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ANDERSEN'S
FAIRY
TALES

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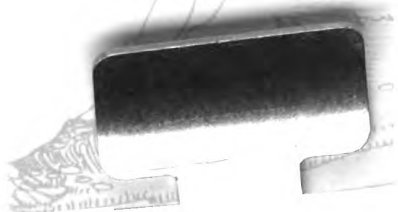
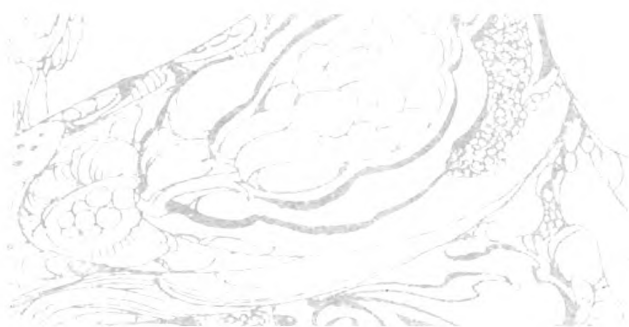




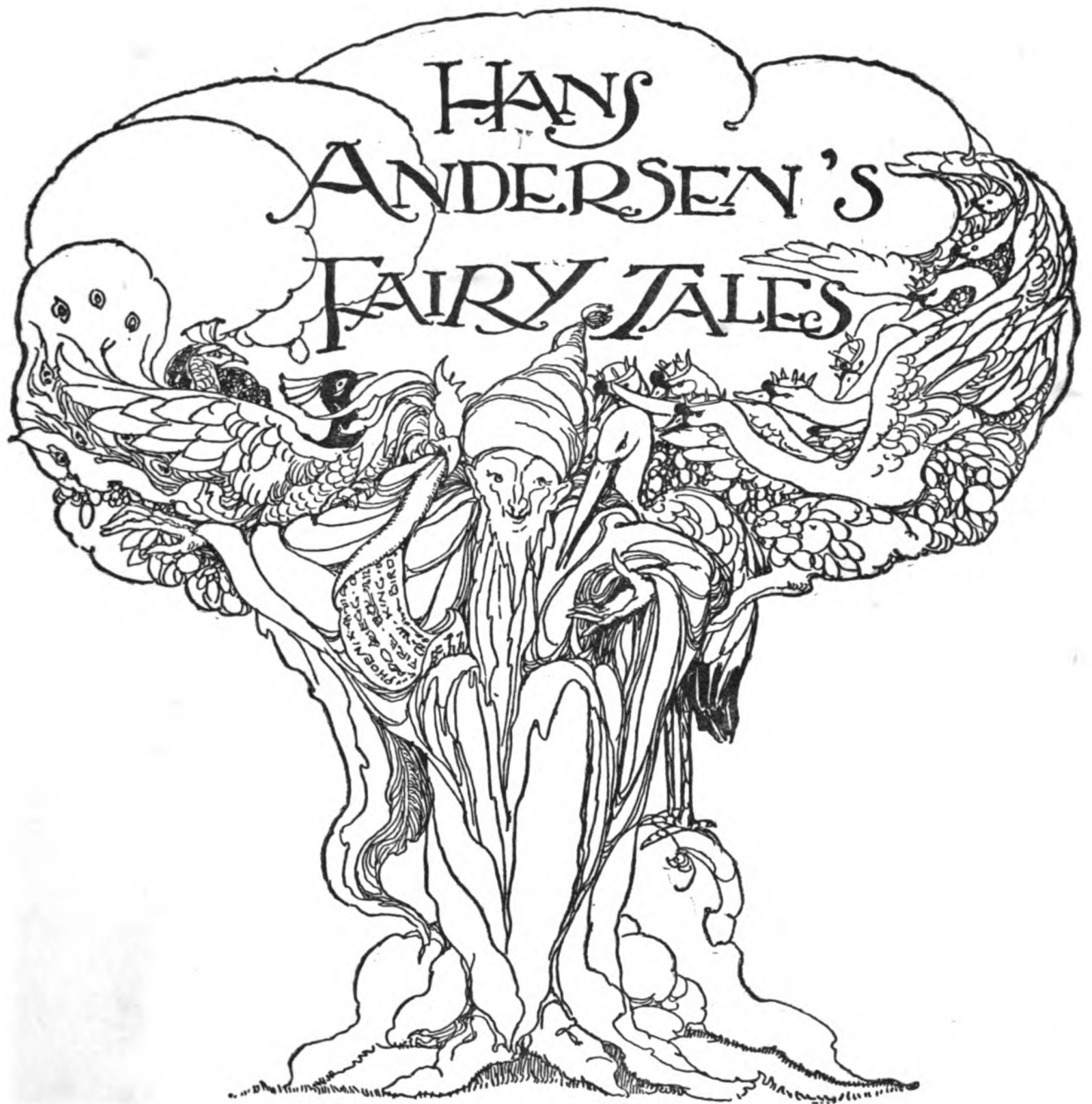
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ANDERSEN'S FAIRY TALES





THE RED SHOES

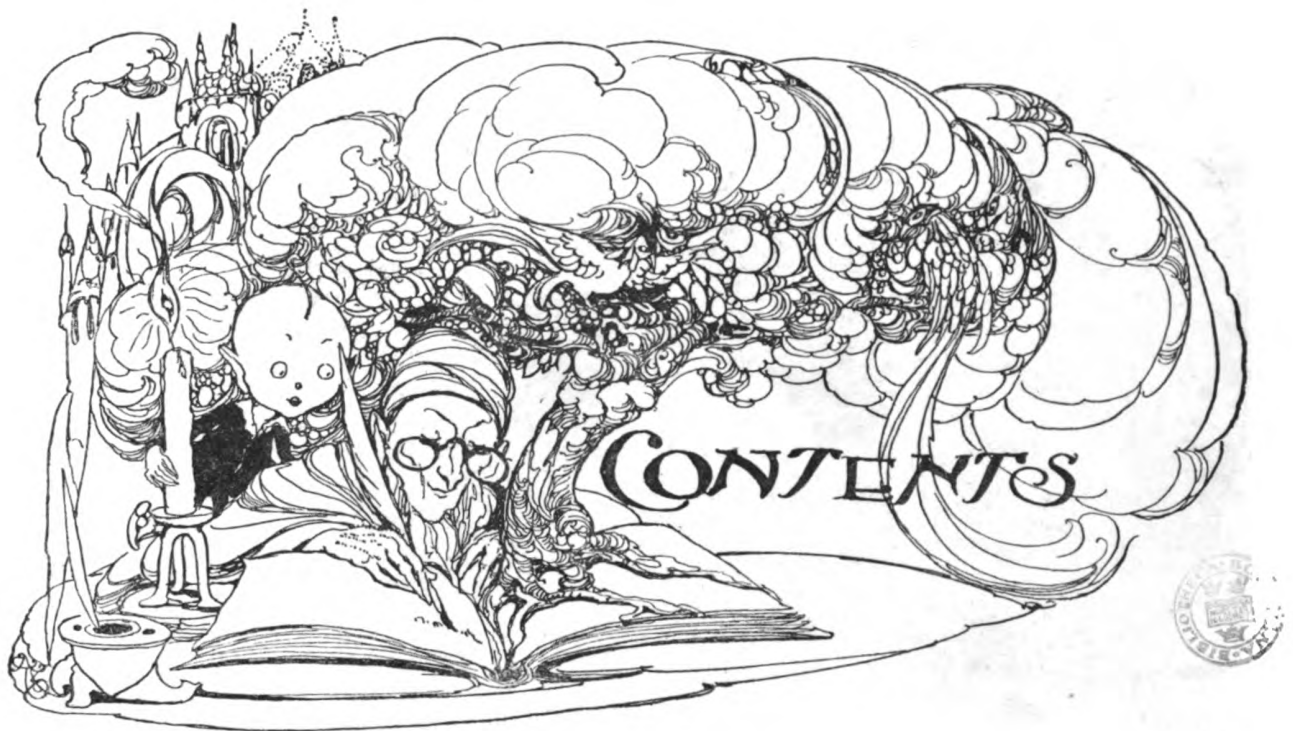


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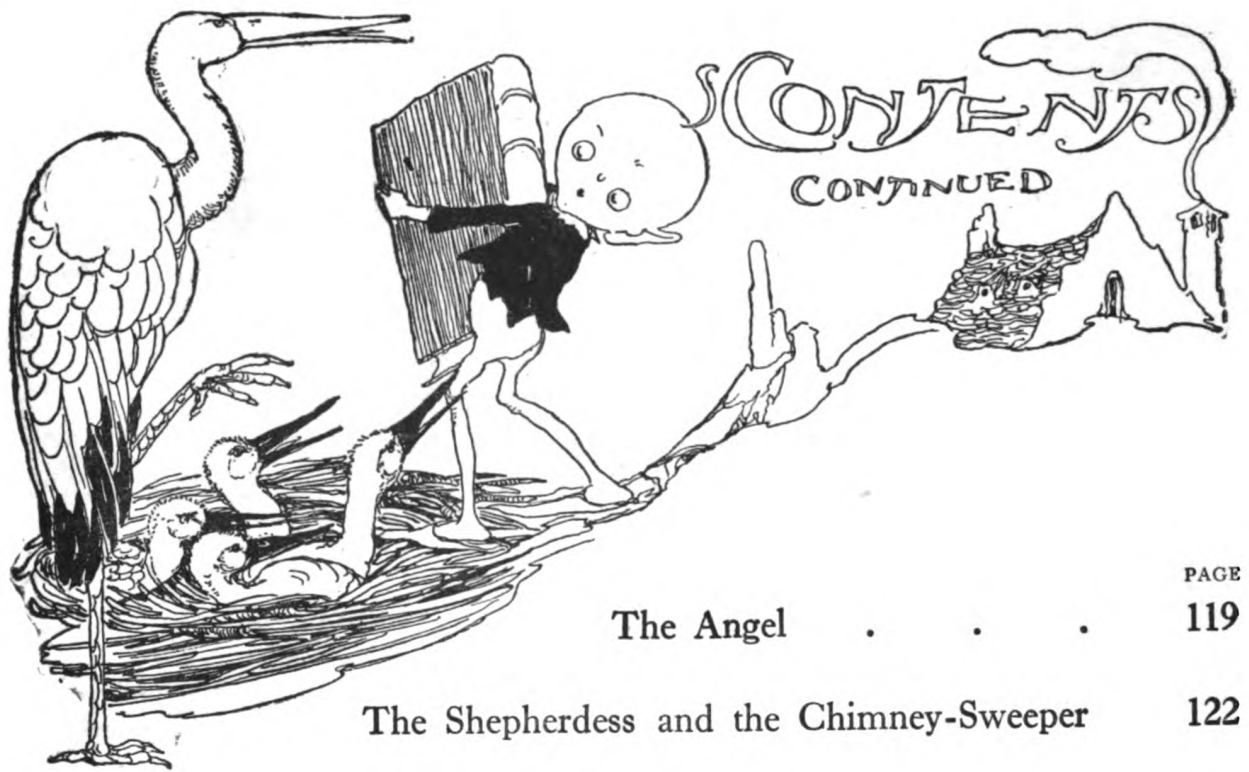
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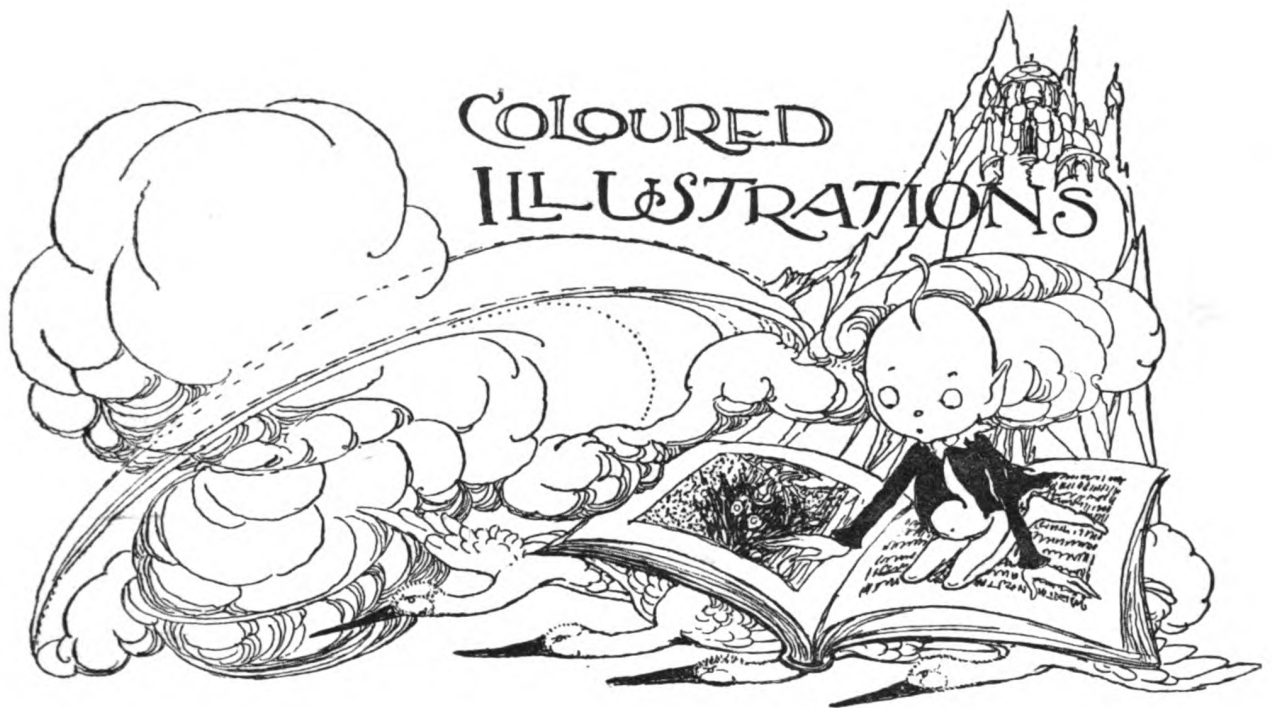
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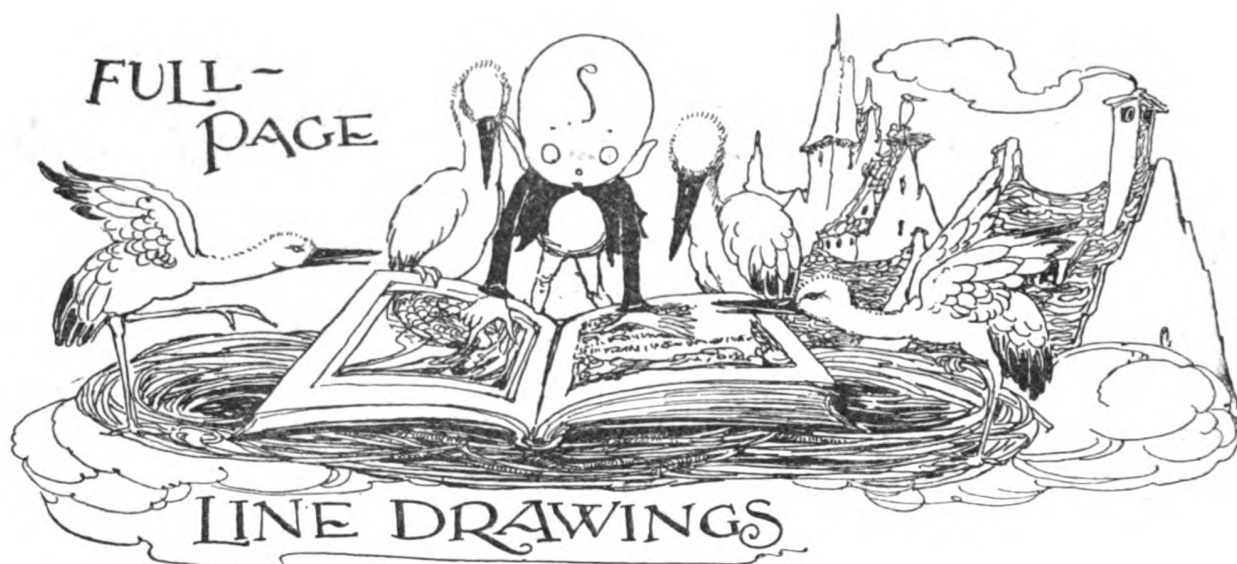
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LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS



“MY flowers are quite faded,” said little Ida. “Only yesterday evening they were so pretty, and now they are all drooping! What can be the reason of it?” asked she of the student who was sitting on the sofa, and who was a great favourite with her, because he used to tell her stories, and cut out all sorts of pretty things for her in paper—such as hearts with little ladies dancing in them, flowers, high castles with open doors, etc. “Why do these flowers look so miserable?” asked she again, showing him a bouquet of faded flowers.

“Do you not know?” replied the student. “Your flowers went to a ball last night, and are tired; that is why they all hang their heads.”

“Surely flowers cannot dance!” exclaimed little Ida.

“Of course they can dance! When it is dark, and we have all gone to bed, they jump about as merrily as possible. They have a ball almost every night.”

“May children go to the ball, too?” asked Ida.

“Yes,” said the student; “daisies and lilies of the valley.”

“And where do the prettiest flowers dance?”

“Have you never been in the large garden in front of the King’s beautiful summer palace—the garden so full of flowers? Surely you remember the swans that come swimming up to you, when you throw them crumbs of bread? There you may imagine they have splendid balls.”

“I was there yesterday with my mother,” said Ida; “but there were

no leaves on the trees, neither did I see a single flower. What could have become of them? There were so many in the summer-time!"

"They are now at the palace," answered the student. "As soon as the King leaves his summer residence, and returns with all his court to the town, the flowers likewise hasten out of the garden and into the palace, where they enjoy themselves famously. Oh, if you could but see them!"

"The two loveliest roses sit on the throne, and act King and Queen. The red cocks-combs then arrange themselves in rows before them, bowing very low; they are the gentlemen of the bedchamber. After that the prettiest among the flowers come in, and open the ball. The blue violets represent midshipmen, and begin dancing with the hyacinths and crocuses, who take the part of young ladies. The tulips and the tall orange-lilies are old dowagers, whose business it is to see that everything goes on with perfect propriety."

"But," asked the astonished little Ida, "may the flowers give their ball in the King's palace?"

"No one knows anything about it," replied the student. "Perhaps once during the night the old chamberlain may come in, with his great bunch of keys, to see that all is right; but as soon as the flowers hear the clanking of the keys they are quite still, and hide themselves behind the long silk window curtains. 'I smell flowers here,' says the old chamberlain; but he is not able to find them."

"That is very funny," said Ida, clapping her little hands; "but could not I see the flowers?"

"To be sure you can see them!" returned the student. "You have only to peep in at the window next time you go to the palace. I did so to-day, and saw a long yellow lily lying on the sofa. That was a court lady."

"Can the flowers in the Botanic Gardens go there, too? Can they go so far?" asked Ida.

"Certainly, for flowers can fly if they wish. The pretty red and yellow butterflies, which look so much like flowers, are, in fact, nothing else. They jump from their stalks, move their petals, as if they were little wings, and fly about. As a reward for always behaving themselves well, they are allowed, instead of sitting quietly on their stalks, to flutter

hither and thither all day long, till wings actually grow out of their petals. You have often seen it yourself.

"For the rest, it may be that the flowers in the Botanic Gardens have not heard what merry-making goes on every night at the palace. But I assure you, if, next time you go into the garden, you whisper to one of the flowers that a ball is to be given at night at Friedricksburg, the news will be repeated from flower to flower, and there they will all fly to a certainty. Then, should the professor come into the garden, and find all his flowers gone, he will not be able to imagine what is become of them."

"Indeed!" said Ida, rather vexed at the student's strange words. "And, pray, how can the flowers repeat to each other what I say to them? I am sure that flowers cannot speak."

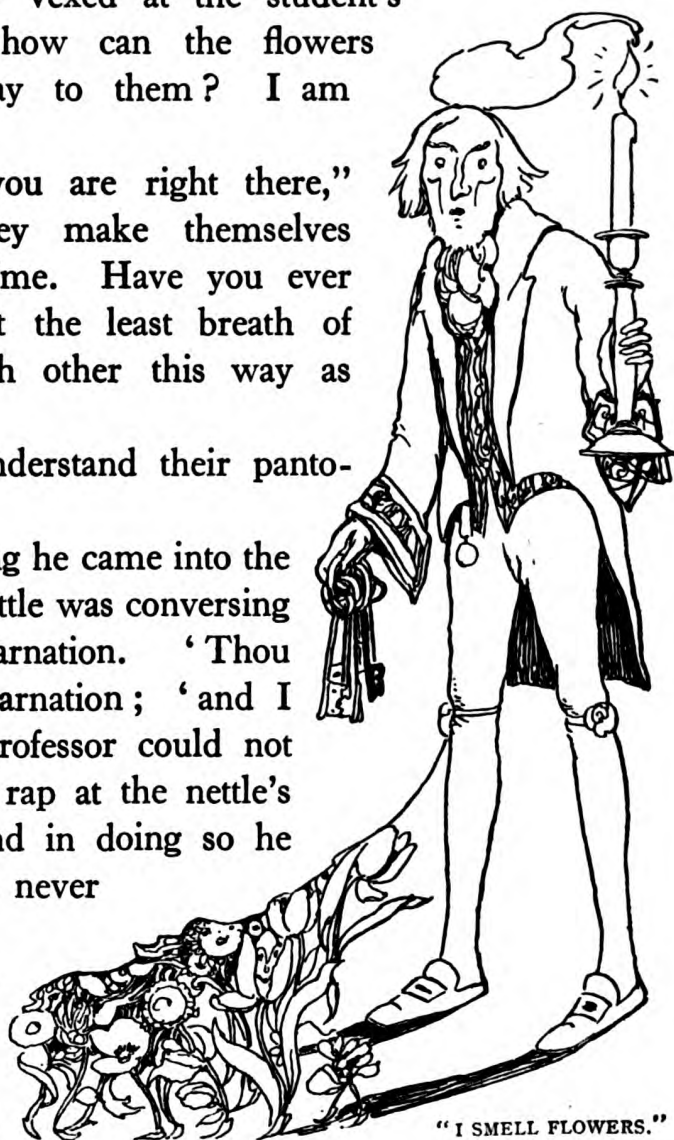
"No, they cannot speak; you are right there," returned the student; "but they make themselves understood by means of pantomime. Have you ever seen them move to and fro at the least breath of air? They can understand each other this way as well as we can by talking."

"And does the professor understand their pantomime?" asked Ida.

"Oh, certainly! One morning he came into the garden, and observed that a tall nettle was conversing in pantomime with a pretty red carnation. 'Thou art so beautiful,' said he to the carnation; 'and I love thee so much!' But the professor could not allow such things; so he gave a rap at the nettle's leaves, which are his fingers, and in doing so he stung himself, and since then has never dared to touch a nettle."

"Ah ha!" laughed little Ida; "that was very foolish."

"What do you mean by this?" here interrupted the



"I SMELL FLOWERS."

tedious counsellor, who had come on a visit; "putting such things into children's heads."

He could not endure the student, and always used to scold, when he saw him cutting out pasteboard figures—as, for instance, a man on the gallows holding a heart in his hand, which was meant for a heart-stealer; or an old witch, riding on a broomstick, and carrying her husband on the tip of her nose. He used always to say then as now: "What do you mean by putting such things into children's heads? It is all nonsensical rubbish!"

However, little Ida thought what the student told her about the flowers was very strange, and she could not help thinking of it. She was now sure that her flowers hung their heads because they were tired with dancing so much the night before; so she took them to the pretty little table, where her playthings were arranged. Her doll lay sleeping in the cradle, but Ida said to her, "You must get up, Sophy, and be content to sleep to-night in the table-drawer, for the poor flowers are ill, and must sleep in your bed; perhaps they will be well again by to-morrow." She then took the doll out of the bed; but the good lady looked vexed at having to give up her cradle to the flowers.

Ida then laid the faded flowers in her doll's bed, drew the covering over them, and told them to lie quite still, whilst she made some tea for them to drink, in order that they might be well again the next day. And she drew the curtains round the bed, so that the sun might not dazzle their eyes.

All the evening she thought of nothing but the student's words; and just before she went to bed, she ran up to the window, where her mother's tulips and hyacinths stood behind the blinds, and whispered to them, "I know very well that you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers moved not a leaf, and seemed not to have heard her.

After she was in bed, she thought for a long time how delightful it must be to see the flowers dancing in the palace, and said to herself, "I wonder whether my flowers have been there?" but before she could settle the point, she fell asleep.

During the night she awoke; she had been dreaming of the student and the flowers, and of the counsellor who told her that they were making



"I KNOW VERY WELL THAT YOU ARE GOING TO A BALL TO-NIGHT."

fun of her. All was still in the room; the night lamp was burning on the table; and her father and mother were both asleep.

"I wonder whether my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" said she. "I should very much like to know." She raised herself a little, looked towards the door, which stood half open; she saw that the flowers and all her playthings were just as she had left them. She listened, and it seemed to her as if some one must be playing on the piano; but the tones were lower and sweeter than she had ever heard before. "Now my flowers must certainly be dancing," said she. "Oh, how I should like to see them!" but she dared not get up for fear of waking her father and mother. "If they would only come in here!" Still the flowers did not come; and the piano sounded so sweetly. At last she could restrain herself no longer, she must see the dancing; so she crept lightly out of bed, and stole towards the door of the room. Oh, what wonderful things she saw then!

The night lamp was burning no longer. However, it was quite light in the room, for the moon shone brightly through the windows on to the floor. All the hyacinths and tulips stood there in two rows, whilst their empty pots might still be seen in front of the windows; they performed figures, and took hold of each other by the leaves. At the piano sat a large

yellow lily, which Ida fancied she must have seen before, for she remembered the student's saying that this flower was exceedingly like Miss Laura, and how every one had laughed at his remark. Now she herself agreed that the lily did resemble this young lady, for she had exactly her way of playing, bowing her long yellow face now to one side, now to the other, and nodding her head to mark the time.

A tall blue crocus now stepped forward, sprang upon the table, on which lay Ida's playthings, went straight up to the bed, and drew back the curtains. There lay the sick flowers; but they arose immediately, and greeted the other flowers, who invited them to dance with them. The sick flowers got up, appeared quite well again, and danced as merrily as the rest.

Suddenly a heavy noise as of something falling from the table was heard. Ida cast a glance that way, and saw that it was the rod which she had found on her bed on the morning of Shrove Tuesday, and which had wished to rank itself among the flowers. It was certainly a very pretty rod, for a wax doll was fixed on the top, wearing a hat, as broad-brimmed as the counsellor's, with a blue and red ribbon tied round it. She hopped upon her three red stilts in the middle of the flowers, and stamped the floor merrily with her feet: she was dancing the Mazurka, which the flowers could not dance, they were so light-footed.

All at once the wax doll on the rod swelled out to a giant, tall and broad, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "What do you mean by putting such things into children's heads? It is all nonsensical rubbish!"

And now the doll looked as much like the counsellor in his broad-brimmed hat, as one drop of water resembles another; her countenance looked as yellow and peevish as his; the paper flowers on the rod, however, pinched her thin legs, and she shrank up to her original size.

The little Ida thought this scene so droll that she could not help laughing; the company, however, did not notice it, for the rod continued to stamp about, till at last the doll-counsellor was obliged to dance, too, whether she would or no, and make herself now thin, now thick, now tall, now short, till at last the flowers interceded for her, and the rod then left her in peace.



LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS

A loud knocking was now heard from the drawer in which lay Ida's doll. It was Sophy who made the noise. She put her head out of the drawer and asked in great astonishment, "Is there a ball here? Why has no one told me of it?"

"Will you dance with me?" asked the nut-crackers.

"Certainly; you are a very fit person to dance with me!" said Sophy, turning her back to him. She then sat down on the table, expecting that one of the flowers would come and ask her to dance; but no one came. She coughed—"Hem! hem!" Still no one came. Meantime the nut-crackers danced by himself, and his steps were not at all badly made.

As no flowers came forward to ask Sophy to dance, all at once she let herself fall down upon the floor, which excited a general commotion, so that all the flowers ran up to ask her whether she had hurt herself; but she had received no injury. The flowers, however, were all very polite, especially Ida's flowers, who took the opportunity of thanking her for the comfortable bed in which they had slept so quietly, and then seized her hands to dance with her, whilst all the other flowers stood in a circle round them. Sophy was now quite happy, and begged Ida's flowers to make use of her bed again after the ball, as she did not at all mind sleeping one night in the table-drawer.

But the flowers said, "We owe you many thanks for your kindness, but we shall not live long enough to need it, as we shall be dead by to-morrow. But ask the little Ida to bury us in the garden near her canary-bird; then we shall grow again next summer, and be even more beautiful than we have been this year."

"No, you must not die!" replied Sophy warmly, as she kissed the flowers. Just then the door was suddenly opened, and a number of flowers danced into the room. Ida could not imagine where these flowers came from, unless from the King's garden. First of all entered two beautiful roses wearing golden crowns; then followed stocks and pinks, bowing to the company on all sides.

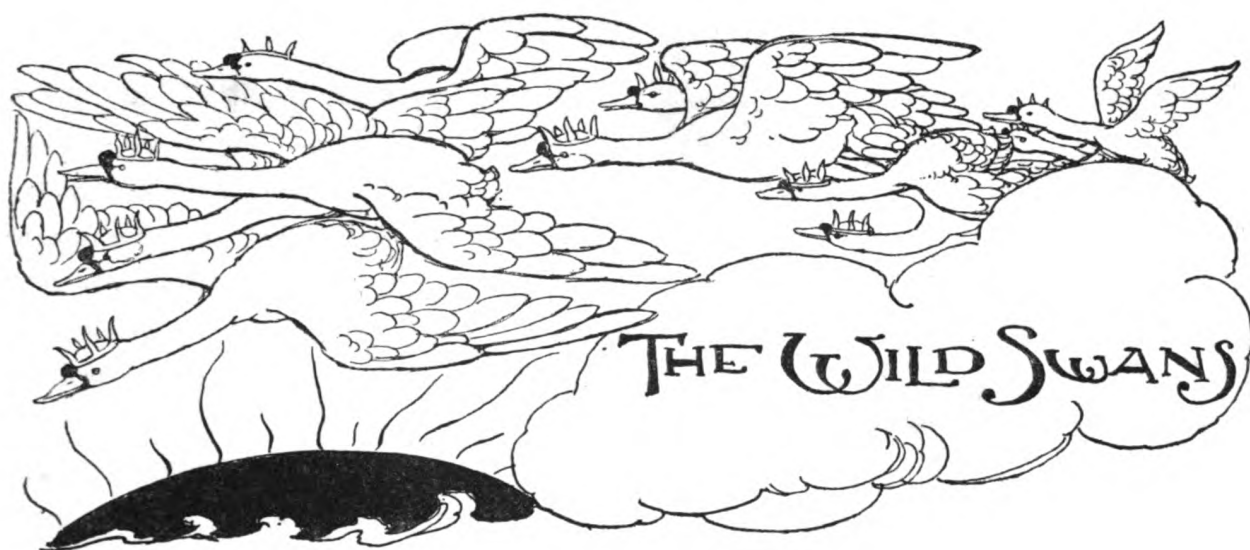
They had also a band of music with them; great poppies and peonies blew upon the shells of peas till they were quite red in the face, whilst

blue and white campanulas rang a merry peal of bells. These were followed by an immense number of different flowers, all dancing—violets, daisies, lilies of the valley, narcissuses, and others, who all moved so gracefully that it was delightful to see them. At last these happy flowers wished one another “good-night”; so little Ida once more crept into bed, to dream of all the beautiful things she had seen.

The next morning, as soon as she was up and dressed, she went to her little table to see if her flowers were there. She drew aside the bed-curtains—yes! there lay the flowers, but they were to-day much more faded than yesterday; Sophy, too, was lying in the drawer, but she looked uncommonly sleepy.

“Can you not remember what you have to say to me?” asked little Ida of her; but Sophy made a most stupid face, and answered not a syllable. “You are not at all good!” said she, “and yet all the flowers let you dance with them.” She then chose out from her playthings a little pasteboard box with birds painted on it, and therein she placed the faded flowers. “That shall be your coffin,” said she; “and when my Norwegian cousins come to see me, they shall go with me to bury you in the garden, so that next summer you may bloom again, and be still more beautiful than you have been this year.”

The two Norwegian cousins of whom she spoke were two lively boys, called Jonas and Esben. Their father had given them two new cross-bows, which they brought with them to show to Ida. She then told them of the poor flowers that were dead, and were to be buried in the garden. The two boys walked in front with their bows slung across their shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the dead flowers in their pretty coffin. A grave was dug for them in the garden. Ida kissed the flowers once more, then laid the box down in the hollow, and Jonas and Esben shot arrows over the grave with their cross-bows, for they had neither guns nor cannon.



FAR hence, in a country whither the Swallows fly in our winter-time, there dwelt a King who had eleven sons, and one daughter, the beautiful Elise. The eleven brothers went to school with stars on their breasts and swords by their sides; they wrote on golden tablets with diamond pens, and could read either with a book or without one; in short, it was easy to perceive that they were princes. Their sister Elise used to sit upon a little glass stool, and had a picture-book which had cost the half of a kingdom. Oh! the children were so happy! But happy they were not to remain always.

Their father, the King, married a very wicked Queen, who was not at all kind to the poor children; they found this out on the first day after the marriage, when there was a grand gala at the palace; for, when the children played at receiving company, instead of giving them as many cakes and sweetmeats as they liked, the Queen gave them only some sand in a little dish, and told them to imagine that was something nice.

The week after, she sent the little Elise to be brought up by some peasants in the country, and it was not long before she told the King so many falsehoods about the poor princes, that he would have nothing more to do with them.

“Away, out into the world, and take care of yourselves,” said the wicked Queen; “fly away in the form of great speechless birds.” But she could not make their transformation so disagreeable as she wished—the princes were changed into eleven white swans. Sending forth a

strange cry, they flew out of the palace windows, over the park and over the wood.

It was still early in the morning when they passed by the place where Elise lay sleeping in the peasant's cottage; they flew several times round the roof, stretched their long necks, and flapped their wings, but no one either heard or saw them; they were forced to fly away, up to the clouds and into the wide world; so on they went to the forest, which extended as far as the seashore.

The poor little Elise stood in the peasant's cottage amusing herself with a green leaf, for she had no other plaything. She pricked a hole in the leaf and peeped through it at the sun, and then she fancied she saw her brothers' bright eyes, and whenever the warm sunbeams shone full upon her cheeks, she thought of her brothers' kisses.

One day passed exactly like the other. When the wind blew through the thick hedge of rose-trees in front of the house, she would whisper to the roses, "Who is more beautiful than you?" but the roses would shake their heads and say, "Elise." And when the peasant's wife sat on Sundays at the door of her cottage reading her hymn-book, the wind would rustle in the leaves and say to the book, "Who is more pious than thou?"—"Elise," replied the hymn-book. And what the roses and the hymn-book said was no more than the truth.

Elise, who was now fifteen years old, was sent for to return home, but when the Queen saw how beautiful she was, she hated her the more and would willingly have transformed her like her brothers into a wild swan; but she dared not do so, because the King wished to see his daughter.

