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THE SHOES OF FORTUNE

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THE SHOES OF FORTUNE,

ETC.



THE
SHOES OF FORTUNE,
AND OTHER TALES.

BY
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

WITH
FOUR DRAWINGS BY OTTO SPECKTER,
AND
OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186 STRAND.

MDCCCLXVII.



LONDON :
PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVY, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

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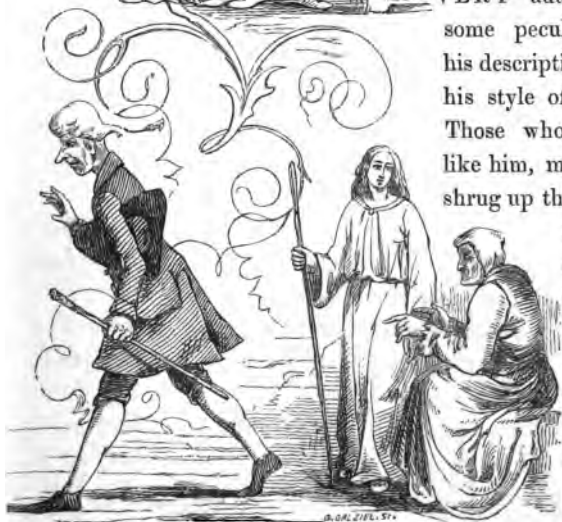
THE SHOES OF FORTUNE.



I.

A BEGINNING.

VERY author has some peculiarity in his descriptions or in his style of writing. Those who do not like him, magnify it, shrug up their shoulders, and exclaim—There he is again! —I, for my part, know very well how I can



bring about this movement and this exclamation. It would happen immediately if I were to begin here, as I intended to do, with: "Rome has its Corso, Naples its Toledo"—"Ah! that Andersen; there he is again!" they would cry; yet I must, to please my fancy, continue quite quietly, and add: "But Copenhagen has its East Street."

Here, then, we will stay for the present. In one of the houses not far from the new market a party was invited—a very large party, in order, as is often the case, to get a return invitation from the others. One half of the company was already seated at the card-table, the other half awaited the result of the stereotype preliminary observation of the lady of the house:

"Now let us see what we can do to amuse ourselves."

They had got just so far, and the conversation began to crystallise, as it could but do with the scanty stream which the commonplace world supplied. Amongst other things they spoke of the middle ages: some praised that period as far more interesting, far more poetical than our own too sober present; indeed Councillor Knap defended this opinion so warmly, that the hostess declared immediately on his side, and both exerted themselves with unwearied eloquence. The Councillor boldly declared the time of King Hans to be the noblest and the most happy period.¹

While the conversation turned on this subject, and was only for a moment interrupted by the arrival of a journal that contained nothing worth reading, we will

¹ A.D. 1482-1513.

just step out into the antechamber, where cloaks, mackintoshes, sticks, umbrellas, and shoes, were deposited. Here sat two female figures, a young and an old one. One might have thought at first they were servants come to accompany their mistresses home; but on looking nearer, one soon saw they could scarcely be mere servants; their forms were too noble for that, their skin too fine, the cut of their dress too striking. Two fairies were they; the younger, it is true, was not Dame Fortune herself, but one of the waiting-maids of her handmaidens who carry about the lesser good things that she distributes; the other looked extremely gloomy—it was Care. She always attends to her own serious business herself, as then she is sure of having it done properly.

They were telling each other, with a confidential interchange of ideas, where they had been during the day. The messenger of Fortune had only executed a few unimportant commissions, such as saving a new bonnet from a shower of rain, &c. &c.; but what she had yet to perform was something quite unusual.

“I must tell you,” said she, “that to-day is my birthday; and in honour of it, a pair of walking-shoes or galoshes has been entrusted to me, which I am to carry to mankind. These shoes possess the property of instantly transporting him who has them on to the place or the period in which he most wishes to be; every wish, as regards time or place, or state of being, will be immediately fulfilled, and so at last man will be happy here below.”

“Do you seriously believe it?” replied Care, in a se-

vere tone of reproach. "No; he will be very unhappy, and will assuredly bless the moment when he feels that he has freed himself from the fatal shoes."

"Stupid nonsense!" said the other, angrily. "I will put them here by the door. Some one will make a mistake for certain and take the wrong ones—he will be a happy man."

Such was their conversation.

II.

WHAT BEFEL THE COUNCILLOR.

It was late; Councillor Knap, deeply occupied with the times of King Hans, intended to go home, and malicious Fate managed matters so that his feet, instead of finding their way to his own galoshes, slipped into those of Fortune. Thus caparisoned the good man walked out of the well-lighted rooms into East Street. By the magic power of the shoes he was carried back to the times of King Hans; on which account his foot very naturally sank in the mud and puddles of the street, there having been in those days no pavement in Copenhagen.

"Well! this is too bad! How dirty it is here!" sighed the Councillor. "As to a pavement, I can find no traces of one, and all the lamps, it seems, have gone to sleep."

The moon was not yet very high; it was besides rather foggy, so that in the darkness all objects seemed mingled

in chaotic confusion. At the next corner hung a votive lamp before a Madonna, but the light it gave was little better than none at all; indeed, he did not observe it before he was exactly under it, and his eyes fell upon the bright colours of the picture which represented the well-known group of the Virgin and the infant Jesus.

"That is probably a wax-work show," thought he; "and the people delay taking down their sign in hopes of a late visitor or two."

A few persons in the costume of the time of King Hans passed quickly by him.

"How strange they look! The good folks come probably from a masquerade!"

Suddenly was heard the sound of drums and fifes; the bright blaze of a fire shot up from time to time, and its ruddy gleams seemed to contend with the bluish light of the torches. The Councillor stood still, and watched a most strange procession pass by. First came a dozen drummers, who understood pretty well how to handle their instruments; then came halberdiers, and some armed with cross-bows. The principal person in the procession was a priest. Astonished at what he saw, the Councillor asked what was the meaning of all this mummary, and who that man was.

"That's the Bishop of Zealand," was the answer.

"Good Heavens! what has taken possession of the Bishop?" sighed the Councillor, shaking his head. It certainly could not be the Bishop; even though he was considered the most absent man in the whole king-

dom, and people told the drollest anecdotes about him. Reflecting on the matter, and without looking right or left, the Councillor went through East Street and across the Håbro-Platz. The bridge leading to Palace Square was not to be found; scarcely trusting his senses, the nocturnal wanderer discovered a shallow piece of water, and here fell in with two men who very comfortably were rocking to and fro in a boat.

"Does your honour want to cross the ferry to the Holme?" asked they.

"Across to the Holme!" said the Councillor, who knew nothing of the age in which he at that moment was; "no, I am going to Christianshafen, to Little Market Street."

Both men stared at him in astonishment.

"Only just tell me where the bridge is," said he. "It is really unpardonable that there are no lamps here; and it is as dirty as if one had to wade through a morass."

The longer he spoke with the boatmen, the more unintelligible did their language become to him.

"I don't understand your Bornholmish dialect," said he at last, angrily, and turning his back upon them. He was unable to find the bridge: there was no railway either. "It is really disgraceful what a state this place is in," muttered he to himself. Never had his age, with which, however, he was always grumbling, seemed so miserable as on this evening. "I'll take a hackney-coach!" thought he. But where were the hackney-coaches? Not one was to be seen.

"I must go back to the New Market; there, it is to be

hoped, I shall find some coaches ; for if I don't, I shall never get safe to Christianshafen."

So off he went in the direction of East Street, and had nearly got to the end of it when the moon shone forth.

"God bless me! What wooden scaffolding is that which they have set up there?" cried he involuntarily; as he looked at East Gate, which, in those days, was at the end of East Street.

He found, however, a little side-door open, and through this he went, and stepped into our New Market of the present time. It was a huge desolate plain; some wild bushes stood up here and there, while across the field flowed a broad canal or river. Some wretched hovels for the Dutch sailors, resembling great boxes, and after which the place was named, lay about in confused disorder on the opposite bank.

"I either behold a *fata morgana*, or I am regularly tipsy," whimpered out the Councillor. "But what's this?"

He turned round anew, firmly convinced that he was seriously ill. He gazed at the street formerly so well known to him, and now so strange in appearance, and looked at the houses more attentively: most of them were of wood, slightly put together; and many had a thatched roof.

"No—I am far from well," sighed he; "and yet I drank only one glass of punch; but I cannot suppose it:—it was, too, really very wrong to give us punch and hot salmon for supper. I shall speak about it at the first

opportunity. I have half a mind to go back again, and say what I suffer. But no, that would be too silly; and Heaven only knows if they are up still."

He looked for the house, but it had vanished.

"It is really dreadful," groaned he with increasing anxiety; "I cannot recognise East Street again; there is not a single decent shop from one end to the other! Nothing but wretched huts can I see any where; just as if I were at Ringsted. Oh! I am ill! I can scarcely bear myself any longer. Where the deuce can the house be? It must be here on this very spot; yet there is not the slightest idea of resemblance, to such a degree has every thing changed this night!—At all events here are some people up and stirring. Oh! oh! I am certainly very ill!"

He now hit upon a half-open door, through a chink of which a faint light shone. It was a sort of hostelry of those times; a kind of public-house. The room had some resemblance to the clay-floored halls in Holstein; a pretty numerous company, consisting of seamen, Copenhagen burghers, and a few scholars, sat here in deep converse over their pewter cans, and gave little heed to the person who entered.

"By your leave!" said the Councillor to the Hostess, who came bustling towards him; "I've felt so queer all of a sudden; would you have the goodness to send for a hackney-coach to take me to Christianshafen?"

The woman examined him with eyes of astonishment, and shook her head; she then addressed him in German.

The Councillor thought she did not understand Danish, and therefore repeated his wish in German. This, in connection with his costume, strengthened the good woman in the belief that he was a foreigner. That he was ill, she comprehended directly; so she brought him a pitcher of water, which tasted certainly pretty strong of the sea, although it had been fetched from the well.

The Councillor supported his head on his hand, drew a long breath, and thought over all the wondrous things he saw around him.

"Is this the *Daily News* of this evening?" he asked mechanically, as he saw the Hostess push aside a large sheet of paper.

The meaning of this councillorship query remained, of course, a riddle to her, yet she handed him the paper without replying. It was a coarse wood-cut representing a splendid meteor "as seen in the town of Cologne," which was to be read below in bright letters.

"That is very old!" said the Councillor, whom this piece of antiquity began to make considerably more cheerful. "Pray how did you come into possession of this rare print? It is extremely interesting, although the whole is a mere fable. Such meteorous appearances are to be explained in this way;—that they are the reflections of the Aurora Borealis, and it is highly probable they are caused principally by electricity."

Those persons who were sitting nearest him and heard his speech, stared at him in wonderment; and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said with a serious

countenance, "You are no doubt a very learned man, Monsieur."

"Oh no," answered the Councillor, "I can only join in conversation on this topic and on that, as indeed one must do according to the demands of the world at present."

"*Modestia* is a fine virtue," continued the gentleman; "however, as to your speech I must say, *mihi secus videtur* : yet I am willing to suspend my *judicium*."

"May I ask with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?" asked the Councillor.

"I am a Bachelor in *Theologia*," answered the gentleman with a stiff reverence.

This reply fully satisfied the Councillor; the title suited the dress. "He is certainly," thought he, "some village schoolmaster,—some queer old fellow, such as one still often meets with in Jutland."

"This is no *locus docendi*, it is true," began the clerical gentleman; "yet I beg you earnestly to let us profit by your learning. Your reading in the ancients is, *sine dubio*, of vast extent?"

"Oh yes, I've read a something, to be sure," replied the Councillor. "I like reading all useful works; but I do not on that account despise the modern ones; 'tis only the unfortunate 'Tales of Every-day Life' that I cannot bear—we have enough and more than enough such in reality."

"Tales of Every-day Life?" said our Bachelor inquiringly.

"I mean those new-fangled novels, twisting and writh-

ing themselves in the dust of commonplace, which also expect to find a reading public."

"Oh," exclaimed the clerical gentleman smiling, "there is much wit in them; besides they are read at court. The King likes the history of Sir Iffven and Sir Gaudian particularly, which treats of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table; he has more than once joked about it with his high vassals."

"I have not read that novel," said the Councillor; "it must be quite a new one, that Heiberg has published lately."

"No," answered the theologian of the time of King Hans; "that book is not written by a Heiberg, but was imprinted by Godfrey von Gehmen."

"Oh, is that the author's name?" said the Councillor. "It is a very old name; and, as well as I recollect, he was the first printer that appeared in Denmark."

"Yes, he is our first printer," replied the clerical gentleman hastily.

So far all went on well. Some one of the worthy burghers now spoke of the dreadful pestilence that had raged in the country a few years back, meaning that of 1484. The Councillor imagined it was the cholera that was meant, which people made so much fuss about; and the discourse passed off satisfactorily enough. The war of the buccaneers of 1490 was so recent that it could not fail being alluded to; the English pirates had, they said, most shamefully taken their ships while in the roadstead; and the Councillor, before whose eyes the Herostratic¹ event of

¹ Herostratus, or Eratostratus,—an Ephesian who wantonly set

1801 still floated vividly, agreed entirely with the others in abusing the rascally English. With other topics he was not so fortunate; every moment brought about some new confusion, and threatened to become a perfect Babel; for the worthy Bachelor was really too ignorant, and the simplest observations of the Councillor sounded to him too daring and phantastical. They looked at one another from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet; and when matters grew to too high a pitch, then the Bachelor talked Latin, in the hope of being better understood—but it was of no use, after all.

“What’s the matter?” asked the Hostess, plucking the Councillor by the sleeve; and now his recollection returned, for in the course of the conversation he had entirely forgotten all that had preceded it.

“Merciful God, where am I!” exclaimed he in agony; and while he so thought, all his ideas and feelings of overpowering dizziness, against which he struggled with the utmost power of desperation, encompassed him with renewed force. “Let us drink claret, and mead, and Bremen beer,” shouted one of the guests—“and you shall drink with us!”

Two maidens approached. One wore a cap of two staring colours, denoting the class of persons to which she belonged. They poured out the liquor, and made the most friendly gesticulations; while a cold perspiration trickled down the back of the poor Councillor.

fire to the famous temple of Diana, in order to commemorate his name by so uncommon an action.

"What's to be the end of this! What's to become of me!" groaned he; but he was forced, in spite of his opposition, to drink with the rest. They took hold of the worthy man; who, hearing on every side that he was intoxicated, did not in the least doubt the truth of this certainly not very polite assertion; but on the contrary implored the ladies and gentlemen present to procure him a hackney-coach: they, however, imagined he was talking Russian.

Never before, he thought, had he been in such a coarse and ignorant company; one might almost fancy the people had turned heathens again. "It is the most dreadful moment of my life: the whole world is leagued against me!" But suddenly it occurred to him that he might stoop down under the table, and then creep unobserved out of the door. He did so; but just as he was going, the others remarked what he was about; they laid hold of him by the legs; and now, happily for him, off fell his fatal shoes—and with them the charm was at an end.

The Councillor saw quite distinctly before him a lantern burning, and behind this a large handsome house. All seemed to him in proper order as usual; it was East Street, splendid and elegant as we now see it. He lay with his feet towards a doorway, and exactly opposite sat the watchman asleep.

"Gracious Heaven!" said he, "have I lain here in the street and dreamed? Yes; 'tis East Street! how splendid and light it is! But really it is terrible what an effect that one glass of punch must have had on me!"

Two minutes later, he was sitting in a hackney-coach

and driving to Frederickshafen. He thought of the distress and agony he had endured, and praised from the very bottom of his heart the happy reality—our own time—which, with all its deficiencies, is yet much better than that in which, so much against his inclination, he had lately been.

III.

THE WATCHMAN'S ADVENTURE.

"WHY, there is a pair of galoshes, as sure as I'm alive!" said the watchman, awaking from a gentle slumber. "They belong no doubt to the lieutenant who lives over the way. They lie close to the door."

The worthy man was inclined to ring and deliver them at the house, for there was still a light in the window; but he did not like disturbing the other people in their beds, and so very considerably he left the matter alone.

"Such a pair of shoes must be very warm and comfortable," said he; "the leather is so soft and supple." They fitted his feet as though they had been made for him. "'Tis a curious world we live in," continued he, soliloquising. "There is the lieutenant, now, who might go quietly to bed if he chose, where no doubt he could stretch himself at his ease; but does he do it? No; he saunters up and down his room, because, probably, he has enjoyed too many of the good things of this world at his dinner. That's a happy fellow! he has neither an infirm mother, nor a whole troop of everlastingly

hungry children to torment him. Every evening he goes to a party, where his nice supper costs him nothing : would to God I could but change with him ! how happy should I be !”

While expressing his wish, the charm of the shoes, which he had put on, began to work ; the watchman entered into the being and nature of the lieutenant. He stood in the handsomely furnished apartment, and held between his fingers a small sheet of rose-coloured paper on which some verses were written,—written indeed by the officer himself ; for who has not, at least once in his life, had a lyrical moment ? and if one then marks down one's thoughts, poetry is produced. But here was written :

OH, WERE I RICH !

“ Oh, were I rich !” Such was my wish, yea such
When hardly three feet high, I longed for much.

Oh, were I rich ! an officer were I,
With sword and uniform and plume so high.

And the time came—and officer was I !
But yet I grew not rich. Alas, poor me !
Have pity Thou, who all man's wants dost see.

I sat one evening sunk in dreams of bliss,
A maid of seven years old gave me a kiss.
I at that time was rich in poesy
And tales of old, though poor as poor could be ;
But all she asked for was this poesy.
Then was I rich, but not in gold, poor me !
As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

Oh, were I rich ! Oft ask I for this boon.
The child grew up to womanhood full soon.

She is so pretty, clever, and so kind;
 Oh, did she know what's hidden in my mind ;—
 A tale of old. Would she to me were kind !
 But I'm condemned to silence ; oh, poor me !
 As Thou dost know, who all men's hearts canst see.

 Oh, were I rich in calm and peace of mind,
 My grief you then would not here written find !
 O thou, to whom I do my heart devote,
 Oh read this page of glad days now remote,
 A dark, dark tale, which I to night devote !
 Dark is the future now. Alas, poor me !
 Have pity Thou, who all men's pains dost see.

Such verses as these people write when they are in love! but no man in his senses ever thinks of printing them. Here one of the sorrows of life, in which there is real poetry, gave itself vent; not that barren grief which the poet may only hint at, but never depict in its detail—misery and want: that animal necessity, in short, to snatch at least at a fallen leaf of the bread-fruit tree, if not at the fruit itself. The higher the position in which one finds oneself transplanted, the greater is the suffering. Every-day necessity is the stagnant pool of life—no lovely picture reflects itself therein. Lieutenant, love, and lack of money—that is a symbolic triangle, or much the same as the half of the shattered die of Fortune. This the lieutenant felt most poignantly, and this was the reason he leant his head against the window, and sighed so deeply. ¶

“The poor watchman out there in the street is far happier than I. He knows not what I term privation. He has a home, a wife, and children, who weep with

him over his sorrows, who rejoice with him when he is glad. Oh, far happier were I, could I exchange with him my being—with his desires and with his hopes perform the weary pilgrimage of life! oh, he is a hundred times happier than I!”

In the same moment the watchman was again watchman. It was the shoes that caused the metamorphosis by means of which, unknown to himself, he took upon him the thoughts and feelings of the officer; but, as we have just seen, he felt himself in his new situation much less contented, and now preferred the very thing which but some minutes before he had rejected. So then the watchman was again watchman.

“That was an unpleasant dream,” said he; “but ’twas droll enough altogether. I fancied that I was the lieutenant over there; and yet the thing was not very much to my taste after all. I missed my good old mother and the dear little ones, who almost tear me to pieces for sheer love.”

He seated himself once more and nodded: the dream continued to haunt him, for he still had the shoes on his feet. A falling star shone in the dark firmament.

“There falls another star,” said he: “but what does it matter; there are always enough left. I should not much mind examining the little glimmering things somewhat nearer, especially the moon; for that would not slip so easily through a man’s fingers. When we die—so at least says the student, for whom my wife does the washing—we shall fly about as light as a feather from one such star to

the other. That's, of course, not true; but 'twould be pretty enough if it were so. If I could but once take a leap up there, my body might stay here on the steps for what I care."

Behold!—there are certain things in the world to which one ought never to give utterance, except with the greatest caution; but doubly careful must one be when we have the Shoes of Fortune on our feet. Now just listen to what happened to the watchman.

As to ourselves, we all know the speed produced by the employment of steam; we have experienced it either on railroads, or in boats when crossing the sea; but such a flight is like the travelling of a sloth in comparison with the velocity with which light moves. It flies nineteen million times faster than the best race-horse; and yet electricity is quicker still. Death is an electric shock which our heart receives; the freed soul soars upwards on the wings of electricity. The sun's light wants eight minutes and some seconds to perform a journey of more than twenty million of our Danish¹ miles; borne by electricity, the soul wants even some minutes less to accomplish the same flight. To it the space between the heavenly bodies is not greater than the distance between the homes of our friends in town is for us, even if they live a short way from each other; such an electric shock in the heart, however, costs us the use of the body here below; unless, like the watchman of East Street, we happen to have on the Shoes of Fortune.

¹ A Danish mile is nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ English.

In a few seconds the watchman had done the 52,000 of our miles up to the moon, which, as every one knows, was formed out of matter much lighter than our earth; and is, so we should say, as soft as newly-fallen snow. He found himself on one of the many circumjacent mountain-ridges with which we are acquainted by means of Dr. Mädler's "Map of the Moon." Within, down it sunk perpendicularly into a caldron, about a Danish mile in depth; while below lay a town, whose appearance we can, in some measure, realise to ourselves by beating the white of an egg in a glass of water. The matter of which it was built was just as soft, and formed similar towers, and domes, and pillars, transparent and rocking in the thin air; while above his head our earth was rolling like a large fiery ball.

He perceived immediately a quantity of beings who were certainly what we call "men;" yet they looked different to us. A far more correct imagination than that of the pseudo-Herschel¹ had created them; and if they had been placed in rank and file, and copied by some skilful painter's hand, one would, without doubt, have exclaimed involuntarily, "What a beautiful arabesque!" They had a language too; but surely nobody can expect that the soul of the watchman should understand it. Be that as it may, it did comprehend it; for in our souls there germinate far greater powers than we poor mortals, despite all our clever-

¹ This relates to a book published some years ago in Germany, and said to be by Herschel, which contained a description of the moon and his inhabitants, written with such a semblance of truth that many were deceived by the imposture.—C. B.

ness, have any notion of. Does she not shew us—she the queen in the land of enchantment—her astounding dramatic talent in all our dreams? There every acquaintance appears and speaks upon the stage, so entirely in character, and with the same tone of voice, that none of us, when awake, were able to imitate it. How well can she recall persons to our mind, of whom we have not thought for years; when suddenly they step forth “every inch a man,” resembling the real personages, even to the finest features, and become the heroes or heroines of our world of dreams. In reality such remembrances are rather unpleasant: every sin, every evil thought, may, like a clock with alarm or chimes; be repeated at pleasure; then the question is, if we can trust ourselves to give an account of every unbecoming word in our heart and on our lips.

The watchman's spirit understood the language of the inhabitants of the moon pretty well. The Selenites¹ disputed variously about our earth, and expressed their doubts if it could be inhabited: the air, they said, must certainly be too dense to allow any rational dweller in the moon the necessary free respiration. They considered the moon alone to be inhabited; they imagined it was the real heart of the universe or planetary system, on which the genuine Cosmopolites, or citizens of the world, dwelt. What strange things men—no, what strange things Selenites sometimes take into their heads!

About politics they had a good deal to say. But little Denmark must take care what it is about, and not run

¹ Dwellers in the moon.

counter to the moon ; that great realm, that might in an ill-humour bestir itself, and dash down a hail-storm in our faces, or force the Baltic to overflow the sides of its gigantic basin.

We will, therefore, not listen to what was spoken, and on no condition run the possibility of telling tales out of school ; but we will rather proceed, like good quiet citizens, to East Street, and observe what happened meanwhile to the body of the watchman.

