Fairy Tales
(part 3)

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Hans Christian Andersen

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by

Hans Christian Andersen

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THE RACES

A prize, or rather two prizes, a great one and a small one, had been awarded for the greatest swiftness in running,—not in a single race, but for the whole year.

"I obtained the first prize," said the hare. "Justice must still be carried out, even when one has relations and good friends among the prize committee; but that the snail should have received the second prize, I consider almost an insult to myself."

"No," said the fence-rail, who had been a witness at the distribution of prizes; "there should be some consideration for industry and perseverance. I have heard many respectable people say so, and I can quite understand it. The snail certainly took half a year to get over the threshold of the door; but he injured himself, and broke his collar-bone by the haste he made. He gave himself up entirely to the race, and ran with his house on his back, which was all, of course, very praiseworthy; and therefore he obtained the second prize."

"I think I ought to have had some consideration too," said the swallow. "I should imagine no one can be swifter in soaring and flight than I am; and how far I have been! far, far away."

"Yes, that is your misfortune," said the fence-rail; "you are so fickle, so unsettled; you must always be travelling about into foreign lands when the cold commences here. You have no love of fatherland in you. There can be no consideration for you."

"But now, if I have been lying the whole winter in the moor," said the swallow, "and suppose I slept the whole time, would that be taken into account?"

"Bring a certificate from the old moor-hen," said he, "that you have slept away half your time in fatherland; then you will be treated with some consideration."

"I deserved the first prize, and not the second," said the snail. "I know so much, at least, that the hare only ran from cowardice, and because he thought there was danger in delay. I, on the other hand, made running the business of my life, and have become a cripple in the service. If any one had a first prize, it ought to have been myself. But I do not understand chattering and boasting; on the contrary, I despise it." And the snail spat at them with contempt.

"I am able to affirm with word of oath, that each prize—at least, those for which I voted—was given with just and proper consideration," said the

old boundary post in the wood, who was a member of the committee of judges. “I always act with due order, consideration, and calculation. Seven times have I already had the honor to be present at the distribution of the prizes, and to vote; but to-day is the first time I have been able to carry out my will. I always reckon the first prize by going through the alphabet from the beginning, and the second by going through from the end. Be so kind as to give me your attention, and I will explain to you how I reckon from the beginning. The eighth letter from A is H, and there we have H for hare; therefore I awarded to the hare the first prize. The eighth letter from the end of the alphabet is S, and therefore the snail received the second prize. Next year, the letter I will have its turn for the first prize, and the letter R for the second.”

“I should really have voted for myself,” said the mule, “if I had not been one of the judges on the committee. Not only the rapidity with which advance is made, but every other quality should have due consideration; as, for instance, how much weight a candidate is able to draw; but I have not brought this quality forward now, nor the sagacity of the hare in his flight, nor the cunning with which he suddenly springs aside and doubles, to lead people on a false track, thinking he has concealed himself. No; there is something else on which more stress should be laid, and which ought not be left unnoticed. I mean that which mankind call the beautiful. It is on the beautiful that I particularly fix my eyes. I observed the well-grown ears of the hare; it is a pleasure to me to observe how long they are. It seemed as if I saw myself again in the days of my childhood; and so I voted for the hare.”

“Buz,” said the fly; “there, I’m not going to make a long speech; but I wish to say something about hares. I have really overtaken more than one hare, when I have been seated on the engine in front of a railway train. I often do so. One can then so easily judge of one’s own swiftness. Not long ago, I crushed the hind legs of a young hare. He had been running a long time before the engine; he had no idea that I was travelling there. At last he had to stop in his career, and the engine ran over his hind legs, and crushed them; for I set upon it. I left him lying there, and rode on farther. I call that conquering him; but I do not want the prize.”

“It really seems to me,” thought the wild rose, though she did not express her opinion aloud—it is not in her nature to do so,—though it would have been quite as well if she had; “it certainly seems to me that the sunbeam ought to have had the honor of receiving the first prize. The sunbeam flies in a few minutes along the immeasurable path from the sun to us. It arrives in such strength, that all nature awakes to loveliness and beauty; we roses

blush and exhale fragrance in its presence. Our worshipful judges don't appear to have noticed this at all. Were I the sunbeam, I would give each one of them a sun stroke; but that would only make them mad, and they are mad enough already. I only hope," continued the rose, "that peace may reign in the wood. It is glorious to bloom, to be fragrant, and to live; to live in story and in song. The sunbeam will outlive us all."

"What is the first prize?" asked the earthworm, who had overslept the time, and only now came up.

"It contains a free admission to a cabbage-garden," replied the mule. "I proposed that as one of the prizes. The hare most decidedly must have it; and I, as an active and thoughtful member of the committee, took especial care that the prize should be one of advantage to him; so now he is provided for. The snail can now sit on the fence, and lick up moss and sunshine. He has also been appointed one of the first judges of swiftness in racing. It is worth much to know that one of the numbers is a man of talent in the thing men call a 'committee.' I must say I expect much in the future; we have already made such a good beginning."

THE RED SHOES

Once upon a time there was little girl, pretty and dainty. But in summer time she was obliged to go barefooted because she was poor, and in winter she had to wear large wooden shoes, so that her little instep grew quite red. In the middle of the village lived an old shoemaker's wife; she sat down and made, as well as she could, a pair of little shoes out of some old pieces of red cloth. They were clumsy, but she meant well, for they were intended for the little girl, whose name was Karen.

Karen received the shoes and wore them for the first time on the day of her mother's funeral. They were certainly not suitable for mourning; but she had no others, and so she put her bare feet into them and walked behind the humble coffin.

Just then a large old carriage came by, and in it sat an old lady; she looked at the little girl, and taking pity on her, said to the clergyman, "Look here, if you will give me the little girl, I will take care of her."

Karen believed that this was all on account of the red shoes, but the old lady thought them hideous, and so they were burnt. Karen herself was dressed very neatly and cleanly; she was taught to read and to sew, and people said that she was pretty. But the mirror told her, "You are more than pretty—you are beautiful."

One day the Queen was travelling through that part of the country, and had her little daughter, who was a princess, with her. All the people, amongst them Karen too, streamed towards the castle, where the little princess, in fine white clothes, stood before the window and allowed herself to be stared at. She wore neither a train nor a golden crown, but beautiful red morocco shoes; they were indeed much finer than those which the shoemaker's wife had sewn for little Karen. There is really nothing in the world that can be compared to red shoes! Karen was now old enough to be confirmed; she received some new clothes, and she was also to have some new shoes.

The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot in his own room, in which there stood great glass cases full of pretty shoes and white slippers. It all looked very lovely, but the old lady could not see very well, and therefore did not get much pleasure out of it. Amongst the shoes stood a pair of red ones, like those which the princess had worn. How beautiful they were! and the shoemaker said that they had been made for a count's daughter, but that they had not fitted her.

"I suppose they are of shiny leather?" asked the old lady. "They shine so."

"Yes, they do shine," said Karen. They fitted her, and were bought. But the old lady knew nothing of their being red, for she would never have allowed Karen to be confirmed in red shoes, as she was now to be.

Everybody looked at her feet, and the whole of the way from the church door to the choir it seemed to her as if even the ancient figures on the monuments, in their stiff collars and long black robes, had their eyes fixed on her red shoes. It was only of these that she thought when the clergyman laid his hand upon her head and spoke of the holy baptism, of the covenant with God, and told her that she was now to be a grown-up Christian. The organ pealed forth solemnly, and the sweet children's voices mingled with that of their old leader; but Karen thought only of her red shoes. In the afternoon the old lady heard from everybody that Karen had worn red shoes. She said that it was a shocking thing to do, that it was very improper, and that Karen was always to go to church in future in black shoes, even if they were old.

On the following Sunday there was Communion. Karen looked first at the black shoes, then at the red ones—looked at the red ones again, and put them on.

The sun was shining gloriously, so Karen and the old lady went along the footpath through the corn, where it was rather dusty.

At the church door stood an old crippled soldier leaning on a crutch; he had a wonderfully long beard, more red than white, and he bowed down to the ground and asked the old lady whether he might wipe her shoes. Then

Karen put out her little foot too. “Dear me, what pretty dancing-shoes!” said the soldier. “Sit fast, when you dance,” said he, addressing the shoes, and slapping the soles with his hand.
The old lady gave the soldier some money and then went with Karen into the church.
And all the people inside looked at Karen’s red shoes, and all the figures gazed at them; when Karen knelt before the altar and put the golden goblet to her mouth, she thought only of the red shoes. It seemed to her as though they were swimming about in the goblet, and she forgot to sing the psalm, forgot to say the “Lord’s Prayer.”
Now every one came out of church, and the old lady stepped into her carriage. But just as Karen was lifting up her foot to get in too, the old soldier said: “Dear me, what pretty dancing shoes!” and Karen could not help it, she was obliged to dance a few steps; and when she had once begun, her legs continued to dance. It seemed as if the shoes had got power over them. She danced round the church corner, for she could not stop; the coachman had to run after her and seize her. He lifted her into the carriage, but her feet continued to dance, so that she kicked the good old lady violently. At last they took off her shoes, and her legs were at rest.
At home the shoes were put into the cupboard, but Karen could not help looking at them.
Now the old lady fell ill, and it was said that she would not rise from her bed again. She had to be nursed and waited upon, and this was no one’s duty more than Karen’s. But there was a grand ball in the town, and Karen was invited. She looked at the red shoes, saying to herself that there was no sin in doing that; she put the red shoes on, thinking there was no harm in that either; and then she went to the ball; and commenced to dance.
But when she wanted to go to the right, the shoes danced to the left, and when she wanted to dance up the room, the shoes danced down the room, down the stairs through the street, and out through the gates of the town. She danced, and was obliged to dance, far out into the dark wood. Suddenly something shone up among the trees, and she believed it was the moon, for it was a face. But it was the old soldier with the red beard; he sat there nodding his head and said: “Dear me, what pretty dancing shoes!”
She was frightened, and wanted to throw the red shoes away; but they stuck fast. She tore off her stockings, but the shoes had grown fast to her feet. She danced and was obliged to go on dancing over field and meadow, in rain and sunshine, by night and by day—but by night it was most horrible. She danced out into the open churchyard; but the dead there did not dance.

They had something better to do than that. She wanted to sit down on the pauper's grave where the bitter fern grows; but for her there was neither peace nor rest. And as she danced past the open church door she saw an angel there in long white robes, with wings reaching from his shoulders down to the earth; his face was stern and grave, and in his hand he held a broad shining sword.

"Dance you shall," said he, "dance in your red shoes till you are pale and cold, till your skin shrivels up and you are a skeleton! Dance you shall, from door to door, and where proud and wicked children live you shall knock, so that they may hear you and fear you! Dance you shall, dance—!"

"Mercy!" cried Karen. But she did not hear what the angel answered, for the shoes carried her through the gate into the fields, along highways and byways, and unceasingly she had to dance.

One morning she danced past a door that she knew well; they were singing a psalm inside, and a coffin was being carried out covered with flowers. Then she knew that she was forsaken by every one and damned by the angel of God.

She danced, and was obliged to go on dancing through the dark night. The shoes bore her away over thorns and stumps till she was all torn and bleeding; she danced away over the heath to a lonely little house. Here, she knew, lived the executioner; and she tapped with her finger at the window and said: "Come out, come out! I cannot come in, for I must dance."

And the executioner said: "I don't suppose you know who I am. I strike off the heads of the wicked, and I notice that my axe is tingling to do so."

"Don't cut off my head!" said Karen, "for then I could not repent of my sin. But cut off my feet with the red shoes."

And then she confessed all her sin, and the executioner struck off her feet with the red shoes; but the shoes danced away with the little feet across the field into the deep forest.

And he carved her a pair of wooden feet and some crutches, and taught her a psalm which is always sung by sinners; she kissed the hand that guided the axe, and went away over the heath.

"Now, I have suffered enough for the red shoes," she said; "I will go to church, so that people can see me." And she went quickly up to the church-door; but when she came there, the red shoes were dancing before her, and she was frightened, and turned back.

During the whole week she was sad and wept many bitter tears, but when Sunday came again she said: "Now I have suffered and striven enough. I believe I am quite as good as many of those who sit in church and give themselves airs."

And so she went boldly on; but she had not got farther than the churchyard gate when she saw the red shoes dancing along before her. Then she became terrified, and turned back and repented right heartily of her sin.

She went to the parsonage, and begged that she might be taken into service there. She would be industrious, she said, and do everything that she could; she did not mind about the wages as long as she had a roof over her, and was with good people. The pastor's wife had pity on her, and took her into service. And she was industrious and thoughtful. She sat quiet and listened when the pastor read aloud from the Bible in the evening. All the children liked her very much, but when they spoke about dress and grandeur and beauty she would shake her head.

On the following Sunday they all went to church, and she was asked whether she wished to go too; but, with tears in her eyes, she looked sadly at her crutches. And then the others went to hear God's Word, but she went alone into her little room; this was only large enough to hold the bed and a chair. Here she sat down with her hymn-book, and as she was reading it with a pious mind, the wind carried the notes of the organ over to her from the church, and in tears she lifted up her face and said: "O God! help me!"

Then the sun shone so brightly, and right before her stood an angel of God in white robes; it was the same one whom she had seen that night at the church-door. He no longer carried the sharp sword, but a beautiful green branch, full of roses; with this he touched the ceiling, which rose up very high, and where he had touched it there shone a golden star. He touched the walls, which opened wide apart, and she saw the organ which was pealing forth; she saw the pictures of the old pastors and their wives, and the congregation sitting in the polished chairs and singing from their hymn-books. The church itself had come to the poor girl in her narrow room, or the room had gone to the church. She sat in the pew with the rest of the pastor's household, and when they had finished the hymn and looked up, they nodded and said, "It was right of you to come, Karen."

"It was mercy," said she.

The organ played and the children's voices in the choir sounded soft and lovely. The bright warm sunshine streamed through the window into the pew where Karen sat, and her heart became so filled with it, so filled with peace and joy, that it broke. Her soul flew on the sunbeams to Heaven, and no one was there who asked after the Red Shoes.

EVERYTHING IN THE RIGHT PLACE

It is more than a hundred years ago! At the border of the wood, near a large lake, stood the old mansion: deep ditches surrounded it on every side, in which reeds and bulrushes grew. Close by the drawbridge, near the gate, there was an old willow tree, which bent over the reeds.

From the narrow pass came the sound of bugles and the trampling of horses' feet; therefore a little girl who was watching the geese hastened to drive them away from the bridge, before the whole hunting party came galloping up; they came, however, so quickly, that the girl, in order to avoid being run over, placed herself on one of the high corner-stones of the bridge. She was still half a child and very delicately built; she had bright blue eyes, and a gentle, sweet expression. But such things the baron did not notice; while he was riding past the little goose-girl, he reversed his hunting crop, and in rough play gave her such a push with it that she fell backward into the ditch.

"Everything in the right place!" he cried. "Into the ditch with you."

Then he burst out laughing, for that he called fun; the others joined in—the whole party shouted and cried, while the hounds barked.

While the poor girl was falling she happily caught one of the branches of the willow tree, by the help of which she held herself over the water, and as soon as the baron with his company and the dogs had disappeared through the gate, the girl endeavoured to scramble up, but the branch broke off, and she would have fallen backward among the rushes, had not a strong hand from above seized her at this moment. It was the hand of a pedlar; he had witnessed what had happened from a short distance, and now hastened to assist her.

"Everything in the right place," he said, imitating the noble baron, and pulling the little maid up to the dry ground. He wished to put the branch back in the place it had been broken off, but it is not possible to put everything in the right place; therefore he stuck the branch into the soft ground.

"Grow and thrive if you can, and produce a good flute for them yonder at the mansion," he said; it would have given him great pleasure to see the noble baron and his companions well thrashed. Then he entered the castle—but not the banqueting hall; he was too humble for that. No; he went to the servants' hall. The men-servants and maids looked over his stock of articles and bargained with him; loud crying and screaming were heard from the master's table above: they called it singing—indeed, they did their best. Laughter and the howls of dogs were heard through the open windows: there they were feasting and revelling; wine and strong old ale were foaming in the glasses and jugs; the favourite dogs ate with their

masters; now and then the squires kissed one of these animals, after having wiped its mouth first with the tablecloth. They ordered the pedlar to come up, but only to make fun of him. The wine had got into their heads, and reason had left them. They poured beer into a stocking that he could drink with them, but quick. That's what they called fun, and it made them laugh. Then meadows, peasants, and farmyards were staked on one card and lost.
"Everything in the right place!" the pedlar said when he had at last safely got out of Sodom and Gomorrah, as he called it. "The open high road is my right place; up there I did not feel at ease."
The little maid, who was still watching the geese, nodded kindly to him as he passed through the gate.
Days and weeks passed, and it was seen that the broken willow-branch which the peddlar had stuck into the ground near the ditch remained fresh and green—nay, it even put forth fresh twigs; the little goose-girl saw that the branch had taken root, and was very pleased; the tree, so she said, was now her tree. While the tree was advancing, everything else at the castle was going backward, through feasting and gambling, for these are two rollers upon which nobody stands safely. Less than six years afterwards the baron passed out of his castle-gate a poor beggar, while the baronial seat had been bought by a rich tradesman. He was the very pedlar they had made fun of and poured beer into a stocking for him to drink; but honesty and industry bring one forward, and now the pedlar was the possessor of the baronial estate. From that time forward no card-playing was permitted there.
"That's a bad pastime," he said; "when the devil saw the Bible for the first time he wanted to produce a caricature in opposition to it, and invented card-playing."
The new proprietor of the estate took a wife, and whom did he take?—The little goose-girl, who had always remained good and kind, and who looked as beautiful in her new clothes as if she had been a lady of high birth. And how did all this come about? That would be too long a tale to tell in our busy time, but it really happened, and the most important events have yet to be told.
It was pleasant and cheerful to live in the old place now: the mother superintended the household, and the father looked after things out-of-doors, and they were indeed very prosperous.
Where honesty leads the way, prosperity is sure to follow. The old mansion was repaired and painted, the ditches were cleaned and fruit-trees planted; all was homely and pleasant, and the floors were as white and shining as a pasteboard. In the long winter evenings the mistress and her maids sat at the spinning-wheel in the large hall; every Sunday the counsellor—this title

the pedlar had obtained, although only in his old days—read aloud a portion from the Bible. The children (for they had children) all received the best education, but they were not all equally clever, as is the case in all families. In the meantime the willow tree near the drawbridge had grown up into a splendid tree, and stood there, free, and was never clipped. "It is our genealogical tree," said the old people to their children, "and therefore it must be honoured." A hundred years had elapsed. It was in our own days; the lake had been transformed into marsh land; the whole baronial seat had, as it were, disappeared. A pool of water near some ruined walls was the only remainder of the deep ditches; and here stood a magnificent old tree with overhanging branches—that was the genealogical tree. Here it stood, and showed how beautiful a willow can look if one does not interfere with it. The trunk, it is true, was cleft in the middle from the root to the crown; the storms had bent it a little, but it still stood there, and out of every crevice and cleft, in which wind and weather had carried mould, blades of grass and flowers sprang forth. Especially above, where the large boughs parted, there was quite a hanging garden, in which wild raspberries and hart's-tongue ferns throve, and even a little mistletoe had taken root, and grew gracefully in the old willow branches, which were reflected in the dark water beneath when the wind blew the chickweed into the corner of the pool. A footpath which led across the fields passed close by the old tree. High up, on the woody hillside, stood the new mansion. It had a splendid view, and was large and magnificent; its window panes were so clear that one might have thought there were none there at all. The large flight of steps which led to the entrance looked like a bower covered with roses and broad-leaved plants. The lawn was as green as if each blade of grass was cleaned separately morning and evening. Inside, in the hall, valuable oil paintings were hanging on the walls. Here stood chairs and sofas covered with silk and velvet, which could be easily rolled about on castors; there were tables with polished marble tops, and books bound in morocco with gilt edges. Indeed, well-to-do and distinguished people lived here; it was the dwelling of the baron and his family. Each article was in keeping with its surroundings. "Everything in the right place" was the motto according to which they also acted here, and therefore all the paintings which had once been the honour and glory of the old mansion were now hung up in the passage which led to the servants' rooms. It was all old lumber, especially two portraits—one representing a man in a scarlet coat with a wig, and the other a lady with powdered and curled hair holding a rose in her hand, each of them being surrounded by a large wreath of willow branches. Both portraits had many holes in them,

because the baron's sons used the two old people as targets for their cross-bows. They represented the counsellor and his wife, from whom the whole family descended. "But they did not properly belong to our family," said one of the boys; "he was a pedlar and she kept the geese. They were not like papa and mamma." The portraits were old lumber, and "everything in its right place." That was why the great-grandparents had been hung up in the passage leading to the servants' rooms.

The son of the village pastor was tutor at the mansion. One day he went for a walk across the fields with his young pupils and their elder sister, who had lately been confirmed. They walked along the road which passed by the old willow tree, and while they were on the road she picked a bunch of field-flowers. "Everything in the right place," and indeed the bunch looked very beautiful. At the same time she listened to all that was said, and she very much liked to hear the pastor's son speak about the elements and of the great men and women in history. She had a healthy mind, noble in thought and deed, and with a heart full of love for everything that God had created. They stopped at the old willow tree, as the youngest of the baron's sons wished very much to have a flute from it, such as had been cut for him from other willow trees; the pastor's son broke a branch off. "Oh, pray do not do it!" said the young lady; but it was already done. "That is our famous old tree. I love it very much. They often laugh at me at home about it, but that does not matter. There is a story attached to this tree." And now she told him all that we already know about the tree—the old mansion, the pedlar and the goose-girl who had met there for the first time, and had become the ancestors of the noble family to which the young lady belonged.

"They did not like to be knighted, the good old people," she said; "their motto was 'everything in the right place,' and it would not be right, they thought, to purchase a title for money. My grandfather, the first baron, was their son. They say he was a very learned man, a great favourite with the princes and princesses, and was invited to all court festivities. The others at home love him best; but, I do not know why, there seemed to me to be something about the old couple that attracts my heart! How homely, how patriarchal, it must have been in the old mansion, where the mistress sat at the spinning-wheel with her maids, while her husband read aloud out of the Bible!"

"They must have been excellent, sensible people," said the pastor's son. And with this the conversation turned naturally to noblemen and commoners; from the manner in which the tutor spoke about the significance of being noble, it seemed almost as if he did not belong to a commoner's family. "It is good fortune to be of a family who have distinguished themselves,

and to possess as it were a spur in oneself to advance to all that is good. It is a splendid thing to belong to a noble family, whose name serves as a card of admission to the highest circles. Nobility is a distinction; it is a gold coin that bears the stamp of its own value. It is the fallacy of the time, and many poets express it, to say that all that is noble is bad and stupid, and that, on the contrary, the lower one goes among the poor, the more brilliant virtues one finds. I do not share this opinion, for it is wrong. In the upper classes one sees many touchingly beautiful traits; my own mother has told me of such, and I could mention several. One day she was visiting a nobleman's house in town; my grandmother, I believe, had been the lady's nurse when she was a child. My mother and the nobleman were alone in the room, when he suddenly noticed an old woman on crutches come limping into the courtyard; she came every Sunday to carry a gift away with her.

"'There is the poor old woman,' said the nobleman; 'it is so difficult for her to walk.'

"My mother had hardly understood what he said before he disappeared from the room, and went downstairs, in order to save her the troublesome walk for the gift she came to fetch. Of course this is only a little incident, but it has its good sound like the poor widow's two mites in the Bible, the sound which echoes in the depth of every human heart; and this is what the poet ought to show and point out—more especially in our own time he ought to sing of this; it does good, it mitigates and reconciles! But when a man, simply because he is of noble birth and possesses a genealogy, stands on his hind legs and neighs in the street like an Arabian horse, and says when a commoner has been in a room: 'Some people from the street have been here,' there nobility is decaying; it has become a mask of the kind that Thespis created, and it is amusing when such a person is exposed in satire."

Such was the tutor's speech; it was a little long, but while he delivered it he had finished cutting the flute.