So the next morning the Queen went into a bath which was made of marble, and fitted up with soft pillows and the gayest carpets; she took three toads, kissed them, and said to one, "Settle thou upon Elise's head that she may become dull and sleepy like thee."—"Settle thou upon her forehead," said she to another, "and let her become ugly like thee, so that her father may not know her again." And "Do thou place thyself upon her bosom," whispered she to the third, "that her heart may become corrupt and evil, a torment to herself."

She then put the toads into the clear water, which was immediately tinted with a green colour, and having called Elise, took off her clothes and made her get into the bath—one toad settled among her hair, another on her forehead, and the third upon her bosom; but Elise seemed not at all aware of it. She rose up, and three poppies were seen swimming on the water.

Had not the animals been poisonous and kissed by a witch, they



THREE POPPIES WERE SEEN SWIMMING ON THE WATER.

would have been changed into roses whilst they remained on Elise's head and heart—she was too good for magic to have any power over her. When the Queen perceived this, she rubbed walnut juice all over the maiden's skin, so that it became quite swarthy, smeared a nasty salve over her lovely face, and roughened her long thick hair. It was impossible to recognise the beautiful Elise after this.

When her father saw her, he was shocked, and said she could not be his daughter; no one would have anything to do with her but the mastiff and the swallows; but they, poor things, could not say anything in her favour.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers, not one of whom she saw at the palace. In great distress she stole away and wandered the whole day over fields and moors, till she reached the forest. She knew not where to go, but she was so sad, and longed so much to see her brothers, who had been driven out into the world, that she determined to seek and find them.

She had not been long in the forest when night came on, and she had lost her way amid the darkness. So she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the trunk of a tree. When she was still in the forest, the air was mild, and from the grass and mould around gleamed the green light of many hundred glowworms ; and when Elise lightly touched one of the branches hanging over her, bright insects fell down upon her like falling stars.

All the night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were all children again, played together, wrote with diamond pens upon golden tablets, and looked at the pictures in the beautiful book which had cost half of a kingdom.

But they did not, as formerly, make straight strokes and pothooks upon the tablets ; no, they wrote of the bold actions they had performed and the strange adventures they had encountered, and in the picture-book everything seemed alive. The birds sang, men and women stepped from the book and talked to Elise and her brothers. However, when she turned over the leaves, they jumped back into their places, so that the pictures did not get confused.

When Elise awoke, the sun was already high in the heavens. She could not see it certainly, for the tall trees of the forest entwined their thick-leaved branches closely together, and, as the sunbeams played upon them, they looked like a golden veil waving to and fro. The air was fragrant, and the birds perched upon Elise's shoulders. She heard the noise of water ; there were several springs forming a pool, with the prettiest pebbles at the bottom ; bushes were growing thickly round. But the deer had trodden a broad path through them, and by this path Elise went down to the water's edge. The water was so clear that, had not the boughs and bushes around been moved by the wind, you might have

fancied they were painted upon the smooth surface, so distinctly was each little leaf mirrored upon it.

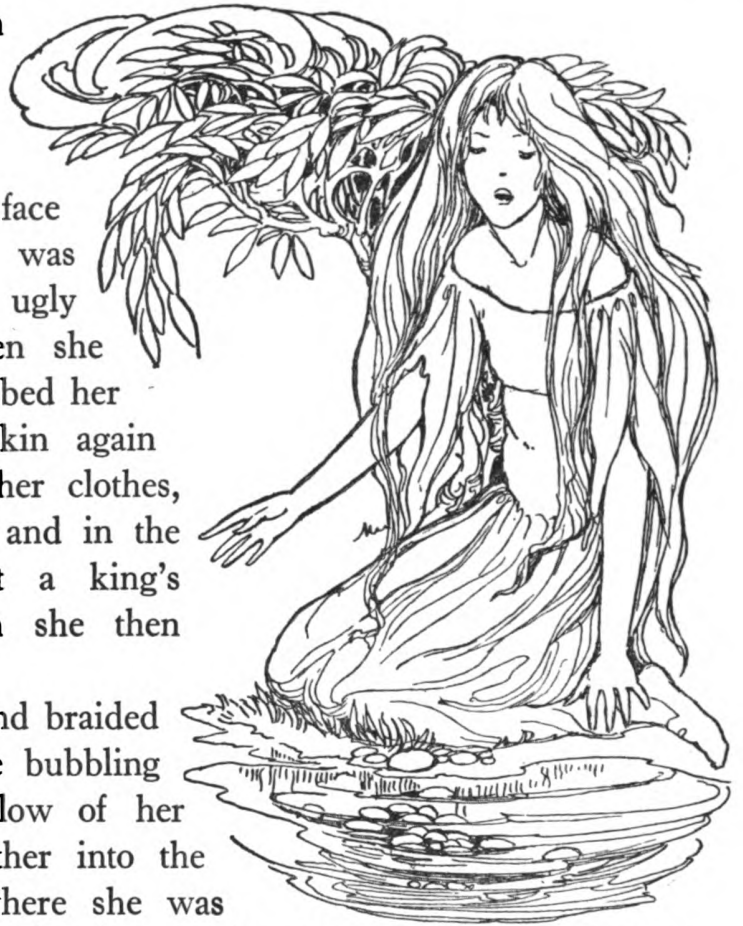
As soon as Elise saw her face reflected in the water, she was quite startled, so brown and ugly did it look; however, when she wetted her little hand, and rubbed her brow and eyes, the white skin again appeared. So Elise took off her clothes, stepped into the fresh water, and in the whole world there was not a king's daughter more beautiful than she then appeared.

After she dressed herself, and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of the hollow of her hand, and then wandered farther into the forest. She did not know where she was going, but she thought of her brothers, and

of the good God who, she felt, would never forsake her. He it was who made the wild crab-trees grow in order to feed the hungry, and who showed her a tree whose boughs bent under the weight of their fruit. She made her noonday meal under its shade, propped up the boughs, and then walked on amid the dark twilight of the forest.

It was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, and the rustling of each little withered leaf that was crushed beneath her feet. Not a bird was to be seen; not a single sunbeam penetrated through the thick foliage; and the tall stems of the trees stood so close together, that, when she looked straight before her, she seemed encircled by trellis-work. Oh! there was a loneliness in this forest such as Elise had never known before.

And the night was so dark! Not a single glowworm sent forth its



ELISE SAW HER FACE IN THE WATER.

light. Sad at heart she lay down to sleep, and then it seemed to her as if the boughs above her opened, and she saw an Angel looking down with gentle aspect, and a thousand little cherubs all around him. When she awoke in the morning she could not tell whether this was a dream, or whether she had really been so watched.

She walked on, and met an old woman with a basket full of berries; the old woman gave her some of them, and Elise asked if she had seen eleven princes ride through the wood.

"No," said the old woman, "but I saw yesterday eleven Swans with golden crowns on their heads swim down the brook near this place."

And she led Elise to a precipice, the base of which was washed by a brook; the trees on each side stretched their long, leafy branches towards each other, and, where they could not unite, the roots had disengaged themselves from the earth and hung over the water.

Elise bade the old woman farewell, and wandered by the side of the stream till she came to the place where it reached the open sea.

The great, beautiful sea lay stretched out before the maiden's eyes, but not a ship, not a boat was to be seen; how was she to go on? She observed the little stones on the shore, all of which the waves had washed into a round form; glass, iron, stone, everything that lay scattered there, had been moulded into shape, and yet the water which had done this was much softer than Elise's delicate little hand.

"It rolls on unweariedly," said she, "and subdues what is so hard; I will be no less unwearied! Thank you for the lesson you have given me, ye bright rolling waves; some day, my heart tells me, you will carry me to my dear brothers!"

There lay upon the wet sea-grass eleven white swan-feathers; Elsie collected them together; drops of water hung about them, whether dew or tears she could not tell. She was quite alone on the seashore, but she did not care for that; the sea presented an eternal variety to her, more, indeed, in a few hours than the gentle inland waters would have offered in a whole year.

When a black cloud passed over the sky, it seemed as if the sea



AT SUNSET ELISE SAW ELEVEN WILD SWANS FLY TOWARDS THE LAND.

were saying, "I, too, can look dark;" and then the wind would blow and the waves fling out their white foam. But when the clouds shone with a bright red tint, and the winds were asleep, the sea also became like a rose-leaf in hue. It was now green, now white; but as it reposed peacefully, a slight breeze on the shore caused the water to heave gently, like the bosom of a sleeping child.

At sunset Elise saw eleven Wild Swans with golden crowns on their heads fly towards the land; they flew one behind another, looking like a streaming white ribbon. Elise climbed the precipice, and concealed herself behind a bush; the swans settled close to her, and flapped their long white wings.

As the sun sank beneath the water, the swans also vanished, and in their place stood eleven handsome princes, the brothers of Elise. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were very much altered, Elise knew them to be her brothers. She ran into their arms, called them by their names—and how happy were they to see and recognise their sister, who was now grown so tall and so beautiful! They laughed and wept, and soon told each other how wickedly their step-mother had treated them.

"We," said the eldest of the brothers, "fly or swim as long as the

sun is above the horizon, but, when it sinks below, we appear again in our human form. We are therefore obliged to look out for a safe resting-place, for, if at sunset we were flying among the clouds, we should fall down as soon as we resumed our own form. We do not dwell here. A land quite as beautiful as this lies on the opposite side of the sea, but it is far off. To reach it, we have to cross the deep waters, and there is no island midway on which we may rest at night; one little solitary rock rises from the waves, and upon it we find only just room enough to stand side by side.

"There we spend the night in our human form, and when the sea is rough, we are sprinkled by its foam; but we are thankful for this resting-place, for without it we should never be able to visit our dear native country. Only once in the year is this visit to the home of our fathers permitted. We require two of the longest days for our flight, and can remain here only eleven days, during which time we fly over the large forest, whence we can see the palace in which we were born, where our father dwells, and the tower of the church in which our mother was buried.

"Here, even the trees and bushes seem of kin to us; here, the wild horses still race over the plains, as in the days of our childhood; here, the charcoal-burner still sings the same old tunes to which we used to dance in our youth; here, we are still drawn, and here we have found thee, thou dear little sister! We have yet two days longer to stay here; then we must fly over the sea to a land beautiful indeed, but not our fatherland. How shall we take thee with us? We have neither ship nor boat!"

"How shall I be able to release you?" said the sister. And so they went on talking almost the whole of the night. They slumbered only a few hours.

Elise was awakened by the rustling of swans' wings which were fluttering above her. Her brothers were again transformed, and for some time flew around in large circles. At last they flew far, far away; one of them remained behind; it was the youngest, and he laid his head in her lap and she stroked his white wings. They remained the whole day

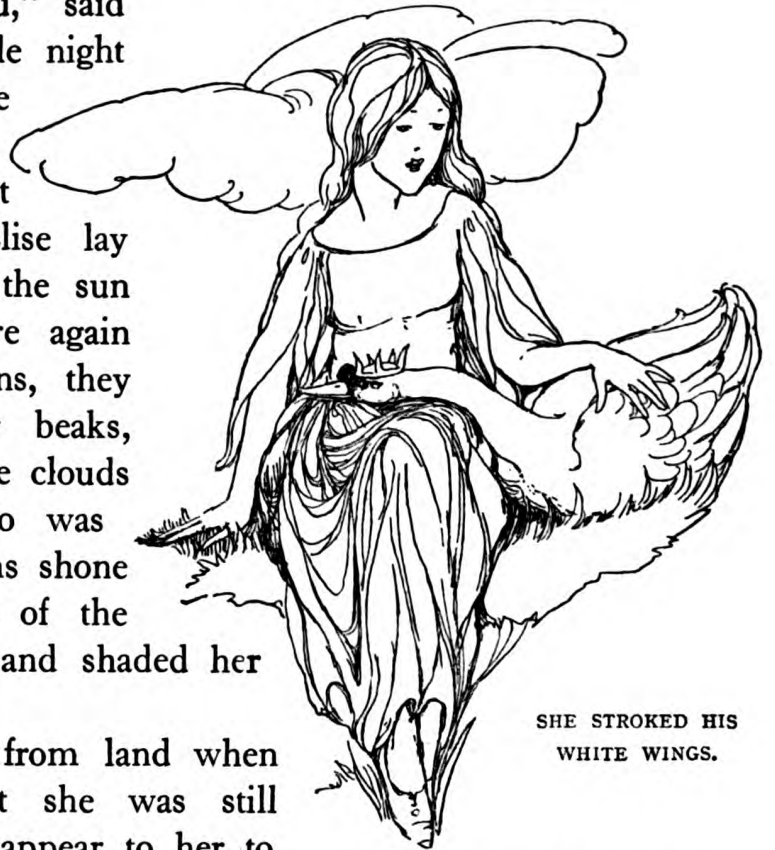
together. Towards evening the others came back, and when the sun set, they stood again on the firm ground in their natural form.

"To-morrow we shall fly away, and may not return for a year, but we cannot leave thee; hast thou courage to accompany us? Our arms are strong enough to bear thee through the forest; shall we not have strength enough in our wings to carry thee over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Elise. They spent the whole night in weaving a mat of the pliant willow bark and the tough rushes, and their mat was thick and strong. Elise lay down upon it, and when the sun rose, and the brothers were again transformed into wild swans, they seized the mat with their beaks, and flew up high among the clouds with their dear sister, who was still sleeping. The sunbeams shone full upon her face; so one of the swans flew over her head, and shaded her with his broad wings.

They were already far from land when Elise awoke: she thought she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be travelling through the air, and over the sea. By her side lay a cluster of pretty berries, and a handful of delicious roots. Her youngest brother had laid them there, and she thanked him with a smile, for she knew him as the swan who flew over her head and shaded her with his wings.

They flew so high that the first ship they saw beneath them seemed like a white sea-gull hovering over the water. Elise saw behind her a large cloud, which looked like a mountain, and on it she saw the shadows of herself and the eleven swans. It formed a picture more splendid than any she had ever yet seen. Soon, however, the sun rose higher, the



SHE STROKED HIS
WHITE WINGS.

cloud remained far behind, and then the floating, shadowy picture disappeared.

The whole day they continued to fly with a whizzing noise somewhat like an arrow; but yet they went slower than usual—they had their sister to carry. A heavy tempest gathered as the evening approached; Elise anxiously watched the sun. It was setting; still the solitary rock could not be seen; it appeared to her that the swans plied their wings with increasing vigour.

Alas! it would be her fault if her brothers did not arrive at the place in time! they would become human beings when the sun set, and, if this happened before they reached the rock, they must fall into the sea and be drowned. She prayed to God most fervently; still no rock was to be seen; the black clouds drew nearer, violent gusts of wind announced the approach of a tempest, the clouds rested upon a huge wave which rolled quickly forwards, and one flash of lightning rapidly succeeded another.

The sun was now on the rim of the sea. Elise's heart beat violently; the swans shot downwards so swiftly that she thought she must fall. But again they began to hover; the sun was half sunk beneath the water, and at that moment she saw the little rock below her; it looked like a seal's head when he raises it just above the water. And the sun was sinking fast—it seemed scarcely larger than a star—her foot touched the hard ground, and the sun vanished like the last spark on a burnt piece of paper.

Arm in arm stood her brothers around her; there was only just room for her and them—the sea beat tempestuously against the rock, flinging over them a shower of foam. The sky seemed in a blaze, with the fast succeeding flashes of fire that lightened it, and peal after peal of thunder rolled, but sister and brothers kept firm hold of each other's hands. They sang a psalm, and their psalm gave them comfort and courage.

By daybreak the air was pure and still, and, as soon as the sun rose, the swans flew away with Elise from the rock. The waves rose higher and higher, and, when they looked from the clouds down upon



IN THE CENTRE WAS A PALACE A MILE IN LENGTH.

the blackish-green sea, covered with white foam, they might have fancied that millions of swans were swimming on its surface.

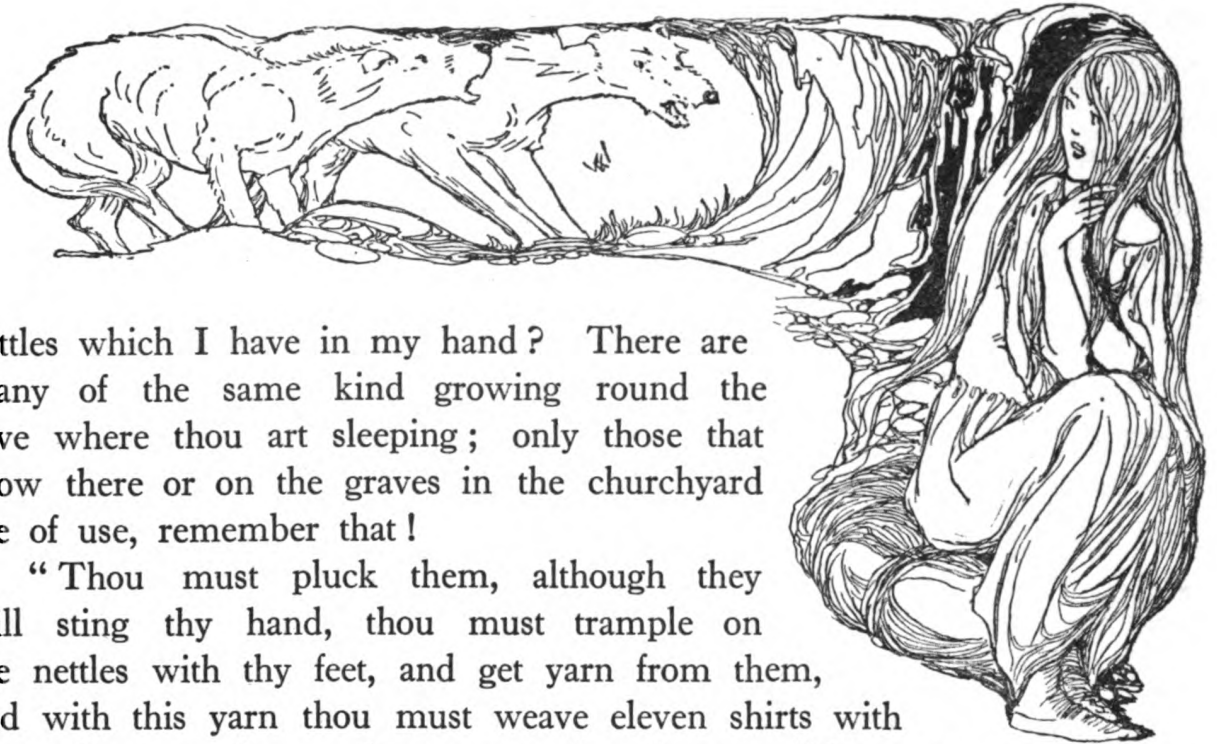
As day advanced, Elise saw floating in the air before her a land of mountains with glaciers, and in the centre, a palace a mile in length, with splendid colonnades, surrounded by palm-trees and gorgeous-looking flowers as large as mill-wheels. She asked if this was the country to which they were flying, but the swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the beautiful airy castle of the fairy Morgana, where no human being was admitted. Whilst Elise still bent her eyes upon it, mountains, trees, and castle all disappeared, and in their place stood twelve churches with high towers and pointed windows—she fancied she heard the organ play, but it was only the murmur of the sea.

She was now close to these churches, but behold! they changed into a large fleet sailing under them; she looked down and saw it was only a sea-mist passing rapidly over the water. An endless variety floated before her eyes, till at last the land to which she was going appeared in sight. Beautiful blue mountains, cedar woods, towns, and castles rose to view. Long before sunset Elise sat down among the mountains, in front of a large cavern; delicate young creepers grew around so thickly that it appeared covered with gay, embroidered carpets.

“Now we shall see what thou wilt dream of to-night!” said her youngest brother, as he showed her the sleeping chamber destined for her.

“Oh, that I could dream how you might be freed from the spell!” said she; and this thought filled her mind. She prayed for God’s help, nay, even in her dreams she continued praying, and it appeared to her that she was flying up high in the air towards the castle of the fairy Morgana. The fairy came forward to meet her, radiant and beautiful, and yet she fancied she resembled the old woman who had given her berries in the forest, and told her of the swans with golden crowns.

“Thou canst free thy brothers,” said she; “but hast thou courage and patience enough? The water is indeed softer than thy delicate hands, and yet can mould the hard stones to its will, but then it cannot feel the pain which thy tender fingers will feel; it has no heart, and cannot suffer the anxiety and grief which thou must suffer. Dost thou see these stinging



nettles which I have in my hand? There are many of the same kind growing round the cave where thou art sleeping; only those that grow there or on the graves in the churchyard are of use, remember that!

“Thou must pluck them, although they will sting thy hand, thou must trample on the nettles with thy feet, and get yarn from them, and with this yarn thou must weave eleven shirts with long sleeves; throw them over the eleven wild swans, and the spell is broken. But mark this: from the moment that thou beginnest thy work till it is completed, even should it take thee years, thou must not speak a word; the first syllable that escapes thy lips will fall like a dagger into the hearts of thy brothers; on thy tongue depends their life. Mark well all this!”

And at the same moment the fairy touched Elise's hands with a nettle, which made them burn like fire, and Elise awoke. It was broad daylight, and close to her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell upon her knees, thanked God, and then went out of the cave in order to begin her work. She plucked with her own delicate hands the stinging-nettles; they burned large blisters on her hands and arms, but she bore the pain willingly in the hope of releasing her dear brothers. She trampled on the nettles with her naked feet, and spun the green yarn.

At sunset came her brothers. Elise's silence quite frightened them; they thought it must be the effect of some fresh spell of their wicked step-mother. But when they saw her blistered hands, they found out

what their sister was doing for their sakes. The youngest brother wept, and, when his tears fell upon her hands, Elise felt no more pain, and the blisters disappeared.

The whole night she spent in her work, for she could not rest till she had released her brothers. All the following day she sat in her solitude, for the swans had flown away; but never had time passed so quickly. One shirt was ready; she now began the second.

Suddenly a hunting horn resounded among the mountains. Elise was frightened. The noise came nearer, she heard the hounds barking; in great terror she fled into the cave, bound up the nettles which she had gathered and combed into a bundle, and sat down upon it.

In the same moment a large dog sprang out from the bushes. Two others immediately followed, they barked loudly, ran away and then returned. It was not long before the hunters stood in front of the cave; the handsomest among them was the King of that country; he stepped up to Elise. Never had he seen a lovelier maiden.

"How camest thou here, thou beautiful child?" said he.

Elise shook her head: she dared not speak, for a word might have cost her the life of her brothers, and she hid her hands under her apron lest the King should see how she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he, "thou must not stay here! if thou art good as thou art beautiful, I will dress thee in velvet and silk, I will put a gold crown upon thy head, and thou shalt dwell in my palace!" So he lifted her upon his horse, while she wept and wrung her hands; but the King said, "I only desire thy happiness! thou shalt thank me for this some day!" and away he rode over mountains and valleys, holding her on his horse in front, whilst the other hunters followed.

When the sun set, the King's magnificent capital, with its churches and domes, lay before them, and the King led Elise into the palace, where, in a marble hall, fountains were playing, and the walls and ceiling displayed the most beautiful paintings. But Elise cared not for all this splendour; she wept and mourned in silence, even whilst some female attendants dressed her in royal robes, wove costly pearls in her hair, and drew soft gloves over her blistered hands.

And now she was fully dressed, and, as she stood in her splendid attire, her beauty was so dazzling that the courtiers all bowed low before her; and the King chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the "beautiful lady of the wood must certainly be a witch, who had blinded their eyes, and infatuated the King's heart."

But the King did not listen; he ordered that music should be played. A sumptuous banquet was served up, and the loveliest maidens danced



SHE WAS OBLIGED TO PASS CLOSE BY THEM.

round the bride; she was led through fragrant gardens into magnificent halls, but not a smile was seen to play upon her lips or beam from her eyes. The King then opened a small room next her sleeping apartment; it was adorned with costly green tapestry, and exactly resembled the cave in which she had been found; upon the ground lay the bundle of yarn which she had spun from the nettles, and by the wall hung the shirt she had completed. One of the hunters had brought all this, thinking there must be something wonderful in it.

"Here thou mayst dream of thy former home," said the King;

"here is the work which employed thee; amidst all thy present splendour it may sometimes give thee pleasure to fancy thyself there again."

When Elise saw what was so dear to her heart, she smiled, and the blood returned to her cheeks; she thought her brothers might still be freed, and she kissed the King's hand. He pressed her to his heart, and ordered the bells of all the churches in the city to be rung, to announce the celebration of their wedding. The beautiful dumb maiden of the wood was to become Queen of the land.

The Archbishop whispered evil words in the King's ear, but they made no impression upon him; the marriage was solemnised, and the Archbishop himself was obliged to put the crown upon her head. In his rage he pressed the narrow rim so firmly on her forehead that it hurt her; but a heavier weight—sorrow for her brothers—lay upon her heart, and she did not feel bodily pain. She was still silent, a single word would have killed her brothers; her eyes, however, beamed with heartfelt love to the King, so good and handsome, who had done so much to make her happy.

She became more warmly attached to him every day. Oh! how much she wished she might confide to him all her sorrows. But she was forced to remain silent; she could not speak until her work was completed! To this end she stole away every night, and went into the little room that was fitted up in imitation of the cave; there she worked at her shirts, but by the time she had begun the seventh, all her yarn was spent.

She knew that the nettles she needed grew in the churchyard, but she must gather them herself; how was she to get them?

"Oh, what is the pain in my fingers compared to the anguish my heart suffers!" thought she. "I must venture to the churchyard; the good God will protect me!"

Fearful, as though she were about to do something wrong, one moonlight night she crept down to the garden, and through the long avenues into the lonely road leading to the churchyard. She saw sitting on one of the broadest tombstones a number of ugly old witches. They took off their ragged clothes as if they were going to bathe, and digging



THE WILD-SWANS

with their long, lean fingers into the fresh grass, drew up the dead bodies and devoured the flesh.

Elise was obliged to pass close by them, and the witches fixed their wicked eyes upon her; but she repeated her prayer, gathered the stinging-nettles, and took them back with her into the palace. One person only had seen her; it was the Archbishop, who was awake when others slept. Now he was convinced that all was not right about the Queen: she must be a witch, who had, through her enchantments, infatuated the King and all the people.

In the Confessional he told the King what he had seen, and what he feared; and, when the words came from his lips, the images of the saints shook their heads, as though they would say, "It is untrue; Elise is innocent!" But the Archbishop explained the omen otherwise; he thought it was a testimony against her that the holy images shook their heads at hearing of her sin.

Two large tears rolled down the King's cheeks; he returned home in doubt; he pretended to sleep at night, though sleep never visited him; and he noticed that Elise rose from her bed every night, and every time he followed her secretly and saw her enter her little room.

His countenance became darker every day; Elise perceived it, though she knew not the cause. She was much pained, and besides, what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers! Her bitter tears ran down on the royal velvet and purple; they looked like bright diamonds, and all who saw the magnificence that surrounded her, wished themselves in her place.

She had now nearly finished her work, only one shirt was wanting; unfortunately, yarn was wanting also; she had not a single nettle left. Once more, only this one time, she must go to the churchyard and gather a few handfuls. She shuddered when she thought of the solitary walk and of the horrid witches, but her resolution was as firm as her trust in God.

Elise went, the King and the Archbishop followed her; they saw her disappear at the churchyard door, and, when they came nearer, they saw the witches sitting on the tombstones as Elise had seen them, and the

King turned away, for he believed her whose head had rested on his bosom that very evening to be amongst them. "Let the people judge her!" said he. And the people condemned her to be burned.

She was now dragged from the King's apartments into a dark, damp prison, where the wind whistled through the grated window. Instead of velvet and silk, they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered; on that must she lay her head, and the shirts she had woven must serve her as mattress and counterpane. But they could not have given her anything she valued so much; and she continued her work, at the same time praying earnestly to her God. The boys sang songs about her in front of her prison; not a soul comforted her with one word of love.

Towards evening she heard the rustling of Swans' wings at the grating. It was the youngest of her brothers, who had at last found his sister, and she sobbed aloud for joy, although she knew that the coming night would probably be the last of her life; but then her work was almost finished, and her brother was near.

The Archbishop came in order to spend the last hour with her; he had promised the King he would; but she shook her head and entreated him with her eyes and gestures to go. This night she must finish her work, or all she had suffered—her pain, her anxiety, her sleepless nights—would be in vain. The Archbishop went away with many angry words, but the unfortunate Elise knew herself to be innocent, and went on with her work.

Little mice ran busily about and dragged the nettles to her feet, wishing to help her; and the thrush perched on the iron bars of the window, and sang all night as merrily as he could, that Elise might not lose courage.

It was still twilight, just one hour before sunrise, when the eleven brothers stood before the palace gates, requesting an audience with the King. But it could not be, they were told; it was still night, the King was asleep, and they dared not wake him. They entreated, they threatened; the guard came up, and the King himself at last stepped out to ask what was the matter. At that moment the sun rose, the brothers could be seen no longer, and eleven white Swans flew away over the palace.



THIS NIGHT SHE MUST FINISH HER WORK.

The people poured forth from the gates of the city ; they wished to see the witch burned. One wretched horse drew the cart in which Elise was placed ; a coarse frock of sackcloth had been put on her, her beautiful long hair hung loosely over her shoulders, her cheeks were of a deadly paleness, her lips moved gently, and her fingers wove the green yarn. Even on her way to her cruel death she did not give up her work ; the ten shirts lay at her feet, and she was now labouring to complete the eleventh. The rabble insulted her.

“ Look at the witch, how she mutters ! She has not a hymn-book in her hand ; no, there she sits with her accursed hocus-pocus. Tear it from her ; tear it into a thousand pieces ! ”

And they all crowded about her, and were on the point of snatching away the shirts, when eleven white Swans came flying towards the cart ; they settled all round her, and flapped their wings. The crowd gave way in terror.

“ It is a sign from Heaven ! She is certainly innocent ! ” whispered some ; they dared not say so aloud.

The Sheriff now seized her by the hand ; in a moment she threw the eleven shirts over the Swans, and eleven handsome Princes appeared in

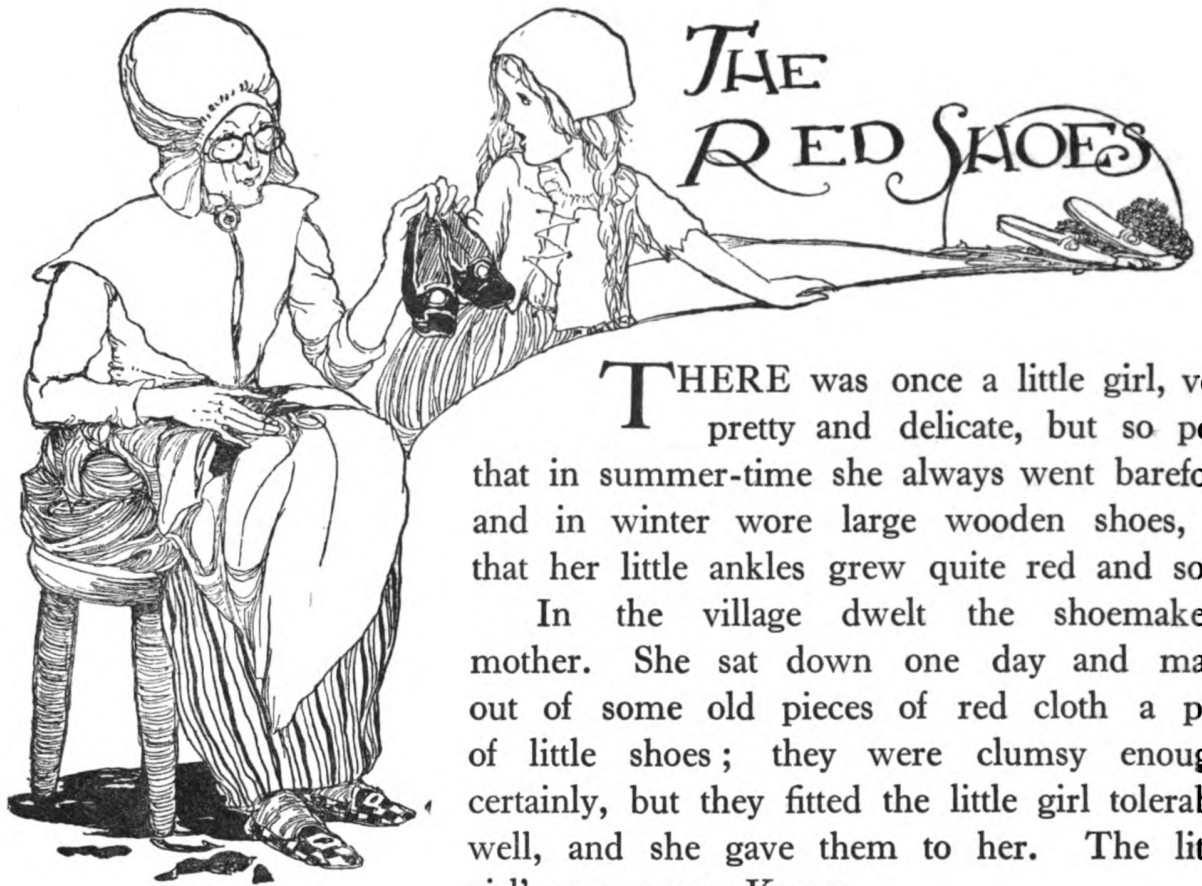
their place. The youngest had, however, only one arm, and a wing instead of the other, for one sleeve was deficient in his shirt—it had not been quite finished.

“Now I may speak,” said she: “I am innocent!”

And the people who had seen what had happened bowed before her as before a saint. She, however, sank lifeless in her brothers' arms; suspense, fear, and grief had quite exhausted her.

“Yes, she is innocent,” said her eldest brother, and he now related their wonderful history. Whilst he spoke a fragrance as delicious as though it came from millions of roses diffused itself around, for every piece of wood in the funeral pile had taken root and sent forth branches. A hedge of blooming red roses surrounded Elise, and above all the others blossomed a flower of dazzling white colour, bright as a star. The King plucked it and laid it on Elise's bosom, whereupon she awoke from her trance with peace and joy in her heart.

And all the church-bells began to ring of their own accord; and birds flew to the spot in swarms; and there was a festive procession back to the palace, such as no King has ever seen equalled.



THERE was once a little girl, very pretty and delicate, but so poor that in summer-time she always went barefoot, and in winter wore large wooden shoes, so that her little ankles grew quite red and sore.

In the village dwelt the shoemaker's mother. She sat down one day and made out of some old pieces of red cloth a pair of little shoes; they were clumsy enough, certainly, but they fitted the little girl tolerably well, and she gave them to her. The little girl's name was Karen.

It was the day of her mother's funeral when the red shoes were given to Karen; they were not at all suitable for mourning, but she had no others, and in them she walked with bare legs behind the miserable straw bier.

Just then a large old carriage rolled by; in it sat a large old lady, who looked at the little girl and pitied her, and said to the priest, "Give me the little girl and I will take care of her."

Karen thought it was all for the sake of the red shoes that the old lady had taken this fancy to her; but the old lady said they were frightful, and they were burned. And Karen was dressed very neatly; she was taught to read and to work; and people told her she was pretty. But the mirror said, "Thou art more than pretty, thou art beautiful!"