He sat lifeless on the steps ; the morning-star,¹ that is to say, the heavy wooden staff, headed with iron spikes, and which had nothing else in common with its sparkling brother in the sky, had glided from his hand ; while his eyes were fixed with glassy stare on the moon, looking for the good old fellow of a spirit which still haunted it.

“ What’s the hour, watchman ? ” asked a passer-by. But when the watchman gave no reply, the merry roysterer, who was now returning home from a noisy drinking bout, took it into his head to try what a tweak of the nose would do, on which the supposed sleeper lost his balance, the body lay motionless, stretched out on the pavement : the man was dead. When the patrol came up, all his comrades, who comprehended nothing of the whole affair, were seized with a dreadful fright ; for dead he was, and he remained so. The proper authorities were informed of the

¹ The watchmen in Germany had formerly, and in some places they still carry with them on their rounds at night, a sort of mace or club, known in ancient times by the above denomination.—C. B.

circumstance, people talked a good deal about it, and in the morning the body was carried to the hospital.

Now that would be a very pretty joke, if the spirit when it came back and looked for the body in East Street, were not to find one. No doubt it would, in its anxiety, run off to the police, and then to the "*Hue and Cry*" office, to announce that "the finder will be handsomely rewarded," and at last away to the hospital; yet we may boldly assert that the soul is shrewdest when it shakes off every fetter, and every sort of leading-string,—the body only makes it stupid.

The seemingly dead body of the watchman wandered, as we have said, to the hospital, where it was brought into the general viewing-room; and the first thing that was done here was naturally to pull off the galoshes—when the spirit, that was merely gone out on adventures, must have returned with the quickness of lightning to its earthly tenement. It took its direction towards the body in a straight line; and a few seconds after, life began to shew itself in the man. He asserted that the preceding night had been the worst that ever the malice of fate had allotted him; he would not for two silver marks again go through what he had endured while moon-stricken; but now, however, it was over.

The same day he was discharged from the hospital as perfectly cured; but the Shoes meanwhile remained behind.

IV.

A MOMENT OF HEAD IMPORTANCE—AN EVENING'S
“DRAMATIC READINGS”—A MOST STRANGE JOURNEY.

EVERY inhabitant of Copenhagen knows, from personal inspection, how the entrance to “Frederick’s Hospital” looks; but as it is possible that others, who are not Copenhagen people, may also read this little work, we will beforehand give a short description of it.

The extensive building is separated from the street by a pretty high railing, the thick iron bars of which are so far apart, that in all seriousness, it is said, some very thin fellow had of a night occasionally squeezed himself through to go and pay his little visits in the town. The part of the body most difficult to manage on such occasions was, no doubt, the head; here, as is so often the case in the world, long-headed people get through best. So much then for the introduction.

One of the young men, whose head, in a physical sense only, might be said to be of the thickest, had the watch that evening. The rain poured down in torrents; yet despite these two obstacles, the young man was obliged to go out, if it were but for a quarter of an hour; and as to telling the door-keeper about it, that, he thought, was quite unnecessary, if, with a whole skin, he were able to slip through the railings. There, on the floor, lay the galoshes, which the watchman had forgotten; he never dreamed for a moment that they were those of Fortune;

and they promised to do him good service in the wet; so he put them on. The question now was, if he could squeeze himself through the grating, for he had never tried before. Well, there he stood.

"Would to God I had got my head through!" said he involuntarily; and instantly through it slipped, easily and without pain, notwithstanding it was pretty large and thick. But now the rest of the body was to be got through!

"Ah! I am much too stout," groaned he aloud, while fixed as in a vice; "I had thought the head was the most difficult part of the matter—oh! oh! I really cannot squeeze myself through!"

He now wanted to pull his over-hasty head back again, but he could not. For his neck there was room enough, but for nothing more. His first feeling was of anger; his next that his temper fell to zero. The Shoes of Fortune had placed him in the most dreadful situation; and, unfortunately, it never occurred to him to wish himself free. The pitch-black clouds poured down their contents in still heavier torrents; not a creature was to be seen in the streets. To reach up to the bell was what he did not like; to cry aloud for help would have availed him little; besides, how ashamed would he have been to be found caught in a trap, like an outwitted fox! How was he to twist himself through! He saw clearly that it was his irrevocable destiny to remain a prisoner till dawn, or, perhaps, even till late in the morning; then the smith must be fetched to file away the bars; but all that would not be done so quickly as he could think

about it. The whole Charity School, just opposite, would be in motion; all the new booths, with their not very courtier-like swarm of seamen, would join them out of curiosity, and would greet him with a wild "hurrah!" while he was standing in his pillory: there would be a mob, a hissing, and rejoicing, and jeering, ten times worse than in the rows about the Jews some years ago—"Oh, my blood is mounting to my brain; 'tis enough to drive one mad! I shall go wild! I know not what to do. Oh! were I but loose; my dizziness would then cease; oh, were my head but loose!"

You see he ought to have said that sooner; for the moment he expressed the wish his head was free; and, cured of all his paroxysms of love, he hastened off to his room, where the pains consequent on the fright the Shoes had prepared for him did not so soon take their leave.

But you must not think that the affair is over now; it grows much worse.

The night passed, the next day also; but nobody came to fetch the Shoes.

In the evening "Dramatic Readings" were to be given at the little theatre in King Street. The house was filled to suffocation; and among other pieces to be recited was a new poem by H. C. Andersen, called *My Aunt's Spectacles*; the contents of which were pretty nearly as follows: "A certain person had an aunt, who boasted of particular skill in fortune-telling with cards, and who was constantly being stormed by persons that wanted to have a peep into futurity. But she was full of mystery about

her art, in which a certain pair of magic-spectacles did her essential service. Her nephew, a merry boy, who was his aunt's darling, begged so long for these spectacles, that, at last, she lent him the treasure, after having informed him, with many exhortations, that in order to execute the interesting trick, he need only repair to some place where a great many persons were assembled; and then, from a higher position, whence he could overlook the crowd, pass the company in review before him through his spectacles. Immediately 'the inner man' of each individual would be displayed before him, like a game of cards, in which he unerringly might read what the future of every person present was to be. Well pleased, the little magician hastened away to prove the powers of the spectacles in the theatre; no place seeming to him more fitted for such a trial. He begged permission of the worthy audience, and set his spectacles on his nose. A motley phantasmagoria presents itself before him, which he describes in a few satirical touches, yet without expressing his opinion openly: he tells the people enough to set them all thinking and guessing; but in order to hurt nobody, he wraps his witty oracular judgments in a transparent veil, or rather in a lurid thunder-cloud, shooting forth bright sparks of wit, that they may fall in the powder-magazine of the expectant audience."

The humorous poem was admirably recited, and the speaker much applauded. Among the audience was the young man of the hospital, who seemed to have forgotten

his adventure of the preceding night. He had on the Shoes; for as yet no lawful owner had appeared to claim them; and besides it was so very dirty out of doors, they were just the thing for him, he thought.

The beginning of the poem he praised with great generosity; he even found the idea original and effective. But that the end of it, like the Rhine, was very insignificant, proved, in his opinion, the author's want of invention; he was without genius, &c. &c. &c. This was an excellent opportunity to have said something clever.

Meanwhile he was haunted by the idea,—he should like to possess such a pair of spectacles himself; then, perhaps, by using them circumspectly, one would be able to look into people's hearts, which, he thought, would be far more interesting than merely to see what was to happen next year; for that we should all know in proper time, but the other never.

"I can now," said he to himself, "fancy the whole row of ladies and gentlemen sitting there in the front row; if one could but see into their hearts;—yes, that would be a revelation—a sort of bazaar. In that lady yonder, so strangely dressed, I should find for certain a large milliner's shop; in that one the shop is empty, but it wants cleaning plain enough. But there would also be some good stately shops among them. Alas!" sighed he; "I know one in which all is stately; but there sits already a spruce young shopman, which is the only thing that's amiss in the whole shop. All would be splendidly decked out, and we should hear, 'Walk in,

gentlemen, pray walk in; here you will find all you please to want.' Ah! I wish to Heaven I could walk in and take a trip right through the hearts of those present!"

And behold! to the Shoes of Fortune this was the cue; the whole man shrunk together, and a most uncommon journey through the hearts of the front row of spectators now began. The first heart through which he came was that of a middle-aged lady, but he instantly fancied himself in the room of the "Institution for the cure of the crooked and deformed," where casts of misshapen limbs are displayed in naked reality on the wall. Yet there was this difference, in the institution the casts were taken at the entry of the patient; but here they were retained and guarded in the heart while the sound persons went away. They were, namely, casts of female friends, whose bodily or mental deformities were here most faithfully preserved.

With the snake-like writhings of an idea he glided into another female heart; but this seemed to him like a large holy fane. The white dove of innocence fluttered over the altar. How gladly would he have sunk upon his knees; but he must away to the next heart; yet he still heard the pealing tones of the organ, and he himself seemed to have become a newer and a better man; he felt unworthy to tread the neighbouring sanctuary which a poor garret, with a sick bed-ridden mother, revealed. But God's warm sun streamed through the open window; lovely roses nodded from the wooden flower-boxes on the roof, and

two sky-blue birds sang rejoicingly, while the sick mother implored God's richest blessings on her pious daughter.

He now crept on hands and feet through a butcher's shop; at least on every side, and above and below, there was nought but flesh. It was the heart of a most respectable rich man, whose name is certain to be found in the Directory.

He was now in the heart of the wife of this worthy gentleman. It was an old, dilapidated, mouldering dove-cot. The husband's portrait was used as a weather-cock, which was connected in some way or other with the doors, and so they opened and shut of their own accord, whenever the stern old husband turned round.

Hereupon he wandered into a boudoir formed entirely of mirrors, like the one in Castle Rosenberg; but here the glasses magnified to an astonishing degree. On the floor, in the middle of the room, sat, like a Dalai-Lama, the insignificant "Self" of the person, quite confounded at his own greatness. He then imagined he had got into a needle-case full of pointed needles of every size.

"This is certainly the heart of an old maid," thought he. But he was mistaken. It was the heart of a young military man; a man, as people said, of talent and feeling.

In the greatest perplexity he now came out of the last heart in the row; he was unable to put his thoughts in order, and fancied that his too lively imagination had run away with him.

"Good God!" sighed he; "I have surely a disposition to madness—'tis dreadfully hot here; my blood boils

in my veins, and my head is burning like a coal." And he now remembered the important event of the evening before, how his head had got jammed in between the iron railings of the hospital. "That's what it is, no doubt," said he. "I must do something in time: under such circumstances a Russian bath might do me good. I only wish I were already on the upper bank."¹

And so there he lay on the uppermost bank in the vapour-bath; but with all his clothes on, in his boots and galoshes, while the hot drops fell scalding from the ceiling on his face.

"Holla!" cried he, leaping down. The bathing attendant, on his side, uttered a loud cry of astonishment when he beheld in the bath a man completely dressed.

The other, however, retained sufficient presence of mind to whisper to him, "'Tis a bet, and I have won it!" But the first thing he did as soon as he got home was to have a large blister put on his chest and back to draw out his madness.

The next morning he had a sore chest and a bleeding back; and, excepting the fright, that was all that he had gained by the Shoes of Fortune.

¹ In these Russian (vapour) baths the person extends himself on a bank or form, and as he gets accustomed to the heat, moves to another higher up towards the ceiling, where, of course, the vapour is warmest. In this manner he ascends gradually to the highest.

V.

THE METAMORPHOSIS OF THE COPYING-CLERK.

THE watchman, whom we have certainly not forgotten, thought meanwhile of the galoshes he had found and taken with him to the hospital; he now went to fetch them; and as neither the lieutenant, nor any body else in the street, claimed them as his property, they were delivered over to the police-office.¹

"Why, I declare the Shoes look just like my own," said one of the clerks, eyeing the newly found treasure, whose hidden powers even he, sharp as he was, was not able to discover. "One must have more than the eye of a shoemaker to know one pair from the other," said he, soliloquising; and putting, at the same time, the galoshes in search of an owner beside his own in the corner.

"Here, sir!" said one of the men, who panting brought him a tremendous pile of papers.

The copying-clerk turned round and spoke awhile with the man about the reports and legal documents in question; but when he had finished, and his eye fell again on the Shoes, he was unable to say whether those to the left or those to the right belonged to him. "At all

¹ As on the continent in all law and police practices nothing is verbal, but any circumstance, however trifling, is reduced to writing, the labour, as well as the number of papers that thus accumulate, is enormous. In a police-office, consequently, we find copying-clerks among many other scribes of various denominations, of which, it seems, our hero was one.

events it must be those which are wet," thought he; but this time, in spite of his cleverness, he guessed quite wrong, for it was just those of Fortune which played as it were into his hands, or rather on his feet. And why, I should like to know, are the police never to be wrong? So he put them on quickly, stuck his papers in his pocket, and took besides a few under his arm, intending to look them through at home to make the necessary notes. It was noon; and the weather, that had threatened rain, began to clear up, while gaily-dressed holiday folks filled the streets. "A little trip to Fredericksburg would do me no great harm," thought he; "for I, poor beast of burden that I am, have so much to annoy me, that I don't know what a good appetite is. 'Tis a bitter crust, alas! at which I am condemned to gnaw!"

Nobody could be more steady or quiet than this young man; we therefore wish him joy of the excursion with all our heart; and it will certainly be beneficial for a person who leads so sedentary a life. In the park he met a friend, one of our young poets, who told him that the following day he should set out on his long-intended tour.

"So you are going away again!" said the clerk. "You are a very free and happy being; we others are chained by the leg and held fast to our desk."

"Yes; but it is a chain, friend, which ensures you the blessed bread of existence," answered the poet. "You need feel no care for the coming morrow; when you are old, you receive a pension."

"True," said the clerk, shrugging his shoulders; "and yet you are the better off. To sit at one's ease and poetise—that is a pleasure; every body has something agreeable to say to you, and you are always your own master. No, friend, you should but try what it is to sit from one year's end to the other occupied with and judging the most trivial matters."

The poet shook his head, the copying-clerk did the same. Each one kept to his own opinion, and so they separated.

"It's a strange race, those poets!" said the clerk, who was very fond of soliloquising. "I should like some day, just for a trial, to take such nature upon me, and be a poet myself: I am very sure I should make no such miserable verses as the others. To-day, methinks, is a most delicious day for a poet: Nature seems anew to celebrate her awakening into life. The air is so unusually clear, the clouds sail on so buoyantly, and from the green herbage a fragrance is exhaled that fills me with delight. For many many a year have I not felt as at this moment."

We see already, by the foregoing effusion, that he is become a poet; to give further proof of it, however, would in most cases be insipid, for it is a most foolish notion to fancy a poet different from other men. Among the latter there may be far more poetical natures than many an acknowledged poet, when examined more closely, could boast of; the difference only is, that the poet possesses a better mental memory, on which account he is able to retain the feeling and the thought till they can be embodied by

means of words; a faculty which the others do not possess. But the transition from a commonplace nature to one that is richly endowed demands always a more or less break-neck leap over a certain abyss which yawns threateningly below; and thus must the sudden change with the clerk strike the reader.

"The sweet air!" continued he of the police-office, in his dreamy imaginings; "how it reminds me of the violets in the garden of my aunt Magdalena! Yes, then I was a little wild boy, who did not go to school very regularly. O heavens! 'tis a long time since I have thought on those times. The good old soul! She lived behind the Exchange. She always had a few twigs or green shoots in water—let the winter rage without as it might. The violets exhaled their sweet breath, whilst I pressed against the window-panes covered with fantastic frost-work the copper coin I had heated on the stove, and so made peep-holes. What splendid vistas were then opened to my view! What change—what magnificence! Yonder in the canal lay the ships frozen up, and deserted by their whole crews, with a screaming crow for the sole occupant. But when the spring, with a gentle stirring motion, announced her arrival, a new and busy life arose; with songs and hurrahs the ice was sawed asunder, the ships were fresh tarred and rigged, that they might sail away to distant lands. But I have remained here—must always remain here, sitting at my desk in the office, and patiently see other people fetch their passports to go abroad. Such is my fate! Alas!"—sighed he, and was again silent. "Great heaven! what is

come to me! never have I thought or felt like this before! It must be the summer-air that affects me with feelings almost as disquieting as they are refreshing." He felt in his pocket for the papers. "These police-reports will soon stem the torrent of my ideas, and effectually hinder any rebellious overflowing of the time-worn banks of official duties;" he said to himself consolingly, while his eye ran over the first page. "DAME TIGBRITH, tragedy in five acts." "What is that? And yet it is undeniably my own handwriting. Have I written the tragedy? Wonderful, very wonderful!—And this—what have I here? 'INTRIGUE ON THE RAMPARTS; OR, THE DAY OF REPENTANCE: vaudeville with new songs to the most favourite airs.' The deuce! where did I get all this rubbish? Some one must have slipped it slyly into my pocket for a joke. There is too a letter to me; a crumpled letter and the seal broken."

Yes, it was a not very polite epistle from the manager of a theatre, in which both pieces were flatly refused.

"Hem! hem!" said the clerk breathlessly, and quite exhausted he seated himself on a bank. His thoughts were so elastic, his heart so tender; and involuntarily he picked one of the nearest flowers. It is a simple daisy, just bursting out of the bud. What the botanist tells us after a number of imperfect lectures, the flower proclaimed in a minute. It related the mythus of its birth, told of the power of the sun-light that spread out its delicate leaves, and forced them to impregnate the air with their incense;—and then he thought of the manifold struggles of life,

which in like manner awaken the budding flowers of feeling in our bosom. Light and air contend with chivalric emulation for the love of the fair flower that bestowed her chief favours on the latter; full of longing she turned towards the light, and as soon as it vanished, rolled her tender leaves together and slept in the embraces of the air. "It is the light which adorns me," said the flower. "But 'tis the air which enables thee to breathe," said the poet's voice.

Close by stood a boy who dashed his stick into a wet ditch. The drops of water splashed up to the green leafy roof, and the clerk thought of the million of ephemera which in a single drop were thrown up to a height, that was as great doubtless for their size, as for us if we were to be hurled above the clouds. While he thought of this and of the whole metamorphosis he had undergone, he smiled and said, "I sleep and dream; but it is wonderful how one can dream so naturally, and know besides so exactly that it is but a dream. If only to-morrow on awaking, I could again call all to mind so vividly! I seem in unusually good spirits; my perception of things is clear, I feel as light and cheerful as though I were in heaven; but I know for a certainty, that if to-morrow a dim remembrance of it should swim before my mind, it then will seem nothing but stupid nonsense, as I have often experienced already—especially before I enlisted under the banner of the police, for that dispels like a whirlwind all the visions of an unfettered imagination. All we hear or say in a dream that is fair and beautiful is like the gold of the subterranean

spirits ; it is rich and splendid when it is given us, but viewed by daylight we find only withered leaves. Alas !” he sighed quite sorrowful, and gazed at the chirping birds that hopped contentedly from branch to branch, “they are much better off than I ! To fly must be a heavenly art ; and happy do I prize that creature in which it is innate. Yes ! could I exchange my nature with any other creature, I fain would be such a happy little lark !”

He had hardly uttered these hasty words when the skirts and sleeves of his coat folded themselves together into wings ; the clothes became feathers, and the galoshes claws. He observed it perfectly, and laughed in his heart. “Now then, there is no doubt that I am dreaming ; but I never before was aware of such mad freaks as these.” And up he flew into the green roof and sang ; but in the song there was no poetry, for the spirit of the poet was gone. The Shoes, as is the case with anybody who does what he has to do properly, could only attend to one thing at a time. He wanted to be a poet, and he was one ; he now wished to be a merry chirping bird ; but when he was metamorphosed into one, the former peculiarities ceased immediately. “It is really pleasant enough,” said he : “the whole day long I sit in the office amid the driest law-papers, and at night I fly in my dream as a lark in the gardens of Fredericksburg ; one might really write a very pretty comedy upon it.” He now fluttered down into the grass, turned his head gracefully on every side, and with his bill pecked the pliant blades of grass, which, in comparison to his present size,

seemed as majestic as the palm-branches of northern Africa.

Unfortunately the pleasure lasted but a moment. Presently black night overshadowed our enthusiast, who had so entirely missed his part of copying-clerk at a police-office; some vast object seemed to be thrown over him. It was a large oil-skin cap, which a sailor-boy of the quay had thrown over the struggling bird; a coarse hand sought its way carefully in under the broad rim, and seized the clerk over the back and wings. In the first moment of fear, he called, indeed, as loud as he could—"You impudent little blackguard! I am a copying-clerk at the police-office; and you know you cannot insult any belonging to the constabulary force without a chastisement. Besides, you good-for-nothing rascal, it is strictly forbidden to catch birds in the royal gardens of Fredericksburg; but your blue uniform betrays where you come from." This fine tirade sounded, however, to the ungodly sailor-boy like a mere "Pip-pi-pi." He gave the noisy bird a knock on his beak, and walked on.

He was soon met by two schoolboys of the upper class,—that is to say as individuals, for with regard to learning they were in the lowest class in the school; and they bought the stupid bird. So the copying-clerk came to Copenhagen as guest, or rather as prisoner, in a family living in Gother Street.

"'Tis well that I'm dreaming," said the clerk, "or I really should get angry. First, I was a poet; now sold for a few pence as a lark; no doubt it was that accursed

poetical nature which has metamorphosed me into such a poor harmless little creature. It is really pitiable, particularly when one gets into the hands of a little black-guard, perfect in all sorts of cruelty to animals: all I should like to know is, how the story will end."

The two school-boys, the proprietors now of the transformed clerk, carried him into an elegant room. A stout stately dame received them with a smile; but she expressed much dissatisfaction that a common field-bird, as she called the lark, should appear in such high society. For to-day, however, she would allow it; and they must shut him in the empty cage that was standing in the window. "Perhaps he will amuse my good Polly," added the lady, looking with a benignant smile at a large green parrot that swung himself backwards and forwards most comfortably in his ring, inside a magnificent brass-wired cage. "To-day is Polly's birth-day," said she with stupid simplicity; "and the little brown field-bird must wish him joy."

Mr. Polly uttered not a syllable in reply, but swung to and fro with dignified condescension; while a pretty canary, as yellow as gold, that had lately been brought from his sunny fragrant home, began to sing aloud.

"Noisy creature! will you be quiet!" screamed the lady of the house, covering the cage with an embroidered white pocket-handkerchief.

"Chirp, chirp!" sighed he; "that was a dreadful snow-storm;" and he sighed again, and was silent.

The Copying-clerk, or, as the lady said, the brown

field-bird, was put into a small cage, close to the Canary, and not far from "my good Polly." The only human sounds that the Parrot could bawl out were, "Come, let us be men!" Everything else that he said was as unintelligible to everybody as the chirping of the canary, except to the clerk, who was now a bird too: he understood his companion perfectly.

"I flew about beneath the green palms and the blossoming almond-trees," sang the Canary; "I flew around, with my brothers and sisters, over the beautiful flowers, and over the glassy lakes, where the bright water-plants nodded to me from below. There, too, I saw many splendidly-dressed parroquets, that told the drollest stories, and the wildest fairy-tales, without end."

"Oh! those were uncouth birds," answered the Parrot. "They had no education, and talked of whatever came into their head. If my mistress and all her friends can laugh at what I say, so may you too, I should think. It is a great fault to have no taste for what is witty or amusing—come, let us be men."

"Ah, have you no remembrance of love for the charming maidens that danced beneath the outspread tents beside the bright fragrant flowers? Do you no longer remember the sweet fruits, and the cooling juice in the wild plants of our never-to-be-forgotten home?" said the former inhabitant of the Canary Isles, continuing his dithyrambic.

"Oh, yes," said the Parrot; "but I am far better off here. I am well fed, and get friendly treatment. I know I am a clever fellow; and that is all I care about.

Come, let us be men. You are of a poetical nature, as it is called,—I, on the contrary, possess profound knowledge and inexhaustible wit. You have genius ; but clear-sighted, calm discretion does not take such lofty flights, and utter such high natural tones. For this they have covered you over,—they never do the like to me ; for I cost more. Besides, they are afraid of my beak ; and I have always a witty answer at hand. Come, let us be men !”

