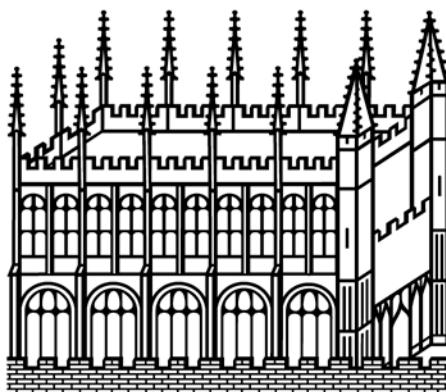




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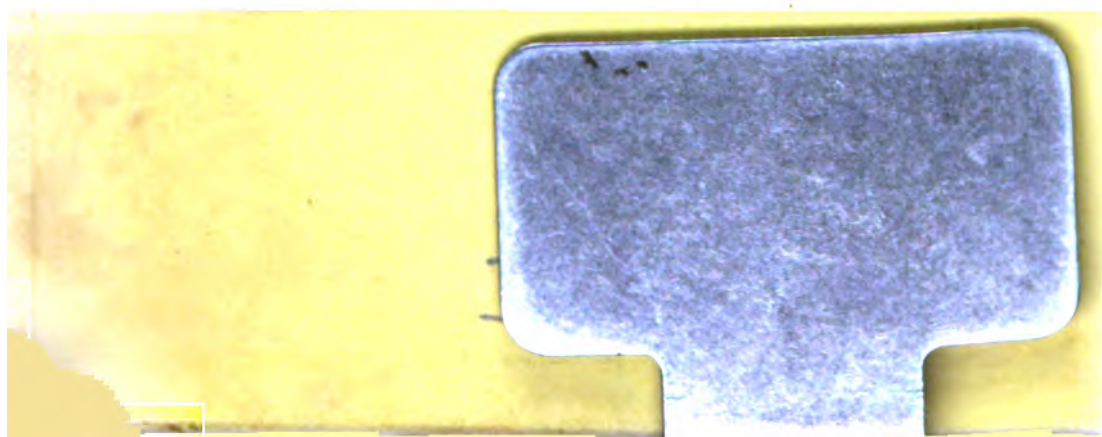




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Miss Maria Beechey.
From her Mother's dear friend Emma Post.





THE
STORY WITHOUT AN END.

Translated from the German,

BY SARAH AUSTIN.

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM HARVEY, ESQ.

A NEW EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED THE GLOW-WORM.

TRANSLATED BY DR. REICH.



LONDON:
EFFINGHAM WILSON, ROYAL EXCHANGE.



TO MY DAUGHTER.

MY DEAR CHILD,

The story that you love so much in German, I dedicate to you in English. It was in compliance with your earnest wish that other children might share the delight it has so often afforded you, that I translated it; so that it is, in some sort, yours of right. Let us hope that your confident expectations of sym-

pathy in your pleasure may not be disappointed; or that, if others think the story less beautiful than you do, they may find compensation in the graceful designs it has inspired.

You have often regretted that it left off so soon, and would, I believe, “have been glad to hear more and more, and for ever.” The continuation you have longed for lies in a wide and magnificent book, which contains more wonderful and glorious things than all our favourite fairy-tales put together. But to read in that book, so as to discover all its beautiful

meanings, you must have pure, clear eyes, and a humble, loving heart; otherwise you will complain, as some do, that it is dim and puzzling; or, as others, that it is dull and monotonous.

May you continue to read in it with new curiosity, new delight, and new profit; and to find it, as long as you live, the untiring "Story without an End."

Your affectionate Mother,

S. A.

LONDON,

Nov. 16th, 1833.

THE STORY WITHOUT AN END.

I.



HERE was once a Child who lived in a little hut, and in the hut there was nothing but a little bed and a looking-glass which hung in a dark corner. Now the Child cared nothing at all about the looking-glass ; but as soon as the first sunbeam glided softly through the casement and kissed his sweet eyelids, and

the finch and the linnet waked him merrily with their morning songs, he arose, and went out into the green meadow. And he begged flour of the primrose, and sugar of the violet, and butter of the butter-cup; he shook dew-drops from the cowslip into the cup of a hare-bell; spread out a large lime leaf, set his little breakfast upon it and feasted daintily. Sometimes he invited a humming bee, oftener a gay butterfly, to partake his feast; but his favourite guest was the blue dragonfly. The bee murmured a great deal, in a solemn tone, about his riches: but the Child thought that if *he* were a bee, heaps of treasure would not make him gay and happy; and that it must be much more delightful and glorious to float about in the





free and fresh breezes of spring, and to hum joyfully in the web of the sunbeams, than, with heavy feet and heavy heart, to stow the silver wax and the golden honey into cells.

To this the butterfly assented ; and he told, how, once on a time, he too had been greedy and sordid ; how he had thought of nothing but eating, and had never once turned his eyes upwards to the blue heavens. At length, however, a complete change had come over him ; and instead of crawling spiritless about the dirty earth, half dreaming, he at once awaked as out of a deep sleep. And now he would rise into the air ;—and it was his greatest joy sometimes to play with the light, and to reflect the heavens in the bright eyes of his

wings ; sometimes to listen to the soft language of the flowers and catch their secrets. Such talk delighted the Child, and his breakfast was the sweeter to him, and the sunshine on leaf and flower seemed to him more bright and cheering.

But when the bee had flown off to beg from flower to flower, and the butterfly had fluttered away to his playfellows, the dragonfly still remained, poised on a blade of grass. Her slender and burnished body, more brightly and deeply blue than the deep blue sky, glistened in the sunbeam ; and her net-like wings laughed at the flowers because *they* could not fly, but must stand still and abide the wind and the rain. The dragonfly sipped a little of the Child's clear dew-drops and blue

violet-honey, and then whispered her winged words. And the Child made an end of his repast, closed his dark blue eyes, bent down his beautiful head, and listened to the sweet prattle.

