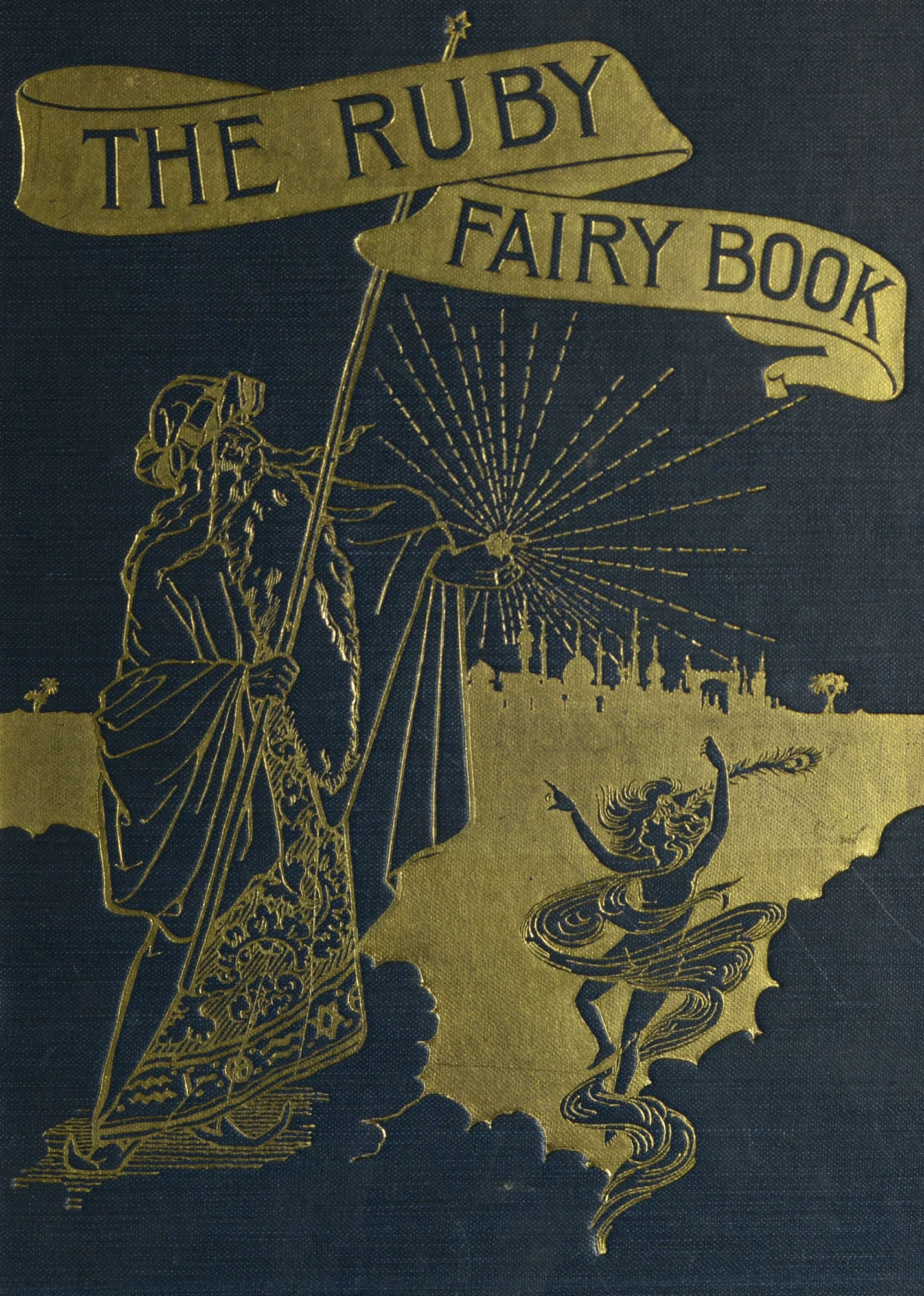
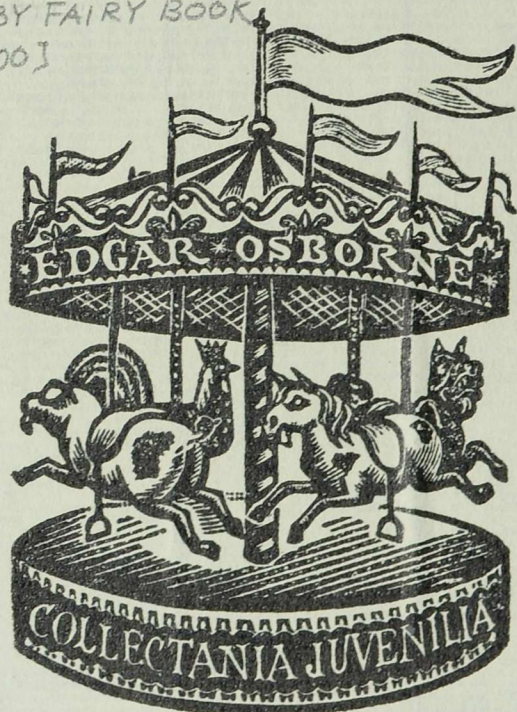


THE RUBY

FAIRY BOOK



(FT)
RUBY FAIRY BOOK
[1900]



37131 009 535 501

64
P. 6/11/11
802

11/11

THE RUBY FAIRY BOOK

Marian Morton



"THE CREATURE . . . FLEW INTO A TERRIBLE RAGE" (p. 245)

THE RUBY

FAIRY BOOK

COMPRISING STORIES BY

JULES LE MAITRE.
J WENZIG.

FLORA SCHMALS
F.C. YOUNGER

LUIGI CAPUANI.
JOHN C. WINDER.
DANIEL RICHE.
CANNING WILLIAMS.

AND

OTHERS

WITH 78 ILLUSTRATIONS BY H.R. MILLAR.

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO.: 34 PATERNOSTER ROW.

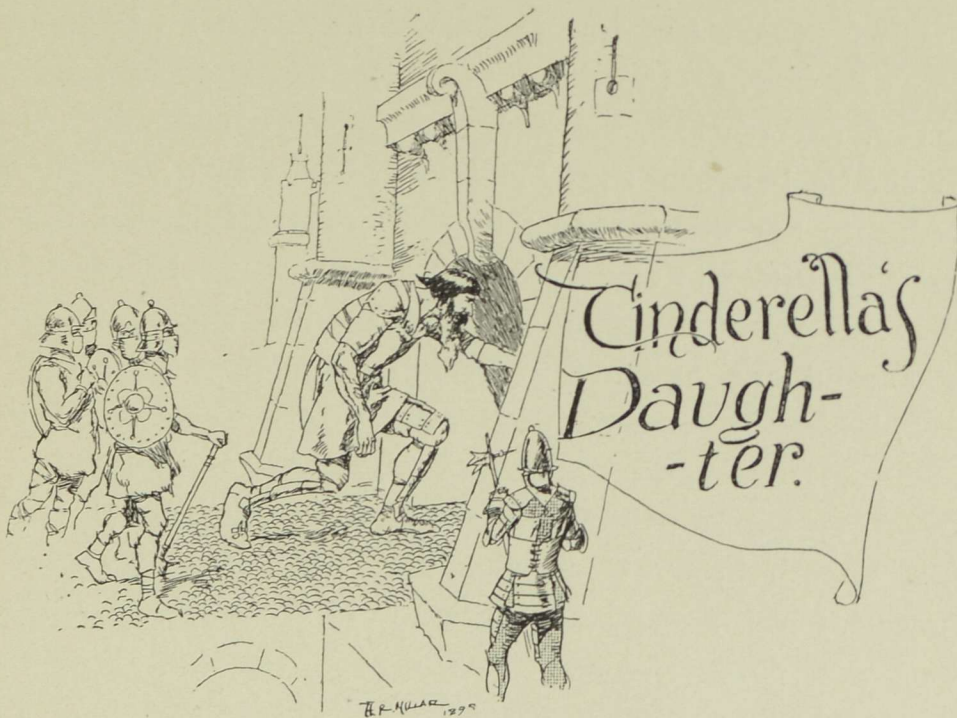
PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON, AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESBURY

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CINDERELLA'S DAUGHTER	I
<i>From the French of Jules le Maître.</i>	
THE SUN HORSE	19
<i>From the German of J. Wenzig.</i>	
THE WANDERING SOLDIER	37
<i>From the German.</i>	
THE SHY PRINCESS	49
<i>By Flora Schmals.</i>	
CHRISTMAS IN THE FOREST	65
<i>From the German.</i>	
THE WOODCUTTER'S DAUGHTER AND THE MYSTERIOUS VOICE	81
<i>From the German.</i>	
THE COTTON-WOOL PRINCESS	99
<i>From the Italian of Luigi Capuani.</i>	
THE ANT MOUNTAIN	117
<i>From the German.</i>	
THE MEMORY-SAVER	133
<i>By F. C. Younger.</i>	

	PAGE
THE STORY OF SUNBEAM	153
<i>By Luigi Capuani.</i>	
THE CAPTIVE PRINCESS	175
<i>By John C. Winder.</i>	
AXIM'S REWARD ; OR, THE MAGIC BLESSING	195
<i>From the Russian.</i>	
PRINCE EGOR AND THE RAVEN	209
<i>From the Russian.</i>	
FISHY FROLICS	225
<i>By Canning Williams.</i>	
NATALIA AND THE IMP	237
<i>From the Russian.</i>	
BELLE YVONNE AND HER HUSBAND THE DWARF	253
<i>From the French of Daniel Riche.</i>	
KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT WISDOM	273
<i>Adapted from the Sanskrit by T. R. Edwards.</i>	

Cinderella's Daughter



From the French of Jules le Maître

“SO Cinderella married the King’s son.” And a few months later the King died, and Cinderella’s husband was King.

Shortly after this the Queen had a little daughter, who was called Mimi. Princess Mimi was as beautiful as the day; her hair was pale gold dotted with sunbeams, her skin the delicate pink of a moss rose.

Now, the law of that country was that she should be married when she was fifteen, and, being a Princess, she could marry only a Prince. But in all the neighbouring countries only two Princes could be found: Polyphemus, who was seven times taller than the Princess; and Hop o’ my Thumb, who was seven times smaller. Both these

Princes adored her, but she cared for neither of them : one was too big, the other too little, to please her.

But, nevertheless, the King, her father, commanded her to choose between them, and gave her only a month to make up her mind. He told the Princes, too, that they were permitted to court her, and it was settled beforehand that the rejected suitor was to bear no malice to the successful one, and not to do him any harm.

Polyphemus arrived with plenty of presents—sheep, oxen, cheeses, great baskets of fruit, and, behind him, a train of giant warriors, clothed in pieced skins. Hop o' my Thumb brought presents, too—birds in a gilt cage, flowers, jewels ; and his followers were clowns in cap and bells and dancers dressed in silk.

Polyphemus at once began to tell his history.

“You must not believe all a fellow called Homer has written about me,” he said. “First of all, he says I have only one eye, and you see for yourself I have two. Next, although it is true that I lived once on an island, and ate mariners who landed there, I only did it because they were little mites. Just, dear Princess, as you might pick the bones of a plover or young rabbit at your father's table, and see nothing cruel in it. And besides that, I haven't done it once since another fellow called Ulysses explained to me that the poor little mites were men like myself, and that some of them had families that grieved dreadfully when they were eaten. Ever since then I have lived altogether on the flesh and milk of my flocks and herds. For really and truly I'm not at all a bad fellow. You can see it for yourself, dear Princess, for though I am so big and strong, I'm as gentle as a lamb with you.”

But he was too vain to tell Mimi that, strong as he was, Ulysses had overcome him and put out one of his eyes ; and that he only recovered his sight through the art of a magician.

Meantime Mimi was thinking :

“ It's all very well, but if he were very hungry he might just eat *me*. Now, Hop o' my Thumb is so little, that it is I who could crunch him, if I were in the mood for it.”

Next it was the little Prince's turn to tell his story :

“ A wicked spell was cast over me and my six brothers, to make us lose our way in a forest. But I scattered white pebbles along the road to show us the way back. Unfortunately, however, we met the Ogre, who carried us off to his castle and put us all into one big bed together, intending to eat us up next day. But, instead of that, he killed his own seven daughters, for I had put them into the bed where he expected to find us. I took away his seven-league boots, too, and very useful they were afterwards, when I went to war with a neighbouring King. For by means of the boots I followed every move of the enemy, and that is how I became a powerful Prince. But I never wear the boots now. They are in the museum of my palace. To begin with, they were very hard on my feet, and then it wasn't convenient to take such very long steps when I went out only for a little walk. But you shall see them some day, dear Princess.”

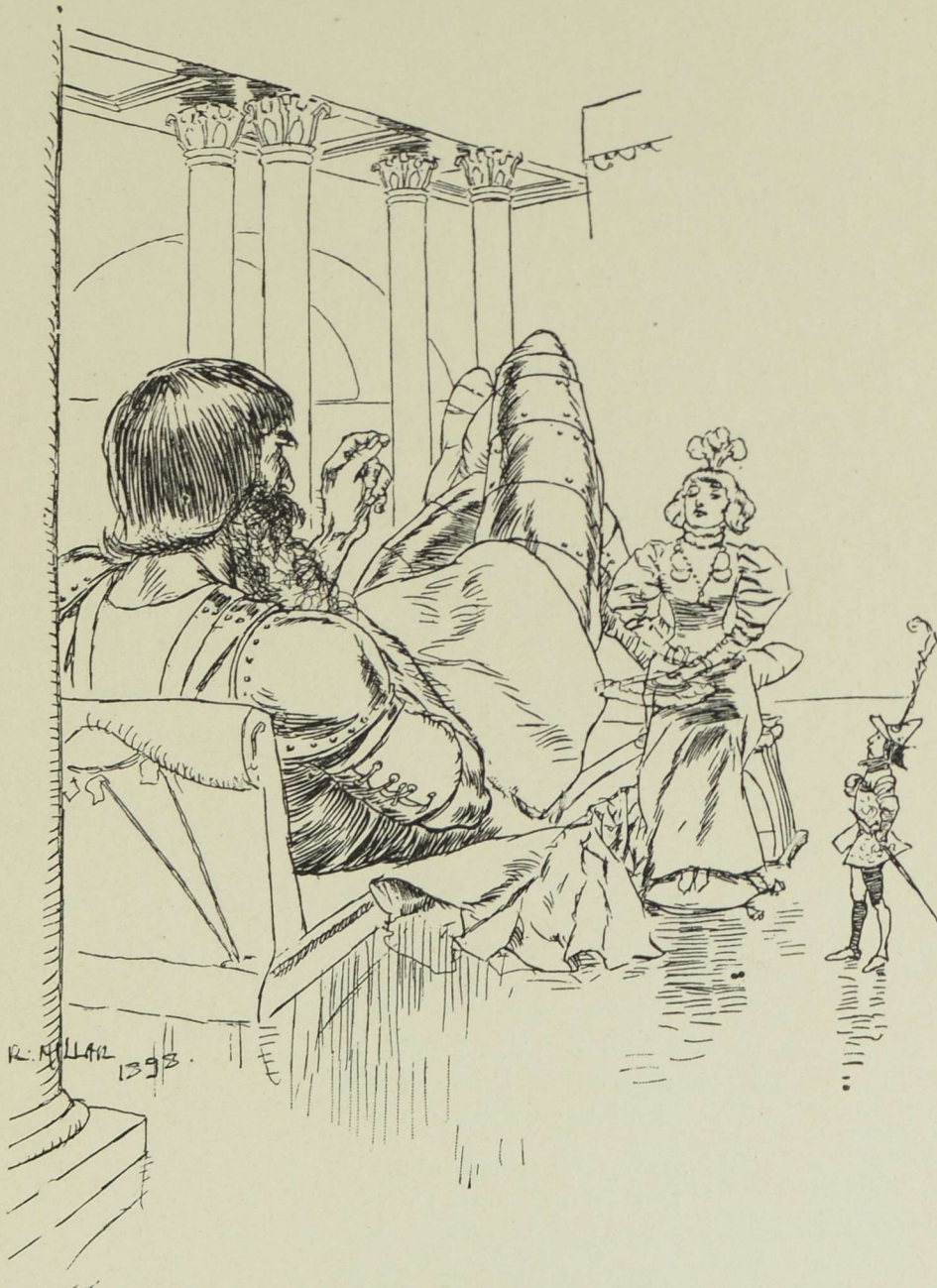
But he was too vain to tell her that his father was nothing but a poor wood-cutter, and, like Polyphemus, he mixed up the true with the false, a thing that love, selfishness, and imagination make many people do. But the Princess admired him for his great cleverness.

One day Polyphemus was stretched on a couch in the boudoir of the Princess, and he was so big the room seemed full of him, and when he spoke his huge voice shook the light furniture and made the windows rattle as if it were thundering.

“I am a simple fellow,” he began, “but my heart is in the right place, and I am very strong. I can pluck up rocks and throw them into the sea, or fell an ox with a tap of my fist. Even lions are afraid of me. Come, dear Princess, with me to my country. I will show you beautiful things there: mountains that are blue when the sun rises, and rose pink when he sets; lakes that shine like polished mirrors; forests that are as old as the world itself. And, no matter where you want to go, I will take you, even to the highest mountains to gather strange flowers that no woman has ever worn before. I will be your slave, too, and so shall all my people be. Don't you think it would be rather fine, dear Princess, to be a sort of goddess served by a giant host? To be the Queen, and you so tiny and delicate, you know, of forests and mountains, of torrents and lakes, of eagles and lions?”

All this stirred the Princess a good deal; and though she was rather tremulous, it was only as a timid little bird quivers when it finds itself in the warm, kind hand it knows and looks to for protection. But Hop o' my Thumb, hidden all this time in a fold of her dress, began now to speak in his tiny voice like a clear crystal bell:

“Dear Princess, choose me. I take so little room. I am so tiny that you can do just what you please with me, too. And then I have wits to love you according



“BAH!” SAID POLYPHEMUS” (p. 9).

to your mood. I can suit my words and caresses to the inmost secret of your heart, whether you are merry or sad; and to all seasons and all kinds of weather. I shall have endless ways of entertaining you, too, and will surround you with every invention of mankind to make life pleasant. You shall see only beautiful things: the loveliest flowers, jewels, stuffs, statues; smell only the most delicious perfumes. I will tell you charming stories; have plays acted for you by the best performers. I can sing, too, and play the mandoline, and compose verses. It is a finer thing to describe beautiful things one has seen and felt, in harmonious language, than to stride over torrents. To master words is more difficult than to master wild beasts. Fine muscles are commoner than fine wits."

And the Princess, dreamy, silent, listened to all he said as to a melody.

One day she said to both her lovers:

"Please make me some verses."

Prince Hop o' my Thumb reflected just a moment and then recited some lines, little ones, like himself:

"A Prince I am of Royal blood,
As all the world may see;
And sweetest Princess Mimi
Is all the world to me.

"I am no Hercules, not I!
Nor do not wish to be.
My heart is large and loving,
And that's enough for me.

"A field of gathered roses
In tiniest vial lies;
The least of little dewdrops
Reflecteth azure skies.

“My body small indeed is,
But that you will not mind;
You know how great my love is,
And surely will be kind.”

“Charming! exquisite!” said the Princess, and she felt proud to be loved by a little man who could so easily string rhymes together.

“Bah!” said Polyphemus, “such little verses as that cannot be hard to make.”

“Try,” said Hop o’ my Thumb.

And try he did, all day long. But nothing came, not even when he hammered his forehead with his fist at last, in a rage at not being able to express what he felt so intensely; somehow, it didn’t seem fair. But there he stuck from morn till eve, his mouth open, his eyes wandering. It was almost nightfall, when at last he discovered that *love* and *dove* rhymed, and, rushing to Mimi, he cried:

“I’ve got it, got it!”

“That’s right,” said the Princess, “let us hear it then.”

“Here it is,” said the giant:

“Oh, my dove,
I assure you I you love.”

This, of course, made the Princess laugh heartily.

“What!” said poor Polyphemus, abashed, “aren’t they good verses?”

Hop o’ my Thumb enjoyed this very much, as it showed his superiority.

“It is not so hard, all the same,” he said.

“You might just have said this, you know :

“My Princess, you are fair ;
For love of you I'm all despair.

Or,

“I'm a giant good and true,
Who breaks his heart for love of you.”

Or,

“A little, little maiden,
Who wields a conquering dart ;
She scarce can reach my instep,
How hath she pierced my heart ?

Or else, if you like it better :

“Among the trees,
The oak, the grandest giant, grows,
And loves, among
The blossoms, that fairest flower, the Rose.”

“Lovely, charming, delightful!” said Mimi. But at that moment she saw in one of Polyphemus's eyes a tear the size of a hen's egg, and he looked so wretched she felt sorry for him. Besides, there was something in Hop o' my Thumb's self-satisfaction that didn't quite please her. Polyphemus, in comparison, looked so subdued and simple that she was touched.

“After all,” she thought, “with one fillip of his finger he could send the other flying, or he could pop him into his pocket. Indeed, though, of course, I'm bigger than Hop o' my Thumb, he could easily enough tuck me under his arm and do anything he liked with me. He must be very good-hearted to bear all this so patiently.”

Then, speaking to Polyphemus, she said :

“Don't be too much grieved, my friend. Your verses

are not first-rate, but they have heart in them, and that is the essential thing."

"But," objected Hop o' my Thumb, "they are not proper verses at all. You could not possibly scan them. There are only three syllables in the first line and seven in the other."



"A TEAR THE SIZE OF A HEN'S EGG" (p. 10).

"Hold your tongue!" said the Princess, sharply. "Thank goodness every one is not a born critic like you."

The palace where Mimi lived was in a large park, across which ran a beautiful blue river, in the midst of which was an island, so covered with flowers that it was like a nosegay floating between the blue sky and the blue river. Mimi loved this island, and spent all the time she could there, either among the flowers, or resting in the porcelain pavilion, which in shape and

colour was built to resemble an immense tulip, with windows of precious stones set in silver.

One day she was there as usual, half asleep in her pavilion, dreaming and thinking, or singing touching little songs to herself, her eyes half shut, so that not until aroused by the sound of waves lapping against the wall did she perceive that the river was overflowing. Opening one of the windows, she saw to her horror that already she was cut off from the mainland, the bridge being under water, and in a few more moments the whole island would be flooded. Terrified, she shrieked for help to her father and mother, who, with Hop o' my Thumb, had rushed to the river bank, but stood there in despair, unable to save her. Just then, however, Polyphemus joined them, and, learning that Mimi was on the island, he calmly stepped into the rushing river (which hardly reached his belt), in three strides reached the pavilion, and, having rescued the Princess, brought her safely and gently to her parents.

"Oh," thought Mimi, "how grand to be so strong and big! How sweet to lie under such protection always! With Polyphemus to take care of me, I should never have a fear or anxiety. I really think I had better choose him."

And with that she smiled, and his huge frame shook with pleasure, just because that little mouth had smiled at him. But next day she found Hop o' my Thumb so sad, that, to comfort him, she asked him to come for a walk in the fields with her.

She held him by the hand all the time, and pretended she was so tired, not to make him walk too fast.



"HE CALMLY STEPPED INTO THE RUSHING RIVER" (p. 12).

Presently they came across a flock of sheep, and, as Hop o' my Thumb was unfortunately wearing a cherry-coloured doublet, the ram became irritated, and made for the little Prince with lowered horns.

Hop o' my Thumb had plenty of self-respect, and, in spite of his alarm, stood his ground. But he would probably have been killed had not the Princess, with great presence of mind, caught him up in her arms and then opened her parasol so suddenly in the angry animal's face, that he was frightened, turned sharp round, and ran away.

"It's lucky for him he went off," said Hop o' my Thumb. "Of course, I wasn't at all afraid. You saw for yourself, dear Princess, that I was ready for him."

"Yes, yes," she answered, "I know you are very brave." And to herself she thought: "How sweet to protect some one feebler than oneself! I'm sure one would grow very fond of any one to whom one was really useful, particularly of one so pretty and refined as this little Prince."

The next day, Hop o' my Thumb brought her a little rose, scarcely more than a bud, but more exquisite in tint and scent than any rose that ever was seen before.

She took it from him, saying:

"Thank you, thank you, dear, kind little Prince."

Her gown that day was made of a sort of fine gossamer, shaded with changing lights, like a dragon-fly's wings.

"Ah," said Hop o' my Thumb, "how beautiful your dress is!"

"Yes," said Mimi, "isn't it pretty? And just see how well your rose looks fastened in it."



H. R. MILLER. 1852 -

"PRINCE CHARMING" (p. 16).

"A rose!" thought Polyphemus; "what's *one* rose? I'll just show her what the bouquets *I* give are like."

And with that he went off to the Indies, to a large tree

covered with enormous bright flowers as big as cathedral bells, and, plucking up the tree, he bore it in triumph to the Princess.

“It is very beautiful,” said Mimi, laughing, “but what shall I do with it, dear Prince? I cannot wear that in my dress or hair, can I?”

Poor Polyphemus, abashed at these words, could think of no answer, and only hung his head. But while doing this, he saw that Hop o’ my Thumb was dressed in stuff like the Princess’s gossamer gown, and he cried:

“Oh!”

“Yes,” said Mimi, “I had it made for him, out of one of the snips left. There was not enough to make even a neck-tie for you; so I didn’t offer you any.”

And with that she turned to the King, her father, and said:

“The time for me to decide has come, father, and I choose Prince Hop o’ my Thumb to be my husband. Prince Polyphemus will forgive me, I hope. I am sorry to make him unhappy, and I have a great regard for him.”

Polyphemus was true to the compact, and, gently grasping his successful rival’s tiny hand, he said:

“Only make her happy.”

The marriage day arrived, and the bride seemed neither glad nor sorry. She liked Hop o’ my Thumb, but did not really love him.

Now, just as the wedding procession was leaving the palace for the church, a servant announced Prince Charming. He had been travelling in foreign lands for several years, and had only arrived in time to be present at the ceremony.

He was a very handsome young man, rather taller than Princess Mimi, very distinguished-looking, and as clever as clever can be. Mimi had never seen or even heard of him before, but, directly he was introduced to her, she grew first pale, then red, and, as if she couldn't help herself, said :

" Prince, I was waiting for you. I love you, and I know you love me. But I have pledged my word to this poor little fellow, and I can't break it." And she looked as if she were going to faint.

But Polyphemus bent down to Hop o' my Thumb, and said :

" Little Prince, if I did it, aren't you courageous enough to do it too? "

" But," said Hop o' my Thumb, " I love her very much indeed."

" Well," said the good giant, " and that's just the reason why——"

" Madam," said Hop o' my Thumb, " this good fellow is right. I love you too much to want to make you unhappy. None of us knew that Prince Charming would come. But if you wish it, let him be your husband."

He said all this very gravely and with much dignity, but when the Princess in her joy and relief caught him up in her arms and kissed him on both cheeks, saying :

" Ah, this is kind of you," he burst into tears, and said :

" That's the hardest cut of all."

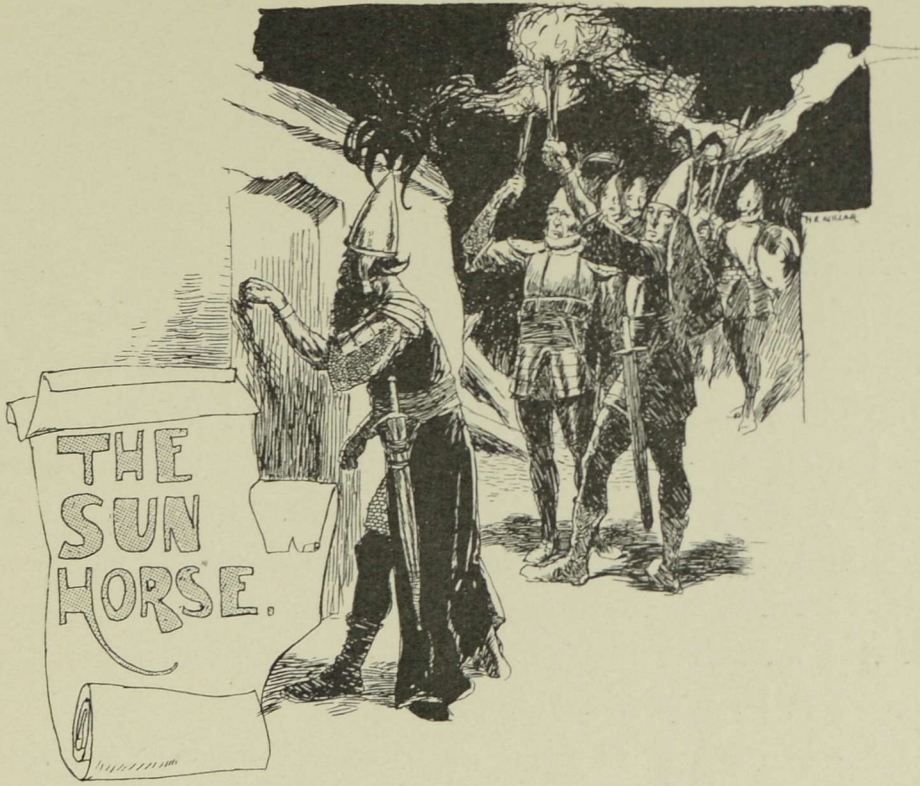
" Come, dear little Prince," said the giant ; " come away with me. No one can understand your grief as I can. You will talk of it to me ; all day long we will talk of

18 The Ruby Fairy Book

her to each other, and watch over her, too, if at a distance."

And with these words he raised his little friend to his shoulder and strode away with him, and both disappeared where earth and sky meet.

The Sun Horse



From the German of F. Wenzig

THERE was once a land as black as night, for it had never seen the sun. The inhabitants would have fled, leaving the land to owls and bats, had not the King possessed a horse with a sun on its forehead. To enable his subjects to dwell in this dark and dreary region, the King caused his horse to be led daily through the country, for wherever this wonderful horse went, the land on all sides was bathed in light; but when it had passed, thick darkness hurried back to resume its sway.

One day the Sun Horse disappeared, and darkness deeper than night covered the land. Discontent and terror spread among the people; want pressed them sore,

for they could work at nothing, earn nothing, and soon dreadful disorder arose. The King grew alarmed, and to avert the threatened danger set forth with his army to seek the Sun Horse.

Arrived at the borders of his kingdom, the King entered vast forests, the growth of thousands of years. Journeying through these forests with his army, the King came at length to a miserable hut. He entered, and saw a middle-aged man seated at a table, reading from a great book that lay open before him. When the King bowed, he rose and courteously returned the salutation. He was tall of stature, his features were thoughtful and his glance piercing; indeed, his whole appearance proclaimed him a seer, and no ordinary man.

“I was reading of you,” said he. “You seek the Sun Horse. Do not trouble further, you cannot regain it. Rely on me, I will find it for you. Return home with your army. You are needed there; only leave me one of your warriors as servants.”

“So be it, oh Unknown,” replied the monarch. “Richly will I reward you if you restore my Sun Horse.”

“I require no reward,” rejoined the Seer. “Now leave me to make preparations for my journey.”

So the King departed with his army, leaving only one warrior behind. The Seer returned to his book, and read far into the night.

Next morning he departed with his servant. The way was long; they travelled through six countries, and still had further to go. Passing through the seventh country, they came to a stately palace; here they halted. Three valiant brothers ruled this land, and had as wives,

three sisters, whose mother was a wicked witch, named Striga. Then the Seer addressed his servant :



“ ‘ STRANGLE IT THIS MOMENT ! ’ ” (p. 25).

“ Remain here, whilst I enter the palace and ascertain if the Kings are at home ; they stole the horse. The youngest rides it.”

Saying this, he changed himself into a green bird, flew to the window of the eldest Queen, and fluttered and knocked with his beak against the glass until she let him in. His great beauty and sweet, caressing ways delighted her, and she rejoiced like a child.

“What a pity my husband is absent! This beautiful bird would have pleased him. Still, he returns to-night; he has only ridden forth to review a third part of the land.”

Thus spake the Queen, caressing the gentle bird.

Suddenly old Striga entered the room, and, perceiving the bird, cried:

“Strangle the accursed bird; he will cover you with blood!”

“Cover me with blood? Nonsense! See how innocent, how loving he is,” replied the Queen.

But Striga cried:

“Deceptive innocence! Give him here instantly, that I may strangle him!”

She sprang forward, but the bird prudently changed into a man, and was out of the room and out of sight in a moment.

Taking again the form of a green bird, he flew to the window of the second Queen, and knocked until she opened it. Directly she let him in, he perched on her snow-white hand, and from thence flew to her shoulder, where he rested, looking confidently into her eyes.

“Alas!” she cried, “alas! that my husband is from home. He would have delighted in you, beautiful bird. However, he will return to-morrow evening; he has but gone to review two-thirds of the kingdom.”

At this moment Striga entered, crying :

“Strangle that accursed thing—strangle it this moment ; it will cover you with blood !”

“That is impossible, mother,” replied the Queen, “He is so gentle.”

“The gentleness is feigned !” screamed Striga, trying to seize the bird. But the Seer, as before, changed himself into a man, and disappeared.

After a time, the Seer flew, as a green bird, to the window of the youngest Queen. On her opening it, he perched on her white hand, and caressed her so prettily that she felt quite a childish delight in playing with him.

“It is a thousand pities that my lord is absent !” cried the young Queen in her joy. “This sweet little bird would have pleased him as much as it does me. Still, he is sure to return the evening after next, when he has reviewed the whole land.”

But even as she spoke old Striga rushed excitedly into the room.

“Strangle that accursed bird !” she cried, whilst still in the doorway. “Strangle it, I say ; it will cover you with blood !”

“Cover me with blood, mother ? Impossible ! Look. See how innocent, how beautiful it is !” replied the Queen.

But Striga stretched forth her withered hands, exclaiming :

“Delusive innocence ! Give it me this moment, that I may strangle it !”

But ere she could seize him the Seer changed into a man, and vanished.

Having gained the required information, the Seer returned to his servant, whom he ordered to purchase provisions for three days and then follow him to the forest. His servant having joined him, the two proceeded to the bridge over which the three Kings must pass. Here they waited.

Towards evening the sound of horse's feet was heard on the bridge. The eldest King was returning. In crossing, his horse stumbled over a beam.

"To the gallows with the good-for-nothing who made this bridge!" exclaimed the enraged King.

Then the Seer sprang forth, and threw himself on the King, crying:

"How dare you curse an innocent man!"

They drew their swords, but the King was no match for the Seer, and after a short struggle he fell lifeless to the ground. The Seer bound the King on his horse, and sent the animal home with its dead master.

Then, concealing himself beneath the bridge, he waited the coming of the second King. He came the next evening, and, seeing the blood-stains on the bridge, exclaimed:

"Some one has been slain here! What scoundrel has dared usurp my kingly office?"

"How dare you thus revile me?" cried the Seer, throwing himself on the King, his drawn sword in his hand. "You are a child of death."

The King defended himself bravely, but in vain; after a short struggle he fell by the sword of his mighty antagonist. The Seer bound the corpse on the horse and sent the animal home; then, again concealing himself, he waited the arrival of the third brother.

The third evening, at sunset, the youngest King approached the bridge, riding the Sun Horse. He rode



“THE SEER RUSHED AT HIM WITH DRAWN SWORD” (p. 28).

fast, for he was late. Noticing the red blood on the ground, he halted, exclaiming :

“Some wretch has presumed to snatch a victim from my kingly arm !”

28 The Ruby Fairy Book

Scarcely had he spoken, when the Seer rushed at him with drawn sword.

“Good!” said the King, and, drawing his sword, he defended himself manfully.

They fought long and furiously, until at length their swords broke. Then the Seer spoke:

“With swords we can strive no longer. Now listen to me. We will become wheels, and roll down yonder mountain. The wheel that breaks is vanquished.”

“Agreed. I will be a waggon-wheel. Be you any other wheel you like,” said the King.

“Not so,” replied the cunning Seer. “You can be any wheel you like, but I will be the waggon-wheel.”

The King consenting, they ascended the mountain. There they changed into wheels. But as they rolled down the steep incline the waggon-wheel crashed against the other wheel, and broke it. The waggon-wheel then became the Seer, and cried, joyfully:

“You are lost! The victory is mine!”

“Not so fast, my friend!” said the King, and he stood in his own shape before the Seer. “You have only broken my finger. Now I have a suggestion. We will be flames, and the flame that consumes the other is the victor. I will be a red flame, you can be a white one.”

“No, no,” replied the Seer; “you can be a white flame, I will be a red flame.”

The King again consenting, they placed themselves on the road to the bridge and began to burn each other pitilessly, but without result. Then a white-haired old beggar passed by. Seeing him, the white flame cried:

“Old man, bring water, and pour it on the red flame. I will give you a penny for your trouble.”

But the red flame said:

“I will give you a ducat if you pour water on the white flame.”

The beggar naturally preferred the ducat to the penny; he brought water and poured it on the white flame. Thus the King died. The red flame now became the Seer; he mounted the Sun Horse and, after thanking the beggar for his help, rode away, followed by his servant.

Deep was the sorrow in the palace at the death of the royal brothers. The walls were hung with black, and loud wailing resounded through the building. Striga moved restlessly from room to room. Suddenly she stopped, stamped her foot on the ground, shook her fist, and rolled her glittering eye; then, mounting a broomstick, she seized her three daughters under her arm, and, hey presto! they were in the air.

The Seer and his servant travelled fast, for they feared Striga's revenge. They passed through gloomy forests, crossed barren heaths, and had already accomplished a good part of their journey. But, alas! their provisions were exhausted. Hunger tormented them, and they could find nothing with which to still its pangs.

At length they came to a tree laden with apples of rosy hue, whose weight bore the wide-spreading branches to the ground.

“Heaven be praised!” exclaimed the servant, hastening to the tree.

“Stay!” cried the Seer. “Pluck not the fruit!” Then, drawing his sword, he smote the tree, and forth gushed

a stream of red blood. "It would have been death to have eaten those apples," said he; "that tree was the eldest Queen. Her mother placed her there to hurry us out of the world!"

Though vexed at the disappointment, the servant was glad his life had been saved, and he followed the Seer in the hope of soon finding other refreshment.

It was not long ere a stream of clear fresh water crossed their path.

"Well," said the servant, "if there is nothing solid to be had, we can at least drink, and cheat our hunger."

"Drink not!" exclaimed the Seer, dismounting, and smiting the stream with his sword. Immediately the sparkling water was darkened by blood-red waves. "That was the second Queen," said the Seer, "placed there by her mother for our destruction."

The servant thanked him for the timely warning, and, in spite of thirst and hunger, followed him without a murmur whither he would.