“ O warm, spicy land of my birth,” sang the Canary-bird ; “ I will sing of thy dark-green bowers, of the calm bays where the pendent boughs kiss the surface of the water ; I will sing of the rejoicing of all my brothers and sisters where the cactus grows in wanton luxuriance.”

“ Spare us your elegiac tones,” said the Parrot giggling. “ Rather speak of something at which one may laugh heartily. Laughing is an infallible sign of the high est degree of mental development. Can a dog or a horse laugh ? No, but they can cry. The gift of laughing was given to man alone. Ha ! ha ! ha !” screamed Polly, and added his stereotype witticism, “ come, let us be men !”

“ Poor little Danish grey-bird,” said the Canary ; “ you have been caught too. It is, no doubt, cold enough in your woods, but there at least is the breath of liberty ; therefore fly away. In the hurry they have forgotten to shut your cage, and the upper window is open. Fly, my friend ; fly away. Farewell !”

Instinctively the Clerk obeyed ; with a few strokes of his wings he was out of the cage ; but at the same moment

the door, which was only ajar, and which led to the next room, began to creak, and supple and creeping came the large tom-cat into the room, and began to pursue him. The frightened Canary fluttered about in his cage; the Parrot flapped his wings, and cried, "Come, let us be men!" The Clerk felt a mortal fright, and flew through the window, far away over the houses and streets. At last he was forced to rest a little.

The neighbouring house had a something familiar about it: a window stood open, he flew in; it was his own room. He perched upon the table.

"Come, let us be men!" said he, involuntarily imitating the chatter of the Parrot, and at the same moment he was again a copying-clerk; but he was sitting in the middle of the table.

"God help me!" cried he. "How did I get up here—and so buried in sleep, too? After all, that was a very unpleasant, disagreeable dream that haunted me! The whole story is nothing but silly, stupid nonsense!"

VI.

THE BEST THAT THE GALOSHES GAVE.

THE following day, early in the morning, while the Clerk was still in bed, some one knocked at his door. It was his neighbour, a young Divine, who lived on the same floor. He walked in.

"Lend me your Galoshes," said he; "it is so wet in

the garden, though the sun is shining most invitingly. I should like to go out a little."

He got the Galoshes, and he was soon below in a little duodecimo garden, where between two immense walls a plum-tree and an apple-tree were standing. Even such a little garden as this was considered in the metropolis of Copenhagen as a great luxury.

The young man wandered up and down the narrow paths, as well as the prescribed limits would allow; the clock struck six; without was heard the horn of a post-boy.

"To travel! To travel!" exclaimed he, overcome by most painful and passionate remembrances; "that is the happiest thing in the world! that is the highest aim of all my wishes! Then at last would the agonising restlessness be allayed, which destroys my existence! But it must be far, far away! I would behold magnificent Switzerland; I would travel to Italy, and——"

It was a good thing that the power of the Galoshes worked as instantaneously as lightning in a powder-magazine would do, otherwise the poor man with his overstrained wishes would have travelled about the world too much for himself, as well as for us. In short, he was travelling. He was in the middle of Switzerland, but packed up with eight other passengers in the inside of an eternally-creaking diligence; his head ached till it almost split, his wearied neck could hardly bear the heavy load, and his feet, pinched by his torturing boots, were terribly swollen. He was in an intermediate state between sleeping and

waking; at variance with himself, with his company, with the country, and with the government. In his right pocket he had his letter of credit, in the left his passport, and in a small leathern purse some double louis-d'or, carefully sewn up in the bosom of his waistcoat. Every dream proclaimed that one or the other of these valuables was lost: wherefore he started up as in a fever; and the first movement which his hand made, described a magic triangle from the right pocket to the left, and then up towards the bosom, to feel if he had them all safe or not. From the roof inside the carriage, umbrellas, walking-sticks, hats, and sundry other articles were depending, and hindered the view, which was particularly imposing. He now endeavoured as well as he was able to dispel his gloom, which was caused by outward chance circumstances merely, and on the bosom of nature imbibe the milk of purest human enjoyment.

Grand, solemn, and dark was the whole landscape around. The gigantic pine-forests on the pointed crags seemed almost like little tufts of heather, coloured by the surrounding clouds. It began to snow, a cold wind blew and roared as though it were seeking a bride.

"Augh!" sighed he, "were we only on the other side the Alps, then we should have summer, and I could get my letters of credit cashed. The anxiety I feel about them prevents me enjoying Switzerland. Were I but on the other side!"

And so saying he was on the other side in Italy, between Florence and Rome. Lake Thracymene, illumined

by the evening sun, lay like flaming gold between the dark-blue mountain-ridges ; here, where Hannibal defeated Flaminus, the rivers now held each other in their green embraces ; lovely, half-naked children tended a herd of black swine, beneath a group of fragrant laurel-trees, hard by the road-side. Could we render this inimitable picture properly, then would everybody exclaim, " Beautiful, unparalleled Italy ! " But neither the young Divine said so, nor any one of his grumbling companions in the coach of the vetturino.

The poisonous flies and gnats swarmed around by thousands ; in vain one waved myrtle-branches about like mad : the audacious insect population did not cease to sting ; nor was there a single person in the well-crammed carriage whose face was not swollen and sore from their ravenous bites. The poor horses, tortured almost to death, suffered most from this truly Egyptian plague ; the flies alighted upon them in large disgusting swarms ; and if the coachman got down and scraped them off, hardly a minute elapsed before they were there again. The sun now set : a freezing cold, though of short duration, pervaded the whole creation ; it was like a horrid gust coming from a burial-vault on a warm summer's day,—but all around the mountains retained that wonderful green tone which we see in some old pictures, and which, should we not have seen a similar play of colour in the South, we declare at once to be unnatural. It was a glorious prospect ; but the stomach was empty, the body tired : all that the heart cared and longed for was good night-quarters ; yet how

would they be? For these one looked much more anxiously than for the charms of nature, which every where were so profusely displayed.

The road led through an olive-grove, and here the solitary inn was situated. Ten or twelve crippled beggars had encamped outside. The healthiest of them resembled, to use an expression of Marryat's, "Hunger's eldest son when he had come of age;" the others were either blind, had withered legs and crept about on their hands, or withered arms and fingerless hands. It was the most wretched misery, dragged from among the filthiest rags. "Eccellenza, miserabili!" sighed they, thrusting forth their deformed limbs to view. Even the hostess, with bare feet, uncombed hair, and dressed in a garment of doubtful colour, received the guests grumblingly. The doors were fastened with a loop of string; the floor of the rooms presented a stone paving half torn up; bats fluttered wildly about the ceiling; and as to the smell therein—no—that was beyond description.

"You had better lay the cloth below in the stable," said one of the travellers; "there, at all events, one knows what one is breathing."

The windows were quickly opened, to let in a little fresh air. Quicker, however, than the breeze, the withered sawn arms of the beggars were thrust in, accompanied by the eternal whine of "Miserabili, miserabili, eccellenza!" On the walls were displayed innumerable inscriptions, written in nearly every language of Europe, some in verse, some in prose, most of them not very laudatory of "bella Italia."

The meal was served. It consisted of a soup of salted water, seasoned with pepper and rancid oil. The last ingredient played a very prominent part in the salad; stale eggs and roasted cocks-combs furnished the grand dish of the repast; the wine even was not without a disgusting taste—it was like a medicinal draught.

At night the boxes and other effects of the passengers were placed against the rickety doors. One of the travellers kept watch, while the others slept. The sentry was our young Divine. How close it was in the chamber! The heat oppressive to suffocation—the gnats hummed and stung unceasingly—the “miserabili” without whined and moaned in their sleep.

“Travelling would be agreeable enough,” said he groaning, “if one only had no body, or could send it to rest while the spirit went on its pilgrimage unhindered, whither the voice within might call it. Wherever I go, I am pursued by a longing that is insatiable,—that I cannot explain to myself, and that tears my very heart. I want something better than what is but momentary—than what is fled in an instant. But what is it, and where is it to be found? Yet, I know in reality what it is I wish for. Oh! most happy were I, could I but reach one aim,—could but reach the happiest of all!”

And as he spoke the word he was again in his home: the long white curtains hung down from the windows, and in the middle of the floor stood the black coffin;—in it he lay in the sleep of death. His wish was fulfilled—the body rested, while the spirit went unhindered on its pil-

grimace. "Let no one deem himself happy before his end," were the words of Solon ; and here was a new and brilliant proof of the wisdom of the old apophthegm.

Every corpse is a sphinx of immortality ; here too on the black coffin the sphinx gave us no answer to what he who lay within had written two days before :

" O mighty Death ! thy silence teaches nought,
Thou leadest only to the near grave's brink ;
Is broken now the ladder of my thoughts ?
Do I instead of mounting only sink ?

Our heaviest grief the world oft seeth not,
Our sorest pain we hide from stranger eyes ;
And for the sufferer there is nothing left
But the green mound that o'er the coffin lies."

Two figures were moving in the chamber. We knew them both : it was the fairy of Care and the emissary of Fortune. They both bent over the corpse.

"Do you now see," said Care, "what happiness your Galoshes have brought to mankind ?"

"To him, at least, who slumbers here, they have brought an imperishable blessing," answered the other.

"Ah no !" replied Care, "he took his departure himself ; he was not called away. His mental powers here below were not strong enough to reach the treasures lying beyond this life, and which his destiny ordained he should obtain. I will now confer a benefit on him."

And she took the Galoshes from his feet : his sleep of death was ended ; and he who had been thus called back

again to life arose from his dread couch in all the vigour of youth. Care vanished, and with her the Galoshes. She has no doubt taken them for herself, to keep them to all eternity.



THE FIR-TREE.



U T in the woods stood a nice little Fir-tree. The place he had was a very good one: the sun shone on him; as to fresh air, there was enough of that, and round him grew many large-sized comrades, pines as well as firs. But the little Fir wanted so very much to be a grown-up tree.

He did not think of the warm sun and

of the fresh air ; he did not care for the little cottage-children that ran about and prattled when they were in the woods looking for wild strawberries. The children often came with a whole pitcher full of berries, or a long row of them threaded on a straw, and sat down near the young tree and said, "Oh, how pretty he is! what a nice little fir!" But this was what the tree could not bear to hear.

At the end of a year he had shot up a good deal, and after another year he was another long bit taller ; for with fir-trees one can always tell by the shoots how many years old they are.

"Oh! were I but such a high tree as the others are," sighed he. "Then I should be able to spread out my branches, and with the tops to look into the wide world! Then would the birds build nests among my branches ; and when there was a breeze, I could bend with as much stateliness as the others!"

Neither the sunbeams, nor the birds, nor the red clouds which morning and evening sailed above him, gave the little tree any pleasure.

In winter, when the snow lay glittering on the ground, a hare would often come leaping along, and jump right over the little tree. Oh, that made him so angry! But two winters were past, and in the third the tree was so large that the hare was obliged to go round it. "To grow and grow, to get older and be tall," thought the Tree,— "that, after all, is the most delightful thing in the world!"

In autumn the wood-cutters always came and felled

some of the largest trees. This happened every year; and the young Fir-tree, that had now grown to a very comely size, trembled at the sight; for the magnificent great trees fell to the earth with noise and cracking, the branches were lopped off, and the trees looked long and bare: they were hardly to be recognised; and then they were laid in carts, and the horses dragged them out of the wood.

Where did they go to? What became of them?

In spring, when the swallows and the storks came, the Tree asked them, "Don't you know where they have been taken? Have you not met them any where?"

The swallows did not know any thing about it; but the Stork looked musing, nodded his head, and said, "Yes; I think I know; I met many ships as I was flying hither from Egypt; on the ships were magnificent masts, and I venture to assert that it was they that smelt so of fir. I may congratulate you, for they lifted themselves on high most majestically!"

"Oh, were I but old enough to fly across the sea! But how does the sea look in reality? What is it like?"

"That would take a long time to explain," said the Stork, and with these words off he went.

"Rejoice in thy growth!" said the Sunbeams, "rejoice in thy vigorous growth, and in the fresh life that moveth within thee!"

And the Wind kissed the Tree, and the Dew wept tears over him; but the Fir understood it not.

When Christmas came, quite young trees were cut



down; trees which often were not even as large or of the same age as this Fir-tree, who could never rest, but always wanted to be off. These young trees, and they were always the finest looking, retained their branches; they were laid on carts, and the horses drew them out of the wood.

"Where are they going to?" asked the Fir. "They are not taller than I; there was one indeed that was considerably shorter;—and why do they retain all their branches? Whither are they taken?"

"We know! we know!" chirped the Sparrows. "We have peeped in at the windows in the town below! We know whither they are taken! The greatest splendour and the greatest magnificence one can imagine await them. We peeped through the windows, and saw them planted in the middle of the warm room and ornamented with the most splendid things, with gilded apples, with gingerbread, with toys, and many hundred lights!"

"And then?" asked the Fir-tree, trembling in every bough. "And then? What happens then?"

"We did not see any thing more: it was incomparably beautiful."

"I would fain know if I am destined for so glorious a career," cried the Tree, rejoicing. "That is still better than to cross the sea! What a longing do I suffer! Were Christmas but come! I am now tall, and my branches spread like the others that were carried off last year! Oh! were I but already on the cart! Were I in the warm room with all the splendour and magnificence!

Yes; then something better, something still grander, will surely follow, or wherefore should they thus ornament me? Something better, something still grander, *must* follow—but what? Oh, how I long, how I suffer! I do not know myself what is the matter with me!”

“Rejoice in our presence!” said the Air and the Sunlight; “rejoice in thy own fresh youth!”

But the Tree did not rejoice at all; he grew and grew, and was green both winter and summer. People that saw him said, “What a fine tree!” and towards Christmas he was one of the first that was cut down. The axe struck deep into the very pith; the tree fell to the earth with a sigh: he felt a pang—it was like a swoon; he could not think of happiness, for he was sorrowful at being separated from his home, from the place where he had sprung up. He well knew that he should never see his dear old comrades, the little bushes and flowers around him, any more; perhaps not even the birds! The departure was not at all agreeable.

The Tree only came to himself when he was unloaded in a court-yard with the other trees, and heard a man say, “That one is splendid! we don’t want the others.” Then two servants came in rich livery and carried the fir-tree into a large and splendid drawing-room. Portraits were hanging on the walls, and near the white porcelain stove stood two large Chinese vases with lions on the covers. There, too, were large easy-chairs, silken sofas, large tables full of picture-books and full of toys, worth hundreds and hundreds of crowns—at least the children

said so. And the Fir-tree was stuck upright in a cask that was filled with sand; but no one could see that it was a cask, for green cloth was hung all round it, and it stood on a large gaily-coloured carpet. Oh! how the tree quivered! What was to happen? The servants, as well as the young ladies, decorated it. On one branch there hung little nets cut out of coloured paper, and each net was filled with sugar-plums; and among the other boughs gilded apples and walnuts were suspended, looking as though they had grown there, and little blue and white tapers were placed among the leaves. Dolls that looked for all the world like men—the Tree had never beheld such before—were seen among the foliage, and at the very top a large star of gold tinsel was fixed. It was really splendid—beyond description splendid.

“This evening!” said they all, “how it will shine this evening!”

“Oh!” thought the Tree, “if the evening were but come! If the tapers were but lighted! And then I wonder what will happen! Perhaps the other trees from the forest will come to look at me! Perhaps the sparrows will beat against the window-panes! I wonder if I shall take root here, and winter and summer stand covered with ornaments!”

He knew very much about the matter!—but he was so impatient that for sheer longing he got a pain in his back, and this with trees is the same thing as a headache with us.

The candles were now lighted—What brightness! What splendour! The Tree trembled so in every bough

that one of the tapers set fire to the foliage. It blazed up famously.

"Help! help!" cried the young ladies, and they quickly put out the fire.

Now the Tree did not even dare tremble. What a state he was in! He was so uneasy lest he should lose something of his splendour, that he was quite bewildered amidst the glare and brightness; when suddenly both folding-doors opened, and a troop of children rushed in as if they would upset the Tree. The older persons followed quietly; the little ones stood quite still. But it was only for a moment; then they shouted that the whole place re-echoed with their rejoicing; they danced round the Tree, and one present after the other was pulled off.

"What are they about?" thought the Tree. "What is to happen now!" And the lights burned down to the very branches, and as they burned down they were put out one after the other, and then the children had permission to plunder the Tree. So they fell upon it with such violence that all its branches cracked; if it had not been fixed firmly in the ground, it would certainly have tumbled down.

The children danced about with their beautiful play-things: no one looked at the Tree except the old nurse, who peeped between the branches; but it was only to see if there was a fig or an apple left that had been forgotten.

"A story! a story!" cried the children, drawing a little fat man towards the Tree. He seated himself under it, and said, "Now we are in the shade, and the Tree can

listen too. But I shall tell only one story. Now which will you have ; that about Ivedy-Avedy, or about Humpy-Dumpy who tumbled down stairs, and yet after all came to the throne and married the princess ?”

“ Ivedy-Avedy,” cried some ; “ Humpy-Dumpy,” cried the others. There was such a bawling and screaming !—the Fir-tree alone was silent, and he thought to himself, “ Am I not to bawl with the rest ?—am I to do nothing whatever ?” for he was one of the company, and had done what he had to do.

And the man told about Humpy-Dumpy that tumbled down, who notwithstanding came to the throne, and at last married the princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried out, “ Oh, go on ! Do go on !” They wanted to hear about Ivedy-Avedy too, but the little man only told them about Humpy-Dumpy. The Fir-tree stood quite still and absorbed in thought : the birds in the wood had never related the like of this. “ Humpy-Dumpy fell down stairs, and yet he married the princess ! Yes, yes ! that’s the way of the world !” thought the Fir-tree, and believed it all, because the man who told the story was so good-looking. “ Well, well ! who knows, perhaps I may fall down stairs too, and get a princess as wife !” And he looked forward with joy to the morrow, when he hoped to be decked out again with lights, playthings, fruits, and tinsel.

“ I won’t tremble to-morrow !” thought the Fir-tree. “ I will enjoy to the full all my splendour ! To-morrow I shall hear again the story of Humpy-Dumpy, and perhaps

that of Ivedy-Avedy too." And the whole night the Tree stood still and in deep thought.

In the morning the servant and the housemaid came in.

"Now then the splendour will begin again," thought the Fir. But they dragged him out of the room, and up the stairs into the loft; and here in a dark corner, where no daylight could enter, they left him. "What's the meaning of this?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I hear now, I wonder?" And he leaned against the wall lost in reverie. Time enough had he too for his reflections; for days and nights passed on, and nobody came up; and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put some great trunks in a corner, out of the way. There stood the Tree quite hidden; it seemed as if he had been entirely forgotten.

"'Tis now winter out of doors!" thought the Tree. "The earth is hard and covered with snow; men cannot plant me now, and therefore I have been put up here under shelter till the spring-time comes! How thoughtful that is! How kind man is, after all! If it only were not so dark here, and so terribly lonely! Not even a hare!—And out in the woods it was so pleasant, when the snow was on the ground, and the hare leaped by; yes—even when he jumped over me; but I did not like it then! It is really terribly lonely here!"

"Squeak! squeak!" said a little Mouse at the same moment, peeping out of his hole. And then another little one came. They snuffed about the Fir-tree, and rustled among the branches.

"It is dreadfully cold," said the Mouse. "But for that, it would be delightful here, old Fir, wouldn't it?"

"I am by no means old," said the Fir-tree. "There's many a one considerably older than I am."

"Where do you come from," asked the Mice; "and what can you do?" They were so extremely curious. "Tell us about the most beautiful spot on the earth. Have you never been there? Were you never in the larder, where cheeses lie on the shelves, and hams hang from above; where one dances about on tallow candles; that place where one enters lean, and comes out again fat and portly?"

"I know no such place," said the Tree. "But I know the wood, where the sun shines and where the little birds sing." And then he told all about his youth; and the little Mice had never heard the like before; and they listened and said,

"Well, to be sure! How much you have seen! How happy you must have been!"

"I!" said the Fir-tree, thinking over what he had himself related. "Yes, in reality those were happy times." And then he told about Christmas-eve, when he was decked out with cakes and candles.

"Oh," said the little Mice, "how fortunate you have been, old Fir-tree!"

"I am by no means old," said he. "I came from the wood this winter; I am in my prime, and am only rather short for my age."

"What delightful stories you know!" said the Mice:

and the next night they came with four other little Mice, who were to hear what the Tree recounted ; and the more he related, the more plainly he remembered all himself ; and it appeared as if those times had really been happy times. " But they may still come—they may still come ! Humpty-Dumpty fell down stairs, and yet he got a princess ! " and he thought at the moment of a nice little Birch-tree growing out in the woods : to the Fir, that would be a real charming princess.

" Who is Humpty-Dumpty ? " asked the Mice. So then the Fir-tree told the whole fairy tale, for he could remember every single word of it ; and the little Mice jumped for joy up to the very top of the Tree. Next night two more Mice came, and on Sunday two Rats even ; but they said the stories were not interesting, which vexed the little Mice ; and they, too, now began to think them not so very amusing either.

" Do you know only one story ? " asked the Rats.

" Only that one," answered the Tree. " I heard it on my happiest evening ; but I did not then know how happy I was."

" It is a very stupid story ! Don't you know one about bacon and tallow candles ? Can't you tell any larder-stories ? "

" No," said the Tree.

" Then good-bye," said the Rats ; and they went home.

At last the little Mice stayed away also ; and the Tree sighed : " After all, it was very pleasant when the sleek little Mice sat round me and listened to what I told them.

Now that too is over. But I will take good care to enjoy myself when I am brought out again."

But when was that to be? Why, one morning there came a quantity of people and set to work in the loft. The trunks were moved, the tree was pulled out and thrown, —rather hard, it is true,—down on the floor, but a man drew him towards the stairs, where the daylight shone.

"Now a merry life will begin again," thought the Tree. He felt the fresh air, the first sunbeam,—and now he was out in the court-yard. All passed so quickly, there was so much going on around him, the Tree quite forgot to look to himself. The court adjoined a garden, and all was in flower; the roses hung so fresh and odorous over the balustrade, the lindens were in blossom, the Swallows flew by, and said, "Quirre-vit! my husband is come!" but it was not the Fir-tree that they meant.

"Now, then, I shall really enjoy life," said he exultingly, and spread out his branches; but, alas! they were all withered and yellow. It was in a corner that he lay, among weeds and nettles. The golden star of tinsel was still on the top of the Tree, and glittered in the sunshine.

In the court-yard some of the merry children were playing who had danced at Christmas round the Fir-tree, and were so glad at the sight of him. One of the youngest ran and tore off the golden star.

"Only look what is still on the ugly old Christmas tree!" said he, trampling on the branches, so that they all cracked beneath his feet.

And the Tree beheld all the beauty of the flowers, and

the freshness in the garden ; he beheld himself, and wished he had remained in his dark corner in the loft : he thought of his first youth in the wood, of the merry Christmas-eve, and of the little Mice who had listened with so much pleasure to the story of Humpy-Dumpy.

“ ’Tis over — ’tis past ! ” said the poor Tree. “ Had I but rejoiced when I had reason to do so ! But now ’tis past, ’tis past ! ”

And the gardener’s boy chopped the Tree into small pieces ; there was a whole heap lying there. The wood flamed up splendidly under the large brewing copper, and it sighed so deeply ! Each sigh was like a shot.