There was a large party at the mansion; many guests from the neighbourhood and from the capital had arrived. There were ladies with tasteful and with tasteless dresses; the big hall was quite crowded with people. The clergymen stood humbly together in a corner, and looked as if they were preparing for a funeral, but it was a festival—only the amusement had not yet begun. A great concert was to take place, and that is why the baron's young son had brought his willow flute with him; but he could not make it sound, nor could his father, and therefore the flute was good for nothing. There was music and songs of the kind which delight most those that perform them; otherwise quite charming!

“Are you an artist?” said a cavalier, the son of his father; “you play on the flute, you have made it yourself; it is genius that rules—the place of honour is due to you.”
“Certainly not! I only advance with the time, and that of course one can’t help.”
“I hope you will delight us all with the little instrument—will you not?” Thus saying he handed to the tutor the flute which had been cut from the willow tree by the pool; and then announced in a loud voice that the tutor wished to perform a solo on the flute. They wished to tease him—that was evident, and therefore the tutor declined to play, although he could do so very well. They urged and requested him, however, so long, that at last he took up the flute and placed it to his lips.
That was a marvellous flute! Its sound was as thrilling as the whistle of a steam engine; in fact it was much stronger, for it sounded and was heard in the yard, in the garden, in the wood, and many miles round in the country; at the same time a storm rose and roared; “Everything in the right place.” And with this the baron, as if carried by the wind, flew out of the hall straight into the shepherd’s cottage, and the shepherd flew—not into the hall, thither he could not come—but into the servants’ hall, among the smart footmen who were striding about in silk stockings; these haughty menials looked horror-struck that such a person ventured to sit at table with them. But in the hall the baron’s daughter flew to the place of honour at the end of the table—she was worthy to sit there; the pastor’s son had the seat next to her; the two sat there as if they were a bridal pair. An old Count, belonging to one of the oldest families of the country, remained untouched in his place of honour; the flute was just, and it is one’s duty to be so. The sharp-tongued cavalier who had caused the flute to be played, and who was the child of his parents, flew headlong into the fowl-house, but not he alone.
The flute was heard at the distance of a mile, and strange events took place. A rich banker’s family, who were driving in a coach and four, were blown out of it, and could not even find room behind it with their footmen. Two rich farmers who had in our days shot up higher than their own corn-fields, were flung into the ditch; it was a dangerous flute. Fortunately it burst at the first sound, and that was a good thing, for then it was put back into its owner’s pocket—”its right place.”
The next day, nobody spoke a word about what had taken place; thus originated the phrase, “to pocket the flute.” Everything was again in its usual order, except that the two old pictures of the peddlar and the goose-girl were hanging in the banqueting-hall. There they were on the wall as if blown up

there; and as a real expert said that they were painted by a master's hand, they remained there and were restored. "Everything in the right place," and to this it will come. Eternity is long, much longer indeed than this story.

A ROSE FROM HOMER'S GRAVE

Al the songs of the east speak of the love of the nightingale for the rose in the silent starlight night. The winged songster serenades the fragrant flowers.

Not far from Smyrna, where the merchant drives his loaded camels, proudly arching their long necks as they journey beneath the lofty pines over holy ground, I saw a hedge of roses. The turtle-dove flew among the branches of the tall trees, and as the sunbeams fell upon her wings, they glistened as if they were mother-of-pearl. On the rose-bush grew a flower, more beautiful than them all, and to her the nightingale sung of his woes; but the rose remained silent, not even a dewdrop lay like a tear of sympathy on her leaves. At last she bowed her head over a heap of stones, and said, "Here rests the greatest singer in the world; over his tomb will I spread my fragrance, and on it I will let my leaves fall when the storm scatters them. He who sung of Troy became earth, and from that earth I have sprung. I, a rose from the grave of Homer, am too lofty to bloom for a nightingale." Then the nightingale sung himself to death. A camel-driver came by, with his loaded camels and his black slaves; his little son found the dead bird, and buried the lovely songster in the grave of the great Homer, while the rose trembled in the wind.

The evening came, and the rose wrapped her leaves more closely round her, and dreamed: and this was her dream.

It was a fair sunshiny day; a crowd of strangers drew near who had undertaken a pilgrimage to the grave of Homer. Among the strangers was a minstrel from the north, the home of the clouds and the brilliant lights of the aurora borealis. He plucked the rose and placed it in a book, and carried it away into a distant part of the world, his fatherland. The rose faded with grief, and lay between the leaves of the book, which he opened in his own home, saying, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer."

Then the flower awoke from her dream, and trembled in the wind. A drop of dew fell from the leaves upon the singer's grave. The sun rose, and the flower bloomed more beautiful than ever. The day was hot, and she was still in her own warm Asia. Then footsteps approached, strangers, such as the rose had seen in her dream, came by, and among them was a poet from the north; he plucked the rose, pressed a kiss upon her fresh mouth, and

carried her away to the home of the clouds and the northern lights. Like a mummy, the flower now rests in his "Iliad," and, as in her dream, she hears him say, as he opens the book, "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer."

THE SNAIL AND THE ROSE-TREE

Round about the garden ran a hedge of hazel-bushes; beyond the hedge were fields and meadows with cows and sheep; but in the middle of the garden stood a Rose-tree in bloom, under which sat a Snail, whose shell contained a great deal—that is, himself.

"Only wait till my time comes," he said; "I shall do more than grow roses, bear nuts, or give milk, like the hazel-bush, the cows and the sheep."

"I expect a great deal from you," said the rose-tree. "May I ask when it will appear?"

"I take my time," said the snail. "You're always in such a hurry. That does not excite expectation."

The following year the snail lay in almost the same spot, in the sunshine under the rose-tree, which was again budding and bearing roses as fresh and beautiful as ever. The snail crept half out of his shell, stretched out his horns, and drew them in again.

"Everything is just as it was last year! No progress at all; the rose-tree sticks to its roses and gets no farther."

The summer and the autumn passed; the rose-tree bore roses and buds till the snow fell and the weather became raw and wet; then it bent down its head, and the snail crept into the ground.

A new year began; the roses made their appearance, and the snail made his too.

"You are an old rose-tree now," said the snail. "You must make haste and die. You have given the world all that you had in you; whether it was of much importance is a question that I have not had time to think about. But this much is clear and plain, that you have not done the least for your inner development, or you would have produced something else. Have you anything to say in defence? You will now soon be nothing but a stick. Do you understand what I say?"

"You frighten me," said the rose—tree. "I have never thought of that."

"No, you have never taken the trouble to think at all. Have you ever given yourself an account why you bloomed, and how your blooming comes about—why just in that way and in no other?"

"No," said the rose-tree. "I bloom in gladness, because I cannot do otherwise. The sun shone and warmed me, and the air refreshed me; I drank the

clear dew and the invigorating rain. I breathed and I lived! Out of the earth there arose a power within me, whilst from above I also received strength; I felt an ever-renewed and ever-increasing happiness, and therefore I was obliged to go on blooming. That was my life; I could not do otherwise."
"You have led a very easy life," remarked the snail.
"Certainly. Everything was given me," said the rose-tree. "But still more was given to you. Yours is one of those deep-thinking natures, one of those highly gifted minds that astonishes the world."
"I have not the slightest intention of doing so," said the snail. "The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have enough to do with myself, and enough in myself."
"But must we not all here on earth give up our best parts to others, and offer as much as lies in our power? It is true, I have only given roses. But you—you who are so richly endowed—what have you given to the world? What will you give it?"
"What have I given? What am I going to give? I spit at it; it's good for nothing, and does not concern me. For my part, you may go on bearing roses; you cannot do anything else. Let the hazel bush bear nuts, and the cows and sheep give milk; they have each their public. I have mine in myself. I retire within myself and there I stop. The world is nothing to me."
With this the snail withdrew into his house and blocked up the entrance.
"That's very sad," said the rose tree. "I cannot creep into myself, however much I might wish to do so; I have to go on bearing roses. Then they drop their leaves, which are blown away by the wind. But I once saw how a rose was laid in the mistress's hymn-book, and how one of my roses found a place in the bosom of a young beautiful girl, and how another was kissed by the lips of a child in the glad joy of life. That did me good; it was a real blessing. Those are my recollections, my life."
And the rose tree went on blooming in innocence, while the snail lay idling in his house—the world was nothing to him.
Years passed by.
The snail had turned to earth in the earth, and the rose tree too. Even the souvenir rose in the hymn-book was faded, but in the garden there were other rose trees and other snails. The latter crept into their houses and spat at the world, for it did not concern them.
Shall we read the story all over again? It will be just the same.

A STORY FROM THE SAND-HILLS

This story is from the sand-dunes or sand-hills of Jutland, but it does not begin there in the North, but far away in the South, in Spain. The wide sea is the highroad from nation to nation; journey in thought; then, to sunny Spain. It is warm and beautiful there; the fiery pomegranate flowers peep from among dark laurels; a cool refreshing breeze from the mountains blows over the orange gardens, over the Moorish halls with their golden cupolas and coloured walls. Children go through the streets in procession with candles and waving banners, and the sky, lofty and clear with its glittering stars, rises above them. Sounds of singing and castanets can be heard, and youths and maidens dance upon the flowering acacia trees, while even the beggar sits upon a block of marble, refreshing himself with a juicy melon, and dreamily enjoying life. It all seems like a beautiful dream.

Here dwelt a newly married couple who completely gave themselves up to the charm of life; indeed they possessed every good thing they could desire—health and happiness, riches and honour.

"We are as happy as human beings can be," said the young couple from the depths of their hearts. They had indeed only one step higher to mount on the ladder of happiness—they hoped that God would give them a child, a son like them in form and spirit. The happy little one was to be welcomed with rejoicing, to be cared for with love and tenderness, and enjoy every advantage of wealth and luxury that a rich and influential family can give. So the days went by like a joyous festival.

"Life is a gracious gift from God, almost too great a gift for us to appreciate!" said the young wife. "Yet they say that fulness of joy for ever and ever can only be found in the future life. I cannot realise it!"

"The thought arises, perhaps, from the arrogance of men," said the husband. "It seems a great pride to believe that we shall live for ever, that we shall be as gods! Were not these the words of the serpent, the father of lies?"

"Surely you do not doubt the existence of a future life?" exclaimed the young wife. It seemed as if one of the first shadows passed over her sunny thoughts.

"Faith realises it, and the priests tell us so," replied her husband; "but amid all my happiness I feel that it is arrogant to demand a continuation of it—another life after this. Has not so much been given us in this world that we ought to be, we must be, contented with it?"

"Yes, it has been given to us," said the young wife, "but this life is nothing more than one long scene of trial and hardship to many thousands. How many have been cast into this world only to endure poverty, shame, illness,

and misfortune? If there were no future life, everything here would be too unequally divided, and God would not be the personification of justice."
"The beggar there," said her husband, "has joys of his own which seem to him great, and cause him as much pleasure as a king would find in the magnificence of his palace. And then do you not think that the beast of burden, which suffers blows and hunger, and works itself to death, suffers just as much from its miserable fate? The dumb creature might demand a future life also, and declare the law unjust that excludes it from the advantages of the higher creation."
"Christ said: 'In my father's house are many mansions,'" she answered. "Heaven is as boundless as the love of our Creator; the dumb animal is also His creature, and I firmly believe that no life will be lost, but each will receive as much happiness as he can enjoy, which will be sufficient for him."
"This world is sufficient for me," said the husband, throwing his arm round his beautiful, sweet-tempered wife. He sat by her side on the open balcony, smoking a cigarette in the cool air, which was loaded with the sweet scent of carnations and orange blossoms. Sounds of music and the clatter of castanets came from the road beneath, the stars shone above then, and two eyes full of affection—those of his wife—looked upon him with the expression of undying love. "Such a moment," he said, "makes it worth while to be born, to die, and to be annihilated!" He smiled—the young wife raised her hand in gentle reproof, and the shadow passed away from her mind, and they were happy—quite happy.
Everything seemed to work together for their good. They advanced in honour, in prosperity, and in happiness. A change came certainly, but it was only a change of place and not of circumstances.
The young man was sent by his Sovereign as ambassador to the Russian Court. This was an office of high dignity, but his birth and his acquirements entitled him to the honour. He possessed a large fortune, and his wife had brought him wealth equal to his own, for she was the daughter of a rich and respected merchant. One of this merchant's largest and finest ships was to be sent that year to Stockholm, and it was arranged that the dear young couple, the daughter and the son-in-law, should travel in it to St. Petersburg. All the arrangements on board were princely and silk and luxury on every side.
In an old war song, called "The King of England's Son," it says:
"Farewell, he said, and sailed away.
And many recollect that day.
The ropes were of silk, the anchor of gold, And everywhere riches and wealth untold."

These words would aptly describe the vessel from Spain, for here was the same luxury, and the same parting thought naturally arose:
"God grant that we once more may meet In sweet unclouded peace and joy."
There was a favourable wind blowing as they left the Spanish coast, and it would be but a short journey, for they hoped to reach their destination in a few weeks; but when they came out upon the wide ocean the wind dropped, the sea became smooth and shining, and the stars shone brightly. Many festive evenings were spent on board. At last the travellers began to wish for wind, for a favourable breeze; but their wish was useless—not a breath of air stirred, or if it did arise it was contrary. Weeks passed by in this way, two whole months, and then at length a fair wind blew from the south-west. The ship sailed on the high seas between Scotland and Jutland; then the wind increased, just as it did in the old song of "The King of England's Son."
"'Mid storm and wind, and pelting hail, Their efforts were of no avail.
The golden anchor forth they threw; Towards Denmark the west wind blew."
This all happened a long time ago; King Christian VII, who sat on the Danish throne, was still a young man. Much has happened since then, much has altered or been changed. Sea and moorland have been turned into green meadows, stretches of heather have become arable land, and in the shelter of the peasant's cottages, apple-trees and rose-bushes grow, though they certainly require much care, as the sharp west wind blows upon them. In West Jutland one may go back in thought to old times, farther back than the days when Christian VII ruled. The purple heather still extends for miles, with its barrows and aerial spectacles, intersected with sandy uneven roads, just as it did then; towards the west, where broad streams run into the bays, are marshes and meadows encircled by lofty, sandy hills, which, like a chain of Alps, raise their pointed summits near the sea; they are only broken by high ridges of clay, from which the sea, year by year, bites out great mouthfuls, so that the overhanging banks fall down as if by the shock of an earthquake. Thus it is there today and thus it was long ago, when the happy pair were sailing in the beautiful ship.
It was a Sunday, towards the end of September; the sun was shining, and the chiming of the church bells in the Bay of Nissum was carried along by the breeze like a chain of sounds. The churches there are almost entirely built of hewn blocks of stone, each like a piece of rock. The North Sea might foam over them and they would not be disturbed. Nearly all of them are without steeples, and the bells are hung outside between two beams. The service was over, and the congregation passed out into the churchyard, where not a tree or bush was to be seen; no flowers were planted there, and they had not placed a

single wreath upon any of the graves. It is just the same now. Rough mounds show where the dead have been buried, and rank grass, tossed by the wind, grows thickly over the whole churchyard; here and there a grave has a sort of monument, a block of half-decayed wood, rudely cut in the shape of a coffin; the blocks are brought from the forest of West Jutland, but the forest is the sea itself, and the inhabitants find beams, and planks, and fragments which the waves have cast upon the beach. One of these blocks had been placed by loving hands on a child's grave, and one of the women who had come out of the church walked up to it; she stood there, her eyes resting on the weather-beaten memorial, and a few moments afterwards her husband joined her. They were both silent, but he took her hand, and they walked together across the purple heath, over moor and meadow towards the sandhills. For a long time they went on without speaking.

"It was a good sermon to-day," the man said at last. "If we had not God to trust in, we should have nothing."

"Yes," replied the woman, "He sends joy and sorrow, and He has a right to send them. To-morrow our little son would have been five years old if we had been permitted to keep him."

"It is no use fretting, wife," said the man. "The boy is well provided for. He is where we hope and pray to go to."

They said nothing more, but went out towards their houses among the sandhills. All at once, in front of one of the houses where the sea grass did not keep the sand down with its twining roots, what seemed to be a column of smoke rose up. A gust of wind rushed between the hills, hurling the particles of sand high into the air; another gust, and the strings of fish hung up to dry flapped and beat violently against the walls of the cottage; then everything was quiet once more, and the sun shone with renewed heat.

The man and his wife went into the cottage. They had soon taken off their Sunday clothes and come out again, hurrying over the dunes which stood there like great waves of sand suddenly arrested in their course, while the sandweeds and dune grass with its bluish stalks spread a changing colour over them. A few neighbours also came out, and helped each other to draw the boats higher up on the beach. The wind now blew more keenly, it was chilly and cold, and when they went back over the sand-hills, sand and little sharp stones blew into their faces. The waves rose high, crested with white foam, and the wind cut off their crests, scattering the foam far and wide.

Evening came; there was a swelling roar in the air, a wailing or moaning like the voices of despairing spirits, that sounded above the thunder of the waves. The fisherman's little cottage was on the very margin, and the sand

rattled against the window panes; every now and then a violent gust of wind shook the house to its foundation. It was dark, but about midnight the moon would rise. Later on the air became clearer, but the storm swept over the perturbed sea with undiminished fury; the fisher folks had long since gone to bed, but in such weather there was no chance of closing an eye. Presently there was a tapping at the window; the door was opened, and a voice said: "There's a large ship stranded on the farthest reef."

In a moment the fisher people sprung from their beds and hastily dressed themselves. The moon had risen, and it was light enough to make the surrounding objects visible to those who could open their eyes in the blinding clouds of sand; the violence of the wind was terrible, and it was only possible to pass among the sand-hills if one crept forward between the gusts; the salt spray flew up from the sea like down, and the ocean foamed like a roaring cataract towards the beach. Only a practised eye could discern the vessel out in the offing; she was a fine brig, and the waves now lifted her over the reef, three or four cables' length out of the usual channel. She drove towards the shore, struck on the second reef, and remained fixed.

It was impossible to render assistance; the sea rushed in upon the vessel, making a clean breach over her. Those on shore thought they heard cries for help from those on board, and could plainly distinguish the busy but useless efforts made by the stranded sailors. Now a wave came rolling onward. It fell with enormous force on the bowsprit, tearing it from the vessel, and the stern was lifted high above the water. Two people were seen to embrace and plunge together into the sea, and the next moment one of the largest waves that rolled towards the sand-hills threw a body on the beach. It was a woman; the sailors said that she was quite dead, but the women thought they saw signs of life in her, so the stranger was carried across the sand-hills to the fisherman's cottage. How beautiful and fair she was! She must be a great lady, they said.

They laid her upon the humble bed; there was not a yard of linen on it, only a woollen coverlet to keep the occupant warm.

Life returned to her, but she was delirious, and knew nothing of what had happened or where she was; and it was better so, for everything she loved and valued lay buried in the sea. The same thing happened to her ship as to the one spoken of in the song about "The King of England's Son."

"Alas! how terrible to see The gallant bark sink rapidly."

Fragments of the wreck and pieces of wood were washed ashore; they were all that remained of the vessel. The wind still blew violently on the coast.

For a few moments the strange lady seemed to rest; but she awoke in pain,

and uttered cries of anguish and fear. She opened her wonderfully beautiful eyes, and spoke a few words, but nobody understood her.—And lo! as a reward for the sorrow and suffering she had undergone, she held in her arms a new-born babe. The child that was to have rested upon a magnificent couch, draped with silken curtains, in a luxurious home; it was to have been welcomed with joy to a life rich in all the good things of this world; and now Heaven had ordained that it should be born in this humble retreat, that it should not even receive a kiss from its mother, for when the fisherman's wife laid the child upon the mother's bosom, it rested on a heart that beat no more—she was dead.

The child that was to have been reared amid wealth and luxury was cast into the world, washed by the sea among the sand-hills to share the fate and hardships of the poor.

Here we are reminded again of the song about "The King of England's Son," for in it mention is made of the custom prevalent at the time, when knights and squires plundered those who had been saved from shipwreck. The ship had stranded some distance south of Nissum Bay, and the cruel, inhuman days, when, as we have just said, the inhabitants of Jutland treated the shipwrecked people so crudely were past, long ago. Affectionate sympathy and self-sacrifice for the unfortunate existed then, just as it does in our own time in many a bright example. The dying mother and the unfortunate child would have found kindness and help wherever they had been cast by the winds, but nowhere would it have been more sincere than in the cottage of the poor fisherman's wife, who had stood, only the day before, beside her child's grave, who would have been five years old that day if God had spared it to her.

No one knew who the dead stranger was, they could not even form a conjecture; the fragments of wreckage gave no clue to the matter.

No tidings reached Spain of the fate of the daughter and son-in-law. They did not arrive at their destination, and violent storms had raged during the past weeks. At last the verdict was given: "Foundered at sea—all lost." But in the fisherman's cottage among the sand-hills near Hunsby, there lived a little scion of the rich Spanish family.

Where Heaven sends food for two, a third can manage to find a meal, and in the depth of the sea there is many a dish of fish for the hungry.

They called the boy Jurgen.

"It must certainly be a Jewish child, its skin is so dark," the people said.

"It might be an Italian or a Spaniard," remarked the clergyman.

But to the fisherman's wife these nations seemed all the same, and she consoled herself with the thought that the child was baptized as a Christian. The boy throve; the noble blood in his veins was warm, and he became strong on his homely fare. He grew apace in the humble cottage, and the Danish dialect spoken by the West Jutes became his language. The pomegranate seed from Spain became a hardy plant on the coast of West Jutland. Thus may circumstances alter the course of a man's life! To this home he clung with deep-rooted affection; he was to experience cold and hunger, and the misfortunes and hardships that surround the poor; but he also tasted of their joys.

Childhood has bright days for every one, and the memory of them shines through the whole after-life. The boy had many sources of pleasure and enjoyment; the coast for miles and miles was full of playthings, for it was a mosaic of pebbles, some red as coral or yellow as amber, and others again white and rounded like birds' eggs and smoothed and prepared by the sea. Even the bleached fishes' skeletons, the water plants dried by the wind, and seaweed, white and shining long linen-like bands waving between the stones—all these seemed made to give pleasure and occupation for the boy's thoughts, and he had an intelligent mind; many great talents lay dormant in him. How readily he remembered stories and songs that he heard, and how dexterous he was with his fingers! With stones and mussel-shells he could put together pictures and ships with which one could decorate the room; and he could make wonderful things from a stick, his foster-mother said, although he was still so young and little. He had a sweet voice, and every melody seemed to flow naturally from his lips. And in his heart were hidden chords, which might have sounded far out into the world if he had been placed anywhere else than in the fisherman's hut by the North Sea.

One day another ship was wrecked on the coast, and among other things a chest filled with valuable flower bulbs was washed ashore. Some were put into saucepans and cooked, for they were thought to be fit to eat, and others lay and shrivelled in the sand—they did not accomplish their purpose, or unfold their magnificent colours. Would Jurgen fare better? The flower bulbs had soon played their part, but he had years of apprenticeship before him. Neither he nor his friends noticed in what a monotonous, uniform way one day followed another, for there was always plenty to do and see. The ocean itself was a great lesson-book, and it unfolded a new leaf each day of calm or storm—the crested wave or the smooth surface.

The visits to the church were festive occasions, but among the fisherman's house one was especially looked forward to; this was, in fact, the visit of

the brother of Jurgen's foster-mother, the eel-breeder from Fjaltring, near Bovbjerg. He came twice a year in a cart, painted red with blue and white tulips upon it, and full of eels; it was covered and locked like a box, two dun oxen drew it, and Jurgen was allowed to guide them.

The eel-breeder was a witty fellow, a merry guest, and brought a measure of brandy with him. They all received a small glassful or a cupful if there were not enough glasses; even Jurgen had about a thimbleful, that he might digest the fat eel, as the eel-breeder said; he always told one story over and over again, and if his hearers laughed he would immediately repeat it to them. Jurgen while still a boy, and also when he was older, used phrases from the eel-breeder's story on various occasions, so it will be as well for us to listen to it. It runs thus:

"The eels went into the bay, and the young ones begged leave to go a little farther out. 'Don't go too far,' said their mother; 'the ugly eel-spearer might come and snap you all up.' But they went too far, and of eight daughters only three came back to the mother, and these wept and said, 'We only went a little way out, and the ugly eel-spearer came immediately and stabbed five of our sisters to death.' 'They'll come back again,' said the mother eel. 'Oh, no,' exclaimed the daughters, 'for he skinned them, cut them in two, and fried them.' 'Oh, they'll come back again,' the mother eel persisted. 'No,' replied the daughters, 'for he ate them up.' 'They'll come back again,' repeated the mother eel. 'But he drank brandy after them,' said the daughters. 'Ah, then they'll never come back,' said the mother, and she burst out crying, 'it's the brandy that buries the eels.'"

