of them has been rendered into fifteen languages.

Little space is left, and there is less need to follow in detail the fortunes of Hans Christian Andersen through the rarely-clouded years that passed between the appearance of his first booklet of children's tales in 1835 and his death in 1875. Such clouds as flecked his sky arose mainly through a thin-skinned petulance and a child-like craving for praise which made any adverse criticism a torture. But we may accept his already-quoted verdict on his life as the true one. When he came to England in 1847 he found himself the lion of the season, nor had his popularity waned when, ten years later, his favourite author, Charles Dickens, entertained him at Gadshill. Wherever he went, to Spain, once again to France, to Sweden and to Norway, he was received as a benefactor to his kind for he had ministered to the joy of life, and never added to its bitterness.

EDWARD CLODD.



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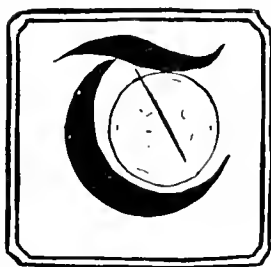
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FAIRY TALES

FROM

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

The Silver Shilling



HERE was once a Shilling. He came out quite bright from the Mint, and sprang up, and rang out, "Hurrah! now I'm off into the wide world." And into the wide world he certainly went.

The child held him with soft warm hands; the miser clutched him in a cold avaricious palm; the old man turned him goodness knows how many times before parting with him; while careless youth rolled him lightly away. The Shilling was of silver, and had very little copper about him: he had been now a whole year in the world—that is to say, in the country in which he had been struck. But one day he started on his foreign travels: he was the last native coin in the purse borne by his travelling master. The gentleman himself was not aware that he still had this coin until he came across it by chance.

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“Why, here’s a shilling from home left to me,” he said. “Well, he can make the journey with me.”

And the Shilling rattled and jumped for joy as it was thrust back into the purse. So here it lay among strange companions, who came and went, each making room for a successor ; but the Shilling from home always remained in the bag, which was a distinction for it.

Several weeks had gone by, and the Shilling had travelled far out into the world without exactly knowing where he was, though he learned from the other coins that they were French or Italian. One said they were in such and such a town, another that they had reached such and such a spot ; but the Shilling could form no idea of all this. He who has his head in a bag sees nothing ; and this was the case with the Shilling. But one day, as he lay there, he noticed that the purse was not shut, and so he crept forward to the opening, to take a look around. He ought not to have done so ; but he was inquisitive, and people often have to pay for that. He slipped out into the fob ; and when the purse was taken out at night the Shilling remained behind, and was sent out into the passage with the clothes. There he fell upon the floor : no one heard it, no one saw it.

Next morning the clothes were carried back into the room ; the gentleman put them on, and continued his journey, while the Shilling remained behind. The coin was found, and was required to go into service again, so he was sent out with three other coins.

“It is a pleasant thing to look about one in the world,” thought the Shilling, “and to get to know strange people and foreign customs.”

And now began the history of the Shilling, as told by himself.

“‘Away with him, he’s bad—no use!’ These words went through and through me,” said the Shilling. “I

The Silver Shilling

knew I sounded well and had been properly coined. The people were certainly mistaken. They could not mean me! but, yes, they did mean me. I was the one of whom they said, 'He's bad—he's no good.' 'I must get rid of that fellow in the dark,' said the man who had received me; and I was passed at night and abused in the daytime. 'Bad—no good,' was the cry: 'we must make haste and get rid of him.'

"And I trembled in the fingers of the holder each time I was to be passed on as a coin of the country.

"What a miserable shilling I am! Of what use is my silver to me, my value, my coinage, if all these things are looked on as worthless? In the eyes of the world one has only the value the world chooses to put upon one. It must be terrible indeed to have a bad conscience, and to creep along on evil ways, if I, who am quite innocent, can feel so badly because I am only thought guilty.

"Each time I was brought out I shuddered at the thought of the eyes that would look at me, for I knew that I should be rejected and flung back upon the table, like an impostor and a cheat. Once I came into the hands of a poor old woman, to whom I was paid for a hard day's work, and she could not get rid of me at all. No one would accept me, and I was a perfect worry to the old dame.

"'I shall certainly be forced to deceive some one with this shilling,' she said; 'for, with the best will in the world, I can't hoard up a false shilling. The rich baker shall have him; he will be able to bear the loss—but it's wrong in me to do it, after all.'

"'And I must lie heavy on that woman's conscience, too,' sighed I. 'Am I really so much changed in my old age?'

"And the woman went her way to the rich baker; but he knew too well what kind of shillings would pass to take

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me, and he threw me back at the woman, who got no bread for me. And I felt miserably sorry to think that I should be the cause of distress to others—I who had been in my young days so proudly conscious of my value and of the correctness of my mintage. I became as miserable as a poor shilling can be whom no one will accept; but the woman took me home again, and looked at me with a friendly, hearty face, and said,

“‘No, I will not deceive any one with thee. I will bore a hole through thee, that every one may see thou art a false thing. And yet—it just occurs to me—perhaps this is a lucky shilling; and the thought comes so strongly upon me that I am sure it must be true! I will make a hole through the shilling, and pass a string through the hole and hang the coin round the neck of my neighbour’s little boy for a lucky shilling.’

“So she bored a hole through me. It is certainly not agreeable to have a hole bored through one; but many things can be borne when the intention is good. A thread was passed through the hole, and I became a kind of medal, and was hung round the neck of the little child; and the child smiled at me, and kissed me, and I slept all night on its warm, innocent neck.

“When the morning came the child’s mother took me up in her fingers and looked at me, and she had her own thoughts about me, I could feel that very well. She brought out a pair of scissors, and cut the string through.

“‘A lucky shilling!’ she said. ‘Well, we shall soon see that.’

“And she laid me in vinegar, so that I turned quite green. Then she plugged up the hole, and carried me, in the evening twilight, to the lottery collector, to buy a lottery ticket that should bring her luck.

“How miserably wretched I felt! There was a stinging feeling in me, as if I should crumble to bits. I knew that I

The Silver Shilling

should be called false and thrown down—and before a crowd of shillings and other coins, too, who lay there with an image and superscription of which they might be proud. But I escaped that disgrace, for there were many people in the collector's room : he had a great deal to do, and I went rattling down into the box among the other coins.



The mother cut the string.

Whether my ticket won anything or not I don't know ; but this I do know, that the very next morning I was recognized as a bad shilling, and sent out to deceive and deceive again. That is a very trying thing to bear when one knows one has a good character, and of that I *am* conscious.

“For a year and a day I thus wandered from house to

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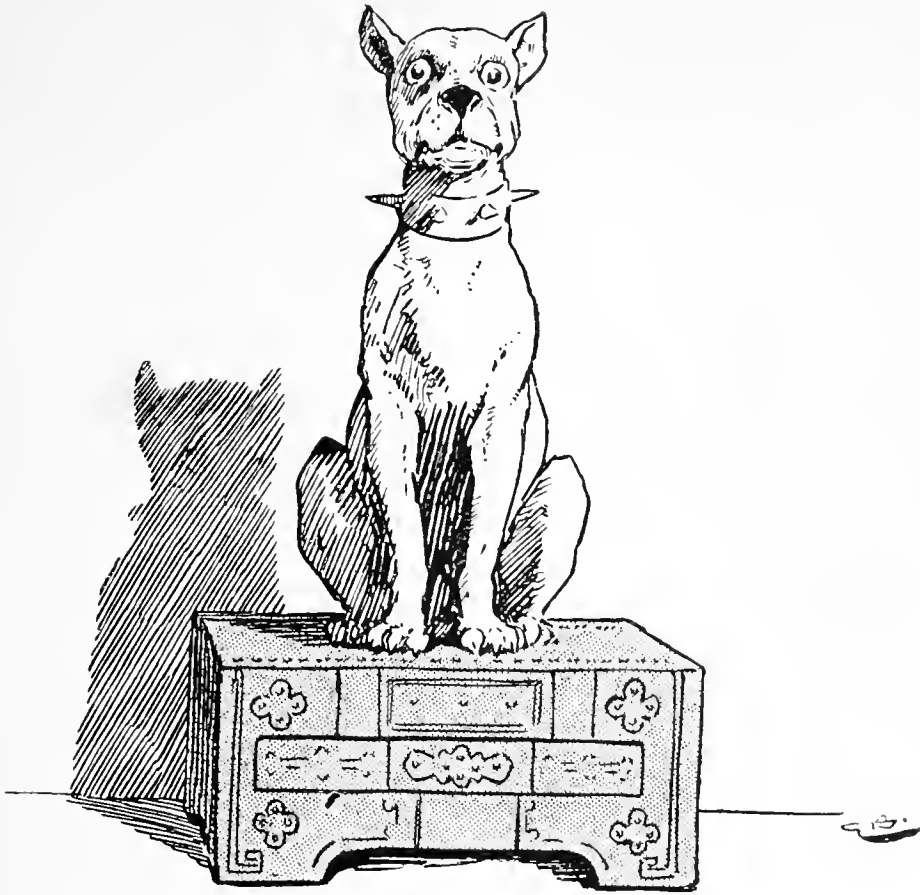
house and from hand to hand, always abused, always unwelcome; no one trusted me; and I lost confidence in the world and in myself. It was a heavy time. At last, one day a traveller, a strange gentleman, arrived, and I was passed to him, and he was polite enough to accept me for current coin; but he wanted to pass me on, and again I heard the horrible cry, 'No use—false!'

"'I received it as a good coin,' said the man, and he looked closely at me: suddenly he smiled all over his face; and I had never seen that expression before on any face that looked at me. 'Why, whatever is that?' he said. 'That's one of our own country coins, a good honest shilling from my home, and they've bored a hole through him, and they call him false. Now, this is a curious circumstance. I must keep him and take him home with me.'

"A glow of joy thrilled through me when I heard myself called a good honest shilling; and now I was to be taken home, where each and every one would know me, and be sure that I was real silver and properly coined. I could have thrown out sparks for very gladness; but, after all, it's not in my nature to throw out sparks, for that's the property of steel, not of silver.

"I was wrapped up in clean white paper, so that I should not be confounded with the other coins, and spent; and on festive occasions, when fellow-countrymen met together, I was shown about, and they spoke very well of me: they said I was interesting—and it is wonderful how interesting one can be without saying a single word.

"And at last I got home again. All my troubles were ended, joy came back to me, for I was of good silver, and had the right stamp, and I had no more disagreeables to endure, though a hole had been bored through me, as through a false coin; but that does not matter if one is not really false. One must wait for the end, and one will be righted at last—that's my belief," said the Shilling.



The Tinder-Box



SOLDIER came marching along the high-road—*one, two! one, two!* He had his knapsack on his back and a sabre by his side, for he had been in the wars, and now he wanted to go home. And on the way he met with an old witch; she was very hideous, and her under lip hung down upon her breast. She said, "Good-evening, soldier. What a fine sword you have, and what a big knapsack! You're a proper soldier! Now you shall have as much money as you like to have."

"I thank you, you old witch!" said the soldier.

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“Do you see that great tree?” quoth the witch; and she pointed to a tree which stood beside them. “It’s quite hollow inside. You must climb to the top, and then you’ll see a hole, through which you can let yourself down and get deep into the tree. I’ll tie a rope round your body, so that I can pull you up again when you call me.”

“What am I to do down in the tree?” asked the soldier.

“Get money,” replied the witch. “Listen to me. When you come down to the earth under the tree, you will find yourself in a great hall: it is quite light, for above three hundred lamps are burning there. Then you will see three doors; these you can open, for the keys are hanging there. If you go into the first chamber, you’ll see a great chest in the middle of the floor; on this chest sits a dog, and he’s got a pair of eyes as big as two tea-cups. But you need not care for that. I’ll give you my blue-checked apron, and you can spread it out upon the floor; then go up quickly and take the dog, and set him on my apron; then open the chest, and take as many shillings as you like. They are of copper: if you prefer silver, you must go into the second chamber. But there sits a dog with a pair of eyes as big as mill-wheels. But do not you care for that. Set him upon my apron, and take some of the money. And if you want gold, you can have that too—in fact, as much as you can carry—if you go into the third chamber. But the dog that sits on the money-chest there has two eyes as big as round towers. He is a fierce dog, you may be sure; but you needn’t be afraid, for all that. Only set him on my apron, and he won’t hurt you; and take out of the chest as much gold as you like.”

“That’s not so bad,” said the soldier. “But what am I to give you, you old witch? for you will not do it for nothing, I fancy.”

“No,” replied the witch, “not a single shilling will I have.



“Good-evening, soldier.”

The Tinder-Box

You shall only bring me an old tinder-box which my grandmother forgot when she was down there last."

"Then tie the rope round my body," said the soldier.

"Here it is," answered the witch, "and here's my blue-checked apron."

Then the soldier climbed up into the tree, let himself slip down into the hole, and stood, as the witch had said, in the great hall where the three hundred lamps were burning.

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! there sat the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups, staring at him. "You're a nice fellow!" exclaimed the soldier; and he set him on the witch's apron, and took as many copper shillings as his pockets would hold, and then locked the chest, set the dog on it again, and went into the second chamber. Aha! there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.

"You should not stare so hard at me," said the soldier; "you might strain your eyes." And he set the dog upon the witch's apron. And when he saw the silver money in the chest, he threw away all the copper money he had, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with silver only. Then he went into the third chamber. Oh, but that was horrid! The dog there really had eyes as big as towers, and they turned round and round in his head like wheels.

"Good-evening!" said the soldier; and he touched his cap, for he had never seen such a dog as that before. When he had looked at him a little more closely, he thought, "That will do," and lifted him down to the floor, and opened the chest. Mercy! what a quantity of gold was there! He could buy with it the whole town, and the sugar sucking-pigs of the cake woman, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the whole world. Yes, that was a quantity of money! Now the soldier threw away all the silver coin with which he had filled his pockets and his knapsack, and took gold instead: yes, all

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his pockets, his knapsack, his boots, and his cap were filled, so that he could scarcely walk. Now indeed he had plenty of money. He put the dog on the chest, shut the door, and then called up through the tree, "Now pull me up, you old witch."

"Have you the tinder-box?" asked the witch.

"Plague on it!" exclaimed the soldier, "I had clean forgotten that." And he went and brought it.

The witch drew him up, and he stood on the high-road again, with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of gold.

"What are you going to do with the tinder-box?" asked the soldier.

"That's nothing to you," retorted the witch. "You've had your money—just give me the tinder-box."

"Nonsense!" said the soldier. "Tell me directly what you're going to do with it, or I'll draw my sword and cut off your head."

"No!" cried the witch.

So the soldier cut off her head. There she lay! But he tied up all his money in her apron, took it on his back like a bundle, put the tinder-box in his pocket, and went straight off towards the town.

That was a splendid town! And he put up at the very best inn, and asked for the finest rooms, and ordered his favourite dishes, for now he was rich, as he had so much money. The servant who had to clean his boots certainly thought them a remarkably old pair for such a rich gentleman; but he had not bought any new ones yet. The next day he procured proper boots and handsome clothes. Now our soldier had become a fine gentleman; and the people told him of all the splendid things which were in their city, and about the King, and what a pretty Princess the King's daughter was.

"Where can one get to see her?" asked the soldier.

"She is not to be seen at all," said they, all together;

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“ she lives in a great copper castle, with a great many walls and towers round about it ; no one but the King may go in and out there, for it has been prophesied that she shall marry a common soldier, and the King can't bear that.”

“ I should like to see her,” thought the soldier ; but he could not get leave to do so. Now he lived merrily, went to the theatre, drove in the King's garden, and gave much money to the poor ; and this was very kind of him, for he knew from old times how hard it is when one has not a shilling. Now he was rich, had fine clothes, and gained many friends, who all said he was a rare one, a true cavalier ; and that pleased the soldier well. But as he spent money every day and never earned any, he had at last only two shillings left ; and he was obliged to turn out of the fine rooms in which he had dwelt, and had to live in a little garret under the roof, and clean his boots for himself, and mend them with a darning-needle. None of his friends came to see him, for there were too many stairs to climb.

It was quite dark one evening, and he could not even buy himself a candle, when it occurred to him that there was a candle-end in the tinder-box which he had taken out of the hollow tree into which the witch had helped him. He brought out the tinder-box and the candle-end ; but as soon as he struck fire and the sparks rose up from the flint, the door flew open, and the dog who had eyes as big as a couple of tea-cups, and whom he had seen in the tree, stood before him, and said,

“ What are my lord's commands ? ”

“ What is this ? ” said the soldier. “ That's a famous tinder-box, if I can get everything with it that I want ! Bring me some money,” said he to the dog ; and *whisk !* the dog was gone, and *whisk !* he was back again, with a great bag full of shillings in his mouth.

Now the soldier knew what a capital tinder-box this was. If he struck it once, the dog came who sat upon the

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chest of copper money ; if he struck it twice, the dog came who had the silver ; and if he struck it three times, then appeared the dog who had the gold. Now the soldier moved back into the fine rooms, and appeared again in handsome clothes ; and all his friends knew him again, and cared very much for him indeed.

Once he thought to himself, “ It is a very strange thing that one cannot get to see the Princess. They all say she is very beautiful ; but what is the use of that, if she has always to sit in the great copper castle with the many towers ? Can I not get to see her at all ? Where is my tinder-box ? ” And so he struck a light, and *whisk !* came the dog with eyes as big as tea-cups.

“ It is midnight, certainly,” said the soldier, “ but I should very much like to see the Princess, only for one little moment.”

And the dog was outside the door directly, and, before the soldier thought it, came back with the Princess. She sat upon the dog’s back and slept ; and every one could see she was a real Princess, for she was so lovely. The soldier could not refrain from kissing her, for he was a thorough soldier. Then the dog ran back again with the Princess. But when morning came, and the King and Queen were drinking tea, the Princess said she had had a strange dream, the night before, about a dog and a soldier—that she had ridden upon the dog, and the soldier had kissed her.

“ That would be a fine history ! ” said the Queen.

So one of the old Court ladies had to watch the next night by the Princess’s bed, to see if this was really a dream, or what it might be.

The soldier had a great longing to see the lovely Princess again ; so the dog came in the night, took her away, and ran as fast as he could. But the old lady put on water-boots, and ran just as fast after him. When she saw that

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they both entered a great house, she thought, "Now I know where it is;" and with a bit of chalk she drew a great cross on the door. Then she went home and lay down, and the dog came up with the Princess; but when he saw that there was a cross drawn on the door where the soldier lived, he took a piece of chalk too, and drew crosses on all the doors in the town. And that was cleverly done, for now the lady could not find the right door, because all the doors had crosses upon them.

In the morning early came the King and the Queen, the old Court lady and all the officers, to see where it was the Princess had been. "Here it is!" said the King, when he saw the first door with a cross upon it. "No, my dear husband, it is there!" said the Queen, who descried another door which also showed a cross. "But there is one, and there is one!" said all, for wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors. So they saw that it would avail them nothing if they searched on.

But the Queen was an exceedingly clever woman, who could do more than ride in a coach. She took her great gold scissors, cut a piece of silk into pieces, and made a neat little bag: this bag she filled with fine wheat flour, and tied it on the Princess's back; and when that was done, she cut a little hole in the bag, so that the flour would be scattered along all the way which the Princess should take.

In the night the dog came again, took the Princess on his back, and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her very much, and would gladly have been a Prince, so that he might have her for his wife. The dog did not notice at all how the flour ran out in a stream from the castle to the windows of the soldier's house, where he ran up the wall with the Princess. In the morning the King and Queen saw well enough where their daughter had been, and they took the soldier and put him in prison.

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There he sat. Oh, but it was dark and disagreeable there! And they said to him, "To-morrow you shall be hanged." That was not amusing to hear, and he had left his tinder-box at the inn. In the morning he could see, through the iron grating of the little window, how the people were hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He heard the drums beat and saw the soldiers marching. All the people were running out, and among them was a shoemaker's boy with leather apron and slippers, and he galloped so fast that one of his slippers flew off, and came right against the wall where the soldier sat looking through the iron grating.

"Halloo, you shoemaker's boy! you needn't be in such a hurry," cried the soldier to him: "it will not begin till I come. But if you will run to where I lived, and bring me my tinder-box, you shall have four shillings; but you must put your best leg foremost."

The shoemaker's boy wanted to get the four shillings, so he went and brought the tinder-box, and—well, we shall hear now what happened.

Outside the town a great gallows had been built, and round it stood the soldiers and many hundred thousand people. The King and Queen sat on a splendid throne, opposite to the Judges and the whole Council. The soldier already stood upon the ladder; but as they were about to put the rope round his neck, he said that before a poor criminal suffered his punishment an innocent request was always granted to him. He wanted very much to smoke a pipe of tobacco, as it would be the last pipe he should smoke in the world. The King would not say "No" to this; so the soldier took his tinder-box and struck fire. One—two—three!—and there suddenly stood all the dogs—the one with eyes as big as tea-cups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the one whose eyes were as big as round towers.

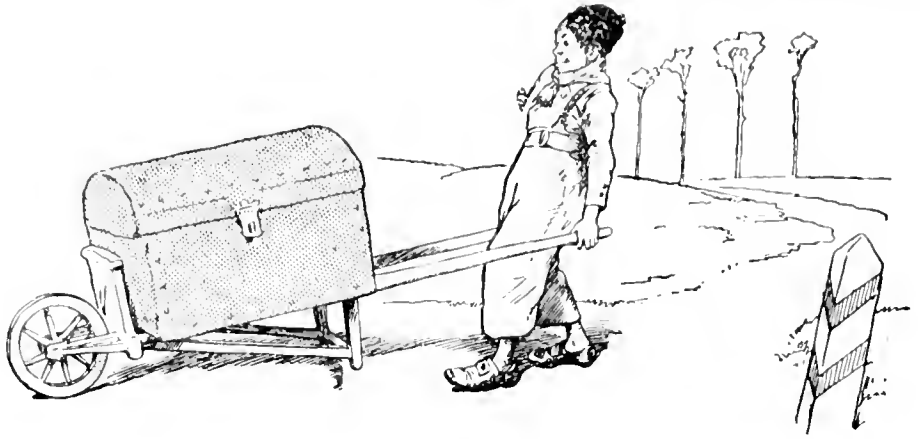
The Tinder-Box

“Help me now, so that I may not be hanged,” said the soldier.

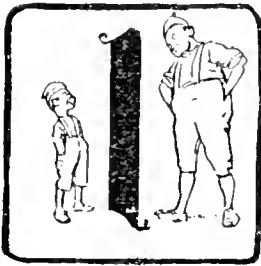
And the dogs fell upon the Judge and all the Council, seized one by the leg and another by the nose, and tossed them all many feet into the air, so that they fell down and were all broken to pieces.

“I won’t!” cried the King; but the biggest dog took him and the Queen and threw them after the others. Then the soldiers were afraid, and the people cried, “Little soldier, you shall be our King, and marry the beautiful Princess!”

So they put the soldier into the King’s coach, and all the three dogs darted on in front and cried “Hurrah!” and the boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The Princess came out of the copper castle, and became Queen, and she liked that well enough. The wedding lasted a week, and the three dogs sat at the table too, and opened their eyes wider than ever at all they saw.



Great Claus and Little Claus



IN a certain village there lived two men, and they had the same name—each was called Claus; but one had four horses and the other only a single horse. To distinguish them from each other, folks called him who had four horses Great Claus, and the one who had only a single horse Little Claus. Now we shall hear what happened to each of them, for this is a true story.

The whole week through Little Claus was obliged to plough for Great Claus, and to lend him his one horse; then Great Claus helped him out with all his four, but only once a week, and that on a holiday. Hurrah! how Little Claus smacked his whip over all five horses, for they were as good as his own on that one day. The sun shone gaily, and all the bells in the steeples were ringing; the people were all dressed in their best, and were going to church, with their hymn-books under their arms, to hear the clergyman speak, and they saw Little Claus ploughing

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with five horses ; but he was so merry that he smacked his whip again and again, and cried, "Gee up, all my five !"

"You must not talk so," said Great Claus, "for only the one horse is yours."

But when no one was passing Little Claus forgot that he was not to say this, and he cried, "Gee up, all my horses !"

"Now, I must beg of you to let that alone," cried Great Claus, "for if you say it again, I shall hit your horse on the head so that it will fall down dead, and then it will be all over with him."

"I will certainly not say it any more," said Little Claus.

But when people came by soon afterwards, and nodded "good-day" to him, he became very glad, and thought it looked very well after all that he had five horses to plough his field ; and so he smacked his whip again, and cried, "Gee up, all my horses !"

"I'll 'gee up' your horse!" said Great Claus. And he took the hatchet and hit the only horse of Little Claus on the head, so that it fell down and was dead immediately.

"Oh, now I haven't any horse at all!" said Little Claus, and began to cry.

Then he flayed the horse, and let the hide dry in the wind, and put it in a sack and hung it over his shoulder, and went to the town to sell his horse's skin.

He had a very long way to go, and was obliged to pass through a great dark wood, and the weather became dreadfully bad. He went quite astray, and before he got into the right way again it was evening, and it was too far to get home again or even to the town before nightfall.

Close by the road stood a large farm-house. The shutters were closed outside the windows, but the light could still be seen shining out over them.

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“I may be able to get leave to stop here through the night,” thought Little Claus; and he went and knocked.

The farmer’s wife opened the door; but when she heard what he wanted she told him to go away, declaring that her husband was not at home, and she would not receive strangers.

“Then I shall have to lie outside,” said Little Claus. And the farmer’s wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a great haystack, and between this and the farm-house was a little outhouse thatched with straw.

“Up there I can lie,” said Little Claus, when he looked up at the roof; “that is a capital bed. I suppose the stork won’t fly down and bite me in the legs.” For a living stork was standing on the roof, where he had his nest.

Now Little Claus climbed up to the roof of the shed, where he lay, and turned round to settle himself comfortably. The wooden shutters did not cover the windows at the top, and he could look straight into the room. There was a great table, with the cloth laid, and wine and roast meat and a glorious fish upon it. The farmer’s wife and the clerk were seated at table, and nobody besides. She was filling his glass, and he was digging his fork into the fish, for that was his favourite dish.

“If one could only get some too!” thought Little Claus, as he stretched out his head towards the window. Heavens! what a glorious cake he saw standing there! Yes, certainly, that *was* a feast.

Now he heard some one riding along the high-road. It was the woman’s husband, who was coming home. He was a good man enough, but he had the strange peculiarity that he could never bear to see a clerk. If a clerk appeared before his eyes he became quite wild. And that was the reason why the clerk had gone to the wife to wish her good-day, because he knew that her husband was not at home; and the good woman therefore put the best fare she had

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before him. But when they heard the man coming they were frightened, and the woman begged the clerk to creep into a great empty chest which stood there; and he did so, for he knew the husband could not bear the sight of a clerk. The woman quickly hid all the excellent meat and wine in her baking-oven; for if the man had seen that, he would have been certain to ask what it meant.

“Ah, yes!” sighed Little Claus, up in his shed, when he saw all the good fare put away.

“Is there any one up there?” asked the farmer; and he looked up at Little Claus. “Who are you lying there? Better come with me into the room.”

And Little Claus told him how he had lost his way, and asked leave to stay for the night.

“Yes, certainly,” said the peasant; “but first we must have something to live on.”

The woman received them both in a very friendly way, spread the cloth on a long table, and gave them a great dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry, and ate with a good appetite; but Little Claus could not help thinking of the capital roast meat, fish, and cake, which he knew were in the oven. Under the table, at his feet, he had laid the sack with the horse’s hide in it; for we know that he had come to sell it in the town. He did not relish the porridge, so he trod upon the sack, and the dry skin inside crackled quite loudly.

“Why, what have you in your sack?” asked the farmer.

“Oh, that’s a magician,” answered Little Claus. “He says we are not to eat porridge, for he has conjured the oven full of roast meat, fish, and cake.”

“Wonderful!” cried the farmer; and he opened the oven in a hurry, and found all the dainty provisions which his wife had hidden there, but which, as he thought, the wizard had conjured forth. The woman dared not say

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anything, but put the things at once on the table; and so they both ate of the meat, the fish, and the cake. Now Little Claus again trod on his sack, and made the hide creak.

“What does he say now?” said the farmer.

“He says,” replied Claus, “that he has conjured three bottles of wine for us too, and that they are standing there in the corner behind the oven.”

Now the woman was obliged to bring out the wine which she had hidden, and the farmer drank it and became very merry. He would have been very glad to see such a conjurer as Little Claus had there in the sack.

“Can he conjure the demon forth?” asked the farmer. “I should like to see him, for now I am merry.”

“Oh, yes,” said Little Claus, “my conjurer can do anything that I ask of him.—Can you not?” he added, and trod on the hide, so that it crackled. “He says ‘Yes.’ But the demon is very ugly to look at: we had better not see him.”

“Oh, I’m not at all afraid. Pray, what will he look like?”

“Why, he’ll look the very image of a clerk.”

“Ha!” said the farmer, “that *is* ugly! You must know, I can’t bear the sight of a clerk. But it doesn’t matter now, for I know that he’s a demon, so I shall easily stand it. Now I have courage, but he must not come too near me.”

“Now I will ask my conjurer,” said Little Claus; and he trod on the sack and held his ear down.

“What does he say?”

“He says you may go and open the chest that stands in the corner, and you will see the demon crouching in it; but you must hold the lid so that he doesn’t slip out.”

“Will you help me to hold him?” asked the farmer. And he went to the chest where the wife had hidden the real clerk, who sat in there and was very much afraid.



The woman begged the clerk to creep in.

Great Claus and Little Claus

The farmer opened the lid a little way and peeped in underneath it.

“Hu!” he cried, and sprang backward. “Yes, now I’ve seen him, and he looked exactly like our clerk. Oh, that was dreadful!”

Upon this they must drink. So they sat and drank until late into the night.

“You must sell me that conjurer,” said the farmer. “Ask as much as you like for him: I’ll give you a whole bushel of money directly.”

“No, that I can’t do,” said Little Claus: “only think how much use I can make of this conjurer.”

“Oh, I should so much like to have him!” cried the farmer; and he went on begging.

“Well,” said Little Claus, at last, “as you have been so kind as to give me shelter for the night, I will let it be so. You shall have the conjurer for a bushel of money; but I must have the bushel heaped up.”

“That you shall have,” replied the farmer. “But you must take the chest yonder away with you. I will not keep it in my house an hour. One cannot know,—perhaps he may be there still.”

Little Claus gave the farmer his sack with the dry hide in it, and got in exchange a whole bushel of money, and that heaped up. The farmer also gave him a big truck, on which to carry off his money and chest.

“Farewell!” said Little Claus; and he went off with his money and the big chest, in which the clerk was still sitting.

On the other side of the wood was a great deep river. The water rushed along so rapidly that one could scarcely swim against the stream. A fine new bridge had been built over it. Little Claus stopped on the centre of the bridge, and said quite loud, so that the clerk could hear it,

“Ho, what shall I do with this stupid chest? It’s as

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heavy as if stones were in it. I shall only get tired if I drag it any farther, so I'll throw it into the river: if it swims home to me, well and good; and if it does not, it will be no great matter."

And he took the chest with one hand, and lifted it up a little, as if he intended to throw it into the river.

"No! let be!" cried the clerk from within the chest; "let me out first!"

"Hu!" exclaimed Little Claus, pretending to be frightened, "he's in there still! I must make haste and throw him into the river, that he may be drowned."

"Oh, no, no!" screamed the clerk. "I'll give you a whole bushel-full of money if you'll let me go."

"Why, that's another thing!" said Little Claus; and he opened the chest.

The clerk crept quickly out, pushed the empty chest into the water, and went to his house, where Little Claus received a whole bushel-full of money. He had already received one from the farmer, and so now he had his truck loaded with money.

"See, I've been well paid for the horse," he said to himself when he had got home to his own room, and was emptying all the money into a heap in the middle of the floor. "That will vex Great Claus when he hears how rich I have grown through my one horse; but I won't tell him about it outright."

So he sent a boy to Great Claus to ask for a bushel measure.

"What can he want with it?" thought Great Claus. And he smeared some tar underneath the measure, so that some part of whatever was measured should stick to it. And thus it happened; for when he received the measure back, there were three new eight-shilling pieces adhering to it.

"What's this?" cried Great Claus; and he ran off at

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once to Little Claus. "Where did you get all that money from?"

"Oh, that's for my horse's skin. I sold it yesterday evening."

"That's really being well paid," said Great Claus. And he ran home in a hurry, took an axe, and killed all his four horses; then he flayed them, and carried off their skins to the town.

"Hides! hides! who'll buy any hides?" he cried through the streets.

All the shoemakers and tanners came running, and asked how much he wanted for them.

"A bushel of money for each!" said Great Claus.

"Are you mad?" said they. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! hides!" he cried again; and to all who asked him what the hides would cost, he replied, "A bushel of money."

"He wants to make fools of us," they all exclaimed. And the shoemakers took their straps, and the tanners their aprons, and they began to beat Great Claus.

"Hides! hides!" they called after him, jeeringly. "Yes, we'll tan your hide for you till the red broth runs down. Out of the town with him!" And Great Claus made the best haste he could, for he had never yet been thrashed as he was thrashed now.

"Well," said he, when he got home, "Little Claus shall pay for this. I'll kill him for it."

Now, at Little Claus's the old grandmother had died. She had been very harsh and unkind to him, but yet he was very sorry, and took the dead woman and laid her in his warm bed, to see if she would not come to life again. There he intended she should remain all through the night, and he himself would sit in the corner and sleep on a chair, as he had often done before. As he sat there, in the night

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the door opened, and Great Claus came in with his axe. He knew where Little Claus's bed stood; and going straight up to it, he hit the old grandmother on the head, thinking she was Little Claus.

"D'ye see," said he, "you shall not make a fool of me again." And then he went home.

"That's a bad fellow, that man," said Little Claus. "He wanted to kill me. It was a good thing for my old grandmother that she was dead already. He would have taken her life."

And he dressed his grandmother in her Sunday clothes, borrowed a horse from his neighbour, harnessed it to a car, and put the old lady on the back seat, so that she could not fall out when he drove. And so they trundled through the wood. When the sun rose they were in front of an inn; there Little Claus pulled up, and went in to have some refreshment.

The host had very, very much money; he was also a very good man, but exceedingly irritable and hot-tempered.

"Good-morning," said he to Little Claus. "You've put on your Sunday clothes early to-day."

"Yes," answered Little Claus; "I'm going to town with my old grandmother; she is sitting there on the car without. I can't bring her into the room. Will you give her a glass of mead? But you must speak very loud, for she can't hear well."

"Yes, that I'll do," said the host. And he poured out a great glass of mead, and went out with it to the dead grandmother, who had been placed upright in the carriage.

"Here's a glass of mead from your son," quoth mine host. But the dead woman replied not a word, but sat quite still. "Don't you hear?" cried the host, as loud as he could; "here is a glass of mead from your son!"

Once more he called out the same thing, but as she

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persisted in not hearing him, he became angry at last, and threw the glass in her face, so that the mead ran down over her nose, and she tumbled backwards into the car, for she had only been put upright, and not bound fast.

“Halloo!” cried Little Claus, running out at the door, and seizing the host by the throat, “you’ve killed my grandmother now! See, there’s a big hole in her forehead.”

“Oh, here’s a misfortune!” cried the host, wringing his hands. “That all comes of my hot temper. Dear Little Claus, I’ll give you a bushel of money, and have your grandmother buried as if she were my own; only keep quiet, or I shall have my head cut off, and that would be so very disagreeable!”

So Little Claus again received a whole bushel of money, and the host buried the old grandmother as if she had been his own. And when Little Claus came home with all his money, he at once sent his boy to Great Claus to borrow a bushel measure.

“What’s that?” said Great Claus. “Have I not killed him? I must go myself and see to this.” And so he went over himself with the bushel to Little Claus.

“Now, where did you get all that money from?” he asked; and he opened his eyes wide when he saw all that had been brought together.

“You killed my grandmother, and not me,” replied Little Claus; “and I’ve been and sold her, and got a whole bushel of money for her.”

“That’s really being well paid,” said Great Claus; and he hastened home, took an axe, and killed his own grandmother directly. Then he put her on a carriage, and drove off to the town with her, to where the apothecary lived, and asked him if he would buy a dead person.

“Who is it, and where did you get him from?” asked the apothecary.

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"It's my grandmother," answered Great Claus. "I've killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"Heaven save us!" cried the apothecary, "you're raving! Don't say such things, or you may lose your head." And he told him earnestly what a bad deed this was that he had done, and what a bad man he was, and that he must be punished. And Great Claus was so frightened that he jumped out of the surgery straight into his carriage, and whipped the horses, and drove home. But the apothecary and all the people thought him mad, and so they let him drive whither he would.

"You shall pay for this!" said Great Claus, when he was out upon the high-road: "yes, yes, you shall pay me for this, Little Claus!" And directly he got home he took the biggest sack he could find, and went over to Little Claus, and said, "Now, you've tricked me again! First I killed my horses, and then my old grandmother! That's all your fault; but you shall never trick me any more." And he seized Little Claus round the body, and thrust him into the sack, and took him upon his back, and called out to him, "Now I shall go off with you and drown you."

It was a long way that he had to travel before he came to the river, and Little Claus was not too light to carry. The road led him close to a church: the organ was playing, and the people were singing so beautifully! Then Great Claus put down his sack, with Little Claus in it, close to the church door, and thought it would be a very good thing to go in and hear a psalm before he went farther; for Little Claus could not get out, and all the people were in church; and so he went in.

"Ah, yes! yes!" sighed Little Claus in the sack; and he turned and twisted, but he found it impossible to loosen the cord. Then there came by an old drover with snow-white hair, and a great staff in his hand: he was driving a whole herd of cows and oxen before him, and they

Great Claus and Little Claus

stumbled against the sack in which Little Claus was confined, so that it was overthrown.

“Oh, dear!” sighed Little Claus, “I’m so young yet, and am to go to heaven directly!”

“And I, poor fellow,” said the drover, “am so old already, and can’t get there yet!”

“Open the sack,” cried Little Claus; “creep into it instead of me, and you will get to heaven directly.”

“With all my heart,” replied the drover; and he untied the sack, out of which Little Claus crept forth immediately.

“But will you look after the cattle?” said the old man; and he crept into the sack at once, whereupon Little Claus tied it up, and went his way with all the cows and oxen.

Soon afterwards Great Claus came out of the church. He took the sack on his shoulders again, although it seemed to him as if the sack had become lighter; for the old drover was only half as heavy as Little Claus.

“How light he is to carry now! Yes, that is because I have heard a psalm.”

So he went to the river, which was deep and broad, threw the sack with the old drover in it into the water, and called after him, thinking that it was Little Claus, “You lie there! Now you shan’t trick me any more!”

Then he went home; but when he came to a place where there was a cross road, he met Little Claus driving all his beasts.

“What’s this?” cried Great Claus. “Have I not drowned you?”

“Yes,” replied Little Claus, “you threw me into the river less than half-an-hour ago.”

“But wherever did you get all those fine beasts from?” asked Great Claus.

“These beasts are sea-cattle,” replied Little Claus. “I’ll tell you the whole story,—and thank you for drowning me,

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for now I'm at the top of the tree. I am really rich! How frightened I was when I lay huddled in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears when you threw me down from the bridge into the cold water! I sank to the bottom immediately; but I did not knock myself, for the most splendid soft grass grows down there. Upon that I fell; and immediately the sack was opened, and the loveliest maiden, with snow-white garments and a green wreath upon her wet hair, took me by the hand, and said, 'Are you come, Little Claus? Here you have some cattle to begin with. A mile farther along the road there is a whole herd more, which I will give to you.' And now I saw that the river formed a great highway for the people of the sea. Down in its bed they walked and drove directly from the sea, and straight into the land, to where the river ends. There it was so beautifully full of flowers and of the freshest grass; the fishes, which swam in the water, shot past my ears, just as here the birds in the air. What pretty people there were there, and what fine cattle pasturing on mounds and in ditches!"

"But why did you come up again to us directly?" asked Great Claus. "I should not have done that, if it is so beautiful down there."

"Why," replied Little Claus, "in that I just acted with good policy. You heard me tell you that the sea-maiden said, 'A mile farther along the road'—and by the road she meant the river, for she can't go anywhere else—'there is a whole herd of cattle for you.' But I know what bends the stream makes—sometimes this, sometimes that; there's a long way to go round: no, the thing can be managed in a shorter way by coming here to the land, and driving across the fields towards the river again. In this manner I save myself almost half-a-mile, and get all the quicker to my sea-cattle!"

"Oh, you are a fortunate man!" said Great Claus. "Do

Great Claus and Little Claus

you think I should get some sea-cattle too if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"Yes, I think so," replied Little Claus. "But I cannot carry you in the sack as far as the river; you are too heavy for me! But if you will go there, and creep into the sack yourself, I will throw you in with a great deal of pleasure."

"Thanks!" said Great Claus; "but if I don't get any sea-cattle when I am down there, I shall beat you, you may be sure."

"Oh, no; don't be so fierce!"

And so they went together to the river. When the beasts, which were thirsty, saw the stream, they ran as fast as they could to get at the water.

"See how they hurry!" cried Little Claus. "They are longing to get back to the bottom."

"Yes, but help me first!" said Great Claus, "or else you shall be beaten."

And so he crept into the great sack, which had been laid across the back of one of the oxen.

"Put a stone in, for I'm afraid I shan't sink else," said Great Claus.

"That can be done," replied Little Claus; and he put a big stone into the sack, tied the rope tightly, and pushed against it. *Plump!* There lay Great Claus in the river, and sank at once to the bottom.

"I'm afraid he won't find the cattle!" said Little Claus; and then he drove homeward with what he had.



Thumbelina



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

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

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

“Thank you,” said the woman; and she gave the witch twelve shillings, for that is what it cost.

Then she went home and planted the barleycorn, and immediately there grew up a great handsome flower, which looked like a tulip; but the leaves were tightly closed, as though it were still a bud.

Thumbelina

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

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

Once as she lay at night in her pretty bed, there came an old Toad creeping through the window, in which one pane was broken. The Toad was very ugly, big and damp: it hopped straight down upon the table, where Thumbelina lay sleeping under the rose-leaf.

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

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

“Don’t speak so loud, or she will awake,” said the old Toad. “She might run away from us, for she is as light

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as a bit of swan's-down. We will put her out in the brook upon one of the broad water-lily leaves. That will be just like an island for her, she is so small and light. Then she can't get away, while we put the state room under the marsh in order, where you are to live and keep house together."

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

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

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

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

Thumbelina

No, that must never be! They assembled together in the water around the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and with their teeth they gnawed away the stalk, and so the leaf swam down the stream; and away went Thumbelina far away, where the Toad could not get at her.

Thumbelina sailed by many cities, and the little birds which sat in the bushes saw her, and said, "What a lovely



little girl!" The leaf swam away with them, farther and farther; so Thumbelina travelled out of the country.

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

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glided onward much faster, and Thumbelina too, for she stood upon the leaf.

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

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

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

“She has not any feelers!” cried another.

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

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

The whole summer through poor Thumbelina lived quite

Thumbelina

alone in the great wood. She wove herself a bed out of blades of grass, and hung it under a shamrock, so that she was protected from the rain; she plucked the honey out of the flowers for food, and drank of the dew which stood every morning upon the leaves. Thus summer and autumn passed away; but now came winter, the cold long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly before her flew away; trees and flowers shed their leaves; the great shamrock under which she had lived shrivelled up, and there remained nothing of it but a yellow withered stalk; and she was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she herself was so frail and delicate—poor little Thumbelina! she was nearly frozen. It began to snow, and every snow-flake that fell upon her was like a whole shovel-full thrown upon one of us, for we are tall, and she was only an inch long. Then she wrapped herself in a dry leaf, and that tore in the middle, and would not warm her—she shivered with cold.

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

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

As she was pleased with Thumbelina, she said, “If you like you may stay with me through the winter, but you

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must keep my room clean and neat, and tell me little stories, for I am very fond of them."

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

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

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

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

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

The Mole took a bit of decayed wood in his mouth, and it glimmered like fire in the dark; then he went first and lighted them through the long dark passage. When they came where the dead bird lay, the Mole thrust up his broad nose against the ceiling, so that a great hole was made, through which the daylight could shine down. In the

Thumbelina

middle of the floor lay a dead Swallow, his beautiful wings pressed close against his sides, and his head and feet drawn back under his feathers : the poor bird had certainly died of cold. Thumbelina was very sorry for this : she was very fond of all the little birds, who had sung and twittered so prettily before her through the summer ; but the Mole gave him a push with his crooked legs, and said, “ Now he doesn't pipe any more. It must be miserable to be born a little bird. I'm thankful that none of my children can be that : such a bird has nothing but his 'tweet-tweet,' and has to starve in the winter !”

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

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

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

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

“ Farewell, you pretty little bird !” said she. “ Farewell ! and thanks to you for your beautiful song in the summer, when all the trees were green, and the sun shone down warmly upon us.” And then she laid the bird's head upon her heart. But the bird was not dead ; he was only lying

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there torpid with cold ; and now he had been warmed, and came to life again.

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

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

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

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

“Oh !” she said, “it is so cold without. It snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed, and I will nurse you.”

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

The whole winter the Swallow remained there, and Thumbelina nursed and tended him heartily. Neither the Field Mouse nor the Mole heard anything about it, for they did not like the poor Swallow. So soon as the spring came,

Thumbelina

and the sun warmed the earth, the Swallow bade Thumbelina farewell, and she opened the hole which the Mole had made in the ceiling. The sun shone in upon them gloriously, and the Swallow asked if Thumbelina would go with him; she could sit upon his back, and they would fly away far into the green wood. But Thumbelina knew that the old Field Mouse would be grieved if she left her.

“No, I cannot!” said Thumbelina.

“Farewell, farewell, you good, pretty girl!” said the Swallow; and he flew out into the sunshine. Thumbelina looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she was heartily and sincerely fond of the poor Swallow.

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

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

Thumbelina had to turn the spindle, and the Mole hired four spiders to weave for her day and night. Every evening the Mole paid her a visit; and he was always saying that when the summer should draw to a close, the sun would not shine nearly so hot, for that now it burned the earth almost as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer should have gone, then he would keep his wedding day with Thumbelina. But she was not glad at all, for she did not like the tiresome Mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she crept out at the door; and when the wind blew the corn-cars apart, so that she could see the

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blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was up there, and wished heartily to see her dear Swallow again. But the Swallow did not come back; he had doubtless flown far away, in the fair green forest. When autumn came on, Thumbelina had all her outfit ready.

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

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

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

Now the wedding was to be held. The Mole had already come to fetch Thumbelina; she was to live with him, deep under the earth, and never to come out into the warm sunshine, for that he did not like. The poor little thing was very sorrowful; she was now to say farewell to the glorious sun, which, after all, she had been allowed by the Field Mouse to see from the threshold of the door.

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

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

Thumbelina

“The cold winter is coming now,” said the Swallow ; “ I am going to fly far away into the warm countries. Will you come with me? You can sit upon my back, then we shall fly from the ugly Mole and his dark room—away, far away, over the mountains, to the warm countries, where the sun shines warmer than here, where it is always summer, and there are lovely flowers. Only fly with me, you dear little Thumbelina, you who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark earthy passage.”

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

At last they came to the warm countries. There the sun shone far brighter than here ; the sky seemed twice as high ; in ditches and on the hedges grew the most beautiful blue and green grapes ; lemons and oranges hung in the woods ; the air was fragrant with myrtles and balsams, and on the roads the loveliest children ran about, playing with the gay butterflies. But the Swallow flew still farther, and it became more and more beautiful. Under the more glorious green trees by the blue lake stood a palace of dazzling white marble, from the olden time. Vines clustered around the lofty pillars ; at the top were many Swallows’ nests, and in one of these the Swallow lived who carried Thumbelina.

“That is my house,” said the Swallow ; “but it is not right that you should live there. It is not yet properly arranged by a great deal, and you will not be content with it. Select for yourself one of the splendid flowers which grow down

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yonder, then I will put you into it, and you shall have everything as nice as you can wish."

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

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

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

The little Prince was very much frightened by the Swallow, for it was quite a gigantic bird to him, who was so small. But when he saw Thumbelina, he became very glad ; she was the prettiest maiden he had ever seen. Therefore he took off his golden crown, and put it upon her, asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and then she should be Queen of all the flowers. Now this was truly a different kind of man to the son of the Toad, and the Mole with the black velvet fur. She therefore said "Yes" to the charming Prince. And out of every flower came a lady or a lord, so pretty to behold that it was a delight ; each one brought Thumbelina a present ; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings which had belonged to a great white fly ; these were fastened to Thumbelina's back, and now she could fly from flower to flower. Then there was much rejoicing ; and the little Swallow sat above them in the nest, and was to sing the marriage song, which he accordingly did as well as he could ; but yet in his heart

Thumbelina

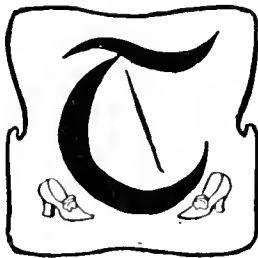
he was sad, for he was so fond, oh! so fond of Thumbelina, and would have liked never to part from her.

“You shall not be called Thumbelina,” said the Flower Angel to her; “that is an ugly name, and you are too fair for it—we will call you Maia.”

The Goloshes of Fortune

I

A Beginning



THE house in Copenhagen, not far from the King's New Market, was brilliantly lighted, for a company—a very large company—had assembled, having received invitations to an evening party there. One half of the company already sat at the card-tables, the other half awaited the result of the hostess's question, "What shall we do now?" They had progressed so far, and the entertainment began to show some degree of animation. Among other subjects the conversation turned upon the Middle Ages. Some considered that period much more interesting than our own time: yes, Councillor Knap defended this view so zealously that the lady of the house went over at once to his side; and both loudly exclaimed against Oersted's treatise in the Almanac on old and modern times, in which the chief advantage is given to our own day. The councillor considered the times of the Danish King Hans as the noblest and happiest age.

While the conversation takes this turn, only interrupted for a moment by the arrival of a newspaper, which con-

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tained nothing worth reading, we will betake ourselves to the antechamber, where the cloaks, sticks, and goloshes had found a place. Here sat two maids—an old one and a young one. One would have thought they had come to escort their mistresses home; but, on looking at them more closely, the observer could see that they were not ordinary servants: their shapes were too graceful for that, their complexions too delicate, and the cut of their dresses too uncommon. They were two fairies. The younger was not Fortune, but lady's-maid to one of her ladies of the bed-chamber, who carry about the more trifling gifts of Fortune. The elder one looked somewhat more gloomy—she was Care, who always goes herself in her own exalted person to perform her business, for thus she knows that it is well done.

They were telling each other where they had been that day. The messenger of Fortune had only transacted a few unimportant affairs, as, for instance, she had preserved a new bonnet from a shower of rain, had procured an honest man a bow from a titled Nobody, and so on; but what she had still to relate was something quite extraordinary.

“I can likewise tell,” she said, “that to-day is my birthday; and in honour of it a pair of goloshes has been entrusted to me, which I am to bring to the human race. These goloshes have the property that every one who puts them on is at once transported to the time and place in which he likes best to be—every wish in reference to time, place, and circumstance is at once fulfilled; and so for once man can be happy here below!”

“Believe me,” said Care, “he will be very unhappy, and will bless the moment when he can get rid of the goloshes again.”

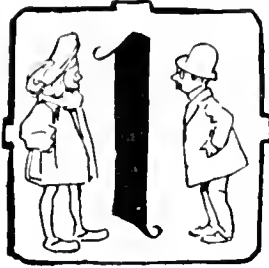
“What are you thinking of?” retorted the other. “Now I shall put them at the door. Somebody will take them by mistake, and become the happy one.”

You see, this was the dialogue they held.

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II

What happened to the Councillor



It was late. Councillor Knap, lost in contemplation of the times of King Hans, wished to get home; and fate willed that instead of his own goloshes he should put on those of Fortune, and thus went out into East Street. But by the power of the goloshes he had been put back three hundred years—into the days of King Hans; and therefore he put his foot into mud and mire in the street, because in those days there was not any pavement.

“Why, this is horrible—how dirty it is here!” said the councillor. “The good pavement is gone, and all the lamps are put out.”

The moon did not yet stand high enough to give much light, and the air was tolerably thick, so that all objects seemed to melt together in the darkness. At the next corner a lamp hung before a picture of the Madonna, but the light it gave was as good as none, he only noticed it when he stood just under it, and his eyes fell upon the painted figure.

“That is probably a museum of art,” thought he, “where they have forgotten to take down the sign.”

A couple of men in the costume of those past days went by him.

“How strange they look!” he said. “They must have come from a masquerade.”

Suddenly there was a sound of drums and fifes, and

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torches gleamed brightly. The councillor started. And now he saw a strange procession go past. First came a whole troop of drummers, beating their instruments very dexterously; they were followed by men-at-arms, with longbows and crossbows. The chief man in the procession was a clerical lord. The astonished councillor asked what was the meaning of this, and who the man might be.

“That is the Bishop of Zealand.”

“What in the world has come to the bishop?” said the councillor, with a sigh, shaking his head. “This could not possibly be the bishop!”

Thinking over this, and without looking to the right or to the left, the councillor went through the East Street, and over the Highbridge Place. The bridge which led to the Palace Square was not to be found; he perceived the shore of a shallow water, and at length saw two people in a boat.

“Do you wish to be ferried over to the Holm, sir?” they asked.

“To the Holm!” repeated the councillor, who did not know, you see, in what period he was. “I want to go to Christian’s Haven and to Little Turf Street.”

The men stared at him.

“Pray tell me where the bridge is?” said he. “It is shameful that no lanterns are lighted here; and it is as muddy, too, as if one were walking in a marsh.” But the longer he talked with the boatmen the less could he understand them. “I don’t understand your Bornholm talk,” he at last cried, angrily, and turned his back upon them. He could not find the bridge, nor was there any paling. “It is quite scandalous how things look here!” he said—never had he thought his own times so miserable as this evening. “I think it will be best if I take a cab,” thought he. But where were the cabs?—not one was to be seen. “I shall have to go back to the King’s New Market, where

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there are many carriages standing, otherwise I shall never get as far as Christian's Haven."

Now he went towards East Street, and had almost gone through it when the moon burst forth.

"What in the world have they been erecting here?" he exclaimed, when he saw the East Gate, which in those days stood at the end of East Street.

In the meantime, however, he found a passage open, and through this he came out upon our New Market; but it was a broad meadow. Single bushes stood forth, and across the meadow ran a great canal or stream. A few miserable wooden booths for Dutch skippers were erected on the opposite shore.

"Either I behold a *Fata Morgana*, or I am tipsy," sighed the councillor. "What can that be? What can that be?"

He turned back, in the full persuasion that he must be ill. In walking up the street he looked more closely at the houses; most of them were built of laths, and many were only thatched with straw.

"No, I don't feel well at all!" he lamented. "And yet I only drank one glass of punch! But I cannot stand that; and besides, it was very foolish to give us punch and warm salmon. I shall mention that to our hostess—the agent's lady. Suppose I go back and say how I feel? But that looks ridiculous, and it is a question if they will still be up."

He looked for the house, but could not find it.

"That is dreadful!" he cried; "I don't know East Street again. Not one shop is to be seen; old, miserable, tumble-down huts are all I see, as if I were at Roeskilde or Ringstedt. Oh, I am ill! It's no use to make ceremony. But where in all the world is the agent's house? It is no longer the same; but within there are people up still. I certainly must be ill!"

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He now reached a half-open door, where the light shone through a chink. It was a tavern of that date—a kind of beer-house. The room had the appearance of a Dutch wine-shop; a number of people, consisting of seamen, citizens of Copenhagen, and a few scholars, sat in deep conversation over their jugs, and paid little attention to the new-comer.

“I beg pardon,” said the councillor to the hostess, “but I feel very unwell; would you let them get me a fly to go to Christian’s Haven?”

The woman looked at him and shook her head; then she spoke to him in German.

The councillor now supposed that she did not understand Danish, so he repeated his wish in the German language. This, and his costume, convinced the woman that he was a foreigner. She soon understood that he felt unwell, and therefore brought him a jug of water. It certainly tasted a little of sea-water, though it had been taken from the spring outside.

The councillor leaned his head upon his hand, drew a deep breath, and thought of all the strange things that were happening about him.

“Is that to-day’s number of the ‘Day’?” he said, quite mechanically, for he saw the woman was putting away a large sheet of paper.

She did not understand what he meant, but handed him the leaf: it was a woodcut representing a strange appearance in the air which had been seen in the city of Cologne.

“This is very old,” said the councillor, who became quite cheerful at sight of this antiquity. “How did you come by this strange leaf? This is very interesting, although the whole thing is a fable. Now-a-days these appearances are explained to be northern lights that have been seen; probably they arise from electricity.”

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Those who sat nearest to him and heard his speech looked at him in surprise, and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said, with a very grave face,

“You must certainly be a very learned man, sir!”

“Oh, no!” replied the councillor; “I can only say a word or two about things one ought to understand.”

“*Modestia* is a beautiful virtue,” said the man. “Moreover, I must say to your speech, ‘*mihi secus videtur* ;’ yet I will gladly suspend my *judicium*.”

“May I ask with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?” asked the councillor.

“I am a bachelor of theology,” replied the man.

This answer sufficed for the councillor; the title corresponded with the garb.

“Certainly,” he thought, “this must be an old village school-master, a queer character, such as one finds sometimes over in Jutland.”

“This is certainly not a *locus docendi*,” began the man; “but I beg you to take the trouble to speak. You are doubtless well read in the ancients?”

“Oh, yes,” replied the councillor. “I am fond of reading useful old books; and am fond of the modern ones too, with the exception of the ‘Every-day Stories,’ of which we have enough, in all conscience.”

“Every-day Stories?” said the bachelor, inquiringly.

“Yes, I mean the new romances we have now.”

“Oh!” said the man, with a smile, “they are very witty, and are much read at Court. The King is especially partial to the romance by Messieurs Iffven and Gaudian, which talks about King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table. He has jested about it with his noble lords.”

“That I certainly have not read,” said the councillor: “that must be quite a new book published by Heiberg.”

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“No,” retorted the man, “it is not published by Heiberg, but by Godfrey von Gehmen.” *

“Indeed! is he the author?” asked the councillor. “That is a very old name: was not that the name of about the first printer who appeared in Denmark?”

“Why, he *is* our first printer,” replied the man.

