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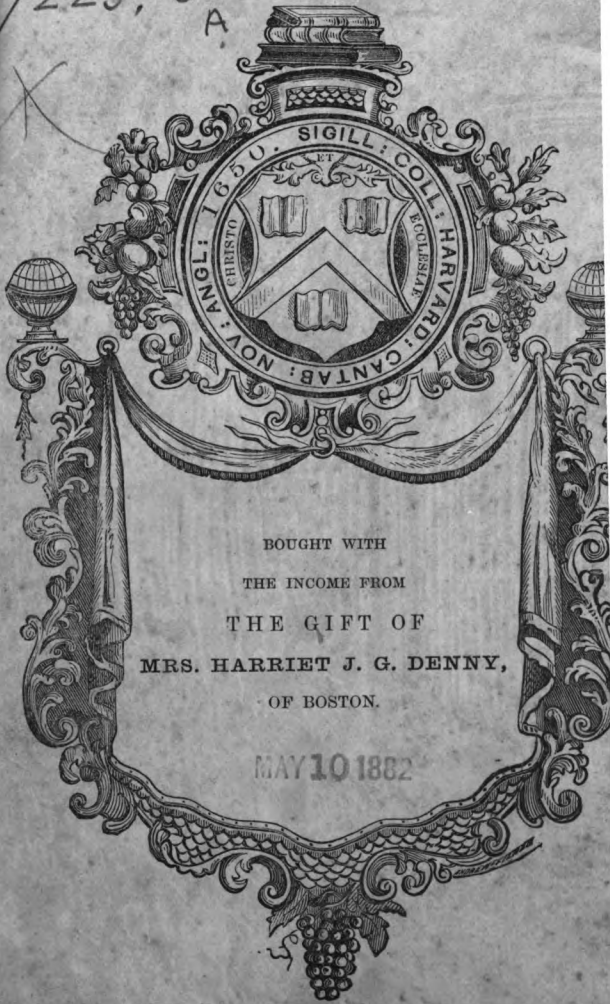
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SLAVONIC
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“PLAY, OH PIPE, PLAY!”

[Page 178.

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SLAVONIC
FAIRY TALES.

COLLECTED AND TRANSLATED FROM
THE RUSSIAN, POLISH, SERVIAN, AND BOHEMIAN.

BY
JOHN T. NAAKÉ,

Of the British Museum

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

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HENRY S. KING & Co.,
65 CORNHILL, AND 12 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.
1874.

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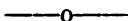
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P R E F A C E .



IT is no longer thought needful to apologise for a collection of folk-tales. They are not even the peculiar property of the children any longer; the gravest scholars do not disdain to examine and discuss them, and all parts of the world, from Mongolia to Cafraria, are ransacked to produce them. Here is presented a little gathering of these wild flowers, plucked not for their scientific interest,—though that they possess,—but for the wild fresh perfume that clings about them.

Poland, Russia, Bohemia, and Servia have contributed stories to this little collection. It may be said that the Bohemian tales, perhaps through the genius of the poets who have preserved them, have, in their original form, more art, more grace, more completeness of outline, than the others. Those from Poland reflect the passive virtues and genial warmth of the peasants whose lives they illustrate. A greater simplicity, amounting

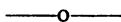
even to childishness, will be found to characterise the Russian stories. Those from Servia are in some features unique, and may be found the most interesting of the series. The exalted imagination of the Servian race is allied with keen and homely sense, and their vigorous and beautiful romances called forth the admiration of Goethe. It is hoped that these varied characteristics may not wholly have evaporated in translation.

The translator makes no claim to the honour of having collected these stories. He has selected his materials from the Polish of K. W. Wojcicki; from the Russian of M. Maksimovich, B. Bronnitsuin, and E. A. Chudinsky; from the Bohemian of K. J. Erben, M. Mikssichok, J. K. Z. Radostova, and J. K. Tyl; and lastly, from the Servian of W. S. Karajich. Wojcicki's work has appeared in German, and the Servian collection has been excellently rendered in the same language by the daughter of W. S. Karajich. But none of these tales, as far as the translator is aware, have hitherto appeared in an English dress.

J. T. N.

LONDON, *April*, 1874.

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SLAVONIC FAIRY TALES.

3 CARRIED AWAY BY THE WIND.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

152 A CERTAIN magician being angry with a young peasant, came to the hut where he lived and stuck a new and sharp knife under the threshold, repeating an incantation as he did so, accompanied by this wish : " May this peasant be seized and carried away by the wind into the air, there to remain for seven whole years."

The peasant went into the fields to make hay, when all of a sudden a great wind arose. It scattered the hay over the field, and seized the peasant himself. In vain he struggled, in vain he caught hold with his strong arms of hedge or branch of tree, the invisible power lifted him up and carried him away.

Borne, as if on the wings of the wind, among the clouds, he flew like a wild pigeon. The sun began already to

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disappear in the west, and the hungry peasant could see the smoke ascending from the cottages in his village, where supper was cooking. At one time he could almost touch the chimney pots with his feet, and he screamed aloud for help. But he screamed and wept in vain; no one heard his cries, or saw his bitter tears.

He was thus carried about in the air for nearly three months, and by that time, from hunger and thirst, had become dried up like a piece of wood. He travelled over a large part of the world, but the wind carried him chiefly over the village where he had lived.

With tears in his eyes he would look on the hut where dwelt his betrothed. He would see her coming out with dinner for some one of the family. He would spread his thin, cold arms towards her, and call her by her name. His voice would die in his throat, while the girl would not even look up.

Away and away the peasant was borne by the wind. Presently he saw the cruel magician standing before his own house. The magician looked up and shouted to him :

“Ah, I have not done with you yet; you shall be thus carried by the wind over your own village for seven long years. You shall suffer constantly, and wish you were dead; but you shall not be able to die.”

“Oh, my little father, my master, forgive me if I have

offended you!" cried the poor fellow from above. "Look at me; see, my mouth is as dry as a chip! Look at my face and hands—^{nothing but bones!} the flesh is gone from them, and the bones only are left! Have mercy upon me!"

The magician whispered a few words, and the peasant stopped in his circular motion, and remained still in the air.

"It is all very well to ask my pardon; but what will you promise to give me if I let you down?"

"All that you ask for," cried the poor peasant; and he put his hands together as in supplication, and knelt down in the air.

"Will you give me your sweetheart?" demanded the magician. "I want her for my wife. If you will promise to give her to me, I will let you come down once more to the earth."

The peasant was silent for a moment. Thought he to himself: "When I am once more on the ground, I'll see what can be done." He therefore called out to the magician,—

"Oh, master! you ask a great sacrifice from me; but if it cannot be otherwise, let it be as you will."

Hereupon the magician blew upon him, and he came down to the ground. Oh, how happy he was when he felt that he could walk, and that the wind had no more power over him!

He hastened home. Before the door he met his betrothed. At the sight of her long lost lover, over whose fate she had often wept, the astonished girl cried out with surprise. The peasant pushed her gently aside, and went into the house. There he saw the farmer who employed him, and said to him, with tears in his eyes,—

“I cannot serve you any longer, nor can I marry your daughter. I love her as dearly as my sight, but she can never be mine.”

The countryman looked at him in wonder, and seeing how sorrowful was his thin, pale face, formerly so fat and rosy, he asked the reason why he refused to marry his daughter.

The peasant told him all: his journey in the air, and the promise he had made the magician. The farmer, having heard him out, bade the poor fellow be of good cheer. He then took a purse full of money, and went to a witch for advice. When he returned in the evening, he was smiling and happy, and said to the peasant,—

“Go to-morrow, before daylight, to the witch, and all will be right.”

The peasant, weary as he was, went to bed, and soon fell fast asleep. He got up, however, before daylight, and went to the witch. He found her crouching before a fire burning herbs. The witch told him to stand quietly by. The morning was calm and beautiful, but

suddenly a strong wind arose, and made the hut tremble. Then the witch took the peasant into the yard, and told him to look up. He raised his eyes and saw the wicked magician, with nothing on but his night-shirt, whirling round and round in the air.

“There is your enemy,” said the witch; “he will hurt you no more. If you wish him to see your wedding, do as I will tell you. For the rest, he will suffer the same punishment as he had designed for you.”

The delighted peasant ran back home. In a month’s time he was married. When the guests were dancing at his wedding, the peasant went into the yard, looked up, and saw above the hut the magician spinning round and round in the air. He took a new knife, and aiming at the magician, threw it with all his might. The magician fell down, and then it was seen that he was nailed by the foot to the ground; thus he was obliged to stand by the window, a miserable witness of the happiness of the peasant and his friends.

On the following morning the magician had disappeared from before the hut. Some people said they saw him flying through the air over a large lake some miles off; before and behind him were large flocks of crows, which, by their croaking, told of his continued flight through space.

WHY IS THE SOLE OF MAN'S FOOT UNEVEN ?

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

WHEN the evil angels rebelled against heaven and escaped to the earth, they took the sun with them. Their prince, the archfiend, stuck it on a lance, and carried it on his shoulder.

When, however, the earth complained to heaven that it would be quite burnt up by the sun, an archangel was sent down to see how he could take the sun away from the archfiend. The archangel descended to the earth, and made friends with the prince of the rebels, who, however, at once divined the object of the visit, and stood, accordingly, on his guard.

One day, as they walked together on the earth, they came to the sea, and agreed to bathe in it. The archfiend stuck the lance, with the sun on the top of it, in ground. After a little while the archangel said, —
“Let us dive and see who will go down the deepest.”

“Good; do you begin,” said the arch fiend.

The archangel dived and brought up some sand between his teeth from the bottom of the sea.

It was now the other's turn to dive; but the archfiend was afraid that, during his absence, the archangel might fly away with the sun. Suddenly a thought struck him. He spat upon the ground, and a magpie arose out of it. This bird was to keep watch over the sun while the archfiend also made his plunge and brought up some sand from the bottom of the sea between his teeth.

As soon as the fiend had dived, the archangel made the sign of the cross with his hand, and the sea was immediately covered with ice nine ells thick. Then he seized the sun and flew away with it to heaven.

The magpie screamed with all her might. The archfiend, hearing her voice, guessed at once what had happened, and hastened back. When he came up, however, he found he could not make his way through, as the sea was frozen over. He therefore dived again to the bottom, brought up a large stone, broke the ice with it, and then rushed after the archangel.

The archangel fled through the air with the utmost speed, followed by the fiend. Just as the angel had one foot in heaven, the fiend overtook him, and with his claws, as he tried to stop him, tore off a large piece of flesh from the sole of the other foot.

The archangel, severely wounded, appeared with the sun in heaven, and weeping, said, "What shall I do, so mutilated as I am?"

And it was said to him, "Cease from thy tears, and despair not. It shall happen that, henceforth, man also, like you, shall have a hollow in the sole of his foot."

As it was said, so it came to pass. From that day there appeared a small hollow in the sole of man's foot, and thus it has remained unto this day.

THE SNOW-CHILD.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

IN a certain village lived a peasant named Ivan, and his wife Mary. They were very fond of each other, and had lived happily together for many years, but unfortunately they had no children. The poor people were sad on that account. Their hearts, however, were gladdened at the sight of their neighbours' children. What could be done? It was evidently the will of Heaven; and in this world, Heaven's will be done!

One day, in winter, after a great quantity of snow had fallen on the ground, the children of the village where Ivan and Mary lived ran into the fields to play. The old couple looked at them from the window. The children ran about, played all sorts of frolics together, and at last began to make a snow-man. Ivan and Mary sat down quietly watching them. Suddenly Ivan smiled and said,—

“I say, wife, let us go out and make a snow-man too.”

Mary was also in a merry mood.

“Yes,” she answered; “let us go out and play, though we are old. But why should we make a snow-man? Better to make a snow-child, since Heaven will not grant us a live one.”

“Very good,” said Ivan.

He put on his cap, and went with his wife into the garden.

They really set about making a baby of snow. They made the body; then arms and legs; then put on the top a ball of snow for a head.

“Heaven help you!” cried one who passed by.

“Many thanks,” replied Ivan.

“Heaven’s help is always acceptable,” added Mary.

“What are you doing?” continued the stranger.

“What you yourself see,” answered Ivan.

“We are making a Snyegurka!” * cried Mary, laughing.

Then they made a little nose and a chin, two little holes for eyes, and as soon as Ivan had finished—oh, wonderful!—a sweet breath came out of its mouth! Ivan lifted up his arms and stared. The little holes were no longer holes; in their place were two bright blue eyes, and the tiny lips smiled lovingly upon him.

* Snow-child.

“Mercy on us! what is this?” cried Ivan, devoutly crossing himself.

The snow-child turned its head towards him—it was really alive! It moved its arms and legs inside the snow, like an infant in swaddling clothes.

“Oh, Ivan,” cried Mary, trembling with joy, “Heaven has at last given us a baby!” and she seized the child in her arms.

The snow fell off “Snyegurka,” as Mary called her, like the shell from a chicken. Mary, delighted beyond measure, held in her arms a beautiful, living girl.

“Oh, my love! my love! My darling Snyegurka!” cried the kind-hearted woman, tenderly embracing her long-wished for, and now unexpectedly granted child. Then she rushed into the hut with the infant in her arms. Ivan was astounded at this wonderful event; as to Mary, she was beside herself with joy.

Snyegurka grew every hour; each day she looked more beautiful than before. Ivan and Mary were delighted with her, and their hut, once so quiet and lonely, was now full of life and merriment. The girls of the village visited them constantly; dressed and played with Snyegurka as if she were a doll; talked to her; sang songs to her; joined her with them in all their games, and taught her all they knew themselves. Snyegurka was very clever, and quickly learnt everything

she was told. During the winter she grew up as tall as a girl of thirteen years old; she understood and could talk about most things around her, and had such a sweet voice that one would never tire of listening to it. Besides this, she was kind, obedient, and affectionate. Her flesh was as white as snow; her eyes looked like two forget-me-nots; and her hair was of a light flaxen colour. Her cheeks only had no rosy hue in them, because there was no blood in her veins. In spite of this she was so beautiful, that, having once seen her, you would wish to see her again and again. It would have done your heart good to see how she enjoyed herself, and how happy she was when at play. Everybody loved her; she was idolised by Mary, who would often say to her husband, "Heaven has granted us joy in our old age; sorrow has left my heart!"

Ivan would answer, "Heaven be praised! But in this world happiness is seldom lasting, and sorrow is good for us all."

The long winter had gradually glided away. The glorious sun again shone in the sky, and warmed the cold earth. Where the snow melted, green grass appeared, and the skylark poured forth its sweet notes. The girls of the village collected together, and welcomed the spring with a song:—

"Beautiful Spring! How did you come to us? How

did you make your journey? On a plough or on a harrow?"*

From a gay, sprightly girl, Snyegurka suddenly became sad.

"What is the matter with you, my dearest child?" Mary would often ask, drawing Snyegurka nearer to her heart. "Are you ill? You are not so happy as you used to be. Perhaps an evil eye has glanced at you?"

Snyegurka would simply answer, "I am well; mother."

The snow had now completely melted away, and the genial spring appeared with its warm and sunny days. The meadows and gardens began to be covered with radiant and sweet-scented flowers. The nightingale and other songsters of the woods and fields resumed their beautiful melodies. In a word, all nature became brighter and more charming.

Snyegurka alone grew sadder and sadder. She began to shun her playfellows, and to hide herself from the rays of the sun like the May-flower under the tree. She would only play near a well of spring water—splashing and dabbling in it with her hand—beneath the shade of

* It is customary in some Slavonic countries to welcome the appearance of spring with song.

a green willow. She grew daily fonder of the shade, the cool air, and the rain shower. During rain, and in the evening, she would become more gay. When the sky became overcast with dark clouds, and a thick shower of hail came pouring down, Snyegurka was as pleased as any other girl would have been at the sight of a pearl necklace. When the hail melted and disappeared beneath the warm rays of the sun, Snyegurka cried bitterly, as if she herself would melt into tears; as an affectionate sister might weep over a lost brother.

The spring now ended, the summer came, and the Feast of St. John was close at hand. All the girls from the village went into the wood to play. Several of them came to the hut, and asked Mistress Mary to allow Snyegurka to go with them. Mary was at first afraid to let Snyegurka go, and the girl herself did not care about it, but they could not very well refuse the invitation. Then Mary thought it would perhaps amuse Snyegurka. She therefore kissed her tenderly, saying,—

“Go, my dear child; go and enjoy yourself. And you, my good girls, take care of my Snyegurka. You know she is as dear to me as my very sight.”

“All right! we’ll take care!” cried the girls; and they caught hold of Snyegurka by the arms, and ran away together to the forest.

There they made garlands and bouquets of flowers,

and sang songs, while Snyegurka took part in their play.

After sunset the girls piled up a small heap of dry grass and brushwood, lighted it, and, with garlands on their heads, stood in a line, one close upon the other. They put Snyegurka at the end, and said, "When you see us running, you run after us." Then they began to sing, and to jump over the fire.

Suddenly they heard a painful cry. They turned round quickly, but could see nothing. Greatly surprised, they looked at each other, and then noticed that Snyegurka was missing. "Oh, the mischievous puss!" cried the girls; "she has hidden herself."

They ran in every direction in search of her, but all in vain. They called her by her name, "Snyegurka!" but there was no answer.

"Perhaps she has gone home," cried some of the girls. They all ran back to the village—Snyegurka was not there!

They searched for her the whole night, the following, and the third day; they examined the forest,—every tree, every bush; but all to no purpose, Snyegurka was gone!

Old Ivan and Mary were almost broken-hearted at the loss of their beloved Snyegurka. Every day Mary went to the forest to look for her lost child. Poor woman!

like a tender mother full of grief and yearning for her young one, she cried aloud,—

“Ah, me! my Snyegurka! Ah, me! my darling dove! Where art thou?”

She often fancied she could hear her dear Snyegurka's painful cry when she disappeared. Alas! alas! Snyegurka was nowhere to be found.

Where had Snyegurka gone? Had some wild beast seized and dragged her into his lair? or a bird of prey carried her across the dark blue sea to its nest? No; neither bird nor beast had carried the girl away. When Snyegurka, following her companions, sprang over the fire, she melted away and changed in an instant into a beautiful white cloud, rose up, and disappeared in the sky for ever!

THE DEMON'S DANCE.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

WHEN the wind throws the dust up in the air, and whirls it round in a dry eddy, it shows the dance of an evil spirit. Whenever you see this, shut up at once all the doors and windows in your hut, or it will certainly do some mischief to your bones. If, however, you are courageous, and wish to obtain riches at the sacrifice of your soul, take a new knife that has been sprinkled with holy water, and throw it dexterously into the very middle of the whirlwind.

One day, a fearless young peasant, angry with the demon, who, in the shape of a hurricane, had blown off the roof of his barn, took up a new, consecrated knife, and stuck it in the ground in the very centre of the dust-eddy. In a moment the demon appeared, bent double, as if suffering great pain, and trembling with fear. He asked the peasant what he wanted with him.

“Mend my barn,” cried the man in a great fury. “Fill

up my potato hole with gold; then bring to my hut a keg of brandy and three sides of bacon."

"I will do it all," answered the demon; "but first take the knife out of the ground. It hurts me cruelly."

"No!" cried the peasant; "first do what I tell you."

The obedient spirit did all that was demanded of him. Some time after this the young peasant fell sick. As he was about to die, his friends, who were gathered round him, saw the demon standing at the head of the bed waiting for his soul. They all lamented his miserable fate, and his godfather said,—

"If, instead of asking for money, he had shot the demon with a silver button, he would have lived to be an old man, and have saved his soul."

THE PLAGUE-OMEN.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

A PEASANT, having lost his wife and children by the plague, fled from his desolate hut and sought refuge in the forest.

He wandered about the whole day; towards evening he made a hut of branches, lit a fire, and being tired soon fell asleep. It was already past midnight when he was awakened by a great noise. He jumped up and listened. He could hear, at a distance, merry songs, accompanied by the music of drums and pipes. He was greatly surprised at these rejoicings, especially when he remembered that the Plague was depopulating the country.

The music approached, and the terror-stricken peasant saw Homen* advancing through a wide road. "Homen"

* So written in the original Polish.

consisted of a number of spectres of the most extraordinary shapes and kinds. In the midst of them was a high, black waggon, on the top of which sat the Plague. The ghastly company increased at every step; for almost everything they met on the road changed into a spectre and followed the rest.

The peasant's fire was nearly out,—there remained only a good sized, half-burnt stem. As soon as Homen approached, the fire-brand stood up, spread out two arms from its sides, and the red embers changed into two shining eyes. It joined at once the train of the Plague, and began also to sing.

The peasant was thunderstruck. Almost beside himself with terror, he seized his axe and tried to strike the nearest spectre; but the axe fell from his hands, and was immediately changed into the shape of a tall woman. She shook her dark hair before his eyes, joined the throng, and began also to sing.

Homen passed on; the astonished peasant saw how trees, bushes, even owls, and other night birds, assumed various forms, and swelled the horrible company—the dreadful harbinger of wide-spread death. He fell senseless on the ground.

In the morning, when the warm sun awakened him, he found that all he had brought with him was broken to pieces: his goods spoiled, his clothes torn. He knew at

once that it was nothing else than Homen who had done him so much injury ; and thanking Heaven that at least his life was spared, he went further on in search of food and shelter.

STORY OF GOL VOYANSKY.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

A MOUJIK* was once ploughing a field with a miserable, lame mare. The poor beast was greatly tormented by gadflies and gnats. The moujik raised his whip, and with one stroke of the thong killed thirty-three gadflies, and a great number of gnats. The moujik reflected a little, and said to himself:—

“O-ho! I’ve become a hero. At one blow I’ve killed thirty-three knights and no end of common soldiers.”

The moujik was called Gol (the naked, or needy). Gol began to think himself a great man; he unharnessed his mare, scrambled on to her back, and rode on till he came to a high road. There he dismounted, cut down a tree, and set it up as a sign-post with the following inscription: “Here passed Gol Voyansky.† He en-

* Russian peasant.

† Gol the Hero.

countered the infidels, and at one blow killed thirty-three knights and a countless multitude of common soldiers. Should any knight pass this way, let him read this inscription, and follow Gol Voyansky." He then remounted his mare and started off afresh.

Soon afterwards, Churila Plenkovich passed by the post, and, having read the inscription, was greatly surprised at the announcement of such astonishing prowess. Although he had never heard of Gol before, he was very anxious to make friends with so valiant a knight. Churila galloped after Gol, and soon overtook him.

"Did not a knight called Gol Voyansky pass this way?" he cried.

"I am Gol," answered the moujik. "And who may you be?"

"Churila Plenkovich," the young knight replied, with a bow, saying to himself as he did so, "Well, this is something wonderful! A common moujik on a sorry horse! Why, it is really disgraceful to be found in such company!"

"Go on my left side," said Gol.

Churila, full of wonder, did so, staring all the time at our hero and his miserable steed.

Meanwhile Eruslan Lazarevich came to the post, and having also read the inscription, galloped after Gol. He soon came up with him, and seeing his friend Churila,

asked him whether he had seen Knight Gol. Churila pointed to his companion. Eruslan Lazarevich bowed to Gol. He, too, was greatly surprised at the appearance of the self-made knight!

“Go on my right side,” said Gol to him.

At that moment another knight approached; it was Prince Bova, who, having read the inscription, was anxious to find Gol, the famous conqueror of the infidels. He, also, was much astonished at the sight of a moujik on a wretched beast, and two valiant knights riding by his side, and conversing with him. Gol was saying to them,—

“You are welcome, companions in arms!”

Prince Bova bowed to Gol, and asked his name.

“Gol Voyansky,” answered the moujik. “And your name?”

“I am Prince Bova,” replied the knight.

“Come and join us in our adventures,” said Gol; “you are neither too soon nor too late. Ride by the side of Eruslan.”

The knights followed Gol, and soon reached some forbidden meadows* belonging to a heroine princess.

“We must not enter here,” said Eruslan.

“Nonsense!” cried Gol. “Let the horses go on into the field.”

* Royal preserves—rigidly exclusive.

“Gol Voyansky,” said Eruslan, “the Princess is very powerful. She has at her command twenty-two knights and a dragon called Zilant, the brother of Tugarin.”

“That’s a mere trifle for me,” said Gol. “You are not afraid of them? I could kill them all as easily as flies.”

“Very well,” said Eruslan; “if that is the case, let us go into the meadows. We shall soon have to fight.”

They entered the field, dismounted, and let their horses loose to graze. Seeing a white, empty tent, they went into it, sat down at the opening, and began to look about them. Gol, being tired, took off his jacket, lay down on the ground, and was soon fast asleep.

“Gol has great confidence in himself,” remarked Prince Bova.

Meanwhile the alarm was raised in the Princess’s castle; bells rang and trumpets sounded. A company of soldiers was despatched, headed by three knights fully armed, to fight the trespassers.

“Get up, Gol!” cried Churila, “the enemy is upon us!”

Gol opened his eyes, and gaping, cried,—

“What’s the matter? Three knights—three gadflies; a company of soldiers—gnats. They won’t let me sleep, eh? Here, Churila, go you and fight them. Kill them all but one; send him to the Princess, and let him tell

her that I, Knight Gol Voyansky, am come to marry her." Having said this he went to sleep again.

Churila mounted his horse, fought for a long time, and finally succeeded in slaying his opponents. He spared one man only, and sent him to the Princess with Gol's message. But instead of a verbal answer, the Princess sent out six knights and three companies of soldiers.

The knights again awakened Gol.

"That's nothing!" cried our hero. "At one blow I could kill them all. Here, Prince Bova, go you and make an end of them; spare one, and send him to the Princess."

Prince Bova killed the knights and routed the little army. Hereupon the Princess sent out twelve knights and six companies of soldiers. They advanced amid the clash of arms and the sound of trumpets.

"O-ho!" cried Gol, getting up; "how many are there of them? Twelve gadflies and a great many gnats. Here, Eruslan, go and fight them; if you can't beat them, I'll come and help you."

Eruslan mounted his steed, and drew his trusty sword. How he hewed about him—right and left! He slew all the knights; the soldiers, terrified, fled from the field. The Princess saw it was a hopeless case. As a last resource, however, she sent out Zilant the Dragon.

Zilant roared tremendously as he came out of his iron nest. It was suspended in the air by twelve iron chains, tied to twelve oak trees. He flew out like an arrow, and called upon the intruders to prepare for the fight.

“It’s my turn now,” said Gol to his knights-companions. “Alas!” he thought within himself, “I must go—to die! It’s all over with me, but I shall at least fall like a hero.”

Having devoutly crossed himself, he mounted his mare, waved his axe, and, shutting his eyes, rode to meet the dragon.

Zilant roared more furiously than ever at the sight of Gol, thinking the moujik was sent out to mock him. Meanwhile, poor Gol, whispering to himself, “Oh, my father and brothers! remember my name—think of me when I am gone!” awaited the approach of death.

Zilant stared at the peasant. “Surely,” he thought, “there is some trickery here. A moujik—and on such a beast—sent out to fight me! Why, with a click of a little finger he could be tossed half a dozen yards.”

In his fear of treachery he stooped, and began to examine Gol’s saddle. In an instant Gol rose up, and gave the dragon such a tremendous blow on the head with his axe that he fell down stunned, and rolled over on the sand. Then Gol cut and chopped at him until he had hewn him into pieces like so much wood. Having killed

the dragon, Gol took his helmet, and returned with it to his companions. Hereupon the Princess ordered the gates of her palace to be opened, and invited the knights to an entertainment. When she saw Gol she greatly wondered wherein his strength lay. She put her hand upon his shoulder, and pressed him down so heavily that Gol could with difficulty stand under it.

“Welcome, valiant knight!” cried the Princess. “I have always admired courage.”

Then she squeezed his hand so hard that the poor fellow ground his teeth together to prevent his screaming out with pain.

“Defend our kingdom,” continued the Princess, “and be our guardian.”

Gol said to himself, “Would that I could be sure to keep a whole bone in my skin.”

The Princess ordered some strong, old mead to be brought, in order to try her visitors; but Gol would not touch a drop of it, saying that when his work was done he only drank of the water of heroes.*

“We have some of the water of heroes preserved,” said the Princess.

“How much have you?” asked Gol.

“A bottleful,” answered the Princess.

* A water the virtue of which is to inspire heroism and knightly qualities.

“Is it of the same size as ours?” asked Gol. “Our bottles contain barely a glassful.”

“Try it,” said the Princess. She ordered the bottle to be brought in, together with a golden cup.

Gol filled the cup, and drank the water; his strength greatly increased. The Princess wished to know how he liked it.

“I’ve hardly tasted it,” said Gol. He then drank three cups of the water, one after another.

“You have drunk enough,” cried the Princess; “there will be none left for me.”

“Glorious Water of Heroes!” exclaimed Gol, walking about and spreading out his arms. “Now let me try my strength.”

He ordered a thick rope, like a ship’s cable, and twisted it into an open noose. Then he mounted a splendid charger from the Princess’s stable, galloped about for a time, and jumped headlong into the middle of the noose. The cable burst asunder into fragments.

From that day Gol became a valiant knight. He assumed the manners suitable to his high position, and married the Princess. They had two daughters, whose names were “Daring,” and “Success.” Gol felt very proud whenever he looked at them; and there was no one living who ever doubted that he had killed thirty-three knights at a blow.

LIDUSHKA AND THE WATER DEMON'S WIFE.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

IN a certain place lived a young housewife, whose name was Lidushka. One day, as she was washing linen in a rivulet, a large, swollen frog swam towards her, looking so ugly that Lidushka, alarmed at the sight of it, jumped back a pace or two. The ugly looking frog approached nearly to the spot where Lidushka had just been washing, spread its legs out on the top of the water, and opening its mouth as if it wished to say something, stood perfectly still.

“You great, fat frog,” said Lidushka to herself; “what do you want here, and why do you open your mouth at me so?”

She then threw a piece of linen that she happened to have in her hand at the frog, wishing to drive it away that she might go on with her washing. The frog dived, and before Lidushka had time to look about her, it reappeared at the other side of the water, and began

to swim directly towards her. Lidushka again drove it away ; but the frog would persist in swimming towards her, opening its mouth all the time ; it would not be driven away, but continued to interrupt her in her work.

“Go away, you great, fat thing!” cried Lidushka at last, quite angrily. “Let me know when you have got your baby, and I will come and be its godmother;” and she threw another piece of linen at the frog.

“Very good, very good!” croaked the frog. Then it disappeared under the water, and disturbed Lidushka no more at her washing.

Not long afterwards, Lidushka came again to the rivulet to wash her linen at the usual place, when suddenly, the same frog she had before seen, only that it was much thinner now, swam towards her.

“I have got my children now,” croaked the frog, “and have come to ask you to be their godmother, as you promised.”

Lidushka remembered that she had said, not long before, that if the frog had a little one, and would let her know, she would be its godmother ; she therefore, although alarmed, did not refuse to do what she had once promised.