It happened one day that the Queen travelled through that part of the country with her little daughter, the Princess; and all the people, Karen amongst them, crowded in front of the palace, whilst the little

Princess stood, dressed in white, at a window, for every one to see her. She wore neither train nor gold crown; but on her feet were pretty red morocco shoes—much prettier ones, indeed, than those the shoemaker's mother had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world could be compared to these red shoes!

Karen was now old enough to be confirmed; she was to have both new frock and new shoes. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot. Large glass cases full of neat shoes and shining boots were fixed round the room; however, the old lady's sight was not very good, and, naturally enough, she had not so much pleasure in looking at them as Karen had. Amongst the shoes was a pair of red ones, just like those worn by the Princess. How gay they were! And the shoemaker said they had been made for a count's daughter, but had not quite fitted her.

"They are of polished leather," said the old lady; "see how they shine!"

"Yes, they shine beautifully!" exclaimed Karen. And, as the shoes fitted her, they were bought; but the old lady did not know that they were red, for she would never have suffered Karen to go to confirmation in red shoes. But Karen did so.

Everybody looked at her feet, and, as she walked up the nave to the chancel, it seemed to her that even the antique sculptured figures on the monuments, with their stiff ruffs and long black robes, fixed their eyes on her red shoes. Of them only she thought when the Bishop laid his hand on her head, when he spoke of Holy Baptism, of her covenant with God, and how that she must now be a full-grown Christian. The organ sent forth its deep, solemn tones, the children's sweet voices mingled with those of the choristers, but Karen still thought only of her red shoes.

That afternoon, when the old lady was told that Karen had worn red shoes at her confirmation, she was much vexed, and told Karen that they were quite unsuitable; and that, henceforward, whenever she went to church, she must wear black shoes, were they ever so old.

Next Sunday was the communion day. Karen looked first at the red shoes, then at the black ones, then at the red again, and—put them on.

It was beautiful sunshiny weather ; Karen and the old lady walked to church through the cornfields ; the path was very dusty.

At the church door stood an old soldier ; he was leaning on crutches, and had a marvellously long beard, not white, but reddish-hued ; and he bowed almost to the earth, and asked the old lady if he might wipe the dust off her shoes. And Karen put out her little foot also. " Oh, what pretty dancing-shoes ! " quoth the old soldier ; " take care, and mind you



" OH, WHAT PRETTY DANCING-SHOES ! " QUOTH THE OLD SOLDIER.

do not let them slip off when you dance ; " and he passed his hands over them.

The old lady gave the soldier a halfpenny, and then went with Karen into church.

And every one looked at Karen's red shoes, and all the carved figures, too, bent their gaze upon them ; and when Karen knelt before the altar, the red shoes still floated before her eyes ; she thought of them and of them only ; and she forgot to join in the hymn of praise—she forgot to repeat " Our Father."

At last all the people came out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen was just lifting her foot to follow her, when the old soldier standing in the porch exclaimed, "Only look, what pretty dancing shoes!"

And Karen could not help it; she felt she must make a few of her dancing steps; and after she had once begun, her feet continued to move, just as if the shoes had received power over them: she danced round the churchyard, she could not stop. The coachman was obliged to run after her; he took hold of her and lifted her into the carriage, but the feet still continued to dance, so as to kick the good old lady most cruelly. At last the shoes were taken off, and the feet had rest.

And now the shoes were put away in a press, but Karen could not help going to look at them every now and then.

The old lady lay ill in bed; the doctor said she could not live much longer. She certainly needed careful nursing, and who should be her nurse and constant attendant but Karen?

But there was to be a grand ball in the town, and Karen was invited; she looked at the old lady who was almost dying—she looked at the red shoes—she put them on, there could be no harm in doing that, at least; she went to the ball, and began to dance.

But, when she wanted to move to the right, the shoes bore her to the left; and, when she would dance up the room, the shoes danced down the room, danced down the stairs, through the streets, and through the gates of the town. Dance she did, and dance she must, straight out into the dark wood.

Something all at once shone through the trees. She thought at first it must be the moon's bright face, shining blood-red through the night mists; but no, it was the old soldier with the red beard. He sat there, nodding at her, and repeating, "Only look, what pretty dancing-shoes!"

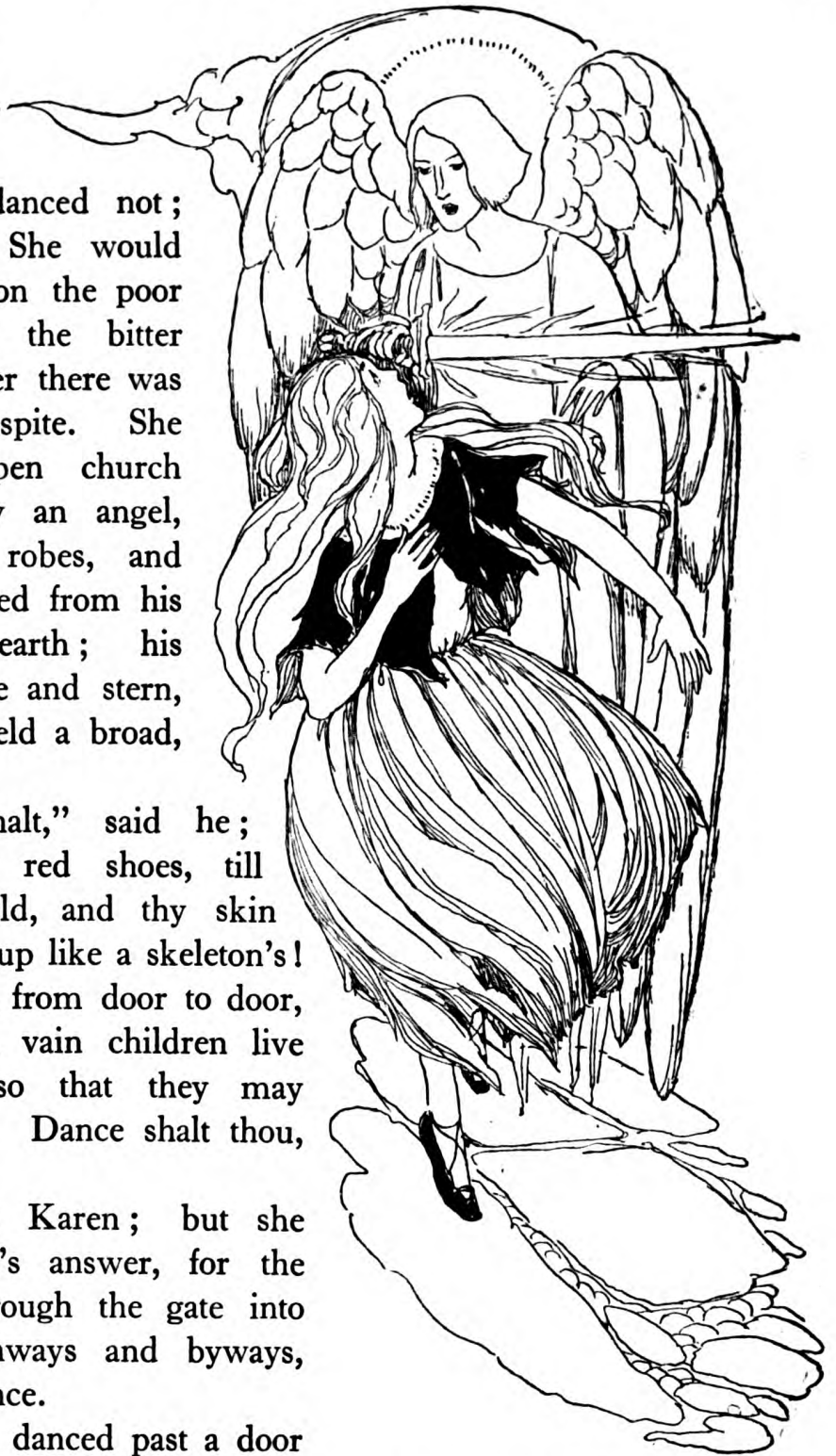
She was very much frightened, and tried to throw off her red shoes, but could not unclasp them. She hastily tore off her stockings, but the shoes she could not get rid of—they had, it seemed, grown on to her feet. Dance she did, and dance she must, over field and meadow, in rain and in sunshine, by night and by day.

By night! that was most horrible! She danced into the lonely churchyard, but the dead there danced not; they were at rest. She would fain have sat down on the poor man's grave, where the bitter tansy grew, but for her there was neither rest nor respite. She danced past the open church door; there she saw an angel, clad in long white robes, and with wings that reached from his shoulders to the earth; his countenance was grave and stern, and in his hand he held a broad, glittering sword.

"Dance thou shalt," said he; "dance on, in thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and thy skin shrinks and crumples up like a skeleton's! Dance thou shalt still, from door to door, and wherever proud, vain children live thou shalt knock, so that they may hear thee and fear! Dance shalt thou, dance on——"

"Mercy!" cried Karen; but she heard not the angel's answer, for the shoes carried her through the gate into the fields, along highways and byways, and still she must dance.

One morning she danced past a door she knew well; she heard psalm-singing



HIS COUNTENANCE WAS GRAVE AND STERN.

from within, and presently a coffin, strewn with flowers, was borne out. Then Karen knew that the good old lady was dead; and she felt herself a thing forsaken by all mankind, and accursed by the Angel of God.

Dance she did, and dance she must, even through the dark night; the shoes bore her continually over thorns and briers, till her limbs were torn and bleeding. Away she danced over the heath to a little solitary house; she knew that the headsman dwelt there, and she tapped with her fingers against the panes, crying—

“Come out! come out! I cannot come in to you, I am dancing.”

And the headsman replied, “Surely thou knowest not who I am. I cut off the heads of wicked men, and my axe is very sharp and keen.”

“Cut not off my head!” said Karen; “for then I could not live to repent of my sin; but cut off my feet with the red shoes.”

And then she confessed to him all her sin, and the headsman cut off her feet with the red shoes on them; but even after this the shoes still danced away with those little feet over the fields, and into the deep forests.

And the headsman made her a pair of wooden feet, and hewed down some boughs to serve her as crutches; and he taught her the psalm which is always repeated by criminals; and she kissed the hand that had guided the axe, and went her way over the heath.

“Now, I have certainly suffered quite enough through the red shoes,” thought Karen; “I will go to church and let people see me once more!” and she went as fast as she could to the church-porch; but, as she approached it, the red shoes danced before her, and she was frightened, and turned her back.

All that week through she endured the keenest anguish, and shed many bitter tears. However, when Sunday came, she said to herself, “Well, I must have suffered and striven enough by this time; I dare say I am quite as good as many of those who are holding their heads so high in church.”

So she took courage and went there; but she had not passed the churchyard gate before she saw the red shoes again dancing before her, and in great terror she again turned back, and more deeply than ever bewailed her sin.



"COME OUT! COME OUT! I CANNOT COME IN TO YOU."

She then went to the pastor's house, and begged that some employment might be given her, promising to work hard and do all she could. She did not wish for any wages, she said; she only wanted a roof to shelter her, and to dwell with good people. And the pastor's wife had pity on her, and took her into her service. And Karen was grateful and industrious.

Every evening she sat silently listening to the pastor, while he read the Holy Scriptures aloud. All the children loved her; but when she heard them talk about dress and finery, and about being as beautiful as a queen, she would sorrowfully shake her head.

Again Sunday came; all the pastor's household went to church, and they asked her if she would not go too, but she sighed and looked, with tears in her eyes, upon her crutches.

When they were all gone, she went into her own little, lowly chamber—it was but just large enough to contain a bed and chair—and there she sat down with her psalm-book in her hand; and while she was meekly and devoutly reading in it, the wind wafted the tones of the organ

from the church into her room, and she lifted up her face to heaven and prayed, with tears, "O God, help me!"

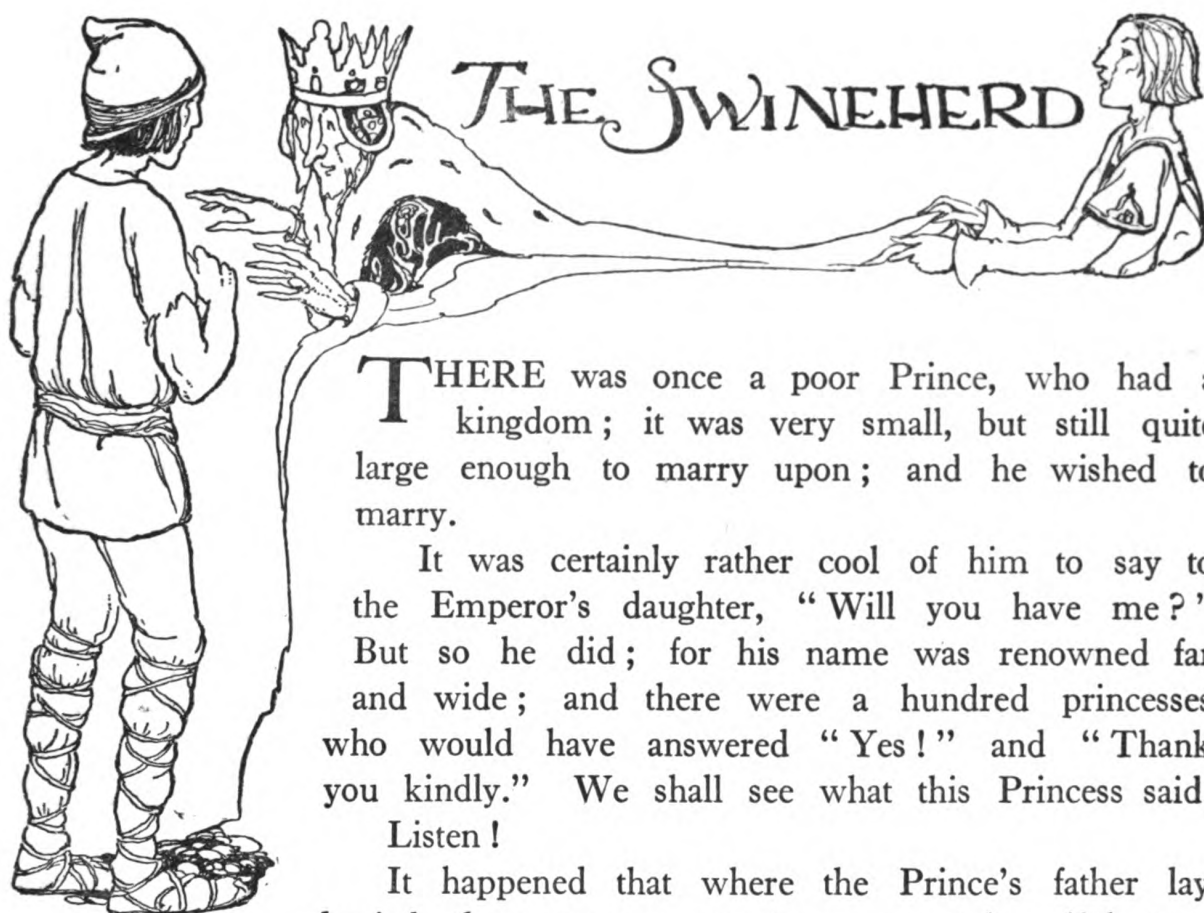
Then the sun shone brightly, so brightly—and behold! close before her stood the white-robed Angel of God, the same whom she had seen on that night of horror at the church-porch, but his hand wielded not now, as then, a sharp, threatening sword. He held a lovely green bough, full of roses.

With this he touched the ceiling, which immediately rose to a great height, a bright gold star spangling in the spot where the Angel's green bough had touched it. And he touched the walls, upon which the room widened, and Karen saw the organ, the old monuments, and the people all sitting in their richly-carved seats, and singing from their psalm-books.

For the church had come home to the poor girl in her narrow chamber, or rather the chamber had grown, as it were, into the church; she sat with the rest of the pastor's household, and, when the psalm was ended, they looked up and nodded to her, saying, "Thou didst well to come, Karen!"

"This is mercy!" said she.

And the organ played again, and the children's voices in the choir mingled sweetly with it. The bright sunbeams streamed warmly through the windows upon Karen's seat. Her heart was so full of sunshine, of peace and gladness, that it broke; her soul flew upon a sunbeam to her Father in heaven, where not a look of reproach awaited her, not a word was breathed of the red shoes.



THERE was once a poor Prince, who had a kingdom; it was very small, but still quite large enough to marry upon; and he wished to marry.

It was certainly rather cool of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But so he did; for his name was renowned far and wide; and there were a hundred princesses who would have answered "Yes!" and "Thank you kindly." We shall see what this Princess said.

Listen!

It happened that where the Prince's father lay buried, there grew a rose-tree—a most beautiful rose-tree, which blossomed only once in every five years, and even then bore only one flower. But that *was* a rose! It smelt so sweet that all cares and sorrows were forgotten by him who inhaled its fragrance.

And furthermore, the Prince had a nightingale who could sing in such a manner that it seemed as if all sweet melodies dwelt in her little throat. So the Princess was to have the rose and the nightingale; and they were accordingly put into large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The Emperor had them brought into a large hall, where the Princess was playing at "Visiting," with the ladies of the court; and when she saw the caskets with the presents, she clapped her hands for joy.

"Ah, if it were but a little pussy-cat!" said she; but the rose-tree, with its beautiful rose, came to view.

"Oh, how prettily it is made!" said all the court-ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor; "it is charming!"

But the Princess touched it, and was almost ready to cry.

"Fie, papa!" said she, "it is not made at all, it is natural!"

"Let us see what is in the other casket, before we get into a bad humour," said the Emperor. So the nightingale came forth, and sang so delightfully that at first no one could say anything ill-humoured of her.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" exclaimed the ladies; for they all used to chatter French, each one worse than her neighbour.

"How much the bird reminds me of the musical box that belonged to our blessed Empress," said an old knight. "Oh, yes! these are the same tones; this is the same style of execution."

"Yes! yes!" said the Emperor, and he wept like a child at the remembrance.

"I will still hope that it is not a real bird," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Well, then, let the bird fly," said the Princess; and she positively refused to see the Prince.

However, he was not to be discouraged; he daubed his face over brown and black; pulled his cap over his ears, and knocked at the door.

"Good-day to my lord the Emperor!" said he. "Can I have employment at the palace?"

"Why, yes," said the Emperor; "I want some one to take care of the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was appointed "Imperial Swineherd." He had a dirty little room close by the pigsty, and there he sat the whole day and worked. By the evening, he had made a pretty little kitchen-pot; little bells were hung all round it; and when the pot was boiling, these bells tinkled in the most charming manner, and played the old melody,—

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!"

¹ "Ah! dear Augustine!
All is gone, gone, gone!"

But what was still more curious, whoever held his finger in the smoke of the kitchen-pot immediately smelt all the dishes that were cooking on every hearth in the city—and this, you see, was something quite different from the rose.

Now the Princess happened to walk that way; and when she heard the tune she stood quite still, and seemed pleased; for she could play “Lieber Augustin.” It was the only piece she knew; and she played it with one finger.

“Why, there is my piece,” said the Princess; “that swineherd must certainly have been well educated! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument.”

So one of the court-ladies had to run in; however, she drew on wooden slippers first.

“What will you take for the kitchen-pot?” said the lady.

“I will have ten kisses from the Princess,” said the swineherd.

“Yes, indeed!” said the lady.

“I cannot sell it for less,” rejoined the swineherd.

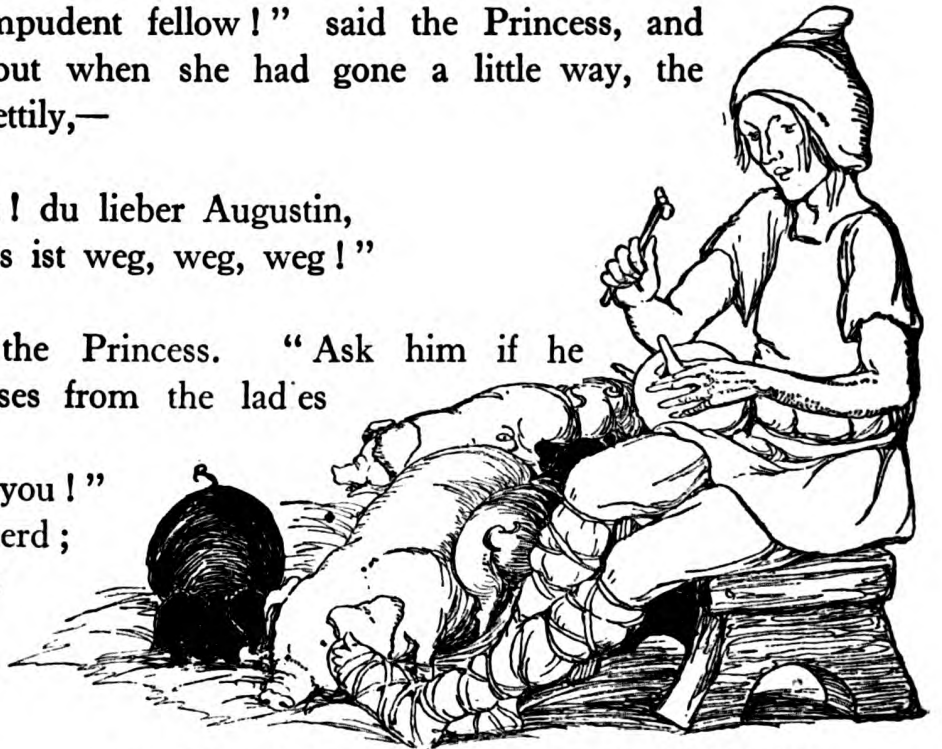
“He is an impudent fellow!” said the Princess, and she walked on; but when she had gone a little way, the bells tinkled so prettily,—

“Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!”

“Stay,” said the Princess. “Ask him if he will have ten kisses from the ladies of my court.”

“No, thank you!” said the swineherd; “ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the kitchen-pot myself.”

“That must



BY THE EVENING HE HAD MADE A PRETTY LITTLE KITCHEN-POT.

not be either!" said the Princess; "but do you all stand before me, that no one may see us."

And the court-ladies placed themselves in front of her, and spread out their dresses. The swineherd got ten kisses, and the Princess—the kitchen-pot.

That was delightful! The pot was boiling the whole evening, and the whole of the following day. They knew perfectly well what was cooking at every fire throughout the city, from the chamberlain's to the cobbler's; the court-ladies danced, and clapped their hands.

"We know who has soup, and who has pancakes for dinner to-day; who has cutlets, and who has eggs. How interesting!"

"Yes, but keep my secret, for I am an Emperor's daughter."

The swineherd—that is to say, the Prince, but no one knew that he was other than an ill-favoured swineherd—he did not let a day pass without working at something. He at last constructed a rattle, which, when it was swung round, played all the waltzes and jig tunes which have ever been heard since the creation of the world.

"Ah, that is *superbe*!" said the Princess, when she passed by. "I have never heard prettier compositions! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument; but mind, he shall have no more kisses!"

"He will have a hundred kisses from the Princess!" said the lady who had been to ask.

"I think he is not in his right senses!" said the Princess, and walked on; but when she had gone a little way, she stopped again. "One must encourage art," said she. "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him he shall, as on yesterday, have ten kisses from me, and may take the rest from the ladies of the court."

"Oh! but we should not like that at all!" said they.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Princess. "If I can kiss him, surely you can! Remember that you owe everything to me." So the ladies were obliged to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess!" said he, "or else let every one keep his own."



THE SWINEHERD



"WHAT'S ALL THIS?" SAID HE.

"Stand round!" said she; and all the ladies stood round her whilst the kissing was going on.

"What can be the reason for such a crowd close by the pigsty?" said the Emperor, who happened just then to step out on the balcony: he rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "They are the ladies of the court; I must go down and see what they are about!" So he pulled up his slippers at the heel, for he had trodden them down.

As soon as he had got into the courtyard, he moved very softly; and the ladies were so much engrossed with counting the kisses, that all might go on fairly, that they did not perceive the Emperor. He rose on his tiptoes.

"What is all this?" said he, when he saw what was going on; and he boxed the Princess's ears with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"March out!" said the Emperor, for he was very angry; and both Princess and swineherd were thrust out of the city.

The Princess now stood and wept; the swineherd scolded; and the rain poured down.

"Alas! unhappy creature that I am," said the Princess. "If I had but married the handsome young Prince! Ah, how unfortunate I am!"

And the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black and brown colour from his face, threw off his dirty clothes, and stepped forth in his princely robes; he looked so noble that the Princess could not help bowing before him.

"I have learned to despise thee," said he. "Thou wouldst not have an honourable prince! thou couldst not prize the rose and the nightingale, but thou wast ready to kiss the swineherd for the sake of a trumpery plaything. Thou art rightly served."

He then went back to his own little kingdom, and shut the door of his palace in her face. Now she might well sing—

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!"



PART I.—WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND ITS FRAGMENTS

LISTEN! We are beginning our story! When we arrive at the end of it we shall, it is to be hoped, know more than we do now. There was once a magician! a wicked magician!! a most wicked magician!!! Great was his delight at having constructed a mirror possessing this peculiarity—that everything good and beautiful, when reflected in it, shrank up almost to nothing, whilst those things that were ugly and useless were magnified, and made to appear ten times worse than before.

The loveliest landscapes reflected in this mirror looked like boiled spinach; and the handsomest persons appeared ugly, or as if standing upon their heads; their features being so distorted that their friends could never have recognised them. Moreover, if one of them had a freckle, it would seem to spread over the nose and mouth; and if a good or pious thought glanced across his mind, a wrinkle was seen in the mirror.

All this the magician thought highly entertaining, and he chuckled with delight at his own clever invention. Those who frequented the school of magic where he taught, spread abroad the fame of this wonderful mirror, and declared that by its means the world and its inhabitants might be seen now for the first time as they really are.

They carried the mirror from place to place, till at last there was no country or person that had not been misrepresented in it. Its admirers now must needs fly up to the sky with it, to see if they could not carry on their sport even there. But the higher they flew the more wrinkled did the mirror become; they could scarcely hold it together. They flew on and on, higher and higher, till at last the mirror trembled so fearfully that it escaped from their hands, and fell to the earth, breaking into millions, billions, and trillions of pieces.

There it caused far greater unhappiness than before, for fragments of it, scarcely so large as a grain of sand, would be flying about in the air, and sometimes get into people's eyes, causing them to view everything the wrong way, or to have eyes only for what was nasty and corrupt; each little fragment having retained the peculiar properties of the entire mirror. Some people were so unfortunate as to receive a little splinter into their hearts—that was terrible! The heart became cold and hard, like a lump of ice. Some pieces were large enough to be used as window-panes, but it was of no use to look at one's friends through such panes as those. Other fragments were made into spectacles, and then what trouble people had with setting and re-setting them!

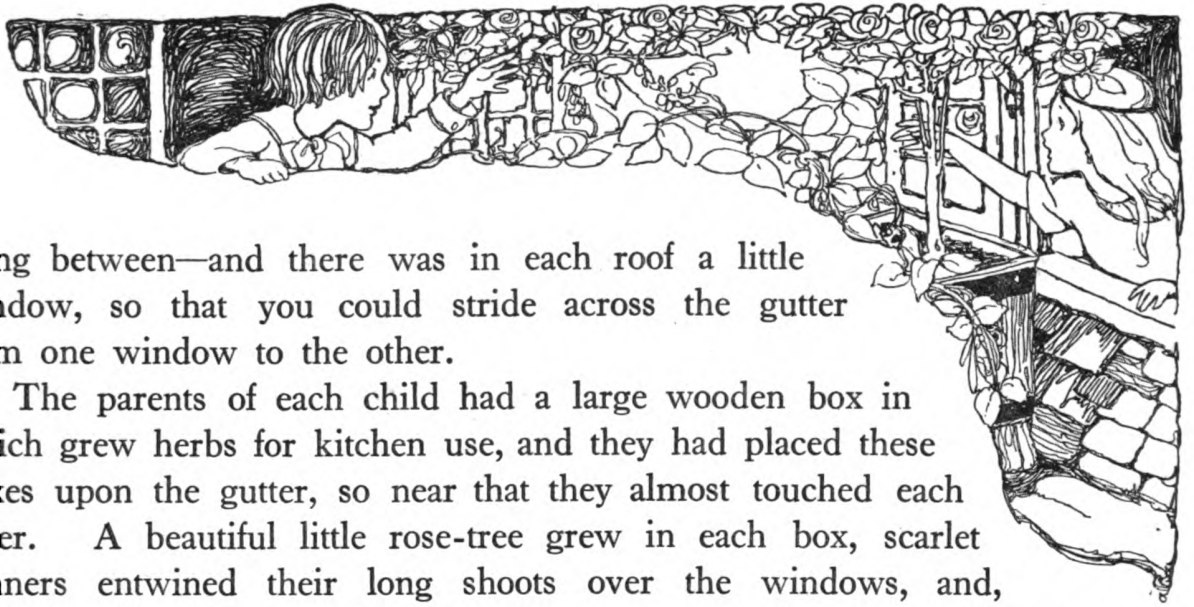
The wicked magician was greatly amused with all this, and he laughed till his sides ached.

There are still some little splinters of this mischievous mirror flying about in the air. We shall hear more about them very soon.

PART II.—A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

In a large town, where there are so many houses and inhabitants that there is not room enough for all the people to have a little garden of their own, and where many are obliged to content themselves with keeping a few plants in pots, there dwelt two poor children, whose garden was somewhat larger than a flower-pot.

They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other as much as if they had been, and their parents lived in two attics exactly opposite. The roof of one neighbour's house nearly joined the other—the gutter ran



along between—and there was in each roof a little window, so that you could stride across the gutter from one window to the other.

The parents of each child had a large wooden box in which grew herbs for kitchen use, and they had placed these boxes upon the gutter, so near that they almost touched each other. A beautiful little rose-tree grew in each box, scarlet runners entwined their long shoots over the windows, and, uniting with the branches of the rose-trees, formed a flowery arch across the street. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they might not climb over them, but they often obtained leave to sit on their little stools, under the rose-trees, and thus they passed many a delightful hour.

But when winter came there was an end to these pleasures. The windows were often frozen over, and then they heated halfpence on the stove, held the warm copper against the frozen pane, and thus made a little round peep-hole, behind which would sparkle a bright, gentle eye—one from each window.

The little boy was called Kay, the little girl's name was Gerda. In summer-time they could get out of the window and jump over to each other; but in winter there were stairs to run down, and stairs to run up, and sometimes the wind roared, and the snow fell out of doors.

"Those are the white bees swarming there!" said the old grandmother.

"Have they a Queen bee?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the real bees have one.

"They have," said the grandmother. "She flies yonder where they swarm so thickly; she is the largest of them, and never remains upon the earth, but flies up again into the black cloud. Sometimes on a

winter's night she flies through the streets of the town, and breathes with her frosty breath upon the windows, and then they are covered with strange and beautiful forms, like trees and flowers."

"Yes, I have seen them!" said both the children—they knew that this was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"If she does come in," said the boy, "I will put her on the warm stove, and then she will melt."

And the grandmother stroked his hair and told him some stories.

That same evening, after little Kay had gone home, and was half undressed, he crept upon the chair by the window and peeped through the little round hole. Just then a few snow-flakes fell outside, and one, the largest of them, remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-pots.

The snow-flake appeared to grow larger and larger, and at last took the form of a lady dressed in the finest white crape, her attire being composed of millions of star-like particles. She was exquisitely fair and delicate, but entirely of ice—glittering, dazzling ice; her eyes gleamed like two bright stars, but there was no rest or repose in them.

She nodded at the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair; he then fancied he saw a large bird fly past the window.

There was a clear frost next day, and soon afterwards came spring; the trees and flowers budded, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children sat once more in their little garden upon the gutter that ran along the roofs of the houses.

The roses blossomed beautifully that summer, and the little girl had learned a hymn in which there was something about roses; it reminded her of her own. So she sang it to the little boy, and he sang it with her.

"Our roses bloom and fade away,
Our Infant Lord abides alway;
May we be blessed His face to see,
And ever little children be!"



SHE NODDED AT THE WINDOW, AND BECKONED WITH HER HAND.

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up into the blue sky, talking away all the time. What glorious summer days were those! How delightful it was to sit under those rose-trees, which seemed as if they never intended to leave off blossoming! One day Kay and Gerda were sitting looking at their picture-book full of birds and animals, when suddenly—the clock on the old church tower was just striking five—Kay exclaimed, “Oh, dear! what was that shooting pain in my heart: and now again, something has certainly got into my eye!”

The little girl turned and looked at him. He winked his eyes; no, there was nothing to be seen.

“I believe it is gone,” said he; but gone it was not. It was one of those glass splinters from the Magic Mirror, the wicked glass which made everything great and good reflected in it to appear little and hateful, and which magnified everything ugly and mean. Poor Kay had also received a splinter in his heart; it would now become hard and cold like a lump of ice. He felt the pain no longer, but the splinter was there.

"Why do you cry?" asked he; "you look so ugly when you cry! there is nothing the matter with me.—Fie!" exclaimed he again, "this rose has an insect in it, and just look at this! After all, they are ugly roses, and it is an ugly box they grow in!" Then he kicked the box, and tore off the roses.

"Oh, Kay, what are you doing?" cried the little girl; but, when he saw how it grieved her, he tore off another rose, and jumped down through his own window, away from his once dear little Gerda.

Ever afterwards when she brought forward the picture-book, he called it a baby's book; and when her grandmother told stories, he interrupted her with a "but," and sometimes, whenever he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and speak just as she did; he did this in a very droll manner, and so people laughed at him.

Very soon he could mimic everybody in the street. All that was singular and awkward about them Kay could imitate, and his neighbours said, "What a remarkable head that boy has!" But no, it was the glass splinter which had fallen into his eye, the glass splinter which had pierced into his heart—it was these which made him regardless whose feelings he wounded, and even made him tease the little Gerda who loved him so fondly.

His games were now quite different from what they used to be. One winter's day when it was snowing, he came out with a large burning-glass in his hand, and, holding up the skirts of his blue coat, let the snow-flakes fall upon them. "Now look through the glass, Gerda!" said he, returning to the house. Every snow-flake seemed much larger, and resembled a splendid flower, or a star with ten points; they were quite beautiful. "See, how curious!" said Kay, "these are far more interesting than real flowers—there is not a single blemish in them; they would be quite perfect if only they did not melt."

Soon after this Kay came in again, with thick gloves on his hands, and his sledge slung across his back. He called out to Gerda, "I have got leave to drive on the great square where the other boys play!" and away he went.

The boldest boys in the square used to fasten their sledges firmly to

the wagons of the country people, and thus drive a good way along with them; this they thought particularly pleasant. While they were in the midst of their play, a large sledge painted white passed by; in it sat a person wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a rough white cap. When the sledge had driven twice round the square, Kay bound to it his little sledge, and was carried on with it. On they went, faster and faster, into the next street.

The person who drove the large sledge turned round and nodded kindly to Kay, just as if they had been old acquaintances; and every time Kay was going to loose his little sledge, turned and nodded again, as if to say that he must stay: so Kay sat still, and they passed through the gates.

Then the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his own hand, but he was still carried on. He tried hastily to unloose the cords and free himself from the large sledge, but it was of no use; his little carriage could not be unfastened, and glided on swift as the wind. Then he cried out as loud as he could, but no one heard him—the snow fell and the sledge flew. Every now and then it made a spring as if driving over hedges and ditches. He was very much frightened; he would have repeated "Our Father," but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.