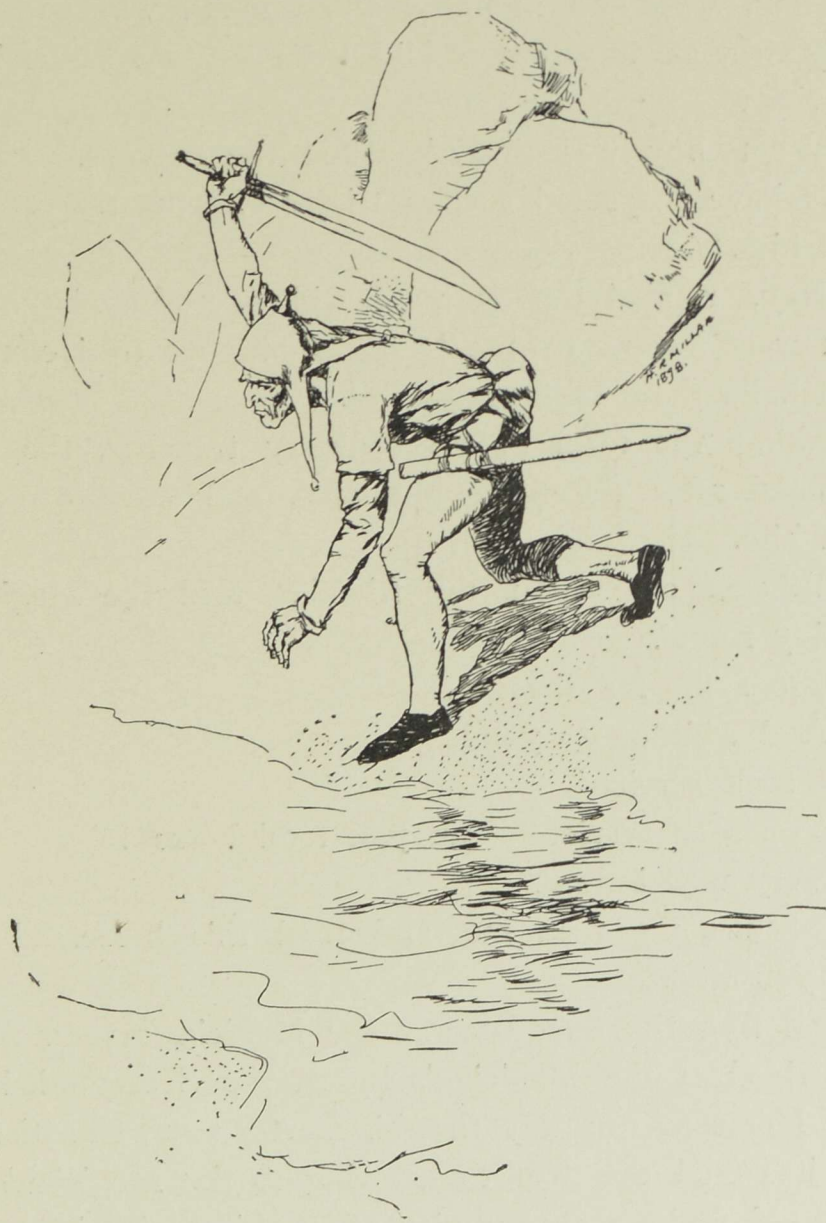
Presently they came to a bush covered with beautiful red roses that filled the air with their fragrance.

"What beautiful roses!" exclaimed the servant. "I will pluck some, and refresh myself with their sweet perfume."

"Gather not the roses!" said the Seer, thrusting his sword deep into the stem of the tree. Immediately a stream of blood issued from the wound. "That was the youngest Queen," continued the Seer; "her mother planted her there, hoping to destroy us through the beauty of the roses."

After journeying for some time, the Seer said:

“Our worst danger is over, for we have passed Striga’s dominions. Still, great caution is necessary, for she



“SMITING THE STREAM” (p. 30).

will surely seek the aid of other powers.” And even as he spoke, a boy came along carrying a thorny stick.

Creeping beneath the Sun Horse, he pricked it with his stick. The next moment the Seer lay on the ground, and the boy, who had mounted the animal, was galloping away swift as an arrow. "Did I not say so?" exclaimed the Seer.

"What boy was that?" asked the servant. "Who could have suspected such a trick? Let us try to overtake him."

"Nay," replied the Seer, "I will overtake him alone. You must return to the borders of your own country. I shall be there to meet you."

Taking the form of an ordinary traveller, the Seer hastened after the little Magician, and soon came up with him.

"Whence came you, my friend?" said the Magician, looking round.

"From the far distance."

"And whither go you?"

"I seek service."

"You seek service? Can you tend horses?"

"Very well indeed."

"Then come with me and tend this horse. I will pay you well."

And thus the Seer became the Magician's servant.

Arrived at the Magician's home, the Seer tended the Sun Horse so carefully that his master was well satisfied; but it vexed the Seer that, owing to the Magician's art he could find no opportunity of escaping with it.

One day the Magician called his servant.

"Listen!" said he. "In the midst of yonder sea is an enormous poplar; on the top of this poplar is a

castle ; in this castle dwells a princess. This Princess I desire for my wife. Many efforts have been made to gain possession of her, but in vain. Bring her to me, and I will reward you handsomely ; fail, and it will be the worse for you."

"The lord commands, the servant must perform, or at least try," replied the Seer.

Procuring a boat, he filled it with ribbons and stuffs of divers colours, and sailed, disguised as a merchant, to the castle on the summit of the poplar.

Arrived at the tree, he hung out the most beautiful of his wares, so that they could be seen from the castle. They soon attracted the attention of the Princess.

"Go down to yonder boat," said she, addressing her handmaiden, "and see if you cannot purchase some of those beautiful ribbons and stuffs."

The maid obeyed.

"I sell nothing," said the merchant, "unless the Princess comes herself to choose."

The maiden repeated the merchant's words. The Princess came, turned over the beautiful merchandise, and chose and bargained, never noticing that the boat had been pushed off, and was sailing towards the shore. It was only when, her business ended, she turned to leave the boat, that she discovered what had happened.

"I know where we are going," said she. "You are taking me to the wicked Magician. Now may Heaven have mercy on me!"

When the Seer found the Princess did not wish to marry the Magician, he conversed with her softly, and said that if she would ascertain wherein the Magician's

strength lay, and confide the secret to him, he would help her to obtain her liberty.

When the Seer returned with the Princess the Magician was delighted, and when she appeared to return his love, he was beside himself with joy. He would have given her everything, done anything to please her. What wonder, then, that he confided to her the secret of his great strength!

"In yonder forest," said he, "stands a great tree. Beneath this tree a stag feeds, in this stag is a duck, in the duck a golden egg, and in this egg is my strength, for there, my love, is my heart."

The Princess at once repeated this secret to the Seer.

Then the Seer took bow and arrow, hastened to the forest, and found the tree with the stag feeding beneath. He shot an arrow, and the stag fell to the earth. Springing forward, he took the duck out of the stag, and the egg out of the duck. He broke the egg, and the Magician's strength was gone for ever; it had passed to the Seer, leaving the once mighty Magician weak and helpless as a child. Then, having freed the Princess, the Seer mounted the Sun Horse and hastened with it to the King to whom it belonged.

He had to travel over a great part of the world ere he reached the borders of the dark kingdom and met the servant he had sent on before him. As he crossed the borders the rays from the Sun Horse shone forth, illuminating the land, that had so long been veiled in impenetrable gloom, and rejoicing the hearts of the distressed inhabitants. Everything lived again: the fields laughed in their spring dress, and the people hastened

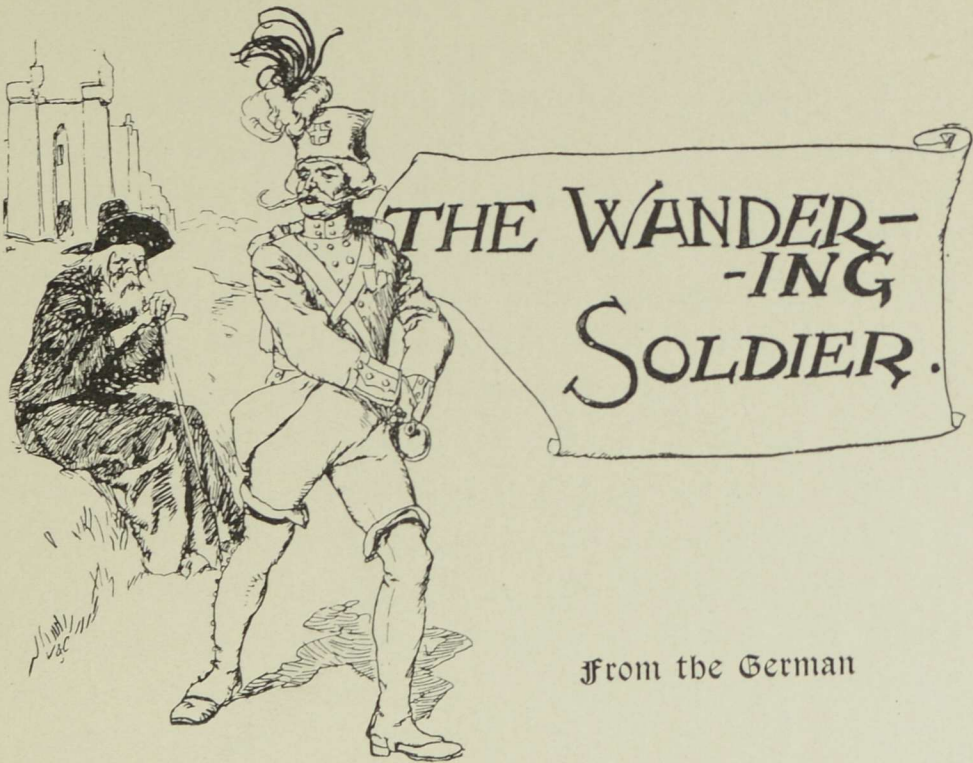


"THE PRINCESS CHOSE AND BARGAINED" (p. 33).

from all parts to thank their kind benefactor. The King knew not how to reward him, but offered him the half of his kingdom. But the Seer refused.

“I desire no reward,” said he, “least of all do I desire the half of your kingdom. Be you King and reign, as is meet. I will return to my solitary hut.”

The Wandering Soldier



From the German

THERE was once a Soldier who had served his King faithfully for many years, and gained many a badge of honour, which adorned his breast. When peace was declared, he obtained leave of absence and set forth on his travels, his shako on his head, a piece of bread in his knapsack, and a draught of water in his flask. His purse was empty, but his heart was full of faith and hope.

Passing one day through a wood, he heard a sound that bespoke a spring near, and hastened forward, intending to rest there and refresh himself in its cool waters. On his way an old man met him, who begged:

“Have pity on me, kind Soldier, and give me a small piece of bread. I am so exhausted with hunger and fatigue, I can no longer hold myself upright.”

The Soldier at once opened his knapsack and gave the old man his last piece of bread, although he himself was very hungry. Arrived at the spring, he murmured :

“A draught of clear water must this time satisfy both thirst and hunger!” and, after refreshing himself and refilling his flask, he continued his journey. Soon the sun shone down fiercely, and about mid-day, as he was crossing an open heath, he became very weary ; still he toiled bravely on, for at a short distance ahead were a few trees, beneath whose shade he determined to rest and refresh himself with a draught of water from his flask. But ere he reached the longed-for shade an old man met him, who said :

“Have pity on me and give me something to drink ; I perish with thirst!”

The Soldier handed his flask to the old man, who emptied it to the last drop, then, thanking his benefactor, proceeded on his journey.

Hunger and thirst now sorely tormented the poor Soldier, and, far and near, nor village nor inn could be seen, nor any living being in the fields through which he passed.

Towards evening, being almost exhausted with hunger and thirst, he plucked a few ears of wheat, rubbed them between his hands, ate the grain, and then lay down to rest before a cross that stood by the wayside.

Suddenly there stood before him the two old men he had met earlier in the day.

“You have fed the hungry,” said the first, “ask, therefore, a favour from the inexhaustible bounty of Heaven.”

“Well,” replied the Soldier, “if it be allowable, the thing I should like best from the favour of Heaven would be a pipe that always remained full of tobacco, if I smoked it ever so often and even lent it to others to smoke.”

The old man handed him a short pipe and disappeared.

“You gave your last drop of water to the thirsty,” said the second; “tell me, therefore, what you desire.”

The Soldier considered.

“Well,” said he, at length, “if Heaven wishes to give me something more, a sack, in which I could catch and keep anything I pleased, would suit me well enough.”

“Here is what you require,” said the old man, handing him a sack. “When you wish to use it, say these words:

“Wonder-sack, open thee!
Then in shall hie
All whom I name to thee,
Safe there to lie!”

As he finished speaking, he likewise disappeared.

The Soldier crossed himself devoutly and repeated the pater-noster. Then he lit his pipe, hung the sack over his left arm, and went on his way, singing gaily. Hunger, thirst, and fatigue were all forgotten.

Ere nightfall he reached the capital and entered by the gate leading straight to the Jewish quarter, in whose streets shop touched shop. As soon as the sellers saw the stranger, they hastened from their stalls, and, crowding round him, began with shrill cries to extol their wares. They pulled at his clothes, urged him to enter their shops, and wrangled among themselves, until the Soldier,

almost distracted by their clamour, angrily untied the strings of his sack, crying :

“Wonder-sack, open thee !
Then in shall hie
All whom I name to thee,
Safe there to lie.
Jews, enter !”

Thereupon the sack opened itself out wide, and immediately all those who pressed round the Soldier—dealers, women, and children—fell head over heels into the sack ; then the cords fastened again of themselves. The Soldier shook the sack, threw it over his back, and wandered on, singing. The Jews began to scream and weep, lamented their sad fate, and begged for liberty.

“As soon as I let you out, you will begin anew to torment every one who passes through,” said the Soldier.

“No, no ; we will never do so any more,” screamed they.

The Soldier then untied his sack, shook them all out, and went on—intending to see everything in the great capital.

That evening the King heard what had occurred. He ordered the Soldier to be summoned, and said :

“You are a brave Soldier, for you have by yourself overcome the whole crowd of Jews. Could you not measure your strength against the demons who have taken possession of my father’s kingly castle, and obliged me to abandon it and move into a new palace ? If you succeed in scaring them away, I will give you gold in abundance and make you a Duke.”



"ENORMOUS COLUMNS OF SMOKE POURED FORTH FROM HIS NOSTRILS" (p. 44).

"I know not if I shall succeed, O King, but I will willingly try," replied the Soldier; and, taking a lantern, he went straight to the castle, that was quite empty, resolved to pass the night there. Seating himself on an iron settle in the large hall, he placed his light on the table and awaited what should take place.

As midnight struck a frightful noise resounded through the old castle, the doors flew open of themselves, and on the threshold appeared a two-horned demon, who beat time on the floor with his long tail.

"How could you be so bold as to venture hither?" he asked, grimly. "Answer, or I will wring your neck!"

"I am a Soldier on my travels," replied our hero, smoking on calmly. "If you wish to wring my neck, at least wait until my pipe is smoked out."

"I will promise you that," said the demon, and, seating himself, he waited. Soon he cried, wrathfully:

"This is too much! Here, give me the pipe, I will smoke it myself. By the name of my master, I will!"

The Soldier obediently took the pipe from his mouth and handed it to the demon, who at once began to smoke, drawing in the smoke with all his strength and then letting it stream out through his great, hawked nose. Enormous columns of smoke poured forth from his nostrils and spread in dark clouds through the hall, but the pipe remained full of tobacco.

Then through all the passages of the castle wild noises resounded, the doors flew open, and in streamed thousands of demons, who surrounded the Soldier, screaming:

"Whence came you hither? What want you here?"

When they learned that their colleague had promised



"THE SOLDIER THEN OPENED THE SACK" (p. 47).

to let the Soldier live until his pipe was smoked out, and saw that this did not come to pass, each in turn took the pipe and puffed and smoked, until almost out

of breath. Soon the smoke streamed forth from every door and window. The last demon thrust the pipe-stem into his mouth up to the centre ; but all of no use, the tobacco burned slowly on, but never decreased.

Meanwhile, tumult arose in the capital as the clouds of smoke were seen issuing from the castle ; the fire-bells were rung, and the fire-hose brought out to extinguish the supposed fire, so that it might not destroy the town. The demons grew very uneasy when they saw the pipe would never be smoked out, and said to the Soldier :

“Give back the word our chief pledged you, we will let you depart alive.”

“I shall remain alive without your gracious permission,” replied the Soldier ; “but if you wish to have back the word, you must promise to quit this castle now and for ever !”

“That we cannot do !” cried the demons. “Concealed in the subterranean vaults is a quantity of unrighteously acquired treasure, stored up by the late King, who is therefore condemned to leave his grave every night and visit these cellars, where we torment him. This we must continue to do until some one discovers the treasure and distributes it amongst the poor !”

When the demons had finished speaking, the Soldier opened his sack, and said :

“Wonder-sack, open thee !
Then in shall hie
All whom I name to thee,
Safe there to lie.
Demons, enter !”

The next moment the Soldier was alone in the hall,

and the demons, imprisoned in the sack, were lamenting their cruel fate and entreating to be set at liberty. The Soldier struck the sack against the wall, then he said :

“ I shall not let you out until you promise to bring all that treasure into this hall, and then leave the castle for ever.”

“ Let us out, we promise !”

With a pin the Soldier made a hole in the sack, and through this tiny opening forth shot a little demon like a stone from a sling. Quickly the Soldier closed the aperture, and said to the demon, who bowed respectfully before him :

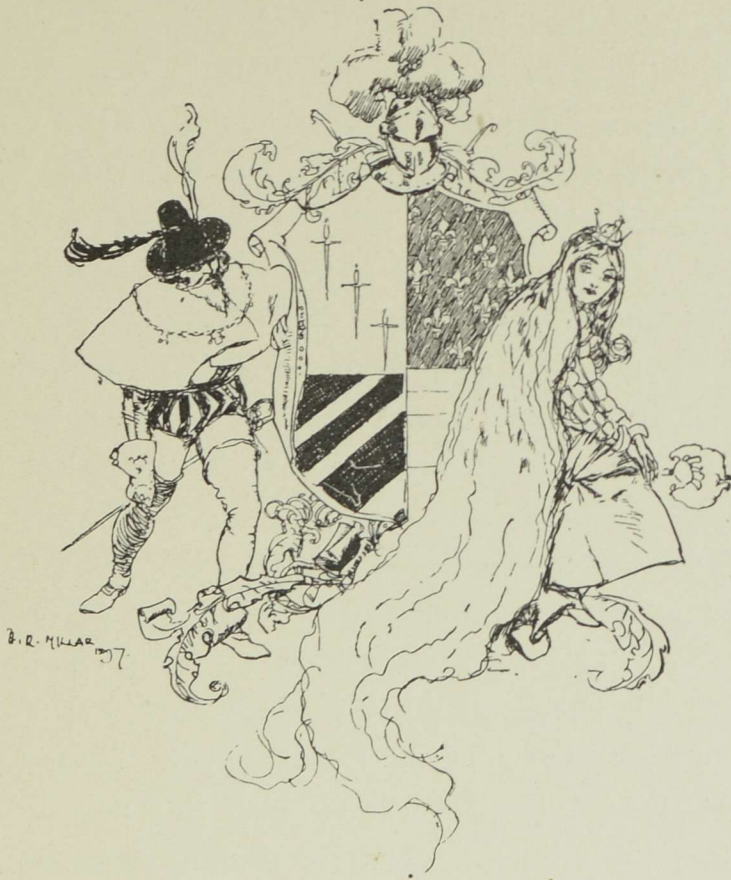
“ Now go and do what I require ; directly that is done I will release the others !”

The little demon descended through a crack in the floor to the subterranean vaults, and, ere the lapse of an hour, half the hall was filled with gold and silver. The Soldier then opened the sack, and a whole crowd of bats flew out moaning, and quickly disappeared through the open windows.

Our hero now lay down to sleep until morning, when he went to the King and told him all that had passed. The gold promised him as reward he begged might be given to the poor ; he also declined the title of Duke, and set forth again to wander through the world.

The Shy Princess

THE SHY PRINCESS,



By Flora Schmals

ONCE upon a time, a King and Queen had a daughter, who was the shyest Princess that ever lived. She could not look at any one without blushing, and if any one spoke to her she began to cry.

Her father and mother tried every remedy to cure her, but instead of improving, she seemed to grow gradually worse. The people called her shyness the Princess's unfortunate infirmity, and said she must have been bewitched at her birth.

The unhappy maiden took no pleasure in her life ; indeed, every day it became a greater punishment to

her. If such a thing had been permitted, she would have shut herself up in a dark room, so that no one could behold her blushes. Truly the most ardent wish that she had on earth was to hide herself away from her fellow-creatures.

Yet it must not be imagined, from what has been said, that the Princess Bashful was not pleasant to look upon. So far was this from being the case, that even the critical Court ladies were sometimes heard to admit that their Princess was not without beauty of a certain kind.

Bashful's face was like a flower of apple-blossom, that has newly opened, and which still retains its dewy paleness, with the faintest tinge of pink. Her eyes, when they were not lowered, shone like violet-blue stars from out a cloud of glistening golden hair. And with this wonderful hair, which rippled down until it reached the ground, she had been known, on more than one occasion, to veil her blushes.

It was a face that all men must have admired had they been lucky enough to obtain a glimpse of it. But the Princess could never be persuaded to show herself at any of the high Court functions, and if a courtier happened to be anywhere about, she would invariably run away at his approach. This was one reason why the ladies thought so highly of her good sense ; for, if the Princess had chosen, she might have thrown them all completely into the shade.

When her twenty-first birthday drew near, the King and the Queen and the whole Court decided that it was quite time for the Princess to marry. Therefore, a Cabinet

Council was held, in order to discuss the important question, from which every one came away with a severe headache. But as a result, the King issued a proclamation on the following day, that the Prince who succeeded in curing his daughter of her shyness should, without fail, become her husband.

So soon as Bashful heard of what had taken place, she withdrew into still stricter retirement, and spent her days and nights in continual weeping.

“By crying, I shall grow as ugly as possible,” she said to herself; “and then no one will care to marry me.”

Meanwhile, the King's edict travelled far and wide, and a rumour soon spread that no fewer than five Princes had at once set out for the palace. Each of these Princes ruled over a large kingdom, and was considered altogether suitable to mate with the Princess. So there were great preparations made on every side, in order to receive the illustrious visitors with due honour. But the courtiers, each of whom secretly adored the miserable Princess, were already consumed with jealousy; while the ladies, who hoped that the rejected Princes might console themselves by choosing one of them instead, whispered to each other that they were dying of curiosity.

On the day following the arrival of the Princes, the Princess Bashful would come of age, when each Prince would be required, successively, to come forward and put his method to the test. Whichever of them could then prevail on the Princess to speak to him should be granted another trial.

Every sort of argument was used to induce the Princess to be present at her birthday reception. But it was not

until the actual morning had dawned that she agreed to survey the Princes, upon the condition that she herself might remain in concealment.

Alas! How swollen were poor Bashful's eyes! And as for her throat, it had become parched and burning, owing to the salt brine from her tears.

The only creature the lonely maiden ever confided in was a handsome Brazilian parrot, whose cage hung in her room. This bird was over a hundred years old, but still enjoyed perfect health; for he had never been allowed to touch a morsel of parsley, and his food was always cold, not hot.

"Oh, dear me! I feel worse than ever I did before," sighed the Princess, as she stood in her turret chamber, with the parrot perched upon her finger.

"Cheer up!" shrieked the parrot. "Don't fret!"

But though he did his best to console his beloved mistress, she knew perfectly well that however bitterly she might repent of her promise, yet a born Princess is bound to keep her word.

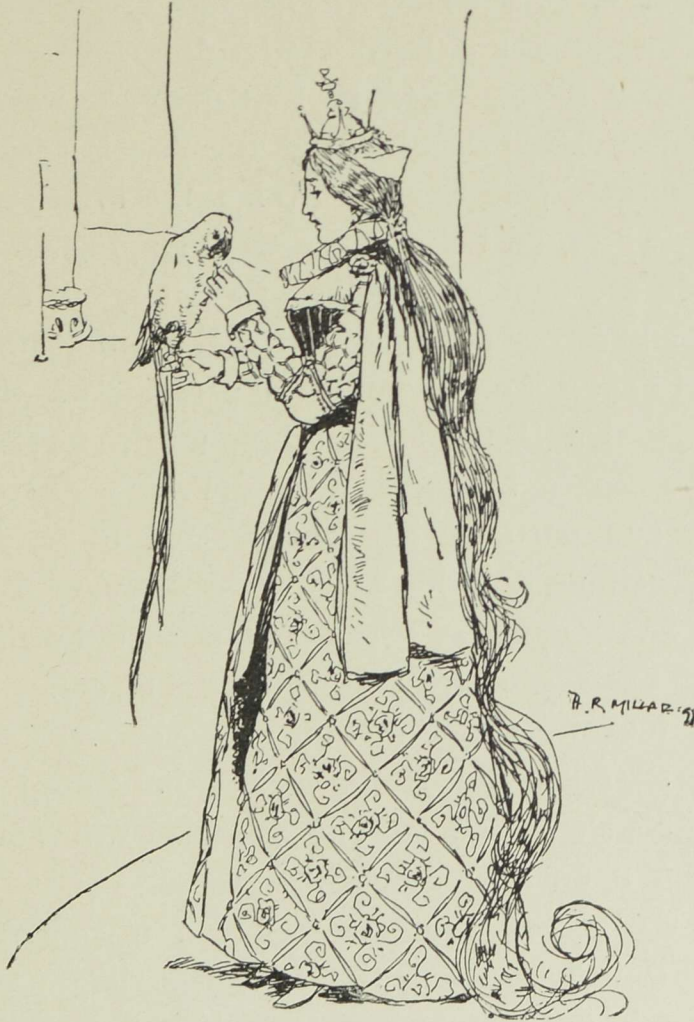
At mid-day the King and Queen were seated on their thrones in the Hall of Audience, and the Court had mustered in full force. The Princess was also on the dais, though hidden from view by a large screen of the finest Japanese workmanship.

Then a trumpet was blown, loud and long, and the first Prince advanced with a bold and confident air.

"The following is my suggestion," he stated, arrogantly. "Let the Princess be informed that the handsomest man in the world has come to woo her. This will immediately inspire her with the wish to look upon me. She will then

admire me to such an extent, that she will certainly speak to me. So shall I win my suit."

"The Princess Bashful has already seen you," replied the King, somewhat haughtily; "if she feels tempted to



"CHEER UP!" SHRIEKED THE PARROT. "DON'T FRET!" (p. 54).

speak to the handsomest man in the world, she will doubtless come forth."

A dead silence reigned throughout the hall, so that you might have heard a pin drop. But the Princess gave no sign.

"It is enough," was the King's verdict. "If that is your plan, sire, it has failed. Let the next competitor be summoned."

The Prince who now appeared was of a cheerful and merry cast of countenance. The idea of possible failure had evidently never entered his head.

"We must have music," he said, gaily, "so that I may dance before the Princess. My dancing is considered a most admirable performance. When the Princess watches me, she will soon be seized with a longing to join me. While we are dancing together, I shall speak to her, and you can make your minds easy that she will answer me."

"The Princess is observing you at present," was the King's ready rejoinder. "Therefore, let the musicians strike up."

So the music began, and the Prince danced. He went on and on, until his legs seemed to be flying off in all directions, and his head grew dizzy with spinning round. Every one was thoroughly worn out with watching the extraordinary capers that he cut. But the Princess took no notice of him whatsoever.

"Stop!" cried the King, at length. "Stop at once, or we shall all go mad. The Princess will not bestow her favour upon a mountebank."

Thus the second Prince was forced to confess himself beaten. But he quitted the hall, whistling audibly, as if to prove to the company that he did not care a jot.

Now, the third aspirant was a man of maturer aspect, with a shrewd expression and a dignified carriage.

"My scheme," he informed them, "cannot possibly admit of failure. Only, before I reveal it, the Princess must permit me to take a look at her. If she is behind that



Ham. 97

“EXTRAORDINARY CAPERS” (p. 56).

screen, as I suppose, will you kindly remove it? Or, better still, allow me for a moment to peep behind the screen.”

But here there came a distinct rustle of silken draperies.

It was evident that the Princess Bashful had fled by the door near which she had stationed herself, in case of any sudden alarm.

“No such stipulation was in the contract,” returned the King, and his tones expressed considerable annoyance. “If you cannot make up your mind to take the Princess on trust, you are not worthy of her. Consequently, sir, I must request you to withdraw.”

So the third Prince stalked off, with a majestic and injured manner. Upon which one of the Court ladies was dispatched at once to bring back the truant Princess. It was the fourth Prince’s turn to draw leisurely to the front, for this one had the pensive, abstracted bearing of a student.

“My proposal is,” he began, in measured tones, “that the Princess should wear a mask. If no one can look at her, she will gain courage and independence. Slowly, but surely, she will become accustomed to mix with her fellow-creatures. Here is a mask which I have brought with me, for the purpose. If the Princess can be persuaded to put it on, I feel sure that she will answer me when I address her.”

“Not so bad,” remarked the King, more hopefully. “However, it is for the Princess to decide. If she will test the experiment, let her give a cough, and the mask will be handed to her without delay.”

But Bashful remained still silent, and no wonder! Had it been a beautiful mask, she might perhaps have complied with such a request. But how could she submit to transform her loveliness into ugliness?

Things were going very badly, thought the Queen. Her glance was full of sadness, and the King frowned

ominously. For only one Prince was left to try his luck, and what likelihood did there seem that he would fare any better than the others had done? He advanced very quietly to the front, and without any display of any kind. He appeared so brave, and yet so modest, it inspired one with confidence merely to look at him.

“Your Majesty,” he began, with diffidence, “I should like to tell you a story, but in order not to weary you I will make it as short as possible. A Prince was once dreadfully in love with a Princess—only, for certain reasons he was not able to declare his love. First of all, he had never seen her, nor was it at all probable that he would ever have the chance. It is true that he might have sent her a message, but then he loved her too dearly to run the risk of causing her tears to flow when she received it.

“So, for a long time, the Prince had to content himself with thinking and dreaming of the maiden, who, for him, was the only one in existence. He gave up the hunting, which was his favourite pastime. All night he lay awake, so that he might have more leisure to cherish her in his heart. Day after day he waited patiently, until at last the opportunity offered itself when he could travel to the palace where she lived.

“And now comes the strangest part of my story. The Princess was very beautiful; but that was not the reason why he loved her. This is a riddle, and you must all try to guess it. Why do I love the Princess?”

Here the King and Queen conversed together in low tones. The courtiers shook their heads to give vent to their displeasure; but the ladies giggled and cast admiring glances at the last competitor.

The Prince's eyes, however, were fixed upon the ground. His countenance had grown very pale and anxious.

Now, the Princess was watching him all the time through a small, round hole which had been pierced in the screen beforehand. She had been feeling very weary of the whole affair; but, upon perceiving the Prince's troubled mien, Bashful smiled to herself, while her cheeks were mantled with blushes.

"Do you give it up?" he asked, at length, after quite ten minutes had elapsed.

Then they were all obliged to own that the riddle was too deep for them.

"Why do I love the Princess?" repeated the Prince. "Because of her shyness."

No one spoke. Fear and trembling were written on every face, because it was forbidden at the palace that any one should refer to the Princess's unfortunate infirmity. But, suddenly, they were startled beyond measure by a delicious peal of low, rippling, girlish laughter. It came from behind the screen, and it was curious the expression of relief that immediately spread over the countenances of all present. For, strange as it may sound, this was absolutely the first occasion on which the Princess Bashful had ever been known to laugh.

But still greater was the sense of relief that stole over the maiden herself. All at once it seemed as if her shyness had ceased to become a bugbear to her. Nay, it was even something to be loved for. What a new and delightful idea!

"That is good to hear," said the Prince, in his most cheery voice. "Can't you do it again?"

At this request, Bashful was so indescribably tickled, that she actually gave another laugh, louder and longer than the first. And, oh! what an inestimable amount of good it did her! The cobwebs seemed to be clearing away from her brain, in the same way as the mists are dispelled by the rising of the sun. She had never felt



"THE LADIES GIGGLED" (p. 59).

so light-hearted in her life. Carried away by his excitement, the King started up from his throne.

"She has laughed," he pronounced, with gladness, "and laughter is surely a part of speech. Let the Prince return hither to-morrow at the same hour; and may his efforts be crowned with success!"

So the Court was adjourned until the following day,

the courtiers dispersing in a most unenviable frame of mind.

“Why could we not have thought of this remedy ourselves?” they asked one another, sourly.

The Princess hied to her chamber as fast as her legs would carry her, for she felt utterly bewildered at the change that was rapidly taking place in her constitution.

As the hour of trial approached, the Prince grew terribly nervous. When the Court had assembled in the Hall of Audience, and the trumpet sounded as usual, he walked boldly enough to the front. But his face was deadly pale, and it was quite easy to perceive that the matter now at stake had become for him a question of life or death.

The Princess had already taken up her position behind the screen, and every one was on the alert.

“We are now ready,” the King declared, “to hear what Prince Valiant has to say for himself.”

“Your Majesty,” stammered the Prince, “it consists of another riddle.” And, notwithstanding all his efforts to the contrary, the poor youth presented a picture of most pitiable dejection.

“Proceed!” commanded the King, though in more kindly accents.

“How can I succeed in winning the Princess?”

The Prince now spoke clearly, and held himself very erect, having, indeed, resolved to meet failure itself in the way that a brave knight should do. Of course, no one made any attempt to solve the riddle. It touched, just as the first had done, upon much too delicate ground.

“We give it up,” said the King, at length, acting as spokesman for the rest.

"The Princess will tell you the answer herself," murmured the Prince, doffing his hat and falling on one knee.

This was a turn in the tide of events which caused universal disappointment. The King's brow swiftly clouded



"THE PRINCE CAME FORWARD AND KISSED BOTH HER HANDS" (p. 64).

over again. Tears rushed into the Queen's eyes and a sob rose in her throat. Yesterday all had promised to go so well, but now there seemed to have come an end to everything.

So spoke the Prince, and continued kneeling until

the King was on the point of bidding him rise and go forth. But just as he began to despair a wonderful thing happened. There was a movement behind the screen which caused it to shake slightly. Another moment, and out stepped the Princess Bashful, who looked enchantingly fair and sweetly gracious.

She was clad in a robe of wondrous blue-green that shimmered like the waves of the sea. Her bright eyes sparkled like dew-drops through their tears, and her hair fell round her in a golden shower.

The Prince bent still lower before her, shading his eyes with his hand, as if the vision of so much beauty had dazzled them. But a white hand was outstretched to raise him from the ground. Then, as everybody remained speechless with surprise, it was the Princess Bashful who addressed him first.

“Prince Valiant,” she said, and her voice resembled the sound of the evening breeze when it plays over the surface of the running water, “I have been told of all the great and generous deeds you have performed. I have been assured that you love me truly. But how can that be, when you had never seen me?”

“It was because, in my own land,” said the Prince, “I had been told how shy you were.”

Whereupon the Princess laughed right merrily. And though her blushes rose fast and furious, they no longer distressed her as of old, and the Prince came forward and kissed both her hands.

Then the King gave out that as the Princess Bashful was cured of her shyness, the marriage should take place on the morrow.

Christmas in the Forest



H. P. MILLER. 1877.

CHRISTMAS *in the* Forest.

From the German

THE little house that, like a lamb strayed from the flock, lay far behind the other houses in the village, belonged to Master Andrew. The house as well as the trade had descended through three generations. Andrew was a shoemaker, like his father and grandfather, and on his father's death had married a peasant maiden.

Alas for Andrew! another shoemaker settled in the village. He had learnt his craft abroad, and was far

more skilful than our villager. Andrew's trade departed, and he was glad to gain a scanty livelihood by patching shoes for the peasants.

Want pressed sorely on the little household, especially as there were six little mouths to feed. But poverty did not drive out peace or happiness. The boys and girls grew up strong and rosy. George, the eldest, helped his father, and was quite clever at putting in a patch. Katie assisted her mother. The younger children brought wood from the forest, and were useful in many ways.

Christmas was approaching. The snow lay thick on the ground. In Andrew's house there were no Christmas preparations. Father and son plied their trade by the feeble light of the oil lamp. The girls sat spinning beside their mother. The younger children, in charge of the second boy John, sat round the hearth cracking nuts.

Andrew whistled softly while the mother told the listening children how Christmas was celebrated in the town, of the fair with its thousand attractions and beautifully decorated fir-trees.

Then Andrew exclaimed:

"There are hundreds of firs outside; perhaps the forester will let us cut down some to sell."

The family applauded the idea. Early next morning Andrew sought the forester, and soon returned, bringing the written permission.

"Quick, boys!" cried he, "run and ask your cousin the miner to lend us his large hand-sledge"

Away ran George and John. Their father sharpened the large axe whilst the mother prepared the breakfast.

The boys quickly returned with the sledge, and, breakfast over, set out with their father for the forest.

Heavily bent the snow-laden branches; still and awesome was the white, silent forest; weirdly rose the old black tree trunks from out the white landscape surrounding them; bravely the three toiled through the deep snow.

At length Andrew halted before a spot where stood innumerable dwarf firs that seemed to grow expressly for Christmas-trees. The strokes of an axe were heard and a little tree fell, shaking the snow from its dark green branches. Gleefully the boys placed it in the sledge. A second followed.

"Give me the axe, father; let me try," cried George. His father handed it, and with skilful strokes the boy felled the third tree. "Listen, father," he continued; "there is plenty of work waiting you at home, and very little time to finish it. You go home; I will fell the trees while Jack loads the sledge. When it is full we will return."

His father agreed.

"Be careful," said he; "the axe is sharp. And do not overload the sledge!" Then he left them.

"Do not stay late!" he called, looking back.

"Very well, father," cried George, with uplifted axe.

Warmed by their work, the boys heeded neither wind nor snow. The fallen trees breathed forth a fragrant perfume; their ice-bound branches drooped sorrowfully as though grieving to leave their forest home.

Their work ended, the boys harnessed themselves to the sledge and started for home. Just as they regained the tall fir George stopped, exclaiming:

"The axe!"

Yes, the axe! It had been left behind. They could not return without that. A moment George hesitated; then he said:

“Wait a bit, Jack. I will run back for the axe. I know just where it is.”

Away he ran, calling as he went:

“Stay with the sledge, Jack.”

Jack watched till he was out of sight; then, weariness overpowering him, he sat down on the sledge. Pushing the branches aside, he saw something shine. It was the axe! Seizing it, he ran after his brother, calling:

“George! George!” No answer. He turned slowly back and seated himself on the sledge with the axe on his lap.