“But you silly thing,” said Lidushka full of anxiety, “where am I to go with you to gratify your wish, and to fulfil my promise?”

“Come, come, come!” croaked the frog, spreading out its legs and swimming on the water.

The promised godmother followed it sorrowfully along the bank of the rivulet. The frog swam on until it came to a dam, when it stopped and croaked, “Fear not, fear not! Remove that stone, and under it you will see a flight of stairs; they will lead you down to my house. Come, come! I will go before you.”

Having thus croaked, the frog disappeared under water, and the good-natured Lidushka saw no other way to get out of her trouble than simply to do what the frog told her. She removed the stone, and saw that there was really a flight of stairs leading under the dam. They were most wonderful stairs; neither of wood nor of stone, but as if made of the purest crystal, clear and transparent, like layers of water placed one below the other. Lidushka went timidly down a few steps, when the frog appeared hopping and croaking joyfully before her, because she was about to fulfil her promise of becoming godmother to its little ones. Lidushka, without further hesitation, descended the remainder of the beautiful steps. They soon reached the object they had in view—the frog’s house. It also was built entirely of crystal water. Like the stairs, by which they had come down, was the whole house—bright, sparkling, and transparent as crystal. The frog, full of joy, hopped about Lidushka, and took her to her little ones.

When the ceremony was over, Lidushka, in fulfilment of her promise, having taken her part in it as a god-mother, a splendid entertainment followed, to which many frogs from far and near had been invited. They all hopped about Lidushka, and croaked with great joy. There were various courses—boiled and pickled, roast and fried—but they all consisted of fish: the finest carp, jack, chad, trout, whiting, perch, and many other fish which Lidushka did not know even by name. She was amazed at the sight of all this. The dinner at an end, she took a walk about the house to see everything more closely.

In the course of her walk, she came to a small room, which looked like the kitchen. It was full of long shelves, and on the shelves stood rows of little jars. Lidushka was much surprised when she noticed that all the jars stood upside down. She was curious to know what was under them, and lifted one up. In a moment a little white dove flew from under it, joyfully fluttered its wings, rose up and disappeared. Lidushka lifted another jar, and, oh, wonderful! there flew from it another beautiful white dove, which joyfully fluttered its wings, and also disappeared. Then Lidushka lifted a third jar, and a third white dove flew out of it, fluttered its wings with joy, rose up in the air and vanished from her sight. She wondered greatly why these little doves were here con-

fined : for Heaven has given an immortal soul to man, that he may live for ever ; and wings to the birds, that they may fly freely over the earth.

“ Oh, how cruel ! ” said Lidushka to herself, “ to keep you here in everlasting darkness. Wait a moment, you dear little doves, and I will give you all your liberty. ” Thus saying she began to raise the little jars, one after another, and as from the first three, there flew from each successive jar a white dove. As if wishing to thank her for their release from their dark prison, each of them fluttered its wings with joy, then rose up and disappeared in the air.

Scarcely had Lidushka finished lifting up the little jars, when the mistress of the house, the ugly looking frog, hopped up to her croaking in a most dismal manner. She could see from afar what Lidushka was doing with the little jars.

“ Unhappy woman ! ” cried the frog ; “ why did you let those souls free ? Quick ! make haste and fly ! Search for a lump of dry earth or a piece of toasted bread. There comes my husband ! Quick ! or he will rob you of your soul ! ” *

When the amiable Lidushka heard this dreadful croak-

* It is said that the Water Démon has no power over those who hold either a handful of dry earth or a piece of toasted bread ; but that he can drown a man in even a spoonful of water.

ing, she turned round to see from what quarter the husband was coming; but she could see nothing of him. Only at a distance she observed a few buds of a beautiful red water-plant floating towards her on the top of the water. Suddenly she remembered what she had often heard before, that the Water Demon sometimes shows himself on the surface of the water in the shape of a cluster of red flowers. He does this especially to young girls as they are haymaking near a stream or pond, to induce them to try to reach the flowers with their rakes. He then pulls them in and drowns them.

Lidushka dashed up the stairs as fast as she could run, and fortunately reached the dry land in time. She was overjoyed at having released all the little white doves; they were the souls of the unfortunate people whom the Water Demon had drawn into his power, and had cruelly drowned. Each soul had been kept in a separate dark prison, in the shape of a little jar. Lidushka was the deliverer of them all.

THE HARE'S HEART.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

MANY years ago, on an island in the middle of the river Vistula stood a large castle, surrounded by a wall. At each corner was a high tower, from which flags streamed, and there strong guards kept watch. A leathern bridge, hung on chains, joined the island to the banks of the river.

In this castle lived a rich and valiant knight. Whenever a trumpet sounded over the entrance gate, it was a sure sign that the knight had returned victorious, and had brought valuable booty with him.

In the deep and dark dungeons of the castle many prisoners were kept, who were led out daily to work. They were compelled to repair the walls, and dig in the garden. Among them were an old woman and her husband. The old woman was a witch, and she was

determined to revenge herself for their sufferings on the knight; she only waited for an opportunity to find him alone.

One day the knight returned as usual to the castle; tired with his exertions, he lay down to rest on the green grass, and soon fell fast asleep. The witch, who had watched him, came out quietly from her hiding-place, and sprinkled some poppy seed over his eyes to make him sleep more soundly. She then struck him on the side of his breast where his heart lay, with a twig of an aspen tree. The knight's breast was immediately opened, and the wicked witch could see his brave heart quietly beating. The malicious old woman chuckled with delight, and with her bony fingers and long nails she took out the heart so dexterously, that the poor knight never awoke. Then she put in its place the heart of a hare, closed the opening, hid herself among the thick bushes, and awaited impatiently the result of her wickedness.

Before the knight was quite awake he already began to feel his timid heart. He, who once did not know what fear was, now trembled, and tossed his body uneasily about in his sleep. At last he opened his eyes. His coat of mail was too heavy for him. As soon as he got up he heard with terror the barking of the dogs. Formerly he loved to listen to their cry; now, terrified, he ran away like a timid hare. As he fled to his room,

the clatter of his own arms and spurs alarmed him so much that he threw them away; and, almost worn out with terror, sank down on his bed.

The time was when the knight would dream only of battles and of rich booty; now he moaned with fear in his sleep. At the barking of the dogs, or the watch-cry of his soldiers, who in the high towers guarded the castle from surprise, he trembled like a child, and hid his face on the pillow.

After a time the knight's enemies besieged his castle. The officers and soldiers waited for their commander, who used to lead them to battle and to victory; but they waited in vain. He, the valiant knight, having heard the clatter of arms, the trampling of horses, and the noise of men, fled to the very top of his castle, whence he could see the numerous forces of the enemy. There he remembered his former battles, his victories, and the glory of his name. He wept bitterly, and called aloud:—

“Oh, Heaven! give me courage! Give me health and strength! My faithful followers are already in the field of battle, and I, their leader, who used to be ever in their front, am now, alas! like a timid maiden, looking down upon them from my castle wall. Give me a fearless heart! Give me strength to bear my arms! Restore me to my former self, and give me victory!”

These recollections of the past awakened him as it were from a dream. He hastened to his room, put on his armour, mounted his horse and galloped out through the gate. The sentries received him joyfully, and sounded their trumpets to announce his arrival. He hastened on, but fear was in his heart and mind. When the army courageously attacked the enemy, the general, terrified, turned his horse round, and flew back to the castle. Though sheltered behind its thick walls, fear did not even then leave him. He dismounted, ran into the deepest vault, and there, fainting away, awaited an inglorious death. His army, however, was victorious, and the watch at the towers received it triumphantly. His soldiers were surprised at the cowardly conduct of their leader. They searched for him a long time in vain; at last they found him in a cellar, half dead from fear and despair.

The unhappy knight did not live long. During the whole of the winter he tried to warm his trembling limbs before the fire. When the spring came he opened his window that he might breathe the fresh air a little. A martin, which had built its nest near the roof, flying by, struck him on the head with its wing. The blow was fatal; the poor knight fell down as if struck by lightning, and soon afterwards died.

He was deeply deplored by all his followers. They

could not comprehend what it was that had so completely changed their master. A year afterwards, when some witches were being "swum" for having stopped the rain, one of them confessed how she had removed the knight's heart, and had put a hare's heart in its place. Then they understood how a once courageous knight had become a craven. They wept bitter tears over his cruel fate, and, as a punishment, burnt the wicked witch over his grave.

THE WONDERFUL HAIR.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE once lived a man who was very poor, and who had many children ; so many that he was unable to support them. As he could not endure the idea of their perishing of hunger, he was often tempted to destroy them ; his wife alone prevented him. One night, as he lay asleep, there appeared to him a lovely child in a vision. The child said,—

“Oh, man! I see your soul is in danger, in the thought of killing your helpless children. But I know you are poor, and am come here to help you. You will find under your pillow in the morning a looking-glass, a red handkerchief, and an embroidered scarf. Take these three things, but show them to no one, and go to the forest. In that forest you will find a rivulet. Walk by the side of this rivulet until you come to its source ;

there you will see a girl, as bright as the sun, with long hair streaming down her shoulders. Take care that she does you no harm. Say not a word to her; for if you utter a single syllable, she will change you into a fish, or some other creature, and eat you. Should she ask you to comb her hair, obey her. As you comb it, you will find one hair as red as blood; pull it out, and run away with it. Be swift, for she will follow you. Then throw on the ground, first the embroidered scarf, then the red handkerchief, and last of all the looking-glass; they will delay her pursuit of you. Sell the hair to some rich man; but see that you do not allow yourself to be cheated, for it is of boundless worth. Its produce will make you rich, and thus you will be able to feed your children."

Next morning, when the poor man awoke, he found under his pillow exactly the things the child had told him of in his dream. He went immediately into the forest, and when he had discovered the rivulet he walked by the side of it, on and on, until he reached its source. There he saw a girl sitting on the bank, threading a needle with the rays of the sun. She was embroidering a net made of the hair of heroes, spread on a frame before her. He approached and bowed to her. The girl got up and demanded,—

"Where did you come from, strange knight?"

The man remained silent. Again she asked him,—

“Who are you, and why do you come here?” And many other questions. But he remained silent as a stone, indicating with his hands only that he was dumb and in need of help. She told him to sit at her feet, and when he had gladly done so, she inclined her head towards him, that he might comb her hair. He began to arrange her hair as if to comb it, but as soon as he had found the red one, he separated it from the rest, plucked it out, leapt up, and ran from her with his utmost speed.

The girl sprang after him, and was soon at his heels. The man, turning round as he ran, and seeing that his pursuer would soon overtake him, threw the embroidered scarf on the ground, as he had been told. When the girl saw it, she stopped and began to examine it; turning it over on both sides, and admiring the embroidery. Meanwhile the man gained a considerable distance in advance. The girl tied the scarf round her bosom and recommenced the pursuit. When the man saw that she was again about to overtake him, he threw down the red handkerchief. At the sight of it, the girl again stopped, examined, and wondered at it; the peasant, in the meantime, was again enabled to increase the distance between them. When the girl perceived this, she became furious, and throwing away both scarf

and handkerchief began to run with increased speed after him. She was just upon the point of catching the poor peasant, when he threw the looking-glass at her feet. At the sight of the looking-glass, the like of which she had never seen before, the girl checked herself, picked it up, and looked in it. Seeing her own face, she fancied there was another girl looking at her. While she was thus occupied the man ran so far that she could not possibly overtake him. When the girl saw that further pursuit was useless, she turned back, and the peasant, joyful and unhurt, reached his home. Once within doors he showed the hair to his wife and children, and told them all that had happened to him ; but his wife only laughed at the story. The peasant, however, took no heed of her ridicule, but went to a neighbouring town to sell the hair. He was soon surrounded by a crowd of people, and some merchants began to bid for his prize. One merchant offered him one gold piece, another two, for the single hair, and so on, until the price rose to a hundred gold pieces. Meanwhile the king, hearing of the wonderful red hair, ordered the peasant to be called in, and offered him a thousand gold pieces for it. The man joyfully sold it for that sum.

What wonderful kind of hair was this after all ? The king split it carefully open from end to end, and in it was found the story of many marvellous secrets of

nature, and of things that had happened since the creation of the world.

Thus the peasant became rich, and henceforth lived happily with his wife and children. The child he had seen in his dream was an angel sent down from heaven to succour him, and to reveal to mankind the knowledge of many wonderful things which had hitherto remained unexplained.

STORY OF
VASILISA WITH THE GOLDEN TRESS,
AND OF IVAN THE PEA.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

MANY years ago there lived a very celebrated czar. He had two sons and a beautiful daughter. This daughter lived in a high tower until she was twenty years of age. She was much beloved by the czar and czarina, and was a great favourite with her nurses and waiting-women. But not a single prince or knight had seen her, as she was never allowed to leave the tower, or to breathe the air of freedom. Her name was Vasilisa with the Golden Tress.

Vasilisa had many handsome dresses and rich jewels, but she was weary of them; the tower was confined, and sad and oppressed, she sighed for a change of scene. She had long, thick hair, of a golden hue, which was

plaited into a single tress reaching to her feet: hence she was called Vasilisa with the Golden Tress.

News flies quickly over the wide world. Many czars, hearing of the princess's beauty, sent ambassadors to her father with offers of marriage. The czar was in no hurry; but when the proper time arrived, he sent messengers to all parts of the world to announce that the Princess Vasilisa would select a husband, and he therefore invited czars and princes to his court. Then he went to the tower, and told the beautiful Vasilisa what he had done.

The princess was greatly pleased, and looking through the golden bars of her chamber on to the beautiful garden full of flowers, she asked permission to go there with her maids to play.

"Father," she said, "I have never seen God's world, nor walked on the grass, nor among the flowers; nor have I ever seen your royal palace. Allow me to play in the garden with my nurses and maids."

The czar gave his permission at once. The beautiful Vasilisa descended from the high tower, and went into the courtyard; the door was opened, and the princess found herself in a green meadow which gradually rose to a steep hill; the hill was covered with trees, and the meadow with many coloured flowers. The princess plucked the lovely flowers as she went on, and ran a

little in advance of her attendants. All at once there arose a strong wind, such as was neither known nor heard of before, such a wind as was never remembered by the oldest people,—it blew a perfect hurricane. In a moment the wind lifted the princess up and carried her away. The attendants screamed; some ran away in terror, others looked helplessly around them, and saw how the wind bore the beautiful Vasilisa with the Golden Tress out of their sight. It carried her over many countries and deep rivers, through three kingdoms into a fourth, which belonged to a terrible dragon.

The women ran into the palace, and falling on their knees before the czar, cried piteously,—

“Have mercy, and do not punish us! The wind has carried away our light—the beautiful Vasilisa with the Golden Tress—we know not whither!” And they told him all that had happened. The czar was very angry with them, and deeply grieved at the loss of his daughter; nevertheless, he forgave them all. On the following morning the foreign princes arrived, and seeing what grief was depicted on the czar’s countenance, they enquired the cause of it.

“Woe is me!” cried the unhappy czar, “the wind has carried away my dear daughter Vasilisa with the Golden Tress, and I know not whither she has gone!” And he told them all that had happened.

When the princes heard this story they thought the czar had changed his mind, and no longer wished his daughter to marry; they therefore hastened into the tower formerly occupied by the princess, and searched everywhere, but could not find her.

The czar dismissed his visitors with all due honour, and gave a rich present to each of them; they mounted their horses and returned to their own countries.

The two young princes, brothers of Vasilisa, seeing the tears of their father and mother, said to them,—

“Father, and you, mother, give us your blessing, and permit us to go in search of your daughter and our sister.”

“My dear sons,” cried the afflicted czar, “where would you go?”

“We will go, father, in every direction; wherever the road will take us,—where the birds fly, and our eyes will guide us. Perhaps we shall find her.”

The czar blessed them, and the czarina made everything ready for their journey; they all wept at parting, and then the princes set forth on their search. But whether they would have to travel near or far; whether for a long or a short time, the princes knew not.

They travelled for one year, they travelled for two years, and they passed through three kingdoms. Then, at a distance, they could see dark, high mountains, and

among them a sandy wilderness, which was the country of the Dragon. The princes asked everywhere of those who passed by,—

“Have you heard or seen where the Princess Vasilisa with the Golden Tress is?” Everywhere the people answered, “We have neither seen nor heard where she is.” Having thus replied, they went on their way.

The princes approached a large town; on the road thither they saw an old, lame man on crutches, carrying a wallet, who asked them for alms. The princes stopped, gave him some silver money, and enquired whether he had seen, or heard of, the Princess Vasilisa, the Unveiled Beauty with the Golden Tress.

“My young friends,” answered the old man, “I see you are wanderers from a foreign land. Our czar, the Dragon, has forbidden us to talk with strangers. We may not tell to any one that the wind has brought a beautiful princess to this town.”

When the princes heard that their sister was so near to them, they spurred their flagging steeds and galloped to the palace. It was truly a palace! It stood on a single silver pillar, and was made all of pure gold; the roof which covered it was of precious stones. The stairs leading to the entrance door spread out like two wings, but ran into one at the top; they were made of rare pearls. At that moment the beautiful Vasilisa was

looking out of a window with golden bars, and recognising her brothers she screamed with delight. She then ordered them to be secretly admitted. Happily the Dragon was away, as the princess was greatly afraid lest he should see them; but no sooner had the princes come in than the silver pillar began to groan, the stairs to spread out, the roof to sparkle, and the whole castle to tremble and to turn round.

“The Dragon is coming!” cried the terrified princess. “At his approach the palace turns round and round. Hide, brothers, hide!”

No sooner had she uttered these words than the Dragon rushed hissing in, and demanded in a terrible voice, “Who is here?”

“We are here!” answered the princes fearlessly. “We have come for our sister Vasilisa.”

“O-ho!” cried the Dragon, flapping his wings. “Since you have come to take your sister away, it will not be for nothing if I kill you. But, although you are the brothers of Vasilisa, you are no very terrible knights.” And hissing and roaring he seized one of the brothers with his wings and hurled him against the other. The courtiers came in, took up the dead princes, and threw them into a deep ditch.

The princess burst into tears. Vasilisa would neither eat, nor drink, nor look upon the beautiful world around

her. Three days thus passed away ; but as she did not die, her resolution failed her, and she determined to live ; she regretted to lose her beauty ; she listened to the calls of hunger, and on the fourth day took some food.

The princess now began to think how she might possibly escape from the Dragon. One day she said to him coaxingly,—

“Dear Dragon, your strength is great, your wings far spreading and powerful ; can no one withstand you ?”

“My time is not yet come,” said the Dragon. “It was written at the hour of my birth that the only being who could withstand me would be Ivan the Pea, grown up from a pea.”

The Dragon laughed as he said this, not anticipating such an antagonist. The strong put confidence in their strength ; but what is said in jest will sometimes become a truth.

Meanwhile, the czarina sorrowed for the loss of her daughter and of her two sons. One day she went with her ladies-in-waiting into the garden to try to amuse herself. It was hot, and the czarina became very thirsty. In the garden there was a beautiful well of spring water, flowing into a white marble basin. The czarina dipped a golden cup into the basin, and, drinking hastily, swallowed a pea with the water. In the

course of time the czarina had a son, and he was called Ivan the Pea. He grew up not by years but by hours. He was a handsome boy,—strong and plump, full of spirit and play, ever laughing and springing on the sands, and daily increasing in strength.

At ten years of age, Ivan the Pea was a tall, powerful knight. He asked whether he had any sisters or brothers; and upon hearing that his sister Vasilisa had been carried away by the wind, and that his two brothers who went to seek her had never returned, he begged his parents to permit him to go also in search of them all.

“My dear son!” cried the czar and czarina, “you are still too young. Your brothers went away and never returned; if you leave us, you also will be lost.”

“No,” answered Ivan the Pea; “I shall not be lost. I desire of all things to find my brothers and sister.”

His parents endeavoured to dissuade him from going, but all in vain. At last they gave their consent, blessed him with tears in their eyes, and bade him adieu.

Ivan the Pea set forth on his journey. He travelled for one day, he travelled for two; towards evening he entered a gloomy forest. In this forest there was a hut on hen’s legs, shaken by the wind, and turning round and round. Following old custom and nursery tradition, Ivan blew upon it, saying,—

“Hut, hut, turn about, with your back to the forest and your front to me.”

The hut immediately turned itself round with its front towards him. An old woman was looking out of the window, and she asked, “Whom have we here?”

Ivan bowed to her, and enquired whether she had observed which way the wind was in the habit of carrying beautiful girls.

“Ah, my son,” said the old woman, coughing and looking hard at Ivan, “the wind has troubled me dreadfully. It is now a hundred and twenty years that I have lived in this hut, without ever once leaving it; it will kill me some day. You must know though that it is not the wind that is in fault, but the Dragon.”

“Which is the way to him?”

“Take care; the Dragon will swallow you up.”

“We shall see.”

“Be mindful of your head, good knight,” continued the old woman, shaking her toothless gums, “and promise me that, if you return safely, you will bring me some of the water from the Dragon’s palace, in which, if I wash myself I shall be made young again.”

“I promise; I will bring you some of the water, grandmother.”

“I take your word for it. And now, my dear son, go towards the sunset; after a year’s journeying you

will arrive at the Fox's mountain; then ask the way to the Dragon's kingdom."

"Farewell, grandmother."

"Farewell, my son."

Ivan went towards the setting sun. A story is soon told, but a difficult work is not so soon completed. Having passed through three kingdoms he arrived at the Dragon's dominions. Before the gates of the city he saw an old, blind, and lame beggar with a wallet. Having given the beggar some alms, Ivan the Pea asked him whether in that city there did not live a young princess, called Vasilisa with the Golden Tress?

"Yes," said the beggar; "but we are forbidden to tell of it."

Upon hearing that his sister was indeed there, Ivan went at once to the palace. At that moment the beautiful Vasilisa with the Golden Tress was watching for the coming of the Dragon from the window. Seeing a young knight approaching, she sent to him secretly to learn his name, and to know whether he was not sent by her father or mother. When she heard that it was Ivan, her youngest brother, whom she had never seen before, the princess rushed out of the palace, and called to him with tears in her eyes,—

"Run, dearest brother! Fly from this place. The Dragon will soon be here, and will kill you!"

“Dearest sister, I am not afraid of the Dragon, nor of all his strength.”

“Are you then the Pea, and therefore able to withstand him?”

“Wait a moment, sister; let me have something to drink first.”

“And what will you drink, brother?”

“A bucketful of mead.”

Vasilisa ordered a bucket of mead to be brought in, and Ivan drank it at a draught, without even once stopping to take breath; he then asked for more. The surprised princess ordered some more mead to be brought in.

“Now, brother,” she said, “I believe that you are Ivan the Pea.”

“Give me something to eat, dear sister, and then let me rest after my journey.”

The princess then directed her servants to bring in a strong chair. Ivan sat down upon it, and it immediately broke into pieces. The attendants then brought another chair, still stronger, covered and joined together with iron. When Ivan sat down, it creaked and bent under him.

“Oh brother!” cried the princess, “that is the Dragon’s own seat.”

“It seems then,” said Ivan smiling, “that I am heavier than he.”

He then got up, went to an old sage, who was smith to the court, and ordered an iron staff to be made, to weigh five hundred puds.* The smiths set to work; hammered the iron night and day amid a shower of red-hot sparks, and in forty hours finished the staff. It required the united strength of fifty men to bring it to the castle. Ivan the Pea lifted it up with one hand, and threw it into the air. The air whistled as the staff passed through it and disappeared in the clouds.

The inhabitants ran from place to place panic-stricken; they were afraid that the staff, falling down again, would crush their city into ruins, then roll into the sea, which would overflow and drown them all.

Prince Ivan gave orders that the people should let him know when the iron staff was seen falling again to the ground, and then went quietly into the palace. The terrified people fled away from the principal square. Some looked from their doors and windows to see whether the iron beam was about to descend. They waited one, they waited two hours; at the end of the third, word was sent to the palace that the staff was coming down. Ivan the Pea ran into the square, stretched out his hand and caught the staff as it fell. It came down with such force that it bent in his hand. The

* A pud is a weight of forty pounds.

prince straightened it on his knee, and then returned to the castle.

Suddenly a dreadful hissing noise was heard; the Dragon was coming. His horse, the wind, flew with the swiftness of an arrow, vomiting forth flames. At a first glance the Dragon looked like a knight; but his head was that of a dragon. Usually at his approach, even if he were miles away, the palace would tremble, and move from place to place; now the Dragon observed, for the first time, that it did not stir. There must be a stranger within. The Dragon paused an instant—hissed and roared; his horse, the wind, shook his black mane and spread out his monstrous wings. The Dragon rushed to the palace, and the palace did not stir an inch.

“O-ho!” roared the Dragon, “I have to do with an enemy; perhaps it is the Pea.”

Prince Ivan soon appeared.

“I will put you in the palm of one hand, clap my other hand upon you, and crush you to atoms!” cried the Dragon.

“We shall see,” said Ivan, approaching with the staff.

“Begone from my castle!” roared the Dragon in a fury.

“Begone, you!” answered Ivan, lifting up his staff.

The Dragon flew up in the air that he might strike Prince Ivan and pierce him with his lance; but he missed his aim. The prince sprang aside, and exclaiming, "It is now my turn!" threw the staff at the Dragon with such force that the blow broke and scattered him into a thousand fragments. The staff pierced the earth, and passed through two kingdoms into a third.

The people threw up their caps with joy, and chose Ivan to be their czar. But Ivan, as a reward for the sage smith, who in so short a time had made him such a staff, ordered the old man to be called before him, and said to the people,—

"This is your czar; obey him for good as you once obeyed the Dragon for evil."

Then Ivan took some of the water of death and of the water of life, and sprinkled them over the bodies of his brothers. The young men rose up, and rubbing their eyes, exclaimed,—

"Heaven knows how long we have slept!"

"My dear brothers" said Ivan, embracing them tenderly, "without my help you would have slept for ages."

Then Ivan took some of the water of the Dragon, ordered a ship to be built, and sailing on the river Swan, with the beautiful Vasilisa with the Golden Tress, he passed through three kingdoms into a fourth,—his own

country. He remembered the old woman in the hut, and gave her some of the water. When the old woman had washed herself in it she became young again; she sang and danced with joy, and accompanied Prince Ivan on his journey.

The czar and czarina received their son Ivan with great joy and honour. They sent messengers to all parts of the world, announcing that their daughter, the beautiful Vasilisa with the Golden Tress, had safely returned home. There were great rejoicings: bells rang merrily, trumpets sounded, drums were beaten, guns were fired. Vasilisa obtained a husband and Prince Ivan a wife. At the marriage feast there were mountains of meat and rivers of mead. They ordered four crowns to be made, and celebrated two weddings at once.

The great-grandfathers of our great-grandfathers were there; they drank of the mead and left some of it for us, but we have never tasted it. This, however, we heard: that after the death of the czar, Ivan the Pea ascended the throne; ruled the people with great glory; and the fame of Czar the Pea has been remembered from generation to generation.

THE EMPEROR TROJAN'S GOAT'S EARS.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE once lived an emperor whose name was Trojan. This emperor had goat's ears, and he used to call in barber after barber to shave him. But whoever went in never came out again; for while the barber was shaving him, the emperor would ask what he observed uncommon in him, and when the barber would answer that he observed his goat's ears, the Emperor Trojan would immediately cut him into pieces.

At last it came to the turn of a certain barber to go, who feigned illness, and sent his apprentice instead. When the apprentice appeared before the emperor he was asked why his master did not come, and he answered, "Because he is ill." Then the emperor sat down, and allowed the youth to shave him. As he shaved him the apprentice noticed the emperor's goat's ears, but when

Trojan asked him what he had observed, he answered, "I have observed nothing."

Then the emperor gave him twelve ducats, and said to him,—

"From this time forth you shall always come and shave me."

When the apprentice came home, his master asked him how he got on at the emperor's, and the youth answered,—

"All well; and the emperor has told me that I am to shave him in future."

Then he showed the twelve ducats he had received; but as to the emperor's goat's ears, of that he said nothing.

From this time forth the apprentice went regularly to Trojan to shave him, and for each shaving he received twelve ducats; but he told no one that the emperor had goat's ears.

At last it began to worry and torment him that he dare tell no one his secret; and he became sick and began to pine away. His master, who could not fail to observe this, asked him what ailed him, and after much pressing the apprentice confessed that he had something on his heart which he dared not confide to any one, and he added,—“If I could only tell it to somebody, I should feel better at once.”

Then said the master,—

“Tell it to me, and I will faithfully keep it from everybody else; or if you fear to trust me with it, then go to the confessor and confide it to him; but if you will not do even that, then go into the fields outside the town, there dig a hole, thrust your head into it, and tell the earth three times what you know, then throw the mould in again and fill up the hole.”

The apprentice chose the last course; went into the field outside the city, dug a hole, into which he thrust his head, and called out three times,—

“The Emperor Trojan has goat's ears!”

Then he filled up the hole again, and with his mind quite relieved went home.

When some time had passed by, there sprang an elder-tree out of this very hole, and three slender stems grew up, beautiful and straight as tapers. Some shepherds found this elder, cut off one of the stems, and made a pipe of it. But as soon as they began to blow into the new pipe, out burst the words:

“The Emperor Trojan has goat's ears!”

The news of this strange occurrence spread immediately through the whole city, and at last the Emperor Trojan himself heard the children blowing on a pipe:

“The Emperor Trojan has goat's ears!”

He sent instantly for the barber's apprentice, and shouted to him,—

“Heh! what is this you have been telling the people about me?”

The poor youth began at once to explain that he had indeed noticed the emperor's ears, but had never told a soul of it. The emperor tore his sabre out of its sheath to hew the apprentice down, at which the youth was so frightened that he told the whole story in its order: how he had confessed himself to the earth; how an elder-tree had sprang up on the very spot; and how, when a pipe was made of one of its stems, the tale was sounded in every direction.

Then the emperor took the apprentice with him in a carriage to the place, to convince himself of the truth of the story; and when they arrived there they found there was only a single stem left. The Emperor Trojan ordered a pipe to be made out of this stem, that he might hear how it sounded. As soon as the pipe was ready, and one of them blew into it, out poured the words:

“The Emperor Trojan has goat's ears!”

Then the emperor was convinced that nothing on this earth could be hidden, spared the barber apprentice's life, and henceforth allowed any barber, without exception, to come and shave him.

THE LANGUAGE OF ANIMALS.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

A CERTAIN man had a shepherd who had served him faithfully and honestly for many years. One day, as the shepherd was tending his sheep, he heard a hissing noise in the forest, and wondered what it could be. He went, therefore, into the wood in the direction of the sound, to learn what it was. There he saw that the dry grass and leaves had caught fire, and in the middle of a burning circle a snake was hissing. The shepherd stopped to see what the snake would do, for the fire was burning all around it, and the flames approached it nearer and nearer every moment. Then the snake cried from amid the fire,—

“Oh, shepherd! for heaven’s sake save me from this fire!”

