FAIRY TALES FROM THE ISLE OF RÜGEN

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT.

Andenken Fortuna zuvor:
Gott über Alles vorsichtig mäßig
E. M. Arndt.

Druck und Verlag
des lith. Inst. d. Ph. Friedr. Wilh. Universität v. Henry & Cohen, in Bonn

Frontispiece

FAIRY TALES

FROM

THE ISLE OF RÜGEN

BY

ERNST MORITZ ARNDT
(1817)

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED BY

ANNA DABIS

WITH FOUR OF THE ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS
PORTRAIT OF E. M. ARNDT, AND MAP

LONDON
DAVID NUTT, 270–271, STRAND
1896

I Dedicate

THIS TRANSLATION TO

FRIDA MOND

THE GREATEST LOVER OF FAIRY TALES

AND THE KINDEST OF FRIENDS

INTRODUCTION

THESE fairy tales from Rügen are reminiscences of the youth of Ernst Moritz Arndt. They had not been written down before his time, but were handed down by word of mouth in the Isle of Rügen, and were related to Arndt chiefly by his parents and their farm-servants. He made early notes of them, but by an unlucky accident these were lost with his books when Arndt had them shipped to Bonn; and he was thirty-seven years old when he wrote them down from memory for his youngest sister Dorothea, to whom he dedicated them.

The tales have long been out of print, and they are so quaint and simple that I think they deserve to find readers among English children. For the benefit of those children who like chapter and verse for what they read, I have added a map of the Isle of Rügen, on which most of the villages and farms mentioned in the stories, are marked.

I should like to add for those who, after having finished the book, care to read the preface (but I think there are few who will), some notes about Ernst Moritz Arndt.

He was born about Christmas 1769, at Schoritz, a large estate which his father farmed for a local earl. At that time the Isle of Rügen belonged to Sweden, although German in population, language, and customs. He was one of a large family, and received a good education from parents, tutor, public school, and university. Self-indulgence was unknown to him, and the simple and hardy way of living in which his parents brought him up, stood him in good stead during the troublous years through which he had to pass. Although he had studied divinity with the view of entering the Church, religious scruples caused him to abandon this intention, and devote himself to history. In 1795 he was seized with the German "Wanderlust," and he travelled by Vienna to North Italy, France, and the Netherlands, gaining experience on various subjects. On his return he got an appointment in the University of Greifswald.

Then came the troublous times of the Napoleonic Wars, and the deepest degradation of the German nation. After the battle of Jena, Arndt published an anonymous pamphlet, trying to rouse the people

against Napoleon. The publisher, Palm, of Nürnberg, who would not betray the author, was shot by Napoleon's orders, and Arndt only escaped the same fate by fleeing the country. He sought a refuge in Sweden, and continued writing against Napoleon, but after a few years he returned in disguise ; and when Napoleon prepared for the invasion of Russia, and compelled the Germans to fight on his side, Arndt preceded him there, at the call of the fugitive Minister, Von Stein. As Secretary to the latter, Arndt saw the crushing defeat and flight of Napoleon and his armies.

Returning to Prussia, he helped enthusiastically to rouse the nation against the Corsican invader, and saw his country liberated, though it grieved his soul that diplomatic intrigues prevented Germany from becoming once more a united country, and reaping the full benefit of the Wars of Liberation.

In 1817 he was appointed Professor of Modern History at the newly-founded University of Bonn, but after a few years he was suspended from office on account of his too liberal ideas, of which the reactionary Government was afraid. Nothing could be found against him, and he was pensioned off with his full salary, but reinstated in 1840, when more liberal ideas prevailed. In 1848 he was elected Deputy to

the German Parliament, in which he strove to represent the "German Conscience." With others, he tried in vain to persuade the then King of Prussia to accept the Imperial crown of Germany from the hands of the people, and place himself at the head of a United Fatherland. Other counsels prevailed; and Arndt gave up politics and devoted himself till the end of his life to his professorial duties, adored by his students. He died in January 1860, without having seen fulfilled the dream and ideal of his whole life, —a United German Fatherland.

Besides his political books and pamphlets, Arndt is the author of charming ballads and many stirring patriotic songs, which will ever keep his memory alive, for they are sung

"As far as the German tongue resounds,"

being simple as the Volkslied of the sixteenth century, and essentially reproducing the spirit of that great time in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when the whole Teutonic nation rose to throw off both the political slavery in which Napoleon had bound them down, and the mental bondage and imitation of French manners and morals which had prevailed since the time of Louis XIV.

Although contemporary with the Classic and

from Rügen

Romantic school of poets, Arndt belongs to neither, but is with Körner and Schenkendorf foremost among the patriotic national poets. Their poetry is the poetry of reality, simple and popular in form and language, as different from the cosmopolitan character and refined form of the Classical poetry as from the dreamy, unreal character and undecided form of the Romantic school.

Throughout Arndt's songs there breathe his simple piety, enthusiastic love for his country, and holy wrath against tyranny and oppression.

London, 1896.

Original Dedication

TO

DOROTHEA

Thou writest, sweet child, to me, "Oh, if the beautiful Isle of Rügen and the beautiful Rhineland could only meet as easily as our thoughts."

Indeed, it is sad, that those who love must live so far apart, and can only reach each other by spiritual, aye, even mostly invisible messengers. I send thee here a packet of playful thoughts, which can come and go as such light-winged messengers do. Many of them are known to thee, and thou hast played thy part in them. Others, who also have played theirs, gaze no longer through the oft-darkened windows of this earth; but already look down with heavenly eyes from the pure, clear firmament, on to the blind crowd of moles below. They, too, have been present in my thoughts and have assisted me, and will bless thee with the best of gifts which the earth can give.

Bonn, 1817.

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MAP OF THE ISLE OF RÜGEN

THE UNDERGROUND FOLK

The Nine Mountains near Rambin

In the western point of the Isle of Rügen in the Baltic, about a mile from the village of Rambin, there lie nine little hills or barrows which are popularly called the nine mountains, and of which the folks tell all sorts of stories. This is said to be their origin: In ancient time there lived a powerful giant in the isle of Rügen, called Balderich, who was annoyed to think his land was an isle, and that he had to wade through the sea to get to Pommerania on the continent. Therefore he had a huge apron made, tied it on and filled it with earth, for he meant to make a path on an embankment from the isle to the continent. But when he had got with his load as far as Rambin, which is about three miles from the sea, his apron tore open, and the earth which fell out through the hole became the nine mountains. He stopped the hole up and walked on, but there the apron tore again and thirteen

little mountains fell out. With what was left him he arrived at last at the sea and poured it in. But there was still a narrow channel left between Rügen and Pommerania, and that vexed the giant's soul so much that he dropped down in a fit and died. And thus the way across was never finished and Rügen remains an isle to this day. Now in these nine mountains near Rambin there live the dwarfs, the little underground folks, and in the night they dance about in the woods and fields and carry on their dance and music in the moonlight at midnight, particularly during the merry spring and summertide, when everything is in flower, for the little folks love nothing better than springtime and flowers. They also have many pretty boys and girls with them, but they don't let them out, but keep them underground in the mountain; for most of them they have stolen or caught by a lucky chance, and they are afraid they might run away. For formerly many children were charmed in the morning or at night by the sweet music and singing that sounded through the bushes, and they ran thither and listened, for they fancied it to be the singing of little forest-birds in praise of God, and thus they were entrapped by the dwarfs, who took them into the mountain, that they should wait on them. But since the human beings know that the place is uncanny, they are more

careful. Yet still many a child was caught by the artful dwarfs and must needs stay fifty years in the mountain and serve them. For 'tis an ancient law underground, that every fifty years they must give those whom they have caught back to the daylight. But even if any one has spent fifty complete years underground to serve the little folks, he won't get older than twenty years, and in this way all that come out are still young, and mostly have good luck in the world, either because they get clever and skilful underground, or because the dwarfs help them invisibly at their work, and bring them secretly gold and silver.

The little folks that live in the nine mountains belong mostly to the brown ones, that are not a bad sort; in two mountains there live the white ones, those are the kindest and prettiest fairies, who have no evil thoughts in their hearts, and wish men well and do them all sorts of kindnesses. But there are also some black ones; they are arch artificers and smiths, skilled and clever in every work, but at the same time great sorcerers and magicians, full of cunning and deceit, and there is no trusting them.

Now I will tell a few stories of these nine mountains that have happened ages ago, and which my father's old bailiff, Henry Vierk, often told me in my boyish years. Henry knew a lot about the underground folks, and about gold cups, silver dishes,

glass slippers, and such like, with which men may make their fortune; so the following is really not being told by myself, but by Henry Vierk.

There lived once upon a time in Rambin a working man, called Jacob Dietrich, a plain, just, and God-fearing man, who had a good and pious wife. The couple owned a little house and garden, and lived honestly by the work of their hands. They had a number of dear children, the youngest of whom, Johann Dietrich, was the pet of all. For he was a handsome, cheery boy, wide-awake and sharp, industrious at school and obedient at home, who well remembered all the lessons and stories he was taught by his parents. But he also learnt from other people, and would stop everybody who could tell a story, and not let them go until he had heard it.

Johann had completed his eighth year, and lived during the summer with his uncle, a farmer in Rothenkirchen, where he had to mind the cows, which they drove into the fields towards the nine mountains, which were more wooded at that time than now. There an old cowherd, Claus Starkvolt by name, would often join the boys, and they would drive their herds together and sit down to tell stories. Now Claus knew a great many, and could tell them well, so that he soon became Johann Dietrich's best friend.

He knew an extra amount of stories about the dwarfs in the nine mountains. Johann always listened to them with the greatest delight, and although he felt occasionally creepy when he had to turn out into the fields at early dawn or late of a night, he grew so fond of these fairy tales, that very soon he heard and saw and talked of nothing but golden cups and crowns, of glass slippers, pockets full of ducats, golden rings and diamond bridal garlands. And when he would shout in his childish delight, old Starkvolt would shake his head and call out: "I say, Johann, where are you off to? Spade and scythe will be your sceptre and crown, and your bride will wear a homespun gown and a wreath of rosemary." But Johann was not daunted, and evermore desired to descend into the mountain; for old Claus had told him what one had to do in order to become master below, and not servant, so that they could not keep one there for fifty years to wash the cups and sweep the floor. It was this: whoever was clever or lucky enough to catch or find the cap of a little dwarf, could descend with them in safety; they could not hurt him, but had to do his bidding, and especially the one to whom the cap belonged had to wait on him and get him what he wanted. Johann had made a note of that, and laid his plans.

It was Midsummer, the best season of the year,

when days are longest and nights shortest. Old and young had enjoyed the festive days, played games and told stories. Then Johann could not restrain himself any longer, but the day after St. John's day he went away on the sly, and when it grew dark, he laid himself down on the top of the highest of the nine mountains, just where, according to Claus Starkvolt, the dwarfs had their principal dancing-ground. And he was so excited that his heart beat like a hammer and he gasped for breath, and he listened in fear and hope from ten o'clock till midnight. And as it struck twelve, there began a singing and ringing in the mountain, and soon he heard whispering and whistling and rustling about him, for some of the little folks swung round in merry dances, whilst others played and had games in the moonshine and carried on all sorts of fun. A secret shudder crept over him, for he could not see them, as they wore the caps that make them invisible. He lay perfectly still, his face pressed into the grass, his eyes firmly closed, and pretending to snore in his sleep. Yet he would now and then just look a wee bit round, but he could see nothing of the dwarfs, however bright the moon shone.

He did not wait long, when three of them sauntered his way. They paid no heed to him, threw their brown caps into the air and caught them one from the other. Suddenly one of them in mischief snatched

the cap out of his mate's hand and threw it away, and the cap flew just on to Johann's head; he felt it, grabbed it, gave up all pretence of sleep and started up. He swung the little cap round with delight, so that the little silver bell sewn on to it rang, and then put it on his head, and—oh marvel! —in the same moment he saw the numberless merry crowd of little folks. Three of them rushed forward in great haste, to get the cap back, but he held it tight. And as he was a giant in size and strength compared to them, and they hardly reached up to his knee, the dwarf whose cap it was stepped humbly forward and implored him, as if his life depended on it, to return the cap. But Johann said: "No, indeed not, you sharp little fellow; this is not a thing to be given away for a piece of bread and butter. I should be sorry to get nothing out of you for this, for now you have no power over me, but must just do as I please. I want to descend with you into the mountain and see what you are doing, and you shall be my servant, for you know as well as I that you are bound to!" The little man behaved as if he had neither heard nor understood; he began to whine and worry and cried bitterly over his lost cap; but when Johann in a determined voice said: "It shall be as I said; you are my servant and I want to descend with you!" he gave in, particularly as the others all talked to him

and said it would have to be so. Johann threw his old hat away, put the cap on and fastened it well to his head, that it should not slip off, for in the cap he carried the mastery.

And he tried its strength at once, ordering his servant to bring him food and drink, as he was hungry. His little servant hurried off and in a wink he was back, carrying bread and wine and luscious fruit. Johann ate and drank, looked on at their games and was highly pleased, and in all ways he behaved as cleverly as if he had been born to rule.

Well, when the cock had just crowed the third time, and the little larks began to trill, and the young day to dawn in the east, there was a rush through grass and bush and flowers; and the mountain rang out and opened again, and the little folks descended; and Johann paid good attention to what happened, and found everything just as Claus had told him; for on the summit of the hill where they had just been dancing on grass and flowers, there suddenly rose a glass point on which those who wanted to go down would step; then it opened and they glided down gently one after the other, and when they had all got in, it disappeared without a trace. Now those that entered were gliding gently into wide silver tubs, each of which could harbour about a thousand of little folk. When Johann

with his servant dropped into a tub, they all shrieked with fear and begged him not to step on them, as his weight would have crushed them. So he took great care and was very kind to them. These silver tubs went up and down like lifts (suspended by silver chains), until every one of them had come down. During his descent Johann was astonished at the marvellous sheen on the walls, which glittered and sparkled as if they were studded with diamonds, and all the while lovely music sounded from the distance underneath, so that he was in the most charming way lulled to sleep and knew no longer what happened to him.

When he awoke at last, he found himself in a luxuriously soft bed, and this bed stood in the prettiest room that you can imagine. And in front of him stood his little brownie, busily driving away the gnats and flies which might have disturbed his slumber. Johann had hardly opened his eyes when the little man brought him towel and basin with water, and the daintiest new clothes to put on, all made of brown silk, and a pair of new black shoes with scarlet bows such as Johann had never seen in Rambin or Rothenkirchen. There also stood some glittering glass shoes for festival days. The little boy was very pleased to see such light and clean clothes and had no objection to be dressed in them. Immediately after his toilet was finished, the

brownie went off and returned with a golden tray, on which was a jug of milk, rolls and fruit, and other things that little boys like to eat. And his servant was obedient and attentive, and would, without a word from Johann, guess from his looks what he wanted, and bring it. But I must describe Johann's room to you. His little bed was white, with the softest mattress covered with snow-white sheets, satin pillows and a satin quilt. A prince might have slept in it. Beside the bed stood very pretty chairs, carved with birds and animals, some also inlaid with precious stones. Marble tables stood along the walls and two small emerald tables with shining mirrors over them, the frames of which were studded with precious stones, faced each other at the opposite ends of the room. The very walls were panelled with emerald, and in this splendid room lived little Johann Dietrich!

Of course they never saw the sun, the moon, and the stars underground, and that seems to imply a want, yet they did not need their light here, nor that of candles and lamps; they had plenty of other light, for they regularly lived among the precious stones, and the passages and walls were faced with these precious stones, and gold and silver, so that there was a perpetual sparkling light, as if it were day for ever. Thus Johann had also a shining stone in his room, an exquisite diamond as

large as a cricket-ball, which was fixed on the ceiling, and shone as bright as day.

After breakfast the little valet opened a small cupboard door let into the wall, and Johann saw in it the daintiest gold and silver things, and fairy tale books with pictures, such as he had never seen before, so that he could not tear himself away all the morning.

At noon a bright and sonorous bell sounded, and the little dwarf asked:

"Master, do you wish to dine alone or in the big company?"

"In the big company," replied Johann, and consequently he was led through various passages and rooms into a large lofty hall, the vaulted ceiling of which was covered with thousands of diamonds. At the same moment he perceived a large crowd of daintily-clad folks, men and women, streaming in through various doors; and the floor opened and a number of tables came up, set with precious plate, tasty dishes, and fruit and wine; chairs arranged themselves round the tables, and the company sat down; the biggest swells came and bowed to Johann and led him to their high table, where they made him sit between their prettiest children, so that he enjoyed himself immensely. It was a very merry meal, for the dwarfs are lively, jolly folks, and can't keep silent long. Besides lovely music sounded through

the air, and coloured birds flew about and sang in thrilling tones. Yet they were not living birds but artificial ones, wrought so ingeniously by the little folks that they could fly and sing, so that Johann stared with amazement at all the marvels he saw.

The servants and maids who waited at table and sprayed attar of roses and other scent about, handed the golden dishes and cups round, and so on, were children of men, who out of curiosity or by accident had got among the little folks without possessing themselves of a pledge, and thus had come under their dominion. These were dressed differently. Both boys and girls wore white frocks and glass shoes, so that their step could be heard, blue caps and silver belts round their waist. That was the garb of service. At first Johann was sorry for them, when he saw how they had to jump about and wait on the underground folks, but as they looked cheerful, were nicely dressed and had rosy cheeks, he thought: They are not so badly off after all, I was worse off when I had to run after the cows and bullocks. Of course I am now a master, and they have to run about as servants, but the time will come when they get free. Thus he felt comforted, and played and enjoyed himself with his small companions for about two hours, eating and drinking and listening to the music in the air. Then the president rang his bell again, and at the

sound the tables and chairs sank beneath the floor, and after another ring there arose palms and laurels, and orange trees with flowers and fruit, and other birds sat in the branches and sang. They sang together in a regular tune and measure, and Johann soon noticed at the end of the hall a little grey man who gave them the time and tune; not that he ever uttered a word, but he played a dance on his fiddle and all the birds joined in and warbled, and the merry little crowd got up and hopped and skipped and danced around, as if the world were to whirl asunder. And the pretty little girls that sat by Johann's side, took hold of him and made him dance round, which he much relished, for about two hours. As long as he remained underground, he joined every afternoon in this jolly dance, and would remember it with keen delight even in his old age. He used to say that the heavenly delights, the singing and harp-playing of the angels, to which the blessed looked forward in heaven, might be very beautiful, but he could not imagine anything lovelier than this music of the pretty little folks, the marvellous birds with their enchanting notes, and the ringing silver bells in the caps. No man who had not seen it could imagine what it was like.

When the music and dancing had finished, it was about the time which we call 4 P.M., the airy little folks disappeared hither and thither to their work.

After supper they would generally again play and dance, but in the night, especially on fine starlit nights, and when they had anything particular to do up there, they all slipped out of the mountain. But at that time Johann would quietly go to bed and say his prayers like a good Christian boy, nor would he ever forget his morning prayers. Before I tell you anything of his further adventures in the succeeding years, I must tell you something more of the little folks he was among.

That such little folks whom one calls by different names: brownies, whities, elves, white elves, black elves, goblins, pucks, mandrakes, Trolls, &c., exist since prehistoric times, and live inside the mountains and hills in marvellous crystal and glass houses, is certain. But how they came there and what sort of spirits they are, and for what purpose God has created them, nobody has been able to tell. They are, like the souls and hearts of men, of very varied kind; some evil, some good, some kind, others mischievous; but of them all, without distinction, it is said, that they are very ingenious and clever, and can execute the most artistic work and jewellry, which for that very reason are often taken for witches' work. All this Johann Dietrich has reported, and told it to his friends and children, who in their turn have told others; and so the tale has come down to our day.

The little folks among whom Johann had descended belonged to the brownies. They were full of tricks, but on the whole a good-natured and pleasant race. They were called brownies, because they wore brown jackets and skirts, and had brown caps with silver bells; some wore black shoes tied with red ribbons, but most of them had fine glass slippers, and these they all used in dancing. Their dwellings were in the mountains, but they kept them very secret, and as long as he was there Johann did not see any of their private rooms. He and his servant had their apartment close by the place where the splendid hall and ballroom would always appear and disappear; he saw also in many other places beautiful halls, open squares, and lovely fields and pastures, but nowhere any dwellings. The little folks would be about in groups or singly, dancing, promenading, or passing by him quickly. And how they came out of the rocks in which they dwelt, or disappeared into them, his eyes could never see, however much he lay in wait to watch for it. They would just appear to his eyes, and vanish again like a flash of lightning or a ray of light. Some of the small girls who were fond of him whispered to him, that each had his or her own little house in the rock, and that the mountain was in reality transparent from end to end and surrounded by glass, but that his eyes were not able to see it.

The biggest of these little folks were hardly two feet high, and the boys and girls were thus very small, but they were of pretty shape and pleasant mien, with beautifully graceful hands and feet. And it was this very loveliness and pleasantness which would tempt many a human being, so that they descended among them without a pledge or token and had to remain and serve for years. If you have a pledge from them, it matters not if you descend with them in their silver barrel, they must let you out when you want it. Nor do they like to give a pledge, and the best thing is to take it from them by stratagem, for then they have to wait on one, although they like best to rule. In fact, their principal fault is that they are too fond of power.

They are particularly desirous of ruling over human beings, and are very conceited if, with their cunning, they can make those their servants who are much bigger and stronger than themselves. The best pledge to obtain from them is a brown cap with the little bell, or a glass slipper, or a silver buckle with which they fasten their belt. He who can get the latter becomes a great ruler over them and has plenty of everything.

One does not know if they ever die; some people say that on getting old they creep into stones and trees and grow into one with them, and turn to those strange sounds, sighs, and groans which one

occasionally hears without knowing whence they come; or that they turn into those odd excrescences and interlaced loops, through which witches are said to escape, when the wild huntsman is after them. No man ever saw a corpse among them, and when one asked after it, they answered as if they did not understand the meaning of the word. It is certain that some of them are over two thousand years old, and thus it is no wonder that such clever folks are found amongst them.

They have a great advantage over us in not having to trouble and toil for their daily bread, for food and drink comes to them by itself, as it were, or through some marvellous trick, and their table never lacks bread and wine and roast meat. In the same way you never see in their domain corn growing in the fields or cattle grazing on the pastures; all that grows there is luxuries for their enjoyment; trees and vines with exquisite fruit and grapes; lovely flowers on which such a variety of butterflies flutter as you never see in the land of sun and moon; and the most lovely shimmering birds, who resemble the paradise bird and the phœnix, rock themselves in the branches and sing sweet songs. Other live things are not seen there, unless you call the fountains of milk and honey alive, which here and there bubble out of the crystal rock walls. Thus it would seem as if these little folks were very happy and

only born for pleasure and enjoyment, and it must be agreed that they well understand the art of enjoying their life; but you must not imagine that they do nothing but eating, playing, dancing, then slip into their chambers and sleep, or play through the night on the earth. Oh dear, no! They are probably by far the busiest and most industrious beings one has ever seen. Nobody understands as well as they the interior of the earth, the secret powers of Nature, and what grows in mountains, stones, and metals, and what works in the colours of flowers and in the roots of trees. For their senses are much more acute and sharper than those of the brightest human being. Our little children often have acute senses and fine thoughts, which grown-up people do not always understand, because their senses have got coarse and hardened through their surroundings.

These underground folks have much delight in precious metals and stones, and make charming works from them, so that even our greatest and cleverest goldsmiths marvel, when they have the chance of seeing such a piece of work. For that reason they are sometimes called the keepers of gold and silver, and it is thought that they are possessed with evil greed and are wicked spirits of the metals. But they who think that wrong them, for the white and brown dwarfs, at least, are not

greedy, for they give plenty of presents to men, which they would not do if they were over fond of gold and jewels. They love it for its sheen and sparkle, for light and glamour is above everything in their eyes. The dwarfs with black caps are avaricious and of a less kind nature.

How they slip out of their glass hills at night and amuse themselves in moonlight and starlight, I have already told you. They can also slip invisibly into the houses of man, for nobody can see them if they have their caps on, unless he himself wear such a cap. Therefore people say that they practise all sorts of mischief, exchange infants in their cradles, even steal them. But that is untrue of the whities and brownies; God has not given them the power of practising mischief in human habitations. It is true they get in, and no keyhole is so small that they could not slip through; but they do no evil to men, they are only curious to see what men are doing. Sometimes they bring pretty presents with them, especially for children, of whom they are very fond. And when children at their play find ducats or golden rings, as sometimes happens, or when they find dainty shoes or a wreath or a new dress on their beds and cradles on waking up, it is not always the angels that have brought them, but more often the brownies. So, at least, say many people who know that they often

invisibly surround the children and guard them from perishing in fire or water. If ever they tease and frighten any one, it is lazy men and dirty maid-servants whom they frighten with bad dreams or nightmares, or bite in the shape of fleas, or bite and scratch them like invisible dogs and cats; or if there are thieves and wicked men who walk forbidden ways at night, they may, as owls, poke them in the back, or, as will-o'-the-wisps, entice them into swamps and bogs, or even bring them into the arms of their pursuers. But that I consider no sin.

The black dwarfs, on the other hand, are malignant and spiteful. But they may not come near the houses of men, nor even on the surface of the world, unless it be in deserts and barren wastes. They never come near men, unless the latter have given themselves into their power and pawned and pledged themselves to them. In fact, these subtle and melancholy spirits rack their brains night and day how they may ensnare poor fools and artful knaves, and make fun of their misery afterwards. These blackies are not as pretty as the others, but exceedingly ugly. They have dull bleared eyes, like charcoal burners and blacksmiths; are silent and secret about their work; live singly, or, at most, two and three together; know neither dancing or music, but only howling and whining. And if at night, in

forest or bog, one hears a noise like of a crowd of screaming children, or meowing cats, or screeching wailing owls, that is their nightly gatherings, that is their music, that is they.

Naturally all human beings feel strange about the underground folks; for man is born unto the light and the love of all that is light and bright, and he shudders at the dark and hidden things, and at secret powers, who walk and rule unseen. Also does one know that they may be anywhere, and can change and transform themselves at will. Of course, most of their powers are magnified; they achieve most by art, by being able to spin and weave a woof as fine as cobwebs, and producing all sorts of phantasms and legerdemain before men. But that they do for fun and play, and not for evil purpose. The black dwarfs, however, practise witchcraft, and when they change themselves, it is into the most noisome beasts and vermin—snakes, bears, wolves, hyænas, tigers, cats, serpents, toads, scorpions, crows, and owls—and woe betide the poor men that have had dealings with them! For of them one ought to demand at least triple pledges, and even the most acute is outdone by them if he does not look out sharp. They weave witches'-caps and fog-caps, with which one can make himself invisible and ride over land and sea in a trice. It was they who wove Dr. Faustus' cloak, with which he rode in a second from

Strassburg to Rome and from Mayence to Paris. But how fared this poor Dr. Faustus? Because he wanted to become too wise, he became, with these black artists, a necromancer himself, and was forfeited in the end to the Prince of Blackness.

They also forge magic arms; armour that is proof against cut and blow; swords that never get notched, and which can pierce any helmet and coat of mail; coats of mail, as fine as cobweb, which no shot can pierce. But these have rather fallen out of use since men became Christians. Yet they certainly are artful smiths and armourers, who know how to temper their steel like no earthly smith; for their blades are pliant like grass and sharp as diamond. They also make other witches' tools of steel and iron, that are used for hidden purposes, and have the strangest and most incomprehensible qualities. The brownies, on the other hand, are the jewellers of the mountains, and work in gold and silver and precious stones. But the cleverest of all are the whities; their work is so fragile and dainty that many eyes can hardly discern it, and they can weave garments of gold and silver that look like rays of sun and moon, and are lighter than cobweb.

During the first weeks of Johann Dietrich's life in the glass mountain, he walked no further than from his bedroom to the dining-hall and back. He could not get tired of looking at and praising the

dainty objects which were placed about his room and in the cupboards. His greatest delight were the pretty pictures and the book-case, in which stood many hundreds of prettily bound books with gold edges, wherein he found the jolliest fairy-tales, which he never got tired of reading. But after a few weeks he would take walks with his servant, who showed and explained things to him. There were such pretty walks in every direction, and he could walk about for miles; this proves how big the mountain was, although at the top it only appeared like a small hill with a few trees and shrubs on it, and this also shows how many miles it went down into the interior of the earth. There was something peculiar about these walks; between every field and pasture, of which there were plenty, strewn with hills and trees and flowers, islets and lakes, in the greatest variety, there were narrow lanes through which one had to walk like through crystal rock walls to get from one place to the other. Each field extended a few miles in length. The fruit trees and fountains I have already mentioned, and the wanderers need never be exhausted without finding something for refreshment. But his greatest delight was to watch the birds hopping from branch to branch, singing like heavenly nightingales, and the flowers of such miraculous beauty and scent, such as Johann had never met with on earth. In short, it

was a charmingly merry and agreeable life, and, with all the pleasure, so quiet. There blew a fresh breeze, but you felt no keen wind; it shone brightly, and you did not suffer from heat; the waves rolled and roared, and you feared no danger, but dainty skiffs and gondolas, shaped like snow-white swans, came of their own accord if you wanted to cross the stream, to take you to the opposite bank or to an eyot. Whence came the light he never knew, and the servant was not allowed to tell him; but Johann saw plainly, that the big carbuncle and diamonds which ornamented the high vault which served as sky, and which adorned all the walls inside the mountain, shone instead of the sun, moon, and stars. These charming fields and commons were generally unpeopled. They saw few brownies on them, and those whom you saw seemed to slip past, as if they were in a great hurry. On rare occasions a few were seen dancing here in the open, by threes, or, at the most, half a dozen of them. Johann never saw more of them together. But it was lively when the troop of human servants, who might amount to a few hundreds, were taken out for a walk. However, that occurred only twice a week; on other days they were at work in the big hall and adjoining rooms, or had to sit in school.

Another peculiarity added to the diamonds doing duty for sun and moon and stars was, that they had

no real difference of seasons; the temperature was always the same—a mild, gentle, spring air, perfumed with flowery scent and filled with the singing of birds.

The day was divided into day and night, and again subdivided into morning, noon, evening, and night; yet noontime was no hotter than the other times of day, and night neither as dark, nor day as light, as in our world above ground.