"And therefore," said the eel-breeder in conclusion, "it is always the proper thing to drink brandy after eating eels."

This story was the tinsel thread, the most humorous recollection of Jurgen's life. He also wanted to go a little way farther out and up the bay—that is to say, out into the world in a ship—but his mother said, like the eel-breeder, "There are so many bad people—eel spearers!" He wished to go a little way past the sand-hills, out into the dunes, and at last he did: four happy days, the brightest of his childhood, fell to his lot, and the whole beauty and splendour of Jutland, all the happiness and sunshine of his home, were concentrated in these. He went to a festival, but it was a burial feast.

A rich relation of the fisherman's family had died; the farm was situated far eastward in the country and a little towards the north. Jurgen's foster parents went there, and he also went with them from the dunes, over heath and moor, where the Skjaerumaa takes its course through green meadows and contains many eels; mother eels live there with their daughters, who

are caught and eaten up by wicked people. But do not men sometimes act quite as cruelly towards their own fellow-men? Was not the knight Sir Bugge murdered by wicked people? And though he was well spoken of, did he not also wish to kill the architect who built the castle for him, with its thick walls and tower, at the point where the Skjaerumaa falls into the bay? Jurgen and his parents now stood there; the wall and the ramparts still remained, and red crumbling fragments lay scattered around. Here it was that Sir Bugge, after the architect had left him, said to one of his men, "Go after him and say, 'Master, the tower shakes.' If he turns round, kill him and take away the money I paid him, but if he does not turn round let him go in peace." The man did as he was told; the architect did not turn round, but called back "The tower does not shake in the least, but one day a man will come from the west in a blue cloak—he will cause it to shake!" And so indeed it happened a hundred years later, for the North Sea broke in and cast down the tower; but Predbjorn Gyldenstjerne, the man who then possessed the castle, built a new castle higher up at the end of the meadow, and that one is standing to this day, and is called Norre-Vosborg.

Jurgen and his foster parents went past this castle. They had told him its story during the long winter evenings, and now he saw the stately edifice, with its double moat, and trees and bushes; the wall, covered with ferns, rose within the moat, but the lofty lime-trees were the most beautiful of all; they grew up to the highest windows, and the air was full of their sweet fragrance. In a north-west corner of the garden stood a great bush full of blossom, like winter snow amid the summer's green; it was a juniper bush, the first that Jurgen had ever seen in bloom. He never forgot it, nor the lime-trees; the child's soul treasured up these memories of beauty and fragrance to gladden the old man.

From Norre-Vosborg, where the juniper blossomed, the journey became more pleasant, for they met some other people who were also going to the funeral and were riding in waggons. Our travellers had to sit all together on a little box at the back of the waggon, but even this, they thought, was better than walking. So they continued their journey across the rugged heath. The oxen which drew the waggon stopped every now and then, where a patch of fresh grass appeared amid the heather. The sun shone with considerable heat, and it was wonderful to behold how in the far distance something like smoke seemed to be rising; yet this smoke was clearer than the air; it was transparent, and looked like rays of light rolling and dancing afar over the heath.

"That is Lokeman driving his sheep," said some one.

And this was enough to excite Jurgen's imagination. He felt as if they were now about to enter fairyland, though everything was still real. How quiet it was! The heath stretched far and wide around them like a beautiful carpet. The heather was in blossom, and the juniper-bushes and fresh oak saplings rose like bouquets from the earth. An inviting place for a frolic, if it had not been for the number of poisonous adders of which the travellers spoke; they also mentioned that the place had formerly been infested with wolves, and that the district was still called Wolfsborg for this reason. The old man who was driving the oxen told them that in the lifetime of his father the horses had many a hard battle with the wild beasts that were now exterminated. One morning, when he himself had gone out to bring in the horses, he found one of them standing with its forefeet on a wolf it had killed, but the savage animal had torn and lacerated the brave horse's legs.

The journey over the heath and the deep sand was only too quickly at an end. They stopped before the house of mourning, where they found plenty of guests within and without. Waggon after waggon stood side by side, while the horses and oxen had been turned out to graze on the scanty pasture. Great sand-hills like those at home by the North Sea rose behind the house and extended far and wide. How had they come here, so many miles inland? They were as large and high as those on the coast, and the wind had carried them there; there was also a legend attached to them.

Psalms were sung, and a few of the old people shed tears; with this exception, the guests were cheerful enough, it seemed to Jurgen, and there was plenty to eat and drink. There were eels of the fattest, requiring brandy to bury them, as the eel-breeder said; and certainly they did not forget to carry out his maxim here.

Jurgen went in and out the house; and on the third day he felt as much at home as he did in the fisherman's cottage among the sand-hills, where he had passed his early days. Here on the heath were riches unknown to him until now; for flowers, blackberries, and bilberries were to be found in profusion, so large and sweet that when they were crushed beneath the tread of passers-by the heather was stained with their red juice. Here was a barrow and yonder another. Then columns of smoke rose into the still air; it was a heath fire, they told him—how brightly it blazed in the dark evening!

The fourth day came, and the funeral festivities were at an end; they were to go back from the land-dunes to the sand-dunes.

"Ours are better," said the old fisherman, Jurgen's foster-father; "these have no strength."

And they spoke of the way in which the sand-dunes had come inland, and it seemed very easy to understand. This is how they explained it:

A dead body had been found on the coast, and the peasants buried it in the churchyard. From that time the sand began to fly about and the sea broke in with violence. A wise man in the district advised them to open the grave and see if the buried man was not lying sucking his thumb, for if so he must be a sailor, and the sea would not rest until it had got him back. The grave was opened, and he really was found with his thumb in his mouth. So they laid him upon a cart, and harnessed two oxen to it; and the oxen ran off with the sailor over heath and moor to the ocean, as if they had been stung by an adder. Then the sand ceased to fly inland, but the hills that had been piled up still remained.

All this Jurgen listened to and treasured up in his memory of the happiest days of his childhood—the days of the burial feast.

How delightful it was to see fresh places and to mix with strangers! And he was to go still farther, for he was not yet fourteen years old when he went out in a ship to see the world. He encountered bad weather, heavy seas, unkindness, and hard men—such were his experiences, for he became ship-boy. Cold nights, bad living, and blows had to be endured; then he felt his noble Spanish blood boil within him, and bitter, angry, words rose to his lips, but he gulped them down; it was better, although he felt as the eel must feel when it is skinned, cut up, and put into the frying-pan.

"I shall get over it," said a voice within him.

He saw the Spanish coast, the native land of his parents. He even saw the town where they had lived in joy and prosperity, but he knew nothing of his home or his relations, and his relations knew just as little about him.

The poor ship boy was not permitted to land, but on the last day of their stay he managed to get ashore. There were several purchases to be made, and he was sent to carry them on board.

Jurgen stood there in his shabby clothes which looked as if they had been washed in the ditch and dried in the chimney; he, who had always dwelt among the sand-hills, now saw a great city for the first time. How lofty the houses seemed, and what a number of people there were in the streets! some pushing this way, some that—a perfect maelstrom of citizens and peasants, monks and soldiers—the jingling of bells on the trappings of asses and mules, the chiming of church bells, calling, shouting, hammering and knocking—all going on at once. Every trade was located in the basement of the houses or in the side thoroughfares; and the sun shone with such heat, and the air was so close, that one seemed to be in an oven full of beetles, cockchafers, bees and flies, all humming and buzzing together. Jurgen scarcely knew where he was or which way he went. Then he saw just

in front of him the great doorway of a cathedral; the lights were gleaming in the dark aisles, and the fragrance of incense was wafted towards him. Even the poorest beggar ventured up the steps into the sanctuary. Jurgen followed the sailor he was with into the church, and stood in the sacred edifice. Coloured pictures gleamed from their golden background, and on the altar stood the figure of the Virgin with the child Jesus, surrounded by lights and flowers; priests in festive robes were chanting, and choir boys in dazzling attire swung silver censers. What splendour and magnificence he saw there! It streamed in upon his soul and overpowered him: the church and the faith of his parents surrounded him, and touched a chord in his heart that caused his eyes to overflow with tears.

They went from the church to the market-place. Here a quantity of provisions were given him to carry. The way to the harbour was long; and weary and overcome with various emotions, he rested for a few moments before a splendid house, with marble pillars, statues, and broad steps. Here he rested his burden against the wall. Then a porter in livery came out, lifted up a silver-headed cane, and drove him away—him, the grandson of that house. But no one knew that, and he just as little as any one. Then he went on board again, and once more encountered rough words and blows, much work and little sleep—such was his experience of life. They say it is good to suffer in one's young days, if age brings something to make up for it.

His period of service on board the ship came to an end, and the vessel lay once more at Ringkjobing in Jutland. He came ashore, and went home to the sand-dunes near Hunsby; but his foster-mother had died during his absence. A hard winter followed this summer. Snow-storms swept over land and sea, and there was difficulty in getting from one place to another. How unequally things are distributed in this world! Here there was bitter cold and snow-storms, while in Spain there was burning sunshine and oppressive heat. Yet, when a clear frosty day came, and Jurgen saw the swans flying in numbers from the sea towards the land, across to Norre-Vosborg, it seemed to him that people could breathe more freely here; the summer also in this part of the world was splendid. In imagination he saw the heath blossom and become purple with rich juicy berries, and the elder-bushes and lime-trees at Norre Vosborg in flower. He made up his mind to go there again.

Spring came, and the fishing began. Jurgen was now an active helper in this, for he had grown during the last year, and was quick at work. He was full of life, and knew how to swim, to tread water, and to turn over and tumble in the strong tide. They often warned him to beware of the sharks, which seize the best swimmer, draw him down, and devour him; but such was not to be Jurgen's fate.

At a neighbour's house in the dunes there was a boy named Martin, with whom Jurgen was on very friendly terms, and they both took service in the same ship to Norway, and also went together to Holland. They never had a quarrel, but a person can be easily excited to quarrel when he is naturally hot tempered, for he often shows it in many ways; and this is just what Jurgen did one day when they fell out about the merest trifle. They were sitting behind the cabin door, eating from a delft plate, which they had placed between them. Jurgen held his pocket-knife in his hand and raised it towards Martin, and at the same time became ashy pale, and his eyes had an ugly look. Martin only said, "Ah! ah! you are one of that sort, are you? Fond of using the knife!"

The words were scarcely spoken, when Jurgen's hand sank down. He did not answer a syllable, but went on eating, and afterwards returned to his work. When they were resting again he walked up to Martin and said:

"Hit me in the face! I deserve it. But sometimes I feel as if I had a pot in me that boils over."

"There, let the thing rest," replied Martin.

And after that they were almost better friends than ever; when afterwards they returned to the dunes and began telling their adventures, this was told among the rest. Martin said that Jurgen was certainly passionate, but a good fellow after all.

They were both young and healthy, well-grown and strong; but Jurgen was the cleverer of the two.

In Norway the peasants go into the mountains and take the cattle there to find pasture. On the west coast of Jutland huts have been erected among the sand-hills; they are built of pieces of wreck, and thatched with turf and heather; there are sleeping places round the walls, and here the fishermen live and sleep during the early spring. Every fisherman has a female helper, or manager as she is called, who baits his hooks, prepares warm beer for him when he comes ashore, and gets the dinner cooked and ready for him by the time he comes back to the hut tired and hungry. Besides this the managers bring up the fish from the boats, cut them open, prepare them, and have generally a great deal to do.

Jurgen, his father, and several other fishermen and their managers inhabited the same hut; Martin lived in the next one.

One of the girls, whose name was Else, had known Jurgen from childhood; they were glad to see each other, and were of the same opinion on many points, but in appearance they were entirely opposite; for he was dark, and she was pale, and fair, and had flaxen hair, and eyes as blue as the sea in sunshine.

As they were walking together one day, Jurgen held her hand very firmly in his, and she said to him: “Jurgen, I have something I want to say to you; let me be your manager, for you are like a brother to me; but Martin, whose housekeeper I am—he is my lover—but you need not tell this to the others.”
It seemed to Jurgen as if the loose sand was giving way under his feet. He did not speak a word, but nodded his head, and that meant “yes.” It was all that was necessary; but he suddenly felt in his heart that he hated Martin, and the more he thought the more he felt convinced that Martin had stolen away from him the only being he ever loved, and that this was Else: he had never thought of Else in this way before, but now it all became plain to him.
When the sea is rather rough, and the fishermen are coming home in their great boats, it is wonderful to see how they cross the reefs. One of them stands upright in the bow of the boat, and the others watch him sitting with the oars in their hands. Outside the reef it looks as if the boat was not approaching land but going back to sea; then the man who is standing up gives them the signal that the great wave is coming which is to float them across the reef. The boat is lifted high into the air, so that the keel is seen from the shore; the next moment nothing can be seen, mast, keel, and people are all hidden—it seems as though the sea had devoured them; but in a few moments they emerge like a great sea animal climbing up the waves, and the oars move as if the creature had legs. The second and third reef are passed in the same manner; then the fishermen jump into the water and push the boat towards the shore—every wave helps them—and at length they have it drawn up, beyond the reach of the breakers.
A wrong order given in front of the reef—the slightest hesitation—and the boat would be lost.
“Then it would be all over with me and Martin too!”
This thought passed through Jurgen’s mind one day while they were out at sea, where his foster-father had been taken suddenly ill. The fever had seized him. They were only a few oars’ strokes from the reef, and Jurgen sprang from his seat and stood up in the bow.
“Father-let me come!” he said, and he glanced at Martin and across the waves; every oar bent with the exertions of the rowers as the great wave came towards them, and he saw his father’s pale face, and dared not obey the evil impulse that had shot through his brain. The boat came safely across the reef to land; but the evil thought remained in his heart, and roused up every little fibre of bitterness which he remembered between himself and Martin since they had known each other. But he could not weave the fibres together, nor did he endeavour to do so. He felt that Martin had robbed

him, and this was enough to make him hate his former friend. Several of the fishermen saw this, but Martin did not—he remained as obliging and talkative as ever, in fact he talked rather too much.

Jurgen's foster-father took to his bed, and it became his death-bed, for he died a week afterwards; and now Jurgen was heir to the little house behind the sand-hills. It was small, certainly, but still it was something, and Martin had nothing of the kind.

"You will not go to sea again, Jurgen, I suppose," observed one of the old fishermen. "You will always stay with us now."

But this was not Jurgen's intention; he wanted to see something of the world. The eel-breeder of Fjaltring had an uncle at Old Skjagen, who was a fisherman, but also a prosperous merchant with ships upon the sea; he was said to be a good old man, and it would not be a bad thing to enter his service. Old Skjagen lies in the extreme north of Jutland, as far away from the Hunsby dunes as one can travel in that country; and this is just what pleased Jurgen, for he did not want to remain till the wedding of Martin and Else, which would take place in a week or two.

The old fisherman said it was foolish to go away, for now that Jurgen had a home Else would very likely be inclined to take him instead of Martin.

Jurgen gave such a vague answer that it was not easy to make out what he meant—the old man brought Else to him, and she said:

"You have a home now; you ought to think of that."

And Jurgen thought of many things.

The sea has heavy waves, but there are heavier waves in the human heart. Many thoughts, strong and weak, rushed through Jurgen's brain, and he said to Else:

"If Martin had a house like mine, which of us would you rather have?"

"But Martin has no house and cannot get one."

"Suppose he had one?"

"Well, then I would certainly take Martin, for that is what my heart tells me; but one cannot live upon love."

Jurgen turned these things over in his mind all night. Something was working within him, he hardly knew what it was, but it was even stronger than his love for Else; and so he went to Martin's, and what he said and did there was well considered. He let the house to Martin on most liberal terms, saying that he wished to go to sea again, because he loved it. And Else kissed him when she heard of it, for she loved Martin best.

Jurgen proposed to start early in the morning, and on the evening before his departure, when it was already getting rather late, he felt a wish to visit

Martin once more. He started, and among the dunes met the old fisherman, who was angry at his leaving the place. The old man made jokes about Martin, and declared there must be some magic about that fellow, of whom the girls were so fond.

Jurgen did not pay any attention to his remarks, but said good-bye to the old man and went on towards the house where Martin dwelt. He heard loud talking inside; Martin was not alone, and this made Jurgen waver in his determination, for he did not wish to see Else again. On second thoughts, he decided that it was better not to hear any more thanks from Martin, and so he turned back.

On the following morning, before the sun rose, he fastened his knapsack on his back, took his wooden provision box in his hand, and went away among the sand-hills towards the coast path. This way was more pleasant than the heavy sand road, and besides it was shorter; and he intended to go first to Fjaltring, near Bovbjerg, where the eel-breeder lived, to whom he had promised a visit.

The sea lay before him, clear and blue, and the mussel shells and pebbles, the playthings of his childhood, crunched over his feet. While he thus walked on his nose suddenly began to bleed; it was a trifling occurrence, but trifles sometimes are of great importance. A few large drops of blood fell upon one of his sleeves. He wiped them off and stopped the bleeding, and it seemed to him as if this had cleared and lightened his brain. The sea-cale bloomed here and there in the sand as he passed. He broke off a spray and stuck it in his hat; he determined to be merry and light-hearted, for he was going out into the wide world—"a little way out, beyond the bay," as the young eels had said. "Beware of bad people who will catch you, and skin you, and put you in the frying-pan!" he repeated in his mind, and smiled, for he thought he should find his way through the world—good courage is a strong weapon!

The sun was high in the heavens when he approached the narrow entrance to Nissum Bay. He looked back and saw a couple of horsemen galloping a long distance behind him, and there were other people with them. But this did not concern him.

The ferry-boat was on the opposite side of the bay. Jurgen called to the ferry-man, and the latter came over with his boat. Jurgen stepped in; but before he had got half-way across, the men whom he had seen riding so hastily, came up, hailed the ferry-man, and commanded him to return in the name of the law. Jurgen did not understand the reason of this, but he thought it would be best to turn back, and therefore he himself took an oar

and returned. As soon as the boat touched the shore, the men sprang on board, and before he was aware of it, they had bound his hands with a rope. "This wicked deed will cost you your life," they said. "It is a good thing we have caught you."

He was accused of nothing less than murder. Martin had been found dead, with his throat cut. One of the fishermen, late on the previous evening, had met Jurgen going towards Martin's house; this was not the first time Jurgen had raised his knife against Martin, so they felt sure that he was the murderer. The prison was in a town at a great distance, and the wind was contrary for going there by sea; but it would not take half an hour to get across the bay, and another quarter of an hour would bring them to Norre-Vosborg, the great castle with ramparts and moat. One of Jurgen's captors was a fisherman, a brother of the keeper of the castle, and he said it might be managed that Jurgen should be placed for the present in the dungeon at Vosborg, where Long Martha the gipsy had been shut up till her execution. They paid no attention to Jurgen's defence; the few drops of blood on his shirt-sleeve bore heavy witness against him. But he was conscious of his innocence, and as there was no chance of clearing himself at present he submitted to his fate.

The party landed just at the place where Sir Bugge's castle had stood, and where Jurgen had walked with his foster-parents after the burial feast, during the four happiest days of his childhood. He was led by the well-known path, over the meadow to Vosborg; once more the elders were in bloom and the lofty lime-trees gave forth sweet fragrance, and it seemed as if it were but yesterday that he had last seen the spot. In each of the two wings of the castle there was a staircase which led to a place below the entrance, from whence there is access to a low, vaulted cellar. In this dungeon Long Martha had been imprisoned, and from here she was led away to the scaffold. She had eaten the hearts of five children, and had imagined that if she could obtain two more she would be able to fly and make herself invisible. In the middle of the roof of the cellar there was a little narrow air-hole, but no window. The flowering lime trees could not breathe refreshing fragrance into that abode, where everything was dark and mouldy. There was only a rough bench in the cell; but a good conscience is a soft pillow, and therefore Jurgen could sleep well.

The thick oaken door was locked, and secured on the outside by an iron bar; but the goblin of superstition can creep through a keyhole into a baron's castle just as easily as it can into a fisherman's cottage, and why should he not creep in here, where Jurgen sat thinking of Long Martha and her wick-

ed deeds? Her last thoughts on the night before her execution had filled this place, and the magic that tradition asserted to have been practised here, in Sir Svanwedel's time, came into Jurgen's mind, and made him shudder; but a sunbeam, a refreshing thought from without, penetrated his heart even here—it was the remembrance of the flowering elder and the sweet smelling lime-trees.

He was not left there long. They took him away to the town of Ringkjobing, where he was imprisoned with equal severity.

Those times were not like ours. The common people were treated harshly; and it was just after the days when farms were converted into knights' estates, when coachmen and servants were often made magistrates, and had power to sentence a poor man, for a small offence, to lose his property and to corporeal punishment. Judges of this kind were still to be found; and in Jutland, so far from the capital, and from the enlightened, well-meaning, head of the Government, the law was still very loosely administered sometimes—the smallest grievance Jurgen could expect was that his case should be delayed. His dwelling was cold and comfortless; and how long would he be obliged to bear all this? It seemed his fate to suffer misfortune and sorrow innocently. He now had plenty of time to reflect on the difference of fortune on earth, and to wonder why this fate had been allotted to him; yet he felt sure that all would be made clear in the next life, the existence that awaits us when this life is over. His faith had grown strong in the poor fisherman's cottage; the light which had never shone into his father's mind, in all the richness and sunshine of Spain, was sent to him to be his comfort in poverty and distress, a sign of that mercy of God which never fails.

The spring storms began to blow. The rolling and moaning of the North Sea could be heard for miles inland when the wind was blowing, and then it sounded like the rushing of a thousand waggons over a hard road with a mine underneath. Jurgen heard these sounds in his prison, and it was a relief to him. No music could have touched his heart as did these sounds of the sea—the rolling sea, the boundless sea, on which a man can be borne across the world before the wind, carrying his own house with him wherever he goes, just as the snail carries its home even into a strange country. He listened eagerly to its deep murmur and then the thought arose—"Free! free! How happy to be free, even barefooted and in ragged clothes!" Sometimes, when such thoughts crossed his mind, the fiery nature rose within him, and he beat the wall with his clenched fists.

Weeks, months, a whole year had gone by, when Niels the thief, called also a horse-dealer, was arrested; and now better times came, and it was seen that Jurgen had been wrongly accused.

On the afternoon before Jurgen's departure from home, and before the murder, Niels the thief, had met Martin at a beer-house in the neighbourhood of Ringkjobing. A few glasses were drank, not enough to cloud the brain, but enough to loosen Martin's tongue. He began to boast and to say that he had obtained a house and intended to marry, and when Niels asked him where he was going to get the money, he slapped his pocket proudly and said:
"The money is here, where it ought to be."
This boast cost him his life; for when he went home Niels followed him, and cut his throat, intending to rob the murdered man of the gold, which did not exist.
All this was circumstantially explained; but it is enough for us to know that Jurgen was set free. But what compensation did he get for having been imprisoned a whole year, and shut out from all communication with his fellow creatures? They told him he was fortunate in being proved innocent, and that he might go. The burgomaster gave him two dollars for travelling expenses, and many citizens offered him provisions and beer—there were still good people; they were not all hard and pitiless. But the best thing of all was that the merchant Bronne, of Skjagen, into whose service Jurgen had proposed entering the year before, was just at that time on business in the town of Ringkjobing. Bronne heard the whole story; he was kind-hearted, and understood what Jurgen must have felt and suffered. Therefore he made up his mind to make it up to the poor lad, and convince him that there were still kind folks in the world.
So Jurgen went forth from prison as if to paradise, to find freedom, affection, and trust. He was to travel this path now, for no goblet of life is all bitterness; no good man would pour out such a draught for his fellow-man, and how should He do it, Who is love personified?
"Let everything be buried and forgotten," said Bronne, the merchant. "Let us draw a thick line through last year: we will even burn the almanack. In two days we will start for dear, friendly, peaceful Skjagen. People call it an out-of-the-way corner; but it is a good warm chimney-corner, and its windows open toward every part of the world."
What a journey that was: It was like taking fresh breath out of the cold dungeon air into the warm sunshine. The heather bloomed in pride and beauty, and the shepherd-boy sat on a barrow and blew his pipe, which he had carved for himself out of a sheep bone. Fata Morgana, the beautiful aerial phenomenon of the wilderness, appeared with hanging gardens and waving forests, and the wonderful cloud called "Lokeman driving his sheep" also was seen. Up towards Skjagen they went, through the land of the Wendels, whence

the men with long beards (the Longobardi or Lombards) had emigrated in the reign of King Snio, when all the children and old people were to have been killed, till the noble Dame Gambaruk proposed that the young people should emigrate. Jurgen knew all this, he had some little knowledge; and although he did not know the land of the Lombards beyond the lofty Alps, he had an idea that it must be there, for in his boyhood he had been in the south, in Spain. He thought of the plenteousness of the southern fruit, of the red pomegranate flowers, of the humming, buzzing, and toiling in the great beehive of a city he had seen; but home is the best place after all, and Jurgen's home was Denmark.