The shepherd stretched out his crook over the flames to the snake, and the snake passed along it on to his hand,

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and from his hand it crawled to his neck, where it twisted itself round.

When the shepherd perceived this, he was greatly alarmed, and said to the snake,—

“What have I done in an evil hour! Have I saved you to my own destruction!”

The snake answered him, “Fear not, but carry me to my father’s house. My father is the king of the snakes.”

The shepherd, however, began to beg the snake to excuse him, saying that he could not leave the sheep; but the snake answered,—

“Be not troubled about the sheep; no harm shall happen to them; only go as fast as you can.”

The shepherd then walked through the forest with the snake until he came to a gate which was entirely made of snakes knotted together. There the snake on the shepherd’s neck gave a whistle, and all the other snakes untwisted themselves. Then the snake said to the shepherd—

“When we come to my father’s palace he will give you whatever you ask for: silver, gold, and precious stones. Do you, however, take nothing of these, but beg to know the language of the brutes and other creatures. He will refuse you this for a long time, but at last he will grant your request.”

Meanwhile they came to the palace, to the father, who, shedding many tears, cried,—

“For heaven’s sake ! my dearest daughter, where have you been ?”

And she told him in due order how she had been surrounded by the forest-fire, and how the shepherd had rescued her. Then the king of the snakes turned to the shepherd and said to him,—

“What would you have me give you for the deliverance of my daughter ?”

The shepherd answered, “Only let me understand the language of animals ; I want nothing else.”

Then the king said, “That is not good for you ; for if I were to bestow upon you the gift of the knowledge of the tongue of animals, and you were to tell any one of it, you would instantly die. Ask, therefore, for something else ; whatever you desire to possess, I will give to you.”

To which the shepherd replied,—

“If you wish to give me anything, then grant me the knowledge of the language of brute creatures ; but if you do not care to give me that—farewell, and God protect you ! I want nothing else.” And the shepherd turned to leave the place.

Then the king called him back, saying,—

“Stay ! come here to me, since you will have it at all hazards. Open your mouth.”

The shepherd opened his mouth, and the king of the snakes breathed into it, and said,—

“Do you now breathe into my mouth.”

The shepherd breathed into his mouth, and the snake-king breathed again into that of the shepherd. After they had breathed each three times into the other's mouth, the king said,—

“Now you understand the language of animals, and of all created things. Go in peace, and God be with you! but for the life of you, tell no one of this; if you do, you will die on the instant!”

The shepherd returned home through the forest. As he walked he heard and understood all that the birds said, and the grass and all the other things that are upon the earth. When he came to his sheep and found them all together and quite safe, he laid himself down to rest. Scarcely had he lain down when there flew two ravens towards him, who took their perch upon a tree, and began to talk together in their own language.

“What if that shepherd only knew that underneath the place where the black lamb lies there is a cellar full of silver and gold!”

When the shepherd heard this, he went to his master, and told him of it. The master took a cart with him, and they dug down to a door leading to the cave, and removed the treasure to his house. But the master was an honest man, and gave all the treasure to the shepherd, saying,—

“My son, all this treasure is yours, for heaven has given it to you. Buy yourself a house with it, marry, and live happily in it.”

The shepherd took the treasure, built himself a house, and, having married, lived a happy life. Soon he became known as the richest man, not only in his own village, but so rich that there was not his equal in the whole neighbourhood. He had his own shepherd, cowkeeper, hostler, and swineherd; plenty of goods and chattels, and great riches.

One day, just before Christmas, he said to his wife, “Get some wine, and some brandy, and all things necessary; to-morrow we will go to the farmyard and take the good things to the shepherds, that they may also enjoy themselves.”

The wife followed his directions and prepared all that he had told her. When they arrived on the following day at the farm-house, the master said to the shepherds in the evening,—

“Come here, all of you; eat, drink, and be merry. I will watch over the flocks for you to night.” And he went, in very deed, and remained with the flocks.

About midnight the wolves began to howl and the dogs to bark, and the wolves said in their language,—

“May we come in and do what mischief we like? Then you, too, shall have your share.”

And the dogs answered in their language, "Come in ; and we will eat our fill with you."

But among the dogs there was an old one, who had but two teeth in his head, and he said to the wolves,—

"That will not do. So long as I have my two teeth in my head you shall do no harm to my master nor his."

The master heard it all, and understood what was said. On the following morning he ordered all the dogs to be killed, save only the old one. The hinds said, "Heaven forbid, sir ; that would be a great pity !" But the master answered, "Do what I have told you."

Then he prepared to return home with his wife, and they both mounted their horses. And as they rode on, the husband got a little ahead, while the wife fell behind. At last the husband's horse neighed, and called to the mare,—

"Come on ! make haste ! Why do you lag behind ?"

And the mare answered him, "Ah, yes, it is all very easy for you : you have only one to carry, the master ; while I have to carry three, the mistress, her baby, and my own foal."

The husband turned round and laughed, and his wife seeing this, urged the mare forward, overtook her husband, and asked him what he had been laughing at.

"Nothing ; I do not know ; just something that came into my mind," answered the husband.

But the wife was not satisfied with this answer, and she pressed him again and again to tell her why he had laughed.

But he excused himself, and said,—

“Let me alone, wife! What is the matter with you? I do not know myself why I laughed.”

But the more he denied her the more she insisted upon his telling her what he had been laughing at. At last the husband said to her,—

“Know then, that if I tell you the reason, I shall instantly die.”

The woman, however, did not care for that, but urged him to tell her notwithstanding.

Meanwhile they had reached home. The husband ordered a coffin to be made immediately, and when it was ready he had it placed before the house, and said to his wife,—

“See now, I now lay me down in this coffin, and then tell you why I laughed; but as soon as I have told you I shall die.”

The husband lay down in the coffin, and looked around him for the last time. And there came the old dog from the farmyard, and sat down at his head and whined. The husband seeing this, said to his wife,—

“Bring a piece of bread and give it to this dog.”

The wife brought out a piece of bread, and threw it

down to the dog; but the dog would not even look at it. Then the house-cock ran up, and began to pick at the bread; and the dog said to it,—

“You miserable greedy thing, you! You can eat, and yet you see that the master is going to die!”

The cock answered the dog, “And let him die since he is such a fool! I have a hundred wives, and I call them all together whenever I find a grain of corn, and as soon as they have come round me, I swallow it myself. And if any one of them got angry, I should be at her directly with my beak. The master has only one wife, and he cannot even manage her.”

When the husband heard this he quickly sprang out of the coffin, took up a stick, and called his wife into the room.

“Come, wife,” he said, “I will tell you what you so much want to hear.”

Then as he beat her with the stick he cried, “This is it, wife! This is it!”

In this way he quieted his wife, and she never asked him again what he had been laughing at.

THE EVIL EYE.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

I.

THERE once lived a rich gentleman in a mansion on the banks of the river Vistula. All the windows of this house were in the front overlooking the beautiful river. The long avenue, formed of poplar trees, leading to the porch, was overgrown with grass and weeds—a sign that few of his neighbours visited the resident, and that the old Polish hospitality was little practised there.

The owner of this house had lived in it for seven years. He had come from a distant part of the country, and was little known to his peasants, who avoided him with fear and trembling because of the terrible stories told of his evil eye.

He was born of rich parents on the banks of the river San. At the moment of his birth an unlucky star shone upon him, and he became possessed of an evil eye, a glance from which would cause disease and death to man and

beast. If, in an unguarded moment, he looked upon the cattle, they died; whatever he regarded and praised, perished. To complete his misfortunes, his father and mother died broken-hearted. The "Evil Eye," as he came to be called in his native place, where his pernicious glances had caused such destruction, sold all his property and removed to the banks of the Vistula. He there took up his abode in a solitary house, dismissed all the domestics, save only one—an old man-servant, who had nursed him in his infancy, and whom alone the evil eye had no power to harm.

The Evil Eye seldom left home, seeing that desolation and even death followed his looks. Whenever he drove out, his old servant sat by his side, to warn him that they were approaching a village, a town, or human being. The unhappy man would then either close his eyes, or cast them down and look on a bundle of pea-straw, which was always lying at his feet.*

Knowing the baneful power of his eyes, which in spite of himself brought misery and desolation around him, the unfortunte man had his house so arranged that all the

* It is the common belief that one possessed of an evil eye, by looking on a bundle of pea-straw hurts nobody,—the pea-straw is only more thoroughly dried up. The eyes of the basilisk are said to have the same influence on rue: when this reptile looks on rue it loses its freshness and colour.

windows looked over the river Vistula. He trusted that by this arrangement he should neither hurt his neighbours nor injure his own property. Twice, in an evil hour, he had looked upon his farm houses, and twice they were burnt. But no precaution would fully suffice to this end. Many vessels were wrecked opposite the White House, as it was commonly called; and the boatmen on the river loaded him with imprecations as they pointed with terror to the large windows from which the Evil Eye brought upon them pain and disaster.

One boatman, more courageous than the rest, rowed to the house and demanded to see its master. The old servant, although fearful of the consequences, took him to the room where his master was dining. Annoyed at being disturbed by a stranger, he looked at the intruder with a scowl, who fell immediately into such a state of alarm that he could not speak a word, but fainted at the door.

The old servant, at the desire of his master, carried the man to his boat, gave him some money, and rowed him to the other side of the river. The poor fellow was ill for a long time, and when he recovered a little he gave a terrible account of the White House and of its master the Evil Eye. This greatly increased the terror of his companions; and whenever any of them passed in their boats or barges near the fatal spot, they would turn their

eyes away from the White House and pray with fervour to be protected from the influence of the Evil Eye.

II.

Ten years had passed away since the White House became the terror of the boatmen and of the neighbouring inhabitants. No one would visit the Evil Eye. He spent his miserable days in silence and solitude.

The following winter proved to be excessively severe. The wolves collected in herds, and maddened with cold and hunger, howled dismally round the house. The master, silent and gloomy, sat before the hearth, on which a large fire was burning, turning over the leaves of a book. The old servant, having fastened the doors, sat on the other side warming himself and repairing a net.

“Stanislas,” said the master, “have you caught many fish to-day?”

“Not many, master; but quite enough to serve us two.”

“True,” said the master sorrowfully, “Although so many years have passed away, we are still but two. Oh, the unhappy hour that gave me birth!”

Suddenly they heard a human voice in the courtyard crying for help. The master started, for it was a long time since he had heard a stranger’s voice. Stanislas ran out of the room, followed by his master, who carried a lamp in his hand.

In front of the door they found a covered sledge, and near it stood an old man calling loudly for assistance. As soon as the stranger saw two men coming towards him with a light, he lifted a lady, his wife, who had fainted, out of the sledge, while old Stanislas assisted a young and beautiful maiden, his daughter, to alight.

Once within doors they piled more wood on the fire, and soon restored the lady to herself. The master of the house, happy to play the host, brought in some good old wine and drank heartily to the health of the father of the young and beautiful girl, and of the two ladies.

The old servant smiled to himself as he looked upon the joyful face of his master, on whose countenance gloom and sorrow had sat almost from his birth.

The visitor, warmed and cheered by the generous wine, told his host how he was overtaken by the storm; how he had lost his way; had for a long time wandered about seeking a refuge in vain; and how, at last, he was met by a crowd of hungry wolves from whose fangs it was with the greatest difficulty he had escaped to, and found shelter in, the courtyard of the White House.

Soon afterwards the fatigued travellers retired to warm and comfortable rooms to seek the rest they so much needed. Silence reigned again in the hall, broken only now and then by the crackling of the wood fire.

III.

The clock on the mantle-shelf in the hall struck one in the morning. Old Stanislas sat before the fire dozing, and now and then putting on some more fuel, when the door leading from the master's apartments was softly opened and the unfortunate man himself entered the hall. The old servant, half asleep, rubbed his eyes and exclaimed, "Why, master, have you not gone to bed yet?"

"Do not make a noise, my dear old friend," said the master in a pleasant tone of voice; "I feel so happy to-day that I cannot close my eyes." And he sat down in a large chair before the fire, smiling to himself, joyful even unto tears.

"Ah, cry! poor master, cry!" thought Stanislas. "Perhaps you will cry away your evil eye!"

"If heaven would but grant me what I wish," said the master, "I would ask for nothing more. I have lived for thirty years alone, like a hermit or a criminal, and yet I have committed no crime nor wilfully injured a living creature. And all through my unhappy eyes!"

His face, so smiling a moment before, assumed its usual expression of sorrow; but it soon passed away, as a ray of hope again lighted up the gloom.

"My dear old friend," he began, and Stanislas looked

up at his master as he spoke, "it is possible that even I may marry."

"Heaven grant it!" cried the old servant joyfully. "But where are we to find our mistress?"

The master rose, went on tiptoe to the door leading to the travellers' apartments, and pointing with his finger, said in a whisper, "There!"

Stanislas nodded his head approvingly as he put some last logs of wood on the fire for the night. The master, deeply occupied with thought, went to bed. The old servant muttering to himself, "Heaven grant it may come to pass; but I am afraid that pears will never grow on a willow-tree," soon fell fast asleep.

IV.

In the morning, when the travellers arose, they found they could not continue their journey on account of the elder lady's illness. The master of the house heard with pleasure that they were likely to stay for a few days longer. Stanislas began to think that it was possible that pears might grow on a willow-tree.

The visitor was a gentleman in comparatively easy circumstances. It is true he was not rich, but he had means, and was upright and independent. He was pleased with the hospitable master of the house, and after a week's stay he said to his wife, whose health had greatly improved,—

“Maggie, do you know that I begin to think our kind host is rather stricken with our Mary; and she, so far as I can see, has no disinclination to his suit. For my part, I should have no objection to the match, provided always that everything else is satisfactory.”

“It is only your fancy,” answered his wife. She was, however, glad that her husband did not object to what she herself heartily desired.

“He seems to be a very amiable man, well conducted, and to have sufficient means to live upon,” continued the father as he walked about the room. “Our daughter, too, is old enough now to enter into the holy state of matrimony.”

After supper, the visitor, having partaken of the generous wine of his host, listened with a smiling face to the offer which the master of the house, in a modest manner, made for the hand of his daughter Mary. The father, having considered a little, said,—“I am much pleased with you and your kind proposal. Since you have enough to live upon, and ask for no dowry, I am willing that my daughter should become your wife. May you be happy and blessed in your children.”

Three months afterwards the Evil Eye wedded his beautiful wife. The grass and weeds disappeared from the long avenue of poplar trees leading to the house, trodden down by the horses and carriages of the friends

of the bride. But when in a little while all the visitors had departed, the grass and weeds began to grow before the White House as before.

V.

Another winter was approaching, and the inhabitants of the White House had been increased by one person only—its mistress. Most of the numerous servants who were engaged at the marriage, soon ran away in terror, on hearing that their master had an evil eye. The few who remained, having suffered greatly from illness, finally left the house also. Its young and beautiful mistress was deserted; and in the hour of her distress lay alone—forsaken by her friends—on the costly bed. Her husband only was present, his face turned away from her, as he held her cold, damp hand in his own. She knew the terrible effect of his evil eye; she knew that each time he glanced at her, he but added to her pain and sorrow, yet, in her affectionate nature, and loving him, she begged that he would look upon her at least once more.

“Oh, Mary!” cried the unhappy man, with a deep sigh, “I know I can never be happy with you so long as I have my sight. Here is a knife—cut out my eyes! Done by your dear hand the act will lose its pain and anguish.”

The poor wife trembled with horror at the proposal, and her husband, seeing that he could not prevail upon her, sank in a chair, and shed bitter tears.

“Of what value to me is this heavenly gift—the gift of sight!” he exclaimed. “At every glance I bring destruction and misery about me! No wonder, dearest Mary, that your pain is great: a tree would wither as I looked at it. But take courage, love; I will not look upon our child. Him at least my eyes shall not injure.”

The suffering woman answered him only with a groan. He called the old servant in, and left her. Soon afterwards two cries, unlike in their sound, were heard in the house. The one—the joyful cry of a new-born infant, as it first saw the light; the other—the agonised cry of a man, the infant’s father, as he parted with sight for ever! His eyes, glittering like two diamonds, lay on the ground by the side of a blood-stained knife.

VI.

Another six years had passed away. Windows had been made on the side of the White House from which a beautiful view of the village and fields could be obtained. The boatmen now often stopped near the house to rest. Its mistress was well and happy: blessed in a beautiful daughter, who was the guide of her blind father. The

peasants no longer ran away at the sight of their master. The former silence reigned no more at the White House, numerous servants were in attendance, and the whole place was full of life and bustle.

Old Stanislas, who had buried his master's eyes at the time of the self-sacrifice, was now bent with age. One day, curious to know whether they had perished or not, he dug for them in the ground. Suddenly they glared upon him like two live coals. As soon as their baneful light shone upon his wrinkled face, the old man shivered, fell down, and died.

This was the first and last time that the evil eye exercised its power for harm upon the old servant. For as the master loved him dearly, so his heart counteracted the effect of his eye; but now the eyes, long buried in the ground, and freed from the influence of the heart of their master, had acquired additional strength for evil, and killed the poor old man.

The blind master deeply lamented his faithful servant. In memory of his fidelity he erected a handsome cross over his grave, beneath which the boatmen often prayed.

HUNTSMAN THE UNLUCKY.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

ONCE upon a time there lived a huntsman. He would go every day in search of game, but it often happened that he killed nothing, and so was obliged to return home with his bag empty. On that account he was nicknamed "Huntsman the Unlucky." At last he was reduced by his ill fortune to such extremities that he had not a piece of bread nor a copeck left. The wretched man wandered about the forest, cold and hungry; he had eaten nothing for three days, and was nearly dying of starvation. He lay down on the grass determined to put an end to his existence; happily better thoughts came into his mind; he crossed himself, and threw away the gun. Suddenly he heard a rustling noise near him. It seemed to issue from some thick grass close at hand. The hunter got up and approached the spot. He then

observed that the grass partly hid a gloomy abyss, from the bottom of which there rose a stone, and on it lay a small jar. As he looked and listened the hunter heard a small voice crying,—

“Dear, kind traveller, release me!”

The voice seemed to proceed from the little jar. The courageous hunter, walking carefully from one stone to another, approached the spot where the jar lay, took it up gently, and heard a voice crying from within like the chirping of a grasshopper,—

“Release me, and I will be of service to you.”

“Who are you, my little friend?” asked Huntsman the Unlucky.

“I have no name, and cannot be seen by human eyes,” answered a soft voice. “If you want me, call ‘Murza!’ A wicked magician put me in this jar, sealed it with the seal of King Solomon, and then threw me into this fearful place, where I have lain for seventy years.”

“Very good,” said Huntsman the Unlucky; “I will give you your liberty, and then we shall see how you will keep your word.” He broke the seal and opened the little jar—there was nothing in it!

“Halloa! where are you, my friend?” cried the hunter.

“By your side,” a voice answered.

The hunter looked about him, but could see no one.

“Murza!”

“Ready! I await your orders. I am your servant for the next three days, and will do whatever you desire. You have only to say, ‘Go there, I know not where; bring something, I know not what.’”

“Very well,” said the hunter. “You will doubtless know best what is wanted: Go there, I know not where; bring something, I know not what.”

As soon as the hunter had uttered these words there appeared before him a table covered with dishes, each filled with the most delicious viands, as if they had come direct from a banquet of the czar. The hunter sat down at the table, and ate and drank till he was satisfied. He then rose, crossed himself, and, bowing on all sides, exclaimed,—

“Thank you! thank you!”

Instantly the table, and everything else with it, disappeared, and the hunter continued his journey.

After walking some distance he sat down by the roadside to rest. It so happened that while the hunter was resting himself, there passed through the forest a gipsy-thief, leading a horse which he wanted to sell.

“I wish I had the money to buy the horse with,” thought the hunter; “what a pity my pockets are empty! However, I will ask my invisible friend. Murza!”

“Ready!”

“Go there, I know not where; bring something, I know not what.”

In less than a minute the hunter heard the money chinking in his pocket; gold poured into them, he knew not how nor whence.

“Thanks! you have kept your word,” said the hunter.

He then began to bargain with the gipsy for the horse. Having agreed upon the price, he paid the man in gold, who, staring at the hunter with his mouth wide open, wondered where Huntsman the Unlucky had got so much money from. Parting from the hunter, the gipsy-thief ran with all his speed to the farther end of the forest, and whistled. There was no answer. “They are asleep,” thought the gipsy, and entered a cavern where some robbers, lying on the skins of animals, were resting themselves.

“Halloa, comrades! Are you asleep?” cried the gipsy. “Get up, quick! or you will lose a fine bird. He is alone in the forest, and his pockets are full of gold. Make haste!”

The robbers sprang up, mounted their horses, and galloped after the hunter.

The hunter heard the clatter, and seeing himself suddenly surrounded by robbers, cried out,—

“Murza!”

“Ready!” answered a voice near him.

“Go there, I know not where; bring something, I know not what.”

There was a rustling noise heard in the forest, and then something from behind the trees fell upon the robbers. They were knocked from their horses, and scattered on all sides; yet no hand was seen to touch them. The robbers, thrown upon the ground, could not raise themselves, and the hunter, thankful and rejoicing at his deliverance, rode on, and soon found his way out of the dark forest, and came upon a town.

Near this town there were pitched tents full of soldiers. Huntsman the Unlucky was told that an enormous army of Tartars had come, under the command of their khan, who, angry at being refused the hand of the beautiful Princess Milovzora, the daughter of the czar, had declared war against him. The hunter had seen the Princess Milovzora when she was out hunting in the forest. She used to ride a beautiful horse, and carry a golden lance in her hand; a magnificent quiver of arrows hung from her shoulder. When her veil was lifted up she appeared like the spring sunlight, to give light to the eyes and warmth to the heart.

The hunter reflected for a little while, and then cried, “Murza!”

In an instant he found himself dressed in splendid

attire : his jacket was embroidered with gold, he wore a beautiful mantle on his shoulders, and ostrich feathers hung gracefully down from the top of his helmet, fastened by a brooch of a ruby surrounded by pearls. The hunter went into the castle, presented himself before the czar, and offered to drive away the forces of the enemy on condition that the czar gave him the beautiful Princess Milovzora for his wife.

The czar was greatly surprised, but did not like to refuse such an offer at once ; he first asked the hunter his name, his birth, and his possessions.

“ I am called Huntsman the Unlucky, Master of Murza the Invisible.”

The czar thought the young stranger was mad ; the courtiers, however, who had seen him before, assured the czar that the stranger exactly resembled Huntsman the Unlucky, whom they knew ; but how he had got that splendid dress they could not tell.

Then the czar demanded :

“ Do you hear what they say ? If you are telling lies, you will lose your head. Let us see, then, how you will overcome the enemy with the forces of your invisible Murza ? ”

“ Be of good hope, czar,” answered the hunter ; “ as soon as I say the word, everything will be completed.”

“ Good,” said the czar. “ If you have spoken the

truth you shall have my daughter for your wife; if not, your head will be the forfeit."

The hunter said to himself, "I shall either become a prince, or I am a lost man."

He then whispered, "Murza, go there, I know not where; do this, I know not what."

A few minutes passed, and there was nothing to be heard or seen. Huntsman the Unlucky turned pale; the czar, enraged, ordered him to be seized and put in irons, when suddenly the firing of guns was heard in the distance. The czar and his courtiers ran out on the steps leading to the castle, and saw bodies of men approaching from both right and left, their standards waving gracefully in the air; the soldiers were splendidly equipped. The czar could hardly believe his eyes, for he himself had no troops so fine as these.

"This is no delusion!" cried Huntsman the Unlucky. "These are the forces of my invisible friend."

"Let them drive away the enemy then, if they can," said the czar.

The hunter waved his handkerchief. The army wheeled into position; music burst forth in a martial strain, and then a great cloud of dust arose. When the dust had cleared away, the army was gone.

The czar invited Huntsman the Unlucky to dinner, and asked him numerous questions about Murza the

Invisible. At the second course the news came that the enemy was flying in every direction, completely routed. The terrified Tartars had left all their tents and baggage behind them. The czar thanked the hunter for his assistance, and informed his daughter that he had found a husband for her. Princess Milovzora blushed upon receiving this intelligence, then turned pale, and began to shed tears. The hunter whispered something to Murza, and the princess's tears changed into precious stones as they fell. The courtiers hastened to pick them up—they were pearls and diamonds. The princess smiled at this, and overcome with pleasure gave her hand to Huntsman the Unlucky—unlucky no longer. Then began the feast.—But here the story must end.

HOW TO CHOOSE A WIFE.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE was once an unmarried man whom some of his friends desired to marry to a maid, some to a widow, and others again to a woman who was divorced from her husband. For his part he knew not which to choose, for all the three were good and handsome. He went therefore to a certain old man, to ask his advice as to whether it would be best to marry the maid, the widow, or the divorced woman. The old man answered him,—

“My son, I can tell you nothing about it. But go to the Allwise (Solomon); he will be able to tell you what is best. Then come back and tell me what he advises you to do.”

Away went the man to the court of Solomon, where the servants asked him what he wanted; and he answered them,—

“I wish to see the Allwise.”

Then one of the servants took him and led him in ; and pointing with his hand to a child who was riding about the court on a stick, said,—

“There is the Allwise.”

The man said wonderingly to himself, “What can this child tell me? But since I am here, I will hear what he has to say.”

Then he approached Solomon, and when he came near to him the child stood still on his horse-stick, and asked him what he wanted. The man told him all the story.

The Allwise answered him thus,—

“When you take a maid to wife, *you* know ; when you take a widow, *she* knows ; but when you take a divorced woman—beware of my horse.”

The child turned round, struck the man gently with the stick across the feet, and then began again to ride about the court on his stick. Then thought the man to himself:—

“What a fool I am ! A grown man, I come to a child to ask him how I shall marry !”

He at once set out to return to the old man to lay before him what had passed with the person to whom he had sent him for advice. When he came to the old man he related in a tone of anger all the circumstances

of his visit to the Allwise; upon which the old man said,—

“Ah, my son, the Allwise has not spoken in vain: when you take a maiden to wife, *you* know; that means that she will believe you understand everything better than she does, and will follow and obey you. If you take a widow, *she* knows; that is to say, she has been already once married, and thinks she is more experienced than you; and will not only not follow, but will try to command you. If you take a divorced woman—beware of my horse! And then he smote you across the feet with his stick. By that you will understand: take care that she does not scold you as she scolded her first husband.

THE PLAGUE.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

WHEN the Plague desolates the country, whole villages stand empty; the cocks become hoarse and cannot crow; even the dogs, our household guardians, no longer bark. They can, however, scent and see the Plague afar off. They growl, and furiously try to attack it; for the Plague delights to tease and worry them.

A peasant once was asleep on the top of a hay-rick; near him leant a ladder. The moon shone brightly, and the night was clear. Suddenly, borne on the wind a great noise was heard, in which the growling and howling of dogs rose distinctly above all other sounds.

The peasant got up, and saw with terror a tall woman, clothed in white, with dishevelled hair, running straight towards him, pursued by dogs. In front of her stood a high fence. The tall woman sprang clear over it at a bound, and ran up the ladder. There, secure from the

furious dogs, she put out her leg, and teasing them, cried,—

“Na goga, noga! Na goga, noga!” (There is my leg, seize it.)

The peasant at once recognised in her the terrible Plague itself. He softly approached the ladder, and pushed it off the rick with all his might. The Plague fell to the ground and the dogs seized her. She threatened the peasant with vengeance, and then suddenly disappeared.

The peasant did not die of the plague, but he was never well afterwards; and he would often involuntarily lift up his leg and repeat the cry,—

“Na goga noga! Na goga noga!”

These were the only words he could utter.

GOLDEN HAIR.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

ONCE there lived a king who was so clever that he could understand all that the animals said to one another. Listen how he came to know this. One day an old woman brought him a snake in a basket, and said if he would have it cooked, and would eat it, he would understand what the animals and living creatures, whether on land, in the air, or in the water, said. The king was pleased at the idea of knowing more than any other man, paid the old woman well for her present, and ordered one of his servants to cook the "fish" immediately for dinner.

"But mind," added the king, "you do not taste it; if you do you will answer to me for it with your head."

Irik, the servant, thought it very strange that the king should forbid him so strongly to taste the dish.

H

“As long as I have lived,” he said to himself, “I never saw such a fish; it looks more like a snake. Besides, how is a cook to prepare food without tasting it?”

When the snake was ready he ate a piece of it, just to try its flavour. Suddenly he heard something buzzing round his ears:—

“A piece for me! a piece for me!”

Irik looked round, but there was no one near, except a few flies darting about the kitchen. Then he heard a hoarse voice outside in the street:—

“Where are you going to? Where are you going to?”

And then various other voices answered,—

“To the miller’s barley. To the miller’s barley.”

And looking out of the window he saw a gander with a flock of geese.

“O’ho!” said he to himself, “that’s the ‘fish,’ is it?”

He understood the whole thing at once. He quickly ate another piece, and then, as if nothing had happened, took the dish to the king.

After dinner the king ordered Irik to saddle two horses, and accompany him on a ride. The king went on before, Irik following him. As they rode through a green meadow Irik’s horse gave a bound, and said,—

“Ho, ho, brother, I feel so light! I should like to jump over the hills!”

“Ah,” said the other horse, “I, too, should like to jump. But I am mounted by an old man, and if I were to jump he would tumble off to the ground like a full sack, and break his neck.”

“And let him break it,” said Irik’s horse, “it does not matter. Instead of an old you would have a young master.”

During this conversation Irik laughed heartily, but quietly, lest the king should hear him. The king well understood what the horses had said. He turned round, and, seeing Irik laughing, cried,—

“What are you laughing at?”

“Nothing, your majesty,” Irik excused himself; “only something that came into my mind.”

The old king, however, began to suspect him, and being afraid of the horses he returned home.

Upon reaching the palace, the king ordered Irik to pour him out a glass of wine.

“But you will lose your head,” added the king, “if you pour either too much or too little.”

Irik took a bottle and began to pour out the wine. Suddenly two birds flew through a window into the room. One was pursuing the other, and the first held three golden hairs in its beak.

“Give them to me!” cried the second, “they are mine!”

“No,” answered the first, “they are mine, I picked them up.”

“But I saw them falling on the ground when the maiden with the golden locks was combing her hair. Give me at least two of them.”

“No, not one.”

Hereupon the second bird flew upon the first, and seized the three hairs of gold. Then they began to struggle for them; at last each bird got one of the three hairs in its beak, and the third one fell upon the floor with a ringing sound.

Irik looked at it, and spilt the wine.

“You have forfeited your head!” thundered out the king; “but I will be merciful to you if you find the maiden with the golden locks, and bring her to me for my wife.”