Johann had spent many months here—about ten, I fancy—and they had passed to him like one day. Then something happened which brought him to school. He walked one day as was his wont, with his servant, when in the twilight of evening he saw something snow-white slip into the crystal rock and disappear. It seemed to him to be one of the little folks, whose hair was hanging in snow-white curls over his shoulders. He inquired from his companion: "What was that? Are there some among you that wear white robes like the little human servants you have caught?"

The servant: "Yes, there are some, but not many, and they never come to table or to dance but once a year on the birthday of the big mountain-king, who lives many thousand miles further down in the interior. That is why you have not seen them yet. They are the most ancient among us, some of them even a few thou-

sand years old, and they know all about the beginning of the world and the origin of things, and are called the wise men. They live very much by themselves and only leave their chambers to instruct our children and the servants, for whom they keep a big school; otherwise they are busy with the contemplation of heavenly things, astronomy and alchemy."

"What!" exclaimed Johann, "there are schools here! How wrong of you not to tell me that before. I have always had a great desire to go to school and learn properly."

"You can, if you like," answered his valet; "you are master here, and we must do as you please. You may order one of the wise men to come to your room if you like, or you may go to one of the schools."

"That I will do at once from to-morrow," said Johann, "and I will go to the school where the servants are being taught. I prefer to learn with those who are born on the earth, for your children would probably be far ahead of me. I should not get along with them, and it would not be nice to be at the bottom of the class."

And the very next morning Johann made the servant take him to school, and he liked school so well, that he never missed a day after that. Now it is very creditable that the brownies should teach

these children so well, that they always come as well-instructed men and women out of the mountains. Here there were teachers of all sorts of arts. The children learned the three R.'s, drawing, painting, the art of writing and relating stories and fairy tales, and were also instructed in many a handicraft. The abler ones were, in addition, taught natural science and astronomy, and were practised in poetry and guessing riddles, of which two arts the little folks are very fond, and with which they delight each other at mealtimes and festivals. Little Johann was very industrious and soon became one of the cleverest among the draughtsmen and painters ; he also executed fine works in silver, gold, and stone ; indeed, he was soon able to make such delicate fruit and flowers, that you could hardly find them surpassed in Nature, which after all is the most perfect and artistic Worker. He also made pretty rhymes, and in their riddle and conundrum competitions he became so skilled, that he was always ready with an answer, and often they found no answer to his riddles.

Many a year Johann had spent here without any thoughts of the beautiful world above, and those whom he had left behind there ; thus pleasantly his time went by and soon he preferred the school to dancing and the other pleasures. He found here among the children many nice play-

fellows. The only thing that grieved him was, that they had to serve for certain hours and could not be with him then; although certainly, they were not treated harshly and had a very light service, more like play; for heavy, dirty, or troublesome labour did not exist here below.

Among these companions and playfellows, Johann liked nobody better than a little fair maiden, called Lisbeth Krabbe. She was of his village, the daughter of the parson, Frederick Krabbe, in Rambin. She had been lost when four years of age, and Johann well remembered having heard about her disappearance. She had not been kidnapped by the brownies, but one summer's day she had run with other children into the field. They had gone to the nine mountains, and there little Lisbeth had dropped asleep and been left behind by the others, and in the night when she woke up, she just chanced to be among the brownies and to descend with them. Johann not only liked her because she was of his village, but because she was an exceedingly pleasant and nice child, with blue eyes and fair curls, and the most angelic smile; and as she grew up, she became very handsome.

Thus Johann played through his child years and quite forgot that there were people living above the mountains. He was now eighteen years of age and Lisbeth sixteen. And what had been innocent

child's play, became now sweet love. They could no longer live apart, called themselves betrothed, and would rather be alone together, than among the others. The brownies were pleased to see it, for they all liked Johann and would have been glad to have him as their servant, for greed of power is a vice they possess among their virtues. They argued thus: Through this pretty maid we shall catch him in the end and he will be content to wait at table, gather fruit from the trees, and to sweep the floor. But they were mistaken. The little servant, whose cap he had, and who often found the time pass heavily, had told him too much: that he only need give orders here, and they all had to obey; for he who had become master of one brownie, was in so far master of all that they had to do everything in their power to please him. Now Johann walked frequently with his sweet little Lisbeth and left the servant at home, for there were no longer any roads or paths which he did not know. And they would walk far into the night without noticing the time; Johann was talking merrily and cheerily, but Lisbeth was often sad and silent, reminding him of the world above, where human beings live, and sun and moon and stars are shining. But as he would always try to make her talk of other things, she would only sigh by herself, and even forget it over the happiness of being with him. Now one night

they had utterly forgotten the time in their walk, and sauntered, goodness knows how far, when it was midnight and they just happened to be at the place where the top of the glass-mountain usually opened, and where the brownies were in the habit of slipping out and in. All of a sudden they heard some earthly cocks crow loudly. This sweet sound, which they had not heard for twelve years, moved little Lisbeth deeply ; she could not restrain herself, embraced Johann, and wept bitterly. But when she recovered herself, she begged him to unlock their underground prison, saying something like this : " Dear Johann, I agree, it is pretty down here and the little folks are pleasant and won't hurt anybody, but I have never felt at home here and have never been happy until I loved you, and yet this is not perfect happiness, for this life is not what it ought to be for human beings. I have no peace day and night, and I will tell you about something which hitherto I have kept to myself. Every night I dream of my dear father and mother and of our churchyard where the people stand so reverently at the church doors and wait for my father, and then I feel a longing in my heart that my tears might turn to blood, because I can't go to church with them and pray and praise God as men ought. For this below is no Christian life, only an artificial humdrum life, half Pagan. And further, dear

Johann, reflect that we can never become husband and wife here, for there is no priest to marry us, and so we shall have to remain betrothed until we are old and grey. Therefore consider and find means for us to get away from here. I yearn indescribably to be with my father and good Christians."

For Johann too there had been something strange in the crowing of the cocks, and he felt for the first time homesick for the land where the sun shines. So he replied to his sweetheart: "Dear, sweet Lisbeth, you admonish me rightly. I, too, feel now that it is a sin for Christians to remain here. I feel sad at heart, and see that it was great forwardness and even a sin for me to have descended among the brownies, but I was a child and knew not what I was doing, so God will forgive me; but now I won't wait another day, but make haste to get out. They have no power to keep me here."

And in his excitement and emotion he hurried her away with him, without noticing how deadly pale Lisbeth had become at his last words, and how they affected her; for he had not considered that she was one of the servants, and had to stop her fifty years ere she could get out. But her grief and pain was so strong that she burst into tears and loud sobs, and when he asked what was the matter, as he was willing to go away with her through the whole world, if it pleased her so, she replied: "Yes, you

are master here and can go; but I am a servant, and according to the strict law that prevails here, I must stop till fifty years have gone by. And what use is it then to me to return to the earth, when father and mother are dead, and all my playmates old and grey? And you, too, will be old and grey. What good is it, then, to me to remain young and not get older than twenty years? O woe to me!"

She said these words so pitifully that they could have moved a rock. But in her lover's ears they sounded like a thunderclap, and it saddened him, for he knew he could not go from here without her, and yet he found no way out of the difficulty. So they parted in sorrow. Johann pressed her hand to his heart and kissed her tenderly, saying: "No, dear Lisbeth, I shall never go without you, believe me." And these words comforted her.

All night long Johann tossed about on his pillows and found no rest, for his thoughts flew round and round like birds pursued by a hawk. At last when day dawned he jumped out of bed, and cried exultingly: "I have it! I have it! Servant, you have told me too much!" He rang his bell, the servant came, and he ordered him to bring Lisbeth to him directly. In a few minutes the servant brought the pretty maid in, whereupon he sent the servant out and told Lisbeth to rejoice, as he had found a way out of the difficulty and she was to cheer up; he felt

sure he could deliver her. Then he bade the servant to lead her back and to call the six chiefs among the little folks to him. The servant was astonished at this message, and the six chiefs more so when the message came to them, and they tried to guess what he wanted with them, and whispered among themselves ; but they came to him. Johann received the six pleasantly, for they were the men among whom he daily sat at table, and he spoke thus to them :

" Dear gentlemen and friends, you are aware in what way I have come amongst you ; not as a prisoner and servant, but as master of one of you, and consequently over all of you. During the ten years I have lived here, you have received me and treated me like a gentleman, for which I owe you thanks. But you owe me greater thanks, for I might have worried and plagued you much ; aye, I could have been a spiteful, unkind tyrant, and you would have had to suffer it obediently without complaining. But I have not acted thus ; rather have I treated you as equals, and played with you instead of lording it over you. Now I beg that you will be kind in return and grant my request. Among your servants there is a dainty maid, whom I love, Lisbeth Krabbe, from Rambin, whence I also come. Give her to me, and let her go with me. For I want to go back to where the sun shines and the

plough draws furrows in the field. I ask for nothing else but this fair maid, and the furniture and ornaments from my room."

Thus he spoke with strong and lively accent, and they well noted how seriously he meant it. But they looked down embarrassed and thoughtful, and were silent. At last the eldest of them lisped out: "Master, you demand what we cannot give; we are grieved you should ask for something impossible. It is an inviolable law, that no servant can be released here before the proper time. If we break the law, our whole subterranean empire would fall. Anything else, for we are proud of you and respect you, but Lisbeth we cannot give unto you."

"You can give her up, and you shall! cried Johann in anger. "Go and consider till to-morrow. I no longer beg, I demand it. Come back at this same hour to-morrow. I will show you if I cannot conquer your flattering, foxy tricks."

The six bowed and went, but they scolded Johann's servant that he had let out so much. The latter excused himself and denied it, saying: "You know how artfully he outwitted me with the cap, and how he knew all our secrets before, through the old herdsman from Rothenkirchen; it is he who has told him this." And they believed it, and scolded no longer.

Next morning when the six came back at the

appointed hour, Johann received them kindly, and said: ".I addressed you severely yesterday, but I did not mean any harshness. Still, I will and must have Lisbeth. I stick to that. I know you will be sorry to miss me, because you are fond of human beings when they are merry and jolly like myself. But I cannot help it. I must get back among Christians to live and die as a Christian, and it would be a sin for me to tarry longer here. That is why I want to leave, not for hatred or dislike of you. And I will take my dear Lisbeth with me. And now, pray, do not be obstinate and obdurate any longer, but behave as friends to a friend, and do voluntarily what you will otherwise be compelled to do, give my pretty sweetheart up to me and let us part pleasantly, so that we may keep kindly memories on either side."

The six behaved very agreeably, and talked one after the other with well-set phrases, by which they meant to entrap him, for they are very skilled in that. But it availed them nothing, and their words were like chaff before the wind, and moved Johann no more than chaff. And the end of it was, that after all their fine speeches he reiterated: "Give up Lisbeth! I shall not go without her." For he was too much in love to forsake her. Still the six refused steadfastly, and behaved as if they were in their right and should never give in.

Johann in the end said smilingly: "Go now, farewell till to-morrow at the same hour. This is your third and last chance. If you won't give in then in kindness, you shall see how I can be master." For when he saw them so obdurate he had resolved to torment them unless better thoughts should prevail.

They came again the third morning. Johann looked at them severely and sternly, did not respond to their bows, but asked curtly: "Yes or no?" They answered unanimously: "No." Then Johann ordered the servant to fetch another forty-four of the nobles and their wives and daughters, as well as the wives and daughters of these six. The servant went off like a whirlwind, and in a few minutes the forty-four had come with their wives and daughters and the families of the other six, so that in all there were about five hundred men, women, and children. Johann bade them go and fetch hatchets, hoes, and stakes, and return to him. They did as they were told. Then he led them to a rocky hill in a field, and these tender, delicate beings, who were not made for rough work, had to cut and break stones. This was to let them know that if they would not yield for love, it would be worse for them. They worked away most patiently, and made no sign, but behaved as if they found it easy play. And so he made them slave

from morning till night, and they had to perspire and work breathlessly, and he stood behind and urged them on. They were hoping he would lose patience and be overcome by pity at the sight of their wives and children getting pale and worn, who used to be so pretty and cheerful. And in fact, Johann was not born to be the like of King Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar, for after having carried on like that for a few weeks, he lost patience, because they did not give in, being an obstinate race. And they cunningly contrived so that the prettiest had always to work nearest to Johann, particularly the pretty little girls who had been his fellows at table, and they would note his expression, and soon perceived that he would secretly turn away, to wipe the tears from his eyes. So in the end Johann thought of some other punishment which would lead him to attain his end quicker. He hardened himself, called them together one evening and said: "I see you are a stiff-necked race, but I will be harder than you. To-morrow when you come to work let each bring a new whip." And he bade them undress and whip one another until the blood flowed. And he put on the most cruel and bloodthirsty looks, as if a tigress had suckled him, or a gallows-bird reared him. But the little folks thrashed each other and laughed in scorn, without fulfilling his request. This took place for three or four days.

Then he could not stand it any longer for pity and disgust, and he sent them home, and thought of some other means to wear their obstinacy out. But being by nature soft and tender-hearted, and having felt their punishments more than they themselves, he gave up the thought of further tormenting them. He became so melancholy that his Lisbeth had now to comfort and cheer him, who used always to be so hopeful. And he took a dislike to the little folks and separated himself from their society, their feasts and dances, and lived alone in his room, and saw nobody but his Lisbeth, so that he became almost a hermit and sank into deep melancholy.

One evening as he walked alone in this sullen mood, he kicked in his temper little stones against other stones to break them. Perhaps it relieved his feelings, for when a man is unhappy and sore in himself he would like to break the whole world to pieces. In short Johann, who had no inclination for anything better, broke the poor stones to bits, when it chanced that out of a rather big stone that was thus hit there crept a creature that was to deliver him. This was a toad, whose house in the stone had grown around her and who may have been inside since the creation. When Johann saw the toad, he jumped for joy, caught her and said: "Now I shall get my Lisbeth! Now you defiant little folks will catch it. If whipping

with rods could not teach you obedience, I shall now whip you with scorpions and toads." He concealed the toad in his pocket as if she were a valuable treasure, hurried home and put her in a solid silver tureen, so that she could not escape. He shouted for joy and behaved quite madly and then rushed out into the field, taking the vessel containing the toad under his arm, in order to test the remedy if it were genuine. He saw a couple of brownies not far off, and as he approached them, they fell to the ground as if struck with deadly disease and whined and cried miserably. He was satisfied with the trial, and eased them at once by running away with his toad and hurrying home, where he sent for Lisbeth, embraced her, who had not seen him so cheerful for six months, and said to her:

"Sweet Lisbeth, darling Lisbeth, now you will be mine; we shall start from here the day after to-morrow, and hurrah! we shall soon have a merry wedding!"

She was still more surprised and said: "Dear Johann, are you out of your mind? How could that possibly happen?"

But he smiled, saying, "No, I am not mad, but I will madden the little folks if they won't give in. Look! here is what shall deliver you and me!" Thus he showed her his find and told her how he found it and how successful it had proved at the first trial.

Now I must reveal to you the secret of the toad. Klas Starkvolt had often told Johann that the little folks could not stand an evil smell, and that the sight and smell of toads would make them faint and suffer intolerable pain, so that by bad smells and these horrible animals one could compel them to everything. Consequently you never find anything smelling in their realm, and toads are unheard of there, and it would really appear that this same toad had been miraculously placed in the stone and got out of it in such a strange manner for the purpose of delivering Johann and Lisbeth out of the mountain.

These two were quite ready to believe in a miracle, especially Lisbeth, who was a most religious child. And when Johann had explained all his plans to her, she fell gratefully on her knees to thank God, and she went home cheerfully and had the sweetest dreams in the night. Nor did Johann go sad to bed.

Next morning he ordered his servant to call the fifty elders with their wives and children, and when they appeared, he addressed them as follows: "You all know how I got here and have lived among you not as lord and master but as your friend and companion, and you seemed to be fond of me, but when I came to ask you a small favour, you refused it defiantly as if I had asked for your life and

empire. And the means I took to make you see your wrong seemed to confirm you only in your obstinate defiance, and when in sheer pity I left off punishing you, you laughed at me for being so stupid that I knew no means to compel you. But I know a way and means now and will soon show it you, if you remain obdurate and won't give up Lisbeth. Therefore for the last time I give you a minute to reflect. If you persist in refusing, you shall be made to feel the pain which is most terrible to you and your children."

But they did not hesitate, and with one voice said "No!" wondering in their minds what new stratagem he meant to frighten wise men with. And they smiled as they said "No."

This enraged Johann even more than the refusal. He cried: "If you won't hear, you shall feel!" ran quickly to where he had hidden the vessel with the toad, and fetched it. He came back, and as he was still about a hundred steps distant from them, they all fell down thunderstruck and began to howl and scream and wriggle, as if they were tormented by the most unbearable pain. They stretched out their hands and implored him: "Leave off, master; leave off! Be merciful! We feel that you have a toad and that there is no escape! Take the horrid plague away; we will do all you order us to do." So he just let them struggle a few seconds longer and

then took the vessel with the toad away, whereupon they rose and their faces resumed their cheerful looks, for the pain had gone as soon as the toad was removed.

Then Johann retained six of the men and left the women and children and the other men to go where they liked. But to the six he thus proclaimed his will: "This night between midnight and one o'clock, I mean to set out with Lisbeth, and you will load three waggons with silver, gold, and precious stones for me; for although I might take all you have, I will be more merciful to you than you have been to me. The ornaments, pictures, books and furniture from my room are also to be loaded on two waggons, so that there will be five altogether. For myself you will, please, prepare the best travelling coach, with six black horses harnessed to it, in which my bride and I will drive home to our people. At the same time I order you to release all those servants who are twenty years old or more, according to earthly reckoning, and you will please give each of them sufficient gold to take to make them rich in the world. And in future the law shall be, and you will confirm it by your oath, that no human being is to be kept here after they have attained their twentieth year."

The six took the oath and went away sadly. But Johann took the toad and buried it deep down in

the ground. In the meanwhile all the preparations were made and Johann and Lisbeth put on their best clothes, so as to appear at once as bride and bridegroom. The little folks went to work very quietly, but all the louder were the troop of servants, whom Johann's new law had set free. They exulted with joy about him and Lisbeth at the prospect of returning home.

It happened to be just about the same time of year as when Johann had descended into the mountain, the midsummer time, called the summer-solstice, and he had been over twelve years below and Lisbeth over fourteen, he was going on for twenty-one years, and Lisbeth eighteen.

When all the waggons with treasure had gone up, and the released boys and maids, Johann and Lisbeth were the last to go up in the silver tub. And it was about an hour after midnight and seemed the same as when he had descended. They were surrounded by sweet music and saw the glass mountain open and the first rays of heavenly light shine down upon them, and soon they were out and saw the day dawn in the east. Johann saw a crowd of the brownies, who were busied about him and Lisbeth and the waggons, move hither and thither. Then he bade them a last good-bye, took the brown cap, swung it thrice round his head, and threw it among them. And instantly they vanished out of his sight

and he saw nothing but a green hill, and well-known bushes and fields, and heard the church-clock in Rambin strike two. Then he knelt down with Lisbeth and the boys and girls who had been released through his intervention, and they prayed devoutly and vowed to lead a good and Christian life for their miraculous delivery from the elves underground.

When they had finished the sun rose and Johann arranged the procession of his waggons. In front came two waggons, each drawn by four bay horses, which were so heavily laden with pure gold that the horses groaned under the weight; then followed a waggon with six snow-white horses, which carried all the silver and crystal; behind this came the two last waggons, each drawn by four grey horses; these were loaded with splendid furniture, vessels, precious stones, and Johann's library. Last came he with his sweetheart in an open landau, made of pure green emerald, and decorated in front with large diamonds, and drawn by six high-bred black horses. The released boys and girls in glass slippers and white frocks with silver belts, walked in front of, beside, and behind the waggons, some of the boys leading the horses. For they all wanted to accompany their deliverer as far as Rambin, before they went off to their homes. There were about fifty or sixty of them, all singing with joy;

and some had fiddles, fifes, and trumpets with which they accompanied the singing. And thus they went with ringing sound down the hills to the high road that leads from Gartz to Rambin. A strange emotion overcame Johann and Lisbeth when they saw in the distance the spire of Rambin and the pastures of Drammendorf and Giesendorf, where they had played so much as children. Just as they passed Rothenkirchen, the herd of cows crossed the road, and Klas Starkvolt, with his faithful dog, Quick, walked slowly after them. Johann saw him, recognised him at once, and said to himself that he would not forget the good old man. Thus they moved on with their procession, and everybody that met them on the road stopped or ran after them, some even ran before them, to announce in Rambin what a beautiful procession was coming along the road, so that they excited the whole village. Of course the procession proceeded but slowly on account of the heavily-laden waggons.

About four o'clock they arrived in Rambin and stopped in the midst of the village, a few steps from the house where Johann had been born. Among the crowd that had run together to stare at the wonder, Johann soon detected his old father and mother, and even his brother Andreas and his sister Trina. Old Parson Krabbe stood there, too, in bedroom slippers and nightcap; but Lisbeth did

not recognise him, as she had been too young when she had left home. They stopped for about ten minutes, without making a sign, and I may well say that such splendour had never been seen in Rambin before this day, nor is it likely to have such another sight till doomsday. Johann and his sweetheart literally shone with diamonds and precious stones; the carriage, the waggons, the horses, and the harness were beautifully decorated, the accompanying boys and girls, in the flower of life, were dressed in beautiful white clothes, and with strange caps and glass slippers, it all seemed to belong to a different world, so that the schoolmaster, who had in his young days followed the trade of a shoemaker and had wandered as far as Moscow and Constantinople, said: "If they are not princes from Tartary, or Persia, or Asia, they must have come down from the moon; for in the lands of Europe I have never seen their like, although I have been in many towns where kings and emperors live." The good schoolmaster was mistaken; they did not come from Persia or Tartary, but quite from the neighbourhood, although from an undiscovered world.

When Johann thought they had feasted their eyes to their satisfaction, he jumped out of his carriage, lifted Lisbeth out and passed through the crowd, who respectfully made way. Without delay

he hurried towards the low thatched cottage where Jacob Dietrich and his wife stood, embraced them and kissed them, who wanted to kneel down and kiss his knees. But he prevented them, saying: "On no account! Do you not recognise me? I am your lost son Johann Dietrich, and here is my sweetheart!" And the two old people stared and knew not were they waking or dreaming; but all the crowd who stood round were surprised and called out: "Johann Dietrich has come back from the underground folks, and see what he has brought with him."

Johann did not stand idle for long, but hurried to the old parson and drew him almost forcibly forward, for the old man did not understand what the youth wanted of him. And he led the venerable old gentleman to Lisbeth asking: "Do you know her?" And before he could reply, he gave her into his arms and said: "This is your lost daughter, whom I bring back to you as my bride-elect. And now you shall bless us and betroth us in Christian fashion, we who have come back to our families in such a marvellous way!" The old man was speechless and wept for joy on his daughter's bosom; for she was his only child and he had long mourned her as dead. And when he had recovered himself a little, he took her hands and laid them into Johann's hand, and bade Jacob Dietrich and his

wife come near, and he betrothed them and thanked God that He had allowed him to see this day.

When this was done, and enough questions and answers had been given, and when all the neighbours and old playmates had looked at Johann and Lisbeth and recognised each in their own fashion, the two went home to their families, and Johann settled that the wedding was to be in eight days. And he sent a hundred carts into the forest to fetch trees and leafy branches in great quantity, and sent for carpenters and joiners and decorators, and where now the convent of St. George stands, a few hundred yards outside the village, he had a lofty leafy tent erected, with tables round the sides and a dancing-gallery in the centre, and the place was large enough to hold five thousand people.

At the same time he sent to Stralsund and Greifswald and bought whole boatloadsfull of wine, sugar, and coffee. And whole herds of oxen, pigs, and sheep were killed, and I can't say how many stags and deer and hares were shot, just as little as I can name the quantity of fish that were ordered and caught. And there was not a single musician in Rügen and Pommerania who was not engaged to come and play, for Johann was rich and wanted to let the people see it. He also asked the whole parish to the wedding, and kept the boys and girls there to help him celebrate his wedding.

This was the order of the wedding:

In the morning all the guests went to church, and old Parson Krabbe thanked God and related the story of the miraculous preservation and release of the children. Then he blessed them and joined them solemnly together. After church they went in proper order to the leafy tent, Jacob Dietrich and his wife having the bride between them, and the bridegroom following, led by Parson Krabbe and his old friend Klas Starkvolt. This latter had been sent for at once by Johann, who gave him rich gifts and a beautiful new suit of clothes for the wedding. And he made Klas promise that he would come and stay with him as much as he liked, which promise he honestly kept. After these couples followed the white girls and boys from the mountain, in pairs, and then all the other friends, neighbours, and parishioners according to their rank, dignity, and age, as was proper. And they celebrated a wedding that was still talked about by their great-grandchildren. For fourteen entire days and nights they were feasting and dancing, and forty couples danced in glass slippers, a thing which had never been heard of before and after. And the people wondered at the graceful dancing which they had learned among the elves, who certainly are the best dancing-masters.

After the wedding celebration, Johann and his

pretty wife travelled about the country and bought towns and villages and estates, so that Johann became lord of almost the whole island, and was made a very noble earl in the land. And his father was made a nobleman, and his brothers and sisters were called lords and ladies. For what can you not get for gold and silver? Almost everything except eternal bliss; otherwise poor people would have nothing left to comfort them. Still, in all his prosperity Johann never forgot the experience of his youth, and he lived a good and pious life, and his wife Lisbeth even more so. They both did much good to the Church and the poor, and built many churches. The very church that is now in Rambin was built by them, and richly endowed. It was erected as a memorial of Johann's birth in the place where Jacob Dietrich's cottage stood. And he presented it with many valuable vessels of the most delicate workmanship that had been made by the little folks underground, and also with his glass slippers and those of Lisbeth. But these were lost in the time of the great King Charles XII. of Sweden, when the Russians occupied the isle of Rügen and laid everything waste. At that time the Cossacks plundered also the church in Rambin and carried all the treasures away.

from Rügen

The Silver Bell

LITTLE Johann Dietrich had from a poor herdsman become a rich and grand lord, because he had the courage to descend into the mountain and get treasures for himself. But others have become rich by merely obtaining a pledge from the little underground folks. By these means, they have got them so far in their power, that they have been obliged to give them presents or do what they asked. To others again they give voluntarily presents and teach them all manner of fine arts and secrets. Now I will tell you some more stories about them.

A shepherd boy in Patzig, about two and a half miles from Bergen, where there are also dwarfs in the hills, found one morning a silver bell on the green heath between the giants' graves (barrows), and put it in his pocket. This was the bell off a brownie's cap who had lost it during their dance and had not at once perceived that the tinkling on his cap had ceased. He had thus descended without his bell and was very sad at his loss. For the worst thing that can happen to them is to lose their cap or their shoe, but even the loss of their bell or the buckle of their belt is no small grief to them, for he

who has lost it gets no sleep until he has it back, and to be without sleep is a sad state of affairs. In this great trouble, the little brownie pried and spied about, but how could he learn who had the bell? For they could only get out at stated times into the broad daylight, and then they might not even appear in their true shape. Often already he had changed himself into all sorts of shapes, human or animal, and had sung of his bell and groaned, lowed and wailed and talked, but not the least trace of it had he found yet. For the worst of the affair was that on the very day when he found the bell, the shepherd boy left Patzig and was now minding sheep at Unruh, near Gingst. After many a day a lucky chance occurred, by which the poor little brownie should recover his bell and his rest.

It occurred to him that a raven or jackdaw, or crow, or magpie might have found the bell, and owing to its thievish instinct, which delights in shining objects, have carried it to its nest. So he changed himself into a pretty little bird, flew to all the nests of the island and sang to the birds, that they might betray to him, if they had found the treasure, that he might recover it and sleep again. But the birds gave no sign. Thus he was at eventide flying over the water by Ralow and across the Unruh pastures, where the boy, Fritz Schlazenteufel minded his sheep. Some of his sheep wore bells

that would ring when the dog drove the sheep about. The bird overhead thought of his bell and sang in his sad mood:

Little bell, little bell,
Little ram, little ram,
And, oh, little sheep,
If thou hast my little bell
Art the richest in the dell,
Hast taken my sleep.

The boy listened to this strange song which came from above, and saw the coloured bird, which appeared still stranger to him. He said: "Ah! if I had that bird! Why, he sings as we can hardly talk. What may be the meaning of his strange song? Perhaps he is possessed of witchcraft. My rams have only pinchbeck bells and he calls them rich, and I have a silver bell; of me he makes no mention." Thus saying, he fumbled in his pocket, took his little bell out and rang it. The bird saw at once how matters stood and was pleased beyond measure; he instantly disappeared behind the nearest bushes, sat down, took off his feather dress and changed himself into an old woman poorly clad. The old woman, provided with sighs and groans as if she carried bags full of them, stumbled across the field to the shepherd boy who was still ringing his bell and wondering what had become of the pretty bird. She hummed and hawed, coughed a few times and

then bade him a pleasant good evening and inquired after the way to Bergen. Only after that she pretended to see the bell and cried: "O dear, oh dear! what a little pet of a bell, I have not seen anything as pretty in all my life! I say, my boy, will you sell me the little bell? and for how much? I have a little grandson, for whom it would be a very convenient toy."

"No, the bell is not for sale," said the boy, in rather a dry tone. Then he added: "It is rather an unusual bell and has not its like anywhere. I need but ring it to make the sheep run where I want them; and just listen at its lovely sound. Listen, mother! Is there any bother in the world that would not pass away at this sound? However low and dull I may feel, this makes the time have wings."

Thought the old woman: "Let's see, if he can resist something shiny!" And she held out to him a handful of silver coin.

But he: "I shan't sell the bell."

Then she offered him five gold ducats.

He said: "The bell remains mine."

She offered a handful of ducats, and he for the third time refused, saying: "Gold is rubbish; it does not ring like my bell."

Then the old woman turned the conversation and tempted him by mentioning secret arts and incantations which make the cattle and sheep thrive and

told him marvels about it. That made him desirous and he gave her his ear. The end of the story was, that she said; "Look here, my boy, give me the bell for this white staff," and she produced a white staff on which there were Adam and Eve carved out, tending the flocks in Paradise, with the fattest rams and lambs capering in front of them; also David, the shepherd boy, how he cast his sling-stone at the giant Goliath. "I will give you this staff in return for the bell, and as long as you mind your sheep with this staff, they will thrive and you will become a rich man. Your mutton will always be fat a month before other people's mutton, and your sheep will always carry two pounds more of wool than others, without anybody being aware of it."