Then the dragonfly told much of the merry life in the green wood ; how sometimes she played hide-and-seek with her playfellows under the broad leaves of the oak and the beech trees ; or hunt-the-hare along the surface of the still waters ; sometimes quietly watched the sunbeams, as they flew busily from moss to flower and from flower to bush, and shed life and warmth over all. But at night, she said, the moonbeams glided softly around the wood, and dropped dew into the mouths of all the thirsty plants ; and when the dawn

of which it sprang, were close behind it, and could only be escaped by a break-neck leap.

Then the Child began to talk to the little waves, and asked them whence they came. They would not stay to give him an answer, but danced away, one over another; till at last, that the sweet Child might not be grieved, a drop of water stopped behind a piece of rock. From her the Child heard strange histories, but he could not understand them all, for she told him about her former life, and about the depths of the mountain.

“A long while ago,” said the drop of water, “I lived with my countless sisters in the great ocean, in peace and unity. We had all sorts of pastimes; sometimes





we mounted up high into the air, and peeped at the stars; then we sank plump down deep below, and looked how the coral builders work till they are tired, that they may reach the light of day at last. But I was conceited, and thought myself much better than my sisters. And so one day when the sun rose out of the sea, I clung fast to one of his hot beams, and thought that now I should reach the stars, and become one of them. But I had not ascended far, when the sunbeam shook me off, and in spite of all I could say or do, let me fall into a dark cloud. And soon a flash of fire darted through the cloud, and now I thought I must surely die; but the whole cloud laid itself down softly upon the top of a mountain, and so I escaped

with my fright, and a black eye. Now I thought I should remain hidden, when, all on a sudden, I slipped over a round pebble, fell from one stone to another, down into the depths of the mountain, till at last it was pitch dark, and I could neither see nor hear anything. Then I found, indeed, that 'pride goeth before a fall,' resigned myself to my fate, and, as I had already laid aside all my unhappy pride in the cloud, my portion was now the salt of humility; and after undergoing many purifications from the hidden virtues of metals and minerals, I was at length permitted to come up once more into the free cheerful air; and now will I run back to my sisters, and there wait patiently till I am called to something better."

But hardly had she done when the root of a forget-me-not caught the drop of water by her hair and sucked her in, that she might become a floweret, and twinkle brightly as a blue star on the green firmament of earth.



III.

THE Child did not very well know what to think of all this; he went thoughtfully home and laid himself on his little bed; and all night long he was wandering about on the ocean, and among the stars, and over the dark mountain. But the moon loved to look on the slumbering Child as he lay with his little head softly pillowed on his right arm. She lingered a long time before his little window, and went slowly away to lighten the dark chamber of some sick person.



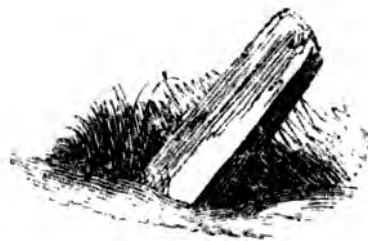


As the moon's soft light lay on the Child's eyelids he fancied he sat in a golden boat, on a great, great water ; countless stars swam glittering on the dark mirror. He stretched out his hand to catch the nearest star, but it had vanished, and the water sprayed up against him. Then he saw clearly that these were not the real stars ; he looked up to heaven, and wished he could fly thither.

But in the mean time the moon had wandered on her way ; and now the Child was led in his dream into the clouds, and he thought he was sitting on a white sheep, and he saw many lambs grazing around him. He tried to catch a little lamb to play with, but it was all mist and vapour ; and the Child was sorrowful, and wished

himself down again in his own meadow, where his own lamb was sporting gaily about.

Meanwhile the moon was gone to sleep behind the mountains, and all around was dark. Then the Child dreamt that he fell down into the dark, gloomy caverns of the mountain, and at that he was so frightened, that he suddenly awoke, just as morning opened her clear eye over the nearest hill.







IV.

THE Child started up, and, to recover himself from his fright, went into the little flower-garden behind his cottage, where the beds were surrounded by ancient palm-trees, and where he knew that all the flowers would nod kindly at him. But behold, the tulip turned up her nose, and the ranunculus held her head as stiffly as possible, that she might not bow good-morrow to him. The rose, with her fair round cheeks, smiled and greeted the Child

lovingly ; so he went up to her and kissed her fragrant mouth. And then the rose tenderly complained that he so seldom came into the garden, and that she gave out her bloom and her fragrance the live-long day in vain ; for the other flowers either could not see her, because they were too low, or did not care to look at her, because they themselves were so rich in bloom and fragrance. But she was most delighted when she glowed in the blooming head of a child, and could pour out all her heart's secrets to him in sweet odours. Among other things, the rose whispered in his ear that she was the Fulness of Beauty.

And in truth the Child, while looking at her beauty, seemed to have quite for-

gotten to go on ; till the blue larkspur called to him, and asked whether he cared nothing more about his faithful friend ; she said that she was unchanged, and that even in death she should look upon him with eyes of unfading blue.

The Child thanked her for her trueheartedness, and passed on to the hyacinth who stood near the puffy, full-cheeked, gaudy tulips. Even from a distance the hyacinth sent forth kisses to him, for she knew not how to express her love. Although she was not remarkable for her beauty, yet the Child felt himself wondrously attracted by her, for he thought no flower loved him so well. But the hyacinth poured out her full heart and wept bitterly, because she stood so

lonely ; the tulips indeed were her countrymen, but they were so cold and unfeeling that she was ashamed of them. The Child encouraged her, and told her he did not think things were so bad as she fancied. The tulips spoke their love in bright looks, while she uttered hers in fragrant words ; that these, indeed, were lovelier and more intelligible, but that the others were not to be despised.