So far it had gone well. But now one of the men began to speak of a pestilence which he said had been raging a few years ago: he meant the plague of 1484. The councillor supposed he meant the cholera, and so the conversation went on tolerably. The Freebooters' War of 1490 was so recent that it could not escape mention. The English pirates had taken ships from the very wharves, said the man; and the councillor, who was well acquainted with the events of 1801, joined in manfully against the English. The rest of the talk, however, did not pass over so well; every moment there was a contradiction. The good bachelor was terribly ignorant, and the simplest assertion of the councillor seemed too bold or too fantastic. They looked at each other, and when it became too bad, the bachelor spoke Latin, in the hope that he would be better understood, but it was of no use.

“How are you now?” asked the hostess, and she plucked the councillor by the sleeve.

Now his recollection came back; in the course of the conversation he had forgotten everything that had happened.

“Good Heavens! where am I?” he said, and he felt dizzy when he thought of it.

“We'll drink claret, mead, and Bremen beer,” cried one of the guests, “and you shall drink with us.”

Two girls came in. One of them had on a cap of two colours. They poured out drink and bowed; the councillor felt a cold shudder running all down his back. “What's

* The first printer and publisher in Denmark under King Hans.

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that? What's that?" he cried; but he was obliged to drink with them. They took possession of the good man quite politely. He was in despair, and when one said that he was tipsy he felt not the slightest doubt regarding the truth of the statement, and only begged them to procure him a droschky. Now they thought he was speaking Muscovite.

Never had he been in such rude vulgar company.

"One would think the country was falling back into heathenism," was his reflection. "This is the most terrible moment of my life."

But at the same time the idea occurred to him to bend down under the table, and then to creep to the door. He did so; but just as he had reached the entry, the others discovered his intention. They seized him by the feet, and now the goloshes, to his great good fortune, came off, and—the whole enchantment vanished.

The councillor saw quite plainly, in front of him, a lamp burning, and behind it a great building; everything looked familiar and splendid. It was East Street, as we know it now. He lay with his legs turned towards a porch, and opposite to him sat the watchman asleep.

"Good Heavens! have I been lying here in the street dreaming?" he exclaimed. "Yes, this is East Street sure enough! how splendidly bright and gay! It is terrible what an effect that one glass of punch must have had on me!"

Two minutes afterwards he was sitting in a fly, which drove him out to Christian's Haven. He thought of the terror and anxiety he had undergone, and praised from his heart the happy present, our own time, which, with all its shortcomings, was far better than the period in which he had been placed a short time before.

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III

The Watchman's Adventures

“ON my word, yonder lies a pair of goloshes!” said the watchman. “They must certainly belong to the lieutenant who lives upstairs. They are lying close to the door.”

The honest man would gladly have rung the bell and delivered them, for upstairs there was a light still burning; but he did not wish to disturb the other people in the house, and so he let it alone.

“It must be very warm to have a pair of such things on,” said he. “How nice and soft the leather is!” They fitted his feet very well. “How droll it is in the world! Now, he might lie down in his warm bed, and yet he does not! There he is pacing up and down the room. He is a happy man! He has neither wife nor children, and every evening he is at a party. Oh, I wish I were he, then I should be a happy man!”

As he uttered this wish, the goloshes he had put on produced their effect, and the watchman was transported into the body and being of the lieutenant. Then he stood up in the room, and held a little pink paper in his fingers, on which was a poem, a poem written by the lieutenant himself. For who is there who has not once in his life had a poetic moment? And at such a moment, if one writes down one's thoughts, there is poetry.

Yes, people write poetry when they are in love: but a prudent man does not print such poems. The lieutenant was in love—and poor—that's a triangle, or, so to speak, the half of a broken square of happiness. The lieutenant felt that very keenly, and so he laid his head against the window-frame and sighed a deep sigh.

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“The poor watchman in the street yonder is far happier than I. He does not know what I call want. He has a home, a wife, and children, who weep at his sorrow and rejoice at his joy. Oh! I should be happier than I am, could I change my being for his, and pass through life with his humble desires and hopes. Yes, he is happier than I!”

In that same moment the watchman became a watchman again; for through the power of the goloshes of Fortune he had assumed the personality of the lieutenant; but then we know he felt far less content, and preferred to be just what he had despised a short time before. So the watchman became a watchman again.

“That was an ugly dream,” said he, “but droll enough. It seemed to me that I was the lieutenant up yonder, and that it was not pleasant at all. I was without the wife and the boys, who are now ready to half stifle me with kisses.”

He sat down again and nodded. The dream would not go quite out of his thoughts. He had the goloshes still on his feet. A falling star glided down along the horizon.

“There went one,” said he, “but for all that, there are enough left. I should like to look at those things a little nearer, especially the moon, for that won’t vanish under one’s hands. The student for whom my wife washes says that when we die we fly from one star to another. That’s not true, but it would be very nice. If I could only make a little spring up there, then my body might lie here on the stairs for all I care.”

Now there are certain assertions we should be very cautious of making in this world, but doubly careful when we have goloshes of Fortune on our feet. Just hear what happened to the watchman.

So far as we are concerned, we all understand the rapidity of dispatch by steam; we have tried it either in

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railways, or in steamers across the sea. But this speed is as the crawling of the sloth or the march of the snail in comparison with the swiftness with which light travels. That flies nineteen millions times quicker. Death is an electric shock we receive in our hearts, and on the wings of electricity the liberated soul flies away. The sunlight requires eight minutes and a few seconds for a journey of more than ninety-five millions of miles; on the wings of electric power the soul requires only a few moments to accomplish the same flight. The space between the orbs of the universe is, for her, not greater than, for us, the distances between the houses of our friends dwelling in the same town, and even living close together. Yet this electric shock costs us the life of the body here below, unless, like the watchman, we have the magic goloshes on.

In a few seconds the watchman had traversed the distance of two hundred and sixty thousand miles to the moon, which body, as we know, consists of a much lighter material than that of our earth, and is, as we should say, soft as new-fallen snow. He found himself on one of the many ring mountains with which we are familiar with Dr. Mädler's great map of the moon. Within the ring a great bowl-shaped hollow went down to the depth of a couple of miles. At the base of the hollow lay a town, of whose appearance we can only form an idea by pouring the white of an egg into a glass of water: the substance here was just as soft as white of egg, and formed similar towers, and cupolas, and terraces like sails, transparent and floating in the thin air. Our earth hung over his head like a great dark red ball.

He immediately became aware of a number of beings, who were certainly what we call "men," but their appearance was very different from ours. If they had been put up in a row and painted, one would have said, "That's a beautiful arabesque!" They had also a language; but no one

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could expect that the soul of the watchman should understand it. But the watchman's soul did understand it, for our souls have far greater abilities than we suppose. Does not its wonderful dramatic talents show itself in our dreams? Then every one of our acquaintances appears speaking in his own character and with his own voice, in a way that not one of us could imitate in our waking hours. How does our soul bring back to us people of whom we have not thought for many years? Suddenly they come into our souls with their smallest peculiarities about them. In fact, it is a fearful thing, that memory which our souls possess: it can reproduce every sin, every bad thought. And then, it may be asked, shall we be able to give an account of every idle word that has been in our hearts and on our lips?

Thus the watchman's soul understood the language of the people in the moon very well. They disputed about this earth, and doubted if it could be inhabited; the air, they asserted, must be too thick for a sensible moon-man to live there. They considered that the moon alone was peopled; for that, they said, was the real body in which the old-world people dwelt. They also talked of politics.

But let us go down to the East Street, and see how it fared with the body of the watchman.

He sat lifeless upon the stairs. His pike had fallen out of his hand, and his eyes stared up at the moon, which his honest body was wondering about.

"What's o'clock, watchman?" asked a passer-by. But the man who didn't answer was the watchman. Then the passengers tweaked him quite gently by the nose, and then he lost his balance. There lay the body stretched out at full length—the man was dead. All his comrades were very much frightened: dead he was, and dead he remained. It was reported, and it was discussed, and in the morning the body was carried out to the hospital.

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That would be a pretty jest for the soul if it should chance to come back, and probably seek its body in the East Street, and not find it! Most likely it would go first to the police and afterwards to the address office, that inquiries might be made from thence respecting the missing goods; and then it would wander out to the hospital. But we may console ourselves with the idea that the soul is most clever when it acts upon its own account; it is the body that makes it stupid.

As we have said, the watchman's body was taken to the hospital, and brought into the washing-room; and naturally enough the first thing they did there was to pull off the goloshes; and then the soul had to come back. It took its way directly towards the body, and in a few seconds there was life in the man. He declared that this had been the most terrible night of his life; he would not have such feelings again, not for a shilling; but now it was past and over.

The same day he was allowed to leave, but the goloshes remained at the hospital.

IV

A Great Moment.—A very Unusual Journey



VERY one who belongs to Copenhagen knows the look of the entrance to the Frederick's Hospital in Copenhagen; but as, perhaps, a few will read this story who do not belong to Copenhagen, it becomes necessary to give a short description of it.

The hospital is separated from the street by a tolerably high railing, in which the thick iron rails stand so far apart,

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that certain very thin inmates are said to have squeezed between them, and thus paid their little visits outside the premises. The part of the body most difficult to get through was the head ; and here, as it often happens in the world, small heads were the most fortunate. This will be sufficient as an introduction.

One of the young volunteers, of whom one could only say in one sense that he had a great head, had the watch that evening. The rain was pouring down ; but in spite of this obstacle he wanted to go out, only for a quarter of an hour. It was needless, he thought, to tell the porter of his wish, especially if he could slip through between the rails. There lay the goloshes which the watchman had forgotten. It never occurred to him in the least that they were goloshes of Fortune. They would do him very good service in this rainy weather, and he pulled them on. Now the question was whether he could squeeze through the bars ; till now he had never tried it. There he stood.

“ I wish to goodness I had my head outside ! ” cried he. And immediately, though his head was very thick and big, it glided easily and quickly through. The goloshes must have understood it well ; but now the body was to slip through also, and that could not be done. “ I am too fat,” said he. “ I thought my head was the thickest. I shan’t get through.”

Now he wanted to pull his head back quickly, but he could not manage it : he could move his neck, but that was all. His first feeling was one of anger, and then his spirits sank down to zero. The goloshes of Fortune had placed him in this terrible condition, and, unfortunately, it never occurred to him to wish himself free. No : instead of wishing, he only strove, and could not stir from the spot. The rain poured down ; not a creature was to be seen in the street ; he could not reach the gate bell, and how was he to get loose ? He foresaw that he would have to remain

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here until the morning, and then they would have to send for a blacksmith, to file through the iron bars. But such a business is not to be done quickly. The whole charity-school would be upon its legs; the whole sailors' quarter close by would come up and see him standing in the pillory; and a fine crowd there would be.

"Hu!" he cried, "the blood's rising to my head, and I shall go mad! Yes, I'm going mad! If I were free most likely it would pass over."

That is what he ought to have said at first. The very moment he had uttered the thought his head was free; and now he rushed in, quite dazed with the fright the goloshes of Fortune had given him. But we must not think the whole affair was over; there was much worse to come yet.

The night passed away, and the following day too, and nobody sent for the goloshes. In the evening a display of oratory was to take place in an amateur theatre in a distant street. The house was crammed, and among the audience was the volunteer from the hospital, who appeared to have forgotten his adventure of the previous evening. He had the goloshes on, for they had not been sent for; and as it was dirty in the streets, they might do him good service. A new piece was recited: it was called "My Aunt's Spectacles." These were spectacles which, when any one put them on in a great assembly of people, would enable the wearer to prophesy what would happen in the coming year.

The idea struck him: he would have liked to possess such a pair of spectacles. If they were used rightly, they would perhaps enable the wearer to look into people's hearts; and that, he thought, would be more interesting than to see what was going to happen in the next year; for future events would be known in time, but the people's thoughts never.

"Now I'll look at the row of ladies and gentlemen on

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the first bench : if one could look directly into their hearts ! how hollow they would look—a sort of empty shop. How my eyes would wander about in that shop ! In every lady's yonder, I should doubtless find a great milliner's warehouse : with this one here the shop is empty, but it would do no harm to have it cleaned out. But would there really be such shops ? Ah, yes !” he continued, sighing, “ I know one in which all the goods are first-rate, but there's a servant in it already ; that's the only drawback in the whole shop ! From one and another the word would be ‘ Please to step in !’ Oh, that I might only step in, like a neat little thought, and slip through their hearts !”

That was the word of command for the goloshes. The volunteer shrivelled up, and began to take a very remarkable journey through the hearts of the first row of spectators. The first heart through which he passed was that of a lady ; but he immediately fancied himself in the Orthopædic Institute, in the room where the plaster casts of deformed limbs are kept hanging against the walls ; the only difference was, that these casts were formed in the institute when the patients came in, but here in the heart they were formed and preserved after the good persons had gone away. For they were casts of female friends, whose bodily and mental faults were preserved here.

Quickly he had passed into another female heart. But this seemed to him like a great holy church ; the white dove of innocence fluttered over the high altar. Gladly would he have sunk down on his knees ; but he was obliged to go away into the next heart. Still, however, he heard the tones of the organ, and it seemed to him that he himself had become another and a better man. He felt himself not unworthy to enter into the next sanctuary, which showed itself in the form of a poor garret, containing a sick mother. But through the window the warm sun

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streamed in, and two sky-blue birds sang full of childlike joy, while the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her daughter.

Now he crept on his hands and knees through an over-filled butcher's shop. There was meat, and nothing but meat, wherever he went. It was the heart of a rich respectable man, whose name is certainly to be found in the address book.

Now he was in the heart of this man's wife ; this heart was an old dilapidated pigeon-house. The husband's portrait was used as a mere weathercock : it stood in connection with the doors, and these doors opened and shut according as the husband turned.

Then he came into a cabinet of mirrors, such as we find in the Castle of Rosenburg ; but the mirrors magnified in a great degree. In the middle of the floor sat, like a Grand Lama, the insignificant *I* of the proprietor, astonished in the contemplation of his own greatness.

Then he fancied himself transported into a narrow needle-case full of pointed needles ; and he thought, " This must decidedly be the heart of an old maid ! " But that was not the case. It was the heart of a young officer, wearing several orders, and of whom one said, " He's a man of intellect and heart. "

Quite confused was the poor volunteer when he emerged from the heart of the last person in the first row. He could not arrange his thoughts, and fancied it must be his powerful imagination which had run away with him.

" Gracious powers ! " he sighed, " I must certainly have a great tendency to go mad. It is also uncommonly hot in here : the blood is rising to my head ! "

And now he remembered the great event of the last evening, how his head had been caught between the iron rails of the hospital.

" That's where I must have caught it, " thought he. " I

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must do something at once. A Russian bath might be very good. I wish I were lying on the highest board in the bath-house."

And there he lay on the highest board in the vapour bath ; but he was lying there in all his clothes, in boots and goloshes, and the hot drops from the ceiling were falling on his face.

"Hi!" he cried, and jumped down to take a plunge bath.

The attendant uttered a loud cry on seeing a person there with all his clothes on. The volunteer had, however, enough presence of mind to whisper to him, "It's for a wager!" But the first thing he did when he got into his own room was to put a big blister on the nape of his neck, and another on his back, that they might draw out his madness.

Next morning he had a very sore back, and that was all he had got by the goloshes of Fortune.

V

The Transformation of the Copying Clerk



HE watchman, whom we surely have not yet forgotten, in the meantime thought of the goloshes, which he had found and brought to the hospital. He took them away ; but as neither the lieutenant nor any one in the street would own them they were taken to the police office.

"They look exactly like my own goloshes," said one of the copying gentlemen, as he looked at the unowned articles and put them beside his own. "More than a shoemaker's eye is required to distinguish them from one another."

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“ Mr. Copying Clerk,” said a servant, coming in with some papers.

The copying-clerk turned and spoke to the man : when he had done this, he turned to look at the goloshes again ; he was in great doubt if the right-hand or the left-hand pair belonged to him.

“ It must be those that are wet,” he thought. Now here he thought wrong, for these were the goloshes of Fortune ; but why should not the police be sometimes mistaken ? He put them on, thrust his papers into his pocket, and put a few manuscripts under his arm, for they were to be read at home, and abstracts to be made from them. But now it was Sunday morning, and the weather was fine. “ A walk to Fredericksburg would do me good,” said he ; and he went out accordingly.

There could not be a quieter, steadier person than this young man. We grant him his little walk with all our hearts ; it will certainly do him good after so much sitting. At first he only thought about the beautiful scenery and his surroundings, so the goloshes had no opportunity of displaying their magic power.

In the avenue he met an acquaintance, one of our younger poets, who told him he was going to start, next day, on a summer trip.

“ Are you going away again already ? ” asked the copying clerk. “ What a happy, free man you are ! You can fly wherever you like ; we others have a chain to our foot.”

“ But it is fastened to the bread tree ! ” replied the poet. “ You need not be anxious for the morrow ; and when you grow old you get a pension.”

“ But you are better off, after all,” said the copying clerk. “ It must be a pleasure to sit and write poetry. Everybody says agreeable things to you, and then you are your own master. Ah, you should just try, poring over the frivolous affairs in the court.”

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The poet shook his head ; the copying clerk shook his head also ; each retained his own opinion ; and thus they parted.

“ They are a strange race, these poets ! ” thought the copying clerk. “ I should like to try and enter into such a nature—to become a poet myself. I am certain I should not write such complaining verses as the rest. What a splendid spring day for a poet ! The air is so remarkably clear, the clouds are so beautiful, and the green smells so sweet. For many years I have not felt as I feel at this moment.”

We already notice that he has become a poet. To point this out would, in most cases, be what the Germans call “ mawkish.” It is a foolish fancy to imagine a poet different from other people, for among the latter there may be natures more poetical than those of many an acknowledged poet. The difference is only that the poet has a better spiritual memory : his ears hold fast the feeling and the idea until they are embodied clearly and firmly in words ; and the others cannot do that. But the transition from an every-day nature to that of a poet is always a transition, and as such it must be noticed in the copying clerk.

“ What glorious fragrance ! ” he cried. “ How it reminds me of the violets at aunt Laura’s ! Yes, that was when I was a little boy. I have not thought of that for a long time. The good old lady ! She lies yonder, by the canal. She always had a twig or a couple of green shoots in the water, let the winter be as severe as it might. The violets bloomed, while I had to put warm farthings against the frozen window-panes to make peep-holes. That was a pretty view. Out in the canal the ships were frozen in, and deserted by the whole crew ; a screaming crow was the only living creature left. Then, when the spring breezes blew, it all became lively : the ice was sawn asunder amid shouting and cheers, the ships were tarred and rigged,

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and then they sailed away to strange lands. I remained here, and must always remain, and sit at the police office, and let others take passports for abroad. That's my fate. Oh, yes!" and he sighed deeply. Suddenly he paused. "Good Heaven! what is come to me? I never thought or felt as I do now. It must be the spring air: it is just as bewildering as it is charming!" He felt in his pockets for his papers. "These will give me something else to think of," said he, and let his eyes wander over the first leaf. There he read: "'*Dame Sigbirth; an original tragedy in five acts.*' What is that? And it is my own hand. Have I written this tragedy? '*The Intrigue on the Promenade; or, the Day of Penance—Vaudeville.*' But where did I get that from? It must have been put into my pocket. Here is a letter. Yes, it was from the manager of the theatre; the pieces were rejected, and the letter is not at all politely worded. H'm! H'm!" said the copying clerk, and he sat down upon a bench: his thoughts were elastic; his head was quite soft. Involuntarily he grasped one of the nearest flowers; it was a common little daisy. What the botanists require several lectures to explain to us, this flower told in a minute. It told the glory of its birth; it told of the strength of the sunlight, which spread out the delicate leaves and made them give out fragrance. Then he thought of the battles of life, which likewise awaken feelings in our breasts. Air and light are the lovers of the flower, but light is the favoured one. Towards the light it turned, and only when the light vanished the flower rolled her leaves together and slept in the embrace of the air.

"It is light that adorns me!" said the Flower.

"But the air allows you to breathe," whispered the poet's voice.

Just by him stood a boy, knocking with his stick upon the marshy ground. The drops of water spurted up among the green twigs, and the copying clerk thought of the

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millions of infusoria which were cast up on high with the drops, which were the same to them, in proportion to their size, as it would be to us if we were hurled high over the region of clouds. And the copying clerk thought of this, and of the great change which had taken place within him; he smiled. "I sleep and dream! it is wonderful, though, how naturally one can dream, and yet know all the time that it is a dream. I should like to be able to remember it all clearly to-morrow when I wake. I seem to myself quite unusually excited. What a clear appreciation I have of everything, and how free I feel! - But I am certain that if I remember anything of it to-morrow, it will be nonsense. That has often been so with me before. It is with all the clever, famous things one says and hears in dreams, as with the money of the elves under the earth; when one receives it, it is rich and beautiful, but, looked at by daylight, it is nothing but stones and dried leaves. Ah!" he sighed, quite plaintively, and gazed at the chirping birds, as they sprang merrily from bough to bough, "they are much better off than I. Flying is a noble art. Happy he who is born with wings. Yes, if I could change myself into anything, it should be into a lark."

In a moment his coat-tails and sleeves grew together and formed wings; his clothes became feathers, and his goloshes claws. He noticed it quite plainly, and laughed inwardly. "Well, now I can see that I am dreaming, but so wildly I have never dreamed before." And he flew up into the green boughs and sang; but there was no poetry in the song, for the poetic nature was gone. The goloshes, like every one who wishes to do any business thoroughly, could only do one thing at a time. He wished to be a poet, and he became one. Then he wished to be a little bird, and, in changing thus, the former peculiarity was lost.

"That is charming!" he said. "In the day-time I sit in the police office among the driest of law papers; at

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night I can dream that I am flying about as a lark in the Fredericksburg Garden. One could really write quite a popular comedy upon it."

Now he flew down into the grass, turned his head in every direction, and beat with his beak upon the bending stalks of grass, which, in proportion to his size, seemed to him as long as palm branches of Northern Africa.

It was only for a moment, and then all around him became as the blackest night. It seemed to him that some immense substance was cast over him; it was a great cap, which a sailor boy threw over the bird. A hand came in and seized the copying clerk by the back and wings in a way that made him whistle. In his first terror he cried aloud, "The impudent rascal! I am copying clerk at the police office!" But that sounded to the boy only like "piep! piep!" and he tapped the bird on the beak and wandered on with him.

In the alley the boy met with two other boys, who belonged to the educated classes, socially speaking; but, according to abilities, they ranked in the lowest class in the school. These bought the bird for a few Danish shillings; and so the copying clerk was carried back to Copenhagen.

"It's a good thing that I am dreaming," he said, "or I should become really angry. First I was a poet, and now I'm a lark! Yes, it must have been the poetic nature which transformed me into that little creature. It is a miserable state of things, especially when one falls into the hands of boys. I should like to know what the end of it will be."

The boys carried him into a very elegant room. A stout and smiling lady received them. But she was not at all gratified to see the common field bird, as she called the lark, coming in too. Only for one day she would consent to it; but they must put the bird in the empty cage which stood by the window.

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“Perhaps that will please Polly,” she added, and laughed at a great Parrot swinging himself proudly in his ring in the handsome brass cage. “It’s Polly’s birthday,” she said, simply, “so the little field bird shall congratulate him.”

Polly did not answer a single word; he only swung proudly to and fro. But a pretty Canary bird, who had been brought here last summer out of his warm fragrant fatherland, began to sing loudly.

“Screamer!” said the lady; and she threw a white handkerchief over the cage.

“Piep! piep!” sighed he; “here’s a terrible snow-storm.” And thus sighing, he was silent.

The copying clerk, or, as the lady called him, the field bird, was placed in a little cage close to the Canary, and not far from the Parrot. The only human words which Polly could say, and which often sounded very comically, were “*Come, let’s be men now!*” Everything else that he screamed out was just as unintelligible as the song of the Canary bird, except for the copying clerk, who was now also a bird, and who understood his comrades very well.

“I flew under the green palm tree and the blossoming almond tree!” sang the Canary. “I flew with my brothers and sisters over the beautiful flowers and over the bright sea, where the plants waved in the depths. I also saw many beautiful parrots, who told the merriest stories.”

“Those were wild birds,” replied the Parrot. “They had no education. Let us be men now! Why don’t you laugh? If the lady and all the strangers could laugh at it, so can you. It is a great fault to have no taste for what is pleasant. No, let us be men now.”

“Do you remember the pretty girls who danced under the tents spread out beneath the blooming trees? Do you remember the sweet fruits and the cooling juice in the wild plants?”

“Oh, yes!” replied the Parrot; “but here I am far better

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off. I have good care and genteel treatment. I know I've a good head, and I don't ask for more. Let us be men now. You are what they call a poetic soul. I have thorough knowledge and wit. You have genius, but no prudence. You mount up into those high natural notes of yours, and then you get covered up. This is never done to me; no, no, for I cost them a little more. I make an impression with my beak, and can cast wit round me. Now let us be men!"

"O my poor blooming fatherland!" sang the Canary, "I will praise thy dark green trees and thy quiet bays, where the branches kiss the clear watery mirror; I'll sing of the joy of all my shining brothers and sisters, where the plants grow by the desert springs."

"Now, pray leave off these dismal tones," cried the Parrot. "Sing something at which one can laugh! Laughter is the sign of the highest mental development. Look if a dog or a horse can laugh! No: they can cry; but laughter—that is given to men alone. Ho! ho! ho!" screamed Polly, and finished the jest with "Let us be men now."

"You little grey Northern bird!" said the Canary; "so you have also become a prisoner. It is certainly cold in your woods, but still liberty is there. Fly out! they have forgotten to close your cage; the upper window is open. Fly! fly!"

Instinctively the copying clerk obeyed, and flew forth from his prison. At the same moment the half-opened door of the next room creaked, and stealthily, with fierce sparkling eyes, the house cat crept in, and made chase upon him. The Canary fluttered in its cage, the Parrot flapped its wings, and cried "Let us be men now!" The copying clerk felt mortally afraid, and flew through the window, away over the houses and streets; at last he was obliged to rest a little.

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The house opposite had a homelike look : one of the windows stood open, and he flew in. It was his own room : he perched upon the table.

“Let us be men now,” he broke out, involuntarily imitating the Parrot ; and in the same moment he was restored to the form of the copying clerk ; but he was sitting on the table.

“Heaven preserve me !” he cried. “How could I have come here and fallen so soundly asleep ? That was an unquiet dream too, that I had. The whole thing was great nonsense.”

VI

The best that the Goloshes brought



WHEN the sun shone through the window the following morning, as the clerk still lay in bed, there came a tapping at his door : it was his neighbour who lodged on the same floor, a young theologian ; and he came in.

“Lend me your goloshes,” said he. “It is very wet in the garden. But the sun shines gloriously, and I should like to smoke a pipe down there.”

He put on the goloshes, and was soon in the garden, which contained a plum-tree and an apple-tree. Even a little garden like this is highly prized in the midst of great cities.

The theologian wandered up and down the path ; it was only six o'clock, and a post-horn sounded out in the street.

“Oh, travelling ! travelling !” he cried out, “that’s the greatest happiness in all the world. That’s the highest goal of my wishes. Then this disquietude that I feel would be

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stilled. But it would have to be far away. I should like to see beautiful Switzerland, to travel through Italy, to——”

Yes, it was a good thing that the goloshes took effect immediately, for he might have gone too far even for himself, and for us others too. He was travelling; he was in the midst of Switzerland, packed tightly with eight others in the interior of a diligence. He had a headache and a weary feeling in his neck, and his feet had gone to sleep, for they were swollen by the heavy boots he had on. He was hovering in a condition between sleeping and waking. In the right-hand pocket he had his letters of credit, in his left-hand pocket his passport, and a few louis d'or were sewn into a little bag he wore on his breast. Whenever he dozed off, he dreamed he had lost one or other of these possessions; and then he would start up in a feverish way, and the first movement his hand made was to describe a triangle from left to right, and towards his breast, to feel whether he still possessed them or not. Umbrellas, hats, and walking-sticks swung in the net over him and almost took away the prospect, which was impressive enough; he glanced out at it, and his heart sang what one poet at least, whom we know, has sung in Switzerland, but has not yet printed:

“’Tis a prospect as fine as heart can desire,
Before me Mont Blanc the rough;
’Tis pleasant to tarry here and admire,
If only you’ve money enough.”

Great, grave, and dark was all nature around him. The pine-woods looked like little mosses upon the high rocks, whose summits were lost in cloudy mists; and then it began to snow, and the wind blew cold.

“Hu!” he sighed; “if we were only on the other side of the Alps, then it would be summer, and I should have got money on my letter of credit: my anxiety about this

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prevents me from enjoying Switzerland. Oh, if I were only at the other side!"

And then he was on the other side, in the midst of Italy, between Florence and Rome. The Lake Thrasymene lay spread out in the evening light, like flaming gold among the dark blue hills. Here, where Hannibal beat Flaminius, the grape-vines held each other by their green fingers; pretty half-naked children were keeping a herd of coal-black pigs under a clump of fragrant laurels by the way-side. If we could reproduce this scene accurately, all would cry, "Glorious Italy!" But neither the theologian nor any of his travelling companions in the carriage of the vetturino thought this.

Poisonous flies and gnats flew into the carriage by thousands. In vain they beat the air frantically with a myrtle branch—the flies stung them nevertheless. There was not one person in the carriage whose face was not swollen and covered with stings. The poor horses looked miserable, the flies tormented them wofully, and it only mended the matter for a moment when the coachman dismounted and scraped them clean from the insects that sat upon them in great swarms. Now the sun sank down; a short but icy coldness pervaded all nature; it was like the cold air of a funeral vault after the sultry summer day; and all around the hills and clouds put on that remarkable green tone which we notice on some old pictures, and consider unnatural unless we have ourselves witnessed a similar play of colour. It was a glorious spectacle; but they were all hungry and their bodies exhausted, with every wish of the heart turned towards a resting-place for the night; but how could that be won? To descry this resting-place all eyes were turned more eagerly to the road than towards the beauties of nature.

The route now led through an olive wood: he could have fancied himself passing between knotty willow-trunks at

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home. Here, by the solitary inn, a dozen crippled beggars had taken up their positions: the quickest among them looked, to quote an expression of Marryat's, like the eldest son of Famine, who had just come of age. The others were either blind or had withered legs, so that they crept about on their hands, or they had withered arms with fingerless hands. This was misery in rags indeed. "*Eccellenza miserabili!*" they sighed, and stretched forth their diseased limbs. The hostess herself, in untidy hair, and dressed in a dirty blouse, received her guests. The doors were tied up with string; the floor of the room was of brick, and half of it was grubbed up; bats flew about under the roof, and the smell within——

"Yes, lay the table down in the stable," said one of the travellers. "There, at least, one knows what one is breathing."

The windows were opened, so that a little fresh air might find its way in; but quicker than the fresh air came the withered arms and the continual whining, "*Miserabili, Eccellenza!*" On the walls were many inscriptions: half of them were against "*La bella Italia.*"

The supper was served. It consisted of a watery soup, seasoned with pepper and rancid oil. This last dainty played a chief part in a salad; musty eggs and roasted cocks'-combs were the best dishes. Even the wine had a strange taste—it was a dreadful mixture.

At night the boxes were placed against the doors. One of the travellers kept watch while the rest slept. The theologian was the sentry. Oh, how close it was in there! The heat oppressed him, the gnats buzzed and stung, and the *miserabili* outside moaned in their dreams.

"Yes, travelling would be all very well," said the theologian, "if one had no body. If the body could rest and the mind fly! Wherever I go, I find a want, that oppresses my heart: it is something better than the present moment

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that I desire. Yes, something better—the best; but what is that, and where is it? In my own heart I know very well what I want: I want to attain to a happy goal, the happiest of all!”

And so soon as the word was spoken he found himself at home. The long white curtains hung down from the windows, and in the middle of the room stood a black coffin; in this he was lying in the quiet sleep of death: his wish was fulfilled—his body was at rest and his spirit roaming. “Esteem no man happy who is not yet in his grave,” were the words of Solon; here their force was proved anew.

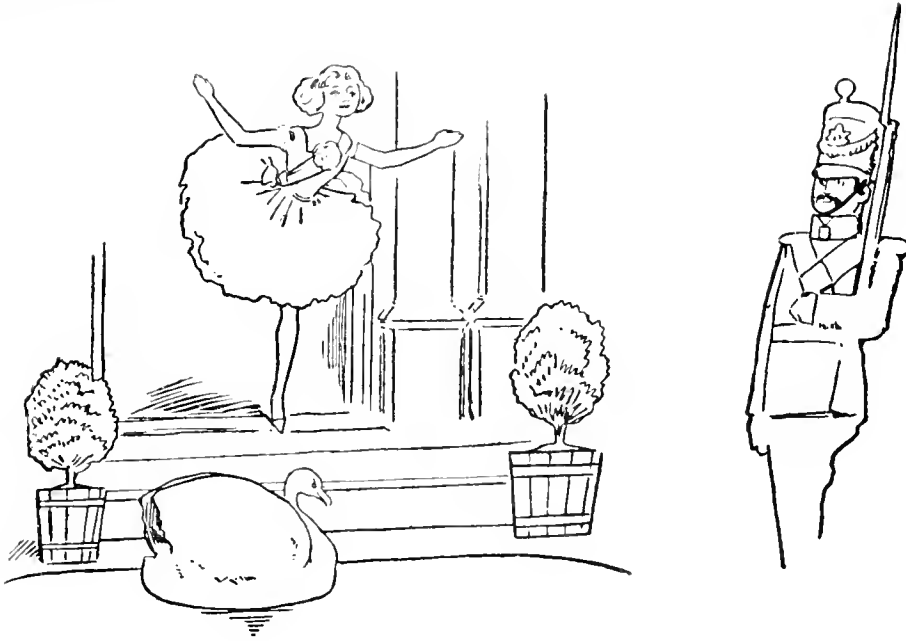
Two forms were moving to and fro in the room. We know them both. They were the Fairy of Care and the Ambassador of Happiness. They both bent over the dead man.

“Do you see?” said Care. “What happiness have your goloshes brought to men?”

“They have at least brought a permanent benefit to him who slumbers here,” replied Happiness.

“Oh, no!” said Care. “He went away of himself, he was not summoned. His spirit was not strong enough to lift the treasures which he had been destined to lift. I will do him a favour.”

And she drew the goloshes from his feet; then the sleep of death was ended, and the awakened man raised himself up. Care vanished, and with her the goloshes disappeared too: doubtless she looked upon them as her property.



The Hardy Tin Soldier



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

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firmly upon his one leg as the others on their two ; and it was just this Soldier who became remarkable.

On the table on which they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that attracted most attention was a neat castle of cardboard. Through the little windows one could see straight into the hall. Before the castle some little trees were placed round a little looking-glass, which was to represent a clear lake. Waxen swans swam on this lake, and were mirrored in it. This was all very pretty ; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle ; she was also cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf ; and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining tinsel rose as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer ; and then she lifted one leg so high that the Tin Soldier could not see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had but one leg.

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

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

When the evening came, all the other tin soldiers were put into their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at “visiting,” and at “war,” and “giving balls.” The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join, but could not lift the lid. The nutcracker threw somersaults, and the pencil amused itself on the table : there was so much noise that the canary woke up, and began to speak too, and even in verse.

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The only two who did not stir from their places were the Tin Soldier and the dancing lady : she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms ; and he was just as enduring on his one leg ; and he never turned his eyes away from her.

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

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

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear him.

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

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

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

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

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

And they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the Tin Soldier in the middle of it ; and so he sailed down the gutter, and the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Goodness preserve us ! how the waves rose in that gutter, and how fast the stream ran ! But then it had

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been a heavy rain. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned round so rapidly that the Tin Soldier trembled; but he remained firm, and never changed countenance, and looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket.

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

“Where am I going now?” he thought. “Yes, yes, that’s the Goblin’s fault. Ah! if the little lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for what I should care.”

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

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

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

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

“Hold him! hold him! He hasn’t paid toll—he hasn’t shown his passport!”

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

Now he was already so near it that he could not stop. The boat was carried out, the poor Tin Soldier stiffening himself as much as he could, and no one could say that he moved an eyelid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge—it must sink. The Tin Soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the

The Hardy Tin Soldier

the boat sank deeper and deeper, and the paper was loosened more and more ; and now the water closed over the Soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little dancer, and how he should never see her again ; and it sounded in the soldier's ears :

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

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

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

The fish swam to and fro ; he made the most wonderful movements, and then became quite still. At last something flashed through him like lightning. The daylight shone quite clear, and a voice said aloud, “ The Tin Soldier ! ” The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She seized the Soldier round the body with both her hands, and carried him into the room, where all were anxious to see the remarkable man who had travelled about in the inside of a fish ; but the Tin Soldier was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there—no ! What curious things may happen in the world. The Tin Soldier was in the very room in which he had been before ! He saw the same children, and the same toys stood on the table ; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful little dancer. She was still balancing herself on one leg, and held the other extended in the air. She was hardy too. That moved the Tin Soldier: he was very nearly weeping tin tears, but that would not have been proper. He looked at her, but they said nothing to each other.

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

The Tin Soldier stood there quite illuminated, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat proceeded from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colours had quite gone off from him; but whether that had happened on the journey, or had been caused by grief, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he felt that he was melting; but he still stood firm, shouldering his musket. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph just into the stove to the Tin Soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and she was gone. Then the Tin Soldier melted down into a lump; and when the servant-maid took the ashes out next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, and that was burned as black as a coal.





The Daisy



OW you shall hear!

Out in the country, close by the roadside, there was a country house; you yourself have certainly once seen it. Before it is a little garden with flowers, and a paling which is painted. Close by it, by the ditch, in the midst of the most beautiful green grass, grew a little Daisy. The sun shone as warmly and as brightly upon it as on the great splendid garden flowers, and so it grew from hour to hour. One morning it stood in full bloom, with its little shining white leaves spreading like rays round the little yellow sun in the centre. It never thought that no man would notice it down in the grass, and that it was a poor despised floweret; no, it was very merry, and turned to the warm

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sun, looked up at it, and listened to the Lark carolling high in the air.

The little Daisy was as happy as if it were a great holiday, and yet it was only a Monday. All the children were at school ; and while they sat on their benches learning, it sat on its little green stalk, and learned also from the warm sun, and from all around, how good God is. And the Daisy was very glad that everything it silently felt was sung so loudly and charmingly by the Lark. And the Daisy looked up with a kind of respect to the happy bird who could sing and fly ; but it was not at all sorrowful because it could not fly and sing also.

“ I can see and hear,” it thought : “ the sun shines on me, and the forest kisses me. Oh, how richly have I been gifted ! ”

Within the palings stood many stiff, aristocratic flowers—the less scent they had the more they flaunted. The peonies blew themselves out to be greater than the roses, but size will not do it ; the tulips had the most splendid colours, and they knew that, and held themselves bolt upright, that they might be seen more plainly. They did not notice the little Daisy outside there, but the Daisy looked at them the more, and thought, “ How rich and beautiful they are ! Yes, the pretty birds fly across to them and visit them. I am glad that I stand so near them, for at any rate I can enjoy the sight of their splendour ! ” And just as she thought that—“ keevit ! ”—down came flying the Lark, but not down to the peonies and tulips—no, down into the grass to the lowly Daisy, which started so with joy that it did not know what to think.

The little bird danced round about it, and sang,

“ Oh, how soft the grass is ! and see what a lovely little flower, with gold in its heart and silver on its dress ! ”

For the yellow point in the Daisy looked like gold, and the little leaves around it shone silvery white.

The Daisy

How happy was the little Daisy—no one can conceive how happy! The bird kissed it with his beak, sang to it, and then flew up again into the blue air. A quarter of an hour passed, at least, before the Daisy could recover itself. Half ashamed, and yet inwardly rejoiced, it looked at the other flowers in the garden; for they had seen the honour and happiness it had gained, and must understand what a joy it was. But the tulips stood up twice as stiff as before, and they looked quite peaky in the face and quite red, for they had been vexed. The peonies were quite wrong-headed: it was well they could not speak, or the Daisy would have received a good scolding. The poor little flower could see very well that they were not in a good humour, and that hurt it sensibly. At this moment there came into the garden a girl with a great sharp shining knife; she went straight up to the tulips, and cut off one after another of them.

“Oh!” sighed the little Daisy, “this is dreadful; now it is all over with them.”

Then the girl went away with the tulips. The Daisy was glad to stand out in the grass, and to be only a poor little flower; it felt very grateful; and when the sun went down it folded its leaves and went to sleep, and dreamed all night long about the sun and the pretty little bird.

Next morning, when the flower again happily stretched out all its white leaves, like little arms, towards the air and the light, it recognised the voice of the bird, but the song he was singing sounded mournfully. Yes, the poor Lark had good reason to be sad: he was caught, and now sat in a cage close by the open window. He sang of free and happy roaming, sang of the young green corn in the fields, and of the glorious journey he might make on his wings high through the air. The poor Lark was not in good spirits, for there he sat a prisoner in a cage.

The little Daisy wished very much to help him. But

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what was it to do? Yes, that was difficult to make out. It quite forgot how everything was beautiful around, how warm the sun shone, and how splendidly white its own leaves were. Ah! it could think only of the imprisoned bird, and how it was powerless to do anything for him.

Just then two little boys came out of the garden. One of them carried in his hand the knife which the girl had used to cut off the tulips. They went straight up to the little Daisy, which could not at all make out what they wanted.

“Here we may cut a capital piece of turf for the Lark,” said one of the boys; and he began to cut off a square patch round about the Daisy, so that the flower remained standing in its piece of grass.

“Tear off the flower!” said the other boy.

And the Daisy trembled with fear, for to be torn off would be to lose its life; and now it wanted particularly to live, as it was to be given with the piece of turf to the captive Lark.

“No, let it stay,” said the other boy; “it makes such a nice ornament.”

And so it remained, and was put into the Lark's cage. But the poor bird complained aloud of his lost liberty, and beat his wings against the wires of his prison; and the little Daisy could not speak—could say no consoling word to him, gladly as it would have done so. And thus the whole morning passed.

“Here is no water,” said the captive Lark. “They are all gone out, and have forgotten to give me anything to drink. My throat is dry and burning. It is like fire and ice within me, and the air is close. Oh, I must die! I must leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green, and all the splendour that God has created!”

And then he thrust his beak into the cool turf to refresh himself a little with it. Then the bird's eye fell upon the

The Daisy

Daisy, and he nodded to it, and kissed it with his beak, and said,

“You also must wither in here, you poor little flower. They have given you to me with a little patch of green grass on which you grow, instead of the whole world which was mine out there! Every little blade of grass shall be a great tree for me, and every one of your fragrant leaves a great flower. Ah, you only tell me how much I have lost!”

“If I could only comfort him!” thought the little Daisy.

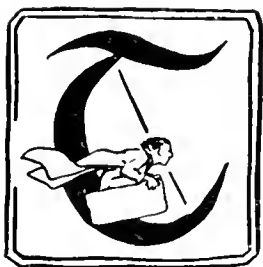
It could not stir a leaf; but the scent which streamed forth from its delicate leaves was far stronger than is generally found in these flowers; the bird also noticed that, and though he was fainting with thirst, and in his pain plucked up the green blades of grass, he did not touch the flower.

The evening came, and yet nobody appeared to bring the poor bird a drop of water. Then he stretched out his pretty wings and beat the air frantically with them; his song changed to a mournful piping, his little head sank down towards the flower, and the bird's heart broke with want and yearning. Then the flower could not fold its leaves, as it had done on the previous evening, and sleep; it drooped, sorrowful and sick, towards the earth.

Not till the next morning did the boys come; and when they found the bird dead they wept—wept many tears—and dug him a neat grave, which they adorned with leaves of flowers. The bird's corpse was put into a pretty red box, for he was to be royally buried—the poor bird! While he was alive and sang they forgot him, and let him sit in his cage and suffer want; but now that he was dead he had adornment and many tears.

But the patch of turf with the Daisy on it was thrown out into the high road: no one thought of the flower that had felt the most for the little bird, and would have been so glad to console him.

The Flying Trunk



HERE was once a merchant, who was so rich that he could pave the whole street with gold, and almost have enough left for a little lane. But he did not do that; he knew how to employ his money differently. When he spent a shilling he got back a crown, such a clever merchant was he; and this continued till he died.

His son now got all this money; and he lived merrily, going to balls and parties every evening, making kites out of dollar notes, and playing at ducks and drakes on the sea-coast with gold pieces instead of pebbles. In this way the money might soon be spent, and indeed it was so. At last he had no more than four shillings left, and no clothes to wear but a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. Now his friends did not trouble themselves any more about him, as they could not walk with him in the street, but one of them, who was good-natured sent him an old trunk, with the remark, "Pack up!" Yes, that was all very well, but he had nothing to pack, therefore he seated himself in the trunk.

That was a wonderful trunk. So soon as any one pressed the lock the trunk could fly. He pressed it, and *whirr!*



Away flew the trunk with him.

The Flying Trunk

away flew the trunk with him through the chimney and over the clouds, farther and farther away. But as often as the bottom of the trunk cracked a little he was in great fear lest it might go to pieces, and then he would have flung a fine somersault! In that way he came to the land of the Turks. He hid the trunk in a wood under some dry leaves, and then went into the town. He could do that very well, for among the Turks all the people went dressed like himself, in dressing-gown and slippers. Then he met a nurse with a little child.

“Here, you Turkish nurse,” he began, “what kind of a great castle is that close by the town, in which the windows are so high up?”

“There dwells the Sultan’s daughter,” replied she. “It is prophesied that she will be very unhappy respecting a lover; and therefore nobody may go to her, unless the Sultan and Sultana are there too.”

“Thank you!” said the merchant’s son; and he went out into the forest, seated himself in his trunk, flew on the roof, and crept through the window into the Princess’s room.

She was lying asleep on the sofa, and she was so beautiful that the merchant’s son was compelled to kiss her. Then she awoke, and was very much startled; but he said he was a Turkish angel who had come down to her through the air, and that pleased her.

They sat down side by side, and he told her stories about her eyes; he told her they were the most glorious dark lakes, and that thoughts were swimming about in them like mermaids. And he told her about her forehead; that it was a snowy mountain with the most splendid halls and pictures. And he told her about the stork who brings the lovely little children.

Yes, those were fine histories! Then he asked the Princess if she would marry him, and she said “Yes,” directly.

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“But you must come here on Saturday,” said she. “Then the Sultan and the Sultana will be here to tea. They will be very proud that I am to marry a Turkish angel. But take care that you know a very pretty story, for both my parents are very fond indeed of stories. My mother likes them high-flown and moral, but my father likes them merry, so that one can laugh.”

“Yes, I shall bring no marriage gift but a story,” said he; and so they parted. But the Princess gave him a sabre, the sheath embroidered with gold pieces, and that was very useful to him.

Now he flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and sat in the forest and made up a story; it was to be ready by Saturday, and that was not an easy thing.

By the time he had finished it Saturday had come. The Sultan and his wife and all the Court were at the Princess's to tea. He was received very graciously.

“Will you relate us a story?” said the Sultana; “one that is deep and edifying.”

“Yes, but one that we can laugh at,” said the Sultan.

“Certainly,” he replied; and began. And now listen well.

“There was once a bundle of Matches, and these Matches were particularly proud of their high descent. Their genealogical tree, that is to say, the great fir-tree of which each of them was a little splinter, had been a great old tree out in the forest. The Matches now lay between a Tinder-Box and an old iron Pot; and they were telling about the days of their youth. ‘Yes, when we were upon the green boughs,’ they said, ‘then we really were upon the green boughs! Every morning and evening there was diamond tea for us’ (meaning dew); ‘we had sunshine all day long whenever the sun shone, and all the little birds had to tell stories. We could see very well that we were rich, for the other trees were only dressed out in summer,

The Flying Trunk

while our family had the means to wear green dresses in the winter as well. But then the woodcutter came, like a great revolution, and our family was broken up. The head of the family got an appointment as mainmast in a first-rate ship, which could sail round the world if necessary; the other branches went to other places, and now we have the office of kindling a light for the vulgar herd. That's how we grand people came to be in the kitchen.'

“‘My fate was of a different kind,’ said the iron Pot which stood next to the Matches. ‘From the beginning, ever since I came into the world, there has been a great deal of scouring and cooking done in me. I look after the practical part, and am the first here in the house. My only pleasure is to sit in my place after dinner, very clean and neat, and to carry on a sensible conversation with my comrades. But except the Water-Pot, which sometimes is taken down into the courtyard, we always live within our four walls. Our only newsmonger is the Market Basket; but he speaks very uneasily about the government and the people. Yes, the other day there was an old pot that fell down from fright, and burst. He’s liberal, I can tell you!’ ‘Now you’re talking too much,’ the Tinder-Box interrupted, and the steel struck against the flint, so that sparks flew out. ‘Shall we not have a merry evening?’

“‘Yes, let us talk about who is the grandest,’ said the Matches.

“‘No, I don’t like to talk about myself,’ retorted the Pot. ‘Let us get up an evening entertainment. I will begin. I will tell a story from real life, something that every one has experienced, so that we can easily imagine the situation, and take pleasure in it. On the Baltic, by the Danish shore——’

“‘That’s a pretty beginning!’ cried all the Plates. ‘That will be a story we shall like.’

“‘Yes, it happened to me in my youth, when I lived in

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a quiet family where the furniture was polished, and the floors scoured, and new curtains were put up every fortnight.'

" 'What an interesting way you have of telling a story!' said the Carpet Broom. 'One can tell directly that a man is speaking who has been in woman's society. There's something pure runs through it.'

"And the Pot went on telling his story, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"All the Plates rattled with joy, and the Carpet Broom brought some green parsley out of the dust-hole, and put it like a wreath on the Pot, for he knew that it would vex the others. 'If I crown him to-day,' it thought, 'he will crown me to-morrow.'

" 'Now I'll dance,' said the Fire Tongs, and they danced. Preserve us! how that implement could lift up one leg! The old Chair-cushion burst to see it. 'Shall I be crowned too?' thought the Tongs; and indeed a wreath was awarded.

" 'They're only common people after all!' thought the Matches.

"Now the Tea-Urn was to sing; but she said she had taken cold, and could not sing unless she felt boiling within. But that was only affectation; she did not want to sing, except when she was in the parlour with the grand people.

"In the window sat an old Quill Pen, with which the maid generally wrote: there was nothing remarkable about this pen, except that it had been dipped too deep into the ink, but she was proud of that. 'If the Tea-Urn won't sing,' she said, 'she may leave it alone. Outside hangs a nightingale in a cage, and he can sing. He hasn't had any education, but this evening we'll say nothing about that.'

" 'I think it very wrong,' said the Tea-Kettle—he was the kitchen singer, and half-brother to the Tea-Urn—'that

The Flying Trunk

that rich and foreign bird should be listened to. Is that patriotic? Let the Market Basket decide.'

"'I am vexed,' said the Market Basket. 'No one can imagine how much I am secretly vexed. Is that a proper way of spending the evening? Would it not be more sensible to put the house in order? Let each one go to his own place, and I would arrange the whole game. That would be quite another thing.'

"'Yes, let us make a disturbance,' cried they all. Then the door opened and the maid came in, and they all stood still; not one stirred. But there was not one pot among them who did not know what he could do, and how grand he was. 'Yes, if I had liked,' each one thought, 'it might have been a very merry evening.'

"The servant girl took the Matches and lighted the fire with them. Mercy! how they sputtered and burst out into flame! 'Now every one can see,' thought they, 'that we are the first. How we shine! what a light!'—and they burned out."

"That was a capital story," said the Sultana. "I feel myself quite carried away to the kitchen, to the Matches. Yes, now thou shalt marry our daughter."

"Yes, certainly," said the Sultan, "thou shalt marry our daughter on Monday."

And they called him *thou* because he was to belong to the family.

The wedding was decided on, and on the evening before it the whole city was illuminated. Biscuits and cakes were thrown among the people, the street boys stood upon their toes, called out "Hurrah!" and whistled on their fingers. It was uncommonly splendid.

"Yes, I shall have to give something as a treat," thought the merchant's son. So he bought rockets and crackers, and every imaginable sort of firework, put them all into his trunk, and flew up into the air.

Fairy Tales from Hans Andersen

“Crack!” how they went, and how they went off! All the Turks hopped up with such a start that their slippers flew about their ears; such a meteor they had never yet seen. Now they could understand that it must be a Turkish angel who was going to marry the Princess.

What stories people tell! Every one whom he asked about it had seen it in a different way; but one and all thought it fine.

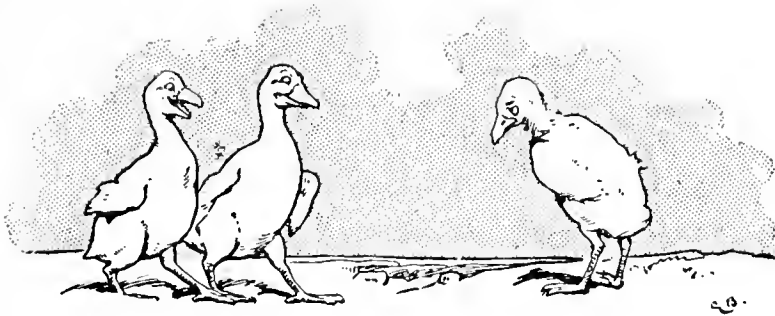
“I saw the Turkish angel himself,” said one. “He had eyes like glowing stars, and a beard like foaming water.”

“He flew in a fiery mantle,” said another; “the most lovely little cherub peeped forth from among the folds.”

Yes, they were wonderful things that he heard; and on the following day he was to be married.

Now he went back to the forest to rest himself in his trunk. But what had become of that? A spark from the fireworks had set fire to it, and the trunk was burned to ashes. He could not fly any more, and could not get to his bride.

She stood all day on the roof waiting; and most likely she is waiting still. But he wanders through the world telling fairy tales; but they are not so merry as that one he told about the Matches.



The Ugly Duckling



IT was glorious out in the country. It was summer, and the corn-fields were yellow and the oats were green; the hay had been put up in stacks in the green meadows, and the stork went about on his long red legs, and chattered Egyptian, for this was the language he had learned from his good mother. All around the fields and meadows were great forests, and in the midst of these forests lay deep lakes. Yes, it was really glorious out in the country. In the midst of the sunshine there lay an old farm, surrounded by deep canals, and from the wall down to the water grew great burdocks, so high that little children could stand upright under the loftiest of them. It was just as wild there as in the deepest wood. Here sat a Duck upon her nest, for she had to hatch her young ones; but she was almost tired out before the little ones came; and then she so seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked better to swim about in the canals than to run up to sit down under a burdock, and cackle with her.

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At last one egg-shell after another burst open. "Piep! piep!" it cried, and in all the eggs there were little creatures that stuck out their heads.

"Rap! rap!" they said; and they all came rapping out as fast as they could, looking all round them under the green leaves; and the mother let them look as much as they chose, for green is good for the eyes.

"How wide the world is!" said the young ones, for they certainly had much more room now than when they were in the eggs.

"Do you think this is all the world?" asked the mother. "That extends far across the other side of the garden, quite into the parson's field, but I have never been there yet. I hope you are all together," she continued, and stood up. "No, I have not all. The largest egg still lies there. How long is that to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an old Duck, who had come to pay her a visit.

"It lasts a long time with that one egg," said the Duck who sat there. "It will not burst. Now, only look at the others; are they not the prettiest ducklings one could possibly see? They are all like their father: the bad fellow never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg which will not burst," said the old visitor. "Believe me, it is a turkey's egg. I was once cheated in that way, and had much anxiety and trouble with the young ones, for they are afraid of the water. I could not get them to venture in. I quacked and clucked, but it was of no use. Let me see the egg. Yes, that's a turkey's egg! Let it lie there, and you teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck. "I've sat so long now that I can sit a few days more."

"Just as you please," said the old Duck; and she went away.

The Ugly Duckling

At last the great egg burst. "Piep! piep!" said the little one, and crept forth. It was very large and very ugly. The Duck looked at it.

"It's a very large duckling," said she; "none of the others look like that: can it really be a turkey chick? Now we shall soon find it out. It must go into the water, even if I have to thrust it in myself."

The next day the weather was splendidly bright, and the sun shone on all the green trees. The Mother-Duck went down to the water with all her little ones. Splash! she jumped into the water. "Quack! quack!" she said, and then one duckling after another plunged in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up in an instant, and swam capitably; their legs went of themselves, and there they were all in the water. The ugly grey duckling swam with them.

"No, it's not a turkey," said she; "look how well it can use its legs, and how upright it holds itself. It is my own child! On the whole it's quite pretty, if one looks at it rightly. Quack! quack! come with me, and I'll lead you out into the great world, and present you in the poultry-yard; but keep close to me, so that no one may tread on you, and take care of the cats!"

And so they came into the poultry-yard. There was a terrible riot going on in there, for two families were quarrelling about an cel's head, and the cat got it after all.

"See, that's how it goes in the world!" said the Mother-Duck; and she whetted her beak, for she, too, wanted the cel's head. "Only use your legs," she said. "See that you can bustle about, and bow your heads before the old Duck yonder. She's the grandest of all here; she's of Spanish blood—that's why she's so fat; and do you see, she has a red rag round her leg; that's something particularly fine, and the greatest distinction a duck can enjoy: it signifies that one does not want to lose her, and that she's to be

Fairy Tales from Hans Andersen

recognized by man and beast. Shake yourselves—don't turn in your toes; a well-brought-up Duck turns its toes quite out, just like father and mother, so! Now bend your necks and say 'Rap!'"

And they did so; but the other ducks round about looked at them, and said quite boldly,

"Look there! now we're to have these hanging on, as if there were not enough of us already! And—fie!—how that Duckling yonder looks; we won't stand that!" And one duck flew up immediately, and bit it in the neck.

"Let it alone," said the mother; "it does no harm to any one."

"Yes, but it's too large and peculiar," said the Duck who had bitten it; "and therefore it must be buffeted."

"Those are pretty children that the mother has there," said the old Duck with the rag round her leg. "They're all pretty but that one; that was a failure. I wish she could alter it."

"That cannot be done, my lady," replied the Mother-Duck. "It is not pretty, but it has a really good disposition, and swims as well as any other; I may even say it swims better. I think it will grow up pretty, and become smaller in time; it has lain too long in the egg, and therefore is not properly shaped." And then she pinched it in the neck, and smoothed its feathers. "Moreover, it is a drake," she said, "and therefore it is not of so much consequence. I think he will be very strong: he makes his way already."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old Duck. "Make yourself at home; and if you find an eel's head you may bring it me."

And now they were at home. But the poor Duckling which had crept last out of the egg, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and jeered, as much by the ducks as by the chickens.