She handed him the staff with a most mysterious air, and smiled so insinuatingly and bewitchingly that the boy was in her power. He greedily grasped the staff, shook her by the hand and said: "Agreed, done! the bell is yours for the staff."

She returned the handshake, took the bell and like a gentle breeze she floated away over pasture and heath. And he saw her pass and vanish like a mist, and his hair stood on end with wonder.

The little man, who in the disguise of the old woman had coaxed him to give up the bell, had not deceived him. For the little folks may not lie, but

must keep their word and fulfil the promises they give, else they are at once changed into the nastiest beasts, toads, snakes, dung-beetles, wolves, lynxes, and monkeys, and have to crawl and rove about for a thousand years, ere they can be delivered; therefore they hate lies.

Fritz Schlagenteufel paid close attention to his staff and soon found out that the old woman had told the truth about it, for all the work he put his hand to succeeded, and he was wonderfully lucky with his flock, so that all masters of sheep wanted to hire him as a shepherd-boy. But he did not always remain a shepherd-boy. Before he was eighteen years of age, he had started a sheepfold of his own, and in a few years he had become the richest sheep-owner in all the Isle of Rügen so that he could purchase a gentleman's estate, and that happened to be Grabitz near Rambin, which now is in possession of Lord ——. There my father has still remembered how the shepherd-boy became a squire and always behaved like a clever and pious man, how his sons and daughters were brought up as ladies and gentlemen, and some of them are still alive and are people of quality. And hearing such tales I often wished that the same might happen to me, and that I might find a silver bell lost by the brownies.

from Rügen

The Glass Slipper

A PEASANT from Rothenkirchen, called Johann Wilde, chanced to find on one of the hills where the little folks are in the habit of dancing, a glass slipper. He put it at once in his pocket, ran away with it, and kept his hand well on his pocket, as if he had a pigeon in it. For he knew he had found a treasure which the little folks underground would have to buy from him, and pay dear for it. Others say that Johann Wilde had taken the little folks in at night and pulled the shoe off one of them, whilst he had pretended to lie there dead drunk. For he was a cunning and bad man, and had deceived many a man by his shrewdness; therefore his neighbours did not care for him, and nobody liked to have any dealing with him. Again, others said that he practised forbidden arts, and was having secret intercourse with fiends and witches. Well, when he had the slipper he made it at once known to the folks that live underground, by going at midnight to the Nine Mountains and calling at the top of his voice: "Johann Wilde in Rothenkirchen has a beautiful glass slipper. Who will buy it? Who likes to buy it?" For he knew that the little man who loses his shoe has to keep barefooted on one foot

until he recovers it. And that is no joke, as the little folks mostly walk on hard and rocky ground. Nor did the little owner tarry to redeem his slipper. As soon as he had a holiday, when he might go up in daytime, he knocked, in the disguise of a tidy pedlar, at Johann Wilde's door, and inquired whether he had any glass slippers to sell. For those were much in demand in all the markets.

The peasant replied that he had a tiny, weeny, pretty glass shoe, so tiny it must even punish a dwarf's foot, and that God would have to create special people to fit it, but that it was a very rare and expensive shoe, and not every merchant could pay for it.

The pedlar asked to see it, and upon its being shown him, said: "Glass slippers are not quite as rare as you believe in Rothenkirchen, because you don't get out into the world." Then after some humming and hawing, he added: "I don't mind paying you well for it, as I have a slipper to match it." And he offered 1000 thalers for it.

"Hum!" sneered the peasant, "a thousand thalers is money, as my father would say, when he drove fat bullocks to market; but for such a shabby price it won't leave my hand. I'd rather see it first on the paw of my daughter's Danish dog. My good man, if you don't know the art to make me find a ducat in each furrow that I plough up, the shoe

will remain mine, and you must inquire in other markets after glass slippers."

The pedlar made still many attempts to talk him over, but seeing that the peasant would not give in he let him have his way, and promised on oath what he wanted. The peasant believed him and gave up the shoe, knowing with whom he was dealing. And off went the pedlar with his slipper.

Johann Wilde went speedily to his stables, harnessed horses to his plough, and drove off to a field, where he chose a piece with the shortest turnings. As the plough broke up the first furrow a ducat came jumping out of it, and the same happened with every succeeding furrow. Now there was no end of ploughing, and the farmer soon bought eight new horses in addition to the eight in his stables, and their manger was never empty of oats, so that he might every two hours have two fresh horses to put in, and drive his plough all the quicker. He became insatiable and would go out before sunrise and plough sometimes till after midnight, and thus on and on, summer and winter, as long as the ground was not frozen hard as stone. But he always ploughed alone, and did not allow anybody to go with him or come to him in the field; for he wanted nobody to know why he did so much ploughing.

And he was much more of a drudge than his

horses, who had plenty of the best oats to feed on, and took their task in proper turns; he became pale and thin with all his working and waking. His wife and children had no pleasure in his company. He never went to the inn and to parties, but withdrew from other people's company, and hardly ever spoke a word, but walked silently and thoughtfully by himself, and during the day he ploughed for his ducats, whilst during the night he would count them and ponder how he might invent a faster mode of ploughing. His wife and the neighbours had pity on him on account of his funny behaviour, his silent and melancholy bearing, and thought he had become mad; and everybody pitied his wife and children, for they thought that he was ruining himself by keeping so many horses in his stables, and by his mad farming and incessant ploughing. But this was not how it turned out, only they were right in so far that the poor peasant knew no happiness since he ploughed the ducats up, and the old saw: "He who yields himself to love of gold, is already half in the devil's claws," could rightly be applied to him. Nor could he bear up long with this running in the furrows by day and night. When spring came round a second time he dropped down dead one day behind his plough, like a fly in November, shrivelled up and faded through his greed of gold, although he had been a strong and

merry fellow before he got possession of the glass slipper.

But his wife found after his death a great treasure, two big nailed-up chests, full of bright and brand-new ducats. So his sons could buy large estates, and become gentlemen and lords. Thus the devil will sometimes create noblemen. But what advantage was it to poor Johann Wilde?

The Miraculous Plough

ANOTHER peasant did better than Johann Wilde. He became master of one of the little black folks who are smiths and armourers. Now this happened in a very strange way.

In front of this peasant's field there stood an iron cross by the road. When he went to work in the morning he would kneel before this cross and say a prayer. One day he saw on the cross a beautiful shiny worm; he had never, to his recollection, seen one like it. He wondered, but left the worm alone; yet the worm did not remain quiet for long, but ran restlessly up and down, as if he were frightened and wanted to get away. Next morning the peasant saw the same worm there, just as restlessly moving about hither and thither, and he felt creepy at the sight and wondered: "May he be one of the little

sorcerers? for he certainly is not all right. He runs like one that has an evil conscience, like one that wants to get off and can't." And he recollected that he had heard his father and other old folks say, that when the underground folks chanced to come against something consecrated, they are kept at the place and cannot get away, wherefore they always carefully avoid such places.

But then he fancied it might be something else, and a sin to disturb the little worm or to take it down. When he found it still there the two following days, and running about frightened, he said: "No, there is something wrong! Now for it, in the name of God!" So he seized the worm, who resisted and stuck to the cross. But he held it firmly and pulled it off by force, and behold! there he held between his fingers an ugly little black fellow, about the length of six thumbs, who screamed and struggled miserably. The peasant shuddered at this sudden transformation, but he held his prey fast, and giving him a few slaps behind, he said: "Patience, patience, my little fellow! If screaming did it, we should look for heroes in the cradles. I will take you home with me for a change, and see what use you may be."

The little fellow trembled and shivered in every limb and began to whine pitifully, and implored the peasant to let him loose.

"Oh, no," said the peasant, "I won't let you go before you have told me who you are, what arts you practise, and how you earn your daily bread."

The little man grinned, shook his head, and said never a word, and left off asking and begging. And now it was the peasant's turn to beg, if he wanted to get any information out of him. But that was no use either. Then he took hold of him and beat and thrashed him until he had big weals, but it was no go; the little blackie remained as silent as the grave, for his kind is the most obstinate and spiteful of the dwarfs.

The peasant waxed wrathful, and said, "Patience, my pet! It would be foolish to lose my temper over such a little shrimp; I will make you tame!" And he ran home with him, put him inside a black and sooty saucepan, put the lid on top, laid a big heavy stone on the lid, and placed it in a cold dark cupboard, saying, "Stay there and freeze till you are blue! You will end by eating humble-pie." And twice a week he went to the cupboard and asked his black prisoner if he would speak, but the little fellow remained dumb. Thus had he asked him in vain for six weeks, when at last his prisoner submitted. As the peasant opened the door, he called to him of his own accord, and begged him to release him out of his nasty, musty prison, saying, he would do all the farmer wanted him to do.

Our friend bade him first to tell his tale.

Said the blackie, "Dear sir, you know that as well as I; else you would not have got me here. By inadvertence, I came too near the cross, which we small folks must not do, and there I was held fast and became at once bodily visible; so as not to be recognised, I changed myself into a worm. But you guessed the thing. For when we stick fast to holy and consecrated objects, we can't get loose unless a human being takes us off. That is never done without pain and trouble, but to sit fast there is not a pleasure either; and so I resisted you, because we have a natural horror of being caught by human hands."

"Indeed, is that the tune?" said the farmer. "You have a natural horror, you say? O, believe me, friend, we have the same of you, and therefore I will get rid of you quickly, and we will make our bargain at once, short and sweet; but first you must make me a present."

"Say what you want; you need only ask," replied the little man. "Silver, gold, precious stones, valuable furniture—anything you ask shall be yours instantly."

"Silver and gold, precious stones, and such like, I do not want," said the farmer. "They have already disturbed too many hearts—aye, and broken many a man's neck; and few people enjoy life with

them. But I know you are artful smiths, and know many crafty tricks, which other smiths don't know. Swear to me, to forge me an iron plough, which the youngest colt can draw without fatigue, and then run as fast and far as your legs will carry you!"

The blackie took the oath; the farmer said, "Now thou art free!" and the little dwarf vanished.

Next morning, before sunrise, a new iron plough stood in the farmer's yard. He harnessed his big dog Water to it, and the dog pulled the plough, which was of the usual size, through the heaviest loam, and it ploughed up deep furrows. He used it many a year, and, to the astonishment of everybody, the smallest colt and the leanest horse could pull it through the field without straining their strength; and this plough made him a well-to-do man, for it cost no horseflesh, and the farmer led a jolly and contented life.

Thus you see that moderation goes farthest, and that it does one no good to ask for too much.

The Forged Deed

THE black dwarfs are confined more closely to their mountains than the brown and white ones, and may rarely leave them in the daytime and never go far away. It is said, that in summer they sit much

under the elder trees, of which they love the smell, and that whoever wants anything from them, must look for them there and call to them. But few men will do it. One does not care to have dealings with them, as they are crafty and rather wicked than good by nature. In Rügen they mostly live in the downs that rise by the sea between Ahlbeck and Mönchgut, and there they hold their gatherings and nightly games.

Not far from Ahlbeck lies a small manor named Granitz, in the large wooded forest, which is also called the Granitz. Not many years ago there lived on this manor a Baron von Scheele. In his latter days he had sunk into deep melancholy and would not see any visitors, though formerly he had been a very lively and sociable man and a vigorous sportsman.

The solitary life of the old baron was caused thus. He had three lovely daughters, called the three fair beauties, who had grown up here in the solitude of the forest among the herds and birds. They had, all the three, run away in the same night, and never returned. This the old man had taken to heart, and abandoned the world and its turbulent pleasures. He had much intercourse with the blackies and spent many a night away from home, and nobody knew where he had been; but when he came home at daybreak, he would whisper to his

housekeeper: "Pst, pst, I supped this night at a fine table!" This old Baron Scheele would tell his friends, and affirm it with a thorough sportsmanlike oath, that the Granitz firs near Ahlbeck and all along the strand were crowded with underground folks. And he would point out to people, whom he took for a walk there, lots of small spoors, as of tiny babies who might have left the imprint of their feet in the sand, and he would often call out: "Listen, how they whisper and chatter." Another time, when he walked with friends along the shore, he suddenly stopped short with astonishment, pointed to the sea and called out: "Upon my soul! there they are again in full work, and thousands of them busied about a few sunken hogsheads of wine, which they roll to the shore. That will be a jolly banquet to-night!" Then he told his friends that he was enabled to see them by day and night, that they would never hurt or injure him, that they even were particular friends of his, that one of them had saved his house from being burnt—he woke him out of his sleep after midnight and showed him a firebrand that had fallen from the stove and was setting light to wood and straw which lay on the ground. He could see some almost every day near the shore, and in rough tempestuous weather, when the sea was raging furiously, they never failed to be there, watching for amber and

shipwrecks, and he was sure that no ship was wrecked without their saving the best part of its cargo and hiding it underground. And how beautiful it was to live there underneath the sandy downs among them, and what crystal palaces they had, no man could realise who had not been there.

This old gentleman had otherwise the reputation of being a good and kindly man, and nobody could say that he did anything that implied a connection with evil spirits. But commerce with the blackies is not always so innocent, and thereby hangs another tale.

Near the village of Lanken, not far from the Granitz forest, there lived a farmer called Matthias Pagels, a quiet, industrious man who lived alone and whom people took to be very rich. Some would even whisper that he was a sorcerer. Still many a man is called that who earns his money by the most natural witchcraft: industry and attention to detail. However, this same Pagels was not a nice man. He had a disagreement with a neighbour, because the latter accused him of ploughing some of his field off. And Pagels had really done it, but he cursed and swore that the whole field belonged to him as far as he had ploughed, and even ten paces further to the high beech that stood at the top of the ridge ; and that he would prove it by an oath and title-deeds. And he did prove it by

oath and title-deeds, and produced a scrip according to which the field was adjudged to him. But the people say that two of the little blackies, who also brought him his money, have forged the title-deed and written and sealed it in the big chancery of the devil. But Matthias Pagels suffered even in his life-time the punishment for it, as he had no rest or peace from his little spirits. Every night at 12 he was forcibly compelled to leave his bed and walk round the field and climb on the high beech and stop there two full hours in the cold. And there one may still chance to see him as a little man in a grey coat with a white night-cap on ; but generally he sits in the shape of a white owl on the tree as soon as midnight has struck and screeches pitifully. And no man likes to go near the tree, and you can't get a horse past it, but it will snort and blow and rear and run away across fields even with the best rider. When my dear mother, who had been born in the village of Lanken, was a child, the old folks still used to sing of Matthias Pagels and his beech-tree :

Pagels with your white hat,
How cold and high you sit
On the highest beech,
On the knotted oak,
Behind the hollow fence,
Why can't you rest ?

That's why I can't rest—
The deed lies in the chest,
And my poor soul
Burns fast in hell.

The Free Shot

THE little blackies often turn poachers, for they are fond of game. But they dare not kill the game with a gun, and have to weave peculiar nets which no man can perceive, in which they catch the deer. Therefore they are sworn enemies to the keepers, and have bewitched many a sportsman's gun, so that it can't hit anything. This had happened to a keeper called Joachim Schulz, who finally died as constable in the town of Barth.

He had hitherto been a very good shot, but all of a sudden he was like one bewitched, could hit nothing, and lost all the good situations he had as keeper.

In this trouble he asked advice from many people, and they gave him plenty of it, for that is the only thing they are pleased to give, even unasked; but it was no good to him, and his gun was bewitched as before. One day an old beggar-woman, whom he had met in the forest, told him that she knew for certain it was a blackie who had bewitched his gun, and nothing in the world could help him,

unless he got something belonging to them in his power. At the same time she showed him a spot, a small hill in the wood, through which the blackies were leaving their mountains at night, and where they kept their revels. There he was to go in secret, take his pouch full of shot, and say a Christian prayer over it; then take a handful of shot and sow it out quickly like peas, and call out: "In the name of the Almighty, avaunt Satan." And if only one grain of shot falls on something belonging to the dwarfs, they must leave it there, but he would have to stand there and wait till sunrise. Then they would all disappear, and the object that was hit would become visible. He was to pick it up and take it away with him. Its owner would have to come in great anxiety, and make his bargain with him. Joachim Schulz did exactly as the old woman told him, and next morning he found on the hill a beautiful silver belt with a silver buckle, on which were still visible the two bumps which his shot had made. And it was not long before a blackie appeared and bargained about his belt, and the crafty huntsman stipulated for a free shot, so that at stated times, in whatever direction he might be shooting, whatever game he wanted, should be hit. And he became the first among all keepers, and such a lucky shot, that many took him for a magician.

And to this very day people believe that nothing has greater power over these blackies, than iron over which a prayer has been said, or which has been handled by good Christians. So that in Sweden there is still an old custom in use: viz., to put scissors or a knife on the breast of infants in the cradle, before they are baptized, so that neither little nor big monsters can hurt them nor exchange them, and put changelings in their place. And many folks there won't go bathing in deep water, unless they have placed some metal handy in the water by the shore; this is to prevent the water-fairies and the sea-god Neck from fetching them and pulling them down into the deep. Huntsmen in Sweden have also—when they have blundered unusually often, and in an incomprehensible way, to throw a steel or knife through the air. For if the bewitching sprite or the beautiful nymph chanced to be there, and the huntsman succeeded in throwing this same piece of metal over them, the spell would be broken, and they could never again dare to touch him.

The Lily Maiden

THE daintiest and prettiest of all the little folks are the white elves, delicate and graceful in shape and movement, and just as nice and amiable in their

way of thinking. They are quite harmless and innocent, and teaze nobody, not even in fun; but their life is light and gentle as that of the flowers and stars with whom they converse and commune. These pretty children sit during the winter, when the earth is rough and barren and cold, inside their mountains, weaving the most refined work in gold and silver, which mortal eyes are mostly too coarse to see; only particularly subtle and sensitive souls see it. But when spring comes, and all through the summer, they live above in the sunshine and starlight very merrily, and do nothing but enjoy themselves and give pleasure to others. As soon as the first buds on trees and flowers begin to swell and burst, they step out of their secret chambers in the hills, and swing themselves on to the stems and stalks, and from them into the blossoms and flowers, in which they sit most charmingly and gracefully and wait. And at night, when human beings sleep, they come out and lead their merry dance in the green round hill, and by brooks and burns, and make the charming music, which travellers hear so often and marvel at, because they cannot see the players. These little elves also go about in daytime, whenever they like, only not in company but singly, and then they must transform themselves. Many of them, for instance, fly about as coloured birds or butterflies or white doves, and bring pretty things to

babies, and tender thoughts and dreams to big folks, who can't imagine whence these thoughts and dreams come. It is well known that they often assume dream-shape when they have to carry secret messages. And they have comforted many a sorely-stricken man, and refreshed many a true lover. He who wins their affection is specially fortunate, and if they do not enrich people with treasures and goods, as the other little folks do, they make them rich in songs and dreams, in merry visions and fancies. And are not those the best treasures a man can win? You may say for certain, that whoever is protected by them, is safe from many a trouble. I will tell you the story of the lily-maiden with reference to this assertion.

Between high Alps on which ice and snow could never melt, even if the sun would shine on them at midsummer, when the days are longest, for twenty-four hours, there lay in deep seclusion a green valley where it never snowed nor froze, where eternal spring seemed to reign, and where the nightingales never ceased their love-songs and complaints. In this valley there was a beautiful garden with a bright crystal palace, and flowers so fair as were nowhere else to be seen. The rose-bushes stood here as high as oaks, and the lilies tall as fir-trees, and everything was exceedingly dainty and marvellous. But the greatest marvel in the wonderful

garden was a lovely maiden, called the lily-maiden, because she liked best to walk among the lilies, and often sang a song of snow-white lilies and angels. Her mother had sung this song to her when she rocked her in her cradle, and it was the only recollection of her childhood. The child had not been born here, but led by strange means into the garden. And this was the song which she would sing in a plaintive voice:

Hush, my baby, sweet and white,
That know'st nought of care and spite,
Sleep in quiet! rest in sleep!
Close your eyes and never weep!

Out of doors white lilies grow,
On whom we beauty's boon bestow;
In the brilliant blue above
Snow-white angels float and rove.

Come ye angels, sweet and white,
Guard my babe from any fright;
Rock my child with gentle lays,
As the wind the lilies sways.

Sleep, my baby, hush-a-bye,
The peace of God abide with thee!
For the angels from above
Come to guard thee and to love.

And this was her story: She was the daughter of a very rich king and his beautiful queen. An old witch was there, who knew that this young princess would inherit the kingdom and be its

queen one day. Now she had an only son, lame and very plain, not to say ugly. But she thought him handsome and that it would be a fine thing if he could one day marry the beautiful princess and get the kingdom given as dowry with her. So she laid her plans. One day as the king and queen were walking with the little princess, who was three years old, in their rose-garden, the old witch changed herself into a she-wolf, jumped into the garden, took the little princess in her jaws and ran away with her. The king and queen cried for help and ran after her, but the wolf with the child was already over the hills and far away and nobody could catch her and save the child. Everybody thought she had devoured the princess, and the king and queen mourned for her as if she were dead. But thank God, the child was living and living in a very happy fashion. In a wild valley, about a thousand miles from the town where the king and queen resided, the old witch had conjured up a garden like a paradise, whither no road or path led, and into which one could only send letters on the wings of an eagle or such like bird. She changed herself into a griffin when she carried the child thither over the high, snow-covered Alps. This garden had not only the prettiest roses and lilies, but also the most splendid trees, on which an abundance of luscious fruit hung, and vines with grapes, and

shrubs with sweet berries, and springs of milk and honey, and fountains spouting precious wine. Of all these the child might eat and drink to her heart's content. And merry birds sat in the boughs and made music. And in the crystal house there was a quiet and cool chamber with a cosy bed in which the child went to sleep when it grew night, and in an adjoining room invisible servants spread the table with the most delicious food and drink, and cleared it again in due time. In short, the child lacked nothing, only human companions; and thus she had to speak to birds and flowers, and would tell them stories and whisper to the flowers and twitter and chatter many an hour with the birds who tamely flew on her shoulders and hands, and would also sing with them—for the lily-maiden soon learned the tunes of all the different birds.

When the old witch brought the child here, she thought she would be quite safe, for who could come here to steal her? She meant to let her grow up here, and every time she came to the garden, she rejoiced at seeing the child get taller and handsomer. Then when the maiden was full grown she meant to marry her to her son, and when they had sons and daughters, she would take all the family back to the king and queen and say: "Behold, this is your beautiful daughter, whom the she-wolf ran away with, and whom God has preserved in

a miraculous way, and this is your worthy and handsome son-in-law, and these are your pretty grandchildren ; and they will have to be reconciled with the facts and I shall be a grandmother to kings and queens ! Hurrah !" Thus hoped the old witch, but it did not all turn out as she wished.

The name of the princess was Gunhilde, and she was daughter to the King of Sweden. As she soon forgot her parents and the faint recollections of her childhood, she played merrily among the flowers and trees, and living in everlasting spring, she knew naught of the trouble and worry and wickedness of this evil world. Only when she sang the lullaby of lilies and angels would she become sad, but this impression passed as lightly as raindrops before a sunny breeze. And among pleasure and play with flowers and birds, the months went by like seconds and the years like minutes and she had become twelve years old and was a beautiful flower, slender as a lily and fresh as a rosebud. In her innocence she might have married the lame and ugly witch's son, if God had not turned it otherwise ; for He caused a coloured bird to be blown into the garden, and this birdie turned, what might have become bitter sorrow, into sweet joy. Now I must tell you what happened to this bird and what more occurred through it.

Beyond those high snow-covered Alps, which

surrounded the valley in which Gunhilde's garden flowered, there lived a couple of charcoal burners, good and simple folks, beloved by God. They also had some good and pious children, of which the little white elves had become aware; these came in all manner of disguise and brought bliss into the charcoal-burner's house. They often brought presents to the children, of which the parents could not understand whence they came, for the children would say they had found them, and so they had. One day a little white elf, in the guise of a snow-bunting, came flying over the Alps, on his way to the cottage. As it was usually very cold up there, they would take the shape of such animals as can well bear the cold. But when the snow-bunting was on its journey there arose a terrible tempest with snowdrifting and whirlwind, and in the darkness the bird was drifted, it knew not where, until it suddenly found itself in a brilliant clear air and saw underneath, deep down in the valley, a beautiful garden. It flew down to see what that was in the midst of this barren region, settled among the other birds on the branches, and twittered and sang among them with all its might. Then it saw the fair lily-maiden walk in the charming avenue of lilies, which stood as high as lime-trees and birches elsewhere, and instantly realised that there was some witchcraft at play. It just chanced to be a day when the old

witch had come to see and rejoice at the quick growth of Gunhilde. She crept as an ugly toad about a corner of the garden. The birdie did not yet know the object of the enchantment, but when it saw the toad with its acute-listening ear and the bright cunning eyes, it could explain everything. But the witch perceived nothing of the bird, and fortunately, for if the witches knew everything, no soul they had ensnared could ever be delivered.

When the little snow-bunting had looked at and inquired into everything, it took flight again on its feathery wings and flew high over the Alps to the charcoal-burner's house, where not far off, in a meadow, it found its mates. Those were already merrily dancing in the starlight round a spring, for it had become night and the moon had risen. The little Elf took his feathery garment off and related his adventure to his companions to explain his delay. And they put their heads together and consulted what was to be done, as it would be a sin to let this pretty girl, who was surely the daughter of noble parents, become the prey of this vile witch. And so they spied and inquired about, and on the wings of the wind they sent out many messengers and soon found out that the lily-maiden must be the little Gunhilde, the daughter of the King of Sweden, with whom a cruel she-wolf had run away. And in a few days more they had found out the

whole plot of the old witch, and knew that she planned nothing less, than that her nasty son should become the consort of the princess, and thus become prince and later on king. And they resolved unanimously that this should never happen, and from this day they kept watch over the princess, and relieved each other in the following way:

Two of them would always be in the enchanted garden. They flew as snow-buntings, or ravens, crows, eagles, or any other bird hardened to the cold, over the Alps, then let themselves be wafted down into the valley, where they would at once turn to coloured birds or butterflies, who sang and flew about the garden in such numbers and such variety of colours that the old witch could not possibly find out whether there were a few more or less. In this way there were always some white elves about Gunhilde by day and by night, who would not lose sight of her, so that no evil could happen to her.

To begin with they were sorry for the child to grow up so ignorant in all her innocence and beauty, and they began to whisper all sorts of thoughts into her heart, and to teach her all sorts of arts and sciences, without Gunhilde becoming aware of it. For this was mostly done during her sleep, so that Gunhilde took what she had learnt to be a dream; for they never became visible to her, nor were they allowed to be seen. But when they flew before her

as birds or butterflies she did not distinguish them from others, although they sang and whispered very different things to her to what the others could. And certainly the princess became under their tuition much more intelligent and reflective; so that even the old witch, when she chanced to come into the garden, stood before her in astonishment, and marvelled what a strange child she must be, to become so clever without being taught. So she muttered one day: "I must bring my little cock quickly, before the little hen gets too clever and flies away." The bird messengers had heard this, and instantly one of them flew home to report it. And in great anxiety the whities held counsel and hit upon a particular stratagem to mar the wicked plot of the witch with regard to her lame son. With their greatest art and with unremitting industry they worked day and night to forge a golden ring. As soon as they had finished it, one of them turned to a crow, who took the ring in its bill and flew over the snowy mountains right into the garden. And when night came and the sweet princess lay asleep, the birdie fluttered on to her bed and in a dream instructed the child about her fate, and in this dream the elf appeared in his true form as a tiny white man with snow-white garment and a white cap with a silver bell on his head. And thus he whispered to her:

"Dear little lily-maiden, I am one of those under-

ground elves of whom you know nothing, but who are your friends, and I come to instruct you about your fate, and to caution you against the evil arts and malice of an old witch, who got you into her power, we know not how. Your father is a great king who rules in a northern land, and your mother a queen. She had robbed them of you, and carried you away to this garden and crystal house. She is a very ugly old woman, wrinkled and blear-eyed, and has an ugly lame son, about whom she has made a plan regarding you. She means to marry you to him; that is, he will come and pretend to play with you to pass away the time, and he will make himself as agreeable to you as such a fellow can. But he is a rogue in disguise like his mother; he will only ensnare you, so that you should accept him as lover and marry him. After that, they think to have you quite under their thumb, so that they can do as they like with you. And the old woman hopes that your father and mother will accept her limping son for their son-in-law, so that he may rule the kingdom after their death. But it were an everlasting pity for your youth and beauty to fall a victim to such a misshapen, ugly, wicked monster. And we have come to warn you of their cunning, artful flattery. For you are growing up into a maiden, and will soon have completed your thirteenth year, and the old witch means to arrive

soon with her son. Beware of them as carefully as possible, therefore. But this you shall know; here is a small gold ring which I put on your finger; mind it well and preserve it as your most valuable treasure. When you are in dire trouble and know not where to turn, then take this little ring off your finger and rub it against your forehead and you will suddenly be changed into two objects, a grain of sand and a cobweb, and they will not be able to hurt you. For all witches and sorcerers have a horror of a grain of sand which this ring has touched, and cobwebs they may not come in contact with or they get paralysed. We have arranged this twofold change so that, if anything happened to the grain of sand, the cobweb would be left, or if anything happened to the cobweb, the grain of sand would be left to change back into Gunhilde. But you need never remain longer than twenty-four hours a cobweb and a grain of sand; for twenty-four hours is the longest time the old witch may spend in the garden; then she must be off and not come back for ten days, for witches have also strict laws to which they are subject. If that were not so, who could fight against them? And now cheer up and remember these words well! We shall always remain about you and assist you!"

This dream was repeated several times so that it

all became clear to the child, and she understood it as if she had always lived in the world among men, where good and evil try to keep the balance. Also many things which she was to see afterwards were shown to her in their natural size and form, and when she awoke she found the little gold ring on her finger and viewed it with pleasure and sang the little verse which had also been whispered to her in her dream :

Little ring, gold circlet mine,
Make me tiny, render me fine ;
Grain of sand the tiniest is,
Cobweb the daintiest is.