Then the hyacinth was comforted, and said she would be content ; and the Child went on to the powdered auricula, who, in her bashfulness, looked kindly up to him, and would gladly have given him more than kind looks, had she had more to give. But the Child was satisfied with her modest greeting ; he felt that he was

poor too, and he saw the deep, thoughtful colours that lay beneath her golden dust. But the humble flower of her own accord sent him to her neighbour, the lily, whom she willingly acknowledged as her queen. And when the Child came to the lily, the slender flower waved to and fro, and bowed her pale head with gentle pride and stately modesty, and sent forth a fragrant greeting to him. The Child knew not what had come to him: it reached his inmost heart, so that his eyes filled with soft tears. Then he marked how the lily gazed with a clear and steadfast eye upon the sun, and how the sun looked down again into her pure chalice, and how, amid this interchange of looks, the three golden threads united

in the centre. And the Child heard how one scarlet lady-bird at the bottom of the cup said to another, "Knowest thou not that we dwell in the flower of heaven?" and the other replied, "Yes, and now will the mystery be fulfilled." And as the Child saw and heard all this, the dim image of his unknown parents, as it were veiled in a holy light, floated before his eyes: he strove to grasp it, but the light was gone, and the Child slipped, and would have fallen, had not the branch of a currant bush* caught and held him; and he took some of the bright berries for his morning's meal, and went back to his hut and stripped the little branches.

* The red currant is called in Germany, *Johan-nis-beere*, St. John's berry.

V.

BUT in the hut he staid not long, all was so gloomy, close, and silent within; and abroad everything seemed to smile, and to exult in the clear and unbounded space. Therefore the Child went out into the green wood, of which the dragonfly had told him such pleasant stories. But he found everything far more beautiful and lovely even than she had described it; for all about, wherever he went, the tender moss pressed his little feet, and the delicate grass embraced his knees, and the flowers

kissed his hands, and even the branches stroked his cheeks with a kind and refreshing touch, and the high trees threw their fragrant shade around him.

There was no end to his delight. The little birds warbled and sang, and fluttered and hopped about, and the delicate wood-flowers gave out their beauty and their odours; and every sweet sound took a sweet odour by the hand, and thus walked through the open door of the Child's heart, and held a joyous nuptial dance therein. But the nightingale and the lily of the valley led the dance; for the nightingale sang of nought but love, and the lily breathed of nought but innocence, and he was the bridegroom and she was the bride. And the nightingale

was never weary of repeating the same thing a hundred times over, for the spring of love which gushed from his heart was ever new; and the lily bowed her head bashfully, that no one might see her glowing heart. And yet the one lived so solely and entirely in the other, that no one could see whether the notes of the nightingale were floating lilies, or the lilies visible notes, falling like dew-drops from the nightingale's throat.

The Child's heart was full of joy even to the brim. He sat himself down, and he almost thought he should like to take root there, and live for ever among the sweet plants and flowers, and so become a true sharer in all their gentle pleasures. For he felt a deep delight in the still,

secluded, twilight existence of the mosses and small herbs, which felt not the storm, nor the frost, nor the scorching sunbeam ; but dwelt quietly among their many friends and neighbours, feasting in peace and good fellowship on the dew and the cool shadows which the mighty trees shed upon them. To them it was a high festival when a sunbeam chanced to visit their lowly home ; whilst the tops of the lofty trees could find joy and beauty only in the purple rays of morning or evening.





VI.

AND as the Child sat there, a little mouse rustled from among the dry leaves of the former year, and a lizard half glided from a crevice in the rock, and both of them fixed their bright eyes upon the little stranger ; and when they saw that he designed them no evil, they took courage and came nearer to him.

“I should like to live with you,” said the Child to the two little creatures, in a soft subdued voice, that he might not frighten them. “Your chambers are so

snug, so warm, and yet so shaded, and the flowers grow in at your windows, and the birds sing you their morning song, and call you to table and to bed with their clear warblings."

"Yes," said the mouse, "it would be all very well if all the plants bore nuts and mast, instead of those silly flowers; and if I were not obliged to grub under ground in the spring, and gnaw the bitter roots, whilst they are dressing themselves in their fine flowers and flaunting it to the world, as if they had endless stores of honey in their cellars."

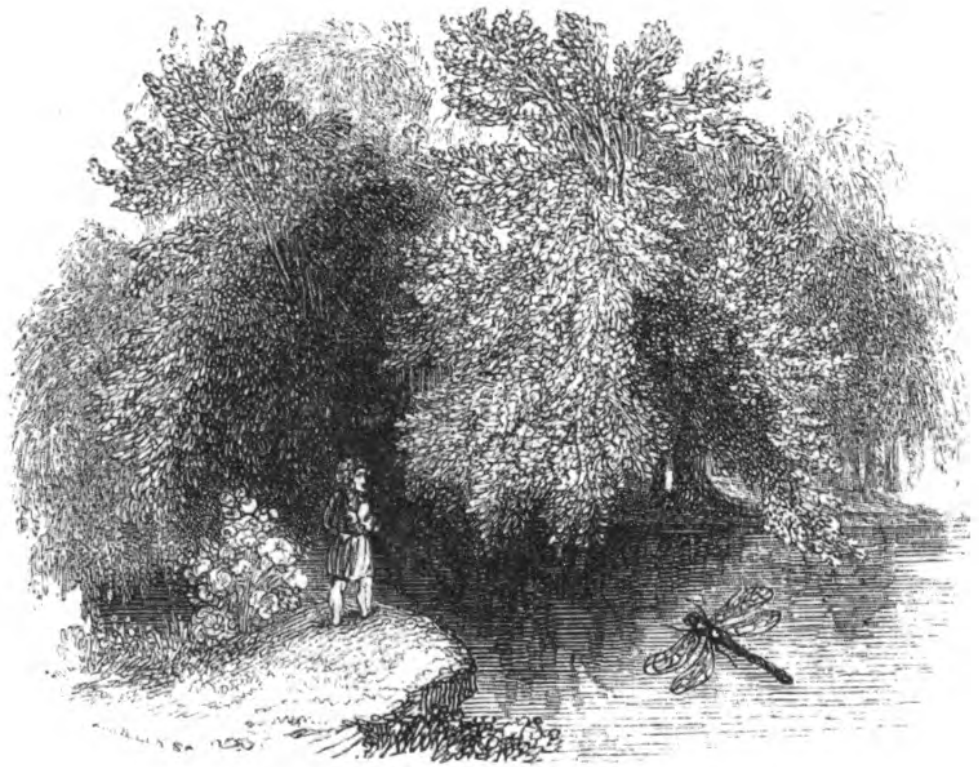
"Hold your tongue," interrupted the lizard pertly; "do you think, because you are grey, that other people must throw away their handsome clothes, or let them lie in

the dark wardrobe under ground, and wear nothing but grey too? I am not so envious. The flowers may dress themselves as they like for me; they pay for it out of their own pockets, and they feed bees and beetles from their cups; but what I want to know is, of what use are birds in the world? Such a fluttering and chattering, truly, from morning early to evening late, that one is worried and stunned to death, and there is never a day's peace for them. And they do nothing; only snap up the flies and the spiders out of the mouths of such as I. For my part, I should be perfectly satisfied, provided all the birds in the world were flies and beetles."