At last they arrived at "Vendilskaga," as Skjagen is called in old Norwegian and Icelandic writings. At that time Old Skjagen, with the eastern and western town, extended for miles, with sand hills and arable land as far as the lighthouse near "Grenen." Then, as now, the houses were strewn among the wind-raised sand-hills—a wilderness in which the wind sports with the sand, and where the voice of the sea-gull and wild swan strikes harshly on the ear. In the south-west, a mile from "Grenen," lies Old Skjagen; merchant Bronne dwelt here, and this was also to be Jurgen's home for the future. The dwelling-house was tarred, and all the small out-buildings had been put together from pieces of wreck. There was no fence, for indeed there was nothing to fence in except the long rows of fishes which were hung upon lines, one above the other, to dry in the wind. The entire coast was strewn with spoiled herrings, for there were so many of these fish that a net was scarcely thrown into the sea before it was filled. They were caught by carloads, and many of them were either thrown back into the sea or left to lie on the beach.

The old man's wife and daughter and his servants also came to meet him with great rejoicing. There was a great squeezing of hands, and talking and questioning. And the daughter, what a sweet face and bright eyes she had! The inside of the house was comfortable and roomy. Fritters, that a king would have looked upon as a dainty dish, were placed on the table, and there was wine from the Skjagen vineyard—that is, the sea; for there the grapes come ashore ready pressed and prepared in barrels and in bottles. When the mother and daughter heard who Jurgen was, and how innocently he had suffered, they looked at him in a still more friendly way; and pretty Clara's eyes had a look of especial interest as she listened to his story. Jurgen found a happy home in Old Skjagen. It did his heart good, for it had been sorely tried. He had drunk the bitter goblet of love which softens or hardens the heart, according to circumstances. Jurgen's heart was still

soft—it was young, and therefore it was a good thing that Miss Clara was going in three weeks' time to Christiansand in Norway, in her father's ship, to visit an aunt and to stay there the whole winter.

On the Sunday before she went away they all went to church, to the Holy Communion. The church was large and handsome, and had been built centuries before by Scotchmen and Dutchmen; it stood some little way out of the town. It was rather ruinous certainly, and the road to it was heavy, through deep sand, but the people gladly surmounted these difficulties to get to the house of God, to sing psalms and to hear the sermon. The sand had heaped itself up round the walls of the church, but the graves were kept free from it.

It was the largest church north of the Limfjorden. The Virgin Mary, with a golden crown on her head and the child Jesus in her arms, stood lifelike on the altar; the holy Apostles had been carved in the choir, and on the walls there were portraits of the old burgomasters and councillors of Skjagen; the pulpit was of carved work. The sun shone brightly into the church, and its radiance fell on the polished brass chandelier and on the little ship that hung from the vaulted roof.

Jurgen felt overcome by a holy, childlike feeling, like that which possessed him, when, as a boy, he stood in the splendid Spanish cathedral. But here the feeling was different, for he felt conscious of being one of the congregation. After the sermon followed Holy Communion. He partook of the bread and wine, and it so happened that he knelt by the side of Miss Clara; but his thoughts were so fixed upon heaven and the Holy Sacrament that he did not notice his neighbour until he rose from his knees, and then he saw tears rolling down her cheeks.

She left Skjagen and went to Norway two days later. He remained behind, and made himself useful on the farm and at the fishery. He went out fishing, and in those days fish were more plentiful and larger than they are now. The shoals of the mackerel glittered in the dark nights, and indicated where they were swimming; the gurnards snarled, and the crabs gave forth pitiful yells when they were chased, for fish are not so mute as people say.

Every Sunday Jurgen went to church; and when his eyes rested on the picture of the Virgin Mary over the altar as he sat there, they often glided away to the spot where they had knelt side by side.

Autumn came, and brought rain and snow with it; the water rose up right into the town of Skjagen, the sand could not suck it all in, one had to wade through it or go by boat. The storms threw vessel after vessel on the fatal reefs; there were snow-storm and sand-storms; the sand flew up to the

houses, blocking the entrances, so that people had to creep up through the chimneys; that was nothing at all remarkable here. It was pleasant and cheerful indoors, where peat fuel and fragments of wood from the wrecks blazed and crackled upon the hearth. Merchant Bronne read aloud, from an old chronicle, about Prince Hamlet of Denmark, who had come over from England, landed near Bovbjerg, and fought a battle; close by Ramme was his grave, only a few miles from the place where the eel-breeder lived; hundreds of barrow rose there from the heath, forming as it were an enormous churchyard. Merchant Bronne had himself been at Hamlet's grave; they spoke about old times, and about their neighbours, the English and the Scotch, and Jurgen sang the air of "The King of England's Son," and of his splendid ship and its outfit.

"In the hour of peril when most men fear, He clasped the bride that he held so dear, And proved himself the son of a King; Of his courage and valour let us sing."

This verse Jurgen sang with so much feeling that his eyes beamed, and they were black and sparkling since his infancy.

There was wealth, comfort, and happiness even among the domestic animals, for they were all well cared for, and well kept. The kitchen looked bright with its copper and tin utensils, and white plates, and from the rafters hung hams, beef, and winter stores in plenty. This can still be seen in many rich farms on the west coast of Jutland: plenty to eat and drink, clean, prettily decorated rooms, active minds, cheerful tempers, and hospitality can be found there, as in an Arab's tent.

Jurgen had never spent such a happy time since the famous burial feast, and yet Miss Clara was absent, except in the thoughts and memory of all. In April a ship was to start for Norway, and Jurgen was to sail in it. He was full of life and spirits, and looked so sturdy and well that Dame Bronne said it did her good to see him.

"And it does one good to look at you also, old wife," said the merchant. "Jurgen has brought fresh life into our winter evenings, and into you too, mother. You look younger than ever this year, and seem well and cheerful. But then you were once the prettiest girl in Viborg, and that is saying a great deal, for I have always found the Viborg girls the prettiest of any."

Jurgen said nothing, but he thought of a certain maiden of Skjagen, whom he was soon to visit. The ship set sail for Christiansand in Norway, and as the wind was favourable it soon arrived there.

One morning merchant Bronne went out to the lighthouse, which stands a little way out of Old Skjagen, not far from "Grenen." The light was out,

and the sun was already high in the heavens, when he mounted the tower. The sand-banks extend a whole mile from the shore, beneath the water, outside these banks; many ships could be seen that day, and with the aid of his telescope the old man thought he descried his own ship, the Karen Bronne. Yes! certainly, there she was, sailing homewards with Clara and Jurgen on board.

Clara sat on deck, and saw the sand-hills gradually appearing in the distance; the church and lighthouse looked like a heron and a swan rising from the blue waters. If the wind held good they might reach home in about an hour. So near they were to home and all its joys—so near to death and all its terrors! A plank in the ship gave way, and the water rushed in; the crew flew to the pumps, and did their best to stop the leak. A signal of distress was hoisted, but they were still fully a mile from the shore. Some fishing boats were in sight, but they were too far off to be of any use. The wind blew towards the land, the tide was in their favour, but it was all useless; the ship could not be saved.

Jurgen threw his right arm round Clara, and pressed her to him. With what a look she gazed up into his face, as with a prayer to God for help he breasted the waves, which rushed over the sinking ship! She uttered a cry, but she felt safe and certain that he would not leave her to sink. And in this hour of terror and danger Jurgen felt as the king's son did, as told in the old song:

"In the hour of peril when most men fear, He clasped the bride that he held so dear."

How glad he felt that he was a good swimmer! He worked his way onward with his feet and one arm, while he held the young girl up firmly with the other. He rested on the waves, he trod the water—in fact, did everything he could think of, in order not to fatigue himself, and to reserve strength enough to reach land. He heard Clara sigh, and felt her shudder convulsively, and he pressed her more closely to him. Now and then a wave rolled over them, the current lifted them; the water, although deep, was so clear that for a moment he imagined he saw the shoals of mackerel glittering, or Leviathan himself ready to swallow them. Now the clouds cast a shadow over the water, then again came the playing sunbeams; flocks of loudly screaming birds passed over him, and the plump and lazy wild ducks which allow themselves to be drifted by the waves rose up terrified at the sight of the swimmer. He began to feel his strength decreasing, but he was only a few cable lengths' distance from the shore, and help was coming, for a boat was approaching him. At this moment he distinctly saw a white staring figure under the water—a wave lifted him up, and he came nearer to the figure—he felt a violent shock, and everything became dark around him.

On the sand reef lay the wreck of a ship, which was covered with water at high tide; the white figure head rested against the anchor, the sharp iron edge of which rose just above the surface. Jurgen had come in contact with this; the tide had driven him against it with great force. He sank down stunned with the blow, but the next wave lifted him and the young girl up again. Some fishermen, coming with a boat, seized them and dragged them into it. The blood streamed down over Jurgen's face; he seemed dead, but still held the young girl so tightly that they were obliged to take her from him by force. She was pale and lifeless; they laid her in the boat, and rowed as quickly as possible to the shore. They tried every means to restore Clara to life, but it was all of no avail. Jurgen had been swimming for some distance with a corpse in his arms, and had exhausted his strength for one who was dead.

Jurgen still breathed, so the fishermen carried him to the nearest house upon the sand-hills, where a smith and general dealer lived who knew something of surgery, and bound up Jurgen's wounds in a temporary way until a surgeon could be obtained from the nearest town the next day. The injured man's brain was affected, and in his delirium he uttered wild cries; but on the third day he lay quiet and weak upon his bed; his life seemed to hang by a thread, and the physician said it would be better for him if this thread broke. "Let us pray that God may take him," he said, "for he will never be the same man again."

But life did not depart from him—the thread would not break, but the thread of memory was severed; the thread of his mind had been cut through, and what was still more grievous, a body remained—a living healthy body that wandered about like a troubled spirit.

Jurgen remained in merchant Bronne's house. "He was hurt while endeavouring to save our child," said the old man, "and now he is our son." People called Jurgen insane, but that was not exactly the correct term. He was like an instrument in which the strings are loose and will give no sound; only occasionally they regained their power for a few minutes, and then they sounded as they used to do. He would sing snatches of songs or old melodies, pictures of the past would rise before him, and then disappear in the mist, as it were, but as a general rule he sat staring into vacancy, without a thought. We may conjecture that he did not suffer, but his dark eyes lost their brightness, and looked like clouded glass.

"Poor mad Jurgen," said the people. And this was the end of a life whose infancy was to have been surrounded with wealth and splendour had his parents lived! All his great mental abilities had been lost, nothing but hardship, sorrow, and disappointment had been his fate. He was like a rare plant, torn

from its native soil, and tossed upon the beach to wither there. And was this one of God's creatures, fashioned in His own likeness, to have no better fate? Was he to be only the plaything of fortune? No! the all-loving Creator would certainly repay him in the life to come for what he had suffered and lost here. "The Lord is good to all; and His mercy is over all His works." The pious old wife of the merchant repeated these words from the Psalms of David in patience and hope, and the prayer of her heart was that Jurgen might soon be called away to enter into eternal life.

In the churchyard where the walls were surrounded with sand Clara lay buried. Jurgen did not seem to know this; it did not enter his mind, which could only retain fragments of the past. Every Sunday he went to church with the old people, and sat there silently, staring vacantly before him. One day, when the Psalms were being sung, he sighed deeply, and his eyes became bright; they were fixed upon a place near the altar where he had knelt with his friend who was dead. He murmured her name, and became deadly pale, and tears rolled down his cheeks. They led him out of church; he told those standing round him that he was well, and had never been ill; he, who had been so grievously afflicted, the outcast, thrown upon the world, could not remember his sufferings. The Lord our Creator is wise and full of loving kindness—who can doubt it?

In Spain, where balmy breezes blow over the Moorish cupolas and gently stir the orange and myrtle groves, where singing and the sound of the castanets are always heard, the richest merchant in the place, a childless old man, sat in a luxurious house, while children marched in procession through the streets with waving flags and lighted tapers. If he had been able to press his children to his heart, his daughter, or her child, that had, perhaps never seen the light of day, far less the kingdom of heaven, how much of his wealth would he not have given! "Poor child!" Yes, poor child—a child still, yet more than thirty years old, for Jurgen had arrived at this age in Old Skjagen.

The shifting sands had covered the graves in the courtyard, quite up to the church walls, but still, the dead must be buried among their relatives and the dear ones who had gone before them. Merchant Bronne and his wife now rested with their children under the white sand.

It was in the spring—the season of storms. The sand from the dunes was whirled up in clouds; the sea was rough, and flocks of birds flew like clouds in the storm, screaming across the sand-hills. Shipwreck followed upon shipwreck on the reefs between Old Skagen and the Hunsby dunes.

One evening Jurgen sat in his room alone: all at once his mind seemed to

become clearer, and a restless feeling came over him, such as had often, in his younger days, driven him out to wander over the sand-hills or on the heath. "Home, home!" he cried. No one heard him. He went out and walked towards the dunes. Sand and stones blew into his face, and whirled round him; he went in the direction of the church. The sand was banked up the walls, half covering the windows, but it had been cleared away in front of the door, and the entrance was free and easy to open, so Jurgen went into the church. The storm raged over the town of Skjagen; there had not been such a terrible tempest within the memory of the inhabitants, nor such a rough sea. But Jurgen was in the temple of God, and while the darkness of night reigned outside, a light arose in his soul that was never to depart from it; the heavy weight that pressed on his brain burst asunder. He fancied he heard the organ, but it was only the storm and the moaning of the sea. He sat down on one of the seats, and lo! the candies were lighted one by one, and there was brightness and grandeur such as he had only seen in the Spanish cathedral. The portraits of the old citizens became alive, stepped down from the walls against which they had hung for centuries, and took seats near the church door. The gates flew open, and all the dead people from the churchyard came in, and filled the church, while beautiful music sounded. Then the melody of the psalm burst forth, like the sound of the waters, and Jurgen saw that his foster parents from the Hunsby dunes were there, also old merchant Bronne with his wife and their daughter Clara, who gave him her hand. They both went up to the altar where they had knelt before, and the priest joined their hands and united them for life. Then music was heard again; it was wonderfully sweet, like a child's voice, full of joy and expectation, swelling to the powerful tones of a full organ, sometimes soft and sweet, then like the sounds of a tempest, delightful and elevating to hear, yet strong enough to burst the stone tombs of the dead. Then the little ship that hung from the roof of the choir was let down and looked wonderfully large and beautiful with its silken sails and rigging:

"The ropes were of silk, the anchor of gold, And everywhere riches and pomp untold," as the old song says.

The young couple went on board, accompanied by the whole congregation, for there was room and enjoyment for them all. Then the walls and arches of the church were covered with flowering junipers and lime trees breathing forth fragrance; the branches waved, creating a pleasant coolness; they bent and parted, and the ship sailed between them through the air and over the sea. Every candle in the church became a star, and the wind sang a hymn in which they all joined. "Through love to glory, no life is lost, the

future is full of blessings and happiness. Hallelujah!" These were the last words Jurgen uttered in this world, for the thread that bound his immortal soul was severed, and nothing but the dead body lay in the dark church, while the storm raged outside, covering it with loose sand.

The next day was Sunday, and the congregation and their pastor went to the church. The road had always been heavy, but now it was almost unfit for use, and when they at last arrived at the church, a great heap of sand lay piled up in front of them. The whole church was completely buried in sand. The clergyman offered a short prayer, and said that God had closed the door of His house here, and that the congregation must go and build a new one for Him somewhere else. So they sung a hymn in the open air, and went home again.

Jurgen could not be found anywhere in the town of Skjagen, nor on the dunes, though they searched for him everywhere. They came to the conclusion that one of the great waves, which had rolled far up on the beach, had carried him away; but his body lay buried in a great sepulchre—the church itself. The Lord had thrown down a covering for his grave during the storm, and the heavy mound of sand lies upon it to this day. The drifting sand had covered the vaulted roof of the church, the arched cloisters, and the stone aisles. The white thorn and the dog rose now blossom above the place where the church lies buried, but the spire, like an enormous monument over a grave, can be seen for miles round. No king has a more splendid memorial. Nothing disturbs the peaceful sleep of the dead. I was the first to hear this story, for the storm sung it to me among the sand-hills.

THE SAUCY BOY

Once upon a time there was an old poet, one of those right good old poets. One evening, as he was sitting at home, there was a terrible storm going on outside; the rain was pouring down, but the old poet sat comfortably in his chimney-corner, where the fire was burning and the apples were roasting.

"There will not be a dry thread left on the poor people who are out in this weather," he said.

"Oh, open the door! I am so cold and wet through," called a little child outside. It was crying and knocking at the door, whilst the rain was pouring down and the wind was rattling all the windows.

"Poor creature!" said the poet, and got up and opened the door. Before him stood a little boy; he was naked, and the water flowed from his long fair locks. He was shivering with cold; if he had not been let in, he would certainly have perished in the storm.

“Poor little thing!” said the poet, and took him by the hand. “Come to me; I will soon warm you. You shall have some wine and an apple, for you are such a pretty boy.”
And he was, too. His eyes sparkled like two bright stars, and although the water flowed down from his fair locks, they still curled quite beautifully. He looked like a little angel, but was pale with cold, and trembling all over. In his hand he held a splendid bow, but it had been entirely spoilt by the rain, and the colours of the pretty arrows had run into one another by getting wet.
The old man sat down by the fire, and taking the little boy on his knee, wrung the water out of his locks and warmed his hands in his own.
He then made him some hot spiced wine, which quickly revived him; so that with reddening cheeks, he sprang upon the floor and danced around the old man.
“You are a merry boy,” said the latter. “What is your name?”
“My name is Cupid,” he answered. “Don’t you know me? There lies my bow. I shoot with that, you know. Look, the weather is getting fine again—the moon is shining.”
“But your bow is spoilt,” said the old poet.
“That would be unfortunate,” said the little boy, taking it up and looking at it. “Oh, it’s quite dry and isn’t damaged at all. The string is quite tight; I’ll try it.” So, drawing it back, he took an arrow, aimed, and shot the good old poet right in the heart. “Do you see now that my bow was not spoilt?” he said, and, loudly laughing, ran away. What a naughty boy to shoot the old poet like that, who had taken him into his warm room, had been so good to him, and had given him the nicest wine and the best apple!
The good old man lay upon the floor crying; he was really shot in the heart. “Oh!” he cried, “what a naughty boy this Cupid is! I shall tell all the good children about this, so that they take care never to play with him, lest he hurt them.”
And all good children, both girls and boys, whom he told about this, were on their guard against wicked Cupid; but he deceives them all the same, for he is very deep. When the students come out of class, he walks beside them with a book under his arm, and wearing a black coat. They cannot recognize him. And then, if they take him by the arm, believing him to be a student too, he sticks an arrow into their chest. And when the girls go to church to be confirmed, he is amongst them too. In fact, he is always after people. He sits in the large chandelier in the theatre and blazes away, so that people think it is a lamp; but they soon find out their mistake. He walks

about in the castle garden and on the promenades. Yes, once he shot your father and your mother in the heart too. Just ask them, and you will hear what they say. Oh! he is a bad boy, this Cupid, and you must never have anything to do with him, for he is after every one. Just think, he even shot an arrow at old grandmother; but that was a long time ago. The wound has long been healed, but such things are never forgotten.
Now you know what a bad boy this wicked Cupid is.

THE SHADOW

In very hot climates, where the heat of the sun has great power, people are usually as brown as mahogany; and in the hottest countries they are negroes, with black skins. A learned man once travelled into one of these warm climates, from the cold regions of the north, and thought he would roam about as he did at home; but he soon had to change his opinion. He found that, like all sensible people, he must remain in the house during the whole day, with every window and door closed, so that it looked as if all in the house were asleep or absent. The houses of the narrow street in which he lived were so lofty that the sun shone upon them from morning till evening, and it became quite unbearable. This learned man from the cold regions was young as well as clever; but it seemed to him as if he were sitting in an oven, and he became quite exhausted and weak, and grew so thin that his shadow shrivelled up, and became much smaller than it had been at home. The sun took away even what was left of it, and he saw nothing of it till the evening, after sunset. It was really a pleasure, as soon as the lights were brought into the room, to see the shadow stretch itself against the wall, even to the ceiling, so tall was it; and it really wanted a good stretch to recover its strength. The learned man would sometimes go out into the balcony to stretch himself also; and as soon as the stars came forth in the clear, beautiful sky, he felt revived. People at this hour began to make their appearance in all the balconies in the street; for in warm climates every window has a balcony, in which they can breathe the fresh evening air, which is very necessary, even to those who are used to a heat that makes them as brown as mahogany; so that the street presented a very lively appearance. Here were shoemakers, and tailors, and all sorts of people sitting. In the street beneath, they brought out tables and chairs, lighted candles by hundreds, talked and sang, and were very merry. There were people walking, carriages driving, and mules trotting along, with their bells on the harness, “tingle, tingle,” as they went. Then the dead were carried to the grave with the sound of

solemn music, and the tolling of the church bells. It was indeed a scene of varied life in the street. One house only, which was just opposite to the one in which the foreign learned man lived, formed a contrast to all this, for it was quite still; and yet somebody dwelt there, for flowers stood in the balcony, blooming beautifully in the hot sun; and this could not have been unless they had been watered carefully. Therefore some one must be in the house to do this. The doors leading to the balcony were half opened in the evening; and although in the front room all was dark, music could be heard from the interior of the house. The foreign learned man considered this music very delightful; but perhaps he fancied it; for everything in these warm countries pleased him, excepting the heat of the sun. The foreign landlord said he did not know who had taken the opposite house—nobody was to be seen there; and as to the music, he thought it seemed very tedious, to him most uncommonly so.

"It is just as if some one was practising a piece that he could not manage; it is always the same piece. He thinks, I suppose, that he will be able to manage it at last; but I do not think so, however long he may play it."

Once the foreigner woke in the night. He slept with the door open which led to the balcony; the wind had raised the curtain before it, and there appeared a wonderful brightness over all in the balcony of the opposite house. The flowers seemed like flames of the most gorgeous colors, and among the flowers stood a beautiful slender maiden. It was to him as if light streamed from her, and dazzled his eyes; but then he had only just opened them, as he awoke from his sleep. With one spring he was out of bed, and crept softly behind the curtain. But she was gone—the brightness had disappeared; the flowers no longer appeared like flames, although still as beautiful as ever. The door stood ajar, and from an inner room sounded music so sweet and so lovely, that it produced the most enchanting thoughts, and acted on the senses with magic power. Who could live there? Where was the real entrance? for, both in the street and in the lane at the side, the whole ground floor was a continuation of shops; and people could not always be passing through them.

One evening the foreigner sat in the balcony. A light was burning in his own room, just behind him. It was quite natural, therefore, that his shadow should fall on the wall of the opposite house; so that, as he sat amongst the flowers on his balcony, when he moved, his shadow moved also.