Hoohoo, what a wight !
Little grain, keep tight !
Little cobweb, do not tear !
Hoohoo, how slender my luck is there !

The little white elves had foreknown or rightly foreseen what would happen. It was not a fortnight later when, what they had predicted in the dream, happened. Hitherto the old witch had never come in human form, but had run into the garden or house as a mouse, or crept into it as a toad or lizard, or flown over the wall as a dung-beetle. Under these masks she had spied on the princess, and had never appeared in her true shape. Her wicked intention was that she would surprise her all the more by the sight of her son, if she had never seen a human form before. But the elves

had provided against that, and showed her in her dreams the loveliest prince and knight, so that she would already walk among her flowers and dream and long for him. This they had all arranged in order to make the ugliness of the old witch and her lame cripple appear all the more repulsive to the lily-maid.

Now the old witch had resolved to finish up, and came, therefore, for the first time, in her true living form.

Gunhilde had just reached her fifteenth birthday, and the day had dawned so charmingly and beautifully as if heaven itself wanted to celebrate it with her. She had dreamt a lovely dream of a fair youth, who had stepped to her bedside and, with humble obeisance, had placed a large green wreath on her bed. This sweet vision awakened her, and in vain did she look through house and garden for the fair garland-bearer, whom she fancied she had seen living and tangible before her. And full of the sweet yearning feelings which the fair vision had excited in her bosom, she walked up and down in her lily avenue and heard the nightingales sing to greet the morning. There was particularly one nightingale who delighted her, who, fluttering hither and thither, accompanied her and sang, as larks and hedge-sparrows will do, in flying. Now this was, of course, none of the old witch's nightingales, but one

of the little elves disguised among the birds. As she walked thus, in innocent longing among her flowers, there came suddenly from the other end of the garden an old woman in a brown frock and snow-white head, which was covered with a black bonnet and bent almost to the ground; she rather crept than walked, and coughed at every step she took. As she came nearer, Gunhilde saw what a fright she was. Her forehead and cheeks were wrinkled like wet gloves that have been put on the stove to dry; her squinting eyes glowed like embers, and ran like a chimney in rainy weather; there was no tooth left in her ugly mouth, and where whilom had been a round chin, there was a sharp pointed bone with a few white stubbly hairs like a tom-cat's beard. The lovely Gunhilde shuddered at the first sight of her, and yet she felt in a way attracted to her; for that is a quality of witches, that they even attract those who detest them. The old witch greeted the young beauty, and bade her a pleasant good-morning, smirked insinuatingly, and was as sweet as a bag of thyme; then, after some humming and throat-clearing, she began:

"I see, my dear pet, that you are surprised at the apparition before you. I do not wonder at your astonishment, for it is very natural, as you have never seen a human being except yourself. But don't be frightened of me. I love you more

than my own life, and have come to make you very happy. You do not know, nor may you yet know, the miracle by which you have come into this garden, and have spent here ten solitary years among trees and flowers; but that much you may know, that I am the one who brought you here to keep you safe from much ill-fortune and temptation of the wicked world. I have been your nurse and guardian to this day, and your beauty and merry temper are the result of my watchful care. But I fancy it is not good for you to remain thus longer alone, and to-morrow you shall have a companion, the most amiable and graceful youth on whom the sun ever shone, who shall be with you by day and night, and help you to while away the time and sweeten it; and he shall become your lover—what other people call a bridegroom—and you shall be his bride. But that you will not understand yet, until you have seen how sweet and lovely the youth is."

This and many like stories the loquacious old crone would tell the princess all day long, with the flattering, insinuating tone in which witches talk, and fancied she had quite caught her, and the young and inexperienced birdie would easily go into the snare in which it was already half way. For Gunhilde, who perceived how cunning and crafty the old woman was, also used a ruse, and pretended

to be delighted at the prospect of the companion whom she promised to bring to her, and behaved altogether in such a childlike, and careless way that the old witch was delighted.

Next morning, as Gunhilde stepped from her chamber into the garden, over which the sun was just rising, the old woman was there, and said:

"Farewell, my pretty child; in a few minutes your lover will be here. Now, play nicely till I come back, and don't let the time be long. In ten days I shall come back to you." But to herself she said, "Ha, ha! this will be a fine game, and the old king in the land of the midnight sun will have tears in his eyes when he will have to greet my son as son-in-law. However, he is my son, and any descendant of Adam may, if occasion warrants, become king or emperor. And is not he a dainty boy? Pshaw! I should think he need not give in before royal blood."

With this merry soliloquy she left the garden and vanished through the gate; and in a few minutes there appeared, instead of her, her little son—or, rather, he limped in there. And what did he look like?

He was a youth of nineteen years, not much over a yard high, and as broad as he was long. He showed in front—for his head seemed to protrude about a foot in front of his body—a broad head

pointed at the top like a sugar-loaf or cone, with a flat face, a squeezed-in snout, and small blinking grey eyes, and what might have been smooth in his face was pockmarked. Sparse white hair covered his pate, and where a manly beard should have been, there were a few bristles, like thistles on a barren sandhill. This elegant figure was dressed in the oddest, most ridiculous fashion—about the style in which royal pages used to be dressed a century or two ago. He wore a scarlet, gold-braided coat, a silken, gold-embroidered waistcoat, white satin breeches, and white silk stockings, and had on black shoes with red silk bows the size of a peony. He carried his hat under his arm, a gold-headed malacca cane shone in his right hand, and a big hair-bag, out of which the powder would blow, wobbled on a peaked hump which grew on his back, sharp enough to serve as a peg for hats and cloaks. This agreeable and pleasant youth hobbled slowly along the lily-avenue, groaning with love-sighs and want of breath. He made towards the princess, and she allowed this new adventurer to come to her without frightening her, for, owing to his small size, he looked more ridiculous than dangerous.

He stepped in front of her and bowed thrice, and his looks alternated between her and himself. He evidently observed himself with great delight from head to foot, especially his big calves in the

shining silk stockings, his wedding shoes with the red ribbons of the colour called lovers' flames, and his scarlet coat abounding with gold, and self-complacently he smiled, as if he meant to say: "Beautiful princess, come along! here you see the most graceful prince; take him for your lover and bridegroom." Yet he did not utter these sentiments, but after having recovered his breath—for the hump on his back pressed heavily on his lungs, especially when he had walked at what was a quick pace for him—he addressed her thus:

"Much beloved princess, or snow-white lily-maiden, or Princess Tulip, or Snowflake, or whatever name you like to hear, I come from afar, carried by a miraculous fate over Alps and high airs on a winged chariot, to devote my youth and beauty to you. For my lady mother, whose wisdom had read in the stars that we were from all eternity destined for each other, and that great kings and rulers should descend from us, has brought me up in solitude the same as you, so that no other maidens, attracted by my charms, might tempt me, and that I might become your bridegroom in all the innocence and lovableness of my heart. Now come, my snow-white blossom, come my lily, my narcissus, my lily of the valley, my snowflake, my feather out of the paradise-bird's crown, and tail feather of the phœnix, which every thousand years rises rejuvenated

from its ashes, come and fondle me, embrace and kiss me, play with me, and be my sweet bride, and I will be your sweetest bridegroom."

With that he bent forward and stretched his arms out, as if he meant to embrace her; but she shuddered and started back. Thus the poor prince lost his balance, having only one reliable pedestal, for the lame leg dragged listlessly behind, and fell on his nose and made it bleed. She laughed outright at the sight of his tumbling full breadth on the gravel; yet she had pity on him, stretched out her hand and helped him up, but when he was back on his legs she gently withdrew her hand and said:

"Dear Prince Taliquo, or Qualiquo, or Quiproquo (for I once dreamt of a prince who looked like you, and was called by a name sounding something like that), if your courtship is to consist of kisses and embraces, you have no chance; he who wants to embrace me must look differently, so please keep at a distance with your kisses, and don't fancy that I would become your bride. I would rather kiss toads and snakes than your misshapen person. Look, there is room enough in this large and beautiful garden; there we may both walk, and I won't begrudge you any of its beauties, but allow me to prefer the conversation of my lilies and nightingales to yours."

Prince Qualiquo—we may as well call him that with the princess—was not the least taken aback

by these words; he smiled and said to himself: "Ha, ha, ha! This is just as mother told me before she let me into the garden? Did not she say: 'She will do like all other maidens; if you talk to them of kissing and marrying, she will behave as if it were a terrible danger, and will pretend you are ugly; she will escape from you and say, you could never be her bridegroom, and she would rather embrace death than you. Don't be disturbed by that; that is the way of coy or affected maidens. Cheer up! be bold, my boy, stalk proudly about, as if you wore an imperial crown, bear yourself with pride and majesty! and majesty itself will bow at your feet. Courage and pride will pierce rocks, will tame lions and tigers. How much more so the heart of a tender maiden? All maids behave like that at first; they flee from what they are most fond of, they pretend to detest what they desire. Hold on, keep firm, and don't let her go till she is your wife. It would be very strange if she, who has lived in such simple solitude, should not find out that a playmate is charming and a bridegroom more so!'"

Thus Prince Qualiquo consoled himself, and would always come back, however much the princess ran away from him. It is true she was amused at his funny gestures and pantomimes, and the strange speeches in which he indulged from time to

time. Then her joke was to escape from him quickly to the opposite end of the garden, which it took him half an hour to reach with his limping. Thus she would carry on till he was checkmated, and would drop down groaning and fall asleep. Then when he lay there miserably in the midday-sun she had pity on him, and tickled him with a lily-stalk on chin and nose till he woke up, when she would make him rise and lead him to a wine-fountain, that he might refresh himself. This he would do so amply that he would drop asleep by the fountain, and she had peace for the rest of the afternoon and evening, until night came, when she locked herself in her room and went to bed.

And as it happened on the first day, so it did on the following ones, and the lily-maiden began to be right tired of Prince Qualiquo. For though she could easily manage to escape from him, she always saw him coming on again, and his everlasting twaddle and whining of love became unbearable. All the more so as this hunchback, with his squeaking, squealing voice, seemed to act as a scarecrow, for the birds which used to sing so merrily in the branches were silent when he appeared. Her only consolation was that towards afternoon he was generally so far gone that he could not distinguish moon from sun. So she also used an innocent stratagem; when his hobbling in pursuit of her

annoyed her too much, she stopped at some fresh wine-spring which he had not tried yet, and pointed it out to him, and as a rule his greed would keep him there.

But it became very unpleasant when he had ferreted out her room. Then he would come as soon as the cold of night or the morning breeze stirred him up from his drunken slumber, would go to the arbour that led to her room, would knock at her door and lisp and whisper, groan and sigh, coo and woo, make ardent speeches, or sing more ardent songs, until he fell asleep again and snored till the sun was high in the heavens. This was the greatest nuisance, for it had been her delight to walk in the early morn under the lilies, and see the sun rise over the Alps ; and now she had to wait in till it pleased him to get up.

Yet she pitied him, because she considered him as stupid as he was ugly. And the poor knave really was very stupid, for the pretty phrases and exclamations and the sighs expressed in words, his mother, the old witch, had made him learn by heart. In the end the lily-maiden grew really angry with him, and put him in bonds like an evildoer. This is how it happened. She found him one day lying very low. In his fuddled state he had slipped by a brook and fallen so that his lame leg hung in the water. In this position he had gently dropped

asleep, and lay so that the least false movement, such as a gnat's sting might cause, might have rolled him over into the water, and in his helpless state he might have slept never to wake again. So Gunhilde went softly up to him and pulled him from the bank on to the dry land. At her gentle touch, which seemed like a sweet dream to him, he suddenly awoke, took one of her hands and pulled her down so quickly, that his ugly mouth was able to press a kiss on her pretty cheeks. She screamed as if stung by an adder, pushed him angrily away and freed her hand, whilst he dropped off again in his drunken sleep and snored loudly. She called out angrily: "You wait, my prince!" then ran and undid the cords by which some young trees were tied up, tied the same round his wrists and bound him to the tree near which he had dropped down. There she let him lie and said: "Good-bye, my sweet lover! here you may lie to doomsday, my hands won't unbind you!"

The prince had slept beautifully through the night and dreamt divine dreams. The arms of the princess which pulled him away from the brook, the kiss he had pressed on her cheeks, her turning him over when she tied him to the tree, all this had got mixed up in his drunken imagination to a merry dream, of which the princess formed the centre. In short, he woke up with the sweetest thoughts and

his arms moved about in a delighted movement, as if they would catch something; but alas! the poor wretch lay on the damp ground and was bound and cold, and at last he groaned and whined. For no merciful hand came to loosen his bonds, the sun burnt him, he felt hungry and thirsty. From the other extremity of the garden, he had heard the princess singing her morning hymn with the birds, but his weak voice could not reach her.

Noon was past and the sun went on his downward way, when the princess came to see how her prisoner fared. He felt cheered in his heart, thinking she meant to release him. But she reproached him with all that happened the previous day of which he now knew nothing, and said: "I have said it; here you may lie till doomsday, my hands won't unbind you, and I shall keep my word." He hoped his supplications would move her heart; he begged and implored, groaned, sighed, wept, howled and roared so as to move a stone, but she remained unmoved, jumped away singing merrily and called out: "Burn, scorch, starve, famish, you nasty monster, who dares to love me! That is what you have deserved for your impudent kiss."

Yet she had so far pity on him as to throw him some apples and pears, and to fill a wooden bowl with water from the brook and hold it out to him. She considered herself very happy to have got him fast.

Thus he had lain three days, when the tenth day had come and the old witch appeared, who looked very surprised, on seeing Gunhilde alone, and inquired after the prince.

"O, he is in good keeping," replied the child. "Come! I will show him to you." She took the old woman by the arm and led her to the prisoner, saying: "Look here, this prince Taliquo, or Qualiquo, has had the impudence to make love to me and call me his bride; his insolence went so far that he has kissed me. Therefore this has happened to him. And now, say, does he not lie there prettily? Is not he charming? Poor doggy, can you bite?" And then she teased him by tickling his nose with a flower-stalk and laughed as heartily as if a hundred birds had sang together.

But the old witch frowned darkly and hit the Prince Qualiquo severely with her stick, saying: "You blockhead, you duffer, you idiot! Thus you allow yourself to be bound and lie like a poor sinner on the earth, wriggling like a worm in the dust? And I thought to greet you as a merry bridegroom! No, all my arts are wasted on you!"

After that she turned to the lily-maiden and her looks became terrible, like as if a thousand toads had sprung together out of her glaring eyes, and as if ever so many serpents were hissing out of her ugly mouth.

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GUNHILDE AND PRINCE TALIQUO

The child was so frightened at this horrible sight, that her innermost soul trembled, and she had only just time, before the worst could happen, to rub her forehead with the ring and to say the little rhyme. And she had hardly murmured the first four lines, when she dropped as a grain of sand and a cobweb on the ground and the witch started back a few steps in fright. When Gunhilde saw herself so small, she whispered the rest of the magic verse. The most peculiar thing in this metamorphosis was, that the grain of sand and the cobweb hid the golden ring in the ground and laid themselves on the top.

The old witch knew too much herself not to know that another's art was struggling against hers. So she untied her stupid son and then began to search. She flew about as a bird, she crawled as a toad, she lurked as a cat, she watched as an owl, she crept as a snake, she slipped as a mouse into every corner and left no grass or herb untouched, if she might get enlightened; she looked into every hole and crack, and found nothing. For as a witch she had that in her art, if she had touched the transformed object, she must have become aware of it. Only she could not touch it, for she had a creeping horror of the grain of sand and the cobweb. Thus she had searched the whole day and night and discovered nothing. And day dawned in the east and she had to leave, but when she closed the

garden-gate, she called back: "Patience, my tender plant! you won't escape me; what I have not achieved to-day, I shall another time."

Cobweb and sand-grain had listened, and when they heard the gate go, they raised themselves up, looked about and saw the witch had gone. Instantly they uncovered the golden ring, rubbed against it, and behold! they had disappeared, but the beautiful Gunhilde stood there in all her loveliness, and the gold ring jumped in delight and put itself on her finger.

And she played as before among the birds and flowers and was refreshed by sweet dreams, and Prince Qualiquo tormented her no longer, but kept out of her way and seemed frightened of her. He just kept to one corner of the garden which he did not leave, but meandered from one wine fountain to the next. Most of his time he slept away in his intoxication and seemed to have quite forgotten crown and throne, bride and wedding-feast, and the royal children and grandchildren. But the little whities were in sorrow and trouble about their dear lily-maiden, for they feared, if the witch came for the second time, she would attack the poor child with craft and cunning; and how easily might the maiden forget to use her gold ring in time, so that the witch might change her into some horrid beast or noisome monster! So they held a fresh council

and sent her, in consequence of it, a horrid dream, which frightened her for several hours.

In this dream Gunhilde saw herself one morning walking among her flowers, enjoying the sunshine and the beauty of spring, when it seemed to her that her flowers suddenly changed into thorns and thistles, and all the flowering trees and fruit trees turned to bare shrubs, and instead of the pretty singing-birds, owls and crows sat on the barren branches and crowed and screeched, and tigers and lions roared, and snakes and dragons hissed through the bushes. And the poor child ran and looked for the gate, for she wanted to escape in her anxiety. But she could not get out, for the garden-wall turned to high rising flames, which prevented her escape and scorched her so much that she had to run back, in order not to be burnt and singed. And as she was running, she knew not where, she came—in what had been her lily-avenue and where now barren thistles stood—upon the old witch, who limping and coughing came towards her and grew in size and horribleness to the height of a giantess; and when she stood close in front of her, she changed to a huge toad who with open jaws snapped at her, to devour her. On that the princess awoke and was pale with fright and much disturbed as she got up.

She went out into her garden and found it unchanged, as beautiful as ever, and she saw no

monster but Prince Qualiquo, who lay again by a fountain, sipping sweet wine. Yet she had no rest and was tormented by sad thoughts, and she thought any minute the lilies might turn to thistles, and the orange-trees to thorns, and the lovely nightingales might as crows and ravens forebode misfortune, and she walked about in indescribable anxiety. And an impulse which she could not resist compelled her to rub her forehead with the gold ring and say the little verse, whereupon she dropped down as grains of sand and cobweb.

Now that was just what the little elves, her friends, had wanted to effect by means of the anxious dream. Instantly three white doves flew down; the first swallowed the grain of sand, the second hid the cobweb under her wing, the third slipped the gold ring round her neck. And quickly they flew away and sang in the air together:

We carry the tiniest,
We carry the finest,
We carry the purest,
In love away.
Oh, hurry! oh, hurry!
Ye helpful winds,
And blow us swiftly
O'er hills and away.

And the winds helped them and opened their quick and rushing wings and carried the doves away in speedy flight. But the old witch, who was lurking

high up in the snow-capped Alps, had got wind of something going on, put her black feather-coat on so quickly that her wings whizzed in the air, and she flew after the white doves. These had just reached the highest peaks, when she had almost overtaken them. One minute longer, and the doves would have been lost together with the precious treasure they carried. But here the witch's power ended; she durst not pursue them further than these Alpine peaks. So she flew back in a rage, rushed down into the beautiful garden and changed it into the barren desert that it had formerly been; and her son she changed to a crow and they flew both together elsewhere, to think of and practise fresh knaveries; for here there was nothing left for them to do.

Meanwhile the doves flew all through the day and night, about five hundred miles, until they found themselves over a large meadow, where their likes were assembled together, it being springtime on earth, when everything and everybody rejoices. Here they floated gently down and sang:

We carry, we carry,
We must not say,
You must not inquire,
A lovely maid.
Gold circlet ring,
Sand-grain spring,
Cobweb swing,
Together grow.

Then they settled down on the green ground; the first spit out the grain of sand, the second produced the cobweb from underneath her wing, and the third pulled the gold circlet off her neck, and they placed the three objects in touch. And these three did not wait for a second asking—but in a moment there stood the pretty lily-maiden on the green meadow, and the three doves had vanished. Yet with all the other white elves they hovered invisibly about the child and flew round her as butterflies and ladybirds on the grasses and flowers, so as to have a good look at her and feast their eyes on her loveliness, or they sang as birds in the branches and soon sang the sweet child to sleep, and then they danced their merry star dance round her, and produced the most charming music.

And here Gunhilde lived a pleasanter life even than in the enchanted garden. The green meadow was situated in the middle of a fine grove by a big lake. There was a wonderful variety of trees and flowers and a charming alternation of mountains, hills and dales, through which the child could ramble at will. Nightingales, blackbirds, larks, and other singing-birds abounded in it, and silver and gold-fish swam in the lake, and majestic swans moved on its mirror-like surface. A boat was always ready waiting on the bank when the child wanted to go on the lake, would take her in and

float her about the water as long as she liked, and bring her back to shore when she willed it. This shortened the time most pleasantly, and in her idle hours she would pass the time with beautiful needlework, in which she soon gained mastery; she had already practised some in the enchanted garden, for the little elves had also taught her this in her dreams, and would always give her new ideas, so that she became one of the cleverest and most ingenious princesses that ever lived. This idea of using dreams as teachers was as ingenious as it was innocent, and made the nights the most interesting part of Gunhilde's life, for then the whities would whisper all sorts of things to her and mirror human life with its varied and complicated relations so clearly before her, that she readily understood and moved about in it with grace and ease when she left the enchanted world in which her childhood and youth had been spent. The elves had even wrought her a golden lute, which she struck beautifully to accompany her singing. It was natural she should be fond of playing and singing as she was surrounded in the day by the most marvellous singing-birds and in the night by the delicate supernatural music of the elves. The latter also provided her with food and drink; whenever she was hungry and thirsty the table was laid for her. But she ate and drank very little, and only of the lightest food:

milk and sweet wine, white bread and honey, fruit and such like, so that one might almost say she had the soul of a flower or bird and touched no heavy and coarse food.

In this meadow and grove, and the lake that bordered it, Gunhilde had spent four happy months, had been very industrious and learned beautiful arts. The four months had only been to her as four minutes. But the little elves concerned themselves about her, and said: "We are wrong to keep her longer for ourselves; she must be taken to her parents, for the summer will soon be at an end, when we shall have to return to our mountains and what would then become of her?" And again they showed her in dreams, what they wanted to be done, and showed her the town of Stockholm in Sweden, where her parents lived, and the palaces and park and the Målar lake with its rushing current that the beautiful town is built on, and created in her heart a great longing after all the things they represented to her, so that for days she could think of nothing else, but how she might leave this grove and get to the beautiful Stockholm; and for several nights she dreamt of the same thing. When she had thus been prepared, they showed her three nights running a pretty coloured bird, a goldfinch, and during the intervening days they made this goldfinch flutter about her, so that she got used to it.

And it happened as they wished: she got fond of the little bird and ran after him over the meadow and made a song about the bird which she sang to her lute. And when the two had grown thus familiar with each other, they sent her another dream, wherein it seemed to her that the little goldfinch flew in front of her and kept calling: "Gunhilde! Gunhilde! To Stockholm! To Stockholm! Follow me, I lead the way!" And in her dream she followed the bird and came safely to Stockholm and saw her father and mother again, and was so joyful that overgreat happiness awakened her.

And when she left the pretty little shell-grotto which the elves had prepared as a bedroom for her, and stepped out on the green meadow, the goldfinch flew before her. This reminded her of her dream, and she hurried back into her chamber, picked out among her things what she liked best, and packed them into a small bundle, slung her golden lute over her shoulder, and began to walk, as if to tempt the bird and try if the dream had only been an empty phantasm. When the elves thus perceived that they had worked her up to the mark, one of them entered the bird and flew merrily before her from branch to branch, calling "To Stockholm! To Stockholm!" and with light step she followed. And other elves surrounded her, for never had they oved a human child like this angelic maiden. Thus

the bird flew and the maiden walked from morning till night; and when she was hungry she found food, and when she grew thirsty she found drink, and when she grew tired she found a little couch. And at night the elves would prepare her a dainty bed of grass and flowers under sheltering trees, and would sit about her bed and whisper sweet dreams to her, or dance round her and sing charming serenades. And the journey itself was like a delightful dream, such as never had been heard of before, and it probably will never be heard of again, that a little bird should guide and call out "To Stockholm!" and that a delicate maiden should have the courage to believe in such a little bird, who, after all, might have flown away any moment and left her in the wilderness, and to wander with him such a long way over hill and dale and field and moor. The journey to Stockholm was about six hundred hours, and they always walked from south, or noon, to north, or midnight, for the King of Sweden rules in the north, in the land of the midnight sun. And Gunhilde walked from ten to twelve hours per day, and did not get tired, for the bird guided her mostly on pleasant paths and short-cuts through shady woods and over green meadows. But when she sat down to rest she would take the lute from her shoulder and sing a cheerful song, or occasionally a song of the unknown longing and

yearning which the dreams had stirred up in her breast. The bird would then sit on the lute and listen, and flap his wings with joy, or join in with merry twittering; and if she dropped asleep, as would sometimes happen, the birdie would wake her when it was time to continue the journey. She would almost daily sing the little song she had made on the bird, and it seemed to her as if he understood its contents and nodded his head more trustingly than before. And the song fell charmingly from her lips. When she had finished, the bird would fly up and flap his wings and sing, "To Stockholm! To Stockholm!" And she put her lute back on her shoulder, took her bundle under her arm, and followed confidingly. Thus they had walked for nearly two months, when they came into the forest which lay not far from the palace of the Swedish king, and soon they were in the very garden where the king and queen used in old times to walk with their little daughter. It was a fine October's day, bright and light as they are in Sweden, and not cold. As Gunhilde stepped into the garden, strange feelings rushed to her heart; it all seemed so well known to her, and yet strange. Still, they were not recollections of her childhood—she was too young to remember when the she-wolf had kidnapped her—but images from the dreams in which the little elves had shown her the palace and garden and other

things. So it seemed to her as if she had really seen these places before. She was tired with walking, and sat down on the seat which stood under a lofty oak-tree, took her lute and sang; and the bird fluttered on to her hand and moved his wing as her fingers touched the strings. She sang her very oldest song of the lilies, her cradle-song, the only thing that she had retained from her childhood. And when she had come to the last verse, it chanced that the king and queen just came out of a sidewalk by the seat where she sat. And the queen was startled, and tears came into her eyes, and she said to her consort, "My dear lord, what song is that? The cradle-song of my little Gunhilde? Alas! my sweet and only daughter, this was the place where the she-wolf robbed me of her!" So said the poor queen, and turned pale as snow, and sorrowful thoughts oppressed her heart, so that the king had to support her with his arms, lest she should fall down fainting. And she cried repeatedly, in deep sorrow, "My daughter Gunhilde, my only daughter, thou canst never, never return!"

Gunhilde, who had sat in deep and melancholy thoughts as she sung her song, looked up, and was astonished when she saw the king and queen: the same shape, the same garments, the very same seat under the oak-tree which the dream had often shown her. And now it dawned upon her, she started up and ran to her royal parents and called

out, "I am your daughter! Take your only daughter back. I have been enchanted, and have sat and played for many years in an enchanted garden, and now I hardly know how I have come here to Stockholm, for I have been strangely guided by a little bird."

And the king and queen looked at her and wondered at her youth and beauty, and the queen recollected a dream, which the little elves must have sent her, wherein she had found her daughter looking like this very maiden. She had taken it for a delusion of the night, of no more import than most dreams, but now she believed in it and embraced the sweet child and pressed her to her heart with delight, and exclaimed, "Yes, you are my daughter." And she untied her neckerchief and saw on her left breast a red mark, like a full-blown rose, which she had brought with her into the world. And she showed it to the king, and said with joy, "Behold here your Rosehilde! for you wanted to have her christened Rosehilde on account of this birth-mark, and I had my way and had her christened Gunhilde."

And now the king took the fair child to his heart and kissed her a thousand times, and they led her into the palace and took her to the apartments in which she had played as a child. But she had no recollection of them except from her dreams.

And when Gunhilde had told them all her story, and they had heard and rejoiced to their heart's content, they proclaimed that Princess Gunhilde had returned, and was as fair and lovely as the day. And all the town and all the country rejoiced with them, for they had grieved at the king's being childless, and at the thought of the misery and war that might occur about the succession. And now all the people belonging to the court who had seen and waited on Gunhilde in her childhood came, also her old nurse and the maids, and they all recognised her. But they all looked for the rose; only the nurse would say she should have known her even without this mark, for she had always imagined her like this, slim and graceful and bright, a fit bride for the mightiest emperor. And she wept with joy, and so did Gunhilde, at the love she was shown by all. And the very evening before each retired to their own chamber, the king and queen took her apart, and the king addressed her thus: "Dear Princess Gunhilde, my beloved only child! God has shown me more grace and mercy than I deserve, and given me a bright star of joy for my declining years, which had been darkened by the sorrow of being childless and having lost you. You are living and have come back in the flower of beauty, and your return will spread joy and glory in this palace and town, aye, over all the land of the Goths and

Swedes. See, my dear child, the people had looked upon me as on a barren branch, and the last of my line; but now I have got you back, and the branch that seemed barren will sprout and bud again, and your mother and I will be crowned with joy and honour. We are both longing to have grandchildren, and I know of a handsome and worthy bridegroom for you, a man of noble descent and incomparable fame, the pride of my army, the support of my throne. To-morrow I shall bring him to you, and he shall become my son-in-law."

The princess bowed at these words, blushed and said: "My king and lord, your will shall be mine. May God turn it to our mutual joy as he has mercifully turned my fate before this!" Thus she replied, and went into her chamber, and when the waiting-maids had undressed her, and she was alone, she knelt down, folded her white hands, and wept and prayed with many a sigh. The prayers were addressed to God, and the sighs to a beautiful, fair youth, whom she had often seen in her dreams during the last two years, and she said: "Oh, my sweet, fair youth! Oh, if he would only look like my fair youth!"

Next morning the king sent his Mistress of the Ceremonies to Gunhilde, and bade her put on her best attire, and her most precious jewels, and to

appear before him in his apartment at noon. And about noon the queen herself came with all the ladies of her court, and they fetched the princess and led her to the hall where the king sat enthroned, with all the great nobles of his land standing by his side. He rose from his high seat and led his daughter up the steps of the throne, and seated her by his side, saying: "I present you to the heiress of our throne, our only daughter, whom God has preserved in a miraculous way and given back to us." And now all the lords and ladies stepped forward, one after the other, according to birth and rank, and bowed thrice at the feet of the throne and did homage to the princess. After this the king beckoned to a herald, who opened a side-door, and in stepped, in shining armour, a stately man of splendid growth and noble bearing, whose fair curls fell over the armour on his shoulders. And the king motioned him to the feet of the throne, and he came forward and bowed reverently. Then spoke the king to the princess: "This is to be your husband and my son-in-law!" And turning to the nobles, he continued: "This shall be your king and master after me!"