The Child changed colour, and his heart was sick and saddened when he heard their

evil tongues. He could not imagine how any body could speak ill of the beautiful flowers, or scoff at his beloved birds. He was waked out of a sweet dream, and the wood seemed to him lonely and desert, and he was ill at ease. He started up hastily, so that the mouse and the lizard shrank back alarmed, and did not look around them till they thought themselves safe out of the reach of the stranger with the large, severe eyes.





VII.

BUT the Child went away from the place ; and as he hung down his head thoughtfully, he did not observe that he took the wrong path, nor see how the flowers on either side bowed their heads to welcome him, nor hear how the old birds from the boughs, and the young from the nests, cried aloud to him, “ God bless thee, our dear little prince.” And he went on and on, farther and farther, into the deep wood ; and he thought over the foolish and heartless talk of the two selfish chatterers, and could not

understand it. He would fain have forgotten it, but he could not. And the more he pondered, the more it seemed to him as if a malicious spider had spun her web around him, and as if his eyes were weary with trying to look through it.

And suddenly he came to a still water, above which young beeches lovingly entwined their arms. He looked in the water, and his eyes were riveted to it as if by enchantment. He could not move, but stood and gazed in the soft, placid mirror, from the bosom of which the tender green foliage, with the deep blue heavens between, gleamed so wondrously upon him. His sorrow was all forgotten, and even the echo of the discord in his little heart was hushed. That heart was once more in his





eyes ; and fain would he have drunk in the soft beauty of the colours that lay beneath him, or have plunged into the lovely deep.

Then the breeze began to sigh among the tree-tops. The Child raised his eyes and saw overhead the quivering green, and the deep blue behind it, and he knew not whether he was waking or dreaming : which were the real leaves and the real heaven,—those in the depths above, or in the depths beneath ? Long did the Child waver, and his thoughts floated in a delicious dreaminess from one to the other, till the dragon-fly flew to him in affectionate haste, and with rustling wings greeted her kind host. The Child returned her greeting, and was glad to meet an acquaintance with whom he could share the rich feast of his joy. But

first he asked the dragonfly if she could decide for him between the Upper and the Nether—the height and the depth? The dragonfly flew above, and beneath, and around; but the water spake:—“The foliage and the sky above are not the true ones: the leaves wither and fall; the sky is often overcast, and sometimes quite dark.” Then the leaves and the sky said, “The water only apes us; it must change its pictures at our pleasure, and can retain none.” Then the dragonfly remarked, that the height and the depth existed only in the eyes of the Child, and that the leaves and the sky were true and real only in his thoughts; because in the mind alone the picture was permanent and enduring, and could be carried with him whithersoever he went.

This she said to the Child; but she immediately warned him to return, for the leaves were already beating the tattoo in the evening breeze, and the lights were disappearing one by one in every corner. Then the Child confessed to her with alarm that he knew not how he should find the way back, and that he feared the dark night would overtake him if he attempted to go home alone; so the dragonfly flew on before him, and showed him a cave in the rock where he might pass the night. And the Child was well content; for he had often wished to try if he could sleep out of his accustomed bed.

VIII.

BUT the dragonfly was fleet, and gratitude strengthened her wings to pay her host the honour she owed him. And truly, in the dim twilight good counsel and guidance were scarce. She flitted hither and thither, without knowing rightly what was to be done ; when, by the last vanishing sunbeam, she saw hanging on the edge of the cave some strawberries who had drunk so deep of the evening-red, that their heads were quite heavy.. Then she flew up to a harebell who stood near, and whispered in her





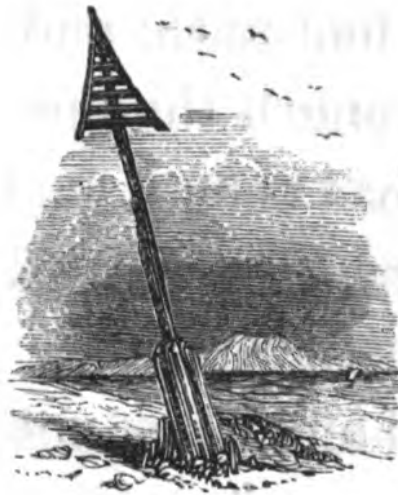
ear that the lord and king of all the flowers was in the wood, and ought to be received and welcomed as beseemed his dignity. Aglaia did not need that this should be repeated. She began to ring her sweet bells with all her might ; and when her neighbour heard the sound, she rang hers also ; and soon all the harebells, great and small, were in motion, and rang as if it had been for the nuptials of their mother earth herself with the prince of the sun. The tone of the blue bells was deep and rich, and that of the white, high and clear, and all blended together in a delicious harmony.

But the birds were fast asleep in their high nests, and the ears of the other animals were not delicate enough, or were too much overgrown with hair, to hear them. The

fireflies alone heard the joyous peal, for they were akin to the flowers, through their common ancestor, light. They inquired of their nearest relation, the lily of the valley, and from her they heard that a large flower had just passed along the foot-path more blooming than the loveliest rose, and with two stars more brilliant than those of the brightest firefly, and that it must needs be their king. Then all the fireflies flew up and down the foot-path, and sought everywhere, till at length they came, as the dragonfly had hoped they would, to the cave.

And now, as they looked at the Child, and every one of them saw itself reflected in his clear eyes, they rejoiced exceedingly, and called all their fellows together, and alighted on the bushes all around ; and soon

is was so light in the cave, that herb and grass began to grow as if it had been broad day. Now, indeed, was the joy and triumph of the dragonfly complete. The Child was delighted with the merry and silvery tones of the bells, and with the many little bright-eyed companions around him, and with the deep red strawberries which bowed down their heads to his touch.



IX.