What was Irik to do? If he would save his life he must go and look for this maiden, although he did not know where to seek her. He saddled his horse, and started at haphazard. He came to a dense forest; near this forest, just by the side of the road, a bush was burning. Some shepherd boys had lighted it. Under the bush was an ants’ nest; the sparks were falling upon it, and the ants, carrying their white eggs, were running in all directions.

“Oh, help, Irik, help!” they cried piteously, “or we and our young ones yet unhatched will perish!”

Irik quickly dismounted, removed the bush, and put out the fire.

“When you are in trouble,” said the ants, “think of us, and we will help you.”

Then he rode through the forest and approached a high fir-tree. On the top of it was a raven’s nest; and under the tree lay two young ravens screaming and complaining.

“Father and mother have flown away from us. We are too young to search for food for ourselves, for we poor chickens cannot even fly. Oh, help, Irik, help! Give us something to eat or we shall die of hunger.”

Irik did not think long; he dismounted from his horse and thrust a sword into its side, that the ravens might have something to eat.

“When you are in trouble,” croaked the ravens joyfully, “think of us, and we will help you.”

Irik was now obliged to travel on foot. He walked for a long time through the forest, and when at last he came out of it he saw a broad sea before him. Two fishermen were quarrelling on the shore. They had caught a large yellow fish in a net, and each of them wanted to keep it.

“Mine is the net, and mine is the fish,” cried one.

“Your net would have been of little use to you had it not been for my boat and help,” said the other.

“When we catch another one like this you shall have it.”

“No; you wait for that one, and let me have this.”

“Let me settle your dispute,” said Irik. “Sell the fish to me, and I will pay you well for it; then divide the money equally between you.”

He gave them all the money he had received from the king for his journey, not keeping anything for himself. The fishermen were pleased with the bargain, and Irik let the fish go into the sea. The fish swam joyfully in the water, dived, and not far from land showed its head again, and said,—

“When you want help, Irik, think of me, and I will repay your kindness.”

It then disappeared beneath the waves.

“Where are you going?” asked the fishermen of Irik.

“I am going to fetch a young bride, the maiden with the golden locks, for the old king my master; but I know not where to find her.”

“We can tell you something about her,” said the fishermen. “It is Zlatovlaska—Golden Hair; she is the daughter of the king of the Palace of Crystal, who lives on yonder island. Every morning, at the break of day, she combs her golden locks; its brightness is reflected on the sea, and up among the clouds. If you like, we will row you over to the island, because you have settled our dispute so pleasantly. Take care, how-

ever, to choose the right princess; the king has twelve daughters, but only one of them has locks of gold."

When Irik arrived on the island he went to the Palace of Crystal, and begged the king to give him his daughter with the golden hair as a wife for his own master.

"I will," answered the king; "but you must serve for her. You must in three days perform three tasks which I will give you—one for each day. Meanwhile you can rest yourself until to-morrow."

Early next morning the king said to Irik, "My daughter Zlatovlaska had a costly pearl necklace; the string broke, and the pearls dropped off, and were scattered in the long grass of the meadow. You must gather these pearls together: not one must be missing."

Irik went into the meadow, it was wide and long; he knelt down in the grass, and began to search for the pearls. He searched from morning until mid-day, but could not find a single one.

"Oh that my ants were here!" he cried; "they would help me."

"We are here to help you," cried the ants, who suddenly appeared from somewhere, and ran to him from all sides. "What do you want?"

"I have to gather many pearls together in this meadow, and I cannot even find one."

"Wait a moment, we will collect them for you."

In a short time the ants brought Irik a great number of pearls from among the grass, and he had nothing to do but to thread them on a piece of string. Just as Irik was about to tie the ends there came crawling to him a lame ant, whose leg had been burnt off when the ant-hill was in the midst of the fire, and cried,—

“Stop, Irik, stop! Don’t tie the thread yet; I have brought you one pearl more.”

Irik took the pearls to the king, and when the king had counted them there was not one missing.

“You have done your task well,” said the king; “tomorrow morning I will give you some other work to do.”

In the morning Irik presented himself to the king, and the king said to him, “My daughter with the golden locks, while bathing in the sea, lost her gold ring. You must find it, and bring it here.”

Irik went to the sea, and, full of sorrow, wandered on the shore. The sea was clear, but so deep that he could not see the bottom. How then was he to find the ring?

“Would that my gold-fish were here!” cried Irik; “it would help me.”

Suddenly something bright appeared in the sea, and then the gold-fish came up to the surface.

“I am here to help you. What do you want?”

“I have to find a gold ring in the sea, and I cannot even see the bottom of it.”

“This very instant I met a pike carrying a gold ring in its fins. Wait a moment, and I will bring it to you.”

Soon afterwards the gold-fish appeared, bringing the pike with the ring.

The king again praised Irik for having done his work so well, and on the following morning gave him the third task.

“If you wish me to give you my daughter with the golden locks for a wife for your king, you must bring her some water of death and some water of life, they will be wanted.”

Irik did not know where to seek for these waters. He walked where chance led him, until he came to a dark forest.

“Would that my ravens were here; they would help me.”

Suddenly a noise was heard over his head, and the two ravens appeared.

“We are here to help you. What do you want?”

“I have to fetch some of the water of death and some of the water of life, and know not where to get them.”

“We know where to get them. Wait a moment, and we will bring you some.”

In a short time the ravens returned to Irik, each carrying a small gourd bottle; in one was the water of life, in the other the water of death.

Irik, delighted with his good fortune, hastened back to the palace. On the skirt of the forest he saw a spider's web spread from one fir-tree to another; in the middle of it sat a large spider killing a fly. Irik took the gourd bottle with the water of death, sprinkled it over the spider, and it fell to the ground like a ripe cherry; it was quite dead. Then he sprinkled the fly with the water of life from the other bottle, and the fly began to struggle; in a short time it disentangled itself from the spider's web, and flew into the air.

"It is your good fortune, Irik, that you have brought me to life again," buzzed the fly in his ears. "Without my assistance you would never guess which one of the twelve maidens is the princess with the locks of gold."

When the king saw that Irik had also accomplished the third task, he said he would give him his daughter Zlatovlaska.

"But," added the king, "you must find her out yourself."

Then the king took him to a large hall, in the middle of which stood a table, and around it sat twelve beautiful girls, all exactly alike; each of them had a long cloth, as white as snow, thrown over her head and reaching to the ground, so that it was impossible to see what kind of hair she had.



"IRIK WAS ALMOST BLINDED BY ITS RADIANCE."

[Page 107.]

“These are my daughters,” said the king; “if you can find out which of them is Zlatovlaska, you will have won her, and may lead her away at once. If you cannot point her out, she is not destined for you, and you must leave this place without her.”

Irik was in the greatest trouble, and did not know what to do. All at once something whispered in his ear:—

“Bz—bz! go round the table, and I will tell you which one it is.”

It was the fly which Irik had rescued from death with the water of life.

“This is not the one—nor this—nor this;—but this is Zlatovlaska!”

“Give me this one from among your daughters,” cried Irik. “I have won her for my master!”

“You have chosen rightly,” said the king. The princess rose immediately from the table, and removed the head-dress, and showed her golden hair, flowing in thick locks down to the ground; it was as bright as the rising sun! Irik was almost blinded by its radiance. Then the king arrayed his daughter for her journey, according to her high birth and station, and Irik took her to his master to become his wife. The old king’s eyes sparkled, and he leapt with joy when he saw Zlatovlaska; he ordered immediate preparations to be made for the wedding.

“I intended to have you hanged for your disobedience, that the ravens might eat you,” he said to Irik; “but since you have served me so well, I will only have you beheaded and decently buried.”

After the execution, Zlatovlaska asked the old king for the dead body of Irik, and as the king could not very well refuse anything to his bride, he sent it to her. The princess joined the head to the trunk, sprinkled some of the water of death over them, and they immediately grew together so exactly that there was not even a mark left of the decapitation. Then she sprinkled the body with the water of life, and Irik got up as fresh as if he were newly born; and as hale as a deer; youth bloomed in his face.

“How soundly I have slept!” said Irik, rubbing his eyes.

“Yes,” said the princess, “you have slept soundly. Had it not been for me, you would have slept long enough.”

When the old king saw that Irik was alive, and had become younger and handsomer than before, he, too, wanted to be made young again. He immediately directed that the same should be done to him as had been done to Irik. Accordingly they beheaded him, and then sprinkled the body with the water of life over and over again, until there was no more left. But the head

would not grow to the trunk. Then they sprinkled it with the water of death, and the head grew immediately to the trunk. But the old king remained dead, for there was no water wherewith to bring him to life again!

But as the kingdom could not remain without a sovereign; and as there was no one so wise as Irik, who understood the language of the brutes and other living creatures, the people made him their king and the Princess Zlatovlaska their queen.

THE PLAGUE AND THE PEASANT.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

A PEASANT sat down in the shade of a larch tree to rest. The sun was high and glowing. Suddenly he perceived something approaching him from a distance. As it came nearer he saw that it was a woman wrapped in a large cloak. Her legs were of a wonderful length.

The peasant was greatly frightened, and tried hard to run away, but the spectre seized him with her bony arms, and said,—

“Do you know the Plague? It is I. Take me on your shoulders and carry me over the whole country. You must not miss a town, a village, or even a hamlet; I must be carried everywhere. For yourself, be not afraid: in the midst of death and misery you shall remain alive and well.”

She put her long arms round his neck. The peasant started, but surprised at feeling no weight, he turned his

head, and then saw that the spectre was sitting on his shoulders.

He took her first to a town. There was music and dancing in the taverns, and joy in every place; mirth and pleasure held their sway. When the peasant entered into the market-place, the woman shook her pestilential garments. Soon the music and dancing ceased, joy disappeared, and terror reigned supreme. The terrified peasant saw coffins and dead bodies on every side. He heard the funeral bells everywhere. Soon the cemetery was filled and there was no more room to bury the dead. Even in the market-place many a corpse was left without a grave!

On went the miserable peasant. Whenever he passed through a village the houses were left empty. The inhabitants, pale and trembling, fled; men were dying on the roads, in the woods, and in the fields.

His native village stood on a high hill: there lived his wife, his little children, and his aged parents. At the sight of it his heart bled within him. Seizing the spectre with all his strength, lest she should escape, he hurried past his home.

Before him flowed the river Pruth, with its blue waters; on the other side arose green hills; and far beyond, dark mountains, capped with snow, lost their summits in the clouds. His resolution was quickly

taken. He rushed on and plunged headlong into the river, hoping by meeting death himself to drown the Plague also, and thus to save the country from further desolation.

The unhappy peasant perished in the waters, but the Plague, as a spirit, could not be drowned. Overcome, however, by this courageous act, she fled away in terror and hid herself among the mountains. Thus the peasant not only saved his village and all those who were dear to him, but also that part of his native land into which the Plague had not been carried.

HANDICRAFT ABOVE EVERYTHING.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

A KING, with his wife and daughter, once made a pleasure trip upon the sea. When they had sailed some distance from the shore, a storm arose which drove the ship upon a foreign land, where both the king and his kingdom were quite unknown, and of which land they themselves had never before heard. Upon gaining the shore the king did not dare tell of his rank; and as he had no money, and was ignorant of any handicraft or other means by which he could support himself and his family, he was obliged to hire himself as a keeper of village cattle.

After living some years in this way, the son of the king of the country fell in love with the herdsman's daughter, who was now well grown and beautiful. The prince told his parents that he would never marry any

other maiden than the daughter of the cattle-keeper of that village. Father, mother, and all the courtiers endeavoured to dissuade him from this course, saying, that for him, who could choose a partner from among imperial and royal princesses, to take the daughter of a herdsman for his wife would be a shame and a disgrace. But all in vain; the prince only replied,—

“Either this maiden or none!”

When they all saw that nothing else was to be done, one of the councillors was sent to the cattle-herd to tell him that the king had chosen his daughter to become the wife of his own son. The councillor made his way to the herd, and told him of the king's decision; but the village cattle-keeper demanded of him, “What handicraft does the king's son understand?”

Upon which the messenger, disgusted, made answer,—

“Heaven be with you, oh man! What should a prince know of a handicraft? People only learn handicrafts to support themselves by; but the king's son possesses countries and cities.”

But the cattle-herd simply replied,—

“That may be; but unless he understands some handicraft I cannot give him my daughter.”

Then went the councillor home again and told the king what the cattle-keeper had said; at which the whole court was perfectly astonished. People had

believed that it would have been the herd's greatest joy and pride that the king's son should take his daughter to wife,—and here he was asking what trade the prince understood! The king sent a second councillor; but the cattle-herd made him the same answer:—

“So long as the king's son has not learnt a handicraft, and cannot bring to me some of his own work as a proof of his knowledge, he and I can never become closer friends.”

When this councillor also returned and informed the king that the cattle-herd was not willing to give his daughter to the prince until he had learnt some handicraft, however simple it might be, the prince went himself forth to find out among the different workshops what trade would be the easiest to learn. As he went from shop to shop, and saw what the various masters worked at, he came upon one where work-people were busy plaiting rush-mats; and as that appeared to him to be the lightest of all handicrafts, he set about to learn it at once. And when in a few days he had learnt to work he plaited a rush-mat all by himself, which a messenger took to the cattle-herd and explained that the prince had already learnt a handicraft, and that the rush-mat was a piece of his own work.

The cattle-herd took the mat in his hand, and looking at it on all sides, demanded,—

“How much is this worth?”

And they answered him,—

“Four paras.”*

“Ah!” he exclaimed. “Good! Four paras to-day, four to-morrow, that makes eight, and four the day after to-morrow, that makes twelve, and so on. If I had understood this handicraft, I should not be tending cattle this day.”

Then he told them who and what he was, and how he had come there. They were all delighted when they learnt that they had been wooing the daughter of a king and not of a cattle-herd; and the marriage of the youth and the maiden took place amid the greatest rejoicings. Then they gave to the father of the bride a ship and a guard of warriors, and he went over the sea and reached his own kingdom.

* A small Turkish coin, worth something less than a farthing.

IVAN KRUCHINA.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

KRUCHINA was a wealthy merchant, and had a son who was called Ivanushka.* The mother of Ivanushka died, and the merchant Kruchina married a second wife. Ivanushka was sent to a day-school; he used to remain there all day, and return home in the evening. During holidays the boy stayed at home and amused himself as he best could.

Business compelled the merchant to travel into foreign countries. The second wife was young, the merchant old and grey-haired. As soon as the merchant had left home visitors began to arrive, who sat down at table, ate, drank, and enjoyed themselves.

“Mother, who are these people?” asked Ivanushka.

“They are all my relations,” answered the step-mother.

* Little John—Johnny.

“Very good,” whispered Ivanushka softly to himself. “As soon as father comes home I will tell him all about this.”

The merchant’s wife had a favourite housekeeper, who knew how to get at other people’s secrets. Having overheard what Ivanushka had said, she told her mistress of it.

In the merchant’s stable was a stray foal, and Ivanushka attended to it: he used to feed it, lead it to water, and clean it. The foal grew up, and became in time a fine, strong horse; he could neigh in various voices, speak like a man, and understood what was said to him. One day, Ivanushka, returning home from school, and passing by the stable, observed that the horse, full of trouble, stood with his head hanging down and his ears drooping.

“Why are you so sad?” asked Ivanushka. “Is there mischief brewing for you or for me?”

“I am sorry on your account—not my own,” answered the horse. “Your stepmother means to poison you with some wine. Take care you don’t drink it, but pour it away.”

Ivanushka went in. His stepmother asked him to take a glass of wine, but he declined; she then began to press him so strongly that he could not possibly refuse her. He took up the glass, approached a win-

dow, and pretending to drink the wine, emptied the glass unobserved outside. There was grass growing under the window, and the poison burnt it to the very root. The stepmother was amazed that nothing happened to Ivanushka.

Next day, on his way home, Ivanushka again passed by the stable door. He went in to caress the horse, and observed that, like the day before, the horse was sad, and stood with his head hanging down. He asked the reason, and the horse said,—

“They have baked a poisoned cake for you; take care not to eat it, but throw it away.”

It happened exactly as the horse had foretold. Ivanushka threw the cake out of the window, and a dog ate it. In an instant he began to run round and round, and to run his head against the walls; at last he threw himself upon the ground, barked, howled, and died. Ivanushka, as well as ever, went next morning to school.

When the housekeeper found out that it was the horse who had warned Ivanushka, she determined with the consent of the merchant's wife to destroy him; and accordingly she put some poison into a pail of water. If the horse would but drink it, thirty-three carrion crows would come and with their iron beaks tear him into pieces.

The servants led the horse to water. Suddenly he broke loose, and rushed to the gate; but it was shut. The servants ran after him, put a bit into his mouth, fastened a rope round his neck and ears, and then began dragging him. The merchant's wife looked out of the window and screamed, "Hold him! Drag him along!"

The horse, however, kicked so violently that they were obliged to let him go.

At that moment Ivanushka came home from school. He could not bear to see the horse so cruelly treated, and said to the servants,—

"Why do you torment the poor beast?"

"We are taking him to water," they answered.

"I will water him myself," said Ivanushka. He then went to the well, drew out some fresh water and gave it to the horse.

The merchant's wife, seeing that she could neither destroy Ivanushka nor the horse, became very angry and pretended to be ill.

When the merchant returned home he found his wife groaning in bed.

"I fear you are ill, my love," said the merchant.

"Very ill."

"Has the doctor been?"

"Yes; he says it will be necessary to kill the horse, take out its gall, and use it for my medicine."

“Certainly,” said the merchant; “we will do so. We can easily buy another.” And he ordered the horse to be killed.

The servants began to sharpen their knives. When Ivanushka came from school, and heard that they were going to kill the horse, he went at once to his father, and said,—

“Father, permit me for the last time to feed the horse, and to lead him about the yard.”

The merchant gave his permission. Ivanushka fed the horse with barley; then he took him by the bridle, and led him into the yard. Ivanushka looked at the horse and shed bitter tears.

All of a sudden the horse kicked Ivanushka; the boy fell down, but quickly sprang up again.

“Has your strength increased?” asked the horse.

“Yes, it has.”

The horse again kicked him, and asked, “Has it still increased?”

“I feel very strong indeed,” answered Ivan. “I should like very much to try my strength on somebody.”

“Ask your father to let you ride me on the road for the last time, and to enjoy yourself.”

Ivan went to his father.

“Father,” he said, “allow me to ride on the horse for the last time, and to enjoy myself.”

The merchant gave his consent. Ivan saddled the horse, mounted him, rode outside the gates, and began to gallop up and down. The merchant stood at the gate looking on.

All at once Ivan whistled, stopped the horse, and said,—

“Farewell, my dear father; I cannot stop with you any longer; stepmother tried to poison me and the horse.” Having said this he galloped away.

Outside the town Ivan met an old, withered, bony woman driving a cart full of hay on the road. Presently the cart turned over. Ivan laughed, and cried,—

“I say, grandmother, I could lift up your cart with one hand.”

He dismounted, and began to lift up the cart.

“Have you left your home with a blessing?” asked the old woman, and taking a scythe from under the hay, she mowed him down.

“À-ha! though you have been bragging of your strength, I have got you now.”

The old woman was Death.

The poor youth fell down dead; the horse, frightened, galloped away. A falcon flew by carrying two phials in its claws,—one of the water of life, the other of the water of death. He had observed carrion birds in the middle of the field feeding on white flesh; they were rapidly

devouring poor Ivan. The falcon was moved with compassion. Descending to the ground, he poured a few drops of the water of death into Ivan's mouth, and the flesh became whole again; then he sprinkled him with the water of life, and Ivan got up, thinking he was awakened from a long sleep.

"Without my assistance," said the falcon, "you would have slept long enough."

At first Ivan would not believe this. The falcon seized a sparrow, struck it with his wing and threw it on the ground. Then he sprinkled it with the water of life, and the sparrow flew away.

"It is as you say. I thank you, bright falcon, for your kind help. But where is my horse?"

"Your horse is in a certain kingdom far away. He lives in a town surrounded by marble walls with crystal gates."

"Oh, falcon, falcon! show me the way to my horse."

"Go in the direction in which you will see me fly."

A story is soon told; but it was a long time before Ivan arrived at the city with marble walls and crystal gates. The walls were high and the guards would not let Ivan pass through the gates. As soon as his horse scented him he began to neigh and to tear himself from his keepers. He kicked the wall, and knocked such an enormous stone out of it that the inhabitants could not possibly replace it. He was, however, seized, shut up

in a cellar built of white stones, and fastened with iron hoops. Ivan passed through the broken wall into the city. The people looked at him, and said,—

“He is a stranger from some foreign country.”

They took him before their czar.

“Who are you?” asked the czar.

“I don’t know.”

“Where do you come from?”

“I don’t know.”

Ivan gave the same answer to all the questions they put to him: “I don’t know.”

The czar was angry at first, but after a little thought he arrived at the conclusion that Ivan only feigned to be a simpleton, and might be made useful. “Remain then unknown,” said the czar to Ivan, and retained him in his service. Ivan served him faithfully; the czar gave him the keys of his treasury, with permission to enter six rooms but not a seventh.

Ivan was often in the treasury. One day, full of thought, he approached the seventh room. Suddenly he heard the neighing of a horse. He could not restrain himself; he opened the door locked with seven locks, and there at once perceived his own long lost horse. The horse was bound with twelve iron hoops and fastened to a pillar with chains; on the pillar were hanging the keys of the chains.

“I did not expect to see you again,” said the horse. “I have helped you before; help me now. Let me out that I may stretch my legs.”

Ivan took down the keys, unlocked the chains, and freed the horse.

“I would not allow any one here to mount me,” said the horse. “Now make haste, put on saddle and bridle, and get on my back. Take one of the gloves and the brush from the wall. They will be useful to you.”

Ivan took the glove and the brush from the hook, mounted the horse, shook the silken reins, and the horse rushed out like an arrow, the sparks flying from beneath his hoofs. He cleared the crystal gates at a bound.

After a little while the horse said to Ivan, “Get down on the ground and hearken if they are pursuing us. The czar has a wind-horse, as swift as lightning; he is sure to overtake us.”

Ivan put his ear to the ground and listened.

“They are pursuing us!” he cried.

“Throw the glove down behind you.”

Ivan threw down the glove, and there arose from the ground a dense, dark forest, which stopped the way. Ivan rode on.

Meanwhile the people cut down the forest and began again to pursue Ivan.

“Throw the brush down behind you.”

Ivan threw it down, and there arose behind them steep rocky mountains, which sheltered Ivan as with a wall.

After some time Ivan reached another kingdom. Having entered a beautiful field, he let the horse loose to graze, and said,—

“My faithful friend and companion, come to me again at the sound of my whistle.”

He then went into a garden which was not far off. In that garden, behind silver bars, stood an apple tree full of beautiful fruit. Ivan was tempted, and plucked one of the finest of them. But to that apple tree were fastened golden wires, and as soon as Ivan had plucked the apple, bells began to ring. The servants rushed into the garden, seized Ivan, and took him to their czar.

The czar asked Ivan for his name and country, and whether he left it of his own free will. He was pleased with Ivan's simplicity, took him into his own service, and ordered him to look after the garden. He nick-named him Ivan the Unknown.

The czar had three daughters, two of whom were already married. One day the maiden princess, who was exceedingly beautiful, came into the garden, and seeing a young handsome gardener there, she said to him,—

“How is it, gardener, that you have not brought me any flowers yet?”

Ivan began immediately to pluck some of the finest flowers. While doing so, a thorn pricked his hand, and the wound bled. At the sight of the blood the princess was moved with pity. She took her own silk handkerchief, and bound the gardener's hand with it.

Now about this time news came that a neighbouring infidel king had declared war against the czar, and had advanced towards the capital with a powerful army. A great battle began.

Ivan cut down a lime tree, made a stout beam of it, went into the fields, and whistled and called loudly for his horse. In an instant his beautiful horse appeared. The earth shook as he galloped. Ivan mounted him and rushed against the enemy. He seized from one a sword, from another a golden helmet, put the helmet on his head and drew down the visor. He then fought and defeated the whole army.

The czar was amazed, and wondered who the knight could be, and whence he came. He did not suppose, even for a moment, that the knight was his own gardener. The people thought he was perhaps St. George himself on his white horse. The enemy was dispersed, and had left their baggage behind them. The strange knight galloped away, and was seen no more.

The czar returned home, and praising the unknown knight's bravery, said to his daughter,—

“Whoever he may be, I would willingly give you to him for a wife as a reward of such valour.”

The gardener stood beneath the window and heard it.

Not long afterwards another hostile army advanced against the capital, and again a frightful battle began.

Ivan went into the fields and whistled; the horse galloped to him, and the dust from beneath his feet arose like smoke in the air. The horse was full of life and vigour.

“What is it you want?” asked the horse.

“Help me once more,” said Ivan; “take me to the battle-field.”

The horse flew with the swiftness of the wind, and the young knight, like an eagle, attacked the forces of the enemy, and routed them. The people again thought it was St. George. Ivan brandished his lance, and killed numbers of the enemy; he delivered the czar from death, and the people from slavery. The foe fled and never returned.

The czar ordered the unknown knight to be invited to his castle. The stranger appeared. The czar begged him to lift up his visor. When the princess saw her own handkerchief on the knight's arm, she blushed, but said not a word.

“Whoever you may be,” said the czar, “I will keep my czar's word with you: if you are unmarried, I will

give you my daughter for a wife; if married, you shall have half of my kingdom.”

Ivan drew up the visor of his golden helmet and bowed humbly to the czar. The surprised czar recognised in the knight his own gardener. Soon afterwards Ivan married the princess.

And now we have told you, in the old fashion, the story of Ivan, the son of the merchant Kruchina.

RIGHT AND WRONG.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

A CERTAIN king had two sons : the one cunning and unjust, the other just and good. After the death of their father, the unjust brother said to the just one,—

“Get you away from me ; we cannot live together any longer. Here you have three hundred gold pieces and a horse ; this is your share of our father’s inheritance. There is nothing more for you.”

The just brother took the three hundred gold pieces and the horse, and departed, saying as he went,—

“Heaven be praised ! although I have received only this much from the whole kingdom.”

After some time the two brothers met on the high road, each mounted on his horse. The just brother called to the unjust one,—

“God help you, my brother !”

And the other answered,—

“God give you nothing but evil! Why do you always bring in the name of God? Wrong is better than Right.”

Then the good brother answered,—

“Come, I will lay you a wager that Wrong is not better than Right.”

And they made a bet together for one hundred gold pieces, and agreed that the first man they met should decide the wager. Going farther on they met the demon on horseback, who had changed himself into a monk. They asked him to tell them which was better—Right or Wrong. The demon answered, “Wrong!” and so the good brother lost his one hundred gold pieces. Then they bet again for the second and third hundred pieces, and according to the decision of the demon, who assumed different shapes each time he appeared to them, the just brother lost all the three hundred gold pieces, and his horse as well. Then said he,—

“Heaven be praised! I have not a single gold piece left; but I have my eyes still, and will wager with you for them, once more.”

And he wagered his eyes that Right was better than Wrong.

Then his brother, without seeking further for a judge, drew forth his knife, and cut the other's eyes out, and cried,—

“Now you are without eyes, let Right help you!”

But the other, pitiable as was his plight, still praised God, and said,—

“I have lost my eyes for the Right of Heaven; now I pray you, oh my brother! to give me some water in a vessel, that I may moisten my mouth and wash my wounds, and to lead me forth and leave me under the fir-tree by the spring.”

The brother listened to this entreaty; gave him some water in a vessel, led him out, and left him under the fir-tree by the spring. And as the miserable man stood there, he heard at a certain hour in the night, the Vilas* come to the spring, and as they bathed in it they said to each other:

“Do you know, sisters, that the king’s daughter is ill of leprosy? The king has called all the physicians together, but not one of them can heal her. If any one only knew it, and would take some of this water, immediately after we have left it, and would tell the king’s

* The Vilas are beings peculiar to Servia. They are female genii supposed to inhabit the highest hills and rocks in the neighbourhood of water, and retain perpetual youth. They are represented as beautiful in countenance, with long hair waving over breast and shoulders, and clad in light gauze-like drapery. In a Servian popular song the Vila thus sings: “The mountains gave me birth and folded me in green leaves; the dew of the morning that suckled me, and the breezes of the woods that rocked me to sleep, were my nurses.”

daughter to bathe in it, in a day and a night she would be well, as would all, whether lame, deaf, or blind, become healed who bathe in this water."

At this moment the cock crowed, and the Vilas disappeared. On hearing this, the unhappy man, crawling on all fours, dragged himself from under the fir-tree down to the water, washed his eyes in it, and immediately received his sight. Then he filled his vessel with the water, went quickly to the king, whose daughter was ill of leprosy, and said to him, "I am come to heal your daughter; if she will admit me into her presence, she will be made well in a day and a night."

When the king heard this he at once admitted him to the maiden's chamber, and the man gave orders that the princess should be bathed in the water he had brought. And when a day and a night had passed the maiden was well and clean from leprosy. The king was overjoyed: he gave the just brother half his kingdom, and his daughter for a wife; and thus the man became the king's son-in-law and the first man in the land after the king.

This news soon spread over the whole kingdom, and came to the ears of him who always had said that Wrong was better than Right. He thought to himself:

"My brother found his fortune under the fir-tree," and away he went to seek for it there himself. First he took some water in a vessel, then went under the fir-tree

and cut out his eyes with a knife. At a certain hour in the night the Vilas came there to bathe, and they began to talk among themselves how the king's daughter had been healed. "Some one must have overheard us," they said, "when we were talking of how she could be healed with the water we had bathed in. Perhaps even now some one is listening to us. Come and let us see."

And when, as they looked about them, they came under the fir-tree, and discovered the man who had come there to seek his fortune, and who had always said that Wrong was better than Right, they seized him, and tore him into four pieces. And this is how Wrong came to the help of the unjust.

MEN - WOLVES .

(FROM THE POLISH.)

I.

On a beautiful hill near the river Vistula, a company of young countrymen and countrywomen came together to celebrate the harvest-home with music and dancing. There was plenty to eat and drink, and they helped themselves freely. In the midst of the merriment a terrible cry was heard which drowned the music and jovial songs.

The young people left off dancing, ran to the spot whence the cry came, and found with horror that an enormous wolf had seized one of the handsomest girls of the village in his mouth, and was dragging her away. The most courageous among the youths followed and soon overtook the wolf; but the furious monster, his mouth foaming with rage, having dropped his prey on the ground, stood over it ready to fight.

The men, unarmed and terrified, knew not what to do. Some of them ran home to fetch fire-arms; the rest, quite unnerved, stood aloof, and awaited their return. The wolf, seeing the fear of those who remained, again seized the poor girl, and disappeared with her into the adjoining forest.