The Ugly Duckling

“It is too big!” they all said. And the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs, and therefore thought himself an Emperor, blew himself out like a ship in full sail, and bore straight down upon it; then he gobbled, and grew quite red in the face. The poor Duckling did not know where it should stand or walk; it was quite melancholy because it looked ugly, and was scoffed at by the whole yard.

So it went on the first day; and afterwards it became worse and worse. The poor Duckling was hunted about by every one; even its brothers and sisters were quite angry with it, and said, “If the cat would only catch you, you ugly creature!” And the mother said, “If you were only far away!” And the ducks bit it, and the chickens pecked at it, and the girl who had to feed the poultry kicked at it with her foot.

Then it ran and flew over the fence, and the little birds in the bushes flew up in fear.

“That is because I am so ugly!” thought the Duckling; and it shut its eyes, but flew on farther; thus it came out into the great moor, where the Wild Ducks lived. Here it lay the whole night long; for it was weary and downcast.

Towards morning the Wild Ducks flew up, and looked at their new companion.

“What sort of a one are you?” they asked; and the Duckling turned in every direction, and bowed as well as it could. “You are remarkably ugly!” said the Wild Ducks. “But that is very indifferent to us, so long as you do not marry into our family.”

Poor thing, it certainly did not think of marrying, and only hoped to obtain leave to lie among the reeds and drink some of the swamp-water.

Thus it lay two whole days; then came thither two Wild Geese, or, properly speaking, two wild ganders. It was not

Fairy Tales from Hans Andersen

long since each had crept out of an egg, and that's why they were so saucy.

"Listen, comrade," said one of them. "You're so ugly that I like you. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Near here, in another moor, there are a few sweet lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and all able to say 'Rap!' You've a chance of making your fortune, ugly as you are!"

"Piff! paff!" resounded through the air; and the two ganders fell down dead in the swamp, and the water became blood-red. "Piff! paff!" it sounded again, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the reeds. And then there was another report. A great hunt was going on. The hunters were lying in wait all round the moor, and some were even sitting up in the branches of the trees, which spread far over the reeds. The blue smoke rose up like clouds among the dark trees, and was wafted far away across the water; and the hunting dogs came—splash, splash!—into the swamp, and the rushes and the reeds bent down on every side. That was a fright for the poor Duckling! It turned its head, and put it under its wing; but at that moment a frightful great dog stood close by the Duckling. His tongue hung far out of his mouth and his eyes gleamed horrible and ugly; he thrust out his nose close against the Duckling, showed his sharp teeth, and—splash, splash!—on he went without seizing it.

"Oh, Heaven be thanked!" sighed the Duckling. "I am so ugly, that even the dog does not like to bite me!"

And so it lay quite quiet, while the shots rattled through the reeds and gun after gun was fired. At last, late in the day, silence was restored; but the poor Duckling did not dare to rise up; it waited several hours before it looked round, and then hastened away out of the moor as fast as it could. It ran on over field and meadow; there was

The Ugly Duckling

such a storm raging that it was difficult to get from one place to another.

Towards evening the Duck came to a little miserable peasant's hut. This hut was so dilapidated that it did not know on which side it should fall; and that's why it remained standing. The storm whistled round the Duckling in such a way that the poor creature was obliged to sit down, to stand against it; and the tempest grew worse and worse. Then the Duckling noticed that one of the hinges of the door had given way, and the door hung so slanting that the Duckling could slip through the crack into the room; and it did so.

Here lived a woman, with her Tom Cat and her Hen. And the Tom Cat, whom she called Sonnie, could arch his back and purr, he could even give out sparks; but for that one had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The Hen had quite little short legs, and therefore she was called Chickabiddy-shortshanks; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning the strange Duckling was at once noticed, and the Tom Cat began to purr, and the Hen to cluck.

"What's this?" said the woman, and looked all round; but she could not see well, and therefore she thought the Duckling was a fat duck that had strayed. "This is a rare prize," she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that."

And so the Duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the Tom Cat was master of the house, and the Hen was the lady, and always said "We and the world!" for she thought they were half the world, and by far the better half. The Duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the Hen would not allow it.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

Fairy Tales from Hans Andersen

“Then you’ll have the goodness to hold your tongue.”

And the Tom Cat said, “Can you curve your back, and purr, and give out sparks?”

“No.”

“Then you cannot have any opinion of your own when sensible people are speaking.”

And the Duckling sat in a corner and was melancholy; then the fresh air and the sunshine streamed in; and it was seized with such a strange longing to swim on the water, that it could not help telling the Hen of it.

“What are you thinking of?” cried the Hen. “You have nothing to do, that’s why you have these strange fancies. Purr or lay eggs, and they will pass over.”

“But it is so charming to swim on the water!” said the Duckling, “so refreshing to let it close above one’s head, and to dive down to the bottom.”

“Yes, that must be a mighty pleasure, truly,” quoth the Hen. “I fancy you must have gone crazy. Ask the Cat about it,—he’s the cleverest animal I know,—ask him if he likes to swim on the water, or to dive down: I won’t speak about myself. Ask our mistress, the old woman; no one in the world is cleverer than she. Do you think she has any desire to swim, and to let the water close above her head?”

“You don’t understand me,” said the Duckling.

“We don’t understand you? Then pray who is to understand you? You surely don’t pretend to be cleverer than the Tom Cat and the old woman—I won’t say anything of myself. Don’t be conceited, child, and be grateful for all the kindness you have received. Did you not get into a warm room, and have you not fallen into company from which you may learn something? But you are a chatterer, and it is not pleasant to associate with you. You may believe me, I speak for your good. I tell you disagreeable things, and by that one may always know one’s true friends.

The Ugly Duckling

Only take care that you learn to lay eggs, or to purr and give out sparks!”

“I think I will go out into the wide world,” said the Duckling.

“Yes, do go,” replied the Hen.

And the Duckling went away. It swam on the water, and dived, but it was slighted by every creature because of its ugliness.

Now came the autumn. The leaves in the forest turned yellow and brown; the wind caught them so that they danced about, and up in the air it was very cold. The clouds hung low, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, and on the fence stood the raven, crying, “Croak! croak!” for mere cold; yes, it was enough to make one feel cold to think of this. The poor little Duckling certainly had not a good time. One evening—the sun was just setting in his beauty—there came a whole flock of great handsome birds out of the bushes; they were dazzlingly white, with long flexible necks; they were swans. They uttered a very peculiar cry, spread forth their glorious great wings, and flew away from that cold region to warmer lands, to fair open lakes. They mounted so high, so high, and the ugly little Duckling felt quite strangely as it watched them. It turned round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched out its neck towards them, and uttered such a strange loud cry as frightened itself. Oh! it could not forget those beautiful, happy birds; and so soon as it could see them no longer, it dived down to the very bottom, and when it came up again, it was quite beside itself. It knew not the name of those birds, and knew not whither they were flying; but it loved them more than it had ever loved any one. It was not at all envious of them. How could it think of wishing to possess such loveliness as they had! It would have been glad if only the ducks would have endured its company—the poor ugly creature!

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And the winter grew cold, very cold! The Duckling was forced to swim about in the water, to prevent the surface from freezing entirely; but every night the hole in which it swam about became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the icy covering crackled again; and the Duckling was obliged to use its legs continually to prevent the hole from freezing up. At last it became exhausted, and lay quite still, and thus froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a peasant came by, and when he saw what had happened, he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice-crust to pieces, and carried the Duckling home to his wife. Then it came to itself again. The children wanted to play with it; but the Duckling thought they would do it an injury, and in its terror fluttered up into the milk-pan, so that the milk spurted down into the room. The woman clasped her hands, at which the Duckling flew down into the butter-tub, and then into the meal-barrel and out again. How it looked then! The woman screamed, and struck at it with the fire-tongs; the children tumbled over one another, in their efforts to catch the Duckling; and they laughed and screamed finely! Happily the door stood open, and the poor creature was able to slip out between the shrubs into the newly-fallen snow; and there it lay quite exhausted.

But it would be too melancholy if I were to tell all the misery and care which the Duckling had to endure in the hard winter. It lay out on the moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again and the larks to sing; it was a beautiful spring.

Then all at once the Duckling could flap its wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore it strongly away; and before it well knew how all this had happened, it found itself in a great garden, where the elder-trees smelt sweet, and bent their long green branches down to the canal that wound through the region. Oh, here it was so beauti-

The Ugly Duckling

ful, such a gladness of spring! and from the thicket came three glorious white swans; they rustled their wings, and swam lightly on the water. The Duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt oppressed by a peculiar sadness.

“I will fly away to them, to the royal birds, and they will kill me, because I, that am so ugly, dare to approach them. But it is of no consequence! Better to be killed by *them* than to be pursued by ducks, and pecked at by fowls, and pushed about by the girl who takes care of the poultry-yard, and to suffer hunger in winter!” And it flew out into the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans: these looked at it, and came sailing down upon it with outspread wings. “Kill me!” said the poor creature, and bent its head down upon the water, expecting nothing but death. But what was this that it saw in the clear water? It beheld its own image—and, lo! it was no longer a clumsy dark-grey bird, ugly and hateful to look at, but—a swan.

It matters nothing if one was born in a duck-yard, if one has only lain in a swan’s egg.

It felt quite glad at all the need and misfortune it had suffered, now it realised its happiness in all the splendour that surrounded it. And the great swans swam round it, and stroked it with their beaks.

Into the garden came little children, who threw bread and corn into the water; the youngest cried, “There is the new one!” and the other children shouted joyously, “Yes, a new one has arrived!” And they clapped their hands and danced about, and ran to their father and mother; and bread and cake were thrown into the water; and they all said, “The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!” and the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings, for he did not know what to do; he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He thought how he had been

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persecuted and depised ; and now he heard them saying that he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder-tree bent its branches straight down into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and mild. Then his wings rustled, he lifted his slender neck, and cried rejoicingly from the depths of his heart,

“ I never dreamed of so much happiness when I was still the Ugly Duckling ! ”





The Red Shoes



WILL tell you now about a little girl ; a very nice, pretty little girl. But in summer she had to go barefoot, because she was poor, and in winter she wore thick wooden shoes, so that her little instep became quite red, altogether red.

In the middle of the village lived an old shoemaker's wife ; she sat, and sewed, as well as she could, a pair of little shoes, of old strips of red cloth ; they were clumsy enough, but well meant, and the little girl was to have them. The little girl's name was Karen.

On the day when her mother was buried she received the

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red shoes and wore them for the first time. They were certainly not suited for mourning; but she had no others, and therefore thrust her little bare feet into them and walked behind the plain deal coffin.

Suddenly a great carriage came by, and in the carriage sat an old lady; she looked at the little girl and felt pity for her, and said to the clergyman,

“Give me the little girl and I will provide for her.”

Karen thought this was for the sake of the shoes; but the old lady declared they were hideous; and they were burned. But Karen herself was clothed neatly and properly: she was taught to read and to sew, and the people said she was agreeable. But her mirror said, “You are much more than agreeable; you are beautiful.”

Once the Queen travelled through the country, and had her little daughter with her; and the daughter was a Princess. And the people flocked towards the castle, and Karen too was among them; and the little Princess stood in a fine white dress at a window, and let herself be gazed at. She had neither train nor golden crown, but she wore splendid red morocco shoes; they were certainly far handsomer than those the shoemaker's wife had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world can compare with red shoes!

Now Karen was old enough to be confirmed: new clothes were made for her, and she was to have new shoes. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little feet; this was done in his own house, in his little room, and there stood great glass cases with neat shoes and shining boots. It had quite a charming appearance, but the old lady could not see well, and therefore took no pleasure in it. Among the shoes stood a red pair, just like those which the Princess had worn. How beautiful they were! The shoemaker also said they had been made for a Count's child, but they had not fitted.

The Red Shoes

“That must be patent leather,” observed the old lady, “the shoes shine so!”

“Yes, they shine!” replied Karen; and they fitted her, and were bought. But the old lady did not know that they were red; for she would never have allowed Karen to go to her confirmation in red shoes; and that is what Karen did.

Every one was looking at her shoes. And when she went across the church porch, towards the door of the choir, it seemed to her as if the old pictures on the tombstones, the portraits of clergymen and clergymen’s wives, in their stiff collars and long black garments, fixed their eyes upon her red shoes. And she thought of her shoes only, when the priest laid his hand upon her head and spoke holy words. And the organ pealed solemnly, the children sang with their fresh sweet voices, and the old precentor sang too; but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

In the afternoon the old lady was informed by every one that the shoes were red; and she said it was naughty and unsuitable, and that when Karen went to church in future, she should always go in black shoes, even if they were old.

Next Sunday was Sacrament Sunday. And Karen looked at the black shoes, and looked at the red ones—looked at them again—and put on the red ones.

The sun shone gloriously; Karen and the old lady went along the foot-path through the fields, and it was rather dusty.

By the church door stood an old invalid soldier with a crutch and a long beard; the beard was rather red than white, for it was red altogether; and he bowed down almost to the ground, and asked the old lady if he might dust her shoes. And Karen also stretched out her little foot.

“Look, what pretty dancing-shoes!” said the old soldier. “Fit so tightly when you dance!”

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And he tapped the soles with his hand. And the old lady gave the soldier an alms, and went into the church with Karen.

And every one in the church looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the pictures looked at them. And while Karen knelt in the church she only thought of her red shoes ; and she forgot to sing her psalm, and forgot to say her prayer.

Now all the people went out of church, and the old lady stepped into her carriage. Karen lifted up her foot to step in too ; then the old soldier said,

“Look, what beautiful dancing-shoes !”

And Karen could not resist : she was obliged to dance a few steps ; and when she once began, her legs went on dancing. It was just as though the shoes had obtained power over her. She danced round the corner of the church—she could not help it ; the coachman was obliged to run behind her and seize her : he lifted her into the carriage, but her feet went on dancing, so that she kicked the good old lady violently. At last they took off her shoes, and her legs became quiet.

At home the shoes were put away in a cupboard ; but Karen could not resist looking at them.

Now the old lady became very ill, and it was said she would not recover. She had to be nursed and waited on : and this was no one's duty so much as Karen's. But there was to be a great ball in the town, and Karen was invited. She looked at the old lady who could not recover ; she looked at the red shoes, and thought there would be no harm in it. She put on the shoes, and that she might very well do ; but they went to the ball and began to dance.

But when she wished to go to the right hand, the shoes danced to the left, and when she wanted to go upstairs the shoes danced downwards, down into the street and out at the town gate. She danced, and was obliged to dance, till she danced straight out into the dark wood.



The coachman was obliged to run behind her.

The Red Shoes

There was something glistening up among the trees, and she thought it was the moon, for she saw a face. But it was the old soldier with the red beard: he sat and nodded, and said,

“Look, what beautiful dancing shoes!”

Then she was frightened, and wanted to throw away the red shoes; but they clung fast to her. And she tore off her stockings; but the shoes had grown fast to her feet. And she danced and was compelled to go dancing over field and meadow, in rain and sunshine, by night and by day; but it was most dreadful at night.

She danced out into the open churchyard; but the dead there do not dance; they have far better things to do. She wished to sit down on the poor man's grave, where the bitter fern grows; but there was no peace nor rest for her. And when she danced towards the open church door, she saw there an angel in long white garments, with wings that reached from his shoulders to his feet; his countenance was serious and stern, and in his hand he held a sword that was broad and gleaming.

“Thou shalt dance!” he said—“dance on thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and till thy body shrivels to a skeleton. Thou shalt dance from door to door, and where proud, haughty children dwell, shalt thou knock, that they may hear thee, and be afraid of thee! Thou shalt dance, dance!”

“Mercy!” cried Karen.

But she did not hear what the angel answered, for the shoes carried her away—carried her through the door on to the field, over stock and stone, and she was always obliged to dance.

One morning she danced past a door which she knew well. There was a sound of psalm-singing within, and a coffin was carried out, adorned with flowers. Then she knew that the old lady was dead, and she felt that she

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was deserted by all, and condemned by the angel of heaven.

She danced and was compelled to dance—to dance in the dark night. The shoes carried her on over thorn and brier; she scratched herself till she bled; she danced away across the heath to a little lonely house. Here she knew the executioner dwelt; and she tapped with her fingers on the panes, and called,

“Come out, come out! I cannot come in, for I must dance!”

And the executioner said,

“You probably don’t know who I am? I cut off the bad people’s heads with my axe, and mark how my axe rings!”

“Do not strike off my head,” said Karen, “for if you do I cannot repent of my sin. But strike off my feet with the red shoes!”

And then she confessed all her sin, and the executioner cut off her feet with the red shoes; but the shoes danced away with the little feet over the fields and into the deep forest.

And he cut her a pair of wooden feet, with crutches, and taught her a psalm, which the criminals always sing; and she kissed the hand that had held the axe, and went away across the heath.

“Now I have suffered pain enough for the red shoes,” said she. “Now I will go into the church, that they may see me.”

And she went quickly towards the church door, but when she came there the red shoes danced before her, so that she was frightened, and turned back.

The whole week through she was sorrowful, and wept many bitter tears; but when Sunday came, she said,

“Now I have suffered and striven enough! I think that I am just as good as many of those who sit in the church and carry their heads high.”

The Red Shoes

And then she went boldly on; but she did not get farther than the churchyard gate before she saw the red shoes dancing along before her; then she was seized with terror, and turned back, and repented of her sin right heartily.

And she went to the parsonage, and begged to be taken there as a servant. She promised to be industrious, and to do all she could; she did not care for wages, and only wished to be under a roof and with good people. The clergyman's wife pitied her, and took her into her service. And she was industrious and thoughtful. Silently she sat and listened when in the evening the pastor read the Bible aloud. All the little ones were very fond of her; but when they spoke of dress and splendour and beauty, she would shake her head.

Next Sunday they all went to church, and she was asked if she wished to go too; but she looked sadly, with tears in her eyes, at her crutches. And then the others went to hear God's word; but she went alone into her little room, which was only large enough to contain her bed and a chair. And here she sat with her hymn-book; and as she read it with a pious mind, the wind bore the notes of the organ over to her from the church; and she lifted up her face, wet with tears, and said,

“O Lord, help me!”

Then the sun shone so brightly; and before her stood the angel in the white garments, the same she had seen that night at the church door. But he no longer grasped the sharp sword; he held a green branch covered with roses; and he touched the ceiling, and it rose up high, and wherever he touched it a golden star gleamed forth; and he touched the walls, and they spread forth widely, and she saw the organ which was pealing its rich sounds; and she saw the old pictures of clergymen and their wives; and the congregation sat in the decorated seats, and sang from their

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hymn-books. The church had come to the poor girl in her narrow room, or her chamber had become a church. She sat in the chair with the rest of the clergyman's people; and when they had finished the psalm, and looked up, they nodded and said,

“That was right that you came here, Karen.”

“It was mercy!” said she.

And the organ sounded its glorious notes; and the children's voices singing in the chorus sounded sweet and lovely; the clear sunshine streamed so warm through the window upon the chair in which Karen sat; and her heart became so filled with sunshine, peace, and joy, that it broke. Her soul flew on the sunbeams to heaven; and there was nobody who asked after the RED SHOES!



The Girl who Trod on the Loaf



THE story of the girl who trod on the loaf to avoid soiling her shoes, and of the misfortune that befell this girl, is well known. It has been written, and even printed.

The girl's name was Ingé: she was a poor child, but proud and presumptuous; there was a bad foundation in her, as the saying is. When she was quite a little child, it was her delight to catch flies, and tear off their wings, so as to convert them into creeping things. Grown older, she would take cockchafers and beetles, and spit them on pins. Then she pushed a green leaf or a little scrap of paper towards their feet, and the poor creatures seized it and held it fast, and turned it over and over struggling to get free from the pin.

"The cockchafer is reading," Ingé would say. "See how he turns the leaf round and round!"

With years she grew worse rather than better; but she was pretty, and that was her misfortune; otherwise she would have been more sharply reproved than she was.

"Your headstrong will requires something strong to break it!" her own mother often said. "As a little child, you used to trample on my apron; but I fear you will one day trample on my heart."

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And that is what she really did.

She was sent into the country, in service in the house of rich people, who kept her as their own child, and dressed her in corresponding style. She looked well, and her presumption increased.

When she had been there about a year, her mistress said to her, "You ought once to visit your parents, Ingé."

And Ingé set out to visit her parents, but it was only to show herself in her native place, and that the people there might see how grand she had become ; but when she came to the entrance of the village, and the young husbandmen and maids stood there chatting, and her own mother appeared among them, sitting on a stone to rest, and with a faggot of sticks before her that she had picked up in the wood, then Ingé turned back, for she felt ashamed that she, who was so finely dressed, should have for a mother a ragged woman who picked up wood in the forest. She did not turn back out of pity for her mother's poverty, she was only angry.

And another half-year went by, and her mistress said again, "You ought to go to your home, and visit your old parents, Ingé. I'll make you a present of a great wheaten loaf that you may give to them : they will certainly be glad to see you again."

And Ingé put on her best clothes and her new shoes, and drew her skirts around her, and set out, stepping very carefully, that she might be clean and neat about the feet ; and there was no harm in that. But when she came to the place where the footway led across the moor, and where there was mud and puddles, she threw the loaf into the mud, and trod upon it to pass over without wetting her feet. But as she stood there with one foot upon the loaf and the other uplifted to step farther, the loaf sank with her, deeper and deeper, till she disappeared altogether, and



She threw the loaf in the mud and trod on it.

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only a great puddle, from which the bubbles rose, remained where she had been.

And that's the story.

But whither did Ingé go? She sank into the moor ground, and went down to the Moor Woman, who is always brewing there. The Moor Woman is cousin to the Elf Maidens, who are well enough known, of whom songs are sung, and whose pictures are painted; but concerning the Moor Woman it is only known that when the meadows steam in summer-time, it is because she is brewing. Into the Moor Woman's brewery did Ingé sink down; and no one can endure that place long. A box of mud is a palace compared with the Moor Woman's brewery. Every barrel there has an odour that almost takes away one's senses; and the barrels stand close to each other; and wherever there is a little opening among them, through which one might push one's way, the passage becomes impracticable from the number of damp toads and fat snakes who sit out their time there. Among this company did Ingé fall; and all the horrible mass of living creeping things was so icy cold, that she shuddered in all her limbs, and became stark and stiff. She continued fastened to the loaf, and the loaf drew her down as an amber button draws a fragment of straw.

The Moor Woman was at home, and on that day there were visitors in the brewery. These visitors were old Bogey and his grandmother, who came to inspect it; and Bogey's grandmother is a venomous old woman, who is never idle: she never rides out to pay a visit without taking her work with her; and accordingly she had brought it on the day in question. She sewed biting-leather to be worked into men's shoes, and which makes them wander about, unable to settle anywhere. She wove webs of lies, and strung together hastily-spoken words that had fallen to the ground; and all this was done for the injury and ruin of

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mankind. Yes, she knew how to sew, to weave, and to string, this old grandmother!

Catching sight of Ingé, she put up her double eye-glass, and took another look at the girl.

“That’s a girl who has ability!” she observed, “and I beg you will give me the little one as a memento of my visit here. She’ll make a capital statue to stand in my grandson’s antechamber.”

And Ingé was given up to her, and this is how Ingé came into Bogy’s domain. People don’t always go there by the direct path, but they can get there by roundabout routes if they have a tendency in that direction.

That was a never-ending antechamber. The visitor became giddy who looked forward, and doubly giddy when he looked back, and saw a whole crowd of people, almost utterly exhausted, waiting till the gate of mercy should be opened to them—they had to wait a long time! Great fat waddling spiders spun webs of a thousand yards over their feet, and these webs cut like wire, and bound them like bronze fetters; and, moreover, there was an eternal unrest working in every heart—a miserable unrest. The miser stood there, and had forgotten the key of his strong box, and he knew the key was sticking in the lock. It would take too long to describe the various sorts of torture that were found there together. Ingé felt a terrible pain while she had to stand there as a statue, for she was tied fast to the loaf.

“That’s the fruit of wishing to keep one’s feet neat and tidy,” she said to herself. “Just look how they’re all staring at me!”

Yes, certainly, the eyes of all were fixed upon her, and their evil thoughts gleamed forth from their eyes, and they spoke to one another, moving their lips, from which no sound whatever came forth: they were very horrible to behold.

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“It must be a great pleasure to look at me!” thought Ingé, “and indeed I have a pretty face and fine clothes.” And she turned her eyes, for she could not turn her head, her neck was too stiff for that. But she had not considered how her clothes had been soiled in the Moor Woman’s brewhouse. Her garments were covered with mud; a snake had fastened in her hair, and dangling down her back; and out of each fold of her frock a great toad looked forth, croaking like an asthmatic poodle. That was very disconcerting. “But all the rest of them down here look horrible,” she observed to herself, and derived consolation from the thought.

The worst of all was the terrible hunger that tormented her. But could she not stoop and break off a piece of the loaf on which she stood? No, her back was too stiff, her hands and arms were benumbed, and her whole body was like a pillar of stone; only she was able to turn her eyes in her head, to turn them quite round, so that she could see backwards: it was an ugly sight. And then the flies came up, and crept to and fro over her eyes, and she blinked her eyes, but the flies would not go away, for they could not fly: their wings had been pulled out, so that they were converted into creeping insects: it was horrible torment added to the hunger, for she felt empty, quite, entirely empty.

“If this lasts much longer,” she said, “I shall not be able to bear it.”

But she had to bear it, and it lasted on and on.

Then a hot tear fell down upon her head, rolled over her face and neck, down on to the loaf on which she stood; and then another tear rolled down, followed by many more. Who might be weeping for Ingé? Had she not still a mother in the world? The tears of sorrow which a mother weeps for her child always make their way to the child; but they do not relieve it, they only increase its torment. And now to bear this unendurable hunger, and yet not to

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be able to touch the loaf on which she stood! She felt as if she had been feeding on herself, and had become like a thin hollow reed that takes in every sound, for she heard everything that was said of her up in the world, and all that she heard was hard and evil. Her mother, indeed, wept much and sorrowed for her, but for all that she said, "A haughty spirit goes before a fall. That was thy ruin, Ingé. Thou hast sorely grieved thy mother."

Her mother and all on earth knew of the sin she had committed; knew that she had trodden upon the loaf, and had sunk and disappeared; for the cowherd had seen it from the hill beside the moor.

"Greatly hast thou grieved thy mother, Ingé," said the mother; "yes, yes, I thought it would be thus."

"Oh that I never had been born!" thought Ingé; "it would have been far better. But what use is my mother's weeping now?"

And she heard how her master and mistress, who had kept and cherished her like kind parents, now said she was a sinful child, and did not value the gifts of God, but trampled them under her feet, and that the gates of mercy would only open slowly to her.

"They should have punished me," thought Ingé, "and have driven out the whims I had in my head."

She heard how a complete song was made about her, a song of the proud girl who trod upon the loaf to keep her shoes clean, and she heard how the song was sung everywhere.

"That I should have to bear so much evil for that!" thought Ingé; "the others ought to be punished, too, for their sins. Yes, then there would be plenty of punishing to do. Ah, how I'm being tortured!"

And her heart became harder than her outward form.

"Here in this company one can't even become better," she said, "and I don't want to become better! Look how

The Girl who Trod on the Loaf

they're all staring at me!" And her heart was full of anger and malice against all men. "Now they've something to talk about at last up yonder. Ah, how I'm being tortured!"

And then she heard how her story was told to the little children, and the little ones called her the godless Ingé, and said that she was so naughty and ugly that she must be well punished.

Thus even the children's mouths spoke hard words of her.

But one day, while grief and hunger gnawed her hollow frame, and she heard her name mentioned and her story told to an innocent child, a little girl, she became aware that the little one burst into tears at the tale of the haughty, vain Ingé.

"But will Ingé never come up here again?" asked the little girl.

And the reply was, "She will never come up again."

"But if she were to say she was sorry, and to beg pardon, and say she would never do so again?"

"Yes, then she might come; but she will not beg pardon," was the reply.

"I should be so glad if she would," said the little girl; and she appeared to be quite inconsolable. "I'll give my doll and all my playthings if she may only come up. It's too dreadful—poor Ingé!"

And these words penetrated to Ingé's inmost heart, and seemed to do her good. It was the first time any one had said "Poor Ingé," without adding anything about her faults: a little innocent child was weeping and praying for mercy for her. It made her feel quite strangely, and she herself would gladly have wept, but she could not weep, and that was a torment in itself.

While years were passing above her, for where she was there was no change, she heard herself spoken of more

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and more seldom. At last one day a sigh struck on her ear: "Ingé, Ingé, how you have grieved me! I said how it would be!" It was the last sigh of her dying mother.

Occasionally she heard her name spoken by her former employers, and they were pleasant words when the woman said, "Shall I ever see thee again, Ingé? One knows not what may happen."

But Ingé knew right well that her good mistress would never come to the place where she was.

And again time went on—a long, bitter time. Then Ingé heard her name pronounced once more, and saw two bright stars that seemed gleaming above her. They were two gentle eyes closing upon earth. So many years had gone by since the little girl had been inconsolable and wept about "poor Ingé," that the child had become an old woman, and was now to be called home to heaven; and in the last hour of existence, when the events of the whole life stand at once before us, the old woman remembered how as a child she had cried heartily at the story of Ingé.

And the eyes of the old woman closed, and the eye of her soul was opened to look upon the hidden things. She, in whose last thoughts Ingé had been present so vividly, saw how deeply the poor girl had sunk, and burst into tears at the sight; in heaven she stood like a child, and wept for poor Ingé. And her tears and prayers sounded like an echo in the dark empty space that surrounded the tormented captive soul, and the unhopedor love from above conquered her, for an angel was weeping for her. Why was this vouchsafed to her? The tormented soul seemed to gather in her thoughts every deed she had done on earth, and she, Ingé, trembled and wept such tears as she had never yet wept. She was filled with sorrow about herself: it seemed as though the gate of mercy could never open to her; and while in deep



“Yonder is a sea-swallow,” said the children.

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penitence she acknowledged this, a beam of light shot radiantly down into the depths to her, with a greater force than that of the sunbeam which melts the snow man the boys have built up; and quicker than the snow-flake melts, and becomes a drop of water that falls on the warm lips of a child, the stony form of Ingé was changed to mist, and a little bird soared with the speed of lightning upward into the world of men. But the bird was timid and shy towards all things around; he was ashamed of himself, ashamed to encounter any living thing, and hurriedly sought to conceal himself in a dark hole in an old crumbling wall; there he sat cowering, trembling through his whole frame, and unable to utter a sound, for he had no voice. Long he sat there before he could rightly see all the beauty around him; for it was beautiful. The air was fresh and mild, the moon cast its mild radiance over the earth; trees and bushes exhaled fragrance, and it was right pleasant where he sat, and his coat of feathers was clean and pure. How all creation seemed to speak of beneficence and love! The bird wanted to sing of the thoughts that stirred in his breast, but he could not; gladly would he have sung as the cuckoo and the nightingale sang in the spring-time. But Heaven, that hears the mute song of praise of the worm, could hear the notes of praise which now trembled in the breast of the bird, as David's psalms were heard before they had fashioned themselves into words and song.

For weeks these toneless songs stirred within the bird; at last the holy Christmas-time approached. The peasant who dwelt near set up a pole by the old wall, with some ears of corn bound to the top, that the birds of heaven might have a good meal, and rejoice in the happy, blessed time.

And on Christmas morning the sun arose and shone upon the ears of corn, which were surrounded by a number

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of twittering birds. Then out of the hole in the wall streamed forth the voice of another bird, and the bird soared forth from his hiding-place; and in heaven it was well known what bird this was.

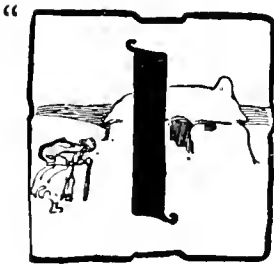
It was a hard winter. The ponds were covered with ice, and the beasts of the field and the birds of the air were stinted for food. Our little bird soared away over the high-road, and in the ruts of the sledges he found here and there a grain of corn, and at the halting-places some crumbs. Of these he ate only a few, but he called all the other hungry sparrows around him, that they, too, might have some food. He flew into the towns, and looked round about; and wherever a kind hand had strewn bread on the window-sill for the birds, he only ate a single crumb himself, and gave all the rest to the other birds.

In the course of the winter, the bird had collected so many bread-crumbs, and given them to the other birds, that they equalled the weight of the loaf on which Ingé had trod to keep her shoes clean; and when the last bread-crumbs had been found and given, the grey wings of the bird became white, and spread far out.

“Yonder is a sea-swallow, flying away across the water,” said the children, when they saw the white bird. Now it dived into the sea, and now it rose again into the clear sunlight. It gleamed white; but no one could tell whither it went, though some asserted that it flew straight into the sun.



Something



“WANT to be something!” said the eldest of five brothers. “I want to do something in the world. I don’t care how humble my position may be in society, if I only effect some good, for that will really be something. I’ll make bricks, for they are quite indispensable things, and then I shall truly have done something.”

“But that *something* will not be enough!” quoth the second brother. “What you intend doing is just as much as nothing at all. It is journeyman’s work, and can be done by a machine. No, I would rather be a bricklayer at once, for that is something real; and that’s what I will be. That brings rank: as a bricklayer one belongs to a guild, and is a citizen, and has one’s own flag and one’s own house of call. Yes, and if all goes well, I will keep journeymen. I shall become a master bricklayer, and my

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wife will be a master's wife—that is what *I* call something.”

“That's nothing at all!” said the third. “That is beyond the pale of the guild, and there are many of those in a town that stand far above the mere master artisan. You may be an honest man; but as a ‘master’ you will after all only belong to those who are ranked among common men. I know something better than that. I will be an architect, and will thus enter into the territory of art and speculation. I shall be reckoned among those who stand high in point of intellect. I shall certainly have to serve up from the pickaxe, so to speak; so I must begin as a carpenter's apprentice, and must go about as an assistant, in a cap, though I am accustomed to wear a silk hat. I shall have to fetch beer and spirits for the common journeymen, and they will call me ‘thou,’ and that is insulting! But I shall imagine to myself that the whole thing is only acting, and a kind of masquerade. To-morrow—that is to say, when I have served my time—I shall go my own way, and the others will be nothing to me. I shall go to the academy, and get instructions in drawing, and shall be called an architect. *That's something!* I may get to be called ‘sir,’ and even ‘worshipful sir,’ or even get a handle at the front or at the back of my name, and shall go on building and building, just as those before me have built. That will always be a thing to remember, and that's what *I* call something!”

“But *I* don't care at all for *that* something,” said the fourth. “*I* won't sail in the wake of others, and be a copyist. I will be a genius, and will stand up greater than all the rest of you together. I shall be the creator of a new style, and will give the plan of a building suitable to the climate and material of the country, for the nationality of the people, for the development of the age—and an additional storey for my own genius.”

Something

“But supposing the climate and the material are bad,” said the fifth, “that would be a disastrous circumstance, for these two exert a great influence. Nationality, moreover, may expand itself until it becomes affectation, and the development of the century may run wild with your work, as youth often runs wild. I quite realise the fact that none of you will be anything real, however much you may believe in yourselves. But, do what you like, I will not resemble you: I shall keep on the outside of things, and criticise whatever you produce. To every work there is attached something that is not right—something that has gone wrong; and I will ferret that out and find fault with it; and *that* will be doing *something!*”

And he kept his word; and everybody said concerning this fifth brother, “There is certainly something in him; he has a good head, but he does nothing.” And by that very means they thought *something* of him!

Now, you see, this is only a little story; but it will never end as long as the world lasts.

But what became of the five brothers? Why, this is *nothing*, and not *something*.

Listen, it is a capital story.

The eldest brother, he who manufactured bricks, soon became aware of the fact that every brick, however small it might be, produced for him a little coin, though this coin was only copper; and many copper pennies laid one upon the other can be changed into a shining dollar; and wherever one knocks with such a dollar in one's hand, whether at the baker's, or the butcher's, or the tailor's—wherever it may be, the door flies open, and the visitor is welcomed, and gets what he wants. You see, that is what comes of bricks. Some of these belonging to the eldest brother certainly crumbled away, or broke in two, but there was a use even for these.

On the high rampart, the wall that kept out the sea,

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Margaret, the poor woman, wished to build herself a little house. All the faulty bricks were given to her, and a few perfect ones into the bargain, for the eldest brother was a good-natured man, though he certainly did not achieve anything beyond the manufacture of bricks. The poor woman put together the house for herself. It was little and narrow, and the single window was quite crooked. The door was too low, and the thatched roof might have shown better workmanship. But after all it was a shelter; and from the little house you could look far across the sea, whose waves broke vainly against the protecting rampart on which it was built. The salt billows spurted their spray over the whole house, which was still standing when he who had given the bricks for its erection had long been dead and buried.

The second brother knew better how to build a wall, for he had served an apprenticeship to it. When he had served his time and passed his examination, he packed his knapsack and sang the journeyman's song:

“While I am young I'll wander, from place to place I'll roam,
And everywhere build houses, until I come back home;
And youth will give me courage, and my true love won't forget;
Hurrah, then, for a workman's life! I'll be a master yet!”

And he carried his idea into effect. When he had come home and become a master, he built one house after another in the town. He built a whole street; and when the street was finished and became an ornament to the place, the houses built a house for him in return, that was to be his own. But how can houses build a house? If you ask them they will not answer you, but people will understand what is meant by the expression, and say, “Certainly, it was the street that built his house for him.” It was little, and the floor was covered with clay; but when he danced with his bride upon this clay floor, it seemed to become polished oak; and from every stone in

Something

the wall sprang forth a flower, and the room was gay, as if with the costliest paperhanger's work. It was a pretty house, and in it lived a happy pair. The flag of the guild fluttered before the house, and the journeymen and apprentices shouted hurrah! Yes, he certainly was *something!* And at last he died; and *that* was something too.

Now came the architect, the third brother, who had been at first a carpenter's apprentice, had worn a cap, and served as an errand boy, but had afterwards gone to the academy, and risen to become an architect, and to be called "honoured sir." Yes, if the houses of the street had built a house for the brother who had become a bricklayer, the street now received its name from the architect, and the handsomest house in it became his property. *That* was something, and *he* was something; and he had a long title before and after his name. His children were called *genteel* children, and when he died his widow was "a widow of rank," and *that* is something!—and his name always remained at the corner of the street, and lived on in the mouth of every one as the street's name—and *that* was something!

Now came the genius of the family, the fourth brother, who wanted to invent something new and original, and an additional storey on the top of it for himself. But the top storey tumbled down, and he came tumbling down with it, and broke his neck. Nevertheless, he had a splendid funeral, with guild flags and music, poems in the papers, and flowers strewn on the paving-stones in the street; and three funeral orations were held over him, each one longer than the last, which would have rejoiced him greatly, for he always liked it when people spoke well of him; a monument also was erected over his grave. It was only one storey high, but still it was *something*.

Now he was dead, like the three other brothers; but the last, the one who was a critic, outlived them all; and that

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was quite right, for by this means he got the last word, and it was of great importance to him to have the last word. The people always said he had a good head of his own. At last his hour came, and he died, and came to the gates of Paradise. There souls always enter two and two, and he came up with another soul that wanted to get into Paradise too; and who should this be but old Dame Margaret from the house upon the sea-wall.

“I suppose this is done for the sake of contrast, that I and this wretched soul should arrive here at exactly the same time,” said the critic. “Pray, who are you, my good woman?” he asked. “Do you want to get in here too?”

And the old woman courtesied as well as she could: she thought it must be St. Peter himself talking to her.

“I’m a poor old woman of a very humble family,” she replied. “I’m old Margaret that lived in the house on the sea-wall.”

“Well, and what have you done? What have you accomplished down there?”

“I have really accomplished nothing at all in the world: nothing that I can plead to have the doors here opened to me. It would be a real mercy to allow me to slip in through the gate.”

“In what manner did you leave the world?” asked he, just for the sake of saying something; for it was wearisome work standing there and saying nothing.

“Why, I really don’t know how I left it. I was sick and miserable during my last years, and could not well bear creeping out of bed, and going out suddenly into the frost and cold. It was a hard winter, but I have got out of it all now. For a few days the weather was quite calm, but very cold, as your honour must very well know. The sea was covered with ice as far as one could look. All the people from the town walked out upon the ice, and I think they said there was a dance there, and skating. There

Something

was beautiful music and a great feast there too ; the sound came into my poor little room, where I lay ill. And it was towards the evening ; the moon had risen beautifully, but was not yet in its full splendour. I looked from my bed out over the wide sea, and far off, just where the sea and sky join, a strange white cloud came up. I lay looking at the cloud, and I saw a little black spot in the middle of it, that grew larger and larger ; and now I knew what it meant, for I am old and experienced, though this token is not often seen. I knew it, and a shuddering came upon me. Twice in my life I have seen the same thing ; and I knew there would be an awful tempest, and a spring flood, which would overwhelm the poor people who were drinking and dancing and rejoicing—young and old, the whole city had issued forth : who was to warn them, if no one saw what was coming yonder, or knew, as I did, what it meant ? I was dreadfully alarmed, and felt more lively than I had done for a long time. I crept out of bed, and got to the window, but could not crawl any farther, I was so exhausted. But I managed to open the window. I saw the people outside running and jumping about on the ice ; I could see the beautiful flags that waved in the wind. I heard the boys shouting ‘hurrah !’ and the servant men and maids singing. There were all kinds of merriment going on. But the white cloud with the black spot ! I cried as loud as I could, but no one heard me ; I was too far from the people. Soon the storm would burst, and the ice would break, and all who were upon it would be lost without remedy. They could not hear me, and I could not come out to them. Oh, if I could only bring them ashore ! Then kind Heaven inspired me with the thought of setting fire to my bed, and rather to let the house burn down, than that all those people should perish miserably. I succeeded in lighting up a beacon for them. The red flame blazed up on high, and I escaped out of the door, but fell down

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exhausted on the threshold, and could get no farther. The flames rushed out towards me, flickered through the window, and rose high above the roof. All the people on the ice yonder beheld it, and ran as fast as they could, to give aid to a poor old woman who, they thought, was being burned to death. Not one remained behind. I heard them coming; but I also became aware of a rushing sound in the air; I heard a rumbling like the sound of heavy artillery; the spring flood was lifting the covering of ice, which presently burst and cracked into a thousand fragments. But the people succeeded in reaching the sea-wall—I saved them all! But I fancy I could not bear the cold and the fright, and so I came up here to the gates of Paradise. I am told they are opened to poor creatures like me—and now I have no house left upon the rampart: not that I think this will give me admission here.”

Then the gates of heaven were opened, and the angel led the old woman in. She left a straw behind her, a straw that had been in her bed when she set it on fire to save the lives of many; and this straw had been changed into the purest gold—into gold that grew and grew, and spread out into beauteous leaves and flowers.

“Look, this is what the poor woman brought,” said the angel to the critic. “What dost *thou* bring? I know that thou hast accomplished nothing—thou hast not made so much as a single brick. Ah, if thou couldst only return, and effect at least as much as that! Probably the brick, when thou hadst made it, would not be worth much; but if it were made with a good will, it would at least be *something*. But thou canst not go back, and I can do nothing for thee!”

Then the poor soul, the old dame who had lived on the dyke, put in a petition for him. She said,

“His brother gave me the bricks and the pieces out of which I built up my house, and that was a great deal for a

Something

poor woman like me. Could not all those bricks and pieces be counted as a single brick in his favour? It was an act of mercy. He wants it now; and is not this the very fountain of mercy?"

Then the angel said,

"Thy brother, him whom thou hast regarded as the least among you all, he whose honest industry seemed to thee as the most humble, hath given thee this heavenly gift. Thou shalt not be turned away. It shall be vouchsafed to thee to stand here without the gate, and to reflect, and repent of thy life down yonder; but thou shalt not be admitted until thou hast in earnest accomplished *something*."

"I could have said that in better words!" thought the critic, but he did not find fault aloud; and for him, after all, that was "SOMETHING!"





The Snow Queen

IN SEVEN STORIES

THE FIRST STORY

Which treats of the Mirror and Fragments



WELL now, listen, we are going to begin. When we are at the end of the story we shall know more than we do now, for he was a bad goblin. He was one of the very worst, for he was a demon. One day he was in very good spirits, for he had made a mirror which had this peculiarity, that everything good and beautiful that was reflected in it shrank together into almost nothing, but that whatever was worthless and looked ugly became prominent and looked worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes seen in this mirror looked like boiled spinach, and the best people became hideous, or stood on their heads and had no

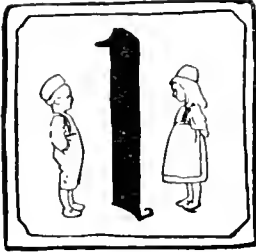
The Snow Queen

bodies ; their faces were so distorted as to be unrecognisable, and a single freckle was shown spread out over nose and mouth. That was very amusing, the demon said. When a good pious thought passed through any person's mind, these were again shown in the mirror, so that the demon chuckled at his artistic invention. Those who visited the goblin school—for he kept a goblin school—declared everywhere that a wonder had been wrought. For now, they asserted, one could see, for the first time, how the world and the people in it really looked. Now they wanted to fly up to heaven, to sneer and scoff at the angels themselves. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more it grinned ; they could scarcely hold it fast. They flew higher and higher, and then the mirror trembled so terribly amid its grinning that it fell down out of their hands to the earth, where it was shattered into a hundred million million and more fragments. And now this mirror occasioned much more unhappiness than before ; for some of the fragments were scarcely so large as a barleycorn, and these flew about in the world, and whenever they flew into any one's eye they stuck there, and those people saw everything wrongly, or had only eyes for the bad side of a thing, for every little fragment of the mirror had retained the power which the whole glass possessed. A few persons even got a fragment of the mirror into their hearts, and that was terrible indeed, for such a heart became a block of ice. A few fragments of the mirror were so large that they were used as window-panes, but it was a bad thing to look at one's friends through these panes ; other pieces were made into spectacles, and then it went badly when people put on these spectacles to see rightly, and to be just ; and then the demon laughed till he shook, for it tickled him so. But without, some little fragments of glass still floated about in the air—and now we shall hear.

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THE SECOND STORY

A Little Boy and a Little Girl



IN the great town, where there are many houses, and so many people that there is not room enough for every one to have a little garden, and where consequently most persons are compelled to be content with some flowers in flower-pots, were two poor children who possessed a garden somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other quite as much as if they had been. Their parents lived just opposite each other in two garrets, there where the roof of one neighbour's house joined that of another; and where the water-pipe ran between the two houses was a little window; one had only to step across the pipe to get from one window to the other.

The parents of each child had a great box, in which grew kitchen herbs that they used, and a little rose bush; there was one in each box, and they grew famously. Now, it occurred to the parents to place the boxes across the pipe, so that they reached from one window to another, and looked quite like two embankments of flowers. Pea plants hung down over the boxes, and the rose bushes shot forth long twigs, which clustered round the windows and bent down towards each other: it was almost like a triumphal arch of flowers and leaves. As the boxes were very high, and the children knew that they might not creep upon them, they often obtained permission to step out upon the roof behind the boxes, and to sit upon their little stools under the roses, and there they could play capitally.

The Snow Queen

In the winter-time there was an end of this amusement. The windows were sometimes quite frozen all over. But then they warmed copper shillings on the stove, and held the warm coins against the frozen pane; and this made a capital peep-hole, so round, so round! And behind it gleamed a pretty mild eye at each window; and these eyes belonged to the little boy and the little girl. His name was Kay and the little girl's was Gerda.

In the summer they could get to one another at one bound; but in the winter they had to go down and up the long staircase, while the snow was pelting without.

"Those are the white bees swarming," said the old grandmother.

"Have they a Queen-bee?" asked the little boy. For he knew that there is one among the real bees.

"Yes, they have one," replied the grandmother. "She always flies where they swarm thickest. She is the largest of them all, and never remains quiet upon the earth; she flies up again into the black cloud. Many a midnight she is flying through the streets of the town, and looks in at the windows, and then they freeze in such a strange way, and look like flowers."

"Yes, I've seen that!" cried both the children; and now they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Only let her come," cried the boy. "I'll set her upon the warm stove, and then she'll melt."

But grandmother smoothed his hair, and told some other tales.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he clambered upon the chair by the window, and looked through the little hole. A few flakes of snow were falling outside, and one of them, the largest of them all, remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-boxes.

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The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, and at last became a maiden clothed in the finest white gauze, put together of millions of starry flakes. She was beautiful and delicate, but of ice—of shining, glittering ice. Yet she was alive; her eyes flashed like two clear stars, but there was no peace or rest in them. She nodded towards the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and sprang down from the chair; then it seemed as if a great bird flew by outside, in front of the window.

Next day there was a clear frost, and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green sprouted forth, the swallows built nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their garden high up in the roof, over all the floors.

How splendidly the roses bloomed this summer! The little girl had learned a psalm, in which mention was made of roses; and, in speaking of roses, she thought of her own; and she sang it to the little boy, and he sang, too,—

“The roses will fade and pass away,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day.”

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, looked at God's bright sunshine, and spoke to it, as if the Christ-child were there. What splendid summer days those were! How beautiful it was without, among the fresh rose bushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming!

Kay and Gerda sat and looked at the picture-book of beasts and birds. Then it was, while the clock was just striking twelve on the church tower, that Kay said,

“Oh! something struck my heart and pricked me in the eye.”

The little girl fell upon his neck: he blinked his eyes. No, there was nothing at all to be seen.

“I think it is gone,” said he; but it was not gone. It

The Snow Queen

was just one of those glass fragments which sprang from the mirror—the magic mirror that we remember well, the ugly glass that made everything great and good which was mirrored in it to seem small and mean, but in which the



The little girl fell on his neck.

mean and the wicked things were brought out in relief, and every fault was noticeable at once. Poor little Kay had also received a splinter just in his heart, and that will now soon become like a lump of ice. It did not hurt him now, but the splinter was still there.

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“Why do you cry?” he asked. “You look ugly like that. There’s nothing the matter with me. Oh, fie!” he suddenly exclaimed, “that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is quite crooked. After all, they’re ugly roses. They’re like the box in which they stand.”

And then he kicked the box with his foot, and tore both the roses off.

“Kay, what are you about?” cried the little girl.

And when he noticed her fright he tore off another rose, and then sprang in at his own window, away from pretty little Gerda.

When she afterwards came with her picture-book, he said it was only fit for babies in arms; and when his grandmother told stories he always came in with a *but*; and when he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on a pair of spectacles, and talk just as she did: he could do that very cleverly, and the people laughed at him. Soon he could mimic the speech and the gait of everybody in the street. Everything that was peculiar or ugly about him Kay could imitate; and people said, “That boy must certainly have a remarkable heart.” But it was the glass that stuck deep in his heart; so it happened that he even teased little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His games now became quite different from what they were before; they became quite sensible. One winter’s day when it snowed he came out with a great burning-glass, held up the blue tail of his coat, and let the snow-flakes fall upon it.

“Now look at the glass, Gerda,” said he.

And every flake of snow was magnified, and looked like a splendid flower, or a star with ten points: it was beautiful to behold.

“See how clever that is,” said Kay. “That’s much more interesting than real flowers; and there’s not a single fault in it—they’re quite regular until they begin to melt.”

The Snow Queen

Soon after Kay came in thick gloves, and with his sledge upon his back. He called up to Gerda, "I've got leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play," and he was gone.

In the great square the boldest among the boys often tied their sledges to the country people's carts, and thus rode with them a good way. They went capitably. When they were in the midst of their playing there came a great sledge. It was painted quite white, and in it sat somebody wrapped in a rough white fur, and with a white rough cap on his head. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay bound his little sledge to it, and so he drove on with it. It went faster and faster, straight into the next street. The man who drove turned round and nodded in a familiar way to Kay; it was as if they knew one another: each time when Kay wanted to cast loose his little sledge, the stranger nodded again, and then Kay remained where he was, and thus they drove out at the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so rapidly that the boy could not see a hand's breadth before him, but still he drove on. Now he hastily dropped the cord, so as to get loose from the great sledge, but that was no use, for his sledge was fast bound to the other, and they went on like the wind. Then he called out quite loudly, but nobody heard him; and the snow beat down, and the sledge flew onward; every now and then it gave a jump, and they seemed to be flying over hedges and ditches. The boy was quite frightened. He wanted to say his prayer, but could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes became larger and larger; at last they looked like white fowls. All at once they sprang aside and the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap were made altogether of ice. It was *a lady*, tall and slender, and brilliantly white: it was the Snow Queen!

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“We have driven well!” said she. “But why do you tremble with cold? Creep into my fur.”

And she seated him beside her in her own sledge, and wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as if he sank into a snow-drift.

“Are you still cold?” asked she, and then she kissed him on the forehead.

Oh, that was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, half of which was already a lump of ice: he felt as if he were going to die; but only for a moment; for then he seemed quite well, and he did not notice the cold all about him.

“My sledge! don’t forget my sledge.”

That was the first thing he thought of; and it was bound fast to one of the white chickens, and this chicken flew behind him with the sledge upon its back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay again, and then he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

“Now you shall have no more kisses,” said she, “for if you did I should kiss you to death.”

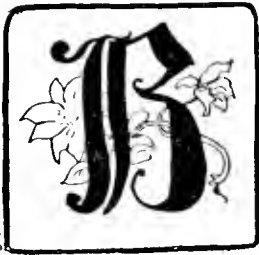
Kay looked at her. She was so beautiful, he could not imagine a more sensible or lovely face; she did not appear to him to be made of ice now as before, when she sat at the window and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfect; he did not feel at all afraid. He told her that he could do mental arithmetic as far as fractions; that he knew the number of square miles and the number of inhabitants in the country. And she always smiled, and then it seemed to him that what he knew was not enough, and he looked up into the wide sky, and she flew with him high up upon the black cloud, and the storm blew and whistled; it seemed as though the wind sang old songs. They flew over woods and trees, over sea and land: below them roared the cold wind, the wolves howled, the snow crackled; over them flew the black screaming crows; but

The Snow Queen

above all the moon shone bright and clear, and Kay looked at the long, long winter night ; by day he slept at the feet of the Queen.

THE THIRD STORY

The Flower Garden of the Woman who could Conjure



UT how did it fare with little Gerda when Kay did not return? What could have become of him? No one knew, no one could give information. The boys only told that they had seen him bind his sledge to another very large one, which had driven along the street and out at the town gate. Nobody knew what had become of him ; many tears were shed, and little Gerda especially wept long and bitterly : then she said he was dead—he had been drowned in the river which flowed close by their school. Oh, those were very dark, long winter days ! But now spring came, with warmer sunshine.

“ Kay is dead and gone,” said little Gerda.

“ I don’t believe it,” said the Sunshine.

“ He is dead and gone,” said she to the Sparrows.

“ We don’t believe it,” they replied ; and at last little Gerda did not believe it herself.

“ I will put on my new red shoes,” she said one morning, “ those that Kay has never seen ; and then I will go down to the river, and ask for him.”

It was still very early ; she kissed the old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town gate towards the river.

“ Is it true that you have taken my little playmate from

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me? I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me!"

And it seemed to her as if the waves nodded quite strangely; and then she took her red shoes, that she liked best of anything she possessed, and threw them both into the river; but they fell close to the shore, and the little wavelets carried them back to her, to the land. It seemed as if the river would not take from her the dearest things she possessed because he had not her little Kay; but she thought she had not thrown the shoes far enough out; so she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds, she went to the other end of the boat, and threw the shoes from thence into the water; but the boat was not bound fast, and at the movement she made it glided away from the shore. She noticed it, and hurried to get back, but before she reached the other end the boat was a yard from the bank, and it drifted away faster than before.

Then little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they could not carry her to land; but they flew along by the shore, and sang, as if to console her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat drove on with the stream, and little Gerda sat quite still, with only her stockings on her feet; her little red shoes floated along behind her, but they could not come up to the boat, for that made more way.

It was very pretty on both shores. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, and slopes with sheep and cows; but not *one* person was to be seen.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda.

And then she became more cheerful, and rose up, and for many hours she watched the charming green banks; then she came to a great cherry orchard, in which stood a little house with remarkable blue and red windows; it had

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a thatched roof, and without stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms to those who sailed past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they did not answer. She came quite close to them; the river carried the boat towards the shore.

Gerda called still louder, and then there came out of the house an old woman leaning on a crutch; she had on a great velvet hat, painted over with the finest flowers.



“You poor little child!” said the old woman, “how did you manage to come on the great rolling river, and to float thus far out into the world?”

And then the old woman went quite into the water, seized the boat with her crutch-stick, drew it to land, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, though she felt a little afraid of the strange old woman.

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“Come and tell me who you are, and how you came here,” said the old lady. And Gerda told her everything; and the old woman shook her head, and said, “Hem! hem!” And when Gerda had told everything, and asked if she had not seen little Kay, the woman said that he had not yet come by, but that he probably would soon come. Gerda was not to be sorrowful, but to look at the flowers and taste the cherries, for they were better than any picture-book, for each one of them could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand and led her into the little house, and the old woman locked the door.

The windows were very high, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow; the daylight shone in a remarkable way, with different colours. On the table stood the finest cherries, and Gerda ate as many of them as she liked, for she had leave to do so. While she was eating them, the old lady combed her hair with a golden comb, and the hair hung in ringlets of pretty yellow round the friendly little face, which looked as blooming as a rose.

“I have long wished for such a dear little girl as you,” said the old lady. “Now you shall see how well we shall live with one another.”

And as the ancient dame combed her hair, Gerda forgot her adopted brother Kay more and more; for this old woman could conjure, but she was not a wicked witch. She only practised a little magic for her own amusement, and wanted to keep little Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden, stretched out her crutch towards all the rose-bushes, and, beautiful as they were, they all sank into the earth, and one could not tell where they had stood. The old woman was afraid that, if the little girl saw roses, she would think of her own, and remember little Kay, and run away.

Now Gerda was led out into the flower-garden. What fragrance was there, and what loveliness! Every conceivable

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flower was there in full bloom ; there were some for every season : no picture-book could be gayer and prettier. Gerda jumped high for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the high cherry-trees ; then she was put into a lovely bed with red silk pillows stuffed with blue violets, and she slept there, and dreamed as gloriously as a Queen on her wedding-day.

One day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine ; and thus many days went by. Gerda knew every flower ; but, as many as there were of them, it still seemed to her as if one were wanting, but which one she did not know. One day she sat looking at the old lady's hat with the painted flowers, and the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old lady had forgotten to efface it from her hat when she caused the others to disappear. But so it always is when one does not keep one's wits about one.

"What, are there no roses here?" cried Gerda.