AND when he had eaten his fill, he sat down on the soft moss, crossed one little leg over the other, and began to gossip with the fireflies. And as he so often thought on his unknown parents, he asked them who were their parents. Then the one nearest to him gave him answer; and he told how that they were formerly flowers, but none of those who thrust their rooty hands greedily into the ground and draw nourishment from the dingy earth, only to make themselves fat and large withal: but that the light was



THOS WILLIAMS



dearer to them than anything, even at night; and while the other flowers slept, they gazed unwearied on the light, and drank it in with eager adoration,—sun, and moon, and star light. And the light had so thoroughly purified them, that they had not sucked in poisonous juices like the yellow flowers of the earth, but, sweet odours for sick and fainting hearts, and oil of potent, ethereal virtue for the weak and the wounded; and, at length, when their autumn came, they did not, like the others, wither and sink down, leaf and flower, to be swallowed up by the darksome earth, but shook off their earthly garment and mounted aloft into the clear air. But there it was so wondrously bright, that sight failed them; and when they came to themselves again,

they were fireflies, each sitting on a withered flower-stalk.

And now the Child liked the bright-eyed flies better than ever ; and he talked a little longer with them, and inquired why they showed themselves so much more in spring. They did it, they said, in the hope that their gold green radiance might allure their cousins, the flowers, to the pure love of light.



X.

DURING this conversation, the dragonfly had been preparing a bed for her host. The moss upon which the Child sat had grown a foot high behind his back, out of pure joy ; but the dragonfly and her sisters had so revelled upon it, that it was now laid at its length along the cave. The dragonfly had awakened every spider in the neighbourhood out of her sleep, and when they saw the brilliant light, they had set to work spinning so industriously, that their web hung down like a curtain before the mouth

of the cave. But as the Child saw the ant peeping up at him, he entreated the fireflies not to deprive themselves any longer of their merry games in the wood, on his account. And the dragonfly and her sisters raised the curtain till the Child had laid him down to rest, and then let it fall again, that the mischievous gnats might not get in to disturb his slumbers.

The Child laid himself down to sleep, for he was very tired; but he could not sleep, for his couch of moss was quite another thing than his little bed, and the cave was all strange to him. He turned himself on one side and then on the other, and as nothing would do, he raised himself and sat upright to wait till sleep might choose to come. But sleep would not come

at all ;—and the only wakeful eyes in the whole wood were the Child's. For the harebells had rung themselves weary, and the fireflies had flown about till they were tired, and even the dragonfly, who would fain have kept watch in front of the cave, had dropped sound asleep.

The wood grew stiller and stiller : here and there fell a dry leaf which had been driven from its old dwelling place by a fresh one ; here and there a young bird gave a soft chirp when its mother squeezed it in the nest ;—and from time to time a gnat hummed for a minute or two in the curtain, till a spider crept on tip-toe along its web, and gave him such a gripe in the wind-pipe as soon spoiled his trumpeting.

And the deeper the silence became, the

more intently did the Child listen, and at last the slightest sound thrilled him from head to foot. At length, all was still as death in the wood; and the world seemed as if it never would wake again. The Child bent forward to see whether it were as dark abroad as in the cave, but he saw nothing save the pitch-dark night, who had wrapped everything in her thick veil. Yet as he looked upwards his eyes met the friendly glance of two or three stars, and this was a most joyful surprise to him, for he felt himself no longer so entirely alone. The stars were, indeed, far, far away, but yet he knew them, and they knew him; for they looked into his eyes.

The Child's whole soul was fixed in his gaze; and it seemed to him as if he must

needs fly out of the darksome cave thither where the stars were beaming with such pure and serene light ; and he felt how poor and lowly he was, when he thought of their brilliancy ; and how cramped and fettered, when he thought of their free, unbounded course along the heavens.



XI.

BUT the stars went on their course, and left their glittering picture only a little while before the Child's eyes. Even this faded, and then vanished quite away. And he was beginning to feel tired, and to wish to lay himself down again, when a flickering will-o'-the-wisp appeared from behind a bush,—so that the Child thought, at first, one of the stars had wandered out of its way, and had come to visit him, and to take him with it. And the Child breathed quick with joy and surprise, and then the will-o'-





the-wisp came nearer and sat himself down on a damp, mossy stone in front of the cave, and another fluttered quickly after him, and sat down over against him, and sighed deeply, "Thank God, then, that I can rest at last !"

"Yes," said the other, "for that you may thank the innocent Child who sleeps there within ; it was his pure breath that freed us."—"Are you then," said the Child, hesitatingly, "not of yon stars which wander so brightly there above?" "Oh, if we were stars," replied the first, "we should pursue our tranquil path through the pure element, and should leave this wood and the whole darksome earth to itself."—"And not," said the other, "sit brooding on the face of the shallow pool."

The Child was curious to know who these could be who shone so beautifully, and yet seemed so discontented. Then the first began to relate how he had been a child too, and how, as he grew up, it had always been his greatest delight to deceive people and play them tricks, to show his wit and cleverness. He had always, he said, poured such a stream of smooth words over people, and encompassed himself with such a shining mist, that men had been attracted by it to their own hurt. But once on a time there appeared a plain man, who only spoke two or three simple words, and suddenly the bright mist vanished, and left him naked and deformed, to the scorn and mockery of the whole world. But the man had turned away his face from him in pity, while he

was almost dead with shame and anger. And when he came to himself again, he knew not what had befallen him, till, at length, he found that it was his fate to hover, without rest or change, over the surface of the bog as a will-o'-the-wisp.

“With me it fell out quite otherwise,” said the first: “Instead of giving light without warmth, as I now do, I burned without shining. When I was only a child, people gave way to me in everything, so that I was intoxicated with self-love. If I saw any one shine, I longed to put out his light; and the more intensely I wished this, the more did my own small glimmering turn back upon myself, and inwardly burn fiercely, while all without was darker than ever. But if any one who shone more brightly

would have kindly given me of his light, then did my inward flame burst forth to destroy him. But the flame passed through the light and harmed it not; it shone only the more brightly, while I was withered and exhausted. And once upon a time I met a little smiling child, who played with a cross of palm branches, and wore a beamy coronet around his golden locks. He took me kindly by the hand and said, 'My friend, you are now very gloomy and sad, but if you will become a child again, even as I am, you will have a bright circlet such as I have.' When I heard that, I was so angry with myself and with the child, that I was scorched by my inward fire. Now would I fain fly up to the sun to fetch rays from him, but the rays drove me back with these

words : ‘ Return thither whence thou camest, thou dark fire of envy, for the sun lightens only in love ; the greedy earth, indeed, sometimes turns his mild light into scorching fire. Fly back, then, for with thy like alone must thou dwell.’ I fell, and when I recovered myself, I was glimmering coldly above the stagnant waters.”

