



THE PRINCESS AND THE SNAKE

Pretty Goldilocks.

PRETTY GOLDBLOCKS

AND OTHER STORIES

FROM THE FAIRY BOOKS

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PRETTY GOLDBLOCKS

ONCE upon a time there was a princess who was the prettiest creature in the world. And because she was so beautiful, and because her hair was like the finest gold, and waved and rippled nearly to the ground, she was called Pretty Goldilocks. She always wore a crown of flowers, and her dresses were embroidered with diamonds and pearls, and everybody who saw her fell in love with her.

Now one of her neighbours was a young king who was not married. He was very rich and handsome, and when he heard all that was said about Pretty Goldilocks, though he had never seen her, he fell so deeply in love with her that he could neither eat nor drink. So he resolved to send an ambassador to ask her in marriage.

He had a splendid carriage made for his ambassador, and gave him more than a hundred horses and a hundred servants, and told him to

be sure to bring the Princess back with him. After he had started nothing else was talked of at Court, and the King felt so sure that the Princess would consent that he set his people to work at pretty dresses and splendid furniture, that they might be ready by the time she came.

Meanwhile, the ambassador arrived at the Princess's palace and delivered his little message, but whether she happened to be cross that day, or whether the compliment did not please her, is not known. She only answered that she was very much obliged to the King, but she had no wish to be married.

The ambassador set off sadly on his homeward way, bringing all the King's presents back with him, for the Princess was too well brought up to accept the pearls and diamonds when she would not accept the King, so she had only kept twenty-five English pins that he might not be vexed.

When the ambassador reached the city, where the King was waiting impatiently, everybody was very much annoyed with him for not bringing the Princess, and the King cried like a baby, and nobody could console him. Now there was at the Court a young man, who was more clever

and handsome than anyone else. He was called Charming, and everyone loved him, excepting a few envious people who were angry at his being the King's favourite and knowing all the State secrets. He happened one day to be with some people who were speaking of the ambassador's return and saying that his going to the Princess had not done much good, when Charming said rashly :

‘If the King had sent me to the Princess Goldilocks I am sure she would have come back with me.

His enemies at once went to the King and said: ‘You will hardly believe, sire, what Charming has the audacity to say—that if *he* had been sent to the Princess Goldilocks she would certainly have come back with him. He seems to think that he is so much handsomer than you that the Princess would have fallen in love with him and followed him willingly.’ The King was very angry when he heard this.

‘Ha, ha!’ said he; ‘does he laugh at my unhappiness, and think himself more fascinating than I am? Go, and let him be shut up in my great tower to die of hunger.’

So the King's guards went to fetch Charming, who had thought no more of his rash speech, and carried him off to prison with great cruelty. The poor prisoner had only a little straw for his bed, and but for a little stream of water which flowed through the tower he would have died of thirst.

One day when he was in despair he said to himself:

‘How can I have offended the King? I am his most faithful subject, and have done nothing against him.’

The King chanced to be passing the tower and recognised the voice of his former favourite. He stopped to listen in spite of Charming's enemies, who tried to persuade him to have nothing more to do with the traitor. But the King said:

‘Be quiet, I wish to hear what he says.’

And then he opened the tower door and called to Charming, who came very sadly and kissed the King's hand, saying:

‘What have I done, sire, to deserve this cruel treatment?’

‘You mocked me and my ambassador,’ said the King, ‘and you said that if I had sent you

for the Princess Goldilocks you would certainly have brought her back.'

'It is quite true, sire,' replied Charming; 'I should have drawn such a picture of you, and represented your good qualities in such a way, that I am certain the Princess would have found you irresistible. But I cannot see what there is in that to make you angry.'

The King could not see any cause for anger either when the matter was presented to him in this light, and he began to frown very fiercely at the courtiers who had so misrepresented his favourite.

So he took Charming back to the palace with him, and after seeing that he had a very good supper he said to him:

'You know that I love Pretty Goldilocks as much as ever, her refusal has not made any difference to me; but I don't know how to make her change her mind: I really should like to send you, to see if you can persuade her to marry me.'

Charming replied that he was perfectly willing to go, and would set out the very next day.

‘But you must wait till I can get a grand escort for you,’ said the King. But Charming said that he only wanted a good horse to ride, and the King, who was delighted at his being ready to start so promptly, gave him letters to the Princess, and bade him good speed. It was on a Monday morning that he set out all alone upon his errand, thinking of nothing but how he could persuade the Princess Goldilocks to marry the King. He had a writing-book in his pocket, and whenever any happy thought struck him he dismounted from his horse and sat down under the trees to put it into the harangue which he was preparing for the Princess, before he forgot it.

One day when he had started at the very earliest dawn, and was riding over a great meadow, he suddenly had a capital idea, and, springing from his horse, he sat down under a willow tree which grew by a little river. When he had written it down he was looking round him, pleased to find himself in such a pretty place, when all at once he saw a great golden carp lying gasping and exhausted upon the grass. In leaping after little flies she had

thrown herself high upon the bank, where she had lain till she was nearly dead. Charming had pity upon her, and, though he couldn't help thinking that she would have been very nice for dinner, he picked her up gently and put her back into the water. As soon as Dame



Carp felt the refreshing coolness of the water she sank down joyfully to the bottom of the river, then, swimming up to the bank quite boldly, she said :

‘I thank you, Charming, for the kindness you have done me. You have saved my life; one day I will repay you.’ So saying, she sank down

into the water again, leaving Charming greatly astonished at her politeness.

Another day, as he journeyed on, he saw a raven in great distress. The poor bird was closely pursued by an eagle, which would soon have eaten it up, had not Charming quickly fitted an arrow to his bow and shot the eagle dead. The raven perched upon a tree very joyfully.

‘Charming,’ said he, ‘it is very generous of you to rescue a poor raven: I am not ungrateful, some day I will repay you.’

Charming thought it was very nice of the raven to say so, and went on his way.

Before the sun rose he found himself in a thick wood where it was too dark for him to see his path, and here he heard an owl crying as if it were in despair.

‘Hark!’ said he, ‘that must be an owl in great trouble; I am sure it has got into a snare’; and he began to hunt about, and presently found a great net which some bird-catchers had spread the night before.

‘What a pity it is that men do nothing but torment and persecute poor creatures which

never do them any harm!' said he, and he took out his knife and cut the cords of the net, and the owl flitted away into the darkness, but then turning, with one flicker of her wings, she came back to Charming and said:

'It does not need many words to tell you how great a service you have done me. I was caught; in a few minutes the fowlers would have been here—without your help I should have been killed. I am grateful, and one day I will repay you.'

These three adventures were the only ones of any consequence that befell Charming upon his journey, and he made all the haste he could to reach the palace of the Princess Goldilocks.

When he arrived he thought everything he saw delightful and magnificent. Diamonds were as plentiful as pebbles, and the gold and silver, the beautiful dresses, the sweetmeats and pretty things that were everywhere quite amazed him; he thought to himself: 'If the Princess consents to leave all this, and come with me to marry the King, he may think himself lucky!'

Then he dressed himself carefully in rich brocade, with scarlet and white plumes, and threw

a splendid embroidered scarf over his shoulder, and, looking as gay and as graceful as possible, he presented himself at the door of the palace, carrying in his arm a tiny pretty dog which he had bought on the way. The guards saluted him respectfully, and a messenger was sent to the Princess to announce the arrival of Charming as ambassador of her neighbour the King.

‘Charming,’ said the Princess; ‘the name promises well; I have no doubt that he is good-looking and fascinates everybody.’

‘Indeed he does, madam,’ said all her maids of honour in one breath. ‘We saw him from the window of the garret where we were spinning flax, and we could do nothing but look at him as long as he was in sight.’

‘Well to be sure!’ said the Princess, ‘that’s how you amuse yourselves, is it? Looking at strangers out of the window! Be quick and give me my blue satin embroidered dress, and comb out my golden hair. Let somebody make me fresh garlands of flowers, and give me my high-heeled shoes and my fan, and tell them to sweep my great hall and my throne, for I want

everyone to say I am really "Pretty Goldilocks."

You can imagine how all her maids scurried this way and that to make the Princess ready, and how in their haste they knocked their heads together and hindered each other, till she thought they would never have done. However, at last they led her into the gallery of mirrors that she might assure herself that nothing was lacking in her appearance, and then she mounted her throne of gold, ebony, and ivory, while her ladies took their guitars and began to sing softly. Then Charming was led in, and was so struck with astonishment and admiration that at first not a word could he say. But presently he took courage and delivered his harangue, bravely ending by begging the Princess to spare him the disappointment of going back without her.

'Sir Charming,' answered she, 'all the reasons you have given me are very good ones, and I assure you that I should have more pleasure in obliging you than anyone else, but you must know that a month ago as I was walking by the river with my ladies I took off my glove, and as

I did so a ring that I was wearing slipped off my finger and rolled into the water. As I valued it more than my kingdom, you may imagine how vexed I was at losing it, and I vowed never to listen to any proposal of marriage unless the ambassador first brought me



back my ring. So now you know what is expected of you, for if you talked for fifteen days and fifteen nights you could not make me change my mind.'

Charming was very much surprised by this answer, but he bowed low to the Princess, and

begged her to accept the embroidered scarf and the tiny dog he had brought with him. But she answered that she did not want any presents, and that he was to remember what she had just told him. When he got back to his lodging he went to bed without eating any supper, and his little dog, who was called Frisk, couldn't eat any either, but came and lay down close to him. All night long Charming sighed and lamented.

'How am I to find a ring that fell into the river a month ago?' said he. 'It is useless to try; the Princess must have told me to do it on purpose, knowing it was impossible.' And then he sighed again.

Frisk heard him and said:

'My dear master, don't despair; the luck may change; you are too good not to be happy. Let us go down to the river as soon as it is light.'

But Charming only gave him two little pats and said nothing, and very soon he fell asleep.

At the first glimmer of dawn Frisk began to jump about, and when he had waked Charming they went out together, first into the garden, and then down to the river's brink, where they wandered up and down. Charming was thinking

sadly of having to go back unsuccessful when he heard someone calling: 'Charming, Charming!' He looked all about him and thought he must be dreaming, as he could not see anybody. Then he walked on and the voice called again: 'Charming, Charming!'

'Who calls me?' said he. Frisk, who was very small and could look closely into the water, cried out: 'I see a golden carp coming.' And sure enough there was the great carp, who said to Charming:

'You saved my life in the meadow by the willow tree, and I promised that I would repay you. Take this; it is Princess Goldilocks' ring.' Charming took the ring out of Dame Carp's mouth, thanking her a thousand times, and he and tiny Frisk went straight to the palace, where someone told the Princess that he was asking to see her.

'Ah! poor fellow,' said she, 'he must have come to say good-bye, finding it impossible to do as I asked.'

So in came Charming, who presented her with the ring and said:

'Madam, I have done your bidding. Will it

please you to marry my master?' When the Princess saw her ring brought back to her unhurt she was so astonished that she thought she must be dreaming.

'Truly, Charming,' said she, 'you must be the favourite of some fairy, or you could never have found it.'

'Madam,' answered he, 'I was helped by nothing but my desire to obey your wishes.'

'Since you are so kind,' said she, 'perhaps you will do me another service, for till it is done I will never be married. There is a prince not far from here whose name is Galifron, who once wanted to marry me, but when I refused he uttered the most terrible threats against me, and vowed that he would lay waste my country. But what could I do? I could not marry a frightful giant as tall as a tower, who eats up people as a monkey eats chestnuts, and who talks so loud that anybody who has to listen to him becomes quite deaf. Nevertheless, he does not cease to persecute me and to kill my subjects. So before I can listen to your proposal you must kill him and bring me his head.'

Charming was rather dismayed at this command, but he answered :

‘Very well, Princess, I will fight this Galifron ; I believe that he will kill me, but at any rate I shall die in your defence.’

Then the Princess was frightened and said everything she could think of to prevent Charming from fighting the giant, but it was of no use, and he went out to arm himself suitably, and then, taking little Frisk with him, he mounted his horse and set out for Galifron’s country. Everyone he met told him what a terrible giant Galifron was, and that nobody dared go near him ; and the more he heard the more frightened he grew. Frisk tried to encourage him by saying :

‘While you are fighting the giant, dear master, I will go and bite his heels, and when he stoops down to look at me you can kill him.’

Charming praised his little dog’s plan, but knew that his help would not do much good.

At last he drew near the giant’s castle, and saw to his horror that every path that led to it

was strewn with bones. Before long he saw Galifron coming. His head was higher than the tallest trees, and he sang in a terrible voice :

‘Bring out your little boys and girls,
Pray do not stay to do their curls,
For I shall eat so very many,
I shall not know if they have any.’

Thereupon Charming sang out as loud as he could to the same tune :

‘Come out and meet the valiant Charming,
Who finds you not at all alarming ;
Although he is not very tall,
He’s big enough to make you fall.’

The rhymes were not very correct, but you see he had made them up so quickly that it is a miracle that they were not worse ; especially as he was horribly frightened all the time. When Galifron heard these words he looked all about him, and saw Charming standing, sword in hand ; this put the giant into a terrible rage, and he aimed a blow at Charming with his huge iron club, which would certainly have killed him if it had reached him, but at that instant a raven perched upon the giant’s head, and, pecking with

its strong beak and beating with its great wings, so confused and blinded him that all his blows fell harmlessly upon the air, and Charming, rushing in, gave him several strokes with his sharp sword so that he fell to the ground. Whereupon Charming cut off his head before he knew anything about it, and the raven from a tree close by croaked out :

‘ You see I have not forgotten the good turn you did me in killing the eagle. To-day I think I have fulfilled my promise of repaying you.’

‘ Indeed, I owe you more gratitude than you ever owed me,’ replied Charming.

And then he mounted his horse and rode off with Galifron’s head.

When he reached the city the people ran after him in crowds, crying :

‘ Behold the brave Charming, who has killed the giant !’ And their shouts reached the Princess’s ear, but she dared not ask what was happening, for fear she should hear that Charming had been killed. But very soon he arrived at the palace with the giant’s head, of which she was still terrified, though it could no longer do her any harm.

‘Princess,’ said Charming, ‘I have killed your enemy; I hope you will now consent to marry the King my master.’

‘Oh, dear! no,’ said the Princess, ‘not until you have brought me some water from the Gloomy Cavern.’

‘Not far from here there is a deep cave, the entrance to which is guarded by two dragons with fiery eyes, who will not allow anyone to pass them. When you get into the cavern you will find an immense hole, which you must go down, and it is full of toads and snakes; at the bottom of this hole there is another little cave, in which rises the Fountain of Health and Beauty. It is some of this water that I really must have: everything it touches becomes wonderful. The beautiful things will always remain beautiful, and the ugly things become lovely. If one is young one never grows old, and if one is old one becomes young. You see, Charming, I could not leave my kingdom without taking some of it with me.’

‘Princess,’ said he, ‘you at least can never need this water, but I am an unhappy ambassador, whose death you desire. Where you send

me I will go, though I know I shall never return.'

And, as the Princess Goldilocks showed no sign of relenting, he started with his little dog for the Gloomy Cavern. Everyone he met on the way said :

'What a pity that a handsome young man should throw away his life so carelessly! He is going to the cavern alone, though if he had a hundred men with him he could not succeed. Why does the Princess ask impossibilities?'

Charming said nothing, but he was very sad. When he was near the top of a hill he dismounted to let his horse graze, while Frisk amused himself by chasing flies. Charming knew he could not be far from the Gloomy Cavern, and on looking about him he saw a black hideous rock from which came a thick smoke, followed in a moment by one of the dragons with fire blazing from his mouth and eyes. His body was yellow and green, and his claws scarlet, and his tail was so long that it lay in a hundred coils. Frisk was so terrified at the sight of it that he did not know where to hide.



He saw one of the Dragons with fire blazing from
his mouth and eyes

Charming, quite determined to get the water or die, now drew his sword, and, taking the crystal flask which pretty Goldilocks had given him to fill, said to Frisk :

‘ I feel sure that I shall never come back from this expedition ; when I am dead, go to the Princess and tell her that her errand has cost me my life. Then find the King my master, and relate all my adventures to him.’

As he spoke he heard a voice calling :
‘ Charming, Charming !’

‘ Who calls me ?’ said he ; then he saw an owl sitting in a hollow tree, who said to him :

‘ You saved my life when I was caught in the net, now I can repay you. Trust me with the flask, for I know all the ways of the Gloomy Cavern, and can fill it from the Fountain of Beauty.’ Charming was only too glad to give her the flask, and she flitted into the cavern quite unnoticed by the dragon, and after some time returned with the flask, filled to the very brim with sparkling water. Charming thanked her with all his heart, and joyfully hastened back to the town.

He went straight to the palace and gave the

flask to the Princess, who had no further objection to make. So she thanked Charming, and ordered that preparations should be made for her departure, and they soon set out together. The Princess found Charming such an agreeable companion that she sometimes said to him :

‘ Why didn’t we stay where we were ? I could have made you king, and we should have been so happy ! ’

But Charming only answered :

‘ I could not have done anything that would have vexed my master so much, even for a kingdom, or to please you, though I think you are as beautiful as the sun. ’

At last they reached the King’s great city, and he came out to meet the Princess, bringing magnificent presents, and the marriage was celebrated with great rejoicings. But Goldilocks was so fond of Charming that she could not be happy unless he was near her, and she was always singing his praises.