Meanwhile, George searched anxiously, but found no axe. Darkness crept on, and with heavy heart he returned to the sledge. John was still there, but he had fallen asleep. The axe lay in the snow. George picked it up, then shook his brother, but, to his dismay, Jack would not wake. He half-opened his eyes, muttered some unintelligible words, and then fell back asleep. George let him sleep, and tried to draw the sledge by himself; but it would not stir.

Anguish and terror now overcame the poor boy. What could he do? Where obtain help? He feared Jack would be frozen. Suddenly a light shone in the distance. He ran towards it, and found to his astonishment that it proceeded from an old ruined castle. He climbed to the window, and the strange sight that greeted him made him for a moment forget his trouble.

In the centre of the hall burned a large fire; over it was a vat-shaped vessel that sent forth spicy odours.

All around hundreds of tiny forms were working busily. On one side sat many little men, some sewing garments of glittering tissue, others making beautiful little shoes.



"THE GNOME Poured ITS CONTENTS BETWEEN THE LIPS OF THE SLEEPING BOY" (p. 73).

And they worked so swiftly. Husch! husch! a coat, cap, or shoe was finished, and flew away to the piles of garments standing beside the little workers.

At the farther end of the hall, cooks were making cakes, which, when baked, they carried two by two on small white boards to a hole in the wall that evidently led to the dwarfs' store-cupboard. Two little men, mounted on stones, stirred the vat with long wands.

"They will certainly enjoy their Christmas," thought George, sniffing the spicy odours.

But a new-comer appeared. He was also a dwarf, but different from the others in dress and appearance. He wore a green hunting-dress made from the wings of earth-beetles; a hat of like colour adorned his head; his hair and beard were long. At his side hung a gold hunting-horn. Majestic he stood amidst the workers, who saluted him respectfully. Raising his eyes, he beheld the intruder, and his glance was one of anger.

George sprang down, but, quick as lightning, the gnome climbed through the opening and stood before the terrified boy. The same moment the fire was extinguished, the bustle ceased, and the castle stood silent and dark in the snowy forest.

"How dare you spy out our secrets?" cried the angry little man.

George raised his fur cap.

"Honoured sir," said he, "I came not to spy, but to implore your aid."

His politeness soothed the enraged gnome; he inquired the cause of distress, and when told, said:

"Lead me to the sledge. I will see if I can help you."

George ran quickly forward, followed by the little man, and soon reached the sledge. John still slept. His face and hands were icy cold. In terror George shook him. Raising his

horn, the gnome blew a long, shrill blast, and instantly gnomes arose from behind every tree, mound, and bush.

He gave his commands in a strange, lisping speech. The gnomes hastened away, but speedily returned with a jug, which they handed to their lord. Mounting the sledge, the gnome poured its contents between the lips of the sleeping boy, who immediately awoke, and stared wonderingly at the strange company.

George quickly explained what had happened, adding that he owed his life to the gnome's kind care. John thanked the little man, and declared he never felt better in his life.

Then the gnome questioned them about their family, and, learning that they would have no Christmas rejoicings, bade them bring their brothers and sisters to the old castle and join the gnomes' Christmas feast.

The boys joyfully agreed, and, thanking him for his kind invitation, turned to depart.

"Stay," said the gnome; "mount the sledge and hold each other tight!" He then ordered his servants to drag them to the last tall fir. The boys mounted. A hundred gnomes harnessed themselves to the sledge, and away they went, swift as the wind. That was a ride! They had barely started ere their father's house was in sight; the sledge stopped and the gnomes vanished. As they clambered down their father came towards them.

"How could you stay so late?" he asked. "Your mother is very anxious and vexed that I left you."

They entered the cottage. Supper was ready, but they could eat nothing until they had related their strange adventure. Their father shook his head.

"Yes, yes," said he, "I knew the gnomes haunted

the old castle, but I have never seen them ; still, George is a Sunday child, and might well see things that are hidden from others."

"Of course they must go," said the mother, "or the little people will be angry and do us harm."

The following morning Andrew, with a horse and cart borrowed from the miner, drove his Christmas-trees to the town. All the children ran out to see the cart loaded, and when it drove away they followed. Passing through the village, other children joined them, forming quite a procession. At the end of the village Andrew stopped, saying :

"Run back to school now, children ; and you, George, make haste with your mending."

The little crowd turned back, and the cart with its green burden went briskly forward. Reaching home, George worked industriously for some hours. Then shouts and laughter attracted him. He looked out. Beneath the tall fir the school-children were heaping up the snow.

"Ah, a snow-man!" he exclaimed. "I must help!" Away flew the boot with its half-finished patch, and away sped the little cobbler to join the laughing throng. Merry were the workers and loud their shouts as George, mounted on his shoemaker's stool, placed the snow man's head upon his shoulders ; and there the giant stood, tall and threatening as a winter god.

Then the children joined hands and danced round him singing merrily, heedless of the icy blast that blew sharply against their laughing faces. Soon George returned to work ; the others ran back to school, and his frozen Majesty stood solitary and forsaken.

When the moon rose behind the forest, bathing the

snow-clad world in her silver light, George's boot had long been finished, the shoemaker slept beside his sleeping family, and in the box with the Sunday clothes lay a little leather purse filled with silver coins that he had brought back from the town.

The longed-for night arrived, and at the first blast of the golden horn that was to summon them to the feast, the children, dressed in their Sunday clothes, hastened to the forest.

Beneath the tall fir they paused in amazement. The snowman reared his hoary head on high. But on his arms and shoulders, and on every branch of the fir, sat the gnomes, who had come to guide their little guests through the forest.

Climbing swiftly down, they tripped lightly before the children. Gaily the girls' red frocks fluttered above the white snow; merrily the silvery laugh of the children rang through the silent forest.

When they reached the castle it was ablaze with light, whilst all around the tall firs, like giant Christmas-trees, were bright with various coloured stars.

They crossed the threshold to the sound of a million tinkling bells. Within all was light and glittering splendour. The ground and walls were covered with soft green moss, spangled with violets cut from amethysts and sapphires, whilst the carnations and snowdrops glistening between were cut from rubies and pearls, their tiny leaves shedding forth rays of dazzling light. A large sun, formed of carbuncles and diamonds, shed over all a light brighter than day. The children believed it a real sun and the flowers real flowers. Beneath stood a gigantic fir, its topmost branches almost touching the sun, and seeming

every moment as though they would burst into flames. Showers of sparks fell from the sun and, resting like stars on every needle-pointed leaf, there sparkled and glittered.

On the branches hung every imaginable fruit, from the tiniest berries to the golden pineapple, all made and moulded with exquisite skill of sugar-pastry; no confectioner could have fashioned them more beautifully than had the little fingers of the gnome-cooks. All around fluttered butterflies, dragon-flies, and cockchafers, whom the gnomes had woke from their winter sleep, and who, placed in this beauteous garden, believed that spring had really come, and dived into the petals of the glittering flowers or stole the sweetness from the sugar fruits.

The children moved about on the tips of their toes, holding each other's hands and murmuring, "How beautiful! Oh, how beautiful!" Their guides had departed, and, save for the butterflies and cockchafers, they were alone. The stillness and splendour almost took away their breath.

Strains of sweet music broke the silence; nearer and nearer it came, louder and louder it swelled, as, two by two, a train of little musicians in glittering doublets, blowing and fiddling on tiny instruments, passed through a slit in the wall and formed a circle round the tree.

Little men with long beards followed, and after them came the King, in whom George recognised his friend with the golden horn. Beside him walked the Queen, closely veiled. Both wore gold mantles ornamented with precious stones, and had crowns of flame on their heads. Next came many old men in gold robes. These wore red caps, and were evidently ministers of state, they looked so grave and thoughtful,

Then followed shining carriages drawn by rats and moles. In these sat the gnome ladies, all veiled. A



"A TRAIN OF LITTLE MUSICIANS IN GLITTERING DOUBLETS" (p. 76).

gnome coachman sat on each carriage, and a gnome footman stood behind.

The King and Queen ascended a mossy eminence, on

which stood two gold thrones. The ladies alighted from their carriages, which drove slowly away.

Then the King made a long speech. The children could not understand a word, but it must have been very touching, for many of the ladies, and even the beautiful little Queen, wept with emotion.

The speech ended, the musicians broke forth into joyous strains, the gnomes sported merrily, and grove and grotto re-echoed with gay laughter.

The King approached the children and asked kindly how they liked it. At first, respect for the gold mantle, the crown, and the speech kept them silent; but at length George stammered forth:

“It is beautiful above measure, beautiful as Heaven!”

Meanwhile, the cooks ran about, carrying beautiful cakes and goblets of rosy wine. The gnomes did ample justice to the fare. The children enjoyed it exceedingly, although the bites and sups were very small. The dwarfs then climbed the Christmas-tree and threw the fruit to the ladies. This caused much merriment. The children had their share, and when they could eat no more, the King made them fill all their pockets.

At length, being tired, they wished to return home.

“Yes,” said the King, “it is time you departed, for at midnight we return to our home beneath the earth. See, our sun grows pale; it bids us part. Yet first take these in memory of our feast,” and he handed each child a pretty covered basket. “There are little presents inside,” he said, smiling; “use them well; and they will bring you happiness all your life long.”

Paler and paler grew the sun. The musicians departed,

playing a sad and plaintive melody. The children would have liked to open their baskets, but politeness forbade. Instead, they thanked the King for his kindness, wished him good-night, and were led by him from the castle.

As they crossed the threshold their father stepped from behind the trees. He had waited there the whole time,



"HE HANDED EACH CHILD A PRETTY COVERED BASKET" (p. 78).

and tried on all sides to enter the castle, but in vain. His anxiety had grown intense, and he rejoiced to see them return in safety. Taking the two youngest children in his arms, he hastened home, followed by the others.

On their way they told of all the music and splendour, and their father marvelled, for he had heard no music and

seen no light. To his eyes the castle and the forest trees were black and gloomy as heretofore. But thus it is ever. The older folk gaze into the world with troubled eyes, and thus see only darkness and gloom, where to the children's eyes all is light, happiness, and joy.

In the baskets a fresh surprise awaited them. They contained neither gold nor precious stones, only pretty little tools, dainty, and bright as playthings. George and Paul each received every requisite for a shoemaker's trade, John and Karl a tailor's scissors, needle, and thimble, Katie and Christel had each a spinning-wheel.

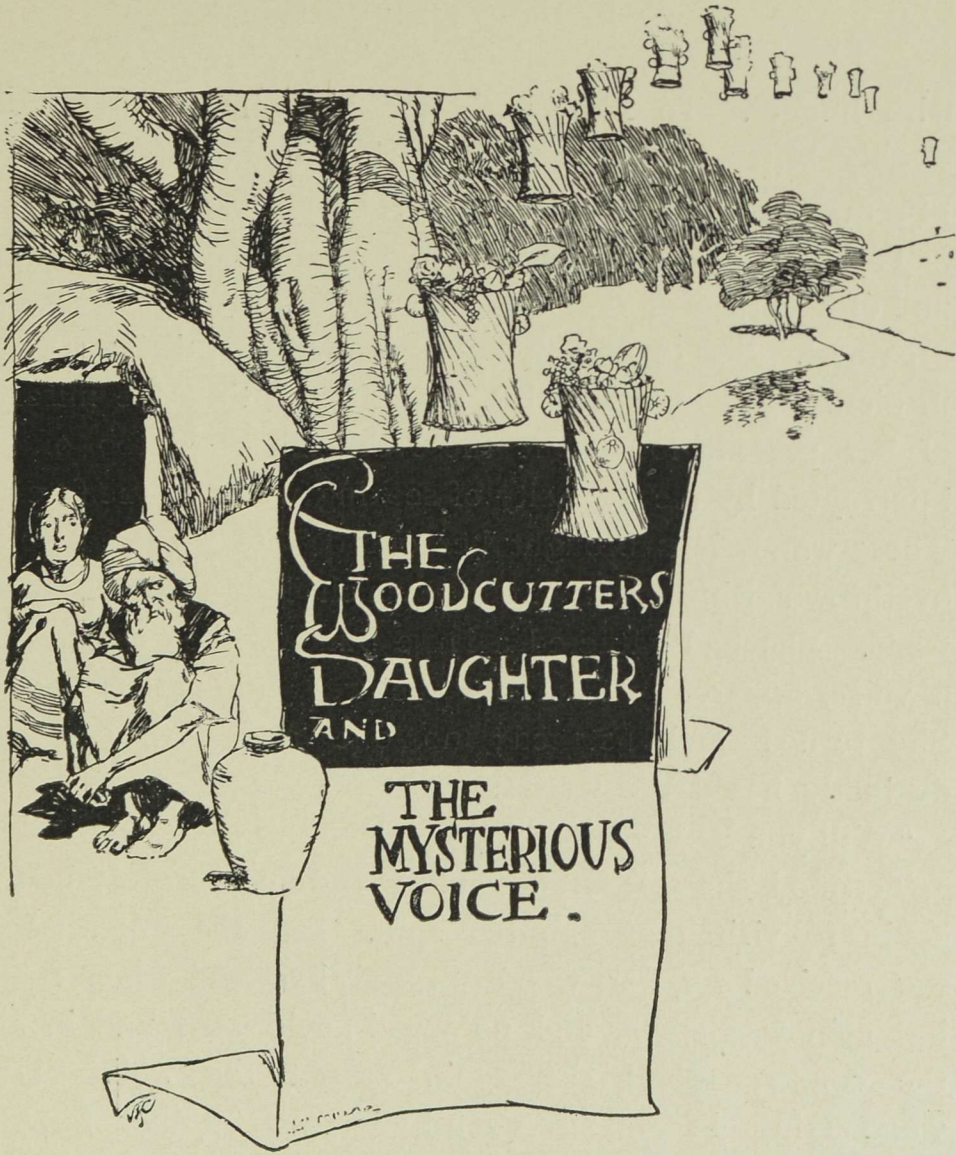
The children laughed at the droll little presents, but their parents understood the deeper meaning that lay hidden beneath the apparent pleasantry, for they knew that the gnome is a friend to the industrious worker, and makes his work to prosper.

Years passed. A stately mansion, with cowshed and pigsty, replaced the shoemaker's cottage. Andrew and his wife were the richest people in the village.

This they owed to their children's industry, or, rather, to the gnome's presents, for the brothers and sisters always used the tools the King had given them. George and Paul were celebrated shoemakers, and did work enough for four; John and Karl were first-class tailors; whilst Katie and Christel were famed throughout the land for their beautiful spinning.

The villagers said Andrew must have found a treasure whilst taking his Christmas-trees to market; but the shoemaker and his family knew better, and, when seated in their new mansion, they often spoke with grateful remembrance of the "Gnome's Christmas Feast."

The Woodcutter's Daughter and the
Mysterious Voice



From the German

IN an Eastern land lived a woodcutter who was so poor he had not even an axe, and was obliged, with his wife and daughter, to gather the old wood they found lying about. If they obtained sufficient to purchase food for the day, they rejoiced over their frugal fare; but this did not often happen, and their compulsory fasts became so frequent that they languished

with hunger. To Nur-Singh and his wife poverty was doubly bitter on account of their daughter. She was of a marriageable age, but who would wed one so poor?

Tulissa, a beautiful maiden, was not without ambition, and often beguiled the weary hours with dreams of future greatness. She would imagine herself a princess, and, in picturing a luxurious life, forget for a time the misery of her present lot. But these dreams were too often interrupted by the necessity of seeking wood in the forest. These wanderings brought her one day to a ruined well, overgrown with grass, around which lay a quantity of wood. She had gathered a large bundle, when she heard a voice, apparently from out the well, calling her name. She turned and listened; no one appeared, yet she distinctly heard the words:

“Will you be my wife?”

Terrified, she seized her bundle and fled, resolved never again to visit that haunted spot. But the good price she received for her wood pleased her, and when their last coin was spent, and no wood could be found in all the country round, she again sought the well. The wood lying in greater quantities than on her former visit induced her to approach close to the dreaded place. She quickly collected the sticks, hoping to depart undisturbed, when again came the words: “Will you be my wife?” and, more terrified than before, she took to flight, never stopping until she reached her home. Here want soon again pressed heavily; her parents sought in vain for wood, and urged Tulissa to try her luck; thereupon she told of the voice that had so alarmed her. Her parents did not consider it so terrible; indeed,

they bade her re-visit the well, and if she again heard the voice, refer the unknown suitor to her father.

Tulissa went unwillingly, and was departing with her bundle, when again came that terrible question:

“Will you be my wife?”

Summoning all her courage, she replied:

“That proposal should be addressed to my father.”

“Send your father here,” sounded the voice.

Glad to escape so easily, Tulissa returned, and told what had occurred. Her father set forth immediately, and to his surprise found the path without trouble. He had not waited long when from out the depths came the words:

“You are poor and wretched; give me your daughter, and you shall be rich and happy; you shall have the finest clothes and daintiest food; your shadow shall grow and your riches increase, for I will gratify your every wish.”

Blinded by these dazzling promises, Nur-Singh immediately consented, the wedding-day was fixed, and the woodcutter returned well-pleased. The women were disappointed that he came empty-handed; they were ashamed to appear in ragged garments on a festal occasion.

A few days before the wedding the family were astonished to see a hundred baskets travelling through the air. They descended before the hut. Some were filled with choice fruits and confectionery, others contained shawls and every requisite for the female toilet, whilst the whole, in true Oriental fashion, was illuminated with coloured lamps. This filled all hearts with joy.

The appointed time found them at the well, but to their surprise there were no preparations for a wedding. At length the woodcutter exclaimed :

“How can I marry my daughter when no one is here to receive her?”

“We are all here,” cried the voice. “Place the ring on your daughter’s finger, and she is mine.” The same moment a ring made its appearance.

The woodcutter obeyed; then, turning round, he saw a tent in which a rich banquet was spread. The three seated themselves to enjoy the sumptuous repast. As they finished, a beautiful sedan-chair approached them. Now for the first time they felt uneasy, and, on seating herself in the chair, the bride drew aside the curtains to take one last look at her relatives. Away sped the chair, followed by the anxious parents, and, passing through a deep ravine, reached an open plain. In the centre stood a magnificent palace, surrounded by a high wall with an iron door, through which the chair disappeared. Satisfied that the bridegroom had fulfilled his promise, they then returned home.

Henceforth they had riches in abundance and no longer needed to work. The neighbours, who before had never troubled about them, now visited them, inquiring eagerly about the change in their fortunes. As Nur-Singh refused to gratify their curiosity they grew envious, went to the King, and entreated him to compel the woodcutter to reveal the secret of his wealth. The King summoned Nur-Singh and questioned him closely. The woodcutter told how he had married his daughter, and the benefits he had received thereby. But the King



"AWAY SPED THE CHAIR" (p. 86).

not believing his story, ordered him to be hanged. Now that death stared him in the face, the unhappy woodcutter began to doubt the wisdom of marrying his daughter to a person of whom he knew nothing, and bitterly he lamented his wretched fate.

The evening before the execution a voice said to the King:

“O King, harm not the poor woodcutter. He has not deceived you; I married his daughter, and terribly will I avenge any injury done him.”

The King replied:

“One day I will spare him to see if you really possess your boasted power, then he must die, for I will not be turned from my purpose by empty threats.”

Next morning when the King arose he and the woodcutter were the only persons living in the town: the inhabitants lay dead, bitten by snakes. The King now saw he had to do with a powerful spirit, so, hastening to the prison, he entreated Nur-Singh to use his influence with his son-in-law to turn aside his wrath. The woodcutter willingly agreed, and, although uncertain if his prayer would reach the ear of him to whom it was addressed, besought the spirit to restore the inhabitants to life. Immediately a rushing noise was heard, and the voice cried:

“Snakes, who obeyed my commands, and who alone know how to cure the poison of your bite, recall these men from the shadow of death.”

The snakes obeyed, the inhabitants lived again; the King with his own hands struck off the woodcutter's fetters, and sent him away loaded with presents.

The Woodcutter's Daughter 89

Tulissa meanwhile lived happily with her husband, whom she only saw at night—he was away all day. He gave her costly presents, and only required that she should never leave the palace nor suffer any stranger to enter. And this beautiful abode contained all the heart could desire: there were gardens full of fruit trees, marble baths inlaid with agate and jasper, and numberless attendants who, to amuse her, played their lutes or related wonderful stories. But Tulissa soon wearied of this luxury, and would willingly have given all her jewels for a wreath of jasmine such as she used to twine in the old days at home.

One morning an old woman came to the palace selling cowries; the porter refused her admittance, but, unfortunately, she espied Tulissa looking out of a turret window. She addressed her in flattering terms, promising wonders if she might only approach, and her listener was soon induced to let down a sheet, up which the stranger rapidly climbed. Seating herself at the edge of the carpet she conversed pleasantly, told Tulissa many things, and asked her many questions. At length, she said:

“Daughter, you say your husband is kind; does he eat with you; does he take food from your plate?”

“No,” replied Tulissa, “he never does me that honour.”

“You should require it of him,” said the stranger. “If he refuses, be sure he does not properly esteem you.”

Saying this she departed.

Left alone, Tulissa felt restless and unhappy. She repeated again and again what she should say to her husband, for she had resolved to follow the stranger's advice. So she left her supper untasted, and when he

entered flew towards him, begging him so earnestly to sup with her that he consented. Yet he did not seem pleased, and, on leaving, gave yet stricter orders to admit no one to the palace.

Time passed, and Tulissa had almost forgotten the incident, when one day, looking from her window, she saw an old woman selling antimony. She called her, let down the sheet, and admitted the stranger. After many compliments, the woman asked the same question as the first stranger. Tulissa replied proudly that he had done her that honour. The old woman then asked had he ever chewed betel-nut and given it to her, and on her replying, "Never," persuaded her to demand this token of esteem.

That evening Tulissa asked her husband :

"Why do you never give me betel-nut from your mouth, as husbands do who love their wives?"

"Speak not thus," exclaimed the spirit; "ask not what will separate us for ever."

Tulissa tried persuasions, but finding them useless, relinquished her plan for the present. It is probable she would have abandoned it altogether, had not the old woman again visited her, asked had her husband ever told her his name, and persuaded her to require it as proof of his affection.

The same evening Tulissa made her request. In vain her husband strove to show her the foolishness of her wish. At length, losing patience, he said :

"If I tell you, it will be fatal to your happiness. I shall be compelled to part from you, and you will have to return to your former poverty."

The Woodcutter's Daughter 91

Despite the warning, Tulissa persisted in her desire, until, finding all entreaties vain, her husband said:

“Well, so be it, but not here,” and led her from the



“TULISSA MADE HER REQUEST” (p. 90).

palace. Arrived at the banks of a river he stopped, asking, anxiously: “Are you still determined? There is yet time to withdraw your request.”

Urged by irresistible curiosity, and regardless of consequences, Tulissa replied :

“I will know.”

The spirit walked into the water up to his knees, and then repeated his question, entreating her to abandon her wish. Tulissa refused, but even whilst she spoke he sank deeper in the stream, until only his head and shoulders were visible. A third time he repeated his question, assuring her of his love and entreating her tenderly to relinquish a wish which, if granted, she would repent to the last hour of her life. When, however, Tulissa again replied, “I will know,” he cried, sorrowfully, “My name is Basnak Dan!” The same moment a serpent’s head appeared above the water, shot a withering glance at the obstinate wife, and then sank in the stream, in which her husband had already disappeared.

Tulissa was now alone, and wearing the ragged clothes of bygone days. Vainly she sought her beautiful palace. Every path she took led to the old, ruined hut, and how ruined and squalid did it now appear! Within sat her parents, poor and hungry as of yore. The old life began again, but now it was embittered by her parents’ reproaches and regret for her ingratitude to her husband.

One day as she pursued her weary way a squirrel crossed her path. These little animals were so common she would not have noticed him, had not his white stripes reminded her of a squirrel whose life she had saved in the palace garden. Satisfied at having attracted her attention, the animal bounded before her to a place where lay abundance of wood. It was a lovely spot, and, after collecting her bundle, she sat down and fell

asleep. A soft whispering awoke her, and looking round she saw two squirrels engaged in earnest conversation.

"Alas!" said one, "how is it that our enemy has grown so powerful? I left our tribe free; I return to find them enduring a miserable slavery."

"It is," replied the other, "because Sarkasukis has obtained a confederate in the mother of Basnak Dan, King of the Serpents. She discovered that her son had wedded a daughter of earth, and knew that if, through her ambassadors, she persuaded his wife to ask his name, she would regain all the power she lost when he succeeded to his father's kingdom. Sarkasukis told of the marriage, and persuaded the wife to ask the foolish question. The Queen-mother now reigns supreme; Basnak Dan is as good as dead, and our persecutor is able to torment us at will."

Then a third squirrel spoke:

"Poor Tulissa! she once saved me from the vengeance of Sarkasukis. Is there no way in which she can regain her lost happiness?"

"There is," said the first speaker; "but it is very dangerous. She must journey eastwards until she reaches a river. This she must cross; but there is no boat, and the river is full of snakes who will kill her if she attempts to swim. After crossing she must seek the huma's nest; should she find this, and an egg inside it, she must place the egg in her bosom to hatch. Next she must seek service with the Queen-mother, who will set her many tasks; should she fail to perform them she will be destroyed by snakes. I know not if the egg will preserve her from danger, but when the bird is hatched it will

peck out the eyes of the green serpent that always encircles the Queen's neck. Basnak Dan will then regain his kingdom and be reconciled to his wife, who, as the huma bestows royal rank on its possessor, will be herself a Queen."

Tulissa listened eagerly, and only hesitated about leaving her parents ; but the sight of some gold pieces that suddenly appeared at her side, and that she rightly guessed to be a gift from her friend the squirrel, removed her fears.

Hastening home, she gave her mother the money and started on her journey. After wandering many days, she reached a broad and deep river, apparently full of horrible black snakes.

Here Tulissa made a raft of some reeds growing on the bank, and on this, accompanied by the squirrels, who had guided her on her journey, reached the opposite shore in safety.

On landing, the squirrels led her to a deep glen, where stood a tree that glittered like an emerald. Beneath it were the humas, singing and building their nest, their beautiful plumage resplendent with golden light.

A few days later the wife laid an egg, but not liking to take their only treasure, Tulissa waited until the nest was full ; then, taking one, she laid it in her bosom and followed the squirrels to the Queen's palace. Here she knocked and asked leave to enter the Queen's service. The attendants led her to their mistress. Although of rare beauty, there was something terrible in her appearance as she reclined among soft cushions, the green snake around her neck, for her eyes shone like the snake's eyes and her long tresses fell in snakelike coils.

The Woodcutter's Daughter 95

After gazing at Tulissa, she said :

“I never engage servants without first proving their capability. If they fear the trial they can depart, but should they decide to try, nothing serves as an excuse for failure ; if they fail, a terrible death awaits them.”



“ SHE REACHED A RIVER FULL OF HORRIBLE BLACK SNAKES ” (p. 94).

Without hesitation Tulissa offered herself for trial. A crystal vase was then handed her ; she was led into a courtyard surrounded by high walls, and bidden collect the perfume from a thousand flowers. No tree, root, or plant could be seen, and Tulissa would have despaired had she not relied on the squirrels' aid. She was looking

for them when a swarm of bees flew over the wall, each carrying a bag of perfume, which they dropped into the vase.

As the delightful perfume filled the air, joyful cries resounded on all sides, the door of the courtyard opened, and Tulissa laid the vase at the feet of the Queen, whose stern glance softened as she inhaled the sweet perfume.

Next day she received a jug of grain, with the command to prepare therefrom a chaplet of precious stones. Now the squirrels helped her. They came in great numbers: each took a grain from the jug and replaced it by a stone of great price. With these Tulissa soon accomplished her task and presented it to the Queen, whose delight knew no bounds.

Returning to her room, she found the little squirrel, who, apparently much distressed, led her to the forest, where the other squirrels awaited her. Here she learned that the terrible Sarkasukis was approaching, that to prevent his entering the palace she must burn certain herbs, but that this would also prevent the squirrels approaching, and, alas! several days must elapse ere the huma's egg would be hatched.

In sorrow Tulissa burned the herbs, and anxiously waited till the huma emerged from its shell. Then, hiding it in her bosom, she sought the Queen's chamber, where the bird flew forth and pecked out the eyes of the terrible green snake, whose magic power had wrought so much evil.

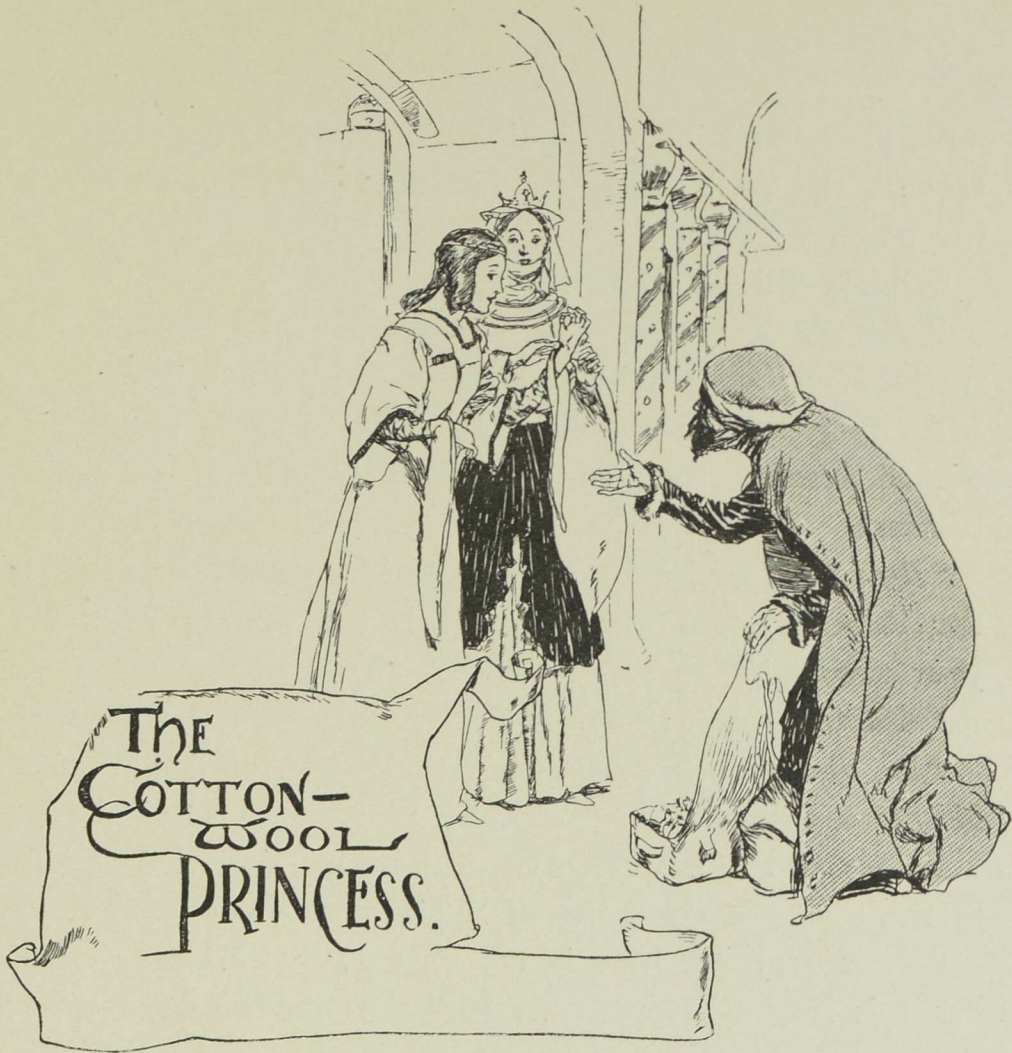
The Queen uttered a piercing cry, the castle rocked, Sarkasukis fell through the ceiling loaded with chains,

The Woodcutter's Daughter 97

while legions of genii, squirrels, and serpents led in their rightful monarch, Basnak Dan. Tulissa's garments, changed to queenly raiment, the huma placed a glittering crown on her forehead, and she was now a fitting bride for a mighty spirit.

Great was the joy of the good spirits at the fall of Sarkasukis and the wicked Queen, but none rejoiced more than Nur-Singh and his wife, who on Basnak Dan's return to power were raised again from poverty to wealth.

The Cotton-wool Princess



From the Italian of Luigi Capuani

A THOUSAND years ago there lived a King and a Queen. They had only one daughter, who was dearer to them than all the world. Now, when the King of France sent to their Court to request the hand of the Princess, neither father nor mother would part from their beloved daughter, and they said to the Ambassador :

“She is still too young!”

But as the girl became every day more beautiful, the

next year the King of Spain's Ambassador appeared to request the girl's hand for his Sovereign. And again the parents answered :

“She is still too young!”

Both the Kings were very angry at this refusal, and resolved to revenge themselves on the poor Princess.

As they were not able themselves to carry out their wicked resolve, they summoned a Magician, and said to him :

“You must devise for us some charm to be used against the Princess—and the worse it is the greater shall be your reward!”

With the words :

“In one month your wish shall be fulfilled!” the Magician departed.

Before the four weeks were over, he appeared again in the castle of the King of Spain.

“Your Majesty, here is the charm!” he cried. “Give her this ring as a present, and when she has worn it on her finger for four-and-twenty hours, you shall see the effect!”

Now the two Kings consulted together as to how they should get the ring to the Princess, for they were no longer friendly with her parents, who would, consequently, become suspicious of any present sent by them. What was to be done?

“I have it! I have it!” the King of Spain cried, suddenly.

Then he disguised himself as a goldsmith, set out on a journey, and took up his position just opposite the palace where the Princess lived. The Queen noticed him

from her window, and as she happened at that time to be wanting to buy some jewellery she sent for him. After she had bought from the stranger various bracelets, chains, and ear-rings, she said to her daughter:

“And you will not choose anything among all these fine things for yourself, little daughter?”

Then the Princess answered:

“I see nothing especially beautiful among them.”

Then the disguised King took the ring out of his case, which he had up to the present kept hidden, made it sparkle in the sun, and said:

“Your Majesty, here is still a very rare jewel; this ring has not its equal in the world for beauty. And it does not please you?”

“Oh, how splendid! Oh, how beautifully it sparkles and gleams!” cried the Princess, entranced. “How much does it cost?”

“The ring has no price; I shall be contented with whatever you give me for it.”

Then a great sum of money was paid to him, and he went his way. The Princess put the ring on her finger, and could not turn her eyes away from it, so charmed was she with its brilliancy. But four-and-twenty hours had not passed—it was just evening—when the poor girl uttered a terrible cry of anguish.

“Oh dear! oh dear!” sounded through the whole palace.

The King, the Queen, and all the ladies of the Court ran, white with terror, and with candles in their hands, to see what had happened.

“Take away your candles! Take them away! Take

them away!" cried the Princess, beside herself with despair. "Do you not see that I have turned into cotton-wool?"

And her body had, indeed, suddenly changed into cotton-wool. The King and Queen were inconsolable at this terrible misfortune, and they at once summoned the wisest men of the kingdom to consult with them as to what was to be done in this extremity.

"Your Majesties," the councillors concluded, after long deliberation, "have it proclaimed in all countries that whoever restores your daughter may wed her."

And then messengers with drums and trumpets went round the whole kingdom and far beyond it, and proclaimed:

"He who restores the Princess to health may become the King's son-in-law."

About this time there lived in a small town the son of a shoemaker. There was great want in his father's house, and one day, when not even a crust of bread remained, and both would have had to die of hunger, the son said:

"Father, give me your blessing; I will go out into the world to seek my fortune."

"May Heaven be gracious to you, my son!" said the father, and the youth took his staff and set out on his journey.

He had already left the fields of his native district far behind him when he met a band of rough boys, who were making a fearful uproar and throwing stones at a toad to kill it.

"What harm has the poor animal done you? Is it

not as much God's creature as you are? Let it live!" he exclaimed, indignantly. But when he saw that the hard-hearted fellows paid no attention to his words and



THE PROCLAMATION (*p.* 104).

did not desist from their intention, he rushed angrily at them and gave one a sound box on the ears and another a mighty punch in his ribs. The boys scattered

in a tumult, and the toad quickly used the opportunity to slip into a hole in the wall.

Then the youth went farther and farther on his way. Suddenly the sound of trumpets and the roll of drums came to his ear. And listen! Is not some proclamation being made? He listened attentively, and distinctly heard the words:

“He who restores the Princess to health may become the King’s son-in-law!”

“What is the matter with her?” he asked a passer by.

“Don’t you know? She has turned into cotton-wool.”

He thanked his informant and continued his travels. Now, by the time night had sunk upon the earth, he had come to a great desert, and he determined to lay himself down to sleep. But how terrified he was when, on turning his head to look once again at the way he had come, he saw a tall, beautiful woman standing at his side. He was about to spring quickly away when she said:

“Do not be afraid of me. I am a Fairy, and have come to thank you.”

“To thank me? And what for?” the youth asked, in confusion.

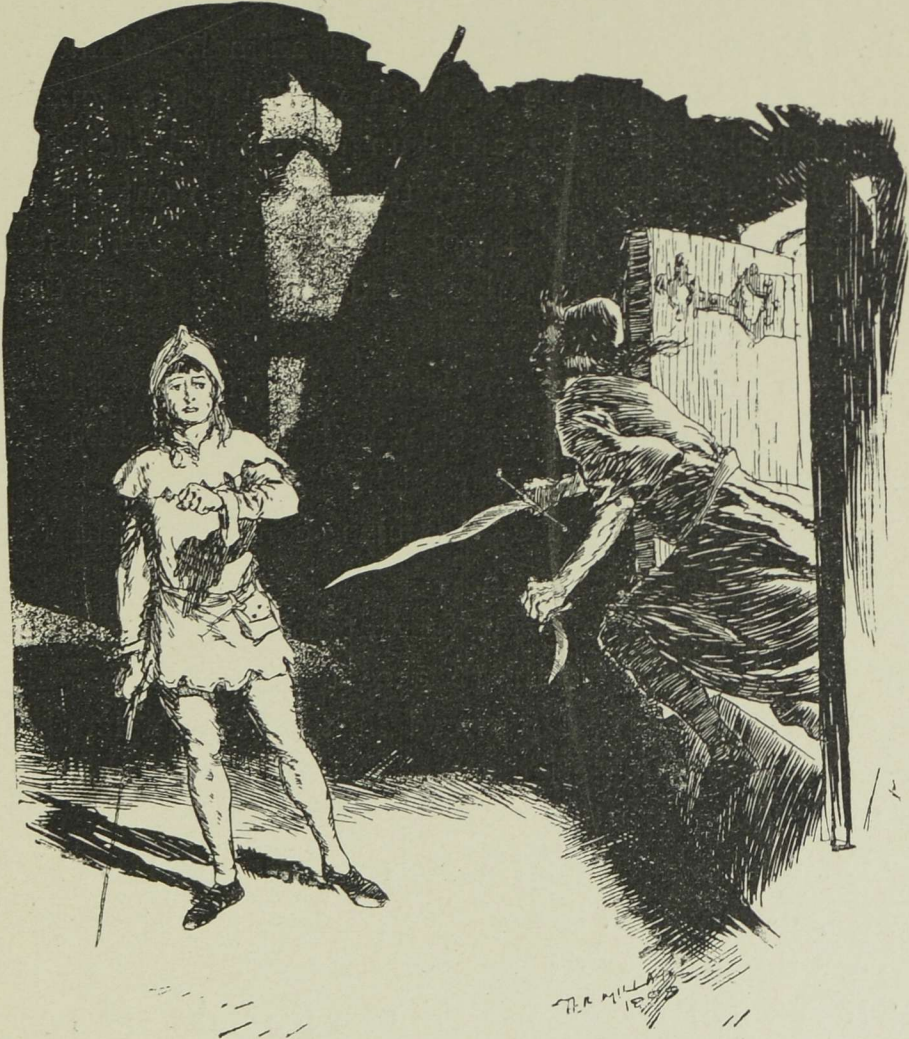
“You saved my life! My fate ordains that I shall be a toad by day and a fairy by night. Now I am at your service.”