"I think my shadow is the only living thing to be seen opposite," said the learned man; "see how pleasantly it sits among the flowers. The door is only ajar; the shadow ought to be clever enough to step in and look about him, and then to come back and tell me what he has seen. You could make

yourself useful in this way," said he, jokingly; "be so good as to step in now, will you?" and then he nodded to the shadow, and the shadow nodded in return. "Now go, but don't stay away altogether."

Then the foreigner stood up, and the shadow on the opposite balcony stood up also; the foreigner turned round, the shadow turned; and if any one had observed, they might have seen it go straight into the half-opened door of the opposite balcony, as the learned man re-entered his own room, and let the curtain fall. The next morning he went out to take his coffee and read the newspapers.

"How is this?" he exclaimed, as he stood in the sunshine. "I have lost my shadow. So it really did go away yesterday evening, and it has not returned. This is very annoying."

And it certainly did vex him, not so much because the shadow was gone, but because he knew there was a story of a man without a shadow. All the people at home, in his country, knew this story; and when he returned, and related his own adventures, they would say it was only an imitation; and he had no desire for such things to be said of him. So he decided not to speak of it at all, which was a very sensible determination.

In the evening he went out again on his balcony, taking care to place the light behind him; for he knew that a shadow always wants his master for a screen; but he could not entice him out. He made himself little, and he made himself tall; but there was no shadow, and no shadow came. He said, "Hem, a-hem;" but it was all useless. That was very vexatious; but in warm countries everything grows very quickly; and, after a week had passed, he saw, to his great joy, that a new shadow was growing from his feet, when he walked in the sunshine; so that the root must have remained. After three weeks, he had quite a respectable shadow, which, during his return journey to northern lands, continued to grow, and became at last so large that he might very well have spared half of it. When this learned man arrived at home, he wrote books about the true, the good, and the beautiful, which are to be found in this world; and so days and years passed—many, many years.

One evening, as he sat in his study, a very gentle tap was heard at the door. "Come in," said he; but no one came. He opened the door, and there stood before him a man so remarkably thin that he felt seriously troubled at his appearance. He was, however, very well dressed, and looked like a gentleman. "To whom have I the honor of speaking?" said he.

"Ah, I hoped you would recognize me," said the elegant stranger; "I have gained so much that I have a body of flesh, and clothes to wear. You never expected to see me in such a condition. Do you not recognize your old

shadow? Ah, you never expected that I should return to you again. All has been prosperous with me since I was with you last; I have become rich in every way, and, were I inclined to purchase my freedom from service, I could easily do so." And as he spoke he rattled between his fingers a number of costly trinkets which hung to a thick gold watch-chain he wore round his neck. Diamond rings sparkled on his fingers, and it was all real.
"I cannot recover from my astonishment," said the learned man. "What does all this mean?"
"Something rather unusual," said the shadow; "but you are yourself an uncommon man, and you know very well that I have followed in your footsteps ever since your childhood. As soon as you found that I have travelled enough to be trusted alone, I went my own way, and I am now in the most brilliant circumstances. But I felt a kind of longing to see you once more before you die, and I wanted to see this place again, for there is always a clinging to the land of one's birth. I know that you have now another shadow; do I owe you anything? If so, have the goodness to say what it is."
"No! Is it really you?" said the learned man. "Well, this is most remarkable; I never supposed it possible that a man's old shadow could become a human being."
"Just tell me what I owe you," said the shadow, "for I do not like to be in debt to any man."
"How can you talk in that manner?" said the learned man. "What question of debt can there be between us? You are as free as any one. I rejoice exceedingly to hear of your good fortune. Sit down, old friend, and tell me a little of how it happened, and what you saw in the house opposite to me while we were in those hot climates."
"Yes, I will tell you all about it," said the shadow, sitting down; "but then you must promise me never to tell in this city, wherever you may meet me, that I have been your shadow. I am thinking of being married, for I have more than sufficient to support a family."
"Make yourself quite easy," said the learned man; "I will tell no one who you really are. Here is my hand,—I promise, and a word is sufficient between man and man."
"Between man and a shadow," said the shadow; for he could not help saying so.
It was really most remarkable how very much he had become a man in appearance. He was dressed in a suit of the very finest black cloth, polished boots, and an opera crush hat, which could be folded together so that nothing could be seen but the crown and the rim, besides the trinkets, the

gold chain, and the diamond rings already spoken of. The shadow was, in fact, very well dressed, and this made a man of him. “Now I will relate to you what you wish to know,” said the shadow, placing his foot with the polished leather boot as firmly as possible on the arm of the new shadow of the learned man, which lay at his feet like a poodle dog. This was done, it might be from pride, or perhaps that the new shadow might cling to him, but the prostrate shadow remained quite quiet and at rest, in order that it might listen, for it wanted to know how a shadow could be sent away by its master, and become a man itself. “Do you know,” said the shadow, “that in the house opposite to you lived the most glorious creature in the world? It was poetry. I remained there three weeks, and it was more like three thousand years, for I read all that has ever been written in poetry or prose; and I may say, in truth, that I saw and learnt everything.”

“Poetry!” exclaimed the learned man. “Yes, she lives as a hermit in great cities. Poetry! Well, I saw her once for a very short moment, while sleep weighed down my eyelids. She flashed upon me from the balcony like the radiant aurora borealis, surrounded with flowers like flames of fire. Tell me, you were on the balcony that evening; you went through the door, and what did you see?”

“I found myself in an ante-room,” said the shadow. “You still sat opposite to me, looking into the room. There was no light, or at least it seemed in partial darkness, for the door of a whole suite of rooms stood open, and they were brilliantly lighted. The blaze of light would have killed me, had I approached too near the maiden myself, but I was cautious, and took time, which is what every one ought to do.”

“And what didst thou see?” asked the learned man.

“I saw everything, as you shall hear. But—it really is not pride on my part, as a free man and possessing the knowledge that I do, besides my position, not to speak of my wealth—I wish you would say you to me instead of thou.”

“I beg your pardon,” said the learned man; “it is an old habit, which it is difficult to break. You are quite right; I will try to think of it. But now tell me everything that you saw.”

“Everything,” said the shadow; “for I saw and know everything.”

“What was the appearance of the inner rooms?” asked the scholar. “Was it there like a cool grove, or like a holy temple? Were the chambers like a starry sky seen from the top of a high mountain?”

“It was all that you describe,” said the shadow; “but I did not go quite in—I remained in the twilight of the ante-room—but I was in a very good position,—I could see and hear all that was going on in the court of poetry.”

“But what did you see? Did the gods of ancient times pass through the rooms? Did old heroes fight their battles over again? Were there lovely children at play, who related their dreams?”

“I tell you I have been there, and therefore you may be sure that I saw everything that was to be seen. If you had gone there, you would not have remained a human being, whereas I became one; and at the same moment I became aware of my inner being, my inborn affinity to the nature of poetry. It is true I did not think much about it while I was with you, but you will remember that I was always much larger at sunrise and sunset, and in the moonlight even more visible than yourself, but I did not then understand my inner existence. In the ante-room it was revealed to me. I became a man; I came out in full maturity. But you had left the warm countries. As a man, I felt ashamed to go about without boots or clothes, and that exterior finish by which man is known. So I went my own way; I can tell you, for you will not put it in a book. I hid myself under the cloak of a cake woman, but she little thought who she concealed. It was not till evening that I ventured out. I ran about the streets in the moonlight. I drew myself up to my full height upon the walls, which tickled my back very pleasantly. I ran here and there, looked through the highest windows into the rooms, and over the roofs. I looked in, and saw what nobody else could see, or indeed ought to see; in fact, it is a bad world, and I would not care to be a man, but that men are of some importance. I saw the most miserable things going on between husbands and wives, parents and children,—sweet, incomparable children. I have seen what no human being has the power of knowing, although they would all be very glad to know—the evil conduct of their neighbors. Had I written a newspaper, how eagerly it would have been read! Instead of which, I wrote directly to the persons themselves, and great alarm arose in all the town I visited. They had so much fear of me, and yet how dearly they loved me. The professor made me a professor. The tailor gave me new clothes; I am well provided for in that way. The overseer of the mint struck coins for me. The women declared that I was handsome, and so I became the man you now see me. And now I must say adieu. Here is my card. I live on the sunny side of the street, and always stay at home in rainy weather.” And the shadow departed.

“This is all very remarkable,” said the learned man.

Years passed, days and years went by, and the shadow came again. “How are you going on now?” he asked.

“Ah!” said the learned man; “I am writing about the true, the beautiful, and the good; but no one cares to hear anything about it. I am quite in despair, for I take it to heart very much.”

“That is what I never do,” said the shadow; “I am growing quite fat and stout, which every one ought to be. You do not understand the world; you will make yourself ill about it; you ought to travel; I am going on a journey in the summer, will you go with me? I should like a travelling companion; will you travel with me as my shadow? It would give me great pleasure, and I will pay all expenses.”
“Are you going to travel far?” asked the learned man.
“That is a matter of opinion,” replied the shadow. “At all events, a journey will do you good, and if you will be my shadow, then all your journey shall be paid.”
“It appears to me very absurd,” said the learned man.
“But it is the way of the world,” replied the shadow, “and always will be.” Then he went away.
Everything went wrong with the learned man. Sorrow and trouble pursued him, and what he said about the good, the beautiful, and the true, was of as much value to most people as a nutmeg would be to a cow. At length he fell ill. “You really look like a shadow,” people said to him, and then a cold shudder would pass over him, for he had his own thoughts on the subject.
“You really ought to go to some watering-place,” said the shadow on his next visit. “There is no other chance for you. I will take you with me, for the sake of old acquaintance. I will pay the expenses of your journey, and you shall write a description of it to amuse us by the way. I should like to go to a watering-place; my beard does not grow as it ought, which is from weakness, and I must have a beard. Now do be sensible and accept my proposal; we shall travel as intimate friends.”
And at last they started together. The shadow was master now, and the master became the shadow. They drove together, and rode and walked in company with each other, side by side, or one in front and the other behind, according to the position of the sun. The shadow always knew when to take the place of honor, but the learned man took no notice of it, for he had a good heart, and was exceedingly mild and friendly.
One day the master said to the shadow, “We have grown up together from our childhood, and now that we have become travelling companions, shall we not drink to our good fellowship, and say thee and thou to each other?”
“What you say is very straightforward and kindly meant,” said the shadow, who was now really master. “I will be equally kind and straightforward. You are a learned man, and know how wonderful human nature is. There are some men who cannot endure the smell of brown paper; it makes them ill. Others will feel a shuddering sensation to their very marrow, if a nail is

scratched on a pane of glass. I myself have a similar kind of feeling when I hear any one say thou to me. I feel crushed by it, as I used to feel in my former position with you. You will perceive that this is a matter of feeling, not pride. I cannot allow you to say thou to me; I will gladly say it to you, and therefore your wish will be half fulfilled." Then the shadow addressed his former master as thou.

"It is going rather too far," said the latter, "that I am to say you when I speak to him, and he is to say thou to me." However, he was obliged to submit.

They arrived at length at the baths, where there were many strangers, and among them a beautiful princess, whose real disease consisted in being too sharp-sighted, which made every one very uneasy. She saw at once that the new comer was very different to every one else. "They say he is here to make his beard grow," she thought; "but I know the real cause, he is unable to cast a shadow." Then she became very curious on the matter, and one day, while on the promenade, she entered into conversation with the strange gentleman. Being a princess, she was not obliged to stand upon much ceremony, so she said to him without hesitation, "Your illness consists in not being able to cast a shadow."

"Your royal highness must be on the high road to recovery from your illness," said he. "I know your complaint arose from being too sharp-sighted, and in this case it has entirely failed. I happen to have a most unusual shadow. Have you not seen a person who is always at my side? Persons often give their servants finer cloth for their liveries than for their own clothes, and so I have dressed out my shadow like a man; nay, you may observe that I have even given him a shadow of his own; it is rather expensive, but I like to have things about me that are peculiar."

"How is this?" thought the princess; "am I really cured? This must be the best watering-place in existence. Water in our times has certainly wonderful power. But I will not leave this place yet, just as it begins to be amusing. This foreign prince—for he must be a prince—pleases me above all things. I only hope his beard won't grow, or he will leave at once."

In the evening, the princess and the shadow danced together in the large assembly rooms. She was light, but he was lighter still; she had never seen such a dancer before. She told him from what country she had come, and found he knew it and had been there, but not while she was at home. He had looked into the windows of her father's palace, both the upper and the lower windows; he had seen many things, and could therefore answer the princess, and make allusions which quite astonished her. She thought he must be the cleverest man in all the world, and felt the greatest respect for

his knowledge. When she danced with him again she fell in love with him, which the shadow quickly discovered, for she had with her eyes looked him through and through. They danced once more, and she was nearly telling him, but she had some discretion; she thought of her country, her kingdom, and the number of people over whom she would one day have to rule. "He is a clever man," she thought to herself, "which is a good thing, and he dances admirably, which is also good. But has he well-grounded knowledge? that is an important question, and I must try him." Then she asked him a most difficult question, she herself could not have answered it, and the shadow made a most unaccountable grimace.

"You cannot answer that," said the princess.

"I learnt something about it in my childhood," he replied; "and believe that even my very shadow, standing over there by the door, could answer it."

"Your shadow," said the princess; "indeed that would be very remarkable."

"I do not say so positively," observed the shadow; "but I am inclined to believe that he can do so. He has followed me for so many years, and has heard so much from me, that I think it is very likely. But your royal highness must allow me to observe, that he is very proud of being considered a man, and to put him in a good humor, so that he may answer correctly, he must be treated as a man."

"I shall be very pleased to do so," said the princess. So she walked up to the learned man, who stood in the doorway, and spoke to him of the sun, and the moon, of the green forests, and of people near home and far off; and the learned man conversed with her pleasantly and sensibly.

"What a wonderful man he must be, to have such a clever shadow!" thought she. "If I were to choose him it would be a real blessing to my country and my subjects, and I will do it." So the princess and the shadow were soon engaged to each other, but no one was to be told a word about it, till she returned to her kingdom.

"No one shall know," said the shadow; "not even my own shadow;" and he had very particular reasons for saying so.

After a time, the princess returned to the land over which she reigned, and the shadow accompanied her.

"Listen my friend," said the shadow to the learned man; "now that I am as fortunate and as powerful as any man can be, I will do something unusually good for you. You shall live in my palace, drive with me in the royal carriage, and have a hundred thousand dollars a year; but you must allow every one to call you a shadow, and never venture to say that you have been a man. And once a year, when I sit in my balcony in the sunshine, you must

lie at my feet as becomes a shadow to do; for I must tell you I am going to marry the princess, and our wedding will take place this evening."
"Now, really, this is too ridiculous," said the learned man. "I cannot, and will not, submit to such folly. It would be cheating the whole country, and the princess also. I will disclose everything, and say that I am the man, and that you are only a shadow dressed up in men's clothes."
"No one would believe you," said the shadow; "be reasonable, now, or I will call the guards."
"I will go straight to the princess," said the learned man.
"But I shall be there first," replied the shadow, "and you will be sent to prison." And so it turned out, for the guards readily obeyed him, as they knew he was going to marry the king's daughter.
"You tremble," said the princess, when the shadow appeared before her. "Has anything happened? You must not be ill to-day, for this evening our wedding will take place."
"I have gone through the most terrible affair that could possibly happen," said the shadow; "only imagine, my shadow has gone mad; I suppose such a poor, shallow brain, could not bear much; he fancies that he has become a real man, and that I am his shadow."
"How very terrible," cried the princess; "is he locked up?"
"Oh yes, certainly; for I fear he will never recover."
"Poor shadow!" said the princess; "it is very unfortunate for him; it would really be a good deed to free him from his frail existence; and, indeed, when I think how often people take the part of the lower class against the higher, in these days, it would be policy to put him out of the way quietly."
"It is certainly rather hard upon him, for he was a faithful servant," said the shadow; and he pretended to sigh.
"Yours is a noble character," said the princess, and bowed herself before him. In the evening the whole town was illuminated, and cannons fired "boom," and the soldiers presented arms. It was indeed a grand wedding. The princess and the shadow stepped out on the balcony to show themselves, and to receive one cheer more. But the learned man heard nothing of all these festivities, for he had already been executed.

THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE SHEEP

Have you ever seen an old wooden cupboard quite black with age, and ornamented with carved foliage and curious figures? Well, just such a cupboard stood in a parlor, and had been left to the family as a legacy by the

great-grandmother. It was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips; the most curious scrolls were drawn upon it, and out of them peeped little stags' heads, with antlers. In the middle of the cupboard door was the carved figure of a man most ridiculous to look at. He grinned at you, for no one could call it laughing. He had goat's legs, little horns on his head, and a long beard; the children in the room always called him, "Major general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs." It was certainly a very difficult name to pronounce, and there are very few who ever receive such a title, but then it seemed wonderful how he came to be carved at all; yet there he was, always looking at the table under the looking-glass, where stood a very pretty little shepherdess made of china. Her shoes were gilt, and her dress had a red rose or an ornament. She wore a hat, and carried a crook, that were both gilded, and looked very bright and pretty. Close by her side stood a little chimney-sweep, as black as coal, and also made of china. He was, however, quite as clean and neat as any other china figure; he only represented a black chimney-sweep, and the china workers might just as well have made him a prince, had they felt inclined to do so. He stood holding his ladder quite handily, and his face was as fair and rosy as a girl's; indeed, that was rather a mistake, it should have had some black marks on it. He and the shepherdess had been placed close together, side by side; and, being so placed, they became engaged to each other, for they were very well suited, being both made of the same sort of china, and being equally fragile. Close to them stood another figure, three times as large as they were, and also made of china. He was an old Chinaman, who could nod his head, and used to pretend that he was the grandfather of the shepherdess, although he could not prove it. He however assumed authority over her, and therefore when "Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs" asked for the little shepherdess to be his wife, he nodded his head to show that he consented. "You will have a husband," said the old Chinaman to her, "who I really believe is made of mahogany. He will make you a lady of Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs. He has the whole cupboard full of silver plate, which he keeps locked up in secret drawers."

"I won't go into the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess. "I have heard that he has eleven china wives there already."

"Then you shall be the twelfth," said the old Chinaman. "To-night as soon as you hear a rattling in the old cupboard, you shall be married, as true as I am a Chinaman;" and then he nodded his head and fell asleep.

Then the little shepherdess cried, and looked at her sweetheart, the china

chimney-sweep. “I must entreat you,” said she, “to go out with me into the wide world, for we cannot stay here.”
“I will do whatever you wish,” said the little chimney-sweep; “let us go immediately: I think I shall be able to maintain you with my profession.”
“If we were but safely down from the table!” said she; “I shall not be happy till we are really out in the world.”
Then he comforted her, and showed her how to place her little foot on the carved edge and gilt-leaf ornaments of the table. He brought his little ladder to help her, and so they contrived to reach the floor. But when they looked at the old cupboard, they saw it was all in an uproar. The carved stags pushed out their heads, raised their antlers, and twisted their necks. The major-general sprung up in the air; and cried out to the old Chinaman, “They are running away! they are running away!” The two were rather frightened at this, so they jumped into the drawer of the window-seat. Here were three or four packs of cards not quite complete, and a doll’s theatre, which had been built up very neatly. A comedy was being performed in it, and all the queens of diamonds, clubs, and hearts, and spades, sat in the first row fanning themselves with tulips, and behind them stood all the knaves, showing that they had heads above and below as playing cards generally have. The play was about two lovers, who were not allowed to marry, and the shepherdess wept because it was so like her own story. “I cannot bear it,” said she, “I must get out of the drawer;” but when they reached the floor, and cast their eyes on the table, there was the old Chinaman awake and shaking his whole body, till all at once down he came on the floor, “plump.” “The old Chinaman is coming,” cried the little shepherdess in a fright, and down she fell on one knee.
“I have thought of something,” said the chimney-sweep; “let us get into the great pot-pourri jar which stands in the corner; there we can lie on rose-leaves and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes near us.”
“No, that will never do,” said she, “because I know that the Chinaman and the pot-pourri jar were lovers once, and there always remains behind a feeling of good-will between those who have been so intimate as that. No, there is nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world.”
“Have you really courage enough to go out into the wide world with me?” said the chimney-sweep; “have you thought how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?”
“Yes, I have,” she replied.
When the chimney-sweep saw that she was quite firm, he said, “My way is through the stove and up the chimney. Have you courage to creep with me

through the fire-box, and the iron pipe? When we get to the chimney I shall know how to manage very well. We shall soon climb too high for any one to reach us, and we shall come through a hole in the top out into the wide world." So he led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks very dark," said she; still she went in with him through the stove and through the pipe, where it was as dark as pitch.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, there is a beautiful star shining above it." It was a real star shining down upon them as if it would show them the way. So they clambered, and crept on, and a frightful steep place it was; but the chimney-sweep helped her and supported her, till they got higher and higher. He showed her the best places on which to set her little china foot, so at last they reached the top of the chimney, and sat themselves down, for they were very tired, as may be supposed. The sky, with all its stars, was over their heads, and below were the roofs of the town. They could see for a very long distance out into the wide world, and the poor little shepherdess leaned her head on her chimney-sweep's shoulder, and wept till she washed the gilt off her sash; the world was so different to what she expected. "This is too much," she said; "I cannot bear it, the world is too large. Oh, I wish I were safe back on the table again, under the looking glass; I shall never be happy till I am safe back again. Now I have followed you out into the wide world, you will take me back, if you love me." Then the chimney-sweep tried to reason with her, and spoke of the old Chinaman, and of the Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's legs; but she sobbed so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney-sweep till he was obliged to do all she asked, foolish as it was. And so, with a great deal of trouble, they climbed down the chimney, and then crept through the pipe and stove, which were certainly not very pleasant places. Then they stood in the dark fire-box, and listened behind the door, to hear what was going on in the room. As it was all quiet, they peeped out. Alas! there lay the old Chinaman on the floor; he had fallen down from the table as he attempted to run after them, and was broken into three pieces; his back had separated entirely, and his head had rolled into a corner of the room. The major-general stood in his old place, and appeared lost in thought.

"This is terrible," said the little shepherdess. "My poor old grandfather is broken to pieces, and it is our fault. I shall never live after this;" and she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted," said the chimney-sweep; "he can be riveted. Do not be so hasty. If they cement his back, and put a good rivet in it, he will be as good as new, and be able to say as many disagreeable things to us as ever."

"Do you think so?" said she; and then they climbed up to the table, and stood in their old places.
"As we have done no good," said the chimney-sweep, "we might as well have remained here, instead of taking so much trouble."
"I wish grandfather was riveted," said the shepherdess. "Will it cost much, I wonder?" And she had her wish. The family had the Chinaman's back mended, and a strong rivet put through his neck; he looked as good as new, but he could no longer nod his head.
"You have become proud since your fall broke you to pieces," said Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs. "You have no reason to give yourself such airs. Am I to have her or not?"
The chimney-sweep and the little shepherdess looked piteously at the old Chinaman, for they were afraid he might nod; but he was not able: besides, it was so tiresome to be always telling strangers he had a rivet in the back of his neck.
And so the little china people remained together, and were glad of the grandfather's rivet, and continued to love each other till they were broken to pieces.

THE SILVER SHILLING

There was once a shilling, which came forth from the mint springing and shouting, "Hurrah! now I am going out into the wide world." And truly it did go out into the wide world. The children held it with warm hands, the miser with a cold and convulsive grasp, and the old people turned it about, goodness knows how many times, while the young people soon allowed it to roll away from them. The shilling was made of silver, it contained very little copper, and considered itself quite out in the world when it had been circulated for a year in the country in which it had been coined. One day, it really did go out into the world, for it belonged to a gentleman who was about to travel in foreign lands. This gentleman was not aware that the shilling lay at the bottom of his purse when he started, till he one day found it between his fingers. "Why," cried he, "here is a shilling from home; well, it must go on its travels with me now!" and the shilling jumped and rattled for joy, when it was put back again into the purse.
Here it lay among a number of foreign companions, who were always coming and going, one taking the place of another, but the shilling from home was always put back, and had to remain in the purse, which was certainly a mark of distinction. Many weeks passed, during which the shilling had travelled a long distance in the purse, without in the least knowing where he

was. He had found out that the other coins were French and Italian; and one coin said they were in this town, and another said they were in that, but the shilling was unable to make out or imagine what they meant. A man certainly cannot see much of the world if he is tied up in a bag, and this was really the shilling's fate. But one day, as he was lying in the purse, he noticed that it was not quite closed, and so he slipped near to the opening to have a little peep into society. He certainly had not the least idea of what would follow, but he was curious, and curiosity often brings its own punishment. In his eagerness, he came so near the edge of the purse that he slipped out into the pocket of the trousers; and when, in the evening, the purse was taken out, the shilling was left behind in the corner to which it had fallen. As the clothes were being carried into the hall, the shilling fell out on the floor, unheard and unnoticed by any one. The next morning the clothes were taken back to the room, the gentleman put them on, and started on his journey again; but the shilling remained behind on the floor. After a time it was found, and being considered a good coin, was placed with three other coins. "Ah," thought the shilling, "this is pleasant; I shall now see the world, become acquainted with other people, and learn other customs."