‘ If it hadn’t been for Charming, ’ she said to the King, ‘ I should never have come here ; you ought to be very much obliged to him, for he did the most impossible things and got me water

from the Fountain of Beauty, so I can never grow old, and shall get prettier every year.'

Then Charming's enemies said to the King :

'It is a wonder that you are not jealous, the Queen thinks there is nobody in the world like Charming. As if anybody you had sent could not have done just as much !'

'It is quite true, now I come to think of it,' said the King. 'Let him be chained hand and foot, and thrown into the tower.'

So they took Charming, and as a reward for having served the King so faithfully he was shut up in the tower, where he only saw the gaoler, who brought him a piece of black bread and a pitcher of water every day.

However, little Frisk came to console him, and told him all the news.

When Pretty Goldilocks heard what had happened she threw herself at the King's feet and begged him to set Charming free, but the more she cried the more angry he was, and at last she saw that it was useless to say any more ; but it made her very sad. Then the King took it in his head that perhaps he was not handsome enough to please the Princess Goldilocks, and he

thought he would bathe his face with the water from the Fountain of Beauty, which was in the flask on a shelf in the Princess's room, where she had placed it that she might see it often. Now it happened that one of the Princess's ladies in chasing a spider had knocked the flask off the shelf and broken it, and every drop of the water had been spilt. Not knowing what to do, she had hastily swept away the pieces of crystal, and then remembered that in the King's room she had seen a flask of exactly the same shape, also filled with sparkling water. So, without saying a word, she fetched it and stood it upon the Queen's shelf.

Now the water in this flask was what was used in the kingdom for getting rid of troublesome people. Instead of having their heads cut off in the usual way, their faces were bathed with the water, and they instantly fell asleep and never woke up any more. So, when the King, thinking to improve his beauty, took the flask and sprinkled the water upon his face, *he* fell asleep, and nobody could wake him.

Little Frisk was the first to hear the news, and he ran to tell Charming, who sent him to

beg the Princess not to forget the poor prisoner. All the palace was in confusion on account of the King's death, but tiny Frisk made his way through the crowd to the Princess's side, and said :

‘Madam, do not forget poor Charming!’

Then she remembered all he had done for her,



and without saying a word to anyone went straight to the tower, and with her own hands took off Charming's chains. Then, putting a golden crown upon his head, and the royal mantle upon his shoulders, she said :

‘Come, faithful Charming, I make you king, and will take you for my husband.’

Charming, once more free and happy, fell at her feet and thanked her for her gracious words.

Everybody was delighted that he should be king, and the wedding, which took place at once, was the prettiest that can be imagined, and Prince Charming and Princess Goldilocks lived happily ever after.

THE PRINCE AND THE THREE FATES¹

ONCE upon a time a little boy was born to a king who ruled over a great country through which ran a wide river. The king was nearly beside himself with joy, for he had always longed for a son to inherit his crown, and he sent messages to beg all the most powerful fairies to come and see this wonderful baby. In an hour or two, so many were gathered round the cradle, that the child seemed in danger of being smothered ; but the king, who was watching the fairies eagerly, was disturbed to see them looking grave. ‘Is there anything the matter?’ he asked anxiously.

The fairies looked at him, and all shook their heads at once.

‘He is a beautiful boy, and it is a great pity ; but what *is* to happen *will* happen,’ said they.

¹ See frontispiece.

‘It is written in the book of fate that he must die, either by a crocodile, or a serpent, or by a dog. If we could save him we would ; but that is beyond our power.’

And so saying they vanished.

For a time the king stood where he was, horror-stricken at what he had heard ; but, being of a hopeful nature, he began at once to invent plans to save the prince from the dreadful doom that awaited him. He instantly sent for his master builder, and bade him construct a strong castle on the top of a mountain, which should be fitted with the most precious things from the king’s own palace, and every kind of toy a child could wish to play with. And, besides, he gave the strictest orders that a guard should walk round the castle night and day.

For four or five years the baby lived in the castle alone with his nurses, taking his airings on the broad terraces, which were surrounded by walls, with a moat beneath them, and only a drawbridge to connect them with the outer world.

One day, when the prince was old enough to run quite fast by himself, he looked from the

terrace across the moat, and saw a little soft fluffy ball of a dog jumping and playing on the other side. Now, of course, all dogs had been kept from him for fear that the fairies' prophecy should come true, and he had never even beheld one before. So he turned to the page who was walking behind him, and said :

‘What is that funny little thing which is running so fast over there?’

‘That is a dog, prince,’ answered the page.

‘Well, bring me one like it, and we will see which can run the faster.’ And he watched the dog till it had disappeared round the corner.

The page was much puzzled to know what to do. He had strict orders to refuse the prince nothing ; yet he remembered the prophecy, and felt that this was a serious matter. At last he thought he had better tell the king the whole story, and let him decide the question.

‘Oh, get him a dog if he wants one,’ said the king, ‘he will only cry his heart out if he does not have it.’ So a puppy was found, exactly like the other ; they might have been twins, and perhaps they were.

Years went by, and the boy and the dog

played together till the boy grew tall and strong. The time came at last when he sent a message to his father, saying :

‘Why do you keep me shut up here, doing nothing? I know all about the prophecy that was made at my birth, but I would far rather be killed at once than live an idle, useless life here. So give me arms, and let me go, I pray you ; me and my dog too.’

And again the king listened to his wishes, and he and his dog were carried in a ship to the other side of the river, which was so broad here it might almost have been the sea. A black horse was waiting for him, tied to a tree, and he mounted and rode away wherever his fancy took him, the dog always at his heels. Never was any prince so happy as he, and he rode and rode till at length he came to a king’s palace.

The king who lived in it did not care about looking after his country, and seeing that his people lived cheerful and contented lives. He spent his whole time in making riddles, and inventing plans which he had much better have let alone. At the period when the young prince reached the kingdom he had just completed a

wonderful house for his only child, a daughter. It had seventy windows, each seventy feet from the ground, and he had sent the royal herald round the borders of the neighbouring kingdoms to proclaim that whoever could climb up the walls to the window of the princess should win her for his wife.

The fame of the princess's beauty had spread far and wide, and there was no lack of princes who wished to try their fortune. Very funny the palace must have looked each morning, with the dabs of different colour on the white marble as the princes were climbing up the walls. But though some managed to get further than others, nobody was anywhere near the top.

They had already been spending several days in this manner when the young prince arrived, and as he was pleasant to look upon, and civil to talk to, they welcomed him to the house which had been given to them, and saw that his bath was properly perfumed after his long journey. 'Where do you come from?' they said at last. 'And whose son are you?'

But the young prince had reasons for keeping his own secret, and he answered :

‘My father was master of the horse to the king of my country, and after my mother died he married another wife. At first all went well, but as soon as she had babies of her own she hated me, and I fled, lest she should do me harm.’

The hearts of the other young men were touched as soon as they heard this story, and they did everything they could think of to make him forget his past sorrows.

‘What are you doing here?’ said the youth, one day.

‘We spend our whole time climbing up the walls of the palace, trying to reach the windows of the princess,’ answered the young men; ‘but, as yet, no one has reached within ten feet of them.’

‘Oh, let me try too,’ cried the prince; ‘but tomorrow I will wait and see what you do before I begin.’

So the next day he stood where he could watch the young men go up, and he noted the places on the wall that seemed most difficult, and made up his mind that when his turn came he would go up some other way.

Day after day he was to be seen watching the woers, till, one morning, he felt that he knew the plan of the walls by heart, and took his place by the side of the others. Thanks to what he had learned from the failure of the rest, he managed to grasp one little rough projection after another, till at last, to the envy of his friends, he stood on the sill of the princess's window. Looking up from below, they saw a white hand stretched forth to draw him in.

Then one of the young men ran straight to the king's palace, and said : 'The wall has been climbed, and the prize is won !'

'By whom ?' cried the king, starting up from his throne ; 'which of the princes may I claim as my son-in-law ?'

'The youth who succeeded in climbing to the princess's window is not a prince at all,' answered the young man. 'He is the son of the master of the horse to the great king who dwells across the river, and he fled from his own country to escape from the hatred of his stepmother.'

At this news the king was very angry, for it had never entered his head that anyone *but* a prince would seek to woo his daughter.

‘Let him go back to the land whence he came,’ he shouted in wrath; ‘does he expect me to give my daughter to an exile?’ And he began to smash the drinking vessels in his fury; indeed, he quite frightened the young man, who ran hastily home to his friends, and told the youth what the king had said.

Now the princess, who was leaning from her window, heard his words and bade the messenger go back to the king her father and tell him that she had sworn a vow never to eat or drink again if the youth was taken from her. The king was more angry than ever when he received this message, and ordered his guards to go at once to the palace and put the successful wooer to death; but the princess threw herself between him and his murderers.

‘Lay a finger on him, and I shall be dead before sunset,’ said she; and as they saw that she meant it, they left the palace, and carried the tale to her father.

By this time the king’s anger was dying away, and he began to consider what his people would think of him if he broke the promise he had publicly given. So he ordered the princess to be

brought before him, and the young man also, and when they entered the throne room he was so pleased with the noble air of the victor that his wrath quite melted away, and he ran to him and embraced him.

‘Tell me who you are?’ he asked, when he had recovered himself a little, ‘for I will never believe that you have not royal blood in your veins.’

But the prince still had his reasons for being silent, and only told the same story. However, the king had taken such a fancy to the youth that he said no more, and the marriage took place the following day, and great herds of cattle and a large estate were given to the young couple.

After a little while the prince said to his wife: ‘My life is in the hands of three creatures—a crocodile, a serpent, and a dog.’

‘Ah, how rash you are!’ cried the princess, throwing her arms round his neck. ‘If you know that, how can you have that horrid beast about you? I will give orders to have him killed at once.’

But the prince would not listen to her.

‘Kill my dear little dog, who has been my playfellow since he was a puppy?’ exclaimed he. ‘Oh, never would I allow that.’ And all that the princess could get from him was that he would always wear a sword, and have somebody with him when he left the palace.

When the prince and princess had been married a few months, the prince heard that his stepmother was dead, and his father was old and ill, and longing to have his eldest son by his side again. The young man could not remain deaf to such a message, and he took a tender farewell of his wife, and set out on his journey home. It was a long way, and he was forced to rest often on the road, and so it happened that, one night, when he was sleeping in a city on the banks of the great river, a huge crocodile came silently up and made its way along a passage to the prince’s room. Fortunately one of his guards woke up as it was trying to steal past them, and shut the crocodile up in a large hall, where a giant watched over it, never leaving the spot except during the night, when the crocodile slept. And this went on for more than a month.

Now, when the prince found that he was not likely to leave his father's kingdom again, he sent for his wife, and bade the messenger tell her that he would await her coming in the town on the banks of the great river. This was the reason why he delayed his journey so long, and narrowly escaped being eaten by the crocodile. During the weeks that followed the prince amused himself as best he could, though he counted the minutes to the arrival of the princess, and when she did come, he at once prepared to start for the court. That very night, however, while he was asleep, the princess noticed something strange in one of the corners of the room. It was a dark patch, and seemed, as she looked, to grow longer and longer, and to be moving slowly towards the cushions on which the prince was lying. She shrank in terror, but, slight as was the noise, the thing heard it, and raised its head to listen. Then she saw it was the long flat head of a serpent, and the recollection of the prophecy rushed into her mind. Without waking her husband, she glided out of bed, and taking up a heavy bowl of milk which stood on the table, laid it on the floor in the path of the ser-

pent—for she knew that no serpent in the world can resist milk. She held her breath as the snake drew near, and watched it throw up its head again as if it was smelling something nice, while its forky tongue darted out greedily. At length its eyes fell upon the milk, and in an instant it was lapping it so fast that it was a wonder the creature did not choke, for it never took its head from the bowl as long as a drop was left in it. After that it dropped on the ground and slept heavily. This was what the princess had been waiting for, and, catching up her husband's sword, she severed the snake's head from its body.

The morning after this adventure the prince and princess set out for the king's palace, but found, when they reached it, that he was already dead. They gave him a magnificent burial, and then the prince had to examine the new laws which had been made in his absence, and do a great deal of business besides, till he grew quite ill from fatigue, and was obliged to go away to one of his palaces on the banks of the river, in order to rest. Here he soon got better, and began to hunt, and to shoot wild duck with his

bow ; and wherever he went, his dog, now grown very old, went with him.

One morning the prince and his dog were out as usual, and in chasing their game they drew near the bank of the river. The prince was running at full speed after his dog when he almost fell over something that looked like a log of wood, which was lying in his path. To his surprise a voice spoke to him, and he saw that the thing which he had taken for a branch was really a crocodile.

‘You cannot escape from me,’ it was saying, when he had gathered his senses again. ‘I am your fate, and wherever you go, and whatever you do, you will always find me before you. There is only one means of shaking off my power. If you can dig a pit in the dry sand which will remain full of water, my spell will be broken. If not death will come to you speedily. I give you this one chance. Now go.’

The young man walked sadly away, and when he reached the palace he shut himself into his room, and for the rest of the day refused to see anyone, not even his wife. At sunset, however, as no sound could be heard through the door,

the princess grew quite frightened, and made such a noise that the prince was forced to draw back the bolt and let her come in. 'How pale you look,' she cried, 'has anything hurt you? Tell me, I pray you, what is the matter, for perhaps I can help you!'

So the prince told her the whole story, and of the impossible task given him by the crocodile.

'How can a sand hole remain full of water?' asked he. 'Of course it will all run through. The crocodile called it a "chance"; but he might as well have dragged me into the river at once. He said truly that I cannot escape him.'

'Oh, if *that* is all,' cried the princess, 'I can set you free myself, for my fairy godmother taught me to know the use of plants, and in the desert not far from here there grows a little four-leaved herb which will keep the water in the pit for a whole year. I will go in search of it at dawn, and you can begin to dig the hole as soon as you like.'

To comfort her husband, the princess had spoken lightly and gaily; but she knew very well she had no light task before her. Still, she was full of courage and energy, and determined

that, one way or another, her husband should be saved.

It was still starlight when she left the palace on a snow-white donkey, and rode away from the river straight to the west. For some time she could see nothing before her but a flat waste of sand, which became hotter and hotter as the sun rose higher and higher. Then a dreadful thirst seized her and the donkey, but there was no stream to quench it, and if there had been she would hardly have had time to stop, for she still had far to go, and must be back before evening, or else the crocodile might declare that the prince had not fulfilled his conditions. So she spoke cheering words to her donkey, who brayed in reply, and the two pushed steadily on.

Oh! how glad they both were when they caught sight of a tall rock in the distance. They forgot that they were thirsty, and that the sun was hot; and the ground seemed to fly under their feet, till the donkey stopped of its own accord in the cool shadow. But though the donkey might rest the princess could not, for the plant, as she knew, grew on the very top of the rock, and a wide chasm ran round the foot

of it. Luckily she had brought a rope with her, and making a noose at one end, she flung it across with all her might. The first time it slid back slowly into the ditch, and she had to draw it up, and throw it again, but at length the noose caught on something, the princess could not see what, and had to trust her whole weight to this little bridge, which might snap and let her fall deep down among the rocks. And in that case her death was as certain as that of the prince.

But nothing so dreadful happened. The princess got safely to the other side, and then became the worst part of her task. As fast as she put her foot on a ledge of the rock the stone broke away from under her, and left her in the same place as before. Meanwhile the hours were passing, and it was nearly noon.

The heart of the poor princess was filled with despair, but she would not give up the struggle. She looked round till she saw a small stone above her which seemed rather stronger than the rest, and by only poising her foot lightly on those that lay between, she managed by a great effort to reach it. In this way, with torn and

bleeding hands, she gained the top; but here such a violent wind was blowing that she was almost blinded with dust, and was obliged to throw herself on the ground, and feel about after the precious herb.

For a few terrible moments she thought that the rock was bare, and that her journey had been to no purpose. Feel where she would, there was nothing but grit and stones, when, suddenly, her fingers touched something soft in a crevice. It was a plant, that was clear; but was it the right one? See she could not, for the wind was blowing more fiercely than ever, so she lay where she was and counted the leaves. One, two, three—yes! yes! there were four! And plucking a leaf she held it safe in her hand while she turned, almost stunned by the wind, to go down the rock.

When once she was safely over the side all became still in a moment, and she slid down the rock so fast that it was only a wonder that she did not land in the chasm. However, by good luck, she stopped quite close to her rope bridge and was soon across it. The donkey brayed joyfully at the sight of her, and set off home at his

best speed, never seeming to know that the earth under his feet was nearly as hot as the sun above him.

On the bank of the great river he halted, and the princess rushed up to where the prince was standing by the pit he had dugged in the dry sand, with a huge water pot beside it. A little way off the crocodile lay blinking in the sun, with his sharp teeth and whitey-yellow jaws wide open.