“Good Fairy,” then said the youth, “I have just heard of a Princess who has turned into cotton-wool, and whoever heals her may become her husband. Teach me how to restore her to health. That is my most ardent wish!”

Then the Fairy said:

“Take this sword in your hand and walk straight on

until you come to a dense forest, full of snakes and wild animals. However, you must not be afraid of them, but must bravely continue your journey until you stand in front of the Magician's palace. As soon as you have



"THE MAGICIAN, IN A GREAT FURY . . . RUSHED OUT" (p. 108).

reached it, knock three times at the great gate"
And she described to him fully what he was to do.
"If you ever need my help, come to this place at this same hour, and you will find me here!" And giving him

her white hand in farewell, she disappeared before the youth could open his mouth to thank her.

Without pausing to consider, the cobbler's son set out and went straight on, according to his instructions. He had already gone a good way when his path led him into a dark forest, into the midst of wild animals. That was awful! They filled the air with fearful roars, gnashed their teeth blood-thirstily, and hungrily opened their jaws. Though the poor youth's heart thumped, he went straight on, making as if he did not notice them. At last he reached the Magician's palace, and knocked three times at the great gate.

Then a voice came from the interior of the castle :

"Woe to you, rash stranger, who have the boldness to come to me! What is your wish?"

"If you really are the Magician, come out and fight with me!" cried the youth.

The Magician, in a great fury at this audacity, rushed out, armed to the teeth, to accept the challenge. But as soon as he saw the sword in the youth's hand, he broke out into pitiable lamentation, and, sinking trembling on to his knees, cried :

"Oh, woe to me, unfortunate creature that I am! At least spare my life!"

Then the youth said :

"If you will release the Princess from the spell, your life shall be spared."

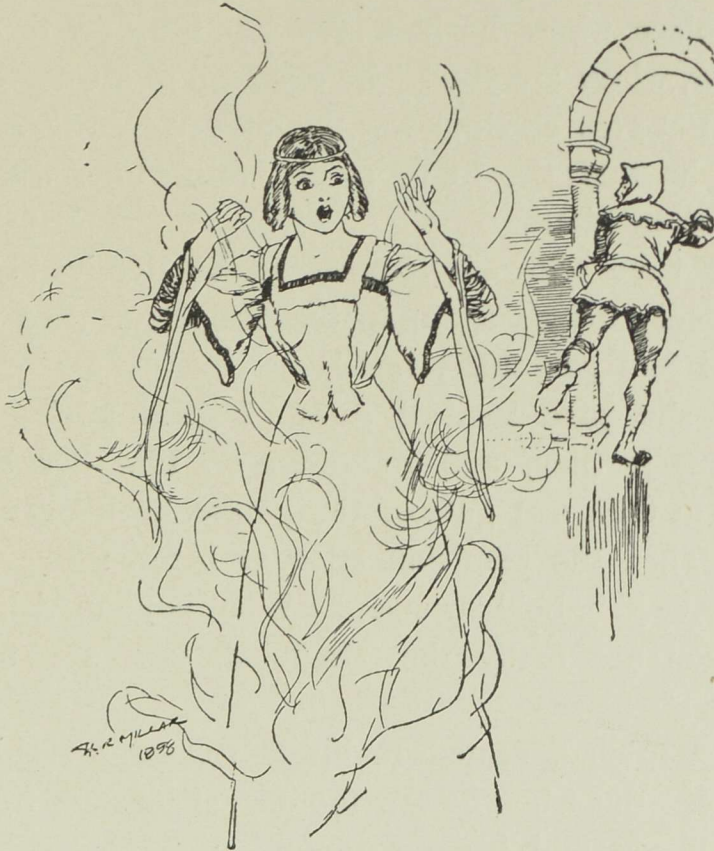
Then the Magician took a ring out of his pocket and said :

"Take this ring and put it on the little finger of her left hand and she shall be well again."

The Cotton-wool Princess 109

Not a little rejoiced at the success of his journey, the youth hastened to the King and asked, just to satisfy himself of the truth of what he had been told :

“Your Majesty, is it true that he who restores the Princess to health will be your son-in-law?”



“THE POOR PRINCESS BURST INTO FLAME” (p. 110).

“It is verily true,” the anxious King assured him.

“Well, then, I am ready to accomplish the task.”

Then the poor Princess was brought in, and all the ladies of the Court, as well as the servants, stood round her to witness the miracle.

But no sooner had she put the ring on her little finger

than she burst into bright flame and stood there, uttering heart-rending cries. Everything was plunged into confusion, and the horrified youth seized the opportunity of escaping from the scene of the disaster as fast as his legs would carry him. His one wish was to get to the Fairy, and he did not stop running until he had come to the place where he had seen her the first time.

"Fairy, where are you?" he cried, all in a tremble.

"I am at your service," was the answer.

Then he told the Fairy of the misfortune which had happened to him.

"You have allowed yourself to be deceived! Take this dagger and go again to the Magician. See that he does not fool you this time!"

Then she gave him all sorts of good advice for his dangerous journey, and bestowed on him her blessing. Arrived at the great gate of the palace, he knocked three times. Then the Magician cried, as before:

"Woe to you, bold stranger! What is your wish?"

"If you are really the Magician, you are to fight with me!"

The Magician, armed to his teeth, came rushing out in a rage. But when he saw the dagger he sank trembling on his knees, and begged piteously:

"Oh, spare my life."

"Good-for-nothing Magician!" the youth cried, angrily; "you have deceived me! Now I will keep you in chains until the Princess is freed from the spell!"

Then he put him in chains, stuck the dagger into the earth, and fastened the chain to it so that the Magician could not move.

The Cotton-wool Princess I I I

“You are mightier than I! Now I realise it!” cried the enchained Magician, gnashing his teeth. “Take the goldsmith’s ring from the Princess’s finger, and she will be released from the spell.”

Not until the youth had learnt that the Princess had escaped with only a few burns on her hands, owing to the promptness of the bystanders in extinguishing the flames, did he summon up enough courage to appear before the King again.

“Your Majesty, I implore your pardon!” he said. “The treacherous Magician, not I, was the cause of the disaster. Now I have completely overcome him, and my remedy will succeed. I have only to draw the goldsmith’s ring from your daughter’s finger and she will be all right again.”

And so it happened. As soon as the ring was taken off, the Princess at once changed back to what she had been before. But who would believe it to be possible? Her tongue, eyes, and ears were missing; they had been consumed by the flames! The youth’s perplexity at this new disaster was indescribable. Again he applied to his guardian Fairy for help.

“You have let him make a fool of you a second time!” she said, again giving him advice, to help him towards the fulfilment of his wish of becoming the King’s son-in-law.

When he came to the Magician he shouted at him:

“You miserable deceiver! Now my patience is at an end! But eye for eye, tongue for tongue, ear for ear!”

With these words he seized the Magician to strangle him.

But the latter cried, in the utmost peril of death:

"Have mercy! Have mercy! Let me live! Go to my sisters, who live a little farther back than this."

Then he gave him the necessary directions so that he might find the way there without delay, and also the magic word which he had to pronounce at the gate. After some hours he came to the gate of a palace, which was in every respect like that of the Magician. He knocked, and in answer to the question:

"Who are you, and what do you want here?"

He answered:

"I want the little gold horn."

"I perceive that my brother has sent you to me. What does he want of me?"

"He wants a little piece of red cloth; he has torn a hole in his cloak."

"Here's a piece, and now get you gone from here!" a woman in the palace cried angrily, at the same time throwing into his opened hands a little piece of red cloth, which she had cut in the shape of a tongue.

He journeyed on for several hours, and at last came to the foot of a high mountain. On a spur of rock was a castle, which looked exactly like that of the Magician. Then he knocked at the great gate, and a voice came from the interior, saying:

"Who are you, and what is your desire?"

"I want the little gold hand."

"That's all right. I perceive that my brother has sent you. What does he want from me?"

"He wants two lentil-grains for soup."

"What rubbish! Here, take them and make yourself scarce!"



“THE OWNER OF THE CASTLE THREW HIM TWO LITTLE LENTIL-GRAINS” (p. 113).

Then the owner of the castle threw him two little lentil-grains wrapped in a piece of paper, and noisily closed the window.

At last he came to a wide plain, in the middle of which

a castle exactly like the Magician's was built. When he knocked he was asked what he wanted, and answered:

"I want the little gold foot."

"Ah! my brother has sent you to me! And what does he wish from me?"

"He wishes you to send him two snails for his supper."

"Here they are, but now leave me in peace!" a woman called out, ungraciously, from the window, at the same time throwing him the two snails he desired.

Now the youth returned with the things he had collected to the Magician, and said:

"Here I bring you what you wished for."

Then the Magician gave him all the necessary instructions as to the use of the three things. But when the youth turned his back to go away, the captive cried, imploringly:

"And you are going to leave me lying here?"

"It would be no more than you deserve. However, I will release you. But woe betide you if you have deceived me again."

After the youth had released the Magician from his chains, he hurried away to appear before the Princess.

Opening her mouth, he put in it the little piece of red stuff which he had brought with him, and she at once had a tongue.

But the first words which came from her mouth were:

"Miserable cobbler! Out of my sight! Begone!"

The poor youth was motionless with painful amazement, and said to himself:

"This is once more the work of the faithless Magician."

But he would not let this bitter ingratitude prevent

The Cotton-wool Princess 115

him from completing the good work. Then, taking the two little lentil-grains, he put them into the blind pupils of the girl's eyes, and at once she was able to see as before. But no sooner had she turned her eyes upon him than she covered her face with her hands and cried scornfully :

“Oh, how ugly mankind is! How horribly ugly!”

The poor youth's courage nearly vanished, and again he said to himself :

“The worthless Magician has done this for me!”

But he would not allow himself to be put out. Taking the empty snail-shells from his pocket, he put them very skilfully where the girl's ears had once been, and behold! the Princess had back again her sweet little ears.

Then the youth turned to the King and said :

“Your Majesty, now I am your son-in-law!”

But when the Princess heard these words she began to weep like a spoilt child, sobbing :

“He called me a witch! He said I was an old witch!”

That was too much ingratitude for the poor youth. Without saying a word, he hurriedly left the castle to seek out his Fairy.

“Fairy, where are you?” he cried, still trembling with anger and vexation.

“I am at your service.”

Then he told her how shamefully he had been treated by the Princess, who was now restored to health.

The Fairy said, laughing :

“You probably forgot to take the Magician's other ring from her little finger?”

“Oh dear! I did not think of that in my confusion,”

exclaimed the youth, seizing his head between his two hands in mingled terror and shame.

“Now hasten and repair the mistake!” advised the Fairy.

Sooner than he had thought possible, he was standing in front of the Princess and drew the evil ring from her little finger. Then a lovely smile spread over her beautiful features, and she thanked him so sweetly and kindly that he became red with embarrassment.

Then the King said, solemnly:

“This is your husband.”

And the youth and the Princess embraced one another in the sight of all, and a few days afterwards the wedding was celebrated.

The Ant Mountain



From the German

THERE was once a most beautiful maiden named Viorica. Her hair was of a golden hue, her eyes were blue as the heavens, her cheeks like milk, her lips red as cherries, and her slight, graceful form was supple as a reed. All mankind rejoiced when they beheld the beautiful maiden, but not so much on account of her surpassing loveliness as because of her great industry, and her exceeding skill in weaving and in all kinds of embroidery.

All her linen, her dresses, and even her Sunday stockings she had embroidered with flowers. Her little hands could not rest for a single moment; she worked whilst walking in the fields and meadows, as well as in the house. All the young men were in love with the beautiful Viorica. She, however, paid no heed to them; she did

not wish to hear of love or marriage; she had no time for that, she said, she must look after her mother.

But the hour at length arrived when her mother fell ill, and all Viorica's love was unable to chain her to the earth. The beautiful maiden had to close the beloved eyes, and was left all alone in the little house now so desolate. For the first time in her life, Viorica's little hands lay idle in her lap. How could she work? She had no longer any one to work for.

One day, shortly after her sad loss, she was sitting on the doorstep looking sorrowfully out into the distance, when her attention was attracted by something long and black that moved rapidly over the ground towards her. She looked with curiosity at the moving mass, and saw it was an endless procession of ants. From whence they came she could not discover, the wandering host stretched so far. At a short distance from the cottage they halted, and formed an immense circle round about the astonished maiden. Several of them, apparently the leaders of the host, then stepped forward, and said:

"We know you well, Viorica, and have often marvelled at your industry, which closely resembles our own, a thing we very rarely find among mortals.

"We know also that you are alone in the world, and therefore beg you to come with us and be our queen. We will build you a palace that shall be larger and more beautiful than any house you have ever seen, only first you must promise to remain with us all your life long, and never again return to dwell among men."

"I will willingly remain with you," replied Viorica. "I have nothing to keep me here except my mother's

grave ; that I must visit from time to time to plant it with fresh flowers."

"You shall certainly visit your mother's grave, but you must speak to no one on your way, otherwise you will be untrue to us, and our vengeance will be terrible."

So Viorica went away with the ants. They journeyed on for a long time, until at length they reached a place where it seemed suitable to build her a palace. Then she saw how much less skilful she was than the ants. She could never have erected such a building in so short a time. There were galleries one above the other leading to spacious rooms, and ever higher and higher ; at the summit of the building were the rooms for the larvæ, who had to be carried out into the sunshine, and brought in again swiftly should raindrops threaten. The bed-chambers were adorned in the most costly manner with the leaves of flowers, which were nailed to the walls with the needle-like leaves of the fir-tree, and Viorica learned to spin cobwebs ; these formed the carpets and the coverings for the beds.

But though all the rooms in the palace were beautiful, their beauty was as nothing when compared with the apartment destined for Viorica. Many passages led thither, thus in a few seconds she could receive news from every part of her kingdom, and these passages the industrious little ants daily strewed with the leaves of the crimson poppy to form a rich carpet for the feet of their beloved queen. The doors were rose leaves fastened together by a silken thread, so that they might open and shut without noise. The floor of Viorica's chamber was covered with a soft, thick carpet of forget-

me-nots, into which her rosy feet sank, for she did not need shoes here; they would have been much too rough, and would have spoilt the beautiful carpet. The walls were covered with carnations, honeysuckle, and forget-me-nots cleverly woven together; these flowers the ants also constantly renewed, and their freshness and sweet perfume were almost overpowering. The curtains were of the leaves of lilies, spread out like a pavilion; the couch, which the diligence of the little ants had stored up in many weeks' work, was composed entirely of the dust of flowers, and over it was spread a coverlet of Viorica's spinning. When she lay there wrapt in slumber she was so beautiful that the stars would have fallen from heaven could they have seen her. But the ants had placed her chamber in the centre of the palace, and guarded their beloved queen most closely and jealously. There was not one of them would have ventured to look on her while asleep.

In the ants' little kingdom everything was most perfectly arranged. Each ant strove to do more work than the others, and to be the one who should best please the industrious queen. Her orders were carried out with the rapidity of lightning, for she never required too much at a time or ordered impossible things, while her commands were issued in such soft, gentle tones that they sounded more like suggestions or kindly advice, and one sunny glance from her bright eyes was deemed by all a more than sufficient reward for any amount of toil.

The ants often said they had the sunshine continually in their house, and exulted much in their good fortune,



“WHO DARES LAY INSOLENT HANDS ON MY KINGDOM?” (p. 125).

To show their gratitude to Viorica they built her a platform, where she could enjoy the fresh air and sunshine should her room feel too small and close. From thence she could see the height of the palace, which already resembled a mighty mountain.

One day as she sat in her chamber embroidering the wings of butterflies on a dress with the silken thread of a caterpillar that the ants had brought her, she heard a noise about her mountain. It sounded like the noise of voices, and the next moment all her subjects were crowding around her alarmed and breathless.

“Our house is being destroyed!” they cried. “Wicked men are knocking it down. Two, three galleries are already destroyed, and the next is threatened. What shall we do? oh, what shall we do?”

“What! nothing more than this?” said Viorica. “I will stop this immediately, and in two days the galleries will all be rebuilt.”

Saying this, she hastened through the labyrinth of passages and suddenly appeared on her platform. Then she beheld a handsome youth who, having dismounted from his horse, was busily engaged destroying the ant mountain, his attendants assisting him with swords and lances. On seeing her they at once stopped their work, while the handsome youth, half-blinded by her beauty, shaded his eyes with his hand and gazed in admiration at the slim figure in shimmering garments that stood before him. Viorica's golden hair fell in thick masses around her feet, a soft flush overspread her features, and her eyes gleamed like the stars. She lowered them for a few seconds before the youth's admiring gaze,

but at length, raising her lids, she opened her rosy mouth and said, in a musical voice :



“THE WICKED MAN . . . IS RIDING ROUND OUR MOUNTAIN” p. 127).

“Who is it dares lay insolent hands on my kingdom ?”

“Pardon, gracious maiden !” cried the astonished youth.

"I am a knight, and a King's son, but henceforth I will be your most zealous defender! How could I guess that a goddess, a fairy, ruled this kingdom?"

"I thank you," replied Viorica. "I require no other service than that of my faithful subjects, and only desire that no human foot should enter my kingdom."

With these words she disappeared suddenly, as though the mount had swallowed her up. Those outside did not see how all the ants came crowding round to kiss her feet, and then led her back in triumph to her chamber, where she resumed her work as quietly as though nothing had happened. The King's son remained standing before the mountain like one lost in a dream; for a whole hour he did not stir, or even think of remounting his horse. He still hoped that the gracious queen would reappear, even were it with reproving look and word, so that he might once more behold her. But he waited in vain. Ants came in endless crowds, all eagerly striving to make good the damage that he in his youthful gaiety had caused. These he would willingly have trodden underfoot in his anger and impatience, for although he questioned them, it seemed they either did not hear or did not understand his words, but continued their work and ran quite boldly about his feet, as if certain of their safety. At length, in despair, the prince mounted his horse and plunged into the forest, where he rode about all night trying to devise a scheme by which he might win this most beautiful maiden for his wife.

Viorica always lay down to rest later than her subjects; she used to look after the larvæ herself every night, and feel if their little beds were soft enough; and so,

holding a glow-worm on the tip of her finger, she raised one flower curtain after another, and looked tenderly on the young brood. Then, returning to her chamber, she dismissed all the glow-worms and fire-flies, which for many hours had lighted her at her work. Only one little glow-worm remained with her whilst she undressed. Usually it was only a moment before she was sunk in deep sleep; to-night she tossed restlessly from side to side, twisted her hair round her finger, sat up and lay down again, and then she was so warm—oh, so very warm! She had never before found there was too little air in her kingdom. Now she longed to hasten out into the open air, but feared she might be heard and her evil example infect others. She had already, pressed by her subjects, been obliged to pass many a hard sentence, and to banish ants from the community on account of forbidden wanderings; she had even been compelled to sentence some to death, and to watch with bleeding heart whilst they were pitilessly stung to death by the others.

The next morning she was up before any of the ants, and astonished them by building up one of the galleries alone. That she had at the same time looked out into the forest, and also listened a little, she did not even know herself. She had scarcely returned to her chamber when some ants came running in in great consternation.

“The wicked man of yesterday is here again, and is riding round our mountain.”

“Leave him alone!” said Viorica, the queen, quite calmly. But the heart of Viorica, the gentle maiden, beat so loudly she was obliged to draw a deep breath.

After this a noticeable unrest took possession of her;

she wandered about much more than formerly, complained that the larvæ were too little in the sun, and carried them out herself, but only to bring them in again just as quickly; moreover, she often contradicted herself when giving her orders. The ants could not tell what had happened to her, and exerted themselves doubly to make everything good and beautiful; they also surprised her with a new and magnificent curtain, but she scarcely looked at it, and quite forgot to praise.

The tramp of horse's feet could be heard daily round the mountain, but for many days Viorica did not show herself.

She was now seized with a longing for the society of mankind such as she had never before experienced. She thought of her village, her little home, her mother, and her mother's grave that she had never visited.

A few days later she told her subjects that she intended visiting her mother's grave, whereupon the ants, terrified, asked if she were no longer happy with them that she remembered her home.

"Oh no," said Viorica, "I shall only be away for a few hours. I will be with you again before nightfall."

She forbade any of them to accompany her, but a few ants followed her at a distance without her noticing them. Arrived at the village, she found every place so altered that she knew she must have been away a long time. She began to reckon how long it would have taken the ants to build the great mountain in which she dwelt, and she told herself that it must have taken years. Her mother's grave was no longer to be found, it was so overgrown with grass, and Viorica wandered about



"IT WAS SWEET TO HEAR ONCE MORE A HUMAN VOICE" (p. 130).

the churchyard weeping bitterly because this also had grown strange to her. Evening came on, and still poor Viorica sought for the grave she could not find. Then close behind her sounded the voice of the King's son. She wished to flee. But he held her fast, and told her of his great love in such soft and tender words, that, with bent head, she stood still and listened. It was so sweet to hear once more a human voice speaking of love and friendship. It was only when darkness had quite fallen that she remembered she was a queen, forgetting her duty, and not a forsaken orphan, and that the ants had forbidden her to hold any communication with mortals. Swiftly she fled from the King's son. But he followed her until they came quite close to the ant mountain, when she begged and implored him to leave her. This he at length consented to do, but not until she had promised to return the following evening.

She crept in softly and groped her way carefully along the narrow passages, but often paused and looked round anxiously, for she seemed to hear strange sounds, as of a swift tripping and whispering all around her. It was, however, only the anxious beating of her own heart; for as soon as she stood still all was quiet. At length she reached her chamber and sank exhausted on the couch; but no sleep visited her eyes. She felt she had broken her promise, and how could she be any longer respected since her word was not sacred? She tossed restlessly to and fro. Her pride revolted against secrecy; still, she hesitated to reveal her adventure of yesterday, for she knew the ants, their fierce hatred and their pitiless punishments. Oftentimes she raised herself

on her elbow, and always she seemed to hear the swift tripping of many thousand feet: it was as if the whole mountain were alive.

As soon as she felt the approach of morning, she raised the flower curtain to hasten out into the open air. But how astonished was she when she found the opening completely blocked up with the needle-pointed leaves of the fir-tree. She sought a second, a third, and so on all the openings; but in vain, all were alike entirely filled up. Then she began to call aloud, and, behold! immediately, through many thousand invisible openings, the ants came in in crowds.

"I wish to go out into the open air," she said sternly.

"No, no," replied the ants, "we cannot let you go out, else we should lose you."

"Do you then no longer obey me?" she asked.

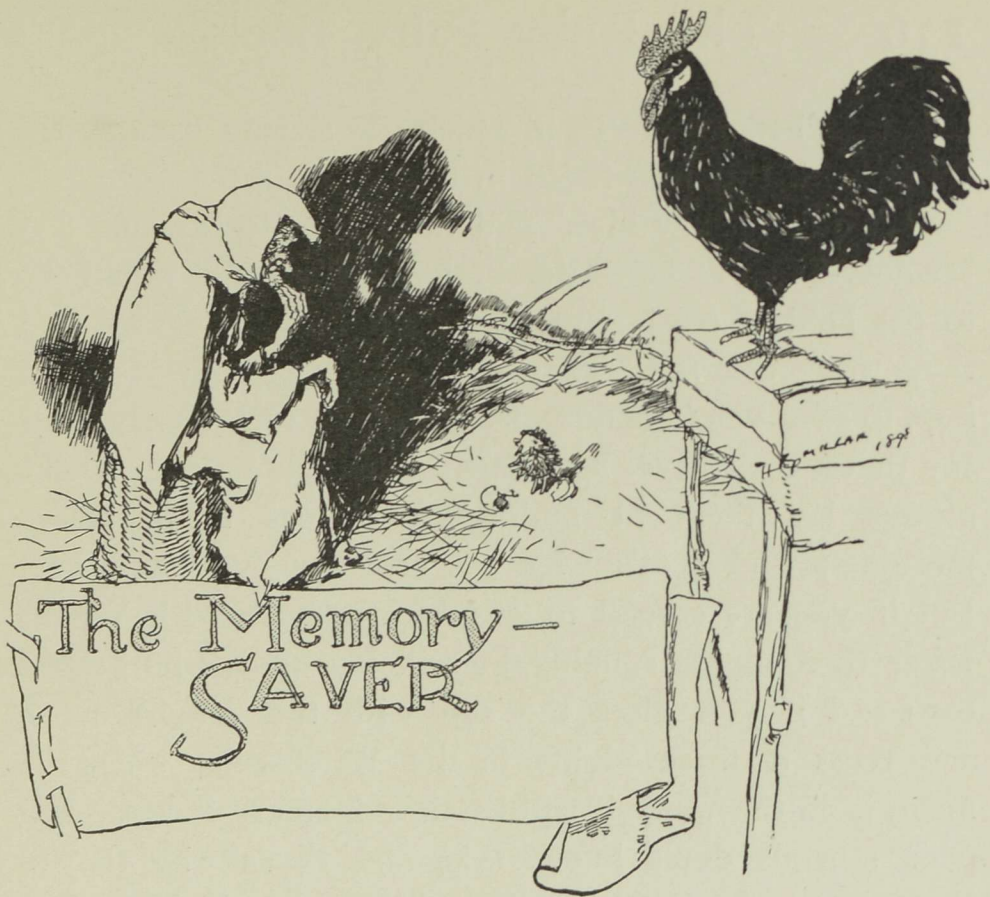
"Oh yes, in all things except this one. You may tread us under your feet as punishment: we are ready and willing to die for the welfare of the community. The honour of our beloved queen must be preserved at all cost."

Viorica bent her head, and tears streamed from her eyes. She implored the ants to give her her liberty; the stern little creatures silently, and with one accord, departed, and she was left alone in the sweet-scented chamber. Oh, how poor Viorica wept and lamented, and tore her beautiful hair! Then she began with her delicate fingers to tear her way out, but, alas! all that she tore away was as swiftly rebuilt, and, at length, she threw herself on the ground, baffled and exhausted. The ants then returned, bringing her the sweetest flowers, nectar,

and dewdrops to quench her thirst, but of her complaints they took no notice. Fearing that her lamentations might be heard by the King's son, the ants built the palace ever higher and higher, until at length it became a mountain that towered far above all the mountains around, and it received the name of the Ant Mountain, which name it still retains.

The King's son has long since ceased to wander round the mountain, but the unfortunate maiden has never ceased to weep, and when the stillness of night reigns over the forest, the sound of Viorica's weeping may be heard to this day.

The Memory-Saver



By F. C. Younger

IT was midnight; the Witch was sitting on an up-turned basket in the hen-house, staring at the Memory-Saver. No one but a witch could have seen at all inside the hen-house, but this particular Witch had gathered pieces of decayed wood on the way there, lit them at glow-worms, and stuck them on the walls. They burnt with a weird blue light, and showed the old Witch on the basket, scratching her bristly chin; the Black Cock in a kind of faint up in one corner, with his eyes turned up till they showed the whites; the empty nest; the halves of a broken egg-shell on the floor; and beside them a tiny round black lump, with all sorts of queer

little tags hanging on to it, which was staring back at the Witch with two frightened little pink eyes.

“It’s quite a new idea,” said the Witch to herself. “A Memory-Saver! How thankful many people would be to get hold of one! But they don’t know the way, and they won’t ask me. They don’t know how to hatch an imp, to save your memory, from a cock’s egg. They even say that a cock never lays eggs. Such ignorance! Cocks always lay them at midnight and eat them before morning; and that’s why no one has ever seen one. But if you are careful to sprinkle the cock with Witch-water three nights running, he will lay an egg he cannot eat; and if you bless the egg with the Witch’s curse, and roast it three nights in the Witch’s fire when the moon is on the wane, it will hatch a Memory-Saver. But poor mortals don’t know this, and that’s why they’re always worrying and ‘taxing their memories,’ as they call it, instead of hiring a nice little imp to save them the trouble. Come here, my dear!” she added, addressing the Memory-Saver.

The little black lump rolled over and over until he reached her feet, then gave a jump and landed on two of the thickest of his tags, which supported him like two little legs. With two others he began to rub his little black self all over, while he shed little green tears from his little pink eyes.

He was a queer little person, very like an egg in shape, with no features but a pair of little pink eyes near the top, and a wide slit which went about half-way round him, and served him for a mouth. The Witch regarded him in silence; she knew that inside him was nothing

but a number of little rooms, carefully partitioned off from one another, which could be emptied by pulling the tag attached to each outside.

There was no sound in the hen-house but the frightened clucking of the hens, the gasping of the Black Cock in the corner, and the sobbing of the imp, which sounded like the squeaking of a slate-pencil on a slate. Presently the Witch patted the Memory-Saver on the head.

“Don’t cry, my dear,” she said; “there’s nothing to cry about! And don’t look at that silly Black Cock in the corner. He isn’t your mother any longer. I’m your mother now—at least, all the mother you’ll get, and I shall pinch you if you don’t work. I’ll just see if you are in good working order now.”

She lifted the imp in her hand as she spoke, and pulled one of the little tags hanging behind him. The Memory-Saver gave a gasp, and, opening his mouth to its widest extent, he began to repeat, rapidly:

“J’ai—tu as—il a—nous avons—vous avez—ils ont.”

“Very good!” said the Witch, “the French string is in order. I’ll try the poetry.”

She pulled another tag as she spoke.

“‘Th’ Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And—his cohorts were—gleaming like purple and gold;
And the—sheen of their—spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue—waves roll—nightly on deep Galilee.’”

panted the Memory-Saver.

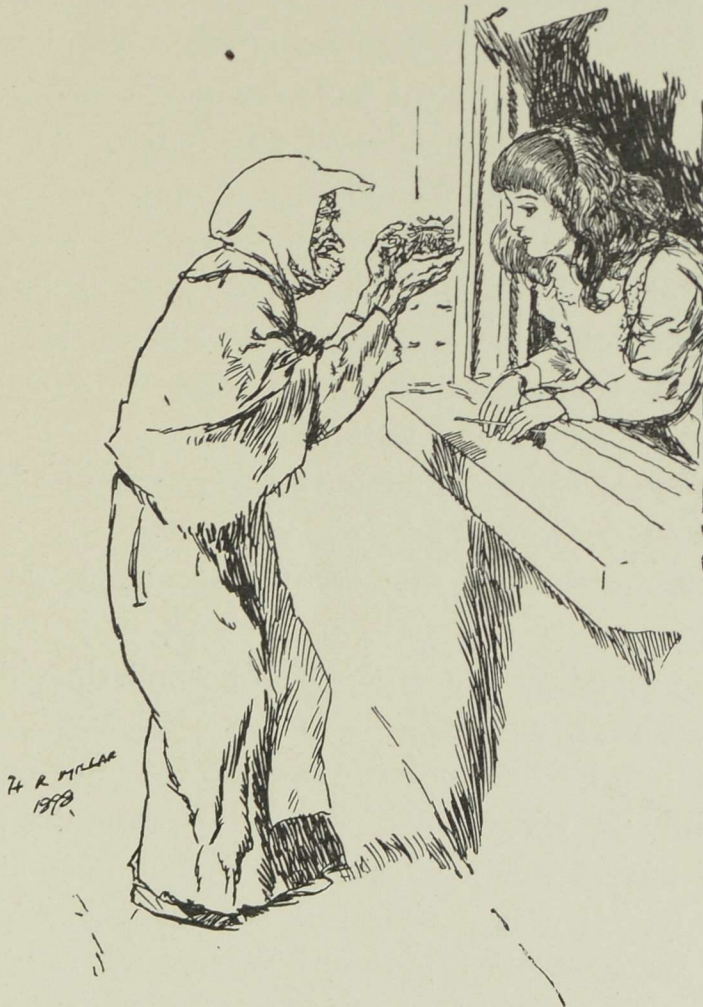
“A little jerky,” said the Witch, doubling the strings round the imp and putting him in her pocket; “but it will work smoother in time. It’s a splendid idea,” she went on, as she buttoned her cloak and opened the

door. "A Memory-Saver! Pull the string of the subject you want (the name is written on each tag), and the imp will tell you all about it. Read a set of lessons to him, and then pull the strings belonging to them, and he'll reel them all off word for word. How many children I know would like to get him to take to school in their pockets! There's little Miss Myra, who is always in trouble about her lessons; she would give all she's got for him. But I'll only part with him at my own price."

The Witch had left the hen-house, and was trotting as fast as she could down a little woodland path. The poor little Memory-Saver was jogged this way and that among the rubbish in the Witch's pocket—queer stones, herbs, little dead toads, pounded spiders, and bat's wings. He would soon have been black with bruises if he had not been black by nature. But the worst pain he suffered was anxiety as to what would become of him. What was the Witch going to do with him? Why had she taken him away from the Black Cock, who at least was friendly, if he did gasp and show the whites of his eyes? The imp cried again, and wondered how long he would have to stay in that choky pocket.

He had not long to wait. That very afternoon the Witch saw Myra crying over her lessons at the window. She was kept in to learn them, and was feeling miserable and cross. No one was about, so the Witch crept up to the window, and told her all about the Memory-Saver, ending by producing him from her pocket. Oh! how glad he was to get out! He sat gasping with delight on the Witch's hand, while she explained his talents to some one. Who was it? The imp looked up and saw

a little girl about ten years old, with an inky pinafore, and long, tumbled brown curls. She looked so much nicer than the Witch, that the Memory-Saver gazed up in her face with a forlorn little smile—or at least a smile



“WHAT A QUEER LITTLE THING!” CRIED MYRA” (p. 139).

that would have been “little” if his mouth had not been so wide.

“What a queer little thing!” cried Myra. “I should like to have him, only—how *could* he do all you say?”

"Just listen," said the Witch, pulling a string.

"William I., 1066—William II., 1087—Henry I., 1100—Stephen, 1135 . . ." said the Memory-Saver, solemnly.

Myra danced with delight.

"Oh, he's splendid!" she cried. "He's just what I want. I never can remember dates. Oh, how much does he cost? I'm afraid I haven't enough money."

"I'm sure you haven't," said the Witch. "I wouldn't part with him for untold gold."

"Then it's no use," said Myra, sadly. "I haven't even got *told* gold, only three shillings and twopence-ha'penny."

"You've got something else that will do better," said the Witch, coaxingly. "Hasn't your brother a large collection of moths and butterflies?"

"Yes," said Myra, looking rather puzzled; "but what has that to do with it?"

"Show me the top drawer of his cabinet, dear," said the Witch.

Myra walked to the cabinet, still wondering, drew out the top drawer, and took it to the window.

The Witch looked up and down the long rows of moths, each with its wings outspread on a separate pin. At last she picked out a great death's-head, and looked at it lovingly. It was a beautiful specimen, just what she wanted for her latest potion, a wonderful mixture that would enable you to turn fifteen cart-wheels on a cobweb without breaking it.

"I'll give you the Memory-Saver for this," she cried, eagerly.

"Oh, but it isn't mine!" said Myra, hastily pulling back the drawer.

"It's your brother's, dear," coaxed the Witch. "You know he would not mind."

"He would," said Myra; "it's his best specimen; he told me so yesterday."

"Well, it does him no good in the drawer," pleaded the Witch; "and the Memory-Saver would prevent your being scolded and punished for not knowing your lessons, as you are almost every day. Besides, you could easily save your pocket-money and buy him another moth."

"They're so dear!" sighed Myra. "But grandma always gives me half a sovereign at Christmas. Well, if you like——"

Myra always maintains that she never gave the Witch permission to take the moth; but, as she spoke, they both vanished, and Myra only saw the drawer with the big gap in its row of moths where the death's-head had been, and the Memory-Saver grinning ecstatically at her from the window-sill. Poor little fellow, he was *so* glad to get away from the Witch's pocket!

Myra's first thought was to move the pins of the other moths, so as to fill up the big gap.

"Then perhaps he won't notice it's gone," she said to herself; "and, as the Witch said, it didn't do him any good in the drawer."

Then she took up the little Memory-Saver and examined him curiously. He was a funny little creature—funnier than ever just now, for he was trying to express his joy at his change of mistresses, which produced a violent commotion in all his tags, and considerably enlarged his mouth. Myra couldn't help laughing, but as she was rather afraid of offending the Memory-Saver,

she begged his pardon immediately, and made him a comfortable seat on some books on the table.

“Now, Memory-Saver,” she said, “I’m going to read my lessons aloud to you, as the Witch told me. Then you’ll know them all, won’t you?”

The Memory-Saver nodded so emphatically that he fell off the books. Myra picked him up, examined him anxiously to see if he were hurt, and, finding he was not, sat him down again.

“I’ve got two lots of lessons to do,” she said, mournfully, “yesterday’s and to-day’s. Could you do both at once, or would it strain you too much?”

The Memory-Saver shook himself off his seat this time, in his eagerness to assure her he could do twenty lots if necessary. When he was once more settled comfortably Myra began to read. The Memory-Saver sat contentedly absorbing French and geography and tables.

“I wonder if you really know it all,” said Myra, gravely, when she had finished. “No, don’t nod any more, or you will fall off again. I’ll just try one string.” She took him up, found the one marked “Tables,” and gave it a gentle tug.

“Once nine is nine, twice nine are eighteen, three times nine are twenty-seven,” said the Memory-Saver, glibly.

“Stop! Stop! that will do!” cried Myra, delighted. “Don’t use it all up before to-morrow.”

The next thing was to find somewhere to keep her new treasure—some place where no one could find him; for Myra felt certain that the stupid grown-up people would not approve of her imp, or see his usefulness as clearly as she did.