The snow-flakes seemed larger and larger, and at last they looked like great white fowls. All at once they fell aside, the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove it rose from the seat. He saw that the cap and coat were entirely of snow; that it was a lady, tall and slender, and dazzlingly white—it was the Snow Queen!

“We have driven fast,” said she, “but no one likes to be frozen; creep under my bear-skin;” and she seated him in the sledge by her side, and spread her cloak around him. He felt as if he were sinking into a drift of snow.

“Are you still cold?” asked she; and then she kissed his brow. Oh! her kiss was colder than ice. It went to his heart, although that was half frozen already; he thought he should die. It was, however, only for a moment; directly afterwards he was quite well, and no longer felt the intense cold around.

“My sledge! do not forget my sledge!” He thought first of that—it was fastened to one of the white fowls, which flew behind with it on his back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay again, and he entirely forgot little Gerda, her grandmother, and all at home.

“Now you must have no more kisses!” said she, “else I should kiss thee to death.”

Kay looked at her, she was so beautiful; a more intelligent, more lovely countenance, he could not imagine. She no longer appeared to him to be ice, cold ice, as at the time when she sat outside the window and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect; he felt no fear. He told her how well he could reckon in his head, even fractions; that he knew the number of square miles of every country, and the number of the inhabitants contained in different towns.

She smiled, and then it occurred to him that, after all, he did not yet know so very much. He looked up into the wide, wide space, and she flew with him high up into the black cloud while the storm was raging; it seemed now to Kay as if it were singing songs of olden time.

They flew over woods and over lakes, over sea and over land; beneath them the cold wind whistled, the wolves howled, the snow glittered,

and the black crow flew cawing over the plain; while above them shone the moon, clear and tranquil.

Thus did Kay spend the long, long winter night; all day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

PART III.—THE ENCHANTED FLOWER GARDEN

But how fared it with little Gerda when Kay never returned? Where could he be? No one knew, no one could give any account of him. The boys said that they had seen him fasten his sledge to another larger one which had driven through the gates of the town.

No one knew where he was, and many were the tears that were shed. Little Gerda wept much and long, for the boys said he must be dead—he must have been drowned in the river that flowed not far from the town. Oh, how long and dismal the winter days were now! At last came the spring, with its warm sunshine.

“Alas, Kay is dead and gone,” said little Gerda.



GERDA THREW HER SHOES INTO THE WATER.

"That I do not believe," said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," said she to the swallows.

"That we do not believe," returned they; and at last little Gerda herself did not believe it.

"I will put on my new red shoes," said she one morning; "those which Kay has never seen; and then I will go down to the river and ask after him."

It was quite early. She kissed her old grandmother, who was still sleeping, put on her red shoes, and went alone through the gates of the town towards the river.

"Is it true," said she, "that thou hast taken my little playfellow away? I will give thee my red shoes if thou wilt restore him to me!"

And the wavelets of the river flowed towards her in a manner which she fancied was unusual; she fancied that they intended to accept her offer. So she took off her red shoes—though she prized them more than anything else she possessed—and threw them into the stream; but they fell near the shore, and the little waves bore them back to her, as though they would not take from her what she most prized.

However, she thought she had not thrown the shoes far enough; so she stepped into a little boat which lay among the reeds by the shore, and, standing at the farthest end of it, threw them thence into the water. The boat was not fastened, and her movements in it caused it to glide away from the shore. She saw this, and hastened to get out; but, by the time she reached the other end of the boat, it was more than a yard distant from the land; she could not escape, and the boat glided on.

Little Gerda was much frightened, and began to cry, but no one besides the sparrows heard her, and they could not carry her back to the land. However, they flew along the banks, and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are, here we are!" The boat followed the stream. Little Gerda sat in it quite still; her red shoes floated behind her, but they could not overtake the boat, which glided along faster than they did.

Beautiful were the shores of that river; lovely flowers, stately old trees, and bright green hills dotted with sheep and cows, were seen in abundance, but not a single human being.



SHE AMUSED HERSELF LOOKING AT THE LOVELY COUNTRY AROUND HER.

“Perhaps the river may bear me to my dear Kay,” thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and amused herself for hours with looking at the lovely country around her. At last she glided past a large cherry garden, in which stood a little cottage with thatched roof and curious red and blue windows. Two wooden soldiers stood at the door, who presented arms when they saw the little vessel approach.

Gerda called to them, thinking that they were alive; but they, naturally enough, made no answer. She came close up to them, for the stream drifted the boat to the land. Gerda called still louder, and an old lady came out of the house, leaning on a crutch; she wore a large hat, with beautiful flowers painted on it.

“Poor little child!” said the old woman, “the mighty flowing river has indeed borne thee a long, long way;” and she walked right into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and took out the little girl.

Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, although she was a little afraid of the strange old lady.

“Come and tell me who thou art, and how thou camest hither,” said she.

And Gerda told her all, and the old lady shook her head, and said, "Hem! hem!" And when Gerda asked if she had seen little Kay, the lady said that he had not arrived there yet, but that he would be sure to come soon, and that in the meantime Gerda must not be sad. She might stay with her, might eat her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were prettier than any picture-book, and could each tell her a story.

She then took Gerda by the hand; they went together into the cottage, and the old lady shut the door. The windows were very high, and the panes were of different coloured glass—red, blue, and yellow—so that when the bright daylight streamed through them, various and beautiful were the hues reflected into the room.

Upon a table in the middle was a plate of fine cherries, and of these Gerda was allowed to eat as many as she liked. And while she was eating them, the old dame combed her hair with a golden comb, and the bright flaxen ringlets fell on each side of her pretty, gentle face, which looked as round and as fresh as a rose.

"I have long wished for such a dear little girl," said the old lady. "We shall see if we cannot live happily together." And, as she combed little Gerda's hair, the child thought less and less of her foster-brother Kay, for the old lady was an enchantress. She did not, however, follow magic for the sake of mischief, but merely for her own amusement.

Now she wished very much to keep little Gerda, to live with her; so, fearing that if Gerda saw her roses, she would be reminded of her own flowers and of little Kay, and that then she might run away, she went out into the garden, and held her crutch out over all her rose-bushes. At once, although they were full of leaves and blossoms, they sank into the black earth, and no one would have guessed that such plants had ever grown there.

Then she led Gerda into this flower garden. Oh, how beautiful and how fragrant it was! Flowers of all seasons and all climes grew there in fullness of beauty—certainly no picture-book could be compared with it.

Gerda jumped with delight, and played among the flowers till the sun set behind the tall cherry-trees. Then a pretty little bed, with crimson silk cushions, stuffed with blue violet leaves, was prepared for her,



GERDA CALLED TO THEM, THINKING THEY WERE ALIVE.



AT ONCE
THEY SANK
INTO THE
BLACK EARTH.

and here she slept so sweetly, and had such dreams as a queen might have.

The next day she again played among the flowers in the warm sunshine, and many more days were spent in the same manner. Gerda knew every flower in the garden, but, numerous as they were, it seemed to her that one was wanting—she could not tell which.

She was sitting one day looking at the old dame's hat, which had flowers painted on it, and, behold, the loveliest among them was a rose! The old lady had entirely forgotten the painted rose on her hat, when she made the real roses to disappear from her garden and sink into the ground.—This is often the case when things are done hastily.

"What!" cried Gerda, "are there no roses in the garden?" And she ran from one bed to another, sought and sought again, but no rose was to be found. She sat down and wept, and it so chanced that her tears fell on a spot where a rose-tree had formerly stood, and as soon as her warm tears had moistened the earth, the bush shot up anew, as fresh and as blooming as it was before it had sunk into the ground. Gerda threw her arms around it, kissed the blossoms, and immediately

recalled to memory the beautiful roses at home, and her little playfellow Kay.

"Oh, how could I stay here so long!" exclaimed the little maiden. "I left my home to seek for Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked of the roses; "think you that he is dead?"



"Dead he is not," said the roses. "We have been down in the earth; the dead are there, but not Kay."

"I thank you," said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, bent low over their cups, and asked, "Know you not where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sunshine dreaming its own little tale. They related their stories to Gerda, but none of them knew anything of Kay.

"And what think you?" said the tiger-lily.

"Listen to the drums beating, boom! boom! They have but two notes—always boom! boom! Listen to the dirge the women are singing! Listen to the chorus of priests! Clothed in her long red robes stands the Hindoo wife on the funeral pile, the flames blaze around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo wife thinks not of the dead. She thinks only of the living; and the anguish which consumes her spirit is keener than the fire which will soon turn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart expire amid the flames of the funeral pile?"

"I do not understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my tale!" said the tiger-lily.

"What says the convolvulus?"

"Hanging over a narrow mountain causeway, behold an ancient baronial castle. Thick evergreens grow amongst the time-stained walls, their leafy branches entwine about the balcony, and there stands a beautiful maiden. She bends over the balustrades and fixes her eyes with eager hopes on the road winding beneath. The rose hangs not fresher and lovelier on its stem than she; the apple-blossom, which the wind threatens every moment to tear from its branch, is not more fragile and trembling. Listen to the rustling of her silken robe! Listen to her half-whispered words, 'He comes not yet!'"

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

"I do but tell you my tale—my dream," replied the convolvulus.

"What says the little snowdrop?"

"Between two trees hangs a swing. Two pretty little maidens, their dress as white as snow, and with long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, sit and swing themselves in it. Their brother stands up in the swing, he has thrown his arms round the ropes to keep himself steady,

for in one hand he holds a little cup, in the other a pipe made of clay ; he is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves and the bubbles fly upwards with bright, ever-changing colours ; the last hovers on the edge of the pipe, and moves with the wind. The swing is still in motion, and the little black dog, almost as light as the soap-bubbles, rises on his hind feet, and tries to get into the swing also. Away goes the swing ; the dog falls, is out of temper, and barks ; he is laughed at, and the bubbles burst. A swinging board, a frothy, fleeting image is my song."

"What you describe may be all very pretty, but you speak so mournfully, and there is nothing about Kay."

"What say the hyacinths ?"

"There were three fair sisters ; transparent and delicate they were. The kirtle of the one was red, that of the second blue, of the third pure white. Hand in hand they danced in the moonlight beside the quiet lake ; they were not fairies, but daughters of men. Sweet was the fragrance when the maidens vanished into the wood ; the fragrance grew stronger. Three biers, on which lay the fair sisters, glided out from the depths of the wood, and floated upon the lake ; the glow-worms flew shining around like little hovering lamps. Sleep the dancing maidens, or are they dead ? The odour from the flowers tells us they are corpses, the evening bells peal out their dirge."

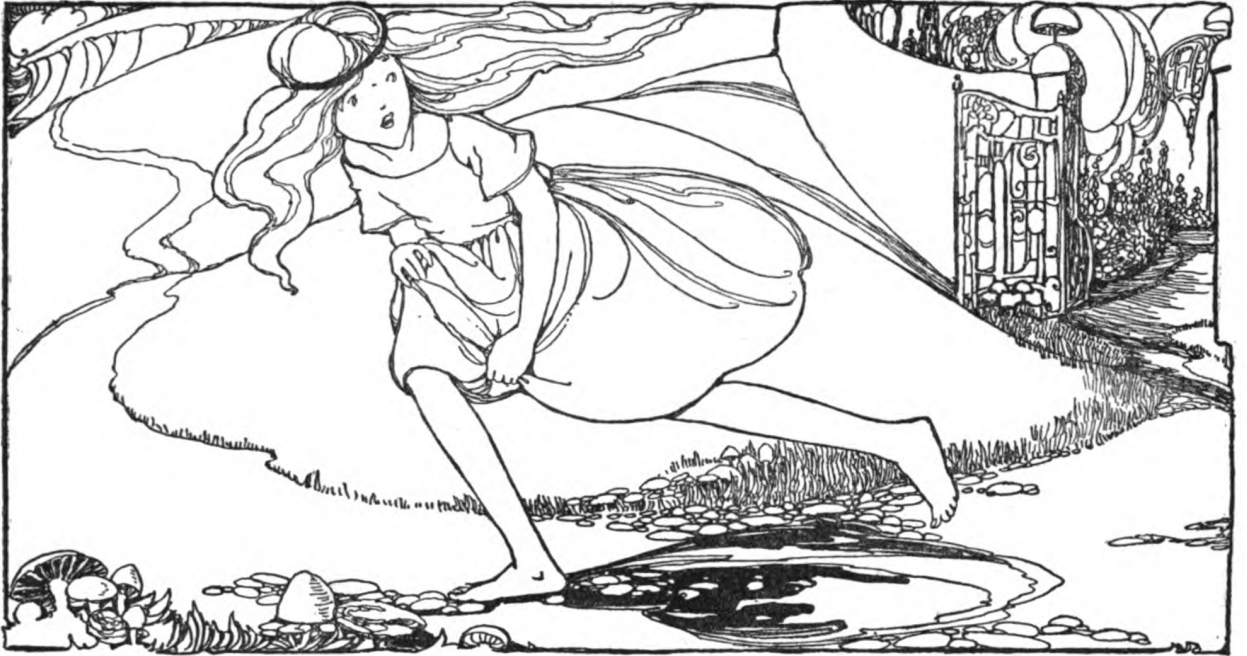
"You make me quite sad," said little Gerda. "Your fragrance is so strong I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Alas ! and is little Kay dead ? The roses have been under the earth, and they say no !"

"Ding dong ! ding dong !" ran the hyacinth bells. "We toll not for little Kay—we know him not ! We do but sing our own song, the only one we know !"

And Gerda went to the buttercup, which shone so brightly from among her smooth green leaves.

"Thou art like a little bright sun," said Gerda ; "tell me, if thou canst, where I may find my playfellow."

And the buttercup glittered brightly, and looked at Gerda. What song could the buttercup sing ? It had nothing to do with Kay.



LITTLE GERDA, WITH BARE FEET, RAN OUT INTO THE WIDE WORLD.

“One bright spring morning, the sun shone warmly upon a little courtyard, the bright beams streamed down the white walls of a neighbouring house, and close by grew the first yellow flower of spring, glittering like gold in the warm sunshine. An old grandmother sat without in her arm-chair, her granddaughter, a pretty, lowly maiden, had just returned home from a short visit; she kissed her grandmother; there was gold, pure gold, in that loving kiss:—

“ ‘Gold was the flower!
Gold the fresh, bright, morning hour!’

“That is my little story,” said the buttercup.

“My poor old grandmother!” sighed Gerda; “yes, she must be wishing for me, just as she wished for little Kay. But I shall soon go home again, and take Kay with me. It is of no use to ask the flowers about him; they know only their own song; they can give me no information.”

And she folded her little frock round her, that she might run the faster; but, as she jumped over the narcissus, it caught her foot, as if wishing

to stop her: so she turned and looked at the tall yellow flower, "Have you any news to give me?" She bent over the narcissus, waiting for an answer.

And what said the narcissus?

"I can look at myself! I can see myself! Oh, how sweet is my fragrance! Up in the little attic-chamber stands a little dancer. She rests sometimes on one leg, sometimes on two. She has trampled the whole world under her feet; she is nothing but an illusion. She pours water from a tea-pot upon a piece of cloth she holds in her hand—it is her bodice; cleanliness is a fine thing! Her white dress hangs on the hook; that has also been washed by the water from the tea-pot, and dried on the roof of the house. She puts it on, and wraps a saffron-coloured handkerchief round her neck; it makes the dress look all the whiter. With one leg extended, there she stands, as though on a stalk. I can look at myself! I see myself!"

"I don't care if you do," said Gerda. "You need not have told me that!" and away she ran to the end of the garden.

The gate was closed, but she pressed upon the rusty lock till it broke. The gate sprang open, and little Gerda, with bare feet, ran out into the wide world. Three times she looked back, but there was no one following her; she ran till she could run no longer, and then sat down to rest upon a large stone. Casting a glance around, she saw that the summer was past, that it was now late in the autumn. Of course, she had not remarked this in the enchanted garden, where there were sunshine and flowers all the year round.

"How long I must have stayed there!" said little Gerda. "So, it is now autumn! Well, then, there is no time to lose!" and she rose to pursue her way.

Oh, how sore and weary were her little feet! and all around looked cold and barren. The long willow leaves had already turned yellow, and the dew trickled down from them like water. The leaves fell off the trees, one by one; the sloe alone bore fruit, and its berries were sharp and bitter. Cold, and gray, and sad seemed the world to her that day.

PART IV.—THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS

Gerda was again obliged to stop and take rest. Suddenly a large raven hopped upon the snow in front of her, saying, "Caw! Caw!—Good-day! Good-day!" He sat for some time on the withered branch of a tree just opposite, eyeing the little maiden, and wagging his head; and he now came forward to make acquaintance, and to ask her whither she was going all alone.

That word "alone" Gerda understood right well—she felt how sad a meaning it has. She told the raven the history of her life and fortunes, and asked if he had seen Kay.

And the raven nodded his head, half doubtfully, and said, "That is possible—possible."

"Do you think so?" exclaimed the little girl; and she kissed the raven so hard that it is a wonder she did not squeeze him to death.

"More moderately—moderately!" said the raven. "I think I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forsaken thee for the princess."

"Dwells he with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Listen to me," said the raven; "but it is so difficult to speak your language! Do you understand Ravenish? If so, I can tell you much better."

"No! I have never learned Ravenish," said Gerda, "but my grandmother knew



SUDDENLY A LARGE RAVEN HOPPED IN FRONT OF HER.

it, and Magpie-language also. Oh, how I wish I had learned to understand Bird talk."

"Never mind," said the raven, "I will relate my story in the best manner I can, though bad will be the best;" and he told all he knew.

"In the kingdom in which we are now sitting, there dwells a princess—a very clever princess. All the newspapers in the world she has read and forgotten again, so clever is she. It is not long since she ascended the throne—which I have heard is not quite so agreeable a situation as one would fancy—and immediately after she began to sing a new song, the burden of which was this, 'Why should I not marry?' 'There is some sense in this song!' said she; and she determined she would marry, but at the same time declared that the man whom she would choose must be able to answer sensibly whenever people spoke to him, and must be good for something else besides merely looking grand and stately.

"The ladies of the court were then all brought together, in order to be informed of her intentions, at which they were highly delighted, and one exclaimed, 'That is just what I wish'; and another, that she had lately been thinking of the very same thing. Believe me," continued the raven, "every word I say is true, for I have a tame beloved one who hops at pleasure about the palace, and she has told me all this."

Of course, the beloved one was also a raven, for birds of a feather flock together.

"Proclamations, adorned with borders of hearts, were immediately issued, in which, after giving the style and titles of the princess, it was set forth that every well-favoured youth was free to go to the palace and talk with the princess, and that whoever should speak in a manner that showed he felt himself at home there would be the one the princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes, indeed," continued the raven, "you may believe me; all this is as true as that I sit here. The people all crowded to the palace; there was famous pressing and squeezing; but it was all of no use, either the first or the second day. The young men could speak well enough while they were outside the palace gates, but, when they entered, and saw the



"THE PRINCESS WAS SEATED ON A PEARL AS LARGE AS A SPINNING-WHEEL."

royal guard in silver uniform, and the lackeys on the staircase in gold, and the spacious saloon all lighted up, they were quite confounded.

"They stood before the throne where the princess sat, and when she spoke to them, they could only repeat the last word she had uttered, which, you know, it was not particularly interesting for her to hear over again. It was just as though they had been struck dumb the moment they entered the palace, for as soon as they got out, they could talk fast enough. There was a regular procession constantly moving from the gates of the town to the gates of the palace.

"I was there, and saw it with my own eyes," said the raven. "They grew both hungry and thirsty whilst waiting at the palace, but no one could get even so much as a glass of water; to be sure, some of them, wiser than the rest, had brought with them slices of bread-and-butter, but none would give any to his neighbour, for he thought to himself, 'Let him look hungry, and then the princess will be sure not to choose him.'"

"But Kay, little Kay, when did he come?" asked Gerda. "Was he among the crowd?"

"Presently, presently; we have just come to him. On the third day arrived a youth with neither horse nor carriage; gaily he marched up to

the palace ; his eyes sparkled like yours ; he had long, beautiful hair, but was very meanly clad."

"That was Kay!" exclaimed Gerda. "Oh, then I have found him," and she clapped her hands with delight.

"He carried a knapsack on his back," said the raven.

"No, not a knapsack," said Gerda, "a sledge, for he had a sledge with him when he left home."

"It is possible," rejoined the raven. "I did not look very closely, but this I heard from my beloved, that when he entered the palace gates and saw the royal guard in silver, and the lackeys in gold upon the staircase, he did not seem in the least confused, but nodded pleasantly and said to them, 'It must be very tedious standing out here, I prefer going in.'

"The halls glistened with light ; cabinet councillors and high officers were walking about barefooted and carrying golden keys. It was just a place to make a man solemn and silent ; and the youth's boots creaked horribly, yet he was not at all afraid."

"That most certainly was Kay!" said Gerda. "I know he had new boots ; I have heard them creak in my grandmother's room."

"Indeed, they did creak," said the raven ; "but he went merrily up to the princess, who was sitting upon a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel, while all the ladies of the court, with the maids-of-honour and their hand-maidens, ranged in order, stood on one side, and all the gentlemen-in-waiting, with their gentlemen, and their gentlemen's gentlemen, who also kept pages, stood ranged in order on the other side, and the nearer they were to the door the prouder they looked. The gentlemen's page, who always wears slippers, one dare hardly look at, so proudly he stands at the door."

"That must be dreadful!" said little Gerda. "And has Kay really won a princess?"

"Had I not been a raven I should have won her myself, notwithstanding my being betrothed. The young man spoke as well as I speak when I converse in Ravenish ; that I have heard from my tame beloved. He was handsome and lively. 'I do not come to woo you,' he said, 'I

have only come to hear the wisdom of the princess ;' and he liked her much, and she liked him in return."

"Yes, to be sure, that was Kay," said Gerda ; "he was so clever, he could reckon in his head, even fractions ! Oh, will you not take me into the palace ?"

"Ah ! that is easily said," replied the raven, "but how is it to be done ? I will talk it over with my tame beloved ; she will advise us



THE RAVEN TOOK GERDA TO A BACK DOOR, WHICH STOOD HALF OPEN.

what to do, for I must tell you that such a little girl as you are will never gain permission to enter publicly."

"Yes, I shall !" cried Gerda. "When Kay knows that I am here, he will immediately come out and fetch me."

"Wait for me at the trellis yonder," said the raven. He wagged his head and away he flew.

The raven did not return till late in the evening.

"Caw, caw," said he. "My tame beloved greets you kindly, and sends you a piece of bread which she took from the kitchen ; there is plenty of bread there, and you must certainly be hungry. It is not

possible for you to enter the palace, for you have bare feet; the royal guard in silver uniform, and the lackeys in gold would never permit it: but do not weep, you shall go there. My beloved knows a little back staircase leading to the sleeping apartments, and she knows also where to find the key."

And they went into the garden, down the grand avenue, where the leaves dropped upon them as they passed along, and, when the lights in the palace one by one had all been put out, the raven took Gerda to a back-door, which stood half open.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and expectation! It was just as if she was about to do something wrong, although she only wanted to know whether Kay was really there—yes, it must be he, she remembered so well his bright eyes and long hair. She would see if his smile were the same as it used to be when they sat together under the rose-trees. He would be so glad to see her, to hear how far she had come for his sake, how all at home mourned his absence. Her heart trembled with fear and joy.

They went up the staircase. A small lamp placed on a cabinet gave a glimmering light. On the floor stood the tame raven, who first turned her head on all sides, and then looked at Gerda, who made her curtsy, as her grandmother had taught her.

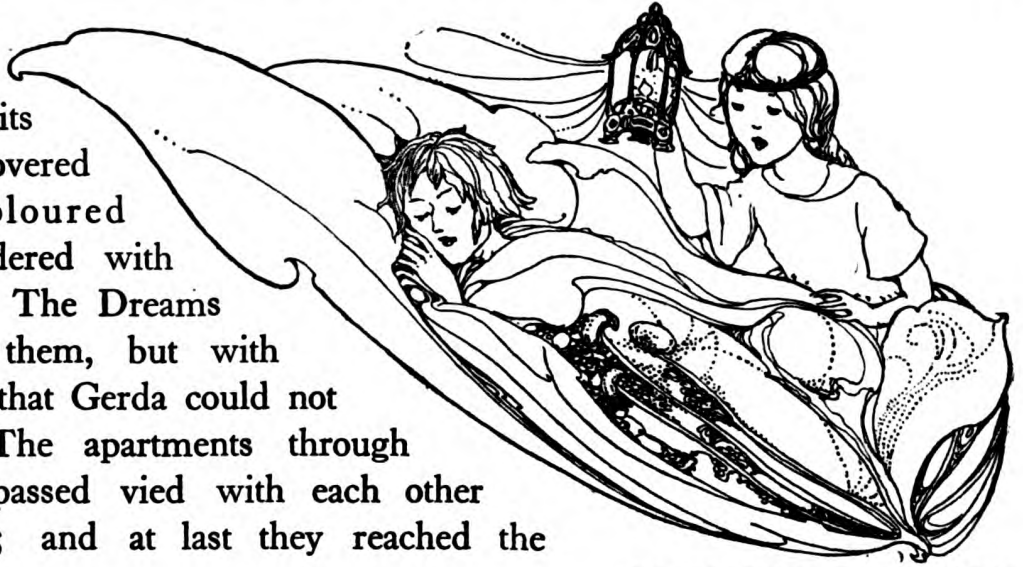
"My betrothed has told me much about you, my good young maiden," said the tame raven; "your adventures, too, are extremely interesting! If you will take the lamp, I will show you the way. We are going straight on; we shall not meet any one now."

"It seems to me as if some one were behind us," said Gerda; and, in fact, there was a rushing sound as of something passing. Strange-looking shadows flitted rapidly along the wall—horses with long, slender legs and fluttering manes, huntsmen, knights, and ladies.

"These are only dreams!" said the raven; "they come to amuse the great personages here at night; you will have a better opportunity of looking at them when you are in bed. I hope that, when you arrive at honours and dignities, you will show a grateful heart."

"Do not talk of that!" said the wood-raven.

They now entered the first saloon; its walls were covered with rose-coloured satin, embroidered with gold flowers. The Dreams rustled past them, but with such rapidity that Gerda could not see them. The apartments through which they passed vied with each other in splendour; and at last they reached the sleeping-hall.



SHE HELD THE LAMP CLOSE TO HIM.

In the centre of this room stood a pillar of gold resembling the stem of a large palm-tree, whose leaves of glass, costly glass, formed the ceiling; and near the door there hung from the tree, on thick golden stalks, two beds in the form of lilies. The one was white, and on it reposed the princess; the other was red, and here must Gerda seek her playfellow, Kay.

She bent aside one of the red leaves and saw a brown neck. Oh, it must be Kay! She called him aloud by his name; held the lamp close to him. The Dreams again rushed by—he awoke, turned his head, and behold! it was not Kay.

The prince resembled him only about the throat; he was, however, young and handsome; and the princess looked out from the white lily petals, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her whole story, and what the ravens had done for her.

“Poor child!” said the prince and princess; and they praised the ravens, and said they were not at all angry with them. Such liberties must never be taken again in their palace, but this time they should be rewarded.

“Would you like to fly away free to the woods?” asked the princess, addressing the ravens—“or to have the appointment secured to you as court-ravens with the perquisites belonging to the kitchen, such as crumbs and leavings?”

And both the ravens bowed low, and chose the appointment at court, for they thought of old age, and said it would be so comfortable to be well provided for in their declining years. Then the prince arose, and gave Gerda his bed to sleep in; and she folded her little hands, thinking, "How kind both men and animals are to me!"

She closed her eyes and slept soundly and sweetly, and all the Dreams flitted about her: they looked like angels from heaven, and seemed to be drawing a sledge on which Kay sat. He nodded to her, but this was only fancy, for as soon as she awoke all the beautiful visions had vanished.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. She was invited to stay at the palace and enjoy all sorts of pleasures; but she begged only for a little carriage and a horse, and a pair of little boots—all she wished was to go out again into the wide world to seek Kay.

They gave her the boots, and a muff besides, and she was dressed very prettily. And as soon as she was ready there drove up to the door a new carriage of pure gold, with the arms of the prince and princess glittering upon it like a star; the coachman, the footman, and outriders all wearing gold crowns. The prince and princess themselves helped her into the carriage and wished her success.

The wood-raven, who was now married, accompanied her the first three miles; he sat by her side, for riding backwards was a thing he could not bear. The other raven stood at the door flapping her wings; she did not go with them on account of a headache she had felt ever since she had received her appointment—a consequence of eating too much. The carriage was well provided with sugar-plums, fruit, and gingerbread nuts.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the prince and princess. Little Gerda wept, and the raven wept out of sympathy. But his farewell was a far sorer trial; he flew up to the branch of a tree and flapped his black wings at the carriage till it was out of sight.

PART V.—THE LITTLE ROBBER-MAIDEN

They drove through the dark, dark forest; the carriage shone like a torch. Unfortunately, its brightness attracted the eyes of the robbers who dwelt in the forest-shades; they could not bear it.

"That is gold! gold!" they cried. Forward they rushed, seized the horses, stabbed the outriders, coachman, and footmen to death, and dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is plump; she is pretty; she has been fed on nut-kernels," said the old robber-wife, who had a long bristly beard, and eyebrows hanging like bushes over her eyes. "She is like a little fat lamb; and how smartly she is dressed!" and she drew out her bright, glittering dagger. "Oh, oh!" cried the woman; for at the very moment she had lifted her dagger to stab Gerda, her own wild and wilful daughter jumped upon her back and bit her ear violently. "You naughty child!" said the mother.

"She shall play with me," said the little robber-maiden; "she shall give me her muff and her pretty frock, and sleep with me in my bed!"



"SHE SHALL PLAY WITH ME," SAID THE LITTLE ROBBER-MAIDEN.

And then she bit her mother again, till the robber-wife sprang up and shrieked with pain, whilst the robbers all laughed, saying, "Look at her playing with her young one!"

"I will get into the carriage;" and so spoiled and wayward was the little robber-maiden that she always had her own way. So she and Gerda sat together in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone farther and farther into the wood.

The little robber-maiden was about as tall as Gerda, but much stronger; she had broad shoulders, and a very dark skin; her eyes were quite black, and had an expression almost melancholy. She put her arm round Gerda's waist, and said, "She shall not kill thee so long as I love thee! Art thou not a princess?"

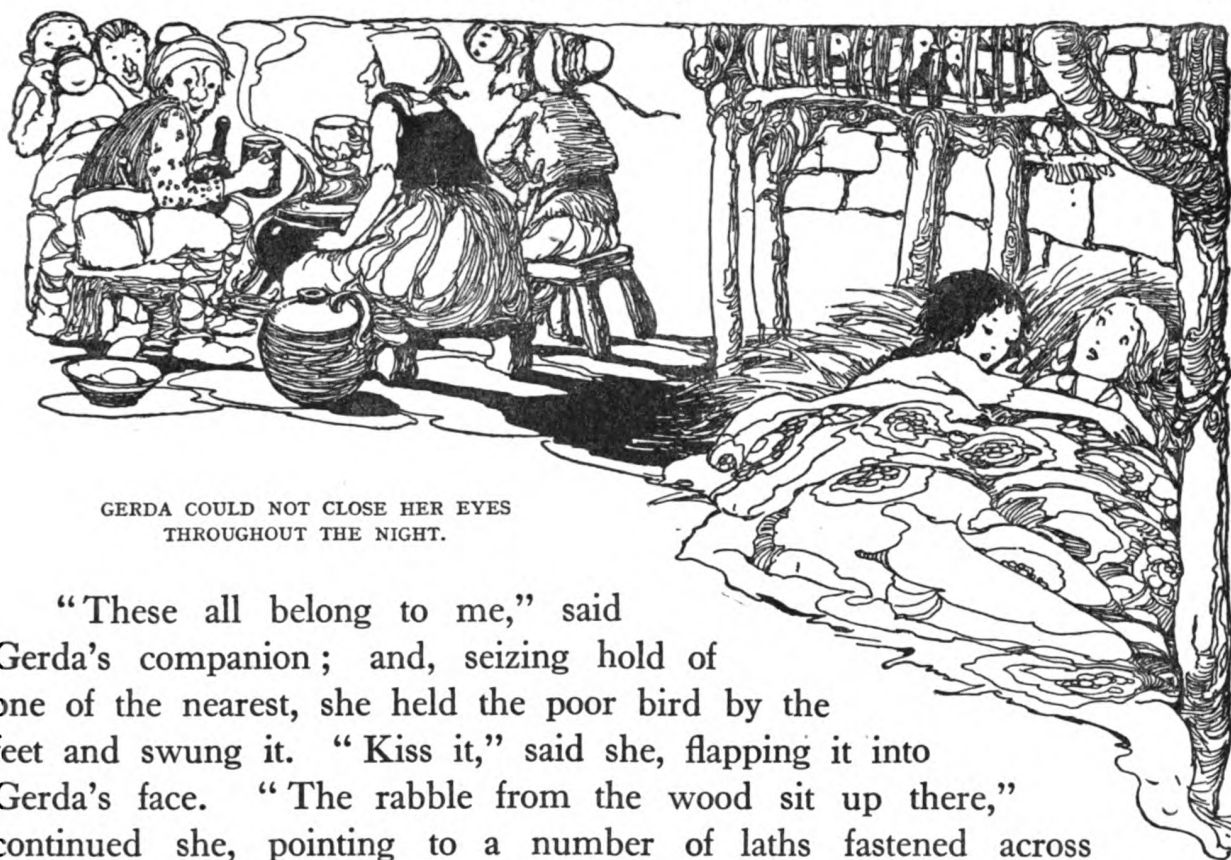
"No!" said Gerda; and then she told her all that had happened to her, and how much she loved little Kay.

The robber-maiden looked earnestly in her face, shook her head, and said, "She shall not kill thee, even if I do quarrel with thee; then, indeed, I would rather do it myself!" And she dried Gerda's tears, and put both her hands into the pretty muff that was so soft and warm.

The carriage at last stopped in the middle of the courtyard of the robbers' castle. This castle was half ruined. Crows and ravens flew out of the openings, and some fearfully large bull-dogs, looking as if they could devour a man in a moment, jumped round the carriage; they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

The maidens entered a large, smoky hall, where a tremendous fire was blazing on the stone floor. The smoke rose up to the ceiling, seeking a way of escape, for there was no chimney. A large cauldron full of soup was boiling over the fire; while hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

"Thou shalt sleep with me and my little pets to-night!" said the robber-maiden. Then they had some food, and afterwards went to the corner in which lay straw and a piece of carpet. Nearly a hundred pigeons were perched on staves and laths around them; they seemed to be asleep, but were startled when the little maidens approached.



GERDA COULD NOT CLOSE HER EYES
THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.

"These all belong to me," said Gerda's companion; and, seizing hold of one of the nearest, she held the poor bird by the feet and swung it. "Kiss it," said she, flapping it into Gerda's face. "The rabble from the wood sit up there," continued she, pointing to a number of laths fastened across a hole in the wall. "Those are wood-pigeons; they would fly away if I did not keep them shut up. And here is my old favourite!"