At a signal from the princess the prince poured the water in the hole, and the moment it reached the brim the princess flung in the four-leaved plant. Would the charm work, or would the water trickle away slowly through the sand, and the prince fall a victim to that horrible monster? For half an hour they stood with their eyes rooted to the spot, but the hole remained as full as at the beginning, with the little green leaf floating on the top. Then the prince turned with a shout of triumph, and the crocodile sulkily plunged into the river.

The prince had escaped for ever the second of his three fates!

He stood there looking after the crocodile,

and rejoicing that he was free, when he was startled by a wild duck which flew past them,



THE POOL IN THE SAND

seeking shelter among the rushes that bordered the edge of the stream. In another instant his

dog dashed by in hot pursuit, and knocked heavily against his master's legs. The prince staggered, lost his balance and fell backwards into the river, where the mud and the rushes caught him and held him fast. He shrieked for help to his wife, who came running; and luckily brought her rope with her. The poor old dog was drowned, but the prince was pulled to shore. 'My wife,' he said, 'has been stronger than my fate.'

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

THERE was once upon a time a pig who lived with her three children on a large, comfortable, old-fashioned farmyard. The eldest of the little pigs was called Brownny, the second Whitey, and the youngest and best looking Blacky. Now



Brownny was a very dirty little pig, and I am sorry to say spent most of his time rolling and wallowing about in the mud. He was never so happy as on a wet day, when the mud in the farmyard got soft, and thick, and slab. Then he

would steal away from his mother's side, and finding the muddiest place in the yard, would roll about in it and thoroughly enjoy himself. His mother often found fault with him for this, and would shake her head sadly and say: 'Ah, Brownny! some day you will be sorry that you did not obey your old mother.' But no words of advice or warning could cure Brownny of his bad habits.

Whitey was quite a clever little pig, but she was greedy. She was always thinking of her food, and looking forward to her dinner; and when the farm girl was seen carrying the pails across the yard, she would rise up on her hind legs and dance and caper with excitement. As soon as the food was poured into the trough she jostled Blacky and Brownny out of the way in her eagerness to get the best and biggest bits for herself. Her mother often scolded her for her selfishness, and told her that some day she would suffer for being so greedy and grabbing.

Blacky was a good, nice little pig, neither dirty nor greedy. He had nice dainty ways (for a pig), and his skin was always as smooth and shining as black satin. He was much cleverer

than Brownny and Whitey, and his mother's heart used to swell with pride when she heard the farmer's friends say to each other that some day the little black fellow would be a prize pig.

Now the time came when the mother pig felt old and feeble and near her end. One day she called the three little pigs round her and said :

‘My children, I feel that I am growing old and weak, and that I shall not live long. Before I die I should like to build a house for each of you, as this dear old sty in which we have lived so happily will be given to a new family of pigs, and you will have to turn out. Now, Brownny, what sort of a house would you like to have?’

‘A house of mud,’ replied Brownny, looking longingly at a wet puddle in the corner of the yard.

‘And you, Whitey?’ said the mother pig in rather a sad voice, for she was disappointed that Brownny had made so foolish a choice.

‘A house of cabbage,’ answered Whitey, with a mouth full, and scarcely raising her snout out of the trough in which she was grubbing for some potato-parings.

‘Foolish, foolish child!’ said the mother pig,

looking quite distressed. 'And you, Blacky?' turning to her youngest son, 'what sort of a house shall I order for you?'

'A house of brick, please, mother, as it will be warm in winter, and cool in summer, and safe all the year round.'

'That is a sensible little pig,' replied his mother, looking fondly at him. 'I will see that the three houses are got ready at once. And now one last piece of advice. You have heard me talk of our old enemy the fox. When he hears that I am dead, he is sure to try to get hold of you, to carry you off to his den. He is very sly, and will no doubt disguise himself, and pretend to be a friend, but you must promise me not to let him enter your houses on any pretext whatever.'

And the little pigs readily promised, for they had always had a great fear of the fox, of whom they had heard many terrible tales. A short time afterwards the old pig died, and the little pigs went to live in their own houses.

Brownny was quite delighted with his soft mud walls and with the clay floor, which soon looked like nothing but a big mud pie. But that was

what Brownny enjoyed, and he was as happy as possible, rolling about all day and making himself in such a mess. One day, as he was lying half asleep in the mud, he heard a soft knock at his door, and a gentle voice said :

‘May I come in, Master Brownny? I want to see your beautiful new house.’

‘Who are you?’ said Brownny, starting up in great fright, for though the voice sounded gentle, he felt sure it was a feigned voice, and he feared it was the fox.

‘I am a friend come to call on you,’ answered the voice.

‘No, no,’ replied Brownny, ‘I don’t believe you are a friend. You are the wicked fox, against whom our mother warned us. I won’t let you in.’

‘Oho! is that the way you answer me?’ said the fox, speaking very roughly in his natural voice. ‘We shall soon see who is master here,’ and with his paws he set to work and scraped a large hole in the soft mud walls. A moment later he had jumped through it, and catching Brownny by the neck, flung him on his shoulders and trotted off with him to his den.

The next day, as Whitey was munching a few leaves of cabbage out of the corner of her house, the fox stole up to her door, determined to carry her off to join her brother in his den. He began speaking to her in the same feigned gentle voice in which he had spoken to Brownny; but it frightened her very much when he said:

‘I am a friend come to visit you, and to have some of your good cabbage for my dinner.’

‘Please don’t touch it,’ cried Whitey in great distress. ‘The cabbages are the walls of my house, and if you eat them you will make a hole, and the wind and rain will come in and give me a cold. Do go away; I am sure you are not a friend, but our wicked enemy the fox.’ And poor Whitey began to whine and to whimper, and to wish that she had not been such a greedy little pig, and had chosen a more solid material than cabbages for her house. But it was too late now, and in another minute the fox had eaten his way through the cabbage walls, and had caught the trembling, shivering Whitey, and carried her off to his den.

The next day the fox started off for Blacky’s house, because he had made up his mind that

he would get the three little pigs together in his den and then kill them, and invite all his friends to a feast. But when he reached the brick house, he found that the door was bolted



and barred, so in his sly manner he began, 'Do let me in, dear Blacky. I have brought you a present of some eggs that I picked up in a farm-yard on my way here.'

‘No, no, Mister Fox,’ replied Blacky, ‘I am not going to open my door to you. I know your cunning ways. You have carried off poor Brownny and Whitey, but you are not going to get me.’

At this the fox was so angry that he dashed with all his force against the wall, and tried to knock it down. But it was too strong and well built; and though the fox scraped and tore at the bricks with his paws he only hurt himself, and at last he had to give it up, and limp away with his fore-paws all bleeding and sore.

‘Never mind!’ he cried angrily as he went off, ‘I’ll catch you another day, see if I don’t, and won’t I grind your bones to powder when I have got you in my den!’ and he snarled fiercely and showed his teeth.

Next day Blacky had to go into the neighbouring town to do some marketing and to buy a big kettle. As he was walking home with it slung over his shoulder, he heard a sound of steps stealthily creeping after him. For a moment his heart stood still with fear, and then a happy thought came to him. He had just reached the top of a hill, and could see his

own little house nestling at the foot of it among the trees. In a moment he had snatched the lid of the kettle and had jumped in himself. Coiling himself round he lay quite snug in the bottom of the kettle, while with his fore-leg he managed to put the lid on, so that he was entirely hidden. With a little kick from the inside he started the kettle off, and down the hill it rolled full tilt; and when the fox came up, all that he saw was a large black kettle spinning over the ground at a great pace. Very much disappointed, he was just going to turn away, when he saw the kettle stop close to the little brick house, and in a moment later Blacky jumped out of it and escaped with the kettle into the house, when he barred and bolted the door, and put the shutter up over the window.

‘Oho!’ exclaimed the fox to himself, ‘you think you will escape me that way, do you? We shall soon see about that, my friend,’ and very quietly and stealthily he prowled round the house looking for some way to climb on to the roof.

In the meantime Blacky had filled the kettle with water, and having put it on the fire, sat

down quietly waiting for it to boil. Just as the kettle was beginning to sing, and steam to come out of the spout, he heard a sound like a soft, muffled step, patter, patter, patter overhead, and the next moment the fox's head and fore-paws were seen coming down the chimney. But



Blacky very wisely had not put the lid on the kettle, and, with a yelp of pain, the fox fell into the boiling water, and before he could escape, Blacky had popped the lid on, and the fox was scalded to death.

As soon as he was sure that their wicked enemy was really dead, and could do them no

further harm, Blacky started off to rescue Brownny and Whitey. As he approached the den he heard piteous grunts and squeals from his poor little brother and sister, who lived in constant terror of the fox killing and eating them. But when they saw Blacky appear at the entrance to the den their joy knew no bounds. He quickly found a sharp stone and cut the cords by which they were tied to a stake in the ground, and then all three started off together for Blacky's house, where they lived happily ever after ; and Brownny quite gave up rolling in the mud, and Whitey ceased to be greedy, for they never forgot how nearly these faults had brought them to an untimely end.

HEART OF ICE

ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen who were foolish beyond all telling, but nevertheless they were vastly fond of one another. It is true that certain spiteful people were heard to say that this was only one proof the more of their exceeding foolishness, but of course you will understand that these were not their own courtiers, since, after all, they *were* a King and Queen, and up to this time all things had prospered with them. For in those days the one thing to be thought of in governing a kingdom was to keep well with all the Fairies and Enchanters, and on no account to stint them of the cakes, the ells of ribbon, and similar trifles which were their due, and, above all things, when there was a christening, to remember to invite every single one, good, bad, or indifferent, to the ceremony. Now, the foolish Queen had one little son who was just

going to be christened, and for several months she had been hard at work preparing an enormous list of the names of those who were to be invited, but she quite forgot that it would take nearly as long to read it over as it had taken to write it out. So, when the moment of the christening arrived, the King—to whom the task had been entrusted—had barely reached the end of the second page and his tongue was tripping with fatigue and haste as he repeated the usual formula: ‘I conjure and pray you, Fairy so-and-so’—or ‘Enchanter such-a-one’—‘to honour me with a visit, and graciously bestow your gifts upon my son.’

To make matters worse, word was brought to him that the Fairies asked on the first page had already arrived and were waiting impatiently in the Great Hall, and grumbling that nobody was there to receive them. Thereupon he gave up the list in despair and hurried to greet those whom he had succeeded in asking, imploring their goodwill so humbly that most of them were touched, and promised that they would do his son no harm. But there happened to be among them a Fairy from a far country about

whom they knew nothing, though her name had been written on the first page of the list. This Fairy was annoyed that after having taken the trouble to come so quickly, there had been no one to receive her, or help her to alight from the great ostrich on which she had travelled from her distant home, and now she began to mutter to herself in the most alarming way.

‘Oh! prate away,’ said she, ‘your son will never be anything to boast of. Say what you will, he will be nothing but a Mannikin——’

No doubt she would have gone on longer in this strain, and given the unhappy little Prince half a dozen undesirable gifts, if it had not been for the good Fairy Genesta, who held the kingdom under her special protection, and who luckily hurried in just in time to prevent further mischief. When she had by compliments and entreaties pacified the unknown Fairy, and persuaded her to say no more, she gave the King a hint that now was the time to distribute the presents, after which ceremony they all took their departure, excepting the Fairy Genesta, who then went to see the Queen, and said to her:

‘A nice mess you seem to have made of this business, madam. Why did you not condescend to consult me? But foolish people like you always think they can do without help or advice, and I observe that, in spite of all my goodness to you, you had not even the civility to invite me!’

‘Ah! dear madam,’ cried the King, throwing himself at her feet; ‘did I ever have time to get as far as your name? See where I put in this mark when I abandoned the hopeless undertaking which I had but just begun!’

‘There! there!’ said the Fairy, ‘I am not offended. I don’t allow myself to be put out by trifles like that with people I really am fond of. But how about your son? I have saved him from a great many disagreeable things, but you must let me take him away and take care of him, and you will not see him again until he is all covered with fur!’

At these mysterious words the King and Queen burst into tears, for they lived in such a hot climate themselves that how or why the Prince should come to be covered with fur they

could not imagine, and thought it must portend some great misfortune to him.

However, Genesta told them not to disquiet themselves.

‘If I left him to you to bring up,’ said she, ‘you would be certain to make him as foolish as yourselves. I do not even intend to let him know that he is your son. As for you, you had better give your minds to governing your kingdom properly.’ So saying, she opened the window, and catching up the little Prince, cradle and all, she glided away in the air as if she were skating upon ice, leaving the King and Queen in the greatest affliction. They consulted everyone who came near them as to what the Fairy could possibly have meant by saying that when they saw their son again he would be covered with fur. But nobody could offer any solution of the mystery, only they all seemed to agree that it must be something frightful, and the King and Queen made themselves more miserable than ever, and wandered about their palace in a way to make anyone pity them. Meantime the Fairy had carried off the little Prince to her own castle, and placed him under the care of a young peasant



She opened the window and glided away in the air

woman, whom she bewitched so as to make her think that this new baby was one of her own children. So the Prince grew up healthy and strong, leading the simple life of a young peasant, for the Fairy thought that he could have no better training; only as he grew older she kept him more and more with herself, that his mind might be cultivated and exercised as well as his body. But her care did not cease there: she resolved that he should be tried by hardships and disappointments and the knowledge of his fellow-men; for indeed she knew the Prince would need every advantage that she could give him, since, though he increased in years, he did not increase in height, but remained the tiniest of Princes. However, in spite of this he was exceedingly active and well formed, and altogether so handsome and agreeable that the smallness of his stature was of no real consequence. The Prince was perfectly aware that he was called by the ridiculous name of 'Mannikin,' but he consoled himself by vowing that, happen what might, he would make it illustrious.

In order to carry out her plans for his welfare

the Fairy now began to send the Prince Mannikin the most wonderful dreams of adventure by sea and land, and of these adventures he himself was always the hero. Sometimes he rescued a lovely Princess from some terrible danger, again he earned a kingdom by some brave deed, until at last he longed to go away and seek his fortune in a far country where his humble birth would not prevent his gaining honour and riches by his courage, and it was with a heart full of ambitious projects that he rode one day into a great city not far from the Fairy's castle. As he had set out intending to hunt in the surrounding forest he was quite simply dressed, and carried only a bow and arrows and a light spear; but even thus arrayed he looked graceful and distinguished. As he entered the city he saw that the inhabitants were all racing with one accord towards the market-place, and he also turned his horse in the same direction, curious to know what was going forward. When he reached the spot he found that certain foreigners of strange and outlandish appearance were about to make a proclamation to the assembled citizens, and he hastily pushed his way into the crowd until

he was near enough to hear the words of the venerable old man who was their spokesman :

‘Let the whole world know that he who can reach the summit of the Ice Mountain shall receive as his reward, not only the incomparable Sabella, fairest of the fair, but also all the realms of which she is Queen !’ ‘Here,’ continued the old man after he had made this proclamation— ‘here is the list of all those Princes who, struck by the beauty of the Princess, have perished in the attempt to win her ; and here is the list of those who have just entered upon the high emprise.’

Prince Mannikin was seized with a violent desire to inscribe his name among the others, but the remembrance of his dependent position and his lack of wealth held him back. But while he hesitated the old man, with many respectful ceremonies, unveiled a portrait of the lovely Sabella, which was carried by some of the attendants, and after one glance at it the Prince delayed no longer, but, rushing forward, demanded permission to add his name to the list. When they saw his tiny stature and

simple attire the strangers looked at each other doubtfully, not knowing whether to accept or refuse him. But the Prince said haughtily :

‘Give me the paper that I may sign it,’ and they obeyed. What between admiration for the Princess and annoyance, at the hesitation shown by her ambassadors, the Prince was too much agitated to choose any other name than the one by which he was always known. But when, after all the grand titles of the other Princes, he simply wrote ‘Mannikin,’ the ambassadors broke into shouts of laughter.

‘Miserable wretches!’ cried the Prince; ‘but for the presence of that lovely portrait I would cut off your heads.’

But he suddenly remembered that, after all, it *was* a funny name, and that he had not yet had time to make it famous; so he was calm, and inquired the way to the Princess Sabella’s country.

Though his heart did not fail him in the least, still he felt there were many difficulties before him, and he resolved to set out at once, without even taking leave of the Fairy, for fear she

might try to stop him. Everybody in the town who knew him made great fun of the idea of



Mannikin's undertaking such an expedition, and it even came to the ears of the foolish King and

Queen, who laughed over it more than any of the others, without having an idea that the presumptuous Mannikin was their only son!

Meantime the Prince was travelling on, though the directions he had received for his journey were none of the clearest.

‘Four hundred leagues north of Mount Caucasus you will receive your orders and instructions for the conquest of the Ice Mountain.’

Fine marching orders, those, for a man starting from a country near where Japan is nowadays!