And she went among the beds, and searched and searched, but there was not one to be found. Then she sat down and wept : her tears fell just upon a spot where a rose-bud lay buried, and when the warm tears moistened the earth, the tree at once sprouted up as blooming as when it had sunk ; and Gerda embraced it, and kissed the Roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and also of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been detained!" said the little girl. "I wanted to seek for little Kay! Do you not know where he is?" she asked the Roses. "Do you think he is dead?"

"He is not dead," the Roses answered. "We have been in the ground. All the dead people are there, but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun thinking only of her

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own story or fancy tale: Gerda heard many, many of them; but not one knew anything of Kay.

And what did the Tiger-Lily say?

“Do you hear the drum ‘Rub-dub’? There are only two notes, always ‘rub-dub!’ Hear the mourning song of the women, hear the call of the priests. The Hindoo widow stands in her long red mantle on the funeral pile; the flames rise up around her and her dead husband; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one here in the circle, of him whose eyes burn hotter than flames, whose fiery glances have burned in her soul more ardently than the flames themselves, which are soon to burn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart die in the flame of the funeral pile?”

“I don’t understand that at all!” said little Gerda.

“That’s my story,” said the Lily.

What says the Convolvulus?

“Over the narrow road looms an old knightly castle: thickly the ivy grows over the crumbling red walls, leaf by leaf up to the balcony, and there stands a beautiful girl; she bends over the balustrade and glances up the road. No rose on its branch is fresher than she; no apple-blossoms wafted onward by the wind floats more lightly along. How her costly silks rustle! ‘Comes he not yet?’”

“Is it Kay whom you mean?” asked little Gerda.

“I’m only speaking of a story—my dream,” replied the Convolvulus.

What said the little Snowdrop?

“Between the trees a long board hangs by ropes; that is a swing. Two pretty little girls, with clothes white as snow and long green silk ribbons on their hats, are sitting upon it, swinging; their brother, who is greater than they, stands in the swing, and has slung his arm round the rope to hold himself, for in one hand he has a little saucer, and in the other a clay pipe: he is blowing bubbles. The

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swing flies, and the bubbles rise with beautiful changing colours; the last still hangs from the pipe-bowl, swaying in the wind. The swing flies on: the little black dog, light as the bubbles, stands up on his hind legs, and wants to be taken into the swing; it flies on, and the dog falls, barks, and grows angry, for he is teased, and the bubble bursts. A swinging board and a bursting bubble—that is my song.”

“It may be very pretty, what you’re telling, but you speak it so mournfully, and you don’t mention little Kay at all.”

What do the Hyacinths say?

“There were three beautiful sisters, transparent and delicate. The dress of one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third quite white; hand in hand they danced by the calm lake in the bright moonlight. They were not elves, they were human beings. It was so sweet and fragrant there! The girls disappeared in the forest, and the sweet fragrance became stronger: three coffins, with three beautiful maidens lying in them, glided from the wood-thicket across the lake; the glow-worms flew gleaming about them like little hovering lights. Are the dancing girls sleeping, or are they dead? The flower-scent says they are dead and the evening bell tolls their knell.”

“You make me quite sorrowful,” said little Gerda. “You scent so strongly, I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Ah! is little Kay really dead? The Roses have been down in the earth, and they say no.”

“Kling! klang!” tolled the Hyacinth Bells. “We are not tolling for little Kay—we don’t know him; we only sing our song, the only one we know.”

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, gleaming forth from the green leaves.

“You are a little bright sun,” said Gerda. “Tell me, if you know, where I may find my companion.”

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And the Buttercup shone so gaily, and looked back at Gerda. What song might the Buttercup sing? It was not about Kay.

“In a little courtyard the clear sun shone warm on the first day of spring. The sunbeams glided down the white wall of the neighbouring house; close by grew the first yellow flower, glancing like gold in the bright sun’s ray. The old grandmother sat out of doors in her chair; her granddaughter, a poor handsome maidservant, was coming home for a short visit: she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, heart’s gold, in that blessed kiss, gold in the mouth, gold in the south, gold in the morning hour. See, that’s my little story,” said the Buttercup.

“My poor old grandmother!” sighed Gerda. “Yes, she is surely longing for me and grieving for me, just as she did for little Kay. But I shall soon go home and take Kay with me. There is no use of my asking the flowers, they only know their own song, and give me no information.” And then she tied her little frock round her, that she might run the faster; but the Jonquil struck against her leg as she sprang over it, and she stopped to look at the tall yellow flower and asked, “Do you, perhaps, know anything of little Kay?”

And she bent quite down to the flower, and what did it say?

“I can see myself! I can see myself!” said the Jonquil. “Oh! oh! how I smell! Up in the little room in the gable stands a little dancing girl: she stands sometimes on one foot, sometimes on both; she seems to tread on all the world. She’s nothing but a delusion: she pours water out of a tea-pot on a bit of stuff—it is her boddice. ‘Cleanliness is a fine thing,’ she says; her white frock hangs on a hook; it has been washed in the tea-pot too, and dried on the roof: she puts it on and ties her saffron handkerchief round her neck, and the dress looks

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all the whiter. Point your toes! look how she seems to stand on a stalk. I can see myself! I can see myself!”

“I don’t care at all about that,” said Gerda. “You need not tell me that.”

And then she ran to the end of the garden. The door was locked, but she pressed against the rusty lock, and it broke off, the door sprang open, and little Gerda ran with naked feet out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one was there to pursue her; at last she could run no longer, and seated herself on a great stone, and when she looked round the summer was over—it was late in the autumn: one could not notice that in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and the flowers of every season always bloomed.

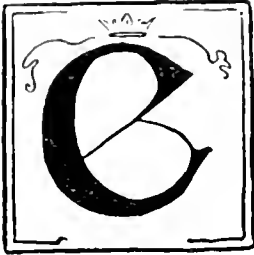
“Alas! how I have loitered!” said little Gerda. “Autumn has come. I may not rest again.”

And she rose up to go on. Oh! how sore and tired her little feet were. All around it looked cold and bleak; the long willow-leaves were quite yellow, and the dew fell down like water; one leaf after another dropped; only the sloe-thorn still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour, and set the teeth on edge. Oh! how grey and gloomy it looked, the wide world!

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THE FOURTH STORY

The Prince and Princess



GERDA was compelled to rest again ; then there came hopping across the snow, just opposite the spot where she was sitting, a great Crow. This Crow stopped a long time to look at her, nodding its head—now it said, “Krah! krah! Good day! good day!” It could not pronounce better, but it felt friendly towards the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone in the wide world. The word “alone” Gerda understood very well, and felt how much it expressed ; and she told the Crow the story of her whole life and fortunes, and asked if it had not seen Kay.

And the Crow nodded very gravely and said,
“That may be! that may be!”

“What, do you think so?” cried the little girl, and nearly pressed the Crow to death, she kissed it so.

“Gently, gently!” said the Crow. “I think I know : I believe it may be little Kay ; but he has certainly forgotten you, with the Princess.”

“Does he live with a Princess?” said Gerda.

“Yes ; listen,” said the Crow. “But it’s so difficult for me to speak your language. If you know the crows’ language, I can tell it much better.”

“No, I never learned it,” said Gerda ; “but my grandmother understood it, and could speak the language too. I only wish I had learned it.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said the Crow. “But it will go badly.”

And then the Crow told what it knew.

The Snow Queen

“In the country in which we now are lives a Princess who is quite wonderfully clever, but then she has read all the newspapers in the world, and has forgotten them again, she is so clever. Lately she was sitting on the throne—and that’s not so pleasant as is generally supposed—and she began to sing a song, and it was just this, ‘Why should I not marry yet?’ You see, there was something in that,” said the Crow. “And so she wanted to marry, but she wished for a husband who could answer when he was spoken to, not one who only stood and looked handsome, for that was wearisome. And so she had all her maids of honour summoned, and when they heard her intention they were very glad. ‘I like that,’ said they; ‘I thought the very same thing the other day.’ You may be sure that every word I am telling you is true,” added the Crow. “I have a tame sweetheart who goes about freely in the castle, and she told me everything.”

Of course the sweetheart was a crow, for one crow always finds out another, and birds of a feather flock together.

“Newspapers were published directly, with a border of hearts and the Princess’s initials. One could read in them that every young man who was good-looking might come to the castle and speak with the Princess, and him who spoke so that one could hear he was at home there, and who spoke best, the Princess would choose for her husband. Yes, yes,” said the Crow, “you may believe me. It’s as true as I sit here. Young men came flocking in; there was a great crowding and much running to and fro, but no one succeeded the first or second day. They could all speak well when they were out in the streets, but when they entered at the palace gates, and saw the guards standing in their silver lace, and went up the staircase, and saw the lackeys in their golden liveries, and the great lighted halls, they became confused. And when they

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stood before the throne itself, on which the Princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last word she had spoken, and she did not care to hear her own words again. It was just as if the people in there had taken some narcotic and fallen asleep, till they got into the street again, for not till then were they able to speak. There stood a whole row of them, from the town gate to the palace gate. I went out myself to see it," said the Crow. "They were hungry and thirsty, but in the palace they did not receive so much as a glass of lukewarm water. A few of the wisest had brought bread and butter with them, but they would not share with their neighbours, for they thought, 'Let him look hungry, and the Princess won't have him.'"

"But Kay, little Kay?" asked Gerda. "When did he come? Was he among the crowd?"

"Wait! wait! We're just coming to him. It was on the third day that there came a little personage, without horse or carriage, walking quite merrily up to the castle; his eyes sparkled like yours, he had fine long hair, but his clothes were shabby."

"That was Kay!" cried Gerda, rejoicing. "Oh, then I have found him!" And she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," observed the Crow.

"No, that must certainly have been his sledge," said Gerda, "for he went away with a sledge."

"That may well be," said the Crow, "for I did not look to it very closely. But this much I know from my tame sweetheart, that when he passed under the palace gate and saw the Life Guards in silver, and mounted the staircase and saw the lackeys in gold, he was not in the least embarrassed. He nodded, and said to them, 'It must be tedious work standing on the stairs—I'd rather go in.' The halls shone full of lights; privy councillors and

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Excellencies walked about with bare feet, and carried golden vessels; any one might have become solemn; and his boots creaked most noisily, but he was not embarrassed."

"That is certainly Kay!" cried Gerda. "He had new boots on; I've heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"Yes, certainly they creaked," resumed the Crow. "And he went boldly in to the Princess herself, who sat on a pearl that was as big as a spinning-wheel; and all the maids of honour with their attendants, and the attendants' attendants, and all the cavaliers with their followers, and the followers of their followers, who themselves kept a page apiece, were standing round; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The followers' followers' pages, who always went in slippers, could hardly be looked at, so proudly did they stand in the doorway!"

"That must be terrible!" faltered little Gerda. "And yet Kay won the Princess?"

"If I had not been a crow, I would have married her myself, notwithstanding that I am engaged. They say he spoke as well as I can when I speak the crows' language; I heard that from my tame sweetheart. He was merry and agreeable; he had not come to marry, only to hear the wisdom of the Princess; and he approved of her and she of him."

"Yes, certainly that was Kay!" said Gerda. "He was so clever, he could do mental arithmetic up to fractions. Oh! won't you lead me to the castle too?"

"That's easily said," replied the Crow. "But how are we to manage it? I'll talk it over with my tame sweetheart: she can probably advise us; for this I must tell you—a little girl like yourself will never get leave to go completely in."

"Yes, I shall get leave," said Gerda. "When Kay

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hears that I'm there he'll come out directly and bring me in."

"Wait for me yonder at the grating," said the Crow : and it wagged its head and flew away.

It was already late in the evening when the Crow came back.

"Rax! rax!" it said. "I'm to greet you kindly from my sweetheart, and here's a little loaf for you. She took it from the kitchen. There's plenty of bread there, and you must be hungry. You can't possibly get into the palace, for you are barefoot, and the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it. But don't cry; you shall go up. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase that leads up to the bed-room, and she knows where she can get the key."

And they went into the garden, into the great avenue, where one leaf was falling down after another; and when the lights were extinguished in the palace one after the other, the Crow led Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh how Gerda's heart beat with fear and longing! It was just as if she had been going to do something wicked; and yet she only wanted to know if it were little Kay. Yes, it must be he. She thought so deeply of his clear eyes and his long hair, she could fancy she saw how he smiled as he had smiled at home when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her; to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake; to know how sorry they had all been at home when he did not come back. Oh, what a fear and what a joy that was!

Now they were on the staircase. A little lamp was burning upon a cupboard, and in the middle of the floor stood the tame Crow turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who courtesied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

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“My betrothed has spoken to me very favourably of you, my little lady,” said the tame Crow. “Your history, as it may be called, is very moving. Will you take the lamp? Then I will precede you. We will go the straight way, and then we shall meet nobody.”

“I feel as if some one were coming after us,” said Gerda, as something rushed by her; it seemed like a shadow on the wall; horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

“These are only dreams,” said the tame Crow; “they are coming to carry the high masters’ thoughts out hunting. That’s all the better, for you may look at them the more closely, in bed. But I hope, when you are taken into favour and get promotion, you will show a grateful heart.”

“Of that we may be sure!” observed the Crow from the wood.

Now they came into the first hall: it was hung with rose-coloured satin, and artificial flowers were worked on the walls: and here the dreams already came flitting by them, but they moved so quickly that Gerda could not see the high-born lords and ladies. Each hall was more splendid than the last; yes, one could almost become bewildered! Now they were in the bed-chamber. Here the ceiling was like a great palm-tree with leaves of glass, of costly glass, and in the middle of the floor two beds hung on a thick stalk of gold, and each of them looked like a lily. One of them was white, and in that lay the Princess; the other was red, and in that Gerda was to seek little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves aside, and then she saw a little brown neck. Oh, that was Kay! She called out his name quite loud, and held the lamp towards him. The dreams rushed into the room again on horseback—he awoke, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay!

The Prince was only like him in the neck; but he was young and good-looking, and the Princess looked up,

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blinking, from the white lily, and asked who was there. Then little Gerda wept, and told her whole history, and all that the Crows had done for her.

“You poor child!” said the Prince and Princess.

And they praised the Crows, and said that they were not angry with them at all, but the Crows were not to do it again. However, they should be rewarded.

“Will you fly out free?” asked the Princess, “or will you have fixed positions as Court crows, with the right to everything that is left in the kitchen?”

And the two Crows bowed, and begged for fixed positions, for they thought of their old age, and said, “It is so good to have some provision for one’s old days,” as they called them.

And the Prince got up out of his bed, and let Gerda sleep in it, and he could not do more than that. She folded her little hands, and thought, “How good men and animals are!” and then she shut her eyes and went quietly to sleep. All the dreams came flying in again, looking like angels, and they drew a little sledge, on which Kay sat nodding; but all this was only a dream, and therefore it was gone again as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was clothed from head to foot in velvet; and an offer was made to her that she should stay in the castle and enjoy pleasant times; but she only begged for a little carriage, with a horse to draw it, and a pair of little boots; then she would drive out into the world and seek for Kay.

And she received not only boots, but a muff likewise, and was neatly dressed; and when she was ready to depart a coach made of pure gold stopped before the door. Upon it shone like a star the coat of arms of the Prince and Princess; coachman, footmen, and outriders—for there were outriders too—sat on horseback with gold crowns on their heads. The Prince and Princess themselves helped

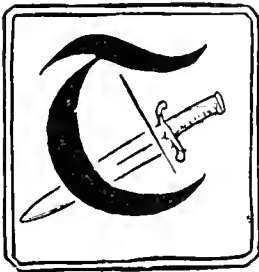
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her into the carriage, and wished her all good fortune. The forest Crow, who was now married, accompanied her the first three miles ; he sat by Gerda's side, for he could not bear riding backwards ; the other Crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings : she did not go with them, for she suffered from headache, which had come on since she had obtained a fixed position and was allowed to eat too much. The coach was lined with sugar-biscuits, and in the seat there were gingerbread-nuts and fruit.

“ Farewell, farewell ! ” cried the Prince and Princess ; and little Gerda wept, and the Crow wept. So they went on for the first three miles, and then the Crow said good-bye, and that was the heaviest parting of all. The Crow flew up on a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered like the bright sunshine.

THE FIFTH STORY

The Little Robber Girl



HEY drove on through the thick forest, but the coach gleamed like a torch, that dazzled the robbers' eyes, and they could not bear it.

“ That is gold ! that is gold ! ” cried they, and rushed forward, and seized the horses, killed the postilions, the coachman, and the footmen, and then pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

“ She is fat—she is pretty—she is fed with nut-kernels ! ” said the old robber woman, who had a very long matted beard, and shaggy eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. “ She's as good as a little pet lamb ; how I shall relish her ! ”

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And she drew out her shining knife, which gleamed in a horrible way.

“Oh!” screamed the old woman at the same moment; for her own daughter who hung at her back bit her ear in a very naughty and spiteful manner. “You ugly brat!” screamed the old woman; and she had not time to kill Gerda.

“She shall play with me!” said the little robber girl. “She shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed!”

And then the girl gave another bite, so that the woman jumped high up, and turned right round, and all the robbers laughed, and said,

“Look how she dances with her calf.”

“I want to go into the carriage,” said the little robber girl.

And she would have her own way, for she was spoiled and very obstinate; and she and Gerda sat in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone deep into the forest. The little robber girl was as big as Gerda, but stronger and more broad-shouldered; and she had a brown skin; her eyes were quite black, and they looked almost mournful. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said,

“They shall not kill you as long as I am not angry with you. I suppose you are a Princess?”

“No,” replied Gerda. And she told all that had happened to her, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber girl looked at her seriously, nodded slightly, and said,

“They shall not kill you even if I do get angry with you, for then I will do it myself.”

And then she dried Gerda’s eyes, and put her two hands into the beautiful muff that was so soft and warm.

Now the coach stopped, and they were in the courtyard of a robber castle. It had burst from the top to the ground;

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ravens and crows flew out of the great holes, and big bulldogs—each of which looked as if he could devour a man—jumped high up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the great old smoky hall, a bright fire burned upon the stone floor; the smoke passed along under the ceiling, and had to seek an exit for itself. A great cauldron of soup was boiling, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

“You shall sleep to-night with me and all my little animals,” said the robber girl.

They got something to eat and drink, and then went to a corner, where straw and carpets were spread out. Above these sat on laths and perches more than a hundred pigeons, and all seemed asleep, but they turned a little when the two little girls came.

“All these belong to me,” said the little robber girl; and she quickly seized one of the nearest, held it by the feet, and shook it so that it flapped its wings. “Kiss it!” she cried, and beat it in Gerda’s face. “There sit the wood rascals,” she continued, pointing to a number of laths that had been nailed in front of a hole in the wall. “Those are wood rascals, those two; they fly away directly if one does not keep them well locked up. And here’s my old sweetheart ‘Ba.’” And she pulled out by the horn a Reindeer, that was tied up, and had a polished copper ring round its neck. “We’re obliged to keep him tight too, or he’d run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with a sharp knife, and he’s very frightened at that.”

And the little girl drew a long knife from a cleft in the wall, and let it glide over the Reindeer’s neck; the poor creature kicked out its legs, and the little robber girl laughed, and drew Gerda into bed with her.

“Do you keep the knife while you’re asleep?” asked Gerda, and looked at it in rather a frightened way.

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“I always sleep with my knife,” replied the robber girl. “One does not know what may happen. But now tell me again what you told me just now about little Kay, and why you came out into the wide world.”

And Gerda told it again from the beginning; and the Wood Pigeons cooed above them in their cage, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber girl put her arm round Gerda’s neck, held her knife in the other hand, and slept so that one could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes at all—she did not know whether she was to live or die.

The robbers sat round the fire, sang and drank, and the old robber woman tumbled about. It was quite terrible for a little girl to behold.

Then the Wood Pigeons said, “Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay. A white owl was carrying his sledge: he sat in the Snow Queen’s carriage, which drove close by the forest as we lay in our nests. She blew upon us young pigeons and all died except us two. Coo! coo!”

“What are you saying there?” asked Gerda. “Whither was the Snow Queen travelling? Do you know anything about it?”

“She was probably journeying to Lapland, for there they have always ice and snow. Ask the Reindeer that is tied to the cord.”

“There is ice and snow yonder, and it is glorious and fine,” said the Reindeer. “There one may run about free in great glittering plains. There the Snow Queen has her summer tent; but her strong castle is up towards the North Pole, on the island that’s called Spitzbergen.”

“Oh, Kay, little Kay!” cried Gerda.

“You must lie still,” exclaimed the robber girl, “or I shall thrust my knife into your body.”

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood Pigeons had said, and the robber girl looked quite serious, and

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nodded her head and said, "That's all the same, that's all the same!"

"Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" the creature replied, and its eyes sparkled in its head. "I was born and bred there; I ran about there in the snow-fields."

"Listen!" said the robber girl to Gerda. "You see all our men have gone away. Only mother is here still, and she'll stay; but towards noon she drinks out of the big bottle, and then she sleeps for a little while; then I'll do something for you."

Then she sprang out of bed, and clasped her mother round the neck and pulled her beard, crying,

"Good-morning, my own old nanny-goat." And her mother filliped her nose till it was red and blue; and it was all done for pure love.

When the mother had drunk out of her bottle and had gone to sleep upon it, the robber girl went to the Reindeer, and said,

"I should like very much to tickle you a few times more with the knife, for you are very funny then; but it's all the same. I'll loosen your cord and help you out, so that you may run to Lapland; but you must use your legs well, and carry this little girl to the palace of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You've heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer sprang up high for joy. The robber girl lifted little Gerda on its back, and had the forethought to tie her fast, and even to give her own little cushion as a saddle.

"There are your fur boots for you," she said, "for it's growing cold; but I shall keep the muff, for that's so very pretty. Still, you shall not be cold, for all that: here's my mother's big muffles—they'll just reach up to your elbows. Now you look just like my ugly mother."

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And Gerda wept for joy.

“I can't bear to see you whimper,” said the little robber girl. “No, you just ought to look very glad. And here are two loaves and a ham for you, now you won't be hungry.”

These were tied on the Reindeer's back. The little robber girl opened the door, coaxed in all the big dogs, and then cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer,

“Now run, but take good care of the little girl.”

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the big muffles towards the little robber girl, and said, “Farewell!”

And the Reindeer ran over stock and stone, away through the great forest, over marshes and steppes, as quick as it could go. The wolves howled and the ravens croaked. “Hiss! hiss!” it went in the air. It seemed as if the sky were flashing fire.

“Those are my old Northern Lights,” said the Reindeer. “Look how they glow!” And then it ran on faster than ever, day and night.

THE SIXTH STORY

The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman



THEY stopped at a little hut. It was very humble; the roof sloped down almost to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep on their stomachs when they wanted to go in or out. No one was in the house but an old Lapland woman, cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp; and the Reindeer told Gerda's whole history, but it related its own first, for this seemed

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to the Reindeer the more important of the two. Gerda was so exhausted by the cold that she could not speak.

“Oh, you poor things,” said the Lapland woman, “you’ve a long way to run yet! You must go more than a hundred miles into Finmark, for the Snow Queen is there, staying in the country, and burning Bengal Lights every evening. I’ll write a few words on a dried cod, for I have no paper, and I’ll give you that as a letter to the Finland woman; she can give you better information than I.”

And when Gerda had been warmed and refreshed with food and drink, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, and telling Gerda to take care of these, tied her again on the Reindeer, and the Reindeer sprang away. Flash! flash! it went high in the air; the whole night long the most beautiful blue Northern Lights were burning.

And then they got to Finmark, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman, for she had not even a hut.

There was such a heat in the chimney that the woman herself went about almost naked. She at once loosened little Gerda’s dress and took off the child’s mufflers and boots; otherwise it would have been too hot for her to bear. Then she laid a piece of ice on the Reindeer’s head, and read what was written on the codfish; she read it three times, and when she knew it by heart, she popped the fish into the soup-cauldron, for it was eatable, and she never wasted anything.

Now the Reindeer first told his own story, and then little Gerda’s; and the Finland woman blinked with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

“You are very clever,” said the Reindeer: “I know you can tie all the winds of the world together with a bit of twine: if the seaman unties one knot, he has a good wind; if he loosens the second, it blows hard; but if he unties the

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third and the fourth, there comes such a tempest that the forests are thrown down. Won't you give the little girl a draught, so that she may get twelve men's power, and overcome the Snow Queen?"

"Twelve men's power!" repeated the Finland woman. "Great use that would be!"

And she went to a bed, and brought out a great rolled-up fur, and unrolled it; wonderful characters were written upon it, and the Finland woman read until the water ran down over her forehead.

But the Reindeer again begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finland woman with such beseeching eyes full of tears, that she began to blink again with her own, and drew the Reindeer into a corner, and whispered to him, while she laid fresh ice upon his head,

"Little Kay is certainly at the Snow Queen's, and finds everything there to his taste and liking, and thinks it the best place in the world; but that is because he has a splinter of glass in his eye, and a little fragment in his heart; but these must be got out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will keep her power over him."

"But cannot you give something to little Gerda, so as to give her power over all this?"

"I can give her no greater power than she possesses already: don't you see how great that is? Don't you see how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how she gets on so well in the world, with her naked feet? She cannot receive her power from us: it consists in this, that she is a dear innocent child. If she herself cannot penetrate to the Snow Queen and get the glass out of little Kay, we can be of no use! Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little girl thither; set her down by the great bush that stands with

The Snow Queen

its red berries in the snow. Don't stand gossiping, but make haste, and get back here!"

And then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda on the Reindeer, which ran as fast as it could.

"Oh, I haven't my boots! I haven't my mufflers!" cried Gerda.

She soon noticed that in the cutting cold; but the Reindeer dare not stop: it ran till it came to the bush with the red berries; there it set Gerda down, and kissed her on the mouth, and great bright tears ran down the creature's cheeks; and then it ran back, as fast as it could. There stood poor Gerda without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of the terrible cold Finmark.

She ran forward as fast as possible; then came a whole regiment of snow-flakes; but they did not fall down from the sky, for that was quite bright, and shone with the Northern Light: the snow-flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda still remembered how large and beautiful the snow-flakes had appeared when she had looked at them through the burning-glass. But here they were certainly far longer and much more terrible—they were alive. They were advanced posts of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. A few looked like ugly great porcupines; others like knots formed of snakes, which stretched forth their heads; and others like little fat bears, whose hair stood up on end: all were brilliantly white, all were living snow-flakes.

Then little Gerda said her prayer; and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath, which went forth out of her mouth like smoke. The breath became thicker and thicker, and formed itself into little angels, who grew and grew whenever they touched the earth; and all had helmets on their heads and shields and spears in their hands; their number increased more and more, and when

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Gerda had finished her prayer a whole legion stood round about her, and struck with their spears at the terrible snow-flakes, so that these were shattered into a thousand pieces ; and little Gerda could go forward afresh, with good courage. The angels stroked her hands and feet, and then she felt less how cold it was, and hastened on to the Snow Queen's palace.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. He certainly was not thinking of little Gerda, and least of all that she was standing in front of the palace.

THE SEVENTH STORY

Of the Snow Queen's Castle, and what happened there at last



HE walls of the palace were formed of the drifting snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls, all blown together by the snow : the greatest of these extended for several miles ; the strong Northern Light illumined them all, and how great and empty, how icily cold and shining they all were ! Never was merriment there, not even a little bears' ball, at which the storm could have played the music, while the bears walked about on their hind-legs and showed off their pretty manners ; never any little sport of mouth-slapping or bars-touch ; never any little coffee gossip among the young lady white foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen. The Northern Lights flamed so brightly that one could count them where they stood highest and lowest. In the midst of this immense empty snow hall was a frozen lake, which had burst into

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a thousand pieces ; but each piece was like the rest, so that it was a perfect work of art ; and in the middle of the lake sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home, and then she said that she sat in the Mirror of Reason, and that this was the only one, and the best in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold—indeed, almost black ; but he did not notice it, for she had kissed the cold shudderings away from him, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He dragged a few sharp flat pieces of ice to and fro, joining them together in all kinds of ways, for he wanted to achieve something with them. It was just like when we have little tablets of wood, and lay them together to form figures—what we call the Chinese game. Kay also went and laid figures, and, indeed, very artistic ones. That was the icy game of Reason. In his eyes these figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance ; that was because of the fragment of glass sticking in his eye. He laid out the figures so that they formed a word—but he could never manage to lay down the word as he wished to have it—the word “Eternity.” And the Snow Queen had said,

“If you can find out this figure you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates.”

But he could not.

“Now I’ll hasten away to the warm lands,” said the Snow Queen. “I will go and look into the black pots :” these were the volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called. “I shall make them a little white ! That’s necessary ; that will do the grapes and lemons good.”

And the Snow Queen flew away, and Kay sat quite alone in the great icy hall that was miles in extent, and looked at his pieces of ice, and thought so deeply that cracks were heard inside him ; one would have thought that he was frozen.

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Then it happened that little Gerda stepped through the great gate into the wide hall. Here reigned cutting winds, but she prayed a prayer, and the winds lay down as if they would have gone to sleep; and she stepped into the great empty cold halls, and beheld Kay: she knew him, and flew to him, and embraced him, and held him fast, and called out,

“Kay, dear little Kay! at last I have found you!”

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda wept hot tears, that fell upon his breast: they penetrated into his heart, they thawed the lump of ice, and consumed the little piece of glass in it. He looked at her, and she sang:

“Roses bloom and roses decay,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day.”

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept so that the splinter of glass came out of his eye. Now he recognised her, and cried rejoicingly,

“Gerda, dear Gerda! where have you been all this time? And where have I been?” And he looked all around him. “How cold it is here! How large and void!”

And he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so glorious that even the pieces of ice round about danced for joy; and when they were tired and lay down, they formed themselves just into the letters of which the Snow Queen had said that if he found them out he should be his own master, and she would give him the whole world and a new pair of skates.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he then became well and merry. The Snow Queen might now come home; his letter of release stood written in shining characters of ice.

And they took one another by the hand, and wandered forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the

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grandmother and of the roses on the roof; and where they went the winds rested and the sun burst forth; and when they came to the bush with the red berries, the Reindeer was standing there waiting: it had brought another young reindeer, which gave the children warm milk, and kissed them on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda, first to the Finnish woman, where they warmed themselves thoroughly in the hot room, and received instructions for their journey home, and then to the Lapland woman, who had made their new clothes and put their sledge in order.

The Reindeer and the young one sprang at their side, and followed them as far as the boundary of the country. There the first green sprouted forth, and there they took leave of the two Reindeers and the Lapland woman. "Farewell!" said all. And the first little birds began to twitter, the forest was decked with green buds, and out of it on a beautiful horse (which Gerda knew, for it was the same that had drawn her golden coach) a young girl came riding, with a shining red cap on her head and a pair of pistols in the holsters. This was the little robber girl, who had grown tired of staying at home, and wished to go first to the north, and if that did not suit her, to some other region. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too; and it was a right merry meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to gad about!" she said to little Kay. "I should like to know if you deserve that one should run to the end of the world after you?"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the Prince and Princess.

"They've gone to foreign countries," said the robber girl.

"But the Crow?" said Gerda.

"But the Crow is dead," answered the other. "The tame one has become a widow, and goes about with an end of black worsted thread round her leg. She complains most

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lamentably, but it's all talk. But now tell me how you have fared, and how you caught him."

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

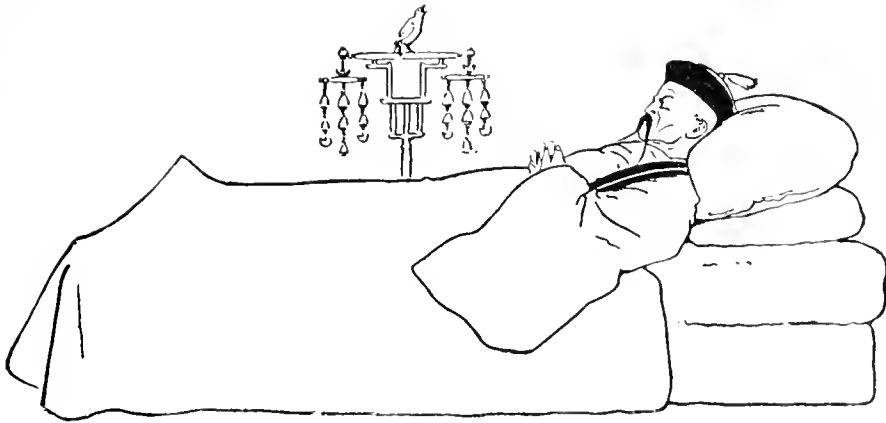
"Snipp-snapp-snurre-purre-basellurre!" said the robber girl.

And she took them both by the hand, and promised that if she ever came through their town, she would come up and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand, and as they went it became beautiful spring, with green and with flowers. The church bells sounded, and they recognised the high steeples and the great town: it was the one in which they lived; and they went to the grandmother's door, and up the stairs, and into the room, where everything remained in its usual place. The big clock was going "Tick! tack!" and the hands were turning; but as they went through the rooms they noticed that they had become grown-up people. The roses out on the roof gutter were blooming in at the open window, and there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat each upon their own, and held each other by the hand. They had forgotten the cold empty splendour at the Snow Queen's like a heavy dream. The grandmother was sitting in God's bright sunshine, and read aloud out of the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old song—

"Roses bloom and roses decay,
But we the Christ-child shall see one day."

There they both sat, grown up, and yet children—children in heart—and it was summer, warm delightful summer.



The Nightingale



IN China, you must know, the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all whom he has about him are Chinamen too. It happened a good many years ago, but that's just why it's worth while to hear the story, before it is forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world; it was made entirely of porcelain, very costly, but so delicate and brittle that one had to take care how one touched it. In the garden were to be seen the most wonderful flowers, and to the costliest of them silver bells were tied, which sounded, so that nobody should pass by without noticing the flowers. Yes, everything in the Emperor's garden was admirably arranged. And it extended so far, that the gardener himself did not know where the end was. If a man went on and on, he came into a glorious forest with high trees and deep lakes. The wood extended straight down to the sea, which was blue and deep; great ships could sail too beneath the branches of the trees; and in

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the trees lived a Nightingale, which sang so splendidly that even the poor fisherman, who had many other things to do, stopped still and listened, when he had gone out at night to throw out his nets, and heard the Nightingale.

“How beautiful that is!” he said; but he was obliged to attend to his property, and thus forgot the bird. But when in the next night the bird sang again, and the fisherman heard it, he exclaimed again, “How beautiful that is!”

From all the countries of the world travellers came to the city of the Emperor, and admired it, and the palace and the garden, but when they heard the Nightingale, they said, “That is the best of all!”

And the travellers told of it when they came home; and the learned men wrote many books about the town, the palace, and the garden. But they did not forget the Nightingale: that was placed highest of all; and those who were poets wrote most magnificent poems about the Nightingale in the wood by the deep lake.

The books went through all the world, and a few of them once came to the Emperor. He sat in his golden chair, and read, and read: every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him to peruse the masterly descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden. “But the Nightingale is the best of all,” it stood written there.

“What’s that?” exclaimed the Emperor. “I don’t know the Nightingale at all! Is there such a bird in my empire, and even in my garden? I’ve never heard of it. To think that I should have to learn such a thing for the first time from books!”

And hereupon he called his cavalier. This cavalier was so grand that if any one lower in rank than himself dared to speak to him, or to ask him any question, he answered nothing but “P!”—and that meant nothing.

“There is said to be a wonderful bird here called a Nightingale,” said the Emperor. “They say it is the best

The Nightingale

thing in all my great empire. Why have I never heard anything about it?"

"I have never heard him named," replied the cavalier. "He has never been introduced at Court."

"I command that he shall appear this evening, and sing before me," said the Emperor. "All the world knows what I possess, and I do not know it myself!"

"I have never heard him mentioned," said the cavalier. "I will seek for him. I will find him."

But where was he to be found? The cavalier ran up and down all the staircases, through halls and passages, but no one among all those whom he met had heard talk of the Nightingale. And the cavalier ran back to the Emperor, and said that it must be a fable invented by the writers of books.

"Your Imperial Majesty cannot believe how much is written that is fiction, besides something that they call the black art."

"But the book in which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore it cannot be a falsehood. I *will* hear the Nightingale! It must be here this evening! It has my imperial favour; and if it does not come, all the Court shall be trampled upon after the Court has supped!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the cavalier; and again he ran up and down all the staircases, and through all the halls and corridors; and half the Court ran with him, for the courtiers did not like being trampled upon.

Then there was a great inquiry after the wonderful Nightingale, which all the world knew excepting the people at Court.

At last they met with a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said,

"The Nightingale? I know it well; yes, it can sing gloriously. Every evening I get leave to carry my poor

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sick mother the scraps from the table. She lives down by the strand; and when I get back and am tired, and rest in the wood, then I hear the Nightingale sing. And then the water comes into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me."

"Little kitchen girl," said the cavalier, "I will get you a place in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor dine, if you will but lead us to the Nightingale, for it is announced for this evening."

So they all went out into the wood where the Nightingale was accustomed to sing; half the Court went forth. When they were in the midst of their journey a cow began to low.

"Oh!" cried the Court pages, "now we have it! That shows a wonderful power in so small a creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are cows lowing," said the little kitchen girl. "We are a long way from the place yet."

Now the frogs began to croak in the marsh.

"Glorious!" said the Chinese Court preacher. "Now I hear it—it sounds just like little church bells."

"No, those are frogs," said the little kitchenmaid. "But now I think we shall soon hear it."

And then the Nightingale began to sing.

"That is it!" exclaimed the little girl. "Listen, listen! and yonder it sits."

And she pointed to a little grey bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" cried the cavalier. "I should never have thought it looked like that! How simple it looks! It must certainly have lost its colour at seeing such grand people around."

"Little Nightingale!" called the little kitchenmaid, quite loudly, "our gracious Emperor wishes you to sing before him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" replied the Nightingale, and began to sing most delightfully.

The Nightingale

“It sounds just like glass bells!” said the cavalier. “And look at its little throat, how it’s working! It’s wonderful that we should never have heard it before. That bird will be a great success at Court.”

“Shall I sing once more before the Emperor?” inquired the Nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was present.

“My excellent little Nightingale,” said the cavalier, “I have great pleasure in inviting you to a Court festival this evening, when you shall charm his Imperial Majesty with your beautiful singing.”

“My song sounds best in the green wood,” replied the Nightingale; still it came willingly when it heard what the Emperor wished.

The palace was festively adorned. The walls and the flooring, which were of porcelain, gleamed in the rays of thousands of golden lamps. The most splendid bells, which could ring clearly, had been placed in the passages. There was a running to and fro, and a thorough draught, and all the bells rang so loudly that one could not hear oneself speak.

In the midst of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole Court was there, and the little cook-maid had got leave to stand behind the door, as she had now received the title of a real Court cook. All were in full dress, and all looked at the little grey bird, to which the Emperor nodded.

And the Nightingale sang so gloriously that the tears came into the Emperor’s eyes, and the tears ran down over his cheeks; then the Nightingale sang still more sweetly, that went straight to his heart. The Emperor was so much pleased that he said the Nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear round its neck. But the Nightingale declined this with thanks, saying it had already received a sufficient reward.

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“I have seen tears in the Emperor’s eyes—that is the real treasure to me. An Emperor’s tears have a peculiar power. I am rewarded enough!” And then it sang again with a sweet, glorious voice.

“That’s the most amiable coquetry I ever saw!” said the ladies who stood round about, and then they took water in their mouths to gurgle when any one spoke to them. They thought they should be nightingales too. And the lackeys and chambermaids reported that they were satisfied also; and that was saying a good deal, for they are the most difficult to please. In short, the Nightingale achieved a real success.

It was now to remain at Court, to have its own cage, with liberty to go out twice every day and once at night. Twelve servants were appointed when the Nightingale went out, each of whom had a silken string fastened to the bird’s legs, which they held very tight. There was really no pleasure in an excursion of that kind.

The whole city spoke of the wonderful bird, and whenever two people met, one said nothing but “Nightingale,” and the other said “gale;” and then they both sighed, and understood one another. Eleven pedlars’ children were named after the bird, but not one of them could sing a note.

One day the Emperor received a large parcel, on which was written “The Nightingale.”

“There we have a new book about this celebrated bird,” said the Emperor.

But it was not a book, but a little work of art, contained in a box, an artificial nightingale, which was to sing like a natural one, and was brilliantly ornamented with diamonds, sapphires, and rubies. So soon as the artificial bird was wound up, he could sing one particular song, and then his tail moved up and down, and shone with silver and gold. Round his neck hung a little ribbon, and on that



The nightingale began to sing most delightfully.

The Nightingale

was written, "The Emperor of China's nightingale is poor compared to that of the Emperor of Japan."

"That is capital!" said they all, and he who had brought the artificial bird immediately received the title, Imperial Head-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now they must sing together; what a duet that will be!" cried the courtiers.

And so they had to sing together; but it did not sound very well, for the real Nightingale sang in its own way, and the artificial bird sang a waltz.

"That's not his fault," said the playmaster; "he's quite perfect, and very much in my style."

Now the artificial bird was to sing alone. It had just as much success as the real one, and then it was much handsomer to look at—it shone like bracelets and breast-pins.

Three and thirty times over did it sing the same piece, and yet was not tired. The people would gladly have heard it again, but the Emperor said that the living nightingale ought to sing something now. But where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown away out of the open window, back to the green wood.

"But what has become of it?" asked the Emperor.

And all the courtiers abused the Nightingale, and declared that it was a very ungrateful creature.

"We have the best bird, after all," said they.

And so the artificial bird had to sing again, and that was the thirty-fourth time that they listened to the same piece. For all that they did not know it quite by heart, for it was so very difficult. And the playmaster praised the bird particularly; yes, he declared that it was better than a nightingale, not only with regard to its plumage and the many beautiful diamonds, but inside as well.

"For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all, your Imperial Majesty, with a real nightingale one can never

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calculate what is coming, but in this artificial bird everything is settled. One can explain it; one can open it and make people understand where the waltzes come from, how they go, and how one follows up another."

"Those are quite our own ideas," they all said.

And the speaker received permission to show the bird to the people on the next Sunday. The people were to hear it sing too, the Emperor commanded; and they did hear it, and were as much pleased as if they had all got tipsy upon tea, for that's quite the Chinese fashion, and they all said, "Oh!" and held up their forefingers and nodded. But the poor fisherman, who had heard the real Nightingale, said,

"It sounds pretty enough, and the melodies resemble each other, but there's something wanting, though I know not what!"

The real Nightingale was banished from the country and empire. The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion close to the Emperor's bed; all the presents it had received, gold and precious stones, were ranged about it; in title it had advanced to be the High Imperial After-Dinner-Singer, and in rank to Number One on the left hand; for the Emperor considered that side the most important on which the heart is placed, and even in an Emperor the heart is on the left side; and the playmaster wrote a work of five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird; it was very learned and very long, full of the most difficult Chinese words; but yet all the people declared that they had read it and understood it, for fear of being considered stupid, and having their bodies trampled on.

So a whole year went by. The Emperor, the Court, and all the other Chinese knew every little twitter in the artificial bird's song by heart. But just for that reason it pleased them best—they could sing with it themselves, and they did so. The street boys sang, "Tsi-tsi-tsi-glug-glug!"

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and the Emperor himself sang it too. Yes, that was certainly famous.

But one evening, when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said, "Whizz!" Something cracked. "Whir-r-r!" All the wheels ran round, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor immediately sprang out of bed, and caused his body physician to be called; but what could *he* do? Then they sent for a watchmaker, and after a good deal of talking and investigation, the bird was put into something like order, but the watchmaker said that the bird must be carefully treated, for the barrels were worn, and it would be impossible to put new ones in in such a manner that the music would play. There was a great lamentation; only once in the year was it permitted to let the bird sing, and that was almost too much. But then the playmaster made a little speech, full of heavy words, and said this was just as good as before—and so of course it was as good as before.

Now five years had gone by, and a real grief came upon the whole nation. The Chinese were really fond of their Emperor, and now he was ill, and could not, it was said, live much longer. Already a new Emperor had been chosen, and the people stood out in the street and asked the cavalier how the Emperor did.

"P!" said he, and shook his head.

Cold and pale lay the Emperor in his great gorgeous bed: the whole Court thought him dead, and each one ran to pay homage to the new ruler. The chamberlains ran out to talk it over, and the ladies'-maids had a great coffee party. In all the halls and passages, cloth had been laid down so that no footstep could be heard, and therefore it was quiet there, quite quiet. But the Emperor was not dead yet: stiff and pale he lay on the gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels;

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a window stood open, high up, and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe ; it was just as if something lay upon his chest ; he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death who sat upon his chest, and had put on his golden crown, and held in one hand the Emperor's sword, in the other his beautiful banner. And all around, from among the folds of the splendid velvet curtains, strange heads peered forth ; a few very ugly, the rest quite lovely. These were all the Emperor's bad and good deeds, which stood before him now that Death sat upon his heart.

“Do you remember this?” whispered one to the other. “Do you remember that?” and then they told him so much that the perspiration ran from his forehead.

“I did not know that!” said the Emperor. “Give me music! music! the great Chinese drum!” he cried, “so that I need not hear all they say!”

And they continued speaking, and Death nodded like a Chinaman to all they said.

“Music! music!” cried the Emperor. “You little precious golden bird, sing, sing! I have given you gold and costly presents; I have even hung my golden slipper around your neck—sing now, sing!”

But the bird stood still; no one was there to wind him up, and he could not sing without that; but Death continued to stare at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and it was quiet, fearfully quiet.

Then there sounded from the window, suddenly, the most lovely song. It was the little live Nightingale, that sat outside on a spray. It had heard of the Emperor's sad plight, and had come to sing to him of comfort and hope. As it sang the spectres grew paler and paler; the blood ran quicker and more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs; and even Death listened, and said,

The Nightingale

“Go on, little Nightingale, go on!”

“But will you give me that splendid golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor’s crown?” said the Nightingale.

And Death gave up each of these treasures for a song. And the Nightingale sang on and on; and it sang of the quiet churchyard where the white roses grow, where the elder-blossoms smell sweet, and where the fresh grass is moistened by the tears of survivors. Then Death felt a longing to see his garden, and floated out at the window in the form of a cold white mist.

“Thanks! thanks!” said the Emperor. “You heavenly little bird! I know you well. I banished you from my country and empire, and yet you have charmed away the evil faces from my couch, and banished Death from my heart! How can I reward you?”

“You have rewarded me!” replied the Nightingale. “I have drawn tears from your eyes, when I sang the first time—I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that rejoice a singer’s heart. But now sleep, and grow fresh and strong again. I will sing you something.”

And it sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet slumber. Ah! how sweet and refreshing that sleep was! The sun shone upon him through the windows, when he awoke refreshed and restored: not one of his servants had yet returned, for they all thought he was dead; only the Nightingale still sat beside him and sang.

“You must always stay with me,” said the Emperor. “You shall sing as you please; and I’ll break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces.”

“Not so,” replied the Nightingale. “It did well as long as it could: keep it as you have done till now. I cannot build my nest in the palace to dwell in it, but let me come when I feel the wish; then I will sit in the evening on the spray yonder by the window, and sing you something, so

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that you may be glad and thoughtful at once. I will sing of those who are happy and of those who suffer. I will sing of good and of evil that remains hidden round about you. The little singing bird flies far around, to the poor fisherman, to the peasant's roof, to every one who dwells far away from you and from your Court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has an air of sanctity about it. I will come and sing to you—but one thing you must promise me.”

“Everything!” said the Emperor; and he stood there in his imperial robes, which he had put on himself, and pressed the sword which was heavy with gold to his heart.

“One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything. Then it will go all the better.”

And the Nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look at their dead Emperor, and—yes, there he stood, and the Emperor said, “Good-morning!”

The Little Match Girl



It was terribly cold ; it snowed and was already almost dark, and evening came on, the last evening of the year. In the cold and gloom a poor little girl, with bare head and bare feet, was walking through the streets. When she left her own house she certainly had had slippers on ; but of what use were they ? They were very big slippers, and her mother had worn them before, so big were they. The little maid lost them as she slipped across the road, where two carriages were rattling by terribly fast. One slipper was not to be found again, and a boy had seized the other, and run away with it. He thought he could use it very well as a cradle, some day when he had children of his own. So now the little girl went with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and a bundle of them in her hand. No one had bought anything of her all day, and no one had given her a farthing.

Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along, a picture of misery, poor little girl ! The snow-flakes covered her long fair hair, which fell in pretty curls over her neck ; but she did not think of that now. In all the windows lights were shining, and there was a glorious smell

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of roast goose, for it was New Year's Eve. Yes, she thought of that!

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down cowering. She had drawn up her little feet, but she was still colder, and she did not dare to go home, for she had not sold any matches, and could not take home a farthing of money. From her father she would certainly receive a beating, and besides, it was cold at home, for they had nothing over them but a roof through which the wind whistled, though the largest rents had been stopped with straw and rags.

Her little hands were almost benumbed with the cold! Ah! a match might do her good, if she could only draw one from the bundle, and rub it against the wall, and warm her hands at it. She drew one out. R-r-atch! how it sputtered and burned! It was a warm bright flame, like a little candle, when she held her hands over it; it was a wonderful little light! It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat before a great polished stove, with bright brass feet and a brass cover. How the fire burned! how comfortable it was! But the little flame went out, and the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the burned match in her hand.

A second was rubbed against the wall. It burned up, and when the light fell upon the wall it became transparent like a thin veil, and she could see through it into the room. On the table a snow-white cloth was spread; upon it stood a shining dinner-service; the roast goose smoked gloriously, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more splendid to behold, the goose hopped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and only the thick, damp, cold wall was before her. She lighted another match. Then she was sitting under a beautiful Christmas tree: it was greater and more ornamental than



The child sat there stiff and cold.

The Little Match Girl

the one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of candles burned upon the green branches, and coloured pictures like those in the print-shops looked down upon them. The little girl stretched forth her hand towards them; then the match went out. The Christmas lights mounted higher. She saw them now as stars in the sky: one of them fell down, forming a long line of fire.

"Now some one is dying," thought the little girl, for her old grandmother, the only person who had loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that when a star fell down a soul mounted up to God. She rubbed another match against the wall; it became bright again, and in the brightness the old grandmother stood clear and shining, mild and lovely.

"Grandmother!" cried the child, "oh! take me with you! I know you will go when the match is burned out. You will vanish like the warm fire, the warm food, and the great glorious Christmas tree!"

And she hastily rubbed the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to hold her grandmother fast. And the matches burned with such a glow that it became brighter than in the middle of the day: grandmother had never been so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and both flew in brightness and joy above the earth, very, very high, and up there was neither cold, nor hunger, nor care—they were with God!

But in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the poor girl with red cheeks and smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last evening of the Old Year. The New Year's sun rose upon a little corpse! The child sat there, stiff and cold, with the matches, of which one bundle was burned. "She wanted to warm herself," the people said. No one imagined what a beautiful thing she had seen, and in what glory she had gone in with her grandmother to the New Year's Day.



The Angel



WHENEVER a good child dies, an angel from heaven comes down to earth, and takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies away over all the places the child has loved, and picks quite a handful of flowers, which he carries up to the Almighty, that they may bloom in heaven more brightly than on earth. And the Father presses all the flowers to His heart ; but He kisses the flower that pleases Him best,

The Angel

and the flower is then endowed with a voice, and can join in the great chorus of praise!

“See”—this is what an angel said, as he carried a dead child up to heaven, and the child heard, as if in a dream, and they went on over the regions of home where the little child had played, and they came through gardens with beautiful flowers—“which of these shall we take with us to plant in heaven?” asked the angel.

Now there stood near them a slender, beautiful rose-bush; but a wicked hand had broken the stem, so that all the branches, covered with half-opened buds, were hanging drooping around, quite withered.

“The poor rose-bush!” said the child. “Take it, that it may bloom up yonder.”

And the angel took it, and kissed the child, and the little one half opened his eyes. They plucked some of the rich flowers, but also took with them the despised buttercup and the wild pansy.

“Now we have flowers,” said the child.

And the angel nodded, but he did not yet fly upwards to heaven. It was night and quite silent. They remained in the great city; they floated about there in a small street, where lay whole heaps of straw, ashes, and sweepings, for it had been removal-day. There lay fragments of plates, bits of plaster, rags, and old hats, and all this did not look well. And the angel pointed amid all this confusion to a few fragments of a flower-pot, and to a lump of earth which had fallen out, and which was kept together by the roots of a great dried field flower, which was of no use, and had therefore been thrown out into the street.

“We will take that with us,” said the angel. “I will tell you why, as we fly onward.

“Down yonder in the narrow lane, in the low cellar, lived a poor sick boy; from his childhood he had been bedridden. When he was at his best he could go up and

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down the room a few times, leaning on crutches ; that was the utmost he could do. For a few days in summer the sunbeams would penetrate for a few hours to the ground of the cellar, and when the poor boy sat there and the sun shone on him, and he looked at the red blood in his three fingers, as he held them up before his face, he would say, ' Yes, to-day he has been out ! ' He knew the forest with its beautiful vernal green only from the fact that the neighbour's son brought him the first green branch of a beech-tree, and he held that up over his head, and dreamed he was in the beech-wood where the sun shone and the birds sang. On a spring day the neighbour's boy also brought him field flowers, and among these was, by chance, one to which the root was hanging ; and so it was planted in a flower-pot, and placed by the bed, close to the window. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand ; and it grew, threw out new shoots, and bore flowers every year. It became as a splendid flower-garden to the sickly boy—his little treasure here on earth. He watered it, and tended it, and took care that it had the benefit of every ray of sunlight, down to the last that struggled in through the narrow window ; and the flower itself was woven into his dreams, for it grew for him and gladdened his eyes, and spread its fragrance about him ; and towards it he turned in death when the Father called him. He has now been with the Almighty for a year ; for a year the flower has stood forgotten in the window, and is withered ; and thus, at the removal, it has been thrown out into the dust of the street. And this is the flower, the poor withered flower, which we have taken into our nosegay ; for this flower has given more joy than the richest flower in a Queen's garden ! ”

“ But how do you know all this ? ” asked the child which the angel was carrying to heaven.

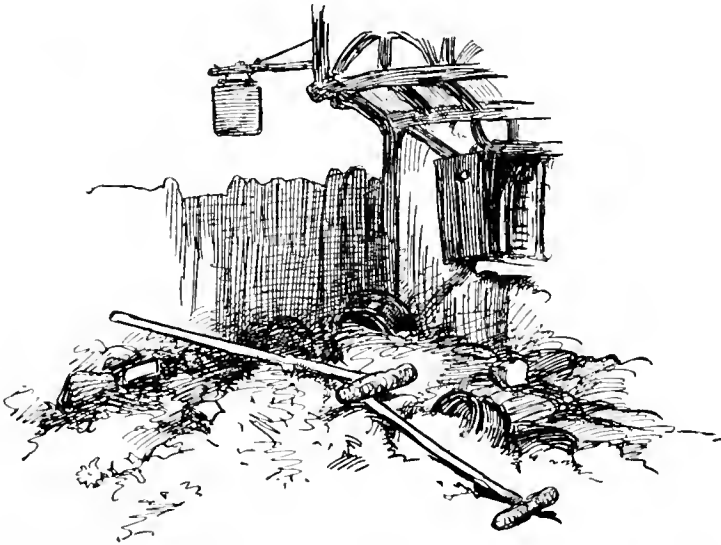
“ I know it, ” said the angel, “ for I myself was that

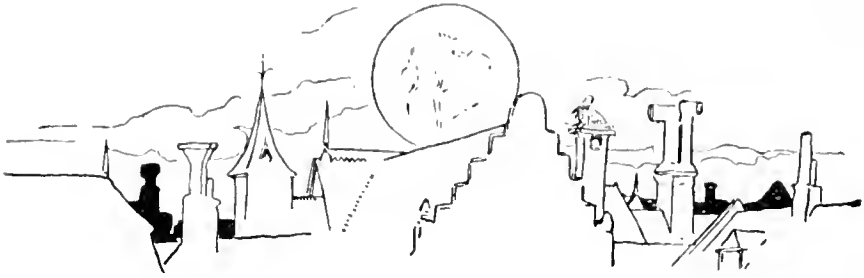
The Angel

little boy who walked on crutches! I know my flower well!"

And the child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious happy face of the angel; and at the same moment they entered the regions where there is peace and joy. And the Father pressed the dead child to His bosom, and then it received wings like the angel, and flew hand in hand with him.

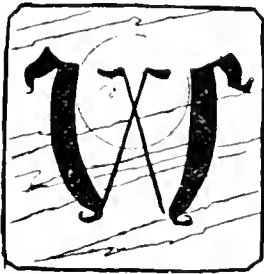
And the Almighty pressed all the flowers to His heart; but he kissed the dry withered field flower, and it received a voice and sang with all the angels hovering around—some near, and some in wider circles, and some in infinite distance, but all equally happy. And they all sang, little and great, the good happy child, and the poor field flower that had lain there withered, thrown among the dust, in the rubbish of the removal-day, in the narrow dark lane.





What the Moon Saw

INTRODUCTION



WHAT a strange thing it is, that when I feel most fervently and most deeply, my hands and my tongue seem alike tied, so that I cannot rightly describe or accurately portray the thoughts that are rising within me; and yet I am a painter: my eye tells me as much as that, and all my friends who have seen my sketches and fancies say the same.

I am a poor lad, and live in one of the narrowest of lanes; but I do not want for light, as my room is high up in the house, with an extensive prospect over the neighbouring roofs. During the first few days I went to live in the town, I felt low-spirited and solitary enough. Instead of the forest and the green hills of former days, I had here only a forest of chimney-pots to look out upon. And then I had not a single friend; not one familiar face greeted me.

So one evening I sat at the window, in a desponding mood; and presently I opened the casement and looked

What the Moon Saw

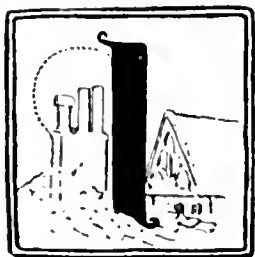
out. Oh, how my heart leaped up with joy! Here was a well-known face at last—a round, friendly countenance, the face of a good friend I had known at home. In fact, it was the MOON that looked in upon me. He was quite unchanged, the dear old Moon, and had the same face exactly that he used to show when he peered down upon me through the willow-trees on the moor. I kissed my hand to him over and over again, as he shone far into my little room; and he, for his part, promised me that every evening, when he came abroad, he would look in upon me for a few moments. This promise he has faithfully kept. It is a pity that he can only stay such a short time when he comes. Whenever he appears, he tells me of one thing or another that he has seen on the previous night or on that same evening.

“Just paint the scenes I describe to you”—that is what he said to me—“and you will have a very pretty picture-book.”