She pulled forward by the horn a reindeer who wore a bright copper ring round his neck, by which he was fastened to a large stone. "We are obliged to chain him up, or he would run away from us: every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp dagger; it makes him fear me so much!" and the robber-maiden drew out a long dagger from a gap in the wall, and passed it over the reindeer's throat. The poor animal struggled and kicked, but the girl laughed, and then she pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Will you keep the dagger in your hand whilst you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking timidly at the dangerous plaything.

"I always sleep with my dagger by my side," replied the little robber-maiden; "one never knows what may happen. But now tell me all over again what you told me before about Kay, and the reason of your coming into the wide world all by yourself."

And Gerda again related her history, and the wood-pigeons imprisoned above listened, but the others were fast asleep. The little robber-maiden threw one arm round Gerda's neck, and, holding the dagger with the other, was also soon asleep. One could hear her heavy breathing, but Gerda could not close her eyes throughout the night; she knew not what would become of her, whether she would even be suffered to live. The robbers sat round the fire drinking and singing. Oh, it was a dreadful night for the poor little girl!

Then spoke the wood-pigeons, "Coo, coo, coo! we have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge; he himself was in the Snow Queen's chariot, which passed through the wood whilst we sat in our nest. She breathed upon us young ones as she passed, and all died of her breath excepting us two—coo, coo, coo!"

"What are you saying?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She travels most likely to Lapland, where ice and snow abide all the year round. Ask the reindeer bound to the rope there."

"Yes, ice and snow are there all through the year; it is a glorious land!" said the reindeer. "There, free and happy, one can roam through the wide sparkling valleys! There the Snow Queen has her summer-tent; her strong castle is very far off, near the North Pole, on the island called Spitsbergen."

"Oh, Kay, dear Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"You must lie still," said the robber-maiden, "or I will thrust my dagger into your side."

When morning came, Gerda repeated to her what the wood-pigeons had said, and the little robber-maiden looked grave for a moment, then nodded her head, saying, "No matter! no matter! Do you know where Lapland is?" asked she of the reindeer.

"Who should know but me?" returned the animal, his eyes kindling. "There was I born and bred; there have I bounded over the wild, icy plains!"

"Listen to me!" said the robber-maiden to Gerda; "you see all our men are gone, my mother is still here and will remain, but towards



noon she will drink a little out of the great flask, and after that she will sleep—then I will do something for you ! ”

And so saying she jumped out of bed, sprang upon her mother, pulled her by the beard, and said, “ My own dear mam, good-morning ! ” and the mother caressed her so roughly that she was red and blue all over. However, it was from pure love.

When her mother was fast asleep, the robber-maiden went up to the reindeer and said, “ I should have great pleasure in stroking you a few more times with my sharp dagger, for then you look so droll. But never mind ; I will unloose your chain and help you to escape, on condition that you run as fast as you can to Lapland, and take this little girl to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You must have heard her story, for she speaks loud enough, and you know well how to listen.”

The reindeer bounded with joy, and the robber-maiden lifted Gerda on his back, taking the precaution to bind her on firmly, as well as to give her a little cushion to sit on. “ And here,” said she, “ are your fur boots, which you will need in that cold country. The muff I must keep myself, as it is too pretty to part with ; but you shall not be frozen. Here are my mother’s huge gloves ; they reach up to the elbow ; put them on—now your hands look as clumsy as my old mother’s ! ”

And Gerda shed tears of joy.

“ I cannot bear to see you crying ! ” said the little robber-maiden, “ you ought to look glad. See, here are two loaves and a piece of bacon for you, that you may not be hungry on the way.” She fastened this provender also on the reindeer’s back, opened the door, called away the great dogs, and then cutting asunder with her dagger the rope which bound the reindeer, shouted to him, “ Now, then, run ! but take good care of the little girl.”

And Gerda stretched out her hands to the robber-maiden and bade her farewell ; and the reindeer fled through the forest, over stock and stone, over desert and heath, over meadow and moor. The wolves howled and the ravens shrieked. “ Isch ! Isch ! ” a red light flashed—one might have fancied the sky was sneezing.

“ Those are my dear old Northern Lights ! ” said the reindeer ; “ look

at them, how beautiful they are!" And he ran faster than ever; night and day he ran. The loaves were eaten, and so was the bacon—at last they were in Lapland.

PART VI.—THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN

They stopped at a little hut, a wretched hut it was; the roof very nearly touched the ground, and the door was so low that whoever wished to go either in or out was obliged to crawl upon hands and knees. No one was at home except an old Lapland woman, who was busy boiling fish over a lamp filled with train oil.

The reindeer related to her Gerda's whole history, not, however, till after he had made her acquainted with his own, which appeared to him of much more importance. Poor Gerda, meanwhile, was so overpowered by the cold that she could not speak.

"Ah, poor things!" said the Lapland woman, "you have still a long way before you! You have a hundred miles to run before you can arrive in Finland: the Snow Queen dwells there, and burns blue lights every evening. I will write for you a few words on a piece of dried stock-fish—paper I have none—and you may take it with you to the wise Finland woman who lives there; she will advise you better than I can."

So when Gerda had well warmed herself and taken some food, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried stock-fish, bade Gerda take care of it, and bound her once more firmly on the reindeer's back.

Onwards they sped; the wondrous Northern Lights, now of the loveliest, brightest blue colour, shone all through the night, and amidst these splendid illuminations they arrived in Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the wise woman, for door to her house she had none.

It was very hot within—so much so that the wise woman wore scarcely any clothing; she was low in stature, and very dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's dress, took off her fur boots and thick gloves, laid a piece of ice on the reindeer's head, and then read what was written on the stock-fish: she read it three times. After the third



WHAT STRANGE CHARACTERS WERE INSCRIBED ON THE SCROLL.

reading she knew it by heart, and threw the fish into the porridge-pot, for it might make a very excellent supper, and she never wasted anything.

The reindeer then repeated his own story, and when that was finished he told of little Gerda's adventures; and the wise woman twinkled her wise eyes, but spoke not a word.

"Thou art so powerful," continued the reindeer, "that I know thou canst twist all the winds of the world into a thread, and if the pilot loosen one knot of it he will have a favourable wind; if he loosen the second it will blow sharp, and if he loosen the third, so tremendous a storm will arise that the trees of the forest will be uprooted, and the ship wrecked. Wilt thou not mix for this little maiden that wonderful draught which will give her the strength of twelve men, and thus enable her to overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" repeated the wise woman, "that would be of much use to be sure!" and she walked away, drew forth a large parchment roll from a shelf, and began to read. What strange characters were seen inscribed on the scroll as the wise woman slowly unrolled it! She read so intently that the perspiration ran down her forehead.

But the reindeer pleaded so earnestly for little Gerda, and Gerda's eyes were raised so entreatingly and tearfully, that at last the wise woman's eyes began to twinkle again out of sympathy, and she drew the reindeer into a corner, and, putting a fresh piece of ice upon his head, whispered thus:—

"Little Kay is still with the Snow Queen, in whose abode everything is according to his taste, and therefore he believes it to be the best place in the world. But that is because he has a glass splinter in his heart, and a glass splinter in his eye. Until he has got rid of them he will never feel like a human being, and the Snow Queen will always maintain her influence over him."

"But canst thou not give something to little Gerda whereby she may overcome all these evil influences?"

"I can give her no power so great as that which she already possesses. Seest thou not how strong she is? Seest thou not that both men and animals must serve her—a poor little girl wandering barefoot through the world?"



HERE HE SET GERDA DOWN, KISSED HER, THE TEARS ROLLING DOWN HIS CHEEKS THE WHILE.

“ Her power is greater than ours ; it proceeds from her heart, from her being a loving and innocent child. If this power which she already possesses cannot give her access to the Snow Queen’s palace, and enable her to free Kay’s eye and heart from the glass fragment, we can do nothing for her ! Two miles hence is the Snow Queen’s garden ; thither thou canst carry the little maiden. Put her down close by the bush bearing red berries and half covered with snow : lose no time, and hasten back to this place ! ”

And the wise woman lifted Gerda on the reindeer’s back, and away they went.

“ Oh, I have left my boots behind ! I have left my gloves behind ! ” cried little Gerda, when it was too late. The cold was piercing, but the reindeer dared not stop ; on he ran until he reached the bush with the red berries. Here he set Gerda down, kissed her, the tears rolling down his cheeks the while, and ran fast back again—which was the best thing he could do. And there stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, alone in that barren region, that ice-cold Finland.

She ran on as fast as she could, and a whole regiment of snow-flakes came to meet her. They did not fall from the sky, which was cloudless and bright with the Northern Lights; they ran straight along the ground, and the farther Gerda advanced the larger they grew. Gerda then remembered how large and curious the snow-flakes had appeared to her when one day she had looked at them through a burning-glass. These, however, were very much larger; they were living forms; they were, in fact, the Snow Queen's guards. Their shapes were the strangest that could be imagined; some looked like great ugly porcupines, others like snakes rolled into knots with their heads peering forth, and others like little fat bears with bristling hair. All, however, were alike dazzlingly white—all were living snow-flakes.

Little Gerda began to repeat "Our Father." Meanwhile, the cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which, as it escaped her mouth, ascended into the air like vapour. The cold grew more intense, the vapour more dense, and at length it took the forms of little bright angels which, as they touched the earth, became larger and more distinct.

They wore helmets on their heads, and carried shields and spears in their hands; their number increased so rapidly that, by the time Gerda had finished her prayer, a whole legion stood around her. They thrust with their spears against the horrible snow-flakes, which fell into thousands of pieces, and little Gerda walked on unhurt and undaunted. The angels touched her hands and feet, and then she scarcely felt the cold, and boldly approached the Snow Queen's palace.

But before we accompany her there, let us see what Kay is doing. He is certainly not thinking of little Gerda, least of all can he imagine that she is now standing at the palace gate.

PART VII.—THE SNOW QUEEN'S PALACE, AND WHAT CAME TO PASS THERE

The walls of the palace were formed of the driven snow, its doors and windows of the cutting winds. There were above a hundred halls, the largest of them many miles in extent, all illuminated by the Northern

Lights, all alike vast, empty, icily cold, and dazzlingly white.

No sounds of mirth ever resounded through these dreary spaces ; no cheerful scene refreshed the sight—not even so much as a bear’s ball, such as one might imagine sometimes takes place ; the tempest forming a band of musicians, and the polar bears standing on their hind paws and exhibiting themselves in the oddest positions. Nor was there ever a card-party, where the cards might be held in the mouth and dealt out by paws ; nor even a small select coffee-party for the white young lady foxes.

Vast, empty, and cold were the Snow Queen’s halls, and the Northern Lights flashed, now high, now low, in regular movement. In the midst of the empty, endless snow hall lay a frozen lake ; it was broken into a thousand pieces, but these pieces so exactly resembled each other that the breaking of them might well be deemed a work of more than human skill. The Snow Queen, when at home, always sat in the middle of this lake ; she used to say that she was then sitting on the Mirror of Reason, and that hers was the best, indeed, the only one, in the world.



HE WAS BUSIED AMONG THE SHARP
ICY FRAGMENTS.

Little Kay was quite blue, nay, almost black with cold. But he did not observe it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away the shrinking feeling he used to experience; and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was busied among the sharp icy fragments, laying and joining them together in every possible way, just as people do with what are called Chinese puzzles.

Kay could form the most curious and complete figures—this was the ice-puzzle of reason—and in his eyes these figures were of the utmost importance. He often formed whole words, but there was one word he could never succeed in forming—it was Eternity. The Snow Queen had said to him, “When thou canst put that figure together, thou shalt become thine own master, and I will give thee the whole world, and a new pair of skates besides.” But he could never do it.

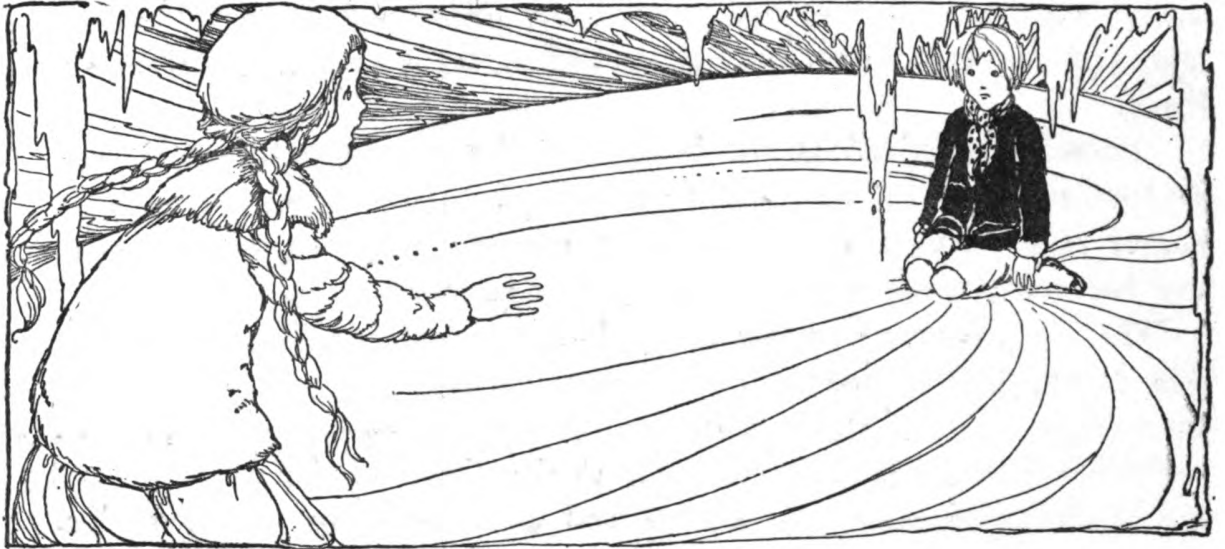
“Now I am going to the warm countries,” said the Snow Queen. “I shall flit through the air, and look into the black cauldrons”—she meant the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius. “I shall whiten them a little; that will be good for the citrons and vineyards.”

So away flew the Snow Queen, leaving Kay sitting all alone in the large, empty hall of ice. He looked at the fragments, and thought and thought till his head ached. He sat so still and so stiff that one might have fancied that he, too, was frozen.

Cold and cutting blew the winds when little Gerda passed through the palace gates, but she repeated her evening prayer, and they immediately sank to rest. She entered the large, cold, empty hall: she saw Kay, she recognised him, she flew upon his neck, she held him fast, and cried, “Kay! dear, dear Kay! I have found thee at last!”

But he sat still as before—cold, silent, motionless; his unkindness wounded poor Gerda deeply. Hot and bitter were the tears she shed; they fell upon his breast; they reached his heart; they thawed the ice and dissolved the tiny splinter of glass within it. He looked at her whilst she sang her hymn—

“Our roses bloom and fade away,
Our Infant Lord abides away;
May we be blessed His face to see,
And ever little children be.”



"KAY! DEAR, DEAR KAY! I HAVE FOUND THEE AT LAST."

Then Kay burst into tears. He wept till the glass splinter floated in his eye and fell with his tears; he knew his old companion immediately, and exclaimed with joy, "Gerda, my dear little Gerda, where hast thou been all this time? And where have I been?" He looked around him. "How cold it is here! how wide and empty!" and he embraced Gerda, whilst she laughed and wept by turns.

Even the pieces of ice took part in their joy; they danced about merrily, and when they were wearied and lay down, they formed of their own accord the mystical letters of which the Snow Queen had said that when Kay could put them together he should be his own master, and that she would give him the whole world, with a new pair of skates besides.

And Gerda kissed Kay's cheeks, which then became fresh and glowing as ever; she kissed his eyes, and they sparkled like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was once more healthy and merry. The Snow Queen might now come home as soon as she liked—it mattered not; Kay's charter of freedom stood written on the mirror in bright icy characters.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the palace, talking about the aged grandmother, and the rose-trees on the roof

of their houses ; and as they walked on, the winds were hushed into a calm, and the sun burst forth in splendour from among the dark storm-clouds.

When they arrived at the bush with the red berries, they found the reindeer standing by awaiting their arrival. He had brought with him another and younger reindeer, whose udders were full, and who gladly gave her warm milk to refresh the young travellers.

The old reindeer and the young hind now carried Kay and Gerda on their backs, first to the little hot room of the wise woman of Finland, where they warmed themselves, and received advice how to proceed on their journey home ; and afterwards to the abode of the Lapland woman, who made them some new clothes and provided them with a sledge.

The whole party now went on together till they came to the boundary of the country ; but just where the green leaves began to sprout, the Lapland woman and the two reindeers took their leave. "Farewell ! farewell !" said they all.

Then the first little birds they had seen for many a long day began to chirp, and warble their pretty songs ; and the trees of the forest burst upon them full of rich and variously tinted foliage. Suddenly the green boughs parted asunder, and a spirited horse galloped up.

Gerda knew it well, for it was the one which had been harnessed to her gold coach ; and on it sat a young girl wearing a bright scarlet cap, and with pistols in the holster before her. It was, indeed, no other than the robber-maiden, who, weary of her home in the forest, was going on her travels, first to the north and afterwards to other parts of the world. She at once recognised Gerda, and Gerda had not forgotten her. They greeted each other with joy and delight.

"A fine gentleman you are, to be sure, you graceless young truant !" said she to Kay. "I should like to know if you deserved that any one should be running to the end of the world on your account !"

But Gerda stroked her cheeks, and asked after the prince and princess.

"They have gone travelling into foreign countries," replied the robber-maiden.

"And the raven ?" asked Gerda.

"Ah! the raven is dead," returned she. "The tame beloved has become a widow; so she hops about with a piece of worsted wound round her leg; she moans most piteously, and chatters more than ever! But tell me now all that has happened to you, and how you managed to pick up your old playfellow."

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

"Snip-snap-snurre-basselurre!" said the robber-maiden. She pressed the hands of both, promised that if ever she passed through their town she would pay them a visit, and then bade them farewell, and rode away out into the wide world.

Kay and Gerda walked on hand in hand, and wherever they went it was spring, beautiful spring, with its bright flowers and green leaves.

They arrived at a large town, the church-bells were ringing merrily, and they immediately recognised the high towers rising into the sky—it was the town wherein they had lived. Joyfully they passed through the streets, joyfully they stopped at the door of Gerda's grandmother; they walked up the stairs and entered the well-known room. The clock said "Tick, tick!" and the hands moved as before.

Only one alteration could they find, and that was in themselves, for they saw that they were now full-grown persons. The rose-trees on the roof blossomed



THEY GREETED EACH OTHER WITH JOY.

in front of the open window, and there beneath them stood the children's seats.

Kay and Gerda went and sat down upon them, still holding each other by the hands; the cold, hollow splendour of the Snow Queen's palace they had forgotten—it seemed to them only an unpleasant dream.

The grandmother meanwhile sat amid God's bright sunshine, and read from the Bible these words: "Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And Kay and Gerda gazed on each other; they now understood the words of their hymn—

“ Our roses bloom and fade away,
Our Infant Lord abides alway;
May we be blessed His face to see,
And ever little children be ! ”

There they sat, those two happy ones, grown-up and yet children—children in heart, while all around them glowed bright summer—warm, glorious summer.



MANY years ago there was an Emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money in dress. He did not trouble himself in the least about his soldiers; nor did he care to go either to the theatre or to the chase, except for the opportunities then afforded him of displaying his new clothes. He had a different suit for each hour of the day; and, as of any other king or emperor, one is accustomed to say, "He is sitting in council," it was always said of him, "The Emperor is sitting in his wardrobe."

Time passed away merrily in the large town which was his capital; strangers arrived every day at the court. One day two rogues, calling themselves weavers, made their appearance. They gave out that they knew how to weave stuffs of the most beautiful colours and elaborate patterns, the clothes made from which should have the wonderful property of remaining invisible to every one who was unfit for the office he held, or who was extraordinarily simple in character.

"These must indeed be splendid clothes!" thought the Emperor. "Had I such a suit, I might, at once, find out what men in my realms are unfit for their office, and also be able to distinguish the wise from the foolish! This stuff must be woven for me immediately." And he caused large sums of money to be given to both the weavers, in order that they might begin their work at once.

So the two pretended weavers set up two looms, and affected to work very busily, though in reality they did nothing at all. They asked for the most delicate silk and the purest gold thread; put both into their own knapsacks; and then continued their pretended work at the empty looms until late at night.

"I should like to know how the weavers are getting on with my cloth," said the Emperor to himself, after some little time had elapsed. He was, however, rather embarrassed, when he remembered that a simpleton, or one unfit for his office, would be unable to see the manufacture. To be sure, he thought, he had nothing to risk in his own person; but yet, he would prefer sending somebody else, to bring him intelligence about the weavers and their work, before he troubled himself in the affair.

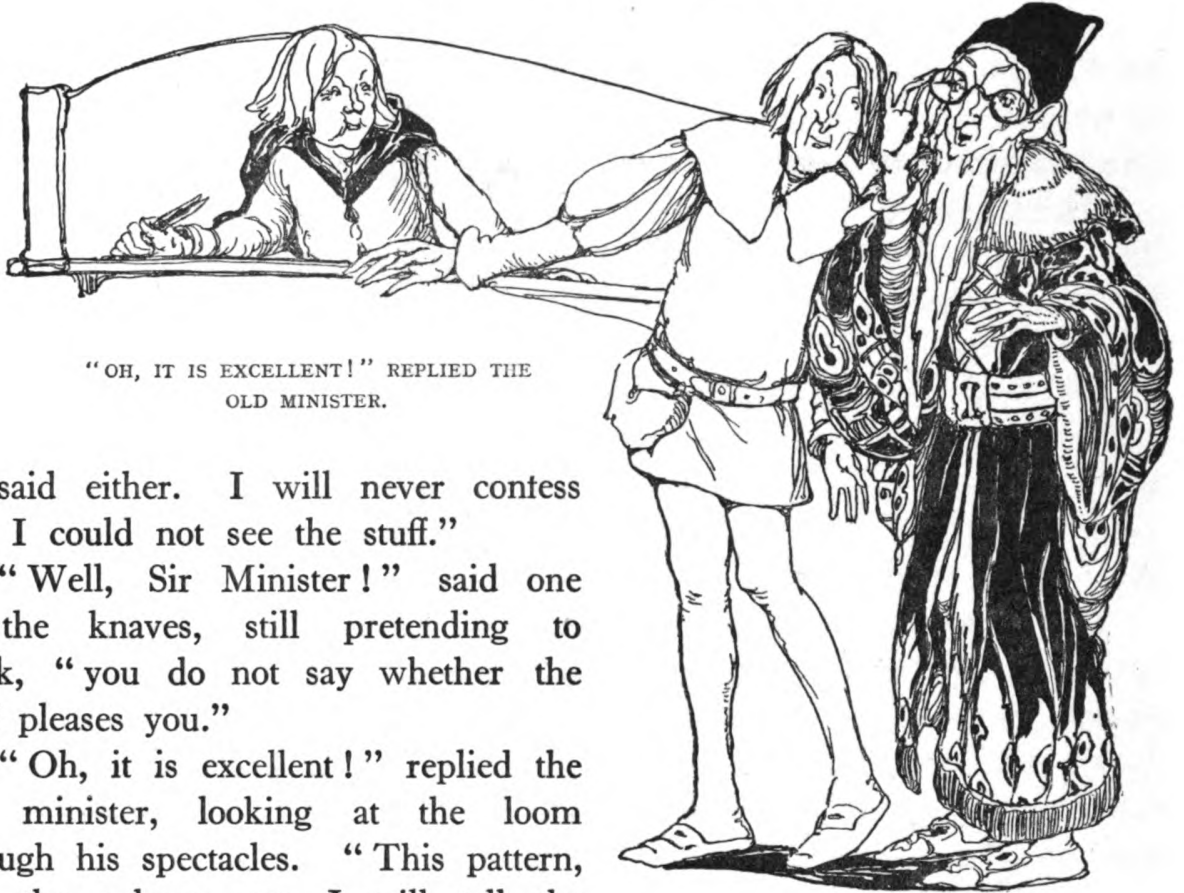
All the people throughout the city had heard of the wonderful property the cloth was to possess; and all were anxious to learn how wise, or how ignorant, their neighbours might prove to be.

"I will send my faithful old minister to the weavers," said the Emperor at last, after some deliberation; "he will be best able to see how the cloth looks; for he is a man of sense, and no one can be more fit for his office than he is."

So the faithful old minister went into the hall, where the knaves were working with all their might at their empty looms. "What can be the meaning of this?" thought the old man, opening his eyes very wide. "I cannot discover the least bit of thread on the looms!" However, he did not express his thoughts aloud.

The impostors requested him very courteously to be so good as to come nearer their looms; and then asked him whether the design pleased him, and whether the colours were not very beautiful; at the same time pointing to the empty frames. The poor old minister looked and looked, but he could not discover anything on the looms, for a very good reason—there was nothing there.

"What!" thought he again, "is it possible that I am a simpleton, I have never thought so myself; and no one must know it now, if I am so. Can it be that I am unfit for my office? No, that must not



"OH, IT IS EXCELLENT!" REPLIED THE
OLD MINISTER.

be said either. I will never confess that I could not see the stuff."

"Well, Sir Minister!" said one of the knaves, still pretending to work, "you do not say whether the stuff pleases you."

"Oh, it is excellent!" replied the old minister, looking at the loom through his spectacles. "This pattern, and the colours—yes, I will tell the Emperor without delay how very beautiful I think them."

"We shall be much obliged to you," said the impostors; and then they named the different colours and described the pattern of the pretended stuff. The old minister listened attentively to their words, in order that he might repeat them to the Emperor; and then the knaves asked for more silk and gold, saying that it was necessary to complete what they had begun. However, they put all that was given them into their knapsacks, and continued to work, with as much apparent diligence as before, at their empty looms.

The Emperor now sent another officer of his court to see how the men were getting on, and to ask whether the cloth would soon be ready. It was just the same with this gentleman as with the minister; he looked at the looms on all sides, but could see nothing at all but the empty frames.

"Does not the stuff appear as beautiful to you as it did to my lord the minister?" asked the impostors of the Emperor's second ambassador; at the same time making the same gestures as before, and talking of the design and colours which were not there.

"I certainly am not stupid!" thought the messenger. "It must be that I am not fit for my good, profitable office! That is very odd; however, no one shall know about it." Accordingly he praised the stuff he could not see, and declared that he was delighted with it.

"Indeed, please your Imperial Majesty," said he to his sovereign, when he returned, "the cloth which the weavers are preparing is extraordinarily rich and beautiful."

The whole city was talking of the splendid cloth which the Emperor had ordered to be woven at his own expense.

And now the Emperor himself wished to see the costly material whilst it was still on the loom. Accompanied by a select number of officers of the court, among whom were the two honest men who had already admired the cloth, he went to the crafty impostors, who went on working more diligently than ever; although they still did not pass a single thread through the looms.

"Is not the work absolutely magnificent?" said the two officers of the crown, already mentioned.

"How is this?" said the Emperor to himself. "I can see nothing! this is indeed a terrible affair! Am I a simpleton, or am I unfit to be an Emperor? That would be the worst thing that could happen.—Oh, the cloth is charming," said he aloud. "It has my complete approval." And he smiled most graciously, and looked closely at the empty looms; for on no account would he say that he could not see what two of the officers of his court had praised so much.

All his courtiers now strained their eyes, hoping to discover something on the looms, but they could see no more than the others. Nevertheless, they all exclaimed, "Oh, how beautiful!" and advised his Majesty to have some new clothes made from this splendid material, for the approaching procession.

"Magnificent! charming! excellent!" was heard on all sides; and



THE ROGUES SAT UP THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT.

every one was uncommonly gay. The Emperor shared in the general satisfaction; and presented the impostors with the ribbon of an order of knighthood, to be worn in their button-holes, and bestowed on them the title of "Gentlemen Weavers."

The rogues sat up the whole of the night before the day on which the procession was to take place, and had sixteen lights burning, so that every one might see how anxious they were to finish the Emperor's new suit. "See!" cried they at last, "the Emperor's new clothes are ready!"

And now the Emperor, with all the grandees of his court, came to the weavers; and the rogues raised their arms, as if in the act of holding something up, saying, "Here are your Majesty's trousers! Here is the scarf! Here is the mantle! The whole suit is as light as a cobweb; one might fancy one has nothing at all on, when dressed in it. That, however, is the great virtue of this delicate cloth."

"Yes, indeed!" said all the courtiers, although not one of them could see anything of this exquisite manufacture.

"If your Imperial Majesty will be graciously pleased to take off your clothes, we will fit on the new suit, in front of the looking-glass."

The Emperor was accordingly undressed, and the rogues pretended to array him in his new suit; the Emperor turned round, from side to side, before the looking-glass.

"How splendid his Majesty looks in his new clothes; and how well they fit!" every one cried out. "What a design! What colours!"

"The canopy which is to be borne over your Majesty in the procession is waiting," announced the chief master of the ceremonies.

"I am quite ready," answered the Emperor. "Do my new clothes fit well?" asked he, turning himself round again before the looking-glass, in order that he might appear to be examining his handsome suit.

The lords of the bedchamber, who were to carry his Majesty's train, felt about on the ground, as if they were lifting up the ends of the mantle, and pretended to be carrying something; for they would by no means betray anything like simplicity or unfitness for their office.

So now the Emperor walked under his high canopy in the midst of the procession, through the streets of his capital; and all the people standing by, and those at the windows, cried out, "Oh, how beautiful are our Emperor's new clothes! What a magnificent train there is to the mantle; and how gracefully the scarf hangs!"

In short, no one would allow that he could not see these much-admired clothes; because, in doing so, he would have declared himself either a simpleton or unfit for his office. Certainly, none of the Emperor's various suits had ever made so great an impression as these invisible ones.

"But the Emperor has nothing at all on!" said a little child. "Listen to the voice of innocence!" exclaimed his father; and what the child had said was whispered from one to another.

"But he has nothing at all on!" at last cried out all the people. The Emperor was vexed, for he knew that the people were right; but he thought the procession must go on now. And the lords of the bedchamber took greater pains than ever to appear holding up a train, although, in reality, there was no train to hold.

"ANNE ANDERSON"



"BUT THE EMPEROR HAS NOTHING AT ALL ON!" SAID A LITTLE CHILD.

The Top and the Ball

A TOP and a ball were lying close together in a drawer, among other playthings.

Thus said the top to the ball:—

“Why should we not become bride and bridegroom, since we are thrown so much together?”

But the ball, who was made of morocco leather, and fancied herself a very fashionable young lady, would not hear of such a proposal.

The next day, the little boy to whom the playthings belonged, came to the drawer; he painted the top red and yellow, and drove a brass nail through the middle of it; it was glorious after that to see the top spin round.

“Look at me now!” said he to the ball; “what do you say to me now? Why should not we become man and wife? We suit each other so well; you can jump, and I can spin; it would not be easy to find a couple happier than we should be.”

“Do you think so?” said the ball; “perhaps you do not know that my father and mother were morocco slippers, and that I have cork in my body.”

“Yes; but I am made of mahogany,” said the top; “the Burgomaster manufactured me with his own hands; for he has a lathe of his own, and took great pleasure in turning me.”

“Can I trust you in this?” said the ball.

“May I never be whipped again if I lie,” said the top.

“You don’t talk amiss,” said the ball; “but I am not at liberty, I am as good as betrothed to a young swallow. Whenever I fly up in the air, he puts his head out of his nest and says, ‘Will you marry me?’ I have said ‘Yes’ to him in my heart, and that is almost the same as a betrothal. But one thing I promise you, I will never forget you!”

"That will be of great use!" said the top; and no more was then said on the subject.

Next day the ball was taken out. The top saw it fly like a bird into the air, so high that it could be seen no longer; it came back again, but every time it touched the ground it sprang higher than before. Either love, or the cork she had in her body, must have been the cause of this.

The ninth time she did not return; the boy sought and sought, but she was gone.

"I know well where she is," sighed the top; "she is in the swallow's nest, celebrating her wedding." The more the top thought of it, the more amiable did the ball appear to him; that she could not be his, only made his love the more ardent. Another had been preferred to him; he could not forget that! And the top spun and hummed; but was always thinking of the dear ball, who, in his imagination, grew more and more amiable. Thus passed several years, and there was constant love!

The top was no longer young. However, he was one day gilded all over; never before had he looked so handsome. He was now a gilt top, and spun most bravely, humming all the time: yes, that was famous! But all at once he sprang too high, and was gone! They sought and sought, even in the cellar; he was nowhere to be found.

Where was he?



IT SPRANG HIGHER THAN BEFORE.

He had jumped into a barrel full of all sorts of rubbish—cabbage-stalks, sweepings, dust, which had fallen in from the gutter.

“Alas! here I lie, my gay gilding will soon be spoiled; and what sort of trumpery can I have fallen in with?” And he peeped at a long cabbage-stalk which lay fearfully near him, and at a strange round thing somewhat like an apple. But it was not an apple, it was an old ball, which had lain several years in the gutter, and was quite soaked through with water.

“Thank goodness! At last I see an equal, with whom I may speak,” said the ball, looking fixedly at the gilt top. “I am made of real morocco, sewed together by a young lady’s hands, and I have cork in my body; but I shall never again be noticed by any one! I was on the point of marriage with the swallow when I fell into the gutter, and there I have lain five years, and am now wet through. Only think what a wearisome time it is for a young lady to be in such a situation!”

But the top answered not a word; he thought of his long-lamented companion; and the more he heard the more certain he became that it was she herself.

The servant-maid now came, and was going to turn the barrel over. “Hurrah!” exclaimed she, “there is the gilt top.”

And the top was brought back to the play-room; it was used and admired as before: but nothing more was heard of the ball, nor did the top ever even speak of his former love for her; such a feeling must have passed away. How could it be otherwise, when he found that she had lain five years in the gutter, and that she was so much altered he scarcely knew her again when he met her in the barrel among rubbish?



THE flea, the grasshopper, and the frog once wanted to try which of them could jump highest; so they invited the whole world, and anybody else who liked to come and see the grand sight. Three famous jumpers were they, as was seen by every one when they met together in the room.

"I will give my daughter to him who shall jump highest," said the King; "it would be too bad for you to have the trouble of jumping, and for us to offer you no prize."

The flea was the first to introduce himself; he had very polite manners, and bowed to the company on every side, for he was of noble blood.

Next came the grasshopper; he was not quite so well formed as the flea; however, he knew how to conduct himself, and wore a green uniform, which belonged to him by right of birth.

"And I can sing so well," he said, "that sixteen parlour-bred crickets, who have chirped and chirped ever since they were born, have fretted themselves ten times thinner than ever, out of sheer envy!"

The frog said not a word; however, it might be that he thought the more, and the house-dog, after going snuffing about him, confessed that the frog must be of a good family.

"Ah, I say nothing for the present!" remarked the old King, "but I observe everything, and form my own private opinion thereupon." And

now the match began. The flea jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him, and so they insisted that he had not jumped at all, which was disgraceful, after he had made such a fuss!

The grasshopper only jumped half as high, but he jumped right into the King's face, and the King declared he was quite disgusted by his rudeness.

The frog stood still as if lost in thought; at last people fancied he did not intend to jump at all.

"I'm afraid he is ill!" said the dog; and he went snuffing at him again, when lo! all at once he made a little sidelong jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a low stool close by.