And the princess could contain herself no longer, but exclaimed: "It is he! it is he!" meaning it was the beautiful, fair youth she had so often seen in her dreams. The king and queen and all the

Court marvelled at these words, but nobody asked what they meant.

So there was joy in the palace and the capital, and all the kingdom, and they soon celebrated a grand and splendid marriage feast, and the bride and bridegroom danced in glass slippers, which they found beside their beds on the wedding morn; there were also seen many pretty white masks with glass slippers among the dancers, and many people said they must be the white elves, the guardian-spirits of Gunhilde. And when, after the dancing, Gunhilde came into her bridal chamber, she found there many precious jewels and ornaments and costly vases, and work so fine and dainty, that no man knew whence it came and who had brought them there. And they guessed this and that. Gunhilde alone knew, but she said nothing.

And Gunhilde lived a very happy life with her fair prince to a good old age, and saw children and grandchildren. She had luck in all things, and art and wisdom before all women. That was the gift of the elves who had taught her, and remained about her and her children so that they became a fortunate and victorious race. The old witch was never again able to gain any power over her and her descendants, and fortune followed them for many centuries, as long as they preserved the little gold ring.

THE STORY OF THE SEVEN COLOURED MICE

I OFTEN made my father tell me this story, and, therefore, I remember it well, and you may listen to it :

In the Isle of Rügen, far away in the Baltic Sea, is a village called Pudmin. There lived once upon a time an industrious, kind-hearted peasant woman with her seven children—seven little maids, the eldest of whom was twelve years old, and the

youngest but two. And they all were dressed alike in coloured frocks and coloured pinafores and red hoods. They wore neither shoes nor stockings, for that would have cost too much, and so they all ran about barefooted and did not mind it at all. Their mother kept them tidy and clean, taught them to pray and sing, and brought them up to fear God and be well mannered. Whenever she had to work in the field, or to go a long way, she deputed Barbara, the eldest, to mind the little ones, to sing to them and tell them fairy-tales.

Now Good Friday came round, and the mother wanted to go to church. She told the children to be good and play nicely together, but on no account to look behind the tiled stove. The little girls promised all they were asked, and the mother went to church.

For a long while the children were very good and enjoyed themselves with playing, singing, and story-telling, but in the end they got tired of it, and one pert little thing crept secretly to the stove and beckoned to her sisters. They were all wishing to know what might be hidden behind the stove, so they crept nearer and nearer and the most venturesome of them stretched her head forward and called out: "There hangs a beautiful big white bag!" And now they all made bold to look, and even Barbara, the eldest, got up and looked at it; and they

whispered and said this and that and tried to guess what might be in the bag. They were dying to know, and one of them plucked up courage and pulled the bag down. Barbara opened the string which tied it up, and behold! apples and nuts fell out of it. When they saw the apples and nuts roll about the floor, they clean forgot everything, sat down, cracked the nuts and ate the apples until not one was left. At dinner-time the mother came home; she saw the nut-shells on the floor, then she looked for the bag; but it was gone. Thereupon she turned very angry and scolded the disobedient children, and forgot herself so far as to say: "I wish you little thieves would all turn into mice."

Now this was a great sin, the more so as it was on such a holy day, and hardly had she said the wicked word, when the seven pretty little children were gone, as if the wind had blown them away, but seven coloured mice with red heads ran about the room, who were the same colours as the children's frocks and hoods had been. The mother was so frightened that she could not move. That very minute the farm-boy opened the door and through the open door the seven coloured mice ran out across the passage and the farmyard and they ran as quick as lightning. When the woman saw that, she could not stop but ran after them.

The seven coloured mice ran along the road

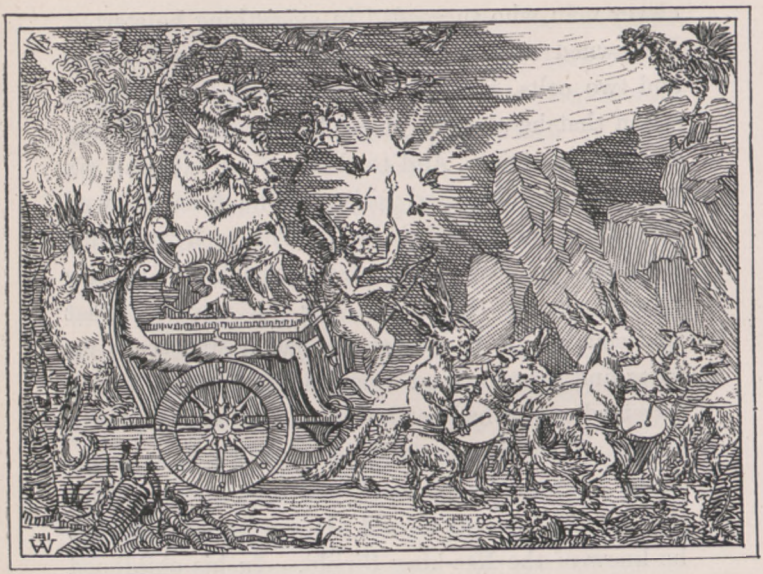
through the village, over meadows and fields to a little oak-wood, and breathless the peasant woman followed them. But in the middle of the wood there lay a pond as clear as a mirror. There the little mice stopped, they turned round and looked at their mother, just as if they meant to say good-bye, and then they jumped all at once into the pond and did not swim but went straight down to the bottom. Now it was bright noon-day when this happened, and the mother remained dumbfounded at the place where the seven mice had disappeared. She no more moved hand or foot, nor was she a human being any longer, but had straight turned into stone. And this big stone lies still in the same place, and the place is called Mousecorner to this very day. But at midnight, when all the world is quiet and asleep, the seven coloured mice come out of the water and dance round the stone for an hour, until the church clock in Pudmin strikes one. Then the stone rings as if it could talk, and that is the only way in which the mother may commune with her children.

But they who know of this tale and tell it, they also know, that one day the seven coloured mice may be turned back into human beings. And this is the way in which it will happen.

One day a woman will come who will be the same age as the peasant woman was on that Good

Friday when she came from church, and with the woman there will come her seven boys to the oak-wood. And as she sits down on the stone, it will come to life and the peasant woman will stand there just as she was, in the same clothes in which she ran after the mice to the Mousecorner. And the seven coloured mice will turn again into seven little maids in coloured frocks, with red hoods on their heads. Each one of the little maids will then go to the boy of her age and take his hand. And when they have grown up, they will become bride and bridegroom and have a merry wedding. And they will be the prettiest and richest and most respected people in all the island, and many estates and farms will belong to them.

And now, my dear children, I am sure you wish with me that the poor little mice may very soon be delivered.



BIRLIBI, THE RAT-KING

THIS is a story which Baltazar Tiers has often told me. Baltazar was a farm-servant on my father's estate, a man of many quaint ideas, who knew plenty of stories and fairy-tales. This is how the story of the Rat-king goes: In the Isle of Rügen there was, once upon a time, a rich peasant in a village which lies between Gartz and Putbus, a little off the road by the sea-shore, and this peasant's name was Hans Burwitz. He was an exceedingly

clever man, who succeeded in everything he started. He owned sixteen cows, forty sheep, eight horses and two colts, as sleek as eels and of such good strain that he always got good prices if he sold any at the horse-fair. Add to that a good wife and six fine children, boys and girls, and he fared so well that folks only called him, "The rich peasant." Yet this man lost all he had through his nightly wanderings in the forest, for he was a great sportsman. In particular, he had a fine scent for foxes and martens, and was therefore often in the forest where he had set his traps and waited for a catch. There in the twilight of dawn and moonshine he may have heard and seen many things that he did not care to talk of; yet he let out what he knew of the Rat-king Birlibi. In his childhood Hans had often heard about the rat-king, who was said to wear a golden crown on his head and to reign supreme over all the stoats, badgers, rats, mice and the like vermin, and to be a most powerful forest-king; but he would never believe it. And year after year he had gone his rounds in the forest after fox and marten and had neither heard nor seen aught of the rat-king. Maybe the latter was in some other land, for he has many castles under the hills and moves year by year on to another of his strongholds, where he enjoys himself with his court and lives in splendour and magnificence.

from Rügen

Well, it happened that Hans Burwitz went once after midnight into the wood on the look-out for a fox. All of a sudden he heard in the distance a confused noise and screeching, of which he could only make out the one word: "Birlibi! Birlibi! Birlibi!" Then he bethought himself of the Rat-king Birlibi, that he had so often been told of, and he thought "Let's go and see what is up," for he was a brave man and knew no fear, even in a pitch-dark night. He was on the point of going after the noise when he remembered the old saying: "Mind your own business if you want to keep your nose on your face," but he heard the sounds of Birlibi as long as he stopped in the wood. And next night and the following night it was just the same. But he was unconcerned and said: "Let the old gentleman and his rabble carry on as they like. They can't hurt him who has no intercourse with them!"

Would to God Hans had always stuck to that; but alas! on the fourth night the temptation overcame him and he really fell into the snare. It happened to be Walpurgis night, that is the night of the first of May, and his wife begged him not to go out into the forest this night, for it was supposed to be an uncanny night in which all the witches and sorcerers were abroad, and all the powers of darkness let loose, and many a good Christian had come to grief during Walpurgis night. Yet Hans

laughed at his wife and spoke of womanish fear, and went his way as usual into the forest after the others had gone to bed. But this once King Birlibi became too strong for him. At first everything was as on the previous nights; there was noise and shouting in the distance, and "Birlibi" rang out clearly above the noise. Hans Burwitz did not mind the whizzing and whistling and rustling overhead in the tree-tops, for he did not believe in witchcraft, and said they were only night-elves of which man was afraid because he did not know them, and all sorts of delusions and phantasms of the kingdom of darkness, which could not hurt him who did not believe in them. But when midnight came on and the clock had struck twelve, such a "Birlibi" came out of the forest, that his hair stood on end and he wanted to run away. But they were too quick for him and soon he was in the midst of the rush and could not get out any more.

When it struck midnight, the whole forest resounded as with drums, trumpets and whistles, and it was as light as if suddenly thousands of lamps and candles had been lit. For this night was the festival of the Rat-king, and all his subjects and vassals were bidden to its celebration. All the bushes seemed to whistle, and the rocks and stones appeared to dance and jump, so that Hans became downright frightened; but when he tried to run

away, so many animals ran and barred the way, that he could not get through and must needs stay where he was. There came the foxes, martens and pole-cats, the weasels, marmots and badgers, the rats and mice in such numbers that it looked as if they had been called together from all the world to this festival. They ran and jumped and sprang and danced like mad, moving on their hind-legs and carrying green boughs in their fore-feet, and they shouted, howled, screeched and whistled each to his own tune. In short all the thieves of the night were together, and created an awful noise between them. In the air it was no better than on the ground, for the owls and crows, bats and beetles, flew about in crowds and proclaimed with shrill and screeching voice, and buzzing, whirring wings the delights of the great festival.

Now as Hans stood quite frightened in the midst of this noisy crew, and knew not where to turn, he perceived all at once a still brighter light and many thousand voices sang:

Open your gates far and wide,
Come hither from every side;
Invited are you, big and small,
To see the king pass through his hall.

Behold in me the king of rats,
Come here to me, the lean and fat;
In gold and silver I do abound,
Bushels of money I offer all round.

This was chanted in a solemn slow measure, interrupted now and then by screeching voices calling out, "Birlibi, Birlibi," and all the crowd echoed, "Birlibi, Birlibi," and the very forest gave the echo, "Birlibi." This was the Rat-king who came driving along. He was as big as an ox and sat in a golden chariot and had a golden crown on his head, a golden sceptre in his hand; and by his side sat his queen, who also wore a golden crown, and was so fat that she shone like a mirror. And their long hairless tails were entwined, and they played with them, for they felt very jolly. Their carriage was drawn by six lean wolves who showed their teeth, and two big tom-cats stood behind them as footmen, who carried big torches and mewed terrifically. Yet the Rat-king and his queen were not frightened of them, but seemed to be rulers of them all. Twelve quick drummers preceded the carriage and beat their drums, and they were hares; they have to beat the drum to give others courage, because they have none themselves.

Hans had been frightened enough before, but when he thus saw the Rat-king, queen, wolves, cats, and hares together, his skin began to creep all over, and his otherwise bold heart failed within him, and he said to himself: "Let whoever likes it remain here where everything is against Nature! I have often heard of, and read of, miracles, but they always happened in a natural fashion. I can see that this

is the evil one's game, and his hellish rabble. If I were but out of it!"

And another attempt he made to force his way through, but it was no good; the rabble rushed on through the forest and carried him along, until they came to the farthest end of the wood. There was an open field in which stood many hundred waggon-loads of bacon, meat, corn, and nuts, and other eatables. Each waggon was driven by a peasant and his horses, and the peasants carried the sacks of corn, the bacon, the ham and sausages, and whatever else they had on their carts down into the wood, and when they saw Hans Burwitz stand there, they called to him: "Come and help us carry!"

And Hans went and helped unloading and carrying, but he was so confused he did not know what he was doing. Only he fancied that he saw in the twilight a few known faces among the peasants, the bailiff from Krakevitz, and the smith from Casnevitz; but he pretended not to know them, and they pretended not to know him either. But these were the facts about them. They had yielded to temptation, and given themselves up to the Rat-king and his rabble, and in the spring, in the Walpurgis night, when he had his great feast, they had to drive the booty and spoil to the forest, which the Rat-king's subjects had plundered and stolen all over the world. As soon as the sacks had been carried

into the forest, the wild rabble fell to and grips, graps, rips, raps, everybody helped himself and dragged his share away, so that they grew fewer and fewer. But the king stopped there in his gorgeous chariot, and a few rats still danced and jumped about him. But when all the waggons were empty, a hundred big rats came along and poured bushels full of gold into the field and on the road, and called out:

Hands open, caps held out!
Who wants more, look about.
Hurrah, hurrah, gold untold!
Take what hands and caps will hold!

And then the peasants pounced upon the gold like hungry wolves, and grasped and snatched and pushed and crushed one another; and every one took as much as he could get of the red gold, and Hans was not idle, but helped himself like the rest. But when they were in full work, like pigeons among the peas, behold! the cock crowed. The morning had come, when the heathenish and hellish kingdom has no more power on earth, and in a wink all had disappeared as if it had been a dream, and Hans stood there all alone in the wood. Day dawned in the east, and he went home with a heavy heart, but also with heavy pockets, for they were full of beautiful red gold coins. His wife was already awake and alarmed, and when she saw him

so pale and troubled she was frightened, and began to question him. But he put her off with a joke as was his wont, and did not tell her a mortal word of what he had seen and heard.

When he was alone, Hans counted his money, and a jolly heap of ducats it was that he emptied out of his pockets and put away in a box. For a few months he did not go into the wood, for he shuddered at the recollection. But by degrees, such is the way of men, he forgot Walpurgis night and its horrible noise and tumult, and went as before in moonshine and starlight to catch foxes and martens. He saw and heard no more of the Rat-king, and thought less and less about him. But when spring came round all was changed; he would sometimes at midnight hear the "Birlibi, Birlibi" in the distance, and his hair would stand on end. Then he would rush home from the wood, but nevertheless he kept thinking of Walpurgis night; and what people think secretly in the day, will be reflected in their dreams at night, so Hans dreamt often that he heard a knock at the door, and when he opened it there was the Rat-king in person, just as he had seen him that once in his chariot. But he was no longer ugly as then, but of pure gold, and he would sing to him in a most seductive voice, so that one would not fancy it to issue from a rat-throat:

Behold in me the king of rats, &c.

Or another time he would come close to Hans' ears and whisper: "I say, Hans Burwitz, you will come again on Walpurgis night and help to carry sacks, and in return fill your pockets with ducats."

It must be acknowledged that when Hans awoke from such a dream, he shuddered, and would say: "Not if I know it, King Birlibi, will I come to your feast!"

But what has happened to many others also happened to him, and the proverb became true in his case, that if you give the Evil One one finger, he soon holds you by both hands.

The nearer Walpurgis night came, the greater grew the desire in Hans to be present. Yet he firmly resolved to resist the tempter, and went quietly to bed with his wife on Walpurgis night. Still he could not go to sleep; he must needs think of the waggons loaded with sacks, and the peasants, and the big rats, who poured gold out of bushel measures, so that at the last he could not remain in bed, but must get up and sneak away from his wife and run into the dark forest. And there everything happened as last year, only that he had brought a bag with him, and gathered still more gold than last time.

Now he thought he had enough money, and he swore a deep oath that he would no more yield to temptation, and would never again go into the forest.

And he kept his oath, however much he dreamt of the golden Rat-king. With earnest prayer he overcame himself and resisted the tempter. Thus many years passed by. Hans was called a very rich man ; he had bought a large estate with his golden ducats, and lived like a lord. It is true, that among the country folk there were rumours about his riches having been earned by witchcraft, but nobody could bring a proof against him. Yet the proof came in the end.

The Rat-king lay in wait for Hans, over whom he had at first gained some power; he was enraged at having lost this power because Hans no more came to his feast on Walpurgis night. And when Hans one day chanced to think of it, and did not drive the thought away, but indulged in it so greedily that he forgot to say his evening prayer, the Rat-king was allowed to revenge himself, and Hans learned what was the real meaning of the golden bait. For from this day he had no more luck in his farming. However much he worked and laboured, everything went backwards. And yet there was neither drought nor failure of crops, nor disease among the cattle, but the mice devoured his corn in field and barn, the weasels, rats and martens killed his fowls, ducks, and pigeons; the foxes and wolves carried off his lambs and sheep, his calves and colts. In short the vermin attacked him on every side, and

in a few years ate him out of house and home, horses and cows, sheep and calves, and at last he had not a chicken left to call his own. And as a poor man he had with wife and children to leave his house and home, to earn his living in his old age as a farm-labourer.

But in his trouble and poverty he remained strong and firm and resisted all temptation; yea, he thanked God for having allowed the rats and mice to deliver him from the evil gold, so that he need not in the next life dance to the Rat-king's whistle, but might gain everlasting peace. And he would often say, that the gold by which he came in such a strange manner, carried no happiness with it, for among all his riches he had never felt so happy and easy at heart as later on when he lived in poverty with a penitent and god-fearing heart, and had often to be thankful when he had only potatoes with salt for his supper.

PRINCESS SVANVITHA

I SUPPOSE you have heard the legend that here in Gartz, where the rampart still is standing by the lake, there was many thousand years ago a large and splendid heathen palace, surrounded by fine houses and temples, in which they kept and worshipped their gods. Long, long ago, the Christians have taken the castle, killed the heathens, overturned their temples, and burnt the idols in them, and now nothing is left of the old splendour but the old rampart, and a few stories, which are told among the people, especially of the rider in helmet and armour who rides on a white horse over the town and the lake. Some, who have seen him of a night, relate that he is the old king of the castle and wears a golden crown, but that is not certain ; whilst it is a certainty that at Christmas and midsummer-time there is a sounding in the lake, as if bells were rung in church, and many people have heard it, my father among them. It comes from a church that is buried in the lake ; some people say it is the old

Pagan temple, but that I cannot believe, for why should the heathens ring bells on Christian festivals? But the sounding and ringing in the lake is as nothing, compared to what happens inside the rampart, and thereof I will tell you a tale. Inside there sits a beautiful princess with streaming hair and weeping eyes and waits for him who is to deliver her, and this is a very sad case. In the ancient time, when the heathen castle of Gartz was besieged by the Christians and those inside were much troubled and pressed, when many of their towers had been pulled down and they had not much food left, so that lots of the poor in the town died of hunger, there was inside a very old man, the father of the king who ruled over the isle of Rügen. This old man was so old, that he could hardly hear or see, but it was his delight to potter about the gold and precious stones which he and his ancestors on the throne had collected, and which were kept deep underground in a roomy vault, built of marble and rock crystal. There were big heaps piled up of them, bigger than the rye and barley heaps piled up in your father's granary. Now when the castle of Gartz was severely pressed during the siege, and many of the bravest men—the king, the old man's son, among them—had been slain on the rampart and before the gates, the old man would no more budge from this marble vault, but stayed there day

and night, and had all the stairs and doors that led to it walled up ; but he had still a tiny secret passage underground, many hundred feet lower than the basement of the castle, which had an exit on the other side of the lake, of which no living man knew anything, and through which he could slip out and buy food and drink outside among men. When finally the castle was taken and destroyed by the Christians, and the men and women were slain, and the houses and temples burnt, so that not a stone remained standing on another, the tower and walls fell helter-skelter and hid the door which led to the treasure-chamber, and not a man was left alive who knew where the dead king had hidden his treasure. But the old king sat below by his heaps of gold, and had his secret passage open and lived still many centuries after the castle was destroyed ; for it is said, that men who set their heart upon gold and silver, cannot be delivered from life and do not die, however much they pray God to let them die. So the poor old man lived there many a year, watching his gold, until he was as dry and bony as a skeleton. Then at last he died, and was transformed, and now he must lie as a lean black dog among the gold heaps and guard them, lest any one come to lift the treasure. But between midnight and one o'clock, in the spirits' hour, he has to walk about like an old grey man, with a black fur cap on his head and a

white stick in his hand. Thus many people have met him near the wood on the road to Poseritz; he even walks sometimes round the churchyard, for in ancient times there were heathen tombs in the place, and the heathens would always bury gold and silver with their dead. That is what he is after and why he sneaks about there, but he cannot get it, as he dare not touch consecrated ground. It is as a punishment for his avarice that he has to run about when other folk sleep in their beds or in their graves.

Now long after this, it happened that there lived at Bergen a king of Rügen, who had a most beautiful daughter, called Svanvitha; and she was the loveliest princess far and wide, so that kings and dukes and princes came from everywhere to woo her. And the king, her father, did not know what to do with all the suitors, and had at last not enough house-room to put them up, nor enough stables for their grooms and horses, and the country even ran short of oats for their horses and space for all the coachmen and servants they brought with them, so that the isle of Rügen was full of people as it has never been since.

The king would have been glad if the princess had taken a husband, and the other suitors could have departed. But this is not as easy for royal people as for common folk, and everything must be

done with great etiquette and nicety. The princess, after having remained almost six months alone in her apartments without seeing any man or saying a word, found at last a prince whom she liked and whom she preferred for a husband. The king liked him also and desired him for a son-in-law. They exchanged rings, and there was great joy in the land at the news, that the beautiful Svanvitha was going to be married, and all the tailors and shoemakers had plenty of work to make the fine clothes and shoes to be worn at the wedding. The bridegroom-elect was Prince Peter of Denmark, and he was an exceedingly handsome and nice gentleman and had few equals.

Then, as everything grew and flowered in hope and love, and the whole island was replete with joy, and only a few days were wanting before the wedding feast, the devil came and sowed his ill weeds, and all the joy was turned to sorrow. For I must tell you there was at court a prince from Poland, a deceitful, wicked man, although good looking and of knightly bearing. He had wooed the princess many a year, and tormented her with his suit; but she always declined him, as she did not like him. When this Polish prince saw that there really would be a wedding, and that Prince Peter of Denmark had been chosen bridegroom for the beautiful Svanvitha, his evil heart conceived a wicked plan, and by his arts

he managed to make the king and everybody else believe that Svanvitha was not a modest lady at all and had flirted outrageously with him before her engagement. Prince Peter of Denmark was silly enough to believe it, and left in a hurry, the Polish prince having left before, and all the kings and princes departed, and the palace in Bergen was empty and deserted and all the joy had departed with the guests, and the fiddlers and bagpipers and harpists, who had been preparing for tournaments and festivals. And the disgrace of the poor princess was bruited about everywhere, and even told in Sweden and Denmark and Poland. And yet she was as innocent and pure-minded as a new-born babe; and it was all owing to the wickedness of the infamous Polish prince, whose suit she had scorned.

Thus fared poor Svanvitha, and the king her father was for some days beside himself and quite out of his mind, and he wanted to kill himself on account of his daughter and the disgrace she had brought over the royal house. And when he was again in his right mind, he became furious, and sent for Svanvitha, and struck her and tore her hair and drove her forth from his presence, and commanded his servants to take her to a secret chamber, that he might never again set eyes upon her. And in a high-walled, thickly-wooded enclosure he had a strong, dark tower built, into which neither sun nor

moon could shine; there he had the princess locked up. The tower had but one tiny weeny hole in the door, into which a ray of light fell, and through which they handed her food to her. There was neither bed, nor table, nor seat in this sad prison, and she, who used to sleep on velvet and silk, had to lie on the hard floor, and had to walk barefooted, after having been used to the daintiest shoes.

Poor Svanvitha would have died of her misery if the consciousness of her innocence had not kept her up, and if she had not been able to pray. She was a very young girl when she was locked up—only sixteen—beautiful as a rose, and slender and white as a lily; and those who loved her, called her the King's Lily. This sweet lily, then, was doomed miserably to fade in dark and dreary solitude. Thus passed three years. The old king also had known no joy since the day when the Polish prince brought such a disgrace over his daughter; his hair had turned snow-white with sorrow; but before other people he carried himself upright and proudly, and pretended that his daughter had long been dead and buried. Yet she sat unknown to the world in her misery, and her only consolation was that God would some day prove her innocence. As she had plenty of time for reflection, she remembered the legend about the rampart in Gartz, which she had been told in her childhood, and she thought

this might be the means of proving her innocence and the infamous lie of the Polish prince. And when her keeper came to hand her food through the little hole, she said to him, "Dear keeper, go to the king, my lord and yours, and tell him that his poor only daughter wants to see him and speak to him once again, and pray him not to deny her this last favour."

And the keeper said "Yes," and ran, and thought to himself, "If the old king would but listen to her prayer!" For he was exceedingly sorry for the poor princess, and so was everybody, for she had always been kind to all the people, and most of them suspected that she was wrongly accused by the lying Polish prince, for she had ever lived in modesty among them.

And as the keeper came to the king with the request of the princess, the old gentleman got very wrathful, and scolded, and threatened to cast him also into prison if ever he dared take the name of the princess again in his mouth, and the frightened keeper went out. But the king laid himself down to sleep, and had a marvellous dream which nobody could interpret; and he woke early and was very restless, and kept thinking of his daughter, and at last he gave orders to have her taken from the tower and brought to his presence.

As Svanvitha stepped before the king she looked pale and haggard; her clothes and shoes were in

rags, and she stood almost naked before him, more like a beggar child than a king's daughter. At the sight of her the old king grew pale as the whitewash on the wall, but otherwise he showed no sign of emotion. And Svanvitha bowed low before him and spoke thus:

"My king and master, I appear before you as a poor sinner, who is said to have no claim to divine grace and heavenly light. But I affirm before God and yourself, that I am suffering innocently and that the Polish prince, out of sheer wickedness and malice, has accused me wrongly. And now God, who will have pity on me, has inspired me with a plan, by which I can prove my unstained virtue and bring riches and honour to your majesty, to myself, and the entire realm. You know there is a tradition of a large treasure being buried under the old castle-rampart at Gartz, where our ancestors once resided. This tradition, which was often told me in my childhood, goes on to say that the treasure can only be lifted by a princess that has descended from those old kings, and who is a pure and chaste virgin; that is, if she has the courage to ascend the rampart naked and solitary in mid-summer-night between twelve and one. There she must walk along backwards until she hits on the spot where the gates and stairs that lead to the treasure-chamber are filled up with earth. As soon

as she touches those with her feet, they will open beneath her, and she will gently sink down into the midst of the treasure, and may pick out as much as she likes and return thence at sunrise. And what she cannot carry, the old ghost who guards the treasure, and his servants, will carry after her. Upon this I have set my hope of new happiness, if such is destined to me; therefore allow me, my lord king, to make the attempt with the help of God. I am, as it is, like to a dead person, and it must be the same to you whether I am buried here or there."

She looked as if she meant to say more, but the words stuck in her throat, and she sobbed and cried bitterly. The king gently beckoned to her keeper, and soon there came ladies and maidservants and carried her out into an adjoining room. And by the king's order the keeper brought her food and drink to strengthen her, and the message that his majesty would grant permission for her midnight expedition. Then the servants took a bath in to her, and fine clothes to cover her. And she lived again in comfort, although she sat quite alone and opened her mouth to nobody. Also the men and maidservants were forbidden to talk to her, nor did they know who she was, and how she came to the castle. For nobody that knew her was admitted to her presence, except the old keeper that used to bring her food to the tower. And her beauty came back,

however pale and haggard she looked when she left the prison; and all who saw her were startled at her grace and loveliness, and she seemed to them like an angel come from heaven to the palace.

When forty days had passed by, and it was mid-summer-day, she went into the chamber of her father, the king, and bade him farewell. And the old king bent his white head over hers and wept bitterly, and she knelt down and embraced his knees and wept even more. Thereupon she went out and disguised herself, so that nobody would have taken her for a princess, and went on her journey. It is only a few miles from Bergen to Gartz, and she walked in the attire of a knight's groom. As it struck midnight from the church tower in Gartz she stepped alone on the rampart, took her clothes off, so that she stood there as God had created her, and took a St. John's wand in her hand, with which she beat on the ground behind her. Then she walked silently backward, as it was prescribed. She had not gone far, when the earth opened underneath her, and she dropped gently down as if a dream were rocking her, and she fell into a large and beautiful hall, lit up by thousands of wax-lights and lamps, the walls of which were of marble and glistening diamond mirrors, and the floor covered with gold and silver and precious stones, so that there was not room to walk past. But she dropped

so gently down on the gold that it did not hurt her. And she looked at all the sparkling splendour in the hall where the treasures and valuables of her ancestors of many centuries were gathered; then she saw in the farthest corner, in a golden armchair, the little grey man, who gave her a friendly nod, as if he would like to talk to his latest descendant. But she said not a word to him, but only gently beckoned to him with a motion of her hand. Upon this beckoning the ghost vanished, and there came in his stead a long row of elegantly dressed servants, who stood in dumb respectfulness behind her as if awaiting the orders of their mistress. Svanvitha did not tarry long, but reflecting how short the midsummer-night is, she picked up diamonds and other precious stones and beckoned to the servants to do the same; and they also filled their hands and pockets and the gussets of their dresses with gold and stones and precious vessels. And she beckoned again, and the whole number followed the princess up the stairs to go out. And they were almost at the top, and she saw the dawning daylight and heard the lark sing and the cock crowing to announce the break of day, when she felt anxious, whether the servants were following her with the treasure. She looked round, and what did she see? She saw the little grey man suddenly transform himself into a big black dog, who jumped up at her with glistening

eyes and fiery jaw. And she got so frightened that she cried, "O dear!" Hardly had she uttered a sound, when the door in front of her closed with a loud bang, the stairs sank down, the servants vanished, the lights in the hall were extinguished, and she was below on the floor and could not get out.