"Do you call that a shilling?" said some one the next moment. "That is not a genuine coin of the country,—it is false; it is good for nothing."

Now begins the story as it was afterwards related by the shilling himself.

"'False! good for nothing!' said he. That remark went through and through me like a dagger. I knew that I had a true ring, and that mine was a genuine stamp. These people must at all events be wrong, or they could not mean me. But yes, I was the one they called 'false, and good for nothing.'

"'Then I must pay it away in the dark,' said the man who had received me. So I was to be got rid of in the darkness, and be again insulted in broad daylight.

"'False! good for nothing!' Oh, I must contrive to get lost, thought I. And I trembled between the fingers of the people every time they tried to pass me off slyly as a coin of the country. Ah! unhappy shilling that I was! Of what use were my silver, my stamp, and my real value here, where all these qualities were worthless. In the eyes of the world, a man is valued just according to the opinion formed of him. It must be a shocking thing to have a guilty conscience, and to be sneaking about on account of wicked deeds. As for me, innocent as I was, I could not help shuddering before their eyes whenever they brought me out, for I knew I should be thrown back again up the table as a false pretender. At length I was paid away to a poor old woman, who received me as wages for a hard day's work. But she could not again get rid of me; no one would take me. I was to the woman a most un-

lucky shilling. ‘I am positively obliged to pass this shilling to somebody,’ said she; ‘I cannot, with the best intentions, lay by a bad shilling. The rich baker shall have it,—he can bear the loss better than I can. But, after all, it is not a right thing to do.’

“’Ah!’ sighed I to myself, ‘am I also to be a burden on the conscience of this poor woman? Am I then in my old days so completely changed?’ The woman offered me to the rich baker, but he knew the current money too well, and as soon as he received me he threw me almost in the woman’s face. She could get no bread for me, and I felt quite grieved to the heart that I should be cause of so much trouble to another, and be treated as a cast-off coin. I who, in my young days, felt so joyful in the certainty of my own value, and knew so well that I bore a genuine stamp. I was as sorrowful now as a poor shilling can be when nobody will have him. The woman took me home again with her, and looking at me very earnestly, she said, ‘No, I will not try to deceive any one with thee again. I will bore a hole through thee, that everyone may know that thou art a false and worthless thing; and yet, why should I do that? Very likely thou art a lucky shilling. A thought has just struck me that it is so, and I believe it. Yes, I will make a hole in the shilling,’ said she, ‘and run a string through it, and then give it to my neighbor’s little one to hang round her neck, as a lucky shilling.’ So she drilled a hole through me.

“It is really not at all pleasant to have a hole bored through one, but we can submit to a great deal when it is done with a good intention. A string was drawn through the hole, and I became a kind of medal. They hung me round the neck of a little child, and the child laughed at me and kissed me, and I rested for one whole night on the warm, innocent breast of a child.

“In the morning the child’s mother took me between her fingers, and had certain thoughts about me, which I very soon found out. First, she looked for a pair of scissors, and cut the string.

“’Lucky shilling!’ said she, ‘certainly this is what I mean to try.’ Then she laid me in vinegar till I became quite green, and after that she filled up the hole with cement, rubbed me a little to brighten me up, and went out in the twilight hour to the lottery collector, to buy herself a ticket, with a shilling that should bring luck. How everything seemed to cause me trouble. The lottery collector pressed me so hard that I thought I should crack. I had been called false, I had been thrown away,—that I knew; and there were many shillings and coins with inscriptions and stamps of all kinds lying about. I well knew how proud they were, so I avoided them from very shame. With the collector were several men who seemed to have a great deal to do, so I fell unnoticed into a chest, among several other coins.

“Whether the lottery ticket gained a prize, I know not; but this I know, that in a very few days after, I was recognized as a bad shilling, and laid aside. Everything that happened seemed always to add to my sorrow. Even if a man has a good character, it is of no use for him to deny what is said of him, for he is not considered an impartial judge of himself.

“A year passed, and in this way I had been changed from hand to hand; always abused, always looked at with displeasure, and trusted by no one; but I trusted in myself, and had no confidence in the world. Yes, that was a very dark time.

“At length one day I was passed to a traveller, a foreigner, the very same who had brought me away from home; and he was simple and true-hearted enough to take me for current coin. But would he also attempt to pass me? and should I again hear the outcry, ‘False! good-for-nothing!’ The traveller examined me attentively, ‘I took thee for good coin,’ said he; then suddenly a smile spread all over his face. I have never seen such a smile on any other face as on his. ‘Now this is singular,’ said he, ‘it is a coin from my own country; a good, true, shilling from home. Some one has bored a hole through it, and people have no doubt called it false. How curious that it should come into my hands. I will take it home with me to my own house.’

“Joy thrilled through me when I heard this. I had been once more called a good, honest shilling, and I was to go back to my own home, where each and all would recognize me, and know that I was made of good silver, and bore a true, genuine stamp. I should have been glad in my joy to throw out sparks of fire, but it has never at any time been my nature to sparkle. Steel can do so, but not silver. I was wrapped up in fine, white paper, that I might not mix with the other coins and be lost; and on special occasions, when people from my own country happened to be present, I was brought forward and spoken of very kindly. They said I was very interesting, and it was really quite worth while to notice that those who are interesting have often not a single word to say for themselves.

“At length I reached home. All my cares were at an end. Joy again overwhelmed me; for was I not good silver, and had I not a genuine stamp? I had no more insults or disappointments to endure; although, indeed, there was a hole through me, as if I were false; but suspicions are nothing when a man is really true, and every one should persevere in acting honestly, for an will be made right in time. That is my firm belief,” said the shilling.

THE SHIRT-COLLAR

There was once a fine gentleman who possessed among other things a boot-jack and a hair-brush; but he had also the finest shirt-collar in the world, and of this collar we are about to hear a story. The collar had become so old that he began to think about getting married; and one day he happened to find himself in the same washing-tub as a garter. "Upon my word," said the shirt-collar, "I have never seen anything so slim and delicate, so neat and soft before. May I venture to ask your name?"

"I shall not tell you," replied the garter.

"Where do you reside when you are at home?" asked the shirt-collar. But the garter was naturally shy, and did not know how to answer such a question.

"I presume you are a girdle," said the shirt-collar, "a sort of under girdle. I see that you are useful, as well as ornamental, my little lady."

"You must not speak to me," said the garter; "I do not think I have given you any encouragement to do so."

"Oh, when any one is as beautiful as you are," said the shirt-collar, "is not that encouragement enough?"

"Get away; don't come so near me," said the garter, "you appear to me quite like a man." "I am a fine gentleman certainly," said the shirt-collar, "I possess a boot-jack and a hair-brush." This was not true, for these things belonged to his master; but he was a boaster.

"Don't come so near me," said the garter; "I am not accustomed to it."

"Affectation!" said the shirt-collar.

Then they were taken out of the wash-tub, starched, and hung over a chair in the sunshine, and then laid on the ironing-board. And now came the glowing iron. "Mistress widow," said the shirt-collar, "little mistress widow, I feel quite warm. I am changing, I am losing all my creases. You are burning a hole in me. Ugh! I propose to you."

"You old rag," said the flat-iron, driving proudly over the collar, for she fancied herself a steam-engine, which rolls over the railway and draws carriages. "You old rag!" said she.

The edges of the shirt-collar were a little frayed, so the scissors were brought to cut them smooth. "Oh!" exclaimed the shirt-collar, "what a first-rate dancer you would make; you can stretch out your leg so well. I never saw anything so charming; I am sure no human being could do the same."

"I should think not," replied the scissors.

"You ought to be a countess," said the shirt collar; "but all I possess consists of a fine gentleman, a boot-jack, and a comb. I wish I had an estate for your sake."

“What! is he going to propose to me?” said the scissors, and she became so angry that she cut too sharply into the shirt collar, and it was obliged to be thrown by as useless.
“I shall be obliged to propose to the hair-brush,” thought the shirt collar; so he remarked one day, “It is wonderful what beautiful hair you have, my little lady. Have you never thought of being engaged?”
“You might know I should think of it,” answered the hair brush; “I am engaged to the boot-jack.”
“Engaged!” cried the shirt collar, “now there is no one left to propose to;” and then he pretended to despise all love-making.
A long time passed, and the shirt collar was taken in a bag to the paper-mill. Here was a large company of rags, the fine ones lying by themselves, separated from the coarser, as it ought to be. They had all many things to relate, especially the shirt collar, who was a terrible boaster. “I have had an immense number of love affairs,” said the shirt collar, “no one left me any peace. It is true I was a very fine gentleman; quite stuck up. I had a boot-jack and a brush that I never used. You should have seen me then, when I was turned down. I shall never forget my first love; she was a girdle, so charming, and fine, and soft, and she threw herself into a washing tub for my sake. There was a widow too, who was warmly in love with me, but I left her alone, and she became quite black. The next was a first-rate dancer; she gave me the wound from which I still suffer, she was so passionate. Even my own hair-brush was in love with me, and lost all her hair through neglected love. Yes, I have had great experience of this kind, but my greatest grief was for the garter—the girdle I meant to say—that jumped into the wash-tub. I have a great deal on my conscience, and it is really time I should be turned into white paper.”
And the shirt collar came to this at last. All the rags were made into white paper, and the shirt collar became the very identical piece of paper which we now see, and on which this story is printed. It happened as a punishment to him, for having boasted so shockingly of things which were not true. And this is a warning to us, to be careful how we act, for we may some day find ourselves in the rag-bag, to be turned into white paper, on which our whole history may be written, even its most secret actions. And it would not be pleasant to have to run about the world in the form of a piece of paper, telling everything we have done, like the boasting shirt collar.

THE SNOW MAN

"It is so delightfully cold," said the Snow Man, "that it makes my whole body crackle. This is just the kind of wind to blow life into one. How that great red thing up there is staring at me!" He meant the sun, who was just setting. "It shall not make me wink. I shall manage to keep the pieces."

He had two triangular pieces of tile in his head, instead of eyes; his mouth was made of an old broken rake, and was, of course, furnished with teeth. He had been brought into existence amidst the joyous shouts of boys, the jingling of sleigh-bells, and the slashing of whips. The sun went down, and the full moon rose, large, round, and clear, shining in the deep blue.

"There it comes again, from the other side," said the Snow Man, who supposed the sun was showing himself once more. "Ah, I have cured him of staring, though; now he may hang up there, and shine, that I may see myself. If I only knew how to manage to move away from this place,—I should so like to move. If I could, I would slide along yonder on the ice, as I have seen the boys do; but I don't understand how; I don't even know how to run."

"Away, away," barked the old yard-dog. He was quite hoarse, and could not pronounce "Bow wow" properly. He had once been an indoor dog, and lay by the fire, and he had been hoarse ever since. "The sun will make you run some day. I saw him, last winter, make your predecessor run, and his predecessor before him. Away, away, they all have to go."

"I don't understand you, comrade," said the Snow Man. "Is that thing up yonder to teach me to run? I saw it running itself a little while ago, and now it has come creeping up from the other side.

"You know nothing at all," replied the yard-dog; "but then, you've only lately been patched up. What you see yonder is the moon, and the one before it was the sun. It will come again to-morrow, and most likely teach you to run down into the ditch by the well; for I think the weather is going to change. I can feel such pricks and stabs in my left leg; I am sure there is going to be a change."

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man to himself; "but I have a feeling that he is talking of something very disagreeable. The one who stared so just now, and whom he calls the sun, is not my friend; I can feel that too."

"Away, away," barked the yard-dog, and then he turned round three times, and crept into his kennel to sleep.

There was really a change in the weather. Towards morning, a thick fog covered the whole country round, and a keen wind arose, so that the cold seemed to freeze one's bones; but when the sun rose, the sight was splen-

did. Trees and bushes were covered with hoar frost, and looked like a forest of white coral; while on every twig glittered frozen dew-drops. The many delicate forms concealed in summer by luxuriant foliage, were now clearly defined, and looked like glittering lace-work. From every twig glistened a white radiance. The birch, waving in the wind, looked full of life, like trees in summer; and its appearance was wondrously beautiful. And where the sun shone, how everything glittered and sparkled, as if diamond dust had been strewn about; while the snowy carpet of the earth appeared as if covered with diamonds, from which countless lights gleamed, whiter than even the snow itself.

"This is really beautiful," said a young girl, who had come into the garden with a young man; and they both stood still near the Snow Man, and contemplated the glittering scene. "Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight," she exclaimed, while her eyes sparkled.

"And we can't have such a fellow as this in the summer time," replied the young man, pointing to the Snow Man; "he is capital."

The girl laughed, and nodded at the Snow Man, and then tripped away over the snow with her friend. The snow creaked and crackled beneath her feet, as if she had been treading on starch.

"Who are these two?" asked the Snow Man of the yard-dog. "You have been here longer than I have; do you know them?"

"Of course I know them," replied the yard-dog; "she has stroked my back many times, and he has given me a bone of meat. I never bite those two."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"They are lovers," he replied; "they will go and live in the same kennel by-and-by, and gnaw at the same bone. Away, away!"

"Are they the same kind of beings as you and I?" asked the Snow Man.

"Well, they belong to the same master," retorted the yard-dog. "Certainly people who were only born yesterday know very little. I can see that in you. I have age and experience. I know every one here in the house, and I know there was once a time when I did not lie out here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Away, away!"

"The cold is delightful," said the Snow Man; "but do tell me tell me; only you must not clank your chain so; for it jars all through me when you do that."

"Away, away!" barked the yard-dog; "I'll tell you; they said I was a pretty little fellow once; then I used to lie in a velvet-covered chair, up at the master's house, and sit in the mistress's lap. They used to kiss my nose, and wipe my paws with an embroidered handkerchief, and I was called 'Ami, dear Ami, sweet Ami.' But after a while I grew too big for them, and they

sent me away to the housekeeper's room; so I came to live on the lower story. You can look into the room from where you stand, and see where I was master once; for I was indeed master to the housekeeper. It was certainly a smaller room than those up stairs; but I was more comfortable; for I was not being continually taken hold of and pulled about by the children as I had been. I received quite as good food, or even better. I had my own cushion, and there was a stove—it is the finest thing in the world at this season of the year. I used to go under the stove, and lie down quite beneath it. Ah, I still dream of that stove. Away, away!"

"Does a stove look beautiful?" asked the Snow Man, "is it at all like me?"

"It is just the reverse of you," said the dog; "it's as black as a crow, and has a long neck and a brass knob; it eats firewood, so that fire spurts out of its mouth. We should keep on one side, or under it, to be comfortable. You can see it through the window, from where you stand."

Then the Snow Man looked, and saw a bright polished thing with a brazen knob, and fire gleaming from the lower part of it. The Snow Man felt quite a strange sensation come over him; it was very odd, he knew not what it meant, and he could not account for it. But there are people who are not men of snow, who understand what it is. "'And why did you leave her?" asked the Snow Man, for it seemed to him that the stove must be of the female sex. "How could you give up such a comfortable place?"

"I was obliged," replied the yard-dog. "They turned me out of doors, and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest of my master's sons in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought; but they were so angry, and from that time I have been fastened with a chain, and lost my bone. Don't you hear how hoarse I am. Away, away! I can't talk any more like other dogs. Away, away, that is the end of it all."

But the Snow Man was no longer listening. He was looking into the housekeeper's room on the lower storey; where the stove stood on its four iron legs, looking about the same size as the Snow Man himself. "What a strange crackling I feel within me," he said. "Shall I ever get in there? It is an innocent wish, and innocent wishes are sure to be fulfilled. I must go in there and lean against her, even if I have to break the window."

"You must never go in there," said the yard-dog, "for if you approach the stove, you'll melt away, away."

"I might as well go," said the Snow Man, "for I think I am breaking up as it is."

During the whole day the Snow Man stood looking in through the window, and in the twilight hour the room became still more inviting, for from the stove came a gentle glow, not like the sun or the moon; no, only the bright

light which gleams from a stove when it has been well fed. When the door of the stove was opened, the flames darted out of its mouth; this is customary with all stoves. The light of the flames fell directly on the face and breast of the Snow Man with a ruddy gleam. “I can endure it no longer,” said he; “how beautiful it looks when it stretches out its tongue?”

The night was long, but did not appear so to the Snow Man, who stood there enjoying his own reflections, and crackling with the cold. In the morning, the window-panes of the housekeeper’s room were covered with ice. They were the most beautiful ice-flowers any Snow Man could desire, but they concealed the stove. These window-panes would not thaw, and he could see nothing of the stove, which he pictured to himself, as if it had been a lovely human being. The snow crackled and the wind whistled around him; it was just the kind of frosty weather a Snow Man might thoroughly enjoy. But he did not enjoy it; how, indeed, could he enjoy anything when he was “stove sick?”

“That is terrible disease for a Snow Man,” said the yard-dog; “I have suffered from it myself, but I got over it. Away, away,” he barked and then he added, “the weather is going to change.” And the weather did change; it began to thaw. As the warmth increased, the Snow Man decreased. He said nothing and made no complaint, which is a sure sign. One morning he broke, and sunk down altogether; and, behold, where he had stood, something like a broomstick remained sticking up in the ground. It was the pole round which the boys had built him up. “Ah, now I understand why he had such a great longing for the stove,” said the yard-dog. “Why, there’s the shovel that is used for cleaning out the stove, fastened to the pole.” The Snow Man had a stove scraper in his body; that was what moved him so. “But it’s all over now. Away, away.” And soon the winter passed. “Away, away,” barked the hoarse yard-dog. But the girls in the house sang,

“Come from your fragrant home, green thyme; Stretch your soft branches, willow-tree; The months are bringing the sweet spring-time,
When the lark in the sky sings joyfully. Come gentle sun, while the cuckoo sings, And I’ll mock his note in my wanderings.”

And nobody thought any more of the Snow Man.

THE SNOW QUEEN

IN SEVEN STORIES

STORY THE FIRST

Which describes a looking-glass and the broken fragments.

You must attend to the commencement of this story, for when we get to the end we shall know more than we do now about a very wicked hobgoblin; he was one of the very worst, for he was a real demon. One day, when he was in a merry mood, he made a looking-glass which had the power of making everything good or beautiful that was reflected in it almost shrink to nothing, while everything that was worthless and bad looked increased in size and worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes appeared like boiled spinach, and the people became hideous, and looked as if they stood on their heads and had no bodies. Their countenances were so distorted that no one could recognize them, and even one freckle on the face appeared to spread over the whole of the nose and mouth. The demon said this was very amusing. When a good or pious thought passed through the mind of any one it was misrepresented in the glass; and then how the demon laughed at his cunning invention. All who went to the demon's school—for he kept a school—talked everywhere of the wonders they had seen, and declared that people could now, for the first time, see what the world and mankind were really like. They carried the glass about everywhere, till at last there was not a land nor a people who had not been looked at through this distorted mirror. They wanted even to fly with it up to heaven to see the angels, but the higher they flew the more slippery the glass became, and they could scarcely hold it, till at last it slipped from their hands, fell to the earth, and was broken into millions of pieces. But now the looking-glass caused more unhappiness than ever, for some of the fragments were not so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about the world into every country. When one of these tiny atoms flew into a person's eye, it stuck there unknown to him, and from that moment he saw everything through a distorted medium, or could see only the worst side of what he looked at, for even the smallest fragment retained the same power which had belonged to the whole mirror. Some few persons even got a fragment of the looking-glass in their hearts, and this was very terrible, for their hearts became cold like a lump of ice. A few of the pieces were so large that they could be used as window-panes; it would have been a sad thing to look at our friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles; this was dreadful for those who wore them, for they could see

nothing either rightly or justly. At all this the wicked demon laughed till his sides shook—it tickled him so to see the mischief he had done. There were still a number of these little fragments of glass floating about in the air, and now you shall hear what happened with one of them.

SECOND STORY

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

In a large town, full of houses and people, there is not room for everybody to have even a little garden, therefore they are obliged to be satisfied with a few flowers in flower-pots. In one of these large towns lived two poor children who had a garden something larger and better than a few flower-pots. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other almost as much as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite to each other in two garrets, where the roofs of neighboring houses projected out towards each other and the water-pipe ran between them. In each house was a little window, so that any one could step across the gutter from one window to the other. The parents of these children had each a large wooden box in which they cultivated kitchen herbs for their own use, and a little rose-bush in each box, which grew splendidly. Now after a while the parents decided to place these two boxes across the water-pipe, so that they reached from one window to the other and looked like two banks of flowers. Sweet-peas drooped over the boxes, and the rose-bushes shot forth long branches, which were trained round the windows and clustered together almost like a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew they must not climb upon them, without permission, but they were often, however, allowed to step out together and sit upon their little stools under the rose-bushes, or play quietly. In winter all this pleasure came to an end, for the windows were sometimes quite frozen over. But then they would warm copper pennies on the stove, and hold the warm pennies against the frozen pane; there would be very soon a little round hole through which they could peep, and the soft bright eyes of the little boy and girl would beam through the hole at each window as they looked at each other. Their names were Kay and Gerda. In summer they could be together with one jump from the window, but in winter they had to go up and down the long staircase, and out through the snow before they could meet.

“See there are the white bees swarming,” said Kay’s old grandmother one day when it was snowing.

“Have they a queen bee?” asked the little boy, for he knew that the real bees had a queen.

“To be sure they have,” said the grandmother. “She is flying there where the swarm is thickest. She is the largest of them all, and never remains on the earth, but flies up to the dark clouds. Often at midnight she flies through the streets of the town, and looks in at the windows, then the ice freezes on the panes into wonderful shapes, that look like flowers and castles.”
“Yes, I have seen them,” said both the children, and they knew it must be true.
“Can the Snow Queen come in here?” asked the little girl.
“Only let her come,” said the boy, “I’ll set her on the stove and then she’ll melt.”
Then the grandmother smoothed his hair and told him some more tales. One evening, when little Kay was at home, half undressed, he climbed on a chair by the window and peeped out through the little hole. A few flakes of snow were falling, and one of them, rather larger than the rest, alighted on the edge of one of the flower boxes. This snow-flake grew larger and larger, till at last it became the figure of a woman, dressed in garments of white gauze, which looked like millions of starry snow-flakes linked together. She was fair and beautiful, but made of ice—shining and glittering ice. Still she was alive and her eyes sparkled like bright stars, but there was neither peace nor rest in their glance. She nodded towards the window and waved her hand. The little boy was frightened and sprang from the chair; at the same moment it seemed as if a large bird flew by the window. On the following day there was a clear frost, and very soon came the spring. The sun shone; the young green leaves burst forth; the swallows built their nests; windows were opened, and the children sat once more in the garden on the roof, high above all the other rooms. How beautiful the roses blossomed this summer. The little girl had learnt a hymn in which roses were spoken of, and then she thought of their own roses, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, and he sang too:—
“Roses bloom and cease to be, But we shall the Christ-child see.”
Then the little ones held each other by the hand, and kissed the roses, and looked at the bright sunshine, and spoke to it as if the Christ-child were there. Those were splendid summer days. How beautiful and fresh it was out among the rose-bushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming. One day Kay and Gerda sat looking at a book full of pictures of animals and birds, and then just as the clock in the church tower struck twelve, Kay said, “Oh, something has struck my heart!” and soon after, “There is something in my eye.”
The little girl put her arm round his neck, and looked into his eye, but she could see nothing.