"They always say, 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try again,' and 'You must cultivate your memory,' when I tell them I can't remember my lessons," she said to herself. "They would take the Memory-Saver away from me if they found him. I must put it somewhere so that they *can't* find him."

Such a place was not easy to find, but at last Myra fixed on the top of the wardrobe in her bedroom.

"They only dust there at spring-cleaning time," she said to herself, "and I can move him then."

So she filled a box with cotton-wool, put the Memory-Saver in it, and placed it on top of the wardrobe.

"Are you quite comfortable?" she asked; and the Memory-Saver almost nodded himself out of his box in his joy. It was Paradise after the Witch's pocket.

"What a good thing he doesn't want anything to eat!" thought Myra, noticing with satisfaction that the wood-work of the wardrobe quite hid him from any one below. "The Witch said he feeds on the lessons. How horrible! I shouldn't like French verbs for breakfast, and grammar for dinner. They can't be satisfying, but, anyhow, they're easy to get. I always have more than I want."

For some days the Memory-Saver was a great success. Myra put him carefully in her pocket before she went to school, and pulled the right string when she was called up to say her lessons. His voice was rather a sing-song, but that couldn't be helped. Miss Prisms, the school-mistress, sent home to Myra's delighted mother a report that her little girl was making wonderful progress in everything but arithmetic and writing. In these, alas! the Memory-Saver could not help her. He could say

tables, and weights and measures, but could not do sums in his head, for the simple reason that he had no head.

At first he was very happy, for Myra took great care of him; but by degrees she grew careless. She found out he was quite as useful when treated roughly as when treated kindly, and as it was less trouble to treat him roughly, she did so.

“Why can’t you do mental arithmetic?” she asked him, severely, one day when she had got into trouble over her sums. “Aren’t you ashamed to be so ignorant, you little imp?”

The Memory-Saver waved his little tags in a wild attempt to explain that it was because he hadn’t got a mind, only two little pink eyes, a big mouth, and a lot of little partitions inside him to keep the different kinds of knowledge apart. Unhappily the many bumps he had had lately had been very bad for his internal constitution, even if the bruises had not shown outside; the partitions were beginning to leak. All this he tried to explain by waving his little arms and legs. But Myra was unsympathetic and did not understand him. She scolded him heartily, and was not even melted by the little green tears that trickled from his little pink eyes into his big mouth. But she was to be punished for it. The poor little Memory-Saver had to remember all that was said to him whether he liked it or not, and so, when Myra pulled the geography string next morning in school, he began:

“England is bounded on the north by Scotland . . . why can’t you do mental arithmetic? . . . on the south by the English Channel . . . aren’t you ashamed . . .

on the east by the German Ocean . . . to be so ignorant?
. . . and on the west by the Irish Sea . . . you little imp!
. . . and St. George's Channel."

"Myra!" gasped Miss Prisms, and for at least two minutes could say no more.



"HER BROTHER WAS MAKING A 'RIDICULOUS FUSS'" (p. 146).

"I—I—didn't mean anything," stammered Myra, blushing crimson and ready to cry.

"I should hope not," said Miss Prisms, severely. "You will learn double lessons for to-morrow, Myra."

“It’s all your fault!” said Myra, angrily, to the Memory-Saver, when she got home. “You must learn all the lessons for me, and then I’m going to slap you, do you hear? You horrid little thing!”

The Memory-Saver heard well enough, and understood too. Myra was in a very bad temper. Her brother had discovered that his death’s-head moth was missing, and was making what Myra called a “ridiculous fuss” about it. He had not asked her if she knew where it was, but she felt very uncomfortable all the same. She did not think he would have minded so much. Being uncomfortable, she was cross; and as she dared not be cross with Miss Prisms, she was cross with the Memory-Saver, and fulfilled her promise of slapping him when he had done the double lessons for her. She was too absorbed in her own trouble to notice that his box was half off the wardrobe top when she put him—not over gently—into it; and the bump with which she landed on the floor as she got down from the chair on which she had been standing quite drowned the bump the box made as it fell behind the wardrobe. The poor little Memory-Saver fell out with a crash, and lay half stunned, feebly waving his little tags. No one came to pick him up, so he lay there all through the long, dark night. He was cracked all over, and something very peculiar had happened to his interior. In fact, though he did not know it, all the partitions had at last given way, and the French, history, spelling, geography, and tables had run into one another, and were now all mixed in one great pulpy mass inside him. No wonder he felt uncomfortable!

When Myra came for him in the morning she found

out what had happened. She fished him out from behind the wardrobe with a good deal of difficulty, and looked at him in consternation. He was sticky all over with



"THE GIRLS TITTERED" (p. 148).

the tears he had shed, was very soft and limp, and, worst of all, was leaking the Wars of the Roses and the chief towns of France from more than one crack. However,

Myra was late as it was ; she had no time to examine him carefully. She put him in her pocket, and ran off to school. She put her hand in her pocket to feel if he were safe as soon as she got to her seat. He felt softer and stickier than ever. Would he be able to say the lessons? Myra felt doubtful, but as she did not remember a word of them herself, she was obliged to trust to him. Trembling she pulled the "Poetry" string, when Miss Prisms called on her for her lesson. The Memory-Saver gasped and began ; each word hurt him very much to bring out, but as they came he began to feel strange and light, happier than he had ever felt before. This is what he said :

"A chieftain to the Highlands bound cries—the feminine of adjectives is formed by adding eleven times nine are Rouen, former capital of Normandy, and heir-presumptive to the throne by his descent from the son of Edward III., eleven times twelve are le père, the father, la mère, the mother—Oh, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle, and this, Paris on the Seine"

"Myra, stop at once!" cried Miss Prisms, angrily ; but Myra, or, rather, the Memory-Saver, could not stop. His internal partitions were gone, and whichever string was pulled he was obliged to let out all that was inside him. So for ten dreadful minutes he went on, pouring out French, geography, history, and tables in one terrible mixture, while Myra wished she could sink through the floor, the girls tittered, and Miss Prisms' anger changed to anxiety. She began to fan Myra with an exercise-book, begged her to be quiet, and assured her she would be "better directly." At last, however, the Memory-

Saver came to an end ; he would have been much longer, but a great deal had leaked out of him in the night.

“Twelve twelves are a hundred and fourty-four—Bayonne at the mouth of the Adour, mounted the throne as Henry VII.,” he concluded.

Myra burst out crying. Miss Prisms made her take sal-volatile and lie on the sofa in her sitting-room. As soon as school was over, she took Myra home herself, and told her mother the little girl must be going to have brain-fever. The doctor was called in and shook his head, looking very wise, although he could find nothing at all the matter with Myra. “It is a curious case,” he said, “let her stay away from school for a week, and send for me if another attack comes on.”

Myra was not sorry for the holiday ; it gave her time to examine the Memory-Saver carefully. She ran through the garden to a little nook by the duck-pond, where no one could see her, before she dared take him out of her pocket and look at him. Poor little Memory-Saver ! She could hardly recognise him as the round, plump, cheery little fellow, who had first beamed at her from the window-sill. He was quite flat, for Myra had sat on him in her excitement ; he was soft and pulpy ; his little pink eyes had retreated and lost colour, and his great mouth opened and shut in gasps like that of a fish out of water. Myra gazed at him horrified. What could she do to revive him ? She turned him over and fanned him with a dock-leaf, but he only gasped. Then she tried the effect of a little geography, but the result was disastrous ; as fast as it entered the poor little imp, it oozed out again all over him, and he turned almost green with pain.

“Why are you tormenting my offspring?” said a sharp, angry voice at Myra’s elbow. “Leave him alone, or give him to me; I’m hungry!”

It was Myra’s turn to gasp now; the Black Cock had never spoken to her before, and she did not even know he could talk. She looked at him more than half frightened.

“He—he isn’t yours, he’s mine,” she stammered.

“Yours, indeed!” crowed the Black Cock, indignantly, “when *I* had all the trouble of laying him? Wasn’t he hatched from one of my eggs at midnight, and stolen by the Witch?”

“I didn’t know he was,” said Myra.

“Well, now you do!” retorted the Cock. “Give him up! Didn’t I tell you I was hungry?”

“But you wouldn’t eat your own child!” cried Myra, aghast.

“Child or not,” said the Black Cock, “no kind of beetles come amiss to me.”

“He isn’t a beetle, he’s a Memory-Saver,” said Myra.

The Black Cock laughed, and Myra shrank back; she had never heard a Black Cock laugh before, and felt she would not be sorry to never hear it again; it was not a pleasant sound.

“I don’t know anything about memories,” said the Black Cock; “but look at him, and then tell me he’s not a beetle!”

Myra looked anxiously. Certainly something very curious was happening to the Memory-Saver; his little tags had arranged themselves in rows underneath him, he was growing longer, he was very like a beetle. *He was a beetle!*

Myra, who could not bear beetles, rose with a scream and threw him out of her lap on to the mud. The Black Cock rushed at him as he scuttled towards the water, but Myra drove him back, and allowed the Memory-Saver



"SHE THREW HIM OUT OF HER LAP" (p. 151).

time to reach the pond. She gave a little sigh of relief as he disappeared, while the Black Cock gave an angry crow, turned his back on Myra, and stalked back to the poultry yard. He never spoke to her again, but whether

it was because he was too offended, or for other reasons Myra never knew.

“After all,” she thought, as she went home, “I’m glad he turned into a water-beetle. It must be much more comfortable than always being full of lessons. I suppose he’ll live on mud now. I hope he’ll be happy. He was a good little fellow, and I wish I’d been kinder to him. How interested they will all be at home when I tell them about him!”

But they were not. They said she must be going to have brain-fever, and sent for the doctor again. The only part of her story they believed was that she had taken her brother’s moth from the cabinet, and this they said was naughty, and she must save up her pocket-money and buy another.

“I’ll never, *never* tell a grown-up person anything again!” thought Myra.

As for the Memory-Saver, at the bottom of the pond he met a pretty young lady water-beetle, and asked her to marry him at once, which she did. He raised a large family, and lived very happily ever after. None of the ducks dare touch him for fear of the Witch, so that he found life much more pleasant than when he was a Memory-Saver. Myra often walked round the pond, looking for him, but she never saw either him or the old Witch again.

The Story of Sunbeam



By Luigi Capuani

THERE was once a poor baker-woman whose only daughter was as black as coal and very ugly, and was therefore called by everybody "Tizzoncini," which means "blacker than burnt wood." Mother and daughter supported themselves miserably by baking bread, and Tizzoncini had to be on her legs from early morning to late night. "Halloa, Tizzoncini, get some hot water!" "Here, Tizzoncini, knead the dough." Now she had to run here and there, up and downstairs, with the tray under her arm and the basket on her head, to fetch from the

people their dough for bread and cakes. Then she had to hurry once more with the heavy basket on her back to the same houses to deliver the newly baked loaves and cakes. In short, poor Tizzoncini could not sit down to rest for a moment the whole day long.

Nevertheless, she was always in good spirits, and although the poor girl was covered over and over with pitch-black soot, and her tumbled hair hung down in tangles, although her feet were bare and coated with dirt and mud, and although her body was clothed in rags, yet her clear laugh could be heard ringing from one end of the street to the other.

“Tizzoncini has laid an egg!” the neighbours jeered, when they heard the girl laugh, for her unrestrained merriment reminded one forcibly of the cheerful cackle of a hen when it comes out of the nest.

As soon as the bells rang for vespers, mother and daughter locked themselves into their room, and did not even put the tips of their noses out of the window after that. That was all very well in winter; but in summer, when the whole neighbourhood was amusing itself in the open air, and going for walks in the moonlight, these two shut themselves up in their close room, which could really be no pleasure. The neighbours could not understand what it meant, and almost racked their brains to pieces from curiosity about it.

“Oh, baker-women, come into the open air for a little, come!” they cried in at the window.

“The air in here is much fresher!” the two replied.

“Oh, baker-women, see how splendidly the moon shines!”

“We have a much more beautiful light in here!” answered mother and daughter from inside.

Then the neighbours said :

“There is something wrong there!” and made every effort to get to look in at the windows, or to listen behind the door to what went on in the house. After a long search they at last found a little chink in the door, and, looking through it, were almost blinded by the brilliant light which met their eyes. And now, when they listened very quietly, they heard the mother say to her daughter :

“Dearest Sunbeam, dearest Sunbeam,
If it good to Heaven seem,
Some day the King will make you his Queen !”

Whereupon Tizzoncini’s merry laugh rang out.

And this went on every evening up to midnight. All the people were astonished at it, and one related the strange story to the other.

In this way it also reached the King’s ears, who fell into a furious passion at it, and ordered the baker-women to appear before him.

“Old witch!” he cried out, when they stepped before the throne, “if you go on like this, I will have you and your black daughter thrown into the deepest dungeon !”

“Please, your Majesty!” the old woman pleaded in a trembling voice, “not a word of the story is true ; the neighbours have lied !”

Tizzoncini, too, could not help laughing at the King’s suspicions.

“Aha! you laugh!” gasped the King in a rage, and he had them both thrown into prison.

But during the night a wonderful light shone through the cracks of the cell door, nearly blinding the gaoler, who at the same time heard the old woman sing :

“Dearest Sunbeam, dearest Sunbeam,
If it good to Heaven seem,
Some day the King will make you his Queen !”

Whereupon Tizzoncini broke out into such clear laughter that the whole prison resounded with it. The gaoler hurried to the King and reported to him what he had seen and heard, down to the smallest detail.

“So that is the way the wind blows!” cried the King, and commanded that the mother and daughter should be thrown into the dungeon deep down under the earth, which was intended for the worst criminals.

This was a pitch-dark little place, filled with damp air, in which one could scarcely breathe. On all sides muddy water had accumulated, so that not a single dry spot was left for the miserable prisoners to rest upon. But even here the wonderful brilliance shone, and the voice of the old woman sang :

“Dearest Sunbeam, dearest Sunbeam,
If it good to Heaven seem,
Some day the King will make you his Queen !”

The gaoler went once again to the King, and related faithfully what he had experienced in the night. But this time the King remained dumb with astonishment, and did not know in the least what to do.

Then he assembled the great ones of the kingdom, to take counsel with them about the matter. But they were



“HE ASSEMBLED THE GREAT ONES OF THE KINGDOM, TO TAKE COUNSEL WITH THEM” (p. 158).

not agreed themselves. For some advised the King to behead them both, while the others asserted again and again that the baker-women were innocent, and proposed, therefore, that they should quietly be set at liberty again. "For," they said to their Sovereign, "did not the old woman say in her song, 'If it seem good to Heaven'? Now, if it is the will of Heaven, the King himself cannot prevent it."

The King let himself be persuaded by these arguments, and gave orders that the old woman and Tizzoncini should be released from prison. The baker-women were heartily glad of regaining their freedom, and began once more to carry on their miserable trade as before.

Now, as there was not a single baker in the whole town who could bake as excellently as Tizzoncini and her mother, the two latter immediately had their hands full of work again, and already on the first day after their release all their customers had come back to them. Yes, even the Queen herself had her bread baked by them, and Tizzoncini now had often to climb the palace steps with her bare, mud-and-dirt-covered feet in order to deliver her goods.

"Tizzoncini, why do you not wash your face?" asked the Queen.

"Your Majesty, my skin is too tender—the water would ruin it."

"Tizzoncini, why do you not comb your hair?"

"Your Majesty, my hair is too fine, and the comb would tear it out of my head."

"Tizzoncini, why do you not buy yourself a pair of shoes?"

"My feet are too tender, the hard leather would rub them sore."

"Tizzoncini, then why does your mother call you 'Sunbeam'?"

"Because, if it seem good to Heaven, I shall one day be Queen," the maiden answered hereupon.

The Queen was greatly pleased at these answers; but Tizzoncini sprang hurriedly down the palace steps with the heavy basket on her head. And at the same time she laughed so clearly that it could be heard from one end of the street to the other, and the people ran together and cried:

"Tizzoncini has laid an egg!"

But the apparition in the night did not cease, and the neighbours were so badly tormented by curiosity that neither food nor drink had any more taste for them. Scarcely had they seen once again the wonderful brightness, and heard the old woman's song, than they set their brains to work to find out some means of getting to the bottom of the mystery.

"Hi, baker-woman!" one cried, "will you be so friendly as to lend me your flour-sieve? Mine has a hole in it."

Tizzoncini opened the door and handed out the sieve.

"What! You are in the dark! And when I knocked it was as bright as day in your room."

"Oh, you must have imagined that it was so."

"Baker-woman," called in another, "do not take my disturbing you amiss, but perhaps you can lend me a needle? Mine has just broken, and my sewing must be done by this evening."

Tizzoncini opened the door and held out the needle.

"What! You are quite in the dark? And when I knocked there was a light in your room."

"Ah! You must have imagined it," Tizzoncini answered.

Now it was not long before the story reached the ears of the young King too. He was sixteen years old, and of surpassing beauty. Now, when he one day met on the palace steps the ugly Tizzoncini, with the tray under her arm and the basket on her head, he conceived such a great dislike to the poor girl that he turned away so as not to have to look at her. Indeed, he detested her so much that one day, when he met her again, he spat straight in her face. Then Tizzoncini returned home with her heart full of grief, and wept bitterly.

"What has happened to you?" asked the mother.

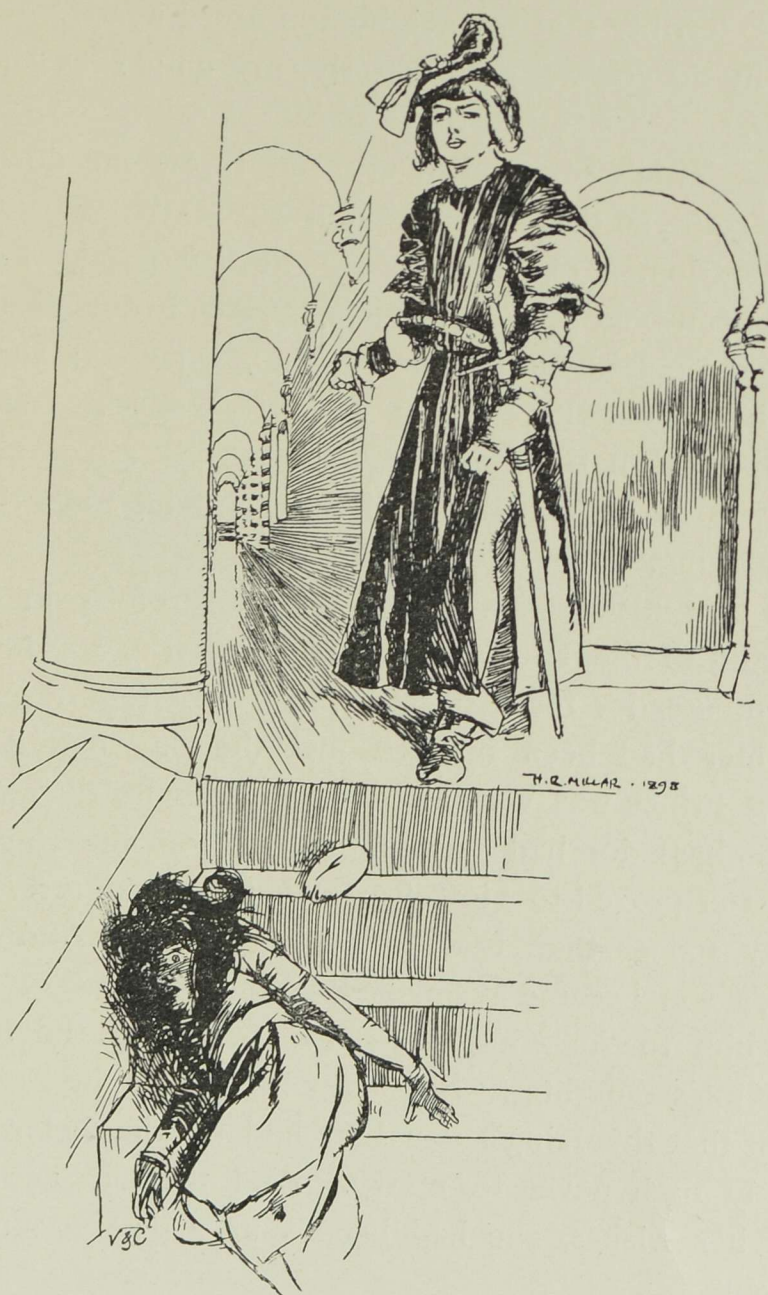
"The King's son spat in my face."

"That may be the will of Heaven," the mother comforted her; "the Prince is our master."

But the neighbours were beside themselves with joy, and mocked poor Tizzoncini still more.

"The King's son spat in her face," they jeered; "that must have suited Sunbeam's face well."

Another time it happened that the young King met Tizzoncini on the landing in the palace, and it seemed to him that she just touched him with her basket. Thereupon he became so angry that he pushed her violently away with his heel, so that the poor girl rolled right down to the bottom of the steps. The dough for the bread and cakes was now covered with dirt, and was, besides, all out of shape. Who would have had the courage to take it back into the King's palace?



"THE POOR GIRL ROLLED RIGHT DOWN" (p. 162).

164 The Ruby Fairy Book

Now when Tizzoncini reached home, she lamented and wept so terribly that the neighbours heard her.

"Why do you weep so bitterly, my child?" asked the mother.

"The King's son kicked me and threw me down the palace steps, so that all the dough was scattered."

"The doings of Heaven are always good," the old woman consoled her; "the young Prince is our master."

But the neighbours mocked again and jeered:

"That must have been a pretty sight, Tizzoncini tumbling down the steps."

Now some years had passed, and the King's son thought of marrying.

He sent his ambassador to the King of Spain to ask the hand of the King's daughter in marriage. But when the ambassador reached Spain, he learnt that the King's daughter had been married just the day before. The young Prince was very angry at this, for he thought that the ambassador had tarried too long on the way. But the latter proved to him clearly that he had arrived half a day sooner than the swiftest travellers. And so the King's son became reconciled with the ambassador and sent him to the King of France to sue for the hand of the King's daughter. But when he arrived in France he learnt that the King's daughter had the day before taken a holy oath never to marry. And then, in accordance with her wishes, she had been shut up as a nun in a convent.

The King's son was so terribly angry at this news that he wanted to have the ambassador, who always arrived a day too late, hanged. But the latter proved

to him once more that, if he had raced with the swiftest traveller in the world, he would this time have reached his goal a whole day sooner than the traveller. The proof was satisfactory to the young Prince, and so he commissioned the ambassador to travel to the Ruler of Turkey whose daughter he was to woo for the Prince.

But when he reached the Ruler's Court, he learnt that the day before a robber had stolen all the costly raiment, the gold ornaments, and the jewels of the Ruler's daughter, so that she could not leave her home.

The poor ambassador had now to return once more without having accomplished anything. When the King's son heard the news he cried with vexation and rage, and the King, as well as the Queen and all the Ministers, stood round him to console him. Now, there was only one King's daughter left, whom he considered worthy enough to lead to the throne as his consort. That was the daughter of the King of England. Swift as an arrow the ambassador set out on his journey. Day and night he granted himself no rest until he had England under his feet. But, alas! scarcely had he set foot in the land than he heard all the bells begin to toll. The people went about with sad faces, and when he inquired the cause of this mourning, he learnt to his horror that the King's daughter had died the day before.

One can imagine the state of grief into which the King's son fell when he heard the sad news from the mouth of his ambassador.

In order to distract his mind and drive the sad thoughts out of his head, he one day went out hunting. But before long, having separated from his companions, he lost

himself in a thick, thick forest. The farther in he went, the more difficulty he had in finding again the path by which he had come ; and at length he knew neither which was the way in nor the way out. At last, when it was already evening, he discovered under some dense trees an old, ruinous little house. As he found the door open he went boldly in. But what was his astonishment when he saw a very aged man, with a long, flowing, snow-white beard, standing in the cottage. The old man had just kindled a fire to cook his supper.

“Good man,” said the King’s son, tremblingly, “could you perhaps show me the way to get out of this forest again ?”

“Ah ! You have come at last !” the old man roared at him in such a terrible voice that he could neither see nor hear for fright.

“Good man, I do not know you ; I am the King’s son !”

“King’s son or no King’s son ! Take the axe there and chop me some wood !” roared the old man.

Then the young King could not utter a word more for terror, and chopped some wood.

“Now get you gone and fetch some water from the spring !” was the next order.

The King’s son did in silence what he was told to do, hung the pails round his neck, and hastened to the spring.

“Now wait on me at table.”

The King’s son made no reply, but served the old man at table as he had been ordered to do. After the aged man had eaten and drank he gave him what was over.

"Now lie down here," shrieked the old man. "That shall henceforth be your place!" At these words he pointed



"THE YOUNG KING . . . CHOPPED SOME WOOD" (p. 166).

to a little heap of straw which lay in the corner of the room, and the King's son at once covered down

upon it. But, however much he tried to go to sleep, he could not close an eye the whole night long from terror and grief.

The old man with the long white beard was a magician and also the ruler of the forest. Whenever he left his house, he surrounded it with a magic net so that the young King could not escape, but remained his slave and also his prisoner.

Meanwhile the King and the Queen, who had waited a long, long time for the return of their son in vain, believed that he was dead and put on mourning for him. But one day the news reached them—it has never been found out how it came—that their son was still alive, but the slave and prisoner of a magician.

Then the King at once sent the cleverest people in his Court to seek his son. At last, after long wanderings to and fro, they found the Magician and said to him:

“The King will give you as a present the most splendid treasures of his kingdom, if you will send back to him his son.”

Then the Magician laughed and said:

“Oh, I am much richer than he.”

The King's consternation at this answer of the Magician was great, and he sent once more his cleverest courtiers to him.

“What do you want to come here so soon again for?” he cried to them in a rough voice.

Then the ambassadors answered:

“The King is ready to sacrifice his life to you, if you will give him back his only son.”

“Oh! I do not ask that,” said the Magician. “Just

bring me a loaf of bread and a cake, kneaded and baked by the Queen's own hand. Then the young Prince shall go hence free!"

"Is that all?" exclaimed the messengers, and they hurried home with joyful hearts.

Now the Queen passed the flour through a sieve, kneaded it, moulded a loaf and a cake out of it, and with her own hand lighted the fire in the oven to bake the dough. But as she was not accustomed to this work, she did not take the bread and cake out of the oven soon enough, and they were both burnt.

Now when the Magician set eyes on the spoilt batch he made an angry grimace, and cried, "Good for the dogs!" at the same time throwing them to his sheepdog, who greedily devoured them both at once.

However, the Queen did not lose patience, and once again set about sifting the flour, kneading and moulding the dough. Then again she lighted with her own hand the fire in the oven, so that the dough should bake. But, alas! this time she took it out of the oven too soon, with the result that the bread and cake were not nearly done.

When the Magician saw this batch, he wrinkled his brow, and cried: "Good for the dogs!" and threw them once again to his sheepdog to eat.

Now, the Queen took the greatest possible pains, and stood day and night by the oven, in order to learn how to bake bread properly. But it always came out of the oven either burnt or not done enough; and the poor King's son remained a prisoner with the Magician.

Then the King, in this dire extremity, called together

all the cleverest people in his whole kingdom, to ask their advice.

“Your sacred Majesty,” one of them said, “I have found a means. The Queen may sift the flour, knead and prepare the dough, but Tizzoncini shall heat the oven and do the baking. Perhaps the Magician will not notice it.”

“Excellent, excellent!” all the rest cried, as if with one voice.

And this advice was followed. But scarcely had the Magician set eyes on the batch than he wrinkled his brow and cried:

“False bread and cake is brought once more,
Wash your face, it needs it sore!”

And again he threw them to the dog. He had at once noticed that Tizzoncini, with the sooty face, had had her hands in the baking.

“Now,” said the very cleverest of all the King’s advisers, “there is only one way left.”

“And that is?” asked the King, while drops of perspiration stood out upon his forehead in his anxiety.

“The King’s son must marry Tizzoncini. Only then can the Magician have his bread and his cake as he wishes them—namely, sifted, kneaded, and baked by the Queen’s own hand. Only then will the young King obtain his liberty again.”

“That is just the will of Heaven!” cried the King, “For did not the old woman always sing:

“Dearest Sunbeam, dearest Sunbeam,
If it good to Heaven seem,
Some day the King will make you his Queen’?”



"IT WAS THE REAL SUNBEAM WHO STOOD THERE" (p. 172).

And with his own hand he drew up a Royal letter which should make known in all countries that the King's son and Tizzoncini were man and wife.

The Magician now had what he wanted, and the King's son was set at liberty. But he would not have anything to do with Tizzoncini.

"What!" he cried out, indignantly, "this dirty, sooty wench, this ugly oven-sweep is to become my wife and Queen! Never, never!"

But it could not be helped. The Royal decree, signed by the King's own hand, had been published, and only the King himself could annul it.

Tizzoncini had removed to the palace, as Queen. But nothing would induce her to wash her face, comb her hair, change her dirty garments, or put on a pair of shoes.

"When the King's son comes, I will dress myself," she said again and again.

At last the young King appeared. But how horrified he was when he saw Tizzoncini from a distance.

"I would rather die than have her for my wife!" he exclaimed, with a shudder.

When these words were repeated to Tizzoncini, she laughed aloud, and said:

"He will come, he will come."

The King's son heard this, and fell into a most terrible passion. Seizing his dagger, he ran against Tizzoncini's door in order to cut off her head. But the door was bolted on the inside, and when the King's son looked through the keyhole he let the dagger fall out of his hand from sheer astonishment. For in the room stood a girl whose face was more beautiful and whose figure was more stately than any he had ever seen before. It was the real Sunbeam who stood there before his astonished and dazzled eyes.

“Open the door, my Queen!” he cried out, joyfully.

“Open the door!”

But Tizzoncini sang mockingly on the other side of the door:

“Dirty, sooty wench!”

“Open the door, Queen of my Heart!”

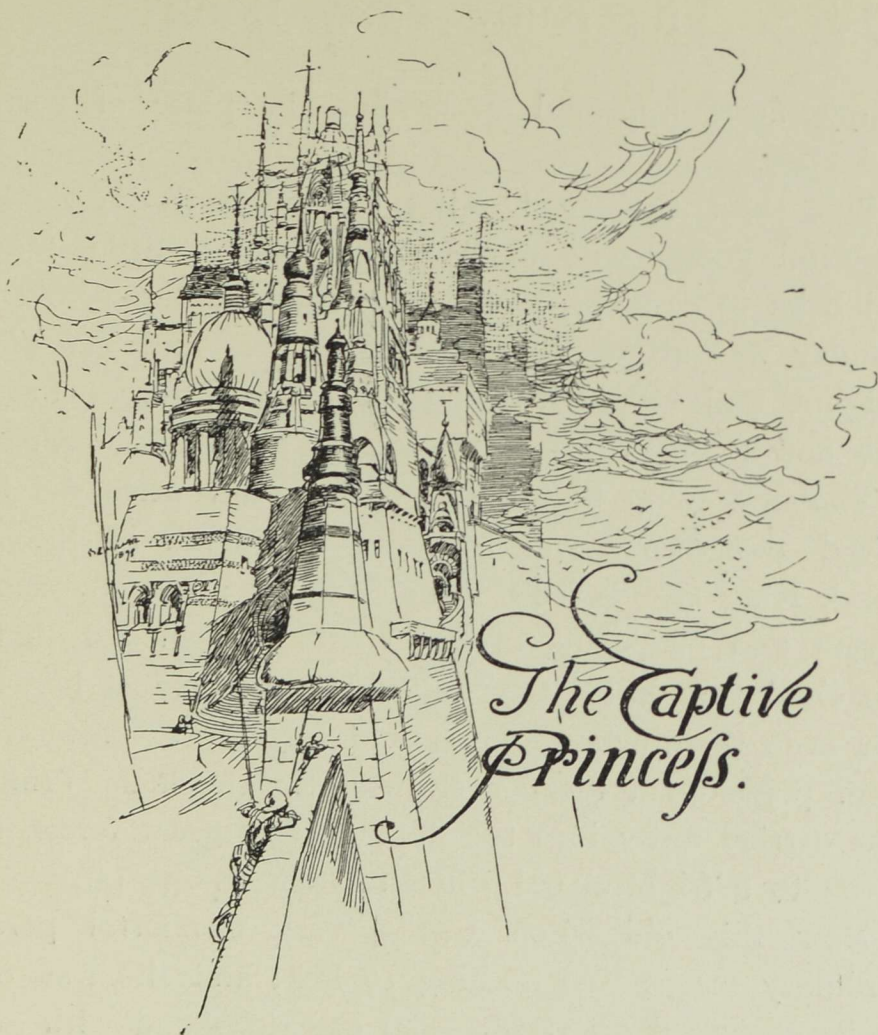
But Tizzoncini sang mockingly on the other side of the door:

“Ugly oven-sweep!”

“Open the door, my Tizzoncini!” the young King now implored.

Then the door opened, and the young King and Tizzoncini lay in one another's arms. Now all the bells in the land were rung. Splendid wedding festivities were celebrated, and the King's son and his consort lived for many years happily and contentedly together.

The Captive Princess



The Captive Princess.

By John C. Winder

IN the far-off land of Bombaloo there reigned long, long ago a cruel and wicked Queen. All day long, year in, year out, the unfortunate people of her realm groaned and wept under her merciless rule. On a high hill, overlooking the city, she dwelt in a magnificent palace with spires and turrets reaching to the clouds. Years before, when good King Greybeard had held his Court there, the land had been peaceful and smiling; contentment reigned in palace and cottage alike, and

happy faces appeared everywhere in place of sorrow and tears.

But, alas! the good King fell on evil days. His beautiful young wife died, leaving him a little, tender girl babe to care for, and in the midst of his sorrow his country was attacked by Queen Grizzle and her fierce knights, and although King Greybeard's forces fought long and bravely they were overcome, and he was slain.

The first thing that Queen Grizzle did when she had seized the throne was to order the death of Princess Pearl, King Greybeard's little daughter; but the soothsayers and magicians of her Court warned her that if the child were killed fortune would turn against her, and not even their evil powers would be able to protect her from punishment for her crimes. So the little Princess was carried away into the depths of a great forest, and given to a frightful old witch to take charge of.

Now this old witch was a very wonderful person. Ordinary magic was nothing to her; and she was only to be consulted on very special occasions, and with great ceremony. She lived in a large inclosure right in the midst of the forest, surrounded by a high wall which she had made herself. This wall was very thick, and of a dark grey colour, quite smooth and warm and—alive.

Inside the wall was her cottage, with a garden all round it, in which grew curious herbs and flowers. The witch could please herself what sort of weather she had; so that when you got up in the morning you never knew whether it would be summer or winter; and if she were in a bad temper she would, you may be sure, have the ground several inches deep in snow, and a cold wind

blowing. Here Princess Pearl was brought up, and she grew year by year into a maiden of wondrous loveliness. Her features were exquisitely formed, her eyes large



"FLORIAN . . . STOOD STILL IN AMAZEMENT" (p. 181).

and soft and of a deep blue colour, and her hair fell in shining waves down to her waist.

She knew that she was a Princess, and, although the Witch often gave her menial tasks to do, she seldom murmured.

"She cannot have power over my mind," said Pearl. "I am a Princess still, and my heart is pure and noble, even if my hands have to do work which is distasteful to me."

But she was very sad, and her beautiful face wore a wistful expression which would have touched any but a witch's heart. Once, when the Witch was very bad-tempered, Pearl begged her with tears to tell her what was the matter.

"The matter is," said the Witch, "that I should like to have your heart to eat. Mind I don't tear it out some day," and she gnashed her great teeth in Pearl's face.

Then Pearl stood up, pale and proud, and said:

"You may try to frighten me, if you like; but I am a king's daughter, and though you kill me I will not fear you."

"Go along, you little hussy," growled the Witch; "boil me a beefsteak at once, and see that there are plenty of blackbeetles in the sauce; you will catch as many as you want in the kitchen."

You will perhaps wonder why Pearl did not try to escape. It was of no use. No one could get past the terrible living wall that surrounded the Witch's habitation. The only way was through its mouth, and that would only open at the Witch's own command. But deliverance was nearer than Pearl thought.

Outside in the forest, one fine summer morning, a youth was wending his way down the long, sun-flecked, whispering aisles that stretched away among the trees.

There, straight in front of him, a little rosy cloud stretched across his path. It was like one of those delicate

films that float awhile and fade in a summer sunset ; and on it, poised as lightly as thistledown, was the most exquisite little creature that could possibly be imagined.

Small as a child, she had the form and beauty of a full-grown woman, and seemed like some charmingly moulded statuette endured with life, yet so fragile that a breath would destroy her. Florian, for that was the youth's name, stood still in amazement, and gazed on the wonder. Presently she spoke, and the air seemed full of faint, delicious music.

"Fair youth," she said, "I see you are surprised. You may well be so, for to few it is allowed to meet me face to face. I am Fairy Echo."

"I am the youngest son of the King of Cosmogon," replied Florian, "and I am travelling over the world, seeking my fortune."

"If you desire adventure, go no farther," said Fairy Echo. "Here, in this forest, is adventure to satisfy the most venturesome."

"I pray you tell me the meaning of your words," said Florian.

"There is," replied the fairy, "held prisoner by a foul witch the most beautiful Princess in the world. Long has she pined in captivity, and only a truly brave man can set her free. If I am not mistaken," she continued, "I see one before me now."

"I do not know," said the Prince, "whether I should allow you to call me truly brave ; but I am ready to do my best to set the Princess free."

"Very well," said the fairy, "I will give you all the help I can ; but 'tis no easy task you undertake. In the

"She cannot have power over my mind," said Pearl. "I am a Princess still, and my heart is pure and noble, even if my hands have to do work which is distasteful to me."

But she was very sad, and her beautiful face wore a wistful expression which would have touched any but a witch's heart. Once, when the Witch was very bad-tempered, Pearl begged her with tears to tell her what was the matter.

"The matter is," said the Witch, "that I should like to have your heart to eat. Mind I don't tear it out some day," and she gnashed her great teeth in Pearl's face.

Then Pearl stood up, pale and proud, and said:

"You may try to frighten me, if you like; but I am a king's daughter, and though you kill me I will not fear you."

"Go along, you little hussy," growled the Witch; "boil me a beefsteak at once, and see that there are plenty of blackbeetles in the sauce; you will catch as many as you want in the kitchen."

You will perhaps wonder why Pearl did not try to escape. It was of no use. No one could get past the terrible living wall that surrounded the Witch's habitation. The only way was through its mouth, and that would only open at the Witch's own command. But deliverance was nearer than Pearl thought.

Outside in the forest, one fine summer morning, a youth was wending his way down the long, sun-flecked, whispering aisles that stretched away among the trees.