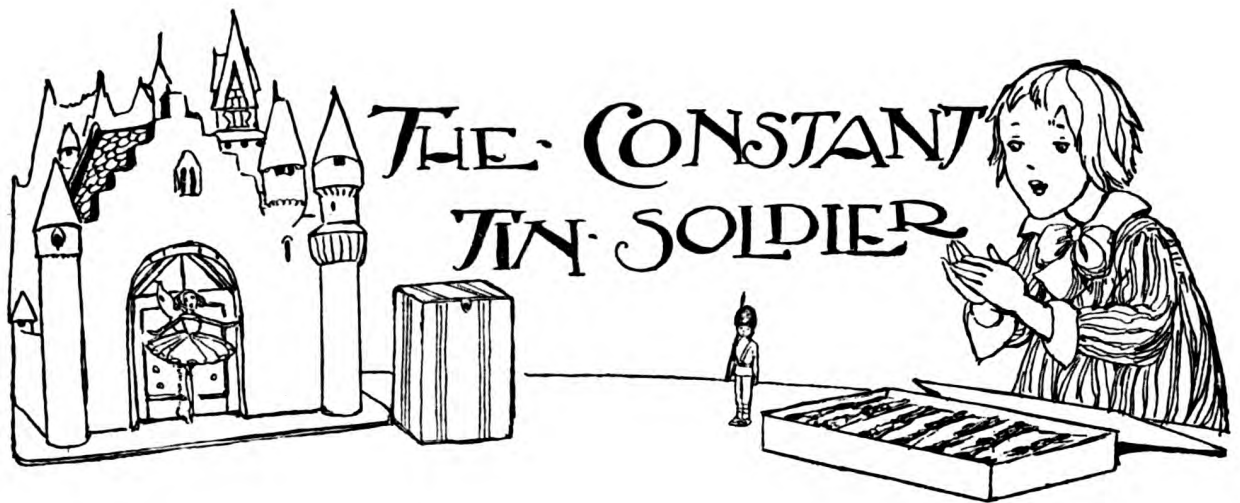
Then spoke the King: "There is nothing higher than my daughter, therefore he who jumps up to her jumps highest; but only a person of good understanding would ever have thought of that, and thus the frog has shown us that he has understanding. He has brains in his head, that he has!"

And thus the frog won the Princess.

"I jumped highest for all that!" exclaimed the flea. "But it's all the same to me; let her have the stiff-legged, slimy creature, if she likes him! I jumped highest, but I am too light and airy for this stupid world; the people can neither see me nor catch me; dullness and heaviness win the day with them!"

And so the flea went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

And the grasshopper sat on a green bank thinking of the world and its goings on, and at length he repeated the flea's last words—"Yes, dullness and heaviness win the day!" And then he again began singing his own melancholy song, and it is from him that we have learned this history; and yet, my friend, though you read it here in a printed book, it may not be perfectly true.



THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, all brothers, for they had all been made out of one old tin spoon. They carried muskets in their arms, and held themselves very upright, and their uniforms were red and blue—very gay, indeed.

The first word they heard in this world, when the lid was taken off the box in which they lay, was “Tin soldiers!” It was a little boy who made this exclamation, clapping his hands at the same time. They had been given to him because it was his birthday, and he now set them out on the table.

The soldiers resembled each other to a hair—one only was rather different from the rest; he had but one leg, for he had been made last, when there was not quite tin enough left. However, he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others did upon their two; and this very tin soldier it is whose fortunes seem to us worthy of record.

On the table where the tin soldiers were set out were several other playthings, but the most charming of them all was a pretty pasteboard castle. Through its little windows one could look into the rooms. In front of the castle stood some tiny trees, clustering round a little mirror intended to represent a lake, and waxen swans swam in the lake and were reflected on its surface.

All this was very pretty, but prettiest of all was a little damsel standing in the open doorway of the castle; she, too, was cut out of pasteboard, but she had on a frock of the clearest muslin, a little sky-blue ribbon was flung across her shoulders like a scarf, and in the midst of this

scarf was set a bright gold wing. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and raised one of her legs so high in the air that the tin soldier could not find it, and fancied that she had, like him, only one leg.

"That would be just the wife for me," thought he, "but then, she is of rather too high rank; she lives in a castle. I have only a box; and besides, there are all our five-and-twenty men in it; it is no place for her!"

"However, there will be no harm in my making acquaintance with her," and so he stationed himself behind a snuff-box that stood on the table; from this place he had a full view of the delicate little lady, who still remained standing on one leg, yet without losing her balance.

When evening came, all the other tin soldiers were put away into the box, and the people of the house went to bed. The playthings now began to play in their turn; they pretended to visit, to fight battles, and give balls. The tin soldiers rattled in the box, but the lid would not come off. The nut-crackers cut capers, and the slate-pencil played at commerce on the slate; there was such a racket that the canary-bird woke up, and began to talk too, but he always talked in verse.

The only two who did not move from their places were the tin soldier and the little dancer; she constantly remained in her graceful position, standing on the point of her foot, with outstretched arms; and, as for him, he stood just as firmly on his one leg, never for one moment turning his eyes away from her.

Twelve o'clock struck. Crash! Open sprang the lid of the snuff-box, but there was no snuff inside it; no; out jumped a little black conjurer, in fact it was a Jack-in-the-box. "Tin soldier!" said the conjurer, "wilt thou keep thine eyes to thyself?"

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Well, only wait till to-morrow!" quoth the conjurer.

When the morrow had come, and the children were out of bed, the tin soldier was placed on the window-ledge, and, whether the conjurer or the wind caused it, all at once the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier, head foremost, from the third story to the ground.

A dreadful fall was that! His one leg turned over and over in the air, and at last he rested, poised on his soldier's cap, with his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The maid-servant and the little boy immediately came down to look for him; but, although they very nearly trod on him, they could not see him. If the tin soldier had but called out, "Here I am!" they might easily have found him; but he thought it would not be becoming for him to cry out, as he was in uniform.

It now began to rain; every drop fell heavier than the last; there was a regular shower. When it was over, two boys came by. "Look!" said one, "here is a tin soldier; he shall have a sail for once in his life."

So they made a boat out of an old newspaper, put the tin soldier into it, and away he sailed down the gutter, both the boys running along by the side and clapping their hands. The paper boat rocked to and fro, and every now and then veered round so quickly that the tin soldier became quite giddy; still he moved not a muscle, looked straight before him, and held his bayonet tightly clasped.

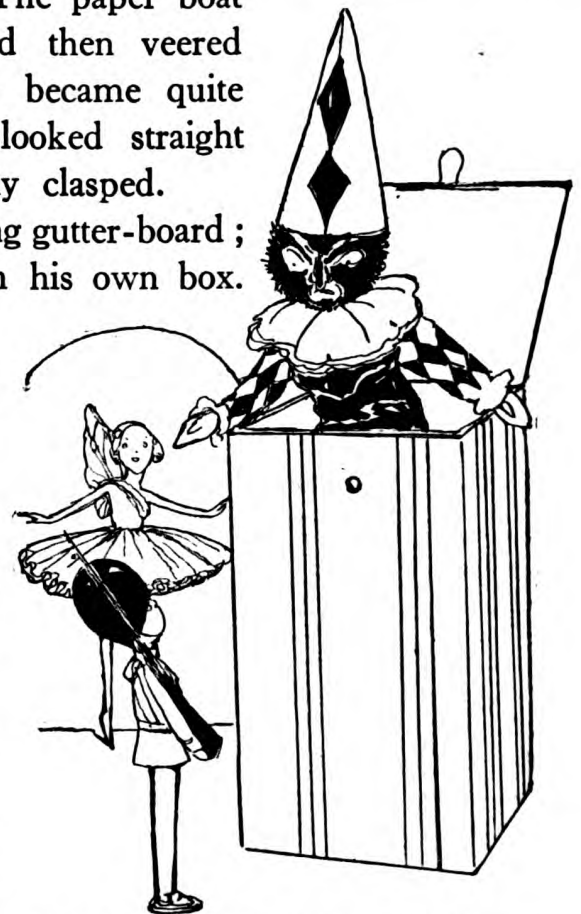
All at once the boat sailed under a long gutter-board; he found it as dark here as at home in his own box.

"Where shall I get to next?" thought he. "Yes, to be sure, it is all that conjurer's doing! Ah, if the little maiden were but sailing with me in the boat I would not care for its being twice as dark!"

Just then a great water-rat that lived under the gutter-board darted out.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat. "Where is your passport?"

But the tin soldier was silent, and held his weapon with a still firmer grasp. The boat sailed on, and the



THE TIN SOLDIER PRETENDED NOT TO HEAR.

rat followed. Oh! how furiously he showed his teeth, and cried out to sticks and straws, "Stop him, stop him! he has not paid the toll; he has not shown his passport!"

But the stream grew stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already catch a glimpse of the bright daylight before the boat came from under the tunnel, but at the same time he heard a roaring noise, at which the boldest heart might well have trembled. Only fancy! where the tunnel ended, the water of the gutter fell perpendicularly into a great canal; this was as dangerous for the tin soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

He was now so close that he could no longer stand upright; the boat darted forwards; the poor tin soldier held himself as stiff and immovable as possible; no one could accuse him of having even blinked. The boat spun round and round three, nay, four times, and was filled with water to the brim; it must sink. The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water; deeper and deeper sank the boat, softer and softer grew the paper. The water went over the soldier's head, and he thought of the pretty little dancer whom he should never see again, and these words rang in his ears :—

"Wild adventure, mortal danger
Be thy portion, valiant stranger!"

The paper now tore asunder, the tin soldier fell through the rent; but, in the same moment, he was swallowed up by a large fish. Oh, how dark it was, worse even than under the gutter-board, and so narrow, too! But the tin soldier's resolution was as constant as ever; there he lay, at full length, shouldering his arms.

The fish turned and twisted about, and made the strangest movements. At last he became quite still; a flash of lightning, as it were, darted through him. The daylight shone brightly, and some one exclaimed, "Tin soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to the market, sold, and brought home into the kitchen, where the servant-girl was cutting him up with a large knife.



THE SAME INSTANT HE WAS SWALLOWED BY A LARGE FISH.

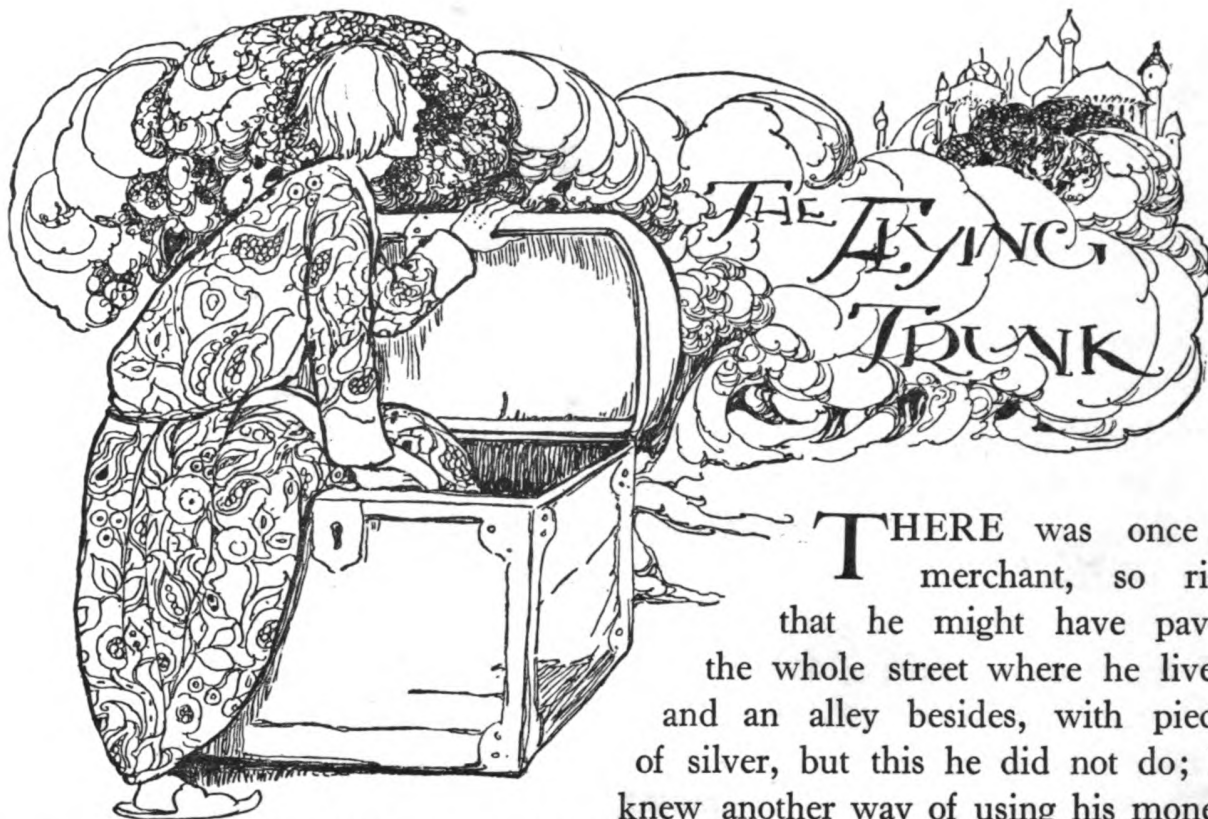
She seized the tin soldier by the middle with two of her fingers, and took him into the parlour, where every one was eager to see the wonderful man who had travelled in the maw of a fish; however, our little warrior was by no means proud. They set him on the table, and there—no, how could anything so extraordinary happen in this world?—the tin soldier was in the very same room in which he had been before.

He saw the same children, the same playthings stood on the table, among them the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancing maiden, who was still standing upon one leg, while she held the other high in the air; she, too, was constant. It quite affected the tin soldier; he could have found it in his heart to weep tin tears, but such weakness would have been unbecoming in a soldier. He looked at her and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

And now one of the little boys took the soldier and threw him without ceremony into the stove. He did not give any reason for so doing, but, no doubt, the conjurer in the snuff-box must have had a hand in it.

The tin soldier now stood in a blaze of red light; he felt extremely hot. Whether this heat was the result of the actual fire or of the flames of love within him, he knew not. He had entirely lost his colour. Whether this change had happened during his travels, or were the effect of strong emotion, I know not. He looked upon the little damsel, she looked upon him, and he felt that he was melting; but, constant as ever, he still stood shouldering his arms.

A door opened, the wind seized the dancer, and, like a sylph, she flew straightway into the stove to the tin soldier; they both flamed up into a blaze, and were gone. The soldier was melted to a hard lump, and when the maid took out the ashes the next day she found his remains in the shape of a little tin heart; of the dancer there remained only the gold wing, and that was burned black as coal.



THERE was once a merchant, so rich that he might have paved the whole street where he lived, and an alley besides, with pieces of silver, but this he did not do; he knew another way of using his money, and whenever he laid out a shilling he gained a crown in return. A merchant he lived, and a merchant he died.

All his money then went to his son. But the son lived merrily, and spent all his time in pleasures—went to balls every evening, made bank-notes into paper kites, and played at ducks and drakes in the pond with gold pieces instead of stones.

In this manner his money soon vanished, until at last he had only a few pennies left, and his wardrobe was reduced to a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. His friends cared no more about him, now that they could no longer walk abroad with him; one of them, however, more good-natured than the rest, sent him an old trunk, with this advice, "Pack up, and be off!" This was all very fine, but he had nothing that he could pack up; so he put himself into the trunk.

It was a droll trunk: when the lock was pressed close it could fly. The merchant's son did press the lock, and lo! up flew the trunk with him through the chimney, high into the clouds, on and on, higher and higher. The lower part cracked, which rather frightened him, for if it had broken in two, a pretty fall he would have had.

However, it descended safely, and he found himself in Turkey. He hid the trunk under a heap of dry leaves in a wood, and walked into the next town. He could do so very well, for among the Turks everybody goes about clad as he was, in dressing-gown and slippers. He met a nurse carrying a little child in her arms. "Hark ye, Turkish nurse," quoth he; "what palace is that with the high windows close by the town?"

"The King's daughter dwells there," replied the nurse. "It has been told of her that she shall be made very unhappy by a lover, and therefore no one may visit her, except when the King and Queen are with her."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son, and he immediately went back into the wood, sat down in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the palace, and crept through the window into the Princess's apartment.

She was lying asleep on the sofa. She was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not help kneeling down to kiss her hand, whereupon she awoke, and was not a little frightened at the sight of this unexpected visitor. But he told her, however, that he was the Turkish prophet, and had come down from the sky on purpose to woo her, and on hearing this she was well pleased.

So they sat down side by side, and he talked to her about her eyes, how they were beautiful dark-blue seas, and that thoughts and feelings floated like mermaidens therein; and he spoke of her brow, how it was a fair snowy mountain, with splendid halls and pictures, and many other such like things he told her.

Oh, these were charming stories: and thus he wooed the Princess, and she immediately said "Yes."

"But you must come here on Saturday," said she; "the King and Queen have promised to drink tea with me that evening; they will be so proud and so pleased when they hear that I am to marry the Turkish prophet! And mind you tell them a very pretty story, for they are exceedingly fond of stories. My mother likes them to be very moral and high-class, and my father likes them to be merry, so as to make him laugh."



THE FLYING
TRUNK

"Yes, I shall bring no other bridal present than a tale," replied the merchant's son; and here they parted, but not before the Princess had given her lover a sword all covered with gold. He knew excellently well what use to make of this present.

So he flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and then sat down in the wood to compose the tale which was to be ready by Saturday, and certainly, he found composition not the easiest thing in the world.

At last he was ready, and at last Saturday came.

The King, the Queen, and the whole court were waiting tea for him at the Princess's palace. The suitor was received with much ceremony.

"Will you not tell us a story?" asked the Queen; "a story that is instructive and full of deep meaning."

"But let it make us laugh," said the King.

"With pleasure," replied the merchant's son; and now you must hear his story.

"There was once a bundle of matches, who were all extremely proud of their high descent, for their genealogical tree—that is to say, the tall fir-tree from which each of them was a splinter—had been a tree of great antiquity, and distinguished by his height from all the other trees of the forest. The matches were now lying on the mantelpiece, between a tinder-box and an old iron saucepan, and to these two they often talked about their youth.

"‘Ah, when we were upon the green branches,’ said they; ‘when we really lived upon green branches—that was a happy time! Every morning and evening we had diamond-tea’ (that is dew); ‘the whole day long we had sunshine, at least whenever the sun shone, and all the little birds used to tell stories to us. It might easily be seen, too, that we were rich, for the other trees were clothed with leaves only during the summer, whereas our family could afford to wear green clothes both summer and winter.

"‘But at last came the wood-cutters: then was the great revolution, and our family was dispersed. The paternal trunk obtained a situation as mainmast to a magnificent ship, which could sail round the world if it chose; the boughs were transported to various places, and our work

was henceforth to kindle lights for low, common people. Now you will understand how it comes to pass that persons of such high descent as we are should be living in a kitchen.'

" 'To be sure, mine is a very different history,' remarked the iron saucepan, near which the matches were lying. 'From the moment I came into the world until now, I have been rubbed and scrubbed, and boiled over and over again—oh, how many times! I love to have to do with what is solidly good, and am really of the first importance in this house.'

" 'My only pleasure is to stand clean and bright upon this mantelpiece after dinner, and hold some rational conversation with my companions. However, excepting the water-pail, who now and then goes out into the court, we all of us lead a very quiet domestic life here. Our only newsmonger is the turf-basket, but he talks in such a democratic way about "government" and the "people"—why, I assure you, not long ago, there was an old jar standing here who was so much shocked by what he heard said that he fell down from the mantelpiece and broke into a thousand pieces! That turf-basket is a Liberal, that's the fact.'

" 'Now, you talk too much,' interrupted the tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint, so that the sparks flew out. 'Why should we not spend a pleasant evening?'

" 'Yes, let us settle who is of highest rank among us!' proposed the matches.

" 'Oh, no; for my part I would rather not speak of myself,' objected the earthenware pitcher. 'Suppose we have an intellectual entertainment? I will begin; I will relate something of everyday life, such as we have all experienced; one can easily transport oneself into it, and that is so interesting! Near the Baltic, among the Danish beech-groves—'

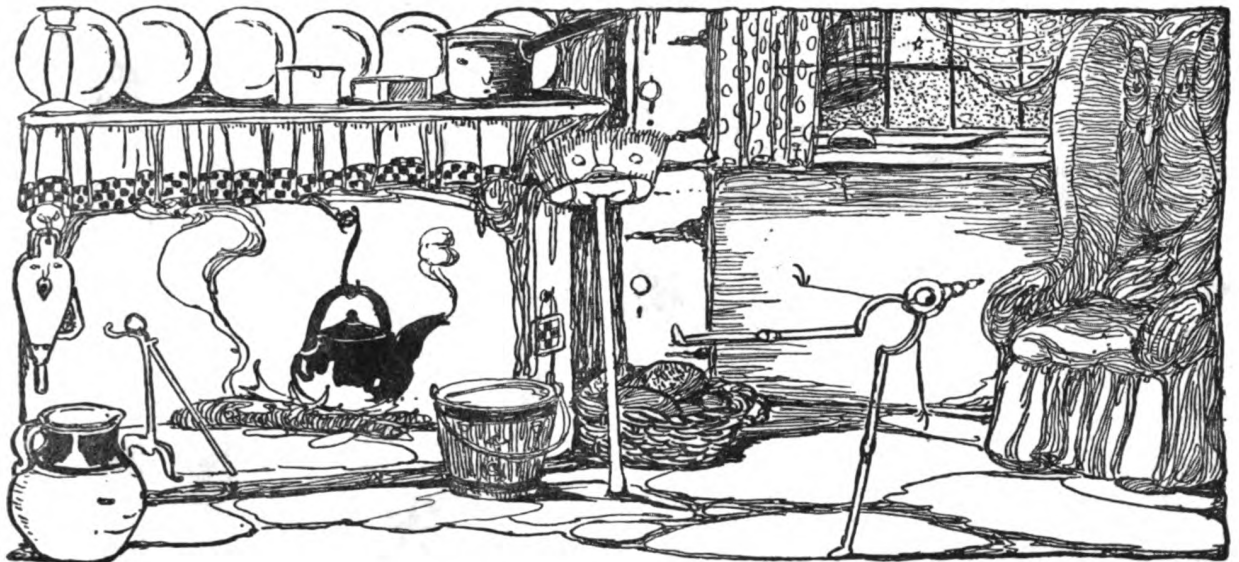
" 'That is a capital beginning!' cried all the plates at once; 'it will certainly be just the sort of story for us!'

" 'Yes, there I spent my youth in a very quiet family; the furniture was rubbed, the floors were washed, clean curtains were hung up every fortnight.'

“‘How very interesting. What a charming way you have of describing things!’ said the hair-broom. ‘Any one might guess immediately that it is a lady who is speaking; the tale breathes such a spirit of cleanliness!’

“‘Very true; so it does!’ exclaimed the water-pail; and in his delight he gave a little jump, so that some of the water splashed upon the floor.

“And the pitcher went on with her tale, and the end proved as good as the beginning.



“NOW I WILL DANCE,” SAID THE FIRE-TONGS.

“All the plates clattered applause, and the hair-broom took some green parsley out of the sand-hole and crowned the pitcher, for he knew that this would vex the others; and, thought he, ‘If I crown her to-day, she will crown me to-morrow.’

“‘Now I will dance,’ said the fire-tongs, and accordingly she did dance, and oh! it was wonderful to see how high she threw one of her legs up into the air; the old chair-cover in the corner tore with horror at seeing her. ‘Am not I to be crowned too?’ asked the tongs; and she was crowned forthwith.

“‘These are the vulgar rabble!’ thought the matches.



HE FLEW UP INTO THE AIR, LETTING THEM OFF AS HE FLEW.

"The tea-urn was now called upon to sing, but she had a cold; she said she could only sing when she was boiling; however, this was all her pride and affectation. The fact was she never cared to sing except when she was standing on the parlour table before company.

"On the window-ledge lay an old quill pen, with which the maids used to write; there was nothing re-

markable about her, except that she had been dipped too low in the ink; however, she was proud of that. 'If the tea-urn does not choose to sing,' quoth she, 'she may let it alone; there is a nightingale in the cage hung just outside, he can sing. To be sure, he had never learned the notes; never mind—we will not speak evil of any one this evening!'

"'I think it highly absurd,' observed the tea-kettle, who was the vocalist of the kitchen, and a half-brother of the tea-urn's, 'that a foreign bird should be listened to. Is it patriotic? I appeal to the turf-basket.'

"'I am only vexed,' said the turf-basket; 'I am vexed from my inmost soul that such things are thought of at all. Is it a becoming way of spending the evening? Would it not be much more rational to reform the whole house, and establish a totally new order of things, rather more according to nature? Then every one would get into his right place, and I would undertake to direct the revolution. What say you to it? That would be something worth the doing!'

"‘Oh, yes; we will make a grand commotion!’ cried they all. Just then the door opened—it was the servant-maid. They all stood perfectly still, not one dared stir; yet there was not a single kitchen-utensil among them all who was not thinking about the great things he could have done, and how great was his superiority over the others.

"‘Ah, if I had chosen it,’ thought each of them, ‘what a merry evening we might have had!’

"The maid took the matches and struck a light—oh, how they spluttered and blazed up!

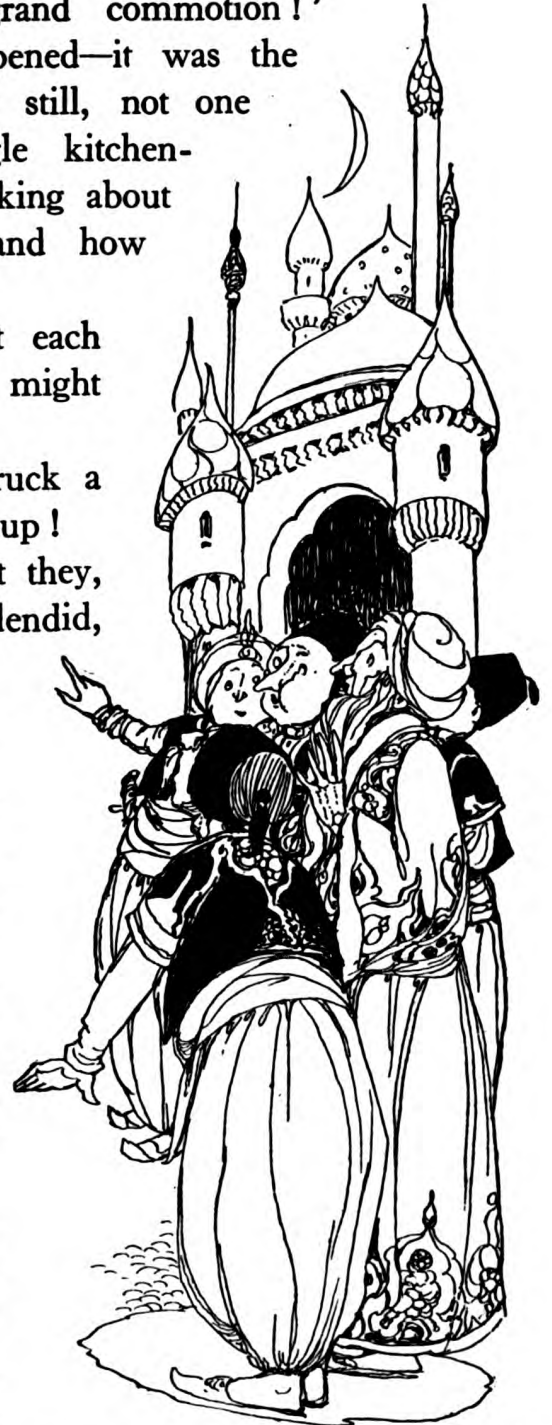
"‘Now every one may see,’ thought they, ‘that we are of highest rank. What a splendid, dazzling light we give—how glorious!’ and in another moment they were burned out.

"That is a capital story," said the Queen; "I quite felt myself transported into the kitchen. Yes, thou shalt have our daughter!"

"With all my heart," said the King; "on Monday thou shalt marry our daughter." They said "thou" to him now, since he was so soon to become one of the family.

The wedding was a settled thing; and on the evening before, the whole city was illuminated; cakes, buns, and sugar-plums were thrown out among the people; all the little boys in the streets stood upon tiptoes, shouting "Hurrah!" and whistling through their fingers—it was famous!

"Well, I suppose I ought to do my part, too," thought the merchant's



WHAT A GLORIOUS SKY-ROCKET WAS THAT!

son; so he went and brought sky-rockets, squibs, Catherine-wheels, Roman-candles, and all kinds of fireworks; put them all into his trunk and flew up into the air, letting them off as he flew.

Hurrah! what a glorious sky-rocket was that!

All the Turks jumped up to look so hastily that their slippers flew about their ears; such a meteor they had never seen before. Now they might be sure that it was indeed the prophet who was to marry their Princess.

As soon as the merchant's son had returned in his trunk to the wood, he said to himself, "I will now go into the city and hear what people say about me, and what sort of figure I made in the air;" and certainly, this was a very natural idea.

Oh, what strange accounts were given! Every one to whom he spoke had beheld the bright vision in a way peculiar to himself, but all agreed that it was marvellously beautiful.

"I saw the great prophet with my own eyes," declared one; "he had eyes like sparkling stars, and a beard like foaming water."

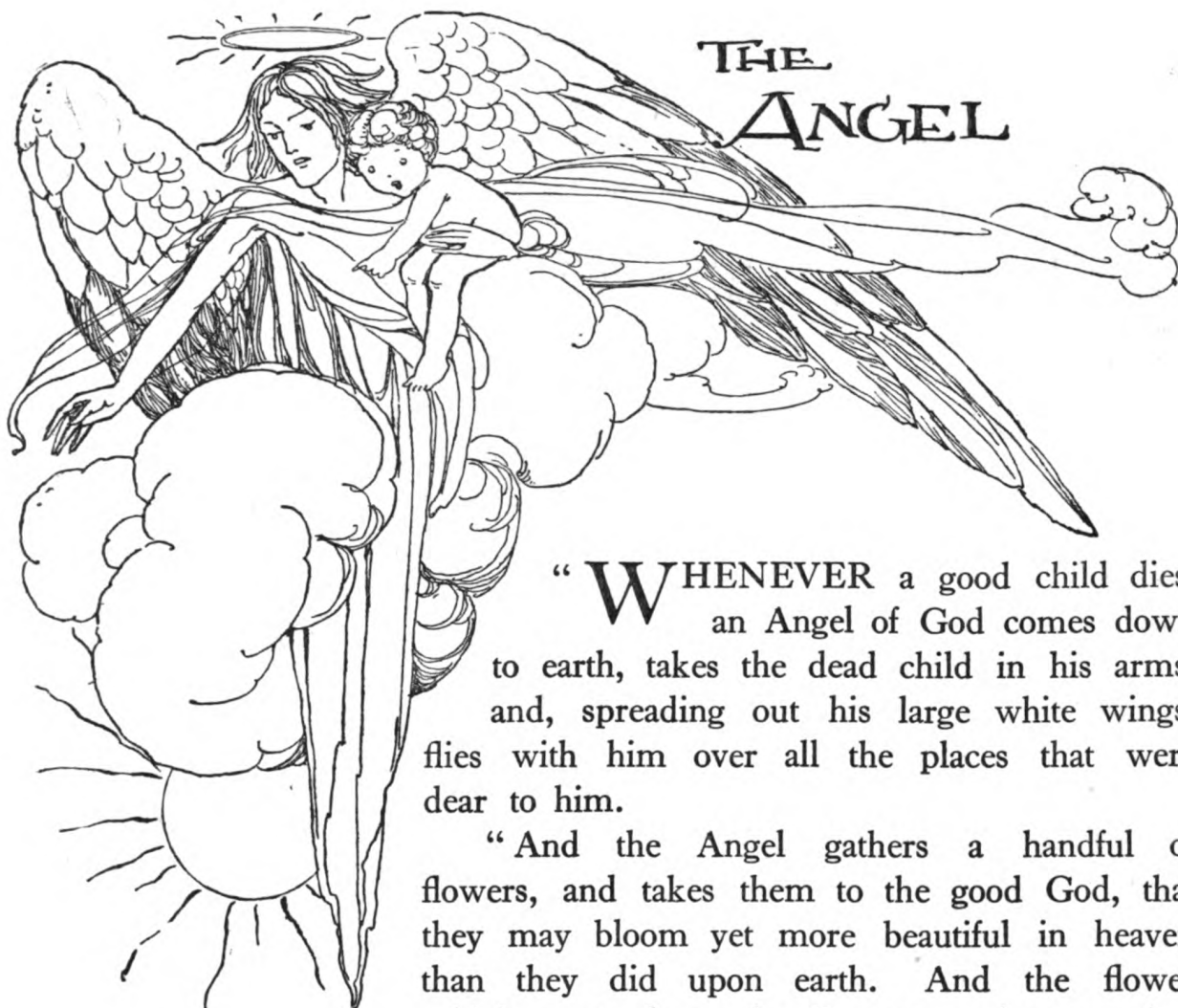
"He flew enveloped in a mantle of fire," said another, "the prettiest little cherubs were peeping forth from under its folds."

Yes; he heard of many beautiful things, and the morrow was to be his wedding-day.

He now went back to the wood, intending to get into his trunk again, but where was it?

Alas! the trunk was burned. One spark from the fireworks had been left in it, and set it on fire; the trunk now lay in ashes. The poor merchant's son could never fly again—could never again visit his bride.

She sat the livelong day upon the roof of her palace expecting him, she expects him still. He, meantime, goes about the world telling stories, but none of his stories now are so pleasant as that one which he related in the Princess's palace about the Brimstone Matches.



THE ANGEL

“WHENEVER a good child dies, an Angel of God comes down to earth, takes the dead child in his arms, and, spreading out his large white wings, flies with him over all the places that were dear to him.

“And the Angel gathers a handful of flowers, and takes them to the good God, that they may bloom yet more beautiful in heaven than they did upon earth. And the flower which most pleases its Creator receives a voice, and, supremely happy, joins in the chorus of the blessed angels.”

Thus spoke an Angel of God while carrying a dead child to heaven; and the child listened as though in a dream, and together they flew over all those places where the child had formerly played, and they passed over gardens full of lovely flowers.

“Which flower shall we take with us and plant in heaven?” asked the Angel.

And there stood a fair delicate rose-tree, but an evil hand had broken the stem, so that all the branches, with their large, half-opened buds, hung faded down to the ground. “Poor tree!” said the child, “let us take it, that it may bloom again with the good God in heaven.”

And the Angel took it, and kissed the child, and the little one

half opened his eyes. They plucked many a splendid garden flower, but they also took the meek little daisy and the wild heart's-ease.

"Now we have flowers enough!" said the child; and the Angel seemed to agree, but he did not yet fly up to heaven.

It was night; it was very still: they stayed near a town; they hovered over one of its narrowest streets, where straw, ashes, and rubbish of all kinds were scattered. There had been a removal that day; lying on the ground were broken plates, bits of plaster, rags, fragments of old hats; in short, nothing but things unseemly.