While they were talking, the Child had fallen asleep ; for he knew nothing of the world nor of men, and he could make nothing of their stories. Weariness had spoken a more intelligible language to him—*that* he understood, and had fallen asleep.

XII.

SOFTLY and soundly he slept till the rosy morning clouds stood upon the mountain, and announced the coming of their lord, the sun. But as soon as the tidings spread over field and wood, the thousand-voiced echo awoke, and sleep was no more to be thought of.

And soon did the royal sun himself arise ; at first, his dazzling diadem alone appeared above the mountains ; at length, he stood upon their summit in the full majesty of his beauty, in all the charms of eternal youth, bright and glorious, his kindly glance em-





bracing every creature of earth, from the stately oak to the blade of grass bending under the foot of the wayfaring man.

Then arose from every breast, from every throat, the joyous song of praise; and it was as if the whole plain and wood were become a temple, whose roof was the heaven, whose altar the mountain, whose congregation all creatures, whose priest the sun.

But the Child walked forth and was glad, for the birds sang sweetly, and it seemed to him as if everything sported and danced out of mere joy to be alive. Here flew two finches through the thicket, and, twittering, pursued each other; there, the young buds burst asunder, and the tender leaves peeped out and expanded themselves in the warm

sun, as if they would abide in his glance for ever ; here, a dew-drop trembled, sparkling and twinkling on a blade of grass, and knew not that beneath him stood a little moss who was thirsting after him ; there, troops of flies flew aloft, as if they would soar far, far over the wood : and so all was life and motion, and the Child's heart joyed to see it.

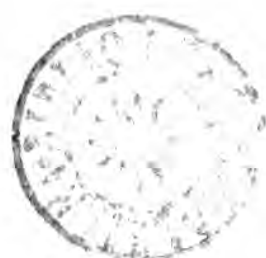
He sat down on a little smooth plot of turf, shaded by the branches of a nut-bush, and thought he should now sip the cup of his delight, drop by drop. And first he plucked down some brambles which threatened him with their prickles ; then he bent aside some branches which concealed the view ; then he removed the stones, so that he might stretch out his feet at full length

on the soft turf; and when he had done all this, he bethought himself what was yet to do; and as he found nothing, he stood up to look for his acquaintance the dragonfly, and to beg her to guide him once more out of the wood into the open fields. About midway he met her, and she began to excuse herself for having fallen asleep in the night. The Child thought not of the past, were it even but a minute ago, so earnestly did he now wish to get out from among the thick and close trees; for his heart beat high, and he felt as if he should breathe freer in the open ground. The dragonfly flew on before and showed him the way as far as the outermost verge of the wood, whence the Child could espy his own little hut, and then flew away to her playfellows.

XIII.

THE Child walked forth alone upon the fresh, dewy corn-field. A thousand little suns glittered in his eyes, and a lark soared warbling above his head. And the lark proclaimed the joys of the coming year, and awakened endless hopes, while she soared circling higher and higher, till, at length, her song was like the soft whisper of an angel holding converse with the spring, under the blue arch of heaven. The Child had seen the earth-coloured little bird rise up before him, and it seemed to





him as if the earth had sent her forth from her bosom as a messenger to carry her joy and her thanks up to the sun, because he had turned his beaming countenance again upon her in love and bounty. And the lark hung poised above the hope-giving field, and warbled her clear and joyous song.

She sang of the loveliness of the rosy dawn, and the fresh brilliancy of the earliest sunbeams ; of the gladsome springing of the young flowers, and the vigorous shooting of the corn ; and her song pleased the Child beyond measure.

But the lark wheeled in higher and higher circles, and her song sounded softer and sweeter.

And now she sang of the first delights of early love ; of wandering together on

the sunny, fresh hill-tops, and of the sweet pictures and visions that arise out of the blue and misty distance. The Child understood not rightly what he heard, and fain would he have understood, for he thought that even in such visions must be wondrous delight. He gazed aloft after the unwearied bird, but she had disappeared in the morning mist.

Then the Child leaned his head on one shoulder to listen if he could no longer hear the little messenger of spring; and he could just catch the distant and quivering notes in which she sang of the fervent longing after the clear element of freedom; after the pure all-present light; and of the blessed foretaste of this desired enfranchise-

ment, of this blending in the sea of celestial happiness.

Yet longer did he listen ; for the tones of her song carried him there, where, as yet, his thoughts had never reached, and he felt himself happier in this short and imperfect flight than ever he had felt before. But the lark now dropped suddenly to the earth, for her little body was too heavy for the ambient æther, and her wings were not large nor strong enough for the pure element.

Then the red corn-poppies laughed at the homely looking bird, and cried to one another and to the surrounding blades of corn, in a shrill voice, “ Now, indeed, you may see what comes of flying so high, and striving and straining after mere air ; people only lose their time, and bring back nothing

but weary wings and an empty stomach. That vulgar-looking, ill-dressed little creature would fain raise herself above us all, and has kept up a mighty noise. And now there she lies on the ground and can hardly breathe, while we have stood still where we are sure of a good meal, and have staid like people of sense where there is something substantial to be had; and in the time she has been fluttering and singing, we have grown a good deal taller and fatter."