However, he fared eastward, avoiding all towns, lest the people should laugh at his name, for you see, he was not a very experienced traveller, and had not yet learned to enjoy a joke even if it were against himself. At night he slept in the woods, and at first he lived upon wild fruits, but the Fairy, who was keeping a benevolent eye upon him, thought that it would never do to let him be half starved in that way, so she took to feeding him with all sorts of good things while he was asleep, and the Prince

wondered very much that when he was awake he never felt hungry! True to her plan the Fairy sent him various adventures to prove his courage, and he came successfully through them all, only in his last fight with a furious monster rather like a tiger he had the ill luck to lose his horse. However, nothing daunted, he struggled on on foot, and at last reached a seaport. Here he found a boat sailing for the coast which he desired to reach, and, having just enough money to pay his passage, he went on board and they started. But after some days a fearful storm came on, which completely wrecked the little ship, and the Prince only saved his life by swimming a long, long way, to the only land that was in sight, and which proved to be a desert island. Here he lived by fishing and hunting, always hoping that the good Fairy would presently rescue him. One day, as he was looking sadly out to sea, he became aware of a curious-looking boat which was drifting slowly towards the shore, and which presently ran into a little creek and there stuck fast in the sand. Prince Mannikin rushed down eagerly to examine it, and saw with amazement that the masts and

spars were all branched, and covered thickly with leaves until it looked like a little wood. Thinking from the stillness that there could be no one on board, the Prince pushed aside the branches and sprang over the side, and found himself surrounded by the crew, who lay motionless as dead men and in a most deplorable condition. They, too, had become almost like trees, and were growing to the deck, or to the masts, or to the sides of the vessel, or to whatever they had happened to be touching when the enchantment fell upon them. Mannikin was struck with pity for their miserable plight, and set to work with might and main to release them. With the sharp point of one of his arrows he gently detached their hands and feet from the wood which held them fast, and carried them on shore, one after another, where he rubbed their rigid limbs, and bathed them with infusions of various herbs with such success, that, after a few days, they recovered perfectly and were as fit to manage a boat as ever. You may be sure that the good Fairy Genesta had something to do with this marvellous cure, and she also put it into the Prince's head to rub the boat itself with

the same magic herbs, which cleared it entirely, and not before it was time, for, at the rate at which it was growing before, it would very soon have become a forest! The gratitude of the



sailors was extreme, and they willingly promised to land the Prince upon any coast he pleased; but when he questioned them about the extraordinary thing that had happened to them and

to their ship, they could in no way explain it, except that they said that, as they were passing along a thickly wooded coast, a sudden gust of wind had reached them from the land and enveloped them in a dense cloud of dust, after which everything in the boat that was not metal had sprouted and blossomed, as the Prince had seen, and that they themselves had grown gradually numb and heavy, and had finally lost all consciousness. Prince Mannikin was deeply interested in this curious story, and collected a quantity of the dust from the bottom of the boat, which he carefully preserved, thinking that its strange property might one day stand him in good stead.

Then they joyfully left the desert island, and after a long and prosperous voyage over calm seas they at length came in sight of land, and resolved to go on shore, not only to take in a fresh stock of water and provisions, but also to find out, if possible, where they were and in what direction to proceed.

As they neared the coast they wondered if this could be another uninhabited land, for no human beings could be distinguished, and yet

that something was stirring became evident, for in the dust-clouds that moved near the ground small dark forms were dimly visible. These appeared to be assembling at the exact spot where they were preparing to run ashore, and what was their surprise to find they were nothing more nor less than large and beautiful spaniels, some mounted as sentries, others grouped in companies and regiments, all eagerly watching their disembarkation. When they found that Prince Mannikin, instead of saying 'Shoot them,' as they had feared, said 'Hi, good dog!' in a thoroughly friendly and ingratiating way, they crowded round him with a great wagging of tails and giving of paws, and very soon made him understand that they wanted him to leave his men with the boat and follow them. The Prince was so curious to know more about them that he agreed willingly; so, after arranging with the sailors to wait for him fifteen days, and then, if he had not come back, to go on their way without him, he set out with his new friends. Their way lay inland, and Mannikin noticed with great surprise that the fields were well cultivated and that the carts and ploughs were drawn by

horses or oxen, just as they might have been in any other country, and when they passed any village the cottages were trim and pretty, and an air of prosperity was everywhere. At one of the villages a dainty little repast was set before the Prince, and while he was eating, a chariot was brought, drawn by two splendid horses, which were driven with great skill by a large spaniel. In this carriage he continued his journey very comfortably, passing many similar equipages upon the road, and being always most courteously saluted by the spaniels who occupied them. At last they drove rapidly into a large town, which Prince Mannikin had no doubt was the capital of the kingdom. News of his approach had evidently been received, for all the inhabitants were at their doors and windows, and all the little spaniels had climbed upon the wall and gates to see him arrive. The Prince was delighted with the hearty welcome they gave him, and looked round him with the deepest interest. After passing through a few wide streets, well paved, and adorned with avenues of fine trees, they drove into the courtyard of a grand palace, which was full of spaniels who

were evidently soldiers. 'The King's body-guard,' thought the Prince to himself as he returned their salutations, and then the carriage stopped, and he was shown into the presence of the King, who lay upon a rich Persian carpet surrounded by several little spaniels, who were occupied in chasing away the flies lest they should disturb his Majesty. He was the most beautiful of all spaniels, with a look of sadness in his large eyes, which, however, quite disappeared as he sprang up to welcome Prince Mannikin with every demonstration of delight; after which he made a sign to his courtiers, who came one by one to pay their respects to the visitor. The Prince thought that he would find himself puzzled as to how he should carry on a conversation, but as soon as he and the King were once more left alone, a Secretary of State was sent for, who wrote from his Majesty's dictation a most polite speech, in which he regretted much that they were unable to converse, except in writing, the language of dogs being difficult to understand. As for the writing, it had remained the same as the Prince's own.

Mannikin thereupon wrote a suitable reply, and then begged the King to satisfy his curiosity about all the strange things he had seen and heard since his landing. This appeared to awaken sad recollections in the King's mind, but he informed the Prince that he was called King Bayard, and that a Fairy, whose kingdom was next his own, had fallen violently in love with him, and had done all she could to persuade him to marry her ; but that he could not do so, as he himself was the devoted lover of the Queen of the Spice Islands. Finally, the Fairy, furious at the indifference with which her love was treated, had reduced him to the state in which the Prince found him, leaving him unchanged in mind, but deprived of the power of speech ; and, not content with wreaking her vengeance upon the King alone, she had condemned all his subjects to a similar fate, saying :

‘Bark, and run upon four feet, until the time comes when virtue shall be rewarded by love and fortune.’

Which, as the poor King remarked, was very much the same thing as if she had said, ‘Remain a spaniel for ever and ever.’

Prince Mannikin was quite of the same opinion; nevertheless he said what we should all have said in the same circumstances:

‘Your Majesty must have patience.’

He was indeed deeply sorry for poor King Bayard, and said all the consoling things he could think of, promising to aid him with all his might if there was anything to be done. In short they became firm friends, and the King proudly displayed to Mannikin the portrait of the Queen of the Spice Islands, and he quite agreed that it was worth while to go through anything for the sake of a creature so lovely. Prince Mannikin in his turn told his own history, and the great undertaking upon which he had set out, and King Bayard was able to give him some valuable instructions as to which would be the best way for him to proceed, and then they went together to the place where the boat had been left. The sailors were delighted to see the Prince again, though they had known that he was safe, and when they had taken on board all the supplies which the King had sent for them, they started once more. The King and Prince parted with much regret, and the former insisted that Man-

nikin should take with him one of his own pages, named Moustá, who was charged to attend to him everywhere, and serve him faithfully, which he promised to do.

The wind being favourable they were soon out of hearing of the general howl of regret from the whole army, which had been given by order of the King, as a great compliment, and it was not long before the land was entirely lost to view. They met with no further adventures worth speaking of, and presently found themselves within two leagues of the harbour for which they were making. The Prince, however, thought it would suit him better to land where he was, so as to avoid the town, since he had no money left and was very doubtful as to what he should do next. So the sailors set him and Moustá on shore, and then went back sorrowfully to their ship, while the Prince and his attendant walked off in what looked to them the most promising direction. They soon reached a lovely green meadow on the border of a wood, which seemed to them so pleasant after their long voyage that they sat down to rest in the shade and amused themselves

by watching the gambols and antics of a pretty tiny monkey in the trees close by. The Prince presently became so fascinated by it that he sprang up and tried to catch it, but it eluded his grasp and kept just out of arm's reach, until it had made him promise to follow wherever it led him, and then it sprang upon his shoulder and whispered in his ear :

‘We have no money, my poor Mannikin, and we are altogether badly off, and at a loss to know what to do next.’

‘Yes, indeed,’ answered the Prince ruefully, ‘and I have nothing to give you, no sugar or biscuits, or anything that you like, my pretty one.’

‘Since you are so thoughtful for me, and so patient about your own affairs,’ said the little monkey, ‘I will show you the way to the Golden Rock, only you must leave Mousta to wait for you here.’

Prince Mannikin agreed willingly, and then the little monkey sprang from his shoulder to the nearest tree, and began to run through the wood from branch to branch, crying, ‘Follow me.’

This the Prince did not find quite so easy, but the little monkey waited for him and showed him the easiest places, until presently the wood grew thinner and they came out into a little clear grassy space at the foot of a mountain, in the midst of which stood a single rock, about ten feet high. When they were quite close to it the little monkey said :

‘This stone looks pretty hard, but give it a blow with your spear and let us see what will happen.’

So the Prince took his spear and gave the rock a vigorous dig, which split off several pieces, and showed that, though the surface was thinly coated with stone, inside it was one solid mass of pure gold.

Thereupon the little monkey said, laughing at his astonishment :

‘I make you a present of what you have broken off; take as much of it as you think proper.’

The Prince thanked her gratefully, and picked up one of the smallest of the lumps of gold; as he did so the little monkey was suddenly transformed into a tall and gracious lady, who said to him :

‘If you are always as kind and persevering and easily contented as you are now you may hope to accomplish the most difficult tasks; go on your way and have no fear that you will be troubled any more for lack of gold, for that little piece which you modestly chose shall never grow less, use it as much as you will. But that you may see the danger you have escaped by your moderation, come with me.’ So saying she led him back into the wood by a different path, and he saw that it was full of men and women; their faces were pale and haggard, and they ran hither and thither seeking madly upon the ground, or in the air, starting at every sound, pushing and trampling upon one another in their frantic eagerness to find the way to the Golden Rock.

‘You see how they toil,’ said the Fairy; ‘but it is all of no avail: they will end by dying of despair, as hundreds have done before them.’

As soon as they had got back to the place where they had left Mousta the Fairy disappeared, and the Prince and his faithful Squire, who had greeted him with every demonstration

of joy, took the nearest way to the city. Here they stayed several days, while the Prince provided himself with horses and attendants, and made many inquiries about the Princess Sabella, and the way to her kingdom, which was still so far away that he could hear but little, and that of the vaguest description, but when he presently reached Mount Caucasus it was quite a different matter. Here they seemed to talk of nothing but the Princess Sabella, and strangers from all parts of the world were travelling towards her father's Court.

The Prince heard plenty of assurances as to her beauty and her riches, but he also heard of the immense number of his rivals and their power. One brought an army at his back, another had vast treasures, a third was as handsome and accomplished as it was possible to be; while, as to poor Mannikin, he had nothing but his determination to succeed, his faithful spaniel, and his ridiculous name—which last was hardly likely to help him, but as he could not alter it he wisely determined not to think of it any more. After journeying for two whole months they came at last to Trelintin, the capital of the

Princess Sabella's kingdom, and here he heard dismal stories about the Ice Mountain, and how none of those who had attempted to climb it had ever come back. He heard also the story of King Farda-Kinbras, Sabella's father. It appeared that he, being a rich and powerful monarch, had married a lovely Princess named Birbantine, and they were as happy as the day was long—so happy that as they were out sledging one day they were foolish enough to defy fate to spoil their happiness.

'We shall see about that,' grumbled an old hag who sat by the wayside blowing her fingers to keep them warm. The King thereupon was very angry, and wanted to punish the woman; but the Queen prevented him, saying:

'Alas! sire, do not let us make bad worse; no doubt this is a Fairy!'

'You are right there,' said the old woman, and immediately she stood up, and as they gazed at her in horror she grew gigantic and terrible, her staff turned to a fiery dragon with outstretched wings, her ragged cloak to a golden mantle, and her wooden shoes to two bundles of rockets. 'You are right there, and you will see

what will come of your fine goings on, and remember the Fairy Gorgonzola!' So saying she mounted the dragon and flew off, the rockets shooting in all directions and leaving long trails of sparks.

In vain did Farda-Kinbras and Birbantine beg her to return, and endeavour by their humble apologies to pacify her; she never so much as looked at them, and was very soon out of sight, leaving them a prey to all kinds of dismal forebodings. Very soon after this the Queen had a little daughter, who was the most beautiful creature ever seen; all the Fairies of the North were invited to her christening, and warned against the malicious Gorgonzola. She also was invited, but she neither came to the banquet nor received her present; but as soon as all the others were seated at table, after bestowing their gifts upon the little Princess, she stole into the palace, disguised as a black cat, and hid herself under the cradle until the nurses and the cradle-rockers had all turned their backs, and then she sprang out, and in an instant had stolen the little Princess's heart and made her escape, only being chased by a few dogs and scullions



Gorgonzola flies off on her dragon

on her way across the courtyard. Once outside she mounted her chariot and flew straight away to the North Pole, where she shut up her stolen treasure on the summit of the Ice Mountain, and surrounded it with so many difficulties that she felt quite easy about its remaining there as long as the Princess lived, and then she went home, chuckling at her success. As to the other Fairies, they went home after the banquet without discovering that anything was amiss, and so the King and Queen were quite happy. Sabella grew prettier day by day. She learnt everything a Princess ought to know without the slightest trouble, and yet something always seemed lacking to make her perfectly charming. She had an exquisite voice, but whether her songs were grave or gay it did not matter, she did not seem to know what they meant; and everyone who heard her said:

‘She certainly sings perfectly; but there is no tenderness, no heart in her voice.’ Poor Sabella! how could there be when her heart was far away on the Ice Mountains? And it was just the same with all the other things that she did. As time went on, in spite of the admiration of the

whole Court and the blind fondness of the King and Queen, it became more and more evident that something was fatally wrong: for those who love no one cannot long be loved; and at last the King called a general assembly, and invited the Fairies to attend, that they might, if possible, find out what was the matter. After explaining their grief as well as he could, he ended by begging them to see the Princess for themselves. 'It is certain,' said he, 'that something is wrong—*what* it is I don't know how to tell you, but in some way your work is imperfect.'

They all assured him that, so far as they knew, everything had been done for the Princess, and they had forgotten nothing that they could bestow on so good a neighbour as the King had been to them. After this they went to see Sabella; but they had no sooner entered her presence than they cried out with one accord:

'Oh! horror!—she has no heart!

On hearing this frightful announcement, the King and Queen gave a cry of despair, and entreated the Fairies to find some remedy for

such an unheard-of misfortune. Thereupon the eldest Fairy consulted her Book of Magic, which she always carried about with her, hung to her girdle by a thick silver chain, and there she found out at once that it was Gorgonzola who had stolen the Princess's heart, and also discovered what the wicked old Fairy had done with it.

‘What shall we do? What shall we do?’ cried the King and Queen in one breath.

‘You must certainly suffer much annoyance from seeing and loving Sabella, who is nothing but a beautiful image,’ replied the Fairy, ‘and this must go on for a long time; but I think I see that in the end she will once more regain her heart. My advice is that you shall at once cause her portrait to be sent all over the world, and promise her hand and all her possessions to the Prince who is successful in reaching her heart. Her beauty alone is sufficient to engage all the Princes of the world in the quest.’

This was accordingly done, and Prince Manikin heard that already five hundred Princes had perished in the snow and ice, not to mention

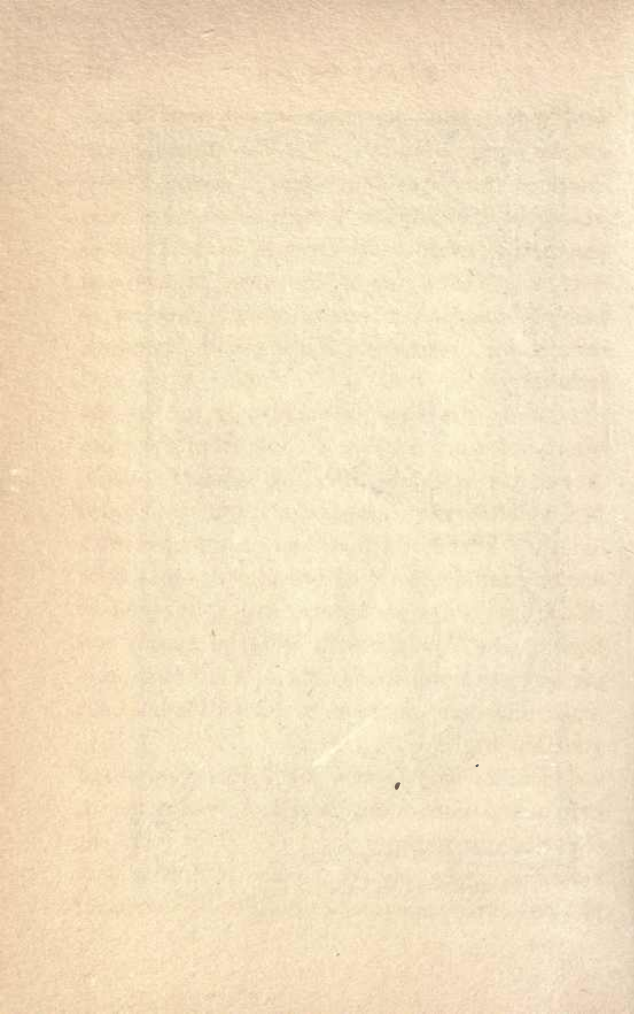
their squires and pages; and that more continued to arrive daily, eager to try their fortune. After some consideration he determined to present himself at Court; but his arrival made no stir, as his retinue was as inconsiderable as his stature, and the splendour of his rivals was great enough to throw even Farda-Kinbras himself into the shade. However, he paid his respects to the King very gracefully, and asked permission to kiss the hand of the Princess in the usual manner; but when he said he was called 'Mannikin,' the King could hardly repress a smile, and the Princes who stood by openly shouted with laughter.