“I think it is gone,” he said. But it was not gone; it was one of those bits of the looking-glass—that magic mirror, of which we have spoken—the ugly glass which made everything great and good appear small and ugly, while all that was wicked and bad became more visible, and every little fault could be plainly seen. Poor little Kay had also received a small grain in his heart, which very quickly turned to a lump of ice. He felt no more pain, but the glass was there still. “Why do you cry?” said he at last; “it makes you look ugly. There is nothing the matter with me now. Oh, see!” he cried suddenly, “that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is quite crooked. After all they are ugly roses, just like the box in which they stand,” and then he kicked the boxes with his foot, and pulled off the two roses.

“Kay, what are you doing?” cried the little girl; and then, when he saw how frightened she was, he tore off another rose, and jumped through his own window away from little Gerda.

When she afterwards brought out the picture book, he said, “It was only fit for babies in long clothes,” and when grandmother told any stories, he would interrupt her with “but;” or, when he could manage it, he would get behind her chair, put on a pair of spectacles, and imitate her very cleverly, to make people laugh. By-and-by he began to mimic the speech and gait of persons in the street. All that was peculiar or disagreeable in a person he would imitate directly, and people said, “That boy will be very clever; he has a remarkable genius.” But it was the piece of glass in his eye, and the coldness in his heart, that made him act like this. He would even tease little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart. His games, too, were quite different; they were not so childish. One winter’s day, when it snowed, he brought out a burning-glass, then he held out the tail of his blue coat, and let the snow-flakes fall upon it. “Look in this glass, Gerda,” said he; and she saw how every flake of snow was magnified, and looked like a beautiful flower or a glittering star. “Is it not clever?” said Kay, “and much more interesting than looking at real flowers. There is not a single fault in it, and the snow-flakes are quite perfect till they begin to melt.”

Soon after Kay made his appearance in large thick gloves, and with his sledge at his back. He called up stairs to Gerda, “I’ve got to leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play and ride.” And away he went. In the great square, the boldest among the boys would often tie their sledges to the country people’s carts, and go with them a good way. This was capital. But while they were all amusing themselves, and Kay with them, a great sledge came by; it was painted white, and in it sat some one wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a white cap. The sledge drove twice

round the square, and Kay fastened his own little sledge to it, so that when it went away, he followed with it. It went faster and faster right through the next street, and then the person who drove turned round and nodded pleasantly to Kay, just as if they were acquainted with each other, but whenever Kay wished to loosen his little sledge the driver nodded again, so Kay sat still, and they drove out through the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so heavily that the little boy could not see a hand's breadth before him, but still they drove on; then he suddenly loosened the cord so that the large sled might go on without him, but it was of no use, his little carriage held fast, and away they went like the wind. Then he called out loudly, but nobody heard him, while the snow beat upon him, and the sledge flew onwards. Every now and then it gave a jump as if it were going over hedges and ditches. The boy was frightened, and tried to say a prayer, but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes became larger and larger, till they appeared like great white chickens. All at once they sprang on one side, the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap, which were made entirely of snow, fell off, and he saw a lady, tall and white, it was the Snow Queen.

"We have driven well," said she, "but why do you tremble? here, creep into my warm fur." Then she seated him beside her in the sledge, and as she wrapped the fur round him he felt as if he were sinking into a snow drift.

"Are you still cold," she asked, as she kissed him on the forehead. The kiss was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, which was already almost a lump of ice; he felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment; he soon seemed quite well again, and did not notice the cold around him.

"My sledge! don't forget my sledge," was his first thought, and then he looked and saw that it was bound fast to one of the white chickens, which flew behind him with the sledge at its back. The Snow Queen kissed little Kay again, and by this time he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

"Now you must have no more kisses," she said, "or I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her, and saw that she was so beautiful, he could not imagine a more lovely and intelligent face; she did not now seem to be made of ice, as when he had seen her through his window, and she had nodded to him. In his eyes she was perfect, and she did not feel at all afraid. He told her he could do mental arithmetic, as far as fractions, and that he knew the number of square miles and the number of inhabitants in the country. And she always smiled so that he thought he did not know enough yet, and

she looked round the vast expanse as she flew higher and higher with him upon a black cloud, while the storm blew and howled as if it were singing old songs. They flew over woods and lakes, over sea and land; below them roared the wild wind; the wolves howled and the snow crackled; over them flew the black screaming crows, and above all shone the moon, clear and bright,—and so Kay passed through the long winter's night, and by day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

THIRD STORY

THE FLOWER GARDEN OF THE WOMAN WHO COULD CONJURE

But how fared little Gerda during Kay's absence? What had become of him, no one knew, nor could any one give the slightest information, excepting the boys, who said that he had tied his sledge to another very large one, which had driven through the street, and out at the town gate. Nobody knew where it went; many tears were shed for him, and little Gerda wept bitterly for a long time. She said she knew he must be dead; that he was drowned in the river which flowed close by the school. Oh, indeed those long winter days were very dreary. But at last spring came, with warm sunshine. "Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it," said the sunshine.

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

"We don't believe it," they replied; and at last little Gerda began to doubt it herself. "I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "those that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river, and ask for him." It was quite early when she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep; then she put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town gates toward the river. "Is it true that you have taken my little playmate away from me?" said she to the river. "I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me." And it seemed as if the waves nodded to her in a strange manner. Then she took off her red shoes, which she liked better than anything else, and threw them both into the river, but they fell near the bank, and the little waves carried them back to the land, just as if the river would not take from her what she loved best, because they could not give her back little Kay. But she thought the shoes had not been thrown out far enough. Then she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds, and threw the shoes again from the farther end of the boat into the water, but it was not

fastened. And her movement sent it gliding away from the land. When she saw this she hastened to reach the end of the boat, but before she could so it was more than a yard from the bank, and drifting away faster than ever. Then little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her to land, but they flew along by the shore, and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are! Here we are!" The boat floated with the stream; little Gerda sat quite still with only her stockings on her feet; the red shoes floated after her, but she could not reach them because the boat kept so much in advance. The banks on each side of the river were very pretty. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, sloping fields, in which cows and sheep were grazing, but not a man to be seen. Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay, thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and raised her head, and looked at the beautiful green banks; and so the boat sailed on for hours. At length she came to a large cherry orchard, in which stood a small red house with strange red and blue windows. It had also a thatched roof, and outside were two wooden soldiers, that presented arms to her as she sailed past. Gerda called out to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they did not answer; and as the boat drifted nearer to the shore, she saw what they really were. Then Gerda called still louder, and there came a very old woman out of the house, leaning on a crutch. She wore a large hat to shade her from the sun, and on it were painted all sorts of pretty flowers. "You poor little child," said the old woman, "how did you manage to come all this distance into the wide world on such a rapid rolling stream?" And then the old woman walked in the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and lifted Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to feel herself on dry ground, although she was rather afraid of the strange old woman. "Come and tell me who you are," said she, "and how came you here."

Then Gerda told her everything, while the old woman shook her head, and said, "Hem-hem;" and when she had finished, Gerda asked if she had not seen little Kay, and the old woman told her he had not passed by that way, but he very likely would come. So she told Gerda not to be sorrowful, but to taste the cherries and look at the flowers; they were better than any picture-book, for each of them could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand and led her into the little house, and the old woman closed the door. The windows were very high, and as the panes were red, blue, and yellow, the daylight shone through them in all sorts of singular colors. On the table stood beautiful cherries, and Gerda had permission to eat as many as she would. While she was eating them the old woman combed out her long

flaxen ringlets with a golden comb, and the glossy curls hung down on each side of the little round pleasant face, which looked fresh and blooming as a rose. “I have long been wishing for a dear little maiden like you,” said the old woman, “and now you must stay with me, and see how happily we shall live together.” And while she went on combing little Gerda’s hair, she thought less and less about her adopted brother Kay, for the old woman could conjure, although she was not a wicked witch; she conjured only a little for her own amusement, and now, because she wanted to keep Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden, and stretched out her crutch towards all the rose-trees, beautiful though they were; and they immediately sunk into the dark earth, so that no one could tell where they had once stood. The old woman was afraid that if little Gerda saw roses she would think of those at home, and then remember little Kay, and run away. Then she took Gerda into the flower-garden. How fragrant and beautiful it was! Every flower that could be thought of for every season of the year was here in full bloom; no picture-book could have more beautiful colors. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry-trees; then she slept in an elegant bed with red silk pillows, embroidered with colored violets; and then she dreamed as pleasantly as a queen on her wedding day. The next day, and for many days after, Gerda played with the flowers in the warm sunshine. She knew every flower, and yet, although there were so many of them, it seemed as if one were missing, but which it was she could not tell. One day, however, as she sat looking at the old woman’s hat with the painted flowers on it, she saw that the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made all the roses sink into the earth. But it is difficult to keep the thoughts together in everything; one little mistake upsets all our arrangements.

“What, are there no roses here?” cried Gerda; and she ran out into the garden, and examined all the beds, and searched and searched. There was not one to be found. Then she sat down and wept, and her tears fell just on the place where one of the rose-trees had sunk down. The warm tears moistened the earth, and the rose-tree sprouted up at once, as blooming as when it had sunk; and Gerda embraced it and kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and, with them, of little Kay.

“Oh, how I have been detained!” said the little maiden, “I wanted to seek for little Kay. Do you know where he is?” she asked the roses; “do you think he is dead?”

And the roses answered, “No, he is not dead. We have been in the ground where all the dead lie; but Kay is not there.”

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and then she went to the other flowers, and looked into their little cups, and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?" But each flower, as it stood in the sunshine, dreamed only of its own little fairy tale of history. Not one knew anything of Kay. Gerda heard many stories from the flowers, as she asked them one after another about him.

And what, said the tiger-lily? "Hark, do you hear the drum?—'turn, turn,'—there are only two notes, always, 'turn, turn.' Listen to the women's song of mourning! Hear the cry of the priest! In her long red robe stands the Hindoo widow by the funeral pile. The flames rise around her as she places herself on the dead body of her husband; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one in that circle; of him, her son, who lighted those flames. Those shining eyes trouble her heart more painfully than the flames which will soon consume her body to ashes. Can the fire of the heart be extinguished in the flames of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," said the tiger-lily.

What, says the convolvulus? "Near yonder narrow road stands an old knight's castle; thick ivy creeps over the old ruined walls, leaf over leaf, even to the balcony, in which stands a beautiful maiden. She bends over the balustrades, and looks up the road. No rose on its stem is fresher than she; no apple-blossom, wafted by the wind, floats more lightly than she moves. Her rich silk rustles as she bends over and exclaims, 'Will he not come?'

"Is it Kay you mean?" asked Gerda.

"I am only speaking of a story of my dream," replied the flower.

What, said the little snow-drop? "Between two trees a rope is hanging; there is a piece of board upon it; it is a swing. Two pretty little girls, in dresses white as snow, and with long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, are sitting upon it swinging. Their brother who is taller than they are, stands in the swing; he has one arm round the rope, to steady himself; in one hand he holds a little bowl, and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing bubbles. As the swing goes on, the bubbles fly upward, reflecting the most beautiful varying colors. The last still hangs from the bowl of the pipe, and sways in the wind. On goes the swing; and then a little black dog comes running up. He is almost as light as the bubble, and he raises himself on his hind legs, and wants to be taken into the swing; but it does not stop, and the dog falls; then he barks and gets angry. The children stoop towards him, and the bubble bursts. A swinging plank, a light sparkling foam picture,—that is my story."

“It may be all very pretty what you are telling me,” said little Gerda, “but you speak so mournfully, and you do not mention little Kay at all.”
What do the hyacinths say? “There were three beautiful sisters, fair and delicate. The dress of one was red, of the second blue, and of the third pure white. Hand in hand they danced in the bright moonlight, by the calm lake; but they were human beings, not fairy elves. The sweet fragrance attracted them, and they disappeared in the wood; here the fragrance became stronger. Three coffins, in which lay the three beautiful maidens, glided from the thickest part of the forest across the lake. The fire-flies flew lightly over them, like little floating torches. Do the dancing maidens sleep, or are they dead? The scent of the flower says that they are corpses. The evening bell tolls their knell.”
“You make me quite sorrowful,” said little Gerda; “your perfume is so strong, you make me think of the dead maidens. Ah! is little Kay really dead then? The roses have been in the earth, and they say no.”
“Cling, clang,” tolled the hyacinth bells. “We are not tolling for little Kay; we do not know him. We sing our song, the only one we know.”
Then Gerda went to the buttercups that were glittering amongst the bright green leaves.
“You are little bright suns,” said Gerda; “tell me if you know where I can find my play-fellow.”
And the buttercups sparkled gayly, and looked again at Gerda. What song could the buttercups sing? It was not about Kay.
“The bright warm sun shone on a little court, on the first warm day of spring. His bright beams rested on the white walls of the neighboring house; and close by bloomed the first yellow flower of the season, glittering like gold in the sun’s warm ray. An old woman sat in her arm chair at the house door, and her granddaughter, a poor and pretty servant-maid came to see her for a short visit. When she kissed her grandmother there was gold everywhere: the gold of the heart in that holy kiss; it was a golden morning; there was gold in the beaming sunlight, gold in the leaves of the lowly flower, and on the lips of the maiden. There, that is my story,” said the buttercup.
“My poor old grandmother!” sighed Gerda; “she is longing to see me, and grieving for me as she did for little Kay; but I shall soon go home now, and take little Kay with me. It is no use asking the flowers; they know only their own songs, and can give me no information.”
And then she tucked up her little dress, that she might run faster, but the narcissus caught her by the leg as she was jumping over it; so she stopped and looked at the tall yellow flower, and said, “Perhaps you may know something.”

Then she stooped down quite close to the flower, and listened; and what did he say?

"I can see myself, I can see myself," said the narcissus. "Oh, how sweet is my perfume! Up in a little room with a bow window, stands a little dancing girl, half undressed; she stands sometimes on one leg, and sometimes on both, and looks as if she would tread the whole world under her feet. She is nothing but a delusion. She is pouring water out of a tea-pot on a piece of stuff which she holds in her hand; it is her bodice. 'Cleanliness is a good thing,' she says. Her white dress hangs on a peg; it has also been washed in the tea-pot, and dried on the roof. She puts it on, and ties a saffron-colored handkerchief round her neck, which makes the dress look whiter. See how she stretches out her legs, as if she were showing off on a stem. I can see myself, I can see myself."

"What do I care for all that," said Gerda, "you need not tell me such stuff." And then she ran to the other end of the garden. The door was fastened, but she pressed against the rusty latch, and it gave way. The door sprang open, and little Gerda ran out with bare feet into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one seemed to be following her. At last she could run no longer, so she sat down to rest on a great stone, and when she looked round she saw that the summer was over, and autumn very far advanced. She had known nothing of this in the beautiful garden, where the sun shone and the flowers grew all the year round.

"Oh, how I have wasted my time?" said little Gerda; "it is autumn. I must not rest any longer," and she rose up to go on. But her little feet were wounded and sore, and everything around her looked so cold and bleak. The long willow-leaves were quite yellow. The dew-drops fell like water, leaf after leaf dropped from the trees, the sloe-thorn alone still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour, and set the teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and weary the whole world appeared!

FOURTH STORY

THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS

Gerda was obliged to rest again, and just opposite the place where she sat, she saw a great crow come hopping across the snow toward her. He stood looking at her for some time, and then he wagged his head and said, "Caw, caw; good-day, good-day." He pronounced the words as plainly as he could, because he meant to be kind to the little girl; and then he asked her where she was going all alone in the wide world.

The word alone Gerda understood very well, and knew how much it expressed. So then she told the crow the whole story of her life and adventures, and asked him if he had seen little Kay.
The crow nodded his head very gravely, and said, "Perhaps I have—it may be."
"No! Do you think you have?" cried little Gerda, and she kissed the crow, and hugged him almost to death with joy.
"Gently, gently," said the crow. "I believe I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forgotten you by this time for the princess."
"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.
"Yes, listen," replied the crow, "but it is so difficult to speak your language. If you understand the crows' language then I can explain it better. Do you?"
"No, I have never learnt it," said Gerda, "but my grandmother understands it, and used to speak it to me. I wish I had learnt it."
"It does not matter," answered the crow; "I will explain as well as I can, although it will be very badly done;" and he told her what he had heard. "In this kingdom where we now are," said he, "there lives a princess, who is so wonderfully clever that she has read all the newspapers in the world, and forgotten them too, although she is so clever. A short time ago, as she was sitting on her throne, which people say is not such an agreeable seat as is often supposed, she began to sing a song which commences in these words: 'Why should I not be married?'
'Why not indeed?' said she, and so she determined to marry if she could find a husband who knew what to say when he was spoken to, and not one who could only look grand, for that was so tiresome. Then she assembled all her court ladies together at the beat of the drum, and when they heard of her intentions they were very much pleased. 'We are so glad to hear it,' said they, we were talking about it ourselves the other day.' You may believe that every word I tell you is true," said the crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart who goes freely about the palace, and she told me all this."
Of course his sweetheart was a crow, for "birds of a feather flock together," and one crow always chooses another crow.
"Newspapers were published immediately, with a border of hearts, and the initials of the princess among them. They gave notice that every young man who was handsome was free to visit the castle and speak with the princess; and those who could reply loud enough to be heard when spoken to, were to make themselves quite at home at the palace; but the one who spoke best would be chosen as a husband for the princess. Yes, yes, you may believe me, it is all as true as I sit here," said the crow. "The people came in crowds. There was a great deal of crushing and running about, but no one succeeded

either on the first or second day. They could all speak very well while they were outside in the streets, but when they entered the palace gates, and saw the guards in silver uniforms, and the footmen in their golden livery on the staircase, and the great halls lighted up, they became quite confused. And when they stood before the throne on which the princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last words she had said; and she had no particular wish to hear her own words over again. It was just as if they had all taken something to make them sleepy while they were in the palace, for they did not recover themselves nor speak till they got back again into the street. There was quite a long line of them reaching from the town-gate to the palace. I went myself to see them," said the crow. "They were hungry and thirsty, for at the palace they did not get even a glass of water. Some of the wisest had taken a few slices of bread and butter with them, but they did not share it with their neighbors; they thought if they went in to the princess looking hungry, there would be a better chance for themselves."

"But Kay! tell me about little Kay!" said Gerda, "was he amongst the crowd?"

"Stop a bit, we are just coming to him. It was on the third day, there came marching cheerfully along to the palace a little personage, without horses or carriage, his eyes sparkling like yours; he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very poor."

"That was Kay!" said Gerda joyfully. "Oh, then I have found him;" and she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," added the crow.

"No, it must have been his sledge," said Gerda; "for he went away with it."

"It may have been so," said the crow; "I did not look at it very closely. But I know from my tame sweetheart that he passed through the palace gates, saw the guards in their silver uniform, and the servants in their liveries of gold on the stairs, but he was not in the least embarrassed. 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs,' he said. 'I prefer to go in.' The rooms were blazing with light. Councillors and ambassadors walked about with bare feet, carrying golden vessels; it was enough to make any one feel serious. His boots creaked loudly as he walked, and yet he was not at all uneasy."

"It must be Kay," said Gerda, "I know he had new boots on, I have heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"They really did creak," said the crow, "yet he went boldly up to the princess herself, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning wheel, and all the ladies of the court were present with their maids, and all the cavaliers with their servants; and each of the maids had another maid to wait upon her, and

the cavaliers' servants had their own servants, as well as a page each. They all stood in circles round the princess, and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The servants' pages, who always wore slippers, could hardly be looked at, they held themselves up so proudly by the door."

"It must be quite awful," said little Gerda, "but did Kay win the princess?"

"If I had not been a crow," said he, "I would have married her myself, although I am engaged. He spoke just as well as I do, when I speak the crows' language, so I heard from my tame sweetheart. He was quite free and agreeable and said he had not come to woo the princess, but to hear her wisdom; and he was as pleased with her as she was with him."

"Oh, certainly that was Kay," said Gerda, "he was so clever; he could work mental arithmetic and fractions. Oh, will you take me to the palace?"

"It is very easy to ask that," replied the crow, "but how are we to manage it? However, I will speak about it to my tame sweetheart, and ask her advice; for I must tell you it will be very difficult to gain permission for a little girl like you to enter the palace."

"Oh, yes; but I shall gain permission easily," said Gerda, "for when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out and fetch me in immediately."

"Wait for me here by the palings," said the crow, wagging his head as he flew away.

It was late in the evening before the crow returned. "Caw, caw," he said, "she sends you greeting, and here is a little roll which she took from the kitchen for you; there is plenty of bread there, and she thinks you must be hungry. It is not possible for you to enter the palace by the front entrance. The guards in silver uniform and the servants in gold livery would not allow it. But do not cry, we will manage to get you in; my sweetheart knows a little back-staircase that leads to the sleeping apartments, and she knows where to find the key."

Then they went into the garden through the great avenue, where the leaves were falling one after another, and they could see the light in the palace being put out in the same manner. And the crow led little Gerda to the back door, which stood ajar. Oh! how little Gerda's heart beat with anxiety and longing; it was just as if she were going to do something wrong, and yet she only wanted to know where little Kay was. "It must be he," she thought, "with those clear eyes, and that long hair." She could fancy she saw him smiling at her, as he used to at home, when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her, and to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake, and to know how sorry they had been at home because he did not come back. Oh what joy and yet fear she felt! They were now on

the stairs, and in a small closet at the top a lamp was burning. In the middle of the floor stood the tame crow, turning her head from side to side, and gazing at Gerda, who curtseyed as her grandmother had taught her to do.
"My betrothed has spoken so very highly of you, my little lady," said the tame crow, "your life-history, Vita, as it may be called, is very touching. If you will take the lamp I will walk before you. We will go straight along this way, then we shall meet no one."
"It seems to me as if somebody were behind us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her like a shadow on the wall, and then horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, ladies and gentlemen on horseback, glided by her, like shadows on the wall.
"They are only dreams," said the crow, "they are coming to fetch the thoughts of the great people out hunting."
"All the better, for we shall be able to look at them in their beds more safely. I hope that when you rise to honor and favor, you will show a grateful heart."
"You may be quite sure of that," said the crow from the forest.
They now came into the first hall, the walls of which were hung with rose-colored satin, embroidered with artificial flowers. Here the dreams again flitted by them but so quickly that Gerda could not distinguish the royal persons. Each hall appeared more splendid than the last, it was enought to bewilder any one. At length they reached a bedroom. The ceiling was like a great palm-tree, with glass leaves of the most costly crystal, and over the centre of the floor two beds, each resembling a lily, hung from a stem of gold. One, in which the princess lay, was white, the other was red; and in this Gerda had to seek for little Kay. She pushed one of the red leaves aside, and saw a little brown neck. Oh, that must be Kay! She called his name out quite loud, and held the lamp over him. The dreams rushed back into the room on horseback. He woke, and turned his head round, it was not little Kay! The prince was only like him in the neck, still he was young and pretty. Then the princess peeped out of her white-lily bed, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her story, and all that the crows had done to help her.
"You poor child," said the prince and princess; then they praised the crows, and said they were not angry for what they had done, but that it must not happen again, and this time they should be rewarded.
"Would you like to have your freedom?" asked the princess, "or would you prefer to be raised to the position of court crows, with all that is left in the kitchen for yourselves?"
Then both the crows bowed, and begged to have a fixed appointment, for

they thought of their old age, and said it would be so comfortable to feel that they had provision for their old days, as they called it. And then the prince got out of his bed, and gave it up to Gerda,—he could do no more; and she lay down. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good everyone is to me, men and animals too;" then she closed her eyes and fell into a sweet sleep. All the dreams came flying back again to her, and they looked like angels, and one of them drew a little sledge, on which sat Kay, and nodded to her. But all this was only a dream, and vanished as soon as she awoke.