The other little red-caps chattered and screamed their accents so loud, that the Child's ears tingled, and he wished he could chastise them for their spiteful jeers; when a cyane said, in a soft voice, to her younger playmates, "Dear friends, be not led astray

by outward show, nor by discourse, which regards only outward show. The lark is, indeed, weary, and the space into which she has soared is void ; but the void is not what the lark sought, nor is the seeker returned empty home. She strove after light and freedom, and light and freedom has she proclaimed. She left the earth and its enjoyments, but she has drunk of the pure air of heaven, and has seen that it is not the earth, but the sun that is steadfast. And if earth has called her back, it can keep nothing of her but what is its own. Her sweet voice and her soaring wings belong to the sun, and will enter into light and freedom, long after the foolish prater shall have sunk and been buried in the dark prison of the earth."

And the lark heard her wise and friendly discourse, and with renewed strength, she sprang once more into the clear and beautiful blue.

Then the Child clapped his little hands for joy, that the sweet bird had flown up again, and that the red-caps must hold their tongues for shame.







XIV.

AND the Child was become happy and joyful, and breathed freely again, and thought no more of returning to his hut, for he saw that nothing returned inwards, but rather that all strove outwards into the free air ; the rosy apple blossoms from their narrow buds, and the gurgling notes from the narrow breast of the lark. The germs burst open the folding doors of the seeds, and broke through the heavy pressure of the earth in order to get at the light : the grasses tore asunder their bands, and their

slender blades sprung upwards. Even the rocks were become gentle, and allowed little mosses to peep out from their sides, as a sign that they would not remain impenetrably closed for ever. And the flowers sent out colour and fragrance into the whole world, for they kept not their best for themselves, but would imitate the sun and the stars, which poured their warmth and radiance over the spring. And many a little gnat and beetle burst the narrow cell in which it was enclosed, and crept out slowly, and, half asleep, unfolded and shook its tender wings, and soon gained strength, and flew off to untried delights.

And as the butterflies came forth from their chrysalids in all their gaiety and splendour, so did every humbled and suppressed





aspiration and hope free itself, and boldly launch into the open and flowing sea of spring.



THE GLOW-WORM.

It was on the evening of a sultry day in the summer, that a poor widow was sitting at the window of her little cottage looking into the garden that surrounded it. An agreeable and fragrant odour was wafted into the apartment by the gentle breeze from the grass which she had been that day cutting, and which odour was alike pleasant and healthy. The evening twilight had already disappeared from the horizon, and the moon was now beaming into the room,

where contentment and cheerfulness formerly had their abode. Her little Frederick, a boy six years old, was standing in the corner of the open window, having his blooming countenance and the curls of his light hair illuminated by the bright moon.

The poor woman was sitting there in order to rest herself a little after the toil of the day; but heavy as that labour was to her during the oppressive heat of the day, she had a still heavier burden pressing on her mind, which worrying care made her forget all her fatigues. Of her supper, which consisted of milk in which some bread was crumbled, she had hardly eaten a mouthful. Little Frederick was standing immoveable all the while, and much dejected on account of seeing his mother so low-

spirited. He, too, finding his mother, instead of finishing her supper, was all the time weeping most bitterly, had laid aside his spoon and left his little basin of milk standing on the table nearly untouched, and which little basin was now reflected on the ceiling by the moonlight. It was not longer than the last spring that Maria had become a widow. Her lamented husband gained so much as to be able to purchase, though not without incurring some debts, the little cottage and the adjoining meadow, and it was by his labour that the green had been planted over with young fruit trees which now stood in full bloom. He had taken Maria for his wife, though she was but a poor orphan, and her parents could give her nothing but a good education ; she

was considered in the whole village as the most pious, industrious, and well-behaved girl, and both were most happy in their union. The fever, which raged in the village, had deprived Maria of the best of husbands ; she herself, who was attending her sick husband with all the tender care of an affectionate wife, was also attacked by the epidemic, and it was only after a very severe illness that she had escaped death.

In consequence of her own and her husband's illness the widow had suffered much in her pecuniary concerns, and now she was even threatened with the loss of her little cottage. The husband of Maria was long in the employment of the richest farmer of the place, who esteemed him for his fidelity and studious habits, and had advanced him

the sum of three hundred florins in order that he might be able to purchase the cottage and garden attached to it; but under the express condition, that he should repay annually the sum of twenty-five florins in cash and an equal sum in labour's wages. This stipulation the husband of Maria had really fulfilled to the time of his sickness, so that the debt amounted to only fifty florins: of this the widow was quite certain.

However, the farmer happening to die from the same disorder, his heirs, a son-in-law and a daughter, found the bill to the full amount of the original debt among the papers of the deceased, without being at all acquainted with the subsequent re-imbusement, of which he had never mentioned one

word to them, and they therefore came for the whole sum upon the poor widow. The frightened woman assured them by all that is true, that her departed husband had paid off the whole of the debt with the exception of fifty florins, while alive ; but all her protestations were of no avail, and the young farmer accused her of wilful falsehood, and commenced a law-suit against her. As she was unable to produce any legal proofs that any part of the debt was paid by her husband, she was condemned to pay the whole of it ; and as the widow had no other property left to her besides this cottage and garden, it was threatened to be sold by auction, and it was the coming day which had been fixed upon for the execution by the creditors.

This last account the poor widow had received not more than an hour since, just after she had finished her work for the day, and it was a neighbour who had told her of it.

It was owing to this sad news, that Maria was sitting overwhelmed with grief at her window, ever and anon casting a sorrowful look towards the brilliant sky and at her little Frederick, sometimes having her eyes fixed in a vacant gaze, till she at last relieved herself by shedding a flood of tears. It was a melancholy and heart-rending spectacle.

“Good God,” she said to herself, “then it is for the last time that I have to-day cut the grass of my little green; the first ripe plums which I have been to-day plucking

for my Frederick are then the last fruits which the poor boy will have to taste from the trees which his father planted with great labour and care ; nay, perhaps it is the last night that we shall sleep in this cottage ! to-morrow this habitation will belong to another, and who can tell if he will not make us leave it immediately. God knows where we shall find a refuge for the morrow-night, perhaps only in the open air !” and she began to sob violently.

Little Frederick, who till then had remained motionless in the corner of the room, now approached his mother and said to her, weeping and sobbing all the while, “Dear mother, do not cry so bitterly, do not you recollect what father told us, when he was dying on the bed there ? ‘Do not

weep so much,' said he, 'God is the father of poor orphans and widows; call on him in your troubles and he will help you!' and is it not true?" asked Frederick.