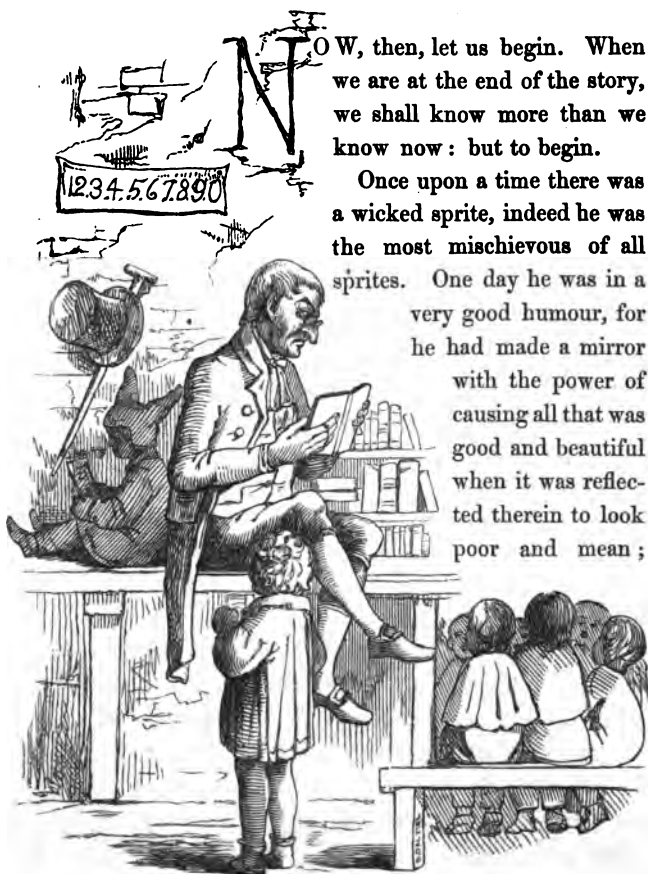
The boys played about in the court, and the youngest wore the gold star on his breast which the Tree had had on the happiest evening of his life. However, that was over now,—the Tree gone; the story at an end. All, all was over ;—every tale must end at last.



THE SNOW-QUEEN.

First Story,

Which treats of a Mirror and of the Splinters.



but that which was good for nothing and looked ugly was shewn magnified and increased in ugliness. In this mirror the most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and the best persons were turned into frights, or appeared to stand on their heads; their faces were so distorted that they were not to be recognised; and if any one had a mole, you might be sure that it would be magnified and spread over both nose and mouth. "That's glorious fun!" said the Sprite. If a good thought passed through a man's mind, then a grin was seen in the mirror, and the Sprite laughed heartily at his clever discovery. All the little sprites who went to his school—for he kept a sprite-school—told each other that a miracle had happened; and that now only, as they thought, it would be possible to see how the world really looked. They ran about with the mirror; and at last there was not a land or a person who was not represented distorted in the mirror. So then they thought they would fly up to the sky, and have a joke there. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more terribly it grinned: they could hardly hold it fast. Higher and higher still they flew, nearer and nearer to the stars, when suddenly the mirror shook so terribly with grinning, that it flew out of their hands and fell to the earth, where it was dashed in a hundred million and more pieces. And now it worked much more evil than before; for some of these pieces were hardly so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about in the wide world, and when they got into people's eyes, there they stayed; and then people saw every thing perverted, or only had an eye for that which was

evil. This happened because the very smallest bit had the same power which the whole mirror had possessed. Some persons even got a splinter in their heart, and then it made one shudder, for their heart became like a lump of ice. Some of the broken pieces were so large that they were used for window-panes, through which one could not see one's friends. Other pieces were put in spectacles; and that was a sad affair when people put on their glasses to see well and rightly. Then the wicked Sprite laughed till he almost choked, for all this tickled his fancy. The fine splinters still flew about in the air; and now we shall hear what happened next.

SECOND STORY.

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL.

IN a large town, where there are so many houses, and so many people, that there is no room left for everybody to have a little garden; and where, on this account, most persons are obliged to content themselves with flowers in pots; there lived two little children, who had a garden somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister; but they cared for each other as much as if they were. Their parents lived exactly opposite. They inhabited two garrets; and where the roof of the one house joined that of the other, and the gutter ran along

the extreme end of it, there was to each house a small window: one needed only to step over the gutter to get from one window to the other.

The children's parents had large wooden boxes there, in which vegetables for the kitchen were planted, and little rose-trees besides: there was a rose in each box, and they grew splendidly. They now thought of placing the boxes across the gutter, so that they nearly reached from one window to the other, and looked just like two walls of flowers. The tendrils of the peas hung down over the boxes; and the rose-trees shot up long branches, twined round the windows, and then bent towards each other: it was almost like a triumphant arch of foliage and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they must not creep over them; so they often obtained permission to get out of the windows to each other, and to sit on their little stools among the roses, where they could play delightfully. In winter there was an end of this pleasure. The windows were often frozen over; but then they heated copper farthings on the stove, and laid the hot farthing on the window-pane, and then they had a capital peep-hole, quite nicely rounded; and out of each peeped a gentle friendly eye—it was the little boy and the little girl who were looking out. His name was Kay, hers was Gerda. In summer, with one jump, they could get to each other; but in winter they were obliged first to go down the long stairs, and then up the long stairs again: and out of doors there was quite a snow-storm.

"It is the white bees that are swarming," said Kay's old grandmother.

"Do the white bees choose a queen?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the honey-bees always have one.

"Yes," said the grandmother, "she flies where the swarm hangs in the thickest clusters. She is the largest of all; and she can never remain quietly on the earth, but goes up again into the black clouds. Many a winter's night she flies through the streets of the town, and peeps in at the windows; and they then freeze in so wondrous a manner that they look like flowers."

"Yes, I have seen it," said both the children; and so they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow-Queen come in?" said the little girl.

"Only let her come in!" said the little boy; "then I'd put her on the stove, and she'd melt."

And then his grandmother patted his head, and told him other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home, and half undressed, he climbed up on the chair by the window, and peeped out of the little hole. A few snow-flakes were falling, and one, the largest of all, remained lying on the edge of a flower-pot. The flake of snow grew larger and larger; and at last it was like a young lady, dressed in the finest white gauze, made of a million little flakes, like stars. She was so beautiful and delicate, but she was of ice, of dazzling, sparkling ice; yet she lived; her eyes gazed fixedly, like two stars; but there was neither quiet or repose in them. She nodded

towards the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair; it seemed to him as if, at the same moment, a large bird flew past the window.

The next day it was a sharp frost;—and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green leaves appeared, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children again sat in their pretty garden, high up on the leads at top of the house.

That summer the roses flowered in unwonted beauty. The little girl had learned a hymn, in which there was something about roses; and then she thought of her own flowers; and she sang the verse to the little boy, who then sang it with her:

“The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
And angels descend there the children to greet.”

And the children held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, looked up at the clear sunshine, and spoke as though they really saw angels there. What lovely summer-days those were! How delightful to be out in the air, near the fresh rose-bushes, that seem as if they would never finish blossoming!

Kay and Gerda looked at the picture-book full of beasts and of birds; and it was then—the clock in the church-tower was just striking five,—that Kay said, “Oh! I feel such a sharp pain in my heart; and now something has got into my eye!”

The little girl put her arms round his neck. He winked his eyes;—now, there was nothing to be seen.

"I think it is out now," said he; but it was not. It was just one of those pieces of glass from the magic mirror that had got into his eye; and poor Kay had got another piece right in his heart. It will soon become like ice. It did not hurt any longer, but there it was.

"What are you crying for?" asked he. "You look so ugly! There's nothing the matter with me. Ah," said he at once, "that rose is cankered! and, look, this one is quite crooked! after all, these roses are very ugly! they are just like the box they are planted in!" And then he gave the box a good kick with his foot, and pulled both the roses up.

"What are you doing?" cried the little girl; and as he perceived her fright, he pulled up another rose, got in at the window, and hastened off from dear little Gerda.

Afterwards, when she brought her picture-book, he asked, "What horrid beasts she had there?" And if his grandmother told them stories, he always interrupted her; besides, if he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and imitate her way of speaking: he copied all her ways, and then every body laughed at him. He was soon able to imitate the gait and manner of every one in the street. Every thing that was peculiar and displeasing in them,—that Kay knew how to imitate; and at such times all the people said, "The boy is certainly very clever!" But it was the glass he had got in his eye; the glass that was sticking in his heart, which made him tease even little Gerda, whose whole soul was devoted to him.

His games now were quite different to what they had

formerly been, they were so very knowing. One winter's day, when the flakes of snow were flying about, he spread the skirts of his blue coat, and caught the snow as it fell.

"Look through this glass, Gerda," said he. And every flake seemed larger, and appeared like a magnificent flower, or a beautiful star: it was splendid to look at!

"Look, how clever!" said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers! They are as exact as possible; there is not a fault in them, if they did not melt!"

It was not long after this, that Kay came one day with large gloves on, and his little sledge at his back, and bawled right into Gerda's ears, "I have permission to go out into the square, where the others are playing;" and off he was in a moment.

There, in the market-place, some of the boldest of the boys used to tie their sledges to the carts as they passed by, and so they were pulled along, and got a good ride. It was so capital! Just as they were in the very height of their amusement, a large sledge passed by: it was painted quite white, and there was some one in it wrapped up in a rough white mantle of fur, with a rough white fur cap on his head. The sledge drove round the square twice, and Kay tied on his as quickly as he could, and off he drove with it. On they went quicker and quicker into the next street; and the person who drove turned round to Kay, and nodded to him in a friendly manner, just as if they knew each other. Every time he was going to untie his sledge the person nodded to him, and then Kay sat quiet; and so on they went till they came outside the gates of the

town. Then the snow began to fall so thickly, that the little boy could not see an arm's length before him, but still on he went; when suddenly he let go the string he held in his hand in order to get loose from the sledge, but it was of no use; still the little vehicle rushed on with the quickness of the wind. He then cried as loud as he could, but no one heard him; the snow drifted and the sledge flew on, and sometimes it gave a jerk as though they were driving over hedges and ditches. He was quite frightened, and he tried to repeat the Lord's Prayer; but all he could do, he was only able to remember the multiplication-table.

The snow-flakes grew larger and larger, till at last they looked just like great white fowls. Suddenly they flew on one side; the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove rose up. It was a lady; her cloak and cap were of snow. She was tall and of slender figure, and of a dazzling whiteness. It was the Snow-Queen.

"We have travelled fast," said she; "but it is freezingly cold. Come under my bear-skin." And she put him in the sledge beside her, wrapped the fur round him, and he felt as though he were sinking in a snow-wreath.

"Are you still cold?" asked she; and then she kissed his forehead. Ah! it was colder than ice; it penetrated to his very heart, which was already almost a frozen lump; it seemed to him as if he were about to die,—but a moment more and it was quite congenial to him, and he did not remark the cold that was around him.

"My sledge! Do not forget my sledge!" It was the first thing he thought of. It was there tied to one of the

white chickens, who flew along with it on its back behind the large sledge. The Snow-Queen kissed Kay once more, and then he forgot little Gerda, grandmother, and all whom he had left at his home.

"Now you will have no more kisses," said she, "or else I should kiss you to death!"

Kay looked at her. She was very beautiful; a more clever or a more lovely countenance he could not fancy to himself; and she no longer appeared of ice as before, when she sat outside the window, and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect, he did not fear her at all, and told her that he could calculate in his head, and with fractions even; that he knew the number of square miles there were in the different countries, and how many inhabitants they contained; and she smiled while he spoke. It then seemed to him as if what he knew was not enough, and he looked upwards in the large huge empty space above him, and on she flew with him; flew high over the black clouds, while the storm moaned and whistled as though it were singing some old tune. On they flew over woods and lakes, over seas, and many lands; and beneath them the chilling storm rushed fast, the wolves howled, the snow crackled; above them flew large screaming crows, but higher up appeared the moon, quite large and bright; and it was on it that Kay gazed during the long long winter's night; while by day he slept at the feet of the Snow-Queen.

Third Story,

*Of the Flower-Garden at the old Woman's who
understood Witchcraft.*



BUT what became of
little Gerda when
Kay did not return?
Where could he be?

Nobody knew; nobody
could give any intelligence.
All the boys knew was, that
they had seen him tie his
sledge to another large and
splendid one, which drove

down the street
and out of the
town. Nobody
knew where
he was; many
sad tears were
shed, and lit-
tle Gerda wept
long and bit-
terly; at last
she said he
must be dead;
that he had
been drowned
in the river
which flowed

close to the town. Oh ! those were very long and dismal winter evenings !

At last spring came with its warm sunshine.

" Kay is dead and gone !" said little Gerda.

" That I don't believe," said the Sunshine.

" Kay is dead and gone !" said she to the Swallows.

" That I don't believe," said they ; and at last little Gerda did not think so any longer either.

" I'll put on my red shoes," said she, one morning ;
" Kay has never seen them, and then I'll go down to the river and ask there."

It was quite early : she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went alone to the river.

" Is it true that you have taken my little playfellow ? I will make you a present of my red shoes, if you will give him back to me."

And, as it seemed to her, the blue waves nodded in a strange manner ; then she took off her red shoes, the most precious things she possessed, and threw them both into the river. But they fell close to the bank, and the little waves bore them immediately to land ; it was as if the stream would not take what was dearest to her ; for in reality it had not got little Kay : but Gerda thought that she had not thrown the shoes out far enough, so she clambered into a boat which lay among the rushes, went to the farthest end, and threw out the shoes. But the boat was not fastened, and the motion which she occasioned, made it drift from the shore. She observed this, and hastened to get back ;

but before she could do so, the boat was more than a yard from the land, and was gliding quickly onward.

Little Gerda was very frightened, and began to cry ; but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her to land ; but they flew along the bank, and sang as if to comfort her, " Here we are ! here we are ! " The boat drifted with the stream, little Gerda sat quite still without shoes, for they were swimming behind the boat, but could not reach it, because it went much faster than they did.

The banks on both sides were beautiful ; lovely flowers, venerable trees, and slopes with sheep and cows, but not a human being was to be seen.

" Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," said she ; and then she grew less sad. She rose, and looked for many hours at the beautiful green banks. Presently she sailed by a large cherry-orchard, where was a little cottage with curious red and blue windows ; it was thatched, and before it two wooden soldiers stood sentry, and presented arms when any one went past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive ; but they, of course, did not answer. She came close to them, for the stream drifted the boat quite near the land.

Gerda called still louder, and an old woman then came out of the cottage, leaning upon a crooked stick. She had a large broad-brimmed hat on, painted with the most splendid flowers.

" Poor little child ! " said the old woman, " how did you get upon the large rapid river, to be driven about so

in the wide world !” And then the old woman went into the water, caught hold of the boat with her crooked stick, drew it to the bank, and lifted little Gerda out.

And Gerda was so glad to be on dry land again ; but she was rather afraid of the strange old woman.

“ But come and tell me who you are, and how you came here,” said she.

And Gerda told her all ; and the old woman shook her head and said, “ A-hem ! a-hem !” and when Gerda had told her any thing, and asked her if she had not seen little Kay, the woman answered that he had not passed there, but he no doubt would come ; and she told her not to be cast down, but taste her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were finer than any in a picture-book, each of which could tell a whole story. She then took Gerda by the hand, led her into the little cottage, and locked the door.

The windows were very high up ; the glass was red, blue, and green, and the sunlight shone through quite wondrously in all sorts of colours. On the table stood the most exquisite cherries, and Gerda ate as many as she chose, for she had permission to do so. While she was eating, the old woman combed her hair with a golden comb, and her hair curled and shone with a lovely golden colour around that sweet little face, which was so round and so like a rose.

“ I have often longed for such a dear little girl,” said the old woman. “ Now you shall see how well we agree together ;” and while she combed little Gerda’s hair,

the child forgot her foster-brother Kay more and more, for the old woman understood magic; but she was no evil being, she only practised witchcraft a little for her own private amusement, and now she wanted very much to keep little Gerda. She therefore went out into the garden, stretched out her crooked stick towards the rose-bushes, which, beautifully as they were blowing, all sank into the earth, and no one could tell where they had stood. The old woman feared that if Gerda should see the roses, she would then think of her own, would remember little Kay, and run away from her.

She now led Gerda into the flower-garden. Oh, what odour and what loveliness was there! Every flower that one could think of, and of every season, stood there in fullest bloom: no picture-book could be gayer or more beautiful. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun set behind the tall cherry-tree; she then had a pretty bed, with a red silken coverlet filled with blue violets. She fell asleep, and had as pleasant dreams as ever a queen on her wedding-day.

The next morning she went to play with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and thus passed away a day. Gerda knew every flower; and, numerous as they were, it still seemed to Gerda that one was wanting, though she did not know which. One day while she was looking at the hat of the old woman painted with flowers, the most beautiful of them all seemed to her to be a rose. The old woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made the others vanish in the earth. But

so it is when one's thoughts are not collected. "What!" said Gerda; "are there no roses here?" and she ran about amongst the flower-beds, and looked, and looked, but there was not one to be found. She then sat down and wept; but her hot tears fell just where a rose-bush had sunk; and when her warm tears watered the ground, the tree shot up suddenly as fresh and blooming as when it had been swallowed up. Gerda kissed the roses, thought of her own dear roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

"Oh, how long I have stayed!" said the little girl. "I intended to look for Kay! Don't you know where he is?" asked she of the roses. "Do you think he is dead and gone?"

"Dead he certainly is not," said the Roses. "We have been in the earth where all the dead are, but Kay was not there."

"Many thanks!" said the little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Don't you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sunshine, and dreamed its own fairy-tale or its own story; and they all told her very many things, but not one knew any thing of Kay.

Well, what did the Tiger-Lily say?

"Hearest thou not the drum? Bum! bum! those are the only two tones. Always bum! bum! Hark to the plaintive song of the old woman! to the call of the priests! The Hindoo woman in her long robe stands upon

the funeral pile: the flames rise around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo woman thinks on the living one in the surrounding circle; on him whose eyes burn hotter than the flames—on him, the fire of whose eyes pierces her heart more than the flames which soon will burn her body to ashes. Can the heart's flame die in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," said the Lily.

What did the *Convolvulus* say?

"Projecting over a narrow mountain-path there hangs an old feudal castle. Thick evergreens grow on the dilapidated walls and around the altar, where a lovely maiden is standing: she bends over the railing and looks out upon the rose. No fresher rose hangs on the branches than she; no apple-blossom carried away by the wind is more buoyant! How her splendid silken robe is rustling!

"Is he not yet come?"

"Is it Kay that you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I am speaking about my story—about my dream," answered the *Convolvulus*.

What did the *Snow-drops* say?

"Between the trees a long board is hanging—it is a swing. Two little girls are sitting in it, and swing themselves backwards and forwards: their frocks are as white as snow, and long green silk ribbons flutter from their bonnets. Their brother, who is older than they are, stands up in the swing; he twines his arms round the cords to hold himself fast, for in one hand he has

a little cup, and in the other a clay-pipe. He is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves, and the bubbles float in charming changing colours: the last is still hanging to the end of the pipe, and rocks in the breeze. The swing moves. The little black dog, as light as a soap-bubble, jumps up on his hind legs to try to get into the swing. It moves, the dog falls down, barks, and is angry. They tease him; the bubble bursts!—A swing, a bursting bubble—such is my song!”

“What you relate may be very pretty, but you tell it in so melancholy a manner, and do not mention Kay.”

What do the Hyacinths say?

“There were once upon a time three sisters, quite transparent and very beautiful. The robe of the one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third white. They danced hand in hand beside the calm lake in the clear moonshine. They were not elfin maidens, but mortal children. A sweet fragrance was smelt, and the maidens vanished in the wood; the fragrance grew stronger——three coffins, and in them three lovely maidens, glided out of the forest and across the lake: the shining glow-worms flew around like little floating lights. Do the dancing maidens sleep, or are they dead? The odour of the flowers says they are corpses; the evening bell tolls for the dead!”

“You make me quite sad,” said little Gerda. “I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Oh! is little Kay really dead? The Roses have been in the earth, and they say no.”

"Ding, dong!" sounded the Hyacinth bells. "We do not toll for little Kay; we do not know him. That is our way of singing, the only one we have."

And Gerda went to the Ranunculuses, that looked forth from among the shining green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun!" said Gerda. "Tell me if you know where I can find my playfellow."

And the Ranunculus shone brightly, and looked again at Gerda. What song could the Ranunculus sing? It was one that said nothing about Kay either.

"In a small court the bright sun was shining in the first days of spring. The beams glided down the white walls of a neighbour's house, and close by the fresh yellow flowers were growing, shining like gold in the warm sun-rays. An old Grandmother was sitting in the air; her Granddaughter, the poor and lovely servant just come for a short visit. She knows her Grandmother. There was gold, pure virgin gold, in that blessed kiss. There, that is my little story," said the Ranunculus.

"My poor old Grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she is longing for me, no doubt; she is sorrowing for me, as she did for little Kay. But I will soon come home, and then I will bring Kay with me. It is of no use asking the Flowers; they only know their own old rhymes, and can tell me nothing." And she tucked up her frock, to enable her to run quicker; but the Narcissus gave her a knock on the leg, just as she was going to jump over it. So she stood still, looked at the long yellow flower, and asked, "You perhaps know something?"

and she bent down to the Narcissus. And what did it say?

"I can see myself—I can see myself! Oh, how odorous I am! Up in the little garret there stands half-dressed a little Dancer. She stands now on one leg, now on both; she despises the whole world; yet she lives only in imagination. She pours water out of the teapot over a piece of stuff which she holds in her hand; it is the bodice: cleanliness is a fine thing. The white dress is hanging on the hook; it was washed in the teapot, and dried on the roof. She puts it on, ties a saffron-coloured kerchief round her neck, and then the gown looks whiter. I can see myself—I can see myself!"

"That's nothing to me," said little Gerda. "That does not concern me." And then off she ran to the further end of the garden.

The gate was locked, but she shook the rusted bolt till it was loosened, and the gate opened; and little Gerda ran off barefooted into the wide world. She looked round her thrice, but no one followed her. At last she could run no longer; she sat down on a large stone, and when she looked about her, she saw that the summer had passed; it was late in the autumn, but that one could not remark in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and where there were flowers the whole year round.

"Dear me, how long I have stayed!" said Gerda. "Autumn is come. I must not rest any longer." And she got up to go further.

Oh, how tender and wearied her little feet were! All

around, it looked so cold and raw; the long willow-leaves were quite yellow, and the fog dripped from them like water; one leaf fell after the other: the sloes only stood full of fruit, which set one's teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and comfortless it was in the dreary world!

FOURTH STORY.

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS.

GERDA was obliged to rest herself again, when, exactly opposite to her, a large Raven came hopping over the white snow. He had long been looking at Gerda and shaking his head; and now he said, "Caw! caw!" Good day! good day! He could not say it better; but he felt a sympathy for the little girl, and asked her where she was going all alone. The word "alone" Gerda understood quite well, and felt how much was expressed by it; so she told the Raven her whole history, and asked if he had not seen Kay.

The Raven nodded very gravely, and said, "It may be—it may be!"

"What, do you really think so?" cried the little girl; and she nearly squeezed the Raven to death, so much did she kiss him.

"Gently, gently," said the Raven. "I think I know; I think that it may be little Kay. But now he has forgotten you for the Princess."

"Does he live with a Princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes,—listen," said the Raven; "but it will be diffi-

cult for me to speak your language. If you understand the raven language, I can tell you better."

"No, I have not learnt it," said Gerda; "but my Grandmother understands it, and she can speak gibberish too. I wish I had learnt it."

"No matter," said the Raven; "I will tell you as well as I can; however, it will be bad enough." And then he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom where we now are there lives a Princess, who is extraordinarily clever; for she has read all the newspapers in the whole world, and has forgotten them again,—so clever is she. She was lately, it is said, sitting on her throne,—which is not very amusing after all,—when she began humming an old tune, and it was just 'Oh, why should I not be married?' 'That song is not without its meaning,' said she, and so then she was determined to marry; but she would have a husband who knew how to give an answer when he was spoken to,—not one who looked only as if he were a great personage, for that is so tiresome. She then had all the ladies of the court drummed together; and when they heard her intention, all were very pleased, and said, 'We are very glad to hear it; it is the very thing we were thinking of.' You may believe every word, I say," said the Raven; "for I have a tame sweetheart that hops about in the palace quite free, and it was she who told me all this.