I have followed his injunction for many evenings. I could make up a new “Thousand and One Nights,” in my own way, out of these pictures, but the number might be too great, after all. The pictures I have here given have not been chosen at random, but follow in their proper order, just as they were described to me. Some great gifted painter, or some poet or musician, may make something more of them if he likes; what I have given here are only hasty sketches, hurriedly put upon the paper, with some of my own thoughts interspersed; for the Moon did not come to me every evening—a cloud sometimes hid his face from me.

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FIRST EVENING



AM now quoting the Moon's own words — "Last night I was gliding through the cloudless Indian sky. My face was mirrored in the waters of the Ganges, and my beams strove to pierce through the thick intertwining boughs of the bananas, arching beneath me like the tortoise's shell. Forth from the thicket tripped a Hindoo maid, light as a gazelle, beautiful as Eve. Airy and ethereal as a vision, and yet sharply defined amid the surrounding shadows, stood this daughter of Hindostan: I could read on her delicate brow the thought that had brought her hither. The thorny creeping plants tore her sandals, but for all that she came rapidly forward. The deer that had come down to the river to quench its thirst, sprang by with a startled bound, for in her hand the maiden bore a lighted lamp. I could see the blood in her delicate finger-tips, as she spread them for a screen before the dancing flame. She came down to the stream, and set the lamp upon the water, and let it float away. The flame flickered to and fro, and seemed ready to expire; but still the lamp burned on, and the girl's black sparkling eyes, half veiled behind their long silken lashes, followed it with a gaze of earnest intensity. She well knew that if the lamp continued to burn so long as she could keep it in sight, her betrothed was still alive; but if the lamp were suddenly extinguished, he was dead. And the lamp burned bravely on, and she fell on her knees and prayed. Near her in the grass lay a speckled snake, but she heeded it not—she thought only of Bramah and of her betrothed.

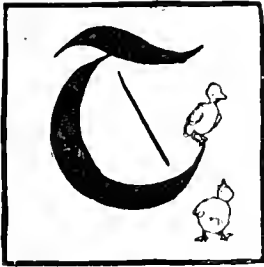
"'He lives!' she shouted joyfully, 'he lives!' And from the mountains the echo came back to her, 'he lives!'"



He was quite unchanged, the dear old Moon!

What the Moon Saw

SECOND EVENING



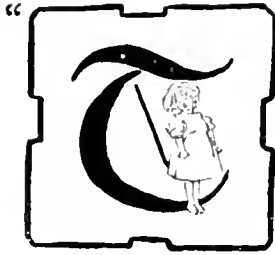
THE Moon said to me, "Yesterday I looked down upon a small courtyard surrounded on all sides by houses. In the courtyard sat a clucking hen with eleven chickens; and a pretty little girl was running and jumping around them. The hen was frightened, and screamed, and spread out her wings over the little brood. Then the girl's father came out and scolded her; and I glided away and thought no more of the matter.

"But this evening, only a few minutes ago, I looked down into the same courtyard. Everything was quiet. But presently the little girl came forth again, crept quietly to the hen-house, pushed back the bolt, and slipped into the apartment of the hen and chickens. They cried out loudly, and came fluttering down from their perches, and ran about in dismay, and the little girl ran after them. I saw it quite plainly, for I looked through a hole in the hen-house wall. I was angry with the wilful child, and felt glad when her father came out and scolded her more violently than yesterday, holding her roughly by the arm: she held down her head, and her blue eyes were full of large tears. 'What are you about here?' he asked. She wept and said, 'I wanted to kiss the hen and beg her pardon for frightening her yesterday; but I was afraid to tell you.'

"And the father kissed the innocent child's forehead, and I kissed her on the mouth and eyes."

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THIRD EVENING



“ HERE in the street round the corner yonder—it is so narrow that my beams can only glide for a minute along the walls of the house, but in that minute I see enough to learn what the world is made of—in that narrow street I saw a woman. Sixteen years ago that woman was a child, playing in the garden of the old parsonage in the country. The hedges of gorse-bushes were old, and the flowers were faded. They straggled wild over the paths, and the ragged branches grew up among the boughs of the apple-trees; here and there were a few roses still in bloom—not so fair as the queen of flowers generally appears, but still they had colour and scent too. The clergyman’s little daughter appeared to me a far lovelier rose, as she sat on her stool under the straggling hedge, hugging and caressing her doll with the battered paste-board cheeks.

“ Ten years afterwards I saw her again. I beheld her in a splendid ball-room: she was the beautiful bride of a rich merchant. I rejoiced at her happiness, and sought her on calm quiet evenings—ah, nobody thinks of my clear eye and silent glance! Alas! my rose ran wild, like the rose-bushes in the garden of the parsonage. There are tragedies in every-day life, and to-night I saw the last act of one.

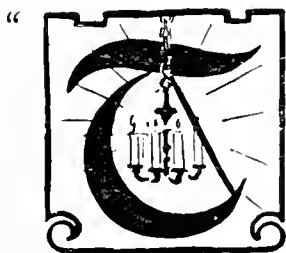
“ She was lying in bed in a house in that narrow street; she was sick unto death, and the cruel landlord came up, and tore away the thin coverlet, her only protection against the cold. ‘Get up!’ said he, ‘your face is enough to frighten one. Get up and dress yourself. Give me money, or I’ll turn you out into the street! Quick—get up!’

What the Moon Saw

She answered, 'Alas! death is gnawing at my heart. Let me rest.' But he forced her to get up and bathe her face, and he put a wreath of roses in her hair; and he placed her in a chair at the window, with a candle burning beside her, and went away.

"I looked at her, and she was sitting motionless, with her hands in her lap. The wind caught the open window and shut it with a crash, so that a pane came clattering down in fragments; but still she never moved. The curtain caught fire, and the flames played about her face; and then I saw that she was dead. There at the window sat the dead woman, preaching a sermon against *sin*—my poor faded rose out of the parsonage garden!"

FOURTH EVENING



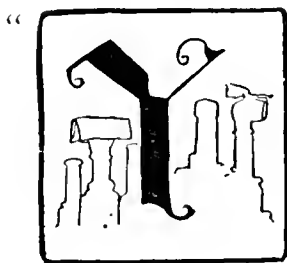
"THIS evening I saw a German play acted," said the Moon. "It was in a little town. A stable had been turned into a theatre; that is to say, the stable had been left standing, and had been turned into private boxes, and all the timber-work had been covered with coloured paper. A little iron chandelier hung beneath the ceiling, and that it might be made to disappear into the ceiling, as it does in great theatres, when the *ting-ting* of the prompter's bell is heard, a great inverted tub had been placed just above it.

"'Ting-ting!' and the little iron chandelier suddenly rose at least half a yard and disappeared in the tub; and that was the sign that the play was going to begin. A young nobleman and his lady, who happened to be passing through the little town, were present at the performance, and consequently the house was crowded. But under the

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chandelier was a vacant space like a little crater: not a single soul sat there, for the tallow was dropping, drip, drip! I saw everything, for it was so warm in there that every loophole had been opened. The male and female servants stood outside, peeping through the chinks, although a real policeman was inside, threatening them with a stick. Close by the orchestra could be seen the noble young couple in two old arm-chairs, which were usually occupied by his worship the mayor and his lady; but these latter were obliged to-day to content themselves with wooden forms, just as if they had been ordinary citizens; and the lady observed quietly to herself, 'One sees, now, that there is rank above rank;' and this incident gave an air of extra festivity to the whole proceedings. The chandelier gave little leaps, the crowd got their knuckles rapped, and I, the Moon, was present at the performance from beginning to end."

FIFTH EVENING



"ESTERDAY," began the Moon, "I looked down upon the turmoil of Paris. My eye penetrated into an apartment of the Louvre. An old grandmother, poorly clad—she belonged to the working class—was following one of the under-servants into the great empty throne-room, for this was the apartment she wanted to see—that she was resolved to see; it had cost her many a little sacrifice and many a coaxing word to penetrate thus far. She folded her thin hands, and looked round with an air of reverence, as if she had been in a church.

"'Here it was!' she said, 'here!' And she approached the throne, from which hung the rich velvet fringed with

What the Moon Saw

gold lace. ‘There,’ she exclaimed, ‘there!’ and she knelt and kissed the purple carpet. I think she was actually weeping.

“ ‘But it was not *this very* velvet!’ observed the footman, and a smile played about his mouth.

“ ‘True, but it was this very place,’ replied the woman, ‘and it must have looked just like this.’

“ ‘It looked so, and yet it did not,’ observed the man: ‘the windows were beaten in, and the doors were off their hinges, and there was blood upon the floor.’

“ ‘But for all that you can say, my grandson died upon the throne of France. Died!’ mournfully repeated the old woman.

“ I do not think another word was spoken, and they soon quitted the hall. The evening twilight faded, and my light shone vividly upon the rich velvet that covered the throne of France.

“ Now, who do you think this poor woman was? Listen, I will tell you a story.

“ It happened in the Revolution of July, on the evening of the most brilliantly victorious day, when every house was a fortress, every window a breastwork. The people stormed the Tuileries. Even women and children were found among the combatants. They penetrated into the apartments and halls of the palace. A poor half-grown boy in a ragged blouse fought among the older insurgents. Mortally wounded with several bayonet thrusts, he sank down. This happened in the throne-room. They laid the bleeding youth upon the throne of France, wrapped the velvet round his wounds, and his blood streamed forth upon the imperial purple. There was a picture!—the splendid hall, the fighting groups! A torn flag lay upon the ground, the tricolor was waving above the bayonets, and on the throne lay the poor lad with the pale glorified countenance, his eyes turned towards the sky, his limbs

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writhing in the death agony, his breast bare, and his poor tattered clothing half hidden by the rich velvet embroidered with silver lilies. At the boy's cradle a prophecy had been spoken: 'He will die on the throne of France!' The mother's heart had fondly imagined a second Napoleon.

"My beams have kissed the wreath of *immortelles* on his grave, and this night they kissed the forehead of the old grandame, while in a dream the picture floated before her which thou mayest draw—the poor boy on the throne of France."

SIXTH EVENING



"I HAVE been in Upsala," said the Moon: "I looked down upon the great plain covered with coarse grass, and upon the barren fields. I mirrored my face in the Tyris river, while the steamboat drove the fish into the rushes. Beneath me floated the waves, throwing long shadows on the so-called graves of Odin, Thor, and Friga. In the scanty turf that covers the hill-side, names have been cut.* There is no monument here, no memorial on which the traveller can have his name carved, no rocky wall on whose surface he can get it painted; so visitors have the turf cut away for that purpose. The naked earth peers through in the form of great letters and names; these form a network over the whole hill. Here is an immortality, which lasts till the fresh turf grows!

"Up on the hill stood a man, a poet. He emptied the mead horn with the broad silver rim, and murmured a name. He begged the winds not to betray him, but I


* Travellers on the Continent have frequent opportunities of seeing how universally this custom prevails among travellers. In some places on the Rhine, pots of paint and brushes are offered by the natives to the traveller desirous of "immortalizing" himself.

What the Moon Saw

heard the name. I knew it. A count's coronet sparkles above it, and therefore he did not speak it out. I smiled, for I knew that a poet's crown adorned his own name. The nobility of Eleanora d'Este is attached to the name of Tasso. And I also know where the Rose of Beauty blooms!"

Thus spake the Moon, and a cloud came between us. May no cloud separate the poet from the rose!

SEVENTH EVENING

“ LONG the margin of the shore stretches a forest of firs and beeches, and sweet, fresh, and fragrant is this wood; hundreds of nightingales visit it every spring. Close beside it is the sea, the ever-changing sea, and between the two is placed the broad high-road. One carriage after another rolls over it; but I did not follow them, for my eyes love best to rest upon one point. A Hun's Grave* lies there, and the sloe and blackthorn grow luxuriantly among the stones. Here is true poetry in nature.

“And how do you think men appreciate this poetry? I will tell you what I heard there last evening and during the night.

“First, two rich landed proprietors came driving by. ‘Those are glorious trees!’ said the first. ‘Certainly; there are ten loads of firewood in each,’ observed the other: ‘it will be a hard winter, and last year we got fourteen dollars a load’—and they were gone. ‘The road here is wretched,’ observed another man who drove past. ‘That’s

* Large mounds, similar to the “barrows” found in Britain, are thus designated in Germany and the North.

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the fault of those horrible trees,' replied his neighbour: 'there is no free current of air; the wind can only come from the sea'—and they were gone. The stage-coach went rattling past. All the passengers were asleep at this beautiful spot. The postilion blew his horn, but he only thought, 'I can play capitally. It sounds well here. I wonder if those in there like it?'—and the stage-coach vanished. Then two young fellows came galloping up on horseback. There's youth and spirit in the blood here! thought I; and, indeed, they looked with a smile at the moss-grown hill and thick forest. 'I should not dislike a walk here with the miller's Christine,' said one—and they flew past. The flowers scented the air; every breath was hushed: it seemed as if the sea were a part of the sky that stretched above the deep valley. A carriage rolled by. Six people were sitting in it. Four of them were asleep; the fifth was thinking of his new summer coat, which would suit him admirably; the sixth turned to the coachman and asked him if there were anything remarkable connected with yonder heap of stones. 'No,' replied the coachman, 'it's only a heap of stones; but the trees are remarkable.' 'How so?' 'Why, I'll tell you how they are very remarkable. You see, in winter, when the snow lies very deep, and has hidden the whole road so that nothing is to be seen, those trees serve me for a landmark. I steer by them, so as not to drive into the sea; and, you see, that is why the trees are remarkable.'

"Now came a painter. He spoke not a word, but his eyes sparkled. He began to whistle. At this the nightingales sang louder than ever. 'Hold your tongues!' he cried, testily; and he made accurate notes of all the colours and transitions—blue, and lilac, and dark brown. 'That will make a beautiful picture,' he said. He took it in just as a mirror takes in a view; and as he worked he whistled a march of Rossini. And last of all came a poor girl.

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She laid aside the burden she carried and sat down to rest upon the Hun's Grave. Her pale handsome face was bent in a listening attitude towards the forest. Her eyes brightened, she gazed earnestly at the sea and the sky, her hands were folded, and I think she prayed, 'Our Father.' She herself could not understand the feeling that swept through her, but I know that this minute, and the beautiful natural scene, will live within her memory for years, far more vividly and more truly than the painter could paint it with his colours on paper. My rays followed her till the morning dawn kissed her brow."

EIGHTH EVENING



HEAVY clouds obscured the sky, and the Moon did not make his appearance at all. I stood in my little room, more lonely than ever, and looked up at the sky where he ought to have shown himself. My thoughts flew far away, up to my great friend, who every evening told me such pretty tales, and showed me pictures. Yes, he has had an experience indeed. He glided over the waters of the Deluge, and smiled on Noah's ark just as he lately glanced down upon me, and brought comfort and promise of a new world that was to spring forth from the old. When the Children of Israel sat weeping by the waters of Babylon, he glanced mournfully upon the willows where hung the silent harps. When Romeo climbed the balcony, and the promise of true love fluttered like a cherub toward heaven, the round Moon hung half hidden among the dark cypresses, in the lucid air. He saw the captive giant at St. Helena, looking from the lonely rock across the wide ocean, while great thoughts swept through his soul.

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Ah! what tales the Moon can tell. Human life is like a story to him. To-night I shall not see thee again, old friend. To-night I can draw no picture of the memories of thy visit. And, as I looked dreamily towards the clouds, the sky became bright. There was a glancing light, and a beam from the Moon fell upon me. It vanished again, and dark clouds flew past; but still it was a greeting, a friendly good-night offered to me by the Moon.

NINTH EVENING



THE air was clear again. Several evenings had passed, and the Moon was in the first quarter. Again he gave me an outline for a sketch. Listen to what he told me.

“I have followed the polar bird and the swimming whale to the eastern coast of Greenland. Gaunt ice-covered rocks and dark clouds hung over a valley, where dwarf willows and barberry bushes stood clothed in green. The blooming lychnis exhaled sweet odours. My light was faint, my face pale as the water-lily that, torn from its stem, has been drifting for weeks with the tide. The crown-shaped Northern Light burned fiercely in the sky. Its ring was broad, and from its circumference the rays shot like whirling shafts of fire across the whole sky, flashing in changing radiance from green to red. The inhabitants of that icy region were assembling for dance and festivity; but accustomed to this glorious spectacle, they scarcely deigned to glance at it. ‘Let us leave the souls of the dead to their ball-play with the heads of the walruses,’ they thought in their superstition, and they turned their whole attention to the song and dance. In the midst of the circle, and divested of his furry cloak, stood a Greenlander, with a small pipe, and he

What the Moon Saw

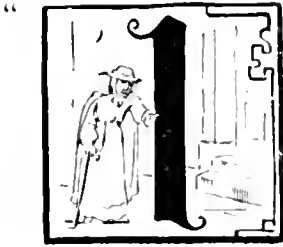
played and sang a song about catching the seal, and the chorus around chimed in with '*Eia, Eia, Ah.*' And in their white furs they danced about in the circle, till you might fancy it was a polar bear's ball.

"And now a Court of Judgment was opened. Those Greenlanders who had quarrelled stepped forward, and the offended person chanted forth in song the faults of his adversary, turning them sharply into ridicule, to the sound of the pipe and the measure of the dance. The defendant replied with satire as keen, while the audience laughed and gave their verdict.

"The rocks heaved, the glaciers melted, and great masses of ice and snow came crashing down, shivering to fragments as they fell: it was a glorious Greenland summer night. A hundred paces away, under the open tent of hides, lay a sick man. Life still flowed through his warm blood, but still he was to die; he himself felt it, and all who stood round him knew it also; therefore his wife was already sewing round him the shroud of furs, that she might not afterwards be obliged to touch the dead body. And she asked, 'Wilt thou be buried on the rock, in the firm snow? I will deck the spot with thy *kayak*, and thy arrows, and the *angekokk* shall dance over it. Or wouldst thou rather be buried in the sea?' 'In the sea,' he whispered, and nodded with a mournful smile. 'Yes, it is a pleasant summer tent, the sea,' observed the wife. 'Thousands of seals sport there, the walrus shall lie at thy feet, and the hunt will be safe and merry!' And the yelling children tore the outspread hide from the window-hole, that the dead man might be carried to the ocean, the billowy ocean, that had given him food in life, and that now, in death, was to afford him a place of rest. For his monument he had the floating, ever-changing icebergs, whereon the seal sleeps, while the storm-bird flies round their gleaming summits."

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TENTH EVENING



“ I KNEW an old maid,” said the Moon. “ Every winter she wore a wrapper of yellow satin, and it always remained new, and was the only fashion she followed. In summer she always wore the same straw hat, and I verily believe the very same grey-blue dress.

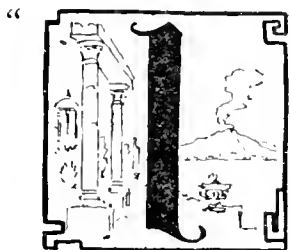
“ She never went out, except across the street to an old female friend ; and in later years she did not even take this walk, for the old friend was dead. In her solitude my old maid was always busy at the window, which was adorned in summer with pretty flowers, and in winter with cress, grown upon felt. During the last months I saw her no more at the window, but she was still alive. I knew that, for I had not yet seen her begin the ‘ long journey,’ of which she often spoke with her friend. ‘ Yes, yes,’ she was in the habit of saying, ‘ when I come to die, I shall take a longer journey than I have made my whole life long. Our family vault is six miles from here. I shall be carried there, and shall sleep there among my family and relatives.’

“ Last night a van stopped at the house. A coffin was carried out, and then I knew that she was dead. They placed straw round the coffin, and the van drove away. There slept the quiet old lady, who had not gone out of her house once for the last year. The van rolled out through the town gate as briskly as if it were going for a pleasant excursion. On the high-road the pace was quicker yet. The coachman looked nervously round every now and then — I fancy he half expected to see her sitting on the coffin, in her yellow satin wrapper. And because he was startled, he foolishly lashed his horses, while he held the reins so tightly that the poor beasts were in a foam : they were young and fiery. A little hare jumped across the road and

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startled them, and they fairly ran away. The old sober maiden, who had for years and years moved quietly round and round in a dull circle, was now, in death, rattled over stock and stone on the public highway. The coffin in its covering of straw tumbled out of the van, and was left on the high-road, while horses, coachman, and carriage flew on in wild career. The lark rose up carolling from the field, twittering his morning lay over the coffin, and presently perched upon it, picking with his beak at the straw covering, as though he would tear it up. The lark rose up again, singing gaily, and I withdrew behind the red morning clouds.”

ELEVENTH EVENING



“ WILL give you a picture of Pompeii,” said the Moon. “I was in the suburb in the Street of Tombs, as they call it, where the fair monuments stand, in the spot where, ages ago, the merry youths, their temples bound with rosy wreaths, danced with the fair sisters of Laïs.

Now the stillness of death reigned around. German mercenaries, in the Neapolitan service, kept guard, and played cards and threw dice ; and a troop of strangers from beyond the mountains came into the town, accompanied by a sentry. They wanted to see the city which had risen from the grave illumined by my beams ; and I showed them the wheel-ruts in the streets paved with broad lava slabs ; I showed them the names on the doors, and the signs that hung there yet : they saw in the little courtyard the basins of the fountains, ornamented with shells ; but no jet of water gushed upwards, no songs sounded forth from the richly-painted chambers, where the bronze dog kept the door.

“It was the City of the Dead ; only Vesuvius thundered forth his everlasting hymn, each separate verse of which is

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called by men an eruption. We went to the temple of Venus, built of snow-white marble, with its high altar in front of the broad steps, and the weeping willows sprouting freshly forth among the pillars. The air was transparent and blue, and black Vesuvius formed the background, with fire ever shooting forth from it, like the stem of the pine-tree. Above it stretched the smoky cloud in the silence of the night, like the crown of the pine, but in a blood-red illumination. Among the company was a lady singer, a real and great singer. I have witnessed the homage paid to her in the greatest cities of Europe. When they came to the tragic theatre, they all sat down on the amphitheatre steps, and thus a small part of the house was occupied by an audience, as it had been many centuries ago. The stage still stood unchanged, and its walled side-scenes, and the two arches in the background, through which the beholders saw the same scene that had been exhibited in the old times—a scene painted by Nature herself, namely, the mountains between Sorrento and Amalfi. The singer gaily mounted the ancient stage, and sang. The place inspired her, and she reminded me of a wild Arab horse, that rushes headlong on with snorting nostrils and flying mane—her song was so light and yet so firm. Anon I thought of the mourning mother beneath the cross at Golgotha, so deep was the expression of pain. And, just as it had done thousands of years ago, the sound of applause and delight now filled the theatre. ‘Happy, gifted creature!’ all the hearers exclaimed. Five minutes more, and the stage was empty, the company had vanished, and not a sound more was heard—all were gone. But the ruins stood unchanged, as they will stand when centuries shall have gone by and when none shall know of the momentary applause and of the triumph of the fair songstress; when all will be forgotten and gone, and even for me this hour will be but a dream of the past.”

What the Moon Saw

TWELFTH EVENING



“LOOKED through the windows of an editor’s house,” said the Moon. “It was somewhere in Germany. I saw handsome furniture, many books, and a chaos of newspapers. Several young men were present : the editor himself stood at his desk, and two little books, both by young authors, were to be noticed. ‘This one has been sent to me,’ said he. ‘I have not read it yet ; what think *you* of the contents ?’ ‘Oh,’ said the person addressed—he was a poet himself—‘it is good enough ; a little broad, certainly ; but, you see, the author is still young. The verses might be better, to be sure ; the thoughts are sound, though there is certainly a good deal of commonplace among them. But what will you have? You can’t be always getting something new. That he’ll turn out anything great I don’t believe, but you may safely praise him. He is well read, a remarkable Oriental scholar, and has a good judgment. It was he who wrote that nice review of my “Reflections on Domestic Life.” We must be lenient towards the young man.’

“‘But he is a complete hack!’ objected another of the gentlemen. ‘Nothing is worse in poetry than mediocrity, and he certainly does not go beyond that.’

“‘Poor fellow!’ observed a third, ‘and his aunt is so happy about him. It was she, Mr. Editor, who got together so many subscribers for your last translation.’

“‘Ah, the good woman! Well, I have noticed the book briefly. Undoubted talent—a welcome offering—a flower in the garden of poetry—prettily brought out, and so on. But this other book—I suppose the author expects me to purchase it? I hear it is praised. He has genius, certainly : don’t you think so?’

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“‘Yes, all the world declares as much,’ replied the poet, ‘but it has turned out rather wildly. The punctuation of the book, in particular, is very eccentric.’

“‘It will be good for him if we pull him to pieces, and anger him a little, otherwise he will get too good an opinion of himself.’

“‘But that would be unfair,’ objected the fourth. ‘Let us not carp at little faults, but rejoice over the real and abundant good that we find here: he surpasses all the rest.’

“‘Not so. If he be a true genius, he can bear the sharp voice of censure. There are people enough to praise him. Don’t let us quite turn his head.’

“‘Decided talent,’ wrote the editor, ‘with the usual carelessness. That he can write incorrect verses may be seen in page 25, where there are two false quantities. We recommend him to study the ancients, etc.’

“I went away,” continued the Moon, “and looked through the window in the aunt’s house. There sat the bepraised poet, the *tame* one; all the guests paid homage to him, and he was happy.

“I sought the other poet out, the *wild* one; him also I found in a great assembly at his patron’s, where the tame poet’s book was being discussed.

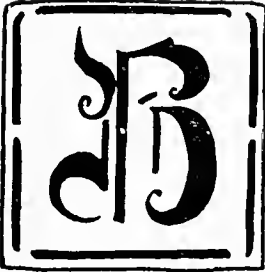
“‘I shall read yours also,’ said Mæcenas; ‘but to speak honestly—you know I never hide my opinions from you—I don’t expect much from it, for you are much too wild, too fantastic. But it must assuredly be allowed that, as a man, you are highly respectable.’

“A young girl sat in a corner; and she read in a book these words:

‘In the dust lies genius and glory,
But every-day talent will *pay*.
It’s only the old, old story,
But the piece is repeated each day.’”

What the Moon Saw

THIRTEENTH EVENING

“ESIDE the woodland path,” said the Moon, “there are two small farm-houses. The doors are low, and some of the windows are placed quite high, and others close to the ground ; and whitethorn and barberry bushes grow around them. The roof of each house is overgrown with moss and with yellow flowers and house-leek. Cabbage and potatoes are the only plants cultivated in the gardens, but out of the hedge there grows a willow-tree, and under this willow-tree sat a little girl, and she sat with her eyes fixed upon the old oak-tree between the two huts.

“It was an old withered stem. It had been sawn off at the top, and a stork had built his nest upon it ; and he stood in this nest clapping with his beak. A little boy came and stood by the girl’s side : they were brother and sister.

“‘What are you looking at?’ he asked.

“‘I’m watching the stork,’ she replied : ‘our neighbour told me that he would bring us a little brother or sister to-day ; let us watch to see it come !’

“‘The stork brings no such things,’ the boy declared, ‘you may be sure of that. Our neighbour told me the same thing, but she laughed when she said it, and so I asked her if she could say “On my honour,” and she could not ; and I know by that that the story about the storks is not true, and that they only tell it to us children for fun.’

“‘But where do the babies come from, then?’ asked the girl.

“‘Why, an angel from heaven brings them under his

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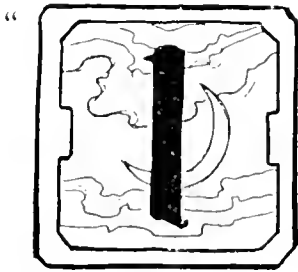
cloak, but no man can see him ; and that's why we never know when he brings them.'

"At that moment there was a rustling in the branches of the willow-tree, and the children folded their hands and looked at one another : it was certainly the angel coming with the baby. They took each other's hand, and at that moment the door of one of the houses opened, and the neighbour appeared.

"'Come in, you two,' she said. 'See what the stork has brought. It is a little brother.'

"And the children nodded gravely at one another, for they had felt quite sure already that the baby was come."

FOURTEENTH EVENING



"I WAS gliding over the Lüneburg Heath," the Moon said. "A lonely hut stood by the wayside, a few scanty bushes grew near it, and a nightingale who had lost his way sang sweetly. He died in the coldness of the night : it was his farewell song that I heard.

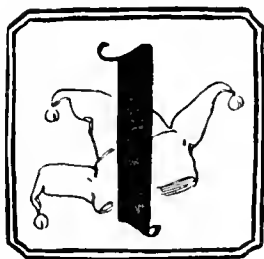
"The morning dawn came glimmering red. I saw a caravan of emigrant peasant families who were bound to Hamburg, there to take ship for America, where fancied prosperity would bloom for them. The mothers carried their little children at their backs, the elder ones tottered by their sides, and a poor starved horse tugged at a cart which bore their scanty possessions. The cold wind whistled, and therefore the little girl nestled closer to the mother, who, looking up at my decreasing disc, thought of the bitter want at home, and spoke of the heavy taxes they had not been able to raise. The whole caravan thought of the same thing ; therefore the rising dawn seemed to them

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a message from the sun, of fortune that was to gleam brightly upon them. They heard the dying nightingale sing: it was no false prophet, but a harbinger of fortune. The wind whistled, therefore they did not understand that the nightingale sang, 'Far away over the sea! Thou hast paid the long passage with all that was thine, and poor and helpless shalt thou enter Canaan. Thou must sell thyself, thy wife, and thy children. But your griefs shall not last long. Behind the broad fragrant leaves lurks the Goddess of Death, and her welcome kiss shall breathe fever into thy blood. Fare away, fare away, over the heaving billows.' And the caravan listened well pleased to the song of the nightingale, which seemed to promise good fortune. The day broke through the light clouds; country people went across the heath to church: the black-gowned women with their white head-dresses looked like ghosts that had stepped forth from the church pictures. All around lay a wide dead plain, covered with faded brown heath, and black charred spaces between the white sand-hills. The women carried hymn-books, and walked into the church. Oh, pray, pray for those who are wandering to find graves beyond the foaming billows."

FIFTEENTH EVENING

"



KNOW a Pulcinella,"* the Moon told me. "The public applaud loudly directly they see him. Every one of his movements is comic, and is sure to throw the house into convulsions of laughter; and yet there is no art in it at all—it is complete nature.

When he was yet a little boy, playing with other boys, he

* The comic or grotesque character of the Italian ballet, from which the English "Punch" takes his origin.

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was already Punch. Nature had intended him for it, and had provided him with a hump on his back, and another on his breast; but his inward man, his mind, on the contrary, was richly furnished. No one could surpass him in depth of feeling or in readiness of intellect. The theatre was his ideal world. If he had possessed a slender well-shaped figure, he might have been the first tragedian on any stage: the heroic, the great, filled his soul; and yet he had to become a Pulcinella. His very sorrow and melancholy did but increase the comic dryness of his sharply-cut features, and increased the laughter of the audience, who showered plaudits on their favourite. The lovely Columbine was indeed kind and cordial to him; but she preferred to marry the Harlequin. It would have been too ridiculous if beauty and ugliness had in reality paired together.

“When Pulcinella was in very bad spirits, she was the only one who could force a hearty burst of laughter, or even a smile from him: first she would be melancholy with him, then quieter, and at last quite cheerful and happy. ‘I know very well what is the matter with you,’ she said; ‘yes, you’re in love!’ And he could not help laughing. ‘I and Love!’ he cried, ‘that would have an absurd look. How the public would shout!’ ‘Certainly, you are in love,’ she continued; and added with a comic pathos, ‘and I am the person you are in love with.’ You see, such a thing may be said when it is quite out of the question—and, indeed, Pulcinella burst out laughing, and gave a leap into the air, and his melancholy was forgotten.

“And yet she had only spoken the truth. He *did* love her, love her adoringly, as he loved what was great and lofty in art. At her wedding he was the merriest among the guests, but in the stillness of night he wept: if the public had seen his distorted face then, they would have applauded rapturously.

“And a few days ago Columbine died. On the day of

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the funeral, Harlequin was not required to show himself on the boards, for he was a disconsolate widower. The director had to give a very merry piece, that the public might not too painfully miss the pretty Columbine and the agile Harlequin. Therefore Pulcinella had to be more boisterous and extravagant than ever ; and he danced and capered, with despair in his heart ; and the audience yelled, and shouted, '*Bravo ! bravissimo !*' Pulcinella was actually called before the curtain. He was pronounced inimitable.



He looked like a grotesque monument.

But last night the hideous little fellow went out of the town, quite alone, to the deserted churchyard. The wreath of flowers on Columbine's grave was already faded, and he sat down there. It was a study for a painter. As he sat with his chin on his hands, his eyes turned up towards me, he looked like a grotesque monument—a Punch on a grave—very peculiar and whimsical. If the people could have seen their favourite, they would have cried as usual, '*Bravo, Pulcinella ! bravo, bravissimo !*' "

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SIXTEENTH EVENING

HEAR what the Moon told me. "I have seen the cadet who had just been made an officer put on his handsome uniform for the first time; I have seen the young bride in her wedding dress, and the Princess girl-wife happy in



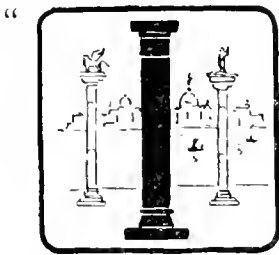
There stood the little maid.

her gorgeous robes; but never have I seen a felicity equal to that of a little girl of four years old, whom I watched this evening. She had received a new blue dress and a new pink hat; the splendid attire had just been put on, and all were calling for a candle, for my rays, shining in through

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the windows of the room, were not bright enough for the occasion, and further illumination was required. There stood the little maid, stiff and upright as a doll, her arms stretched painfully straight out away from her dress, and her fingers apart; and, oh, what happiness beamed from her eyes and from her whole countenance! 'To-morrow you shall go out in your new clothes,' said her mother; and the little one looked up at her hat and down at her frock, and smiled brightly. 'Mother,' she cried, 'what will the little dogs think when they see me in these splendid new things?'"

SEVENTEENTH EVENING



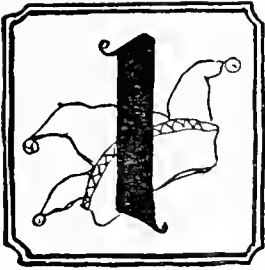
"HAVE spoken to you of Pompeii," said the Moon; "that corpse of a city, exposed in the view of living towns: I know another sight still more strange, and this is not the corpse, but the spectre of a city. Whenever the jetty fountains splash into the marble basins, they seem to me to be telling the story of the floating city. Yes, the spouting water may tell of her, the waves of the sea may sing of her fame! On the surface of the ocean a mist often rests, and this is her widow's veil. The Bridegroom of the Sea is dead, his palace and his city are his mausoleum! Dost thou know this city? She has never heard the rolling of wheels or the hoof-tread of horses in her streets, through which the fish swim, while the black gondola glides spectrally over the green water. I will show you the place," continued the Moon, "the largest square in it, and you will fancy yourself transported into the city of a fairy tale. The grass grows rank among the broad flagstones, and in the morning twilight thousands of tame pigeons flutter

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around the solitary lofty tower. On three sides you find yourself surrounded by cloistered walks. In these the silent Turk sits smoking his long pipe; the handsome Greek leans against the pillar, and gazes at the upraised trophies and lofty masts, memorials of power that is gone. The flags hang down like mourning scarves. A girl rests there: she has put down her heavy pails filled with water, the yoke with which she has carried them rests on one of her shoulders, and she leans against the mast of victory. This is not a fairy palace you see before you yonder, but a church: the gilded domes and shining orbs flash back my beams; the glorious bronze horses up yonder have made journeys, like the bronze horse in the fairy tale: they have come hither, and gone hence, and have returned again. Do you notice the variegated splendour of the walls and windows? It looks as if Genius had followed the caprices of a child, in the adornment of these singular temples. Do you see the winged lion on the pillar? The gold glitters still, but his wings are tied—the lion is dead, for the King of the Sea is dead; the great halls stand desolate, and where gorgeous painting hung of yore, the naked wall now peers through. The *lazzaroni* sleeps under the arcade, whose pavement in old times was to be trodden only by the feet of the high nobility. From the deep wells, and perhaps from the prisons by the Bridge of Sighs, rise the accents of woe, as at the time when the tambourine was heard in the gay gondolas, and the golden ring was cast from the Bucentaur to Adria, the Queen of the Seas. Adria! shroud thyself in mists; let the veil of thy widowhood shroud thy form, and clothe in the weeds of woe the mausoleum of thy bridegroom—the marble, spectral Venice!”

What the Moon Saw

EIGHTEENTH EVENING



LOOKED down upon a great theatre," said the Moon. "The house was crowded, for a new actor was to make his first appearance that night. My rays glided over a little window in the wall, and I saw a painted face with the forehead pressed against the panes. It was the hero of the evening. The knightly beard curled crisply about the chin; but there were tears in the man's eyes, for he had been hissed off, and indeed with reason. The poor Incapable! But Incapables cannot be admitted into the empire of Art. He had deep feelings, and loved his art enthusiastically, but the art loved not him. The prompter's bell sounded; '*the hero enters with a determined air,*' so ran the stage direction in his part, and he had to appear before an audience who turned him into ridicule. When the piece was over, I saw a form wrapped in a mantle creeping down the steps: it was the vanquished knight of the evening. The scene-shifters whispered to one another, and I followed the poor fellow home to his room. To hang oneself is to die a mean death, and poison is not always at hand, I know; but he thought of both. I saw how he looked at his pale face in the glass, with eyes half closed, to see if he should look well as a corpse. A man may be very unhappy, and yet exceedingly affected. He thought of death, of suicide; I believe he pitied himself, for he wept bitterly; and when a man has had his cry out he doesn't kill himself.

"Since that time a year had rolled by. Again a play was to be acted, but in a little theatre, and by a poor strolling company. Again I saw the well-remembered face, with the painted cheeks and the crisp beard. He

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looked up at me and smiled ; and yet he had been hissed off only a minute before—hissed off from a wretched theatre by a miserable audience. And to-night a shabby hearse rolled out of the town gate. It was a suicide—our painted, despised hero. The driver of the hearse was the only person present, for no one followed except my beams. In a corner of the churchyard the corpse of the suicide was shovelled into the earth, and nettles will soon be rankly growing over his grave, and the sexton will throw thorns and weeds from the other graves upon it.”

NINETEENTH EVENING



“ COME from Rome,” said the Moon. “ In the midst of the city, upon one of the seven hills, lie the ruins of the imperial palace. The wild fig-tree grows in the clefts of the wall, and covers the nakedness thereof with its broad grey-green leaves ; trampling among heaps of rubbish, the ass treads upon green laurels, and rejoices over the rank thistles. From this spot, whence the eagles of Rome once flew abroad, whence they ‘ came, saw, and conquered,’ one door leads into a little mean house, built of clay between two pillars ; the wild vine hangs like a mourning garland over the crooked window. An old woman and her little granddaughter live there : they rule now in the palace of the Cæsars, and show to strangers the remains of its past glories. Of the splendid throne-hall only a naked wall yet stands, and a black cypress throws its dark shadow on the spot where the throne once stood. The dust lies several feet deep on the broken pavement ; and the little maiden, now the daughter of the imperial palace, often sits there on her stool when the evening bells ring. The keyhole of the door close by she calls her turret-

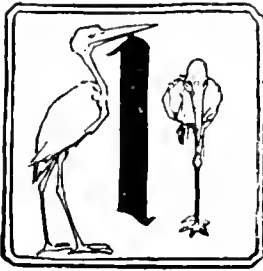
What the Moon Saw

window; through this she can see half Rome, as far as the mighty cupola of St. Peter's.

“On this evening, as usual, stillness reigned around; and in the full beam of my light came the little granddaughter. On her head she carried an earthen pitcher of antique shape filled with water. Her feet were bare, her short frock and her white sleeves were torn. I kissed her pretty round shoulders, her dark eyes, and black shining hair. She mounted the stairs; they were steep, having been made up of rough blocks of broken marble and the capital of a fallen pillar. The coloured lizards slipped away startled, from before her feet, but she was not frightened at them. Already she lifted her hand to pull the door-bell—a hare's foot fastened to a string formed the bell-handle of the imperial palace. She paused for a moment—of what might she be thinking? Perhaps of the beautiful Christ-child, dressed in gold and silver, which was down below in the chapel, where the silver candlesticks gleamed so bright, and where her little friends sang the hymns in which she also could join? I know not. Presently she moved again—she stumbled; the earthen vessel fell from her head, and broke on the marble steps. She burst into tears. The beautiful daughter of the imperial palace wept over the worthless broken pitcher; with her bare feet she stood there weeping, and dared not pull the string, the bell-rope of the imperial palace.”

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TWENTIETH EVENING



It was more than a fortnight since the Moon had shone. Now he stood once more, round and bright, above the clouds, moving slowly onward. Hear what the Moon told me.

“From a town in Fezzan I followed a caravan. On the margin of the sandy desert, in a salt plain, that shone like a frozen lake, and was only covered in spots with light drifting sand, a halt was made. The eldest of the company—the water-gourd hung at his girdle, and on his head was a little bag of unleavened bread—drew a square in the sand with his staff, and wrote in it a few words out of the Koran, and then the whole caravan passed over the consecrated spot. A young merchant, a child of the East, as I could tell by his eye and his figure, rode pensively forward on his white snorting steed. Was he thinking, perchance, of his fair young wife? It was only two days ago that the camel, adorned with furs and with costly shawls, had carried her, the beauteous bride, round the walls of the city, while drums and cymbals had sounded, the women sang, and festive shots, of which the bridegroom fired the greatest number, resounded round the camel; and now he was journeying with the caravan across the desert.

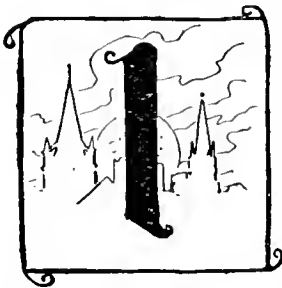
“For many nights I followed the train. I saw them rest by the well-side among the stunted palms; they thrust the knife into the breast of the camel that had fallen, and roasted its flesh by the fire. My beams cooled the glowing sands, and showed them the black rocks, dead islands in the immense ocean of sand. No hostile tribes met them in their pathless route, no storms arose, no columns of sand whirled destruction over the journeying

What the Moon Saw

caravan. At home the beautiful wife prayed for her husband and her father. 'Are they dead?' she asked of my golden crescent; 'Are they dead?' she cried to my full disc. Now the desert lies behind them. This evening they sit beneath the lofty palm-trees, where the crane flutters round them with its long wings, and the pelican watches them from the branches of the mimosa. The luxuriant herbage is trampled down, crushed by the feet of elephants. A troop of negroes are returning from a market in the interior of the land; the women, with copper buttons in their black train, and decked out in clothes dyed with indigo, drive the heavily-laden oxen, on whose backs slumber the naked black children. A negro leads by a string a young lion which he has bought. They approach the caravan; the young merchant sits pensive and motionless, thinking of his beautiful wife, dreaming in the land of the blacks, of his white fragrant lily beyond the desert. He raises his head, and——"

But at this moment a cloud passed before the Moon, and then another. I heard nothing more from him this evening.

TWENTY-FIRST EVENING

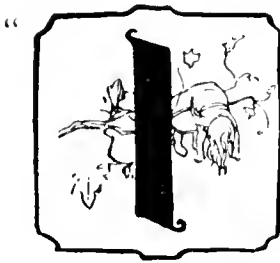


LOOKED down on Tyrol," said the Moon, "and my beams caused the dark pines to throw long shadows upon the rocks. I looked at the pictures of St. Christopher carrying the Infant Jesus that are painted there upon the walls of the houses, colossal figures reaching from the ground to the roof. St. Florian was represented pouring water on the burning house, and the Lord hung bleeding on the great cross by the way-side. To the present generation these are old pictures,

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but I saw when they were put up, and marked how one followed the other. On the brow of the mountain yonder is perched, like a swallow's nest, a lonely convent of nuns. Two of the sisters stood up in the tower tolling the bell; they were both young, and therefore their glances flew over the mountain out into the world. A travelling coach passed by below, the postilion wound his horn, and the poor nuns looked after the carriage for a moment with a mournful glance, and a tear gleamed in the eyes of the younger one. And the horn sounded faintly and more faint, and the convent bell drowned its expiring echoes."

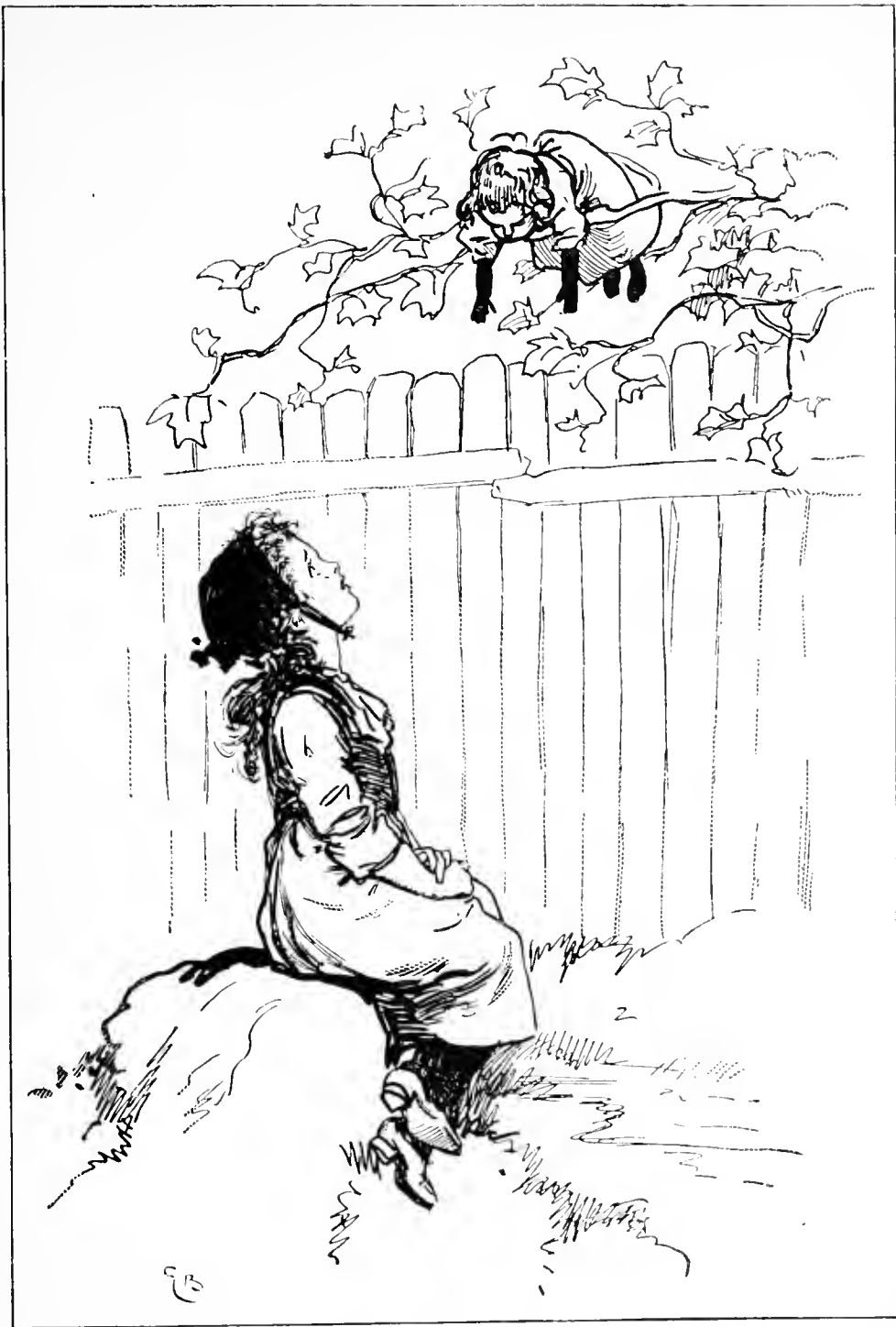
TWENTY-SECOND EVENING



"SAW a little girl weeping," said the Moon: "she was weeping over the depravity of the world. She had received a most beautiful doll as a present. Oh, that was a glorious doll, so fair and delicate! She did not seem created for the sorrows of this world.

But the brothers of the little girl, those great naughty boys, had set the doll high up in the branches of a tree, and had run away.

"The little girl could not reach up to the doll, and could not help her down, and that is why she was crying. The doll must certainly have been crying too, for she stretched out her arms among the green branches, and looked quite mournful. Yes, these are the troubles of life of which the little girl had often heard tell. Alas, poor doll! It was already growing dark; and suppose night were to come on completely? Was she to be left sitting there alone on the bough all night long? No, the little maid could not make up her mind to that. 'I'll stay with you,' she said, although

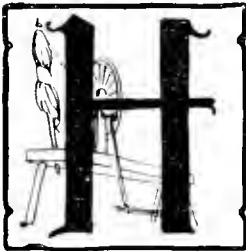


She looked up at the doll.

What the Moon Saw

she felt anything but happy in her mind. She could almost fancy she distinctly saw little gnomes, with their high-crowned hats, sitting in the bushes ; and farther back in the long walk, tall spectres appeared to be dancing. They came nearer and nearer, and stretched out their hands towards the tree on which the doll sat ; they laughed scornfully, and pointed at her with their fingers. Oh, how frightened the little maid was ! ‘ But, if one has not done anything wrong,’ she thought, ‘ nothing evil can harm one. I wonder if I have done anything wrong ?’ And she considered. ‘ Oh, yes ! I laughed at the poor duck with the red rag on her leg ; she limped along so funnily, I could not help laughing ; but it’s a sin to laugh at animals.’ And she looked up at the doll. ‘ Did you laugh at the duck, too ?’ she asked ; and it seemed as if the doll shook her head.”

TWENTY-THIRD EVENING



HEAR what the Moon told me. “ Some years ago, here in Copenhagen, I looked through the window of a mean little room. The father and mother slept, but the little son was not asleep. I saw the flowered cotton curtains of the bed move, and the child peep forth. At first

I thought he was looking at the great clock, which was gaily painted in red and green. At the top sat a cuckoo, below hung the heavy leaden weights, and the pendulum with the polished disc of metal went to and fro, and said ‘ tick, tick.’ But no, he was not looking at the clock, but at his mother’s spinning-wheel, which stood just underneath it. That was the boy’s favourite piece of furniture, but he dared not touch it, for if he meddled with it he got a rap on the knuckles. For hours together, when his mother was spinning, he would

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sit quietly by her side, watching the murmuring spindle and the revolving wheel, and as he sat he thought of many things. Oh, if he might only turn the wheel himself! Father and mother were asleep: he looked at them, and looked at the spinning-wheel, and presently a little naked foot peered out of the bed, and then a second foot, and then two little white legs. There he stood. He looked round once more, to see if father and mother were still asleep—yes, they slept; and now he crept *softly, softly*, in his short little nightgown, to the spinning-wheel, and began to spin. The thread flew from the wheel, and the wheel whirled faster and faster. I kissed his fair hair and his blue eyes, it was such a pretty picture.

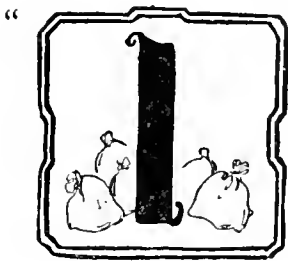
“At that moment the mother awoke. The curtain shook; she looked forth, and fancied she saw a gnome or some other kind of little spectre. ‘In Heaven’s name!’ she cried, and aroused her husband in a frightened way. He opened his eyes, rubbed them with his hands, and looked at the brisk little lad. ‘Why, that is Bertel,’ said he. And my eye quitted the poor room, for I have so much to see. At the same moment I looked at the halls of the Vatican, where the marble gods are enthroned. I shone upon the group of the Laocoon: the stone seemed to sigh. I pressed a silent kiss on the lips of the Muses, and they seemed to stir and move. But my rays lingered longest about the Nile group with the colossal god. Leaning against the Sphinx, he lies there thoughtful and meditative, as if he were thinking of the rolling centuries; and little love-gods sport with him and with the crocodiles. In the horn of plenty sits with folded arms a little tiny love-god gazing at the great solemn river-god, a true picture of the boy at the spinning-wheel,—the features were exactly the same. Charming and lifelike stood the little marble form, and yet the wheel of the year has turned more than a thousand times since the time when it sprang from the stone. Just

What the Moon Saw

as often as the boy in the little room turned the spinning-wheel had the great wheel murmured, before the age could again call forth marble gods equal to those he afterwards formed.

“Years have passed since all this happened,” the Moon went on to say. “Yesterday I looked upon a bay on the eastern coast of Denmark. Glorious woods are there, and high trees, an old knightly castle with red walls, swans floating in the ponds, and in the background appears, among orchards, a little town with a church. Many boats, the crews all furnished with torches, glided over the silent expanse—but these fires had not been kindled for catching fish, for everything had a festive look. Music sounded, a song was sung, and in one of the boats a man stood erect, to whom homage was paid by the rest, a tall, sturdy man, wrapped in a cloak. He had blue eyes and long white hair. I knew him, and thought of the Vatican, and of the group of the Nile, and the old marble gods. I thought of the simple little room where little Bertel sat in his nightshirt by the spinning-wheel. The wheel of time has turned, and new gods have come forth from the stone. From the boats there arose a shout: ‘Hurrah! hurrah for Bertel Thorwaldsen!’”

TWENTY-FOURTH EVENING



WILL now give you a picture from Frankfort,” said the Moon. “I especially noticed one building there. It was not the house in which Goethe was born, nor the old council-house, through whose grated windows peered the horns of the oxen that were roasted and given to the people when the Emperors were crowned. No, it was a private house, plain in appearance,

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and painted green. It stood near the old Jews' Street. It was Rothschild's house.

“I looked through the open door. The staircase was brilliantly lighted: servants carrying wax candles in massive silver candlesticks stood there, and bowed low before an aged woman, who was being brought downstairs in a litter. The owner of the house stood bareheaded, and respectfully imprinted a kiss on the hand of the old woman. She was his mother. She nodded in a friendly manner to him and to the servants, and they carried her into the dark narrow street, into a little house, which was her dwelling. Here her children had been born, from hence the fortune of the family had arisen. If she deserted the despised street and the little house, fortune would also desert her children. That was her firm belief.”

The Moon told me no more; his visit this evening was far too short. But I thought of the old woman in the narrow, despised street. It would have cost her but a word, and a brilliant house would have arisen for her on the banks of the Thames—a word, and a villa would have been prepared in the Bay of Naples.

“If I deserted the lowly house, where the fortunes of my sons first began to bloom, fortune would desert them!” It was a superstition, but a superstition of such a class, that he who knows the story and has seen this picture, need have only two words placed under the picture to make him understand it; and these two words are: “A mother.”

What the Moon Saw

TWENTY-FIFTH EVENING

“It was yesterday, in the morning twilight”—these are the words the Moon told me—“in the great city no chimney was yet smoking—and it was just at the chimneys that I was looking. Suddenly a little head emerged from one of them, and then half a body, the arms resting on the rim of the chimneypot. ‘Ya-hip! cried a voice. It was the little chimney-sweeper, who had for the first time in his life crept through a chimney and stuck out his head at the top. ‘Ya-hip! ya-hip!’ Yes, certainly that was a very different thing from creeping about in the dark narrow chimneys! the air blows so fresh, and he could look over the whole city towards the green wood. The sun was just rising. It shone round and great, just in his face, which beamed with triumph, though it was very prettily blacked with soot.



“‘The whole town can see me now,’ he exclaimed, ‘and the moon can see me now, and the sun too. ‘Ya-hip! ya-hip!’ And he flourished his broom in triumph.”

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TWENTY-SIXTH EVENING



“LAST night I looked down upon a town in China,” said the Moon. “My beams lighted up the naked walls which form the streets there. Now and then, certainly, a door is seen, but it is locked, for what does the Chinaman care about the outer world? Close wooden shutters covered the windows behind the walls of the houses; but through the windows of the temple a faint light glimmered. I looked in, and saw the quaint decorations within. From the floor to the ceiling pictures are painted in the most glaring colours and richly gilt—pictures representing the deeds of the gods here on earth. In each nine statues are placed, but they are almost entirely hidden by the coloured drapery and the banners that hang down. Before each idol (and they are all made of tin) stood a little altar of holy water, with flowers and burning wax lights on it. Above all the rest stood Fo, the chief deity, clad in a garment of yellow silk, for yellow is here the sacred colour. At the foot of the altar sat a living being, a young priest. He appeared to be praying, but in the midst of his prayer he seemed to fall into deep thought, and this must have been wrong, for his cheeks glowed and he held down his head. Poor Soui-hong! Was he, perhaps, dreaming of working in the little flower-garden behind the high street wall? And did that occupation seem more agreeable to him than watching the wax lights in the temple? Or did he wish to sit at the rich feast, wiping his mouth with silver paper between each course? Or was his sin so great that, if he dared to utter it, the Celestial Empire would punish it with death? Had his thoughts ventured to fly with the ships of the barbarians, to their homes in

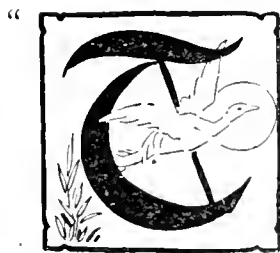
What the Moon Saw

far-distant England? No, his thoughts did not fly so far, and yet they were sinful, sinful as thoughts born of young hearts, sinful here in the temple, in the presence of Fo and the other holy gods.

“I know whither his thoughts had strayed. At the farther end of the city, on the flat roof paved with porcelain, on which stood the handsome vases covered with painted flowers, sat the beauteous Pu, of the little roguish eyes, of the full lips, and of the tiny feet. The tight shoe pained her, but her heart pained her still more. She lifted her graceful round arm, and her satin dress rustled. Before her stood a glass bowl containing four goldfish. She stirred the bowl carefully with a slender lacquered stick, very slowly, for she, too, was lost in thought. Was she thinking, perchance, how the fishes were richly clothed in gold, how they lived calmly and peacefully in their crystal world, how they were regularly fed, and yet how much happier they might be if they were free? Yes, that she could well understand, the beautiful Pu. Her thoughts wandered away from her home, wandered to the temple, but not for the sake of holy things. Poor Pu! Poor Soui-hong!

“Their earthly thoughts met, but my cold beam lay between the two like the sword of the cherub.”