There, straight in front of him, a little rosy cloud stretched across his path. It was like one of those delicate

films that float awhile and fade in a summer sunset ; and on it, poised as lightly as thistledown, was the most exquisite little creature that could possibly be imagined.

Small as a child, she had the form and beauty of a full-grown woman, and seemed like some charmingly moulded statuette endured with life, yet so fragile that a breath would destroy her. Florian, for that was the youth's name, stood still in amazement, and gazed on the wonder. Presently she spoke, and the air seemed full of faint, delicious music.

"Fair youth," she said, "I see you are surprised. You may well be so, for to few it is allowed to meet me face to face. I am Fairy Echo."

"I am the youngest son of the King of Cosmogon," replied Florian, "and I am travelling over the world, seeking my fortune."

"If you desire adventure, go no farther," said Fairy Echo. "Here, in this forest, is adventure to satisfy the most venturesome."

"I pray you tell me the meaning of your words," said Florian.

"There is," replied the fairy, "held prisoner by a foul witch the most beautiful Princess in the world. Long has she pined in captivity, and only a truly brave man can set her free. If I am not mistaken," she continued, "I see one before me now."

"I do not know," said the Prince, "whether I should allow you to call me truly brave ; but I am ready to do my best to set the Princess free."

"Very well," said the fairy, "I will give you all the help I can ; but 'tis no easy task you undertake. In the

first place, you will have to climb the wall that surrounds the Witch's house, and as that is quite smooth and very lofty, without a single break or crevice, you will find these very necessary."

Hearing a slight jingle on the ground at his feet, Florian looked down and saw several large spikes and steel hooks.

"The spikes you must fasten to your feet, and with the hooks you must pull yourself up," explained the fairy. "But the Witch has very sharp ears, and will soon know that some one is trying to climb the wall, so that as soon as your head appeared over the top she would send her ravens to pick out your eyes. Take this jewel, and so long as it remains in your pocket you will be quite invisible. You must then climb down the inside of the wall, and when the Witch has her back turned towards you, go boldly up to her, and with this sword strike off her head."

"Oh!" cried Florian, "I cannot kill a woman."

"She is not a woman at all," said the fairy, "only a vile enchantress who is unworthy to live. Do as I bid you, and all will be well."

As she spoke, the music again sounded, the shining cloud grew gradually dimmer, and with a soft sigh of harmony the fairy vanished from Florian's sight. For a few moments he stood as if dazed, listening to the murmurs of the forest, and then he picked up the sword, fastened it to his side by its splendidly jewelled belt, placed the spikes and hooks in his pouch, and the jewel in his pocket.

"I wonder if I am invisible," he thought, and stepped boldly forward.

Presently he heard the cooing of a dove in a tree close to him, and, looking round, saw a white one which, as soon as he had observed it, flew in front of him as if to show him the way.

“The fairy gave me no directions,” he said to himself; “I will follow the dove, and perhaps it will lead me to the Witch’s house.”

Deeper and deeper he went into the shade of the forest, and always in front of him he heard the soft note of the dove, until at last he stood before the great, smooth wall behind which the Princess Pearl was imprisoned.

He touched it with his hand, and to his surprise found that it was quite warm. He looked up, and the top seemed to be right up in the clouds. Then he drew his sword, and stuck the point right into the wall which cringed and quivered, while the air around was filled with strange, dull moanings.

Nothing daunted, he fastened the spikes to his shoes, and grasping the sharp hooks in either hand, he commenced to climb. The Witch, who sat in her cottage, heard the hollow groans of the wall, and knew that some one was outside.

“Let them kick,” quoth she; “they cannot get in, and a little knocking about will do my wall no harm.”

The groans and howlings continued so long, however, that she went out into the garden to find out what was the matter.

“If anybody is trying to get in,” she muttered, “I will frighten them.”

Then she threw something up in the air, and immediately a violent thunderstorm commenced. The wind

roared through the forest, and the rain came down in a perfect deluge. Still the weird moaning went on.

"I never knew my wall behave like this before," said the Witch. "I must have a look round."

So she looked carefully at the wall, and in one place she saw what looked like large gashes on the inside of the wall, from which a dark liquid was oozing. They were really the marks made by Florian's spikes, but as he was invisible, the Witch could only see the wounds he made in the wall.

After a while the groans ceased, but that was because Florian had climbed down and was inside the inclosure. The Witch sniffed the air. Florian thought he had never seen such a hideous creature, and was not at all sorry that he had to cut off her head.

"Oh, oh," said the Witch, "what a peculiar smell! I declare I could almost persuade myself that there was a man in my garden. How I should like one for dinner. Pearl, come here," she called.

Then Pearl came slowly and wearily out of the cottage, and Florian was filled with admiration for her beauty, and longed to tell her that he had come to save her. The Witch caught her by the shoulder.

"Do you smell anything, you plague-spot?" she screamed.

"No," replied Pearl, "only the herbs and flowers."

Florian sat down on a bench in the garden, and as soon as the Witch turned her back on him, he took the jewel out of his pocket and placed it beside him. In a moment Pearl saw him, and gave a loud cry. He hurriedly replaced it in his pocket.

"What is the matter with you, you little wretch?" cried the Witch.

The Witch saw that Pearl was looking with astonishment



J. R. MILLAR 1890

"PEARL SAW HIM, AND GAVE A LOUD CRY" (p. 184).

at the bench on which Florian sat, and she moved towards him, holding out her long, claw-like hands. Florian started up to escape her clutch, and in doing so the jewel fell out of his pocket.

Then the Witch, with flaming eyes, rushed upon him, and a dreadful scene ensued, the hag pursuing Florian round the garden, and in and out of the cottage, with frightful cries, while the Princess looked on with mingled horror and admiration. At last, just as the Witch was making a wild dash at Florian, he sped past her, and, with a great sweep of his fairy sword, cut off her hideous head.

There was a terrific crash of thunder, and in a moment all was enveloped in thick darkness. Florian felt that his senses were leaving him. He staggered forward a few paces, and then fell unconscious to the ground. When he came to himself he found that he was lying in the midst of a broad, green meadow. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and his head rested in the lap of the most charming maiden he had ever seen—it was Princess Pearl.

“Where is the Witch’s cottage? How did we come here?” he asked.

“I do not know,” replied Pearl. “After you cut off the Witch’s head I remember nothing ; but I think that we are free.”

“I am sure we are,” said Florian. “But, beautiful maiden, what are we to do?”

“Alas! I cannot say,” answered Pearl. “I know not how far we are from my father’s kingdom, and if we were to return there, I fear no one would recognise me after all these years.”

“Never mind,” said Florian, “I will protect you. We will return to my home, and I will give you into my father’s care.”

While they were talking, the white dove which had guided Florian through the forest came fluttering round, and to Pearl's delight settled on the Prince's shoulder.



“WITH A GREAT SWEEP OF HIS FAIRY SWORD, HE CUT OFF HER
HIDEOUS HEAD” (*p.* 186).

“Oh, what a lovely bird!” she cried; “I am sure it will bring us good luck.”

“Yes,” replied Florian, “this bird is a friend of mine. We will follow where it leads us, and be sure we shall not go astray.”

Then the bird spread its snowy wings and flew in front of them, and they followed its guidance until they came to the outskirts of the forest.

Before them lay a wide plain, dotted with farms and smiling in the sunshine, while in the distance they saw the smoke of a city.

"Why, that is my father's city," cried Pearl, "and there is the castle on the top of that great hill!"

Wonderingly they followed the dove over the plain and through the gate of the city. Crowds of people thronged the streets, all with sad and weary faces.

Pearl and Florian excited much comment by reason of their radiant youth and beauty, and many persons turned round to look at them.

An old woman stopped them as they went up the hill to the castle.

"Where are you going, my children?" she asked.

"To the castle, good dame," answered Florian, "whither this white dove appears to be leading us."

"Do not go," said the woman; "the dove may be one of the Queen's evil messengers. She hates youth and beauty, and will most likely throw you into prison, or lay you under some frightful enchantment."

Nevertheless, they went on until they came to the palace gate, where a tall soldier stopped them.

"Who are you?" he asked, "and what do you want?"

"We desire to see the Queen," answered Florian.

"Pass on," said the soldier, laughing. "You are the first to make such a request since I came here."

They passed into the courtyard—the dove leading the way. Up magnificent flights of stairs, through marble

corridors and gleaming courts they went, until they came to the great chamber where the Queen held her Court.

Ladies and gentlemen in silks and satins, with dark,



“I DEMAND PROTECTION FOR THIS YOUNG LADY” (p. 190).

evil faces, leered at them and whispered, but no one stopped them, and at length they stood before the throne.

There sat Queen Grizzle, dressed in robes of state, blazing with jewels, and holding in her hand a golden

sceptre. She was a tall, dark woman, with black frowning brows, and as Florian led Pearl up to the throne, she looked at him with a terrible glance.

“What are these?” she asked, in a deep voice.

No one answered.

“I am Florian, youngest son of the King of Cosmogon,” said the Prince, “and I demand protection for this young lady.”

“Demand protection!” echoed the Queen. “Aye, we will protect you. What ho, my guards! Away with these malaperts! Lock them up in the highest towers of the castle, and to-morrow we will have their heads off.”

Princess Pearl, hearing these dreadful words, threw herself on her knees before the Queen.

“Oh, please, please do not cut off Florian’s head,” she cried. “I am Princess Pearl, King Greybeard’s daughter, and he has rescued me from the dreadful witch of the forest. Kill me if you like, but do not harm him.”

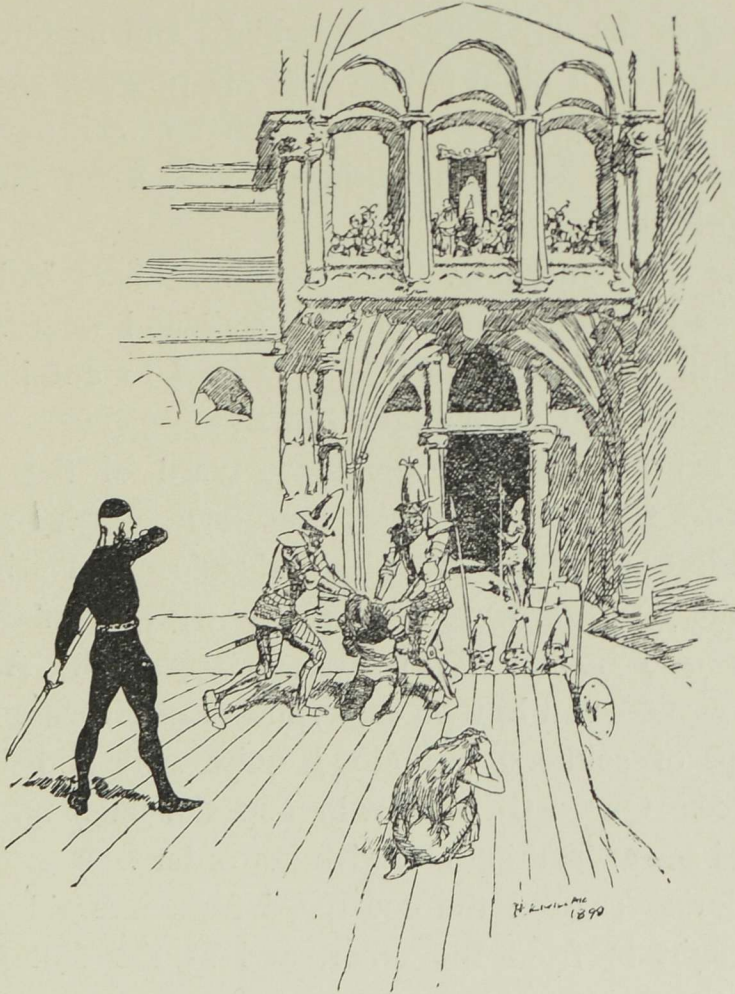
“Princess Pearl!” shrieked the Queen. “Oh, you little viper! I wish you had two heads apiece, and then I could chop them all off! Away with them. Build up the scaffold at once, and see that they don’t get a chance of speaking to one another.”

At these words the guard seized Florian and Pearl, and, binding them with ropes, led them away in different directions.

“Oh,” thought Florian, “is it possible that the fairy deceived me?” The guards hurried him up a long flight of stairs that went round and round, and flung him into a little room at the top of a high tower.

He sat down on a stool, and felt very miserable as he thought of Princess Pearl.

“Why did we follow the dove?” he murmured. “I



“A TALL MAN, DRESSED IN BLACK, DREW OUT A LONG, SHINING SWORD” (p. 193).

ought to have known better than to take her into the midst of such danger.”

While his head was bowed in despair a sunbeam glanced into the gloomy chamber, and with it came the same

tremulous music that had sounded in the forest ; while a soft voice seemed to murmur, "Be brave ; all will be well."

This cheered Florian's heart, but the hours seemed very long as the day wore into twilight and no one came near him. When night fell he said his prayers, and sank into an uneasy slumber, from which he was awakened by hearing the key turn in the rusty lock on the door of the prison.

It was early morning. The rough soldiers bade him get up and follow them. He felt sore and weary. The ropes with which he was bound seemed to cut into his flesh, but he kept up a brave heart.

They led him into the great courtyard of the castle, and there a scene met his eyes that was enough to make the boldest tremble. All the balconies and windows round the courtyard were crowded with courtiers and servants who hooted when Florian appeared. A high scaffold was erected in the centre, and round it were drawn up troops of soldiers who stood quite still, and looked very fierce. Queen Grizzle sat in a special balcony, where she could see everything and give her orders.

As Florian crossed the courtyard from one side, Pearl was brought in from the other, and at the foot of the scaffold they met.

"Unfasten their bonds," shouted the Queen, and in another moment Pearl and Florian were clasped in each other's arms.

A maid-of-honour behind the Queen burst into tears.

"What is all that noise?" asked Grizzle.

"They are so young, your Majesty," wept the lady.

“Take her away,” said the Queen, “and when those two youngsters are dispatched, off with her head as well.” And the poor maid-of-honour was carried fainting away.

Meanwhile the Prince and Princess had gone, hand-in-hand, up the steps of the scaffold.

“Do not be afraid, little Pearl,” whispered Florian. “It will soon be over, and then we shall go away to a land where no one can part us.”

“No, I am not afraid,” replied Pearl; “but I know they will hurt you.”

Then the guards seized Florian, and forced him on his knees, and a tall man, dressed in black, drew out a long, shining sword. Pearl shuddered and shut her eyes.

Suddenly a wonderful thing happened. The air was filled with the sound of voices singing triumphantly. Rosy clouds floated into the courtyard. The executioner’s hand was stayed as if by magic, and a cascade of flowers fell all over the scaffold. Queen Grizzle stood up, pale and dreadful, but her voice was frozen in her throat, for Fairy Echo, tall and splendid now, stood before her.

“Oh, cruel and wicked Queen!” she cried, “you who have abused your power and been a scourge to the land, take now the reward of your evil deeds. Your kingdom is taken from you, and you, deprived of your reason, must wander over the earth until your heart becomes soft and mild. As for this brave youth, whose life you would so lightly have taken, he has shown himself well worthy of the hand of the rightful heir to this throne, and I here proclaim Prince Florian and Princess Pearl King and Queen of Bombaloo.”

Here she waved her wand, and Queen Grizzle, with wild looks, came down from the balcony, and walked across the courtyard and out of the castle; and she has never been heard of from that day to this.

Most of the Court followed her example, when they found the turn matters were taking, and there were great rejoicings all over the country. The maid-of-honour who wept, became Queen Pearl's favourite lady, which shows that kind thoughts are never wasted. Florian made a very good King, and as Fairy Echo kept an eye on things, no one had much cause to grumble.

Axim's Reward ; or, the Magic Blessing



AXIM'S REWARD OR THE MAGIC BLESSING

From the Russian

MANY thousand years ago there lived in the Hundred and First Kingdom a rich merchant who had an only son named Axim. Now it so happened that in the middle of the kingdom in which they lived were a number of swamps which no one was able to traverse; this was particularly annoying, as it did away with what might have been a very agreeable short cut; as it was, the inhabitants were obliged to

travel by a very round about way, and no one had sufficient energy to alter this state of affairs, until our friend the merchant determined to set to work with his son to make a road straight across. They mentioned this idea to no one, but took a small house close to the swamps and started working. They worked and worked for days and nights, until in due time all was ready, and the people of the kingdom were very agreeably surprised one fine morning on seeing a lovely straight road where formerly there had been nothing but swamps.

One day as Axim was taking a constitutional along the road, he saw two poor old beggar women sitting on a bench.

"I wonder," he heard one say, "who it was who built this causeway. I should very much like to reward him, whoever he was."

Axim stopped and wondered how a feeble old woman could possibly reward any one, so out of pure curiosity, he said:

"My father and I did the work between us."

"And what do you wish for as a reward?" asked the old woman.

"Nothing. I have all I want," Axim replied. "I only wish to live and have the power to be of use to my country."

"A very sensible wish, indeed," she answered. "And all I can tell you is, that you had better go and live as long as you can, and do all the good in your power while your life lasts."

Axim laughed.

"That is all very fine," he said, "but there are a great

many things one would like to do in this world, but which, unfortunately, one can't."

"Nonsense, there is no such thing as *can't*. As a reward for what you have already done I will give you my blessing, which you will find of the greatest possible use. You will henceforth be able to do everything you desire." So saying, the old woman put her hand upon his head, muttering some mysterious words, and then disappeared.

Shortly after this war broke out between the Queen of the Hundred and First Kingdom and the King of the Sea; for the King strongly objected to having his view interfered with by vessels and small craft belonging to the Queen, and had, on several occasions, prevented their progress by seizing them and taking all those on board prisoners. This naturally annoyed the Queen, and she promptly demanded the return of her subjects; but the King refused to comply with her wishes, except on one condition—namely, that she should consent to become his wife; but this offer she firmly declined, and the result was war.

The kingdom was in a great state of excitement, and all the male population enlisted to fight the King of the Sea; among others was our friend Axim.

When the army had been on the march some weeks, and had almost arrived at the place appointed for the battle, which was by the seashore, the Queen found that she had forgotten her sword.

"What shall I do?" she exclaimed. "How am I to join in the fight without my favourite and most useful weapon?"

Her Generals advised her to relinquish the idea of personally conducting the campaign, but she was obstinate.

"I *will* fight," she said, "and I *must* have my sword. Some one must go to the palace and fetch it at once. I insist upon having it by to-morrow morning."

But this the Generals declared impossible. "Why," they said, "it took us over six weeks to get here."

"I can't help that, but the sword I must have, and whoever brings it to me by to-morrow morning shall have my daughter for his bride."

This was, of course, a great inducement, as the young Princess was famous for her remarkable beauty. Axim immediately stepped forward.

"I will go and fetch the sword, your Majesty," he said; "as I think I can do it in the time."

The Queen at once wrote a note to the Princess telling her to give Axim the sword. This done, the young man departed, greatly to the amusement of the rest, who considered him hopelessly mad to undertake a thing which they knew to be an impossibility.

As soon as he was out of sight Axim stopped and laughed.

"Now for the old woman's blessing!" he thought. "I wonder whether it will prove useful or not? I want to be at the palace within six hours."

Hardly had he said these words when he found himself suddenly changed into a small bird, and by his side stood the very old woman.

"When you wish to resume your proper shape," she said, "just rub your beak, and you will find that you are a bird no longer. On the other hand, whenever you

want to become a bird again, rub your nose. The only thing you must be careful about is to avoid falling into



"HE DELIVERED THE NOTE TO THE PRINCESS" (p. 202).

the hands of the King of the Sea, for then my blessing will lose its force. Now fly away."

On flew Axim until he alighted in the palace gardens. He hurriedly rubbed his beak, and, resuming his proper

shape, walked into the palace and delivered the note to the Princess.

“What a marvellous man you must be!” she exclaimed on reading the letter. “How did you manage to get here in such a short time?”

“It was entirely due to the blessing of an old woman,” he replied; and he told the Princess how he had been suddenly changed into a bird, and for fear of her not believing him, he rubbed his nose, and was instantly changed into the little bird. After flying round the room several times, he perched himself on the Princess’s arm. Just when he was about to resume his proper form, the Princess managed to cut off some of the feathers without his knowing it, and hid them carefully away. After that, they sat down to dinner and talked, until it dawned upon them that they had fallen very desperately in love with one another.

Axim at last was obliged to tear himself away, so he bade the Princess a tender farewell, and, changing himself once more into a bird, flew off with the sword in his beak.

Early on the following morning, Axim arrived at the encampment, but as there was still plenty of time he resumed his proper form, and, lying down by the seashore, fell fast asleep with the sword by his side, for he was weary after his long journey, and out of breath with flying so fast. Hardly had he fallen asleep when the Colonel came out of one of the tents to take his morning tub. The instant he caught sight of Axim and the Queen’s sword, a thought struck him, and, pushing the sleeping man into the sea, he possessed himself of the sword and quickly departed.



"HE PUSHED THE SLEEPING MAN INTO THE SEA" (p. 202).

On coming into the Queen's presence, he made a profound salutation, saying :

"Behold, your Majesty, the sword which you desired, and which I have procured for you within the stated time. Axim and I had a race, but I lost sight of him on the way. I suppose some wild beast must have eaten him up in the forest."

The Queen did not trouble her head about Axim ; all she wanted was the sword.

"If you are still alive after the battle," she said, "you may marry my daughter."

The Colonel, however, had no intention of getting killed ; he promptly got lost in the crowd the moment the battle commenced, and was not seen until it was over.

At first the Queen thought that the victory was not going to be on her side, for she lost many of her subjects, and was about to return to the palace miserably defeated, when to her intense joy things began to look more hopeful and in a very short time she gained the victory.

Now to return to Axim. He had not been idle, therefore he had not been drowned. The King of the Sea saved him as he was falling and took him prisoner. When Axim heard that the Queen was not likely to come off victorious he became very miserable, particularly as he found himself unable to help her.

"If only I could get on land again," he thought, "I might do some good."

At last he begged the King to let him out just to have a look at his comrades.

"It is hard," Axim said, "to be kept a prisoner while

there is fighting going on. You will surely not refuse to let me have one glimpse of the glorious spectacle?"

The King of the Sea promised to take him up after sunset, and, what is more, he kept his word. As soon



“AXIM IMMEDIATELY DID AS HE WAS TOLD” (*p.* 207).

as Axim got on shore, he began to pray very hard to the saints that the sun would be so powerful next day as to scorch the King of the Sea; for he and his men hated a hot sun, as they were not accustomed to it in the depths below.

Axim had hardly finished praying when the King of the Sea carried him down again. Next day the sun was so powerful that the King's army could hardly bear the heat, and many fainted, while the Queen and her troops fought bravely, killing many of her foes.

At sunset Axim was again allowed up for a few minutes to pray, and next day the sun was so hot that very few of the enemy survived. On the third day the King himself got a sunstroke, but although he managed to take Axim up on shore as usual at sunset, he felt so giddy that he was unable to fetch him down again at the usual time. Axim was well aware of this; he also knew that he would again have the power to successfully invoke the old woman's blessing if the King did not appear at the given time. There being no sign of the King, Axim hurriedly changed himself into a bird, and by the time the King had recovered sufficiently to fetch his prisoner, that bird had flown. Since then, the King of the Sea has never ventured out of his depths for fear of sunstroke.

Meanwhile the Queen, having gained the victory, returned to the palace and gave orders for the wedding of her daughter and the wicked Colonel.

Just as the feast was at its highest, Axim walked into the palace and straight up to the Queen.

"What is the meaning of this?" he asked, in some surprise. "You promised that I should marry your daughter if I brought you back the sword; why, then, is she about to marry another?"

"You never brought me the sword," the Queen replied indignantly; "you got eaten up by wild beasts instead,

and left the Colonel to do my bidding. Away with you!"

"There is some mistake," said the Princess, getting up from the table and approaching her mother. "This certainly is the man who fetched your sword, and not the Colonel. I told you it was not the Colonel from the first."

"What proof have you that it is this man?" asked the Queen.

"Will you please change yourself into a bird," the Princess said, turning to Axim, "and I will show my mother what I mean?"

Axim immediately did as he was told, while the Princess took out of her pocket the feathers she had cut off, and showed everybody present from whence she had cut them.

"But that is not all," said a voice, and on looking round Axim beheld his friend the old woman; "if it had not been for him your Majesty would never have won the battle," and the old woman then explained everything.

"But," objected the Queen, "how do you know? How are we to believe you? Who are you?"

"This is who I am." As she spoke she was suddenly changed into a beautiful fairy, and was recognised by all present as the good Queen of the Air Spirits.

After that no more proofs were necessary. The wicked Colonel was promptly beheaded, while Axim and the charming Princess were married and lived happily ever after.

Prince Egor and the Raven



From the Russian

LONG before you or I were born there lived a King and Queen who had an only son, called Egor, who was remarkably handsome. As this young Prince grew up, his parents became very anxious that he should get married; but this was no easy matter, as Prince Egor was very difficult to please, and he had never seemed to care for any of the Princesses of his acquaintance.

“If I am to marry,” said the Prince to his father, “my bride must be the most beautiful woman ever seen, as well as the cleverest.”

One day, as the Prince was strolling about the grounds of the palace, he saw a big black raven sitting down upon a tree, and as he looked at the bird, he fancied that it smiled upon him.

212 The Ruby Fairy Book

“What a curious creature!” thought the Prince; aloud, “I wonder whether it can talk?”

“Of course I can,” answered the raven. “That is exactly what I am here for. I have something of the utmost importance to communicate to you. You wish to get married, do you not?”

“Not in the least—there you are wrong,” laughed the Prince.

“Well, your parents are anxious that you should, and you refuse to do so unless you meet a Princess who is more beautiful than any other woman living?”

The Prince nodded.

“Very well, then, I know the very person for you.”

“And her name?”

“Is Queen Agraphiana the Fair, of the Hundred and Thirteenth Kingdom at the World’s End. It is a long journey.”

“I have heard of her great beauty, certainly,” said the Prince; “but I always heard that she was married.”

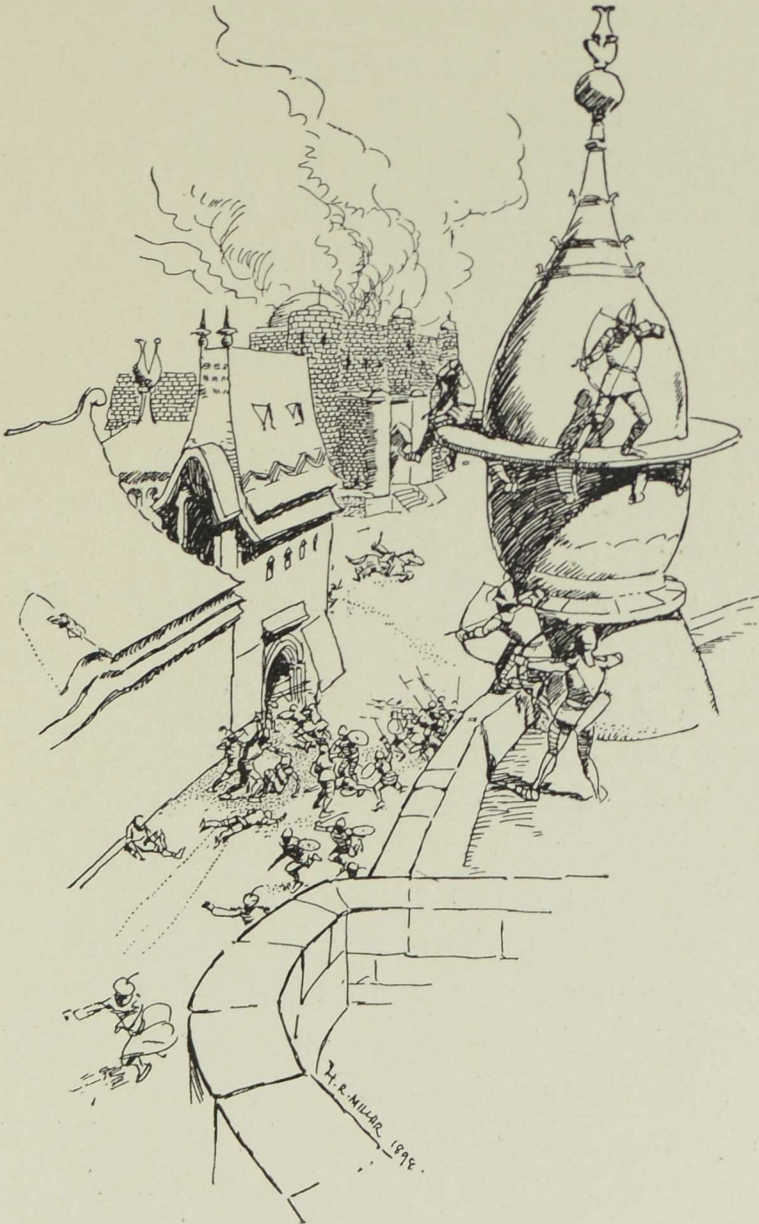
“Rubbish!” answered the raven. “Never believe what people say. Go in search of her as soon as ever you can, and lose no time.”

The Prince was intensely amused. However, he returned to the palace to prepare for his long journey; and, in spite of all his parents said to him, Egor mounted his horse and galloped off towards the Hundred and Thirteenth Kingdom at the World’s End.

On rode the Prince, for days and weeks and months, until he reached the Hundred and Twelfth Kingdom, which he found in a great state of disorder. Soldiers were lying about dead and wounded in the streets, while

Prince Egor and the Raven 213

others were fighting and killing each other right and left. Just as Prince Egor was about to ask the meaning



“FIGHTING AND KILLING EACH OTHER RIGHT AND LEFT” (p. 213).

of all this uproar, some strong, handsome men in armour came galloping along the roads, crying :

“Victory! Long live Queen Agraphiana the Fair!”

A tremendous cheer rose from all sides, and the streets became bright with soldiers of all arms.

“What on earth has happened?” asked the Prince at last, of a soldier near him.

“We, of the Hundred and Thirteenth Kingdom, with Queen Agraphiana at our head, have defeated these people of the Hundred and Twelfth Kingdom.”

“Where is your Queen? I should like to see her.”

“She is in the camp; follow me, and I will lead you to her.”

They had not gone far before they came to an encampment, and out of one of the tents Queen Agraphiana the Fair advanced to meet them.

“Hail to you, Prince Egor,” she said. “Have you come as friend or as foe?”

“Friend, of course, most beautiful Queen.”

“Then you are welcome. You must be tired; you have evidently had a long journey; come in and rest, and if you will stay with us in camp for awhile, we shall all be glad to have you among us.”

The Prince was charmed; never had he seen so beautiful a woman. He spent two whole days in Queen Agraphiana’s society, and of course fell so much in love with her that he married her.

The young Prince and his bride soon left the encampment, and went to live in Queen Agraphiana’s kingdom, where they were extremely happy for a long time.

At last war broke out in the Hundred and Eleventh Kingdom, and Agraphiana had to join her army, but

Prince Egor and the Raven 215

refused to take her husband with her, although he begged very hard to be allowed to accompany her.

“No, no,” she said, firmly; “I can manage my own



“RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIM WAS A HIDEOUS-LOOKING SKELETON” (*p.* 216).

affairs quite well. I don't want to have you run into any danger. You can remain here and look after the palace during my absence. You may go where you please, and

216 The Ruby Fairy Book

do what you like ; but mind you don't open the door of that cupboard, or bad luck will attend us."

The Prince promised to obey her, though he was sorely disappointed at not being allowed to go with her and fight ; however, as there was no help for it, he determined to do his best to amuse himself at home, while his wife did the fighting.

He did not venture anywhere near the mysterious cupboard until one day when he felt particularly dull and did not know what to do with himself. He had been strolling about the palace, when he suddenly found himself opposite the forbidden cupboard ! He hesitated, looked at it, and then laughed.

"How ridiculous !" he exclaimed. "What possible harm could happen if I open that little door ?"

So he turned the key and—entered !

Right in front of him, hanging from the ceiling by one hundred and thirteen iron chains, was a hideous-looking skeleton !

"Beware, my Prince, beware !" cried a voice, and, on looking round, Egor beheld his old friend, the raven.

"What harm can an old, deceased skeleton do to me ?" asked the Prince.

But the only answer he got from the bird was, "Beware !"

"Have mercy on me, Prince Egor," groaned the skeleton. "I am so thirsty, give me water. My throat is so dry, I have hung here for over twelve years without a morsel of food, and without a drop to drink."

The Prince felt very sorry for the wretched creature, and in spite of another mournful "Beware !" from the

Prince Egor and the Raven 217

raven, he fetched two huge pails of water and poured the contents down the skeleton's throat. After a moment's silence, the skeleton shook himself, and with a tremendous wrench forced the iron chains asunder, and was once more free.

"I am more than grateful," said the skeleton, giving the Prince his bony hand; "but I am afraid you won't see Queen Agraphiana again, for now she shall be mine by right of conquest."

So saying, the skeleton took a great leap out of the window and disappeared, leaving the astonished Prince in a state of great misery.

"Well," said the familiar voice of the raven, "you have rushed upon your fate."

The Prince took no notice of the bird, but sat by the window and wept.

"Look!" cried the raven; "there they go!"

Prince Egor looked up, out of the window, and was horrified to see the wretched skeleton fly past him carrying the beautiful Queen Agraphiana in his arms.

"Miserable wretch that I am!" cried the Prince. "What am I to do?"

"Dry your eyes," advised the raven, "and follow the skeleton like a man; try to get her back, and smash him to atoms. That is what you have got to do."

"But whither have they flown? How can I follow?" asked the Prince.

"They have gone to the skeleton's dominion which is the Two Hundred and Twenty-sixth at the Other Side of the World's End. But before you attempt to rescue the Queen, you must secure a certain horse, which will

enable you and your wife to escape in safety from the skeleton. Now, to find that horse you will have to cross the fiery river, and call on an old witch to whom this horse belongs, and whose friendship you must gain, which will be no light task ; still, you must try. I will be at hand to advise you. Here is a silver whistle ; take it, and when you come to the fiery river, sound the whistle three times, and a very high bridge will appear, so high that the flames will not reach you when you cross, and it will remain there until you use your whistle again."

Prince Egor thanked the raven, and started off at once to the skeleton's dominion. On, on he walked, for days and weeks, until he came to the fiery river, which he crossed by means of the magic bridge that appeared the moment he whistled for it. At last he came to a curious-looking hut, standing on chickens' legs, and which was surrounded by a hundred poles, on ninety-nine of which were human skulls.

Prince Egor did not stop to look at them, but entered the hut, in which sat a hideous old witch.

"Good-day, to you," he said. "I have come to serve you as groom, if you will have me."

"By all means," replied the Witch ; "and what wages do you require?"

"None ; I only want one of your horses. But just now I am simply famished, and should like something to eat and drink."

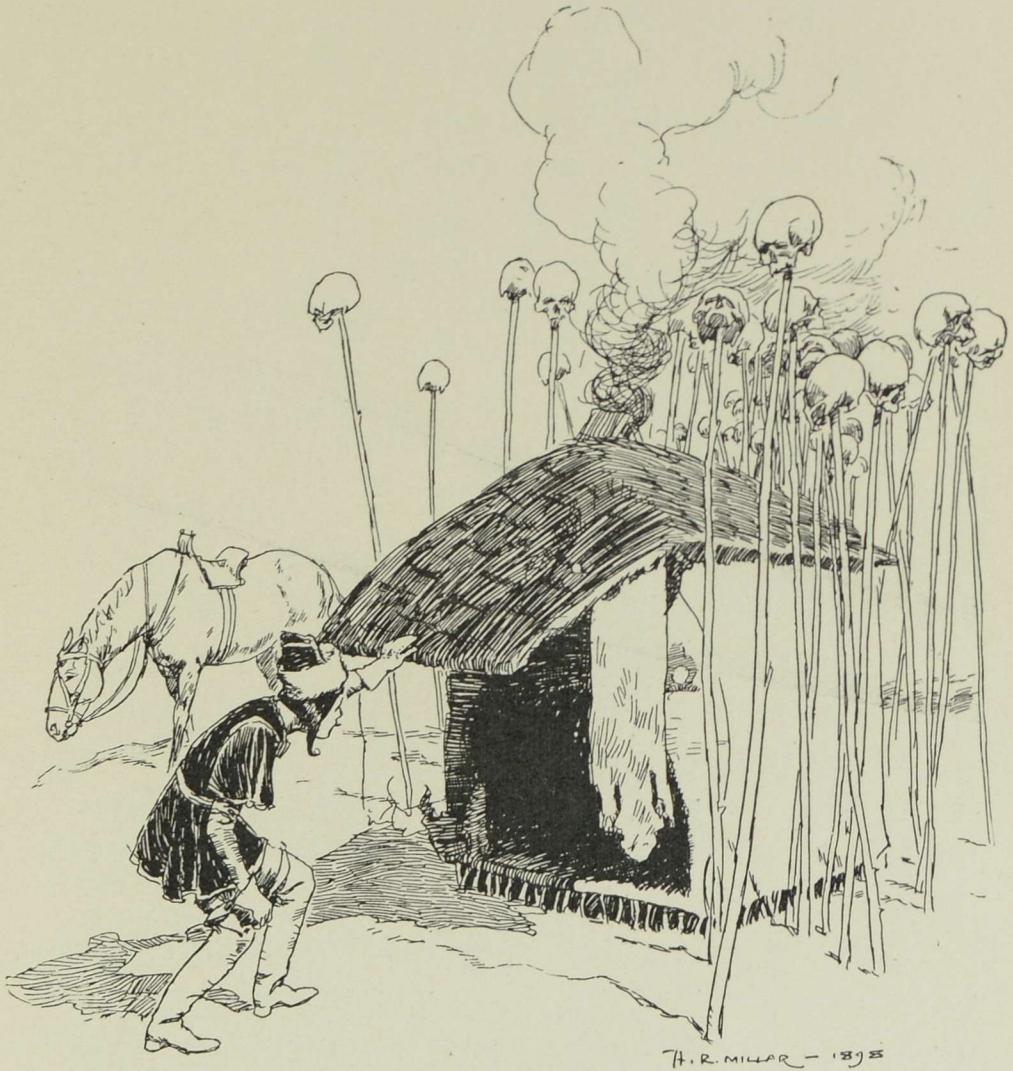
The old witch gave him as much as he wanted, and then told him to go to bed.

"You must get up early in the morning," she said, "and take my horses out for an airing ; but take care

Prince Egor and the Raven 219

and don't lose them, or your head will add to the decorations of my outer wall."

Next morning Prince Egor went to the stables and let



"PRINCE EGOR . . . ENTERED THE HUT" (p. 218).

all the horses out, but he had hardly done so, when the animals snorted and neighed and galloped off as hard as ever they could, and before Prince Egor knew what had

taken place they were out of sight. The Prince was in despair, and began to wonder what he had better do, when, to his delight, he beheld the raven.