"The newspapers appeared forthwith with a border of hearts and the initials of the Princess; and therein you might read that every good-looking young man was at

liberty to come to the palace and speak to the Princess ; and he who spoke in such wise as shewed he felt himself at home there, that one the Princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes—yes," said the Raven, "you may believe it ; it is as true as I am sitting here. People came in crowds ; there was a crush and a hurry, but no one was successful either on the first or second day. They could all talk well enough when they were out in the street ; but as soon as they came inside the palace-gates, and saw the guard richly dressed in silver, and the lackeys in gold on the staircase, and the large illuminated saloons, then they were abashed ; and when they stood before the throne on which the Princess was sitting, all they could do was to repeat the last word they had uttered, and to hear it again did not interest her very much. It was just as if the people within were under a charm, and had fallen into a trance till they came out again into the street ; for then,—oh, then,—they could chatter enough. There was a whole row of them standing from the town-gates to the palace. I was there myself to look," said the Raven. "They grew hungry and thirsty ; but from the palace they got nothing whatever, not even a glass of water. Some of the cleverest, it is true, had taken bread and butter with them ; but none shared it with his neighbour, for each thought, 'Let him look hungry, and then the Princess won't have him.'"

"But Kay—little Kay," said Gerda, "when did he come ? Was he among the number ?"

"Patience, patience ; we are just come to him. It

was on the third day, when a little personage, without horse or equipage, came marching right boldly up to the palace; his eyes shone like yours, he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very shabby."

"That was Kay," cried Gerda, with a voice of delight. "Oh, now I've found him!" and she clapped her hands for joy.

"He had a little knapsack at his back," said the Raven.

"No, that was certainly his sledge," said Gerda; "for when he went away he took his sledge with him."

"That may be," said the Raven; "I did not examine him so minutely: but I know from my tame sweetheart, that when he came into the courtyard of the palace, and saw the body-guard in silver, the lackeys on the staircase, he was not the least abashed; he nodded, and said to them, 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs; for my part, I shall go in.' The saloons were gleaming with lustres,—privy-councillors and excellencies were walking about barefooted, and wore gold keys; it was enough to make any one feel uncomfortable. His boots creaked, too, so loudly; but still he was not at all afraid."

"That's Kay, for certain," said Gerda. "I know he had on new boots; I have heard them creaking in Grand-mamma's room."

"Yes, they creaked," said the Raven. "And on he went boldly up to the Princess, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel. All the ladies of the court, with their attendants and attendants' attendants, and all the

cavaliers, with their gentlemen and gentlemen's gentlemen, stood round; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. It was hardly possible to look at the gentleman's gentleman, so very haughtily did he stand in the doorway."

"It must have been terrible," said little Gerda. "And did Kay get the Princess?"

"Were I not a Raven, I should have taken the Princess myself, although I am promised. It is said he spoke as well as I speak when I talk raven language; this I learned from my tame sweetheart. He was bold and nicely behaved; he had not come to woo the Princess, but only to hear her wisdom. She pleased him, and he pleased her."

"Yes, yes; for certain that was Kay," said Gerda. "He was so clever; he could reckon fractions in his head. Oh, won't you take me to the palace?"

"That is very easily said," answered the Raven. "But how are we to manage it? I'll speak to my tame sweetheart about it, she must advise us; for so much I must tell you, such a little girl as you are will never get permission to enter."

"Oh, yes, I shall," said Gerda; "when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out directly to fetch me."

"Wait for me here on these steps," said the Raven. He moved his head backwards and forwards and flew away.

The evening was closing in when the Raven returned. "Caw—caw!" said he. "She sends you her compliments; and here is a roll for you. She took it out of the kitchen, where there is bread enough. You are hungry,

no doubt. It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for you are barefooted ; the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it ; but do not cry, you shall come in still. My sweetheart knows a little backstair that leads to the bedchamber, and she knows where she can get the key of it."

And they went into the garden in the large avenue, where one leaf was falling after the other ; and when the lights in the palace had all gradually disappeared, the Raven led little Gerda to the backdoor, which stood half open.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with anxiety and longing ! It was just as if she had been about to do something wrong ; and yet she only wanted to know if little Kay was there. Yes, he must be there. She called to mind his intelligent eyes and his long hair so vividly, she could quite see him as he used to laugh when they were sitting under the roses at home. "He will, no doubt, be glad to see you,—to hear what a long way you have come for his sake ; to know how unhappy all at home were when he did not come back."

Oh, what a fright and a joy it was !

They were now on the stairs. A single lamp was burning there ; and on the floor stood the tame Raven, turning her head on every side and looking at Gerda, who bowed as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My intended has told me so much good of you, my dear young lady," said the tame Raven. "Your tale is very affecting. If you will take the lamp, I will go before. We will go straight on, for we shall meet no one."

"I think there is somebody just behind us," said

Gerda ; and something rushed past : it was like shadowy figures on the wall ; horses with flowing manes and thin legs, huntsmen, ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"They are only dreams," said the Raven. "They come to fetch the thoughts of the high personages to the chase : 'tis well, for now you can observe them in bed all the better. But let me find, when you enjoy honour and distinction, that you possess a grateful heart."

"Tut ! that's not worth talking about," said the Raven of the woods.

They now entered the first saloon, which was of rose-coloured satin, with artificial flowers on the wall. Here the dreams were rushing past, but they hastened by so quickly that Gerda could not see the high personages. One hall was more magnificent than the other ; one might indeed well be abashed ; and at last they came into the bed-chamber. The ceiling of the room resembled a large palm-tree with leaves of glass, of costly glass ; and in the middle, from a thick golden stem, hung two beds, each of which resembled a lily. One was white, and in this lay the Princess : the other was red, and it was here that Gerda was to look for little Kay. She bent back one of the red leaves, and saw a brown neck—Oh ! that was Kay ! She called him quite loud by name, held the lamp towards him—the dreams rushed back again into the chamber—he awoke, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay !

The Prince was only like him about the neck ; but he was young and handsome. And out of the white lily leaves the Princess peeped too, and asked what was the matter.

Then little Gerda cried and told her her whole history, and all that the Ravens had done for her.

"Poor little thing!" said the Prince and the Princess. They praised the Ravens very much, and told them they were not at all angry with them, but they were not to do so again. However they should have a reward.

"Will you fly about here at liberty," asked the Princess; "or would you like to have a fixed appointment as court ravens, with all the broken bits from the kitchen?"

And both the Ravens nodded, and begged for a fixed appointment; for they thought of their old age, and said, "it was a good thing to have a provision for their old days."

And the Prince got up and let Gerda sleep in his bed, and more than this he could not do. She folded her little hands and thought, "how good men and animals are!" and she then fell asleep and slept soundly. All the dreams flew in again, and they now looked like the angels; they drew a little sledge, in which little Kay sat and nodded his head; but the whole was only a dream, and therefore it all vanished as soon as she awoke.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. They offered to let her stay at the palace, and lead a happy life; but she begged to have a little carriage with a horse in front, and for a small pair of shoes: then, she said, she would again go forth in the wide world and look for Kay.

Shoes and a muff were given her; she was, too, dressed very nicely; and when she was about to set off, a new



carriage stopped before the door. It was of pure gold, and the arms of the Prince and Princess shone like a star upon it; the coachman, the footmen, and the outriders, for outriders were there too, all wore golden crowns. The Prince and the Princess assisted her into the carriage themselves, and wished her all success. The Raven of the woods, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles. He sat beside Gerda, for he could not bear riding backwards; the other Raven stood in the doorway, and flapped her wings; she could not accompany Gerda, because she suffered from headache since she had had a fixed appointment and ate so much. The carriage was lined inside with sugar-plums, and in the seats were fruits and gingerbread.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried Prince and Princess; and Gerda wept, and the Raven wept. Thus passed the first miles; and then the Raven bade her farewell, and this was the most painful separation of all. He flew into a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the carriage, that shone from afar like a sunbeam.

FIFTH STORY.

THE LITTLE ROBBER-MAIDEN.

THEY drove through the dark wood; but the carriage shone like a torch, and it dazzled the eyes of the robbers, so that they could not bear to look at it.

"'Tis gold! 'tis gold!" cried they; and they rushed

forward, seized the horses, knocked down the little postilion, the coachman, and the servants, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"How plump, how beautiful she is! She must have been fed on nut-kernels," said the old female Robber, who had a long scrubby beard, and bushy eyebrows that hung down over her eyes: "she is as good as a fatted lamb! how nice she will be!" And then she drew out a knife, the blade of which shone so that it was quite dreadful to behold.

"Oh!" cried the woman at the same moment. She had been bitten in the ear by her own little daughter, who hung at her back; and who was so wild and unmanageable that it was quite amusing to see her. "You naughty child!" said the mother; and now she had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little Robber-child: "she shall give me her muff, and her pretty frock; she shall sleep in my bed!" And then she gave her mother another bite, so that she jumped, and ran round with the pain; and the robbers laughed, and said, "Look how she is dancing with the little one!"

"I will go into the carriage," said the little Robber-maiden; and she would have her will, for she was very spoiled, and very headstrong. She and Gerda got in; and then away they drove over the stumps of felled trees, deeper and deeper into the woods. The little Robber-maiden was as tall as Gerda, but stronger, broader-shouldered, and of dark complexion; her eyes were quite

black; they looked almost melancholy. She embraced little Gerda, and said, "They shall not kill you as long as I am not displeased with you. You are, doubtless, a princess?"

"No," said little Gerda; who then related all that had happened to her, and how much she cared about little Kay.

The little Robber-maiden looked at her with a serious air, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shall not kill you, even if I am angry with you: then I will do it myself;" and she dried Gerda's eyes, and put both her hands in the handsome muff, which was so soft and warm.

At length the carriage stopped. They were in the midst of the court-yard of a robber's castle. It was full of cracks from top to bottom; and out of the openings magpies and rooks were flying; and the great bull-dogs, each of which looked as if he could swallow a man, jumped up, but they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

In the midst of the large, old, smoking hall burnt a great fire on the stone floor. The smoke disappeared under the stones, and had to seek its own egress. In an immense caldron soup was boiling; and rabbits and hares were being roasted on a spit.

"You shall sleep with me to-night, with all my animals," said the little Robber-maiden. They had something to eat and drink; and then went into a corner, where straw and carpets were lying. Beside them, on laths and perches, sat nearly a hundred pigeons, all asleep, seemingly; but yet they moved a little when the Robber-

maiden came. "They are all mine," said she; at the same time seizing one that was next her by the legs, and shaking it so that its wings fluttered. "Kiss it," cried the little girl, and flung the pigeon in Gerda's face. "Up there is the rabble of the wood," continued she, pointing to several laths which were fastened before a hole high up in the wall; "that's the rabble; they would all fly away immediately, if they were not well fastened in. And here is my dear old Bac;" and she laid hold of the horns of a reindeer, that had a bright copper ring round its neck, and was tethered to the spot. "We are obliged to lock this fellow in too, or he would make his escape. Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp knife; he is so frightened at it!" and the little girl drew forth a long knife, from a crack in the wall, and let it glide over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal kicked; the girl laughed, and pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you intend to keep your knife while you sleep?" asked Gerda; looking at it rather fearfully.

"I always sleep with the knife," said the little Robber-maiden: "there is no knowing what may happen. But tell me now, once more, all about little Kay; and why you have started off in the wide world alone." And Gerda related all, from the very beginning: the wood-pigeons cooed above in their cage, and the others slept. The little Robber-maiden wound her arm round Gerda's neck, held the knife in the other hand, and snored so loud that every body could hear her; but Gerda could not close her eyes, for she did not know whether she was

to live or die. The Robbers sat round the fire, sang and drank; and the old female Robber jumped about so, that it was quite dreadful for Gerda to see her.

Then the Wood-pigeons said, "Coo! coo! we have seen little Kay! A white hen carries his sledge; he himself sat in the carriage of the Snow-Queen, who passed here, down just over the wood, as we lay in our nest. She blew upon us young ones; and all died except we two. Coo! coo!"

"What is that you say up there?" cried little Gerda. "Where did the Snow-Queen go to? Do you know anything about it?"

"She is no doubt gone to Lapland; for there is always snow and ice there. Only ask the reindeer, who is tethered there."

"Ice and snow is there! There it is glorious and beautiful!" said the Reindeer. "One can spring about in the large shining valleys! The Snow-Queen has her summer-tent there; but her fixed abode is high up towards the North Pole, on the Island called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay! poor little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Do you choose to be quiet?" said the Robber-maiden. "If you don't, I shall make you."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood-pigeons had said; and the little maiden looked very serious, but she nodded her head, and said, "That's no matter—that's no matter. Do you know where Lapland lies?" asked she of the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" said the animal;

and his eyes rolled in his head. "I was born and bred there;—there I leapt about on the fields of snow."

"Listen," said the Robber-maiden to Gerda. "You see that the men are gone; but my mother is still here, and will remain. However, towards morning she takes a draught out of the large flask, and then she sleeps a little: then I will do something for you." She now jumped out of bed, flew to her mother; with her arms round her neck, and pulling her by the beard, said, "Good morrow, my own sweet nanny-goat of a mother." And her mother took hold of her nose, and pinched it till it was red and blue; but this was all done out of pure love.

When the mother had taken a sup at her flask, and was having a nap, the little Robber-maiden went to the Reindeer, and said, "I should very much like to give you still many a tickling with the sharp knife, for then you are so amusing; however, I will untether you, and help you out, so that you may get back to Lapland. But you must make good use of your legs; and take this little girl for me to the palace of the Snow-Queen, where her play-fellow is. You have heard, I suppose, all she said; for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

The Reindeer gave a bound for joy. The Robber-maiden lifted up little Gerda, and took the precaution to bind her fast on the Reindeer's back; she even gave her a small cushion to sit on. "Here are your worsted leggins, for it will be cold; but the muff I shall keep for myself, for it is so very pretty. But I do not wish you to be cold. Here is a pair of lined gloves of my mother's: they just

reach up to your elbow. On with them! Now you look about the hands just like my ugly old mother!"

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you fretting," said the little Robber-maiden. "This is just the time when you ought to look pleased. Here are two loaves and a ham for you, so that you won't starve." The bread and the meat were fastened to the Reindeer's back; the little maiden opened the door, called in all the dogs, and then with her knife cut the rope that fastened the animal, and said to him, "Now, off with you; but take good care of the little girl!"

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the large wadded gloves towards the Robber-maiden, and said, "Fare-well!" and the Reindeer flew on over bush and bramble through the great wood, over moor and heath, as fast as he could go.

"Ddsa! ddsa!" was heard in the sky. It was just as if somebody was sneezing.

"These are my old northern-lights," said the Reindeer, "look how they gleam!" And on he now sped still quicker,—day and night on he went: the loaves were consumed, and the ham too; and now they were in Lapland.

SIXTH STORY.

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN.

SUDDENLY they stopped before a little house, which looked very miserable: the roof reached to the ground;

and the door was so low, that the family was obliged to creep upon their stomachs when they went in or out. Nobody was at home except an old Lapland woman, who was dressing fish by the light of an oil lamp. And the Reindeer told her the whole of Gerda's history, but first of all his own; for that seemed to him of much greater importance. Gerda was so chilled that she could not speak.

"Poor thing," said the Lapland woman, "you have far to run still. You have more than a hundred miles to go before you get to Finland; there the Snow-Queen has her country-house, and burns blue lights every evening. I will give you a few words from me, which I will write on a dried haberdine, for paper I have none; this you can take with you to the Finland woman, and she will be able to give you more information than I can."

When Gerda had warmed herself, and had eaten and drunk, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried haberdine, begged Gerda to take care of them, put her on the Reindeer, bound her fast, and away sprang the animal. "Ddsa! ddsa!" was again heard in the air; the most charming blue lights burned the whole night in the sky, and at last they came to Finland. They knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman; for as to a door, she had none.

There was such a heat inside that the Finland woman herself went about almost naked. She was diminutive and dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's clothes, pulled off her thick gloves and boots; for otherwise the heat would have been too great,—and after laying a piece

of ice on the Reindeer's head, read what was written on the fish-skin. She read it three times: she then knew it by heart; so she put the fish into the cupboard,—for it might very well be eaten, and she never threw any thing away.

Then the Reindeer related his own story first, and afterwards that of little Gerda; and the Finland woman winked her eyes, but said nothing.

“You are so clever,” said the Reindeer: “you can, I know, twist all the winds of the world together in a knot. If the seaman loosens one knot, then he has a good wind; if a second, then it blows pretty stiffly; if he undoes the third and fourth, then it rages so that the forests are upturned. Will you give the little maiden a potion, that she may possess the strength of twelve men, and vanquish the Snow-Queen?”

“The strength of twelve men!” said the Finland woman. “Much good that would be!” Then she went to a cupboard, and drew out a large skin rolled up. When she had unrolled it, strange characters were to be seen written thereon; and the Finland woman read at such a rate that the perspiration trickled down her forehead.

But the Reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked so imploringly with tearful eyes at the Finland woman, that she winked and drew the Reindeer aside into a corner, where they whispered together, while the animal got some fresh ice put on his head.

“’Tis true little Kay is at the Snow-Queen’s, and finds every thing there quite to his taste; and he thinks it

the very best place in the world: but the reason of that is, he has a splinter of glass in his eye and in his heart. These must be got out first; otherwise he will never go back to mankind, and the Snow-Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you give little Gerda nothing to take which will endue her with power over the whole?"

"I can give her no more power than what she has already. Don't you see how great it is? Don't you see how men and animals are forced to serve her; how well she gets through the world barefooted? She must not hear of her power from us: that power lies in her heart, because she is a sweet and innocent child! If she cannot get to the Snow-Queen by herself, and rid little Kay of the glass, we cannot help her. Two miles hence the garden of the Snow-Queen begins; thither you may carry the little girl. Set her down by the large bush with red berries, standing in the snow; don't stay talking, but hasten back as fast as possible." And now the Finland woman placed little Gerda on the Reindeer's back, and off he ran with all imaginable speed.

"Oh! I have not got my boots! I have not brought my gloves!" cried little Gerda. She remarked she was without them from the cutting frost: but the Reindeer dared not stand still; on he ran till he came to the great bush with the red berries, and there he set Gerda down, kissed her mouth, while large bright tears flowed from the animal's eyes, and then back he went as fast as possible. There stood poor Gerda now, without

shoes or gloves, in the very middle of dreadful icy Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could. There then came a whole regiment of snow-flakes, but they did not fall from above, and they were quite bright and shining from the Aurora Borealis. The flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda well remembered how large and strange the snow-flakes appeared when she once saw them through a magnifying-glass; but now they were large and terrific in another manner—they were all alive. They were the outposts of the Snow-Queen. They had the most wondrous shapes; some looked like large ugly porcupines; others like snakes knotted together, with their heads sticking out; and others, again, like small fat bears, with the hair standing on end: all were of dazzling whiteness—all were living snow-flakes.

Little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer. The cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which came like smoke out of her mouth. It grew thicker and thicker, and took the form of little angels, that grew more and more when they touched the earth. All had helmets on their heads, and lances and shields in their hands; they increased in numbers; and when Gerda had finished the Lord's Prayer, she was surrounded by a whole legion. They thrust at the horrid snow-flakes with their spears, so that they flew into a thousand pieces; and little Gerda walked on bravely and in security. The angels patted her hands and feet; and then she felt the

cold less, and went on quickly towards the palace of the Snow-Queen.

But now we shall see how Kay fared. He never thought of Gerda, and least of all that she was standing before the palace.

SEVENTH STORY.

WHAT TOOK PLACE IN THE PALACE OF THE SNOW-QUEEN,
AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD.

THE walls of the palace were of driving snow, and the windows and doors of cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls there, according as the snow was driven by the winds. The largest was many miles in extent; all were lighted up by the powerful Aurora Borealis, and all were so large, so empty, so icy cold, and so resplendent! Mirth never reigned there; there was never even a little bear-ball, with the storm for music, while the polar bears went on their hind-legs and shewed off their steps. Never a little tea-party of white young lady foxes; vast, cold, and empty were the halls of the Snow-Queen. The northern-lights shone with such precision that one could tell exactly when they were at their highest or lowest degree of brightness. In the middle of the empty, endless hall of snow, was a frozen lake; it was cracked in a thousand pieces, but each piece was so like the other, that it seemed the work of a cunning artificer. In the middle of this lake sat the

Snow-Queen when she was at home; and then she said she was sitting in the Mirror of Understanding, and that this was the only one and the best thing in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue, yes nearly black with cold; but he did not observe it, for she had kissed away all feeling of cold from his body, and his heart was a lump of ice. He was dragging along some pointed flat pieces of ice, which he laid together in all possible ways, for he wanted to make something with them; just as we have little flat pieces of wood to make geometrical figures with, called the Chinese Puzzle. Kay made all sorts of figures, the most complicated, for it was an ice-puzzle for the understanding. In his eyes the figures were extraordinarily beautiful, and of the utmost importance; for the bit of glass which was in his eye caused this. He found whole figures which represented a written word; but he never could manage to represent just the word he wanted—that word was “eternity;” and the Snow-Queen had said, “If you can discover that figure, you shall be your own master, and I will make you a present of the whole world and a pair of new skates.” But he could not find it out.

“I am going now to the warm lands,” said the Snow-Queen. “I must have a look down into the black caldrons.” It was the volcanoes Vesuvius and Etna that she meant. “I will just give them a coating of white, for that is as it ought to be; besides, it is good for the oranges and the grapes.” And then away she flew, and Kay sat quite alone in the empty halls of ice that

were miles long, and looked at the blocks of ice, and thought and thought till his skull was almost cracked. There he sat quite benumbed and motionless; one would have imagined he was frozen to death.

Suddenly little Gerda stepped through the great portal into the palace. The gate was formed of cutting winds; but Gerda repeated her evening prayer, and the winds were laid as though they slept; and the little maiden entered the vast, empty, cold halls. There she beheld Kay: she recognised him, flew to embrace him, and cried out, her arms firmly holding him the while, "Kay, sweet little Kay! Have I then found you at last?"

But he sat quite still, benumbed and cold. Then little Gerda shed burning tears; and they fell on his bosom, they penetrated to his heart, they thawed the lumps of ice, and consumed the splinters of the looking-glass: he looked at her, and she sang the hymn:

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
And angels descend there the children to greet."

Hereupon Kay burst into tears; he wept so much that the splinter rolled out of his eye, and he recognised her, and shouted, "Gerda, sweet little Gerda! where have you been so long? And where have I been?" He looked round him. "How cold it is here!" said he; "how empty and cold!" And he held fast by Gerda, who laughed and wept for joy. It was so beautiful, that even the blocks of ice danced about for joy; and when they were tired and laid themselves down, they formed

exactly the letters which the Snow-Queen had told him to find out; so now he was his own master, and he would have the whole world and a pair of new skates into the bargain.

Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they grew quite blooming; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was again well and merry. The Snow-Queen might come back as soon as she liked; there stood his discharge written in resplendent masses of ice.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the large hall; they talked of their old grandmother, and of the roses upon the roof; and wherever they went, the winds ceased raging, and the sun burst forth. And when they reached the bush with the red berries, they found the Reindeer waiting for them. He had brought another, a young one, with him, whose udder was filled with milk, which he gave to the little ones, and kissed their lips. They then carried Kay and Gerda,—first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves in the warm room, and learned what they were to do on their journey home; and then they went to the Lapland woman, who made some new clothes for them and repaired their sledges.

The Reindeer and the young hind leaped along beside them, and accompanied them to the boundary of the country. Here the first vegetation peeped forth; here Kay and Gerda took leave of the Lapland woman. “Farewell! farewell!” said they all. And the first green buds appeared, the first little birds began to chirrup; and out of

the wood came, riding on a magnificent horse, which Gerda knew (it was one of the leaders in the golden carriage), a young damsel with a bright-red cap on her head, and armed with pistols. It was the little Robber-maiden, who, tired of being at home, had determined to make a journey to the north; and afterwards in another direction, if that did not please her. She recognised Gerda immediately, and Gerda knew her too. It was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow for tramping about," said she to little Kay; "I should like to know, faith, if you deserve that one should run from one end of the world to the other for your sake?"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and inquired for the Prince and Princess.

"They are gone abroad," said the other.

"But the Raven?" asked little Gerda.

"Oh! the Raven is dead," answered she. "His tame sweetheart is a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg; she laments most piteously, but it's all mere talk and stuff! Now tell me what you've been doing, and how you managed to catch him."

And Gerda and Kay both told her their story.