Amidst this confusion the Angel pointed to the broken pieces of an old flower-pot, and a lump of earth fallen out of it; they were only held together by the roots of a large, faded field-flower, which was no longer worth looking at, and had, therefore, been thrown out into the street.

"We will take this flower with us," said the Angel. "I will tell thee about it as we are flying."

And they flew away, and the Angel spake as follows :—

"There once lived in a low cellar, down in that little narrow street, a poor, sick boy. He had been kept to his bed from his earliest years; perhaps, now and then, he was able to take a few turns up and down his little room on his crutches, but that was all he could do.

"Sometimes, during the summer, the sunbeams would stream through his little cellar-window, and then, if the child sat up and felt the warm sun shining upon him, and could see the crimson blood in his slight, wasted fingers, as he held them up to the light, he would say, 'To-day I have been out!' He only knew the pleasant woods and their greenness by the neighbour's son bringing him the first fresh boughs of the beech-tree, which he would hold over his head, and then fancy he was under the shade of the beech-trees, with the sun shining around him.

"One day in spring the neighbour's son brought him some field-flowers, and among them was one with a root; so it was put into a flower-pot and placed at the window, close by the bed, and, being carefully planted, it flourished, and put forth fresh shoots, and bore flowers every year. It was like a beautiful garden to the poor boy—his little treasure upon earth; he watered it, and tended it, taking care that every

sunbeam, from the first to the last, which came in at his little low window, should fall upon the plant. And its flowers, with their soft colours and fragrance, mingled with his dreams; and towards them he turned when he was dying, when Our Lord called him to Himself.

"The child has now been a year with the blessed; for a year the plant has stood by the window, faded and forgotten, and to-day it was thrown out among the rubbish into the street. And this is the flower which we have just now taken; for this poor faded field-flower has given more pleasure than the most splendid blossoms in the garden of a queen."

"But how do you know all this?" asked the child, whom the Angel was bearing to heaven.

"How do I know it!" said the Angel. "I was myself that little sick boy who went upon crutches. Ought I not to know my own flower?"

And the child opened wide its eyes, and looked into the Angel's fair, bright countenance—and in the same moment they were in heaven.

And the dead child received wings like the Angel's, and flew with him hand in hand. And a voice was given to the poor faded field-flower, and it sang with the Angels surrounding the great God, some very near Him, and others forming larger circles farther and farther away, but all equally blessed.

And they all sang together—the Angels, the good child, and the poor, faded field-flower, which had lain among the rubbish of that dark and narrow street.



The Shepherdess and the Chimney-Sweeper

HAVE you ever seen an old-fashioned oaken-wood cabinet, quite black with age and covered with varnish and carving-work?

Just such a piece of furniture, an old heirloom that had been the property of its present mistress's great-grandmother, once stood in a parlour. It was carved from top to bottom—roses, tulips, and little stags' heads with long branching antlers, peering forth from the curious scrolls and foliage surrounding them. Moreover, in the centre panel of the cabinet was carved the full-length figure of a man, who seemed to be always grinning, perhaps at himself, for in truth he was a most ridiculous figure; he had crooked legs, small horns on his forehead, and a long beard.

The children of the house used to call him "the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant," for this was a long, hard name, and not many figures, whether carved in wood or in stone, could boast of such a title.

There he stood, his eyes always fixed upon the table under the pier-glass, for on this table stood a pretty little porcelain shepherdess, her mantle gathered round her, and fastened with a red rose; her shoes and hat were gilt; her hand held a crook. Oh, she was charming!

Close by her stood a little chimney-sweeper, likewise of porcelain. He was as clean and neat as any of the other figures; indeed, the manufacturer might just as well have made a prince as a chimney-sweeper of him, for though elsewhere black as coal, his face was as fresh and rosy as a girl's, which was certainly a mistake; it ought to have been black. His ladder in his hand, there he kept his station, close by the little shepherdess. They had been placed together from the first, had always remained on the same spot, and had thus plighted their troth to each other; they suited each other so well; they were both young people, both of the same kind of porcelain, both alike fragile and delicate.

Not far off stood a figure three times as large as the others. It was

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER 123

an old Chinese mandarin who could nod his head; he, too, was of porcelain, and declared that he was grandfather to the little shepherdess. He could not prove his statement; however, he insisted that he had authority over her, and so, when the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major General-Corporal-Sergeant made proposals to the little shepherdess, he nodded his head in token of his consent.

"Now, you will have a husband," said the old mandarin to her, "a husband who, I believe, is of mahogany-wood; you will be the wife



NOT FAR OFF STOOD A FIGURE THREE TIMES AS LARGE AS THE OTHERS.

of a Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant, of a man who has a whole cabinet full of silver-plate, besides a store of no one knows what in the secret drawers!"

"I will not go into that dismal cabinet!" declared the little shepherdess. "I have heard say that eleven porcelain ladies are already imprisoned there."

"Then you shall be the twelfth, and you will be in good company!" rejoined the mandarin. "This very night, when the old cabinet creaks, you shall go as sure as I am a Chinese mandarin!"

Whereupon he nodded his head and fell asleep.

But the little shepherdess wept, and turned to the beloved of her heart, the porcelain chimney-sweep.

"I believe I must ask you," said she, "to go out with me into the wide world, for here we cannot stay."

"I will do everything you wish," replied the little chimney-sweeper; "let us go at once. I think I can support you by my profession."

"If you could but get off the table!" sighed she. "I shall never be happy till we are away, out in the wide world."

And he comforted her, and showed her how to set her little foot on the carved edges and gilded foliage twining round the leg of the table, till at last they reached the floor. But turning to look at the old cabinet, they saw everything in a grand stir; all the carved stags putting their little heads farther out, raising their antlers, and moving their throats, whilst the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant sprang up, and shouted out to the old Chinese mandarin, "Look, they are eloping! they are eloping!" They were not a little frightened, and quickly jumped into an open drawer for protection.

In this drawer there were three or four incomplete packs of cards, and also a little puppet-theatre; a play was being performed, and all the queens, whether of diamonds, hearts, clubs, or spades, sat in the front row fanning themselves with the flowers they held in their hands. Behind them stood the knaves, showing that they had each two heads, one above and one below, as most cards have. The play was about two persons who were crossed in love, and the shepherdess wept over it, for it was just like her own history.

"I cannot bear this!" said she. "Let us leave the drawer." But when they had again reached the floor, on looking up at the table they saw that the old Chinese mandarin had awakened, and was rocking his whole body to and fro with rage.

"Oh, the old mandarin is coming!" cried the little shepherdess, and down she fell on her porcelain knees in the greatest distress.

"A sudden thought has struck me," said the chimney-sweeper. "Suppose we creep into the large pot-pourri vase that stands in the

corner; there we can rest upon roses and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he come near us."

"That will not do at all," said she; "besides, I know that the old mandarin was once betrothed to the pot-pourri vase, and no doubt there is still some slight friendship existing between them. No, there is no help for it, we must wander forth together into the wide world."

"Hast thou indeed the courage to go with me into the wide world?" asked the chimney-sweeper. "Hast thou considered how large it is, and that we may never return home again?"

"I have," replied she.

And the chimney-sweeper looked keenly at her, and then said, "My path leads through the chimney! Hast thou, indeed, the courage to creep with me through the stove, through the flues and the tunnel? Well do I know the way! We shall mount up so high that they cannot come near us, and at the top there is a cavern that leads into the wide world."

And he led her to the door of the stove.

"Oh, how black it looks!" sighed she; however, she went on with him, through the flues and through the tunnel, where it was dark, pitch dark.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, what a lovely star shines above us!"

And there was actually a star in the sky, shining right down upon them, as if to show them the way. And they crawled and crept—a fearful path was theirs—so high, so very high! But he guided and supported her, and



showed her the best places whereon to plant her tiny porcelain feet, till they reached the edge of the chimney, where they sat down to rest, for they were very tired, and, indeed, not without reason.

Heaven with all its stars was above them, and the town with all its roofs lay beneath them; the wide, wide world surrounded them. The poor shepherdess had never imagined all this; she leaned her little head on her chimney-sweeper's arm, and wept so much that the gilding broke off from her waistband.

"This is too much!" exclaimed she. "This can I not endure! The world is all too large! Oh, that I were once more upon the little table under the pier-glass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed thee out into the wide world; surely thou canst follow me home again, if thou lovest me!"

And the chimney-sweeper talked very sensibly to her, reminding her of the old Chinese mandarin and the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant. But she wept so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney-sweeper so fondly, that at last he could not but yield to her request, unreasonable as it was.

So with great difficulty they crawled down the chimney, crept through the flues and the tunnel, and at length found themselves once more in the dark stove; but they still waited behind the door, listening, before they would venture to return into the room.

Everything was quite still, and they peeped out. Alas! on the ground lay the old Chinese mandarin. In trying to follow the runaways, he had fallen down off the table and had broken into three pieces; his head lay shaking in a corner. The crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General, Corporal-Sergeant stood where he had always stood, thinking over what had happened.

"Oh, how shocking!" exclaimed the little shepherdess, "old grandfather is broken in pieces, and we are the cause! I shall never survive it!" and she wrung her delicate hands.

"He can be put together again," replied the chimney-sweeper. "He can very easily be put together; only be not so impatient! If they glue his back together, and put a strong rivet in his neck, then he will be as

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER 127

good as new again, and will be able to say plenty of unpleasant things to us."

"Do you really think so?" asked she. And then they climbed up the table to the place where they had stood before.

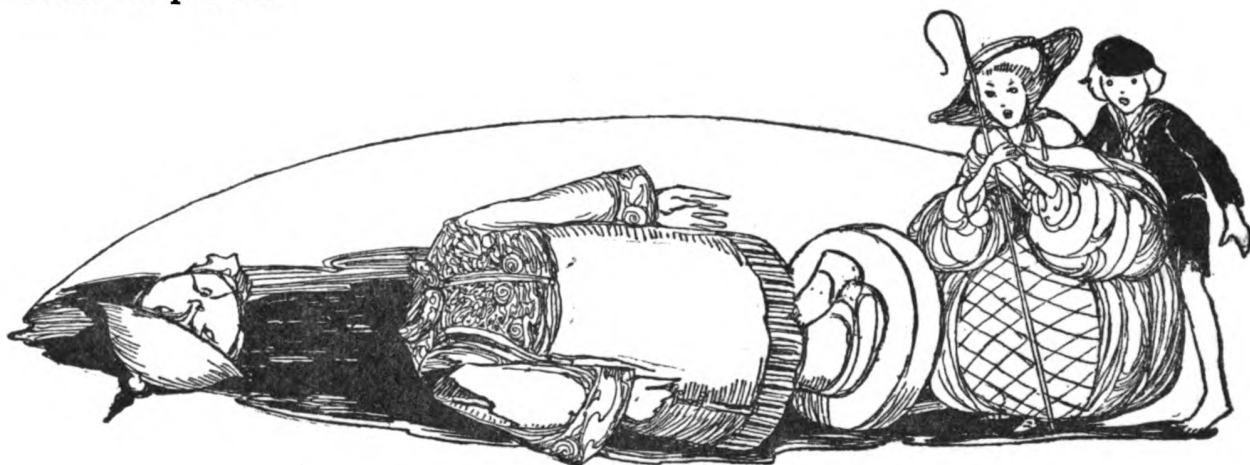
"See how far we have been!" observed the chimney-sweeper; "we might have spared ourselves all the trouble."

"If we could but have old grandfather put together!" said the shepherdess. "Will it cost very much?"

And he was put together; the family had his back glued and his neck riveted; he was as good as new, but could no longer nod his head.

"You have certainly grown very proud since you broke in pieces!" remarked the crooked-legged Field-Marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant; "but I must say, for my part, I do not see that there is anything to be proud of. Am I to have her or am I not? Just answer me that!"

And the chimney sweeper and the little shepherdess looked imploringly at the old mandarin. They were so afraid lest he should nod his head, but nod he could not; and it was disagreeable to him to tell a stranger that he had a rivet in his neck. So the young porcelain people always remained together; they blessed the grandfather's rivet, and loved each other till they broke in pieces.



The Storks

ON the roof of a house situated at the extremity of a small town, a stork had built his nest. There sat the mother-stork, with her four young ones, who all stretched out their little black bills, which had not yet become red. Not far off, upon the parapet, erect and proud, stood the father-stork; he had drawn one of his legs under him, being weary of standing on two. You might have fancied him carved in wood, he stood so motionless.

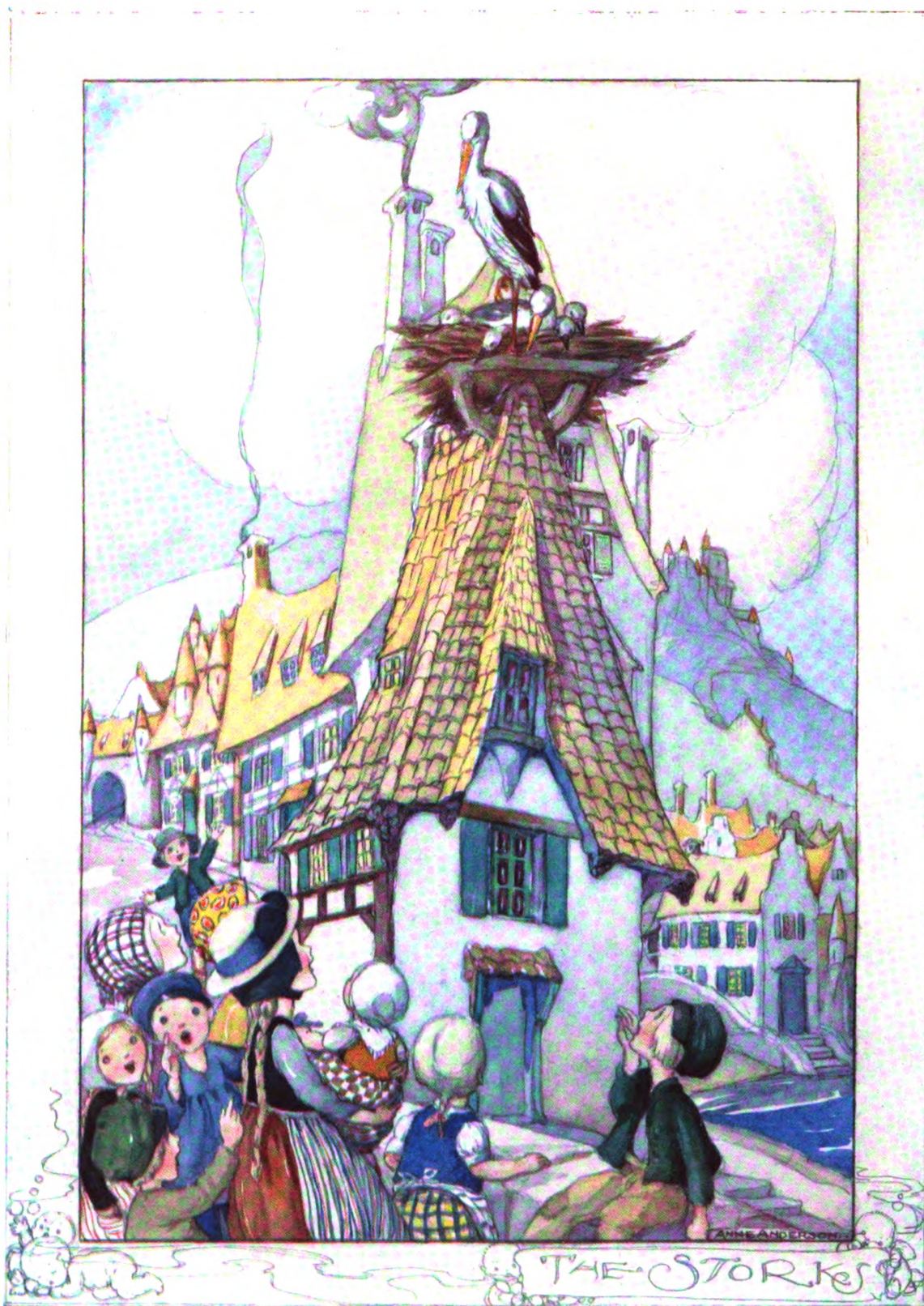
"It looks so grand," thought he, "for my wife to have a sentinel to keep guard over her nest. People cannot know that I am her husband, they will certainly think that I am commanded to stand here—how well it looks!" and so he remained standing on one leg.

In the street below, a number of children were playing together. When they saw the storks, one of the liveliest amongst them began to sing as much as he could remember of some old rhymes about storks, in which he was soon joined by the others.

"Stork! stork! long-legged stork!
Into thy nest, I prithee, walk;
There sits thy mate,
With her four children so great.
The first we'll hang like a cat,
The second we'll burn,
The third on a spit we'll turn,
The fourth drown dead as a rat!"

"Only listen to what the boys are singing," said the little storks;
"they say we shall be hanged and burned!"

"Never mind," said the mother, "don't listen to them; they will do you no harm."



THE STORK

But the boys went on singing, and pointed their fingers at the storks: only one little boy, called Peter, said it was a sin to mock and tease animals, and that he would have nothing to do with it.

The mother-stork again tried to comfort her little ones. "Never mind," said she; "see how calmly your father is standing there, and upon one leg only."

"But we are so frightened!" said the young ones, drawing their heads down into the nest.

The next day, when the children were again assembled to play together, and saw the storks, they again began their song.

"The first we'll hang like a cat,
The second we'll burn!"

"And are we really to be hanged and burned?" asked the young storks.

"No, indeed!" said the mother. "You shall learn to fly: I will teach you myself. Then we can fly over to the meadow, and pay a visit to the frogs. They will bow to us in the water, and say, 'Croak, croak!' and then we shall eat them; will not that be nice?"

"And what then?" asked the little storks.

"Then all the storks in the country will gather together, and the autumn exercise will begin. It is of the greatest importance that you should fly well then; for every one who does not, the general will stab to death with his bill. So you must pay great attention when we begin to drill you, and learn very quickly."

"Then we shall really be killed after all, as the boys said. Oh, listen! they are singing it again."

"Attend to me, and not to them!" said the mother. "After the grand exercise, we shall fly to warm countries far, far away from here, over mountains and forests. We shall fly to Egypt, where are the three-cornered stone houses whose tops reach the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than it is possible for storks to imagine. There is a river, too, which overflows its banks so as to make the whole country like a marsh, and we shall go into the marsh and eat frogs."

"Oh!" said the young ones.

"Yes, it is delightful! One does nothing but eat all the day long. And while we are so comfortable, in this country not a single green leaf is left on the trees; and it is so cold that the clouds are frozen, and fall down upon the earth in little white pieces."

She meant snow, but she could not express herself more clearly.

"And will the naughty boys be frozen to pieces, too?" asked the young storks.

"No, they will not be frozen to pieces; but they will be nearly as badly off as if they were: they will be obliged to crowd round the fire in their little dark rooms; while you, on the contrary, will be flying about in sunny lands, where there are beautiful flowers and warm sunshine."

Well, time passed away, and the young storks grew so tall that when they stood upright in the nest they could see the country around to a great distance. The father-stork used to bring them every day the nicest little frogs, as well as snails, and all the other stork tit-bits he could find. Oh! it was so droll to see him show them his tricks; he would lay his head upon his tail, make a rattling noise with his bill, and then tell them such charming stories all about the moors.

"Now you must learn to fly!" said the mother one day; and accordingly, all the four young storks were obliged to come out upon the parapet. Oh! how they trembled! And though they balanced themselves on their wings, they were very near falling.

"Only look at me," said the mother. "This is the way you must hold your heads; and in this manner place your feet—one, two! one, two! this will help you to get on." She flew a little way, and the young ones made an awkward spring after her—bounce! down they fell; for their bodies were heavy.

"I will not fly," said one of the young ones, as he crept back into the nest. "I do not want to go into the warm countries!"

"Do you want to be frozen to death during the winter? Shall the boys come and hang, burn, or roast you? Wait a little, I will call them!"



"NO, LEAVE THEM ALONE!" SAID THE MOTHER.

"Oh, no!" said the little stork; and again he began to hop about on the roof like the others. By the third day they could fly pretty well, and so they thought they could also sit and take their ease in the air; but bounce! down they tumbled, and found themselves obliged to make use of their wings. The boys now came into the street, singing their favourite song.

"Stork! stork! long-legged stork!"

"Shall not we fly down and peck out their eyes?" said the four young ones together.

"No, leave them alone!" said the mother. "Attend to me, that is of much more importance!—one, two, three, now to the right! one, two, three, now to the left, round the chimney pot!"

"That was very well; you managed your wings so neatly last time that I will let you come with me to-morrow to the marsh: several first-rate stork families will be there with their children. Let it be said that mine are the prettiest and best behaved of all; and remember to stand very upright, and to throw out your chest: that looks well, and gives such an air of distinction!"

"But are we not to take revenge upon those rude boys?" asked the young ones.

"Let them screech as much as they please! You will fly among the clouds, you will go to the land of the pyramids, when they must shiver with cold, and have not a single green leaf to look at, nor a single sweet apple to eat!"

"Yes, we shall be revenged!" whispered they, one to another. And then they were drilled again.

Of all the boys in the town, the worst for singing nonsensical verses was always the same one who had begun teasing the storks, a little urchin not more than six years old. The young storks, indeed, fancied him a hundred years old, because he was bigger than either their father or their mother—and what should they know about the ages of children or grown-up human beings!

All their schemes of revenge were aimed at this little boy; he had been the first to tease them, and continued to do so. The young storks were highly excited about it, and the older they grew, the less they were inclined to endure persecution. Their mother, in order to pacify them, at last promised that they should be revenged, but not until the last day of their stay in this place.

"We must first see how you behave yourselves at the grand exercise; if then you should fly badly, and the general should thrust his beak into your breast, the boys will, in some measure, be proved in the right. Let me see how well you will behave!"

"Yes, that you shall!" said the young ones. And now they really took great pains, practised every day, and at last flew so lightly and prettily that it was a pleasure to see them.

Well, now came the autumn. All the storks assembled, in order to fly together to warm countries for the winter. What a practising there was! Away they went over woods and fields, towns and villages, merely to see how well they could fly, for they had a long journey before them. The young storks distinguished themselves so honourably that they were pronounced "worthy of frogs and serpents." This was the highest character they could obtain; now they were allowed to eat frogs and serpents, and accordingly they did eat them.

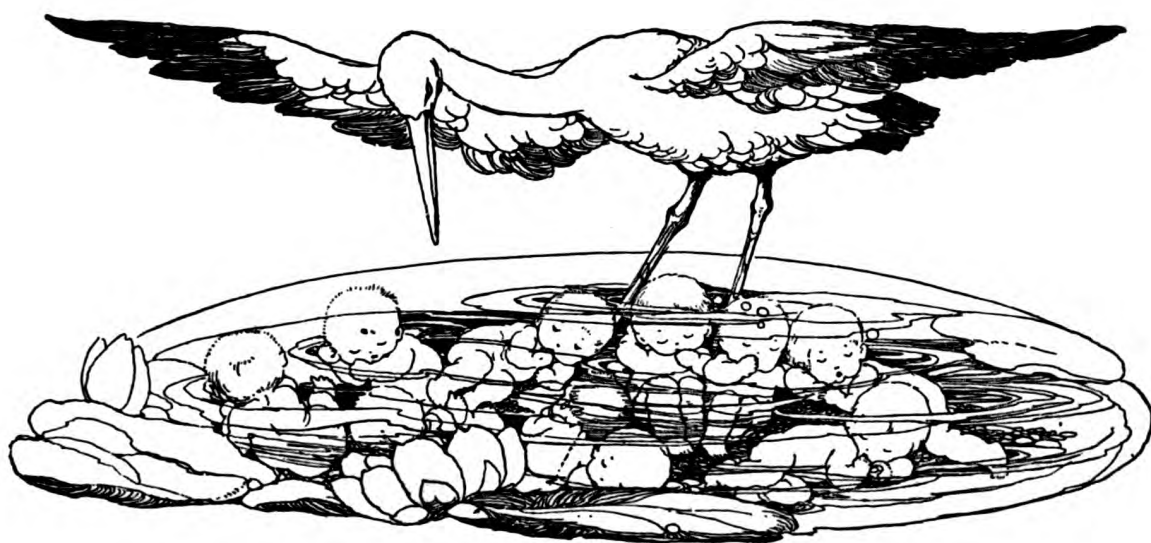
"Now we will have our revenge!" said they.

"Very well!" said the mother; "I have been thinking what will be the best. I know where the pool is, in which all the little human children lie until the storks come and take them to their parents? The pretty little things sleep and dream more pleasantly than they will ever dream again. All parents like to have a little child, and all children like to have a little brother or sister. We will fly to the pool and fetch one for each of the boys who has not sung that wicked song; and the other naughty children shall have none."

"But he who first sang those naughty rhymes! that great ugly fellow! what shall we do to him?" cried the young storks.

"In the pool there lies a little child who has dreamed away his life; we will take it for him, and he will weep because he has only a little dead brother. But as to the good boy who said it was a sin to mock and tease animals, surely you have not forgotten him? We will bring him two little ones, a brother and a sister. And as this little boy's name is Peter, you too shall for the future be called 'Peter'!"

And it came to pass just as the mother said; and all the storks were called "Peter," and are still so called to this very day.



The Real Princess

THERE was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess ; but then she must be a real Princess. He travelled all over the world in hopes of finding such a lady ; but there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty ; but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide, for now one thing, now another, seemed to him not quite right about the ladies. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful tempest arose. It thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents ; besides, it was as dark as pitch.

All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door, and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition. The water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah, we shall soon see that !" thought the old Queen-mother. However, she said not a word of what she was going to do ; but went quietly into the bedroom, took all the bed-clothes off the bed, and put three little peas on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the three peas, and put twenty feather-beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly indeed !" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had some-



THE NEXT MORNING SHE WAS ASKED HOW SHE HAD SLEPT.

thing hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It has hurt me so much ! ”

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the three little peas through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather-beds. None but a real Princess could have had such a delicate sense of feeling.

The Prince accordingly made her his wife ; being now convinced that he had found a real Princess. The three peas were, however, put into the cabinet of curiosities, where they are still to be seen, provided they are not lost.

Was not this a lady of real delicacy ?



SEVERAL large lizards were running nimbly in and out among the clefts of an old tree; they could understand each other perfectly well, for they all spoke the lizards' language. "Only hear what a rumbling and grumbling there is in the old Elfin-mountain yonder!" observed one lizard. "I have not been able to close my eyes for the last two nights; I might as well have had the toothache, for the sleep I have had!"

"There is something in the wind, most certainly!" replied the second lizard. "They raise the Mount upon four red pillars till cock-crowing; there is a regular cleaning and dusting going on, and the Elfin-maidens are learning new dances—such a stamping they make in them! There is certainly something in the wind!"

"Yes; I have been talking it over with an earth-worm of my acquaintance," said a third lizard. The earth-worm has just come from the Mount; he has been grubbing in the ground there for days and nights together, and has overheard a good deal; he can't see at all, poor wretch! but no one can be quicker than he is at feeling and hearing. They are expecting strangers at the Elfin-mountain—distinguished strangers; but who they are, the earth-worm would not say; most likely he did not know. All the wills-o'-the-wisp are engaged to form a procession of torches—so they call it; and all the silver and gold, of which there is such a store

in the Elfin-mount, is being fresh rubbed up, and set out to shine in the moonlight."

"But who can these strangers be?" exclaimed all the lizards with one voice. "What can be in the wind? Only listen! what buzzing and humming!"

Just then the Elfin-mount parted asunder; and an elderly Elfin damsel came tripping out—she was the old Elfin-King's housekeeper, and distantly related to his family, on which account she wore an amber heart on her forehead, but was otherwise plainly dressed. Like all other elves, she was hollow in the back. She was very quick and light-footed; trip—trip—trip, away she ran, straight into the marsh, to the night-raven.

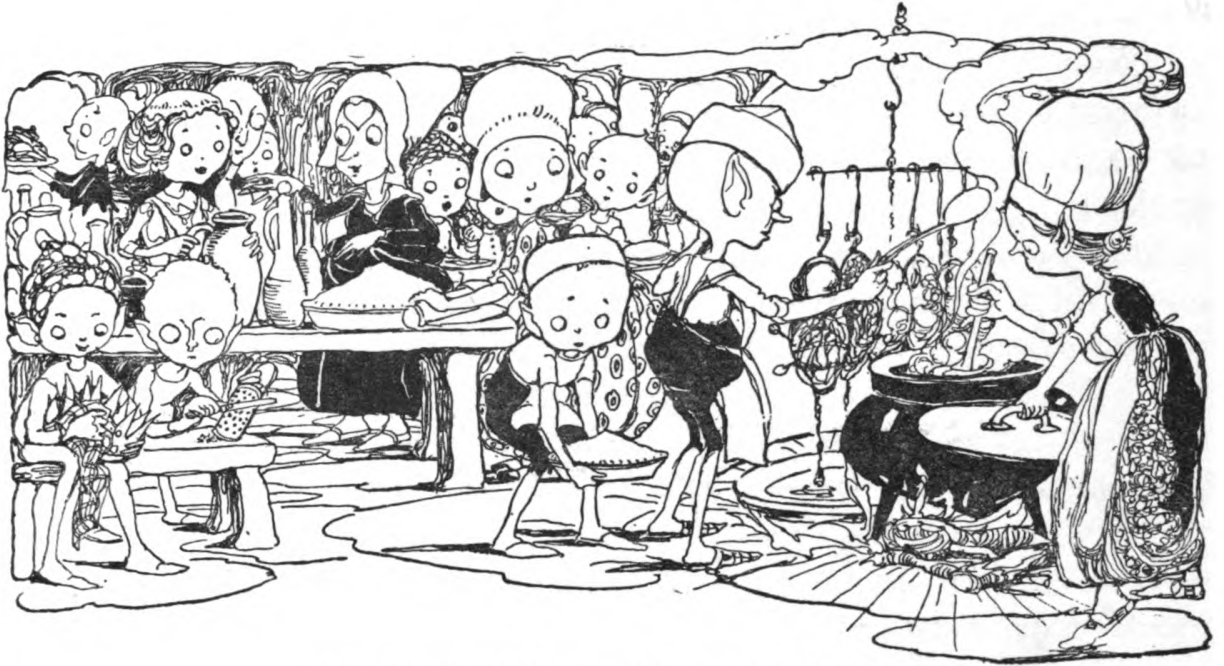
"You are invited to Elfin-mount, for this very evening," said she; "but will you not first do us a very great kindness, and be the bearer of the other invitations? You do not keep house yourself, you know; so you can easily oblige us. We are expecting some very distinguished strangers, Trollds, in fact; and his Elfin Majesty intends to welcome them in person."

"Who are to be invited?" inquired the night-raven.

"Why, to the grand ball all the world may come; even men, if they could but talk in their sleep, or do a little bit of anything in our way. But the first banquet must be very select; none but guests of the very highest rank must be present. To say the truth, I and the King have been having a little dispute; for I insist that not even ghosts may be admitted to-night. The Mer-King and his daughters must be invited first; they don't much like coming on land, but I'll promise they shall each have a wet stone, or, perhaps, something better still, to sit on; and then, I think, they cannot possibly refuse us this time. All old Trollds of the first rank we must have; also the River-Spirit and the Nisses; and, I fancy, we cannot pass over the Death-Horse and Kirkegrim: true, they do not belong to our set, they are too solemn for us, but they are connected with the family, and pay us regular visits."

"Caw!" said the night-raven; and away he flew to bear the invitations.

The Elfin-maidens were still dancing in the Elfin-mount; they danced



OTHER CHOICE DISHES WERE PREPARED OR PREPARING.

with long scarfs woven from mist and moonlight, and for those who like that sort of thing it looks pretty enough. The large state-room in the Mount had been regularly cleaned; the floor had been washed with moonshine, and the walls rubbed with witches' fat till they shone.

In the kitchen, frogs were roasting on the spit; while divers other choice dishes, such as mushroom seed, hemlock soup, etc., were prepared or preparing. These were to supply the first courses; rusty nails, bits of coloured glass, and such like dainties, were to come in for the dessert; there was also bright saltpetre wine, and ale brewed in the brewery of the Wise Witch of the Moor.

The old Elfin-King's gold crown had been fresh rubbed with powdered slate-pencil; new curtains had been hung up in all the sleeping-rooms—yes, there was indeed a rare bustle and commotion.

"Now, we must have the rooms scented with cows' hairs and swines' bristles; and then, I think, I shall have done my part!" said the Elfin-King's housekeeper.

"Dear papa," said the youngest of the daughters, "won't you tell me now who these grand visitors are?"

"Well!" replied his Majesty, "I suppose there's no use in keeping it a secret. Let two of my daughters get themselves ready for their wedding-day, that's all! Two of them most certainly will be married. The Chief of the Norwegian Trolds, he who dwells in old Dofrefield, and has so many castles of freestone among those rocky fastnesses, besides a gold mine—which is a capital thing, let me tell you—he is coming down here with his two boys, who are both to choose themselves a bride.

"Such an honest, straightforward, true old Norseman is this mountain chief! so merry and jovial! He and I are old comrades; he came down here years ago to fetch his wife; she is dead now; she was the daughter of the Rock-King at Möen. Oh, how I long to see the old Norseman again! His sons, they say, are rough, unmannerly cubs, but perhaps report may have done them injustice, and at any rate they are sure to improve in a year or two, when they have sown their wild oats. Let me see how you will polish them up!"

"And how soon are they to be here?" inquired his youngest daughter again.

"That depends on wind and weather!" returned the Elfin-King. "They travel cheaply; they come at the ship's convenience. I wanted them to pass over by Sweden, but the old man would not hear of that. He does not keep pace with the times, that's the only fault I can find with him."