TWENTY-SEVENTH EVENING



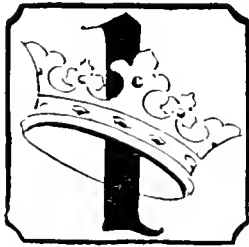
“THE air was calm,” said the Moon; “the water was as transparent as the pure ether through which I was gliding, and deep below the surface I could see the strange plants that stretched up their long arms towards me like the gigantic trees of the forest. The fishes swam to and fro above their tops. High in the air a flight of wild swans were winging their way, one of which sank lower and lower,

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with wearied pinions, his eyes following the airy caravan, which melted farther and farther into the distance. With outspread wings he sank slowly, as a soap-bubble sinks in the still air, till he touched the water. At length his head lay back between his wings, and silently he lay there, like a white lotus flower upon the quiet lake. And a gentle wind arose, and crisped the quiet surface which gleamed like the clouds that poured along in great broad waves; and the swan raised his head, and the glowing water splashed like blue fire over his breast and back. The morning dawn illuminated the red clouds, the swan rose strengthened, and flew towards the rising sun, towards the bluish coast whither the caravan had gone; but he flew all alone, with a longing in his breast. Lonely he flew over the blue swelling billows."

TWENTY-EIGHTH EVENING

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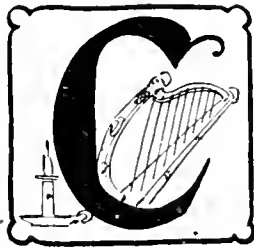
WILL give you another picture of Sweden," said the Moon. "Among dark pine-woods, near the melancholy banks of the Stoxen, lies the old convent church of Wreta. My rays glided through the grating into the roomy vaults, where Kings sleep tranquilly in great stone coffins. On the wall, above the grave of each, is placed the emblem of earthly grandeur, a kingly crown; but it is made only of wood, painted and gilt, and is hung on a wooden peg driven into the wall. The worms have gnawn the gilded wood, the spider has spun her web from the crown down to the sand, like a mourning banner, frail and transient as the grief of mortals. How quietly they sleep! I can remember them quite plainly. I still see the bold smile on their lips, that so strongly and plainly expressed joy or grief. When the steamboat winds along

What the Moon Saw

like a magic snail over the lakes, a stranger often comes to the church, and visits the burial vault; he asks the names of the Kings, and they have a dead and forgotten sound. He glances with a smile at the worm-eaten crowns, and if he happens to be a pious, thoughtful man, something of melancholy mingles with the smile. Slumber on, ye dead ones! The Moon thinks of you, the Moon at night sends down her rays into your silent kingdom, over which hangs the crown of pine-wood."

TWENTY-NINTH EVENING

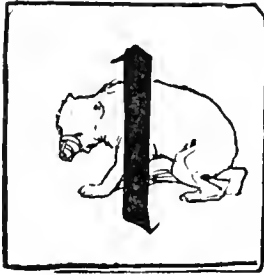
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LOSE by the high-road," said the Moon, "is an inn, and opposite to it is a great wagon-shed, whose straw roof was just being re-thatched. I looked down between the bare rafters and through the open loft into the comfortless space below. The turkey-cock slept on the beam, and the saddle rested in the empty crib. In the middle of the shed stood a travelling carriage; the proprietor was inside, fast asleep, while the horses were being watered. The coachman stretched himself, though I am very sure that he had been most comfortably asleep half the last stage. The door of the servants' room stood open, and the bed looked as if it had been turned over and over; the candle stood on the floor, and had burned deep down into the socket. The wind blew cold through the shed: it was nearer to the dawn than to midnight. In the wooden frame on the ground slept a wandering family of musicians. The father and mother seemed to be dreaming of the burning liquor that remained in the bottle. The little pale daughter was dreaming too, for her eyes were wet with tears. The harp stood at their heads, and the dog lay stretched at their feet."

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THIRTIETH EVENING



T was in a little provincial town," the Moon said; "it certainly happened last year, but that has nothing to do with the matter. I saw it quite plainly. To-day I read about it in the papers, but there it is not half so clearly expressed. In the tap-room of the little inn sat the bear-leader, eating his supper; the bear was tied up outside, behind the wood pile—poor Bruin, who did nobody any harm, though he looked grim enough. Up in the garret three little children were playing by the light of my beams; the eldest was perhaps six years old, the youngest certainly not more than two. Tramp! tramp!—somebody was coming upstairs: who might it be? The door was thrust open—it was Bruin! the great, shaggy Bruin! He had got tired of waiting down in the courtyard, and had found his way to the stairs. I saw it all," said the Moon. "The children were very much frightened at first at the great shaggy animal; each of them crept into a corner, but he found them all out, and smelt at them, but did them no harm. 'This must be a great dog,' they said, and began to stroke him. He lay down upon the ground, the youngest boy clambered on his back, and, bending down a little head of golden curls, played at hiding in the beast's shaggy skin. Presently the eldest boy took his drum, and beat it till it rattled again: the bear rose up on its hind legs and began to dance. It was a charming sight to behold. Each boy now took his gun, and the bear was obliged to have one too, and he held it up quite properly. Here was a capital playmate they had found! and they began marching—one, two; one, two.

What the Moon Saw

“Suddenly some one came to the door, which opened, and the mother of the children appeared. You should have seen her in her dumb terror, with her face as white as chalk, her mouth half open, and her eyes fixed in a



Here was a capital playmate.

horrified stare. But the youngest boy nodded to her in great glee, and called out in his baby prattle, ‘We’re playing at soldiers.’ And then the bear-leader came running up.”

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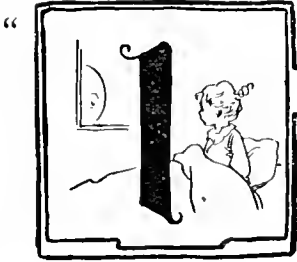
THIRTY-FIRST EVENING



THE wind blew stormy and cold, the clouds flew hurriedly past; only for a moment now and then did the Moon become visible. He said, "I looked down from the silent sky upon the driving clouds, and saw the great shadows chasing each other across the earth. I looked upon a prison. A closed carriage stood before it: a prisoner was to be carried away. My rays pierced through the grated window towards the wall: the prisoner was scratching a few lines upon it, as a parting token; but he did not write words, but a melody, the outpouring of his heart. The door was opened, and he was led forth, and fixed his eyes upon my round disc. Clouds passed between us, as if he were not to see my face, nor I his. He stepped into the carriage, the door was closed, the whip cracked, and the horses galloped off into the thick forest, whither my rays were not able to follow him; but as I glanced through the grated window, my rays glided over the notes, his last farewell engraved on the prison wall—where words fail, sounds can often speak. My rays could only light up isolated notes, so the greater part of what was written there will ever remain dark to me. Was it the death-hymn he wrote there? Were these the glad notes of joy? Did he drive away to meet his death, or hasten to the embraces of his beloved? The rays of the Moon do not read all that is written by mortals."

What the Moon Saw

THIRTY-SECOND EVENING



“LOVE the children,” said the Moon, “especially the quite little ones—they are so droll. Sometimes I peep into the room, between the curtain and the window-frame, when they are not thinking of me. It gives me pleasure to see them dressing and undressing. First, the little round naked shoulder comes creeping out of the frock, then the arm; or I see how the stocking is drawn off, and a plump little white leg makes its appearance, and a little white foot that is fit to be kissed, and I kiss it too.

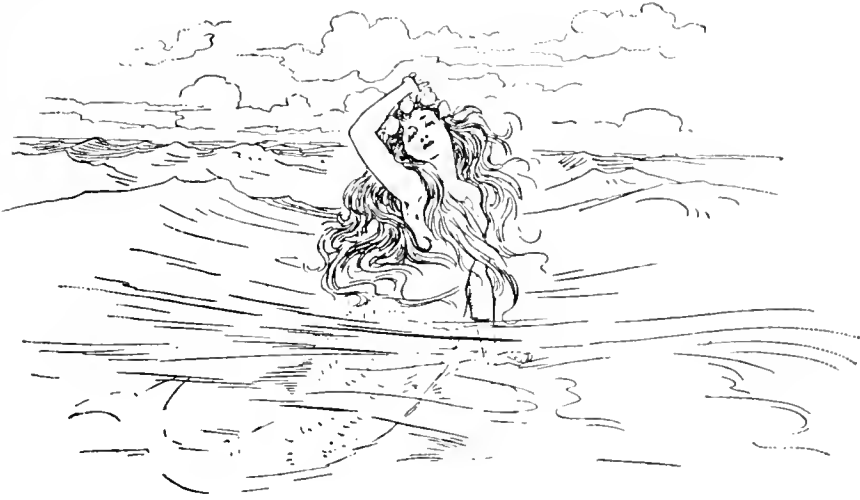
“But about what I was going to tell you. This evening I looked through a window, before which no curtain was drawn, for nobody lives opposite. I saw a whole troop of little ones, all of one family, and among them was a little sister. She is only four years old, but can say her prayers as well as any of the rest. The mother sits by her bed every evening, and hears her say her prayers; and then she has a kiss, and the mother sits by the bed till the little one has gone to sleep, which generally happens as soon as ever she can close her eyes.

“This evening the two elder children were a little boisterous. One of them hopped about on one leg in his long white nightgown, and the other stood on a chair surrounded by the clothes of all the children, and declared he was acting Greek statues. The third and fourth laid the clean linen carefully in the box, for that is a thing that has to be done; and the mother sat by the bed of the youngest, and announced to all the rest that they were to be quiet, for little sister was going to say her prayers.

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“I looked in, over the lamp, to the little maiden’s bed, where she knelt on the neat white coverlet, her hands folded demurely and her little face quite grave and serious. She was praying the Lord’s Prayer aloud. But her mother interrupted in the middle of her prayer. ‘How is it,’ she asked, ‘that when you have prayed for daily bread, you always add something I cannot understand? You must tell me what that is.’ The little one was silent, and looked at her mother in embarrassment. ‘What is it you say after *our daily bread*?’ ‘Dear mother, don’t be angry: I only said, *and plenty of butter on it.*’”





The Little Sea Maid



FAR out in the sea the water is as blue as the petals of the most beautiful cornflower, and clear as the purest glass. But it is very deep, deeper than any cable will sound; many steeples must be placed one above the other to reach from the ground to the surface of the water. And down there live the sea people.

Now, you must not believe there is nothing down there but the naked sand; no,—the strangest plants and flowers grow there, so pliable in their stalks and leaves that at the least motion of the water they move just as if they had life. All fishes, great and small, glide among the twigs, just as here the birds do in the trees. In the deepest spot of all lies the Sea King's castle: the walls are of coral and the tall gothic windows of the clearest amber; shells form the roof, and they open and shut according as the water flows. It looks lovely, for in each shell lie gleaming pearls,

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a single one of which would have great value in a Queen's diadem.

The Sea King below there had been a widower for many years, while his old mother kept house for him. She was a clever woman, but proud of her rank, so she wore twelve oysters on her tail, while the other great people were only allowed to wear six. Beyond this she was deserving of great praise, especially because she was very fond of her granddaughters, the little Sea Princesses. These were six pretty children ; but the youngest was the most beautiful of all. Her skin was as clear and as fine as a rose leaf, her eyes were blue as the deepest sea, but, like all the rest, she had no feet, for her body ended in a fish-tail.

All day long they could play in the castle, down in the halls, where living flowers grew out of the walls. The great amber windows were opened, and then the fishes swam in to them, just as the swallows fly in to us when we open our windows ; but the fishes swam straight up to the Princesses, ate out of their hands, and let themselves be stroked.

Outside the castle was a great garden with bright red and dark blue flowers ; the fruit glowed like gold, and the flowers like flames of fire ; and they continually kept moving their stalks and leaves. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of brimstone. A peculiar blue radiance lay upon everything down there : one would have thought oneself high in the air, with the canopy of heaven above and around, rather than at the bottom of the deep sea. During a calm the sun could be seen ; it appeared like a purple flower, from which all light streamed out.

Each of the little Princesses had her own little place in the garden, where she might dig and plant at her good pleasure. One gave her flower-bed the form of a whale ; another thought it better to make hers like a little sea

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woman ; but the youngest made hers quite round, like the sun, and had flowers which gleamed red as the sun itself. She was a strange child, quiet and thoughtful ; and when the other sisters made a display of the beautiful things they had received out of wrecked ships, she would have nothing beyond the red flowers which resembled the sun, except a pretty marble statue. This was a figure of a charming boy, hewn out of white clear stone, which had sunk down to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted a pink weeping willow beside this statue ; the tree grew famously, and hung its fresh branches over the statue towards the blue sandy ground, where the shadow showed violet, and moved like the branches themselves ; it seemed as if the ends of the branches and the roots were playing together and wished to kiss each other.

There was no greater pleasure for her than to hear of the world of men above them. The old grandmother had to tell all she knew of ships and towns, of men and animals. It seemed especially beautiful to her that up on the earth the flowers shed fragrance, for they had none down at the bottom of the sea, and that the trees were green, and that the fishes which one saw there among the trees could sing so loud and clear that it was a pleasure to hear them. What the grandmother called fishes were little birds ; the Princess could not understand them in any other way, for she had never seen a bird.

“When you have reached your fifteenth year,” said the grandmother, “you shall have leave to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, and to see the great ships sailing by. Then you will see forests and towns !”

In the next year one of the sisters was fifteen years of age, but each of the others was one year younger than the next ; so that the youngest had full five years to wait before she could come up from the bottom of the sea, and

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find how our world looked. But one promised to tell the others what she had seen and what she had thought the most beautiful on the first day of her visit; for their grandmother could not tell them enough—there was so much about which they wanted information.

No one was more anxious about these things than the youngest—just that one who had the longest time to wait, and who was always quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, and looked up through the dark blue water at the fishes splashing with their fins and tails. Moon and stars she could see; they certainly shone quite faintly, but through the water they looked much larger than they appear to our eyes. When something like a black cloud passed among them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship with many people: they certainly did not think that a pretty little sea maid was standing down below stretching up her white hands towards the keel of their ship.

Now the eldest Princess was fifteen years old, and might mount up to the surface of the sea.

When she came back she had a hundred things to tell,—but the finest thing, she said, was to lie in the moonshine on a sand-bank in the quiet sea, and to look at the neighbouring coast, with the large town, where the lights twinkled like a hundred stars, and to hear the music and the noise and clamour of carriages and men, to see the many church steeples, and to hear the sound of the bells. Just because she could not get up to these, she longed for them more than for anything.

Oh, how the youngest sister listened! And afterwards when she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark-blue water, she thought of the great city with all its bustle and noise; and then she thought she could hear the church bells ringing, even down to the depth where she was.

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In the following year, the second sister received permission to mount upward through the water and swim whither she pleased. She rose up just as the sun was setting; and this spectacle, she said, was the most beautiful. The whole sky looked like gold, she said, and as to the clouds, she could not properly describe their beauty. They sailed away over her head, purple and violet-coloured, but far quicker than the clouds there flew a flight of wild swans, like a long white veil, over the water towards where the sun stood. She swam towards them; but the sun sank, and the roseate hue faded on the sea and in the clouds.

In the following year the next sister went up. She was the boldest of them all, and therefore she swam up a broad stream that poured its waters into the sea. She saw glorious green hills clothed with vines: palaces and castles shone forth from amid splendid woods; she heard how all the birds sang; and the sun shone so warm that she was often obliged to dive under the water to cool her glowing face. In a little bay she found a whole swarm of little mortals. They were quite naked, and splashed about in the water: she wanted to play with them, but they fled in affright, and a little black animal came—it was a dog, but she had never seen a dog—and it barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and tried to gain the open sea. But she could never forget the glorious woods, the green hills, and the pretty children, who could swim in the water though they had not fish-tails.

The fourth sister was not so bold: she remained out in the midst of the wild sea, and declared that just there it was most beautiful. One could see for many miles around, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen ships, but only in the far distance—they looked like seagulls; and the funny dolphins had thrown somersaults, and the great whales spouted out water from their nostrils, so that it looked like hundreds of fountains all around.

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Now came the turn of the fifth sister. Her birthday came in the winter, and so she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea looked quite green, and great icebergs were floating about ; each one appeared like a pearl, she said, and yet was much taller than the church steeples built by men. They showed themselves in the strangest forms, and shone like diamonds. She had seated herself upon one of the greatest of all, and let the wind play with her long hair ; and all the sailing-ships tacked about very quickly beyond where she sat ; but towards evening the sky became covered with clouds, it thundered and lightened, and the black waves lifted the great iceblocks high up, and let them glow in the red glare. On all the ships the sails were reefed, and there was fear and anguish. But she sat quietly upon her floating iceberg, and saw the forked blue flashes dart into the sea.

Each of the sisters, as she came up for the first time to the surface of the water, was delighted with the new and beautiful sights she saw ; but as they now had permission, as grown-up girls, to go whenever they liked, it became indifferent to them. They wished themselves back again, and after a month had elapsed they said it was best of all down below, for there one felt so comfortably at home.

Many an evening hour the five sisters took one another by the arm and rose up in a row over the water. They had splendid voices, more charming than any mortal could have ; and when a storm was approaching, so that they knew that ships would go down, they swam on before the ships, and sang lovely songs, which told how beautiful it was at the bottom of the sea, and exhorted the sailors not to be afraid to come down. But these could not understand the words, and thought it was the storm sighing ; and they did not see the splendours below, for if

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the ships sank they were drowned, and floated as dead men to the Sea King's palace.

When the sisters thus rose up, arm in arm, in the evening time, through the water, the little sixth sister stood all alone looking after them; and she felt as if she must weep; but the sea maid has no tears, and for this reason she suffers far more acutely.

"Oh, if I were only fifteen years old!" said she. "I know I shall love the world up there very much, and the people who live and dwell there."

At last she was really fifteen years old.

"Now, you see, you are growing up," said the grandmother, the old dowager. "Come, let me adorn you like your sisters."

And she put a wreath of white lilies in the little maid's hair, but each flower was half a pearl; and the old lady let eight oysters attach themselves to the Princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

"But that hurts so!" said the little sea maid.

"Yes, pride must suffer pain," replied the old lady.

Oh, how glad she would have been to shake off all the tokens of rank and lay aside the heavy wreath! Her red flowers in the garden suited her better; but she could not help it. "Farewell!" she said, and then she rose, light and clear as a water-bubble, up through the sea.

The sun had just set when she lifted her head above the sea, but all the clouds still shone like roses and gold, and in the pale red sky the evening stars gleamed bright and beautiful. The air was mild and fresh and the sea quite calm. There lay a great ship with three masts; one single sail only was set, for not a breeze stirred, and around in the shrouds and on the yards sat the sailors. There was music and singing, and as the evening closed in, hundreds of coloured lanterns were lighted up, and looked as if the flags of every nation were waving in the air. The little sea

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maid swam straight to the cabin window, and each time the sea lifted her up she could look through the panes, which were clear as crystal, and see many people standing within dressed in their best. But the handsomest of all was the young Prince with the great black eyes: he was certainly not more than sixteen years old; it was his birthday, and that was the cause of all this feasting. The sailors were dancing upon deck; and when the young Prince came out, more than a hundred rockets rose into the air; they shone like day, so that the little sea maid was quite startled, and dived under the water; but soon she put out her head again, and then it seemed just as if all the stars of heaven were falling down upon her. She had never seen such fireworks. Great suns spurted fire all around, glorious fiery fishes flew up into the blue air, and everything was mirrored in the clear blue sea. The ship itself was so brightly lit up that every separate rope could be seen, and the people therefore appeared the more plainly. Oh, how handsome the young Prince was! And he pressed the people's hands and smiled, while the music rang out in the glorious night.

It became late; but the little sea maid could not turn her eyes from the ship and from the beautiful Prince. The coloured lanterns were put out, rockets ceased to fly into the air, and no more cannons were fired; but there was a murmuring and a buzzing deep down in the sea; and she sat on the water, swaying up and down, so that she could look into the cabin. But as the ship got more way, one sail after another was spread. And now the waves rose higher, great clouds came up, and in the distance there was lightning. Oh! it was going to be fearful weather, therefore the sailors furled the sails. The great ship flew in swift career over the wild sea: the waters rose up like great black mountains, which wanted to roll over the masts; but like a swan the ship dived into the valleys between these high waves, and then let itself be lifted on high again. To the



She at last came to the Prince, who could scarcely swim.

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little sea maid this seemed merry sport, but to the sailors it appeared very differently. The ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks were bent by the heavy blows; the sea broke into the ship; the main-mast snapped in two like a thin reed; and the ship lay over on its side, while the water rushed into the hold. Now the little sea maid saw that the people were in peril; she herself was obliged to take care to avoid the beams and fragments of the ship which were floating about on the waters. One moment it was so pitch dark that not a single object could be descried, but when it lightened it became so bright that she could distinguish every one on board. She looked particularly for the young Prince, and when the ship parted she saw him sink into the sea. Now she was very glad, for now he would come down to her. But then she remembered that people could not live in the water, and that when he got down to her father's palace he would certainly be dead. No, he must not die; so she swam about among the beams and planks that strewed the surface, quite forgetting that one of them might have crushed her. Diving down deep under the water, she again rose high up among the waves, and in this way she at last came to the Prince, who could scarcely swim longer in that stormy sea. His arms and legs began to fail him, his beautiful eyes closed, and he would have died had the little sea maid not come. She held his head up over the water, and then allowed the waves to carry her and him whither they listed.

When the morning came the storm had passed by. Of the ship not a fragment was to be seen. The sun came up red and shining out of the water; it was as if its beams brought back the hue of life to the cheeks of the Prince, but his eyes remained closed. The sea maid kissed his high fair forehead and put back his wet hair, and he seemed to her to be like the marble statue in her little garden; she kissed him again and hoped that he might live.

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Now she saw in front of her the dry land—high blue mountains, on whose summits the white snow gleamed as if swans were lying there. Down on the coast were glorious green forests, and a building—she could not tell whether it was a church or a convent—stood there. In its garden grew orange and citron trees, and high palms waved in front of the gate. The sea formed a little bay there; it was quite calm, but very deep. Straight towards the rock where the fine white sand had been cast up, she swam with the handsome Prince, and laid him upon the sand, taking especial care that his head was raised in the warm sunshine.

Now all the bells rang in the great white building, and many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little sea maid swam farther out between some high stones that stood up out of the water, laid some sea foam upon her hair and neck, so that no one could see her little countenance, and then she watched to see who would come to the poor Prince.

In a short time a young girl went that way. She seemed to be much startled, but only for a moment; then she brought more people, and the sea maid perceived that the Prince came back to life and that he smiled at all around him. But he did not cast a smile at her; he did not know that she had saved him. And she felt very sorrowful; and when he was led away into the great building, she dived mournfully under the water and returned to her father's palace.

She had always been gentle and melancholy, but now she became much more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen the first time she rose up to the surface, but she would tell them nothing.

Many an evening and many a morning she went up to the place where she had left the Prince. She saw how the fruits of the garden grew ripe and were gathered; she saw

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how the snow melted on the high mountain; but she did not see the Prince, and so she always returned home more sorrowful still. Then her only comfort was to sit in her little garden, and to wind her arm round the beautiful marble statue that resembled the Prince; but she did not tend her flowers; they grew as if in a wilderness, over the paths, and trailed their long leaves and stalks up into the branches of trees, so that it became quite dark there.

At last she could endure it no longer, and told all to one of her sisters, and then the others heard of it too; but nobody knew of it beyond these and a few other sea maids, who told the secret to their intimate friends. One of these knew who the Prince was; she too had seen the festival on board the ship; and she announced whence he came and where his kingdom lay.

“Come, little sister!” said the other Princesses; and, linking their arms together, they rose up in a long row out of the sea, at the place where they knew the Prince’s palace lay.

This palace was built of a kind of bright yellow stone, with great marble staircases, one of which led directly down into the sea. Over the roof rose splendid gilt cupolas, and between the pillars which surrounded the whole dwelling stood marble statues which looked as if they were alive. Through the clear glass in the high windows one looked into the glorious halls, where costly silk hangings and tapestries were hung up, and all the walls were decked with splendid pictures, so that it was a perfect delight to see them. In the midst of the greatest of these halls a great fountain plashed; its jets shot high up towards the glass dome in the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and upon the lovely plants growing in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, and many an evening and many a night she spent there on the water. She swam far

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closer to the land than any of the others would have dared to venture; indeed, she went quite up the narrow channel under the splendid marble balcony, which threw a broad shadow upon the water. Here she sat and watched the young Prince, who thought himself quite alone in the bright moonlight.

Many an evening she saw him sailing, amid the sounds



She saw him many times.

of music, in his costly boat with the waving flags: she peeped up through the green reeds, and when the wind caught her silver-white veil, and any one saw it, he thought it was a white swan spreading out its wings.

Many a night when the fishermen were on the sea with their torches, she heard much good told of the young Prince; and she rejoiced that she had saved his life when he was driven about, half dead, on the wild billows: she thought how quietly his head had reclined on her bosom,

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and how heartily she had kissed him ; but he knew nothing of it, and could not even dream of her.

More and more she began to love mankind, and more and more she wished to be able to wander about among those whose world seemed far larger than her own. For they could fly over the sea in ships, and mount up the high hills far above the clouds, and the lands they possessed stretched out in woods and fields farther than her eyes could reach. There was much she wished to know, but her sisters could not answer all her questions ; therefore she applied to the old grandmother ; and the old lady knew the upper world, which she rightly called “the countries above the sea,” very well.

“If people are not drowned,” asked the little sea maid, “can they live for ever? Do they not die as we die down here in the sea?”

“Yes,” replied the old lady. “They too must die, and their life is even shorter than ours. We can live to be three hundred years old, but when we cease to exist here, we are turned into foam on the surface of the water, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have not an immortal soul ; we never receive another life ; we are like the green seaweed, which when once cut through can never bloom again. Men, on the contrary, have a soul which lives for ever, which lives on after the body has become dust ; it mounts up through the clear air, up to all the shining stars ! As we rise up out of the waters and behold all the lands of the earth, so they rise up to unknown glorious places which we can never see !”

“Why did we not receive an immortal soul ?” asked the little sea maid, sorrowfully. “I would gladly give all the hundreds of years I have to live, to be a human being only for one day, and to have a hope of partaking of the heavenly kingdom.”

“You must not think of that,” replied the old lady.

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“We feel ourselves far more happy and far better than mankind yonder.”

“Then I am to die and be cast as foam upon the sea, not hearing the music of the waves, nor seeing the pretty flowers and the red sun? Can I not do anything to win an immortal soul?”

“No!” answered the grandmother. “Only if a man were to love you so that you should be more to him than father or mother; if he should cling to you with his every thought and with all his love, and let the priest lay his right hand in yours with a promise of faithfulness here, and in all eternity, then his soul would be imparted to your body, and you would receive a share of the happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and yet retain his own. But that can never come to pass. What is considered beautiful here in the sea—the fish-tail—they would consider ugly on the earth: they don’t understand it; there one must have two clumsy supports which they call legs, to be called beautiful.”

Then the little sea maid sighed, and looked mournfully upon her fish-tail.

“Let us be glad,” said the old lady. “Let us dance and leap in the three hundred years we have to live. That is certainly long enough; after that we can rest ourselves all the better. This evening we shall have a Court ball.”

It was a splendid sight, such as is never seen on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the great dancing saloon were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of huge shells, pink and grass-green, stood on each side in rows, filled with a blue fire which lit up the whole hall and shone through the walls, so that the sea without was quite lit up: one could see all the innumerable fishes, great and small, swimming towards the glass walls; of some the scales gleamed with purple, while in others they shone like silver

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and gold. Through the midst of the hall flowed a broad stream, and on this the sea men and sea women danced to their own charming songs. The people of the earth have no voices so beautiful. The little sea maid sang the most sweetly of all, and the whole Court applauded with hands and tails, and for a moment she felt gay in her heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all in the sea or on the earth. But soon she thought again of the world above her: she could not forget the charming Prince, or her sorrow at not having an immortal soul like his. Therefore she crept out of her father's palace, and while everything within was joy and gladness, she sat melancholy in her little garden. Then she heard the bugle horn sounding through the waters, and thought, "Now he is certainly sailing above, he on whom my wishes hang, and in whose hand I should like to lay my life's happiness. I will dare everything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters dance yonder in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch of whom I have always been so much afraid: perhaps she can counsel and help me."

Now the little sea maid went out of her garden to the foaming whirlpools behind which the old sorceress dwelt. She had never travelled that way before. No flowers grew there, no sea-grass; only the naked grey sand stretched out towards the whirlpools, where the water rushed round like roaring mill-wheels and tore down everything it seized into the deep. Through the midst of these rushing whirlpools she was obliged to pass to get into the domain of the witch; and for a long way there was no other road except one which led over warm gushing mud: this the witch called her turf-moor. Behind it lay her house in the midst of a singular forest, in which all the trees and bushes were polypes—half animals, half plants. They looked like hundred-headed snakes growing up out of the earth. All the branches were long, slimy

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arms, with fingers like supple worms, and they moved limb by limb from the root to the farthest point; all that they could seize on in the water they held fast, and did not let it go. The little sea maid stopped in front of them quite frightened; her heart beat with fear, and she was nearly turning back; but then she thought of the Prince and the human soul, and her courage came back. She bound her long flying hair closely around her head, so that the polypes might not seize it. She put her hands together on her breast, and then shot forward as a fish shoots through the water, among the ugly polypes, which stretched out their supple arms and fingers after her. She saw that each of them held something it had seized with hundreds of little arms, like strong iron bands. People who had perished at sea and had sunk deep down, looked forth as white skeletons from among the polypes' arms; ships' oars and chests they also held fast, and skeletons of land animals, and a little sea woman whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed the most terrible of all to our little Princess.

Now she came to a great marshy place in the wood, where fat water-snakes rolled about, showing their ugly cream-coloured bodies. In the midst of this marsh was a house built of white bones of shipwrecked men; there sat the sea witch feeding a toad out of her mouth, just as a person might feed a little canary-bird with sugar. She called the ugly fat water-snakes her little chickens, and allowed them to crawl upwards and all about her.

"I know what you want," said the sea witch. "It is stupid of you, but you shall have your way, for it will bring you to grief, my pretty Princess. You want to get rid of your fish-tail, and to have two supports instead of it, like those the people of the earth walk with, so that the young Prince may fall in love with you, and you may get an immortal soul." And with this the witch laughed loudly and disagreeably, so that the toad and the water-snakes

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tumbled down to the ground, where they crawled about. "You come just in time," said the witch; "after to-morrow at sunrise I could not help you until another year had gone by. I will prepare a draught for you, with which you must swim to land to-morrow before the sun rises, and seat yourself there and drink it; then your tail will shrivel up and become what the people of the earth call legs, but it will hurt you—it will seem as if you were cut with a sharp sword. All who see you will declare you to be the prettiest human being they ever beheld. You will keep your graceful walk; no dancer will be able to move so lightly as you; but every step you take will be as if you trod upon sharp knives, and as if your blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I can help you."

"Yes!" said the little sea maid, with a trembling voice; and she thought of the Prince and the immortal soul.

"But, remember," said the witch, "when you have once received a human form, you can never be a sea maid again; you can never return through the water to your sisters or to your father's palace; and if you do not win the Prince's love, so that he forgets father and mother for your sake, is attached to you heart and soul, and tells the priest to join your hands, you will not receive an immortal soul. On the first morning after he has married another, your heart will break and you will become foam on the water."

"I will do it," said the little sea maid; but she became as pale as death.

"But you must pay me, too," said the witch; "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the finest voice of all here at the bottom of the water; with that you think to enchant him; but this voice you must give to me. The best thing you possess I will have for my costly draught! I must give you my own blood in it, so that the draught may be sharp as a two-edged sword."

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“But if you take away my voice,” said the little sea maid, “what will remain to me?”

“Your beautiful form,” replied the witch, “your graceful walk, and your speaking eyes: with those you can take captive a human heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue, and then I will cut it off for my payment, and then you shall have the strong draught.”

“It shall be so,” said the little sea maid.

And the witch put on her pot to brew the draught.

“Cleanliness is a good thing,” said she; and she cleaned out the pot with the snakes, which she tied up in a big knot; then she scratched herself, and let her black blood drop into it. The steam rose up in the strangest forms, enough to frighten the beholder. Every moment the witch threw something else into the pot; and when it boiled thoroughly, there was a sound like the weeping of a crocodile. At last the draught was ready. It looked like the purest water.

“There you have it,” said the witch.

And she cut off the little sea maid’s tongue, so that now the Princess was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

She could see her father’s palace. The torches in the great hall were extinguished, and they were certainly sleeping within, but she did not dare to go to them, now that she was dumb and was about to leave them for ever. She felt as if her heart would burst with sorrow. She crept into the garden, took a flower from each bed of her sisters, blew a thousand kisses towards the palace, and rose up through the dark blue sea.

The sun had not yet risen when she beheld the Prince’s castle and mounted the splendid marble staircase. The moon shone beautifully clear. The little sea maid drank the burning sharp draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body. She fell down in a swoon, and lay as if she were dead. When the sun

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shone out over the sea she awoke, and felt a sharp pain ; but just before her stood the handsome young Prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes upon her, so that she cast down her own, and then she perceived that her fish-tail was gone, and that she had the prettiest pair of white feet a little girl could have. But she had no clothes, so she shrouded herself in her long hair. The Prince asked how she came there ; and she looked at him mildly, but very mournfully, with her dark blue eyes, for she could not speak. Then he took her by the hand, and led her into the castle. Each step she took was, as the witch had told her, as if she had been treading on pointed needles and knives, but she bore it gladly. At the Prince's right hand she moved on, light as a soap-bubble, and he, like all the rest, was astonished at her graceful swaying movements.

She now received splendid clothes of silk and muslin. In the castle she was the most beautiful creature to be seen ; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Lovely slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward, and sang before the Prince and his royal parents ; one sang more charmingly than all the rest, and the Prince smiled at her and clapped his hands. Then the little sea maid became sad ; she knew that she herself had sung far more sweetly, and thought, " Oh ! he should only know that I have given away my voice for ever to be with him."

Now the slaves danced pretty waving dances to the loveliest music ; then the little sea maid lifted her beautiful white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided dancing over the floor as no one had yet danced. At each movement her beauty became more apparent, and her eyes spoke more directly to the heart than the songs of the slaves.

All were delighted, and especially the Prince, who called her his little foundling ; and she danced again and again, although every time she touched the earth it seemed as if she were treading upon sharp knives. The Prince said that

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she should always remain with him, and she received permission to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had a page's dress made for her, that she might accompany him on horseback. They rode through the blooming woods, where the green boughs swept their shoulders and the little birds sang in the fresh leaves. She climbed with the Prince up the high mountains, and although her delicate feet bled so that even the others could see it, she laughed at it herself, and followed him until they saw the clouds sailing beneath them like a flock of birds travelling to distant lands.

At home in the Prince's castle, when the others slept at night, she went out on to the broad marble steps. It cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea-water, and then she thought of the dear ones in the deep.

Once, in the night-time, her sisters came arm in arm. Sadly they sang as they floated above the water; and she beckoned to them, and they knew her, and told her how she had grieved them all. Then she visited them every night; and once she saw in the distance her old grandmother, who had not been above the surface for many years, and the Sea King with his crown upon his head. They stretched out their hands towards her, but did not venture so near the land as her sisters.

Day by day the Prince grew more fond of her. He loved her as one loves a dear good child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; and yet she must become his wife, or she would not receive an immortal soul, and would have to become foam on the sea on his marriage morning.

“Do you not love me best of them all?” the eyes of the little sea maid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair forehead.

“Yes, you are the dearest to me!” said the Prince, “for

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you have the best heart of them all. You are the most devoted to me, and are like a young girl whom I once saw, but whom I certainly shall not find again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked. The waves threw me ashore near a holy temple, where several young girls performed the service. The youngest of them found me by the shore and saved my life. I only saw her twice: she was the only one in the world I could love; but you chase her picture out of my mind, you are so like her. She belongs to the holy temple, and therefore my good fortune has sent you to me. We will never part!"

"Ah! he does not know that I saved his life," thought the little sea maid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands. I sat here under the foam and looked to see if any one would come. I saw the beautiful girl whom he loves better than me." And the sea maid sighed gently—she could not weep. "The maiden belongs to the holy temple," she said, "and will never come out into the world—they will meet no more. I am with him and see him every day. I will cherish him, love him, give up my life for him."

But now they said that the Prince was to marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighbouring King was to be his wife, and that was why such a beautiful ship was being prepared. The story was, that the Prince travelled to visit the land of the neighbouring King, but it was done that he might see the King's daughter. A great company was to go with him. The little sea maid shook her head and smiled: she knew the Prince's thoughts far better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her: "I must see the beautiful Princess: my parents desire it, but they do not wish to compel me to bring her home as my bride. I cannot love her. She is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you resemble. If I were to choose a bride,

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I would rather choose you, my dear dumb foundling with the speaking eyes."

And he kissed her red lips and played with her long hair, so that she dreamed of happiness and of an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child?" said he, when they stood on the fine ship which was to carry him to the country of the neighbouring King; and he told her of storm and calm, of strange fishes in the deep, and of what the divers had seen there. And she smiled at his tales, for she knew better than any one what happened at the bottom of the sea.

In the moonlight night when all were asleep, except the steersman who stood by the helm, she sat on the side of the ship gazing down through the clear water. She fancied she saw her father's palace. High on the battlements stood her old grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, and looking through the rushing tide up to the vessel's keel. Then her sisters came forth over the water, and looked mournfully at her and wrung their white hands. She beckoned to them, smiled, and wished to tell them that she was well and happy; but the cabin-boy approached her, and her sisters dived down, so that he thought the white objects he had seen were foam on the surface of the water.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbour of the neighbouring King's splendid city. All the church bells sounded, and from the high towers the trumpets were blown, while the soldiers stood there with flying colours and flashing bayonets. Each day brought some festivity with it; balls and entertainments followed one another; but the Princess was not yet there. People said she was being educated in a holy temple far away, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she arrived.

The little sea maid was anxious to see the beauty of the

The Little Sea Maid

Princess, and was obliged to acknowledge it. A more lovely apparition she had never beheld. The Princess's skin was pure and clear, and behind the long dark eyelashes there smiled a pair of faithful dark blue eyes.

“You are the young lady who saved me when I lay like a corpse upon the shore!” said the Prince; and he folded his blushing bride to his heart. “Oh, I am too, too happy!” he cried to the little sea maid. “The best hope I could have is fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you are the most devoted to me of them all!”

And the little sea maid kissed his hand; and it seemed already to her as if her heart were broken, for his wedding morning was to bring death to her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church bells were ringing, and heralds rode about the streets announcing the betrothal. On every altar fragrant oil was burning in gorgeous lamps of silver. The priests swung their censers, and bride and bridegroom laid hand in hand, and received the bishop's blessing. The little sea maid was dressed in cloth of gold, and held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, her eye marked not the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of her death, and of all that she had lost in this world.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on board the ship. The cannon roared, all the flags waved; in the midst of the ship a costly tent of gold and purple, with the most beautiful cushions, had been set up, and there the married pair were to sleep in the cool still night.

The sails swelled in the wind and the ship glided smoothly and lightly over the clear sea. When it grew dark, coloured lamps were lighted and the sailors danced merry dances on deck. The little sea maid thought of the first time when she had risen up out of the sea, and beheld a similar scene of splendour and joy; and she joined in the whirling dance,

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and flitted on as a swallow flits when he is pursued ; and all shouted and admired her, for she had danced so prettily. Her delicate feet were cut as if with knives, but she did not feel it, for her heart was wounded far more painfully. She knew this was the last evening on which she should see him for whom she had left her friends and her home, and had given up her beautiful voice, and had suffered unheard-of pains every day, while he was utterly unconscious of all. It was the last evening she should breathe the same air with him, and behold the starry sky and the deep sea ; and everlasting night without thought or dream awaited her, for she had no soul, and could win none. And everything was merriment and gladness on the ship till past midnight, and she laughed and danced with thoughts of death in her heart. The Prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his raven hair, and hand in hand they went to rest in the splendid tent.

It became quiet on the ship ; only the helmsman stood by the helm, and the little sea maid leaned her white arms upon the bulwarks and gazed out towards the east for the morning dawn—the first ray, she knew, would kill her. Then she saw her sisters rising out of the flood : they were pale like herself ; their long beautiful hair no longer waved in the wind—it had been cut off.

“ We have given it to the witch, that we might bring you help, so that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife ; here it is—look ! how sharp ! Before the sun rises you must thrust it into the heart of the Prince, and when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again into a fish-tail, and you will become a sea maid again, and come back to us, and live your three hundred years before you become dead salt sea-foam. Make haste ! He or you must die before the sun rises ! Our old grandmother mourns so that her white hair has fallen off, as ours did under the witch’s scissors. Kill the Prince and come

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back! Make haste! Do you see that red streak in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die!”

And they gave a very mournful sigh, and vanished beneath the waves.

The little sea maid drew back the purple curtain from the tent, and saw the beautiful bride lying with her head on the Prince's breast; and she bent down and kissed his brow, and gazed up to the sky where the morning red was gleaming brighter and brighter; then she looked at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes upon the Prince, who in his sleep murmured his bride's name. She only was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the sea maid's hand. But then she flung it far away into the waves—they gleamed red where it fell, and it seemed as if drops of blood spurted up out of the water. Once more she looked with dim and sorrowful eyes upon the Prince; then she threw herself from the ship into the sea, and felt her frame dissolving into foam.

Now the sun rose up out of the sea. The rays fell mild and warm upon the cold sea-foam, and the little sea maid felt nothing of death. She saw the bright sun, and over her head sailed hundreds of glorious ethereal beings—she could see them through the white sails of the ship and the red clouds of the sky; their speech was melody, but of such a spiritual kind that no human ear could hear it, just as no human eye could see them; without wings they floated through the air. The little sea maid found that she had a frame like these, and was rising more and more out of the foam.

“Whither am I going?” she asked; and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, so spiritual, that no earthly music could be compared to it.

“To the daughters of the air!” replied the others. “A sea maid has no immortal soul, and can never gain one, except she win the love of a mortal. Her eternal existence

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depends upon the power of another. The daughters of the air have likewise no immortal soul, but they can make themselves one through good deeds. We fly to the hot countries, where the close pestilent air kills men, and there we bring coolness. We disperse the fragrance of the flowers through the air, and spread refreshment and health. After we have striven for three hundred years to accomplish all the good we can bring about, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the eternal happiness of men. You, poor little sea maid, have striven with your whole heart after the goal we pursue; you have suffered and endured; you have by good works raised yourself to the world of spirits, and can gain an immortal soul after three hundred years."

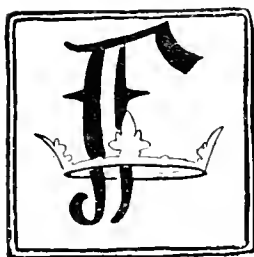
And the little sea maid lifted her glorified eyes towards God's sun, and for the first time she felt them fill with tears. On the ship there was again life and noise. She saw the Prince and his bride searching for her; then they looked mournfully at the pearly foam, as if they knew that she had thrown herself into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the forehead of the bride, fanned the Prince, and mounted with the other children of the air on the rosy cloud which floated through the ether.

After three hundred years we shall thus float into Paradise!

"And we may even get there sooner," whispered a daughter of the air. "Invisibly we float into the houses of men where children are, and for every day on which we find a good child that brings joy to its parents and deserves their love, our time of probation is shortened. The child does not know when we fly through the room; and when we smile with joy at the child's conduct, a year is counted off from the three hundred; but when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of grief, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial."



The Wild Swans



AR away, where the swallows fly when our winter comes on, lived a King who had eleven sons, and one daughter named Eliza. The eleven brothers were Princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast and his sword by his side. They wrote with pencils of diamond upon slates of gold, and learned by heart just as well as they read: one could see directly that they were Princes. Their sister Eliza sat upon a little stool of plate glass, and had a picture-book which had been bought for the value of half a kingdom.

Oh, these children were very well off; but it was not always to remain so.

Their father, who was King of the whole country, married a bad Queen who did not love the poor children at all. On the very first day they could notice this. In the whole palace there was great feasting, and the children were playing there. Then guests came; but instead of

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the children receiving, as they had been accustomed to do, all the spare cake and all the roasted apples, they only had some sand given them in a tea-cup, and were told that they might make believe that was something good.

The next week the Queen took the little sister Eliza into the country, to a peasant and his wife; and but a short time had elapsed before she told the King so many falsehoods about the Princes that he did not trouble himself any more about them.

“Fly out into the world and get your own living,” said the wicked Queen. “Fly like great birds without a voice.”

But she could not make it so bad for them as she had intended, for they became eleven magnificent wild swans. With a strange cry they flew out of the palace windows, far over the park and into the wood.

It was yet quite early morning when they came by the place where their sister Eliza lay asleep in the peasant's room. Here they hovered over the roof, turned their long necks, and flapped their wings; but no one heard or saw them. They were obliged to fly on, high up towards the clouds, far away into the wide world; there they flew into a great dark wood, which stretched away to the sea shore.

Poor little Eliza stood in the peasant's room and played with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings. And she pricked a hole in the leaf, and looked through it up at the sun, and it seemed to her that she saw her brothers' clear eyes; each time the warm sun shone upon her cheeks she thought of all the kisses they had given her.

Each day passed just like the rest. When the wind swept through the great rose-hedges outside the house, it seemed to whisper to them, “What can be more beautiful than you?” But the roses shook their heads and answered, “Eliza!” And when the old woman sat in front of her door on Sunday and read in her hymn-book, the wind

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turned the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and the hymn-book said, "Eliza!" And what the rose-bushes and the hymn-book said was the simple truth.

When she was fifteen years old she was to go home. And when the Queen saw how beautiful she was, she became spiteful and filled with hatred towards her. She would have been glad to change her into a wild swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so at once, because the King wished to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the Queen went into the bath, which was built of white marble, and decked with soft cushions and the most splendid tapestry; and she took three toads and kissed them, and said to the first,

"Sit upon Eliza's head when she comes into the bath, that she may become as stupid as you.—Seat yourself upon her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may become as ugly as you, and her father may not know her.—Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "that she may receive an evil mind and suffer pain from it."

Then she put the toads into the clear water, which at once assumed a green colour; and calling Eliza, caused her to undress and step into the water. And while Eliza dived, one of the toads sat upon her hair, and the second on her forehead, and the third on her heart; but she did not seem to notice it; and as soon as she rose, three red poppies were floating on the water. If the creatures had not been poisonous, and if the witch had not kissed them, they would have been changed into red roses. But at any rate they became flowers, because they had rested on the girl's head, and forehead, and heart. She was too good and innocent for sorcery to have power over her.

When the wicked Queen saw that, she rubbed Eliza with walnut juice, so that the girl became dark brown, and smeared a hurtful ointment on her face, and let her

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beautiful hair hang in confusion. It was quite impossible to recognise the pretty Eliza.

When her father saw her he was much shocked, and declared this was not his daughter. No one but the yard dog and the swallows knew her; but they were poor animals who had nothing to say in the matter.

Then poor Eliza wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all away. Sorrowfully she crept out of the castle, and walked all day over field and moor till she came into the great wood. She did not know whither she wished to go, only she felt very downcast and longed for her brothers: they had certainly been, like herself, thrust forth into the world, and she would seek for them and find them.

She had been only a short time in the wood when the night fell; she quite lost the path, therefore she lay down upon the soft moss, prayed her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. Deep silence reigned around, the air was mild, and in the grass and in the moss gleamed like a green fire hundreds of glow-worms; when she lightly touched one of the twigs with her hand, the shining insects fell down upon her like shooting stars.

The whole night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were children again playing together, writing with their diamond pencils upon their golden slates, and looking at the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. But on the slates they were not writing, as they had been accustomed to do, lines and letters, but the brave deeds they had done, and all they had seen and known; and in the picture-book everything was alive, the birds sang, and the people went out of the book and spoke with Eliza and her brothers. But when the leaf was turned, they jumped back again directly, so that there should be no confusion.

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When she awoke the sun was already standing high. She certainly could not see it, for the lofty trees spread their branches far and wide above her, but the rays played there above like a gauzy veil, there was a fragrance from the fresh verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard the plashing of water; it was from a number of springs all flowing into a lake which had the most delightful sandy bottom. It was surrounded by thick-growing bushes, but at one part the stags had made a large opening, and here Eliza went down to the water. The lake was so clear, that if the wind had not stirred the branches and the bushes, so that they moved, one would have thought they were painted upon the depths of the lake, so clearly was every leaf mirrored, whether the sun shone upon it or whether it lay in shadow.

When Eliza saw her own face she was terrified—so brown and ugly was she; but when she wetted her little hand and rubbed her eyes and her forehead, the white skin gleamed forth again. Then she undressed and went down into the fresh water: a more beautiful King's daughter than she was could not be found in the world. And when she had dressed herself again and plaited her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of her hollow hand, and then wandered far into the wood, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her dear brothers, and thought that Heaven would certainly not forsake her. It is God who lets the wild apples grow, to satisfy the hungry. He showed her a wild apple-tree, with the boughs bending under the weight of the fruit. Here she took her midday meal, placing props under the boughs, and then went into the darkest part of the forest. There it was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every dry leaf which bent under her feet. Not one bird was to be seen, not one ray of sunlight could find its way through the great dark boughs of the trees; the lofty trunks stood

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so close together, that when she looked before her it appeared as though she were surrounded by sets of palings one behind the other. Oh, here was a solitude such as she had never before known!

The night came on quite dark. Not a single glow-worm now gleamed in the grass. Sorrowfully she lay down to sleep. Then it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted above her head, and mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from on high.

When the morning came, she did not know if it really had been so or if she had dreamed it.

She went a few steps forward, and then she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and the old woman gave her a few of them. Eliza asked the dame if she had not seen eleven Princes riding through the wood.

"No," replied the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans swimming in the river close by, with golden crowns on their heads."

And she led Eliza a short distance farther, to a small hill, and at the foot of the slope a little river wound its way. The trees on its margin stretched their long leafy branches across towards each other, and where their natural growth would not allow them to come together, the roots had been torn out of the ground, and hung, intermingled with the branches, over the water.

Eliza said farewell to the old woman, and went beside the river to the place where the stream flowed out to the great open ocean.

The whole glorious sea lay before the young girl's eyes, but not one sail appeared on its surface, and not a boat was to be seen. How was she to go on her way? She looked at the innumerable little pebbles on the shore; the water had worn them all round. Glass, ironstones, everything there had received its shape from the water, which was much softer than even her delicate hand.

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“It rolls on unweariedly, and thus what is hard becomes smooth. I will be just as unwearied. Thanks for your lesson, you clear rolling waves; my heart tells me that one day you will lead me to my dear brothers.”

On the foam-covered sea-grass lay eleven white swan feathers, which she collected into a bunch. Drops of water were upon them—whether they were dew-drops or tears nobody could tell. It was solitary there on the strand, but she did not feel it, for the sea showed continual changes—more in a few hours than the lovely lakes can produce in a whole year. Then a great black cloud came. It seemed as if the sea would say, “I can look angry too;” and then the wind blew, and the waves turned their white side outward. But when the clouds gleamed red and the wind slept, the sea looked like a rose-leaf; sometimes it became green, sometimes white. But however quietly it might rest, there was still a slight motion on the shore; the water rose gently, like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to set, Eliza saw eleven wild swans, with crowns on their heads, flying towards the land: they swept along one after the other, so that they looked like a long white band. Then Eliza went down the slope and hid herself behind a bush. The swans alighted near her and flapped their great white wings.

As soon as the sun had disappeared beneath the water, the swans' feathers fell off, and eleven handsome Princes, Eliza's brothers, stood there. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were greatly altered, she knew and felt that it must be they. And she sprang into their arms and called them by their names; and the Princes felt supremely happy when they saw their little sister again; and they knew her, though she was now tall and beautiful. They smiled and wept; and soon they understood how cruel their stepmother had been to them all.

“We brothers,” said the eldest, “fly about as wild swan:

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as long as the sun is in the sky, but directly it sinks down we receive our human form again. Therefore we must always take care that we have a resting-place for our feet when the sun sets; for if at that moment we were flying up towards the clouds, we should sink down into the deep as men. We do not dwell here: there lies a land just as fair as this beyond the sea. But the way thither is long; we must cross the great sea, and on our path there is no island where we could pass the night, only a little rock stands forth in the midst of the waves; it is but just large enough for us to rest upon it close to each other. If the sea is rough, the foam spurts far over us, but we thank God for the rock. There we pass the night in our human form: except for this rock we could never visit our beloved native land, for we require two of the longest days in the year for our journey. Only once in each year is it granted to us to visit our home. For eleven days we may stay here and fly over the great wood, from whence we can see the palace in which we were born and in which our father lives, and the high church tower, beneath whose shade our mother lies buried. Here it seems to us as though the bushes and trees were our relatives; here the wild horses career across the steppe, as we have seen them do in our childhood; here the charcoal-burner sings the old songs to which we danced as children; here is our fatherland; hither we feel ourselves drawn, and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days more we may stay here; then we must away across the sea to a glorious land, but which is not our native land. How can we bear you away? For we have neither ship nor boat."

"In what way can I set you free?" asked the sister; and they talked together nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours.

Eliza was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings above her head. Her brothers were again enchanted, and

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they flew in wide circles and at last far away ; but one of them, the youngest, remained behind, and the swan laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his wings ; and the whole day they remained together. Towards evening the others came back, and when the sun had gone down they stood there in their own shapes.

“To-morrow we fly far away from here, and cannot come back until a whole year has gone by. But we cannot leave you thus ! Have you courage to come with us ? My arm is strong enough to carry you in the wood ; and should not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea ?”

“Yes, take me with you,” said Eliza.

The whole night they were occupied in weaving a net of the pliable willow bark and tough reeds, and it was great and strong. On this net Eliza lay down ; and when the sun rose, and her brothers were changed into wild swans, they seized the net with their beaks, and flew with their beloved sister, who was still asleep, high up towards the clouds. The sunbeams fell exactly upon her face, so one of the swans flew over her head, that his broad wings might overshadow her.

They were far away from the shore when Eliza awoke : she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be carried high through the air and over the sea. By her side lay a branch with beautiful ripe berries and a bundle of sweet-tasting roots. The youngest of the brothers had collected them and placed them there for her. She smiled at him thankfully, for she recognised him ; he it was who flew over her and shaded her with his wings.

They were so high that the greatest ship they saw beneath them seemed like a white seagull lying upon the waters. A great cloud stood behind them—it was a perfect mountain ; and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans ; there they flew on, gigantic in

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size. Here was a picture, a more splendid one than she had ever yet seen. But as the sun rose higher and the cloud was left farther behind them, the floating shadowy images vanished away.

The whole day they flew onward through the air, like a whirring arrow, but their flight was slower than it was wont to be, for they had their sister to carry. Bad weather came on; the evening drew near; Eliza looked anxiously at the setting sun, for the lonely rock in the ocean could not be seen. It seemed to her as if the swans beat the air more strongly with their wings. Alas! she was the cause that they did not advance fast enough. When the sun went down, they must become men and fall into the sea and drown. Then she prayed a prayer from the depths of her heart; but still she could descry no rock. The dark clouds came nearer in a great black threatening body, rolling forward like a mass of lead, and the lightning burst forth, flash upon flash.

Now the sun just touched the margin of the sea. Eliza's heart trembled. Then the swans darted downwards, so swiftly that she thought they were falling, but they paused again. The sun was half hidden below the water. And now for the first time she saw the little rock beneath her, and it looked no larger than a seal might look, thrusting his head forth from the water. The sun sank very fast; at last it appeared only like a star; and then her foot touched the firm land. The sun vanished like the last spark in a piece of burned paper; her brothers were standing around her, arm in arm, but there was not more than just enough room for her and for them. The sea beat against the rock and went over her like small rain; the sky glowed in continual fire, and the thunder rolled peal on peal; but sister and brothers held each other by the hand and sang psalms, from which they gained comfort and courage.

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In the morning twilight the air was pure and calm. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Eliza from the island. The sea still ran high, and when they soared up aloft, the white foam looked like millions of white swans swimming upon the water.

When the sun mounted higher, Eliza saw before her, half floating in the air, a mountainous country with shining masses of ice on its water, and in the midst of it rose a castle, apparently a mile long, with row above row of elegant columns, while beneath waved the palm woods and bright flowers as large as mill-wheels. She asked if this was the country to which they were bound ; but the swans shook their heads, for what she beheld was the gorgeous, ever-changing palace of Fata Morgana, and into this they might bring no human being. As Eliza gazed at it, mountains, woods, and castle fell down, and twenty proud churches, all nearly alike, with high towers and pointed windows, stood before them. She fancied she heard the organs sounding, but it was the sea she heard. When she was quite near the churches they changed to a fleet sailing beneath her, but when she looked down it was only a sea-mist gliding over the ocean. Thus she had a continual change before her eyes, till at last she saw the real land to which they were bound. There arose the most glorious blue mountains, with cedar forests, cities, and palaces. Long before the sun went down she sat on the rock, in front of a great cave overgrown with delicate green trailing plants looking like embroidered carpets.

“ Now we shall see what you will dream of here to-night,” said the youngest brother ; and he showed her to her bed-chamber.

“ Heaven grant that I may dream of a way to release you,” she replied.

And this thought possessed her mightily, and she prayed ardently for help ; yes, even in her sleep she continued to

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pray. Then it seemed to her as if she were flying high in the air to the cloudy palace of Fata Morgana; and the fairy came out to meet her, beautiful and radiant; and yet the fairy was quite like the old woman who had given her the berries in the wood, and had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads.

“Your brothers can be released,” said she. “But have you courage and perseverance? Certainly, water is softer than your delicate hands, and yet it changes the shape of stones; but it feels not the pain that your fingers will feel; it has no heart, and cannot suffer the agony and torment you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging-nettle which I hold in my hand? Many of the same kind grow around the cave in which you sleep: those only, and those that grow upon churchyard graves, are of any use, remember that. Those you must pluck, though they will burn your hands into blisters. Break these nettles to pieces with your feet, and you will have flax; of this you must plait and weave eleven shirts of mail with long sleeves: throw these over the eleven swans, and the charm will be broken. But recollect well, from the moment you begin this work until it is finished, even though it should take years to accomplish, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce your brothers’ hearts like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang on your tongue. Remember all this!”

And she touched her hand with the nettle; it was like a burning fire, and Eliza woke with the smart. It was broad daylight; and close by the spot where she had slept lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell upon her knees and prayed gratefully, and went forth from the cave to begin her work.