But this misfortune happened to her on account of her having looked round and spoken. For you have no power over the spirits, if you turn round or speak; your enterprise must needs fail then, of which I could quote many stories and examples.

As she did not return, the poor king was sorely grieved; for he thought that she had either perished in her descent to the treasure through the malice of evil spirits, who have power under the earth, or that she had not ventured down at all and was now walking through the world as a poor forsaken adventuress. He lived but a few weeks after her disappearance, then he died and was buried. And many years passed by, a century or more, and all the people who had lived at the time of the old king and the beautiful Svanvitha died; and here and there people would still talk of them as of an old fairy-tale, when suddenly it was rumoured that the princess was still living and sitting underneath the rampart at Gartz in the treasure vault, where she had to assist her old grey ancestor in guarding the

treasures. And nobody can say where this report had its origin. Perhaps the little grey man, who walks round at times, has betrayed it to somebody, or she may have been seen by one of those clairvoyant people who have been born on great holidays at particular hours, who can hear the grass and the gold grow inside the earth and whose eyes can see through the thickest walls and ramparts.

And there was much noise about this story and the miraculous sinking down of the princess, and that she was still sitting in the dark chamber, and living and waiting to be delivered. And they say she can be delivered if a person will venture, in the same way as she did, to descend into the forbidden chamber. This person will have to bow thrice before her, kiss her, take her hand and lead her out without saying a word. He who succeeds in bringing her out, will live in joy and splendour with her and will have enough treasure to buy a kingdom. Therein he will sit on the throne as king for fifty years, and Svanvitha as his queen by his side, and they will have many beautiful children; but the little grey spook will disappear for ever when they have ridded him of his treasure.

Now there have been many bold and daring princes and handsome youths who by means of a St. John's wand have descended to her; but they always blundered in some way, and the princess is

not yet delivered. Of course, if it were so easy, a good many would like to marry such a beautiful princess and become king! People say that the horrid black dog is at the bottom of each failure; nobody has been able to stand the sight of him, and on seeing him, every one has cried out, then the door has closed, the staircase has sunk down, and all chance of delivery has been over.

Thus poor Svanvitha sits there in all her innocence and must shiver and mind the cold gold, and nobody but God knows when she will be delivered. There she is sitting, bent over heaps of gold, her long hair hanging down her back and weeping incessantly. Already there are six young fellows sitting around her, who have to assist her in minding the gold. They are those who have not succeeded in delivering her. But he who succeeds will marry the princess, get all the treasure and release at the same time the other poor prisoners. They say the last one only disappeared twenty years ago, a shoemaker whose name was Joachim Fritz. He was a handsome young fellow and always fond of walking on the rampart. All of a sudden he had disappeared and nobody knew whither he had drifted or flown, and his parents and friends inquired after him all the world over, but they found him not. Most probably he is now sitting there below among the others.

THE SERPENT-KING

SERPENT-KING lived on a distant island in the Baltic, which lies near Denmark, and had his castle there. The castle lay again on a smaller isle which was contained in the big island, something like a set of small boxes which a pedlar puts into a big one. This islet lay in a big lake. There Serpent-king had constructed his castle in the ground underneath a big hill, and it was beautiful in there and everything shone and sparkled with silver and gold and precious stones, and there were splendid apartments. In these sat Serpent-king, a poor, enchanted prince, and waited for his deliverance.

Now he had been enchanted on account of his vanity, for he had been a most handsome prince who had attracted many charming princesses and queens and empresses with his beauty, but he had not loved any of them, and forsaken one after the other with his fickle heart.

As a punishment he had been transformed, so that he should himself taste how it felt to live without

love, and it is very likely that he will have to creep about as Serpent-king till doomsday. For because he has jilted and betrayed so many poor princesses, the word went out to him: "Be thou the Serpent-king and remain as such and eat the earth and suck poison from roots and herbs; be an object of horror to men and beasts until an innocent young girl will have pity on thee and marry thee and kiss thee without shuddering. But mind, if thou become unfaithful to her, thou wilt be lost for all eternity."

In his transformation Serpent-king had kept the colour of the dress he wore as prince, that is, he wore a green and yellow striped satin coat, and thus he crawls about as a handsome green and yellow striped serpent, with a golden crown on his head, and whistles and hisses like a serpent, but cannot speak. There are only a few days in the year when he may sing, and then he sings with such a sweetly enticing voice that many a poor girl has been tempted to go with him to his castle, yet he has not found one among them who would kiss him. However, those that have gone with him to his castle must remain there until he finds one who will have the heart to love and kiss him. She who does that will become his queen, and all the other girls become her handmaidens. And this is the only way in which they can be released.

Not far from the lake in which lay the islet with

his castle, was a village called Thorstorp. The meadows and common pastures of this village ran down to the lake, and the children would drive their cows thither and tend them there. Among these little shepherds there were two who were very fond of each other, and would always drive their herds together. One was a little girl called Margaret and the other a boy, Jacob. Margaret was fourteen and Jacob sixteen. They were almost grown up, but as innocent as little children and did not know why they were so fond of each other; but it is a fact that they loved each other above anything.

They, as well as the other boys and girls, had often seen the Serpent-king about, and liked him for his beautiful colouring and his sparkling crown. The rogue came often swimming over the lake and curled about the grass, and wreathed his lithe, handsome body round the trees and bushes, when the children looked on and enjoyed his play. But they never ventured quite near to him, for they had an uncanny feeling about him, because he was in serpent shape, although they knew that he would never bite nor hurt any one. Nor had they ever heard his singing, although the tale went that he could sing, and had enticed many a pretty maiden who now sat weeping in his castle. In their hearing he had only hissed like other serpents. He was of course not allowed to sing every day, and was, moreover, much

too cunning to sing before company where it would not have availed him anything, but rather, when his singing-days came round, he would try to surprise a pretty girl by herself, and generally succeeded in luring her away.

One day it happened that as Margaret and Jacob sat under a bush telling each other fairy tales, whilst their cows grazed in front of them, and the other shepherds had driven further inland, there came a message to call Jacob home. He kissed his little Margaret and said: "Please, take heed of my cows until I return, and should the Serpent-king come, don't remain by yourself, but drive your herd towards the others; else he might get you away with his singing, for the rogue is said to have a bewitching voice." She promised readily and laughingly called after the boy:

"Oh, that is only a fable; the Serpent-king can't talk. You may be sure he won't be able to sing me away."

Jacob had hardly gone out of sight, when the Serpent-king came swimming over the lake and curled about the meadow in the merriest circles, and made such pretty figures all the while, raising his head with its golden crown with a bright smile towards Margaret, so that she enjoyed it immensely and quite forgot her promise to Jacob. Serpent-king came nearer and nearer, and crept on to a

green tree in front of Margaret to swing for a few minutes in its boughs. And then he sang with, oh! such a sweet and flexible voice, as if a hundred nightingales were fluting together, and Margaret could not move from the spot, but needs must listen to him as if she were enchanted, although she thought of Jacob's warning. He sang her a song called the Serpent-king's bridal hymn, with which he had already wooed and enchanted many a maiden. His song finished, he smiled at the girl, came down from his tree and curled about her in the grass, singing softly with an insinuating tone: "Come with me! go with me!" And Margaret went with him. She had hardly gone ten paces with him, when she recollected herself and wanted to return, but it was too late! She was now in the Serpent-king's power: he encircled her and carried her across the meadow. In vain did she cry: "Jacob, Jacob, help me, save me!" and called to the other shepherds. None heard her, and Serpent-king did not mind it, and rolled away with her quicker than lightning, and swam across the lake.

When he landed her on the islet he disappeared, but Margaret had fainted in her fright and knew not how she got across the lake, for there was not a drop of water on her clothes and in her curly hair. When she came to she found herself in a beautiful garden, full of splendid trees and gay

flowers; everything was as Serpent-king's song had described it; sweets and comfits and rosy apples hung on the branches, a river of milk flowed through the garden, springs and fountains with wine bubbled and flowed from the hill. But the castle was much finer than the bridal hymn had described it, and, in fact, quite beyond a man's power of description, however much time he might have to think of words to describe and paint it in.

As Margaret came to the castle there were about a hundred maids carrying candles and lamps, waiting for her. They led her into a lofty marble hall which was decorated with silver and gold and precious stones, and they attired her in gold-embroidered garments and put a golden crown on her head, and called her queen and mistress, waited on her and brought her everything she desired. These maids were all young girls in snow-white garments and green wreaths in their hair, but most of them looked sad and sorrowful. And when night came, other maids appeared and led Margaret to a chamber made of pure gold. In it stood a golden bedstead, on which lay blue and pink silk cushions and coverings. And with great show of respect they took her dresses and shoes off, and lifted her gently into the bed. Then they put out all the lights but one, curtseyed in silence and left her.

And after a little while there was a whispering

and soft talking at the door, the door opened and the Serpent-king came in and crept to Margaret's bed, and whispered in soft accents: "Be welcome, my queen-elect! be welcome, my sweet bride! Now I come to thee as bridegroom, sweet Margaret; what I have sung to thee under the green tree, will all come true now. Kiss me and love me! Then I shall be delivered, and thou wilt be a rich and great queen. For alas! it is my sad fate to creep on the ground as Serpent-king, until an innocent child embraces me with affection and changes me back into the prince I have been." And he hissed gently, and looking at her with sparkling eyes he raised his head.

But Margaret screamed out loud: "Away, thou coloured monster! No, no, never—never will I be thy queen, even if thou wert as handsome as thou now art horrid. I will never have another lover than my dear Jacob." And Serpent-king had to bend down and sneak away.

And when daylight came, the same white maidens who had undressed Margaret entered and dressed her again in the regal robes, with the crown on her head, and all the other maids in the hall and in front of the castle bowed before her and waited on her. And she walked about the castle and the garden to look at all the splendour. But she could not walk beyond the garden, for a high crystal wall

surrounded it, and the gates were locked. All day long she saw nothing of the Serpent-king, of which she was glad. But she often thought of her Jacob, and bitterly weeping in the midst of all the grandeur and splendour she would cry out: "O my dear Jacob, if I could only sit in my poor old dress with thee under a green tree, how much happier I should be! Shame on the horrid Serpent-king, how he has tempted and betrayed me by his singing!"

At night-time she was again taken to the gold chamber and put to bed as yesterday. And the Serpent-king came in the same way and crept to her bed and implored her to love him and be his queen. But she was even angrier than yesterday, and drove him away with sharp words. And he had sadly to creep away and sleep again on the cold damp earth. Thus it went on three days longer, and thrice again the Serpent-king tried if the child would love him and marry him. But she kept on calling: "Away, away with thee, hypocritical deceiver. I will never wed any one but Jacob in all eternity."

With the fifth day the trials Margaret had to endure were over, and the sad Serpent-king called the maidens to disrobe her and lead her from the golden chamber, and turning to Margaret he said: "Now thou art no longer the bride-elect of a king,

and canst never become one, even shouldst thou desire it. Such is the order of Fate here, henceforth thou art a poor serving-maid. Therefore, go to the other maids and wait for the high lady who will come to deliver me." He meant of course the maiden who would have pity on him, and kiss him and love him and become queen and mistress of all the others that had scorned his wooing.

So now Margaret wore a white dress and a green wreath and had to stand with the others at the door and in the big hall and wait. They were all young children, the waitresses and the chambermaids, between fourteen and seventeen years of age, more than one-hundred-and-fifty in number and all pretty and gentle. Every one of them the Serpent-king had tempted the same as Margaret, but not one had loved him and listened to his entreaties. Of course these pretty children were nicely dressed, had food and drink and all necessaries in plenty, had no trouble or work, could sing and dance all day long if they liked, or run about in the beautiful garden to pick flowers, or listen to the merry birds singing in the trees, but in all this ease and splendour they found time hang heavy on their hands and most of them were full of sadness and longing. Some longed for father and mother, others for brother or sister, others for their sweethearts. Margaret longed for nobody but her dear Jacob,

from whom she had allowed herself to be enticed away.

Jacob had returned soon after Margaret had been kidnapped by the Serpent-king; he looked for her in the wood and on the pastures among the other shepherds. He found her nowhere and the shepherds surmised that she had been caught by the Serpent-king. Also a man, who was ploughing by the lake, said he had heard some plaintive sounds in the distance, and they might have proceeded from the kidnapped Margaret. Little Jacob was deeply grieved, and every day, aye every hour, he thought of Margaret and looked across to the islet near which no man would venture; for the legend said, "that he who ventured without a safe pledge into the domain of the Serpent-king was doomed to sudden death." So Jacob looked across sadly and longingly and would sigh: "O Margaret, why did you not stop your ears when the lying, hypocritical knave sang?" And sometimes he would call out: "Keep firm, Margaret! Do not become queen, Margaret." This was surely not necessary, for Margaret was true as gold. But his greatest trial was when he saw the Serpent-king in his striped coat glide about the meadows and could not punish him.

Thus Jacob had spent two years in grief and sorrow, when an old shepherd gave him some

counsel how one could get the mastery over enchanted princes and princesses and even of witches and sorcerers, let them be ever so bad and wicked. Jacob went at once into the wood and cut a big thorny stick from a buckthorn, which is also called crossthorn, and on this stick he carved a cross. Next time when the Serpent-king was gliding and meandering over the meadow, Jacob took courage and rushed at him so that he wondered what the peasant-boy wanted, for he was rather used to the people running away from him instead of rushing at him. And he thought by himself, "I will soon drive this clodhopper off and make his hair stand on end." With that he raised himself up and darted sparks from his fiery eyes, hissed his tongue out and his crown got red with anger, whilst he rounded his back as if he would jump at Jacob. But Jacob met him boldly and said: "Come along, thou wicked king! Come along! I am not afraid of thee, I will teach thee manners." And as the monster jumped at him, he just touched him with his stick, when, oh wonder! Serpent-king curled and wound round the thorn as a tendril will curl round a staff. Jacob was delighted and called out joyfully, "Hold tight, my prince, I will try a trick." So he took the stick and swung it thrice round about his head, so that it whizzed through the air, and Serpent-king clung tight, as if he had grown

fast to it. "The stick is taut and the shepherd is a clever fellow," said Jacob and asked: "Serpent-king wilt thou give back my little Margaret? If so, I will let thee loose at once and thou mayst go where thou listest?" Serpent-king shook his head. Jacob went on: "Then fare thee well for to-day, my prince! Thou mayst shiver here through the night and reflect till to-morrow." So he took the stick and thrust it into the ground, with Serpent-king suspended round it, which looked very funny. Next morning Jacob returned to the charge: "Serpent-king, wilt thou give me back my little Margaret?" Serpent-king shook his head more determined than yesterday. So Jacob grew wrathful and went to cut a strong hazel-switch, saying, "I must inquire what thy smart coat will say to the joke; perhaps that will yield a better answer." With that Jacob gave him a good thrashing so that he wriggled like a worm and hissed his tongue out; but he did not nod his head so as to say, "I will give Margaret up.

When Jacob thought that he had beaten him enough for that once, he went off, saying, "Enough for to-day; reflect till to-morrow." The third day Jacob returned and said, "Serpent-king, yesterday and the day before I asked thee, wilt thou return my Margaret? To-day you will not come off so cheaply; to-day the question is, wilt thou give up my Margaret and all the poor maidens that are

confined in thy castle and garden?" Serpent-king shook his head twice. Then Jacob took his hazel-switch and gave him an unmerciful thrashing, so that he felt almost sorry for him, yet Serpent-king would not nod his head to acquiesce. Thereupon Jacob: "This is the last time that I will have patience. Thou mayst rot on the thorn if thou wilt not give in, for unless I release thee, thou canst not come off. So for the last time I say: consider it till to-morrow."

When Jacob returned on the fourth day, he asked: "Serpent-king, wilt thou give free my Margaret and the other maidens, so that they may go away unhampered from thy domain, and wilt thou let them take away as much as they can carry in their hands?"

By this time Serpent-king had been conquered, for it had been freezing in the night and he was faint with hunger and thirst; besides he saw that Jacob brought a fresh stick in his hand, twice as thick as the first; so that he did not run the risk but nodded his head thrice for "Yes." Then Jacob said, "Swear to me by thy salvation and by the hope thou hast of being one day delivered out of this ugly striped skin." And Serpent-king nodded thrice his acquiescence.

After this Jacob took his knife and cut the cross smoothly off the thorn stick, round which Serpent-

king was suspended, and directly he had done so, the Serpent-king was gliding off the stick and curling about on the grass as if to stretch his frozen and bruised body and make it supple. Then he crept to Jacob's feet, raised himself up and bent down again, just as a clever and docile horse first raises and then lowers himself that his rider may mount. Jacob understood the hint, for he knew that neither bridge nor boat went to the islet; he crossed himself, repeated a prayer, and saying: "In the name of God!" he got on his strangely coloured steed. In a wink Serpent-king had whisked him off over the meadow and across the lake. There he jumped at the iron gates, which none but he could open and they unlocked themselves and both went in. Jacob found his Margaret; and who could describe their delight? But the joy became universal in the castle and garden, and rung and sounded to heaven from every voice, when Jacob proclaimed that all the imprisoned maidens were to be free and to go out with himself and Margaret from their captivity. And he told the pretty girls to make haste and pack up what each of them wanted to carry away, for in two hours they were to leave the isle. So they ran hither and thither and were very busy; but Serpent-king was sad and looked on with tears in his eyes. When Jacob saw him so mournful, he was sorry for his fate, that he should

have to creep about in a serpent's coat for the sake of his former guilt and sin, until an innocent young girl would have pity on him and love him. So he consoled him, saying: "Do not be sorry, Serpent-king, that these are leaving thee to go home, for not one of them can deliver thee now. And what matters it to thee, that they clear thy castle out? Thou hast still enough and to spare of treasure and splendour. I pity thee and will give thee good advice; do not despise it. Drop thy proud and defiant ways and do not be so cunning. For with thy cunning and stratagems thou wilt not gain anything, as thou must have seen thyself ere this; and although thou art named Serpent-king, I am sure thou hast not been transformed to be a master but to be a servant, to serve in penitence for thy sins, so that thou mayest obtain mercy from the Lord of Kings. Thy wearing of the serpent's coat means that thou shalt be humble and obedient and then thou mayst find love and deliverance. But a proud and cunning heart without humility can have no love in it, and how canst thou imagine that an innocent young heart shall embrace the Serpent-king if it does not perceive love and piety in him?" Thus Jacob talked quite touchingly to the Serpent-king, and when Margaret and the maidens were ready he called to him to open the gates. Serpent-king knocked with his head against the iron gate

and it opened and they all went out together. When they came to the lake, there was neither bridge nor boat, and Jacob said: "Make haste, Serpent-king, and get the bridge ready!"

Serpent-king could not help himself, he must try another stratagem, so he stretched a fine shiny cobweb like an arch from one bank to the other, and said smilingly, "I can't help you. This is the only bridge by which one can get from the isle across the lake."

He was hoping in his heart nobody would step on to it for fear of drowning, and that by this ruse he would keep all the maidens as servants and Jacob into the bargain. But Jacob, who had heard of such tricks before, took his Margaret by the hand, and saying: "In the name of God, follow me!" he jumped on to the cobweb bridge with Margaret and instantly it became the most beautiful wide marble bridge, and he and Margaret with the other maidens got safely across. As soon as they were on land the bridge disappeared and not a trace of it was left, not even a cobweb. And they were all delighted and astonished and saw and heard nothing but the low whining of the Serpent-king who was weeping at his loss.

Jacob ran across the meadows with his Margaret and the white-clad maidens he had released, and with singing and exultation they came into Thor-

storp. And everybody stood astonished at the story of his adventure, and they called it "Jacob's exodus," and told it everywhere.

But the pretty maidens thanked him and Margaret and said good-bye to go to their homes, and as they had brought gold and silver and valuable dresses from the Serpent-king's castle, they soon found young and handsome lovers, and married. Also Jacob and Margaret soon celebrated their marriage, but they did not remain in Thorstorp, for the neighbourhood of Serpent-king's isle seemed too dangerous; so they moved further inland and bought a handsome estate for the gold they had brought with them and lived happily ever after.

But they never heard anything more of the Serpent-king, and whether he got delivered at last.

THE BURNING MONEY

One autumn night, or rather towards morning, three farmers were riding home from a wedding feast in Lanken. They were neighbours, and rode the same way. When they came out of the forest they saw by a little bush in a field a big fire which now looked like glowing embers, and then would burst up in bright flame. They stopped and wondered what it might be, and came to the conclusion that cowboys or shepherds had lit it to protect themselves from the sharp night air. But then they recollected that it was towards the end of November, and that in this season there are usually no herdsmen and cowboys in the fields. The youngest of them, a daring fellow, said: "Listen, neighbours, there burns our luck! Be quiet, let us ride there and each fill his pocket with coals, then we have enough fortune for life, and may ask the earl for how much he will sell us his castle."

But the oldest of them said: "God forbid that I should ride out of my way so late! I know the

huntsman well who cries: 'Hoho! Halloa! keep the middle-road!' "

Neither was the second farmer inclined to ride there, but the youngest rode to the place. Notwithstanding his horse snorting and rearing he brought him close to the fire, jumped off and filled his pockets with the embers. The two others were seized with fright and rode off at a mad gallop, and he raced after them and caught them up near Vilmnitz. They rode another bit of the way together and arrived silently at their village, and too breathless to utter a word.

The horses were white with foam, they had trembled and raced so fast. The farmer, too, had almost felt as if the evil fiend had already caught him by the hair. The bright day broke when they arrived at home. Of course they wanted to see what treasure the youngest one had got, for his pockets hung heavily down as if full of weighty ducats. He puts his hand inside, but alas! he brought out nothing but dead mice. The two others laughed and said: "There, you've got a nice devil's Christmas box! that really was not worth the fright we suffered." But they shuddered at the mice and promised their fellow that they would tell nobody a single word of this adventure.

You would have thought that the dead mice had cured the farmer's desire for gold; but he kept on

pondering over the glowing embers, and said to himself: "If you had only had a few grains of salt in your pocket and sprinkled it quickly on the coals the treasure would have had to remain, and could not have slipped away." And so he rode out again on the following night, with great fear and shuddering, yet he could not stay at home, for the greed of money was more powerful than his fear. And again he saw it burn in the same place, but there was nothing to show in the day-time, and green grass grew on it. So he rode to the fire, sprinkled the salt over it, raked up the coals to fill his pockets, and raced home at a mad gallop, taking care not to utter a sound, nor to meet with anybody, for that would have broken the charm. And yet he had nothing but coals in his pockets, and a few shillings which were blackened by the coals. Then he was as happy as a king, as if this were the beginning of fortune and the earnest money which the spirits had given him. Probably he had a few shillings loose in his pocket ere he left home, but these miserable shillings left the poor farmer, who was formerly an industrious, respectable man, no rest or peace; every night he rode out, and rode his best horses to death with the racing. And nobody could see that he found a treasure trove; on the contrary his property went backwards from year to year, and at last he disappeared altogether on one of his nightly rides.

And nobody ever saw him or his horse again, only his hat was found in the Schmachter lake. Probably the Evil One enticed him as Will-o'-the-Wisp into the lake, for such arts he uses against those who meddle with him and seek him.

WOLF AND NIGHTINGALE

A SWEDISH STORY

In ancient times when everything was different in the world to what it is nowadays, there lived in the north a king who had the loveliest, handsomest queen that could be found far and wide. This queen had presented the king with two children, a son and a daughter; but soon after she died, in the flower of her youth. The king was exceedingly sad and sorrowful, and though years went by, he would not hear of a second marriage. Yet a man's mind is given to change, and after a considerable time, when the children had grown fairly big, he took another wife. But the new queen became a bad mother for the prince and his sister. These two were handsome and of goodly figure, and so kind to everybody that the people used to cheer whenever they appeared. This annoyed the queen extremely, and she conceived evil designs against the poor children, yet she durst not show this on any account before the king and the people, but

hid her spite under the outward show of friendliness.

Meanwhile the little princess had grown into a beautiful maiden, and from all the neighbouring countries came suitors—dukes, princes, and kings' sons—who demanded her hand in marriage. The one she liked best was the prince from a country to the east, an exceedingly handsome and well-made gentleman. They soon celebrated a merry betrothal at the royal court, and the wedding was to follow very shortly. In the whole country there was joy at the coming wedding of the Princess Aurora; only one person was displeased, and said to herself, "This maiden puts me quite in the shade. The people adore her and clamour for her, whilst they take no notice of me, who am their queen; they shall soon know it!"

Thereupon she reflected day and night as to how she could ruin the lovely Aurora and her brother, and get them for ever out of the way. But she did not succeed, for the royal children were well guarded by day and by night, because all the servants were devoted to them. So she had no chance, and the wedding-day came round. Then she remembered her wicked witchcraft, and, with great show of kindness, she came to her stepchildren and begged them to step out into the garden with her, as she wanted to show them a beautiful rose.

Nobody suspected any harm, for it was bright noontime, and in the banqueting-hall of the castle the guests were assembled, and the prince from the eastern country stood beside the throne, for the wedding ceremony was to take place presently. The evil queen meanwhile led the prince and the princess into the most lonely part of the garden under a dark yew-tree. She broke a branch of that and touched their shoulders with it whilst she softly murmured some incantation. And in an instant the two were changed into animals. The young prince, in the shape of an ugly savage wolf, jumped over the wall into the wild forest; and the poor princess flew, as an unpretentious little grey bird, like the nightingale, on a tree and sang a sad lament.

The queen ran back to the castle screaming, and behaved as if she were in despair; and, with torn dress and dishevelled hair, she dropped fainting at the king's feet, so that he bade her attendants take her away. When she recovered at last, she seemed very sad, and kept lamenting: "O, you poor dear Aurora, what a sad wedding-day you have had! and O, unhappy prince, what has become of you?" And then she related that a troop of brigands had suddenly burst upon them and had torn the prince and princess from her side and carried them off. She pretended the brigands had nearly killed her

and then left her on the ground; and she showed a big bruise, which she had given herself purposely by knocking against a tree, and played her part so well that nobody suspected her deceit.

The king called all his knights and vassals to horse, and sent all his esquires riding after the supposed robbers, but however carefully they searched through the forest, on the cliffs, and in the glens for many miles around, they found not the least trace of the lost royal children. For weeks and months the king continued to send out messengers, but they all came home without bringing him any hope. Then he grieved so much that his hair turned as white as snow and he died. At his death he gave the whole kingdom over to the queen, and admonished his subjects to be loyal and obedient to her.

Four years went by. The queen ruled with great severity over the land, and hired foreign soldiers and mercenaries, for whom she sent beyond the sea, to guard her. That made her only the more disliked among the people, and if fear had not restrained them they would not have allowed the wicked queen to remain on the throne.

The poor enchanted children fared badly and sadly meanwhile. The handsome young prince had run in the shape of a brown wolf into the forest, and he was compelled to behave as one; he had to

run through desert and uncultivated places by day and night, and sneak away like a thief, for the wolfish cowardice was in him. Like other wolves, he had to feed on all sorts of prey, game, and birds, and find his rest between hard, cold stones. That was not exactly a princely existence, and very different to what he had been used to before this misery. Yet although his reason had become darkened since he lived in a wolf's skin, he had no desire for human prey, excepting the wicked woman who had enchanted him, and he felt occasionally urged to go near the castle and park, as if there was some extra good game for him there. It was only a dark instinct that urged him, for he had no distinct recollection of the past, and whenever he had come within a thousand paces of the castle, a shudder would creep over him, and he felt bound to race back into the wilderness. But that was owing to the queen's witchcraft, which kept him at that distance, but had no power beyond it. Yet she caused a great many fox and wolf hunts to be held in the forest; but however often the dogs were at his heels, and the shots of the huntsmen whistled past his head, he always escaped from all danger. He would for awhile turn aside into the darkest thicket, and when the noise of the hunt and the sound of horns had passed, he would come back into the wood nearest the park and bask in the sun in the

places where he had rested as a boy and a youth.

Princess Aurora, who had been changed into a little singing-bird, had flown up into the green tree-tops. Under the light feathery dress her soul had not got darkened like that of her brother. She remembered still a good deal about herself, about people and things, only she could not talk. But she sang in her wood solitude, oh! so beautifully that all the little birds would listen, the tree-tops would gently rustle, and the flowers nod their little heads with delight. And men would have had their attention drawn to the especially lovely song of the little grey bird if the queen had not found out some means to prevent it. She pretended to be so ill that not only the croaking and screaming of ravens and crows was unbearable to her, but also that her nerves could not stand the merry singing and twittering of the little forest-birds. And to make the people believe it, she had several times dropped down in a faint when the little birds in the branches above her started their tune. Of course, she intended to have the little bird killed as well as the wolf. And at the bidding of the all-powerful queen, many a little bird which had sung lustily was made dumb for ever; not even the robins and the wrens were spared, and in the capital as well as in its neighbourhood no winged creatures remained alive. And as

it was now very dull and quiet in the wood, nobody liked to walk there any longer. Thus it happened that nobody could listen to the marvellous sounds of the nightingale except here and there a lonely huntsman, and he would not say anything so as to avoid being punished for having spared the little bird; for it goes against the nature of honest sportsmen to shoot at a harmless singing-bird, only they had to pop off their guns in the forest so that the sound could be heard in the palace. And many birds flew away for that reason and returned no more. But the nightingale, whom God protected in all danger, could not bear to leave the forest of her home; and although witchcraft kept her at the distance of a thousand paces from the paternal castle, she always returned thus far when the noise of the hunting and shooting was over. It pleased her to sing her sadly sweet songs to the brook, the stars, and the flowers, and she was only unhappy when the autumn came and she had to fly to foreign lands. But was she not glad when the spring came and she could return to the fields and places where she had played as a child, where she had wound wreaths as a maiden among her companions and led the dance with them! She liked best to dwell in the top of a green oak-tree, at whose roots a clear brook flowed. In her happy days she had often sat there with her lover, and here she now occasionally saw the

wolf, who would stretch himself quietly under the tree and listen to her singing as if he understood it. She did not know that this was her brother, but she got fond of the animal, and was sorry to think he was but an ugly shaggy wolf and could not flutter from branch to branch like herself.