“Do not fret,” said the bird, “I will send all the horses safely home ; meanwhile, you go back and enter the very last stable, where you will find a mangy pony lying in a corner, which is the horse for you. Take it, and at midnight mount him and ride away as hard as ever you can.”

Away went the Prince to the stable, saddled the sick pony, and waited. Presently he heard the horses all come galloping home.

“What made you come back, you idiots?” he heard the Witch ask them, angrily.

“We could not help ourselves,” they answered ; “the moment we got into the forest, a number of wild birds and beasts surrounded us and drove us back.”

“Well, next time he lets you out, you must on no account return.”

At midnight, when all was silent, Prince Egor rode away to the fiery river ; he whistled three times, and immediately the bridge appeared. When he had crossed, the raven flew down upon his shoulder saying :

“Leave the bridge as it is, for the Witch will pursue you, and when she is halfway across you may whistle, and the flames will devour her as she falls through the breaking bridge ; otherwise, she might erect a bridge of her own which you would not be able to destroy.”

When the Witch awoke and found that both the Prince and the mangy pony were missing, she flew into a terrific rage and gave chase.

Prince Egor and the Raven 221

“A bridge!” she cried, when she arrived at the fiery river. “What luck! just what I wanted.”

But just as she got halfway across, Prince Egor whistled,



“PRINCE EGOR WHISTLED, AND DOWN WENT THE BRIDGE” (p. 221).

and down went the bridge, sending the old Witch head over heels into the flames, which immediately devoured her.

Prince Egor then, by the raven's advice, took his pony to a lake hard by, and made it drink until it became quite well and strong again, and was transformed into a handsome and powerful horse.

At last, after three days' hard riding, the Prince rode up to the skeleton's gloomy palace, where he was thankful to hear that the skeleton was out hunting, but that Queen Agraphiana was in.

On hearing his voice, the Queen rushed out to meet him.

"Oh, my Prince, my Prince, where have you been all this long, long time? I thought you would never come to save me," she said.

Prince Egor told her where he had been and what he had done.

"Ah, why did you not listen to me, my Prince? You would have been saved all this terrible worry."

"Never mind, dear one, let us lose no time, but fly from here at once before the skeleton returns."

"But he will overtake us!"

"I doubt it, as I have secured a splendid horse which runs faster than any bird can fly."

The young couple seated themselves on the animal and galloped off.

Meanwhile, the skeleton, returning homewards, was surprised to find his horse remarkably restive.

"What is the matter?" he asked; "is there trouble in the air?"

"Prince Egor has been to the palace, and has carried away the Queen," replied the horse.

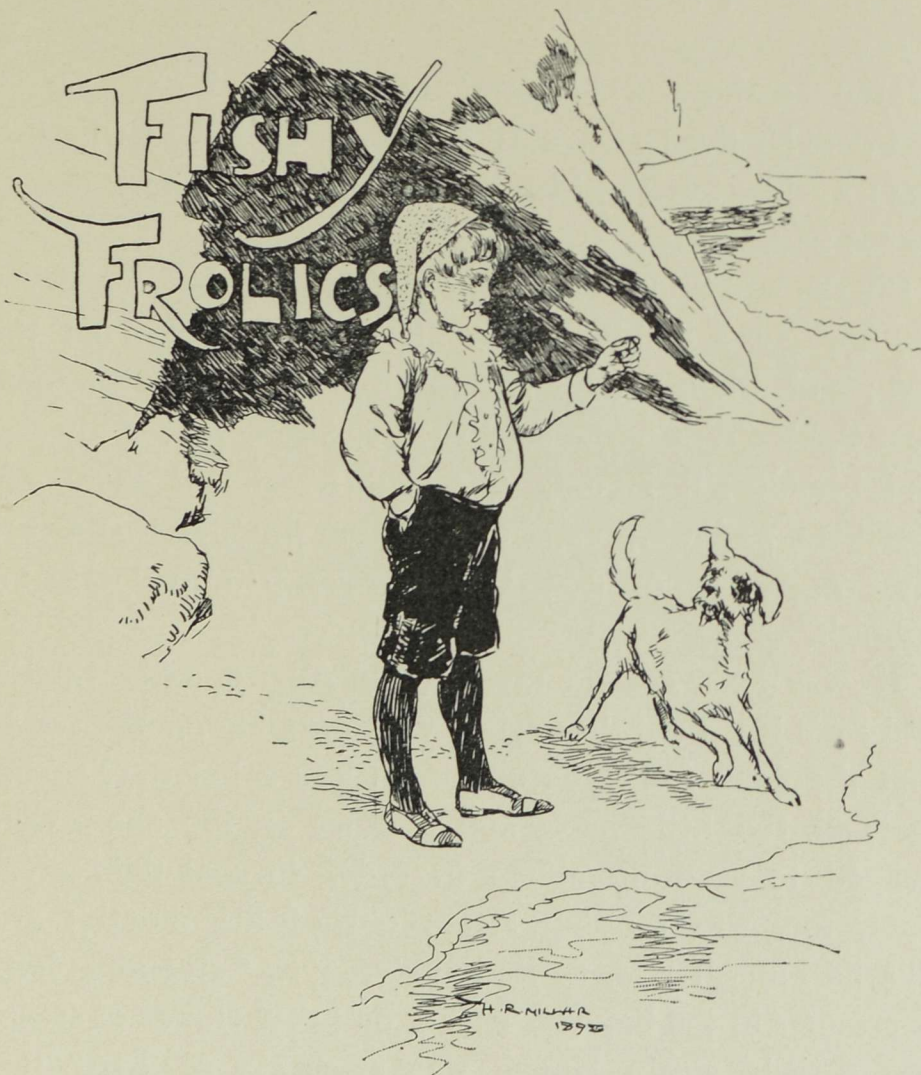
"But we shall overtake them."

“I am not so sure of that, as the Prince has secured the best horse in the Witch’s stables.”

“Never mind, let us try our best.”

After a long and anxious ride, the skeleton came in sight of the Prince and Queen Agraphiana, and, quickening his pace, he was about to draw his sword, when the Prince’s horse suddenly turned round, and galloping straight up to the skeleton, knocked him off his saddle on to the ground, then rushing at him, he trampled upon him and crushed every bit of life out of the hideous creature. Queen Agraphiana then mounted the skeleton’s horse and rode away with Prince Egor to her own kingdom, where they lived happily for many a long year; occasionally visiting Prince Egor’s parents, who were delighted with their daughter-in-law. As for the raven, he established himself in the palace and was Prince Egor’s greatest pet, as well as his most faithful friend.

Fishy Frolics



By Canning Williams

AT the time when Charlie Greenfinch witnessed the frolics I am about to describe, he had seen seven winters and eight summers, which is another way of saying that he was seven and a half years old. He was a healthy young Briton, and, like one or two other healthy boys of my acquaintance, was fonder of play than he was of his lessons.

Charlie liked nothing so well as a scamper with "Spot"

on the seashore, which reminds me that I have to tell you that he lived at a seaside town. Spot was Charlie's dog : a white terrier with a spot on his face, which accounts for his name.

Charlie and Spot were the best of friends ; but, whenever the boy got a scolding from his mother, he scolded the dog ; and, whenever his father whipped him, he whipped poor Spot. As Charlie used to say, " Spot shares my fun and biscuits ; it is only fair that he should share my scoldings and whippings also." But whether this was a right argument or not, I will leave you to decide for yourself.

It was on a certain morning in August, after Charlie and Spot had tired themselves with romping on the sands, that the fishy frolics occurred. It was a hot day, so hot that all the little pools and puddles on the shore were obliged to send up steam in order to cool themselves. Spot, too, was sending steam out of his mouth ; and Charlie himself was, as he expressed it, " steaming hot." A steamer in the bay was letting off great clouds of steam, and a little steam launch was steaming so hard that Charlie thought it would burst its boiler ; so he went into a small cavern that the sea had made at the foot of the cliff, sat down, and waited for the explosion. Spot lay at his master's side, and growled at some sea-gulls that he would have caught if he could.

The cavern was a nice cool place, so, before the friends had been there many minutes, Spot, like a polite little dog, put in his tongue and ceased to send out steam ; and Charlie, instead of thinking about the steam launch, thought of crabs, eels, and lobsters, and wondered whether

they were having a good time at the bottom of the deep blue sea.

As everybody knows, boys and girls, and grown-up men and women, too, can think much better when they rest their heads on their hands, with their eyes on the



"A NICE COOL PLACE" (p. 228).

ground ; so Charlie, who wanted to think very hard about the crabs, eels, and lobsters, propped up his head with his arm, and gazed at the pebbles which lay around.

Now, I suppose the crabs, eels, and lobsters must have known that a little boy was on the shore thinking about

them, or they would not have crawled out of the sea, and gone through a performance right in front of the cavern.

The crabs were the first to come out of the water. The father and mother crabs carried the baby crabs in their claws, and put them down on a large flat rock, whence they would be able to get a good view of the frolics, and be out of the way.

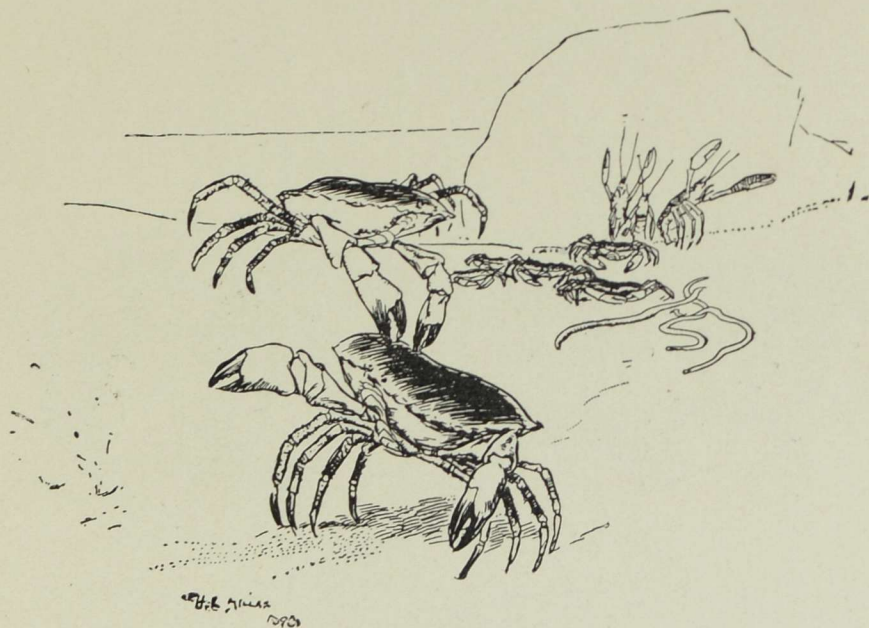
Then came the lobsters, who carried their young ones on their shoulders, and placed them on another big rock.

After the lobsters came the eels; but, as the little eels were strong enough to crawl by themselves, all the father and mother eels did for them was to arrange them in rows in the space between the rocks.

Then, after a lot of talking and running about, the lobsters and eels sat down together, while the crabs, mounted on their hind legs, played at leap-frog. Charlie, who had no idea that crabs were such excellent jumpers, watched the performance with great interest. The crabs played the game much the same as we do, the only difference that Charlie saw being that those crabs who fell when leaping had to retire from the fun. This arrangement soon reduced the number of players until only two were left. But these two were splendid fellows, and each tried his hardest not to be beaten. First one and then the other stood as high as his legs would let him, but each cleared the other's head and alighted in the finest style. At last, however, one of them stumbled, and, though he tried his best to keep his feet, rolled head over heels on the sand. The victorious crab walked proudly up to his companions, and, like the little gentleman he was, made

them a low bow when they clapped their claws in his honour.

The lobsters now entered the field. A dozen of them were told off to collect some long roots of seaweed which the sea had cast upon the beach. When this was done, the lobsters divided themselves into ten sets, each set consisting of two groups, and each group of five players.

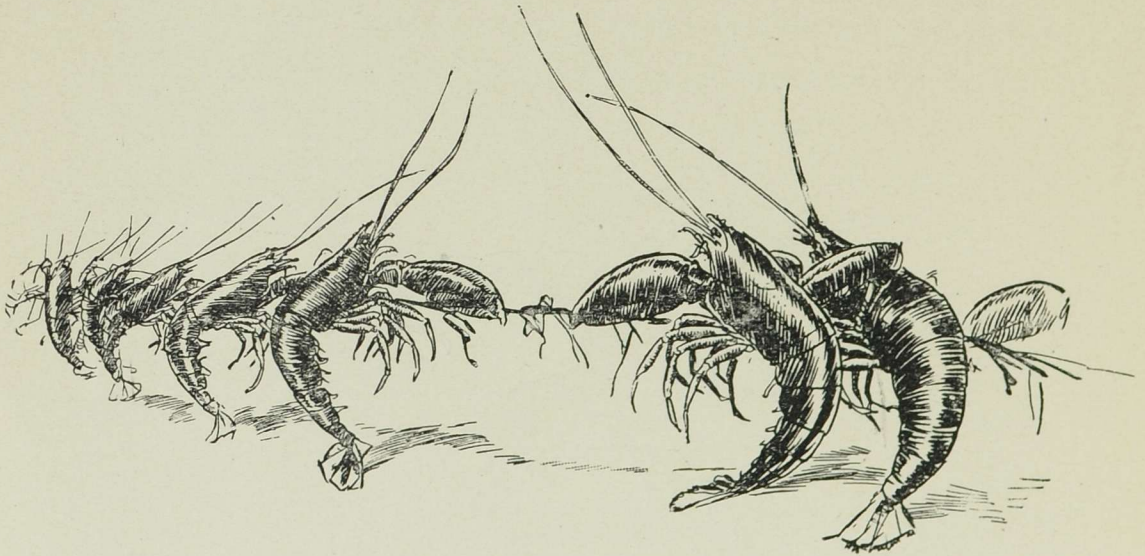


"LEAP-FROG" (p. 230).

"Ah!" said Charlie to himself, "I see what it is: they are going to play at tug-of-war." And Charlie was right.

The lobsters lost no time in setting to work; and, my word, didn't they pull! The ropes of seaweed must have been tough, or they would not have stood the tugging. Now this side, and now that, gained a few inches; but they were all so well matched that what ground was lost one moment was regained the next, and so the game went on.

Presently, however, amid a loud clapping of claws by the crabs and a beating of tails by the eels, one of the teams was fairly beaten, and retired with shame to the lobsters' quarters. This success was followed by another; the second by a third; the third by a fourth; and the fourth by a fifth. The remaining five sets, straining every muscle and firmly digging their legs



H. R. MARR. 1897

"TUG-OF-WAR" (p. 231).

in the sand, tugged as never lobsters tugged before, when crack went the ropes, and the legs of fifty lobsters were kicking in the air!

It was now the eels' turn. As eels have no legs or claws, Charlie could not think of any game at which they could play; so he closely watched their movements.

So also did a score of sea-gulls, who were perched upon the top of the cliff which overlooked the playground. Now, sea-gulls are not at all fond of sports and pastimes,

nor do they like to see other creatures fond of them, so they swooped down from the cliff and ordered the crabs, eels, and lobsters to go back to the sea. This, however,



"THE EELS WERE QUITE ABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES" (p. 234).

they refused to do, whereupon the sea-gulls—who, as you know, have very strong and sharp beaks—began to peck at them. This made the crabs, eels, and lobsters angry, especially the eels, who, through having no hard shells on their backs, felt the pecks the most.

Eels, as a rule, are not much given to fighting, but on this occasion, their tempers being aroused by the sea-gulls and their backs smarting from pecks, they showed that they were quite able to defend themselves, which they did by winding themselves around the bodies of the birds, and squeezing them so hard as to make them gasp for breath and fall to the ground. This gave the crabs and lobsters a fine opportunity for revenge. Seizing the birds' legs in their nippers, they nipped with all their might and main, and made the sea-gulls cry out for mercy.

As the birds began the fight, it was only fair that the others should end it, so the more the birds cried, the harder squeezed the eels and the tighter nipped the crabs and lobsters. The crabs and lobsters could have gone on nipping all day, but the eels had had enough at the end of a quarter of an hour, so they let go, and the sea-gulls, aching all over, flew out to sea, carrying with them a much better opinion of crabs, eels, and lobsters—but especially of eels—than they had entertained before the fight.

The eels, having exhausted themselves with squeezing the sea-gulls, had to give up the fun they had intended to indulge in, which was as disappointing to them as it was to Charlie, who was very anxious to know what kind of game the eels could play at.

But the crabs and lobsters were so happy at having pinched the legs of the impudent sea-gulls, that they needs must have a football match in celebration of the affair.

At each end of the playground, two lobsters stood on their hind legs as goal-posts, and a large cork was

used as a football. It was an exciting match, although the crabs, through being more active than the lobsters, had the best of it. At half-time—that is, when half the game was over—the crabs had scored five goals to their opponents' two.

After a short rest, the second half of the match commenced. The lobsters, who, of course, could not bear the idea of being beaten by the crabs, kicked the cork so well and ran so hard that they quickly succeeded in scoring three more goals, making the game five to five. The success of the lobsters made the crabs lose courage, and when a side, in whatever game, loses courage, that side usually loses the match. And so it was with the crabs; for, a few minutes later, the lobsters scored their winning goal, which brought the play to an end.

All these sports and pastimes were, of course, very amusing to Charlie, but dogs are not so fond of watching games as they are of taking part in them; so Spot, who was tired of lying on the hard pebbles, and felt hungry as well, gave a bark, as much as to say, "Aren't you ready to go home yet?"

Spot's bark made Charlie start, for, in watching the games, he had quite forgotten the dog.

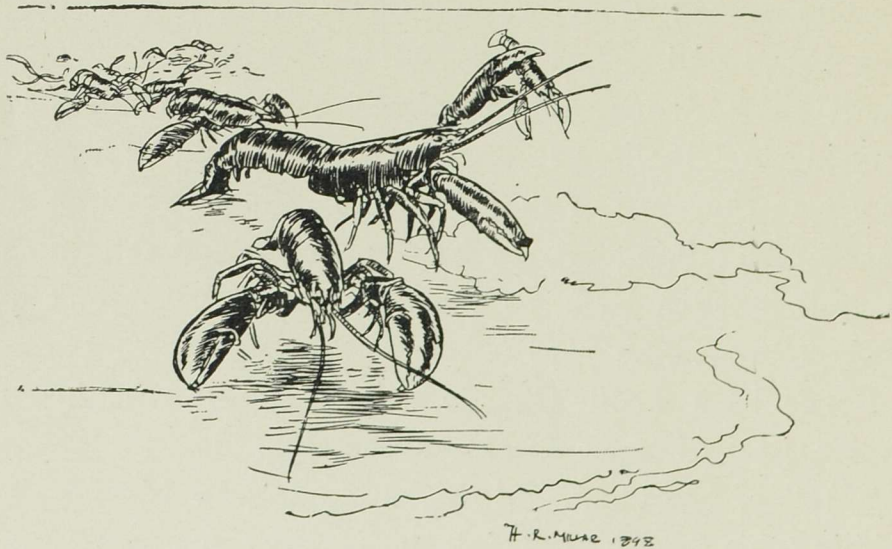
"Halloa, Spot!" cried he, springing to his feet, and rubbing his eyes, "I think it is time we were going home."

But Charlie had no sooner stood up than he fell down (which was rather a funny way of going home), and made some most peculiar grimaces. The fact is, he had been so long in the cavern that he had got the "pins

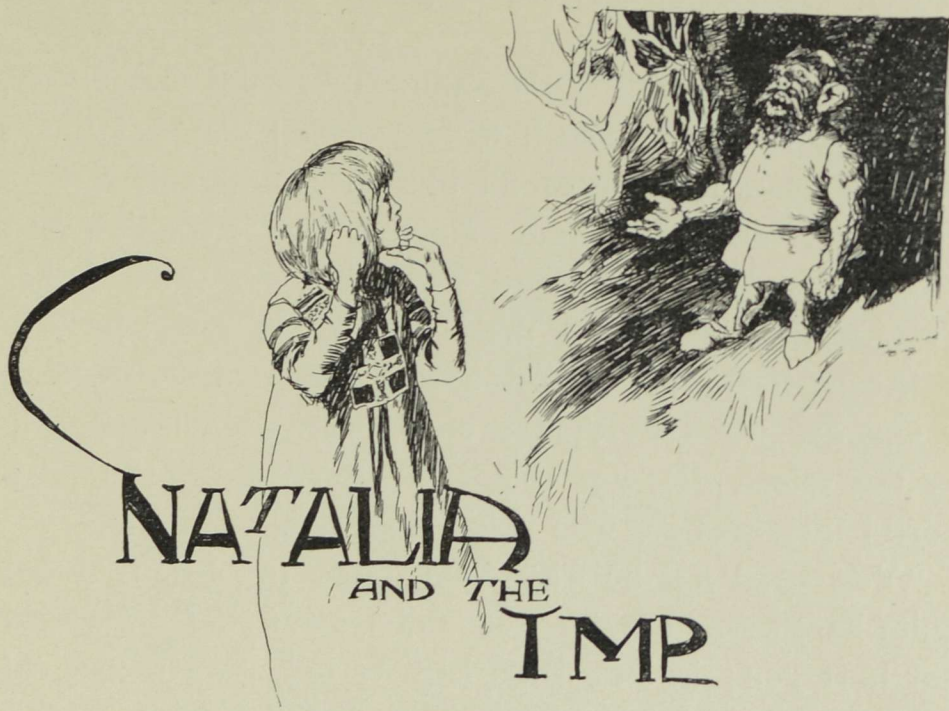
and needles" in his legs, which is an uncomfortable place for such things, as most boys and girls know.

"Why!" he exclaimed, yawning, "it is just as though I had been asleep; and yet I am *sure* I saw the football match and the other things."

But when Charlie looked for the crabs, the eels, and the lobsters, they were not to be seen, for Spot's bark had sent them all back to their homes at the bottom of the deep blue sea.



Natalia and the Imp



NATALIA AND THE IMP

From the Russian

MANY years ago there lived a poor peasant with his two daughters. Now, it so happened that the eldest girl, Martha, took a violent dislike to her younger sister, Natalia, who was by far the sweeter, prettier, and nicer of the two.

As years passed, Martha's dislike and jealousy of her sister increased, as she found that Natalia was the favourite everywhere and was greatly sought after by all the young men in the village. Martha tried everything in her power to make life a burden to Natalia: she made her do all the hard work in the hut, and worried and snubbed her as much as she possibly could, and did her best to try to set every one against her. But Natalia did not mind; she became daily more beautiful and more sweet-tempered, and did the hard work good-naturedly and without a single

word of complaint. This annoyed Martha immensely, and she was beside herself with rage and disappointment to find that, in spite of all this bad treatment, Natalia continued more and more amiable and attractive and seemed perfectly contented with her lot. The father did not trouble himself much about the girls; he was either out trying to get work or else asleep on the stove.

One day, while Martha was out picking wild strawberries in the forest, she was somewhat startled at meeting a horrid little demon, who grinned at her.

“You need not be frightened,” said the Imp; “I am quite harmless. Besides, you and I are friends—I would not hurt you; in fact, I am here to help you to get rid of your sister. I know you hate her; so do I, and I would gladly do anything to rid you and the world in general of such a plague.”

Martha was greatly relieved at this.

“How do you propose to help me?” she asked.

“Well, you send your sister round to me on some excuse or other, and that is all you need do in the matter; I will manage the rest.”

“But where is she to find you?”

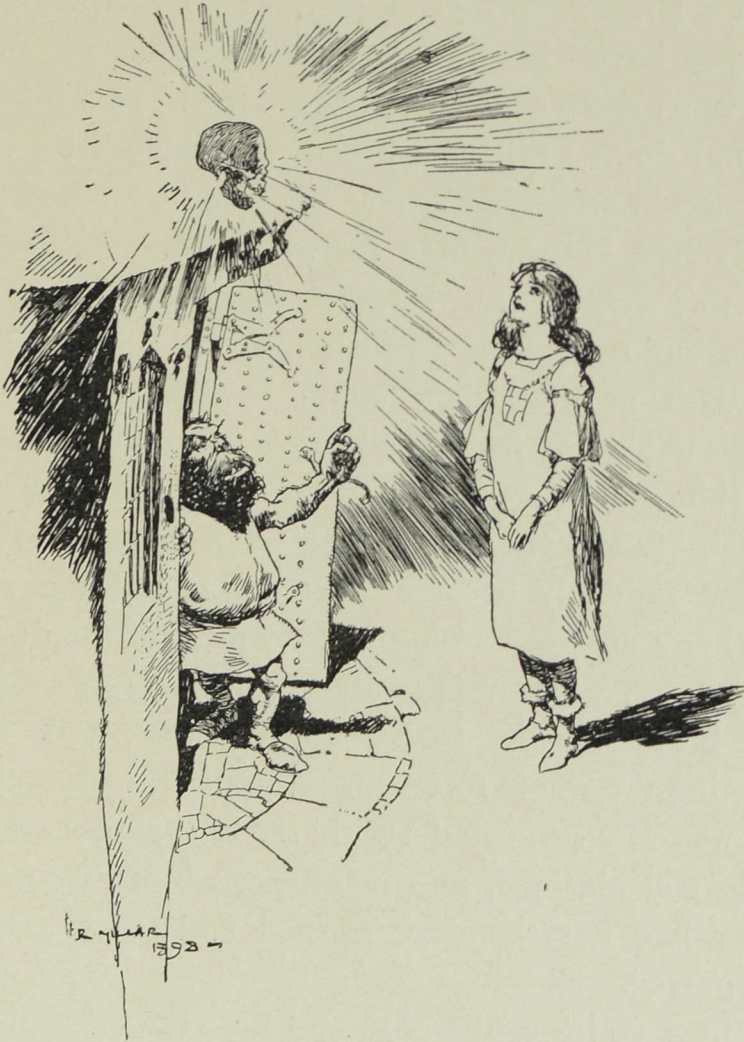
“I have a wonderful emporium in the middle of the forest where you can get anything you like, from a kopek’s worth of sunflower seed* to a leg of mutton.”

“Very well,” said Martha, “I will send her at once;” and, so saying, she hastily returned home.

The moment the wicked girl got back to the hut she hid all the matches, as well as every particle of candle,

* Sunflower seeds are supposed to be good for the complexion, and are consequently very freely eaten by the peasantry.

and blew out the holy oil, which was burning before the ikon (or sacred picture) in the corner. As night closed in she rushed off to find her sister.



"THE HORRID LITTLE IMP APPEARED." (p. 242).

"Natalia, Natalia, what shall I do? I have forgotten to bring in any candles or matches, and it is growing dark; and, worse than all, the lamp in front of the ikon has gone out, and I cannot light it again. Something terrible

is sure to happen to us if we do not light the lamp at once. Rush off, like a good girl, to the forest and get some candles and matches ; there is a friend of mine who has a large supply of all sorts of necessaries, and he will let you have whatever you want without payment."

"But won't some of our neighbours lend you a match?"

"Go and do as I tell you, you disagreeable little thing! You never will do anything you are asked without making a fuss," yelled Martha, in a fury.

That was enough for Natalia. She stopped to hear no more, but rushed straight off into the forest. It was almost dark now, and she could hardly find her way. She was not a bit frightened ; she was only anxious to get the things her sister required as quickly as possible.

At last, after having walked some distance, everything about her suddenly became quite light, and she saw in front of her a curious-looking house, and over the door was a death's-head, which was lighted up inside and sent forth rays of brilliant light from its eyes, nose, and mouth, illuminating the whole forest for some distance round.

This was so unexpected and horrible that poor Natalia began to feel alarmed, and in all probability would have run away had not the door opened and the horrid little Imp appeared.

"Oh, here you are, at last!" said he, with a ghastly grin. "I began to think you were not going to turn up."

"What! did you expect me, then?" gasped the terrified Natalia.

"Of course! This illumination is entirely in your honour. I don't usually waste so much light—I can see in the dark."

"You must have made some mistake," Natalia said, "as it was quite by accident that I came here. My sister sent me to get some candles and matches from some place near here, kept by a friend of hers."

"I know all about that—I am the friend in question; this noble mansion is the grand emporium of everything, and you have made no mistake."

"Then, if you please, will you kindly let me have the candles and matches, as my sister is waiting for them, and is all in the dark?"

"Let her wait!" grinned the Imp; "I don't part with my lights so easily. You will have to come and attend to my emporium and tidy up things for me before I let you go again, and if you don't do as I tell you you won't see any other light but mine for the rest of your blessed little life."

"I am really very sorry, but I must run off. Can't you let me have just one candle and a match for to-night, as my sister is anxiously waiting for me to bring them?"

Here the Imp indulged in a loud laugh, which jarred on Natalia's nerves.

"Come, girl," said he, "don't stand there idle; go in and tidy up the place, and get me my dinner ready."

There was no help for it. Natalia was obliged to follow the creature into the long, low building. On looking round, she found it full of every imaginable article of food, clothing, furniture, kitchen utensils, etc., and all in a hopeless muddle, and everything just where it had no possible business to be.

"This place is not tidy by any means," said the Imp; "you will have to set to work and put things straight

by to-morrow morning. But first of all I want my meal ; so run away and find what you think I should like, and cook it properly. I shall expect it ready in ten minutes."

With these words the Imp opened a small door leading into a kitchen, pushed Natalia in, and locked her up alone. The poor girl looked round, but saw nothing either in the shape of food or cooking utensils. She hunted high and low, but in vain ; at last she sat down on the floor and cried.

Presently she heard a very slight flapping of wings, and, on glancing up, she saw a little white dove, which flew down towards her and perched upon her shoulder.

"Don't cry, Natalia," said the bird ; "there is no occasion for you to fear. You have always been a good girl, unselfish to a degree, and cheerful under most trying circumstances ; therefore no harm will ever overtake you. I will be near to protect you ; for I never fail to help and protect all those who deserve it. Whatever the Imp, who is the greatest enemy I have, tells you to do, try to do it, no matter how difficult ; I will always be near—only never despair, but persevere and have patience."

The dove then left Natalia's shoulder and began fluttering round the room. Natalia watched the little thing eagerly ; all her fear had left her, and a feeling of perfect calm came over her.

Suddenly, what was her surprise when right in front of her appeared a table upon which a sumptuous repast was daintily displayed ! Everything that any one could possibly wish to eat and drink was upon the table.

"Oh, you dear, sweet little dove ! how can I ever thank you ?" exclaimed Natalia. But the bird had disappeared,

and in another moment the door opened and the Imp walked in.

“Well,” he cried, “I trust you have obeyed my orders and prepared my dinner.”

Just as Natalia was about to reply the creature caught sight of all the good things and flew into a terrible rage.

“What is the meaning of this?” he cried. “Where did you get these things from? Answer me this instant.”

“I am very sorry,” replied Natalia, calmly, “but you told me to prepare your dinner, and—here it is.”

“None of your insolence! How dare you speak to me like that? Be off with you, and put the emporium in order—*that* won’t be so easy—and if you don’t put it straight by the morning, I will make mincemeat of you!”

“There is no pleasing some people!” thought Natalia, as she was roughly turned out of the kitchen.

The Imp had been correct in saying that it would be no easy matter to put the emporium to rights. The instant Natalia put a thing into its place it rolled out again and hid itself away in some obscure corner of the room, and it took Natalia quite half an hour to find it, and then with no better result. This sort of thing went on half through the night, until, tired out and weary, Natalia decided to rest a little and try again later on. So she lay down upon the counter and instantly fell asleep; nor did she wake up again until she heard the door handle rattle and found that it was morning; and the Imp walked in to see if all was tidy. She jumped up and looked round in alarm, but what was her surprise

and delight to see that everything was in perfect order and as neat as possible.

“That dear little dove!” thought Natalia; “how good of it to help me!”

The Imp was beside himself with rage.

“What is the meaning of all this?” he cried. “Tell me this instant who it was that helped you, for you could not have done the work alone.”

“I don’t know who it was,” Natalia replied, “but a dove flew upon my shoulder last night and promised to protect me and help me; more than that I do not know.”

“That’s not true!” stormed the Imp; “doves, or any birds, for the matter of that, don’t fly about helping people. I never heard such rubbish in all my life! Tell me instantly who helped you?”

“What I told you is perfectly true, and if you won’t believe me I cannot help it.”

The Imp glared at the girl for a moment, evidently wondering what he could do next.

“I shall be even with you yet,” he said at last; “you told me your sister wanted candles and matches. I am out of them; but this evening you can have the magic skull over my door—that will give you light for the rest of your lives and illuminate the whole village besides, provided you ever reach it in safety, for the fiery skull is no easy thing to carry. Take it and see whether any goose of a bird will help you to carry it.” The Imp clapped his hands and laughed in delight at what he considered an excellent joke.

Natalia trembled at the thought of possessing so horrid a thing as the magic skull; but there was no help for

it—she knew she would have to make the best of it and trust to the little dove for help.



“IT WILL . . . HELP YOU IN MANY WAYS” (p. 249).

At the close of the day the Imp climbed up a ladder, and, after some difficulty, contrived to bring down the skull, which he gave to Natalia.

“Take it,” said he, “and give it to your sister with my compliments, though I doubt if you will ever get as far as the village alive. In less than ten minutes you ought to be a heap of ashes. Farewell !”

The Imp laughed loudly and re-entered the house, leaving Natalia to return to the village with the skull in her hand.

It was beginning to grow dark now, and she had not gone far into the forest before the skull began to send forth rays of light all round. For some time nothing happened, but presently the rays became so fierce that they began to scorch her hand, and at last she was obliged to drop the horrid thing altogether, as the heat from it was too intense to bear ; but even after she had let it drop the rays from the skull scorched the trees and grass and everything that was within reach. Natalia tried to run away, but the dreadful rays followed her and scorched her whenever she attempted to go ; when she remained quiet they hardly touched her.

“Whatever shall I do?” cried Natalia ; “I can’t stay here for ever, and I can’t carry the horrid thing.”

“Don’t be frightened,” said a voice, and once more Natalia saw her friend the dove ; “take up the skull again and carry it home ; I shall sit on your shoulder, so that the rays won’t dare to hurt you while I am with you.”

Natalia quickly obeyed. She hardly felt any heat at all as she walked along carrying the skull.

“Why may I not leave this horrid thing in the forest ?” asked Natalia of the dove ; “what use is it to me ?”

“It will prove of the greatest use, my child ; keep it, for it cannot hurt you now, as its power for evil depends

much upon the influence to which it is subjected. It will rid you of your enemies and help you in many ways. Do you know that ever since you left home the village has been in utter darkness and the inhabitants have been almost starving, for every morsel of food has disappeared; the wretched Imp spirited it all away into his emporium?"

"And are my father and sister starving too?"

"Yes; they have been very miserable, particularly your sister, who never ceased lamenting sending you away to the forest."

Natalia hurried on faster and never stopped to rest until she was safely inside the hut. Her sister embraced her warmly and wept bitterly over her, begging her to forgive her cruelty; while the father was beside himself with joy.

After that all went well in the village. As for the peasant and his daughters, a wonderful change came over their prospects; for the magic skull, instead of sending forth rays of fierce light, shot forth gold whenever Natalia required it. Consequently the peasant and his daughters were poor no longer; they moved out of the little hut into a large house, and Natalia spent all her time in helping her poorer neighbours.

For some time all went well, until Martha again developed a great dislike and jealousy towards her sister. She was annoyed because the magic skull paid no attention to her: whenever she wanted gold it only sent forth fire and burnt her, and she hated having to ask her sister for whatever money she required.

"Why," thought she, "should I not try to secure a skull from the Imp for my own use?"

So one day she set out to visit the emporium in the forest, but whether she found what she required no one



THE DOVE INSTANTLY CHANGED ITSELF INTO A REMARKABLY HANDSOME
YOUNG PRINCE (p. 251).

ever knew, for she was never seen or heard of after. Natalia and her father had the forest searched and left no stone unturned to find Martha, but all in vain.

One morning, as Natalia was sitting by her window,

weeping over Martha's strange disappearance, she was delighted to see her friend the dove fly in and perch itself on the sill.

"Dear little dove," cried Natalia, "cannot you tell me where my sister is?"

"She has met with the fate that she had destined for you. I tried to help her, but she only laughed at me, and would not obey me or trust in me. The Imp has had his revenge; he will never get over your reaching home in safety with the skull."

Natalia was miserable, and for days nothing would comfort her.

"Natalia," said the dove, appearing to her again one day, "will you marry me?"

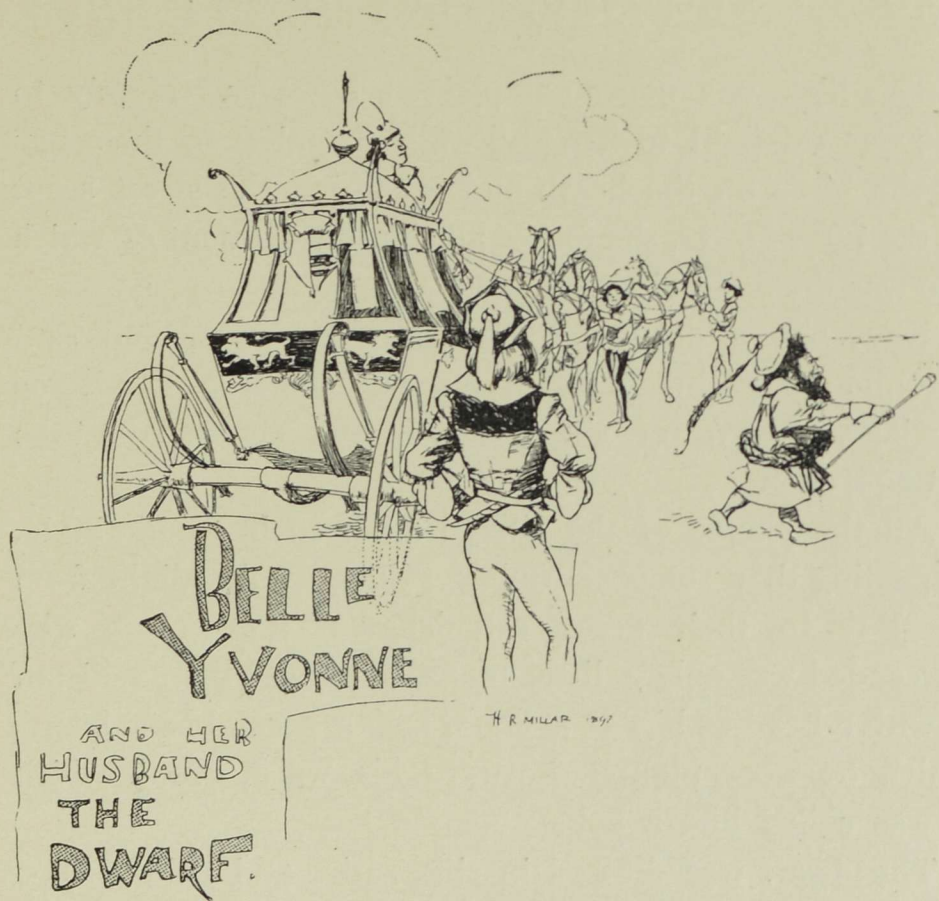
To say that Natalia was astonished would be to put it very mildly.