With her delicate hands she groped among the ugly nettles. These stung like fire, burning great blisters on her arms and hands; but she thought she would bear it

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gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. Then she bruised every nettle with her bare feet and plaited the green flax.

When the sun had set her brothers came, and they were frightened when they found her dumb. They thought it was some new sorcery of their wicked stepmother's; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother wept. And where his tears dropped she felt no pain, and the burning blisters vanished.

She passed the night at her work, for she could not sleep till she had delivered her dear brothers. The whole of the following day, while the swans were away, she sat in solitude, but never had time flown so quickly with her as now. One shirt of mail was already finished, and now she began the second.

Then a hunting-horn sounded among the hills, and she was struck with fear. The noise came nearer and nearer; she heard the barking dogs, and timidly she fled into the cave, bound into a bundle the nettles she had collected and prepared, and sat upon the bundle.

Immediately a great dog came bounding out of the ravine, and then another, and another: they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. Only a few minutes had gone before all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the King of the country. He came forward to Eliza, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden.

"How did you come hither, you delightful child?" he asked.

Eliza shook her head, for she might not speak—it would cost her brothers their deliverance and their lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the King might not see what she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he. "You cannot stop here. If

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you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in velvet and silk, and place the golden crown on your head, and you shall dwell in my richest castle, and rule."

And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands; but the King said,

"I only wish for your happiness: one day you will thank me for this."

And then he galloped away among the mountains with her on his horse, and the hunters galloped at their heels.

When the sun went down, the fair regal city lay before them, with its churches and cupolas; and the King led her into the castle, where great fountains plashed in the lofty marble halls, and where walls and ceilings were covered with glorious pictures. But she had no eyes for all this—she only wept and mourned. Passively she let the women put royal robes upon her, and weave pearls in her hair, and draw dainty gloves over her blistered fingers.

When she stood there in full array, she was dazzlingly beautiful, so that the Court bowed deeper than ever. And the King chose her for his bride, although the archbishop shook his head and whispered that the beautiful fresh maid was certainly a witch, who blinded the eyes and led astray the heart of the King.

But the King gave no ear to this, but ordered that the music should sound, and the costliest dishes should be served, and the most beautiful maidens should dance before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into gorgeous halls; but never a smile came upon her lips or shone in her eyes: there she stood, a picture of grief. Then the King opened a little chamber close by, where she was to sleep. This chamber was decked with splendid green tapestry, and completely resembled the cave in which she had been. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had prepared from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the shirt of mail she had completed.



“How did you come hither, you delightful child?”

The Wild Swans

All these things one of the huntsmen had brought with him as curiosities.

“Here you may dream yourself back in your former home,” said the King. “Here is the work which occupied you there, and now, in the midst of all your splendour, it will amuse you to think of that time.”

When Eliza saw this that lay so near her heart, a smile played round her mouth and the crimson blood came back into her cheeks. She thought of her brothers’ deliverance, and kissed the King’s hand; and he pressed her to his heart, and caused the marriage feast to be announced by all the church bells. The beautiful dumb girl out of the wood became the Queen of the country.

Then the archbishop whispered evil words into the King’s ear, but they did not sink into the King’s heart. The marriage was to take place; the archbishop himself was obliged to place the crown on her head, and with wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly upon her brow that it pained her. But a heavier ring lay close around her heart—sorrow for her brothers; she did not feel the bodily pain. Her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives, but her eyes glowed with love for the kind, handsome King, who did everything to rejoice her. She loved him with her whole heart, more and more every day. Oh that she had been able to confide in him and tell him of her grief! But she was compelled to be dumb, and finish her work in silence. Therefore at night she crept away from his side, and went quietly into the little chamber which was decorated like the cave, and wove one shirt of mail after another. But when she began the seventh she had no flax left.

She knew that in the churchyard nettles were growing that she could use; but she must pluck them herself, and how was she to go out there?

“Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment my

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heart endures?" thought she. "I must venture it, and help will not be denied me!"

With a trembling heart, as though the deed she purposed doing had been evil, she crept into the garden in the moonlight night, and went through the lanes and through the deserted streets to the churchyard. There, on one of the broadest tombstones, she saw sitting a circle of vampires. These hideous wretches took off their ragged garments, as if they were going to bathe; then with skinny fingers clawed open the fresh graves, and with fiendish greed they snatched up the corpses and ate the flesh. Eliza was obliged to pass close by them, and they fastened their evil glances upon her; but she prayed silently, and collected the burning nettles, and carried them into the castle.

Only one person had seen her, and that was the archbishop. He was awake while others slept. Now he felt sure his opinion was correct, that all was not as it should be with the Queen: she was a witch, and thus she had bewitched the King and the whole people.

In secret he told the King what he had seen and what he feared; and when the hard words came from his tongue, the pictures of saints in the cathedral shook their heads, as though they could have said, "It is not so! Eliza is innocent!" But the archbishop interpreted this differently—he thought they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sinfulness. Then two heavy tears rolled down the King's cheeks: he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night pretended to be asleep; but no quiet sleep came upon his eyes, for he noticed that Eliza got up. Every night she did this, and each time he followed her silently, and saw how she disappeared from her chamber.

From day to day his face became darker. Eliza saw it, but did not understand the reason; but it frightened her

The Wild Swans

—and what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers? Her hot tears flowed upon the royal velvet and purple; they lay there like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw the splendour wished they were Queens. In the meantime she had almost finished her work. Only one shirt of mail was still to be completed, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more, for the last time, therefore, she must go to the churchyard, only to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of this solitary wandering and of the horrible vampires, but her will was firm as her trust in Providence. Eliza went on, but the King and the archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish into the churchyard through the wicket-gate; and when they drew near, the vampires were sitting on the gravestones as Eliza had seen them; and the King turned aside, for he fancied her among them, whose head had rested against his breast that very evening.

“The people must condemn her,” said he.

And the people condemned her to suffer death by fire.

Out of the gorgeous regal halls she was led into a dark damp cell, where the wind whistled through the grated window; instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles which she had collected: on this she could lay her head; and the hard burning coats of mail which she had woven were to be her coverlet. But nothing could have been given her that she liked better. She resumed her work and prayed. The street boys sang jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

But towards evening there came the whirring of swan's wings close by the grating—it was the youngest of her brothers. He had found his sister, and she sobbed aloud with joy, though she knew that the approaching night would probably be the last she had to live. But now the work was almost finished, and her brothers were here.

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Now came the archbishop, to stay with her in her last hour, for he had promised the King to do so. And she shook her head, and with looks and gestures she begged him to depart, for in this night she must finish her work, or else all would be in vain, all her tears, her pain, and her sleepless nights. The archbishop withdrew uttering evil words against her ; but poor Eliza knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

It was still twilight, nor till an hour afterwards would the sun rise. And the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the King. That could not be, they were told, for it was still almost night ; the King was asleep, and might not be disturbed. They begged, they threatened, and the sentries came, yes, even the King himself came out, and asked what was the meaning of this. At that moment the sun rose, and no more were the brothers to be seen, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

All the people came flocking out at the town gate, for they wanted to see the witch burned. The old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had put upon her a garment of sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose about her beautiful head ; her cheeks were as pale as death ; and her lips moved silently, while her fingers were engaged with the green flax. Even on the way to death she did not interrupt the work she had begun ; the ten shirts of mail lay at her feet, and she wrought at the eleventh. The mob derided her.

“Look at the red witch, how she mutters ! She has no hymn-book in her hand ; no, there she sits with her ugly sorcery—tear it in a thousand pieces !”

And they all pressed upon her and wanted to tear up the shirts of mail. Then eleven wild swans came flying up, and sat around about her on the cart, and beat with their wings ; and the mob gave way before them, terrified.

The Wild Swans

“That is a sign from heaven! She is certainly innocent!” whispered many. But they did not dare to say it aloud.

Now the executioner seized her by the hand; then she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and immediately eleven handsome Princes stood there. But the youngest had a swan’s wing instead of an arm, for a sleeve was wanting to his shirt—she had not quite finished it.

“Now I may speak!” she said. “I am innocent!”

And the people who saw what happened bowed before her as before a saint; but she sank lifeless into her brothers’ arms, such an effect had suspense, anguish, and pain had upon her.

“Yes, she is innocent,” said the eldest brother.

And now he told everything that had taken place; and while he spoke a fragrance arose as of millions of roses, for every piece of faggot in the pile had taken root and was sending forth shoots; and a fragrant hedge stood there, tall and great, covered with red roses, and at the top a flower, white and shining, gleaming like a star. This flower the King plucked and placed in Eliza’s bosom; and she awoke with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells rang of themselves, and the birds came in great flocks. And back to the castle such a marriage procession was held as no King had ever seen.

She was Good for Nothing



HE mayor stood at the open window. His shirt-frill was very fine, and so were his ruffles; he had a breast-pin stuck in his frill, and was uncommonly smooth shaven — all his own work; certainly he had given himself a slight cut, but he had stuck a bit of newspaper on the place.

“Harkye, youngster!” he cried.

The youngster in question was no other than the son of the poor washerwoman, who was just going past the house; and he pulled off his cap respectfully. The peak of the said cap was broken in the middle, for the cap was arranged so that it could be rolled up and crammed into his pocket. In his poor but clean and well-mended attire, with heavy wooden shoes on his feet, the boy stood there, as humble and abashed as if he stood opposite the King himself.

“You’re a good boy,” said Mr. Mayor. “You’re a civil boy. I suppose your mother is rinsing clothes down yonder in the river? I suppose you are to carry that thing to your mother that you have in your pocket? That’s a bad affair with your mother. How much have you got in it?”



He pulled off his cap respectfully.

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“Half a quartern,” stammered the boy, in a frightened voice.

“And this morning she had just as much,” the mayor continued.

“No,” replied the boy, “it was yesterday.”

“Two halves make a whole. She’s good for nothing! It’s a sad thing with that kind of people! Tell your mother that she ought to be ashamed of herself; and mind you don’t become a drunkard—but you will become one, though. Poor child—there, go!”

Accordingly the boy went on his way. He kept his cap in his hand, and the wind played with his yellow hair, so that great locks of it stood up straight. He turned down by the street corner, into the little lane that led to the river where his mother stood by the washing-bench, beating the heavy linen with the mallet. The water rolled quickly along, for the flood-gates at the mill had been drawn up, and the sheets were caught by the stream, and threatened to overturn the bench. The washerwoman was obliged to lean against the bench to support it.

“I was very nearly sailing away,” she said. “It is a good thing that you are come, for I have need to recruit my strength a little. For six hours I’ve been standing in the water. Have you brought anything for me?”

The boy produced the bottle, and the mother put it to her mouth and took a little.

“Ah, how that revives one!” said she; “how it warms! It is as good as a hot meal, and not so dear. And you, my boy! you look quite pale. You are shivering in your thin clothes—to be sure it is autumn. Ugh! how cold the water is! I hope I shall not be ill. But no, I shall not be that! Give me a little more, and you may have a sip too, but only a little sip, for you must not accustom yourself to it, my poor dear child!”

And she stepped up to the bridge on which the boy

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stood, and came ashore. The water dripped from the straw matting she had wound round her, and from her gown.

“I work and toil as much as ever I can,” she said, “but I do it willingly, if I can only manage to bring you up honestly and well, my boy.”

As she spoke a somewhat older woman came towards them. She was poor enough to behold, lame of one leg, and with a large false curl hanging down over one of her eyes, which was a blind one. The curl was intended to cover the eye, but it only made the defect more striking. This was a friend of the laundress. She was called among the neighbours, “Lame Martha with the curl.”

“Oh, you poor thing! How you work standing there in the water!” cried the visitor. “You really require something to warm you; and yet malicious folks cry out about the few drops you take!”

And in a few minutes' time the mayor's late speech was reported to the laundress; for Martha had heard it all, and she had been angry that a man could speak as he had done to a woman's own child, about the few drops the mother took; and she was the more angry, because the mayor on that very day was giving a great feast, at which wine was drunk by the bottle—good wine, strong wine.

“A good many will take more than they need—but that's not called drinking. *They* are good; but *you* are good for nothing!” cried Martha, indignantly.

“Ah, so he spoke to you, my child?” said the washer-woman; and her lips trembled as she spoke. “So he says you have a mother who is good for nothing? Well, perhaps he's right, but he should not have said it to the child. Still, I have had much misfortune from that house.”

“You were in service there when the mayor's parents were alive, and lived in that house. That is many years ago: many bushels of salt have been eaten since then, and

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we may well be thirsty;" and Martha smiled. "The mayor has a great dinner-party to-day. The guests were to have been put off, but it was too late, and the dinner was already cooked. The footman told me about it. A letter came a little while ago, to say that the younger brother had died in Copenhagen."

"Died!" repeated the laundress—and she became pale as death.

"Yes, certainly," said Martha. "Do you take that so much to heart? Well, you must have known him years ago, when you were in service in the house."

"Is he dead? He was such a good, worthy man! There are not many like him." And the tears rolled down her cheeks. "Good gracious! everything is whirling around me—it was too much for me. I feel quite ill." And she leaned against the plank.

"Good gracious, you are ill indeed!" exclaimed the other woman. "Come, come, it will pass over presently. But no, you really look seriously ill. The best thing will be for me to lead you home."

"But my linen yonder——"

"I will take care of that. Come, give me your arm. The boy can stay here and take care of it, and I'll come back and finish the washing; that's only a trifle."

The laundress's limbs shook under her. "I've stood too long in the cold water," she said faintly, "and I have eaten and drunk nothing since this morning. The fever is in my bones. O kind Heaven, help me to get home! My poor child!" And she burst into tears.

The boy wept too, and soon he was sitting alone by the river, beside the damp linen. The two women could make only slow progress. The laundress dragged her weary limbs along, and tottered through the lane and round the corner into the street where stood the house of the mayor; and just in front of his mansion she sank down on the

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pavement. Many people assembled round her, and Lame Martha ran into the house to get help. The mayor and his guests came to the window.

“That’s the washerwoman!” he said. “She has taken a glass too much. She is good for nothing. It’s a pity for the pretty son she has. I really like the child very well; but the mother is good for nothing.”

Presently the laundress came to herself, and they led her into her poor dwelling, and put her to bed. Kind Martha heated a mug of beer for her, with butter and sugar, which she considered the best medicine; and then she hastened to the river, and rinsed the linen—badly enough, though her will was good. Strictly speaking, she drew it ashore, wet as it was, and laid it in a basket.

Towards evening she was sitting in the poor little room with the laundress. The mayor’s cook had given her some roasted potatoes and a fine piece of fat ham, for the sick woman, and Martha and the boy discussed these viands while the patient enjoyed the smell, which she pronounced very nourishing.

And presently the boy was put to bed, in the same bed in which his mother lay; but he slept at her feet, covered with an old quilt made up of blue and white patches.

Soon the patient felt a little better. The warmed beer had strengthened her, and the fragrance of the provisions pleased her also.

“Thanks, you kind soul,” she said to Martha. “I will tell you all when the boy is asleep. I think he has dropped off already. How gentle and good he looks, as he lies there with his eyes closed! He does not know what his mother has suffered, and Heaven grant that he may never know it. I was in service at the councillor’s, the father of the mayor. It happened that the youngest of the sons, the student, came home. I was young then, a wild girl, but honest, that I may declare in the face of Heaven. The

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student was merry and kind, good and brave. Every drop of blood in him was good and honest. I have not seen a better man on this earth. He was the son of the house, and I was only a maid, but we formed an attachment to each other, honestly and honourably. And he told his mother of it, for she was in his eyes as a Deity on earth; and she was wise and gentle. He went away on a journey, but before he started he put his gold ring on my finger; and directly he was gone my mistress called me. With a firm yet gentle seriousness she spoke to me, and it seemed as if Wisdom itself were speaking. She showed me clearly, in spirit and in truth, the difference there was between him and me.

“‘Now he is charmed with your pretty appearance,’ she said, ‘but your good looks will leave you. You have not been educated as he has. You are not equals in mind, and there is the misfortune. I respect the poor,’ she continued: ‘in the sight of God they may occupy a higher place than many a rich man can fill; but here on earth we must beware of entering a false track as we go onward, or our carriage is upset, and we are thrown into the road. I know that a worthy man wishes to marry you—an artisan—I mean Eric the glovemaker. He is a widower without children, and is well to do. Think it over.’

“Every word she spoke cut into my heart like a knife, but I knew that my mistress was right, and that knowledge weighed heavily upon me. I kissed her hand, and wept bitter tears, and I wept still more when I went into my room and threw myself on my bed. It was a heavy night that I had to pass through. Heaven knows what I suffered and how I wrestled! The next Sunday I went to the Lord’s house to pray for strength and for guidance. It seemed like a Providence, that as I stepped out of church Eric came towards me. And now there was no longer a doubt in my mind. We were suited to

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each other in rank and in means, and he was even then a thriving man. Therefore I went up to him, took his hand, and said, 'Are you still of the same mind towards me?' 'Yes, ever and always,' he replied. 'Will you marry a girl who honours and respects, but who does not love you—though that may come later?' I asked again. 'Yes, it will come!' he answered. And upon this we joined hands. I went home to my mistress. I wore the gold ring that her son had given me at my heart. I could not put it on my finger in the day-time, but only in the evening when I went to bed. I kissed the ring again and again, till my lips almost bled, and then I gave it to my mistress, and told her the banns were to be put up next week for me and the glovemaker. Then my mistress put her arms round me and kissed me. *She* did not say that I was good for nothing; but perhaps I was better then than I am now, though the misfortunes of life had not yet found me out. In a few weeks we were married; and for the first year the world went well with us: we had a journeyman and an apprentice, and you, Martha, lived with us as our servant."

"Oh, you were a dear, good mistress," cried Martha. "Never shall I forget how kind you and your husband were!"

"Yes, those were our good years, when you were with us. We had not any children yet. The student I never saw again.—Yes, though, I saw him, but he did not see me. He was here at his mother's funeral. I saw him stand by the grave. He was pale as death, and very downcast, but that was for his mother; afterwards, when his father died, he was away in a foreign land, and did not come back hither. I know that he never married; I believe he became a lawyer. He had forgotten me, and even if he had seen me again, he would not have known me, I look so ugly. And that is very fortunate."

And then she spoke of her days of trial, and told how

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misfortune had come as it were swooping down upon them.

“We had five hundred dollars,” she said; “and as there was a house in the street to be bought for two hundred, and it would pay to pull it down and build a new one, it was bought. The builder and carpenter calculated the expense, and the new house was to cost ten hundred and twenty. Eric had credit, and borrowed the money in the chief town, but the captain who was to have brought it was shipwrecked, and the money was lost with him.

“Just at that time my dear sweet boy who is sleeping yonder was born. My husband was struck down by a long heavy illness: for three-quarters of a year I was compelled to dress and undress him. We went back more and more, and fell into debt. All that we had was sold, and my husband died. I have worked, and toiled, and striven, for the sake of the child, and scrubbed staircases, washed linen, clean and coarse alike, but I was not to be better off, such was God’s good will. But He will take me to Himself in His own good time, and will not forsake my boy.”

And she fell asleep.

Towards morning she felt much refreshed, and strong enough, as she thought, to go back to her work. She had just stepped again into the cold water, when a trembling and faintness seized her; she clutched at the air with her hand, took a step forward, and fell down. Her head rested on the bank, and her feet were still in the water: her wooden shoes, with a wisp of straw in each, which she had worn, floated down the stream, and thus Martha found her on coming to bring her some coffee.

In the meantime a messenger from the mayor’s house had been dispatched to her poor lodgings to tell her “to come to the mayor immediately, for he had something to tell her.” It was too late! A barber-surgeon was brought to open a vein in her arm; but the poor woman was dead.

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In the letter that brought the news of his brother's death, the contents of the will had been mentioned, and it was a legacy of six hundred dollars to the glovemaker's widow, who had once been his mother's maid. The money was to be paid, according to the mayor's discretion, in larger or smaller sums, to her or to her child.

"There was some fuss between my brother and her," said the mayor. "It's a good thing that she is dead; for now the boy will have the whole, and I will get him into a house among respectable people. He may turn out a reputable working man."

And Heaven gave its blessing to these words.

So the mayor sent for the boy, promised to take care of him, and added that it was a good thing the lad's mother was dead, inasmuch as she had been good for nothing.

They bore her to the churchyard, to the cemetery of the poor, and Martha strewed sand upon her grave and planted a rose-tree upon it, and the boy stood beside her.

"My dear mother!" he cried, as the tears fell fast. "Is it true what they said, that she was good for nothing?"

"No, she was good for much!" replied the old servant, and she looked up indignantly. "I knew it many a year ago, and more than all since last night. I tell you she was worth much, and the Lord in heaven knows it is true, let the world say as much as it chooses, 'She was good for nothing.'"



Ib and Christine



IN North Jutland, not far from the clear stream Gudenau, in the forest which extends by its banks and far into the country, a great ridge of land rises and stretches along like a wall through the wood. By this ridge, westward, stands a farm-house, surrounded by poor land; the sandy soil is seen through the spare rye and wheat-ears that grow upon it. Some years have elapsed since the time of which we speak. The people who lived here cultivated the fields, and moreover kept three sheep, a pig, and two oxen; in fact, they supported themselves quite comfortably, for they had enough to live on if they took things as they came. Indeed, they could have managed to

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save enough to keep two horses, but like the other peasants of the neighbourhood, they said, "The horse eats itself up"—that is to say, it eats as much as it earns. Jeppe-Jäns cultivated his field in summer. In the winter he made wooden shoes, and then he had an assistant, a journeyman, who understood as well as he himself did how to make the wooden shoes strong, and light, and graceful. They carved shoes and spoons, and that brought in money. It would have been wronging the Jeppe-Jänses to call them poor people.

Little Ib, a boy seven years old, the only child of the family, would sit by, looking at the workmen, cutting at a stick, and occasionally cutting his finger. But one day Ib succeeded so well with two pieces of wood, that they really looked like little wooden shoes; and these he wanted to give to little Christine. And who was little Christine? She was the boatman's daughter, and was graceful and delicate as a gentleman's child: had she been differently dressed, no one would have imagined that she came out of the hut on the neighbouring heath. There lived her father, who was a widower, and supported himself by carrying firewood in his great boat out of the forest to the estate of Silkeborg, with its great eel-pond and eel-weir, and sometimes even to the distant little town of Randers. He had no one who could take care of little Christine, and therefore the child was almost always with him in his boat, or in the forest among the heath plants and barberry bushes. Sometimes, when he had to go as far as the town, he would bring little Christine, who was a year younger than Ib, to stay with the Jeppe-Jänses.

Ib and Christine agreed very well in every particular: they divided their bread and berries when they were hungry, they dug in the ground together for treasures, and they ran, and crept, and played about everywhere. And one day they ventured together up the high ridge, and a

Ib and Christine

long way into the forest; once they found a few snipe's eggs there, and that was a great event for them.

Ib had never been on the heath where Christine's father lived, nor had he ever been on the river. But even this was to happen; for Christine's father once invited him to go with them, and on the evening before the excursion he followed the boatman over the heath to the house of the latter.

Next morning early, the two children were sitting high up on the pile of firewood in the boat, eating bread and whistleberries. Christine's father and his assistant propelled the boat with staves. They had the current with them, and swiftly they glided down the stream, through the lakes it forms in its course, and which sometimes seemed shut in by reeds and water-plants, though there was always room for them to pass, and though the old trees bent quite forward over the water, and the old oaks bent down their bare branches, as if they had turned up their sleeves, and wanted to show their knotty naked arms. Old elder-trees, which the stream had washed away from the bank, clung with their fibrous roots to the bottom of the stream, and looked like little wooded islands. The water-lilies rocked themselves on the river. It was a splendid excursion; and at last they came to the great eel-weir, where the water rushed through the flood-gates; and Ib and Christine thought this was beautiful to behold.

In those days there was no manufactory there, nor was there any town: only the old great farm-yard, with its scanty fields, with few servants and a few head of cattle, could be seen there; and the rushing of the water through the weir, and the cry of the wild ducks, were the only signs of life in Silkeborg. After the firewood had been unloaded, the father of Christine bought a whole bundle of eels and a slaughtered sucking-pig, and all was put into a basket and placed in the stern of the boat. Then they

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went back again up the stream; but the wind was favourable, and when the sails were hoisted it was as good as if two horses had been harnessed to the boat.

When they had arrived at a point in the stream where the assistant-boatman dwelt, a little way from the bank, the boat was moored, and the two men landed, after telling the children to sit still. But the children did not do that, or at least they obeyed only for a very short time. They must be peeping into the basket in which the eels and the sucking-pig had been placed, and they must needs pull the sucking-pig out, and take it in their hands, and feel and touch it all over; and as both wanted to hold it at the same time, it came to pass that they let it fall into the water, and the sucking-pig drifted away with the stream—and here was a terrible event!

Ib jumped ashore, and ran a little distance along the bank, and Christine sprang after him.

“Take me with you!” she cried.

And in a few minutes they were deep in the thicket, and could no longer see either the boat or the bank. They ran on a little farther, and then Christine fell down on the ground and began to cry; but Ib picked her up.

“Follow me!” he cried. “Yonder lies the house.”

But the house was not yonder. They wandered on and on, over the dry, rustling, last year's leaves, and over fallen branches that crackled beneath their feet. Soon they heard a loud piercing scream. They stood still and listened, and presently the scream of an eagle sounded through the wood. It was an ugly scream, and they were frightened at it; but before them in the thick wood, the most beautiful blueberries grew in wonderful profusion. They were so inviting that the children could not do otherwise than stop; and they lingered for some time, eating the blueberries till they had quite blue mouths and

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blue cheeks. Now again they heard the cry they had heard before.

“We shall get into trouble about the pig,” said Christine.

“Come, let us go to our house,” said Ib; “it is here in the wood.”

And they went forward. They presently came to a wood, but it did not lead them home; and darkness came on, and they were afraid. The wonderful stillness that reigned around was interrupted now and then by the shrill cries of the great horrid eagle, and of the birds that were strange to them. At last they both lost themselves in a thicket. Christine cried, and Ib cried too; and after they had bemoaned themselves for a time, they threw themselves down on the dry leaves, and went fast asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when the two children awoke. They were cold; but in the neighbourhood of this resting-place, on the hill, the sun shone through the trees, and there they thought they would warm themselves; and from there Ib fancied they would be able to see his parents' house. But they were far away from the house in question, in quite another part of the forest. They clambered to the top of the rising ground, and found themselves on the summit of a slope running down to the margin of a transparent lake. They could see fish in great numbers in the pure water lighted up by the sun's rays. This sight was quite a sudden surprise for them; but close beside them grew a nut-bush covered with the finest nuts; and now they picked the nuts, and cracked them, and ate the delicate young kernels, which had only just become perfect. But there was another surprise and another fright in store for them. Out of the thicket stepped a tall old woman: her face was quite brown, and her hair was deep black and shining. The whites of her eyes gleamed like a negro's; on her back she carried a bundle, in her hand she bore a knotted stick. She was a

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gipsy. The children did not at once understand what she said. She brought three nuts out of her pocket, and told them that in these nuts the most beautiful, the loveliest things were hidden, for they were wishing-nuts.

Ib looked at her, and she seemed so friendly, that he plucked up courage and asked her if she would give him the nuts; and the woman gave them to him, and gathered some more for herself, a whole pocket-full, from the nut-bush.

And Ib and Christine looked at the wishing-nuts with great eyes.

“Is there a carriage with a pair of horses in this nut?” he asked.

“Yes, there’s a golden carriage with two horses,” answered the woman.

“Then give me the nut,” said little Christine.

And Ib gave it to her, and the strange woman tied it in her pocket-handkerchief for her.

“Is there in this nut a pretty little neckerchief, like the one Christine wears round her neck?” inquired Ib.

“There are ten neckerchiefs in it,” answered the woman. “There are beautiful dresses in it, and stockings, and a hat with a veil.”

“Then I will have that one too,” cried little Christine.

And Ib gave her the second nut also. The third was a little black thing.

“That one you can keep,” said Christine; “and it is a pretty one too.”

“What is in it?” inquired Ib.

“The best of all things for you,” replied the gipsy woman.

And Ib held the nut very tight. The woman promised to lead the children into the right path, so that they might find their way home; and now they went forward, certainly in quite a different direction from the path they should

Ib and Christine

have followed. But that is no reason why we should suspect the gipsy woman of wanting to steal the children. In the wild wood-path they met the forest bailiff, who knew Ib; and by his help, Ib and Christine both arrived at home, where their friends had been very anxious about them. They were pardoned and forgiven, although they had indeed both deserved "to get into trouble;" firstly, because they had let the sucking-pig fall into the water, and secondly, because they had run away.

Christine was taken back to her father on the heath, and Ib remained in the farm-house on the margin of the wood by the great ridge. The first thing he did in the evening was to bring forth out of his pocket the little black nut, in which "the best thing of all" was said to be enclosed. He placed it carefully in the crack of the door, and then shut the door so as to break the nut; but there was not much kernel in it. The nut looked as if it were filled with tobacco or black rich earth; it was what we call hollow or worm-eaten.

"Yes, that's exactly what I thought," said Ib. "How could the very best thing be contained in this little nut? And Christine will get just as little out of her two nuts, and will have neither fine clothes nor the golden carriage."

And winter came on, and the new year began; indeed, several years went by.

Ib was at last to be confirmed; and for this reason he went during the whole winter to the clergyman, far away in the nearest village, to prepare. About this time the boatman one day visited Ib's parents, and told them that Christine was now going into service, and that she had been really fortunate in getting a remarkably good place, and falling into worthy hands.

"Only think!" he said; "she is going to the rich inn-keeper's, in the inn at Herning, far towards the west, many

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miles from here. She is to help the hostess in keeping the house ; and afterwards, if she takes to it well, and stays to be confirmed there, the people are going to adopt her as their own daughter."

And Ib and Christine took leave of one another. People called them "the betrothed ;" and at parting, the girl showed Ib that she had still the two nuts which he had given her long ago, during their wanderings in the forest ; and she told him, moreover, that in a drawer she had carefully kept the little wooden shoes which he had carved as a present for her in their childish days. And thereupon they parted.

Ib was confirmed. But he remained in his mother's house, for he had become a clever maker of wooden shoes, and in summer he looked after the field. He did it all alone, for his mother kept no farm-servant, and his father had died long ago.

Only seldom he got news of Christine from some passing postilion or eel-fisher. But she was well off at the rich innkeeper's ; and after she had been confirmed, she wrote a letter to her father, and sent a kind message to Ib and his mother ; and in the letter there was mention made of certain linen garments and a fine new gown, which Christine had received as a present from her employers. This was certainly good news.

Next spring, there was a knock one day at the door of our Ib's old mother, and behold, the boatman and Christine stepped into the room. She had come on a visit to spend the day: a carriage had to come from the Herning inn to the next village, and she had taken the opportunity to see her friends once again. She looked as handsome as a real lady, and she had a pretty gown on, which had been well sewn and made expressly for her. There she stood, in grand array, and Ib was in his working clothes. He could not utter a word : he certainly seized her hand, and held

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it fast in his own, and was heartily glad ; but he could not get his tongue to obey him. Christine was not embarrassed, however, for she went on talking and talking, and, moreover, kissed Ib on his mouth in the heartiest manner.

“ Did you know me again directly, Ib ? ” she asked ; but even afterwards, when they were left quite by themselves, and he stood there still holding her hand in his, he could only say,

“ You look quite like a real lady, and I am so uncouth. How often I have thought of you, Christine, and of the old times ! ”

And arm in arm they sauntered up the great ridge, and looked across the stream towards the heath, towards the great hills overgrown with bloom. It was perfectly silent ; but by the time they parted it had grown quite clear to him that Christine must be his wife. Had they not, even in their childhood, been called the betrothed pair ? To him they seemed to be really engaged to each other, though neither of them had spoken a word on the subject. Only for a few more hours could they remain together, for Christine was obliged to go back into the next village, from whence the carriage was to start early next morning for Herning. Her father and Ib escorted her as far as the village. It was a fair moonlight evening, and when they reached their destination, and Ib still held Christine's hand in his own, he could not make up his mind to let her go. His eyes brightened, but still the words came halting over his lips. Yet they came from the depths of his heart when he said,

“ If you have not become too grand, Christine, and if you can make up your mind to live with me in my mother's house as my wife, we must become a wedded pair some day ; but we can wait awhile yet.”

“ Yes, let us wait for a time, Ib,” she replied ; and he kissed her lips. “ I confide in you, Ib,” said Christine ;

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“and I think that I love you—but I will sleep upon it.”

And with that they parted. And on the way home Ib told the boatman that he and Christine were as good as betrothed; and the boatman declared he had always expected it would turn out so; and he went home with Ib, and remained that night in the young man's house; but nothing further was said of the betrothal.

A year passed by, in the course of which two letters were exchanged between Ib and Christine. The signature was prefaced by the words, “Faithful till death!” One day the boatman came in to Ib, and brought him a greeting from Christine. What he had further to say was brought out in somewhat hesitating fashion, but it was to the effect that Christine was almost more than prosperous, for she was a pretty girl, courted and loved. The son of the host had been home on a visit: he was employed in the office of some great institution in Copenhagen; and he was very much pleased with Christine, and she had taken a fancy to him: his parents were ready to give their consent; but Christine was very anxious to retain Ib's good opinion; “and so she had thought of refusing this great piece of good fortune,” said the boatman.

At first Ib said not a word, but he became as white as the wall, and slightly shook his head. Then he said slowly,

“Christine must not refuse this advantageous offer.”

“Then do you write a few words to her,” said the boatman.

And Ib sat down to write; but he could not manage it well: the words would not come as he wished them; and first he altered and then he tore up the page; but the next morning a letter lay ready to be sent to Christine, and it contained the following words:

Ib and Christine

“I have read the letter you have sent to your father, and gather from it that you are prospering in all things, and that there is a prospect of higher fortune for you. Ask your heart, Christine, and ponder well the fate that awaits you, if you take me for your husband; what I possess is but little. Do not think of me, or my position, but think of your own welfare. You are bound to me by no promise, and if in your heart you have given me one, I release you from it. May all treasures of happiness be poured out upon you, Christine. Heaven will console me in its own good time.

“Ever your sincere friend,
“IB.”

And the letter was dispatched, and Christine duly received it.

In the course of that November her banns were published in the church on the heath, and in Copenhagen, where her bridegroom lived; and to Copenhagen she proceeded, under the protection of her future mother-in-law, because the bridegroom could not undertake the journey into Jutland on account of his various occupations. On the journey, Christine met her father in a certain village, and here the two took leave of one another. A few words were mentioned concerning this fact, but Ib made no remark upon it: his mother said he had grown very silent of late; indeed, he had become very pensive, and thus the three nuts came into his mind which the gipsy woman had given him long ago, and of which he had given two to Christine. Yes, it seemed right—they were wishing-nuts, and in one of them lay a golden carriage with two horses, and in the other very elegant clothes; all those luxuries would now be Christine's in the capital. Her part had thus come true. And to him, Ib, the nut had offered only black earth. The gipsy woman had said this was “the best of all for him.” Yes, it was right—that also was coming true. The black earth was the best for him. Now he understood clearly what had been the woman's meaning. In the black earth, in the dark grave, would be the best happiness for him.

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And once again years passed by, not very many, but they seemed long years to Ib. The old innkeeper and his wife died, and the whole of their property, many thousands of dollars, came to the son. Yes now Christine could have the golden carriage and plenty of fine clothes.

During the two long years that followed no letter came from Christine; and when her father at length received one from her, it was not written in prosperity, by any means. Poor Christine! Neither she nor her husband had understood how to keep the money together, and there seemed to be no blessing with it, because they had not sought it.

And again the summer bloomed and faded. The winter had swept for many years across the heath, and over the ridge beneath which Ib dwelt, sheltered from the rough winds. The spring sun shone bright, and Ib guided the plough across his field, when one day it glided over what appeared to be a fire-stone. Something like a great black ship came out of the ground, and when Ib took it up it proved to be a piece of metal; and the place from which the plough had cut the stone gleamed brightly with ore. It was a great golden armlet of ancient workmanship that he had found. He had disturbed a "Hun's Grave," and discovered the costly treasure buried in it. Ib showed what he had found to the clergyman, who explained its value to him, and then he betook himself to the local judges, who reported the discovery to the keeper of the museum, and recommended Ib to deliver up the treasure in person.

"You have found in the earth the best thing you could find," said the judge.

"The best thing!" thought Ib. "The very best thing for me, and found in the earth! Well, if that is the best, the gipsy woman was correct in what she prophesied to me."

Ib and Christine

So Ib travelled with the ferry-boat from Aarhus to Copenhagen. To him, who had but once or twice passed beyond the river that rolled by his home, this seemed like a voyage across the ocean. And he arrived in Copenhagen.

The value of the gold he had found was paid over to him ; it was a large sum—six hundred dollars. And Ib of the heath wandered about in the great capital.

On the day on which he had settled to go back with the captain, Ib lost his way in the streets, and took quite a different direction from the one he intended to follow. He had wandered into the suburb of Christianshaven, into a poor little street. Not a human being was to be seen. At last a very little girl came out of one of the wretched houses. Ib inquired of the little one the way to the street which he wanted ; but she looked shyly at him, and began to cry bitterly. He asked her what ailed her, but could not understand what she said in reply. But as they went along the street together, they passed beneath the light of a lamp ; and when the light fell on the girl's face, he felt a strange and sharp emotion, for Christine stood bodily before him, just as he remembered her from the days of his childhood.

And he went with the little maiden into the wretched house, and ascended the narrow crazy staircase, which led to a little attic chamber in the roof. The air in this chamber was heavy and almost suffocating : no light was burning ; but there was a heavy sighing and moaning in one corner. Ib struck a light with the help of a match. It was the mother of the child who lay sighing on the miserable bed.

“Can I be of any service to you?” asked Ib. “This little girl has brought me up here, but I am a stranger in this city. Are there no neighbours or friends whom I could call to you?” And he raised the sick woman's head and smoothed her pillow.

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It was Christine of the heath!

For years her name had not been mentioned yonder, for the mention of her would have disturbed Ib's peace of mind, and rumour had told nothing good of her. The wealth which her husband had inherited from his parents had made him proud and arrogant. He had given up his certain appointment, had travelled for half a year in foreign lands, and on his return had incurred debts, and yet lived in an expensive fashion. His carriage had bent over more and more, so to speak, until at last it turned over completely. The many merry companions and table friends he had entertained declared it served him right, for he had kept house like a madman; and one morning his corpse was found in the canal.

The icy hand of death was already on Christine. Her youngest child, only a few weeks old, expected in prosperity and born in misery, was already in its grave, and it had come to this with Christine herself, that she lay sick to death and forsaken in a miserable room, amid a poverty that she might well have borne in her childish days, but which now oppressed her painfully, since she had been accustomed to better things. It was her eldest child, also a little Christine, that here suffered hunger and poverty with her, and whom Ib had now brought home.

"I am unhappy at the thought of dying and leaving the poor child here alone," she said. "Ah, what is to become of the poor thing?" And not a word more could she utter.

And Ib brought out another match, and lighted up a piece of candle he found in the room, and the flame illumined the wretched dwelling. And Ib looked at the little girl, and thought how Christine had looked when she was young; and he felt that for her sake he would be fond of this child, which was as yet a stranger to him. The dying woman gazed at him, and her eyes opened

Ib and Christine

wider and wider—did she recognise him? He never knew, for no further word passed over her lips.

And it was in the forest by the river Gudenau, in the region of the heath. The air was thick and dark, and there were no blossoms on the heath-plant; but the autumn tempests whirled the yellow leaves from the wood into the stream, and out over the heath towards the hut of the boatman, in which strangers now dwelt; but beneath the ridge, safe beneath the protection of the high trees, stood the little farm, trimly whitewashed and painted, and within it the turf blazed up cheerily in the chimney; for within was sunlight, the beaming sunlight of a child's two eyes; and the tones of the spring birds sounded in the words that came from the child's rosy lips: she sat on Ib's knee, and Ib was to her both father and mother, for her own parents were dead, and had vanished from her as a dream vanishes alike from children and grown men. Ib sat in the pretty neat house, for he was a prosperous man, while the mother of the little girl rested in the churchyard at Copenhagen, where she had died in poverty.

Ib had money, and was said to have provided for the future. He had won gold out of the black earth, and he had a Christine for his own, after all.



The Swineherd



HERE was once a poor Prince, who had a kingdom which was quite small, but still it was large enough that he could marry upon it, and that is what he wanted to do.

Now it was certainly somewhat bold of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But he did venture it, for his name was famous far and wide : there were hundreds of Princesses who would have been glad to say yes ; but did *she* say so ? Well, we shall see.

On the grave of the Prince's father there grew a rose-bush—a very beautiful rose-bush. It bloomed only every fifth year, and even then it bore only a single rose ; but what a rose that was ! It was so sweet that whoever smelt at it forgot all sorrow and trouble. And then he had a nightingale, which could sing as if all possible melodies

The Swineherd

were collected in its little throat. This rose and this nightingale the Princess was to have, and therefore they were put into great silver vessels and sent to her.

The Emperor caused the presents to be carried before him into the great hall where the Princess was playing at "visiting" with her maids of honour, and when she saw the great silver vessels with the presents in them, she clapped her hands with joy.

"If it were only a little pussy-cat!" said she.

But then came out the rose-bush with the splendid rose.

"Oh, how pretty it is made!" said all the court ladies

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor, "it is charming."

But the Princess felt it, and then she almost began to cry.

"Fie, papa!" she said, "it is not artificial, it's a *natural* rose!"

"Fie," said all the court ladies, "it's a natural one!"

"Let us first see what is in the other vessel before we get angry," said the Emperor. And then the nightingale came out; it sang so beautifully that they did not at once know what to say against it.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" said the maids of honour, for they all spoke French as badly as possible.

"How that bird reminds me of the late Emperor's musical snuff-box," said an old cavalier. "Yes, it is the same tone, the same expression."

"Yes," said the Emperor; and then he wept like a little child at the remembrance of his dead father.

"I really hope it is not a natural bird," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a natural bird," said they who had brought it.

"Then let the bird fly away," said the Princess; and she would by no means allow the Prince to come.

But the Prince was not to be frightened. He stained

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his face brown and black, drew his hat down over his brows and knocked at the door.

“Good-day, Emperor,” he said: “could I not be employed here in the castle?”

“Yes,” replied the Emperor, “but there are so many who ask for an appointment, that I do not know if it can be managed; but I’ll bear you in mind. But it just occurs to me that I want some one who can keep the pigs, for we have many pigs here, very many.”

So the Prince was appointed the Emperor’s swineherd. He received a miserable small room down by the pigsty, and here he was obliged to stay; but all day long he sat and worked, and when it was evening he had finished a neat little pot, with bells all round it, and when the pot boiled these bells rang out prettily and played the old melody—

“Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.”

But the cleverest thing about the whole arrangement was, that by holding one’s finger in the smoke, one could at once smell what provisions were being cooked at every hearth in the town. That was quite a different thing from the rose.

Now the Princess came with all her maids of honour, and when she heard the melody she stood still and looked quite pleased; for she, too, could play “Oh, my darling Augustine” on the piano. It was the only thing she could play, but then she played it with one finger.

“Why, that is what I play!” she cried. “He must be an educated swineherd! Hark ye; go down and ask the price of the instrument.”

So one of the maids of honour had to go down; but first she put on a pair of pattens.

“What do you want for the pot?” inquired the lady.

“I want ten kisses from the Princess,” replied the swineherd.

The Swineherd

“Heaven preserve us!” exclaimed the maid of honour.

“Well, I won’t sell it for less,” said the swineherd.

“And what did he say?” asked the Princess.

“I don’t like to repeat it,” replied the lady.

“Well, you can whisper it in my ear.” And the lady whispered it to her.

“He is very rude,” declared the Princess; and she went away. But when she had gone a little way, the bells sounded so prettily—

“Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.”

“Hark ye,” said the Princess; “ask him if he will take ten kisses from my maids of honour.”

“I’m much obliged,” replied the swineherd; “ten kisses from the Princess, or I shall keep my pot.”

“How tiresome that is!” cried the Princess. “But at least you must stand before me, so that nobody sees it.”

And the maids of honour stood before her, and spread out their dresses, and then the swineherd received ten kisses, and she received the pot.

Then there was rejoicing! All the evening and all the day long the pot was kept boiling; there was not a kitchen hearth in the whole town of which they did not know what it had cooked, at the shoemaker’s as well as the chamberlain’s. The ladies danced with pleasure, and clapped their hands.

“We know who will have sweet soup and pancakes for dinner, and who has hasty pudding and cutlets; how interesting that is!”

“Very interesting!” said the head lady-superintendent.

“Yes, but keep counsel, for I’m the Emperor’s daughter.”

“Yes, certainly,” said all.

The swineherd, that is to say, the Prince—but of course they did not know but that he was a regular swineherd—let no day pass by without doing something, and so he

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made a rattle ; when any person swung this rattle, he could play all the waltzes, hops and polkas that have been known since the creation of the world.

“ But that is *superbe!*” cried the Princess as she went past. “ I have never heard a finer composition. Hark ye, go down and ask what the instrument costs ; but I give no more kisses.”

“ He demands a hundred kisses from the Princess,” said the maid of honour who had gone down to make the inquiry.

“ I think he must be mad !” exclaimed the Princess ; and she went away ; but when she had gone a little distance she stood still. “ One must encourage art,” she observed. “ I am the Emperor’s daughter ! Tell him he shall receive ten kisses like last time, and he may take the rest from my maids of honour.”

“ Ah, but we don’t like to do it !” said the maids of honour.

“ That’s all nonsense !” retorted the Princess, “ and if I can allow myself to be kissed, you can, too ; remember, I give you board and wages.”

And so the maids of honour had to go down to him again.

“ A hundred kisses from the Princess,” said he, “ or each shall keep his own.”

“ Stand before me,” said she then ; and all the maids of honour stood before her while he kissed the Princess.

“ What is that crowd down by the pigsty ?” asked the Emperor, who had stepped out to the balcony. He rubbed his eyes, and put on his spectacles. “ Why, those are the maids of honour, at their tricks, yonder ; I shall have to go down to them.”

And he pulled up his slippers behind, for they were shoes that he had trodden down at heel. Gracious mercy, how he hurried ! As soon as he came down into the courtyard,



All the maids of honour stood before her while he kissed the Princess.

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he went quite softly, and the maids of honour were too busy counting the kisses and seeing fair play, to notice the Emperor. Then he stood on tiptoe.

“What’s that?” said he, when he saw that there was kissing going on; and he hit them on the head with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

“Be off!” said the Emperor, for he was angry.

And the Princess and the swineherd were both expelled from his dominions. So there she stood and cried, the rain streamed down and the swineherd scolded.

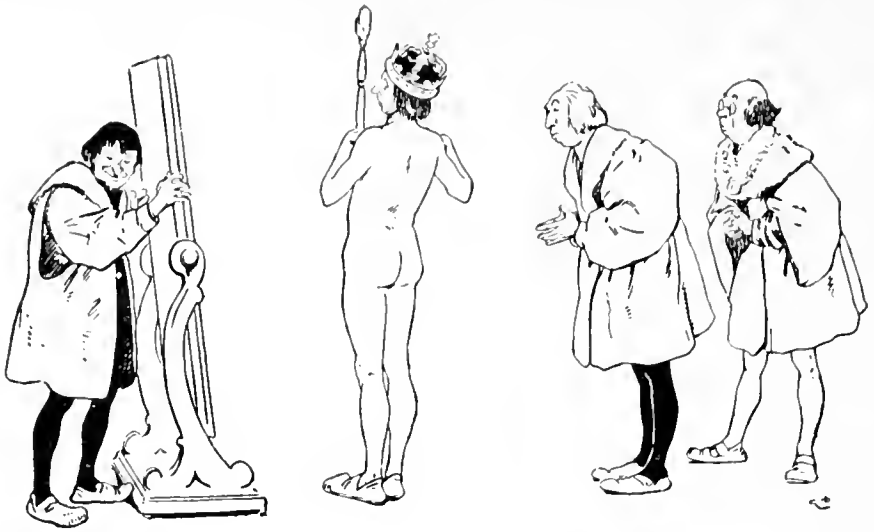
“Oh miserable wretch that I am!” said the Princess. “If I had only taken the handsome Prince! Oh, how unhappy I am!”

Then the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the stains from his face, threw away the shabby clothes, and stepped forth in his princely attire, so handsome that the Princess was fain to bow before him.

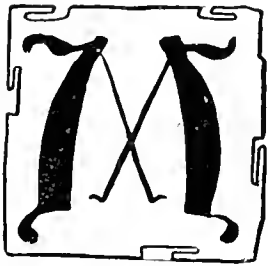
“I have come to this, that I despise you,” said he. “You would not have an honest Prince; you did not value the rose and the nightingale, but for a plaything you kissed the swineherd, and now you have your reward.”

And then he went into his kingdom and shut the door in her face. So now she might stand outside, and sing—

“Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.”



The Emperor's New Clothes



ANY years ago there lived an Emperor, who cared so enormously for new clothes that he spent all his money upon them, that he might be very fine. He did not care about his soldiers, nor about the theatre, and only liked to drive out and show his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, "He is in council," one always said of him, "The Emperor is in the wardrobe."

In the great city in which he lived it was always very merry; every day a number of strangers arrived there. One day two cheats came: they gave themselves out as weavers, and declared that they could weave the finest stuff any one could imagine. Not only were their colours and patterns, they said, uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes made of the stuff possessed the wonderful quality

The Emperor's New Clothes

that they become invisible to any one who was unfit for the office he held, or was incorrigibly stupid.

“Those would be capital clothes!” thought the Emperor. “If I wore those, I should be able to find out what men in my empire are not fit for the places they have; I could distinguish the clever from the stupid. Yes, the stuff must be woven for me directly!”

And he gave the two cheats a great deal of cash in hand, that they might begin their work at once.

As for them, they put up two looms, and pretended to be working; but they had nothing at all on their looms. They at once demanded the finest silk and the costliest gold; this they put into their own pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

“I should like to know how far they have got on with the stuff,” thought the Emperor. But he felt quite uncomfortable when he thought that those who were not fit for their offices could not see it. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but yet he preferred first to send some one else to see how matters stood. All the people in the whole city knew what peculiar power the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbours were.

“I will send my honest old Minister to the weavers,” thought the Emperor. “He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he has sense, and no one understands his office better than he.”

Now the good old Minister went out into the hall where the two cheats sat working at the empty looms.

“Mercy preserve us!” thought the old Minister, and he opened his eyes wide. “I cannot see anything at all!” But he did not say this.

Both the cheats begged him to be kind enough to come nearer, and asked if he did not approve of the colours and the pattern. Then they pointed to the empty loom, and

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the poor old Minister went on opening his eyes ; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

“Mercy!” thought he, “can I indeed be so stupid? I never thought that, and not a soul must know it. Am I not fit for my office?—No, it will never do for me to tell that I could not see the stuff.”

“Do you say nothing to it?” said one of the weavers.

“Oh, it is charming—quite enchanting!” answered the old Minister as he peered through his spectacles. “What a fine pattern and what colours! Yes, I shall tell the Emperor that I am very much pleased with it.”

“Well, we are glad of that,” said both the weavers, and then they named the colours and explained the strange pattern. The old Minister listened attentively, that he might be able to repeat it when the Emperor came. And he did so.

Now the cheats asked for more money, and more silk and gold which they declared they wanted for weaving. They put all into their own pockets, and not a thread was put upon the loom ; but they continued to work at the empty frames as before.

The Emperor soon sent again, dispatching another honest statesman, to see how the weaving was going on, and if the stuff would soon be ready. He feared just like the first : he looked and looked, but as there was nothing to be seen but the empty looms, he could see nothing.

“Is not that a pretty piece of stuff?” asked the two cheats ; and they displayed and explained the handsome pattern which was not there at all.

“I am not stupid!” thought the man, “it must be my good office for which I am not fit. It is funny enough, but I must not let it be noticed.” And so he praised the stuff which he did not see, and expressed his pleasure at the beautiful colours and the charming pattern. “Yes, it is enchanting,” he said to the Emperor.

The Emperor's New Clothes

All the people in the town were talking of the gorgeous stuff. The Emperor wished to see it himself while it was still upon the loom. With a whole crowd of chosen men, among whom were also the two honest statesmen who had already been there, he went to the two cunning cheats, who were now weaving with might and main without fibre or thread.

“Is that not splendid?” said the two old statesmen who had already been there once. “Does not your Majesty remark the pattern and the colours?” And then they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that the others could see the stuff.

“What's this?” thought the Emperor. “I can see nothing at all! That is terrible. Am I stupid? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me. Oh, it is *very* pretty!” he said aloud. “It has our exalted approbation.” And he nodded in a contented way, and gazed at the empty loom, for he would not say that he saw nothing. The whole suite whom he had with him looked and looked, and saw nothing any more than the rest, but like the Emperor, they said, “That *is* pretty!” and counselled him to wear these splendid new clothes for the first time at the great procession that was presently to take place. “It is splendid, tasteful, excellent!” went from mouth to mouth. On all sides there seemed to be general rejoicing, and the Emperor gave the cheats the title of Imperial Court Weavers.

The whole night before the morning on which the procession was to take place the cheats were up, and had lighted more than sixteen candles. The people could see that they were hard at work, completing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the stuff down from the loom; they made cuts in the air with great scissors; they sewed with needles without thread; and at last they said, “Now the clothes are ready!”

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The Emperor came himself with his noblest cavaliers; and the two cheats lifted up one arm as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers, here is the coat, here is the cloak!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web, one would think one had nothing on, but that is just the beauty of it."

"Yes," said all the cavaliers; but they could not see anything, for nothing was there.

"Does your Imperial Majesty please to condescend to undress?" said the cheats; "then we will put you on the new clothes here in front of the great mirror."

The Emperor took off his clothes, and the cheats pretended to put on him each new garment as it was ready; and the Emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"Oh, how well they look! how capitally they fit!" said all. "What a pattern! what colours! That *is* a splendid dress!"

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be borne above your Majesty in the procession!" announced the head-master of the ceremonies.

"Well, I am ready," replied the Emperor. "Does it not suit me well?" And then he turned again to the mirror, for he wanted it to appear as if he contemplated his adornment with great interest.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train stooped down with their hands towards the floor, just as if they were picking up the mantle; then they pretended to be holding something up in the air. They did not dare to let it be noticed that they saw nothing.

So the Emperor went in procession under the rich canopy, and every one in the streets said, "How incomparable are the Emperor's new clothes! What a train he has to his mantle! How it fits him!" No one would let it be perceived that he could see nothing, for that would



“But he has nothing on!” a little child cried out.

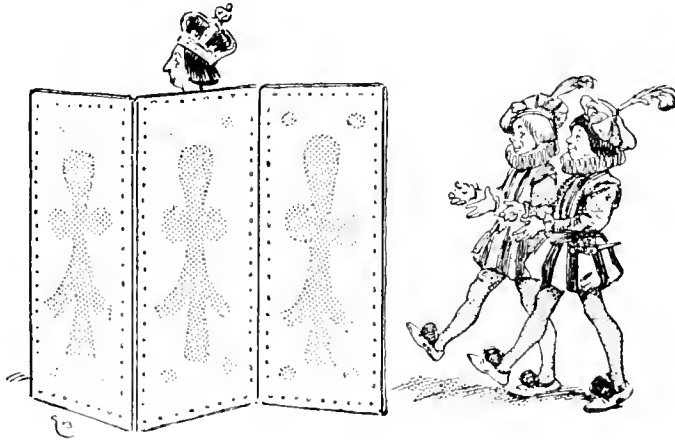
The Emperor's New Clothes

have shown that he was not fit for his office, or was very stupid. No clothes of the Emperor's had ever had such a success as these.

"But he has nothing on!" a little child cried out at last.

"Just hear what that innocent says!" said the father, and one whispered to another what the child had said.

"But he has nothing on!" said all the people at length. That touched the Emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought within himself, "I must go through with the procession," and the chamberlains held on tighter than ever, and carried the train which did not exist at all.



The Marsh King's Daughter



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

The second is not known yet, perhaps because it is quite an inland story. It has been handed down from mouth to mouth, from stork-mamma to stork-mamma, for thousands of years, and each of them has told it better and better; and now *we* will tell it best of all.

The first stork pair who told the story had their summer residence on the wooden house of the Viking, which lay by the wild moor in Wendsyssel: that is to say, if we are to

The Marsh King's Daughter

speaking out of the abundance of our knowledge, hard by the great moor in the circle of Hjorring, high up by the Skagen, the most northern point of Jutland. The wilderness there is still a great wide moor-heath, about which we can read in the official description of districts. It is said that in old times there was here a sea, whose bottom was upheaved; now the moorland extends for miles on all sides, surrounded by damp meadows and unsteady shaking swamp, and turfy moor, with blueberries and stunted trees. Mists are almost always hovering over this region, which seventy years ago was still inhabited by the wolves. It is certainly rightly called the "wild moor"; and one can easily think how dreary and lonely it must have been, and how much marsh and lake there was here a thousand years ago. Yes, in detail exactly the same things were seen then that may yet be beheld. The reeds had the same height, and bore the same kind of long leaves and bluish-brown feathery plumes, that they bear now; the birch stood there, with its white bark, and its fine loosely-hanging leaves, just as now; and as regards the living creatures that dwelt here—why, the fly wore its gauzy dress of the same cut that it wears now, and the favourite colours of the stork were white picked out with black, and red stockings. The people certainly wore coats of a different cut from those they now wear; but whoever stepped out on the shaking moorland, be he huntsman or follower, master or servant, met with the same fate a thousand years ago that he would meet with to-day. He sank and went down to the Marsh King, as they called him, who ruled below in the great moorland empire. They also called him Gungel King; but we like the name Marsh King better, and by that we will call him, as the storks did. Very little is known of the Marsh King's rule; but perhaps that is a good thing.

In the neighbourhood of the moorland hard by the great arm of the German Ocean and the Cattegat, which is called

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the Lumfjorden, lay the wooden house of the Viking, with its stone water-tight cellars, with its tower and its three projecting storeys. On the roof the stork had built his nest, and the stork-mamma there hatched the eggs, and felt sure that her hatching would come to something.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Marsh King's Daughter

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

"Well, you know that in the middle of the moor there is something like a lake," continued stork-papa. "You can see one corner of it if you raise yourself a little. There, by the reeds and the green mud, lay a great elder stump, and on this the three swans sat, flapping their wings, and looking about them. One of them threw off her plumage and I immediately recognised her as our house Princess from Egypt! There she sat, with no covering but her long black hair. I heard her tell the others to pay good heed to the swan's plumage, while she dived down into the water to pluck the flowers which she fancied she saw growing there. The others nodded, and picked up the empty feather dress and took care of it. 'I wonder what they will do with it?' thought I; and perhaps she asked herself the same question. If so, she got an answer—a very practical answer—for the two rose up and flew away with her swan's plumage. 'Do thou dive down!' they cried; 'thou shalt never see Egypt again! Remain thou here in the moor!' And so saying, they tore the swan's plumage into a thousand pieces, so that the feathers whirled about like a snowstorm; and away they flew—the two faithless Princesses!"