Turning to the King, Prince Mannikin said with great dignity:

'Pray laugh if it pleases your Majesty, I am glad that it is in my power to afford you any amusement; but I am not a plaything for these gentlemen, and I must beg them to dismiss any ideas of that kind from their minds at once,' and with that he turned upon the one who had laughed the loudest and proudly challenged him to a single combat. This Prince, who was called Fadasse, accepted the challenge very scornfully,



The eldest Fairy consulted her Book of Magic



mocking at Mannikin, who, he felt sure, had no chance against himself; but the meeting was arranged for the next day. When Prince Mannikin quitted the King's presence he was conducted to the audience hall of the Princess Sabella. The sight of so much beauty and magnificence almost took his breath away for an instant, but, recovering himself with an effort, he said :

‘Lovely Princess, irresistibly drawn by the beauty of your portrait, I come from the other end of the world to offer my services to you. My devotion knows no bounds, but my absurd name has already involved me in a quarrel with one of your courtiers. To-morrow I am to fight this ugly overgrown Prince, and I beg you to honour the combat with your presence, and prove to the world that there is nothing in a name, and that you deign to accept Mannikin as your knight.

When it came to this the Princess could not help being amused, for, though she had no heart, she was not without humour. However, she answered graciously that she accepted with pleasure, which encouraged the Prince to entreat

further that she would not show any favour to his adversary.

‘Alas!’ said she, ‘I favour none of these foolish people, who weary me with their sentiment and their folly. I do very well as I am, and yet from one year’s end to another they talk of nothing but delivering me from some imaginary affliction. Not a word do I understand of all their pratings about love, and who knows what dull things besides, which, I declare to you, I cannot even remember.’

Mannikin was quick enough to gather from this speech that to amuse and interest the Princess would be a far surer way of gaining her favour than to add himself to the list of those who continually teased her about that mysterious thing called ‘love’ which she was so incapable of comprehending. So he began to talk of his rivals, and found in each of them something to make merry over, in which diversion the Princess joined him heartily, and so well did he succeed in his attempt to amuse her that before very long she declared that of all the people at Court he was the one to whom she preferred to talk.

The following day, at the time appointed for the combat, when the King, the Queen, and the Princess had taken their places, and the whole Court and the whole town were assembled to see the show, Prince Fadasse rode into the lists magnificently armed and accoutred, followed by



twenty-four squires and a hundred men-at-arms, each one leading a splendid horse, while Prince Mannikin entered from the other side armed only with his spear and followed by the faithful Mousta. The contrast between the two champions was so great that there was a shout of laughter from the whole assembly; but when at

the sounding of a trumpet the combatants rushed upon each other, and Mannikin, eluding the blow aimed at him, succeeded in thrusting Prince Fadasse from his horse and pinning him to the sand with his spear, it changed to a murmur of admiration.

So soon as he had him at his mercy, however, Mannikin, turning to the Princess, assured her that he had no desire to kill anyone who called himself her courtier, and then he bade the furious and humiliated Fadasse rise and thank the Princess to whom he owed his life. Then, amid the sounding of the trumpets and the shoutings of the people, he and Moustá retired gravely from the lists.

The King soon sent for him to congratulate him upon his success, and to offer him a lodging in the palace, which he joyfully accepted. While the Princess expressed a wish to have Moustá brought to her, and, when the Prince sent for him, she was so delighted with his courtly manners and his marvellous intelligence that she entreated Mannikin to give him to her for her own. The Prince consented with alacrity, not only out of politeness, but because he foresaw

that to have a faithful friend always near the Princess might some day be of great service to him. All these events made Prince Mannikin a person of much more consequence at the Court. Very soon after, there arrived upon the frontier the Ambassador of a very powerful King, who sent to Farda-Kinbras the following letter, at the same time demanding permission to enter the capital in state to receive the answer:

‘I, Brandatimor, to Farda-Kinbras send greeting. If I had before this time seen the portrait of your beautiful daughter Sabella I should not have permitted all these adventurers and petty Princes to be dancing attendance and getting themselves frozen with the absurd idea of meriting her hand. For myself I am not afraid of any rivals, and, now I have declared my intention of marrying your daughter, no doubt they will at once withdraw their pretensions. My Ambassador has orders, therefore, to make arrangements for the Princess to come and be married to me without delay—for I attach no importance at all to the farrago of nonsense which you have caused to be published all over the world about this Ice Mountain. If the

Princess really has no heart, be assured that I shall not concern myself about it, since, if anybody can help her to discover one, it is myself. My worthy father-in-law, farewell !'

The reading of this letter embarrassed and displeased Farda-Kinbras and Birbantine immensely, while the Princess was furious at the insolence of the demand. They all three resolved that its contents must be kept a profound secret until they could decide what reply should be sent, but Moustá contrived to send word of all that had passed to Prince Mannikin. He was naturally alarmed and indignant, and, after thinking it over a little, he begged an audience of the Princess, and led the conversation so cunningly up to the subject that was uppermost in her thoughts, as well as his own, that she presently told him all about the matter and asked his advice as to what it would be best to do. This was exactly what he had not been able to decide for himself; however, he replied that he should advise her to gain a little time by promising her answer after the grand entry of the Ambassador, and this was accordingly done.

The Ambassador did not at all like being put off after that fashion, but he was obliged to be content, and only said very arrogantly that so soon as his equipages arrived, as he expected they would do very shortly, he would give all the people of the city, and the stranger Princes with whom it was inundated, an idea of the power and the magnificence of his master. Mannikin, in despair, resolved that he would for once beg the assistance of the kind Fairy Genesta. He often thought of her and always with gratitude, but from the moment of his setting out he had determined to seek her aid only on the greatest occasions. That very night, when he had fallen asleep quite worn out with thinking over all the difficulties of the situation, he dreamed that the Fairy stood beside him and said :

‘Mannikin, you have done very well so far ; continue to please me and you shall always find good friends when you need them most. As for this affair with the Ambassador, you can assure Sabella that she may look forward tranquilly to his triumphal entry, since it will all turn out well for her in the end.’

The Prince tried to throw himself at her feet to thank her, but woke to find it was all a dream ; nevertheless he took fresh courage, and went next day to see the Princess, to whom he gave many mysterious assurances that all would yet be well. He even went so far as to ask her if she would not be very grateful to anyone who would rid her of the insolent Brandatimor. To which she replied that her gratitude would know no bounds. Then he wanted to know what would be her best wish for the person who was lucky enough to accomplish it. To which she said that she would wish them to be as insensible to the folly called 'love' as she was herself!

This was indeed a crushing speech to make to such a devoted lover as Prince Mannikin, but he concealed the pain it caused him with great courage.

And now the Ambassador sent to say that on the very next day he would come in state to receive his answer, and from the earliest dawn the inhabitants were astir, to secure the best places for the grand sight ; but the good Fairy Genesta was providing them an amount of amusement they were far from expecting, for

she so enchanted the eyes of all the spectators that when the Ambassador's gorgeous procession appeared, the splendid uniforms seemed to them miserable rags that a beggar would have been ashamed to wear, the prancing horses appeared



as wretched skeletons hardly able to drag one leg after the other, while their trappings, which really sparkled with gold and jewels, looked like old sheepskins that would not have been good enough for a plough horse. The pages resembled the ugliest sweeps. The trumpets gave no more

sound than whistles made of onion-stalks, or combs wrapped in paper ; while the train of fifty carriages looked no better than fifty donkey carts. In the last of these sat the Ambassador with the haughty and scornful air which he considered becoming in the representative of so powerful a monarch : for this was the crowning point of the absurdity of the whole procession, that all who took part in it wore the expression of vanity and self-satisfaction and pride in their own appearance and all their surroundings which they believed their splendour amply justified.

The laughter and howls of derision from the whole crowd rose ever louder and louder as the extraordinary cortège advanced, and at last reached the ears of the King as he waited in the audience hall, and before the procession reached the palace he had been informed of its nature, and, supposing that it must be intended as an insult, he ordered the gates to be closed. You may imagine the fury of the Ambassador when, after all his pomp and pride, the King absolutely and unaccountably refused to receive him. He raved wildly both against King and people, and the cortège retired in

great confusion, jeered at and pelted with stones and mud by the enraged crowd. It is needless to say that he left the country as fast as horses could carry him, but not before he had declared war, with the most terrible menaces, threatening to devastate the country with fire and sword.

Some days after this disastrous embassy King Bayard sent couriers to Prince Mannikin with a most friendly letter, offering his services in any difficulty, and inquiring with the deepest interest how he fared.

Mannikin at once replied, relating all that had happened since they parted, not forgetting to mention the event which had just involved Farda-Kinbras and Brandatimor in this deadly quarrel, and he ended by entreating his faithful friend to despatch a few thousands of his veteran spaniels to his assistance.

Neither the King, the Queen, nor the Princess could in the least understand the amazing conduct of Brandatimor's Ambassador; nevertheless the preparations for the war went forward briskly and all the Princes who had not gone on towards the Ice Mountain offered their

services, at the same time demanding all the best appointments in the King's army. Mannikin was one of the first to volunteer, but he only asked to go as aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief, who was a gallant soldier and celebrated for his victories. As soon as the army could be got together it was marched to the frontier, where it met the opposing force headed by Brandatimor himself, who was full of fury, determined to avenge the insult to his Ambassador and to possess himself of the Princess Sabella. All the army of Farda-Kinbras could do, being so heavily outnumbered, was to act upon the defensive, and before long Mannikin won the esteem of the officers for his ability, and of the soldiers for his courage, and care for their welfare, and in all the skirmishes which he conducted he had the good fortune to vanquish the enemy.

At last Brandatimor engaged the whole army in a terrific conflict, and though the troops of Farda-Kinbras fought with desperate courage, their general was killed, and they were defeated and forced to retreat with immense loss. Mannikin did wonders, and half a dozen times turned

the retreating forces and beat back the enemy ; and he afterwards collected troops enough to keep them in check until the severe winter setting in put an end to hostilities for a while.

He then turned to the Court, where consternation reigned. The King was in despair at the death of his trusty general, and ended by imploring Mannikin to take the command of the army, and his counsel was followed in all the affairs of the Court. He followed up his former plan of amusing the Princess, and on no account reminding her of that tedious thing called 'love,' so that she was always glad to see him, and the winter slipped by gaily for both of them.

The Prince was all the while secretly making plans for the next campaign ; he received private intelligence of the arrival of a strong reinforcement of Spaniels, to whom he sent orders to post themselves along the frontier without attracting attention, and as soon as he possibly could he held a consultation with their commander, who was an old and experienced warrior. Following his advice, he decided to have a pitched battle as soon as the enemy advanced,

and this Brandatimor lost not a moment in doing, as he was perfectly persuaded that he was now going to make an end of the war and utterly vanquish Farda-Kinbras. But no sooner had he given the order to charge than the Spaniels, who had mingled with his troops unperceived, leaped each upon the horse nearest to him, and not only threw the whole squadron into confusion by the terror they caused, but, springing at the throats of the riders, unhorsed many of them by the suddenness of their attack ; then turning the horses to the rear, they spread consternation everywhere, and made it easy for Prince Mannikin to gain a complete victory. He met Brandatimor in single combat, and succeeded in taking him prisoner ; but he did not live to reach the Court, to which Mannikin had sent him : his pride killed him at the thought of appearing before Sabella under these altered circumstances. In the meantime Prince Fadasse and all the others who had remained behind were setting out with all speed for the conquest of the Ice Mountain, being afraid that Prince Mannikin might prove as successful in that as he seemed to be in everything else, and when

Mannikin returned he heard of it with great annoyance. True he had been serving the Princess, but she only admired and praised him for his gallant deeds, and seemed no whit nearer bestowing on him the love he so ardently desired, and all the comfort Moustá could give him



on the subject was that at least she loved no one else, and with that he had to content himself. But he determined that, come what might, he would delay no longer, but attempt the great undertaking for which he had come so far. When he went to take leave of the King and Queen they entreated him not to go, as they

had just heard that Prince Fadasse, and all who accompanied him, had perished in the snow; but he persisted in his resolve. As for Sabella, she gave him her hand to kiss with precisely the same gracious indifference as she had given it to him the first time they met. It happened that this farewell took place before the whole Court, and so great a favourite had Prince Mannikin become that they were all indignant at the coldness with which the Princess treated him.

Finally the King said to him :

‘Prince, you have constantly refused all the gifts which, in my gratitude for your invaluable services, I have offered to you, but I wish the Princess to present you with her cloak of marten’s fur, and *that* I hope you will not reject!’ Now this was a splendid fur mantle which the Princess was very fond of wearing, not so much because she felt cold, as that its richness set off to perfection the delicate tints of her complexion and the brilliant gold of her hair. However, she took it off, and with graceful politeness begged Prince Mannikin to accept it, which you may be sure he was charmed to do, and, taking only this and a little bundle of all kinds of wood, and

accompanied only by two spaniels out of the fifty who had stayed with him when the war was ended, he set forth, receiving many tokens of love and favour from the people in every town he passed through. At the last little village he left his horse behind him, to begin his toilsome march through the snow, which extended, blank and terrible, in every direction as far as the eye could see. Here he had appointed to meet the other forty-eight spaniels, who received him joyfully, and assured him that, happen what might, they would follow and serve him faithfully. And so they started, full of heart and hope. At first there was a slight track, difficult, but not impossible to follow; but this was soon lost, and the Pole Star was their only guide. When the time came to call a halt the Prince, who had after much consideration decided on his plan of action, caused a few twigs from the faggot he had brought with him to be planted in the snow, and then he sprinkled over them a pinch of the magic powder he had collected from the enchanted boat. To his great joy they instantly began to sprout and grow, and in a marvellously short time the camp was surrounded

by a perfect grove of trees of all sorts, which blossomed and bore ripe fruit, so that all their wants were easily supplied, and they were able to make huge fires to warm themselves. The Prince then sent out several spaniels to reconnoitre, and they had the good luck to discover a horse laden with provisions stuck fast in the snow. They at once fetched their comrades, and brought the spoil triumphantly into the camp, and, as it consisted principally of biscuits, not a spaniel among them went supperless to sleep. In this way they journeyed by day and encamped safely at night, always remembering to take on a few branches to provide them with food and shelter. They passed by the way armies of those who had set out upon the perilous enterprise, who stood frozen stiffly, without sense of motion; but Prince Mannikin strictly forbade that any attempt should be made to thaw them. So they went on and on for more than three months, and day by day the Ice Mountain, which they had seen for a long time, grew clearer, until at last they stood close to it, and shuddered at its height and steepness. But by patience and perseverance they crept up

foot by foot, aided by their fires of magic wood, without which they must have perished in the intense cold, until presently they stood at the gates of the magnificent Ice Palace which crowned the mountain, where, in deadly silence and icy sleep, lay the heart of Sabella. Now the difficulty became immense, for if they maintained enough heat to keep themselves alive they were in danger every moment of melting the blocks of solid ice of which the palace was entirely built, and bringing the whole structure down upon their heads; but cautiously and quickly they traversed courtyards and halls, until they found themselves at the foot of a vast throne, where, upon a cushion of snow, lay an enormous and brilliantly sparkling diamond, which contained the heart of the lovely Princess Sabella. Upon the lowest step of the throne was inscribed in icy letters, 'Whosoever thou art who by courage and virtue canst win the heart of Sabella, enjoy peacefully the good fortune which thou hast richly deserved.'

Prince Mannikin bounded forward, and had just strength left to grasp the precious diamond which contained all he coveted in the world

before he fell insensible upon the snowy cushion. But his good spaniels lost no time in rushing to the rescue, and between them they bore him hastily from the hall, and not a moment too soon, for all around them they heard the clang of the falling blocks of ice as the Fairy Palace slowly collapsed under the unwonted heat. Not until they reached the foot of the mountain did they pause to restore the Prince to consciousness, and then his joy to find himself the possessor of Sabella's heart knew no bounds.