However, there was one man who sometimes listened to the touching singing of the nightingale in the lonely forest, and that was the handsome prince her whilom bridegroom-elect. The old king had loved this prince above all other men, on account of his virtue and valour, and on his death-bed he had recommended him to the queen as a counsellor and helper in important business of State. Thus, out of love to the late king, the prince remained after his death with the queen. He soon became aware, however, that the queen hated him and desired to put him out of the way, and therefore he left her court abruptly and returned to his father-land. This vexed the queen exceedingly; she had him declared a traitor and outlaw, and caused him to be pursued, promising that whoever brought her his head should be royally rewarded. Yet in his father's kingdom the prince had no rest, for the grief over his lost bride never left him. Aye, it happened that at a certain time every year he disappeared mysteriously, and nobody knew his whereabouts. He would then put on very plain

armour, saddle his horse, and ride away so suddenly that nobody observed which way he took. Then he would ride to the land of the queen, to the well-known places where he had walked with his bride-elect. And that place by the brook, among the dark green oaks, was his favourite resort. Hidden from the sight of the queen's spies, he would, in the close thicket, lament over his lost one, and the little nightingale would ever sing there to comfort his heart. And the two, the sad man and the little birdie, were fond of each other; they knew not why, for when the prince had ridden back to his father's kingdom, a great yearning for him seized the nightingale, and the prince in his turn would longingly think of her sadly sweet song until he prepared for another ride to the oak-tree, which happened always about the anniversary of that fatal wedding-day when the princess had disappeared.

Many a year went by in this fashion. The queen had the animals hunted and the birds shot, and was as cruel to her subjects as to the animals of the forest. She fancied herself almighty, and thought her power and glory would never come to an end.

But a secret fear kept her from walking in the park and adjoining forest. One day she gave a great banquet in the castle, to which all neighbouring princes and princesses and the great nobles of the land were bidden. For the afternoon she had

ordered a great wolf-hunt in the forest, and all the princes begged the queen to ride with them to the hunt. At first she declined under various pretexts, but in the end she allowed herself to be talked over. She went on a high chariot, with three well-armed knights sitting beside her and many hundred armed warriors riding in the front, by the side, and behind her chariot, and an endless row of chariots with the noble lords and ladies followed her. But the wolf was ever in her mind; only she thought, "Let him come; this brave escort will soon finish him off." Thus Providence blinds even the cleverest and most cunning sinners when the time for their punishment has come; for there was one thing she utterly forgot—all the other masters of her black art had warned her of the sixth year after the disappearance of the royal children.

It was a bright and lovely spring day, and with music and drums they rode into the forest. The horses neighed, the armour clanked, the spears and swords sparkled in the sun; but the grandest sight of all was the queen in her splendid robes and her jewels glistening as she sat enthroned on her chariot. And the huntsmen with their shouting and the leashes of hounds came to meet them. And a big bear rushed out of the thicket and a strong boar burst through the throng of hunters, but without fear they attacked the wild beasts and killed them.

But shortly after they had a fright, for a terrible wolf tore out of the thicket with such dreadful howls that men, dogs, and horsemen tried to escape from him. And he flew, as an arrow shot from a bow, through the rows of armed men, who all forgot that they carried swords and spears or bows, for the monster looked too awful and enraged. The queen saw him make for her chariot, and cried for help, but there was no one to help her. Most of her escort ran away themselves, and the others cried in a cowardly fashion. And without hindrance the wolf jumped up to her, tore the proud woman down, and buried his teeth in her; and nobody prevented him! Yet, oh miracle! when at last they recovered their nerve and wanted to attack the wolf, he had disappeared, and in the place of the bloodthirsty monster there stood a beautiful armed youth. The men all stared at the marvellous sight; some even drew their swords as if he were a second monster to be attacked, when all of a sudden the old Chancellor of the kingdom, who was in one of the following chariots, rushed forward and called out, "Beware, men! You know not whom you are going to attack!" And he knelt down at the feet of the beautiful youth, and said, "Be welcome, you noble branch of a noble tree! Rejoice, O folk; your lawful prince has returned, and is now your king!" On hearing these words, many nobles and men ran

forward and recognised the prince, and did him homage as their lord; and in their joy they thought no more of the dead queen, whom they never loved.

The young king bade them all follow him for his entry into his paternal castle. He stopped the hunt at once, and the cornets and trumpets sounded a cheery march to celebrate his entry. And as he saw the hall of his castle, tears came into his eyes, for he remembered his misery and the terrible trial which had lain on him. And his mind became enlightened, so that he could explain to the Chancellor and the nobles what had happened to him, and how only the heart's blood of the old witch who had been his stepmother and their queen was able to change him back into a human being.

Yet the more he reflected about his transformation the sadder he became, for it weighed on him what might have become of his darling sister, and whether she too was straying about in the guise of an animal. He inquired all round, but nobody could give him any news of her. Then he saddened again, but God turned his sadness into joy very soon. You must know that, just at the time of the great wolf-hunt, the prince from the country to the east happened to be in the forest, sitting under his dear green oak-tree, in which the nightingale was singing. When the noise of the hunt had subsided, the forest had become quiet, and the sun had set, the prince

moistened the ground with his silent tears and felt sadder than ever at heart. And it seemed to him that also the nightingale's song was different, and sounded full of meaning, almost like a human voice; for a strange feeling had come over her from the moment when the wolf had drunk the heart-blood of the witch. And a strange shudder crept over the prince, and he called up into the branches:

"Birdie, birdie; tell me, canst talk?"

And the nightingale answered "Yes," and was herself startled at being able to talk, and wept with joy. Then she opened her little beak and quite distinctly told the prince of her own and her brother's transformation, and that the latter was now delivered from witchcraft; for all this had suddenly been revealed to her, only she knew not to whom she was telling it. The prince rejoiced in his heart, and called the little bird down in most endearing and seductive terms, and implored her to come with him to his flower-garden, where neither falcon nor hunter should harm her. But birdie would not hear of it, and praised her splendid liberty and her green oak-tree. But as she fluttered round the man and sang without any fear or distrust, he caught her, mounted his horse in haste, and carried her in his hand to an inn, where he had put up, not far from the town. He immediately went upstairs to his room and locked the door.

When the nightingale saw that, she was deeply grieved, and begged and sang and implored him to let her fly out of the musty room into the merry wood. But he would not hear of it. Then she tried to frighten him by changing herself first into a lion, then a tiger, then a serpent, a scorpion, a tarantula, and at last into a horrid dragon, who flew at him with poisonous tongue. Yet the prince showed and felt no fear, and in the end birdie had to turn into a bird again. The prince stood lost in thought, for he remembered an old tradition. Quickly he pulled his pocket-knife out and cut deep into his left hand, and as his heart's blood came out in big drops he took some and smeared it on the bird's head and breast. Hardly had he finished when the miracle was done; the poor little grey nightingale was transformed into the handsomest maiden, the lovely princess Aurora. She at once recognised her bridegroom-elect, and you may imagine how rejoiced and delighted they were in their hearts. But they did not tarry long at the inn, but drove straight to the castle and sent in word to the young king that two foreign princes desired him to give them hospitality. And as the king stepped into the hall he recognised his lost darling sister and his dear friend the prince from the kingdom to the east. And he rejoiced beyond measure, and all the nation with him.

In a few days they celebrated the wedding, and a splendid wedding it was, with dancing, feasting, and tournaments.

The princess begged and readily obtained from her brother, as a wedding-gift, the forest in which she had flown about so many years. Therein she had a proud royal castle erected, and the green leafy oak stood in the middle of her park and continued to grow many a long year, so that children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren played under its shade. But Princess Aurora, with her husband, lived to a happy old age, just as her brother ruled as a great and pious king.

Good-night!

SNOWFLAKE

SNOWFLAKE was a poor enchanted princess flying about the world, and seeking love. She was a beautiful child, snow-white and pretty of complexion, with eyes of heavenly blue and fair curls, and her father was a powerful king in India. When she was six years old her mother died and she got a wicked stepmother. The latter brought two daughters to the king, but they were as ugly as crows, and Snowflake looked all the lovelier by their side. This vexed the queen, who was an evil witch, and she pondered how she might ruin the pretty child who was now twelve years of age. But she had to be careful before the king, who loved Snowflake more than his own life. She might have killed the child with poison or steel, yet it seemed too risky; it might be betrayed, and she thought it safer to mar her by sorcery. One day as she bathed her and put her a clean dress on, she anointed her with some salve, moved round her very quickly, kissed and embraced her, and suddenly

turned into a black fox, who licked the frightened child all over with her quick tongue, and murmured the following words :

Snowflake, Snowflake, fly away,
Fly through the wide world away;
Cold to-day, to-morrow warm,
Never rest in lover's arm ;
But who with unchanging faith
Five years follows thee apace.

And instantly the pretty princess was turned to a snowflake ; the old witch opened the window and snowflake was wafted out into the air. This happened on a cold winter's day, and the wicked stepmother called mockingly after her : "Now you may fly and shiver until eternity ! It is more likely that I should become young as you, than that you will find a man who will be faithful to you for five years even in his innermost thoughts."

And the sweet little snowflake flew about in the cold wind with other snowflakes, and was cold and shivered as they, and made a plaintive noise like them. But she knew why she grieved, for she had retained her sweet warm soul, although she was outwardly so miserably changed, and even in this guise she had to fly about the wide and barren world to look for love. And the saddest things that used to happen to her were, when she chanced to alight on a pretty face, or cling to a warm breast or a hot

little hand, and was shaken off unkindly or blown off, as if she brought only an unpleasant sensation of cold like other snowflakes. Thus whenever she had hoped that she might rest a little in somebody's love, she had to fly off again all through the long dreary winter, and she lay on the cold breast of frozen mountains and stones and the icy lakes, and wept and sighed for love, which she found nowhere. And as the weather grew warmer and the first little flowers raised their tiny heads and the first birds sang again, she was not allowed to remain in the beautiful air, but had to go into darkness, for old winter caught her with the other snowflakes and locked them all up in the depths and caverns of the old mountains, to lie there until he should return to the earth.

There Snowflake lay through beautiful spring and warm summer and autumn, and spent her time in longing and sadness—in longing, for all her memories had been retained ; in sadness, for she doubted that she should ever meet with love. Then she whispered many melancholy sounds and uttered many sorrowful songs, which only the silent rock walls heard, and which were like an echo of her own fate. And at last winter returned and opened his gates and drove the light-winged snowflakes out into the world. And she flew among the others, but again in search of love ; and light winds came

and carried her along over continents and oceans. Thus she alighted in her travels on the top of cold Caucasus, and sighed and groaned pitifully in the bitter feeling of abandonment among her cold and loveless mates. And as she was here sick to death with yearning, she heard from below her in a deep ravine such painful sighs and groans, that they might have moved a stone, and instantly she flew to the spot whence the voice proceeded. There she saw underneath a leafless tree, through whose branches the winter wind howled and whistled, a youth of stately bearing and beautiful face. His coat of mail, helmet and shield lay about on the snow, his noble horse stood aside and tried to paw up the snow for some grass, his spurs lay broken by his side, his coat was torn, and in his right hand he flourished a shining sword. His hair hung unkempt about his face, and his eyes looked troubled, like some one staring into vacancy, and miserable wails fell from his lips.

In silent anguish Snowflake fell down at his feet and thought: "Alas! if the man is as sorrowful as I am, and unhappy through longing for love, he may crush me here in his despair, so that I lose life and consciousness! Such death would be sweet to me." But thus ran his wail:

"Welcome, ye places of sorrow! ye barren rocks and bare trees, you rough and dark ravine, and ye

winds which rush along with the snowdrift; ye are my funeral procession, the dirge I like. Gone is my strength in which I defied the world; faded is the beauty which women and maidens have praised; my poor sick soul, starved and bled to death, here thou shalt find the rest and peace which the cold earth could not give thee. O cold earth, soon thou wilt no longer be cold, but a quiet, cool bed to the senseless dead. Come, my faithful sword, true friend and protector in many a battle and adventure! render me thy last service; pierce this heart which is already so much cut up, this poor heart to whom were given all goods and treasures, save the highest treasure, love. Oh, if this ugly thorn could love, I would embrace it, press it to my breast; aye, into my breast that it should bleed from its many thorns, and yet I would shout with exultation; yes, this cold snow I would pick up if its cold would warm to love, would fill my hands with it and carry it away as my most precious possession, and heaven and earth should hear my exulting cry, 'I am being loved! I am happy!' Even an otter or a toad I would embrace and call it my darling love, if it would love me. But no! no! never, never. Come then, my sword! come on, death! thou deliverer from all pain, and make an end to this miserable farce." And he prepared to pierce his heart.

And like lightning a thought flew through the tender soul of Snowflake. She raised herself and settled on the hand that was going to heave its last stroke. He felt a warm sensation as of something burning. And he looked into his hand and saw a snowflake lying there in its beautiful fragile form. And Snowflake, who was herself looking for a loving soul, grew warmer and burnt his hand. The man dropped his sword in wonder and looked at her, as if he understood the tender child which lay on his hand no heavier than a breath of air, and with delight he exclaimed, "What, is it she? Gracious Heaven! now I will live! And were it for eternity, I shall not find time too long!" Hearing these words, Snowflake melted with delight and became a glittering drop which lay clear in his hand, like the heavenly blue eye of an angel, and seemed to implore his love.

And the man saw the sparkling drop, which glowed warm in his hand, and ran towards a tree that had still a few green leaves, picked off the freshest leaf and poured the drop into it and hid it carefully in his bosom. Then he put on his armour, swung himself on his horse, and rode at a flying pace to the nearest town.

Now I have to tell you who this man was, whence he came, and what had happened to him.

He was a noble prince, the son of the king of

Arabia, the country where gold grows, and myrrh and other precious herbs. He had been born under the most miraculous circumstances, and with such incomparable beauty, that the king his father and the wise men of the land paid great attention to him from his earliest childhood; for they thought that his life would also be full of unusual events. They cast the lot, they inquired from the stars about him, they toyed with riddles and soothsayers; but the lot would not fall, the stars would not speak, the soothsayers could not explain; they all remained in the dark about his future. But they did not remain in the dark about his disposition. The prince showed from infancy an unusual tenderness and softness of heart. In his big black eyes lay so much sorrow and yearning that the old king was frightened, and would say to his wise men and counsellors: "The boy will have to be brought up severely, and must always be among crowds of men, else he might become a dreamer or star-gazer, who make the worst kings; or love, the most pernicious and dangerous of all passions, might drive him altogether from the path of virtue." All the actions and movements of the prince were as gentle and tender as his little heart, and his voice sounded softly and lovely, like a summer's breeze when it plays among the spring flowers. Therefore he was named Prince Bisbiglio, which means lisping sounds.

from Rügen

When Prince Bisbiglio was four years of age, his father did not put him under the care of a wise man in the desert, as is the custom with Oriental kings, who fancy that in the noise of the capital and the glamour and luxury of court-life a man could hardly be brought up to, and exercised in, austere virtue; but he sent him to an old tried warrior, who, with an ever-ready armed troop, was always on the watch guarding the frontiers. There he was to be brought up a warrior, see nothing but horses and arms, hear only the clang of arms, trumpets, and clarions; know no other bed but the hard soldier's camp-bed, and no other field and pasture but the hard-trodden wrestling-places and drilling-places whereon men and horses did not allow the grass to grow.

He was to learn no arts, for the king feared arts might make him soft and disgust him with hard work, which is the best art for him who is to rule as a man over other men. In this camp the prince lived for ten years, and became a perfect warrior, practised in all arms, a master in the managing of horses and throwing of spears; besides, he was slim and warrior-like in appearance, and strong for his age. In his fifteenth year his father bade him return to court, and rejoiced at the sight of the handsome youth and his wise bringing-up. But

what availed him the latter? Whatever nature has sown in a man must shoot forth sooner or later; it is indelible like life, and can only be exterminated with life. Prince Bisbiglio had for ten years seen nothing but rough and iron men, masters of war and lances, bow and sword; he had gazed into no stars, listened not to nightingales, nor turned in merry dance. And yet there were so many stars and nightingales and dances in his soul that they would not be suppressed by all the iron noise and exercise. No; they became all the more alive in him the more they were repressed into the innermost recesses of his mind.

Bisbiglio was a child of longing and love, and amidst the hard and rude warriors his heart had unconsciously yearned for love, he had absorbed it out of every sign and glance, out of every song and story, however differently they sounded, even out of every word spoken carelessly before him; his own heart had early opened him this heaven with its stars and nightingales. Thus powerful is inborn impulse.

Bisbiglio was in the flower of his age, the time when imagination is liveliest; he longed to get out into the beautiful wide world, to explore its beauty and splendour, and he went to the king, his father, and begged to be allowed to go out as other princes do, that he might make a name through princely

and knightly adventures. The king was pleased to allow it, for, thought he, he is a firm youth, grown up among iron and steel; the cooing love-doves and the flattering sirens of tenderness will not tempt him from the path of heroic deeds. But Bisbiglio's purpose differed from that of his father; he wanted no adventures but those of love, desired to ride out after love and to search for it in the wide world, until he should find that love, the highest and rarest possession which had always been in his thoughts. For in the camp on Euphrates he had often heard the tale of the Persian prince Sospirio, who had wandered over the world for twenty years in search of love, and who at last found it in the shape of a snow-white briar-rose, flowering secretly and lonely in the midst of the African desert. This was the high mysterious star towards which Bisbiglio gazed early in life, this was the sweet nightingale which sang to him even among the neighing of war-horses and the clashing of spear and shield; he had dreamt night and day of marvellous adventures, of combats with giants and dragons, of transformations and enchantments—not as knightly and royal occupations and games, no—all for love, and again for love. So he had gone out into the world, and now for four years, with pain and longing, he had been looking for love and had not found it.

Of adventures he had had enough, of combats he had had plenty, of beautiful women and maidens, princesses and queens, Amazons and sirens, of marvellous flowers and birds he had seen abundance; some he had liked and been fond of, but alas! he had not found love—the heavenly, glowing, feeling, living, singing, exulting love. He had attracted all that was beautiful and lovely, as a magnet attracts the iron; he had also been tenderly loved, but alas! after a few days, aye, sometimes after a few minutes, he had felt something was lacking, and had to ride on to find the true love he was in search of. This had again occurred a month ago. In Damascus he had seen the king's daughter, beautiful as a rose, slender as a lily, lovely as a violet in the hidden valley, and she had grown very fond of him, as he of her. And yet the unfortunate prince was compelled to ride onward, feeling hers was not the love he was searching for; and now he despaired of ever finding it, and had ridden up to the wild snow-covered mountains, to the highest top of Mount Caucasus, and there sweet Snowflake had preserved his life.

When the prince came into the town, he stopped at the house of a jeweller, bought a tiny phial cut out of pure diamond, poured his sparkling drop, his snowflake, into it, sealed it up and hid it in his bosom, saying: "Thou wilt surely become a princess some day like the briar-rose in the desert, and even if thou

never become one, I shall be the happiest of men as long as I feel thy flame."

For you must know, he had wrought a little bag that lay close to his heart, into which he put his phial, and he felt in his heart a gentle pricking, which he would not have missed for the world. So he rode on merrily through the wood. He had a foreboding that the drop would be transformed and could not remain thus; he also knew that he must not ride home before the fate was fulfilled. And Snowflake was as a tiny drop in the diamond phial, and was overjoyed, for she felt herself beloved; yet she often trembled at the thought—five years! how long, five years! Will he stand the test? It is sweet to rest on his heart, but how much sweeter would it be to embrace him and press him to my heart! And she trembled with delight at the prospect, and at the same time with fear that she might lose him.

For three years Prince Bisbiglio rode through the world with her, and they passed to him like three days. Then came the time of severe tests which he had to undergo before her fate could be fulfilled. And this was the first of them:

He rode past a house burning in bright flame. Then he doubted in himself: if she, who is my love, were human, instead of being a liquid drop, and I lay in the flame, would she jump into it and save me?

And hardly had he conceived the wicked thought, when he felt the phial with irresistible strength tear his shirt and coat and burst his iron armour. And quick as lightning it threw itself into the fire; he saw the phial bursting, and the pure drop wept and sighed in the fiery trouble and soon only looked like a duller flame than the others. Then an unspeakable anguish seized his soul, he vaulted from his horse and into the fire, seized the small flame and hid it in his hand. And it burned a deep wound into his hand, and then resolved itself again into a drop. But he hurried to the nearest town and purchased another diamond phial in which he confined it and laid it in its old place. His hair had got scorched in the fire, his cheeks burnt, and the wound in his hand was very deep. And he suffered great pain and lay ill for three weeks before he recovered. Then he grieved at his want of faith, but Snowflake was full of joy that he had so faithfully jumped into the fire for her, yet she wept inwardly to see him suffer so much pain. And he was well aware of it, for he fancied often he heard a groaning in the phial, although in reality he heard nothing.

Then came the second trial:

He rode over a high bridge which crosses a rapid stream, called Tigris. From there he saw the nest of a halcyon (or kingfisher) floating on the stream, and the female sat on the nest, feeding her young. And

deeply moved by this sight, he said: "Oh, what love! Are men ever so faithful? Truly, if the current swallowed this little brood, the mother would dive after them and save them or die herself." And Snowflake felt his heart's thought, and in her anguish of soul she burst again through coat and armour and the phial dashed against a stone, and the drop poured itself into the stream and hissed as if one pours hot water into cold, and away it was carried by the rapid current. Quick as lightning the prince dashed into the stream and struggled with current and whirlpool, dived up and down and wrestled with death and life and filled his hands again and again with water, until he had found the gently hissing drop, which he now felt as a burning coal in his hand. Then he swam to the bank and sank down exhausted, but the little drop again burnt a wound in his hand. When he recovered his senses, he felt bruised all over from the rocks he had knocked against and the burn in his hand smarted, but his soul exulted in delight. And Snowflake was also exulting at this proof of his valiant faithfulness. In the nearest town he got another phial, confined his drop in it, laid it on his heart, and rode on.

Now came the third and last trial:

One morning as the prince was riding through a thick and high mountain-forest, he perceived a gigantic rider who rode on a white charger and was

so tall that his head towered above the tops of the oaks and beeches. He carried a lance which wavered like a ship's mast in the air, and lowered it when he saw the prince. This giant carried an ugly wrinkled old woman behind him on a pillion, who clung to him with her bony arms. He carried her along against his wishes, in consequence of a vow he had taken, but meant to rid himself of her by bestowing her on the first comer. Thus, when he saw Bisbiglio, he called with a voice to make all the hill-tops and ravines echo as if a hundred thunder-storms had let off all the heavenly guns, "Stop, my boy; I have here something for you. You are young and can do with a sweetheart, which is rather an inconvenience to a man of my years. Take this lady on your horse and swear to me that you will give her knightly treatment and fight anybody you meet who will not acknowledge her to be the handsomest princess whom the sun has ever shone upon. On this condition I will let you pass scot free, otherwise your mother will soon have to bury a dead son."

"As long as a warm drop of blood is in my body that will never happen," cried Bisbiglio, burning with rage. "Beware, you braggart! for I will fight you!" With these words he jumped off his horse and let it run away; for he well perceived that he could not attack the giant and his colossal steed on horseback,

but that skill and suppleness would have to be his arms against the latter's superior strength.

And the giant, who felt ashamed to be less brave than the youth, jumped also from his horse. They threw their lances away and took to their swords.

And now took place a finer and rarer combat than was ever seen in the lists. The ground trembled when the giant moved a foot, and it seemed as if the rocks must break under his blows. Lightly as on the wings of the wind the prince moved about, and skilfully evaded each stroke and blow, owing to the slow heaviness of the giant. Thus they had fought a long time, and the giant's blood oozed out of many a wound, but they were not deep wounds. The prince was still unhurt, and played nimbly with his light weapon about the monster. When the giant saw his own blood flow, he grew furious in his soul, and called out, "Enough of this; or, rather, too much! No longer shall the mouse play with the lion!" And he lifted his arm to strike a terrible blow with which he meant to cut the prince in two like a turnip. Yet his sword slipped off the helmet, but caught on the shield and coat of mail, and the prince felt the point of the iron touch his heart. In this extremity he gathered his last strength and drove his sword to its entire length into the giant's breast, so that the big warrior fell down swearing and groaning.

You may imagine Snowflake's anxiety during this terrible contest, and how she shivered and trembled in her phial when the giant rattled with his weapons and when she heard his blows whistling through the air. But when she saw the red blood stream down over the prince's armour, she could no longer contain herself in her prison; she burst her phial and mingled with the purple stream of blood on the ground. And, oh, marvel and miracle! the moment she was surrounded by the prince's blood, there stood the most beautiful maiden. Snowflake had returned to human shape and figure.

The prince was so exhausted from the fight and loss of blood that he swooned away. Snowflake threw herself down beside him with a thousand tears, opened his coat of mail, and dried the blood in his wound with her beautiful long curls; she wept over him as over a dead man. But as she wept and wailed, he opened his eyes and breathed again, and saw his sweet darling, for whose sake he had travelled so many years over the world. And at the sight of her, new strength seemed to rush through his veins; he felt regenerated, and no longer noticed his wound nor how the blood streamed down, but only saw the lovely Snowflake, and embraced her and kissed her. But she cut up some of her dress and laid it on his wound, and the blood was stanched. The wound was deep, but not deadly, which it might easily have

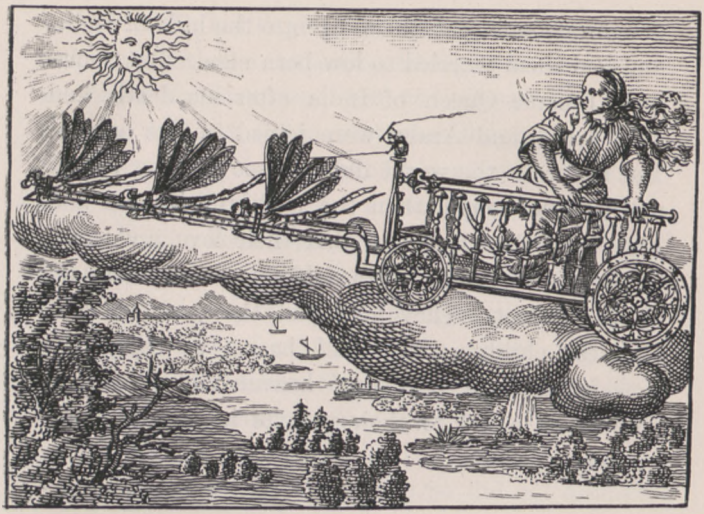
been if slightly deeper, for the giant had hit him near the heart.

But the monster lay there dead, never to rise again. They looked at his huge lance and his heavy armour, which no ordinary mortal could have lifted, and there they let him lie; the ugly old woman, on whose account the terrible fight arose, they allowed to go in peace whither she liked. As a memorial of this fight with the giant, the prince only took the big white horse on which the monster rode, and his sword, but as they lifted the sword from the ground and looked at it they saw a new wonder: the point had melted like iron when a smith lays it into a hot fire to soften it. When Snowflake saw that, her eyes sparkled with delight, and tears streamed down her cheeks, and she pressed the prince to her heart with great warmth and said: "O you most faithful soul, with unconquerable love, your heart is so hot with love that it has melted the giant's iron! Do I now own this warm heart of which I dreamt in bitter sorrow during my enchantment? Now I see that everything is fulfilled which my stepmother, the evil witch, murmured when she made me fly out of the window." And she related to the prince the history of her transformation, and how she had miserably flown about for two winters as a snowflake, until in his hand she melted to a drop of water.

The day of the combat with the giant happened

just to be the last day of the fifth year since Snowflake met with the despairing Bisbiglio in the barren ravine of the Caucasus. And as both saw that their fate was fulfilled, and as they were longing to crown their true and incomparable love by a wedding, they rode no further after adventures—for the last five years had been the very prettiest adventure—but they took the straightest road to the castle in which lived the old king of Araby, Bisbiglio's father. And they arrived there safely, and the prince duly told his father everything that had happened to him. And the old gentleman saw now that the wisdom he fancied he had shown in the education of his son was not very successful, but he did not grumble at his adventures, as he brought such a beautiful daughter into his house; for Snowflake was so handsome and lovely that she pleased not only him and all men, but also the angels in heaven. And when he had given sufficient scope to his delight, and the wedding had been celebrated, Bisbiglio and his Snowflake travelled to the old king in India. And Snowflake related to him all her story: how the stepmother had changed herself into a fox, and sung, "Snowflake, Snowflake, fly away!" and how she had become a snowflake and been let out of the window, and had lived seven sad years under the enchantment. And the king grew furious and had the old witch punished by death; and he disowned her ugly

daughters, and sent them up into the hills of India, and had them married to low-born men. But Snowflake became Queen of India after his death, and thus India and Araby were joined in one empire. But never in the world did one see a more tender and faithful couple than the faithful Bisbiglio and his sweet Snowflake; so that their love and faith is to this day told of in fable and song through all the Orient. They also had the prettiest and loveliest children, who had hearts to enjoy the gracefulness and beauty of heaven and earth and who were equal to their parents in kindness and goodness.