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

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

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

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

"But I shall go and look every day to see if anything happens," said stork-papa.

And he was as good as his word.

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

"But she cannot possibly be left lying there," thought stork-papa ; "and in my nest there are so many persons already. But stay, I have a thought. The wife of the Viking has no children, and how often has she not wished

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for a little one! People always say, 'The stork has brought a little one;' and I will do so in earnest this time. I shall fly with the child to the Viking's wife. What rejoicing will be yonder!"

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

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

"Ah, I said it would be so from the very beginning!" said the stork-mamma; "but now think a little of your own family. Our travelling time is drawing on; sometimes already I feel quite restless in my wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale have started, and I heard the quails saying that they were going too, as soon as the wind was favourable. Our young ones will behave well at the exercising, or I am much deceived in them."

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

Therefore she and the whole household had enough to do in preparing everything for the reception of her lord.

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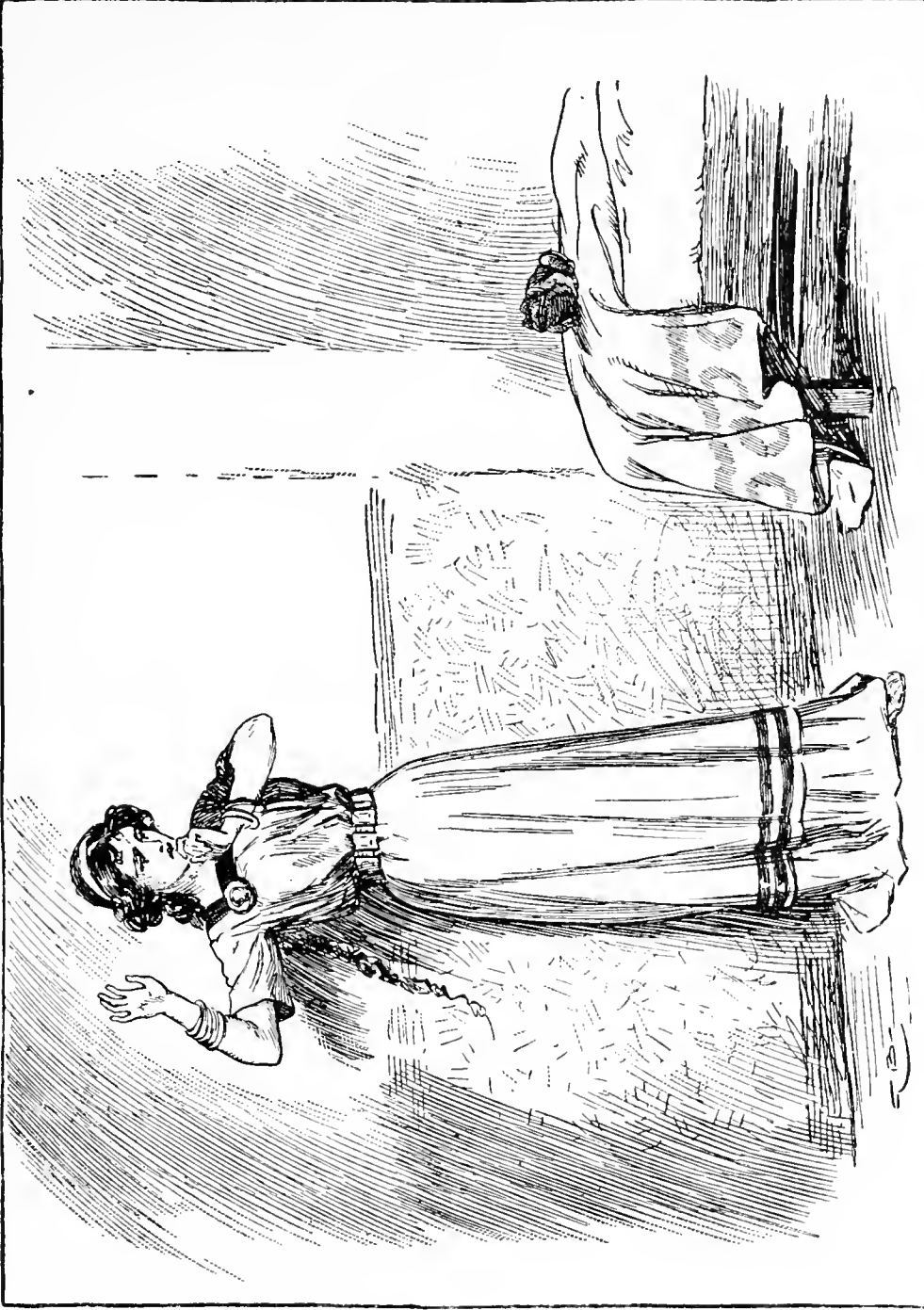
The long coloured curtains of tapestry, which she and her maids had worked, and on which they had woven pictures of their idols, Odin, Thor, and Friga, were hung up; the slaves polished the old shields, that served as ornaments; and cushions were placed on the benches and dry wood laid on the fireplace in the midst of the hall, so that the flame might be fanned up at a moment's notice. The Viking's wife herself helped in the work, so that towards evening she was very tired, and went to sleep quickly and lightly.

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

“What is this?” she said. “Have I had a bad dream? Is it not my own lovely cherub lying there?”

And she kissed and hugged it; but the child struggled and fought like a little wild cat.

Not on this day nor on the morrow did the Viking return, although he certainly was on his way; but the wind was against him, for it blew towards the south, favourably



The frog uttered a low, wailing croak.

The Marsh King's Daughter

for the storks. A good wind for one is contrary for another.

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

The wife of the Viking lived in care and sorrow about it ; and her heart yearned towards the little creature, of whose condition she felt she should not dare tell her husband on his return, for he would probably, according to the custom which then prevailed, expose the child on the public highway, and let whoever listed take it away. The good Viking woman could not find it in her heart to allow this, and she therefore determined that the Viking should never see the child except by daylight.

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

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

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

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

And the storks flew away.

At the same time the sound of the trumpets rolled across the heath, for the Viking had landed with his warriors ; they were returning home, richly laden with spoil from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in the land of the Britons, sang in frightened accents :

“Deliver us from the wild Northmen!”

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

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

And with that they beat upon their shields, and hammered the table in glorious fashion with bones and knives.

The Viking’s wife sat upon the high seat in the open hall. She wore a silken dress and golden armlets, and great amber beads : she was in her costliest garb. And

The Marsh King's Daughter

the bard mentioned her in his song, and sang of the rich treasure she had brought her rich husband. The latter was delighted with the beautiful child, which he had seen in the day-time in all its loveliness, and the savage ways of the little creature pleased him especially. He declared that the girl might grow up to be a stately heroine, strong and determined as a man. She would not wink her eyes when a practised hand cut off her eyebrows with a sword by way of jest.

The full mead-barrel was emptied, and a fresh one brought in, for these were people who liked to enjoy all things plentifully. The old proverb was indeed well known, which says, "The cattle know when they should quit the pasture, but a foolish man knoweth not the measure of his own appetite." Yes, they knew it well enough; but one *knows* one thing, and one *docs* another. They also knew that "even the welcome guest becomes wearisome when he sitteth long in the house;" but for all that they sat still, for pork and mead are good things; and there was high carousing, and at night the bondmen slept among the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers in the fat grease and licked them. Those were glorious times!

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

The rough damp mist of autumn, which devours the leaves of the forest, had already descended upon thicket and heath. "Birds featherless," as they called the snow, flew in thick masses, and the winter was coming on fast. The sparrows took possession of the storks' nests, and

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talked about the absent proprietors according to their fashion, but these—the stork-pair, with all the young ones—what had become of them? .

* * * * *

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

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

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

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

“There’s nothing further to be seen,” answered stork-mamma. “Behind this delightful region there are luxuriant forests, whose branches are interlaced with one another, while prickly, climbing plants close up the paths—only the elephant can force a way for himself with his great feet; and the snakes are too big and the lizards too quick for us. If you go into the desert, you’ll get your eyes full of sand when there’s a light breeze, but when it blows great guns,

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you may get into the middle of a pillar of sand. It is best to stay here, where there are frogs and locusts. I shall stay here and you shall stay too."

And there they remained. The parents sat in the nest on the slender minaret, and rested, and yet were busily employed smoothing and cleaning their feathers, and whetting their beaks against their red stockings. Now and then they stretched out their necks and bowed gravely, and lifted their heads, with their high foreheads and fine smooth feathers, and looked very clever with their brown eyes. The female young storks strutted about in the juicy reeds, looking slyly at the other young storks, made acquaintances and swallowed a frog at every third step, or rolled a little snake to and fro in their bills, which they thought became them well, and, moreover, tasted nice. The male young ones began a quarrel, beat each other with their wings, struck with their beaks, and even pricked each other till the blood came. And in this way sometimes one couple was betrothed, and sometimes another of the young ladies and gentlemen, and that was just what they wanted, and their chief object in life; then they took to a new nest, and began new quarrels, for in hot countries people are generally hot-tempered and passionate. But it was pleasant for all that, and the old people especially were much rejoiced, for all that young people do seems to suit them well. There was sunshine every day, and every day plenty to eat and nothing to think of but pleasure. But in the rich castle at the Egyptian host's, as they called him, there was no pleasure to be found.

The rich mighty lord reclined on his divan, in the midst of the great hall of the many-coloured walls, looking as if he were sitting in a tulip; but he was stiff and powerless in all his limbs, and lay stretched out like a mummy. His family and servants surrounded him, for he was not dead, though one could not exactly say that he was alive. The

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healing moor-flower from the North, which was to have been found and brought home by her who loved him best, never appeared. His beautiful young daughter, who had flown in the swan's plumage over sea and land to the far North, was never to come back. "She is dead!" the two returning swan-maidens had said, and they had concocted a complete story, which ran as follows :

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

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

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

"And perhaps break it off," interposed the stork-mamma ; "and then you would look well ! Think first of yourself, and then of your family, and all the rest does not concern you."

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

And the learned and wise men came together and spoke a great deal, out of which the stork could make no sense—and it had no result, either for the sick man or for the daughter in the swampy waste. But for all that we may

The Marsh King's Daughter

listen to what the people said, for we have to listen to a great deal of talk in the world.

But then it will be an advantage to hear what went before, and in this case we are well informed, for we know just as much about it as stork-papa.

* * * * *

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

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

“That is a beautiful thought!” stork-papa said immediately.

“I don't quite understand it,” stork-mamma replied, “and that's not my fault, but the fault of the thought. But let it be as it will, I've something else to think of.”

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

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

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by-way of which they could think ; and at length the wise men and the learned men had said, as we have already told, that “ Love begets life—will restore a father’s life ; ” and on this occasion they had surpassed themselves, and said more than they understood. They repeated it, and wrote down as a recipe, “ Love begets life.” But how was the thing to be prepared according to the recipe? that was the point they could not get over. At last they were decided upon the point that help must come by means of the Princess, through her who clave to her father with her whole soul ; and at last a method had been devised whereby help could be procured in this dilemma. Yes, it was already more than a year ago since the Princess had sallied forth by night, when the brief rays of the new moon were waning ; she had gone out to the marble sphinx, had shaken the dust from her sandals, and gone onward through the long passage which leads into the midst of one of the great pyramids, where one of the mighty kings of antiquity, surrounded by pomp and treasure, lay swathed in mummy cloths. There she was to incline her ear to the breast of the dead king ; for thus, said the wise men, it should be made manifest to her where she might find life and health for her father. She had fulfilled all these injunctions, and had seen in a vision that she was to bring home from the deep lake in the northern moorland—the very place had been accurately described to her—the lotos flower which grows in the depths of the waters, and then her father would regain health and strength.

And therefore she had gone forth in the swan’s plumage out of the land of Egypt to the open heath, to the woodland moor. And the stork-papa and stork-mamma knew all this ; and now we also know it more accurately than we knew it before. We know that the Marsh King had drawn her down to himself, and know that to her loved ones at home she is dead for ever. One of the wisest of them

The Marsh King's Daughter

said as the stork-mamma said too, "She will manage to help herself," and at last they quieted their minds with that, and resolved to wait and see what would happen, for they knew of nothing better that they could do.

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

"But where do you intend to hide them?" asked stork-mamma.

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

"No one will thank you for it," quoth stork-mamma; "but you're the master. Except at breeding-time I have nothing to say."

* * * * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

It seemed as if, out of mere malice, when her mother stood on the threshold or came out into the yard, Helga would often seat herself on the margin of the well, and wave her arms in the air; then suddenly she would dive into the deep well, where her frog nature enabled her to dive and rise, down and up, until she climbed forth again like a cat, and came back into the hall dripping with

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water, so that the green leaves strewn upon the ground floated and turned in the streams that flowed from her garments.

But there was one thing that imposed a check upon Helga, and that was the evening twilight. When that came she was quiet and thoughtful, and would listen to reproof and advice, and then a secret feeling seemed to draw her towards her mother. And when the sun sank, and the usual transformation of body and spirit took place in her, she would sit quiet and mournful, shrunk to the shape of the frog, her body indeed much larger than that of the animal whose likeness she took, and for that reason much more hideous to behold, for she looked like a wretched dwarf with a frog's head and webbed fingers. Her eyes then assumed a very melancholy expression. She had no voice, and could only utter a hollow croaking that sounded like the stifled sob of a dreaming child. Then the Viking's wife took her on her lap, and forgot the ugly form as she looked into the mournful eyes, and said, "I could almost wish that thou wert always my poor dumb frog-child ; for thou art only the more terrible when thy nature is veiled in a form of beauty."

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

"One can scarcely believe that she was ever so small that she could lie in the cup of a water-lily," said stork-papa, "now she has grown up the image of her Egyptian mother. Ah, we shall never see that poor lady again ! Probably she did not know how to help herself, as you and the learned physicians said. Year after year I have flown to and fro, across and across the great moorland, and she has never once given a sign that she was still alive. Yes, I may as well tell you that every year, when I came here a

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

"And our good nest would be destroyed too," said stork-mamma; "but you think less of that than of your plumage stuff and of your Moor Princess. You'd best go down into the mud and stay there with her. You're a bad father to your own children, as I said already when I hatched our first brood. I only hope neither we nor our children will get an arrow in our wings through that wild girl. Helga doesn't know in the least what she does. I wish she would only remember that we have lived here longer than she, and that we have never forgotten our duty, and have given our toll every year, a feather, an egg, and a young one, as it was right we should do. Do you think I can now wander about in the courtyard and everywhere as I was wont in former days, and as I still do in Egypt, where I am almost the playfellow of the people, and that I can press into pot and kettle as I can yonder? No, I sit up here and am angry at her, the stupid chit! And I am angry at you too. You should have just left her lying in the water-lily, and she would have been dead long ago."

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

And with that he gave a hop and flapped his wings heavily twice, stretched out his legs behind him and flew away, or rather sailed away, without moving his wings.

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He had already gone some distance when he gave a great *flap!* The sun shone upon his grand plumage, and his head and neck were stretched forth proudly. There was power in it, and dash!

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

* * * * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the Viking would not suffer him to die such a death, he purposed to sacrifice the priest on the morrow, on the death-stone in the grove, as a despiser and foe of the high gods. For the first time a man was to be sacrificed here.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The frog-woman beckoned him to follow, and led him through corridors shrouded with curtains, into the stables,

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

He thought not of her hideous form, but felt how the mercy and loving-kindness of the Almighty were working by means of this monstrous apparition; he prayed pious prayers and sang songs of praise. Then she trembled. Was it the power of song and of prayer that worked in her, or was she shuddering at the cold morning twilight that was approaching? What were her feelings? She raised herself up, and wanted to stop the horse and to alight; but the Christian priest held her back with all his strength, and sang a pious song, as if that would have the power to loosen the charm that turned her into the hideous semblance of a frog. And the horse galloped on more wildly than ever, the sky turned red, the first sunbeam pierced through the clouds, and as the flood of light came streaming down, the frog changed its nature. Helga was again the beautiful maiden with the wicked, demoniac spirit. He held a beautiful maiden in his arms, but was horrified at the sight: he swung himself from the horse, and compelled it to stand. This seemed to him a new and terrible sorcery; but Helga likewise leaped from the saddle and stood on the ground. The child's short garment reached only to her knee. She plucked the sharp knife from her girdle, and quick as lightning she rushed in upon the astonished priest.

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

She pressed in upon him. They struggled together in a hard strife, but an invisible power seemed given to the Christian captive. He held her fast; and the old oak-tree



“Let me get at thee!” she screamed.

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beneath which they stood came to his assistance ; for its roots, which projected over the ground, held fast the maiden's feet that had become entangled in it. Quite close to them gushed a spring ; and he sprinkled Helga's face and neck with the fresh water, and commanded the unclean spirit to come forth, and blessed her in the Christian fashion ; but the water of faith has no power when the well-spring of faith flows not from within.

And yet the Christian showed his power even now, and opposed more than the mere might of a man against the evil that struggled within the girl. His holy action seemed to overpower her : she dropped her hands, and gazed with frightened eyes and pale cheeks upon him who appeared to her a mighty magician learned in secret arts ; he seemed to her to speak in a dark Runic tongue, and to be making cabalistic signs in the air. She would not have winked had he swung a sharp knife or a glittering axe against her ; but she trembled when he signed her with the sign of the cross on her brow and her bosom, and she sat there like a tame bird with bowed head.

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

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

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

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

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

They say the rain-drops can hollow the hard stone, and the waves of the sea can smooth and round the sharp edges of the rocks. Thus did the dew of mercy that dropped upon Helga smooth what was rough and penetrate what was hard in her. The effects did not yet appear, nor was she aware of them herself; but doth the seed in the bosom of earth know, when the refreshing dew and the quickening sunbeams fall upon it, that it hath within itself the power of growth and blossoming? As the song of the mother penetrates into the heart of the child, and it babbles the words after her, without under-

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standing their import until they afterwards engender thought, and come forward in due time clearer and more clearly, so here also did the Word work, that is powerful to create.

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

“Where hast thou stolen that beauteous maiden?” cried the robbers; and they seized the horse's bridle and dragged the two riders from its back. The priest had no weapon save the knife he had taken from Helga, and with this he tried to defend himself. One of the robbers lifted his axe to slay him, but the young priest sprang aside and eluded the blow, which struck deep into the horse's neck, so that the blood spurted forth, and the creature sank down on the ground. Then Helga seemed suddenly to wake up from her long reverie, and threw herself hastily upon the gasping animal. The priest stood before her to protect and defend her, but one of the robbers swung his iron hammer over the Christian's head, and brought it down with such a crash that blood and brains were scattered around, and the priest sank to the earth, dead.

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

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The full moon was already rising. Presently it shone with splendid radiance over the earth, and poor Helga crept forth from the thicket in the wretched frog's shape. She stood still beside the corpse of the priest and the carcass of the slain horse. She looked at them with eyes that appeared to weep, and from the frog-mouth came forth a croaking like the voice of a child bursting into tears. She leaned first over the one, then over the other, brought water in her hollow hand, which had become larger and more capacious by the webbed skin, and poured it over them; but dead they were, and dead they would remain, she at last understood. Soon the wild beasts would come and tear their dead bodies; but no, that must not be, so she dug up the earth as well as she could, in the endeavour to prepare a grave for them. She had nothing to work with but a stake and her two hands, encumbered with the webbed skin that grew between the fingers, and which were torn by the labour so that the blood flowed over them. At last she saw that her endeavours would not succeed. Then she brought water and washed the dead man's face, and covered it with fresh green leaves; she brought green boughs and laid them upon him, scattering dead leaves in the spaces between. Then she brought the heaviest stones she could carry and laid them over the dead body, stopping up the interstices with moss. And now she thought the grave-hill would be strong and secure. The night had passed away in this difficult work, the sun broke through the clouds and beautiful Helga stood there in all her loveliness, with bleeding hands, and with the first tears flowing that had ever bedewed her maiden cheeks.

Then in this transformation it seemed as if two natures were striving within her. Her whole frame trembled, and she looked around as if she had just awoke from a troubled dream. Then she ran towards the slender tree, clung to it for support, and in another moment she had climbed to the

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summit of the tree, and held fast. There she sat like a startled squirrel, and remained the whole day long in the silent solitude of the wood, where everything is quiet, and, as they say, dead. Butterflies fluttered around in sport, and in the neighbourhood were several ant-hills, each with its hundreds of busy little occupants moving briskly to and fro. In the air danced a number of gnats, swarm upon swarm, and hosts of buzzing flies, ladybirds, gold beetles, and other little winged creatures; the worm crept forth from the damp ground, the moles came out; but except these all was silent around—silent, and, as people say, dead—for they speak of things as they understand them. No one noticed Helga, but some flocks of crows that flew screaming to her on the twigs with pert curiosity; but when the glance of her eye fell upon them, it was a signal for their flight. But they could not understand her—nor, indeed, could she understand herself.

When the evening twilight came on, and the sun was sinking, the time of her transformation roused her to fresh activity. She glided down from the tree, and as the last sunbeam vanished she stood in the wrinkled form of the frog, with the torn webbed skin on her hands; but her eyes now gleamed with a splendour of beauty that had scarcely been theirs when she wore her garb of loveliness, for they were a pair of pure, pious, maidenly eyes that shone out of the frog-face. They bore witness of depth of feeling, of the gentle human heart; and the beautiful eyes overflowed in tears, weeping precious drops that lightened the heart.

On the sepulchral mound she had raised, there yet lay the cross of boughs, the last work of him who slept beneath. Helga lifted up the cross, in pursuance of a sudden thought that came upon her. She planted it upon the burial mound, over the priest and the dead horse. The sorrowful remembrance of him called fresh tears into her eyes; and in this tender frame of mind she marked the

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same sign in the sand around the grave ; and as she wrote the sign with both her hands, the webbed skin fell from them like a torn glove ; and when she washed her hands in the woodland spring and gazed in wonder at their snowy whiteness, she again made the holy sign in the air between herself and the dead man ; then her lips trembled, the holy name that had been preached to her during the ride from the forest came to her mouth, and she pronounced it audibly.

Then the frog-skin fell from her, and she was once more the beautiful maiden. But her head sank wearily, her tired limbs required rest, and she fell into a deep slumber.

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

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

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the Power that can read every thought of the heart—and then the priest spoke.

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

And he lifted her upon the horse, and gave her a golden censer similar to the one she had seen in the Viking's castle. The open wound in the forehead of the slain Christian shone like a diadem. He took the cross from the grave and held it aloft. And now they rode through the air, over the rustling wood, over the hills where the old heroes lay buried, each on his dead war-horse; and the iron figures rose up and galloped forth, and stationed themselves on the summits of the hills. The golden hoop on the forehead of each gleamed in the moonlight, and their mantles floated in the night breeze. The dragon that guards buried treasures likewise lifted up his head and gazed after the riders. The gnomes and wood spirits peeped forth from beneath the hills and from between the furrows of the fields, and flitted to and fro with red, blue, and green torches, like the sparks in the ashes of a burned paper.

Over woodland and heath, over river and marsh they fled away, up to the wild moor; and over this they hovered in wide circles. The Christian priest held the cross aloft, it gleamed like gold; and from his lips dropped pious prayers. Beautiful Helga joined in the hymns he sang,

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like a child joining in its mother's song. She swung the censer, and a wondrous fragrance of incense streamed from thence, so that the reeds and grass of the moor burst forth into blossom. Every germ came forth from the deep ground. All that had life lifted itself up. A veil of water-lilies spread itself forth like a carpet of wrought flowers, and upon this carpet lay a sleeping woman, young and beautiful. Helga thought it was her own likeness she saw upon the mirror of the calm waters. But it was her mother whom she beheld, the Moor King's wife, the Princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead priest commanded that the slumbering woman should be lifted upon the horse; but the horse sank under the burden, as though its body had been a cloth fluttering in the wind. But the holy sign gave strength to the airy phantom, and then the three rode from the moor to the firm land.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And while the two were locked in each other's embrace, the old stork flew around them in smaller and smaller circles, and at length shot away in swift flight towards his nest, whence he brought out the swan-feather suits he had

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preserved there for years, throwing one to each of them, and the feathers closed around them, so that they soared up from the earth in the semblance of two white swans.

“And now we will speak with one another,” quoth stork-papa, “now we understand each other, though the beak of one bird is differently shaped from that of another. It happens more than fortunately that you came to-night. To-morrow we should have been gone—mother, myself, and the young ones—for we are flying southward. Yes, only look at me! I am an old friend from the land of the Nile, and mother has a heart larger than her beak. She always declared the Princess would find a way to help herself; and I and the young ones carried the swan’s feathers up here. But how glad I am! and how fortunate that I’m still here. At dawn of day we shall move hence, a great company of storks. We will fly first, and do you follow us; thus you cannot miss your way; moreover, I and the youngsters will keep a sharp eye upon you.”

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

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

“Yes, we must go to the Viking’s castle,” said stork-papa; “mother and youngsters are waiting for us there. How they will turn up their eyes and flap their wings! Yes, you see, mother doesn’t speak much, she’s short and dry, but she means all the better. I’ll begin clapping at once, that they may know we’re coming.”

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

In the castle every one was sunk in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had not retired to rest until it was late. She was anxious about Helga who had vanished with the Christian priest three days before ; she knew Helga must have helped him in his flight, for it was the girl's horse that had been missed from the stables ; but how all this had been effected was a mystery to her. The Viking woman had heard of the miracles told of the Christian priest, and which were said to be wrought by him and by those who believed in his words and followed him. Her passing thoughts formed themselves into a dream, and it seemed to her that she was still lying awake on her couch, and that deep darkness reigned without. The storm drew near ; she heard the sea roaring and rolling to the east and to the west, like the waves of the North sea and the Cattegat. The immense snake which was believed to surround the span of earth in the depths of the ocean was trembling in convulsions ; she dreamed that the night of the fall of the gods had come—Ragnarok, as the heathen called the last day when everything was to pass away, even the great gods themselves. The war-trumpet sounded, and the gods rode over the rainbow, clad in steel, to fight the last battle. The winged Valkyrs rode before them, and the dead warriors closed the train. The whole firmament was ablaze with Northern Lights, and yet the darkness seemed to predominate. It was a terrible hour.

And close by the terrified Viking woman Helga seemed to be crouching on the floor in the hideous frog form, trembling and pressing close to her foster-mother, who took her on her lap and embraced her affectionately, hideous though she was. The air resounded with the blows of clubs and swords and with the hissing of arrows, as if a hail-storm were passing across it. The hour was come

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when earth and sky were to burst, the stars to fall, and all things to be swallowed up in Surtur's sea of fire, but she knew that there would be a new heaven and a new earth, that the cornfields then would wave where now the ocean rolled over the desolate tracts of sand, and that the unutterable God would reign; and up to Him rose Balder the gentle, the affectionate, delivered from the kingdom of the dead; he came, the Viking woman saw him and recognised his countenance; it was that of the captive Christian priest. "White Christian!" she cried aloud, and with these words she pressed a kiss upon the forehead of the hideous frog-child. Then the frog-skin fell off, and Helga stood revealed in all her beauty, lovely and gentle as she had never appeared, and with beaming eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for all the care and affection lavished during the days of bitterness and trial, for the thought she had awakened and cherished in her, for naming the name, which she repeated, "White Christian"; and beautiful Helga arose in the form of a mighty swan, and spread her white wings with a rushing like the sound of a troop of birds of passage winging their way through the air.

The Viking woman awoke, and she heard the same noise outside still continuing. She knew it was the time for the storks to depart, and that it must be those birds whose wings she heard. She wished to see them once more, and to bid them farewell as they set forth on their journey. Therefore she rose from her couch and stepped out upon the threshold, and on the top of the gable she saw stork ranged behind stork, and around the castle over the high trees flew bands of storks wheeling in wide circles; but opposite the threshold where she stood, by the well where Helga had often sat and alarmed her with her wildness, sat two white swans gazing at her with intelligent eyes. And she remembered her dream, which still filled her soul

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as if it were reality. She thought of Helga in the shape of a swan, and of the Christian priest; and suddenly she felt her heart rejoice within her.

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

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

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

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

"Do not talk about snakes while we are flying up here," said stork-mamma. "It only puts ideas into the children's heads which cannot be gratified."

* * * * *

"Are those the high mountains of which I have heard tell?" asked Helga in the swan's plumage.

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

"What are yonder white clouds that rise so high?" asked Helga again.

"Those are the mountains covered with perpetual snow which you see yonder," replied her mother.

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

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

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

“I can scent the Nile mud and wet frogs,” said stork-mamma, “I begin to feel quite hungry. Yes ; now you shall taste something nice ; and you will see the maraboo bird, the crane, and the ibis. They all belong to our family, though they are not nearly so beautiful as we. They give themselves airs, especially the ibis. He has been quite spoiled by the Egyptians, for they make a mummy of him and stuff him with spices. I would rather be stuffed with live frogs, and so would you, and so you shall. Better have something in one’s inside while one is alive, than to be made a fuss with after one is dead. That’s my opinion, and I am always right.”

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

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

And joy reigned through the whole house, and likewise

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

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

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

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

“I cannot quite repeat the words as they were spoken,” said stork-papa, who had listened from the roof to the report of these events made by the learned men, and was now telling it again to his own family. “What they said was so confused, it was so wise and learned, that they immediately received rank and presents; even the head cook received an especial mark of distinction—probably for the soup.”

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

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Late in the night, when the gentle peace of sleep rested upon the now happy house, there was one who still watched. It was not stork-papa, though he stood upon one leg and slept on guard—it was Helga who watched. She bowed herself forward over the balcony, and looked into the clear air, gazed at the great gleaming stars, greater and purer in their lustre than she had ever seen them in the North, and yet the same orbs. She thought of the Viking woman in the wild moorland, of the gentle eyes of her foster-mother, and of the tears which the kind soul had wept over the poor frog-child who now lived in splendour under the gleaming stars, in the beautiful spring air on the banks of the Nile. She thought of the love that dwelt in the breast of the heathen woman, the love that had been shown to a wretched creature, hateful in human form, and hideous in its transformation. She looked at the gleaming stars, and thought of the glory that had shone upon the forehead of the dead man, when she flew with him through the forest and across the moorland; sounds passed through her memory, words she had heard pronounced as they rode onward, and when she was borne wondering and trembling through the air, words from the great Fountain of love that embraces all human kind.

Yes, great things had been achieved and won! Day and night beautiful Helga was absorbed in the thought of her great happiness, and stood like a child that turns hurriedly from the giver to gaze on the splendours of the gifts it has received. She seemed to lose herself in the increasing happiness, in thoughts of what might still come, of what would come. Had she not been borne by miracle to greater and greater bliss? And in this idea she one day lost herself so completely, that she thought no more of the Giver. It was the rapturous spirit of youth unfolding its wings for a bold flight! Her eyes were gleaming with courage, when suddenly

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

Once, they say, the ostriches were a beautiful, glorious race of birds, with strong, large wings; and one evening the larger birds of the forest said to the ostrich, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, God willing, to the river to drink?" And the ostrich answered, "I will." At daybreak, accordingly, they winged their flight from thence, flying first up on high, towards the sun, that gleamed like the eyes of God—higher and higher, the ostrich far in advance of all the other birds. Proudly the ostrich flew straight towards the light, boasting of his strength, and not thinking of the Giver, or saying, "God willing!" Then suddenly the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the flaming ocean of sunlight, and in a moment the wings of the proud bird were scorched and shrivelled up, and he sank miserably to the ground. Since that time the ostrich has never again been able to raise himself in the air, but flees timidly along the ground, and runs round in a narrow circle. And this is a warning for us men, that in all our thoughts and schemes, in all our doings and devices, we should say, "God willing." And Helga bowed her head thoughtfully and gravely, and looked at the circling ostrich, noticing its timid fear, and its stupid pleasure at sight of its own great shadow cast upon the white sunlit wall. And seriousness struck its roots deep into her mind and heart. A rich life in present and future happiness was given and won; and what was yet to come? The best of all, "God willing."

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

“That’s heavy to carry,” thought the stork-papa, when he had the golden ring round his neck; “but gold and honour are not to be flung into the street. The stork brings good fortune; they will be obliged to acknowledge that over yonder.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then strong wings were heard beating the air. The storks were coming home, and however tired the old stork pair might be from the journey, and however much they needed repose, they did not fail to come down at once to the balustrades of the verandah, for they knew what feast was being celebrated. Already on the frontier of the land they had heard that Helga had caused their figures to be painted on the wall—for did they not belong to her history?

“That's very pretty and suggestive,” said stork-papa.

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

And when Helga saw them, she rose, and came on to the verandah to stroke the backs of the storks. The old pair waved their heads and bowed their necks, and even

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the youngest among the young ones felt highly honoured by the reception.

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

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

And fair Helga begged so fervently, so beseechingly, as she had never yet prayed, that it might be permitted her to gaze in there for one single moment, that she might be allowed to cast but a single glance into the brightness that beamed in the kingdom of heaven.

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

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

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

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

“Only one more look—the last.”

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

Then a great dread came upon her. Alone she went through the empty great hall into the next chamber. Strange warriors slept yonder. She opened a side door which led into her own chamber, and, as she thought to step in there, she suddenly found herself in the garden ; but yet it had not looked thus here before—the sky gleamed red—the morning dawn was come.

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

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

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

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

"That's a mistake," said the stork, "you must have dreamed that!"

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

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

"Why, that's an old story, which I heard from the time of my great-grandfather. There certainly was here in Egypt a Princess of that kind from the Danish land, but she vanished on the evening of her wedding-day, many hundred years ago, and never came back! You may read about it yourself yonder on the monument in the garden; there you will find swans and storks sculptured, and at the top you yourself are cut in white marble!"

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

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

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

* * * * *

"Well, that's a new ending to the story," said stork-papa.

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“I had certainly not expected it. But I like it very well.”

“But what will the young ones say to it?” said stork-mamma.

“Yes, certainly, that’s the important point,” replied he.





The Travelling Companion



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

“You have been a good son, John,” said the sick father. “Providence will help you through the world.” And he looked at him with mild, earnest eyes, drew a deep breath, and died: it was just as if he slept. But John wept; for now he had no one in the world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor John! He lay on his knees before the bed, kissed his dead father’s hand, and shed very many bitter tears, but at last his eyes closed, and he went to sleep, lying with his head against the hard bed-post.

Then he dreamed a strange dream: he saw the sun and moon shine upon him, and he beheld his father again, fresh and well, and he heard his father laugh as he had always laughed when he was very glad. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown upon her long shining hair, gave him her

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hand; and his father said, "Do you see what a bride you have gained? She is the most beautiful in the whole world!" Then he awoke, and all the splendour was gone. His father was lying dead and cold in the bed, and there was no one at all with them. Poor John!

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

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

He pictured that to himself so plainly that he smiled, while the tears were still rolling down his cheeks. The little birds sat up in the chestnut-trees, and twittered, "Tweet-tweet! tweet-tweet!" They were joyful and merry, though they had been at the burying; but they seemed to know that the dead man was now in heaven; that he had wings far larger and more beautiful than theirs; that he was now happy, because he had been a good man upon earth, and they were glad of it. John saw how they flew from the green tree out into the world, and he felt inclined

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to fly too. But first he cut out a great cross of wood to put on his father's grave ; and when he brought it there in the evening the grave was decked with sand and flowers ; strangers had done this, for they were all very fond of the good father who was now dead.

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

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

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

The first night he was obliged to lie down on a haystack in the field to sleep, for he had no other bed. But that was very nice, he thought ; the king could not be better off.

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There was the whole field, with the brook, the haystack, and the blue sky above it; that was certainly a beautiful sleeping-room. The green grass with the little red and white flowers was the carpet; the elder bushes and the wild rose hedges were garlands of flowers; and for a wash-hand basin he had the whole brook with the clear fresh water; and the rushes bowed before him, and wished him "good-evening" and "good-morning." The moon was certainly a great night-lamp, high up under the blue ceiling, and that lamp would never set fire to the curtains with its light. John could sleep quite safely, and he did so, and never woke until the sun rose and all the little birds were singing around, "Good-morning! good-morning! Are you not up yet?"

The bells were ringing for church; it was Sunday. The people went to hear the preacher, and John followed them, and sang a psalm and heard God's word. It seemed to him just as if he was in his own church, where he had been christened and had sung psalms with his father.

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

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

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“Here I will sit down in a corner,” said he, and went in. “I am quite tired, and require a little rest.” Then he sat down, folded his hands and said his evening prayer; and before he was aware of it he was asleep and dreaming, while it thundered and lightened without.

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

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

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

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

“Yes,” said these ugly bad men, “if you will pay his debt we will do nothing to him, you may depend upon that!” And then they took the money he gave them, laughed aloud at his good-nature, and went their way.

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But he laid the corpse out again in the coffin, and folded its hands, took leave of it, and went away contentedly through the great forest.

All around, wherever the moon could shine through between the trees, he saw the graceful little elves playing merrily. They did not let him disturb them; they knew that he was a good innocent man; and it is only the bad people who never get to see the elves. Some of them were not larger than a finger's-breadth, and had fastened up their long yellow hair with golden combs: they were rocking themselves, two and two, on the great dew-drops that lay on the leaves and on the high grass; sometimes the drop rolled away, and then they fell down between the long grass-stalks, and that occasioned much laughter and noise among the other little creatures. It was charming. They sang, and John recognised quite plainly the pretty songs which he had learned as a little boy. Great coloured spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, had to spin long hanging bridges and palaces from hedge to hedge; and as the tiny dewdrops fell on these they looked like gleaming glass in the moonlight. This continued until the sun rose. Then the little elves crept into the flower-buds, and the wind caught their bridges and palaces, which flew through the air in the shape of spiders' webs.

John had just come out of the wood, when a strong man's voice called out behind him, "Halloo, comrade! whither are you journeying?"

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

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

"Yes, certainly," said John; and so they went on together. Soon they became very fond of each other, for they were both good men. But John saw that the stranger

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was much more clever than himself. He had travelled through almost the whole world, and knew how to tell of almost everything that existed.

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

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

“That would be paying well !” said the old woman, and she nodded her head in a strange way. She did not like to give away the rods, but then it was not agreeable to lie there with a broken leg. So she gave him the wands ; and as soon as he had only rubbed the ointment on her leg, the old mother rose, and walked much better than before—such was the power of this ointment. But then it was not to be bought at the chemist’s.

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

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

And they went on a good way.

“See how the sky is becoming overcast,” said John,

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pointing straight before him. "Those are terribly thick clouds."

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

But that was not so near as it looked; they had to walk for a whole day before they came to the mountains where the black woods grew straight up towards heaven, and there were stones almost as big as a whole town. It might certainly be hard work to get quite across them, and for that reason John and his comrade went into the inn to rest themselves well, and gather strength for the morrow's journey.

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

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

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The poor man who managed the play was very much frightened and quite sorrowful about his queen, for she was the daintiest little doll he possessed, and now the ugly bulldog had bitten off her head. But afterwards, when the people went away, the stranger said that he would put her to rights again ; and then he brought out his little box and rubbed the doll with the ointment with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as the doll had been rubbed, she was whole again ; yes, she could even move all her limbs by herself ; it was no longer necessary to pull her by her string. The doll was like a living person, only that she could not speak. The man who had the little puppet-show was very glad, now he had not to hold this doll any more. She could dance by herself, and none of the others could do that.

When night came on and all the people in the inn had gone to bed, there was some one who sighed so fearfully, and went on doing it so long, that they all got up to see who this could be. The man who had shown the play went to his little theatre, for it was there that somebody was sighing. All the wooden dolls lay mixed together, the king and all his followers ; and it was they who sighed so pitiably, and stared with their glass eyes ; for they wished to be rubbed a little as the queen had been, so that they might be able to move by themselves. The queen at once sank on her knees and stretched forth her beautiful crown, as if she begged, " Take this from me, but rub my husband and my courtiers ! " Then the poor man, the proprietor of the little theatre and the dolls, could not refrain from weeping, for he was really sorry for them. He immediately promised the travelling companion that he would give him all the money he should receive the next evening for the representation if the latter would only anoint four or five of his dolls. But the comrade said he did not require anything at all but the sword the man wore

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by his side ; and, on receiving this, he anointed six of the dolls, who immediately began to dance so gracefully that all the girls, the living human girls, fell a-dancing too. The coachman and the cook danced, the waiter and the chambermaid, and all the strangers, and the fire-shovel and tongs ; but these latter fell down just as they made their first leaps. Yes, it was a merry night !

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

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

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

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

They now travelled for many, many miles over the

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

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

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it quite black before they drank it, they were in such deep mourning—and they certainly could not do more.

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

Then they heard the people outside shouting “Hurrah!” The Princess came by; and she was really so beautiful that all the people forgot how wicked she was, and that is why they cried “Hurrah!” Twelve beautiful virgins, all in white silk gowns, and each with a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black steeds at her side. The Princess herself had a snow-white horse, decked with diamonds and rubies. Her riding-habit was all of cloth of gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam; the golden crown on her head was just like little stars out of the sky, and her mantle was sewn together out of more than a thousand beautiful butterflies’ wings. In spite of this, she herself was much more lovely than all her clothes.

When John saw her his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly utter a word. The Princess looked just like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamt on the night when his father died. He found her so enchanting that he could not help loving her greatly. It could not be true that she was a wicked witch, who caused people to be hanged or beheaded if they could not guess the riddles she put to them.

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

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



That was a strange garden for a Princess.

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

John opened it, and the old King came towards him in a dressing-gown and embroidered slippers; he had the crown on his head, and the sceptre in one hand and the orb in the other. “Wait a little!” said he, and put the orb under his arm, so that he could reach out his hand to John. But as soon as he learned that his visitor was a suitor, he began to weep so violently that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the ground, and he was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing-gown. Poor old King!

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

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

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

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

Then the Princess herself came riding into the courtyard with all her ladies; and they went out to her and wished her good-morning. She was beautiful to look at, and she gave John her hand. And he cared much more for her then than before—she could certainly not be a

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wicked witch, as the people asserted. Then they betook themselves to the hall, and the little pages waited upon them with preserves and gingerbread nuts. But the old King was quite sorrowful; he could not eat anything at all. Besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

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

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

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

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

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

All the people in the town had heard directly that a new suitor for the Princess had arrived; and there was great sorrow on that account. The theatre remained closed; the women who sold cakes tied bits of crape round their

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sugar men, and the King and the priests were on their knees in the churches. There was great lamentation, for John would not, they all thought, fare better than the other suitors had fared.

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

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

"How it hails! how it hails!" said the Princess at every blow she got from the rod; and it served her right. At last she arrived at the mountain, and knocked there. There was a rolling like thunder, and the mountain opened, and the Princess went in. The travelling companion followed

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her, for no one could see him—he was invisible. They went through a great, long passage, where the walls shone in quite a peculiar way : there were more than a thousand glowing spiders running up and down the walls and gleaming like fire. Then they came into a great hall built of silver and gold ; flowers as big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls ; but no one could pluck these flowers, for the stems were ugly, poisonous snakes, and the flowers were streams of fire pouring out of their mouths. The whole ceiling was covered with shining glow-worms and sky-blue bats flapping their thin wings. It looked quite terrific ! In the middle of the floor was a throne, carried by four skeleton horses, with harness of fiery red spiders ; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black mice biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of pink spider's web, trimmed with the prettiest little green flies, which gleamed like jewels. On the throne sat an old magician, with a crown on his ugly head and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the Princess on the forehead, made her sit down beside him on the costly throne, and then the music began. Great black grasshoppers played on jews'-harps, and the owl beat her wings upon her body, because she hadn't a drum. That was a strange concert ! Little black goblins with a Jack-o'-lantern light on their caps danced about in the hall. But no one could see the travelling companion : he had placed himself just behind the throne, and heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now came in, were very grand and noble ; but he who could see it all knew very well what it all meant. They were nothing more than broomsticks with heads of cabbages on them, which the magician had animated by his power, and to whom he had given embroidered clothes. But that did not matter, for, you see, they were only wanted for show.

After there had been a little dancing, the Princess told

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the magician that she had a new suitor, and therefore she inquired of him what she should think of to ask the suitor when he should come to-morrow to the palace.

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

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

It was quite early in the morning when John awoke. The travelling companion also got up, and said he had had a wonderful dream in the night, about the Princess and her shoe ; and he therefore begged John to ask if the Princess had not thought about her shoe. For it was this he had heard from the magician in the mountain.

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

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and to the palace. The entire hall was filled with people : the judges sat in their arm-chairs and had eider-down pillows behind their heads, for they had a great deal to think about. The old King stood up, and wiped his eyes with a white pocket-handkerchief. Now the Princess

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came in. She was much more beautiful than yesterday, and bowed to all in a very affable manner; but to John she gave her hand, and said, "Good-morning to you."

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

Wonderful! How glad the old King was! He threw a somersault beautiful to behold. And all the people clapped their hands in honour of him, and of John, who had guessed right the first time!

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

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

That evening John went early to bed, said his prayers, and went to sleep quite quietly. But the travelling com-

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panion bound his wings to his back and his sword by his side, and took all three rods with him, and so flew away to the palace.

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

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

“One may have too much of a good thing,” said the magician. “I shall think of something of which he has never thought, or he must be a greater conjuror than I. But now we will be merry.” And he took the Princess by the hands, and they danced about with all the little goblins and Jack-o'-lanterns that were in the room. The red spiders jumped just as merrily up and down the walls. It looked as if fiery flowers were spurting out. The owl played the drum, the crickets piped, and the black grasshoppers played on the jews'-harp. It was a merry ball.

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

Then they flew away into the bad weather, and the travelling companion broke his three rods across their backs. Never had the magician been out in such a hail-

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storm. In front of the palace he said good-bye to the Princess and whispered to her at the same time, "Think of my head." But the travelling companion heard it; and just at the moment when the Princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the magician was about to turn back, he seized him by his long beard, and with his sabre cut off the ugly conjuror's head just by the shoulders so that the magician did not even see him. The body he threw out into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped into the water, and then tied it in his silk handkerchief, took it with him into the inn, and then lay down to sleep.

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

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

"Of what have I thought?" she asked John. And he immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the ugly magician's head. All present shuddered, for it was terrible to look upon; but the Princess sat just like a statue, and would not utter a single word. At length she stood up, and gave John her hand, for he had guessed well. She did not look at any one, only sighed aloud, and said, "Now you are my lord!—this evening we will hold our wedding."

"I like that!" cried the King. "Thus I will have it."

All present cried "Hurrah!" The soldiers' band played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake-women

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

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

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

But still the Princess was a witch, and did not like John. That occurred to the travelling companion ; and so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it, and told John that he must put a large tub of water before the Princess's bed ; and when the Princess was about to get into bed, he should give her a little push, so that she should fall into the tub ; and then he must dip her three times, after he had put in the feathers and poured in the drops ; she would then lose her magic qualities, and love him very much.

John did all that the travelling companion had advised him to do. The Princess screamed out loudly while he dipped her in the tub, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great coal-black swan with fiery eyes. When she came up the second time above the water, the swan was white with the exception of a black ring round her neck. John let the water close for the third time over the bird, and in the same moment it was again changed to the

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beautiful Princess. She was more beautiful even than before, and thanked him, with tears in her lovely eyes, that he had freed her from the magic spell.

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

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

And in the same moment he vanished.

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



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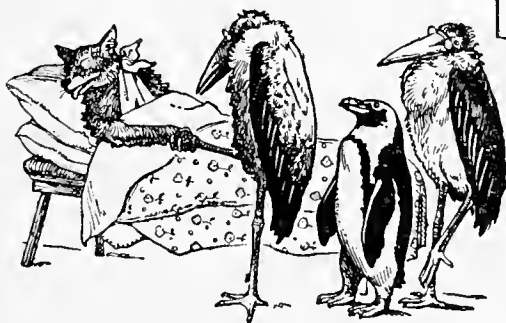
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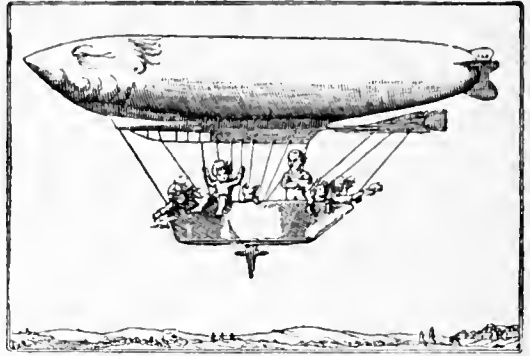


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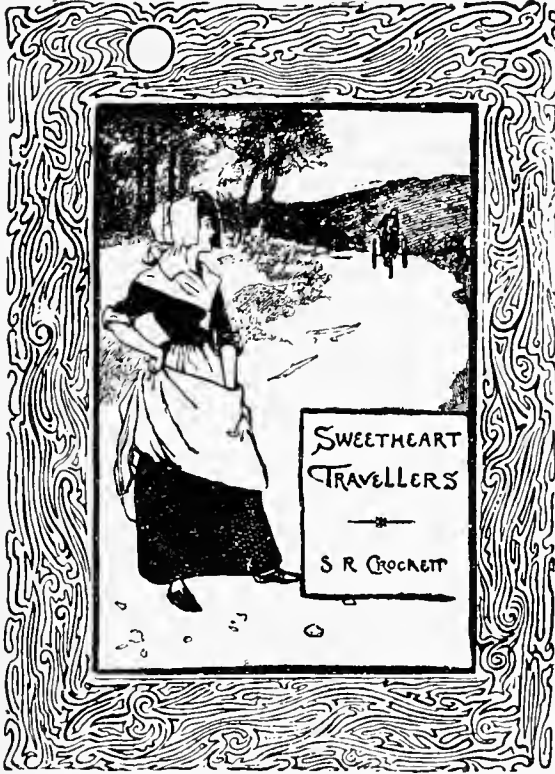
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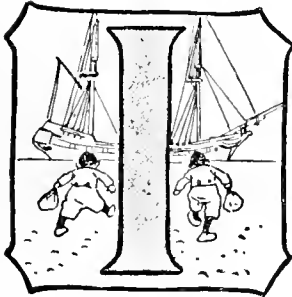
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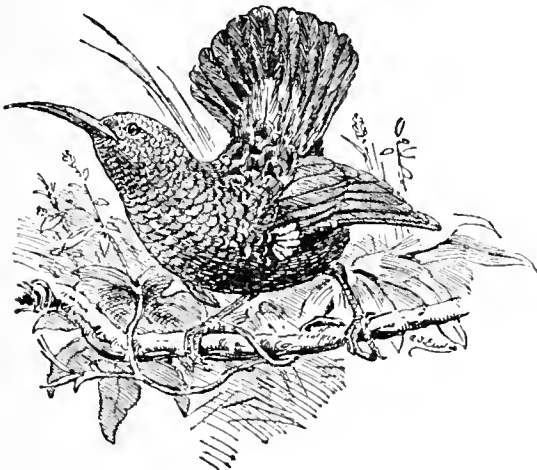
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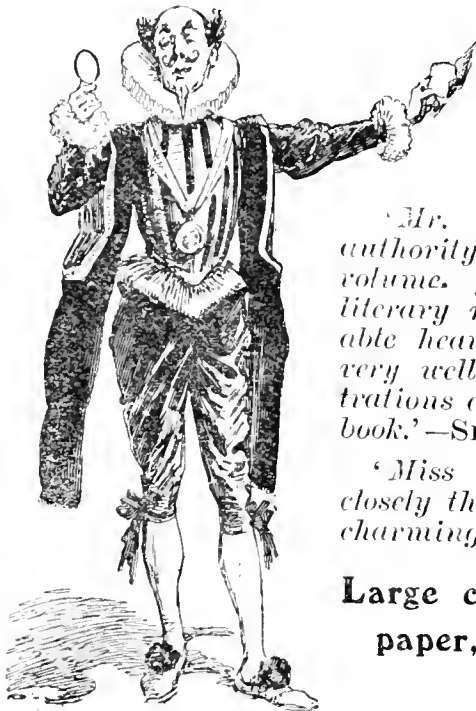
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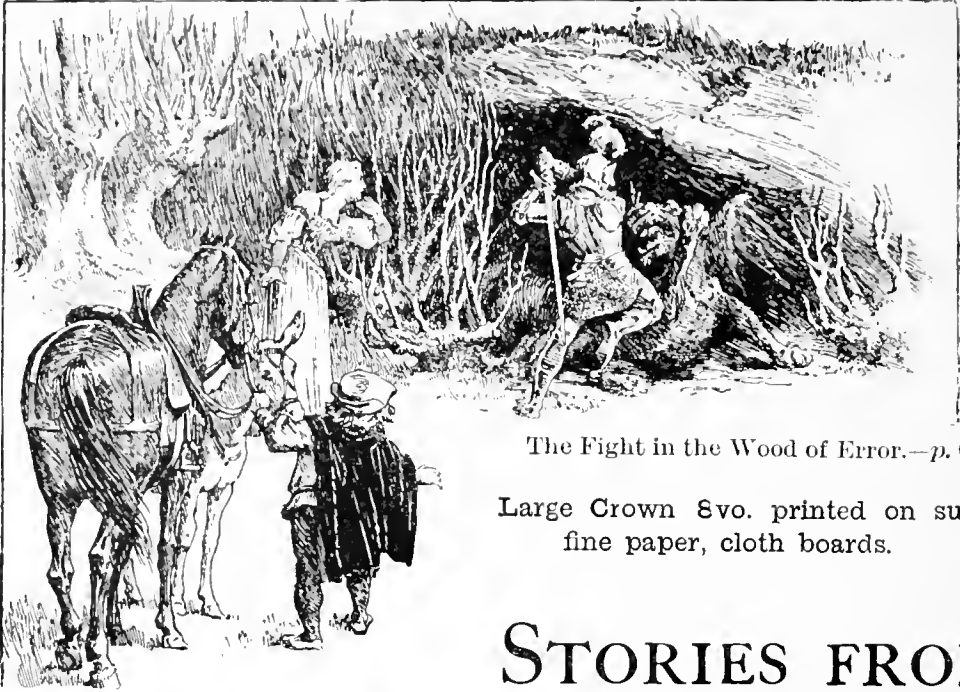
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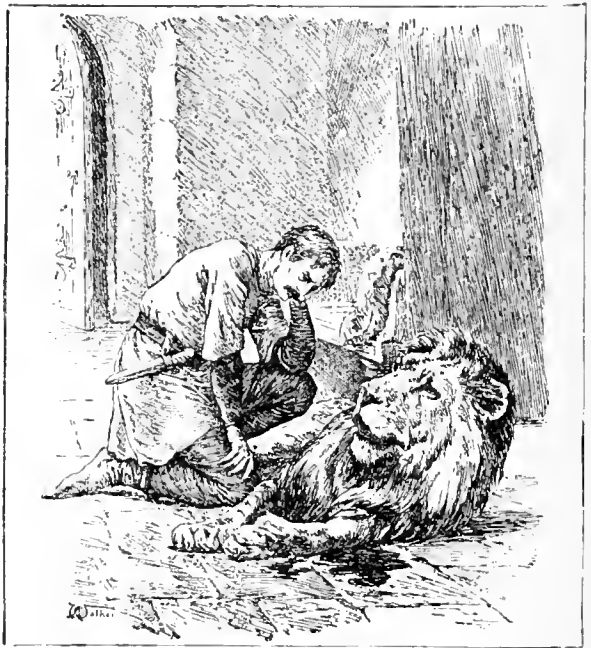
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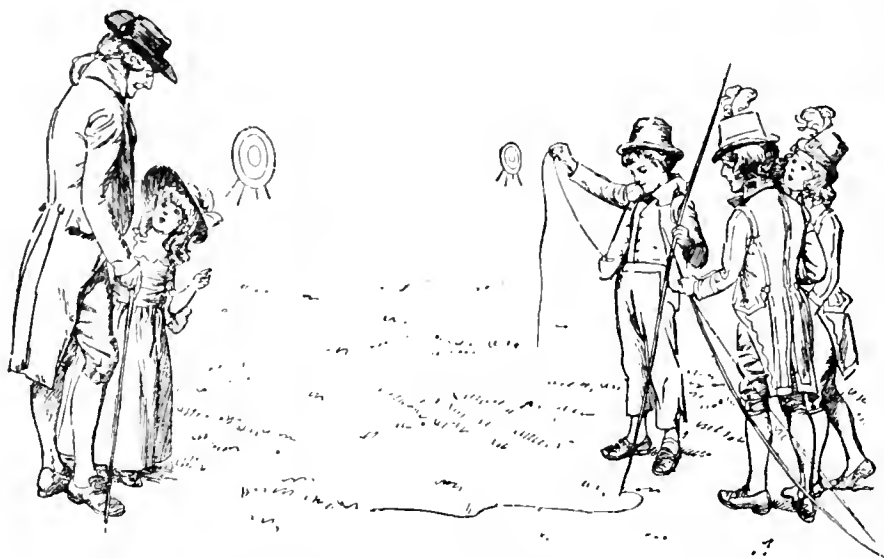
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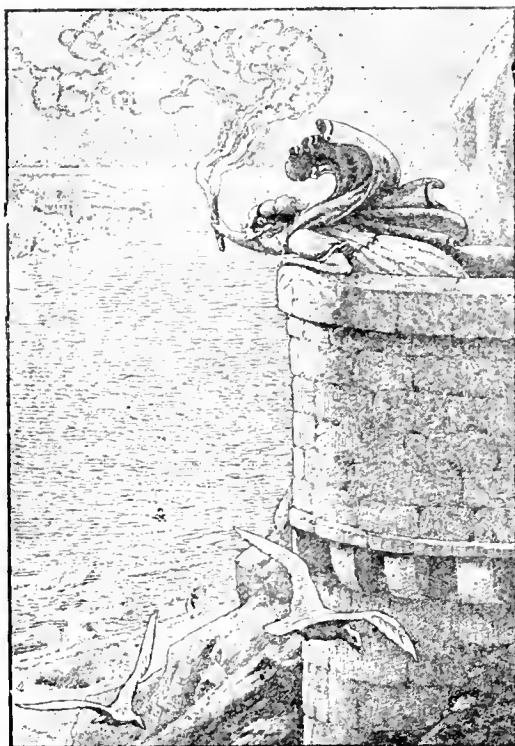
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