With all speed they began to retrace their steps, but this time the happy Prince could not bear the sight of his defeated and disappointed rivals, whose frozen forms lined his triumphant way. He gave orders to his spaniels to spare no pains to restore them to life, and so successful were they that day by day his train increased, so that by the time he got back to the little village where he had left his horse he was escorted by five hundred sovereign Princes, and knights and squires without number, and he was so courteous and unassuming that they all followed him willingly, anxious to do him honour. But then he was so happy and blissful himself that he

found it easy to be at peace with all the world. It was not long before he met the faithful Mousta, who was coming at the top of his speed hoping to meet the Prince, that he might



tell him of the sudden and wonderful change that had come over the Princess, who had become gentle and thoughtful and had talked to him of nothing but Prince Mannikin, of the

hardships she feared he might be suffering, and of her anxiety for him, and all this with a hundred tender expressions which put the finishing stroke to the Prince's delight. Then came a courier bearing the congratulations of the King and Queen, who had just heard of his successful return, and there was even a graceful compliment from Sabella herself. The Prince sent Moustá back to her, and he was welcomed with joy, for was he not her lover's present?

At last the travellers reached the capital, and were received with regal magnificence. Fardá-Kinbras and Birbantine embraced Prince Manikin, declaring that they regarded him as their heir and the future husband of the Princess, to which he replied that they did him too much honour. And then he was admitted into the presence of the Princess, who for the first time in her life blushed as he kissed her hand, and could not find a word to say. But the Prince, throwing himself on his knees beside her, held out the splendid diamond, saying:

‘Madam, this treasure is yours, since none of the dangers and difficulties I have gone through have been sufficient to make me deserve it.’

‘Ah! Prince,’ said she, ‘if I take it, it is only that I may give it back to you, since truly it belongs to you already.’

At this moment in came the King and Queen, and interrupted them by asking all the questions imaginable, and not infrequently the same over and over again. It seems that there is always one thing that is sure to be said about an event by everybody, and Prince Mannikin found that the question which he was asked by more than a thousand people on this particular occasion was:

‘And didn’t you find it very cold?’

The King had come to request Prince Mannikin and the Princess to follow him to the Council Chamber, which they did, not knowing that he meant to present the Prince to all the nobles assembled there as his son-in-law and successor. But when Mannikin perceived his intention, he begged permission to speak first, and told his whole story, even to the fact that he believed himself to be a peasant’s son. Scarcely had he finished speaking when the sky grew black, the thunder growled, and the lightning flashed, and in the blaze of light the good Fairy

Genesta suddenly appeared. 'Turning to Prince Mannikin, she said:

'I am satisfied with you, since you have shown not only courage but a good heart.' Then she addressed King Farda-Kinbras, and informed him of the real history of the Prince, and how she had determined to give him the education she knew would be best for a man who was to command others. 'You have already found the advantage of having a faithful friend,' she added to the Prince, 'and now you will have the pleasure of seeing King Bayard and his subjects regain their natural forms as a reward for his kindness to you.'

Just then arrived a chariot drawn by eagles, which proved to contain the foolish King and Queen, who embraced their long-lost son with great joy, and were greatly struck with the fact that they did indeed find him covered with fur! While they were caressing Sabella and wringing her hands (which is a favourite form of endearment with foolish people) chariots were seen approaching from all points of the compass, containing numbers of Fairies.

'Sire,' said Genesta to Farda-Kinbras, 'I have

taken the liberty of appointing your Court as a meeting-place for all the Fairies who could spare the time to come; and I hope you can arrange to hold the great ball, which we have once in a hundred years, on this occasion.'

The King having suitably acknowledged the honour done him, was next reconciled to Gorgonzola, and they two presently opened the ball together. The Fairy Marsontine restored their natural forms to King Bayard and all his subjects, and he appeared once more as handsome a king as you could wish to see. One of the Fairies immediately despatched her chariot for the Queen of the Spice Islands, and their wedding took place at the same time as that of Prince Mannikin and the lovely and gracious Sabella. They lived happily ever afterwards, and their vast kingdoms were presently divided between their children,

The Prince, out of grateful remembrance of the Princess Sabella's first gift to him, bestowed the right of bearing her name upon the most beautiful of the martens, and that is why they are called *sables* to this day.

THE ENCHANTED RING

ONCE upon a time there lived a young man named Rosimond, who was as good and handsome as his elder brother Bramintho was ugly and wicked. Their mother detested her eldest son, and had only eyes for the youngest. This excited Bramintho's jealousy, and he invented a horrible story in order to ruin his brother. He told his father that Rosimond was in the habit of visiting a neighbour who was an enemy of the family, and betraying to him all that went on in the house, and was plotting with him to poison their father.

The father flew into a rage, and flogged his son till the blood came. Then he threw him into prison and kept him for three days without food, and after that he turned him out of the house, and threatened to kill him if he ever came back. The mother was miserable, and did nothing but weep, but she dared not say anything.

The youth left his home with tears in his eyes, not knowing where to go, and wandered about for many hours till he came to a thick wood. Night overtook him at the foot of a great rock, and he fell asleep on a bank of moss, lulled by the music of a little brook.

It was dawn when he woke, and he saw before him a beautiful woman seated on a grey horse, with trappings of gold, who looked as if she were preparing for the hunt.

‘Have you seen a stag and some deerhounds go by?’ she asked.

‘No, madam,’ he replied.

Then she added, ‘You look unhappy; is there anything the matter? Take this ring, which will make you the happiest and most powerful of men, provided you never make a bad use of it. If you turn the diamond inside, you will become invisible. If you turn it outside, you will become visible again. If you place it on your little finger, you will take the shape of the King’s son, followed by a splendid Court. If you put it on your fourth finger, you will take your own shape.’

Then the young man understood that it was a

Fairy who was speaking to him, and when she had finished she plunged into the woods. The youth was very impatient to try the ring, and returned home immediately. He found that the Fairy had spoken the truth, and that he could



see and hear everything, while he himself was unseen. It lay with him to revenge himself, if he chose, on his brother, without the slightest danger to himself, and he told no one but his mother of all the strange things that had be-

fallen him. He afterwards put the enchanted ring on his little finger, and appeared as the King's son, followed by a hundred fine horses and a guard of officers all richly dressed. His father was much surprised to see the King's son in his quiet little house, and he felt rather embarrassed, not knowing what was the proper way to behave on such a grand occasion. Then Rosimond asked him how many sons he had.

‘Two,’ replied he.

‘I wish to see them,’ said Rosimond. ‘Send for them at once. I desire to take them both to Court, in order to make their fortunes.’

The father hesitated, then answered: ‘Here is the eldest, whom I have the honour to present to your Highness.’

‘But where is the youngest? I wish to see him, too,’ persisted Rosimond.

‘He is not here,’ said the father. ‘I had to punish him for a fault, and he has run away.’

Then Rosimond replied, ‘You should have shown him what was right, but not have punished him. However, let the elder come with me, and as for you, follow these two guards, who will escort you to a place that I will point out to them.’

Then the two guards led off the father, and the Fairy of whom you have heard found him in the forest, and beat him with a golden birch rod, and cast him into a cave that was very deep and dark, where he lay enchanted. 'Lie there,' she said, 'till your son comes to take you out again.'

Meanwhile the son went to the King's palace, and arrived just when the real prince was absent. He had sailed away to make war on a distant island, but the winds had been contrary, and he had been shipwrecked on unknown shores, and taken captive by a savage people. Rosimond made his appearance at Court in the character of the Prince, whom everyone wept for as lost, and told them that he had been rescued when at the point of death by some merchants. His return was the signal for great public rejoicings, and the King was so overcome that he became quite speechless, and did nothing but embrace his son. The Queen was even more delighted, and fêtes were ordered over the whole kingdom.

One day the false Prince said to his real brother, 'Bramintho, you know that I brought you here from your native village in order to

make your fortune ; but I have found out that you are a liar, and that by your deceit you have been the cause of all the troubles of your brother Rosimond. He is in hiding here, and I desire that you shall speak to him, and listen to his reproaches.'

Bramintho trembled at these words, and, flinging himself at the Prince's feet, confessed his crime.

'That is not enough,' said Rosimond. 'It is to your brother that you must confess, and I desire that you shall ask his forgiveness. He will be very generous if he grants it, and it will be more than you deserve. He is in my ante-room, where you shall see him at once. I myself will retire into another apartment, so as to leave you alone with him.'

Bramintho entered, as he was told, into the ante-room. Then Rosimond changed the ring, and passed into the room by another door.

Bramintho was filled with shame as soon as he saw his brother's face. He implored his pardon, and promised to atone for all his faults. Rosimond embraced him with tears, and at once forgave him, adding, 'I am in great favour with

the King. It rests with me to have your head cut off, or to condemn you to pass the remainder of your life in prison ; but I desire to be as good to you as you have been wicked to me.' Brantho, confused and ashamed, listened to his words without daring to lift his eyes or to remind Rosimond that he was his brother. After this, Rosimond gave out that he was going to make a secret voyage, to marry a Princess who lived in a neighbouring kingdom ; but in reality he only went to see his mother, whom he told all that had happened at the Court, giving her at the same time some money that she needed, for the King allowed him to take exactly what he liked, though he was always careful not to abuse this permission. Just then a furious war broke out between the King his master and the Sovereign of the adjoining country, who was a bad man and one that never kept his word. Rosimond went straight to the palace of the wicked King, and by means of his ring was able to be present at all the councils, and learnt all their schemes, so that he was able to forestall them and bring them to naught. He took the command of the army which was brought against

the wicked King, and defeated him in a glorious battle, so that peace was at once concluded on conditions that were just to everyone.

Henceforth the King's one idea was to marry the young man to a Princess who was the heiress to a neighbouring kingdom, and, besides that, was as lovely as the day. But one morning, while Rosimond was hunting in the forest where for the first time he had seen the Fairy, his benefactress suddenly appeared before him. 'Take heed,' she said to him in severe tones, 'that you do not marry anybody who believes you to be a prince. You must never deceive anyone. The real Prince, whom the whole nation thinks you are, will have to succeed his father, for that is just and right. Go and seek him in some distant island, and I will send winds that will swell your sails and bring you to him. Hasten to render this service to your master, although it is against your own ambition, and prepare, like an honest man, to return to your natural state. If you do not do this, you will become wicked and unhappy, and I will abandon you to all your former troubles.'

Rosimond took these wise counsels to heart.

He gave out that he had undertaken a secret mission to a neighbouring state, and embarked on board a vessel, the winds carrying him straight to the island where the Fairy had told him he would find the real Prince. This unfortunate youth had been taken captive by a savage people, who had kept him to guard their sheep. Rosimond, becoming invisible, went to seek him amongst the pastures, where he kept his flock, and, covering him with his mantle, he delivered him out of the hands of his cruel masters, and bore him back to the ship. Other winds sent by the Fairy swelled the sails, and together the two young men entered the King's presence.

Rosimond spoke first and said, 'You have believed me to be your son. I am not he, but I have brought him back to you.' The King, filled with astonishment, turned to his real son and asked, 'Was it not you, my son, who conquered my enemies and won such a glorious peace? Or is it true that you have been shipwrecked and taken captive, and that Rosimond has set you free?'

'Yes, my father,' replied the Prince. 'It is

he who sought me out in my captivity and set me free, and to him I owe the happiness of seeing you once more. It was he, not I, who gained the victory.'

The King could hardly believe his ears; but Rosimond, turning the ring, appeared before him in the likeness of the Prince, and the King gazed distractedly at the two youths who seemed both to be his son. Then he offered Rosimond immense rewards for his services, which were refused, and the only favour the young man would accept was that one of his posts at Court should be conferred on his brother Bramintho. For he feared for himself the changes of fortune, the envy of mankind and his own weakness. His desire was to go back to his mother and his native village, and to spend his time in cultivating the land.

One day, when he was wandering through the woods, he met the Fairy, who showed him the cavern where his father was imprisoned, and told him what words he must use in order to set him free. He repeated them joyfully, for he had always longed to bring the old man back and to make his last days happy. Rosimond

thus became the benefactor of all his family, and had the pleasure of doing good to those who had wished to do him evil. As for the Court, to whom he had rendered such services, all he asked was the freedom to live far from its corruption; and, to crown all, fearing that if he kept the ring he might be tempted to use it in order to regain his lost place in the world, he made up his mind to restore it to the Fairy. For many days he sought her up and down the woods and at last he found her. 'I want to give you back,' he said, holding out the ring, 'a gift as dangerous as it is powerful, and which I fear to use wrongfully. I shall never feel safe till I have made it impossible for me to leave my solitude and to satisfy my passions.'

While Rosimond was seeking to give back the ring to the Fairy, Bramintho, who had failed to learn any lessons from experience, gave way to all his desires, and tried to persuade the Prince, lately become King, to ill-treat Rosimond. But the Fairy, who knew all about everything, said to Rosimond, when he was imploring her to accept the ring:

'Your wicked brother is doing his best to

poison the mind of the King towards you, and to ruin you. He deserves to be punished, and he must die; and in order that he may destroy himself, I shall give the ring to him.'

Rosimond wept at these words, and then asked :

'What do you mean by giving him the ring as a punishment? He will only use it to persecute everyone, and to become master.'

'The same things,' answered the Fairy, 'are often a healing medicine to one person and a deadly poison to another. Prosperity is the source of all evil to a naturally wicked man. If you wish to punish a scoundrel, the first thing to do is to give him power. You will see that with this rope he will soon hang himself.'

Having said this, she disappeared, and went straight to the palace, where she showed herself to Bramintho under the disguise of an old woman covered with rags. She at once addressed him in these words :

'I have taken this ring from the hands of your brother, to whom I had lent it, and by its help he covered himself with glory. I now give it to you, and be careful what you do with it.'

Bramintho replied with a laugh :

‘I shall certainly not imitate my brother, who was foolish enough to bring back the Prince instead of reigning in his place,’ and he was as good as his word. The only use he made of the ring was to find out family secrets and betray them, to commit murders and every sort of wickedness, and to gain wealth for himself unlawfully. All these crimes, which could be traced to nobody, filled the people with astonishment. The King, seeing so many affairs, public and private, exposed, was at first as puzzled as anyone, till Bramintho’s wonderful prosperity and amazing insolence made him suspect that the enchanted ring had become his property. In order to find out the truth he bribed a stranger just arrived at Court, one of a nation with whom the King was always at war, and arranged that he was to steal in the night to Bramintho and to offer him untold honours and rewards if he would betray the State secrets.

Bramintho promised everything, and accepted at once the first payment of his crime, boasting that he had a ring which rendered him invisible, and that by means of it he could penetrate into

the most private places. But his triumph was short. Next day he was seized by order of the King, and his ring was taken from him. He



was searched, and on him were found papers which proved his crimes ; and, though Rosimond himself came back to the Court to entreat his

pardon, it was refused. So Bramintho was put to death, and the ring had been even more fatal to him than it had been useful in the hands of his brother.

To console Rosimond for the fate of Bramintho, the King gave him back the enchanted ring, as a pearl without price. The unhappy Rosimond did not look upon it in the same light, and the first thing he did on his return home was to seek the Fairy in the woods.

‘Here,’ he said, ‘is your ring. My brother’s experience has made me understand many things that I did not know before. Keep it, it has only led to his destruction. Ah! without it he would be alive now, and my father and mother would not in their old age be bowed to the earth with shame and grief! Perhaps he might have been wise and happy if he had never had the chance of gratifying his wishes! Oh! how dangerous it is to have more power than the rest of the world! Take back your ring, and as ill fortune seems to follow all on whom you bestow it, I will implore you, as a favour to myself, that you will never give it to anyone who is dear to me.’

THE SNUFF-BOX

As often happens in this world, there was once a young man who spent all his time in travelling. One day, as he was walking along, he picked up a snuff-box. He opened it, and the snuff-box said to him in the Spanish language, 'What do you want?' He was very much frightened, but luckily, instead of throwing the box away, he only shut it tight, and put it in his pocket. Then he went on, away, away, away, and as he went he said to himself, 'If it says to me again, "What do you want?" I shall know better what to say this time.' So he took out the snuff-box and opened it; and again it asked, 'What do you want?' 'My hat full of gold,' answered the youth, and immediately it was full.

Our young man was enchanted. Henceforth he should never be in need of anything. So on he travelled, away, away, away, through thick forests, till at last he came to a beautiful castle.

In the castle there lived a King. The young man walked round and round the castle, not caring who saw him, till the King noticed him,



and asked what he was doing there. 'I was just looking at your castle.' 'You would like to have one like it, wouldn't you?' The young man did not reply, but when it grew dark he

took his snuff-box and opened the lid. 'What do you want?' 'Build me a castle with laths of gold and tiles of diamond, and the furniture all of silver and gold.' He had scarcely finished speaking when there stood in front of him, exactly opposite the King's palace, a castle built precisely as he had ordered. When the King awoke he was struck dumb at the sight of the magnificent house shining in the rays of the sun. The servants could not do their work for stopping to stare at it. Then the King dressed himself, and went to see the young man. And he told him plainly that he was a very powerful Prince; and that he hoped that they might all live together in one house or the other, and that the King would give him his daughter to wife. So it all turned out just as the King wished. The young man married the Princess, and they lived happily in the palace of gold.