And "Schnipp-schnapp-schnurre-basselurre," said the Robber-maiden; and she took the hands of each, and promised that if she should some day pass through the town where they lived, she would come and visit them; and then away she rode. Kay and Gerda took each other's hand: it was lovely spring-weather, with abundance of flowers and of verdure. The church-bells rang, and the children

recognised the high towers, and the large town ; it was that in which they dwelt. They entered, and hastened up to their Grandmother's room, where every thing was standing as formerly. The clock said "tick ! tack !" and the finger moved round ; but as they entered, they remarked that they were now grown up. The roses on the leads hung blooming in at the open window ; there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down on them, holding each other by the hand : they both had forgotten the cold empty splendour of the Snow-Queen, as though it had been a dream. The Grandmother sat in the bright sunshine, and read aloud from the Bible : "Unless ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven."

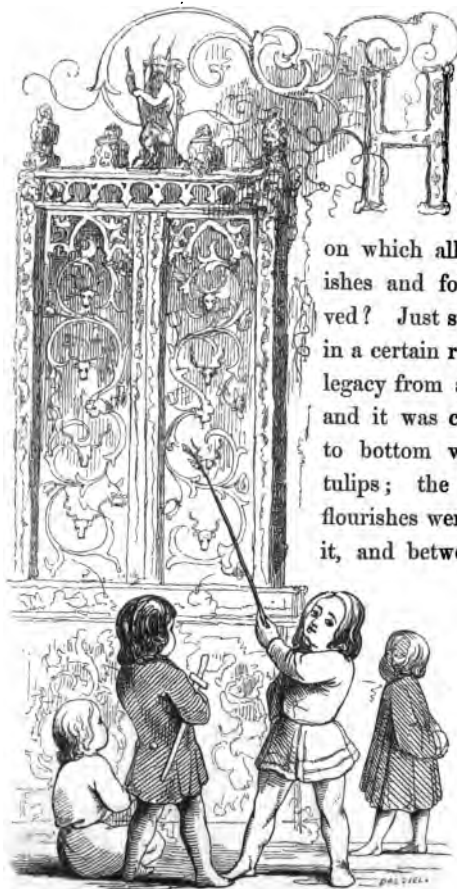
And Kay and Gerda looked in each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn :

"The rose in the valley is blooming so sweet,
And angels descend there the children to greet."

There sat the two grown-up persons ; grown-up, and yet children ; children at least in heart : and it was summer-time ; summer, glorious summer !



THE
SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEP.



HAVE you ever seen a very, very old clothes-press, quite black with age, on which all sorts of flourishes and foliage were carved? Just such a one stood in a certain room. It was a legacy from a grandmother, and it was carved from top to bottom with roses and tulips; the most curious flourishes were to be seen on it, and between them little stags popped out their heads with zig-zag antlers. But on the top a whole man was carved. True he was laughable to look at; for he shewed his teeth—laughing one could not call it—had goat's legs,

little horns on his head, and a long beard. The children in the room always called him General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs, for this was a name difficult to pronounce, and there are very few who get the title: but to cut him out in wood—that was no trifle. However, there he was. He looked down upon the table and towards the mirror, for there a charming little porcelain Shepherdess was standing. Her shoes were gilded, her gown was tastefully looped up with a red rose, and she had a golden hat and cloak; in short, she was most exquisite. Close by stood a little Chimney-sweep, as black as a coal, but of porcelain too. He was just as clean and pretty as another; as to his being a sweep, that was only what he represented; and the porcelain manufacturer could just as well have made a prince of him as a chimney-sweep, if he had chosen; one was as easy as the other.

There he stood so prettily with his ladder,¹ and with a little round face as fair and as rosy as that of the Shepherdess. In reality this was a fault; for a little black he certainly ought to have been. He was quite close to the Shepherdess; both stood where they had been placed; and as soon as they were put there, they had mutually promised each other eternal fidelity; for they suited each

¹ The flues in Germany are much larger than in the houses in England; so much so indeed, that men only are employed as sweeps. The lower part being very wide, they have short ladders of about eight feet in length to enable them to get up to the narrower part, where they then scramble on in the usual way.—C. B.

other exactly—they were young, they were of the same porcelain, and both equally fragile.

Close to them stood another figure three times as large as they were. It was an old Chinese, that could nod his head. He was of porcelain too, and said that he was grandfather of the little Shepherdess; but this he could not prove. He asserted, moreover, that he had authority over her, and that was the reason he had nodded his assent to the General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goatslegs, who paid his addresses to the Shepherdess.

"In him," said the old Chinese, "you will have a husband who, I verily believe, is of mahogany. You will be Mrs. Goatslegs, the wife of a General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent, who has his shelves full of plate, besides what is hidden in secret drawers and recesses."

"I will not go into the dark cupboard," said the little Shepherdess; "I have heard say that he has eleven wives of porcelain in there already."

"Then you may be the twelfth," said the Chinese. "To-night, as soon as the old clothes-press cracks, as sure as I am a Chinese, we will keep the wedding." And then he nodded his head, and fell asleep.

But the little Shepherdess wept, and looked at her beloved—at the porcelain Chimney-sweep.

"I implore you," said she, "fly hence with me; for here it is impossible for us to remain."

"I will do all you ask," said the little Chimney-sweep. "Let us instantly leave this place. I think my trade will enable me to support you."

"If we were only down from the table," said she. "I shall not be happy till we are far from here, and free."

He consoled her, and shewed her how she was to set her little foot on the carved border and on the gilded foliage which twined around the leg of the table, brought his ladder to her assistance, and at last both were on the floor; but when they looked towards the old clothes-press, they observed a great stir. All the carved stags stretched their heads out farther, raised their antlers, and turned round their heads. The General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent gave a jump, and called to the old Chinese, "They are eloping! they are eloping!"

At this she grew a little frightened, and jumped quickly over the ridge into the drawer.

Here lay three or four packs of cards, which were not complete, and a little puppet-show, which was set up as well as it was possible to do. A play was being performed, and all the ladies, Diamonds as well as Hearts, Clubs and Spades, sat in the front row, and fanned themselves with the tulips they held in their hands, while behind them stood the varlets. The play was about two persons who could not have each other, at which the Shepherdess wept, for it was her own history.

"I cannot bear it longer," said she; "I must get out of the drawer."

But when she had got down on the floor, and looked up to the table, she saw that the old Chinese was awake, and that his whole body was rocking.

"The old Chinese is coming!" cried the little Shep-

herdess ; and down she fell on her porcelain knee, so frightened was she.

"A thought has struck me," said the Chimney-sweep ; "let us creep into the great Pot-pourri Jar that stands in the corner ; there we can lie on roses and lavender, and if he comes after us, throw dust in his eyes."

"'Tis of no use," said she. "Besides, I know that the old Chinese and the Pot-pourri Jar were once betrothed ; and when one has been once on such terms, a little regard always lingers behind. No ; for us there is nothing left but to wander forth into the wide world."

"Have you really courage to go forth with me into the wide world ?" asked the Chimney-sweep tenderly. "Have you considered how large it is, and that we can never come back here again ?"

"I have," said she.

And the Sweep gazed fixedly upon her, and then said, "My way lies up the chimney. Have you really courage to go with me through the stove, and to creep through all the flues ? We shall then get into the main flue, after which I am not at a loss what to do. Up we mount, then, so high, that they can never reach us ; and at the top is an opening that leads out into the world."

And he led her towards the door of the stove.

"It looks quite black," said she ; but still she went with him, and on through all the intricacies of the interior, and through the flues, where a pitchy darkness reigned.

"We are now in the chimney," said she ; "and behold, behold, above us is shining the loveliest star !"

It was a real star in the sky that shone straight down upon them, as if to shew them the way. They climbed and they crept higher and higher. It was a frightful way ; but he lifted her up, he held her, and shewed her the best places on which to put her little porcelain feet ; and thus they reached the top of the chimney, and seated themselves on the edge of it ; for they were tired, which is not to be wondered at.

The heaven and all its stars were above them, and all the roofs of the town below them ; they could see far around, far away into the world. The poor Shepherdess had never pictured it to herself thus ; she leaned her little head on her Sweep, and wept so bitterly that all the gilding of her girdle came off.

“Oh, this is too much !” said she ; “I cannot bear it. The world is too large. Oh, were I but again on the little table under the looking-glass ! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed you into the wide world ; now, if you really love me, you may follow me home again.”

And the Chimney-sweep spoke sensibly to her, spoke to her about the old Chinese and the General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent ; but she sobbed so violently, and kissed her little Sweep so passionately, that he was obliged to give way, although it was not right to do so.

So now down they climbed again with great difficulty, crept through the flue and into the stove, where they listened behind the door, to discover if anybody was in the room. It was quite still ; they peeped, and there, on

the floor, in the middle of the room, lay the old Chinese. He had fallen from the table in trying to follow the fugitives, and was broken in three pieces; his whole back was but a stump, and his head had rolled into a corner, while General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goats-legs was standing where he had ever stood, absorbed in thought.

"How dreadful!" said the little Shepherdess. "My old grandfather is dashed to pieces, and we are the cause. I never can survive the accident." And she wrung her little hands in agony.

"He can be mended," said the Chimney-sweep; "he can easily be mended. Only do not be so hasty. If we glue his back together, and rivet his neck well, he will be as good as new, and will be able to say enough disagreeable things to us yet."

"Do you think so?" said she; and then they clambered up again to the table on which they had stood before.

"You see," said the Sweep, "we might have spared ourselves these disagreeables, after all."

"If we had but mended my old grandfather!" said the Shepherdess. "Does it cost much?"

And mended he was. The family had his back glued, and his neck riveted, so that he was as good as new, except that he could not nod.

"Meseems, you have grown haughty since you were dashed to pieces," said General-clothes-press-inspector-head-superintendent Goats-legs. "However, I think there is

not so very much to be proud of. Am I to have her, or am I not?"

The Chimney-sweep and the little Shepherdess looked so touchingly at the old Chinese; they feared he would nod, but he could not, and it was disagreeable to him to tell a stranger that he had constantly a rivet in his neck. So the little porcelain personages remained together. They blessed the old grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they fell to pieces.



THE ELFIN MOUND.



SEVERAL large Lizards were running quickly into the cleft of an old tree : they could understand each other perfectly, for they all spoke the lizard language.

“What a noise there is in the old Elfin mound!” said one of the Lizards.

“What a rumbling and uproar! For two nights I have not been able to close my eyes, and might just as well have had a toothache, for then I certainly should not have slept.”

“There is a something going on there,” said the other Lizard. “They let the mound stand on four red poles till the crowing of the cock, to have it thoroughly aired ; and the Elfin damsels have learnt new dances, in which there is some stamping. A something is going on, I’m sure.”

“Yes ; I have spoken to an Earthworm of my acquaintance,” said the third Lizard. “The Earthworm came direct from the mound, where day and night he had

been rummaging about in the ground. He had heard a good deal ; for he can see nothing, poor wretch, but eaves-dropping and listening he understands to perfection. Visitors are expected at the Elfin mound ; visitors of rank, but who they were, the Earthworm either would not or could not say. All the Jacks-o'-the-lantern have been ordered to prepare a procession by torch-light ; and all the silver and gold, of which there is plenty in the Elfin mound, will be polished and laid in the moonshine."

"But who can the strangers be?" said all the Lizards. "What can be going on? Listen! what a humming and buzzing!"

At the same instant the Elfin mound opened, and an elderly Elfin damsel, without a back, but for the rest very respectably dressed, came tripping forth. It was the old Elfin King's housekeeper ; she was distantly related to him, and wore an amber heart on her forehead. Her feet were so nimble—trip—trap—trip—trap!—how she skipped along, right away to the moor to the Night-raven.

"You will be invited to the Elfin mound, and that to-night," said she. "But would you not do us a great favour, and take charge of the invitations? As you do not give parties yourself, you must do us this service. Strangers of high rank are coming to us ; magicians of no small importance, let me tell you ; and so the old Elfin King wants to shew himself off to advantage."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the Night-raven.

"Why, to the grand ball every body may come ; men even, if they do but speak in their sleep, or are able to do

something in our way. But the principal banquet is to be very select; those of the first rank only are to be invited. I have had a long discussion with the Elfin King; for, according to my notions, we cannot even ask ghosts. The Sea-god and his daughters must be invited first; 'tis true, they don't much like coming on dry land, but they will have probably a wet stone to sit upon, or maybe something better still; and then, I think, they will not refuse for this once. We must have the old Mountain Dwarfs of the first class, with tails; the Elf of the Brook, and the Brownie; and then, I think, we must not omit the Swart Elf, and the Skeleton Horse: they belong, it is true, to the clergy, who are not of our sort; however, 'tis their office, and they are, moreover, nearly related to us, and are continually paying us visits."

"Caw!" said the Night-raven, and flew away to invite the company.

The Elfin maidens were already dancing on the Elfin mound: they danced with long shawls, woven of haze and moonshine; and to all who like this sort of dancing, it seems pretty. In the centre of the Elfin mound was the great hall, splendidly ornamented; the floor was washed with moonshine, and the walls were rubbed with witches' fat, so that they shone in the light like tulip-leaves. In the kitchen there were a great quantity of frogs among the dishes; adders' skins, with little children's fingers inside; salad of mushroom-seed; wet mice's snouts and hemlock; beer, from the brewery of the old Witch of the Moor; sparkling saltpetre wine from a grave-cellar,—all very

substantial eating : rusty nails and church-window glass were among the delicacies and kick-shaws.

The old Elfin King had his golden crown polished with pounded slate-pencil. It was the pencil of the head-scholar ; and to obtain this one is very difficult for the Elfin King.

They hung up the curtains in the bed-chamber, and fastened them with adder spittle. There was, indeed, a humming and a buzzing in the Elfin mound !

"Now we must perfume the place with singed hair and pig's bristles ; and then I think I shall have done my share of the business," said the little Elfin damsel.

"Dear papa," said the least of the daughters, "shall I now know who the high visitors are?"

"Well then," said he, "I suppose I must tell you. Two of my daughters are to shew themselves off, in order to get married. Two will certainly be married. The aged Mountain Elf of Norway, who lives in the old Dovre-field, and possesses many craggy castles, and a gold-mine too, —which is a better thing than one imagines,—is coming here with his two sons ; and they are to choose themselves wives. The hoary Elf is an honest old Norwegian, merry and straightforward. I have known him since many a long day, when we drank together to better acquaintance and good fellowship. He came here to fetch his wife,—she is dead now,—who was the daughter of the Rock-king. Oh, how I long to see the old northern Elf ! His sons, people say, are coarse blustering fellows ; but maybe one wrongs them, and when older they will improve."

"And when will they come?" asked his daughter.

"That depends on wind and weather," said the Elfin King. "They travel economically; they will come here by water. I wish they would go through Sweden; but the old gentleman has no inclination that way. He does not keep pace with the time; and that I can't bear."

At the same moment two Jacks-o'-the-lantern came hopping in, one faster than the other, and for that reason one was first.

"They're coming! they're coming!" cried they.

"Give me my crown; and let me stand in the moon-shine," said the Elfin King.

The daughters held up their long shawls and bowed to the earth.

There stood the hoary Mountain Elf, with a crown of hardened icicles and polished fir-cones on his head, and wrapped up in a mantle of fur and boots of the same. His sons, on the contrary, went with open throats, for they disdained the cold.

"Is that a mound?" asked the lesser of the youths, pointing to Elfin-home. "In Norway we call such a thing a hole."

"Boy," said the father, "a mound rises upwards, and a hole goes inwards. Have you no eyes in your head?"

Now they went in to the Elfin mound, where there was very choice company, certainly; and had come together with such speed, one might have thought they had been borne thither on the breeze; however, the arrangements for every one were neat and pretty. The sea-folk sat at table

in large water-butts; and they said they felt just as if they were at home. All observed good manners at the table, except the two little Norwegian Mountain Elves, who put their feet on the board, for they thought that all they did was becoming.

"Take your feet away from the plates," said the old Elf; and then they obeyed, although not immediately. They tickled the ladies next them with fir-cones; then they pulled off their boots, to be more at their ease, and gave them to the ladies to hold for them; but their father was very different. He told about the proud Norwegian rocks, and of the waterfalls, which, covered with foam, dashed downwards, raging and roaring like thunder; he told about the salmon, that leaps up against the falling waters, when the Spirit of the flood plays on her golden harp. He related about the clear winter nights, when the bells on the sledges jingle, and the youths run with flaming torches over the smooth ice, which is so transparent that they could see how affrighted the fishes were beneath their feet. He, indeed, could recount so that one saw and heard the things he described; when, huzza! all of a sudden, the old Elf gave one of the Elfin damsels a smacking kiss; and yet they were not even distantly related.

The Elfin maidens were now to dance, simple as well-as stamping dances; and then came the most difficult one of all, the so-called "Dance out of the dance." Confound it! their legs grew so long, one did not know which was the beginning nor which was the end—one could not dis

tinguish legs from arms, all was twirling about in the air like saw-dust; and they went whizzing round to such a degree that the Skeleton Horse grew quite sick, and was obliged to leave the table.

"Brrrrr!" said the grey-headed Elf, "that's a regular Highland fling, as it's called. But what can they do besides spinning about like a whirlwind?"

"That you shall see," said the King, calling the youngest of his daughters. She was as delicate and fair as moon-light, and was the daintiest of all the sisters. She put a white wand in her mouth, and vanished. That was her art.

But the old Mountain Elf said, "This was an art he should not at all like in his wife, nor did he think his sons would either."

The other could walk beside her own self, as though she had a shadow, which is a thing Elves never have.

The third one's talent was of a very different kind; she had learned in the brewery of the Witch of the Moor, and she knew how to lard alder-wood with glow-worms.

"She would make a good housewife," said the Mountain Elf, blinking, for he did not at all like drinking so much.

Then came the fourth Elfin maiden; she had a large golden harp, and when she touched the first string, everybody lifted up the left foot, for the Elves are all left-sided; and when she touched the next, everybody was forced to do whatever she pleased.

"That is a dangerous damsel," said the Mountain Elf;

but both his sons went out of the Elfin mound, for they were tired of it.

“What can the next daughter do?” asked the old Elf.

“I have learned to love the Norwegians,” said she; “and I will not marry unless I can go to Norway.”

But the youngest of the sisters whispered into the old Elf’s ear, “She only says that, because she has heard, in an old Norwegian rhyme, that when even the world is at an end, the rocks of Norway will stand firm; and that’s the reason she wants to go there, for she is greatly afraid of death.”

“Ho! ho!” said the old Elf; “that’s the way the wind blows, is it? But what can the seventh and last do?”

“The sixth comes before the seventh,” said the Elfin King, for he knew how to count; but the sixth at first would not come forward.

“I can do nothing except tell people the truth,” said she. “No one troubles about me, and I have enough to do to get my shroud ready.”

Now came the seventh and last. And what could she do? She could tell as many fairy-tales as she chose.

“Here are my five fingers,” said the old Mountain Elf. “For each one tell me a story.”

And the Elfin maiden took hold of him by the wrist, and he laughed till he was almost choked; and when she came to the finger that wore a golden ring, just as if it knew that matrimony was going on, the old Elf said, “Hold fast what you have! The hand is yours! I will take you myself to wife!”

And the Elfin maiden said that the fairy-tale to the ring-finger and to the little finger were wanting.

“ Oh, we’ll hear them in winter,” said the old Elf; “ and about the fir-tree too, and about the birch, and the gifts of the wood-nymphs, and about the crackling frost. You shall have opportunities enough of telling stories, for no one understands that yonder. And there we will sit in our rocky dwelling, where the pine-torch is burning, and where we drink mead out of the golden horns of the old Norwegian kings; I got some as a present from the Water-spirit. And when we are sitting so together, Garbo will come to pay us a visit, and he will sing to you all the songs of the mountain maidens. How merry we shall be! The salmon will leap in the waterfall, and dash against the walls of rock; but he will not be able to come in to us, after all! Yes, yes; one leads a happy, comfortable life in dear old Norway! But where are the boys?”

Where were they? Why, they were running about the fields, blowing out the wills-o’-the-wisp that were coming quite orderly to have a procession with torches.

“ What’s all this harum-scarum about?” said the old Elf. “ I have taken a step-mother for you; methinks now you may choose a wife too.”

But they said they liked speechifying and boon companionship better, and had no taste for matrimony; and so they made speeches, tossed off their glasses, and turned them topsy-turvy, to shew that they were quite empty. They then pulled off their coats, and lay down on the table to sleep. But the old Elf danced round the room with his

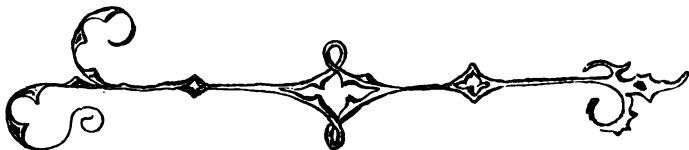
young bride, and exchanged boots with her; for that is much more genteel than exchanging rings.

“The cock is crowing!” said the elderly damsel who attended to the housekeeping. “We must now bolt the shutters, lest the sun should spoil our complexions.”

And then the mound closed.

The Lizards ran about and up and down the cleft tree, and one said to the other, “How much I like the old Mountain Elf!”

“I like the merry boys better,” said the Earthworm; but then he could not see, poor wretch!



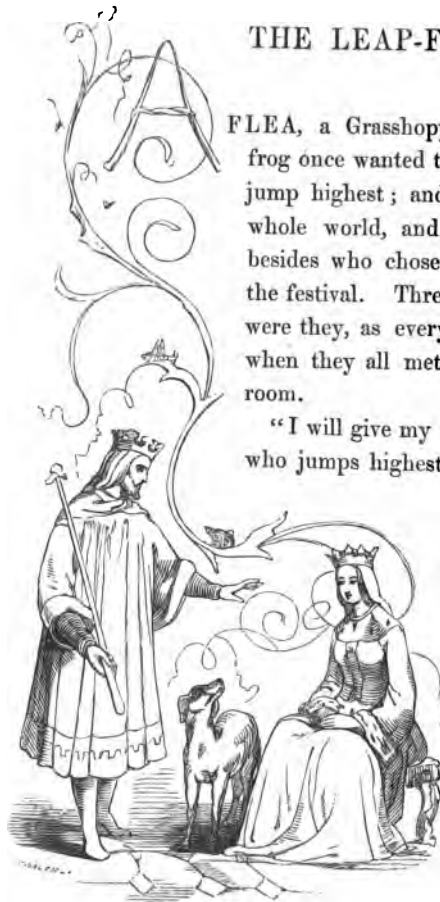
THE LEAP-FROG.

FLEA, a Grasshopper, and a Leap-frog once wanted to see which could jump highest ; and they invited the whole world, and every body else besides who chose to come, to see the festival. Three famous jumpers were they, as every one would say, when they all met together in the room.

"I will give my daughter to him who jumps highest," exclaimed the

King ; "for it is not so amusing where there is no prize to jump for."

The Flea was the first to step forward. He had exquisite manners, and bowed to the company on all sides ; for he



had noble blood, and was, moreover, accustomed to the society of man alone ; and that makes a great difference.

Then came the Grasshopper. He was considerably heavier, but he was well-mannered, and wore a green uniform, which he had by right of birth ; he said, moreover, that he belonged to a very ancient Egyptian family, and that in the house where he then was he was thought much of. The fact was, he had been just brought out of the fields, and put in a pasteboard house, three stories high, all made of court-cards with the coloured side inwards ; and doors and windows cut out of the body of the Queen of Hearts. " I sing so well," said he, " that sixteen native grasshoppers who have chirped from infancy, and yet got no house built of cards to live in, grew thinner than they were before for sheer vexation when they heard me."

It was thus that the Flea and the Grasshopper gave an account of themselves, and thought they were quite good enough to marry a princess.

The Leap-frog said nothing ; but people gave it as their opinion that he therefore thought the more ; and when the house-dog snuffed at him with his nose, he confessed the Leap-frog was of good family. The old councillor, who had had three orders given him to make him hold his tongue, asserted that the Leap-frog was a prophet ; for that one could see on his back if there would be a severe or mild winter, and that was what one could not see even on the back of the man who writes the almanac.

" I say nothing, it is true," exclaimed the King ; " but I have my own opinion notwithstanding."

Now the trial was to take place. The Flea jumped so high that nobody could see where he went to ; so they all asserted he had not jumped at all; and that was dishonourable.