Fifty years had passed away since the occurrence of this terrible scene. Another feast was being held on the same hill, and an old, grey-headed man approached the merry-makers. The people invited him to join in their revels, but he, gloomy and reserved, sat down to drink the proffered glass of brandy in silence.

A peasant, of nearly the same age as the guest, approached, saluted him, and tried to engage him in conversation. The stranger, after looking at him for some time, demanded with emotion: "Is it you, indeed, John?"

The countryman then recognised in the stranger his elder brother, who had been lost fifty years before. The wondering peasants soon surrounded the old visitor, who told them how, having been changed into a wolf by a witch, he had carried his betrothed away from that same hill during a harvest-home festival; how he had lived with her in the forest for a year, when she had died.

"From that moment," he continued, "savage and furious, I attacked every one, and destroyed everything

I fell in with. The blood I then shed I cannot even now wipe away.”

Here he showed them his hands covered with blood-stains.

“It is now four years since, again changed to human shape, I have wandered from place to place. I wished to see you all once more—to see the hut and village where I was born, and grew up to be a man. After that—Ah, woe is me! Fly! Fly from me! I shall become a wolf again!”

As soon as he had uttered these words, he was changed into a wolf. He howled piteously, rushed past the astonished peasants, and disappeared in the neighbouring forest for ever.

II.

A witch, having fallen in love with a young peasant, tried all her magic arts in vain to make him return her affection. At last, offended at his indifference, the furious woman resolved to take a terrible revenge.

Meeting him once, she said, “When you next go to the forest for wood, at the first stroke of your axe you shall be changed into a wolf.”

The peasant slighting her threats, put his oxen to the wagon and drove to the forest. But no sooner had he struck a tree than the axe fell to the ground. Surprised

and terrified he looked at his hands—they were changed into wolf's paws! Almost maddened with fear and distress, he ran about the forest. He looked into a pool of water, and saw that he was changed into a wolf; only here and there some portion of his clothes remained, the transformation not being yet quite complete. He hastened to his oxen, but they, frightened at the sight of him, turned and ran. He tried to stop them by the sound of his once familiar voice, but instead of speaking he could only howl. Then, alas! with pain and terror he fully understood that the threats of the despised witch were carried into effect.

Unable, in spite of the change, to depart from his native place, he wandered about in the neighbourhood. In vain he tried to accustom himself to raw meat; he could not eat it; he had an especial horror of human flesh. In order to obtain food, he used to frighten away the shepherds and harvestmen, and eat their bread, milk, and other provisions.

Having spent some years in this manner, he one day felt an unusual desire to sleep, and accordingly laid down in the grass. But what was his surprise, when, on awakening, he perceived that he was again changed into a man. Delighted beyond measure, and forgetting that after breaking the spell, and changing from the state of a wolf to that of a man, people are left without clothes, the happy peasant ran swiftly home.

Happiness, they say, does not last long. The truth of this saying the peasant experienced only too soon. On arriving home he found his parents were dead; Kate, the girl whom he had loved before all others, was married, and had four children; most of his friends were either dead or had removed to distant parts.

The unfortunate peasant bore his misfortunes bravely. He tried to forget his troubles by the tillage, in the sweat of his brow, of a small piece of land. Sometimes, especially on holidays, he would go to the village public-house, and there, surrounded by his neighbours, would tell the story of his adventures, and the trials he had suffered through the cruel vengeance of the despised witch.

III.

A peasant, having been a wolf for seven years, was permitted by the witch who had transformed him to resume his natural shape. Although hungry and without clothes, he walked the whole day to reach his home where he had left his wife and children. He arrived late at night before his hut, and knocked at the door.

“Who is there?” demanded a voice from within; and the peasant at once recognised it as that of his wife.

“It is I—your husband; open the door, quick!”

“Heaven help us!” cried the terrified woman. “Here, husband, get up!”

The wondering peasant soon saw before him his former servant, who, having married his wife, had come into all his property. The new husband rushed out of the hut armed with a pitchfork, determined to drive away its rightful owner. The unhappy man-wolf, exasperated at his wife's inconstancy, cried out in his anguish,—

“Oh, that I were again a wolf, that I might punish my faithless wife, and never feel my misery!”

His wish was gratified on the instant: he was changed again into a wolf. Maddened with rage, he attacked his wife, who stood by holding a child of the second marriage in her arms. He pulled her down to the ground, devoured the child, and revenged himself upon its mother by mangling her body in a fearful manner.

At the cries of the wounded woman the neighbours ran to her assistance and set upon the furious animal. The wolf did not long defend himself; he soon fell beneath the repeated blows of his assailants. When the peasants, shouting with joy at their victory, began to examine the creature by the light of the burning pine splinters, they found to their surprise and horror, that instead of a wolf, they had killed their countryman who was lost seven years before, and was supposed to have been changed into a wolf. They tried to restore him, but it was too late. Whilst they were lamenting his unhappy end, the faithless woman, his wife, died of the wounds she had received.

YANECHK AND THE WATER DEMON.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

A SHEPHERDESS in Borohrady had an only son whose name was Yanechek,* but that one son was more trouble to her than ten daughters would have been to any other mother. Yanechek was in truth a very mischievous boy. There was not one of his playmates, girl or boy, upon whom he had not practised some trick; and not a woman in Borohrady who had not complained of his pranks to his mother, the widow Dorothy.

“Gossip Dorothy,” cried Mistress Betusche, “your Yanechek fastened my door on the outside last night, and I had to call to my neighbours for half a day before I could get out.”

“Shepherdess Dorothy,” said the magistrate one day in the village market-place, “if I catch Yanechek in my pigeon-house again I will send him to prison.”

* Johnny.

“My dear Dorothy,” complained Mistress Anichka, “last night, at twelve o’clock, Yanechek frightened us dreadfully.”

And thus it was day after day: “Gossip Dorothy, Shepherdess Dorothy, My dear Dorothy,” and day after day Dorothy shed tears over her troubles.

“Why don’t you correct the boy?” suggested the shepherdess’s brother.

But Dorothy was afraid to whip her mischievous son, because that would make him cry; and the boy, knowing his mother’s weakness, did as he pleased without fear. In his mischief he did not consider his mother’s feelings in the least. He would chase the goats up the steepest rocks, while his mother, Dorothy, standing at the bottom, would scream, “Come down, Yanechek!” at the top of her voice, her heart ready to break with fear. But Yanechek would climb to the very top, then seize the thin branches of a bush with his right hand and bend his whole body forward, so that it appeared as if he were suspended in the air, or upon the point of falling down to cut himself to pieces on the sharp rocks beneath.^k At this sight his poor mother Dorothy would be seized with a fainting fit, and crying, “Heaven help me!” would fall senseless to the ground.^l Then, as the poor shepherdess began to recover from her swoon, the wicked Yanechek would hold her in his arms, crying,—

“Open your eyes, mother! open your eyes!”

And as soon as his mother opened her eyes, Yanechek would jump up, turn round on his heel, and clapping his hands together would cry joyfully,—

“Mother is alive again! Mother is alive again!”

And the shepherdess, instead of taking a cane to chastise her mischievous son, would simply say,—

“How you frightened me, you naughty boy!”

And this reproof seemed to her a sufficient punishment for her dear son.

But the wicked boy caused the greatest anxiety to his mother Dorothy when he went to bathe in the large pool. There was no part of that pool, deep as it was, where Yanechek did not dive to the bottom. On warm days he would splash about in the smooth water, turn somersaults, and leap and gambol like a playful carp. Or he would climb up the willow trees growing on the bank of the pool, and from the highest and thinnest branches he would spring headlong into the cool, deep water.

“Yanechek! Yanechek!” his mother often cried, “don’t bathe in the pool. You will fall into the Water Demon’s net some day.”

“I don’t care for the Water Demon,” the boy would answer laughing. Then he would run into the forest and gather a cap full of strawberries or a basket of mushrooms for his mother. For Dorothy was very fond

of strawberries with milk, and of stewed mushrooms, and so long as she had these dainties on her table she never punished Yanechek, and he might run and bathe in the pool as often as he liked.

One day, when the dainty shepherdess had some mushrooms for dinner, Yanechek went to the pool, ran up the steep bank and plunged into the calm water. He began to gambol about, dive, and then rising again stuck his legs up in the air. All at once he raised up his head, stretched out his arms and screamed for help as if in the agonies of death. The labourers in the field, hearing his cries ran to his assistance. They seized him by the hair of the head and drew him to land. There the wretched boy lay lifeless; he neither moved nor breathed. The peasants laid him on his stomach, so that the water might run from him more freely, and not knowing what next to do, some ran for the shepherdess and some for the doctor.

Shepherdess Dorothy had just begun to eat her stewed mushrooms when the country people brought her the sad news that her son was drowned. Horror-stricken, she dropped the wooden spoon, and pale and with her hair hanging loose, rushed towards the pool to her poor boy Yanechek. But the miserable boy was nowhere to be found: in vain they sought for his body among the bushes, in the fields, and in the water. When the

evening came, Dorothy, her eyes red with crying and her dress in disorder, returned to her hut with the neighbours who came to comfort her. Although the mischievous conduct of Yanechek had dug a deep gulf between her and the people about her, yet the grief of the mother built a bridge over it, and they came to comfort the bereaved widow. No sooner had they entered the hut than they were seized with terror, and rushed out of the door again, screaming, "A ghost! a ghost!"

Yanechek sat at the table at which a lamp was burning, and where a dish full of stewed red mushrooms was steaming. He was eating and evidently enjoying the savoury dish.

"You wicked boy!" exclaimed Dorothy, both surprised at the sight of her unexpected visitor and vexed at the rapid disappearance of her favourite delicacy; "is it right to treat your mother in this way?"

"Are you vexed, mother," cried Yanechek laughing at her, "that I have been eating mushrooms?"

Then he jumped upon the table, lay down, and putting his hands under his chin, made faces at her.

"The Water Demon take you!" cried the shepherdess, her cheeks turning red, really angry for the first time in her life with Yanechek. But the next instant her face grew deadly pale again, for through the window came the words,—

“It shall be so! It shall be so!”

The widow Dorothy, horrified at the sound, turned towards the window and saw a white face outside looking at her with a fiendish smile on its lips. † Yanechek jumped down from the table, seized his mother's stick, and ran with it out of the hut. In the darkness of the evening he could just make out some person fleeing away. He raised the stick and threw it after the figure; but the stick fell to the ground only a little way before him, and from a distance came a burst of malicious laughter mingled with which came the words distinctly uttered,—

“It shall be so! It shall be so!”

It was a summer day. The sun shone warmly on fields and gardens, on rivulets and lakes. On the bank of the still pool, Yanechek, the mischievous son of Dorothy the shepherdess, danced about joyfully. He whistled aloud and undressed himself that he might make a plunge into the cool water. On the surface of the water there floated a bunch of most beautiful flowers, so beautiful that it was difficult to tell whether they were really flowers or a cluster of precious stones. The flowers seemed to smile upon Yanechek, and to say to him, “Come and take us, we will gladden your heart until your life's end.” Thus the flowers enticed him to take them. † But the boy was as cunning as a fox, and cried out,—

“You must get yourself another bait, Mr. Water Demon. You have prepared your nosegay in vain this time, you stupid Water Demon. I will stick the flowers in my hat without wetting my foot-soles.”

Thus said Yanechek, and having broken off a long branch from the nearest willow tree, he bent over the water as he tried to draw the flowers to the bank. But as he bent forward with the long rod the beautiful flowers floated a little farther from the bank, and Yanechek, growing angry and impatient to reach them, went step by step slowly into the cool water as he followed the flowers. They tempted him so much that he did not notice that he had already reached the middle of the pool. Now, however, he could reach the flowers with the long rod, and he drew them towards him that he might seize them with his hand. As he grasped them he entangled his hand in a fine net which the Water Demon had spread round the flowers; and the more he tried to draw the prize towards him, the more the net pulled him towards the bottom of the pool. At last Yanechek let go the flowers, but he could not disentangle himself from the net, for what the Water Demon has once seized he does not easily let go.¹² Then Yanechek began to scream with all his might for help,—

“Help, good people, help! The Water Demon is drowning me!”

But the people working in the fields, although they heard his cries, turned a deaf ear to his entreaties. They said angrily,—

“And let him drown you, you wicked boy!”

The miserable, struggling Yanecek was dragged deeper and deeper. At last he was overwhelmed by the water, and on the top of it there appeared a little man in a green dress, who called out to the people in the fields, whilst a diabolical smile played upon his face,—

“It shall be so! It shall be so!”

Shepherdess Dorothy waited for her son Yanecek that whole day and night in vain. Early next morning, as she ran round the bank of the pool in search of her mischievous but much-loved son, she saw his hat, waistcoat, and shirt lying on the ground, and thus learnt with intense grief how it was she had waited in vain so long. She would have thrown herself into the cold, still water after him in her despair, if her neighbours had not prevented her. Weeping bitterly the poor widow collected the remains of the dress of her unhappy boy, and by degrees the love of the mother's heart gave her courage instead of despair, and desire of revenge instead of vain lamentation. For nine days she plaited a rope out of nine pieces of bast, and with this strongly-woven cord she hid herself among some bushes near the pool to wait for the Water Demon.

“If I stay here three times seven days my body will become as thin as a shadow, and the wicked Water Demon will not see his enemy.”

Speaking thus to herself, Dorothy took courage and waited three times seven days, and her body dried up and became as thin as a shadow; her mother's love alone kept her alive, for that love was her only food and her only comfort.

Nine times in a year the Water Demon leaves his palace built under the water, to walk upon the warm earth and see whom he may entice to his cold bed. Then he listens to the curses of the wicked and the profane words of the ungodly. Only once each time can he make his choice of an innocent man sacrificed to him by the immutable decrees of Fate! The Water Demon walks on the earth in a green dress-coat, and every time the eye of a human being glances at him the water drops from his left coat-tail. This time also, as Dorothy still watched among the bushes on the bank of the pool—and she waited there more than three times seven days—the Water Demon came out of the water in a green dress-coat. The heart of the shepherdess began to beat more quickly and her hands to shake as the Water Demon made the first step on the dry land, where his power ceases. She came out softly from among the bushes, and like a mere shadow walked in

the footsteps of the evil Water Demon. As she followed in his track she made a running knot in the rope of nine times plaited bast, and cast it round the leg of the Water Demon just as he was about to leap over a field ditch. Having fastened the rope round his leg she tore off his left coat-tail, and the Water Demon, deprived of his power, struggled like an obstinate ram, and neighed like a wild horse. Dorothy dragged the Water Demon by the rope to her hut, carefully avoiding the least puddles, lest he should touch even the smallest drop of water. Arrived at her hut, Dorothy fastened the wicked spirit near the oven by a strong knot, then put in some dry faggots, lit them, and the oven soon became as hot as the summer sun at mid-day. Then the Water Demon began to wail piteously, and Dorothy approaching him set on to sing,—

“Oh, Water Demon! Water Demon! Give me back my son, give me back my Yanechek!”

But the Water Demon paid no attention to her words, but ground his teeth at her with rage. When, however, the woman kept on adding fuel to the fire and still continued her song, the Evil Spirit, dried up by the heat, lost his strength and youthful appearance, and became like a withered old man. With this change into a man a hundred years old, came also upon him the pains and infirmities of age, and sighing for his liberty he at last

told Dorothy how she could again see her son Yanechek, and could release him from the water palace. Upon this she promised to let the Water Demon free, and full of hope, started on her way.

Searching for her son the mother came to the bank of the pool, and there, carrying out the instructions of the Water Demon, she repeated the following words,—

“Mother Well! Mother Well! Listen to what the master says: open thy waters to the bottom!”

As soon as she had uttered these words the waters opened, and there appeared before her stairs leading down into the depths of the pool. These stairs Dorothy courageously descended, while the crystal waters grew up higher and higher as she went down. Gradually the stairs and the passage became narrower, so that the withered form of the widow could only pass through with difficulty. At last her farther progress was stopped by a large, green frog. Then Dorothy, remembering the instructions of the Water Demon, said these words,—

“Oh, Frog! Frog! Hear what the master says, open a passage for me!”

As soon as she had said this the mouth of the frog opened like a large gate, its body changed into pillars like bright emeralds, and above them shone the eyes of the frog like two suns. Through this gate the widow

entered a large and lofty hall; larger and loftier than any church she had ever seen. The walls were spread all over with sparkling glass, and all around were bright shining places, as if of pure silver, where there was an incredible number of holes filled with little silver jars; so many were there that the simple shepherdess could never have counted them. The hall was beautiful indeed, but it was cold and full of terrors. Suppressed cries of pain and agonising sighs came from the little jars under which the Water Demon kept the lost souls of the drowned imprisoned. A frightful prison for the unhappy spirits: they moaned and sobbed in despair, as if laden with heavy and grievous sins. Full of both fear and hope, Dorothy began to knock at the little jars with her bent finger.

“Are you here, my son Yanechek?” she asked in a trembling voice.

“I am Veit, condemned to everlasting torments here for having sought relief from a bad wife by death in the water. Another woman won my love.”

“Are you here, my son Yanechek?”

“I am called Voyteh. I cheated the orphan children committed to my charge: I could not longer endure the reproaches of my conscience, and drowned myself from despair.”

“Are you here, my son Yanechek?” asked the widow

as she went on. She would receive answers to her questions, and then would follow sighs and groans terrible to hear. The poor woman's heart grew more and more anxious and sad.

Thus poor Dorothy the shepherdess continued to knock at the silver jars, one after the other, for nine times nine days, because the wicked Water Demon had not clearly explained to her where to seek for Yanechek. At last, almost worn out with fatigue, she cast a timid glance at the last two jars. "Are you here, my son Yanechek?" she asked, her voice sinking to a whisper; and she touched the shelf with her finger, fully expecting to receive an evil answer. No sooner had she done so than there came a sound from one of the little jars as when an empty vessel is struck. It broke loudly and harshly on the ears of the shepherdess, for the sound was like a human voice, and it seemed to say, "Yanechek is not here; but here is a place prepared for a mother who rears a wicked son." As the sound seemed to form itself into these words a dreadful fear seized the soul of the shepherdess, and her senses began to fail her. Low, suppressed cries of pain moaned in her ears, mingled with fiendish laughter; innumerable silver jars whirled round and round before her eyes, and the sighs and the laughter seemed to come from the silver jars, and to say to her,—

“Yanechek is not here ; but here is a place prepared for you !”

Then the great hall itself began to turn round and round about Dorothy, and she felt as if she should faint away. In the midst of her distress and sense of sickness she fancied she could hear sighs of pain from the last little jar. They seemed like the cries of her lost Yanechek when at home feigning illness. “Oh, help, mother, help !” These words came indeed from the last little jar, and the sound of them revived the poor mother again. She recognised her son with her soul ; she quickly lifted up the jar, and Yanechek sprang out of his narrow prison.

“May you stick fast in a swamp, you slow mother !” cried the liberated son.

But the mother, doting on her wicked boy, did not hear the cruel words. She looked with intense commiseration on his thin face, his sunken eyes, his pale lips and bony hands, and covered his emaciated body with kisses.

“What did you eat here, my poor boy ?”

“Despair was my food.”

“What did you drink here, my poor boy ?”

“Despair was my drink.”

To every question Dorothy put to him, his answer was “Despair.” And the mother’s heart was again troubled,

and a new fear seized her lest despair should come over her son again. Then she took her boy in her arms and carried him out of the Water Demon's hall. She passed through the frog's gate, up the narrow stairs between the crystal walls, to the top of the lake, and never stopped till she reached the green bank. On the green bank she laid her dear burden—laid her Yanechek—on the soft grass, sat down by the dear boy, stroked his face and said sweet words to him. But the wicked Yanechek lay there with a gloomy scowling face, never answering his mother, and turning his eyes constantly on the ground. But when Dorothy began to tell him how she had plaited a nine-fold rope of bast for the Water Demon, how she had watched for him, how she had caught and fastened him near the oven, the face of Yanechek gained more colour than through the fresh air, and his eyes sparkled more brightly than from the soft, sweet kisses of his mother.

“And is the Water Demon still fastened to the oven?” demanded Yanechek, springing to his feet.

“Yes,” answered his mother. “The Water Demon cannot break the nine-fold bast rope, nor can he untie the knot.”

“Have you the sharp axe still at home?” again asked Yanechek.

“Yes; but what do you want with it?”

“I don't want it; but the Water Demon must have a cut with it behind his ear.”

“Heaven preserve you from such a deed! I have promised the Water Demon his freedom.”

“You have promised him that!” cried Yanechek. “You silly mother! you have promised him his freedom that he may catch me again, and you too, perhaps. No! no! this fiend shall never go back to his cold hall; you may carry him there without his head.”

Having thus spoken, Yanechek ran along the bank of the pool towards his mother's hut. The shepherdess could with difficulty keep up with him. She followed him, panting for breath, and unable as she felt herself to be to prevent her son from carrying out his purpose, fresh anxiety filled her heart for his own safety. Yanechek was still her dearest treasure, for him she would have done anything. As soon as they reached the hut, Yanechek seized the sharp-edged axe, too sharp and too heavy for his wasted body, and ran with it into the room where the Water Demon was still fastened to the oven.

“Now, you evil thing,” cried Yanechek, as thirsting for revenge he raised the axe in the air; “have you got some flowers for me that I may make you a funeral garland?”

“Bow! bow!” barked the Water Demon, changing

immediately into a black shaggy dog, and showing his teeth.

The wicked boy grew furious with rage, the widow was terrified for her son and screamed, "Strike the monster dead!" Yanechek took aim and threw the axe at the dog. But the Water Demon had sharp eyes, and sprang aside, and the axe fell on the nine-fold bast rope and cut it in two. The dog, freed from his strong fetters, flew past Yanechek on to the oaken table where stood the shepherdess's water-jug. The water in this jug, during all the time of Dorothy's absence, as she sat watching among the bushes, and when she was tapping at the silver jars, had not quite dried up. There was still one drop of water at the bottom. On this drop the dog set his paw, and in an instant his former young and vigorous form returned. Then he overturned the jug, and that single drop of water became a strong flood, like a summer torrent among the mountains, and quickly filled the room with its fast flowing waters. In those waters the wicked Yanechek and his weak-minded, indulgent mother were drowned. Full of terror and despair, both mother and son called loudly for help as the water rose and bubbled up to their very throats. The Water Demon, a fiendish smile upon his lips, walked on the top of the rolling waves and stretched out his icy-cold hands to Dorothy and Yanechek. As soon as he had

caught hold of them he dived with them into the deep, took them to his cold hall, and there imprisoned the two unhappy souls each under a narrow jar.

For many years afterwards a dark, deep pool was to be seen on the spot where the shepherdess Dorothy's hut once stood, and the people living near would tell travellers the story of the unhappy mother and of her son Yanechek.

SPIRIT TREASURES.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

I.

A CERTAIN farmer had two houses,—one in which he lived with his family in summer time, the other a winter house, provided with an oven, and called *istopka*. The farmer took a fancy one day to sleep in the *istopka* alone. He went there and lay down—it was a bright moonlight night—but, being unable to sleep, he lay with his eyes open staring at the walls. Suddenly the figure of a man rose up from beneath the floor, walked heavily across it, and as it moved made a noise like a purse full of money. It walked straight towards the farmer. The farmer crossed himself, said a prayer, and began to whisper, “Chur! Chur!”* It was fortunate that he thus protected himself. The spectre passed the farmer by, and went into the yard; there it stayed some time, when it returned to the room. Again the farmer crossed himself,

* A word used to exorcise spirits.

and whispered, "Chur, Chur!" Just at this moment the cock crowed, and the spectre instantly disappeared somewhere beneath the floor.

The farmer went home and related all that he had seen. He and his family considered the matter of the apparition over, and came to the conclusion to consult some "wise-man" about it. The next day they found a wise-man, and told him all the story.

"Ah!" said the wise-man, "you have lost a famous chance, countryman."

"What chance?"

"Why, it was a treasure."

"Is it possible!"

"Yes."

"Could we not get it somehow?"

"You can."

"How, then?"

"Listen, and I will tell you. When the spectre again rises from beneath the floor, and approaches you, permit it to do so. When it is within two steps of you, seize it three times by the head, repeating each time, 'Amen! Amen! crumble thou into pieces.'" v

The farmer did as he was told. The spectre crumbled into old copper money of five-copeck pieces.* The

* About twopence.

money altogether was worth more than two hundred and fifty roubles.*

II.

A moujik used once to sleep in a deserted room. Sometimes, just as he was about to fall asleep, a cat of a reddish colour would jump up from he knew not where, and run about the room. The cat shone like gold, and when its tail came into contact with anything hard it made a ringing noise like that of small money. The moujik took council with the wise-men about this apparition. Their answer was,—

“Catch the cat by the tail, and before it can escape from your hands, call out three times, “Amen! Amen! crumble thou into pieces!”

The moujik followed the advice. At the third repetition of the words the cat crumbled into gold pieces of five roubles each.

III.

In a certain village the moujiks had noticed that, for several years past, and as they had heard, for at least a century before, in the spring, when the rain came on or the snow melted, a hole that was in the back grounds becoming full of water there would appear a duck

* About £32.

swimming about on it, whence no one knew. If driven away, it would return in a short time, and begin again to swim in the pond. Many people had tried to kill it, but somehow it always escaped death. On St. John's Day, if the weather were dry, a little candle would be seen to burn in the hole; if it were wet, the same duck would be seen swimming about on the water.

The moujiks took council together, and agreed that there must be a hidden treasure in that hole, and began to dig for it. They dug and dug, and at last found a cauldron, but with nothing in it. They then consulted some wise-men, who thus advised them,—

“Dig in the hole on the night of St. John; dig, and say ‘Chur!’ Dig, and say ‘Chur!’ When the spade of any one of you strikes against a cauldron, cry out immediately, ‘Amen! Amen! Amen!’ Then dig again and you will dig the money out.”

The moujiks followed these directions to the letter, and dug out an enormous cauldron full of ancient gold coins. They divided the money amongst them, and each of them received so much that they all became merchants of the highest guild, and made their village into a city.

JUST EARNINGS ARE NEVER LOST.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE was once a poor man who had hired himself to a certain rich one without an agreement as to the wages he was to receive. He served his master for a year and a day, and when the term was ended, he went to him, and asked that he might be paid what his master thought he had earned. The master took out a penny, and said to him,—

“There you have your wages.”

The servant took the penny, thanked the master, and then went to a rivulet which had a very rapid flow. When he reached the bank, he said to himself:

“Good heavens! how does it come to pass that in a whole year I have only earned one penny? God knows whether I have earned no more than that. Therefore I will convince myself, and will throw this little coin into

the water ; if it should swim, then have I earned it ; but if it sink, then have I not earned it."

Thereupon he crossed himself and said,—

"Merciful heaven ! if I have earned this penny, let it float on the top of the water ; but if not, then let it sink to the bottom."

So saying, he threw the penny-piece into the stream ; and lo ! it sank to the bottom at once.

Then he stooped, took the penny out of the water, and brought it back to his master.

"Master," he said, "I bring you your money again, as I have not earned it ; and I will serve you for another year."

And he began to serve as before ; and when the year and a day were completed, he came again to his master, and asked him to pay him what he thought he had earned. The master again took out a penny and said to him,—

"There you have your wages."

The hind took the money, thanked his master, and went straight to the same rivulet, crossed himself, and threw the penny into the water, saying,—

"Merciful heaven ! if I have rightly earned it, let this money float on the top of the stream ; if not, then let it sink to the bottom."

But when he threw the coin into the stream, it sank

to the bottom at once. Then he bent down, drew it out, and taking it to his master said, as he gave it to him,—

“Master, here you have your penny again; I have not earned it yet, and I will therefore serve you for another year.”

So he began his service over again, and when the third year came to a close, he went once more to his master, and asked him to give him as much as he thought he had earned. This time, also, the master gave him only a penny; and he took it, thanked him, and went for the third time to the rivulet to see whether he had rightly earned the money or not. When he got there, he crossed himself, and threw the penny into the water with the words:

“Merciful heaven! if I have rightly earned this money, let it swim upon the top; if not, let it sink down to the ground.”

This time, however, as the penny fell into the water, lo! it swam upon the surface. Full of joy he drew it out of the stream, and thrust it into his pocket: then he went deep into the wood, built himself a little hut, and lived happily therein.

After some time, hearing that his old master was about to sail in a ship across the sea to another country, he went to him with his penny, and begged of him to buy something with the money in the foreign land. The

master promised to do so, took the penny, and set out on his journey. And while on his travels he came once upon some children on the sea-shore, who carried a cat with them which they were about to kill, and then throw into the water. When the master saw this, he hastened down to them and demanded,—

“What are you doing, children?”

And they answered him,—

“This cat does nothing but harm, and we are going to kill it.”

Then he drew out the penny of his old servant, and offered it to the children for the cat. The children were glad of the offer, took the penny, and gave the cat to the merchant. He, however, took the cat on board his ship and set sail.

As he pursued his voyage, there arose one day a violent storm, which carried the vessel heaven knows where, so that for a whole three months he could not find his right way. When the storm abated, the master of the ship, not knowing where he was, sailed on a little farther, and at last landed before a fortress.

As soon as it was known in the fortress that a ship from a foreign land had come to shore, a great many people streamed down to see it, and one of them, a man of importance and very rich, invited the master of the ship home to supper. When he came to the house,

there was a sight to see! Rats and mice ran about in all directions, and the servants stood armed with sticks to prevent their jumping on to the table. Then said the merchant to the master of the house,—

“For heaven’s sake, brother, what does this mean?”

And the other answered him,—

“It is always this way with us, brother; we can neither eat our meals, at mid-day nor in the evening, for these creatures; even when we go to sleep each of us has a box that he shuts himself up in, lest the mice should nibble his ears off.”

The master of the ship then remembered the cat he had bought for a penny, and said to his host,—

“I have an animal on board my ship which, in the course of two or three days, would settle all these creatures.”

“Brother,” replied the master of the house, “if you really have such an animal, give it to me; I will fill your ship with gold and silver if what you tell me is true.”

After supper the merchant went on board his ship, brought the cat, and said to his host that they might now all go to sleep without getting into their boxes. But the people would not trust themselves to do this, and he alone slept without a box. Then he let the cat loose, and as she saw the rats and mice she began to

catch them and kill them, and to throw them all together in a heap. The rats and mice, however, as soon as they saw what she was, fled for shelter wherever they could. When the day broke, and the people of the house got up, there was a great heap of dead rats and mice to be seen in the middle of the room; and only now and then would there run one or the other of them across the room; but they peeped timidly out of their holes. And after three days there was not one to be seen. Then the master of the house filled our traveller's ship with gold and silver in return for the cat, and the merchant set sail in his ship for home.

When at last he reached his own house, his old servant came to him to ask what he had brought him for his penny. The master drew out a piece of marble, which was beautifully cut square, and answered, "See, this is what I have bought with your penny."