EARTHWORM

At Distelfeld in the Fichtelgebirge, there lived an honest peasant, Kuntz Bartold, with his pious wife Katrine. These good folks had many dear children, but the greatest darling was a little girl who had been christened Eva Maria. Little Eva was a quiet, good, and thoughtful child, the most diligent at school, the most attentive at church, and pleasant and obedient to every one, and liked to give to the poor. Otherwise, with all her pleasant ways, the child was very quiet and reticent, fond of being alone in the

garden, field, or forest. For as God gives to everybody their individual tastes and talents, he had given to this child a great love of nature, and a ready understanding of things, so that she understood easily what clever folks only hinted at, and learnt in her play what nobody had taught her. People will wonder at such bright children and call them Sunday-children because they seem to see and understand everything; others even fancy that there is witchcraft at play. And yet it is all quite natural that some know much and learn easily, and that others are stupid and learn nothing. When little Eva was ten years old, she knew most of the animals, birds, flowers, and trees, and had such innocent, trusting intercourse with them, as if she had lived a hundred years among them. But she was fondest of coloured stones and the lower animals, and could play all day long with lady-birds, gold-beetles, butterflies and tree-frogs, without being tired. She was now in her tenth year, and had to mind her mother's cows in the forest. There she would always gather lots of coloured stones and beetles, and when she came home at night her pockets were full of stones, and she carried little rush baskets which she had plaited, filled with beetles, butterflies and tree-frogs, with which she and the other children used to play. To gather these things she would often dig and rummage on the ground, roll stones and logs away and pull the

bark off the trees, and the people who saw her do this, even her own parents, called her in fun Earthworm. And this name stuck so to her that nobody called her Eva, but only Earthworm.

Now one spring day, when Eva was in her twelfth year, as she drove her cows and calves into the forest, and trotted behind them with her little dog, merrily singing all the while, she met an old woman, almost naked and looking very pale and miserable. She complained of the cold, and it being in April it was rather cold in these wooded mountains. Earthworm was so touched that she took off her dress and put it over the old woman's shoulders. The latter went away saying, "Many thanks, my child! Your kindness shall not be unrewarded." Now Earthworm had to walk about all day long with no dress on and felt cold herself, and at night she was scolded by her mother for having given away more than she was allowed to; for her mother was not rich enough to buy many new dresses for her children.

When midsummer came and the days were longest, Earthworm had bathed one day in the forest. When she came out of the brook and looked for her clothes behind a bush, she found in their stead the neatest new clothes, just come from the tailor, and a smart hood and new shoes. The latter astonished her most, for in summer she and her brothers and sisters wore

no shoes but walked barefooted. But she put all the new clothes on and also the shoes, and in childish delight she cried, "O, who has given me these?"

"I have," came from behind the bushes, and soon she saw an old woman come, the very same to whom she had given her frock in the spring, and the old woman smiled pleasantly and said, "Earthworm, don't you know me any more?"

And Eva said: "Oh yes, you are the poor old lady who was so cold in spring, with such ragged clothes, but now you have got beautiful clothes on."

"Yes, my child, that is the way of the world, rich to-day, poor to-morrow. Because you were such a kind-hearted child, I have brought you some new clothes, and if there is anything else you wish for, speak out and I will grant it."

Earthworm did not consider long, but said: "O, please let that big beautiful beetle come every day to play with me. I have seen him once here in the forest, but I could not catch him."

"I quite believe that," said the old woman, "for he is a desperately sharp visitor; but he shall come. And now good-bye, my child!" The old woman kissed her, took her stick and went off.

She had hardly disappeared, when it buzzed through the trees, ss, ssum, ssum, and a large shining beetle came and settled down near Eva; his wings shone

like pure gold, and his two bright eyes sparkled like diamonds.

Earthworm was very delighted and played all day long with him, and when she drove her cattle home, he also opened his wings and flew away. And thus he came every day that she was in the forest, and she played and talked to him, as if he had been a boy, and she also told the other herds, who sometimes saw her playing with him, that he was her sweetheart and understood all she said; that he brought her pretty toys to play with, and apples and nuts when she was hungry. The other children were amused and did not believe it, but they were all fond of the beetle. I myself could not say if the beetle really brought her things or if she only said it in fun; but this much is certain, that the two had grown very fond of each other, and that he returned next spring as soon as Eva drove her cattle into the forest, and they continued their old friendship. Then Eva learnt too, that he was a rare beetle and knew and could do more than ordinary beetles.

One day she sat as usual with him under a green oak tree, playing with him and other beetles in the grass. Suddenly one of the prettiest lady-birds took wing, and rose quickly above the oak. Earthworm looked longingly after it and exclaimed, "Oh! if I could fly like that and float in the air above the trees!"

Gold-beetle whispered to her, "Would you really like it, Earthworm?"

And she answered, "Indeed I would."

Not a second after, the most charming chariot descended in the air and lowered itself before Earthworm, as if to say, "If you please, get in, Earthworm!" The chariot was wrought daintily in white ivory, carved and painted with birds and flowers. It was large enough for a little girl to sit in it comfortably, and was drawn by six blue dragon flies. She stood before the charming vehicle and clapped her hands with wonder and delight. Gold-beetle urged her to get in, and although she was all in a tremble with delight and desire, she yet laughed and said, "Where shall I get in? These little horses won't carry me far!"

"You just get in," said Gold-beetle, "I will be coachman"; and he settled on the box. Earthworm laughed again, but got in for fun, as she thought, for she did not dream this team could raise her from the ground.

But, behold! Gold-beetle took the ribbons, took the golden whip plaited out of sunbeams in hand and cracked it, so that it sounded through the forest, and the six winged horses started, and in a twinkle they were high above the beeches and oaks and flew so quickly that it almost took Eva's breath away and she held on to her chariot almost frightened. But

she had not time to cry "Stop, stop," as she would have liked to. Yet when she saw that there was no danger, she much enjoyed the flying drive above the forest to its borders and back. When they came back to where her cows and calves were feeding, Gold-beetle directed the chariot down very gently so that they descended at the same place where they had started.

These drives were often repeated, and it was Earthworm's special delight that in her ivory car and with the dragon-fly team they were flying faster than the fastest birds, so that she often could catch pigeons, falcons, and other fast-flying ones on her way. Sometimes she had a night drive, and when Gold-beetle invited her, she stepped quietly out of the house when everybody was asleep, and the drives by moonlight seemed the merriest to her. But she never told anybody of this, only she confided to her mother that the old woman had presented her with the new clothes in return for the frock she had given her in the spring.

Now she was fifteen years of age and grew to be a big girl, but she was still tending the cattle in the forest. Gold-beetle's visits became more rare, but then she used to collect the other girls and boys who tended cattle in the wood about her and tell them stories, of which she knew very many, for her mother

had always shortened the winter evenings by telling stories and fairy-tales.

One day Eva had told them a sad story of a young prince who had been mortally wounded in fighting a dragon, and now sang a dying song to his sweetheart. This story had so impressed itself on her thoughts that she kept singing:

Fare thee well, my sweetheart,
Fare thee well, we must part;

and the tears kept coming into her eyes. Thus with sad musings she sat under the oak, her usual playground, when all of a sudden Gold-beetle, whom she had not seen for several days, came buzzing along. He whispered to her: "Earthworm, would you like a drive? There is the loveliest rainbow in the sky, we will go and look at it close by; but come and get ready at once!" She consented, the chariot came, she got in, and Gold-beetle took his whip and urged the team on.

Off they went at such a pace that Earthworm could not distinguish sky and earth, and saw nothing of the promised rainbow. The coachman was mischievously urging the horses on, they were buzzing, and the air was rushing as if in a storm, whilst Gold-beetle sang with a thin, shrill voice:

O weep not, my sweetheart,
Fare thee well, we must part.

Poor Earthworm could do nothing else but hold on; she was too breathless to ask, although it seemed to her as if they were really whirling far away through the air, when all of a sudden they went down gently and stopped in an unknown country. Earthworm was going to ask, "Where are we?" But before she could utter the question, carriage, coachman, and team, had vanished; and she never in her life saw them again.

It was dark, the sun had gone down, and the moon and the stars shone brightly in the sky. Now she might have sung, "Farewell! fare thee well!" but she was not in a singing mood, but wept bitterly, wringing her hands. Then she sighed and said repeatedly: "Oh, what a wicked girl I have been! Mother has often scolded me for playing so much with beetles and worms. Now I see what tricky knaves they are. Just you wait, Gold-beetle! when I see you again, you shall catch it! Oh, if I could only find somebody to show me the way home!"

Now she began to walk through the bushes, but the quick flight had tired her out so that she had soon to sit down under a tree to rest. There she fell asleep and slept till the next morning. Sleep well, and pleasant dreams, dear Earthworm!

When she awoke, the sun stood high in the heaven. She looked about with wide-open eyes, for yesterday's

adventure seemed a dream to her, and she had also dreamt again of the quick journey through the air, and of a burning house, of war, and all sorts of trouble and anxiety. With these thoughts she awoke, and became aware that she was in an utterly unknown country, far away from her father's house. For round about were high mountains with snow-capped tops. She wept bitterly and said: "Oh, you wicked Gold-beetle! I shall never get out of this, and I shall never see my father and mother again, for how should I get over those mountains through the deep snow?"

She walked on aimlessly and listlessly, till she came to a little orchard where apples, pears, and plums hung in plenty on the trees. She picked some and ate, for she was very hungry, and then she walked on through the trees, for she heard a cock crowing and a dog barking. These sounds cheered her, and she thanked God for having brought her to the neighbourhood of human beings; then she soon saw a small thatched house and went straight towards it. A little dog ran to meet her, wagged his tail merrily, and neither barked nor growled. He was followed by a white pussy cat, who rubbed her fur against Eva's knees and purred comfortably, as cats will do when they are pleased. These two accompanied her to the door, in front of which sat an old, white-haired, little woman spinning and singing a cheerful

hymn, "Wake up, my heart, to praise the Lord!" and she was not disturbed by the new arrival, and Earthworm joined in and sang with her to the end, feeling thankful that she had come to such pious folks. After that the old woman rose from her spinning-wheel, shook her by the hand, and bade her welcome. But when she looked in the child's face, she said, "O dear me! Earthworm, is it you? How in the world have you come here?"

The child was startled at being called by her nick-name, looked closely at the old woman, and recognised in her the giver of the beautiful new clothes, so she cheerfully replied: "Yes, mother, I am Earthworm, but how I have got here I can't tell. I only know that Gold-beetle is an arch-deceiver; he deluded me with talk of a beautiful rainbow, and brought me so quickly through the air that I could neither see nor hear, and at last put me down here and left me in the lurch. Now I am glad to find you. I am sure you can show me the way through the mountains to get home to father and mother, for they will be very anxious that I did not come home last night, and will think that robbers have stolen me, or wolves devoured me."

The old woman made answer, "Be welcome here, Earthworm! Your parents live very far away and I could not take you there now. For all the roads are unsafe, it being war-time, and strange

soldiers yesterday took possession of Distelfeld. So do not scold Gold-beetle; it is for that reason that he brought you away. You could not assist your poor parents, and you yourself might have come to sore grief. So you had better resign yourself and stay with me. We live here in the forest, far from the high road, and no enemy will come across these mountains. When all is quiet again, I will take you home."

So Earthworm yielded and stayed, but she wept many a tear in the secrecy of her little room, and in the solitary forest, at being so far away from her folks. Otherwise she fared well.

Now this was a little farm, lying quite in the heart of the forest, with some fields, pastures, and garden; there was plenty of wood, and trout and carp in the brooks and ponds. Here lived the old woman with her husband and a man-servant, who was not young either, and the three tilled and managed the farm. Earthworm helped them as well. They had two oxen, two horses, eight cows, twenty sheep and goats, a number of fowls and ducks in the yard, fruit in the garden and corn in the fields, and lived comfortably and happily. They were very good Christians, and Earthworm had ample time to read the Bible and the hymn-book. During the summer they were very busy garnering the corn and filling the house and barns for the winter; in the autumn

and winter the men threshed and chopped wood, and brought it home from the forest, and the mother and Earthworm, after attending to the cows and the kitchen, sat at the spinning-wheel telling stories or singing sacred songs. Earthworm used to say later on that the years she spent here had been the happiest time of her life.

Thus five summers went by without her finding the time hang heavy on her hands, when one morning the old woman came into the girl's room and said "Dear Earthworm, it is time for you to go home to your parents. There have been troublous times in Distelfeld and the whole country of Franconia; but now war is over, it is peace, and it is only fair that you should go back to your parents and try to make up to them for the care they took of you in your childhood. I sent for you here, not simply to have you with me—though you know that I am very fond of you—but that you should be safe from the savagery and misery of war; and although I should be glad to keep you, it would be a sin not to give you back to your parents. You have become aware that I know different arts; but I am one of the women called good fairies, and I never use my art for evil purposes. Therefore do not be afraid of me, but remember me, for I have spent my life in trying to turn mad adventures to right and to unravel confusion. And now child, get ready,

pack up your clothes and linen, for we start to-morrow."

Earthworm did as she was bid and then sat down alone and cried at the thought of parting from the old woman who had been so kind to her. Next morning the waggon and pair stood at the door, with the old farm servant as coachman, and she got in with the old woman. They drove for six days, and on the seventh they came to the village where the people from Distelfeld go to church. There they stopped at the inn, and the old woman said: "Now I must bid you good-bye, my child, I cannot drive further, for I must get home again. God bless you and keep you faithfully and securely in His ways, then you will be happy here and in after life." She bade the man unload the chests and boxes which contained Eva's clothes and house-linen, and gave her a full purse, saying, "This is to be your dowry, my child; you can buy a small farm with it." Then she drove off and Earthworm hired the innkeeper to drive her to Distelfeld, where her parents lived.

When they drove on to the common, she wondered at seeing so few houses, and some of them quite new, and asked the driver, "Why, is this Distelfeld?"

"Of course it is," replied he, "but it is not the old Distelfeld; that was burnt down in the war, and they are just rebuilding."

Earthworm was frightened and thought anxiously about her parents and brothers and sisters, but she dared not inquire from the man after them. They drove into the village and saw burnt-out places, large trees and beams lying about, broken fences and tumble-down walls, until she got to her father's house. That was no longer the old one, but a brand new one, which they had just finished. There she found her parents alive, though very poor, yet not discouraged, for they trusted in God. Her sisters and brothers were alive except one, who had died in the war. Her two elder sisters were married and lived in the next village. And she related to her parents where she had been so long, and how it had fared with her, and cheered them by saying, "God can help you, and I can also." With these words she opened the purse which her kind foster-mother had given her at parting, and there were five hundred new gold ducats in it, and in the chests was the most beautiful house-linen, which she herself had helped to spin and bleach, and which the good old woman had given her for an outfit.

And she soon chose an honest young farmer for a husband and lived in Distelfeld as a good and Christian woman. A blessing was on her industry and piety so that she had means to help her parents and many others. Her children were diligently instructed and sent to church and school, and she did

not allow them to be much alone in the forest or roam about in the night. For she held it was not good for men to get too much attached to the lower creation, which might only confuse their minds and take them from the right way, and that it was safest to hold fast to the Bible, and not inquire over much what is in the trees and hills and what the birds and beetles, or flowers and leaves, whisper and talk about, and that it was a great mercy that her childish play had not led her all wrong.

BIG JOACHIM

FARMER HANS DIEBENKORN—I forget what village he lived in—had a son called Joachim, who was a very rough uncouth boy, full of tricks and knavery, and whom nobody could subdue. His father was a quiet respectable man who admonished and punished him often; parson and schoolmaster chiselled and planed him with serious warning and severe punishment; he was liberally treated to the cane and hazel switch; but all that could not soften and tame him; Joachim remained the same defiant, disobedient fellow that he had always been, and when he could play a nasty trick he was in his element. The worst of it, and that which caused his father the greatest anxiety, was his unusual strength. When he was only fifteen years old he could measure himself in wrestling and boxing with the strongest farm servants in the village. Add to this, that Joachim was a handsome slim fellow, who could talk so well and make himself so agreeable that no stranger could guess what a rogue he was. All the better could he

play his jokes and tricks on other fellows, for he could pretend so much that the cleverest people were taken in by him. His father, who knew his failings, kept him close to work; but as soon as he had a free minute, he was at his tricks, and everywhere one heard complaints of him. Yet an old proverb says, "Oft goes the pitcher to the well, but at last comes broken home," and that fitted on Joachim.

His particular pastime was to tease old folks who passed his way, or poor folks who begged at the doors of kind-hearted people, and he did this repeatedly, however hard his father chastised him for it, and reminded him that there was no greater sin than mocking those who are in trouble, for God had sent them their trouble and they are under his special protection.

One day a poor old beggar woman came along, with a basket on her head and a sack on her back. She staggered painfully along, stood still after every few paces and groaned and coughed. Joachim saw her coming, made up to her and pleasantly bade her good day. She felt confidence in him and asked him how she could get across a deep brook which flowed between her and the village. "Oh, come along, mother, come with me," said Joachim; "I will show you a way." He went in front and she followed as he led her to a narrow slender plank,

which was laid across the brook. When the old woman was in the middle of it, Joachim began to rock with all his might at one end—pretending that he was giddy—and he rocked so much that the plank tipped over and the poor old woman with basket and sack fell into the water, full length. He jumped towards her, helped her out of the water, and pretended to be much concerned, but he smirked and laughed in his sleeve.

The poor old lady thanked him as if she did not notice it, and took her wet clothes off and hung them about the bushes to dry in the sun, and then to pass away the time she began to sing a few songs in a touching, plaintive voice. Joachim, who had run away, came back and listened; he liked the singing, sat down by her side and said, laughing, "I say, mother, will you sing a song for me?"

"Certainly, my boy; but you must pay attention and remember it." And she sang:

Ducats behind the hedge,
Love from a peacock,
Constancy in a sparrow,
Reason in the little finger,
Are as rare things
As roses among the hay.

Pay good heed, my boy,
You play too many tricks,
Which may God forgive;

But many mice will devour the cat,
You will remember this water,
And your pleasure will turn to wail.

Joachim laughed immoderately when she had ended, and said, "What a stupid, foolish ditty, old lady; without rhyme or reason. Listen; I will sing you one." And, with a bright playful voice, he began quickly:

Cuckoo sat on the fence,
It came on to rain and he got wet,
And the cuckoo got wet;
Then he cried, Oh, my pet,
How wet, how wet, how wet!
My pet, how you are wet!
Cuckoo, cuckoo!
And he flew thence.

Thereupon he ran away, but not without first upsetting the old woman's basket and shoes.

This sort of thing he did often, and could never restrain his wanton malice. One day he came running from the forest and singing merrily, for he was always in high spirits. It was a cold wintry day, and snowing and freezing hard. As thus, with merry shouts, he ran down a narrow pass, there stood a tiny old man, who looked very white and miserable, and groaned and sighed over the effort of lifting a big basket on his back, which he could not manage. When he saw Joachim he was pleased, and begged him, "Dear boy, remember that you also

will one day be old and infirm, and help me to put this basket on my back."

"With pleasure," said Joachim; he came forward, raised the basket and put the dosser handles round his shoulders; but then he pulled the old man over with his basket, left him to lie in the snow, and, running away, called out, "Peep, birdie, peep!"

The old man gathered himself up, picked up the things that had fallen out of his basket, and, with an angry voice, he called after the laughing boy, "Yes, peep, birdie, peep! God will teach you to pipe, you wicked boy."

And God did teach this bird to pipe. Next morning, when he had to go with his axe into the forest to cut trees, he had to walk through this same narrow pass. As he came near it he had a funny feeling—so uncomfortable, such as he had never felt in his life. And although it was bright day, for the wintry sun had just risen in red glory, he felt creepy as if it had been midnight; but that was his evil conscience, and he kept fancying that the old man was coming out of the pass, calling to him, "Peep, birdie, peep!" He would willingly have taken another road if there had been one. At last he ventured into the narrow pass, but he had barely set his foot on the place where last night he pushed the old man with his basket into the snow, when it took

him and shook him, and he was gone; nor did he ever come back, and no man knew whither he had flown and drifted. And the folk believed that the Evil One had fetched him for the sake of the many wicked, scandalous tricks the boy had played.

Yet that was not so, but the old man's "Peep, birdie, peep!" had come true. Joachim was changed into a bird, into even the smallest bird that lives in our parts; and he had to learn the piping of a bird. It is his punishment now that, in the hardest winter, he has to fly about through the shrubs and hedges and flutter round the houses, and mostly at the windows of poor people's cottages, and must be hungry and cold, and say "Peep, peep!" He wears a grey coat, like the grey blouse which he wore when he was transformed, and to this day he must laugh out of his roguish twinkling eyes even when he feels like crying. He is called "Little Wren," but in derision people call him "Big Joachim," or "Short Jan." They also call him "Hedgeking," or "Nettleking," because the poor wretch has to slip and fly through nettles and thistles and thorny hedges, and often builds his nest among the nettles. There he has time to reflect upon his sins, when the wind whistles and the snow is drifting, and he has to sit and pipe in bare bushes and hedges. The children often hear him sing with his thin voice, and are reminded

of the old story of Joachim Diebenkorn. But this is what he sings:

Peep, peep!
The apples are ripe,
The pears are yellow,
The bacon is cured,
The room is warm,
Hans sits in Margaret's arm.

Peep, peep!
How cold is the rime,
How thin is my coat,
How bare is my bed,
How long is the night,
I am in sad plight.

THE HOOPOE

THIS is what Henry Vierk once related of the tailor Hoopoe.

The most marvellous things will happen in this world. Kings have become beggars, beggars have become kings, and you cannot judge from a man's looks what he has once been and what may become of him. Thus the hoopoe was once a ladies' tailor; and who would guess now from his appearance that he had ever been used to good society? He used to live in a big and rich city, carried himself like a smart fellow, wore a coloured silken coat, went from one grand house to another, from one palace to the next, and carried home expensive materials, out of which he was to make clothes. And as he was good-looking and well-mannered, all the great ladies took him for their tailor, so that he had plenty of work, and even measured the queen for her coronation-robe. Thus Master Hoopoe soon became very rich; and yet he was never satisfied, but would run after work and carry home his load, which often was so

heavy as to make him groan like a carthorse, and when he mounted the stairs he would sigh, "Hoop, whoop!" Now, desire for work could easily be excused, but it turned in the end to evil greed, and that the Lord could not overlook in His patience. The tailor came to steal and thieve some pieces of all the materials given to him to make up, and for that reason it happened one night, when, with a heavy bundle and a heavier sigh of "whoop, hoop!" he climbed upstairs, he was suddenly changed into a coloured bird, who, under the name of Hoopoe, flutters round houses and mews and with insatiable greed picks up the nastiest things and carries them to his nest. To this very day he wears a coloured coat, but its colours remind you of the place where thieves and knaves go to. Part of it is raven-black, the other fiery red, to signify the darkness and fire of hell.

A similar coat to that of Master Hoopoe is worn by a beetle, called the grave-digger, who runs about the roads and buries dead moles and beetles. The coloured bug also walks about in the same colours. They both have an offensive smell, and no doubt were at one time thieves. Well, the hoopoe has kept, from his tailoring time, the habit of crying "Whoop, hoop!" as if he still carried an ill-gotten burden which was too heavy for him. Country folks, therefore, call him the cuckoo's clerk, because from the

distance his call sounds as if he would repeat the cuckoo's call in the same way as the clerk repeats after the parson.

Only the cuckoo is a jolly rogue, who can enjoy his tune, whilst the hoopoe is a sad melancholy knave, who must sigh and utter even his whoopoe with difficulty.

HOW THE MICE ARE WHISTLING

FROM THE LOW GERMAN

"WHERE are the mice whistling?" Do you know why when one wants to make fun of anybody's not thriving well, one says, "Where are the mice whistling?" In Reddebas there lived once upon a time a farmer called Martin Drews, who was rather wild and fierce, and would bear no restraint. The village folks called him "Mad Drews." At work he was capable, could thresh and mow as much as two or three others; but of God and His word he would not hear anything, and every Sunday and holiday, and many a week-day night, he would sit in the public-house at cards and gin, and would behave dreadfully. For he could drink more than any man, and stand more fatigue than a horse. If he had sat up through the night, he was yet quick and fresh at work during the day, and whoever sat down to drink with him was lost, and at

cards he was still more dangerous. He made all his card-party stupid, or tired them out, and thus got their money. In short, he was a fellow against whom everybody ought to have been cautioned, and nobody could do anything against his fists. Thus Martin went on for many a day, like a regular heathen, and yet until now he had always fared well. Now it happened one Christmas Eve that he sat in the inn at Karnin playing at cards, and having plenty of trumps. As midnight drew near, the gamekeeper from Karnin, who was of the party, rose and said, "Throw the cards down, Drews, and let us say a Paternoster, so that the Evil One may not have any power over us this coming year."

Drews laughed at him and said, "Go along with your Evil One; that is nothing but parsons' talk, and spook for children and old women. The Devil has long been killed, and as far as he is concerned I will safely go through the world by day and night. What, you, a fellow that carries powder and shot, can still believe in these old tales!"

"Yes," said the keeper, "through the world with God and His word." And he stood up, folded his hands, and prayed; and all the others prayed with him, also the card-players, who had laid down their cards. But Martin snapped his fingers, shuffled the cards, and laughed. The game was broken up, for

nobody would go on playing with him, and everybody went home. At last Drews left also.

As he was halfway between Karnin and Reddebas, on the big high-road to Hamburg, where the road turns off to Satel, he saw all of a sudden a red flame running through the bushes, and however bold he was, his skin was creepy all over his body, and his hair stood on end inside his cap. His fear actually got the better of him, and he could not help it; he took to his heels. When he had run along for some time he stood still to take breath, and said to himself, "Fie, Martin! Is that how you run away from the Devil? And yet it is nothing but children's tales—for who has ever seen the Devil? Go along, be a man and go at him, if he can be found."

Thus he made himself brave and turned back, and walked slowly to the place where half-an-hour ago his legs had become so nimble. Yet his heart beat under his ribs so loudly that you could have heard it at the distance of a gunshot. Still he pulled himself together, set his teeth firmly, and wanted to be a man. And when he came to the Satel road, where he had seen the funny flame running over the white snow, he stood still and called out with such a loud voice that the trees trembled, "Come out, Devil! come out, if you have any courage!"

And what happened? Upon his word the flame

leapt like lightning over the snow just towards him, and he saw that it was like a glowing mouse, which jumped as if in high glee, and whistled quite finely, and was no bigger than an ordinary mouse; but it flickered and flared like hellish fire, and had a beautifully gilt comb on its head, and gnashed its fiery teeth as if it meant to bite him. And whether Martin liked it or not, he could not stand the flickering and snapping, and in a trice he took again to his heels. But he had so outrun his strength in the deep snow, and the fright had so upset him, that he was laid up miserably ill for a week or longer. Yet he was silent about his Christmas adventure, and his run in the snow, and did not tell a soul how he had got from Karnin to Reddebas.

And that was not the end of it, for evil things take their time, just as good things. He had called out the old black fiend, and now he would not give him up. Martin was so frightened of the place near the Satel road, that even in bright daylight nobody could have taken him there alive. When he had any journey to make towards Flemendorp or the sea, he always made a long detour. Yet Old Nick is very cunning, and knows how to find the way to where he wants to go. It was very peculiar in this mouse affair, that in spite of all the fear with which he remembered the flaming mouse on the snow, yet

he felt a burning desire and impulse in his heart to see the fiery mouse once more. For thus it is that fear and desire draw a poor sinner to the Devil. His desire grew stronger day by day, and tormented him so much that he had no rest nor peace from it. And the greatest torment was near the time when God leaves the road open to the Devil, when he and all that wear witches' and evil spirits' caps may carry on their game. When all good Christians lie in their best sleep at midnight, Martin could hardly contain himself, however fearful he felt; it pulled him out of his warm bed, and out of the house into the sullen, dark, and dreary night, on to the high-road where it goes uphill from the village towards Karnin, and only greater fear and trembling drove him home again.

Thus the craving desire for and fear of the Devil, plagued him for three months, from Christmas to Easter, and the formerly merry and wild fellow became thoughtful and melancholy, so that his friends and neighbours wondered what might be the matter with him. Martin bravely resisted for some time, yet in the end the Devil got the better of him, and notwithstanding his fear he was driven towards the road to Satel. And as he came to it, surely there all was ready for him, and his fate was sealed. The very instant the fiery mouse was there, and jumped about him and behaved so nicely, and looked so

pleasantly at him with its bright shining eyes, as if it would make friends; and then it ran in front of him towards the coppice, and stood still again and looked back at him, so as to say, "Come with me, come with me!" And however much his heart beat and thumped he could not help it, he must follow. And as the mouse came into the coppice, it crept under a round stone and disappeared, and instantly the stone looked as if it were on fire. When Martin saw that, his fear was gone, he bethought himself of old tales which his father used in old days to tell him of burning gold, and how one might conjure the Devil so that he could not pull the gold down with him.

Martin lost no time; he spread his hands in the form of a cross over the stone, flourished his hat over it, and cried, "Avaunt, Satan, thou hast no right over me!" And he stood boldly and daringly there until the cock crowed and the larks rose up in the air, and the bright day broke. Then he set to work, rolled the stone aside, and there lay a dead mouse and a big heap of red ducats. And he gathered his hat-crown full, and filled his pockets and boots, and then sneaked home without making a noise, and put the gold in his money-box. And having thus taken the first earnest-money from Satan, he was doomed. Many a night when all good people lie in a sweet slumber which covers all care, poor Martin had to

turn out and stagger to the fatal stone, and stand shivering by it in fear and trembling.

This went on for a few years, and he had boxes and chests heaped full of gold, and stalked about like a lord in a splendid coat, silver spurs, and a hat with gold galloon. But every Christian could see that there was something wrong. And at last there started a rumour of fiery mice, and one farm-servant, who could no longer remain in his service for fear and awe, related that he had often seen the burning mice run over the farmyard, and that in the barns and stables nobody could save and hide himself from their whistling and nibbling.

And so it happened that when the evil fiend had so ensnared him that he no longer could burst his bonds, one Christmas Eve, between midnight and one o'clock, so many flaming mice came running across the farmyard that it shone like a big fire, and these jumping Devil's brats set fire to his house and barns and stables; and Martin Drews, with wife and children, with his cattle and horses, was burnt to ashes, and all the Devil's money with him—unless the mice have secretly carried it off. Only two or three miserable ducats were scratched up among the ashes. And ever since that time folks say, "Listen, how Martin's mice are whistling!" And where formerly Martin's house used to stand, that is behind the publican's

orchard, there is ghostly whistling every night; and on each tree there sits an owl and screams, and I would not advise any one to go over that place in the dead, dark night-time.

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
London and Edinburgh