"Yes, dear child," replied the mother, "he said so." "Well then," retorted the child, "how can you weep so long? pray to God, and he will assist you in your trouble. Or do you think God is not so rich; oh yes! he is still richer than even the farmer. Do but look out of the window: to Him belong the moon and all the stars: father often said that the whole world is his: why should we then weep and so torment ourselves? Come, let us pray at once to God, he is sure to help us. Do you but begin, I will assist you in your prayer."

"Good child," cried the mother, "you

are right ;” and some rays of hope began already to soften her grief and to press milder tears from her eyes. She then lifted up her hands in prayer, and raised her eyes to heaven, the little boy lifting his tiny hands likewise, and the bright moon shone on mother and child in their devotional attitude. The mother then began to say the following prayer, whilst the child repeated it after her every word.

“ Dear Father, who art in heaven, look down upon a poor mother and her child ; a poor widow and a poor orphan are looking up to thee. We are in great distress and have no refuge here on earth ; but thou art rich in mercies ; thou hast told us to call upon thee in our troubles, and thou wilt be our help. We now pray to thee, do not

cast us out from this cottage, do not take from a poor little orphan his inheritance ; or if in thy inscrutable judgment thou hast so ordained it for us, oh ! then let us find on thy wide earth another resting-place ; send consolation into our hearts that they break not when we shall be obliged to forsake our little habitation, and when from yonder hill we take a last farewell of it."

The widow could not proceed any further, and looking up, bathed in tears, to heaven, she remained silent, when the little boy, who was still standing in the attitude of prayer, called out, "O mother ! look, only look, tell me what is this ; here I see a little light moving in the air, a little star flying ; look here, it moves along the window, oh ! now it comes into the room. How beauti-

ful and brilliant it shines, surpassing almost the evening star in brightness; now it moves along the ceiling! oh! it is very wonderful."

"This is a glow-worm, dear Frederick," said the mother; "during the day it is an insignificant insect, but in the night it has this wonderful appearance."

"May I catch it," said the boy; "will it not hurt me, and shall I not burn my fingers with this little burning-light?"

"It will not burn you," said the mother smiling, with her cheeks bathed in tears; "catch it and examine it well, but do not hurt it. This also is one of the wondrous works of the Almighty."

The little boy had by this time forgotten all sadness, and was only bent on catching the

glow-worm, which had now approached nearer to the floor, and was flying about under the tables and chairs. "Oh! what a pity," exclaimed he: the shining insect had just flown under a large chest of drawers which stood near the wall, while he was attempting to lay hold of it; and looking under the drawers, "I see it," he exclaimed; "there it is quite near the wall, and the white wall, the floor, and every mote is glistening around its seat; but I cannot reach it, my arm is too short."

"Have patience," cried the mother, "it will soon come forth again."

The boy waited for a little while, but came again to his mother, saying with a soft, beseeching voice, "Mother, pray do reach it for me, or be so good as to move

away the drawers a little from the wall, and I shall easily catch it myself." The mother got up and removed the drawers; the little urchin then took hold of the glow-worm, and looked at it with as much delight as ever a prince or a princess did on the finest and brightest jewel.

But the attention of the mother was soon drawn to a different object. When removing the chest of drawers, she heard something fall down, that had been held between it and the wall, and on stooping to lift it up, she uttered a loud shriek; "Heavens!" she exclaimed; "now we are all at once freed from our troubles, here is the account book for which I have been so long searching in vain. Alas! I believed that it was destroyed by some one during

my severe illness, when I was lying quite senseless in my fever. Now all will be right again, as it will be clearly proved that my late husband had duly discharged the debt which I am now called upon to pay again. Who would have thought, that this book was lying behind the drawers, which piece of furniture we purchased with the cottage, and which has since our coming here never been moved from its place ?”

She now lighted a candle and began to turn over the leaves, whilst tears of joy were gliding down her cheeks. All turned out as she expected, every item was written down as her late husband had paid it to the deceased farmer, and signed by the latter. In the last page there was even found the hand-writing of the old farmer himself, and

it read as follows : On St. Martin's day I settled my account with John Blunt, and he owes me now no more than fifty florins.

The poor widow, filled with joy, embraced her child, and exclaimed in ecstasy, "Oh ! dear Frederick, thanks to heaven, now we shall not be obliged to leave our home—we may now stay here."

"Is it not I, mother," cried the little urchin, "who am the cause of this ? If I had not so much begged of you to remove the chest of drawers, you would not have found the book, which might have remained there for ever without our being aware of it."

The mother was for a moment silent, but then she said : "Oh ! my dear child, this was a special interposition of Providence. I

tremble in awful reverence when I am thinking of it ; for was it not just when we were praying, that the glittering insect came into the room and did, as it were, light a candle to show us where the book lay ? yes, God guides everything, even the most trivial ; nothing occurs by chance ; without the foreknowledge of God not one hair falls from our head. Be mindful of this all your life-time, and put your trust always in Him ; but especially in the time of your trouble, for to Him it is easy to help and to save. He need not send us a shining angel, He can accomplish it through a little winged insect.”

The poor widow could not shut an eye all the night for joy, and soon after break of day she hastened to the judge of the

place. The judge sent for the heir, who came; the hand-writing of the deceased farmer was acknowledged by him as genuine, and he felt much ashamed for having accused the widow of perversion. But the judge told him that he must recompense her for the shame and the trouble he had caused to her, to which he declared himself willing. On the widow narrating the particulars of her nightly prayers, and the appearance of a glittering glow-worm, the judge exclaimed, "Here the providence of God was manifest, his help evident."

The young farmer was much affected by it: and with a tear glittering in his eye, he said, "Yes, so it is, God is the father of the widows and orphans, but also their avenger. Pardon me that I treated you so

harshly, it was done under a mistake. However, in order to redress the ills I have caused you, I make you a present of the fifty florins you are still indebted to me, and should you ever be in distress, I wish you would come to me for assistance, for it shall always be granted to you; for I now see it clearly, that he who puts his trust in God, him does he not forsake. Should I ever be in embarrassment, or my wife become a widow, and my children orphans, then may he help us thus as he has helped you now."





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