But the King's wife was jealous both of the young man and of her own daughter. The Princess had told her mother about the snuff-box, which gave them everything they wanted, and the Queen bribed a servant to steal the snuff-box. They noticed carefully where it was put

away every night, and one evening, when the whole world was asleep, the woman stole it and brought it to her old mistress. Oh, how happy the Queen was! She opened the lid, and the snuff-box said to her, 'What do you want?' And she answered at once, 'I want you to take me and my husband and my servants and this beautiful house and set us down on the other side of the Red Sea, but my daughter and her husband are to stay behind.'

When the young couple woke up, they found themselves back in the old castle, without their snuff-box. They hunted for it high and low, but quite vainly. The young man felt that no time was to be lost, and he mounted his horse and filled his pockets with as much gold as he could carry. On he went, away, away, away, but he sought the snuff-box in vain all up and down the neighbouring countries, and very soon he came to the end of all his money. But still he went on, as fast as the strength of his horse would let him, begging his way.

Someone told him that he ought to consult the moon, for the moon travelled far, and might be able to tell him something. So he went away,

away, away, and ended, somehow or other, by reaching the land of the moon. There he found a little old woman, who said to him, 'What are you doing here? My son eats all living things he sees, and if you are wise, you will go away without coming any further.' But the young man told her all his sad tale, and how he possessed a wonderful snuff-box, and how it had been stolen from him, and how he had nothing left, now that he was parted from his wife and was in need of everything. And he said that perhaps her son, who travelled so far, might have seen a palace with laths of gold and tiles of diamond, and furnished all in silver and gold. As he spoke these last words, the moon came in and said he smelt mortal flesh and blood. But his mother told him that it was an unhappy man who had lost everything, and had come all this way to consult him, and bade the young man not to be afraid, but to come forward and show himself. So he went boldly up to the moon, and asked if by any accident he had seen a palace with the laths of gold and the tiles of diamond, and all the furniture of silver and gold. Once this house belonged to him, but now it was stolen.

And the moon said no, but that the sun travelled farther than he did, and that the young man had better go and ask him.



So the young man departed, and went away, away, away, as well as his horse would take him,

begging his living as he rode along, and, somehow or other, at last he got to the land of the sun. There he found a little old woman, who asked him, 'What are you doing here? Go away. Have you not heard that my son feeds upon Christians?' But he said no, and that he would not go, for he was so miserable that it was all one to him whether he died or not; that he had lost everything, and especially a splendid palace like none other in the whole world, for it had laths of gold and tiles of diamond, and all the furniture was of silver and gold. And that he had sought it far and long, and in all the earth there was no man more unhappy. So the old woman's heart melted, and she agreed to hide him.

When the sun arrived, he declared that he smelt Christian flesh, and he meant to have it for his dinner. But his mother told him such a pitiful story of the miserable wretch who had lost everything, and had come from far to ask his help, that at last he promised to see him.

So the young man came out from his hiding-place and begged the sun to tell him if in the course of his travels he had not seen somewhere

a palace that had not its like in the whole world, for its laths were of gold and its tiles of diamond, and all the furniture in silver and gold.

And the sun said no, but that perhaps the wind had seen it, for he entered everywhere, and saw things that no one else ever saw, and if anyone knew where it was, it was certainly the wind.

Then the poor young man again set forth as well as his horse could take him, begging his living as he went, and, somehow or other, he ended by reaching the home of the wind. He found there a little old woman busily occupied in filling great barrels with water. She asked him what had put it into his head to come there, for her son ate everything he saw, and that he would shortly arrive quite mad, and that the young man had better look out. But he answered that he was so unhappy that he had ceased to mind anything, even being eaten, and then he told her that he had been robbed of a palace that had not its equal in all the world, and of all that was in it, and that he had even left his wife, and was wandering over the world until he found it. And that it was the sun who

had sent him to consult the wind. So she hid him under the staircase, and soon they heard the south wind arrive, shaking the house to its foundations. Thirsty as he was, he did not wait to drink, but he told his mother that he smelt the blood of a Christian man, and that she had better bring him out at once and make him ready to be eaten. But she bade her son eat and drink what was before him, and said that the poor young man was much to be pitied, and that the sun had granted him his life in order that he might consult the wind. Then she brought out the young man, who explained how he was seeking for his palace, and that no man had been able to tell him where it was, so he had come to the wind. And he added that he had been shamefully robbed, and that the laths were of gold and the tiles of diamond, and all the furniture in silver and gold, and he inquired if the wind had not seen such a palace during his wanderings.

And the wind said yes, and that all that day he had been blowing backwards and forwards over it without being able to move one single tile. 'Oh, do tell me where it is,' cried the

young man. 'It is a long way off,' replied the wind, 'on the other side of the Red Sea.' But our traveller was not discouraged, he had already journeyed too far.

So he set forth at once, and, somehow or other, he managed to reach that distant land. And he inquired if anyone wanted a gardener. He was told that the head gardener at the castle had just left, and perhaps he might have a chance of getting the place. The young man lost no time, but walked up to the castle and asked if they were in want of a gardener; and how happy he was when they agreed to take him! Now he passed most of his day in gossiping with the servants about the wealth of their master and the wonderful things in the house. He made friends with one of the maids, who told him the history of the snuff-box, and he coaxed her to let him see it. One evening she managed to get hold of it, and the young man watched carefully where she hid it away, in a secret place in the bedchamber of her mistress.

The following night, when everyone was fast asleep, he crept in and took the snuff-box. Think of his joy as he opened the lid! When it

asked him, as of yore, 'What do you want?' he replied: 'What do I want? What do I want? Why, I want to go with my palace to the old place, and for the King and the Queen and all their servants to be drowned in the Red Sea.' He had hardly finished speaking when he found himself back again with his wife, while all the other inhabitants of the place were lying at the bottom of the Red Sea.

THE GOLDEN BLACKBIRD

ONCE upon a time there was a great lord who had three sons. He fell very ill, sent for doctors of every kind, even bone-setters, but they, none of them, could find out what was the matter with him, or even give him any relief. At last there came a foreign doctor, who declared that the Golden Blackbird alone could cure the sick man.

So the old lord despatched his eldest son to look for the wonderful bird, and promised him great riches if he managed to find it and bring it back.

The young man began his journey, and soon arrived at a place where four roads met. He did not know which to choose, and tossed his cap in the air, determining that the direction of its fall should decide him. After travelling for two or three days, he grew tired of walking without knowing where or for how long, and he

stopped at an inn which was filled with merry-makers and ordered something to eat and drink.

‘My faith,’ said he, ‘it is sheer folly to waste more time hunting for this bird. My father is old, and if he dies I shall inherit his goods.’

The old man, after waiting patiently for some time, sent his second son to seek the Golden Blackbird. The youth took the same direction as his brother, and when he came to the cross roads, he too tossed up which road he should take. The cap fell in the same place as before, and he walked on till he came to the spot where his brother had halted. The latter, who was leaning out of the window of the inn, called to him to stay where he was and amuse himself.

‘You are right,’ replied the youth. ‘Who knows if I should ever find the Golden Blackbird, even if I sought the whole world through for it? At the worst, if the old man dies, we shall have his property.’

He entered the inn and the two brothers made merry and feasted, till very soon their money was all spent. They even owed something to their landlord, who kept them as hostages till they could pay their debts.

The youngest son set forth in his turn, and he arrived at the place where his brothers were still prisoners. They called to him to stop, and did all they could to prevent his going further.

‘No,’ he replied, ‘my father trusted me, and I will go all over the world till I find the Golden Blackbird.’

‘Bah,’ said his brothers, ‘you will never succeed any better than we did. Let him die if he wants to; we will divide the property.’

As he went his way he met a little hare, who stopped to look at him, and asked:

‘Where are you going, my friend?’

‘I really don’t quite know,’ answered he. ‘My father is ill, and he cannot be cured unless I bring him back the Golden Blackbird. It is a long time since I set out, but no one can tell me where to find it.’

‘Ah,’ said the hare, ‘you have a long way to go yet. You will have to walk at least seven hundred miles before you get to it.’

‘And how am I to travel such a distance?’

‘Mount on my back,’ said the little hare, ‘and I will conduct you.’

The young man obeyed: at each bound the

little hare went seven miles, and it was not long before they reached a castle that was as large and beautiful as a castle could be.

‘The Golden Blackbird is in a little cabin near by,’ said the little hare, ‘and you will easily find it. It lives in a little cage, with another cage beside it made all of gold. But whatever you do, be sure not to put it in the beautiful cage, or everybody in the castle will know that you have stolen it.’

The youth found the Golden Blackbird standing on a wooden perch, but as stiff and rigid as if he were dead. And beside the beautiful cage was the cage of gold.

‘Perhaps he would revive if I were to put him in that lovely cage,’ thought the youth.

The moment that Golden Bird had touched the bars of the splendid cage he awoke, and began to whistle, so that all the servants of the castle ran to see what was the matter, saying that he was a thief and must be put in prison.

‘No,’ he answered, ‘I am not a thief. If I have taken the Golden Blackbird, it is only that it may cure my father, who is ill, and I have travelled more than seven hundred miles in order to find it.’

‘Well,’ they replied, ‘we will let you go, and will even give you the Golden Bird, if you are able to bring us the Porcelain Maiden.’

The youth departed, weeping, and met the little hare, who was munching wild thyme.

‘What are you crying for, my friend?’ asked the hare.

‘It is because,’ he answered, ‘the castle people will not allow me to carry off the Golden Blackbird without giving them the Porcelain Maiden in exchange.’

‘You have not followed my advice,’ said the little hare. ‘And you have put the Golden Bird into the fine cage.’

‘Alas! yes!’

‘Don’t despair! the Porcelain Maiden is a young girl, beautiful as Venus, who dwells two hundred miles from here. Jump on my back and I will take you there.’

The little hare, who took seven miles in a stride, was there in no time at all, and he stopped on the borders of a lake.

‘The Porcelain Maiden,’ said the hare to the youth, ‘will come here to bathe with her friends, while I just eat a mouthful of thyme to refresh

me. When she is in the lake, be sure you hide her clothes, which are of dazzling whiteness, and do not give them back to her unless she consents to follow you.'

The little hare left him, and almost immediately the Porcelain Maiden arrived with her friends. She undressed herself and got into the water. Then the young man glided up noiselessly and laid hold of her clothes, which he hid under a rock at some distance.

When the Porcelain Maiden was tired of playing in the water she came out to dress herself, but, though she hunted for her clothes high and low, she could find them nowhere. Her friends helped her in the search, but, seeing at last that it was of no use, they left her, alone on the bank, weeping bitterly.

'Why do you cry?' said the young man, approaching her.

'Alas!' answered she, 'while I was bathing someone stole my clothes, and my friends have abandoned me.'

'I will find your clothes if you will only come with me.'

And the Porcelain Maiden agreed to follow

him, and after having given up her clothes, the young man bought a small horse for her, which went like the wind. The little hare brought them both back to seek for the Golden Blackbird, and when they drew near to the castle where it lived the little hare said to the young man :

‘Now, do be a little sharper than you were before, and you will manage to carry off both the Golden Blackbird and the Porcelain Maiden. Take the golden cage in one hand, and leave the bird in the old cage where he is, and bring that away too.’

The little hare then vanished ; the youth did as he was bid, and the castle servants never noticed that he was carrying off the Golden Bird. When he reached the inn where his brothers were detained, he delivered them by paying their debt. They set out all together, but as the two elder brothers were jealous of the success of the youngest, they took the opportunity as they were passing by the shores of a lake to throw themselves upon him, seize the Golden Bird, and fling him in the water. Then they continued their journey, taking with them the Porcelain Maiden, in the firm belief

that their brother was drowned. But, happily, he had snatched in falling at a turf of rushes and called loudly for help. The little hare came running to him, and said, 'Take hold of my leg and pull yourself out of the water.'



When he was safe on shore the little hare said to him:

'Now this is what you have to do: dress yourself like a Breton seeking a place as stable-boy, and go and offer your services to your father. Once there, you will easily be able to make him understand the truth.'

The young man did as the little hare bade him, and he went to his father's castle and inquired if they were not in want of a stable-boy.

'Yes,' replied his father, 'very much indeed. But it is not an easy place. There is a little horse in the stable which will not let anyone go near it, and it has already kicked to death several people who have tried to groom it.'

'I will undertake to groom it,' said the youth. 'I never saw the horse I was afraid of yet.' The little horse allowed itself to be rubbed down without a toss of its head and without a kick.

'Good gracious!' exclaimed the master; 'how is it that he lets you touch him, when no one else can go near him?'

'Perhaps he knows me,' answered the stable-boy.

Two or three days later the master said to him: 'The Porcelain Maiden is here: but, though she is as lovely as the dawn, she is so wicked that she scratches everyone that approaches her. Try if she will accept your services.'

When the youth entered the room where she was, the Golden Blackbird broke forth into a joyful song, and the Porcelain Maiden sang too, and jumped for joy.

‘Good gracious!’ cried the master. The Porcelain Maiden and the Golden Blackbird know you too?’

‘Yes,’ replied the youth, ‘and the Porcelain Maiden can tell you the whole truth, if she only will.’

Then she told all that had happened, and how she had consented to follow the young man who had captured the Golden Blackbird.

‘Yes,’ added the youth, ‘I delivered my brothers, who were kept prisoners in an inn, and, as a reward, they threw me into a lake. So I disguised myself and came here, in order to prove the truth to you.’

So the old lord embraced his son, and promised that he should inherit all his possessions, and he put to death the two elder ones, who had deceived him and had tried to slay their own brother.

The young man married the Porcelain Maiden, and had a splendid wedding feast.

THE MASTER CAT; OR, PUSS IN BOOTS

THERE was a miller who left no more estate to the three sons he had than his mill, his ass, and his cat. The partition was soon made. Neither the scrivener nor attorney was sent for. They would soon have eaten up all the poor patrimony. The eldest had the mill, the second the ass, and the youngest nothing but the cat.

The poor young fellow was quite comfortless at having so poor a lot.

‘My brothers,’ said he, ‘may get their living handsomely enough by joining their stocks together; but for my part, when I have eaten up my cat, and made me a muff of his skin, I must die of hunger.’

The Cat, who heard all this, but made as if he did not, said to him with a grave and serious air:

‘Do not thus afflict yourself, my good master; you have nothing else to do but to give me a

bag, and get a pair of boots made for me, that I may scamper through the dirt and the brambles, and you shall see that you have not so bad a portion of me as you imagine.'

The Cat's master did not build very much upon what he said; he had, however, often seen him play a great many cunning tricks to catch rats and mice; as when he used to hang by the heels, or hide himself in the meal, and make as if he were dead; so that he did not altogether despair of his affording him some help in his miserable condition. When the Cat had what he asked for, he booted himself very gallantly, and, putting his bag about his neck, he held the strings of it in his two fore-paws, and went into a warren where was great abundance of rabbits. He put bran and sow-thistles into his bag, and, stretching out at length, as if he had been dead, he waited for some young rabbits, not yet acquainted with the deceits of the world, to come and rummage his bag for what he had put into it.

Scarce was he lain down but he had what he wanted: a rash and foolish young rabbit jumped into his bag, and Monsieur Puss, immediately

drawing close the strings, took and killed him without pity. Proud of his prey, he went with it to the palace, and asked to speak with his Majesty. He was shown upstairs into the King's



apartment, and, making a low reverence, said to him:

‘I have brought you, sir, a rabbit of the warren, which my noble Lord the Marquis of Carabas’ (for that was the title which Puss was

pleas'd to give his master) 'has commanded me to present to your Majesty from him.'

'Tell thy master,' said the King, 'that I thank him, and that he does me a great deal of pleasure.'

Another time he went and hid himself among some standing corn, holding still his bag open; and, when a brace of partridges ran into it, he drew the strings, and so caught them both. He went and made a present of these to the King, as he had done before of the rabbit which he took in the warren. The King, in like manner, received the partridges with great pleasure, and ordered him some money, and drink.

The Cat continued for two or three months thus to carry his Majesty, from time to time, game of his master's taking. One day in particular, when he knew for certain that he was to take the air along the river-side, with his daughter, the most beautiful princess in the world, he said to his master:

'If you will follow my advice your fortune is made. You have nothing else to do but go and wash yourself in the river, in that part I shall show you, and leave the rest to me.'

The Marquis of Carabas did what the Cat advised him to, without knowing why or wherefore. While he was washing the King passed by, and the Cat began to cry out :

‘Help! help! My Lord Marquis of Carabas is going to be drowned.’

At this noise the King put his head out of the coach-window, and, finding it was the Cat who had so often brought him such good game, he commanded his guards to run immediately to the assistance of his Lordship the Marquis of Carabas. While they were drawing the poor Marquis out of the river, the Cat came up to the coach and told the King that, while his master was washing, there came by some rogues, who went off with his clothes, though he had cried out: ‘Thieves! thieves!’ several times, as loud as he could.

This cunning Cat had hidden them under a great stone. The King immediately commanded the officers of his wardrobe to run and fetch one of his best suits for the Lord Marquis of Carabas.