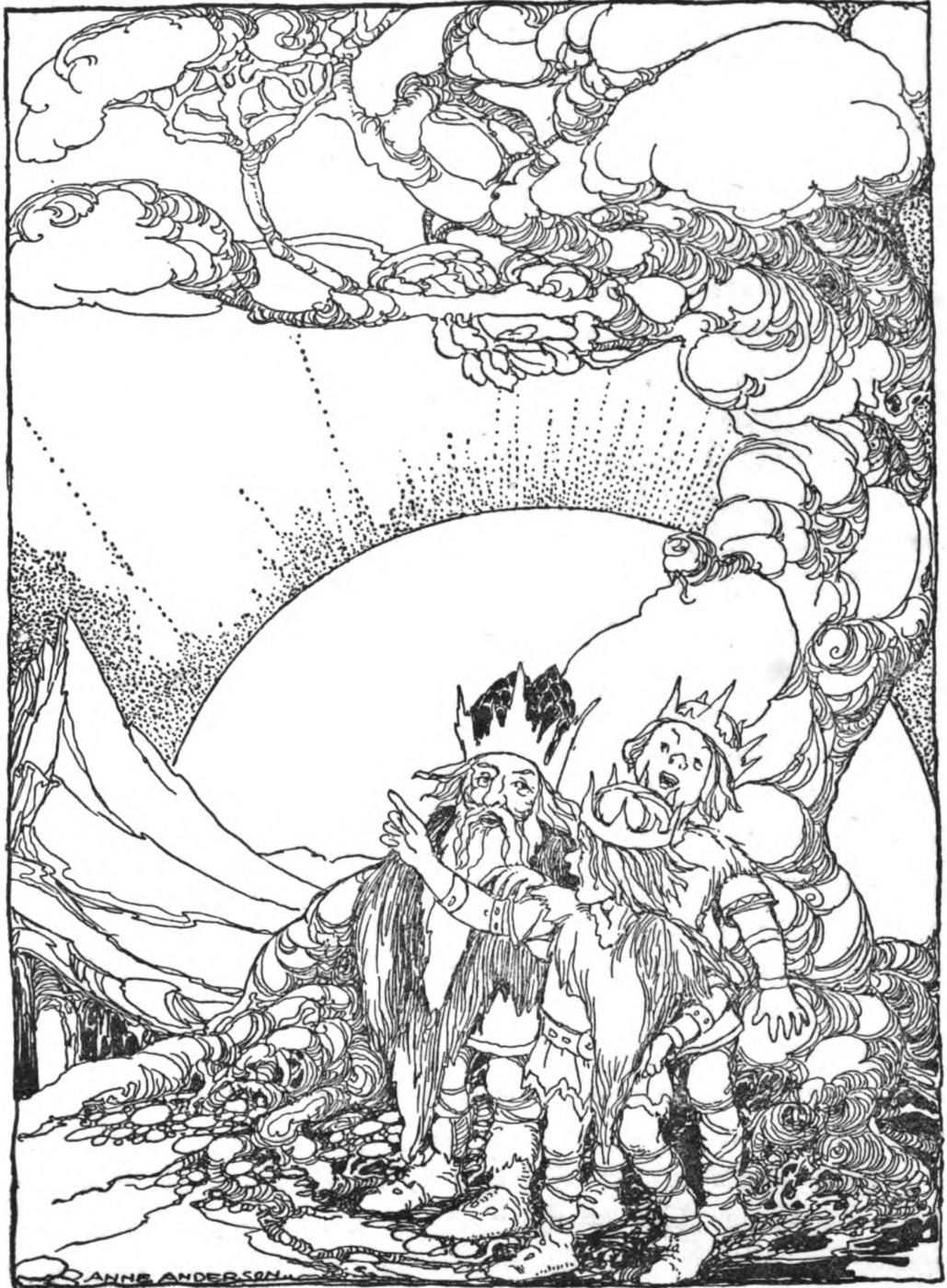
Just then two wills-o'-the-wisp were seen dancing up in a vast hurry, each trying to get before the other, and to be the first to bring the news.

"They come, they come!" cried both with one voice.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moonlight!" said the Elfin-King.

And his seven daughters lifted their long scarfs and bowed low to the earth.

There stood the Trolld Chief from the Dofrefield, wearing a crown composed of icicles and polished pine cones; for the rest, he was clothed in a bear-skin cloak and sledge-boots; his sons were clad more slightly, and kept their throats uncovered, by way of showing that they cared nothing about the cold.



"IS THAT A MOUNT?" ASKED THE YOUNGEST OF THEM.

"Is that a mount?" asked the youngest of them, pointing to it. "Why, up in Norway we should call it a cave!"

"You foolish boy!" replied his father; "a cave you go into, a mount you go up! Where are your eyes, not to see the difference?"

The only thing that surprised them in this country, they said, was that the people should speak and understand their language.

"Behave yourselves now!" said the old man; "don't let your host fancy you never went into decent company before!"

And now they all entered the Elfin-mountain, into the grand saloon, where a really very select party was assembled, although at such short notice that it seemed almost as though some fortunate gust of wind had blown them together. And every possible arrangement had been made for the comfort of each of the guests; the Mer-King's family, for instance, sat at table in large tubs of water, and they declared they felt quite as if they were at home. All behaved with strict good-breeding, except the two young northern Trollds, who at last so far forgot themselves as to put their legs on the table.

"Take your legs away from the plates!" said their father; and they obeyed, but not so readily as they might have done. Presently they took some pine cones out of their pockets and began pelting the lady who sat between them, and then, finding their boots trouble them, they took them off, and coolly gave them to this lady to hold.

But their father, the old Mountain Chief, conducted himself very differently; he talked so delightfully about the proud Norse mountains, and the torrents, white with dancing spray, that dashed foaming down their rocky steep with a noise loud and hoarse as thunder, yet musical as the full burst of an organ, touched by a master hand; he told of the salmon leaping up from the wild waters while the Neck was playing on his golden harp; he told of the starlight winter nights when the sledge bells tinkled so merrily, and the youths ran with lighted torches over the icy crust, so transparent that through it they could see the fishes whirling to and fro in deadly terror beneath their feet; he told of the gallant northern youths and pretty maidens singing songs of old time, and dancing

the Hallinge dance—yes, so charmingly he described all this, that you could not but fancy you heard and saw it all.

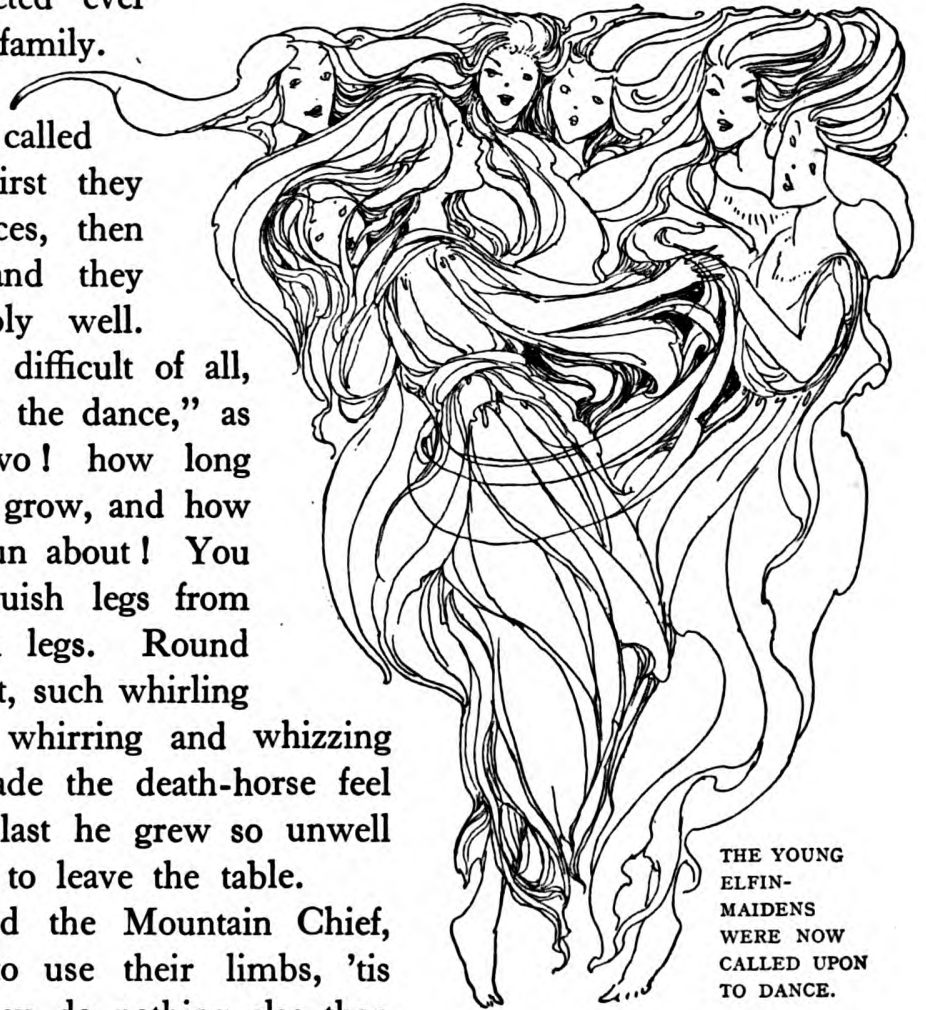
Oh fie, for shame! all of a sudden the Mountain Chief turned round upon the elderly Elfin-maiden, and gave her a cousinly salute, and he was not yet connected ever so little with the family.

The young Elfin-maidens were now called upon to dance. First they danced simple dances, then stamping dances, and they did both remarkably well. Last came the most difficult of all, the "Dance out of the dance," as it was called. Bravo! how long their legs seemed to grow, and how they whirled and spun about! You could hardly distinguish legs from arms, or arms from legs. Round and round they went, such whirling and twirling, such whirring and whizzing there was that it made the death-horse feel quite dizzy, and at last he grew so unwell that he was obliged to leave the table.

"Hurrah!" cried the Mountain Chief, "they know how to use their limbs, 'tis certain! but can they do nothing else than dance, stretch out their feet, and spin round like a whirlwind?"

"You shall judge for yourself," replied the Elfin-King; and here he called the eldest of his daughters to him. She was transparent and fair as moonlight; she was, in fact, the most delicate of all the sisters; she put a white wand between her lips and vanished: that was her accomplishment.

But the Mountain Chief said he should not at all like his wife to



THE YOUNG
ELFIN-
MAIDENS
WERE NOW
CALLED UPON
TO DANCE.

possess such an accomplishment as this, and he did not think his sons would like it either.

The second could walk by the side of herself, just as though she had a shadow, which elves and trolls never have.

The accomplishment of the third sister was of quite another kind: she had learned how to brew good ale from the Wise Witch of the Moor, and she also knew how to lard alder-wood with glow-worms.

"She will make a capital housewife," remarked the old Mountain Chief.

And now advanced the fourth Elfin-damsel: she carried a large gold harp; and no sooner had she struck the first chord than all the company lifted their left feet—for elves are left-sided—and when she struck the second chord, they were all compelled to do whatever she wished.

"A dangerous lady, indeed!" said the old Troll Chief. Both of his sons now got up and strode out of the mount; they were heartily weary of these accomplishments.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the Mountain Chief.

"I have learned to love the north," replied she; "and I have resolved never to marry unless I may go to Norway."

But the youngest of the sisters whispered to the old man, "That is only because she has heard an old Norse rhyme, which says that when the end of the world shall come, the Norwegian rocks shall stand firm amid the ruins; she is very much afraid of death, and therefore she wants to go to Norway."

"Ho, ho!" cried the Mountain Chief; "sits the wind in that quarter? But what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the Elfin-King; for he could count better than to make such a mistake. However, the sixth seemed in no hurry to come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," said she. "Let no one trouble himself about me, I have enough to do to sew my shroud!"

And now came the seventh and last, and what could she do? Why, she could tell fairy tales, as many as any one could wish to hear.

"Here are my five fingers," said the Mountain Chief; "tell me a story for each finger."

And the Elfin-maiden took hold of his wrist, and told her stories, and he laughed till his sides ached; and when she came to the finger that wore a gold ring, as though it knew it might be wanted, the Mountain Chief suddenly exclaimed, "Hold fast what thou hast, the hand is thine! I will have thee myself to wife!" But the Elfin-maiden said that she had still two more stories to tell, one for the ring-finger, and another for the little finger.

"Keep them for next winter; we'll hear them then," replied the Mountain Chief. "And we'll hear about the 'Loves of the Fir-Tree and



THEY WERE BLOWING OUT THE POOR WILLS-O'-THE WISP.

the Birch,' about the Valkyria's gifts, too, for we all love fairy legends in Norway, and no one there can tell them so charmingly as thou dost. And then we will sit in our rocky halls, whilst the fir-logs are blazing and crackling in the stove, and drink mead out of the golden horns of the old Norse kings; the Neck has taught me a few of his rare old ditties; besides, the Garbo will often come and pay us a visit, and he will sing thee all the sweet songs that the mountain maidens sang in days of yore—that will be most delightful! The salmon in the torrent will spring up and beat himself against the rock walls, but in vain; he will not be able to get in. Oh, thou canst not imagine what a happy, glorious life we lead in that dear old Norway! But where are the boys?"

Where were the boys? Why, they were racing about in the fields and blowing out the poor wills-o'-the-wisp, who were just ranging themselves in the proper order to make a procession of torches.

"What do you mean by making all this riot?" inquired the Mountain Chief. "I have been choosing you a mother, now you come and choose yourselves wives from among your aunts."

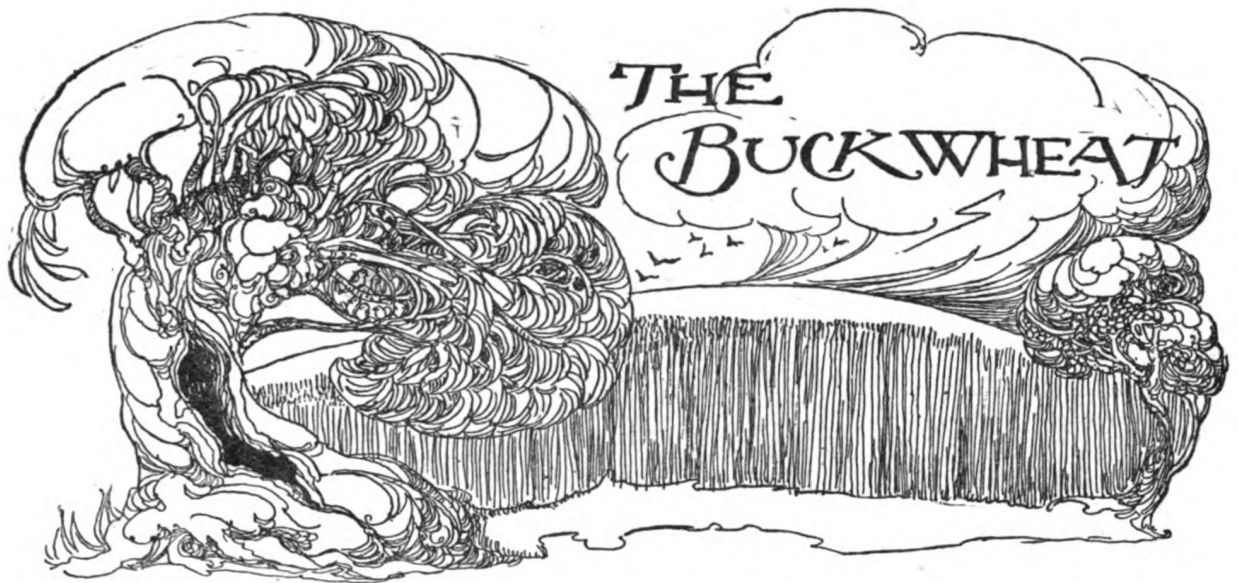
But his sons said they would rather make speeches and drink toasts, they had not the slightest wish to marry. And accordingly they made speeches, tossed off their glasses, and turned them topsy-turvy on the table, to show that they were quite empty; after this they took off their coats, and most rudely lay down on the table and went to sleep. But the old Mountain Chief, the while, danced round the hall with his young bride, and exchanged boots with her, because that is not so vulgar as exchanging rings.

"Listen, the cock is crowing!" exclaimed the lady-housekeeper. "We must make haste and shut the window-shutters close, or the sun will scorch our complexions."

And herewith Elfin-mountain closed.

But outside, in the cloven trunk, the lizards kept running up and down, and one and all declared, "What a capital fellow that old Norwegian Trolld is!"

"For my part, I prefer the boys," said the earth-worm; but he, poor wretch, could see nothing either of them or of their father, so his opinion was not worth much.



IF, after a tempest, you chance to walk through a field where buckwheat is growing, you may observe that it is burned as black as though a flame of fire had passed over it; and, should you ask the reason, the peasant will tell you, "The lightning has done it."

But how is it that the lightning has done it? I will tell you what the sparrow told me; and the sparrow heard the story from an old willow-tree, which grew, and still grows, close to a field of buckwheat.

This willow-tree is tall and highly respectable, but, at the same time, old and wrinkled. Its trunk has been riven asunder from top to bottom; grass and brambles grow out of the gap; the tree bends forward, and the branches hang down almost to the ground, looking like long green hair.

There were different kinds of corn growing in the fields around the willow—rye, wheat, and oats—the beautiful oats, whose ears, when they are ripe, look like a number of little yellow canary-birds, sitting upon one branch. The corn-ears were richly blessed; and the fuller they were, the lower they bowed their heads in pious humility.

But there was also a field of buckwheat, lying just in front of the old willow-tree: the buckwheat bowed not like the rest of the corn; he stood stiff and proud.

"I am quite as rich as the wheat," said he; "and besides, I am so much more handsome. My flowers are as beautiful as the blossoms of the apple-tree; it is delightful to look at me and my companions. Do you know anything more beautiful than we are, you old willow-tree?"

And the willow-tree bent his head, as much as to say, "Yes, indeed I do!" But the buckwheat was puffed up with pride, and said, "The stupid tree! he is so old that grass is growing out of his body."

Now came a dreadful storm; all the flowers of the field folded their leaves, or bent their heads, whilst it passed over them; the buckwheat, however, in his pride, still stood erect.

"Bow thy head as we do!" said the flowers.

"I have no need," said the buckwheat.

"Bow thy head as we do," said the corn. "The angel of storms comes flying hitherward; he has wings which reach from the clouds to the earth; he will strike thee down, before thou hast time to plead for mercy!"

"No, I will not bow!" said the buckwheat.

"Close thy flowers, and fold thy leaves," said the old willow-tree; "look not into the flash, when the cloud breaks. Even men dare not do that; for in the flash, one looks into God's heaven, and that sight can dazzle even human eyes. What, then, would it prove to mere vegetables like us, if we should dare to do so—we, who are so inferior to men?"

"So inferior, indeed!" said the buckwheat. "Now then, I *will* look right into God's heaven." And, in his pride, he did gaze upon the lightning without shrinking. Such was the flash, that it seemed as if the whole world was in flames.

When the tempest was over, flowers and corn, greatly refreshed by the rain, once more breathed pure air; but the buckwheat had been burned as black as coal by the lightning: it stood on the field a dead, useless plant.

The old willow-tree waved its branches to and fro in the wind; and large drops of water fell from the green leaves, as though the tree wept. And the sparrows asked, "Why weepest thou? It is so beautiful here! See how the sun shines; how the clouds pass over the clear sky; how sweet is the fragrance of the flowers! Why, then, weepest thou, old willow-tree?"

And the willow-tree told of the buckwheat's pride, and of the punishment which followed. I, who relate this story, heard it from the sparrows—they told it to me one evening, when I asked them for a tale.



THE flax was in full bloom; its pretty blue blossoms were as soft as the wings of a moth, and still more delicate, and as they swayed in the wind they made a perfect sea of blue. And the sun shone on the flax-field, and the rain watered it; and that was as good for the flax-flowers as it is for little children to be washed and kissed by their mother. They look so much fresher and prettier afterwards.

Thus it was with the flax-flowers. They seemed to smile in their happiness and to nod and talk to each other.

"People say I am so fine and flourishing," observed the flax, "and that I am growing so charmingly tall; a splendid piece of linen will be got from me. Oh, how happy I am. How can any one be happier? Everything around me is so pleasant, and I shall be of use for something or another. When I am woven into fine linen—who knows?—I may be worn by a king's daughter. How the sun cheers one up, and how fresh and sweet the rain tastes. I am very happy. I am the happiest vegetable in the world."

"Ah, ah, ah!" jeered the stakes in the hedge; "you don't know the world, not you; but we know it, there are knots in us," and then they cracked so dolefully—

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilurre,
And so the song is en—ded—ded—ded."

"No, it is not ended," replied the flax; the sun shines every morning; the rain does me so much good I can see myself grow; I can feel that I am in blossom. Who so happy as I?"

However, one day people came, took hold of the flax, and pulled it up, root and all. That was very hard to bear.

Then it was thrown into water as if intended to be drowned, and after that, put before the fire as if to be roasted. This was most cruel and not what the flax had expected.

"One cannot always have what one wishes," sighed the flax; "but it is well to suffer sometimes, it gives one experience."

But matters seemed to get worse and worse. The flax was bruised and broken, hacked and hackled, and at last put on the wheel—snurre rur! snurre rur! It was not possible to keep one's thoughts collected in such a situation as this.

"I have been very fortunate," thought the flax amid all these tortures. "One ought to be thankful for the happiness one has enjoyed in times past. Thankful, thankful; oh yes," and still the flax said the same when taken to the loom. And there it was made into a large, handsome piece of linen; all the flax of that one field was made into a single piece. There was not one flaw in the whole of it and many people praised it for its fineness.

"Well, but this is charming. Never should I have expected it. What good fortune I have carried through the world with me. What arrant nonsense the stakes in the hedge used to talk with their

'Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilurre.'"

"The song is not ended at all; life is but just beginning. It is a very pleasant thing, too, is life. To be sure, I have suffered, but that

is past now, and I have become something through suffering. I am so strong, and yet so soft; so white and so long. This is far better than being a vegetable; even during blossom time nobody attends to one, and one only gets water when it is raining.

"Now, I am well taken care of. The girl turns me over every morning, and I have a shower-bath from the water-tub every evening; nay, the parson's wife herself came and looked at me, and said I was



"THE PARSON'S WIFE HERSELF CAME AND LOOKED AT ME."

the finest piece of linen in the parish. No one can possibly be happier than I am."

The linen was taken into the house, and cut up with scissors. Oh, how it was cut and clipped, how it was pierced and stuck through with needles! That was certainly no pleasure at all. It was at last made up into twelve articles of attire, which people can hardly do without; and they were sewn so beautifully by their owner that not one stitch was too big or too little.

"So this, then, was my fate! Well, it is very delightful; now I shall be of use in the world, and there is really no pleasure like that of being useful. We are now twelve pieces, but we are still one and the same—we are a dozen. Certainly this is being fortunate."

Years passed away. At last the linen could endure no longer. "All things must pass away some time or another," remarked each piece. "I should like very much to last a little while longer, but one ought not to wish for the impossible."

And so the linen was rent into shreds. They believed all was over with them, for they were hacked and mashed and boiled, and they knew not what else; and all this happened in a mill that did not at all resemble the lovely field in which the flax had grown; after a great deal of hard pressing, the shreds became beautiful, fine, white paper.

"Now, upon my word, this is a surprise! And a most delightful surprise too!" declared the paper. "Why, now I am finer than ever, and I shall be written upon. I wonder what will be written upon me. Was there ever such famous good fortune as mine?"

And the paper was written upon; the most charming stories in the world were written on it, and they were read aloud; and people declared that these stories were very beautiful and very instructive; that to read them would make mankind both wiser and better. Truly, a great blessing was given to the world in the words that were written upon that same paper.

"Certainly, this is more than I could ever have dreamt of when I was a little blue flower of the field. How could I then have looked forward to becoming a messenger to bring knowledge and pleasure among men? I can hardly understand it even now. Yet, so it is, actually.

"And, for my own part, I have never done anything, beyond the little that in me lay, to strive to exist, and yet I am carried on from one state of honour and happiness to another; and every time that I think within myself, 'Now, surely, the song is en—ded—ded—ded,' I am changed into something new, something far higher and better.

"Now, I suppose I shall be sent on my travels, shall be sent round the wide world, so that all men may read me. I should think that

would be the wisest plan. Formerly I had blue blossoms; now, for every single blossom I have some beautiful thought or pleasant fancy. Who so happy as I?"

But the paper was not sent on its travels; it went to the printer's instead, and there all that was written upon it was printed in a book, nay, in many hundred books; and in this way a greater number of people received pleasure and profit from it than if the written paper



THE MOST CHARMING STORIES IN THE WORLD WERE WRITTEN UPON IT.

itself had been sent round the world, and perhaps got torn and worn to pieces before it had gone half-way.

"Yes, to be sure, this is much more sensible," thought the paper. "It never occurred to me, though. I am to stay at home and be held in as great honour as if I were an old grandfather. The book was written on me first, the ink flowed in upon me from the pen and formed the words. I shall stay at home while the books go about the world, to and fro; that is much better. I shall rest quietly and

think of all the happy and useful days I have spent. How glad I am, how fortunate I am!"

So the paper was rolled up and laid on one side. "It is good to repose after labour," said the paper. "It is quite right to collect oneself, and quietly think over all that dwelleth within one. Now first do I rightly know myself. And to know oneself, I have heard, is the best knowledge, the truest progress. And, come what will, this I am sure of, all will end in progress—always is there progress!"

One day the roll of paper was thrown upon the stove to be burned; it must not be sold to the grocer to wrap round pounds of butter and sugar. And all the children in the house flocked round; they wanted to see the blaze, they wanted to count the multitude of tiny red sparks which seem to dart to and fro among the ashes, dying out, one after another, so quickly. They call them "The children going out of school," and the last spark of all is the schoolmaster. They often fancy he is gone out, but another and another spark flies up unexpectedly, and the schoolmaster always tarries a little behind the rest.

And now all the paper lay heaped up on the stove. "Ugh!" it cried, and all at once it burst into a flame; so high did it rise into the air; never had the flax been able to rear its tiny blue blossoms so high, and it shone as never the white linen had shone. All the letters written on it became fiery red in an instant, and all the words and thoughts of the writer were surrounded with a glory. It was more than wonderful, and the children danced around it, keeping as close as it was safe to be.

"Now, then, I go straight up into the sun!" said something within the flames. It was as if a thousand voices at once had spoken thus, and the flame burst through the chimney, and rose high above it; and brighter than the flame, yet invisible to mortal eyes, hovered little tiny beings, as many as there had been blossoms on the flax.

They were lighter than even the flame that bore them; and, when that flame had died away, and nothing remained of the paper but the black ashes, they once again danced over them, and, wherever their feet



ALL THE CHILDREN IN THE HOUSE FLOCKED ROUND.

touched the ashes, their footprints—the fiery red sparks—were seen till they had all danced away.

Thus, “The children went out of school, and the schoolmaster came last;” it was a pleasure to see the pretty sight; and the children of the house stood looking at the black ashes and singing; their clear young voices floating out into the air—

“Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilurre,
And now the song is en—ded—ded—ded.”

But the tiny invisible beings replied every one, “The song is never ended! That is the best of it! We know that, and therefore none are so happy as we are!”

However, the children could neither hear nor understand the reply, nor would it be well that they should, for children must not know everything.

The Darning-Needle

THERE was once a darning-needle so fine that she fancied herself a sewing-needle.

“Now take care, and hold me fast!” said the darning-needle to the fingers that took her up. “Don’t lose me, pray! If I were to fall down on the floor, you would never be able to find me again, I am so fine!”

“That’s more than you can tell!” said the fingers, as they took hold of her.

“See, I come with a train!” said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread, without a single knot in it, after her.

The fingers guided the needle to the cook-maid’s slippers; the upper leather was torn, and had to be sewn together.

“This is vulgar work!” said the darning-needle. “I shall never get through; I break—I am breaking!”—and break she did. “Did I not say so?” continued she. “I am too fine!”

“Now she is good for nothing,” thought the fingers; however, they must still keep their hold. The cook-maid dropped sealing-wax upon the darning-needle and then stuck her into her neckerchief.

“See, now I am a breast-pin!” said the darning-needle. “I knew well that I should come to honour; when one is something, one always becomes something.” At this she laughed, only inwardly, of course, for nobody has ever seen or heard a darning-needle laugh; there sat she now at her ease, as proud as if she were driving in her carriage.

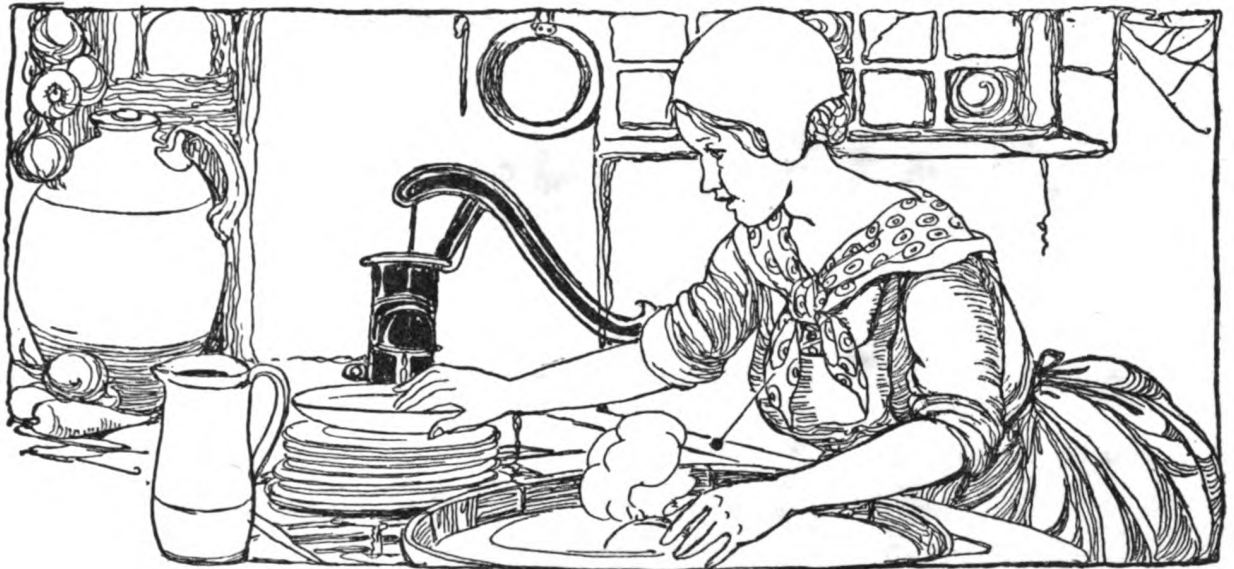
“May I take the liberty of asking if you are gold?” inquired she of the pin that was her neighbour. “You have a pleasing exterior, and a very peculiar head; it is but small, though. You must take care that it grows, for it is not every one that can have sealing-wax dropped upon her!” And the darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell off from the neckerchief into the sink, where the cook was engaged just then in washing-up.

"Now for our travels!" said the darning-needle; "but I hope I shall not go very far." However, she did travel far, very far.

"I am too fine for this world," said she, as at last she sat still in the gutter. "However, I know who I am, and there is always some little pleasure in that."

And so the darning-needle held herself erect, and did not lose her good-humour.

All sorts of things sailed past her—splinters of wood, straws, scraps of old newspapers. "See, how they sail along!" said the darning-needle.



SHE FELL OFF FROM THE NECKERCHIEF INTO THE SINK.

"They do not know what is sticking under them! It is I. I stick—I sit here. There goes a splinter, he thinks of nothing in the world but himself, splinter as he is. There floats a straw, to see how it turns round and round! Nay, think not so much of thyself, thou mightst easily float against one of the stones. There swims a newspaper—everything in it is forgotten, yet now it spreads itself out! I sit patiently and quietly! I know what I am, and that I shall always be the same!"

One day there chanced to be close by her something that glittered so charmingly that the darning-needle felt persuaded it must needs be a diamond; it was, in reality, only a splinter of glass, but, delighted with

its appearance, the darning-needle addressed it, introducing herself as a breast-pin. "Surely you are a diamond?"

"Why, yes, something of the sort!" was the reply. So now each believed the other to be some very rare and costly trinket, and they both began to complain of the extraordinary haughtiness of the world.

"Yes, I have dwelt in a box belonging to a young lady," said the darning-needle, "and this young lady was a cook-maid; she had five fingers on each hand, and anything so arrogant, so conceited as these five fingers I have never known; and after all, what were they good for? For nothing, but to hold me, to take me out of the box, and lay me in the box!"

"And were they at all bright? Did they shine?" asked the glass splinter.

"Shine!" repeated the darning-needle, "not they, but conceited enough they were, notwithstanding! They were five brothers; 'Finger' was the family name; they held themselves so erect, side by side, although they were not all of the same height.

"The first, Thumbkin he was called, was short and thick; he generally stood out of the rank rather before the others; he had only one bend in his back, so that he could only bow once, but he used to say that if he were cut off from a man, that man would no longer be fit for military service.

"Foreman, the second, would put himself forward everywhere, meddle with sweet and with sour, pointed at sun or moon, and he it was who pressed upon the pen whenever the fingers wrote. Middleman was so tall that he could look over the others' heads. Ringman wore a gold belt round his body; and as for Littleman, he did nothing at all, and was proud of that, I suppose. Proud they were, and proud they would be; therefore I took myself off into the gutter!"

"And now we sit together and shine!" quoth the glass splinter.

Just then some more water was poured into the gutter; it overflowed and carried the glass splinter along with it.

"So now he has advanced farther," observed the darning-needle. "I stay here, I am too fine, but such it is my pride to be; it is respectable!" So still she sat there erect, enjoying her own thoughts.

"I could almost believe I was born of a sunbeam, I am so fine; and

yet the sunbeams do not seem to seek me out under the water. Alas ! I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. Had I still my old eye which broke, I believe I could weep. I would not, though—it is not refined to weep.”

One day some boys were raking about in the gutter, hunting for old nails, pennies, and such like. This was a dirty business, certainly, but such was their pleasure.

“Hallo !” cried one, pricking himself with the darning-needle ; “there’s a fellow for you !”

“Do not call me a fellow ; I am a young lady,” said the darning-needle, but no one heard it. The sealing-wax had worn off, and she had become quite black. Black, however, makes a person look thin ; so she fancied herself finer than ever.

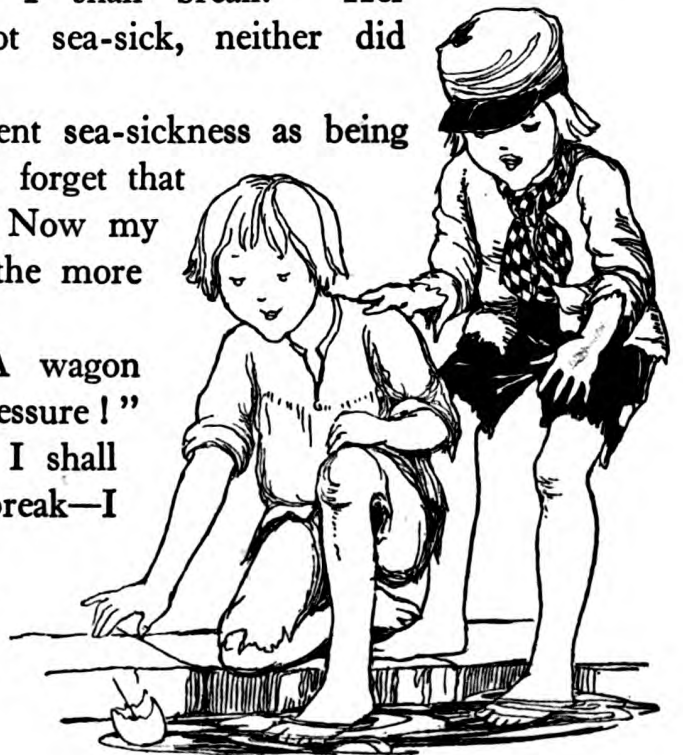
“There sails an egg-shell,” said the boys, and they stuck the darning-needle into the shell.

“White walls and a lady in black,” said the darning-needle ; “that is very striking. Now, every one can see me. But I hope I shall not be sea-sick, for then I shall break.” Her fear was needless ; she was not sea-sick, neither did she break.

“Nothing is so good to prevent sea-sickness as being of steel, and then, too, never to forget that one is a little more than man. Now my trial is over. The finer one is, the more one can endure.”

Crash went the egg-shell. A wagon rolled over it. “Ugh, what a pressure !” sighed the darning-needle ; “now I shall be sea-sick after all. I shall break—I shall break !”

But she broke not, although the wheel had passed over her. Long did she lie there—and there let her lie.





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