The servant, rejoiced at the sight, took the stone, carried it into his hut, and made a table of it. The next day he went out to fetch wood, and when he came back, lo! the stone was changed into gold, and shone like the sun. The whole hut was filled with its light. The honest servant was frightened at this, he ran to the master, and cried,—

"Master, what is this you have given me? it cannot be mine; come and look at it."

The master went to the hut, and when he saw what a miracle heaven had worked, he exclaimed,—

“My son, I see now that it must be so! Him whom God helps do all the saints help also. Come with me and take your own.”

And herewith he gave him all that he had brought home with him in his ship, and his own daughter for a wife as well.

STORY OF LITTLE SIMPLETON.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

ONCE there lived a peasant and his wife who had three daughters. The two elder girls were cunning and selfish ; the youngest was simple and open-hearted, and on that account came to be called, first by her sisters and afterwards by her father and mother, "Little Simpleton." Little Simpleton was pushed about, had to fetch everything that was wanted, and was always kept at work ; but she was ever ready to do what she was told, and never uttered a word of complaint. She would water the garden, prepare pine splinters, milk the cows, and feed the ducks ; she had to wait upon everybody,—in a word, she was the drudge of the family.

One day, as the peasant was going with the hay to market, he asked his daughters what they would like him to buy for them.

“Buy me some kumach* for a sarafan,† father,” answered the eldest daughter.

“And me some nankeen,” said the second. The youngest daughter alone did not ask for a present. The peasant was moved with compassion for the girl; although a simpleton she was still his daughter. Turning to her he asked,—“Well, Little Simpleton, what shall I buy for you?”

Little Simpleton smiled and replied,—

“Buy me, dearest father, a little silver plate and a little apple.”

“What do you want them for?” asked her sisters.

“I will make the little apple roll round the plate, and will say some words to it which an old woman taught me because I gave her a cake.”

The peasant promised to buy his daughters what they asked of him, and then started for market. He sold his hay, and bought the presents: some nankeen for one of his daughters, for another some kumach, and for Little Simpleton a little silver plate and a little apple. Then he returned home and gave these things to his daughters.

The girls were delighted; the two elder ones made themselves sarafans, and laughed at Little Simpleton,

Red wool stuff from Bucharest.

† A long dress worn by the Russian peasant women.

wondering what she would do with the silver plate and the apple.

Little Simpleton did not eat the apple, but sat down in a corner and cried,—

“Roll, roll, little apple on the silver plate, and show me towns and fields, forests and seas, lofty mountains and beautiful skies.”

And the apple began to roll on the plate, and there appeared on it town after town; ships sailing on the seas, and people in the fields; mountains and beautiful skies; suns and stars. All these things looked so beautiful, and were so wonderful, that it would be impossible to tell of them in a story, or describe them with the pen.

At first the elder sisters looked at the little plate with delight; soon, however, their hearts were filled with envy, and they began to try to get it from their younger sister. But the girl would not part with it on any account. Then the wicked girls said,—

“Dearest sister, let us go into the forest to gather blackberries.”

Little Simpleton got up, gave the plate and apple to her father, and went with them into the forest. They walked about and gathered blackberries. All at once they saw a spade lying upon the ground. The wicked sisters killed Little Simpleton with it, and buried her under a birch-tree.

They returned home late, and told their father,—“The Simpleton is lost; she ran away from us in the forest; we searched, but could not find her anywhere. The wolves must have eaten her.”

The peasant regretted the loss of his daughter bitterly; for although so simple she was still his child. The wicked sisters also shed tears. Her father put the little silver plate and the little apple into a box, and locked them up.

Next morning a shepherd was tending his sheep near the place, playing on his pipe, and searching in the forest for one of his flock that was missing. He observed the little grave under the birch-tree; it was covered by the most lovely flowers, and out of the middle of the grave there grew a reed. The shepherd cut off the reed, and made a pipe of it. As soon as the pipe was prepared, oh, wonderful! it began to play of itself, and say,—

“Play, oh pipe, play! and comfort my poor parents and sisters. I was killed for the sake of my little silver plate and my little apple.”

When the people heard of this they ran out of their huts, and all came round the shepherd and began to ask him who was killed.

“Good people,” answered the shepherd, “I don’t know who it is. While searching for one of my sheep in the

forest, I came upon a grave covered with flowers. Above them all stood a reed. I cut off the reed and made this pipe of it. It plays of itself, and you have heard what it says.”

The father of Little Simpleton happened to be present. He took the pipe into his own hand, and it began to play:—

“Play, oh pipe, play! Comfort my poor father and mother. I was killed for the sake of my little silver plate and my little apple.” The peasant asked the shepherd to take him to the place where he had cut the reed. They all went into the forest, saw the grave, and were astonished at the sight of the lovely flowers which grew there. They opened the grave, and there discovered the body of a girl, which the poor man recognised as that of his youngest daughter. There she lay, murdered—but by whom no one could tell. The people asked one another who it was that had killed the poor girl. Suddenly the pipe began to play,—

“Oh, my dearest father! my sisters brought me to this forest, and here killed me for the sake of my little plate and my little apple. You will not bring me to life until you fetch some of the water from the czar’s well.”

Then the wicked sisters confessed it all. They were seized and cast into a dark prison, to await the pleasure

of the czar. The peasant set out for the capital. As soon as he arrived at the city, he went to the palace, saw the czar, told his story, and begged permission to take some water from the well. The Czar said, "You may take some water of life from my well, and as soon as you have restored your daughter to life, bring her here with her little plate, and the little apple; bring your other two daughters also."

The peasant bowed to the ground, and returned home with a bottle full of the water of life. He hastened to the grave in the forest, lifted up the body of his daughter, and as soon as he had sprinkled it with the water the girl came to life again, and threw herself into his arms. All who were present were moved to tears.

Then the peasant started again for the capital, and arriving there went at once to the czar's palace. The czar came out, and saw the peasant with his three daughters, two of them with their arms bound, the third, as beautiful as the spring flowers, stood near, the tears like diamonds falling down her cheeks. The czar was very angry with the two wicked sisters; then he asked the youngest for her little plate and apple. The girl took the box from her father's hands, and said,—

"Sire, what would you like to see? Your towns or your armies; the ships at sea, or the beautiful stars in the sky?"

Then she made the little apple roll round the plate, and there appeared on it many towns, one after the other, with bodies of soldiers near them, with their standards and artillery. Then the soldiers made ready for the fight, and the officers stood in their places. The firing commenced, the smoke arose, and hid it all from view. The little apple began again to roll on the plate, and there appeared the sea covered with ships, their flags streaming in the wind. The guns began to fire, the smoke arose, and again all disappeared from their sight. The apple again began to roll on the plate, and there appeared on it the beautiful sky with suns and stars.

The czar was astonished. The girl fell down on her knees before him, and cried,—

“Oh, Sire, take my little plate and my little apple, and forgive my sisters!”

The czar was moved by her tears and entreaties, and forgave the wicked sisters; the delighted girl sprang up and began to embrace and kiss them. The czar smiled, took her by the hand and said, “I honour the goodness of your heart, and admire your beauty. Would you like to become my wife?”

“Sire,” answered the beautiful girl, “I obey your royal command; but allow me first to ask my parents’ permission.”

The delighted peasant at once gave his consent ; they sent for the mother, and she, too, gladly bestowed her blessing.

“ One favour more,” said the beautiful girl to the czar. “ Permit my parents and sisters to remain with me.”

On hearing this the sisters fell down on their knees before her, and cried,—

“ We are not worthy of so much favour ! ”

“ Dearest sisters,” said the beautiful girl, “ all is forgotten and forgiven. They who remember the past with malice deserve to lose their sight.”

She then tried to lift them up from the ground, but they, shedding bitter tears, would not rise. Then the czar, looking at them with a frown, bade them get up ; he allowed them, however, to stay in the palace.

A magnificent entertainment then began : the palace was splendidly lighted up, and looked like the sun among the clouds. The czar and czarina rode out in an open chariot and showed themselves to the people, who cried joyfully,—

“ Long live czar and czarina ! May they shine upon us like the glorious sun for years and years to come ! ”

JONEK.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

I.

“If you would possess a pipe, at the sound of which even unwilling legs will dance, and which will make the dead rise and appear as they lived, seek for it in the forest.

“In the deep, black forest, look for a green willow, which has never heard the rush of water, nor the crowing of a cock; for at the sound of the cock’s crow spirits disappear, and a willow which has heard the rush of water will never make anybody dance.

“If you wish a girl to love you, catch a bat, put it into an earthen pot, and at midnight take the pot to an ant-hill and bury it there. On the following night, also at twelve o’clock, go again and fetch the pot away. You will find in it a pitchfork and a rake. If you draw the rake from the direction of the girl towards yourself, she

will love you : if from that of a favourite companion, he will be your friend. If a woman love you, for whom you do not care, push towards her with the pitchfork, and she will hate you : if a man, for whom you do not care, offers you his friendship, or who is unworthy of yours, do the same towards him, and he will trouble you no more.

“ Thus, by means of the pipe you will be made merry, and be able to see the dead as they lived ; by the aid of the rake you will gain love and friendship.

“ But should you desire to know the dark, unseen future, or to possess unbounded riches, listen to this last instruction :—

“ On the eve of St. John’s Day, exactly at midnight, the fern blooms ; but it is not easy to obtain its flower. Terror will stop your breath, and turn your blood cold ; your heart will almost cease to beat. Thunder-storms without number will rage around you, and shake the very ground. The hair on your head will stand erect like poplars, and not even the wind will be able to bend it down. If you can bear all this, the fern-flower, obtained with so much courage, will show you the future, and give you countless gold. By its means you will become rich, and be able to look into the future as in a mirror.”

A young peasant heard these words in the gloom of a forest, and at once left his oxen and waggon laden with chopped wood. Filled with joy and hope, he went deeper

into the wood in search of a willow, from the bark of a bough of which he might make the wonderful pipe. He wandered about for a long time looking for the green willow. At last he found one in the middle of a dry meadow in the depth of the forest. He cut a straight bough, twisted off the bark, and the pipe was soon made.

He played on it, and joy filled his heart. He was alone in the solitude of the dense wood, and he himself was filled with gladness at the sound of the pipe, and danced and hopped about on the green meadow, until, tired with the exertion, he fell on the grass to rest. Having now himself experienced the power of the pipe, the peasant trembled with fear as he remembered that its voice could call up the dead. At the very thought of this, cold perspiration came on his forehead. His curiosity, however, overcame his fear, and he felt an irresistible wish to go to the cemetery at once. He hid the pipe under his coat, and began to trace his way out of the forest by a narrow and difficult pass.

The young peasant soon came to an open place, and ran up a little hill; it was surrounded by old and new graves. Here two roads met, and a new cross stood over a fresh grave.* “Well,” said the peasant to him-

* It is not uncommon among the Slavonic peoples to bury the dead by the road-side.

self, "let us try the pipe here; it is a long way to the cemetery. I'll see whether even one dead man will rise up at the sound of it."

He took out the pipe and played. As soon as its voice was heard, the cross fell to the ground, the grave opened, and an old beggar appeared, who had been killed on the cross-road thirty years before.

The young man turned his head away with horror at the sight of the old and withered face of the miserable beggar, made more hideous by the wounds he had received. In his fright he kept on playing, and now saw that the remaining graves also suddenly opened; then he heard the clatter of arms and the trampling of horses' hoofs. There appeared to him a number of tall knights in armour, the greater part of them on horseback. If the peasant was greatly terrified at the sight of the old beggar, he was struck almost dead with fear as the stalwart knights rose before him. Although he was the tallest man of the village to which he belonged, his head would scarcely reach to the knees of these giants. Frightened more than ever, he opened his mouth and rubbed his eyes. As soon as he ceased to blow in the pipe, the spirits returned to their graves, and the earth covered them up, at the same time a cold damp wind blew which shook the grass and flowers.

Although almost worn out with fatigue and excite-

ment, the peasant next procured the rake and the pitchfork, so anxious was he to gain love and friendship.

Sophy, a young, black-eyed girl, who lived in a neighbouring hut, had moved his heart for a long time past. The girl, however, did not care for young Jonek, as the peasant was commonly called. In vain he sang to her,—

“Sophy’s eyes are as beautiful as blackberries,
Her mouth is as sweet as honey !”

Sophy laughed at Jonek and his song.

One day she was weeding flax in the garden ; Jonek, hidden from her view, drew the magic rake along the ground from her towards himself. From that moment Sophy received his attentions more graciously, and the delighted Jonek kissed the rake in his joy and gratitude. He was sure she loved him, and to make his happiness complete he now only wanted a friend.

He chose a young companion whose name was Linnet. A warm friendship soon sprang up between the two. Young Linnet was well-known to black-eyed Sophy ; when the two young men came to see her she always received them with a smile. Jonek began already to think of his marriage with Sophy ; and one day, full of thought on the subject, sat down behind a rick of hay.

All at once he heard some conversation behind the next rick. Curious to know what it was about, he approached the hay-rick unperceived, and overheard his friend Linnet talking with Sophy about their own wedding-day. Full of rage, Jonek broke the rake and the pitchfork, and renounced both friendship and love.

“What’s the use of the willow pipe, the bat’s rake and pitchfork to me?” cried Jonek with tears in his eyes. “The first tired me out, making me dance against my will, besides frightening me out of my senses with the sight of the ghosts. It was all in vain that I drew Sophy towards me with the bat’s rake. All is now lost! I had better try and get some money, and see what will happen to me next.”

The next day was St. John’s Eve. Jonek did not sleep in his hut that night; his poor mother awaited him in vain. At night a terrible storm broke down many of the trees in the neighbouring forest; houses and barns, struck by lightning, were burnt to the ground. About mid-day Jonek returned to his hut, pale and trembling. His eyes glared like the eyes of a madman. In vain his poor old mother put a dish of boiled pudding with bacon before him—he could not touch a morsel. His mother prayed; Jonek sighed heavily; at times, however, he would smile joyfully to himself, as he shook the gold in his pockets.

II.

Jonek was the chief groomsman at the wedding of Sophy with Linnet. He was dressed in richer clothes than any one else present, and he gave plenty of money to the musicians. From that day he took the lead in the public-houses; often treated the whole village, and every holiday time paid the musicians like a gentleman. Sometimes he would play on the willow pipe, and all who heard it would dance joyfully the whole night through.

But Jonek was not satisfied with being rich. He wished to know what would happen to him in the future. He took the fern-flower from his pocket, and said to it,—

“Tell me, show me, oh flower!
What will become of thy Jonek?”

And he heard a voice from underground, saying in reply,—

“Thou wilt be hanged:
Thy legs, cold and stiff, will shake in the wind.”

“Confound it!” cried Jonek angrily, “I shall not be hanged, for I have done nothing to deserve it.” And he laughed at the idea; but at night, though half tipsy, he could not sleep for fear.

Jonek enjoyed himself, however, for a long time before he began to think seriously of the future. His pockets were now empty: the attempt to obtain the fern-flower a second time by the same person was impossible; and he had no more money. This troubled him very much. The Easter holidays were approaching, and all the young men in the village asked Jonek to engage the musicians early; while Jonek had not even a penny left to pay them with. Unable to sleep, he pondered on his troubles, and he then recollected that with the help of the fern-flower he could discover hidden treasures, as he had done before when he had found gold under the ruins of an old castle. He therefore rubbed the fern-flower again, and in a vision saw a gentleman in his garden, and in that garden he also saw a brass box full of treasure, buried six feet under an apple tree. Jonek got up, ran quickly to the garden, and began to dig. He had already dug out the heavy box, and was about to push it over the wall, when the owner awoke, and hearing the thief, rushed out of the house and stopped him. But Jonek, greedy of gold, and fearing discovery, struck him with the spade on the head, and killed him on the spot.

At the cries of their dying master, the servants came running out of the house, seized the murderer, and delivered him up to justice.

· Six months afterwards Jonek was hanged in the market-place of a neighbouring town. Such was the reward for his greed of gold, and his desire to know the future.

The wind blew hard, the voice of the enchanted pipe was no longer heard, yet the stiff, cold legs of Jonek swung and shook in the wind as if he were about to dance.

THE MAIDEN WHO WAS SWIFTER THAN THE HORSE.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE was once a maiden who had neither father nor mother, for the Vilas had formed her out of snow, brought at midsummer, on St. Elias's day, from a bottomless cleft in the rock. The wind had fanned her into life, the dew had nourished her, the forest had clothed her with its leaves, and the meadows adorned her with their flowers. She was whiter than the snow, rosier than the rose, brighter than the sun, and more beautiful than any maiden who had ever been upon the earth, or ever will be again.

This virgin let it be known throughout the wide world that on a certain day, in a certain place, a race would be run; and that whatever youth, riding on horseback, should overtake her, would win her. This news spread in a few days throughout the whole world,

and thousands of suitors came together, all mounted on such splendid steeds that you would not know how to say which one was handsomer or better than the other. Even the son of the czar came to the race. The suitors drew themselves up in a line, all on horseback, side by side, but the virgin took her place on foot in the middle of them. Then she spoke,—

“There, at the winning-post, I have set up a golden apple. If any one among you can reach it before me and take it, I will be his; but should I be first at the goal and take the apple, know ye that all who run against me will sink dead on the earth. Think well, therefore, what ye do.”

But the riders were as if enchanted; each one hoped to win the maiden, and they said one to the other,—

“It is clear at the outset that this maiden, on foot, will never be able to outrun any of us, but that that one among us whom God and good fortune shall bless, will bear her home.”

Then, as the maiden clapped her hands together, they all sprang forward on the course. By the time they had run half the distance the maiden had already outstripped them by a long way, for she had unfolded small wings from below her shoulders. Then the riders shouted to each other, and spurred and whipped their horses until they overtook her.

When the maiden saw this she plucked a hair out of her head and threw it from her. In an instant a dense wood arose, in which the riders lost themselves for a time, not knowing which way to turn. At last they came again upon her track and rushed after her at full speed. Meanwhile the maiden had greatly gained upon them; but they whipped and spurred their horses, and overtook her once more. And when the maiden saw that she was so closely pressed, a tear fell from her eye which soon became a rapid stream, in which the riders were nearly drowned. Of them all the son of the czar alone, by swimming his horse across the flood, was able to follow her footsteps.

As he saw that the maiden was far on before him, he invoked her three times, in the name of God, to stop, and she stood still on the place where she was. Then he seized her, and drew her on to the saddle behind, and swimming back on dry land, turned his horse through the mountain-pass towards home. But when he reached the highest point, and turned round to look at her, lo! the maiden had vanished!

THE BOOK OF MAGIC.

(FROM THE RUSSIAN.)

A SOLDIER was quartered in a certain town. He had taken to study the Black Art, and had got possession of books which dealt therewith. One day, during his absence from his quarters, one of his comrades came to see him. Not finding him at home, the visitor took up one of the soldier's books, and for want of other occupation began to read it. It was in the evening, and he read by the light of a lamp. The book was full of names and nothing else. He had read about half of the names when he raised his head, and looking around him, saw that the room was full of diabolical looking beings. The soldier was struck with terror, and not knowing what to do, began again to read the book. After reading for some little time, he again looked round him; the number of spirits had increased. Again he read, and having finished the book, looked again around him. By this time the number of demons had so much

increased that there was barely space for them in the room. They sat upon each other's shoulders, and pressed continually forward round the reader. The soldier saw that the situation was serious; he shut the book, closed his eyes, and anxiously awaited his comrade. The spirits pressed closer and closer upon him, crying,—

“Give us work to do—quick!”

The soldier reflected awhile, and then said,—

“Fill up the cisterns of all the baths in the town with water brought thither in a sieve.”

The demons flew away. In two minutes they returned and said,—

“It is done! Give us some more work to do—quick!”

“Pull the Voivode's* house down, brick by brick—but take care you do not touch or disturb the inmates; then build it up again as it was before.”

The goblins disappeared, but in two minutes returned.

“It is done!” they cried. “Give us more work—quick!”

“Go,” said the soldier, “and count the grains of sand that lie at the bottom of the Volga, the number of drops of water that are in the river, and of the fish that swim in it, from its source to its mouth.”

* Governor.

The spirits flew away; but in another minute they returned, having executed their task. Thus, before the soldier could think of some new labour to be done, the old one was completed, and the demons were again at his side demanding more work. When he began to think what he should give them, they pressed round him, and threatened him with instant death if he did not give them something to do. The soldier was becoming exhausted, and there was yet no sign of his comrade's return. What course should he take? How deliver himself from the evil spirits? The soldier thought to himself,—

“While I was reading the book, not one of the demons came near me. Let me try to read it again; perhaps that will keep them off.”

Again he began to read the book of magic, but he soon observed that as he read the number of phantoms increased, so that soon such a host of the spirit-world surrounded him that the very lamp was scarcely visible. When the soldier hesitated at a word, or paused to rest himself, the goblins became more restless and violent, demanding,—

“Give us work to do! Give us work!”

The soldier was almost worn out, and unhappily knew not how to help himself. Suddenly a thought occurred to him,—

“The spirits appeared when I read the book from the

beginning; let me now read it from the end, perhaps this will send them way."

He turned the book round and began to read it from the end. After reading for some time he observed that the number of spirits decreased; the lamp began again to burn brightly, and there was an empty space around him.

The soldier was delighted, and continued his reading. He read and read until he had read them all away. And thus he saved himself from the demons. His comrade came in soon afterwards. The soldier told him what had happened.

"It is fortunate for you," said his comrade, "that you began to read the book backwards in time. Had you not thus read them away by midnight they would have devoured you."

THE WISE JUDGMENT.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

KING Hradibor was a wise and a clever man. He was wise because he would travel about the country, that he might see everything for himself; he was clever because he did so under an assumed name, in order that people might not prepare themselves for his visits. In this way he saw many remarkable things—things of which he had not the remotest idea before; and no wonder, for he would not only go into open towns and villages, but even into the poorest hut if it came in his way. In a miserable hovel he once saw what he had never seen before—a poor woman with twelve daughters.

“Are all these your daughters?” asked the king of the old woman, who was greatly surprised that a gentleman should deign to enter her poor hut.

“They are all mine,” answered the old woman, sighing; “and I don’t know what to do with them.”

“As you are so poor,” said the king, “I will take one of your daughters with me on my return.”

Then the king gave the old woman a piece of gold money, and, wishing her heaven’s blessing, departed.

The woman became a little easier in her mind on the receipt of this present; but not so her daughters. They were all well-conducted and obedient children; but when a fine gentleman comes and asks to take one of them away—for his wife, of course!—it is no trifling matter. They began to discuss the question together, and each claimed the strange gentleman for herself. At length, as after a long dispute they could not agree who was the most eligible, the eldest sister said,—

“I am the eldest, and according to custom I ought to be married first.”

“That’s of no consequence,” cried the second sister; “the gentleman may pay little respect for custom, and choose any one of us he likes best.”

“Certainly,” concurred the third sister, “such gentlemen don’t care much for custom. What do you say, sisters?”

“No, no; of course not!” they all cried, with the exception of the eldest—and the youngest, who was but five years old, and the most beautiful of them all.

Then the mother came among her daughters, and sent them to their work. The girls set to work, but some-

how the work did not go on so well this time as usual ; they were all deeply buried in thought ; they would stop to arrange their dresses and smooth their hair, and they looked at each other with suspicion. Had not the king soon returned they would all have worried themselves to death, although he had promised to take only one of them. Fortunately the king soon made his appearance, and not wishing to keep the girls in suspense any longer, he took the youngest of them, called Libena, by the hand, saying to the old woman,—

“ I will take this one away with me.”

“ Why, what will you do with her ? ” cried the mother and sisters with one voice.

“ What shall I do with her ? I will adopt her as my own daughter, since I have none at home. Do you not agree to that ? ”

“ With pleasure,” answered the mother ; the daughters were dumb with surprise. Then the king stepped into his carriage, placed Libena by his side, and having given the mother a purse full of gold pieces, drove away. The daughters surrounded the mother, and when she had shown them the money they recovered somewhat from their astonishment and were satisfied.

Meanwhile the king drove to his palace, where he had three sons, the youngest of whom was only ten years old.

“I have brought you a sister,” said the king to his sons, when he reached home. The princes came running round their new sister and smothered her with kisses. From that moment Libena was regarded by every one in the palace as a princess. It was only the servant who had travelled with the king about the country who knew it was not so.

Libena grew more beautiful every day, and the princes came to love her more and more; even the queen herself loved her as much as if she had been her own daughter. Among the servants, however, Libena came in the course of time to be looked upon with contempt, because the first one who knew of her place of birth told it to his friend, he to another, and so on, until the whole story was well known to every servant in the palace. The princes alone knew nothing of Libena's origin, although they had grown up to be young men. They, indeed, had no thought on the matter. They were greatly attached to their supposed sister, were always in her company, did whatever she asked of them, and would willingly have died for her sake. One day the youngest prince ordered the coachman to get the carriage ready, as the princess wished to take a short drive. The servant turned towards the stable to do what he was told, and thinking the prince was already out of hearing, grumbled to himself,—

“What a fuss they do make with that bought girl!—just as if she were a princess!”

“What did you say?” cried the prince, seizing the coachman by the arm. “Is Libena not our sister?”

The coachman was frightened; after a moment’s hesitation he mumbled that he did not say anything.

“You did,” said the prince. “If you do not tell me what it was, I will complain to my father.”

“I only said,” apologised the coachman, “what the other servants have told me—that his majesty bought the Princess Libena at some village.”

Upon hearing this the prince went immediately to seek his brothers.

“Brothers!” he exclaimed with great joy, “I have just heard that Libena is not our sister.”

“Then I shall take her for my wife,” cried the eldest brother.

“No! I shall take her. I shall take her!” cried the other brothers.

“I am the eldest, and have the greatest right to her,” continued the eldest prince. “I will go at once and ask father to give her to me for my wife.”

He then went to the king, and his brothers followed him. The king and the queen were much surprised when their sons told them, with great delight, how they had heard that Libena was not their sister.

“Do you dislike her, then?” asked the king.

“Not in the least,” answered the youngest prince.

“My brothers want her for a wife.”

“And you, too, I suppose,” said the king smiling.

“I shall die if she does not become mine,” answered the prince.

“Then you all three want her for a wife?”

“Yes, yes!” cried the princes together.

The king reflected for a moment, then he said,—

“Hear me, my sons, you cannot all three marry Libena. Go, therefore, all of you, into the world, and he among you who brings home the most wonderful thing, shall become the husband of Libena. Does that please you?”

“Yes, yes!” answered the princes.

They soon set out together on their travels. They journeyed for three days, but they could find nothing remarkable.

“This will not do,” said the eldest brother, at the inn where they stopped for the night. “We must part; then perhaps we shall meet with better fortune.”

The two younger brothers agreed to this suggestion, and soon afterwards they started, each on a different route, after promising to come again, and to wait for each other, at the same inn, before returning home.

The eldest prince pursued the road leading to the

right. One day he came to a town, and from a distance saw a great crowd of people. He came nearer, pressed into the middle of the crowd, and there saw a very old man with a little carriage.

“What is this?” asked the prince of one of the bystanders.

“Why, this old man wants to sell his little carriage,” answered the man; “but he asks such an enormous sum for it—a thousand gold pieces.”

“And some of you would perhaps buy it!” said the prince aloud. “Oh, foolish people! Would you give a thousand gold pieces for this miserable carriage? Are you not afraid that the whole world would laugh at you? You are as ridiculous as this old man.”

When the prince said this, those who were present grew ashamed of themselves, and one by one went away. At last the prince remained alone with the old man.

“I pray you,” said the prince to the old man in a whisper, “tell me, what is there remarkable in this little carriage?”

“Indeed, sir, it is a very wonderful carriage,” answered the old man mysteriously. “Whoever sits in it will find himself immediately carried into that place to which he way wish to go.”

“A miraculous carriage!” exclaimed the prince. “Here are your thousand gold pieces for it.”

He sat down in the little vehicle, and wished himself in the inn, where he had parted from his brothers. In an instant he was there. Delighted at having obtained so wonderful a prize, he sat down thinking of Libena more deeply than ever.

The second prince went away to the left. He travelled several days and met with nothing out of the ordinary course of things; but at last fortune smiled also upon him. On the public road, just at the entrance to a town, he saw a little old man showing a handsome looking-glass he had for sale.

People passing by would stop and look at it, and ask the price, but when they heard it they would only shake their heads, and continue their journey. The prince also looked at the glass, but could see nothing remarkable in it.

“Buy it, sir,” cried the old man to the young prince. “It is not dear; I will sell it to you for two thousand gold pieces.”

“You foolish old man! Who would give you so large a sum for a common looking-glass?”

“But stay, sir; whoever looks into this glass will see whatever he desires.”

“Here are the two thousand gold pieces,” cried the prince, and he handed his well-filled purse to the old man. The latter took the money and gave him the

looking-glass. The prince looked into the glass, and silently wished to see the inn where he was to meet his brothers. At once he saw his elder brother sitting in the inn, and, judging from his countenance, in a happy mood. The prince concluded from this that his brother had gained possession of some extraordinary thing, and mounting a fast horse he galloped quickly back to the place of meeting.

Meanwhile, the youngest prince, who had chosen the road leading straight on before him, wandered on like a man bewildered; the one clear thought which filled both heart and mind was the thought of Libena.

One day, as he walked into the market-place of a town, he came upon a crowd of people who had collected round an old woman.

“Whoever heard of such a thing?” “To ask ten gold pieces for an apple!” “This is a foolish woman!” “She is mad!”

These were the exclamations which the prince heard, uttered in laughter or in indignation, from the crowd round the old woman.

“Buy, gentlemen, buy!” cried she continually. “I have only three apples for sale, and each of them costs ten gold pieces.”

The prince at once concluded that these apples must be something extraordinary, and without further con-

sideration he gave the old woman the thirty gold pieces. As she gave him the apples, she whispered in his ear,—

“You have bought a prize, my son. If one is about to die, and will eat but one of these apples, he will live and be well again.”

The prince was delighted. He put the apples in his pouch, and returned joyfully to the inn where his two brothers impatiently awaited his arrival.

“Where have you been so long?” asked the eldest brother.

“I have wandered about the world seeking wonderful things.”

“And what have you brought?” asked the second brother.

“Three apples.”

“There is nothing wonderful in three apples,” said the eldest brother again. “We have something better. I have a little carriage by which one may travel as fast as the wind; and our brother has a looking-glass in which you can see all that you desire.”

“Then let us look into it at once, and see what they are doing at home,” cried the youngest prince.

The brothers agreed. They took up the looking-glass, and wished to see their palace at home. They were terror-stricken by what they saw; the windows of the apartments where their parents and Libena lived were

closed, and the blinds drawn darkly down. The servants ran about the courtyard as if distracted, throwing up their arms in despair.

“What does this mean?” exclaimed the eldest prince. “Some one is dangerously ill—perhaps dead!”