"Who, then, are you? I thought you were a dove?"

"No; I only assumed that form to help you. I am the son of the Queen of the Fairies."

So saying the dove instantly changed itself into a remarkably handsome young Prince; so charming was he that Natalia directly fell desperately in love with him, and promised to marry him on the following day, which she accordingly did and lived happily ever after; Natalia becoming as great a favourite with the fairies as she was with the mortals.

Belle Yvonne and her Husband, the Dwarf



From the French of Daniel Riche

SOLITARY, by the seashore, in a cottage which the rough winds from across the ocean shook like a worn-out and abandoned ship, lived the aunt of Belle Yvonne, who was beautiful as a spring day, with the gold glint of her hair, her eyes as blue as the cloudless sky, and her skin as fair as the hue of the lilies growing by the margin of the well.

But though she was beautiful enough to surprise a King, Yvonne was very unhappy. Her old witch of an aunt, who lived by theft and the spoils of wrecked mariners gathered from the shore, beat her much more often than complimented her on her good looks.

256 The Ruby Fairy Book

The little one never complained, however. Merely to live was a delight to her, and while listening to the songs of the birds on the heath and breathing the sweet scent of the furze-flower, she forgot all the ill-treatment of which she was the daily victim.

Now, one afternoon, when the old woman had sent Yvonne to gather mussels on the shore, a handsome carriage, drawn by six white horses, stopped at the cottage door.

All the people of the village followed it, wonderingly, expecting that some charming Prince would alight from it. But to their great astonishment the person who descended was only a little man—not taller than a distaff—with a head as big as a lion's, and a great black beard, which he wore plaited down to his waist, round which it was coiled like a belt.

The dwarf was dressed in silk, satin, and gold; rings and jewels sparkled on all his fingers, and the knob of his cane was composed of a single diamond.

He entered the miserable cottage, and the old woman was so overcome by the sight of him that she threw herself upon her knees before him in sign of humility and deference.

“Rise, woman,” said the dwarf, in a thin little voice, like the tone of a flageolet; “I have to speak with you on a matter of importance.”

As she was rising, in obedience to his command, she received full in the nose a purse filled with gold pieces; but, far from complaining, her face brightened into a hideous smile, and she asked humbly:

“What can I do to satisfy you, my lord?”

“I have noticed,” he replied, “your niece, Yvonne, agile as a young goat, flitting about the rocks; she is so beautiful that I have come to ask for her hand.”

The old woman clapped her legs three times with her hands, which with her was a sign of utter stupefaction.

“You, a rich lord, who have a carriage drawn by six white horses, and so many purses full of gold pieces that you throw them to old women—you wish to marry my niece?”

“It is my dearest wish, supposing she will consent.”

“She refuse such an honour?” squeaked the old woman. “If she dare!”

From a distance Yvonne perceived the assembled village, and though she could not imagine what it meant, the concourse of people about her aunt’s door alarmed her so much that her rosy cheek became pale.

She was obliged to go home, however. Slowly, and bending under the weight of the load of mussels she had gathered, she made her way towards the cottage. On seeing her approach the curious crowd opened to let her pass, crying:

“Here she is—here she is!”

The poor child felt her heart contract more and more.

When she learned that her hand was sought by the dwarf, Belle Yvonne burst into tears. She would have preferred to remain unmarried all her life than to wed such a frightful creature!

Seeing this, the old witch of an aunt begged his lordship to come again the next day, assuring him that her niece would then be ready to accept him; and when next day the dwarf returned, Yvonne received him with smiles.

What had the old woman said to bring about this change? Had she dazzled her with the prospect of riches, or terrorised her by force or threats?

No; the old witch had caused her unsuspectingly to eat the brain of a mole strangled with three fern-stalks on a moonless night under a tree in which an owl was hooting. This charm, the power of which lasted two days, made all men who met her sight appear beautiful as the heroes of a dream.

She, therefore, received the dwarf with joy, and, on the second day, they were married, and he conducted her across wide lands and through dark forests to her new home.

Once arrived in the great hall of her magnificent castle, lit by four torches held in golden sockets, the charm came to an end, and poor Yvonne trembled with fear on hearing her dwarf-husband say to her:

“Madam, I know that I am neither big nor beautiful, in spite of my long beard; and, as I am very jealous, I warn you that you will never be allowed to go beyond the limits of my domain. You will see no other man besides myself. With those exceptions, pray understand me, gentle wife, your every desire, every dream, shall be accomplished.”

Yvonne was at first greatly distressed by her complete solitude. Youth needs noise and movement for the expenditure of its excess of strength; it needs, also, in provision for the days of its old age, to store up pictures, thoughts, and facts, to be revived when the time comes when activity is replaced by a quiet seat in an old arm-chair by the fireside.



"THEY DANCED TILL THEY WERE OUT OF BREATH" (p. 261).

A sense of deadly weariness weighed upon her. But as the years made no change in her situation, she determined to make the best of it by diverting herself by all

means possible, in company with her servant, Marie-Jeanne, a good, rough girl, fond of laughing and chattering.

At the close of an autumn day the two women were sitting at a window watching the setting sun, when some portions of a ballad, sung by two delicate and fluent voices, reached their ears.

This song, thrilling the dusky calm, touched and delighted the two recluses, and, when the voices ceased, both leaned out of the window to get sight of the troubadours, but saw, under their balcony, only two dwarfs so exactly like Yvonne's husband that they could not repress an exclamation of bewildered astonishment. Like him they were not taller than a distaff; like him, they had each a head as big as a lion's; and, like him, each had a long plaited beard coiled round his waist.

Recovered from their astonishment, the two young women were moved to laughter by this curious resemblance. Then Marie-Jeanne, who was always on the lookout for distraction for her mistress, proposed:

"Suppose we ask these two musicians to come and amuse us a little?"

"How can you think of such a thing? What if my lord should return?"

"Oh, never fear, madam! He will not return till late in the evening; you will have plenty of time to amuse yourself with their songs."

It did not need much pressing to induce the poor recluse to accept this tempting offer, and, clapping her hands with pleasure, she permitted Marie-Jeanne to make a sign to them to come up.

In the course of a few moments the two dwarfs sang,

accompanying themselves on the viol; and the lady and the servant, who for so long had not had any amusement of any kind, danced till they were out of breath.

Suddenly, while they were in the full enjoyment of their new-found pleasure, the sound of footsteps gritting on the gravel-walk in the court of honour fell upon their ears.

“Heavens! My husband!”

“Your husband?”

“We are lost!”

“Don’t give way to despair so quickly,” said Marie-Jeanne, who was not readily alarmed. “Chickens don’t allow their necks to be wrung without screeching loud enough to make themselves heard. We’ll find some way.”

“Do you think it possible?”

Marie-Jeanne did not answer this question, but hurried across the room to a large coffer, the lid of which she raised.

“Quick! hide yourselves in this chest,” she said to the musicians. “The master is very spiteful, and if he discovers you in this house, he will be sure to cut you into little pieces.”

Terrified out of their wits, they instantly obeyed, and Marie-Jeanne shut down the lid, seated herself upon it, and coolly set to work knitting.

Not a moment too soon; for she had hardly made a dozen loops when the little lord entered the room. The discomposure of his wife was at once observed by him.

“What is the matter with you, Belle Yvonne? You are as pale as a corpse.”

262 The Ruby Fairy Book

"I, my lord!" she stammered; "I am feeling a little weak this evening, that is all."

"That comes of your not being allowed to go abroad perhaps," said Marie-Jeanne, boldly.

"The park is large, my beloved, it must suffice for your walks." Then, changing the subject to avoid a discussion which had many times been re-opened, he added, "I have mislaid here the little box of pistoles, of which I have need, and have returned in search of it."

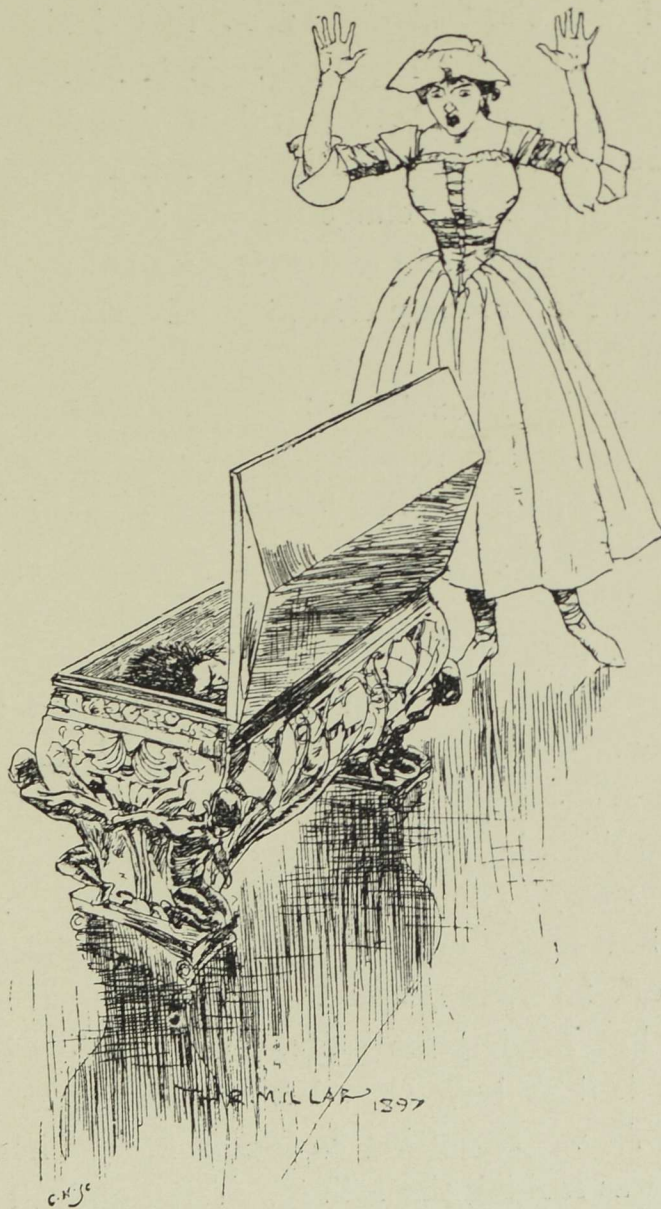
"Search, search, my lord," said Belle Yvonne, adding, in a tone scarcely louder than the breath of the summer air, "the company of my lord is always agreeable."

Leisurely he examined all the furniture, felt in all the drawers, hoping by chance to discover what it was his wife was hiding from him—for that she was hiding something from him he felt certain; but neither seeing nor hearing anything unusual, he kissed her hand, and, with his coffret under his arm, quitted the room.

When they had seen him cross the drawbridge Marie-Jeanne hurried to the great chest and raised the lid. Alas! the little lord had stayed too long, and the two musicians, deprived of air, had both been suffocated.

Belle Yvonne and the well-meaning servant wept. It was abominable that two such gay and well-bred little singers, who had made them dance so delightfully, should lose their lives in so miserable a manner.

When they became somewhat calmer, Yvonne wondered what would come of this pitiful adventure. Had they done wrong in indulging in a little recreation, in disobedience to the will of the lord and master, and had this accident occurred to punish them?



"THE TWO MUSICIANS, . . . HAD BOTH BEEN SUFFOCATED (p. 262).

Marie-Jeanne, with a shrug of her broad shoulders, cut short her mistress's lamentations.

"Don't be downcast, madam," she said; "this misfortune had only one cause—my weight—which made

the lid of the chest air-tight; so that I alone am responsible for what has happened. It is for me, therefore, to find some way of getting rid of the proofs of our disobedience before your husband returns."

For a long time she cudgelled her brains. Night was closing in upon the castle and filling its halls with sinister gloom, when she suddenly cried, in tones of triumph:

"I have it!"

"Speak quickly!" exclaimed Yvonne, glad exceedingly to have a servant so resourceful.

"This is my plan," replied Marie-Jeanne, unhesitatingly: "In the wildest depths of the forest there lives by himself an honest woodman. He knows nobody, and does not even suspect that he is the vassal of your noble husband. I will go and ask him to relieve me of these two poor little musicians, and for a trifle he will be sure to do us this piece of service."

"Do you think he will not be astonished?"

"Don't worry yourself on that account, my dear mistress, but leave all to me," replied Marie-Jeanne, hurrying off, for time pressed.

In this hut Marie-Jeanne found old Guido, whose hair and beard had so long been left untrimmed as to cover his entire face. Squatting before a fireless hearth, the woodman was seeking the solution of the difficult problem—how to live on nothing.

Astonished at receiving a visitor, he hastily rose and offered a plump fagot as the only substitute for an arm-chair he was able to command.

"To what do I owe the honour of your presence, *demoiselle*?" he asked.

"The lady *châtelaine*, of whom I am the servant," replied Marie-Jeanne, boldly, "this morning admitted to the castle a frightful little starveling, and, moved by compassion—for she has a tender soul—she had a meal set before him, of which he ate so gluttonously as to choke himself and die of it."

"The clumsy fool!" said Guido, wishing that such a chance might fall in his way. "He would have done better to fill his pockets instead of choking himself, so that he might have doubled his pleasure next day."

"That is what he ought to have done, wasn't it?" said Marie-Jeanne. "Well, my mistress having invited this poor wretch in the absence of her lord, and fearing his anger, has sent me to beg you to come and take away the body, for which service she will give you three pistoles."

Guido closed his eyes, and under the close-pressed lids saw a river of gold. Three pistoles! Never had he possessed such a fortune! He replied:

"What the lady *châtelaine* desires is an order. I will immediately come for your gormandiser and throw him into the sea."

"That's it," cried Marie-Jeanne.

Running back to the castle, she drew one of the dwarfs from the chest and descended with it to the grand vestibule, and waited against one of the thousand marble columns which supported the antique dwelling till she was joined by the old woodman, to whom she simply said:

"Here is your load."

"Good, good," he said, taking it upon his shoulder; "in

266 The Ruby Fairy Book

five minutes I shall be back, and, by that time, your glutton will be in the stomach of a shark."

So Guido went off, and Belle Yvonne's cunning maid returned upstairs to her mistress, who waited in a corner of the room farthest from the fatal chest.

"There's one got rid of."

"Yes, but there is the other," tremulously said her mistress.

"Don't distress yourself as to that; we'll get rid of it quite as easily." And drawing the body from the chest, she descended with it to the vestibule as before. The sea was only a short distance from the castle, and Marie-Jeanne soon saw the woodman coming back for his reward. Then, with her two hands planted on her hips, and putting on an air of indignation, she cried:

"Upon my word! you've a pretty way of executing the commissions intrusted to you!"

"What do you mean?" stammered the woodman.

"Why, that five minutes ago, our glutton returned here and fell dead at my feet!"

"Impossible! I saw him sink."

"How could he be here at this minute, then?" demanded Marie-Jeanne, pointing to the second little musician.

"If I did not see it with my own eyes, I would not believe it, for I swear to you I threw it into the sea from the top of the rock."

"The proof?"

Greatly irritated at being taken for an incompetent, Guido threatened the lifeless body of the poor little musician:

"Son of a sorcerer, this time I will weight your carcass



"I THREW IT INTO THE SEA FROM THE TOP OF THE ROCK" (p. 266).

with stones, and I promise you shall never come to the surface again!"

And shouldering his burden, he once more set off without having the least suspicion of the trick which was being played upon him.

Marie-Jeanne, delighted by the success of her stratagem, went back to her mistress, who could not help smiling at the relation of the old woodman's indignation on finding the second dwarf at the place whence he had taken the first.

But time passed and Guido did not return. At last, in their uneasiness concerning him, they were wondering whether he might have fallen into the sea with his load, when they saw him approaching, wiping the perspiration from his forehead,

Marie-Jeanne took from a casket the sum agreed on, and hastened to meet him.

While she was filling for him a goblet of rosy wine, the old fellow, his eyes sparkling with joy, carefully examined, weighed, and sniffed at the three pieces of gold. Then, after having wrapped them in a water-lily leaf, emptied the goblet at a draught, and given vent to a deep sigh of satisfaction, he said :

“Take my word for it, *demoiselle*, that devil's cub gave me some trouble.”

“Yes, obliged you to make two journeys.”

“Three!—for in spite of my having filled the sack he was in with heavy stones, the little man escaped again!”

Marie-Jeanne's eyes opened wider than ever they had opened before in her life. She was bewildered.

“What do you mean?” she asked, as soon as she regained the use of her tongue.

“I was coming back here for the money you promised,

fully convinced that I had finally got rid of your embarrassing visitor, when, close to the portcullis, what should



"I BROUGHT HIM DOWN WITH A SINGLE BLOW" (p. 270).!

I see but my little man walking in front of me, quietly, this time, with a small box under his arm."

Guessing the nature of the mistake, Marie-Jeanne, a little pale, inquired :

“What happened then?”

“My blood was up!” exclaimed the old woodman. “A mere nothing like him—a thing not taller than a distaff—had no right to snap his fingers at an honest woodman like me. So, snatching up a thick stick, and giving him no time to make even so much as a gesture, I brought him down with a single blow, saying, as I planted my cudgel on his head ‘To slip from the trap once might do, but to slip from it twice is once too many!’”

Without asking leave, Guido helped himself to another goblet of wine, then concluded :

“Now, if he comes back, I hope this drink of wine may choke me! To your good health, *demoiselle!*”

Without saying a word, Marie-Jeanne let him depart ; then, when the heavy, iron-bound door had closed behind him, she rushed to her mistress, crying :

“Lady, put on a black veil ; your lord is dead and buried!”

A low cry escaped from the lips of Belle Yvonne, and she fainted—without Marie-Jeanne knowing whether her swoon was owing to grief or joy.

The charming widow did not take long to console herself. The windows of the ancient manor-house, closed for so many years, were opened wide, allowing the pure breath of the breeze and the gay beams of the sun to enter in floods.

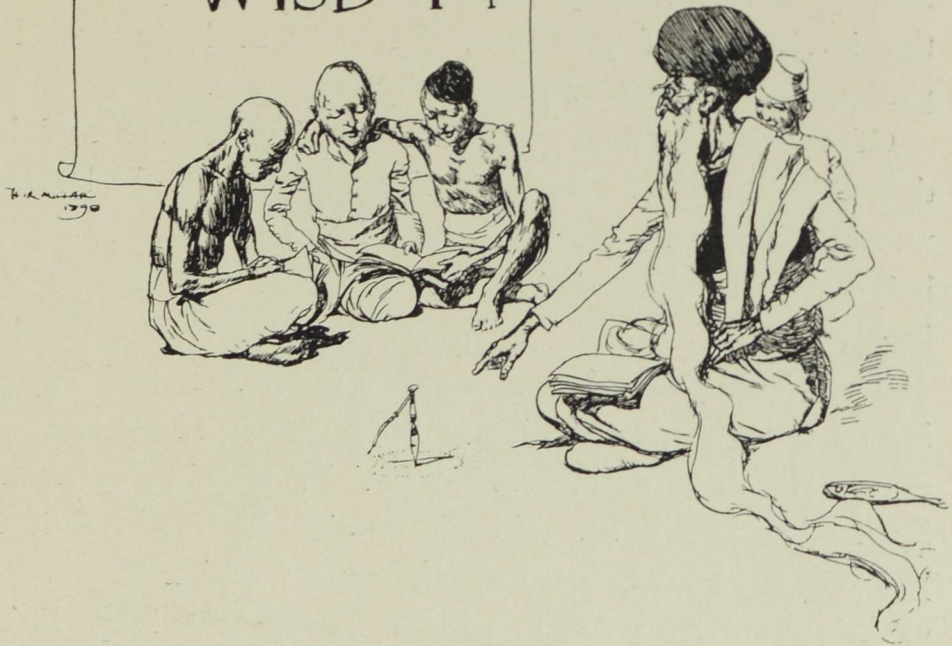
The sombre ivy disappeared from the antique walls, giving place to clustering roses ; the superb halls, built for joy and mouldering in gloominess, were once more

illuminated brightly, and Yvonne—omitting an invitation to her aunt—gave there sumptuous entertainments.

At the end of a year of widowhood, the beautiful *châtelaine* allowed herself to be loved by the King's son, who married her, and made her so happy—so happy that she never grew old.

Knowledge without Wisdom

KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT WISDOM



Adapted from the Sanskrit by T. R. Edwards

ONCE upon a time there lived four lads in an Indian village. Their parents had a great ambition that they should become learned in the Shasters. In those days, however, schools were rare. Only here and there a pundit could be found who was willing to take in disciples. After many fruitless inquiries they at last discovered an illustrious sage who consented to teach their sons. To his fatherly care the youths were committed.

Now, in those days disciples had to perform various menial offices for their master, as well as beg food in the

276 The Ruby Fairy Tales

towns and villages around. Pundits then supported their scholars in addition to teaching them.

In this humble way the four youths spent several years. A long course of study was absolutely necessary to master the intricacies of grammar, the rules of logic, and the profound teachings of philosophy.

Of the four, three proved themselves clever and industrious students. In them the sage felt he had found worthy disciples. Through them his vast stores of knowledge would be handed down to future generations unimpaired.

The fourth youth, however, was a failure. Notwithstanding all the patient teaching of his master, and all his own efforts, *he could not learn*. What he acquired one day he forgot the next. Learn though he could not, he yet possessed much natural shrewdness and a large share of common-sense. His master could not help liking him, even while he pitied his dulness.

Not so his companions. They only delighted to cast ridicule upon him, and to make him the butt of their cruel jibes. Were it not that they were kept in check by the good old sage, his life would have been unbearable.

At last the time came when the pundit had exhausted all the resources of his learning. His disciples knew all he could teach them. Seeing which, they became vain of their accomplishments and puffed up with self-conceit.

The day of their departure for their own country at last arrived, and all four bade farewell to their kind old master.

On their journey homewards, the illustrious three discoursed of their profound knowledge, and indulged in

boastful speculations as to their future. From talking of themselves they turned to deride their less fortunate companion walking beside them. Feeling no longer under restraint, they taunted him to their heart's content. They



"THE PERFECT SKELETON" (p. 279).

pointed the finger of scorn at him and called him block-head and dunce, stupid and fool. It was in vain the poor fellow begged them to let him alone. His entreaties only evoked peals of laughter.

Proceeding in this way, they at last came to the heart of a great forest. For many miles around them the

278 The Ruby Fairy Tales

country was uninhabited, save by wild beasts. Their levity now gave place to fear. Walking along cautiously, they espied lying scattered on the ground the skull and bones of some animal. They gazed in silence upon them, and tried to guess the creature to which they belonged.

Suddenly one of the learned trio burst out with this exclamation :

“Friends, see you these bones all strewn about the ground in disorder? I possess a charm whereby I can cause them all to come together, each fitting to its fellow, until you will behold a perfect skeleton before you.”

Whereupon another of the three youths exclaimed :

“If you can do that, my friend, I also have a charm which can clothe your skeleton with flesh and skin and hair, and transform it into the perfect animal.”

It was now the turn of the third to speak.

“Friends,” said he, “I have the power to complete your work. I know of a potent charm which can confer life on the beast.”

Elated with pride at the marvellous powers they possessed, they all said :

“Come, let us put our great learning to the test. Let us show this dull fellow that he knows nothing at all. He shall have an ocular demonstration of our extraordinary resources.”

Having thus spoken, and fascinated at the prospect of showing their skill, they at once began their incantations.

The first youth uttered aloud his magic charm. The

effect of it was instantly seen. The bones, which had been lying so still, seemed all at once to become possessed of life. They leaped from the ground and rushed together. With a rattle and a clatter they fitted into one another *until the perfect skeleton of some wild animal stood before them.*

The author of this wonderful feat was beside himself with delight, and the others gazed on in speechless admiration.

After a while, the second youth took upon him to try the effect of his charm. In clear and sonorous tones he pronounced the mystic words, and again the result was wonderful. Flesh and skin and hair immediately covered the skeleton frame before them, *and the creature proved to be a full-grown lion.*

Life only was now required to complete their task, and this the third youth was about to confer by his charm, whereupon he whom they called fool cried out, vehemently:

"Friend, hold! By the name of all the gods, do not utter the words. Do you not see that this creature is a lion? If you give it life, it will surely destroy us."

The three paragons of learning, indignant at the interruption, and despising the quarter whence it came, rejected his advice with scorn.

"Fool," said they, "hold your peace. You know nothing about the matter. We are not going to be frightened by an ignoramus from seeing our work completed."

Once more the sagacious youth implored them to desist, but it was in vain. They were blinded with anger

280 The Ruby Fairy Tales

and self-conceit. Seeing which, he made this last request :



"THREE LIFELESS FORMS WERE STRETCHED UPON THE SWORD" (p. 281).

"If you *will* give life to the beast, I beseech you to wait till I have climbed up into this tree." And with

that he made a dash for the nearest tree and scrambled up its trunk.

Scarce able to wait till he had climbed half-way up, the third infatuated youth now pronounced the final fateful charm.

Again the effect was instantaneous. The calm, lifeless form before them became instinct with life. *The lion was alive.* Its fierce eyes glared upon them. All too late they realised that *they* were the fools, and not their companion in the tree. With a roar and a bound the savage beast sprang upon them. In a few moments three lifeless forms were stretched upon the sward.

This done, the ravenous brute gorged itself on their remains. Soon nothing was left of them save a few bones to mark the fatal spot. Only he whom they had called stupid escaped to relate their sad end.

Thus, instead of having their names handed down to posterity as pundits and philosophers, they were ever afterwards used to illustrate the baleful effects of knowledge without wisdom.

FOURTH EDITION.

THE GOLDEN FAIRY BOOK.

FAIRY TALES OF OTHER LANDS.

BY

GEORGE SAND, MORITZ JOKAI, ALEXANDRE DUMAS, VOLTAIRE,
DANIEL DARE, XAVIER MARMIER, ETC., ETC.

In crown 4to, richly gilt, and gilt edges, 6s.

With 111 Illustrations by H. R. Millar.

A FEW PRESS OPINIONS.

“‘The Golden Fairy Book’ is brimful of charm, and must be cordially welcomed. The book is one to be bought. It is rarely that fairy stories by such important authors come together. Young people are to be congratulated upon the provision of such a boon companion as ‘The Golden Fairy Book,’ to which Mr. H. R. Millar has contributed over one hundred artistic and amusing illustrations.”—*Gentlewoman*.

“An excellent collection of charming tales by famous authors. The volume is prettily bound, and excellently printed, with a profusion of illustrations.”—*Times*.

“‘The Golden Fairy Book’ need not be considered inferior to any. In appearance it is possibly ahead of all. Mr. Millar’s illustrations are spirited and clever, and the tales in themselves have been selected with great judgment from writers of all countries. If any find the old tales at all tiresome, let them take this ‘Golden Book’ in preference.”—*Daily Graphic*.

“A new and delightful departure . . . this most attractive gift-book, which one may safely prophesy will be a sure delight to its many possessors.”—*St. James’s Budget*.

“‘The Golden Fairy Book’ is as good as can be, and the illustrations are refined and attractive. The stories are gathered from many nations—a particular charm to this excellent collection.”—*Westminster Gazette*.

“Not only the little folk, but we ‘children of a larger growth’ also will be delighted with this collection of wondrous fairy tales. The book is beautifully illustrated.”—*The Lady*.

“Among the prettiest books of the season is ‘The Golden Fairy Book.’ Admirably illustrated, this volume is pleasing within and without.”—*Globe*.

“Boundless variety and that of the best. . . . ‘The Golden Fairy Book’ is well calculated to charm and satisfy the most omnivorous youthful appetite for imagined wonders.”—*Sketch*.

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THIRD LARGE EDITION NOW READY.

The Silver Fairy Book.

FAIRY TALES OF OTHER LANDS.

BY

SARAH BERNHARDT, E. P. LARKEN, HORACE MURREIGH, EMILE DE GIRARDIN, WILHELM HAUF, XAVIER MARMIER, LOUIS DE GRAMONT, Etc.

In crown 4to, cloth richly silvered, and silvered edges, 6s.

With 84 Illustrations by H. R. Millar.

A FEW PRESS OPINIONS.

“‘The Silver Fairy Book’ is, both from the interesting nature of the stories and the excellence of the illustrations, likely to be one of the most popular among young people, and indeed among all who still retain a fondness for fairy stories. The greater portion of them will be entirely new to English readers, and may be said to depart altogether from beaten paths.”—*Standard*.

“Beautifully got up in silver and dark blue, with 84 good illustrations by H. R. Millar. The stories are very prettily told. The book is an unusually good one, and will make a charming present.”—*Guardian*.

“Another delightful gift-book . . . a perfect mine of romantic interest and entertainment to child readers. The binding, the excellent quality of paper, the bold, clear type, with the quaint and daintily-produced illustrations are fitting accompaniments to the charming fairy tales that the book comprises. ‘The Silver Fairy Book’ is one of the choicest and handsomest books of its class.”—*Sheffield Independent*.

“Another volume which it would not be advisable to miss is the ‘Silver Fairy Book.’”—*Truth*.

“A very artistic-looking volume. . . . They are all fairy tales, with which the young reader is sure to be delighted.”—*Bookseller*.

“Few gift-books can be so safely recommended, and the illustrations by H. R. Millar are of unusual merit.”—*Academy*.

“Very prettily got up, and has 84 excellent illustrations. Indeed the fifteen tales from the English, French, and German are generally so good and bright that they deserve graceful illustration.”—*Times*.

“This striking volume will be a valuable addition to the libraries of children of all ages. The collection is as excellent as it is varied, and the illustrations are among the best we have ever seen.”—*Manchester Courier*.

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE DIAMOND FAIRY BOOK.

FAIRY TALES OF OTHER LANDS.

BY

ISABEL BELLERBY, Z. TOPELIUS, MRS. EGERTON EASTWICK,
CLEMENS BRENTANO, XAVIER MARMIER, J. JARRY,
W. HAUFF, SAINT-JUIRS, ETC.

In crown 4to, cloth, richly gilt and gilt edges, 6s.

With 83 Illustrations by H. R. Millar.

A FEW PRESS OPINIONS.

"Best among the gift-books under this section is 'The Diamond Fairy Book,' which is beautifully bound, beautifully illustrated, and full of charmingly beautiful stories."
—*Daily Mail*.

"One of the most popular gift-books of the season"—*St. James's Budget*.

"The daintiest and most fascinating of its kind we have seen for a very long time, worthy of the king of fairy tales, Hans Anderson, himself. The book is printed and bound in the daintiest and most elegant manner, and adorned with eighty-three beautiful illustrations by H. R. Millar."—*Lady*.

"It would be difficult to find a better six shillings' worth of fairy lore than this 'Diamond Fairy Book.' It is charmingly bound, and has eighty-three really beautiful illustrations by Mr. H. R. Millar."—*Queen*.

"A volume of great variety and charm. Above all the limitations of children have been remembered, and whilst we have striking scenes and characters, the little people are not over-weighted with ethics or metaphysics. The form of the book is most artistic, and the eighty-three illustrations by H. R. Millar are clever, dainty and appropriate."—*Manchester Courier*.

A New Volume of Fairy Tales of Denmark. Translated from the Danish of the late PROFESSOR SVEND GRUNDWIG.

FAIRY TALES FROM AFAR.

BY

PROFESSOR SVEND GRUNDWIG.

Translated by JANE MULLEY.

In large crown 8vo, cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.

With 32 Full-page Illustrations by Sydney Aldridge.

16 being printed on Plate Paper.

LONDON; HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THREE NEW VOLUMES OF THE CELEBRATED
52 STORIES SERIES.

Edited by ALFRED H. MILES.

*Each in large crown 8vo, handsomely bound in bevelled boards,
cloth gilt, gilt edges. 5s.*

With Illustrations on plate paper; between 400 and 500
well-filled pages.

**FIFTY-TWO STORIES OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE.
FIFTY-TWO STIRRING STORIES FOR BOYS.
FIFTY-TWO STIRRING STORIES FOR GIRLS.**

~~~~~  
*VOLUMES ALREADY ISSUED.*

- |                                                        |                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Fifty-two Stories for Boys.                         | 17. Fifty-two Stories of the Indian Mutiny.                    |
| 2. Fifty-two Stories for Girls.                        | 18. Fifty-two Stories of Pluck and Peril for Boys.             |
| 3. Fifty-two More Stories for Boys.                    | 19. Fifty-two Stories of Pluck, Peril and Romance for Girls.   |
| 4. Fifty-two More Stories for Girls.                   | 20. Fifty-two Stories of the British Navy.                     |
| 5. Fifty-two Further Stories for Boys.                 | 21. Fifty-two Stories of Duty and Daring for Boys.             |
| 6. Fifty-two Further Stories for Girls.                | 22. Fifty-two Stories of Duty and Daring for Girls.            |
| 7. Fifty-two Other Stories for Boys.                   | 23. Fifty-two Stories of the British Army.                     |
| 8. Fifty-two Other Stories for Girls.                  | 24. Fifty-two Holiday Stories for Boys.                        |
| 9. Fifty-two Fairy Tales.                              | 25. Fifty-two Holiday Stories for Girls.                       |
| 10. Fifty-two Stories for Boyhood and Youth.           | 26. Fifty-two Sunday Stories for Boys and Girls.               |
| 11. Fifty-two Stories for Girlhood and Youth.          | 27. Fifty-two Stories of Heroism in Life and Action for Boys.  |
| 12. Fifty-two Stories for Children.                    | 28. Fifty-two Stories of Heroism in Life and Action for Girls. |
| 13. Fifty-two Stories of Boy Life at Home and Abroad.  | 29. Fifty-two Stories of the Wide, Wide World.                 |
| 14. Fifty-two Stories of Girl Life at Home and Abroad. |                                                                |
| 15. Fifty-two Stories of Life and Adventure for Boys.  |                                                                |
| 16. Fifty-two Stories of Life and Adventure for Girls. |                                                                |

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.

# EVELYN EVERETT-GREEN'S POPULAR STORIES.

---

*In crown 8vo, handsome cloth gilt, and gilt edges, 5s.*

## THE SILVER AXE.

By the Author of "Dare Lorimer's Heritage," "Golden Gwendolyn," etc.

**With 16 Full-page Illustrations by Ida Lovering.**

This is a long and exceptionally well-written story of an historical character, the time being the seventeenth century. It is full of exciting incident, with mystery, fighting, and love interwoven throughout. The story of "The Silver Axe" is likely to prove one of the author's most successful efforts.

*Handsomely bound in cloth gilt, with Eight full-page Illustrations, 5s. each.*

MISS MARJORIE OF SILVERMEAD.

DARE LORIMER'S HERITAGE.

GOLDEN GWENDOLYN.

NAMESAKES.

*In crown 8vo, cloth gilt, and Six Illustrations, 3s. 6d. each.*

THE WOOING OF VAL.

MY COUSIN FROM AUSTRALIA.

A STEPMOTHER'S STRATEGY.

*In crown 8vo, cloth gilt, and Two Illustrations, 2s. 6d.*

A FIERY CHARIOT.

---

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.



# Rosa N. Carey's Popular Stories.

## LIFE'S TRIVIAL ROUND.

*In cloth gilt, with Eight full-page Illustrations, 6s.*

"Rosa N. Carey has produced one of those bright, attractive domestic stories which is certain to be popular."—*Dundee Advertiser*.

## MY LADY FRIVOL.

*In cloth gilt, with Sixteen Illustrations on plate paper, 6s.*

"Miss Carey has a well-merited reputation as a writer of pleasant, wholesome romance, of a kind to place safely in the hands of young girls. Her books are distinguished by high tone, clear characterisation, and bright humour, with never a dull page from beginning to end. 'My Lady Frivol' is a fascinating creation . . . a bright and entertaining story that no reader will lay aside unfinished."—*Birmingham Daily Gazette*.

THIRD LARGE EDITION.

## MOLLIE'S PRINCE.

*In cloth gilt, 6s.*

"We can warmly recommend this charming story."—*Church Times*.

"This remarkable story."—*Daily Telegraph*.

"Two more delightful girls than Waveney and Mollie Ward one would not wish to meet. . . . We are introduced to such remarkably nice people that one quite regrets parting with them."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"We can sincerely recommend 'Mollie's Prince.'"—*Globe*.

FOURTH EDITION.

## DR. LUTTRELL'S FIRST PATIENT.

*In handsome cloth gilt, 3s. 6d.*

"A careful and pleasing piece of work . . . just such a book as a mother would desire her daughters to read. For clear, incisive characterisation, for apt presentation of life in a lifelike way, for a delicate humour as delicious as it is unobtrusive, the book ranks high."—*Glasgow Herald*.

"Written in Miss Carey's most interesting style. The various characters are charmingly worked out, and in this book Miss Carey has certainly enhanced her reputation."—*Liverpool Courier*.

LONDON: HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.

# Annie S. Swan's Popular Stories.

*In handsome cloth gilt, 5s.*

## AN AMERICAN WOMAN.

With Eight full-page Illustrations.

## A SON OF ERIN.

With Eight full-page Original Illustrations.

*In cloth, richly gilt, 3s. 6d. each.*

## A STORMY VOYAGER.

With Illustrations by R. H. MATHER.

*7th Thousand.*

## WYNDHAM'S DAUGHTER.

With Illustrations by MARGARET J. BADENOCH.

*5th Thousand.*

## A VICTORY WON.

With Illustrations by D. MURRAY SMITH.

*9th Thousand.*

## MEMORIES OF MARGARET GRAINGER, SCHOOLMISTRESS.

With Illustrations by D. MURRAY SMITH.

*7th Thousand.*

## ELIZABETH GLEN, M.B.;

The Experiences of a Lady Doctor.

With Illustrations by RICHARD TOD and D. MURRAY SMITH.

*7th Thousand.*

## MRS. KEITH-HAMILTON, M.B.;

More Experiences of Elizabeth Glen, M.B.

With Illustrations by D. MURRAY SMITH.

*5th Thousand.*

## A BITTER DEBT;

A Tale of the Black Country.

With Illustrations by D. MURRAY SMITH.

*12th Thousand.*

LONDON; HUTCHINSON & CO., 34, PATERNOSTER ROW.