The Grasshopper jumped only half as high; but he leaped into the King's face, who said that was ill-mannered.

The Leap-frog stood still for a long time lost in thought; it was believed at last he would not jump at all.

"I only hope he is not unwell," said the house-dog; when, pop! he made a jump all on one side into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a little golden stool close by.

Hereupon the King said, "There is nothing above my daughter; therefore to bound up to her is the highest jump that can be made: but for this, one must possess understanding, and the Leap-frog has shewn that he *has* understanding. He is brave and intellectual."

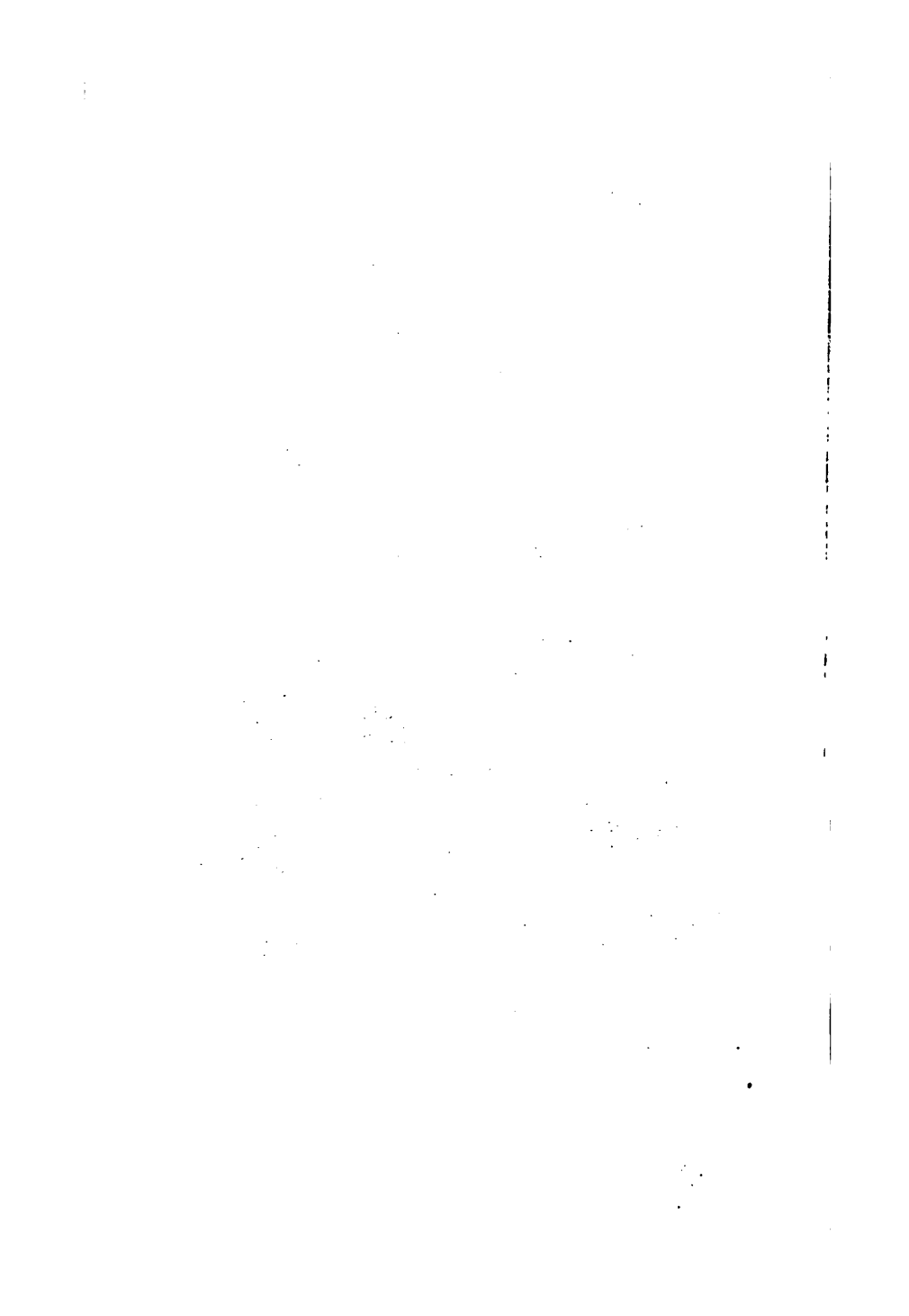
And so he won the Princess.

"It's all the same to me," said the Flea; "she may have the old Leap-frog, for all I care. I jumped the highest; but in this world merit seldom meets its reward. A fine exterior is what people look at now-a-days."

The Flea then went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

The Grasshopper sat without on a green bank, and reflected on worldly things; and he said too, "Yes, a fine exterior is every thing—a fine exterior is what people care about." And then he began chirping his peculiar melancholy song, from which we have taken this history; and which may, very possibly, be all untrue, although it does stand here printed in black and white.





THE ELDER-BUSH.



ONCE upon a time there was a little boy who had taken cold. He had gone out and got his feet wet; though nobody could imagine how it had happened, for it was quite dry weather. So his mother undressed him, put him to bed, and had the tea-pot brought in, to make him a good cup of elder-flower tea. Just at that moment the merry old man came in who lived up a-top of the house all alone; for he had neither wife nor children,—but he liked children very much, and knew so many fairy-tales, that it was quite delightful.

“Now drink your tea,” said the boy’s mother; “then, perhaps, you may hear a fairy-tale.”

“If I had but something new to tell,” said the old man. “But how did the child get his feet wet?”

“That is the very thing that nobody can make out,” said his mother.

“Am I to hear a fairy-tale?” asked the little boy.

“Yes, if you can tell me exactly—for I must know

that first—how deep the gutter is in the little street opposite, that you pass through in going to school.”

“Just up to the middle of my boot,” said the child; “but then I must go into the deep hole.”

“Ah, ah! that’s where the wet feet came from,” said the old man. “I ought now to tell you a story; but I don’t know any more.”

“You can make one in a moment,” said the little boy. “My mother says that all you look at can be turned into a fairy-tale; and that you can find a story in every thing.”

“Yes, but such tales and stories are good for nothing. The right sort come of themselves; they tap at my forehead and say, ‘Here we are.’”

“Won’t there be a tap soon?” asked the little boy. And his mother laughed, put some elder-flowers in the tea-pot, and poured boiling water upon them.

“Do tell me something! Pray do!”

“Yes, if a fairy-tale would come of its own accord; but they are proud and haughty, and come only when they choose. Stop!” said he, all on a sudden; “I have it! Pay attention! There is one in the tea-pot!”

And the little boy looked at the tea-pot. The cover rose more and more; and the elder-flowers came forth so fresh and white, and shot up long branches. Out of the spout even did they spread themselves on all sides, and grew larger and larger; it was a splendid Elder-bush, a whole tree; and it reached into the very bed, and pushed the curtains aside. How it bloomed! And what an odour! In the middle of the bush sat a friendly-looking old woman

in a most strange dress. It was quite green, like the leaves of the elder, and was trimmed with large white elder-flowers ; so that at first one could not tell whether it was a stuff, or a natural green and real flowers.

“ What’s that woman’s name ? ” asked the little boy.

“ The Greeks and Romans,” said the old man, “ called her a Dryad ; but that we do not understand. The people who live in the New Booths¹ have a much better name for her ; they call her ‘ old Granny,’—and she it is to whom you are to pay attention. Now listen, and look at the beautiful Elder-bush.

“ Just such another large blooming Elder-tree stands near the New Booths. It grew there in the corner of a little miserable court-yard ; and under it sat of an afternoon, in the most splendid sunshine, two old people ; an old, old seaman, and his old, old wife. They had great-grand-children, and were soon to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage ; but they could not exactly recollect the date : and old Granny sat in the tree, and looked as pleased as now. ‘ I know the date,’ said she ; but those below did not hear her, for they were talking about old times.

“ ‘ Yes, can’t you remember when we were very little,’ said the old seaman, ‘ and ran and played about ? it was the very same court-yard where we now are, and we stuck slips in the ground, and made a garden.’

“ ‘ I remember it well,’ said the old woman ; ‘ I remember it quite well. We watered the slips, and one of

¹ A row of buildings for seamen in Copenhagen.

them was an Elder-bush. It took root, put forth green shoots, and grew up to be the large tree under which we old folks are now sitting.'

" 'To be sure,' said he. 'And there in the corner stood a water-pail, where I used to swim my boats.'

" 'True; but first we went to school to learn somewhat,' said she; 'and then we were confirmed. We both cried; but in the afternoon we went up the Round Tower, and looked down on Copenhagen, and far far away over the water; then we went to Friedericksberg, where the King and the Queen were sailing about in their splendid barges.'

" 'But I had a different sort of sailing to that, later; and that, too, for many a year; a long way off, on great voyages.'

" 'Yes, many a time have I wept for your sake,' said she. 'I thought you were dead and gone, and lying down in the deep waters. Many a night have I got up to see if the wind had not changed: and changed it had, sure enough; but you never came. I remember so well one day, when the rain was pouring down in torrents, the scavengers were before the house where I was in service, and I had come up with the dust, and remained standing at the door—it was dreadful weather—when just as I was there, the postman came and gave me a letter. It was from you! What a tour that letter had made! I opened it instantly and read: I laughed and wept. I was so happy. In it I read that you were in warm lands where the coffee-tree grows. What a blessed land that must be! You related so much, and I saw it all while the rain was pouring down,

and I standing there with the dust-box. At the same moment came some one who embraced me.'

" 'Yes; but you gave him a good box on his ear, that made it tingle!'

" 'But I did not know it was you. You arrived as soon as your letter, and you were so handsome—that you still are—and had a long yellow silk handkerchief round your neck, and a bran new hat on: oh, you were so dashing! Good heavens! what weather it was, and what a state the street was in!'

" 'And then we married,' said he; 'don't you remember? And then we had our first little boy, and then Mary, and Nicholas, and Peter, and Christian.'

" 'Yes, and how they all grew up to be honest people, and were beloved by every body.'

" 'And their children also have children,' said the old sailor; 'yes, those are our grandchildren full of strength and vigour. It was, methinks, about this season that we had our wedding.'

" 'Yes, this very day is the fiftieth anniversary of the marriage,' said Old Granny, sticking her head between the two old people; who thought it was their neighbour who nodded to them. They looked at each other, and held one another by the hand. Soon after came their children and their grandchildren; for they knew well enough that it was the day of the fiftieth anniversary, and had come with their congratulations that very morning; but the old people had forgotten it, although they were able to remember all that had happened many years ago. And the Elder-bush sent

forth a strong odour in the sun, that was just about to set, and shone right in the old people's faces. They both looked so rosy-cheeked; and the youngest of the grandchildren danced around them, and called out quite delighted, that there was to be something very splendid that evening,—they were all to have hot potatoes. And old Nanny nodded in the bush, and shouted 'hurrah!' with the rest."

"But that is no fairy-tale," said the little boy, who was listening to the story.

"The thing is, you must understand it," said the narrator; "let us ask old Nanny."

"That was no fairy-tale, 'tis true," said old Nanny; "but now it's coming. The most wonderful fairy-tales grow out of that which is reality; were that not the case, you know, my magnificent Elder-bush could not have grown out of the tea-pot." And then she took the little boy out of bed, laid him on her bosom, and the branches of the Elder-tree, full of flowers, closed around her. They sat in an aerial dwelling, and it flew with them through the air. Oh, it was wondrous beautiful! Old Nanny had grown all of a sudden a young and pretty maiden; but her robe was still the same green stuff with white flowers, which she had worn before. On her bosom she had a real elder-flower, and in her yellow waving hair a wreath of the flowers; her eyes were so large and blue that it was a pleasure to look at them; she kissed the boy, and now they were of the same age and felt alike.

Hand in hand they went out of the bower, and they

were standing in the beautiful garden of their home. Near the green lawn papa's walking-stick was tied, and for the little ones it seemed to be endowed with life; for as soon as they got astride it, the round polished knob was turned into a magnificent neighing head, a long black mane fluttered in the breeze, and four slender yet strong legs shot out. The animal was strong and handsome, and away they went at full gallop round the lawn. "Huzza! now we are riding miles off," said the boy; "we are riding away to the castle where we were last year!" And on they rode round the grass-plot; and the little maiden, who, we know, was no one else but old Nanny, kept on crying out, "Now we are in the country! Don't you see the farm-house yonder? and there is an elder-tree standing beside it; and the cock is scraping away the earth for the hens, look, how he struts! And now we are close to the church. It lies high upon the hill, between the large oak-trees, one of which is half-decayed. And now we are by the smithy, where the fire is blazing, and where the half-naked men are banging with their hammers till the sparks fly about. Away! away! to the beautiful country-seat!" And all that the little maiden, who sat behind on the stick, spoke of flew by in reality. The boy saw it all, and yet they were only going round the grass-plot. Then they played in a side avenue, and marked out a little garden on the earth; and they took elder-blossoms from their hair, planted them, and they grew just like those the old people planted when they were children, as related before. They went hand in hand, as the old people had done when they

were children ; but not to the Round Tower or to Friedericksberg ; no, the little damsel wound her arms round the boy, and then they flew far away through all Denmark. And spring came, and summer ; and then it was autumn, and then winter ; and a thousand pictures were reflected in the eye and in the heart of the boy ; and the little girl always sang to him, " This you will never forget." And during their whole flight the Elder-tree smelt so sweet and odorous ; he remarked the roses and the fresh beeches, but the Elder-tree had a more wondrous fragrance, for its flowers hung on the breast of the little maiden ; and there too did he often lay his head during the flight.

" It is lovely here in Spring !" said the young maiden. And they stood in a beech-wood that had just put on its first green, where the woodroof¹ at their feet sent forth its fragrance, and the pale-red anemony looked so pretty among the verdure. " Oh, would it were always spring in the sweetly-smelling Danish beech-forests !"

" It is lovely here in Summer !" said she. And she flew past old castles of by-gone days of chivalry, where the red walls and the embattled gables were mirrored in the canal, where the swans were swimming, and peered up into the old cool avenues. In the fields the corn was waving like the sea ; in the ditches red and yellow flowers were growing ; while wild drone-flowers and blooming convolvuluses were creeping in the hedges ; and towards evening rose the moon round and large, and the hay-cocks in the meadows smelt so sweetly. " This one never forgets !"

¹ *Asperula odorata*.

“It is lovely here in Autumn!” said the little maiden. And suddenly the atmosphere grew as blue again as before; the forest grew red, and green, and yellow-coloured. The dogs came leaping along, and whole flocks of wild-fowl flew over the cairn, where blackberry-bushes were hanging round the old stones. The sea was dark blue, covered with ships full of white sails; and in the barn old women, maidens, and children were sitting, picking hops into a large cask; the young sang songs, but the old told fairy-tales of mountain-sprites and soothsayers. Nothing could be more charming.

“It is delightful here in Winter!” said the little maiden. And all the trees were covered with hoar-frost; they looked like white corals; the snow crackled under foot, as if one had new boots on; and one falling star after the other was seen in the sky. The Christmas-tree was lighted in the room; presents were there, and good-humour reigned. In the country the violin sounded in the room of the peasant; the newly-baked cakes were attacked; even the poorest child said, “It is really delightful here in Winter!”

Yes, it was delightful; and the little maiden shewed the boy every thing; and the Elder-tree still was fragrant, and the red flag, with the white cross, was still waving: the flag under which the old seaman in the New Booths had sailed. And the boy grew up to be a lad, and was to go forth in the wide world—far, far away to warm lands, where the coffee-tree grows; but at his departure the little maiden took an elder-blossom from her bosom, and gave it him to keep; and it was placed between the leaves of his

Prayer-Book; and when in foreign lands he opened the book, it was always at the place where the keepsake-flower lay; and the more he looked at it, the fresher it became; he felt, as it were, the fragrance of the Danish groves, and from among the leaves of the flowers he could distinctly see the little maiden, peeping forth with her bright blue eyes;—and then she whispered, “It is delightful here in Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter;” and a hundred visions glided before his mind.

Thus passed many years, and he was now an old man, and sat with his old wife under the blooming tree. They held each other by the hand, as the old grandfather and grandmother yonder in the New Booths did, and they talked exactly like them of old times, and of the fiftieth anniversary of their wedding. The little maiden, with the blue eyes, and with elder-blossoms in her hair, sat in the tree, nodded to both of them, and said, “To-day is the fiftieth anniversary!” And then she took two flowers out of her hair, and kissed them. First, they shone like silver, then like gold; and when they laid them on the heads of the old people, each flower became a golden crown. So there they both sat, like a king and a queen, under the fragrant tree, that looked exactly like an elder: the old man told his wife the story of “Old Nanny,” as it had been told him when a boy. And it seemed to both of them it contained much that resembled their own history; and those parts that were like it pleased them best.

“Thus it is,” said the little maiden in the tree, “some call me ‘Old Nanny,’ others a ‘Dryad;’ but, in reality, my

name is 'Remembrance:' 'tis I who sit in the tree that grows and grows! I can remember; I can tell things! Let me see if you have my flower still?"

And the old man opened his Prayer-Book. There lay the elder-blossom, as fresh as if it had been placed there but a short time before; and Remembrance nodded, and the old people, decked with crowns of gold, sat in the flush of the evening sun. They closed their eyes, and—and —! Yes, that's the end of the story!

The little boy lay in his bed; he did not know if he had dreamed or not, or if he had been listening while some one told him the story. The tea-pot was standing on the table, but no elder-tree was growing out of it; and the old man, who had been talking, was just on the point of going out at the door, and he did go.

"How splendid that was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been to warm countries."

"So I should think," said his mother. "When one has drunk two good cupfulls of elder-flower tea, 'tis likely enough one goes into warm climates;" and she tucked him up nicely, lest he should take cold. "You have had a good sleep while I have been sitting here, and arguing with him whether it was a story or a fairy-tale."

"And where is Old Nanny?" asked the little boy.

"In the tea-pot," said his mother; "and there she may remain."

THE RED SHOES.



HERE was once a pretty delicate little girl who was always obliged to go barefooted in summer, and to wear heavy wooden shoes in winter ; for she was very poor, and in this manner her little feet grew quite red, — terribly red.

In the middle of the village lived the shoemaker's wife ; and the old woman sewed together a small pair of shoes, as well as she was able, out of strips of cloth. They were very clumsy ; but it was kindly meant, and these shoes the little girl was to have. Her name was Karen.

On the very day her mother was buried she got the red shoes, and wore them for the first time. They were not fit for mourning, it is true ; but she had no others ; so she put them on her little bare feet, and thus followed the humble coffin to the grave.

At the same moment a large old-fashioned carriage passed by, and in it there sat a stout Old Lady ; she looked at the child, and took pity on her ; and said to the clergyman, " Prithee give the child to me ; I will take care of her."

And Karen thought all this was owing to the red shoes ; but the Old Lady said they were ugly : and so they were burned. Karen herself was dressed nicely, and she was taught to read and sew ; and people said she was a pretty little thing ; but the Mirror said, "You are more than pretty ; you are beautiful."

It happened that the Queen travelled through the country ; and she had her little daughter, who was a princess, with her ; and all the people went in crowds to the palace to see her. Karen went with the rest ; and there stood the little Princess, in a fine white dress, at the window, to be gazed at. She had neither train nor crown of gold ; but charming red morocco shoes, which were as different as could be from those the old shoemaker's wife had once made for Karen. There is, after all, nothing in the world to be compared to red morocco shoes !

Karen was now old enough to be confirmed ; so she had new things, and she was to have new shoes too. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot in his own room, where large glass-cases were standing, filled with the most exquisite new shoes and boots. It looked so pretty ; but the Old Lady could not see well, so it gave her no pleasure. Amid the shoes stood a red pair, exactly like those that the Princess had worn ; oh, how beautiful they were ! The Shoemaker said they had been made for an earl's daughter, but they had not fitted well.

"Why that is surely morocco !" said the Old Lady. "How they shine !"

"Yes, how they shine!" said Karen. They fitted, and were bought; but the Old Lady did not know they were red, for she would never have permitted Karen to go to be confirmed in red shoes; however, it really happened.

Every body looked at her feet; and as she went through the church, it seemed to her as if the old portraits above the grave-stones,—those pictures of clergymen and of clergymen's wives, in long black robes—fixed their eyes on her red shoes; and on them alone did she think, when the clergyman laid his hand on her head, and spoke of holy baptism, and of her covenant with God, and said that she was now to shew herself a Christian, being of riper years. Then the organ played so solemnly, the sweet voices of the children sounded, and the old clerk sang; but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

In the afternoon the Old Lady heard from every one that the child's shoes were red; and she said that red shoes were not pretty nor fitting; and that for the future, when Karen went to church, she should always wear black shoes, even if they were old ones.

Next Sunday was the communion; and Karen looked at the black shoes and looked at the red: she looked once more at the red ones, and put them on.

The sun was shining splendidly; Karen and the Old Lady went by a path through the corn, and it was rather dusty there.

At the church-door stood an old soldier on crutches, and with a strange long beard, which was more red than white; for red in truth it was. And he stooped down to

the ground, and asked the Old Lady if he should dust her shoes. Karen stretched out her little foot too. "Only look!" said the Soldier; "what nice little dancing-shoes! Sit tight when you dance!" And so saying, he gave the soles a pat with his hand.

And the Old Lady gave the Soldier a few half-pence, and entered the church with Karen.

All the people there looked at Karen's red shoes, all the pictures peered down at them too; and when Karen kneeled before the altar, and raised the golden chalice to her lips, she still thought of the red shoes, and it seemed to her as if they were swimming before her in the cup; she forgot to sing her psalm—she forgot to repeat the Lord's Prayer.

Now every body left the church, and the Old Lady got into her carriage. Karen raised her foot to follow her, when the Old Soldier, who was standing close by, said, "Only look! what nice little dancing shoes!" and, do what she would, Karen could not help making a few steps. When she had once begun, her feet kept on dancing; it was as if the shoes had power over her; she danced round the church, nor could she stop herself from doing so; till at last the coachman was obliged to run after and catch hold of her. He lifted her into the carriage, but still her feet continued dancing; so that Karen knocked and pushed the poor Old Lady terribly. At last the shoes were taken off, and her feet grew quiet.

The red shoes were put away in a closet; but Karen could not help going to have a look at them.

The Old Lady grew very ill, and it was said she could not live. She was to be nursed and waited on; and from whom could she expect more attention than from Karen? But there was a great ball in the town, and Karen was invited: she looked at the Old Lady, who certainly could not live; she looked at the red shoes, and it seemed to her as if it could be no sin to go:—she drew on the shoes; in that at least there could be no harm—and then she went to the ball and began to dance.

But when she wanted to go to the right, the shoes danced to the left; and when she wished to dance up the ball-room, the shoes danced the other way—down the stairs, through the streets, and out at the town-gates. She danced, and was forced to dance, right away into the dark forest.

There she saw something up among the trees. She thought it was the moon; but it was the Old Soldier with the red beard who was sitting there; and he nodded his head, and said, "Only look! what nice little dancing shoes!"

She now grew greatly frightened, and wanted to fling the red shoes away; but they clung fast. She tore off her stockings, but the shoes had grown on to her feet; and she danced, and was forced to dance, over meadow and field, in rain and in sunshine, by day and by night. By night it was very dreadful.

She danced into the churchyard; but the dead there did not dance, they had something much better to do than dance. She wanted to sit down on the grave of a poor person, where the bitter tansy was growing, but for her

there was no repose or rest ; and as she danced towards the open church-door, she beheld an angel there, in long white garments, with wings that reached from his shoulders to the earth. His countenance was stern and serious, and in his hand he held a broad and shining sword.

“ On shalt thou dance !” said he. “ Yes, on shalt thou dance in thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, till thy skin shrivels together like a skeleton’s ! Thou shalt dance on from door to door, and where proud vain children dwell, there shalt thou knock, that they may hear and fear thee ! Thou shalt dance on !”

“ Mercy ! mercy !” cried Karen. But she heard not what the Angel said in reply ; for the shoes bore her through the side-door out into the fields, over hedges and ditches ; still dancing, and forced to dance always.