“We shall soon see,” said the second prince; and he desired to behold his parents and Libena. They looked in the glass; they saw the king, the queen, and their beloved one—alas! they were all upon the point of death!

“Let us fly to them!” exclaimed the youngest brother.

The princes sprang into the wonderful carriage, and in an instant they found themselves before the palace. The youngest of them immediately ran to his father, his mother, and to Libena; gave to each of them an apple, and begged them to eat it. They did as he desired, and, oh, wonder of wonders! before you could count one hundred they were so far recovered as to be able to rise. Every one praised the youngest prince to the utmost; more especially the doctors, who had used all their skill in vain, and were driven to despair. The king embraced his youngest son, and cried, with tears of joy in his eyes,—

“Now is Libena yours! Without your help, we should all have died.”

“Not so, father,” said the second prince. “Had it not

been for my looking-glass we should not have known of your illness. Libena therefore belongs to me."

"No!" cried the eldest prince. "She is mine! Without my carriage you would have died before we could have reached home."

Upon this a violent dispute arose as to which of the princes had won Libena. The king and his courtiers could not but acknowledge the evenly-balanced right of each of the princes to the prize; but that did not help the case, as only one of them could marry Libena. As they could not agree, the king called all the learned men of the kingdom together in his palace, that they might settle the question.

The learned men were soon assembled. They sat whole days together, and carried on the dispute even at meal times, but all to no purpose; they could not agree, and consequently arrived at no satisfactory conclusion. At last the king grew wearied of the delay, and thinking to hasten the settlement, announced his intention of being present at their next debate. The learned men prepared themselves for the occasion; and they came to dispute so vigorously in the king's presence, that at last he clapped his hands to his ears and ran out of the room. And no wonder; for an ordinary man of common sense, had he stayed to hear them but a single day, must certainly have become crazed by their interminable talk.

“Your Majesty,” said the Lord Chamberlain, “we shall never come to an end with these gentlemen. They are so comfortable here, that they will stay and dispute to the day of their death.”

“You are right,” answered the king, “we shall never finish with such fellows. This is what you shall do: issue a proclamation to the effect that any of my subjects is at liberty to come forward and decide the question.”

Two days afterwards the hall where the learned men disputed was thrown open to everybody. The king, the queen, and Libena sat on the throne. Near it were the princes; the eldest with his little carriage, the second with the looking-glass, the youngest empty-handed. Around the hall sat the men of learning who disputed with, if possible, even more violence than usual; not even the presence of the king restrained them. At intervals there appeared several people—some rich, in fine clothes, some poor, in humble apparel—and expressed their opinions of the case; but they had much better have stopped at home.

At last the king grew angry, and was about to leave the hall, when there appeared a little old man, with hair as white as milk, who, having bowed to the king, addressed the princes,—

“How vain is this long dispute! - You all three are

equally deserving; but how does the matter stand?— One of you has a miraculous little carriage; another a wonderful looking-glass; but the third has nothing, because his magic apples are eaten. Therefore it is only just that he, who has nothing else, should receive Libena.”

The king, full of joy, sprang to his feet. He embraced the old man, exclaiming,—

“You have made a wise decision; and it shall be as you say.”

The learned gentlemen were ready to faint with surprise and vexation; they never expected so much sense under so common-place a dress. They sat as dumb and still as wood until the king told them that the marriage would be celebrated on the following day, and that they were invited to the ceremony. This seemed to bring them to their senses. They began then to praise, and to express their wonder at the little old man.

The two elder princes were fain to be satisfied with the decision, and Libena was happy with the youngest prince for her husband.

TWARDOWSKI.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

TWARDOWSKI was by birth a nobleman. He desired to be wiser than other, honest folks, and to discover an elixir against death; for of all things he feared to die. He had learnt in an old book the art of calling demons into his presence. He left Cracow, in which city he was a doctor of medicine, secretly at midnight, and came to Podgorze, where he began his magical arts to summon the demon from the deep. The evil spirit soon appeared. As was customary in those days, the two entered into a covenant. The demon knelt on the ground and wrote out a bond, which Twardowski signed with his own blood, squeezed out of the third finger of his left hand. The chief condition of the covenant was this: the demon should have no power over the body or soul of Twardowski unless he could catch him in Rome.

By virtue of the bond executed between them,

Twardowski commanded the services of the demon, and he ordered him to collect all the silver in Poland, to bury it at Olkusz and to cover it well over with sand. The obedient servant did as he was bid. Hence the celebrated silver mines of Olkusz. Then Twardowski ordered the evil spirit to bring a great rock to Piaskowa Skala, to set it on its sharpest point in the earth, and there to leave it for ever. The obedient servant at once obeyed the command. The rock still stands as it was first set up, and is called the Hawk's Rock.

In a word, whatever Twardowski desired he could at once obtain. He could ride on a painted horse, and fly in the air without wings. When he travelled he would seat himself on a cock, and gallop on his way faster than on horseback. He would proceed in a boat on the river Vistula, his sweetheart by his side, against the tide, without oar or sail. He could take a piece of glass in his hand, and with it burn up whole villages, although a hundred miles distant.

Twardowski fell in love with a young lady, and sought her in marriage. But she had a curious whim of keeping an insect confined in a bottle, and said that the man who could guess what creature it was should be her husband. Twardowski disguised himself as a beggar, and presented himself before the young lady. She held up the bottle at a distance, and asked him :

“What kind of creature is this—worm or snake?”

“It is a bee, miss,” answered Twadowski.

He was right; and he married the young lady. But they made a strange couple. Madame Twardowski sold all kinds of earthen ware in a mud hut on the market-place at Cracow. Her husband would sometimes pass that way attired like a wealthy nobleman, and he would then order his numerous servants to break his wife's wares into pieces. When the woman, in her fury, cursed him, his servants, and all about her, Twardowski, seated in his fine carriage, enjoyed his frolic the more, and would burst into loud laughter.

After some time, when Twardowski was sated with pleasure, he went one day into the depths of a forest without his instruments of magic. As he there sat, buried in thought, the demon suddenly appeared to him, and demanded that he should at once set out for Rome. The magician, enraged at the demand, drove the evil spirit from before him by a single word of a powerful incantation. But the fiend, gnashing his teeth with fury, pulled a large pine-tree up by the roots and struck Twardowski with such violence on the legs that he broke one of them. Twardowski was lamed for life; and from that hour was nicknamed, and commonly known as, “Gameleg.”

At last the demon grew tired of waiting for the soul of

Twardowski. He devised a stratagem to entrap him. He assumed the shape of a gentleman's footman, went to Twardowski, who was then greatly renowned as a physician, and begged him to come to his master, who stood in great need of his help. Twardowski proceeded in all speed with the messenger to a neighbouring village, not knowing that in this village was a tavern called Rome. No sooner had he entered this tavern than a large flock of crows and owls sat down on the roof, and filled the air with dreadful croaks and screams. Twardowski saw at once how the matter stood. Trembling with fear he seized a newly baptised infant in his arms from the cradle in which it lay, and began to nurse it.

The demon soon made his appearance. Although finely attired—he wore a three-cornered cocked hat, a dress coat, long waistcoat, tight breeches, and shoes with buckles—he was recognised at once, for his horns were visible above his hat, and his cloven feet stuck out of his shoes. The demon was about to seize Twardowski, when he perceived a difficulty—the magician held in his arms a sinless infant, over which the demon had no possible claim. But the fiend did not lose his wits. He approached Twardowski with the utmost composure, and said to him,—

“ You are at least a gentleman ; remember, “ *Verbum nobile debet esse stabile.*”

Twardowski saw that he could not escape ; so he laid the infant in the cradle, and disappeared with his terrible companion up the chimney. The flock of crows and owls screamed with joy. But Twardowski, although carried with great rapidity into the air, did not lose his consciousness or presence of mind. He was borne up so high that villages appeared no bigger than gnats, towns looked of the size of flies, and Cracow itself like two spiders. He looked down upon the earth, and sorrow filled his heart. There he had left all that was dear to him. When he had arrived at a height which neither the hawk nor the Carpathian eagle ever attained, he made a tremendous effort, and in a weak voice began to sing a hymn. It was a hymn to the Virgin Mary which he had composed when he was young and innocent. He knew nothing then of the Black Art, and used to sing the hymn daily. Although he sang with all the strength he possessed, his voice seemed lost in the air. But some shepherds who were tending their flocks on the mountain side, just beneath him, heard the hymn, and looked up, wondering, into the sky to learn whence came those sacred words ; for his voice, instead of ascending and being lost in the air, descended to the earth, that human souls might hear it. Twardowski sang the hymn to the end, and found to his astonishment that his upward flight was arrested, and that he remained

suspended in the air in the same spot. His companion had disappeared. Then he heard a voice from a dark cloud which said,—

“ Thus you will remain suspended in the air until the day of judgment.”

Where his upward course was arrested there he still remains. But his voice is no longer heard. Not many years ago, old people who remembered his story, would point out on bright nights a dark spot in the sky as the body of Twardowski, awaiting the day of judgment.

THE MAIDEN WHO WAS WISER THAN THE KING.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE once lived a poor man in a miserable hovel, who had no one with him save an only daughter. But she was very wise, and went about everywhere seeking alms, and taught her father also to speak in a becoming manner when he begged. It happened once that the poor man came to the king and asked for a gift. The king demanded whence he came, and who had taught him to speak so well. The man said whence he came, and that it was his daughter who had taught him.

“And who taught your daughter?” asked the king.

The poor man answered: “God, and our great poverty.”

Then the king gave him thirty eggs, saying,—

“Take these eggs to your daughter, and tell her to hatch chickens out of them, and I will reward her hand-

somely ; but if she cannot hatch them, it will go ill with you."

The poor man went crying back, to his hovel, and related what had passed to his daughter. The maiden saw at once that the eggs had been boiled, but she told her father to go to rest, and assured him that she would see that all went well. The father followed her advice, and went to sleep ; the maiden took a pot, filled it with water and beans, and set it on the fire. On the following morning, the beans being quite boiled, she told her father to take a plough and oxen, and to plough along the road where the king would pass.

"And," she added, "when you see the king, take the beans, sow them, and cry, 'Hi! go on, oxen mine! Heaven be with me, and make my boiled beans take root and grow!' And when the king asks you how it is possible for boiled beans to grow, answer him, that it is quite as possible as for boiled eggs to yield chickens."

The poor man hearkened to his daughter, went away, and began to plough. When he saw the king coming he began to cry,—

"Hi! go on, oxen mine! God help me, and make my boiled beans take root and grow!"

The king, hearing these words, stopped on the road, and said to the poor man,—

“Here, fellow! how is it possible for boiled beans to grow?”

And the poor man answered him,—

“Heaven prosper you, king! just as possible as for boiled eggs to yield chickens.”

The king guessed at once that it was the poor man's daughter who had taught him this answer. He ordered his servants to seize him and bring him into his presence. Then he gave him a bundle of flax, and said to him,—

“Take this flax and make out of it ropes and sails and all that is wanted on shipboard; if you do not, you shall loose your head.”

The poor man took the bundle in great fear, and went crying home to his daughter, to whom he related all that had passed. But the maiden sent him again to rest with the promise that all should go well. On the following day she took a small piece of wood, awoke her father, and said to him,—

“Take this wood, and carry it to the king; let him cut a spinning-wheel, a spindle, and a loom out of it, and I will do all that he demands of me.”

The poor man again followed the directions of his daughter; he went to the king and delivered the maiden's message. The king was astonished at hearing this, and began to think what he should do next. At last he took up a small cup, and said as he gave it to the father,—

“Take this cup to your daughter, and let her empty the sea with it, so that it shall become like a dry field.”

The poor man obeyed with tears in his eyes, and took the cup to his daughter with the king’s message. But the maiden told him he need only leave the matter till the morning, when she would see to it.

In the morning she called her father, and gave him a pound of tow to take to the king, and bade him say :—

“Let the king stop up all the springs and river-mouths of the earth with this tow, and then will I dry up the sea for him.”

And the poor man went and told this to the king.

Now the king saw that this maiden was wiser than he was himself, and he ordered her to be brought before him. And when the father and daughter stood in his presence and bowed before him, he said to the daughter,—

“Tell me, girl, what is it that man hears the farthest ?”

And the maiden answered,—

“Great king! that which man hears the farthest is the thunder, and a lie.”

Upon this the king took hold of his beard, and turning to his councillors, demanded of them :

“Tell me what my beard is worth ?”

And when one valued it at so much, and another at so

much more, the maiden told them outright that they could not guess it. "The king's beard," she said, "is of as much worth as three rainy days in summer-time."

The king was astonished, and exclaimed, "The maiden has made the best answer!"

Then he asked her if she would be his wife, nor would he desist from pressing his suit, until she agreed to it. The maiden bent before him and said,—

"Glorious king! let it be as you will; but I beg of you to write on a piece of paper with your own hand, that, should you ever be angry with me, and should drive me forth from your palace, I shall be at liberty to take whatever I love dearest away with me."

And the king agreed and wrote out the paper.

After some time had passed away, it came, in fact, to pass, that the king became one day so angry with his wife, that he said to her,—

"I will have you no longer for my wife; leave my palace, and go where you will."

"Illustrious king!" answered the queen, "I will obey you. Permit me, however, to stay here over the night, then in the morning I will go forth."

The king granted her prayer; and the queen before supper mixed some brandy and some sweet herbs in the king's wine, and pressed him to partake of it, saying,—

"Drink, oh king, and be merry. To-morrow we part;

and believe me, I shall then be happier than when I married you."

The king drank too much, and when he was fast asleep, the queen had him laid in a wagon ready prepared, and drove with him into a rocky cavern. And when the king awoke in the cavern, and saw where he was, he cried out,—

"Who has brought me here?"

"I have brought you here," answered the queen.

The king demanded of her :

"Why have you done this? Have I not told you that you are no longer my wife?"

Then said she, as she drew forth a sheet of paper,—

"It is true what you say; but see what you yourself have laid down on this sheet: that when I should leave you, I might take with me, from your palace, that which I loved best."

When the king heard this, he kissed her, and went back with her to the palace.

MADEY.

(FROM THE POLISH.)

A MERCHANT was once travelling through a dark, dense forest. At night he lost his way; he wandered about for a long time, and at last, unable to see in the darkness above and around, he fell into a bog and there helplessly remained. He began already to despair of his life, when suddenly an evil spirit, in human shape, appeared to him.

“Fear not,” said the evil spirit to the merchant, “I will help you out of this bog and show you the right way, on condition that you give me something that is in your home which you know not and which you have not seen.”

The merchant reflected a little; at last he accepted the proposal, not knowing that during his absence a beautiful boy had been born to him in his house. The evil spirit took the merchant out of the bog and showed him the way home. He made him sign a bond of the

gift, once more reminded him of the agreement, and disappeared.

The merchant, on his return home, joyfully greeted his wife, from whom he had been separated so long; but the sight of his lovely boy, whom he had already promised to the evil spirit, made his heart bleed within him. The unhappy merchant often wept in secret, hiding his bitter tears even from his wife.

Meanwhile the child grew up. He was quiet, obedient, and willing to learn; when five years old he could read and write. His poor father was almost broken-hearted at the thought of parting with such a son, whom he, alas! had unknowingly given over to destruction.

When the boy was seven years old he observed that his father, whenever he looked upon his rosy face, would sigh and shed tears. The little boy begged his father so often to tell him the reason of this emotion, that at last the merchant related all the story of the bond.

“Fear not, dear father,” said the little boy. “Heaven will help us. I will go to the evil spirit and bring back the bond.”

His father and mother wept bitterly at parting. They prayed for and blessed their little son, who, although so young and tender, was starting on such a long and dangerous journey. The boy, having made all necessary preparations, set out from home.

He walked long and far ; at last he came to a thick, gloomy forest. In a secret cave in this forest lived a robber whose name was Madey. He had murdered his own father, and had spared the life of his mother only that she might prepare his food. He had no pity for the life of man ; those he could capture he would murder without mercy. His mother, an old woman, would often hide strayed travellers in the cave, but Madey's nose was so keen that he would scent strangers at once.

Seeking shelter from a storm, our little traveller accidentally entered the cave. The old woman, having compassion on his tender years, hid him in a narrow recess ; but Madey, as soon as he came in, scented the little boy. The poor child was about to perish beneath the cruel blows of a club, when the robber, hearing where the boy was going, granted him his life on condition that he should see in the abode of the evil spirits the kind of punishment prepared for him, Madey, after death.

The boy left the cave early the following morning, and soon arrived at the gates of the evil spirit's abode. He opened them easily by means of the holy water and holy images which he affixed upon the gate posts. The prince of the demons, alarmed at this intrusion, asked him at once what he wanted.

“The bond given for my soul by my father.”

The prince, wishing to get rid of him as soon as possible, ordered the bond to be given up. It was in the possession of a lame spirit called Twardowski. Although the royal command was pressing, and Twardowski was urged to make haste by being sprinkled with holy water, which burnt him like fire, he was obstinate, and would not give up the bond.

At last the prince, tired of waiting, called out angrily,—
“Seize him and lay him on Madey’s bed.”

Twardowski, terrified even at the thought of such fearful torments, gave up the bond at once.

The boy went to see that dreadful bed. It was made of iron bars strewn over with sharp knives, large needles, and razors. Under it a fierce fire burned continually, while showers of burning brimstone dropped upon it from above.

The boy left the dreadful place and began his journey home. He walked one day, and he walked another, at last, on the third day, he arrived at the cave where Madey, gloomy and anxious, awaited his return. The boy told him all he had heard and seen. The robber was almost paralyzed with fear at the recital. Hoping to escape such a terrible punishment, he began seriously to repent of his many crimes.

They left the cave together. Madey stuck his mur-

derous club in the ground, knelt down near it, and knowing that the boy was destined to become a priest, vowed that he would wait for him on that same spot until he should return a bishop.

Many years passed away before the once little boy came to be raised to the dignity of a bishop.

One day the bishop, passing through a dense, gloomy forest, smelt a sweet odour of apples. He asked some of his servants to find the tree, and to bring him some of the fruit. The servants soon returned from their search and informed the bishop that they had discovered the tree, which was full of apples, but that they could not get any of them, and that an old man was kneeling beside it.

The bishop went to the spot, and what was his surprise, when, in the old, grey-haired man, with a beard reaching to the ground, he recognised the desperate robber Madey!

The robber, full of repentance and sorrow for the past, entreated the bishop to hear his confession and grant him absolution. His request was readily granted. The bishop's attendants saw with surprise that during the confession the apples on the tree, one after another, changed into snow-white doves, flew up, and disappeared in the skies. Soon there was only one apple left; it was the soul of Madey's father whom he had murdered;

that terrible sin he could only bring himself to acknowledge at the last. As soon, however, as he had confessed it, the remaining apple also changed into a beautiful white dove and flew away to heaven.

The bishop prayed long and earnestly over the repentant sinner. When he had pronounced his absolution the body of Madey crumbled into dust.

THE LONG-DESIRED CHILD.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

IN a hut at the farther end of a village, close to the forest, there once lived a man with his wife. Although they were very poor—the man was a daily labourer and the woman spun for sale—yet they were continually wishing for children, and saying, “Would we had a child.”

“Be thankful that heaven has not granted you one,” said the neighbours: “you yourselves have not enough to eat.”

But the man and the woman said,—

“When we eat and are satisfied there would be always something left for our child. Would we had one.”

One morning, as the man was digging out stumps of trees in the forest, he came across a small root which looked exactly like a little child—it had a head, body,

arms, and legs,—he had only to smooth its forehead a little with his axe to make it round, and to cut off the roots from its little arms and legs to give them shape, and then the child was perfect, and wanted only voice to scream. The man took this root home, and said to his wife,—

“Here you have what you wished for—an Otesanek.* If you like, you can bring him up.”

The woman put the child into swaddling clothes, then took it up, nursed it in her arms and sang to it:

“Bye, bye, my little Otesanek! When you awake, my little boy, I will boil you some food. Bye, bye!”

Suddenly the child began to kick about, raised up its head and cried,—

“Mother, I want something to eat!”

The woman was overjoyed. She put the child quickly in bed and hastened to prepare its food. When the food was ready Otesanek ate it all up, and then screamed again,—

“Mother, I want something to eat.”

“Wait a moment, my dear child, wait a moment,” said the woman, “and I will bring you something to eat.”

She then ran to a neighbour’s and brought in a basin of milk. Otesanek drank the milk, and then screamed

* A hewn-out child.

again that he wanted something more to eat. The woman was greatly surprised at this, and said,—

“What, my child, have you not yet had enough?”

She then went out and borrowed in the village a loaf of bread, put it on the table, and again left the room to boil some water and make soup. As soon as she was gone, Otesanek, seeing the bread on the table, scrambled out of the swaddling clothes, jumped upon a bench, and in an instant swallowed up the bread, and then screamed again,—

“Mother, I want something to eat!”

The woman came in to cut the bread for the soup,—she looked about for it everywhere, but it was gone! In a corner stood Otesanek looking like a small barrel and staring at her.

“Heaven have mercy upon us!” cried the woman; “Otesanek, surely you have not eaten the loaf of bread?”

“Yes, mother,” answered Otesanek; “I have eaten it, and now will eat you too.”

He opened his mouth, and before the woman could recover from her astonishment, swallowed her up.

In a short time the man returned home. As soon as he had entered in, Otesanek screamed,—

“Father, I want something to eat!”

The man was greatly alarmed at the sight of a child

with open mouth and rolling eyes, and looking as big as an oven. Having, however, recognised Otesanek, he said,—

“O-ho! is it you? Where is your mother?”

“I have eaten her,” answered Otesanek; “and now it is your turn.”

He opened his mouth and in an instant swallowed up the man. But the more Otesanek ate the more he wanted. There being nothing now in the hut that he could swallow up, he went into the village to look about him. He met a girl wheeling from the field a wheelbarrow full of clover.

“What have you eaten,” cried the girl full of wonder, “that you look so big?”

Otesanek answered: “I am an eater, and have eaten some grits from a saucepan, a basinful of milk, a loaf of bread, my mother and father, and now will eat you too.”

He rushed up to her, and the girl with the wheelbarrow disappeared. Afterwards Otesanek met a peasant who was driving a cart loaded with hay from the meadow. He advanced into the middle of the road and the horses stopped.

“Can’t you get out of the way, you monster? I shall drive over you,” cried the peasant angrily, and began to urge the horses forward. Otesanek, however, did not pay the least attention to him, but began to say,—

“I am an eater, and have eaten some grits from a saucepan, a basinful of milk, a loaf of bread, my mother and father, a girl with the wheelbarrow, and now will eat you too.”

Before the peasant recovered from his surprise he himself, with the horses and cart, was swallowed up by Otesanek. Then Otesanek went farther on. In the field there was a man watching pigs. Otesanek took a fancy to them and swallowed them all up, together with the man—there was not a sign left of them. Afterwards he perceived on a hill not far off a shepherd with a flock of sheep.

“Having already eaten so much,” said Otesanek to himself, “I will eat these too.”

He came nearer and swallowed them all up—the sheep, the shepherd, and his dog Vorish. Then he staggered forward and at last came to a field where an old woman was attending to cabbages. Otesanek did not reflect long, he went into the field, began to break off cabbages from the stumps and eat them up.

“Why are you destroying my property, Otesanek?” cried the old woman. “Surely you have eaten enough to be satisfied.”

Otesanek looked at her with a grin and said: “I am an eater, and have eaten some grits from a saucepan, a basinful of milk, a loaf of bread, my father and mother,

a girl with a wheelbarrow, a peasant and a cart loaded with hay, a swineherd and pigs, a shepherd and his sheep, and now will eat you too." And he wanted to swallow her up. But the old woman was too sharp for Otesanek,—she struck him with her mattock and cut him in half. Otesanek fell down dead. Then there was a sight to see! First jumped out of the body the dog Vorish, after him came out the shepherd, and after the shepherd jumped out the sheep. Vorish collected the sheep together, the shepherd whistled and drove them home. Afterwards the herd of pigs rushed out, after them jumped out the swineherd, who cracked his whip and drove them after the shepherd. Then came out the horses drawing the cart loaded with hay; the peasant shook the reins angrily, and drove after the swineherd also to the village. After the cart came out the girl with the wheelbarrow, and after the girl jumped out the man and his wife, and carried home, alternately, under their arms the borrowed loaf of bread. From that moment neither of them ever said, "Would we had a child."

THE WICKED WOOD-FAYS.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

THERE was once a poor orphan boy who had neither father nor mother, and as he had nothing whatever to live upon, he was obliged to go out in search of service. He wandered about for a long time, but could not find a place anywhere; one day he came to a solitary hut standing close to a forest. Before the door sat an old man, who, instead of eyes, had dark holes in his head; his goats were bleating in the stable, and the old man said,—

“I should be very glad to take you into the meadow, my poor goats, only I cannot, as I am blind, and I have no one here whom I could send with you.”

“Master, send me!” cried the boy. “I should be very glad to feed your goats and wait upon you too.”

“Who are you, and what is your name?” asked the old man.

The boy told him his history, and added that his name was Yanechek.

“Very good, Yanechek,” said the old man, “I will take you into my service, and first of all drive the goats into the meadow to graze; but do not drive them to yonder hill in the forest, as there the jezinky* would come to you, make you sleep, and then tear out your eyes as they have done mine.”

“Do not be afraid of it at all, master,” answered Yanechek; “jezinky shall not tear out my eyes.”

Then he let the goats out of the stable and drove them into the meadow. The first and second day he watched them near the forest; but on the third day he said to himself, “Why should I be afraid of the jezinky? I shall drive the goats there where the grass is better.” Then he cut off three green pieces of brier, put them inside his hat, and drove the goats directly to the top of the hill in the forest. There the goats scattered about and began to graze, and Yanechek sat down in the shade on a stone. He had not sat there long, when suddenly, he could not tell whence, there appeared before him a beautiful girl, dressed all in white, with hair as black as a raven, nicely combed and falling down her shoulders, and black eyes.

* Wicked wood-fays.

“Hail, young shepherd!” she said. “See what beautiful apples grow in our garden; here is one for you, so that you may know how nicely they taste.” And she handed him a beautiful red apple. But Yanechek knew that if he were to take that apple and eat it, he would fall asleep, and then the girl would tear out his eyes; he therefore said,—

“Thank you, beautiful maiden; my master has in his garden an apple tree which bears much finer apples. I have eaten enough of them.”

“Well, if you do not like it, I shall not press you,” answered the girl, and then went away.

In a short time there came another girl, handsomer than the first; she held in her hand a beautiful red rose and said,—

“Hail, young shepherd! See what a beautiful rose I have plucked from yonder ridge between those fields; it smells deliciously,—smell it”

“Thank you, beautiful maiden,” answered Yanechek. “My master has in his garden much finer roses; I have smelt them enough.”

“Very well,” answered the girl angrily; “if you do not want to smell it, you need not do it.”

She then turned round and went away. After a little while there came a third girl, the youngest and handsomest of them all.

“Hail, young shepherd!” she said.

“Thank you, pretty maiden,” answered Yanechek.

“You are a fine looking lad,” continued the girl; “but you would look handsomer if you had your hair nicely combed; come, I will comb it for you.”

Yanechek did not answer her a word; but when the girl had approached him in order to comb his hair, he took off his hat, pulled out of it one of the briers, and with it struck the girl on the hand. The girl screamed,—

“Oh, help! help!” and then burst out crying as she could not move away from the spot where she was standing. Yanechek did not pay any attention to her cries, but tied up her arms with the piece of brier. Then the two other jezinky appeared, and seeing their sister thus caught, they begged Yanechek that he would untie her arms and let her go.

“Do it yourselves,” answered Yanechek.

“We cannot,” said the girls; “we have delicate hands and we should prick ourselves.”

When, however, they saw that Yanechek would not do it, they approached their sister in order to untie the brier. Suddenly Yanechek rushed upon the girls and struck each of them with the brier, and then tied up their arms.

“See, I have caught you now, you wicked jezinky,” cried Yanechek,—“you that have torn out my master’s eyes.”

Then he rushed home to his master and said,—

“Come, master, I have found somebody that will return you your eyes.”

When Yanechek and his old master had come to the hill, Yanechek said to the eldest girl,—

“Now, tell me, where are my master’s eyes? If you will not, I shall throw you into the water.”

The girl protested that she did not know where the eyes were, and Yanechek was about to throw her into the rivulet that was flowing near the hill.

“Do not drown me, Yanechek; do not drown me,” cried the girl, “and I will give you your master’s eyes.”

Then she led him to a cave where there was a large heap of eyes, great and small, black, red, blue, and green, and selected two out of that heap. But when Yanechek had put them into his master’s head, the poor old man began to complain bitterly: “Oh, woe, woe is me! These are not my eyes; I can only see owls.” Yanechek became very angry, and having caught hold of the girl he threw her into the water. Then he said to the second girl,—

“Will you tell me where my master’s eyes are?”

The girl excused herself, saying that she did not know anything about them, but when Yanechek had threatened that he would also throw her into the water, the girl led him to the same cave and selected two other

eyes. The old man, however, again complained: "Oh, woe is me! These are not my eyes; I can only see wolves." The same thing was done to the second jezinky as to the first; the water only bubbled over her.

"Will you tell me where my master's eyes are?" asked Yanechek of the third and youngest of the jezinky.

This one also led him to the cave, and selected two eyes out of the heap. But when they were put into the old man's head he again complained that they were not his eyes, saying, "I can only see pikes."

Yanechek seeing that the girl had cheated him, wanted to drown her also, but the jezinky burst out crying, and said,—

"Do not drown me, Yanechek; do not drown me, and I will give you your master's real eyes." And she selected them from the very bottom of the heap of eyes.

When Yanechek had put them into his master's head, the old man cried joyfully,—

"These are my eyes! Thank heaven! now I can see well."

Henceforth Yanechek and his old master lived together happily. Yanechek attended to the goats, and the old man made cheese from their milk, of which they both partook. From that day the youngest jezinky has never shown herself on the hill.

THE WONDERFUL BIRD.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE once lived a poor man. One morning he left his home in search of bread for his children and wife. As he was walking along the road he saw a beautiful little bird clapping its wings and looking at him; he caught it and returned home with it. He put the little bird under a sieve, so that it might not escape, and then went out again in search of bread, but not being able to get any anywhere, he returned home dispirited and sorrowful.

As soon as the man had come in, his hungry children rushed up to him and told him that the bird had laid two little eggs; one of them asked him to take the eggs to market, sell them and buy some bread with the produce. The man smiled at this proposal, and said, sighing,—

“My poor child, what shall I get for two such little eggs?”

But the child was sure that he would get a very great deal for the eggs. So the man went with the two little eggs to market. Before the gates of the city he met a stranger, who, as soon as he had seen the eggs, eagerly asked him how much he wanted for them. The man answered,—

“Give me what you like, so that I may buy some bread for myself and my family.”