The King caressed him after a very extraordinary manner, and as the fine clothes he had

given him extremely set off his good mien (for he was well made and very handsome in his person), the King's daughter took a secret inclination to him, and the Marquis of Carabas had no sooner cast two or three respectful and somewhat tender glances but she fell in love with him to distraction. The King would needs have him come into the coach and take part of the airing. The Cat, quite overjoyed to see his project begin to succeed, marched on before, and, meeting with some countrymen, who were mowing a meadow, he said to them :

‘Good people, you who are mowing, if you do not tell the King that the meadow you mow belongs to my Lord Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped as small as herbs for the pot.’

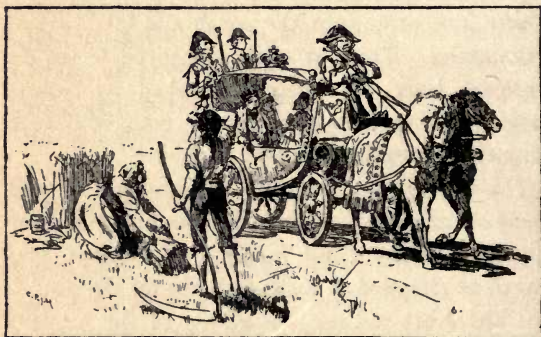
The King did not fail asking of the mowers to whom the meadow they were mowing belonged.

‘To my Lord Marquis of Carabas,’ answered they all together, for the Cat's threats had made them terribly afraid.

‘You see, sir,’ said the Marquis, ‘this is a meadow which never fails to yield a plentiful harvest every year.’

The Master Cat, who went still on before, met with some reapers, and said to them :

‘ Good people, you who are reaping, if you do not tell the King that all this corn belongs to the Marquis of Carabas, you shall be chopped as small as herbs for the pot.’



The King, who passed by a moment after, would needs know to whom all that corn, which he then saw, did belong.

‘ To my Lord Marquis of Carabas,’ replied the reapers, and the King was very well pleased with it, as well as the Marquis, whom he congratulated thereupon. The Master Cat, who

went always before, said the same words to all he met, and the King was astonished at the vast estates of my Lord Marquis of Carabas.

Monsieur Puss came at last to a stately castle, the master of which was an ogre, the richest had ever been known; for all the lands which the King had then gone over belonged to this castle. The Cat, who had taken care to inform himself who this ogre was and what he could do, asked to speak with him, saying he could not pass so near his castle without having the honour of paying his respects to him.

The ogre received him as civilly as an ogre could do, and made him sit down.

‘I have been assured,’ said the Cat, ‘that you have the gift of being able to change yourself into all sorts of creatures you have a mind to; you can, for example, transform yourself into a lion, or elephant, and the like.’

‘That is true,’ answered the ogre very briskly; ‘and to convince you, you shall see me now become a lion.’

Puss was so sadly terrified at the sight of a lion so near him that he immediately got into the gutter, not without abundance of trouble

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and danger, because of his boots, which were of
no use at all to him in walking upon the tiles.
A little while after, when Puss saw that the ogre
had resumed his natural form, he came down,
and owned he had been very much frightened.



‘I have been moreover informed,’ said the Cat,
‘but I know not how to believe it, that you have
also the power to take on you the shape of the
smallest animals; for example, to change yourself
into a rat or a mouse; but I must own to you I
take this to be impossible.’

‘Impossible!’ cried the ogre; ‘you shall see that presently.’

And at the same time he changed himself into a mouse, and began to run about the floor. Puss no sooner perceived this but he fell upon him and ate him up.

Meanwhile the King, who saw, as he passed, this fine castle of the ogre’s, had a mind to go into it. Puss, who heard the noise of his Majesty’s coach running over the draw-bridge, ran out, and said to the King:

‘Your Majesty is welcome to this castle of my Lord Marquis of Carabas.’

‘What! my Lord Marquis,’ cried the King, ‘and does this castle also belong to you? There can be nothing finer than this court and all the stately buildings which surround it; let us go into it, if you please.’

The Marquis gave his hand to the Princess, and followed the King, who went first. They passed into a spacious hall, where they found a magnificent collation, which the ogre had prepared for his friends, who were that very day to visit him, but dared not to enter, knowing the King was there. His Majesty was perfectly charmed with the good qualities of my Lord

Marquis of Carabas, as was his daughter, who had fallen violently in love with him, and, seeing the vast estate he possessed, said to him, after having drunk five or six glasses:

‘It will be owing to yourself only, my Lord Marquis, if you are not my son-in-law.’



The Marquis, making several low bows, accepted the honour which his Majesty conferred upon him, and forthwith, that very same day, married the Princess.

Puss became a great lord, and never ran after mice any more but only for his diversion.

THE MAGIC SWAN

THERE were once upon a time three brothers, of whom the eldest was called Jacob, the second Frederick, and the youngest Peter. This youngest brother was made a regular butt of by the other two, and they treated him shamefully. If anything went wrong with their affairs, Peter had to bear the blame and put things right for them, and he had to endure all this ill-treatment because he was weak and delicate and couldn't defend himself against his stronger brothers. The poor creature had a most trying life of it in every way, and day and night he pondered how he could make it better. One day, when he was in the wood gathering sticks and crying bitterly, a little old woman came up to him and asked him what was the matter; and he told her all his troubles.

'Come, my good youth,' said the old dame, when he had finished his tale of woe, 'isn't the

world wide enough? Why don't you set out and try your fortune somewhere else?'

Peter took her words to heart, and left his father's house early one morning to try his fortune in the wide world, as the old woman had advised him. But he felt very bitterly parting from the home where he had been born, and where he had at least passed a short but happy childhood, and sitting down on a hill he gazed once more fondly on his native place.

Suddenly the little old woman stood before him, and, tapping him on the shoulder, said, 'So far good, my boy; but what do you mean to do now?'

Peter was at a loss what to answer, for so far he had always thought that fortune would drop into his mouth like a ripe cherry. The old woman, who guessed his thoughts, laughed kindly and said, 'I'll tell you what you must do, for I've taken a fancy to you, and I'm sure you won't forget me when you've made your fortune.'

Peter promised faithfully he wouldn't and the old woman continued:

'This evening at sunset go to yonder pear

tree which you see growing at the cross roads. Underneath it you will find a man lying asleep, and a beautiful large swan will be fastened to the tree close to him. You must be careful not to waken the man, but you must unfasten the swan and take it away with you. You will find that everyone will fall in love with its beautiful plumage, and you must allow anyone who likes to pull out a feather. But as soon as the swan feels as much as a finger on it, it will scream out, and then you must say, "Swan, hold fast." Then the hand of the person who has touched the bird will be held as in a vice, and nothing will set it free, unless you touch it with this little stick which I will make you a present of. When you have captured a whole lot of people in this way, lead your train straight on with you; you will come to a big town where a Princess lives who has never been known to laugh. If you can only make her laugh your fortune is made; then I beg you won't forget your old friend.'

Peter promised again that he wouldn't, and at sunset he went to the tree the old woman had mentioned. The man lay there fast asleep,

and a large beautiful swan was fastened to the tree beside him by a red cord. Peter loosed the bird, and led it away with him without disturbing the bird's master.

He walked on with the swan for some time, and came at last to a building-yard where some men were busily at work. They were all lost in admiration of the bird's beautiful plumage, and one forward youth, who was covered with clay from head to foot, called out, 'Oh, if I'd only one of those feathers how happy I should be!'

'Pull one out, then,' said Peter kindly, and the youth seized one from the bird's tail; instantly the swan screamed, and Peter called out, 'Swan, hold fast,' and do what he could the poor youth couldn't get his hand away. The more he howled the more the others laughed, till a girl who had been washing clothes in the neighbouring stream hurried up to see what was the matter. When she saw the poor boy fastened to the swan she felt so sorry for him that she stretched out her hand to free him. The bird screamed.

'Swan, hold fast,' called out Peter, and the girl was caught also.

When Peter had gone on for a bit with his captives, they met a chimney sweep, who laughed loudly over the extraordinary troop, and asked the girl what she was doing.

‘Oh, dearest John,’ replied the girl, ‘give me your hand and set me free from this cursed young man.’

‘Most certainly I will, if that’s all you want,’ replied the sweep, and gave the girl his hand. The bird screamed.

‘Swan, hold fast,’ said Peter, and the black man was added to their number.

They soon came to a village where a fair was being held. A travelling circus was giving a performance, and the clown was just doing his tricks. He opened his eyes wide with amazement when he saw the remarkable trio fastened on to the swan’s tail.

‘Have you gone raving mad, Blackie?’ he asked as well as he could for laughing.

‘It’s no laughing matter,’ the sweep replied. ‘This wench has got so tight hold of me that I feel as if I were glued to her. Do set me free, like a good clown, and I’ll do you a good turn some day.’

Without a moment's hesitation the clown grasped the black outstretched hand. The bird screamed.

'Swan, hold fast,' called out Peter, and the clown became the fourth of the party.

Now in the front row of the spectators sat the respected and popular Mayor of the village, who was much put out by what he considered nothing but a foolish trick. So much annoyed was he that he seized the clown by the hand and tried to tear him away, in order to hand him over to the police.

Then the bird screamed, and Peter called out, 'Swan, hold fast,' and the dignified Mayor shared the fate of his predecessors.

The Mayoress, a long thin stick of a woman, enraged at the insult done to her husband, seized his free arm and tore at it with all her might, with the only result that she too was forced to swell the procession. After this no one else had any wish to join them.

Soon Peter saw the towers of the capital in front of him. Just before entering it, a glittering carriage came out to meet him, in which was seated a young lady as beautiful as the day, but

with a very solemn and serious expression. But no sooner had she perceived the motley crowd fastened to the swan's tail than she burst into a loud fit of laughter, in which she was joined by all her servants and ladies in waiting.

'The Princess has laughed at last,' they all cried with joy.



She stepped out of her carriage to look more closely at the wonderful sight, and laughed again over the capers the poor captives cut. She ordered her carriage to be turned round and drove slowly back into the town, never taking her eyes off Peter and his procession.

When the King heard the news that his daughter had actually laughed, he was more

than delighted, and had Peter and his marvellous train brought before him. He laughed himself when he saw them till the tears rolled down his cheeks.

‘My good friend,’ he said to Peter, ‘do you know what I promised the person who succeeded in making the Princess laugh?’

‘No, I don’t,’ said Peter.

‘Then I’ll tell you,’ answered the King; ‘a thousand gold crowns or a piece of land. Which will you choose?’

Peter decided in favour of the land. Then he touched the youth, the girl, the sweep, the clown, the Mayor, and the Mayoress with his little stick, and they were all free again, and ran away home as if a fire were burning behind them; and their flight, as you may imagine, gave rise to renewed merriment.

Then the Princess felt moved to stroke the swan, at the same time admiring its plumage. The bird screamed.

‘Swan, hold fast,’ called out Peter, and so he won the Princess for his bride. But the swan flew up into the air, and vanished in the blue horizon. Peter now received a duchy as a

present, and became a very great man indeed ; but he did not forget the little old woman who had been the cause of all his good fortune, and appointed her as head housekeeper to him and his royal bride in their magnificent castle.

THE DIRTY SHEPHERDESS

ONCE upon a time there lived a King who had two daughters, and he loved them with all his heart. When they grew up, he was suddenly seized with a wish to know if they, on their part, truly loved him, and he made up his mind that he would give his kingdom to whichever best proved her devotion.

So he called the elder Princess and said to her, 'How much do you love me?'

'As the apple of my eye!' answered she.

'Ah!' exclaimed the King, kissing her tenderly as he spoke, 'you are indeed a good daughter.'

Then he sent for the younger, and asked her how much she loved him.

'I look upon you, my father,' she answered, 'as I look upon salt in my food.'

But the King did not like her words, and

ordered her to quit the Court, and never again to appear before him. The poor Princess went sadly up to her room and began to cry, but when she was reminded of her father's commands, she dried her eyes, and made a bundle of her jewels and her best dresses and hurriedly left the castle where she was born.

She walked straight along the road in front of her, without knowing very well where she was going or what was to become of her, for she had never been shown how to work, and all she had learnt consisted of a few household rules, and recipes of dishes which her mother taught her long ago. And as she was afraid that no housewife would want to engage a girl with such a pretty face, she determined to make herself as ugly as she could.

She therefore took off the dress that she was wearing and put on some horrible old rags belonging to a beggar, all torn and covered with mud. After that she smeared mud all over her hands and face, and shook her hair into a great tangle. Having thus changed her appearance, she went about offering herself as a goose-girl or shepherdess. But the farmers' wives would

have nothing to say to such a dirty maiden, and sent her away with a morsel of bread for charity's sake.

After walking for a great many days without being able to find any work, she came to a large farm where they were in want of a shepherdess, and engaged her gladly.

One day when she was keeping her sheep in a lonely tract of land, she suddenly felt a wish to dress herself in her robes of splendour. She washed herself carefully in the stream, and as she always carried her bundle with her, it was easy to shake off her rags, and transform herself in a few moments into a great lady.

The King's son, who had lost his way out hunting, perceived this lovely damsel a long way off, and wished to look at her closer. But as soon as the girl saw what he was at, she fled into the wood as swiftly as a bird. The Prince ran after her, but as he was running he caught his foot in the root of a tree and fell, and when he got up again, she was nowhere to be seen.

When she was quite safe, she put on her rags again, and smeared over her face and hands.



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However, the young Prince, who was both hot and thirsty, found his way to the farm, to ask for a drink of cider, and he inquired the name of the beautiful lady that kept the sheep. At this everyone began to laugh, for they said that the shepherdess was one of the ugliest and dirtiest creatures under the sun.

The Prince thought some witchcraft must be at work, and he hastened away before the return of the shepherdess, who became that evening the butt of everybody's jests.

But the King's son thought often of the lovely maiden whom he had only seen for a moment, though she seemed to him much more fascinating than any lady of the Court. At last he dreamed of nothing else, and grew thinner day by day till his parents inquired what was the matter, promising to do all they could to make him as happy as he once was. He dared not to tell them the truth, lest they should laugh at him, so he only said that he should like some bread baked by the kitchen girl in the distant farm.

Although the wish appeared rather odd, they hastened to fulfil it, and the farmer was told the request of the King's son. The maiden showed

no surprise at receiving such an order, but merely asked for some flour, salt, and water, and also that she might be left alone in a little room adjoining the oven, where the kneading-trough stood. Before beginning her work she washed herself carefully, and even put on her rings; but, while she was baking, one of her rings slid into the dough. When she had finished she dirtied herself again, and let lumps of the dough stick to her fingers, so that she became as ugly as before.

The loaf, which was a very little one, was brought to the King's son, who ate it with pleasure. But in cutting it he found the ring of the Princess, and declared to his parents that he would marry the girl whom that ring fitted.

So the King made a proclamation through his whole kingdom, and ladies came from afar to lay claim to the honour. But the ring was so tiny that even those who had the smallest hands could only get it on their little fingers. In a short time all the maidens of the kingdom, including the peasant girls, had tried on the ring, and the King was just about to announce that their

efforts had been in vain, when the Prince observed that he had not yet seen the shepherdess.

They sent to fetch her, and she arrived covered with rags, but with her hands cleaner than usual, so that she could easily slip on the ring. The King's son declared that he would fulfil his promise, and when his parents mildly remarked that the girl was only a keeper of sheep, and a very ugly one too, the maiden boldly said that she was born a princess, and that, if they would only give her some water and leave her alone in a room for a few minutes, she would show that she could look as well as anyone in fine clothes.

They did what she asked, and when she entered in a magnificent dress, she looked so beautiful that all saw she must be a princess in disguise. The King's son recognised the charming damsel of whom he had once caught a glimpse, and, flinging himself at her feet, asked if she would marry him. The Princess then told her story, and said that it would be necessary to send an ambassador to her father to ask his consent and to invite him to the wedding.

The Princess's father, who had never ceased to repent his harshness towards his daughter, had sought her through the land, but as no one could tell him anything of her, he supposed her dead. Therefore it was with great joy he heard that she was living and that a king's son asked her in marriage, and he quitted his kingdom with his elder daughter so as to be present at the ceremony.

By the orders of the bride, they only served her father at the wedding breakfast bread without salt, and meat without seasoning. Seeing him make faces, and eat very little, his daughter, who sat beside him, inquired if his dinner was not to his taste.

'No,' he replied, 'the dishes are carefully cooked and sent up, but they are all so dreadfully tasteless.'

'Did not I tell you, my father, that salt was the best thing in life? And yet, when I compared you to salt, to show how much I loved you, you thought slightingly of me and you chased me from your presence.'

The King embraced his daughter, and allowed that he had been wrong to misinterpret her

words. Then, for the rest of the wedding feast, they gave him bread made with salt, and dishes with seasoning, and he said they were the very best he had ever eaten,

... Then for the rest of the wedding feast
 they were very merry and they
 with dancing and in all that time
 and in the first year

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be several paragraphs of a story or narrative.]



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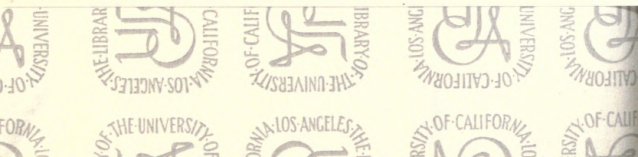
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