One morning she danced by a door which she knew. Voices singing psalms were heard within, and a coffin was carried out, decked with flowers. So Karen knew that the Old Lady was dead ; and it seemed to her as if she were now deserted and alone, and as though the curse of God’s angels rested upon her.

On she danced, and was forced to dance, all the dark night. The shoes bore her over briers and stubble ; she was scratched and bleeding, and on she danced across the moor towards a lonely house. She knew that the executioner lived here ; and she tapped at the window, and said, “ Come out to me ; come out ! I cannot come in, for I am dancing !”

And the Executioner answered, “ It seems you do not

know who I am. I cut off the heads of wicked men, and I observe my axe is trembling!"

"Do not cut off my head," said Karen, "for then I could not repent of my sins! But my feet with the red shoes, cut them off."

And then she confessed all her sins; and the Executioner cut off her feet with the red shoes; and they danced off with the little feet over the fields right away to the gloomy forest.

The man made her a pair of feet of wood, and gave her crutches, and taught her a psalm which sinners always sing. She then kissed the hand that had held the axe, and wandered forth across the moor.

"I have suffered enough now for the sake of the red shoes," said she. "I will now go to church, that they may see me." So she hastened towards the church; but when she came to the door, there were the red shoes dancing before her. She was horrified, and turned back.

The whole week she was very melancholy, and shed many a bitter tear; and when Sunday came she said, "I have suffered and endured enough now; I am as good, I should think, as many in the church who hold their heads so high." And she set off boldly; but she had not got farther than the little side-door, when she saw the red shoes dancing before her. She was frightened, went back again, and repented her sins with a sincere heart.

She went to the vicarage, and asked if she could not be taken into service there. She promised to be diligent, and do every thing she was able; she did not care, she said,

for wages, if she could only have a roof over her head, and live with honest people. The clergyman's wife had pity on her, and took her into her service. She was diligent and thoughtful; and sat still and listened when the clergyman read the Bible of an evening. All the children were attached to her; but when they talked to her about dress and ornament, and about being as fine as a queen, she shook her head reprovingly.

The following Sunday all went to church, and they asked Karen if she would go too; but she looked sorrowfully, with tears in her eyes, on her crutches; and so the others went without her, to hear the word of God. But Karen went alone into her quiet chamber, which was just large enough to hold a bed and a chair; and here she sat herself with her hymn-book in her hand. While she, with pious heart, was reading therein, the breeze bore the tones of the organ to her ear, and she lifted up her face tremblingly, and said, "O God, do Thou help me!"

Suddenly the sun shone brightly, and before her stood the Angel of God in white garments, whom she had seen before at the door of the church. He no longer held the sharp sword, but a green branch full of roses; and he touched the ceiling with it; and the ceiling rose quite high, and where the Angel had touched it, a golden star was shining. He touched the walls too, and they grew farther apart; she saw the organ that was playing, she saw the old pictures of clergymen and clergymen's wives:—the congregation sat in the pews, and sang out of their hymn-books. Either the church itself had come to the little

maiden in the narrow humble chamber, or she had gone to the church. She sat in the pew beside the other persons of the clergyman's family; and when she had finished singing and looked up, they nodded to her, and said, "It was right of you to come, Karen!"

And the organ sounded, and the voices of the children rose so sweet and soothingly. The warm bright sunshine streamed through the window on the spot where Karen was sitting; her heart became so full of sunshine and peace and joy, that it broke. Her soul flew on a sunbeam up to God, and there no mention was ever made of the red shoes.



THE BELL.



PEOPLE said, "The Evening-bell is sounding, the sun is setting." A strange wondrous tone was heard in the narrow streets of a large town. It was like the sound of a church-bell: but it was only heard for a moment, for the rolling of the carriages and the voices of the multitude made too great a noise.

Those persons who were walking without the town, where the houses were farther apart, with gardens or little fields between them, could see the evening sky still better, and heard the sound of the bell much more distinctly. It was as if the tones came from a church in the still forest; people looked thitherward, and felt their minds attuned most solemnly.

A long time passed, and people said to each other—"I wonder if there is a church out in the wood? The bell has a tone that is wondrous sweet; let us stroll thither, and examine the matter nearer." And the rich people drove out, and the poor walked, but the way seemed

strangely long to them ; and when they came to a clump of willows which grew on the skirts of the forest, they sat down, and looked up at the long branches, and fancied they were now in the depth of the green wood. The confectioner of the town came out, and set up his booth there ; and soon after came another confectioner, who hung a bell over his stand, as a sign or ornament, but it had no clapper, and it was tarred over to preserve it from the rain. When all the people returned home, they said it had been very romantic, and that it was quite a different sort of thing to a pic-nic or tea-party. There were three persons who asserted they had penetrated to the end of the forest, and that they had always heard the wonderful sounds of the bell, but it had seemed to them as if it had come from the town. One wrote a whole poem about it, and said the bell sounded like the voice of a mother to a good dear child, and that no melody was sweeter than the tones of the bell. The king of the country was also observant of it, and vowed that he who could discover whence the sounds proceeded, should have the title of " Universal Bell-ringer," even if it were not really a bell.

Many persons now went to the wood, for the sake of getting the place, but one only returned with a sort of explanation ; for nobody went far enough, that one not further than the others. However, he said that the sound proceeded from a very large owl, in a hollow tree ; a sort of learned owl, that continually knocked its head against the branches. But whether the sound came from his head or from the hollow-tree, that no one could say with certainty.

So now he got the place of "Universal Bell-ringer," and wrote yearly a short treatise "On the Owl;" but every body was just as wise as before.

It was the day of confirmation. The clergyman had spoken so touchingly, the children who were confirmed had been greatly moved: it was an eventful day for them; from children they became all at once grown-up persons; it was as if their infant souls were now to fly all at once into persons with more understanding. The sun was shining gloriously; the children that had been confirmed went out of the town, and from the wood was borne towards them the sounds of the unknown bell with wonderful distinctness. They all immediately felt a wish to go thither; all except three. One of them had to go home to try on a ball-dress; for it was just the dress and the ball which had caused her to be confirmed this time, for otherwise she would not have come; the other was a poor boy, who had borrowed his coat and boots to be confirmed in from the innkeeper's son, and he was to give them back by a certain hour; the third said that he never went to a strange place if his parents were not with him—that he had always been a good boy hitherto, and would still be so now that he was confirmed, and that one ought not to laugh at him for it: the others, however, did make fun of him, after all.

There were three, therefore, that did not go; the others hastened on. The sun shone, the birds sang, and the children sang too, and each held the other by the hand; for as yet they had none of them any high office, and were all of equal rank in the eye of God.

But two of the youngest soon grew tired, and both returned to town; two little girls sat down, and twined garlands, so they did not go either; and when the others reached the willow-tree, where the confectioner was, they said, "Now we are there! In reality the bell does not exist; it is only a fancy that people have taken into their heads!"

At the same moment the bell sounded deep in the wood, so clear and solemnly that five or six determined to penetrate somewhat further. It was so thick, and the foliage so dense, that it was quite fatiguing to proceed. Woodroofs and anemones grew almost too high; blooming convolvuluses and blackberry-bushes hung in long garlands from tree to tree, where the nightingale sang and the sunbeams were playing: it was very beautiful, but it was no place for girls to go; their clothes would get so torn. Large blocks of stone lay there, overgrown with moss of every colour; the fresh spring bubbled forth, and made a strange gurgling sound.

"That surely cannot be the bell," said one of the children, lying down and listening; "this must be looked to." So he remained, and let the others go on without him.

They afterwards came to a little house, made of branches and the bark of trees; a large wild apple-tree bent over it, as if it would shower down all its blessings on the roof, where roses were blooming. The long stems twined round the gable, on which there hung a small bell.

Was it that which people had heard? Yes: everybody was unanimous on the subject, except one, who said that the bell was too small and too fine to be heard at so great a

distance, and besides it was very different tones to those that could move a human heart in such a manner. It was a king's son who spoke ; whereon the others said, "Such people always want to be wiser than every body else."

They now let him go on alone ; and as he went, his breast was filled more and more with the forest solitude ; but he still heard the little bell with which the others were so satisfied, and now and then, when the wind blew, he could also hear the people singing who were sitting at tea where the confectioner had his tent ; but the deep sound of the bell rose louder ; it was almost as if an organ were accompanying it, and the tones came from the left hand, the side where the heart is placed. A rustling was heard in the bushes, and a little boy stood before the King's Son, a boy in wooden shoes, and with so short a jacket that one could see what long wrists he had. Both knew each other ; the boy was that one among the children who could not come because he had to go home and return his jacket and boots to the innkeeper's son. This he had done, and was now going on in wooden shoes and in his humbler dress, for the bell sounded with so deep a tone, and with such strange power, that proceed he must.

"Why, then, we can go together," said the King's Son. But the poor child that had been confirmed was quite ashamed ; he looked at his wooden shoes, pulled at the short sleeves of his jacket, and said, "He was afraid he could not walk so fast ; besides, he thought that the bell must be looked for to the right ; for that was the place where all sorts of beautiful things were to be found."

"But there we shall not meet," said the King's Son, nodding at the same time to the poor boy, who went into the darkest, thickest part of the wood, where thorns tore his humble dress, and scratched his face and hands and feet till they bled. The King's Son got some scratches too; but the sun shone on his path, and it is him that we will follow, for he was an excellent and resolute youth.

"I must and will find the bell," said he, "even if I am obliged to go to the end of the world."

The ugly apes sat upon the trees, and grinned. "Shall we thrash him?" said they, "shall we thrash him? he is the son of a king!"

But on he went, without being disheartened, deeper and deeper into the wood, where the most wonderful flowers were growing. There stood white lilies with blood-red stamina, sky-blue tulips, which shone as they waved in the winds, and apple-trees, the apples of which looked exactly like large soap-bubbles:—so only think how the trees must have sparkled in the sunshine! Around the nicest green meads, where the deer were playing in the grass, grew magnificent oaks and beeches; and if the bark of one of the trees was cracked, there grass and long creeping plants grew in the crevices. And there were large calm lakes there too, in which white swans were swimming, and beat the air with their wings. The King's Son often stood still and listened. He thought the bell sounded from the depths of these still lakes; but then he remarked again that the tone proceeded not from there, but farther off, from out the depths of the forest.

The sun now set: the atmosphere glowed like fire. It was still in the woods, so very still; and he fell on his knees, sung his evening hymn, and said: "I cannot find what I seek; the sun is going down, and night is coming;—the dark, dark night. Yet perhaps I may be able once more to see the round red sun before he entirely disappears. I will climb up yonder rock."

And he seized hold of the creeping-plants, and the roots of trees,—climbed up the moist stones where the water-snakes were writhing and the toads were croaking—and he gained the summit before the sun had quite gone down. How magnificent was the sight from this height! The sea,—the great, the glorious sea, that dashed its long waves against the coast,—was stretched out before him. And yonder, where sea and sky meet, stood the sun, like a large shining altar, all melted together in the most glowing colours. And the wood and the sea sang a song of rejoicing, and his heart sang with the rest: all nature was a vast holy church, in which the trees and the buoyant clouds were the pillars, flowers and grass the velvet carpeting, and heaven itself the large cupola. The red colours above faded away as the sun vanished, but a million stars were lighted, a million lamps shone; and the King's Son spread out his arms towards heaven, and wood, and sea; when at the same moment, coming by a path to the right, appeared, in his wooden shoes and jacket, the poor boy who had been confirmed with him. He had followed his own path, and had reached the spot just as soon as the son of the king had done. They ran towards each other,

and stood together hand in hand in the vast church of nature and of poetry, while over them sounded the invisible holy bell: blessed spirits floated around them, and lifted up their voices in a rejoicing hallelujah !



HOLGER DANSKE.



N Denmark is an old castle, called Kronburg, which lies near the Sound, where large ships sail daily past by hundreds: English, and Russian, and Prussian ships. And they salute the old castle with their cannon,—“Boom!” and the castle answers with its cannon,—“Boom!” for this is the way the cannons say, “Good morning,” and “Much obliged to you.” But in winter no ships sail by; for the water is then all covered with ice as far as Sweden. It is quite like a highway. Danish and Swedish flags are waving there; and Danes and Swedes say to each other,—“Good morning!” and “Much obliged to you!” yet not with cannons, but with friendly shakes of the hand; and the one people go over to fetch wheaten bread and cracknel biscuits from the other; for we always like what we get abroad better than home-fare. But the most magnificent of the whole is, after all, the old Castle of Kronburg; and here it is that Holger Danske sleeps in the deep dark cellar, where no one ever enters. He is clad in steel and iron, and rests his head

on his stalwart arm ; his long beard falls over the marble table, to which it has grown fast ; he sleeps and dreams, but in his dream he sees all that is going on in Denmark. Every Christmas-eve an angel comes and tells him that what he has dreamed is true, and that he may go to sleep again ; for that Denmark is as yet in no real danger. But should it be so, old Holger Danske will arise, and the table will split in twain when he draws his beard towards him. He then advances and strikes a blow that is heard in all the countries of the world.

All this about Holger Danske was told by an old grandpapa to his little grandson ; and the child knew that what grandpapa said was true. And while the old man told his story, he worked at a large figure of wood representing Holger Danske, which was intended for the figure-head of a ship ; for the old grandfather was a carver, and made figures to be placed at the prows of vessels, according to their names : and here he had cut out Holger Danske, with his long beard and his slender figure, standing so proudly with his broad battle-sword in one hand, and the other resting on the arms of Denmark.

And the old grandfather told so many things about remarkable Danish men and women, that at last his little grandchild thought he knew quite as much as Holger Danske could know, who, after all, only dreamed about the matter ; and when the little fellow was in bed, he thought so much about it, that he quite pressed his chin upon the counterpane, and it seemed to him as if he had a long beard, and that the two were grown together.

The old grandfather remained sitting at his work, and was carving the last bit he had to do: it was the Danish arms. Now he had finished; and he looked at the whole, and thought of all he had read and heard, and of what he had told the little boy that evening; and he nodded and wiped his spectacles, put them on his nose again, and said,—"Yes, Holger Danske will hardly appear in my time. But the boy there in bed may get a sight of him, and be present when the great day comes." And then the old grandfather nodded; and the more he looked at his Holger Danske, the more clearly he saw that the figure he had made was a good one; it almost seemed to him as if it had a colour, and as though the armour grew bright like real steel and iron. The hearts of the Danish arms grew redder and redder, and the lions leaped up with crowns of gold upon their heads.

"That's the very finest coat-of-arms in the world," said the old man. "The lions denote strength, and the hearts love and clemency." And he looked at the uppermost lion, and thought of King Canute, who bound mighty England to the throne of Denmark; and he gazed at the second lion, and thought of Waldemar, who collected the scattered states of Denmark and conquered the countries of the Vandals; he looked at the third lion, and thought of Margaret, who united Denmark, and Sweden, and Norway; but when he looked at the red hearts, they seemed more ruddy than before,—they grew into flames that moved, and he followed each one in thought.

The first flame led him to a narrow dark prison: there

sat a captive—a noble woman, Eleonora Ulfeld, Christian the Fourth's daughter ; and the flame settled like a rose upon her bosom, and there it bloomed with her heart—with the heart of her, the best and noblest of all Danish women.

“ Yes, that is one heart in the army of Denmark !” said the old grandfather.

And his thoughts followed the other flame, that led him upon the sea where the cannons thundered, and the ships lay enwrapped in smoke ; and the flame fixed itself, like the ribbon of an order of knighthood, on the breast of Hvitfeldt, as, for the preservation of the fleet, he blew up himself and his ship.

And the third flame led him to Greenland's needy huts, where stood the pastor Hans Egede with love in his words and deeds. The flame was a star on his breast, a heart for the arms of Denmark ; and the thoughts of the old grandfather preceded the buoyant flame, for he well knew where it would go to. In the humble room of the peasant woman stood Frederick the Sixth, and wrote his name with chalk on the rafters. The flame trembled on his breast, trembled in his heart ; in the room of the peasant his heart became a heart for Denmark's arms. And the old grandfather dried his eyes ; for he had lived for King Frederick, with his venerable silver hair and honest blue eyes ; he had known him too—and he folded his hands, and gazed silently before him. Then the old man's daughter-in-law came in, and said it was late ; that it was time to leave off work, and that supper was ready.

"But what you have made is really quite beautiful, grandfather," said she. "Holger Danske and our old arms complete! It seems to me that I have seen that face before!"

"No, that cannot well be," said the old grandfather. "But I have seen it, and have tried to carve it in wood from memory. It was when the English were lying in the roadstead, on the second of April, when we shewed that we were true old Danes. On the 'Denmark,' when I was in the squadron under Steen Billes, a man stood beside me: it was as if the balls were afraid of him! Merrily did he sing the old songs, and fired and fought as though he were more than human! I still remember his countenance; but whence he came, or whither he went, I know not. No one knows! I have often thought that it was old Holger Danske himself, who had swam down from Kronburg, and had aided in the hour of danger. That was my fancy, and there stands his likeness."

And the figure threw its large shadow quite high upon the wall, even on the ceiling; and it looked as if it were really Holger Danske himself that was standing there, for the shadow moved; but that might be because the flame of the lamp did not burn steadily. And the daughter-in-law kissed the old grandfather, and drew him towards the great arm-chair before the table; and she and her husband, who was, of course, the son of the old man, and the father of the little boy lying in bed, ate their evening meal; and the old grandfather told about the Danish lion and the Danish hearts; told them about strength and gentleness.

And he explained, quite distinctly, that there is another strength besides that which lies in the sword; and he pointed to the shelf where old books were lying, where the collected comedies of Holberg were; books which had been read and re-read, so amusing were they: you fancied that all the persons in them were known to you since many a day.

"Look you! he could use his chisel too," said the grandfather. "What was false and cross-grained in people, he chiselled away as well as he could!" And the old man gave a nod of his head in the direction of the looking-glass, in which was stuck the calendar, with "the Round Tower" on the cover; and he said, "Tycho Brahe, too, was one of those who used the sword—not to hew into flesh and blood, but to clear a more distinct path between all the stars of heaven! And then he, whose father was of my craft, the old sculptor's son; he with the white hair and strong shoulders, whom we ourselves have read about; he, in short, who is talked of in all the countries of the world!"—ah, he could work in stone; I can only carve in wood! Yes, yes, Holger Danske can come in many ways, in order that one may hear of Denmark's power in all parts of the world!"

But the little boy in bed saw distinctly the old castle of Kronburg and the Sound, and the real Holger Danske, who sat deep under the earth, with his beard grown fast to the marble table, dreaming of all that is going on

¹ Thorwaldsen.

above. Holger Danske dreamed, too, of the little humble room where the carver sat ; he heard all that was spoken, nodded in his dream, and said :

“ Yes, remember me, ye Danish people ! Give thought unto me. I will come in the hour of need ! ”

And the bright day shone in brilliancy outside the castle of Kronburg, and the wind bore the sounds of the hunter's horn across from the neighbouring land ; the ships sailed by, and saluted, “ Boom, boom ! ” and from Kronburg came the answer, “ Boom, boom ! ” But Holger Danske did not awake, let them fire as loud as they may ; for, you know, it was only “ Good day, ” and “ Very much obliged, ” that they said. There must be a different sort of firing before he will awake ; but awake he is sure to do, for strength and power dwell in Holger Danske.

Those for whom I have translated these Tales—the children of England—may not, perhaps, know that there is more than one tradition very similar to that of Holger Danske, to be found in Germany, relating, of course, to those monarchs who, while living, called forth the admiration of their country. The most popular one is about Frederic Barbarossa, who—but as what I am going to tell you will make rather a long note, I think I will give the German emperor a chapter to himself.—C. B.

THE

EMPEROR FREDERIC BARBAROSSA.

A CHAPTER BY THE TRANSLATOR.



GERMANY has many traditions. One of the most popular is about the Emperor Frederic I.; and this tradition is to be considered as something more than a mere empty tale or goblin story, for it is associated with the destiny and the hopes of a whole people.

Well, this mighty Emperor, this "greatest hero of the Christian world," who, while he reigned, strove incessantly to make the German empire what it once had been, is said to be still alive. He sits spell-bound in the Kyfhauser mountain; nor will that spell be broken until the day of judgment, unless his country should be in the dreaddest need. He has taken with him the jewels of the empire, and they stand beside him on a marble table. His fiery beard, which still grows during his enchanted sleep, must reach three times round the

table before he will awake. As yet, however, it goes round but twice. His sword is in his hand in readiness, and he waits till his day shall come. Some shepherds, 'tis said, have seen him, and he has asked, "Do the ravens still fly round the mountain?" and when answered in the affirmative, he has again rested his head upon his hand, and said, "Then I must sleep for another hundred years!"

And why, you will ask, should the people think that he is still alive? Because the nation could not bring themselves to believe, that the great monarch who for near forty years had ruled as German Emperor; who had gone forth with his tens—ay, with his hundreds—of thousands of soldiers to battle—that he, the noble, the magnanimous, the indomitable Emperor, who had made the restoration of the German empire, as it had once been, the aim of his whole life, could possibly have left them for ever. When, I say, his astounded people were told that he was no more—that they would never again behold his glorious countenance; when they saw the Crusaders coming back from the struggle with the Infidel, and missed the chief who had led them forth in power; when asking for him, they were told he lay entombed at Antioch,—then all were struck dumb with amazement, and men knew not what to think.

The Holy Land was a far distant country, around which was mystery. The eager questioners about the circumstances of their hero's death heard various accounts; and when men began to wake from their bewilderment, they whispered to each other doubts of what they had been told—doubts of his being really dead! They forgot his

mortal nature, and remembered him only as what to their minds he had ever been,—as a guiding spirit, sent by Heaven for the accomplishment of some great destiny. Could he, then, have ceased to be? Could he have left them thus suddenly, far from his own native land? The more they pondered, the stronger grew the pleasing hope that he was still with his people, and that when the day should arrive for the fulfilment of his darling scheme, he would certainly come forth again, and lead his chosen to victory. And in this thought they found consolation. From a hope it became a certainty, and henceforth they clung to this creation of their fancy with all the devotedness of veneration and of love.

Thus we see that the tradition in question is not a tale invented for mere amusement's sake, but rather the visible form which the cherished feeling of a whole people has taken in expressing itself—the tangible shape assumed by the hopes and longings of the nation in giving themselves vent.

It is true such a belief could hardly spring up now; but this, you must remember, was in days 600 years ago. Many circumstances have happened since to make men's minds different to what they then were. There is no probability of such a tradition becoming prevalent about Napoleon. Though many a veteran may have stood lost in thought beside his tomb, and have wished the while it were possible for his General to hear the tramp of the thousands as they marched near his resting-place, or that the drum's long rolling could reach him in his coffin; though, too,

the fanciful wish may have been imparted to some trusty comrade, old soldier like himself, yet it would never be spoken of as a thing that might be. Many a one even has most assuredly seen, in his mind's eye, the well-known figure of his Emperor standing, as it were, before him, and with all the reality of life, while dwelling on some vividly-remembered event of past days. Nevertheless, we are sure to hear no tradition of the Emperor going his rounds beneath the dome of the Invalides, while still watching over the destinies of France. Men's minds are changed.

You must know, too, that the desire of Barbarossa to re-establish the holy Roman Empire under one head, makes his memory especially dear to Germany; for there even now men talk of its fulfilment: not, indeed, as an event likely to be accomplished, but as one most ardently to be desired. Still many a heart beats quicker at the mention of such a state of things; there are many still who, like Barbarossa, view this as the grandest aim of all human striving.

Can we wonder, then, that the Germans love to dwell on this pleasing vision, connected as it is with so much that is dear to their countrymen? It is like a shadow falling on the stream of time, but the event that casts the shade is behind them, out of sight, and beyond their reach.

The most natural spot for the abode of such a sleeper would be some mountain solitude. Childhood is always poetical; and I do not doubt that those of my young readers who have stood on the dreary heights of West-

moreland, or amid the still grander mountain scenery of the Continent, will have felt its influence, and, without being cowards, have experienced a sort of dread at the awful stillness around them. There is nothing there to disturb the slumberer: not a sound is heard of man or beast; for not a creature comes up into that realm of dreariness: the very rocks seem spell-bound, and lying in an enchanted sleep.

CHARLES BONER.