The stranger gave him a gold sequin, and said,—

“Here is one sequin for the eggs, and here is another for yourself if you will tell me where you got them from.”

The man told him all; and when the stranger asked him whether he would sell the bird also, he answered that he would for a good price; then they returned together to the poor man's home. When they had arrived, and the stranger had seen the little bird, he said,—

“Here is one hundred gold sequins for the bird.”

The man sold it to him for that sum. The stranger then and there killed the bird, pulled off its head, took out the heart, and said,—

“Roast this head and heart for me; I want to eat them.”

The man put the head and heart on a spit and gave them to one of his children to roast before the fire.

Whilst the stranger was engaged in conversation with the man and his wife, the rest of the children assembled round the fire to see how the roasting was getting on, and being very hungry, one of them ate the head and the other the heart, and then ran away. Soon afterwards the stranger approached the fire to see whether the head and heart were sufficiently roasted to be eaten, and when he saw what had happened, he smote his forehead and began loudly to complain, not so much on account of the hundred sequins which he had paid for the bird, but that he had been cheated and had lost his luck in this as well as in the next world; and thus lamenting he went away.

On the following morning, when the two boys awoke, there lay under the head of him who had eaten the heart of the little bird one hundred sequins, and the boy who had eaten the head told his father and mother what was taking place all over the world, and even what the kings were thinking about. Thus it happened every morning: the first found always a hundred sequins under his head, and the second knew what was thought and done in the whole world. By this means the brothers became very rich, and at last they bribed the people to elect one of them for their king: the people's choice fell

upon him who had eaten the heart of the little bird. Then the brother who had eaten the head began, from envy, as well as because he was the wisest man in the world, to hate his brother the king, and to think how he could get rid of him. At last he determined to kill him, so that he might reign in his stead. One evening, when the king was asleep, he killed him, opened the body and found in it the bird's heart; having eaten it he sewed up the body. On the following day the news spread among the people: "The king is dead! Whom shall we elect for his successor?" They set about to elect their king in this place and in that; among high and low; some proposed one, and some another; at last they came to the late king's brother and made him their king. Having become king—every morning he found under his head one hundred sequins as his brother had done—he sent to a neighbouring king asking his daughter in marriage; the king gave him his daughter, and they were married according to custom. When, on the first and second morning after the wedding, the young queen discovered that there were a hundred sequins lying under her husband's head, she was greatly surprised, and on the third morning she removed fifty and left the other half in the same place. But when the king awoke and did not find the whole hundred sequins, he caught hold of his wife as if he were going to kill her; the

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queen, terrified, threw away the sequins, and at the same instant the king fell down senseless, began to cough violently, and at last brought up the heart of the little bird. In a moment a hand appeared, whiter than the snow on the mountains, and seized the heart; and a voice was heard, saying,—“It was mine; but this shall be forgiven unto you!” This was the voice of the soul of the king’s brother, and the hand was his shadow.

Soon afterwards the king recovered from the swoon. When he heard what had happened, he repented of his sins until his life’s end, and gave alms to the poor.

WISDOM AND FORTUNE.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

ONCE Fortune met Wisdom in a certain place.

“Get out of my way!” cried Fortune.

At that time Wisdom was inexperienced and did not know which was to make room for the other; she therefore said,—

“Why should I get out of your way? Are you better than I am?”

“He is better,” answered Fortune, “who can do most. Do you see that peasant boy ploughing the field? Get inside him, and if you succeed better than I, I shall always, and justly, make room for you whenever we meet.”

Wisdom agreed to this proposal and entered at once into the ploughboy’s head. As soon as the boy felt that he had wisdom in his head, he began to reason within himself,—

“Why should I walk until my life’s end behind the plough? Surely, I can somewhere else and more easily make my fortune.”

He left off working, shut up the plough, and drove home.

“Father,” he said, “I don’t like the peasant’s work. I would rather learn to be a gardener.”

The father said,—“What’s the matter with you, Vanek? * Have you lost your senses?” But after a moment’s thought he added, “Well, if you like to be a gardener, then learn it by all means; your brother shall inherit the hut after me.”

Vanek lost the hut, but he did not care about that; he went to the king’s gardener to be taught the art of gardening. The gardener did not teach him much, and yet Vanek learnt the business very quickly. In a short time he ceased to ask the gardener for instruction, but did everything according to his own idea. At first the gardener was angry, but when he saw that everything went better than before, he was satisfied. “I see,” he said, “you are wiser than I am.” He then allowed Vanek to garden just as he liked.

In a short time Vanek improved the garden so much that the king was greatly pleased with it, and often

* Johnny.

walked in the garden with his wife and their only daughter. That daughter was a very beautiful girl, but from her twelfth year she ceased to speak, no one heard a word from her. The king was greatly grieved on that account, and announced that whoever would make the princess speak again might take her for his wife. Many young princes, dukes, and other great men applied, one after another, but as they came, so they went away, not one of them succeeded in making the princess speak.

“And why should not I try my luck,” thought Vanek; “who knows, perhaps I shall succeed in making her answer me when I question her.”

He presented himself at once before the king, and the king with all his councillors took him to the apartments where his daughter lived. That daughter had a very beautiful little dog, of which she was very fond, because it was very clever; it understood everything that she wanted. When Vanek with the king and the councillors came into the princess's room, he pretended not to see the girl at all, but turning to the little dog he said,—

“I have heard, my little dog, that thou art very clever; I have, therefore, come to thee for advice. There were three of us companions—a sculptor, a tailor, and myself. Once, as we were walking through a forest, we were obliged to stop in it for the night. In order to be secure from the wolves we lit a fire, and agreed among ourselves

to watch one after another. The sculptor watched first, and in order to beguile the time he took a log of wood, and cut out of it a beautiful girl. When it was ready the sculptor awoke the tailor and asked him to watch. The tailor seeing the wooden girl asked what it was. 'Just what you see,' answered the sculptor: 'the time lay heavily on my hands, and I have cut this girl out of a log of wood; if you find the time tedious, you may dress her.' The tailor took out at once the scissors, needles, and thread, cut the dress and began to sew it up; when the dress was ready he dressed the girl in it. Afterwards he awoke me, and asked me to watch. I said, 'What have you got there?' 'Just what you see,' he answered: 'the time lay heavily on the sculptor's hands, so he cut this girl out of a log of wood, and I, for the same reason, have dressed her. Should you find the time tedious, you may teach her to speak.'" I set to work and succeeded in teaching her to speak. But in the morning, when my companions awoke, each of them wanted to take the girl away. The sculptor said, 'I have made her.' The tailor said, 'I have dressed her.' I also defended my right. Tell me now, my little dog, to which of us does the girl belong?"

The little dog remained silent, but instead of it the king's daughter said,—

"To whom should she belong but to you? What is

the use of the sculptor's girl without life, or of the tailor's dress without speech? You have conferred upon her the greatest gifts—life and speech,—consequently she belongs to you by right.”

“You have decided about yourself,” said Vanek. “I have given to you speech and new life, consequently you belong to me by right.”

Then one of the king's councillors said,—

“His majesty the king will give you a rich reward, because you have succeeded in unloosing his daughter's tongue; but you cannot take her for your wife, because you are of mean birth.”

And the king added,—

“Because you are of mean birth I will give you, instead of my daughter, a rich reward.”

But Vanek would not even so much as hear of any other reward, and answered,—

“The king promised, without exception, that whoever would make his daughter speak might take her for his wife. The king's word is law: if the king wish that the people should keep the law, he must keep it first himself. Consequently the king must give me his daughter for a wife.”

“Guards, seize him!” cried the same councillor. “Whoever dares to say what the king should do, offends the royal majesty, and is guilty of death. May your

majesty be pleased to order this criminal to be beheaded with the sword."

The king said, "Let him be beheaded with the sword."

Immediately the guards bound Vanek and led him to death. When they had arrived at the place of execution, Fortune was already waiting for them there, and whispered to Wisdom,—

"See how this man, for following you, is now about to lose his head. Get out of him, and let me enter in your place."

When gracious Fortune had entered into Vanek, the executioner's sword broke off at the handle, just as if somebody had cut it in half, and before another sword could be procured a messenger arrived on horseback from town, blowing a trumpet and waving a white flag; he was followed by a royal carriage for Vanek. It happened thus. The king's daughter had been telling her father at home that Vanek alone had spoken the truth, and that the king's word could not be broken; and although Vanek was of mean birth, yet the king could easily make him a duke.

The king said, "You are right; let him be made a duke."

Then a royal carriage was immediately sent for Vanek, and in his stead was executed that councillor who had

provoked the king against Vanek. When afterwards Vanek and the king's daughter rode together from the wedding, Wisdom stood somewhere on the road, and seeing that she must needs meet with Fortune, she bent down her head and ran away aside, as if sprinkled with water. From that moment Wisdom, whenever about to meet with Fortune, passes her at a distance.

THE THREE BROTHERS.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

HE who asks little shall obtain much.

There lived once three brothers whose only property in this bright world consisted of a pear-tree which they watched one after another ; whilst one of them was left watching it the two others would go to their daily labour.

One day an angel from heaven was commanded to go and see how the brothers were living, and to provide them with better means of subsistence if they needed it. As soon as the angel had descended to the earth he assumed the shape of a beggar, and having come to the brother who was watching the tree, he begged him for a pear. The man plucked one of the pears which belonged to him, gave it to the angel and said,—

“ Here you have one of my own pears ; of those which belong to my brothers I cannot give you any.”

The angel thanked him and went away. On the following day the second brother stopped at home to watch the tree; the angel came also to him and asked for a pear. The second brother likewise plucked one of the pears which belonged to him, and gave it to the angel, and said,—

“Here you have one of my own pears; of those which belong to my brothers I cannot give you any.”

The angel thanked him and went away. When the turn came for the third brother to watch the tree, the angel came to him also and asked for a pear. The youngest brother, in like manner, plucked one of those which belonged to him, gave it to the angel, and said,—

“Here you have one of my own pears; of those which belong to my brothers I cannot give you any.”

On the fourth day the angel took the form of a monk, and having come early in the morning he found the brothers still at home, to whom he said,—

“Come with me, and I will give you something better to do.”

The brothers followed the angel without any hesitation. When they had come to a broad, rapid stream, they all rested there, and the angel said to the eldest brother,—

“What would you like to have?”

And he answered, "I should like this water to be turned into wine and belong to me."

The angel made the sign of the cross with his staff, and lo!—instead of water, there flowed wine in the stream. Casks were being made, wine was being poured into them; people were seen working, and a village arose. The angel left the eldest brother there and said, "Now you have what you wished for, stop and live here."

Then the angel took the two younger brothers, and went with them farther on. They soon came to a field in which an enormous number of pigeons were feeding. There the angel asked the second brother,—

"What would you like to have?"

And he answered, "I should like all these pigeons to be changed into sheep and belong to me."

The angel made the sign of the cross with his staff over the field, and in an instant all the pigeons became sheep. A dairy appeared in which some women were milking the ewes, others were measuring the milk, collecting cream, making cheeses, and melting fat; there was also a slaughter-house in which meat was dressed, weighed, and money received; people were busy everywhere, and a village sprang up on the spot. Hereupon the angel said to the second brother, "Here you have what you wished for."

Then the angel went away with the youngest brother, and whilst walking through a field he asked him,—

“And what would you like to have?”

So the youngest brother answered, “May Heaven grant me a truly pious wife; I do not ask for anything else.”

“Ah,” said the angel, “it is very difficult to find a truly pious woman. In the whole world there are only three such, two of them are already married, but the third is still a maiden; there are, however, already two suitors for her.”

Then they started again, and having walked for a long time they reached a town where a king lived who had a truly pious daughter. Having entered into the town, they went immediately to the king to ask for his daughter.

There they found that two kings had arrived before them, had asked for the princess, and had already put their apples on the table. Hereupon they also put their apples on the table by the side of the other apples.

When the king saw them he said to those who stood around,—

“What shall we do? The first two suitors are kings, and these men are mere beggars in comparison with them.”

Then the angel said, “I will tell you what to do. Let the princess take three branches of vine, plant them in the garden, and name each one after her lovers;

in the morning on whose branch grapes will be found, him she must take for her husband."

They all agreed to this proposition. The princess planted three branches of vine in the garden, and named each one after a suitor. In the morning there were grapes on the vine of the poor man. The king not knowing how to get out of this difficulty, was obliged to give his daughter to the youngest brother for wife; he took them at once to church and married them. After the ceremony, the angel took the newly-married couple to a forest and left them there, and they lived in that forest one year.

When the year was up, the angel was again commanded to go and see how the brothers were living, and to assist them if they needed it. Having descended to the earth the angel again assumed the shape of a beggar, went to the eldest brother where the wine was flowing in the stream, and begged him for a glass of wine; but the man drove him away, saying,—

"If I were to give a glass of wine to everybody that asks for it, there would be nothing left for me."

When the angel heard this he made the sign of the cross with his staff, and the water flowed again in the stream as before; then he said to the eldest brother,—

"Riches were not good for you; go home and attend to your pear-tree again."

Then the angel went to the second brother whose sheep covered the field, and begged him for a piece of cheese ; he also drove the angel away, saying,—

“ If I were to give a piece of cheese to everybody that asks for it, there would be nothing left for me.”

When the angel heard this he made the sign of the cross with his staff, and the sheep changed into pigeons again ; then the angel said to him,—

“ Riches were not good for you ; go home and attend to your pear-tree again.”

At last the angel went to the youngest brother in order to see how he was getting on, and he found him living with his wife in a poor hut in the forest. The angel asked him for a night's lodging, and they received him with all their hearts, and begged him to excuse them that they could not entertain him as they wished, “ for” they added, “ we are very poor.” And the angel answered them, “ Never mind ; I shall be satisfied with whatever it is.”

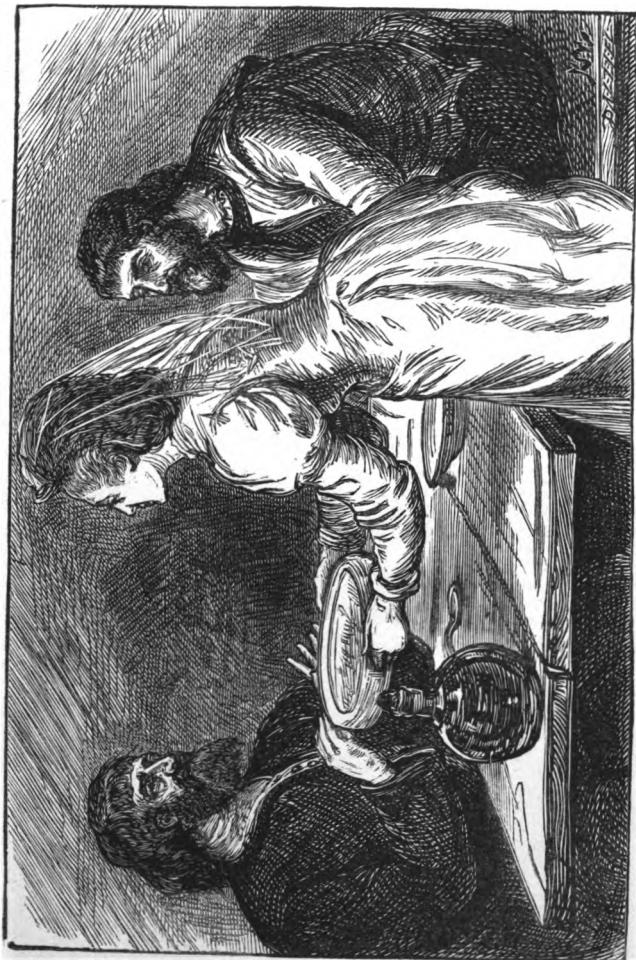
What were they to do ? They had no corn to make bread with, but they used to pound the bark of trees and make bread of it. Such bread the woman prepared also for the visitor, and put it under an earthen cover to bake.

Whilst the bread was baking they entertained the visitor with conversation. When, some time afterwards, they looked to see whether the bread was baked yet, they

found under the cover fine bread nicely baked—one could not wish for better, and it had even risen up under the cover; when the man and his wife saw it they lifted up their hands to heaven, and said,—

“O Lord, receive our thanks! Now we can entertain our visitor.”

Then they put the bread before the angel and a gourd-bottle with water; but as soon as they began to drink out of it, the water was changed into wine. Hereupon the angel made the sign of the cross with his staff over the hut, and in its place there arose a princely palace with plenty of all good things in it. Then the angel blessed the man and his wife, and departed from them, and they lived happily until their lives' end.



"THE BREAD WAS NICELY BAKED."

THE BROWNIE, OR HOUSE-SPIRIT.

(FROM THE BOHEMIAN.)

I.

AT Behary lived a peasant whose name was Palichka. One day as he was walking to market at Kopidlno, he found in the field under a pear-tree a black hen, wet, trembling with cold, and crying. Palichka took the hen under his cloak, and having brought her home, put her behind the oven, so that she might dry herself, and then let her go into the yard among his other fowls.

At night, when everybody was asleep, the peasant heard a strange noise in his storeroom, and now and then a piercing voice, half human and half like that of a fowl, crying, "Master, I have brought you some potatoes!" Palichka jumped out of bed, rushed into the storeroom, and there saw a flaming hen and three heaps of potatoes; the hen was flying from heap to heap.

“Fie, you unclean thing,” cried the terrified peasant, and having violently shut the door he went to bed again; but he could not sleep from fear at the thought of what a terrible creature he had brought home. In the morning he removed all these potatoes to a dung-hill.

On the following night Palichka again heard the same voice, crying, “Master, I have brought you some wheat, rye, and barley!” Palichka did not go to see what it was, but trembling with fear like a leaf, he prayed continually: “Deliver us from evil.” In the morning he took up a spade and a besom, and having carefully swept the room, he removed all this corn away, so that not even a grain was left behind.

This event gave him a great deal of anxiety; he did not know what to do, and was greatly alarmed lest any of his neighbours should hear about it. But his neighbours soon knew all about the matter; they saw at night something flying to Palichka’s house, looking like a burning wisp of straw, and yet it did not set the house on fire; in the day-time they observed a black hen in the yard among the other fowls. Soon a report was spread in the village that gossip Palichka had sold himself to the demon. Some of the more sober of his neighbours shook their heads doubtfully, as from his youth they knew Palichka to be both pious and honest,

and they agreed among themselves to go and speak to him about the rumour. Accordingly they called upon Palichka, and he told them candidly everything that had happened, and asked them to advise him what to do.

“My advice is to kill this monster,” cried a young peasant, and having caught hold of a piece of wood he threw it at the black hen. But in the same moment the hen flew up on to his shoulders and began to beat him as if with a cane, and at every blow she cried, “I am Rarash! Rarash! Rarash!”*

Afterwards some of the neighbours advised Palichka to sell all he had and remove from thence, as Rarash would, doubtless, remain in the house. The peasant readily seized this idea, and searched for a buyer; but no one would buy a house with a Rarash in it. Palichka, however, was determined to get rid of Rarash at any price. Accordingly he sold all his corn, cattle, and all that he did not absolutely want, bought a new hut in a neighbouring village, and removed there. Having arrived for the last time with a cart and loaded it with sheep troughs, household utensils, harrows, and other implements, he set his straw-covered hut on fire; it stood alone and could not hurt any other building.

* The brownie, or house-spirit.

Then he cracked his whip and was about to drive away ; before doing so, however, he looked once more at his hut as it was burning, and said,—

“ May you burn there, you unclean thing ! I am sure to get something for the land at least.”

“ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ” laughed somebody behind him on the cart. Palichka looked round, and on the handle of a scythe the black hen was sitting ; she flapped with her wings and began to sing,—

“ We shall remove from here, we shall not stop here ;
We shall not stop here, we shall go away from here ;
We shall not stop here, we shall remove from here ;
We shall remove from here, somewhere else we shall steal.”

Gossip Palichka felt like one thunderstruck. He really did not know what to do next. Then a thought occurred to him whether Rarash would not be persuaded to go away of his own accord if he would feed him well. Accordingly he asked his wife to give Rarash daily a dishful of fresh milk and three small loaves of wheaten bread. Rarash enjoyed this food immensely, and it did not seem at all likely that he would go away. One evening, as Palichka's servant boy returned home from the field, he saw on the steps of the hut the three small loaves which the wife had put there for Rarash. Being hungry the boy took up one of the loaves and ate it.

“It is better that I should eat this bread than that goblin,” he said to himself.

At that very moment Rarash jumped upon his back and screamed, “First loaf, second loaf! Vashek ate the third loaf!” And after every exclamation pecked him so dreadfully on the back that for a long time afterwards the boy had black and blue marks on his body. In the morning when Palichka got up and went to wake the boy he found him so dreadfully beaten that he could scarcely move. Having heard what had happened, Palichka went at once to Rarash and begged him to go away, as otherwise no man would be willing to serve in his house.

“Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Rarash, and said, “Take me there, where you brought me from, and I shall not trouble you any longer.”

The peasant at once put on his cloak and carried the hen back to the same pear-tree where he had found her. From that moment Rarash never troubled him any more.

II.

In a sheepfold at Libenice there was another Rarash, but there he was called Shetek. He looked like a little boy, only instead of nails he had claws on his fingers and toes. The farm labourers told many merry stories

about him. Shetek was very fond of teasing dogs, cats, and turkeys; he also did a great deal of mischief to the farm servants, and whenever they did anything which they did not like their master to know, he was sure to expose them afterwards. On that account, especially, the farm servants hated him very much; they were, however, afraid to do anything to him, because he would be sure to revenge himself; moreover, the master would not allow him to be hurt, as during the whole of the time that Shetek stopped in the sheepfold, not one of the sheep sickened.

In winter Shetek loved to sit on the top of the oven and warm himself, and when the young women brought into the room husks in pails in order to pour hot water over them, he used to jump down from the oven into the pail screaming, "Now for the husks!" But one day he burned himself dreadfully. One of the young women had filled her pail with boiling hot water, sprinkled some husks on the top of it, and then came into the room as usual. "Now for the husks!" cried Shetek, and jumped into the pail; but in a moment he was out again, screaming and writhing with pain. The servants laughed so loudly that the windows shook in their frames. Shetek never forgave the girl. One day, as she was walking over a ladder lying on the ground, he entangled her dress so much in it that the other servants

were obliged to come to the girl's assistance, and it was a long time before they could disengage her from the ladder.

In summer-time the farm servants used to sleep in the open air. One night Shetek came to them, and having half climbed up a ladder that was standing near, he began to tease the dogs that were sleeping in the yard. He lifted up now one of his legs, now another, and continually called out to them,—

“One leg,—two legs! which of them would you like to bite?”

The dogs barked at him and almost got mad with fury. The men, too, became very angry with him for disturbing them in their sleep; so one of them got up, took up a bundle of straw, threw it at Shetek and knocked him down with it from the ladder. The dogs received Shetek rather warmly, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he escaped from them. The man knew that Shetek was sure to revenge himself; he therefore was on his guard and tried to avoid him. All this precaution, however, did not help him in the least. One day, as he was watching a flock of sheep in the meadow, he sat down on the grass behind a heap of hay. Suddenly he heard a rustling noise near, and before he had time to see what it was, the whole heap of hay was thrown over him and entangled in his hair.

The man screamed for help, and the mowers ran to his assistance ; but do what they would they could not disentangle the hay from among the hair, they were so closely interwoven one with the other. The man was obliged to have his head shaved. When some time afterwards he drove the sheep into the meadow and came to a wild pear-tree, Shetek, who was sitting on the top of it, mocked him and laughed, "Ha ! ha ! ha !"

ALL ABOUT TWOPENCE.

(FROM THE SERVIAN.)

THERE lived once a poor man who endeavoured to get his living by various means. One day he filled up a bag with moss, put a little wool on the top of it, and then started to market to try to sell it all as wool. On the road he met another man who was also going to market and carrying a bag full of acorns, which he wished to sell as nuts, and the top of which he had, indeed, carefully covered with nuts. Upon mutual inquiry as to what each had in his bag, the first man said that he was carrying wool, and the second that he was carrying nuts to market for sale; hereupon they agreed to exchange their goods on the spot. The owner of the moss, however, demanded some money into the bargain, maintaining that wool was more valuable than nuts; but when he perceived that the owner of the acorns would

not give anything extra, but only wanted to exchange one thing for the other, he thought that, after all, nuts were better than moss. After bargaining for a long time, the man who had the acorns agreed to give the other an extra twopence; but as he had no money with him, he agreed to owe him that sum, and as a pledge that he would pay the debt faithfully, they entered into a bond of friendship. Having exchanged the bags, the men parted, each thinking that he had cheated the other, but when they had come home and removed the goods out of the bags, then they saw that, in reality, neither of them was cheated.

Some time afterwards the vendor of the moss went out in search of his confederate in order to get the twopence out of him, and having found him in the employment of a certain village parson, he addressed him thus: "Brother, you have cheated me." And the other answered: "And you, brother, have also cheated me." Then the first man demanded the twopence, saying, that it was only just to pay that which had been agreed upon, and strengthened by a bond of friendship. The other acknowledged the debt, but excused himself, saying, that he had no money wherewith to pay it; "however," he added, "behind my master's house there is a deep hole in the ground, down which he often goes, and in which, doubtless, he has hidden either some money

or some other valuable property. We will go there after dark, and you shall let me down into the hole; after I have ransacked it we will share the plunder, and then I will pay you your twopence. This proposition was accepted. In the evening the parson's servant took up a sack and a rope, and having come with his confederate to the hole, he got into the sack, and the confederate fastened the rope round his waist and let him down into the hole. When the man reached the bottom he came out of the sack. Having examined the hole and not finding anything but corn, he said to himself, "If I tell my brother that there is nothing in the hole, he is likely to go away and leave me here; what would my master say to-morrow if he were to find me in this hole?" He quickly got into the sack again, fastened the rope to it, and then called out to his confederate, "Brother, pull up the sack, it is full of various things."

As the man was pulling up the sack, he said to himself, "Why should I divide these things with my confederate? I had better take it myself, and he may come out of the hole as well as he can." Having lifted up the sack, with the confederate in it, he put it on his shoulders and hastened through the village; he was followed by a large number of dogs barking furiously. As he grew tired he allowed the sack to slip close to the ground, upon which the confederate in the sack called out,—

“Brother, pull up the sack, the dogs are biting me.”

When the man who carried the sack heard this, he threw it down on the ground. Then he in the sack said,—
“Thus, brother, you wanted to cheat me.” And the other answered,—“By heaven, you have again cheated me.” After a long dispute the man who owed the two-pence promised to pay them faithfully to the other whenever he would come again, and then they parted.

Some time afterwards the man who was in the service of the clergyman made himself a home and got married. One day as he was sitting with his wife before the hut, he observed his confederate walking directly towards it; then he said to his wife,—

“Wife, here comes my confederate; I owe him two-pence. Now, I do not know what to do, for I promised to pay them to him as soon as ever he found me out. I will go in, lie down on my back, and you must cover me up; then you must begin to cry and to lament, and tell him that I am dead; then, surely, he will go away.”

Having said this he went into the hut, lay on his back, and crossed his arms; his wife covered him up, and then began to lament. Meanwhile the confederate approached the hut, and wishing to the woman heaven’s blessing, asked her whether this was the house of So-and-so; the woman, writhing in agony on the ground, answered him,—



"THIS IS HIS HOUSE, AND HERE HE LIES DEAD IN IT."

[Page 260.]

“Yes, woe is me! This is his house, and here he lies dead in it.”

Then the confederate said, “Heaven have mercy upon his soul! He was my confederate. We have worked and transacted business together, and since I have found him in such a state, it is only right that I should stop and accompany him to his grave, and throw a handful of earth over his coffin.”

The woman told him that he would have to wait a long time for the funeral, and that he had better go away. But he answered,—

“Heaven forbid! How could I leave my former confederate like this? I will wait, be it even three days, until he is buried.”

When the woman whispered this to her husband in the hut, he told her to go to the clergyman, tell him that he was dead, and have him removed to the church in the cemetery; then, perhaps, his confederate would go away. The woman went to the clergyman and told him of her husband's death. The clergyman came up with some of his men, who put the pretended dead on a bier, carried him off and left him in the middle of the church, so that he might spend the night there according to custom, and then on the following day receive the benediction and be buried. When the clergyman with the other people were about to leave the church, the confederate said that he

could not leave his brother unguarded, with whom he had transacted business, and had eaten bread and salt, but that he would watch over him the whole night. Thus he remained in the church.

Now it happened that night that some robbers were passing near who had plundered a castle not far off, and had carried away a large sum of money, with quantities of clothes and arms. When the robbers approached the church and saw that there was a light in it, they said among themselves,—

“Let us go into this church and there divide our booty.”

The confederate, when he perceived that armed men had entered into the church, hid himself in a corner. The robbers sat down on the ground, divided the money with a helmet and the clothes and arms, as well as they could. They were perfectly satisfied with the division of all their plunder, with the exception of one sword, which all of them believed to be of a very great value. One of the robbers took it in his hand, rose up and said,—

“Wait a moment; I will try the sword on this dead person, whether it is really so good as you suppose. If I can cut off his head at one blow, then it is really good.”

Having said this, the robber approached the bier, but in the same moment the pretended dead jumped up and cried with a terrible voice,—

“Dead, where are you?”

And his confederate in the corner answered,—

“Here we are; all ready to fight.”

At the sound of these words, the robber who held the sword threw it down and fled; his companions left all their booty, which they had collected in heaps on the ground, jumped up and also fled away without daring to look behind. Having run away a long way off, the robbers stopped, and their captain cried out,—

“Stop! comrades, stop! We have walked over mountains and valleys, by day and by night; we have fought with men and attacked castles and palaces, and we have never been afraid so much of anybody as we have been this night of the dead. Is there not a brave man among us who would go and see what is going on in that church?”

Then one of the robbers said, “I won’t do it.” Another said, “I do not dare to do it.” “And I,” said a third, “would rather fight with ten living than one dead man.”

At last there was found one robber who said that he would go back. Having returned, he approached carefully to a window in the church in order to see what was taking place inside it. In the church, meantime, the confederates divided all the robbers’ money, clothes, and arms among themselves, but, in the end, could not agree about the twopence, and almost came to blows. All that

the robber could hear behind the window was,—

“Where is my twopence? Give me my twopence.”

Suddenly the man who owed the twopence observed the robber standing close by; in an instant he stretched out his arm through the window, pulled off the robber's cap, and, giving it to his confederate, said,—

“Confound your twopence! Take this instead of your twopence!”

The robber, terrified, fled away without daring to look behind, and, having reached his companions, he cried out half dead with fear,—

“Oh, comrades! Thank heaven that we have escaped alive from that dreadful place. We have divided the money among ourselves with the helmet, but there is risen such an enormous number of dead people that, when they had divided the money among themselves, there was scarcely left twopence for each of them. In fact, that was even wanting for one of them, so they pulled off my cap and gave it to him instead of the twopence!”

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