The following day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and they invited her to stay at the palace for a few days, and enjoy herself, but she only begged for a pair of boots, and a little carriage, and a horse to draw it, so that she might go into the wide world to seek for Kay. And she obtained, not only boots, but also a muff, and she was neatly dressed; and when she was ready to go, there, at the door, she found a coach made of pure gold, with the coat-of-arms of the prince and princess shining upon it like a star, and the coachman, footman, and outriders all wearing golden crowns on their heads. The prince and princess themselves helped her into the coach, and wished her success. The forest crow, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles; he sat by Gerda's side, as he could not bear riding backwards. The tame crow stood in the door-way flapping her wings. She could not go with them, because she had been suffering from headache ever since the new appointment, no doubt from eating too much. The coach was well stored with sweet cakes, and under the seat were fruit and gingerbread nuts. "Farewell, farewell," cried the prince and princess, and little Gerda wept, and the crow wept; and then, after a few miles, the crow also said "Farewell," and this was the saddest parting. However, he flew to a tree, and stood flapping his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered in the bright sunshine.

FIFTH STORY

LITTLE ROBBER-GIRL

The coach drove on through a thick forest, where it lighted up the way like a torch, and dazzled the eyes of some robbers, who could not bear to let it pass them unmolested.

"It is gold! it is gold!" cried they, rushing forward, and seizing the horses. Then they struck the little jockeys, the coachman, and the footman dead, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is fat and pretty, and she has been fed with the kernels of nuts," said the

old robber-woman, who had a long beard and eyebrows that hung over her eyes. “She is as good as a little lamb; how nice she will taste!” and as she said this, she drew forth a shining knife, that glittered horribly. “Oh!” screamed the old woman the same moment; for her own daughter, who held her back, had bitten her in the ear. She was a wild and naughty girl, and the mother called her an ugly thing, and had not time to kill Gerda.

“She shall play with me,” said the little robber-girl; “she shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed.” And then she bit her mother again, and made her spring in the air, and jump about; and all the robbers laughed, and said, “See how she is dancing with her young cub.”

“I will have a ride in the coach,” said the little robber-girl; and she would have her own way; for she was so self-willed and obstinate.

She and Gerda seated themselves in the coach, and drove away, over stumps and stones, into the depths of the forest. The little robber-girl was about the same size as Gerda, but stronger; she had broader shoulders and a darker skin; her eyes were quite black, and she had a mournful look. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said,—

“They shall not kill you as long as you don’t make us vexed with you. I suppose you are a princess.”

“No,” said Gerda; and then she told her all her history, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber-girl looked earnestly at her, nodded her head slightly, and said, “They sha’nt kill you, even if I do get angry with you; for I will do it myself.” And then she wiped Gerda’s eyes, and stuck her own hands in the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

The coach stopped in the courtyard of a robber’s castle, the walls of which were cracked from top to bottom. Ravens and crows flew in and out of the holes and crevices, while great bulldogs, either of which looked as if it could swallow a man, were jumping about; but they were not allowed to bark. In the large and smoky hall a bright fire was burning on the stone floor. There was no chimney; so the smoke went up to the ceiling, and found a way out for itself. Soup was boiling in a large cauldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

“You shall sleep with me and all my little animals to-night,” said the robber-girl, after they had had something to eat and drink. So she took Gerda to a corner of the hall, where some straw and carpets were laid down. Above them, on laths and perches, were more than a hundred pigeons, who all seemed to be asleep, although they moved slightly when the two little girls came near them. “These all belong to me,” said the robber-girl; and

she seized the nearest to her, held it by the feet, and shook it till it flapped its wings. "Kiss it," cried she, flapping it in Gerda's face. "There sit the wood-pigeons," continued she, pointing to a number of laths and a cage which had been fixed into the walls, near one of the openings. "Both rascals would fly away directly, if they were not closely locked up. And here is my old sweetheart 'Ba;'" and she dragged out a reindeer by the horn; he wore a bright copper ring round his neck, and was tied up. "We are obliged to hold him tight too, or else he would run away from us also. I tickle his neck every evening with my sharp knife, which frightens him very much." And then the robber-girl drew a long knife from a chink in the wall, and let it slide gently over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal began to kick, and the little robber-girl laughed, and pulled down Gerda into bed with her.
"Will you have that knife with you while you are asleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it in great fright.
"I always sleep with the knife by me," said the robber-girl. "No one knows what may happen. But now tell me again all about little Kay, and why you went out into the world."
Then Gerda repeated her story over again, while the wood-pigeons in the cage over her cooed, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber-girl put one arm across Gerda's neck, and held the knife in the other, and was soon fast asleep and snoring. But Gerda could not close her eyes at all; she knew not whether she was to live or die. The robbers sat round the fire, singing and drinking, and the old woman stumbled about. It was a terrible sight for a little girl to witness.
Then the wood-pigeons said, "Coo, coo; we have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge, and he sat in the carriage of the Snow Queen, which drove through the wood while we were lying in our nest. She blew upon us, and all the young ones died excepting us two. Coo, coo."
"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"
"She was most likely travelling to Lapland, where there is always snow and ice. Ask the reindeer that is fastened up there with a rope."
"Yes, there is always snow and ice," said the reindeer; "and it is a glorious place; you can leap and run about freely on the sparkling ice plains. The Snow Queen has her summer tent there, but her strong castle is at the North Pole, on an island called Spitzbergen."
"Oh, Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.
"Lie still," said the robber-girl, "or I shall run my knife into your body."
In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said; and the

little robber-girl looked quite serious, and nodded her head, and said, “That is all talk, that is all talk. Do you know where Lapland is?” she asked the reindeer.

“Who should know better than I do?” said the animal, while his eyes sparkled. “I was born and brought up there, and used to run about the snow-covered plains.”

“Now listen,” said the robber-girl; “all our men are gone away,—only mother is here, and here she will stay; but at noon she always drinks out of a great bottle, and afterwards sleeps for a little while; and then, I’ll do something for you.” Then she jumped out of bed, clasped her mother round the neck, and pulled her by the beard, crying, “My own little nanny goat, good morning.” Then her mother filliped her nose till it was quite red; yet she did it all for love.

When the mother had drunk out of the bottle, and was gone to sleep, the little robber-maiden went to the reindeer, and said, “I should like very much to tickle your neck a few times more with my knife, for it makes you look so funny; but never mind,—I will untie your cord, and set you free, so that you may run away to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little maiden to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her play-fellow is. You have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening.”

Then the reindeer jumped for joy; and the little robber-girl lifted Gerda on his back, and had the forethought to tie her on, and even to give her her own little cushion to sit on.

“Here are your fur boots for you,” said she; “for it will be very cold; but I must keep the muff; it is so pretty. However, you shall not be frozen for the want of it; here are my mother’s large warm mittens; they will reach up to your elbows. Let me put them on. There, now your hands look just like my mother’s.”

But Gerda wept for joy.

“I don’t like to see you fret,” said the little robber-girl; “you ought to look quite happy now; and here are two loaves and a ham, so that you need not starve.” These were fastened on the reindeer, and then the little robber-maiden opened the door, coaxed in all the great dogs, and then cut the string with which the reindeer was fastened, with her sharp knife, and said, “Now run, but mind you take good care of the little girl.” And then Gerda stretched out her hand, with the great mitten on it, towards the little robber-girl, and said, “Farewell,” and away flew the reindeer, over stumps and stones, through the great forest, over marshes and plains, as quickly as

he could. The wolves howled, and the ravens screamed; while up in the sky quivered red lights like flames of fire. “There are my old northern lights,” said the reindeer; “see how they flash.” And he ran on day and night still faster and faster, but the loaves and the ham were all eaten by the time they reached Lapland.

SIXTH STORY

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINLAND WOMAN

They stopped at a little hut; it was very mean looking; the roof sloped nearly down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep in on their hands and knees, when they went in and out. There was no one at home but an old Lapland woman, who was cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp. The reindeer told her all about Gerda’s story, after having first told his own, which seemed to him the most important, but Gerda was so pinched with the cold that she could not speak. “Oh, you poor things,” said the Lapland woman, “you have a long way to go yet. You must travel more than a hundred miles farther, to Finland. The Snow Queen lives there now, and she burns Bengal lights every evening. I will write a few words on a dried stock-fish, for I have no paper, and you can take it from me to the Finland woman who lives there; she can give you better information than I can.” So when Gerda was warmed, and had taken something to eat and drink, the woman wrote a few words on the dried fish, and told Gerda to take great care of it. Then she tied her again on the reindeer, and he set off at full speed. Flash, flash, went the beautiful blue northern lights in the air the whole night long. And at length they reached Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman’s hut, for it had no door above the ground. They crept in, but it was so terribly hot inside that that woman wore scarcely any clothes; she was small and very dirty looking. She loosened little Gerda’s dress, and took off the fur boots and the mittens, or Gerda would have been unable to bear the heat; and then she placed a piece of ice on the reindeer’s head, and read what was written on the dried fish. After she had read it three times, she knew it by heart, so she popped the fish into the soup saucepan, as she knew it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything. The reindeer told his own story first, and then little Gerda’s, and the Finlander twinkled with her clever eyes, but she said nothing. “You are so clever,” said the reindeer; “I know you can tie all the winds of the world

with a piece of twine. If a sailor unties one knot, he has a fair wind; when he unties the second, it blows hard; but if the third and fourth are loosened, then comes a storm, which will root up whole forests. Cannot you give this little maiden something which will make her as strong as twelve men, to overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The Power of twelve men!" said the Finland woman; "that would be of very little use." But she went to a shelf and took down and unrolled a large skin, on which were inscribed wonderful characters, and she read till the perspiration ran down from her forehead. But the reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finland woman with such beseeching tearful eyes, that her own eyes began to twinkle again; so she drew the reindeer into a corner, and whispered to him while she laid a fresh piece of ice on his head, "Little Kay is really with the Snow Queen, but he finds everything there so much to his taste and his liking, that he believes it is the finest place in the world; but this is because he has a piece of broken glass in his heart, and a little piece of glass in his eye. These must be taken out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something to help her to conquer this power?"

"I can give her no greater power than she has already," said the woman; "don't you see how strong that is? How men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how well she has got through the world, barefooted as she is. She cannot receive any power from me greater than she now has, which consists in her own purity and innocence of heart. If she cannot herself obtain access to the Snow Queen, and remove the glass fragments from little Kay, we can do nothing to help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little girl so far, and set her down by the large bush which stands in the snow, covered with red berries. Do not stay gossiping, but come back here as quickly as you can." Then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda upon the reindeer, and he ran away with her as quickly as he could.

"Oh, I have forgotten my boots and my mittens," cried little Gerda, as soon as she felt the cutting cold, but the reindeer dared not stop, so he ran on till he reached the bush with the red berries; here he set Gerda down, and he kissed her, and the great bright tears trickled over the animal's cheeks; then he left her and ran back as fast as he could.

There stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of cold, dreary, ice-bound Finland. She ran forwards as quickly as she could,

when a whole regiment of snow-flakes came round her; they did not, however, fall from the sky, which was quite clear and glittering with the northern lights. The snow-flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came to her, the larger they appeared. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful they looked through the burning-glass. But these were really larger, and much more terrible, for they were alive, and were the guards of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. Some were like great porcupines, others like twisted serpents with their heads stretching out, and some few were like little fat bears with their hair bristled; but all were dazzlingly white, and all were living snow-flakes. Then little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath come out of her mouth like steam as she uttered the words. The steam appeared to increase, as she continued her prayer, till it took the shape of little angels who grew larger the moment they touched the earth. They all wore helmets on their heads, and carried spears and shields. Their number continued to increase more and more; and by the time Gerda had finished her prayers, a whole legion stood round her. They thrust their spears into the terrible snow-flakes, so that they shivered into a hundred pieces, and little Gerda could go forward with courage and safety. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she felt the cold less, and she hastened on to the Snow Queen's castle.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. In truth he thought not of little Gerda, and never supposed she could be standing in the front of the palace.

SEVENTH STORY

OF THE PALACE OF THE SNOW QUEEN AND WHAT HAPPENED THERE AT LAST

The walls of the palace were formed of drifted snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms in it, all as if they had been formed with snow blown together. The largest of them extended for several miles; they were all lighted up by the vivid light of the aurora, and they were so large and empty, so icy cold and glittering! There were no amusements here, not even a little bear's ball, when the storm might have been the music, and the bears could have danced on their hind legs, and shown their good manners. There were no pleasant games of snap-dragon, or touch, or even a gossip over the tea-table, for the young-lady foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen. The

flickering flame of the northern lights could be plainly seen, whether they rose high or low in the heavens, from every part of the castle. In the midst of its empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake, broken on its surface into a thousand forms; each piece resembled another, from being in itself perfect as a work of art, and in the centre of this lake sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home. She called the lake "The Mirror of Reason," and said that it was the best, and indeed the only one in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold, indeed almost black, but he did not feel it; for the Snow Queen had kissed away the icy shiverings, and his heart was already a lump of ice. He dragged some sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro, and placed them together in all kinds of positions, as if he wished to make something out of them; just as we try to form various figures with little tablets of wood which we call "a Chinese puzzle." Kay's fingers were very artistic; it was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in his eyes the figures were very remarkable, and of the highest importance; this opinion was owing to the piece of glass still sticking in his eye. He composed many complete figures, forming different words, but there was one word he never could manage to form, although he wished it very much. It was the word "Eternity." The Snow Queen had said to him, "When you can find out this, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates." But he could not accomplish it.

"Now I must hasten away to warmer countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black craters of the tops of the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called,—I shall make them look white, which will be good for them, and for the lemons and the grapes." And away flew the Snow Queen, leaving little Kay quite alone in the great hall which was so many miles in length; so he sat and looked at his pieces of ice, and was thinking so deeply, and sat so still, that any one might have supposed he was frozen.

Just at this moment it happened that little Gerda came through the great door of the castle. Cutting winds were raging around her, but she offered up a prayer and the winds sank down as if they were going to sleep; and she went on till she came to the large empty hall, and caught sight of Kay; she knew him directly; she flew to him and threw her arms round his neck, and held him fast, while she exclaimed, "Kay, dear little Kay, I have found you at last."

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold.

Then little Gerda wept hot tears, which fell on his breast, and penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, and washed away the little piece

of glass which had stuck there. Then he looked at her, and she sang—
"Roses bloom and cease to be,
But we shall the Christ-child see."
Then Kay burst into tears, and he wept so that the splinter of glass swam out of his eye. Then he recognized Gerda, and said, joyfully, "Gerda, dear little Gerda, where have you been all this time, and where have I been?" And he looked all around him, and said, "How cold it is, and how large and empty it all looks," and he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so pleasing to see them that the pieces of ice even danced about; and when they were tired and went to lie down, they formed themselves into the letters of the word which the Snow Queen had said he must find out before he could be his own master, and have the whole world and a pair of new skates. Then Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; and she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and his feet, and then he became quite healthy and cheerful. The Snow Queen might come home now when she pleased, for there stood his certainty of freedom, in the word she wanted, written in shining letters of ice.
Then they took each other by the hand, and went forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the grandmother, and of the roses on the roof, and as they went on the winds were at rest, and the sun burst forth. When they arrived at the bush with red berries, there stood the reindeer waiting for them, and he had brought another young reindeer with him, whose udders were full, and the children drank her warm milk and kissed her on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves thoroughly in the hot room, and she gave them directions about their journey home. Next they went to the Lapland woman, who had made some new clothes for them, and put their sleighs in order. Both the reindeer ran by their side, and followed them as far as the boundaries of the country, where the first green leaves were budding. And here they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapland woman, and all said—Farewell. Then the birds began to twitter, and the forest too was full of green young leaves; and out of it came a beautiful horse, which Gerda remembered, for it was one which had drawn the golden coach. A young girl was riding upon it, with a shining red cap on her head, and pistols in her belt. It was the little robber-maiden, who had got tired of staying at home; she was going first to the north, and if that did not suit her, she meant to try some other part of the world. She knew Gerda directly, and Gerda remembered her: it was a joyful meeting.
"You are a fine fellow to go gadding about in this way," said she to little Kay, "I should like to know whether you deserve that any one should go to the end of the world to find you."

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the prince and princess.
"They are gone to foreign countries," said the robber-girl.
"And the crow?" asked Gerda.
"Oh, the crow is dead," she replied; "his tame sweetheart is now a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg. She mourns very pitifully, but it is all stuff. But now tell me how you managed to get him back."
Then Gerda and Kay told her all about it.
"Snip, snap, snare! it's all right at last," said the robber-girl.
Then she took both their hands, and promised that if ever she should pass through the town, she would call and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand-in-hand towards home; and as they advanced, spring appeared more lovely with its green verdure and its beautiful flowers. Very soon they recognized the large town where they lived, and the tall steeples of the churches, in which the sweet bells were ringing a merry peal as they entered it, and found their way to their grandmother's door. They went upstairs into the little room, where all looked just as it used to do. The old clock was going "tick, tick," and the hands pointed to the time of day, but as they passed through the door into the room they perceived that they were both grown up, and become a man and woman. The roses out on the roof were in full bloom, and peeped in at the window; and there stood the little chairs, on which they had sat when children; and Kay and Gerda seated themselves each on their own chair, and held each other by the hand, while the cold empty grandeur of the Snow Queen's palace vanished from their memories like a painful dream. The grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine, and she read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God." And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once understood the words of the old song,
"Roses bloom and cease to be,
But we shall the Christ-child see."
And they both sat there, grown up, yet children at heart; and it was summer,—warm, beautiful summer.

THE SNOWDROP

It was winter-time; the air was cold, the wind was sharp, but within the closed doors it was warm and comfortable, and within the closed door lay the flower; it lay in the bulb under the snow-covered earth.

One day rain fell. The drops penetrated through the snowy covering down into the earth, and touched the flower-bulb, and talked of the bright world above. Soon the Sunbeam pierced its way through the snow to the root, and within the root there was a stirring.

"Come in," said the flower.

"I cannot," said the Sunbeam. "I am not strong enough to unlock the door! When the summer comes I shall be strong!"

"When will it be summer?" asked the Flower, and she repeated this question each time a new sunbeam made its way down to her. But the summer was yet far distant. The snow still lay upon the ground, and there was a coat of ice on the water every night.

"What a long time it takes! what a long time it takes!" said the Flower. "I feel a stirring and striving within me; I must stretch myself, I must unlock the door, I must get out, and must nod a good morning to the summer, and what a happy time that will be!"

And the Flower stirred and stretched itself within the thin rind which the water had softened from without, and the snow and the earth had warmed, and the Sunbeam had knocked at; and it shot forth under the snow with a greenish-white blossom on a green stalk, with narrow thick leaves, which seemed to want to protect it. The snow was cold, but was pierced by the Sunbeam, therefore it was easy to get through it, and now the Sunbeam came with greater strength than before.

"Welcome, welcome!" sang and sounded every ray, and the Flower lifted itself up over the snow into the brighter world. The Sunbeams caressed and kissed it, so that it opened altogether, white as snow, and ornamented with green stripes. It bent its head in joy and humility.

"Beautiful Flower!" said the Sunbeams, "how graceful and delicate you are! You are the first, you are the only one! You are our love! You are the bell that rings out for summer, beautiful summer, over country and town. All the snow will melt; the cold winds will be driven away; we shall rule; all will become green, and then you will have companions, syringas, laburnums, and roses; but you are the first, so graceful, so delicate!"

That was a great pleasure. It seemed as if the air were singing and sounding, as if rays of light were piercing through the leaves and the stalks of the

Flower. There it stood, so delicate and so easily broken, and yet so strong in its young beauty; it stood there in its white dress with the green stripes, and made a summer. But there was a long time yet to the summer-time. Clouds hid the sun, and bleak winds were blowing.

"You have come too early," said Wind and Weather. "We have still the power, and you shall feel it, and give it up to us. You should have stayed quietly at home and not have run out to make a display of yourself. Your time is not come yet!"

It was a cutting cold! The days which now come brought not a single sunbeam. It was weather that might break such a little Flower in two with cold. But the Flower had more strength than she herself knew of. She was strong in joy and in faith in the summer, which would be sure to come, which had been announced by her deep longing and confirmed by the warm sunlight; and so she remained standing in confidence in the snow in her white garment, bending her head even while the snow-flakes fell thick and heavy, and the icy winds swept over her.

"You'll break!" they said, "and fade, and fade! What did you want out here? Why did you let yourself be tempted? The Sunbeam only made game of you. Now you have what you deserve, you summer gauk."

"Summer gauk!" she repeated in the cold morning hour.

"O summer gauk!" cried some children rejoicingly; "yonder stands one—how beautiful, how beautiful! The first one, the only one!"

These words did the Flower so much good, they seemed to her like warm sunbeams. In her joy the Flower did not even feel when it was broken off. It lay in a child's hand, and was kissed by a child's mouth, and carried into a warm room, and looked on by gentle eyes, and put into water. How strengthening, how invigorating! The Flower thought she had suddenly come upon the summer.

The daughter of the house, a beautiful little girl, was confirmed, and she had a friend who was confirmed, too. He was studying for an examination for an appointment. "He shall be my summer gauk," she said; and she took the delicate Flower and laid it in a piece of scented paper, on which verses were written, beginning with summer gauk and ending with summer gauk. "My friend, be a winter gauk." She had twitted him with the summer. Yes, all this was in the verses, and the paper was folded up like a letter, and the Flower was folded in the letter, too. It was dark around her, dark as in those days when she lay hidden in the bulb. The Flower went forth on her journey, and lay in the post-bag, and was pressed and crushed, which was not at all pleasant; but that soon came to an end.

The journey was over; the letter was opened, and read by the dear friend. How pleased he was! He kissed the letter, and it was laid, with its enclosure of verses, in a box, in which there were many beautiful verses, but all of them without flowers; she was the first, the only one, as the Sunbeams had called her; and it was a pleasant thing to think of that.

She had time enough, moreover, to think about it; she thought of it while the summer passed away, and the long winter went by, and the summer came again, before she appeared once more. But now the young man was not pleased at all. He took hold of the letter very roughly, and threw the verses away, so that the Flower fell on the ground. Flat and faded she certainly was, but why should she be thrown on the ground? Still, it was better to be here than in the fire, where the verses and the paper were being burnt to ashes. What had happened? What happens so often:—the Flower had made a gauk of him, that was a jest; the girl had made a fool of him, that was no jest, she had, during the summer, chosen another friend.

Next morning the sun shone in upon the little flattened Snowdrop, that looked as if it had been painted upon the floor. The servant girl, who was sweeping out the room, picked it up, and laid it in one of the books which were upon the table, in the belief that it must have fallen out while the room was being arranged. Again the flower lay among verses—printed verses—and they are better than written ones—at least, more money has been spent upon them.

And after this years went by. The book stood upon the book-shelf, and then it was taken up and somebody read out of it. It was a good book; verses and songs by the old Danish poet, Ambrosius Stub, which are well worth reading. The man who was now reading the book turned over a page.

"Why, there's a flower!" he said; "a snowdrop, a summer gauk, a poet gauk! That flower must have been put in there with a meaning! Poor Ambrosius Stub! he was a summer fool too, a poet fool; he came too early, before his time, and therefore he had to taste the sharp winds, and wander about as a guest from one noble landed proprietor to another, like a flower in a glass of water, a flower in rhymed verses! Summer fool, winter fool, fun and folly—but the first, the only, the fresh young Danish poet of those days. Yes, thou shalt remain as a token in the book, thou little snowdrop: thou hast been put there with a meaning."

And so the Snowdrop was put back into the book, and felt equally honored and pleased to know that it was a token in the glorious book of songs, and that he who was the first to sing and to write had been also a snowdrop, had been a summer gauk, and had been looked upon in the winter-time as a fool. The Flower understood this, in her way, as we interpret everything in our way.

That is the story of the Snowdrop.

SOMETHING

"I mean to be somebody, and do something useful in the world," said the eldest of five brothers. "I don't care how humble my position is, so that I can only do some good, which will be something. I intend to be a brickmaker; bricks are always wanted, and I shall be really doing something."

"Your 'something' is not enough for me," said the second brother; "what you talk of doing is nothing at all, it is journeyman's work, or might even be done by a machine. No! I should prefer to be a builder at once, there is something real in that. A man gains a position, he becomes a citizen, has his own sign, his own house of call for his workmen: so I shall be a builder. If all goes well, in time I shall become a master, and have my own journeymen, and my wife will be treated as a master's wife. This is what I call something."

"I call it all nothing," said the third; "not in reality any position. There are many in a town far above a master builder in position. You may be an upright man, but even as a master you will only be ranked among common men. I know better what to do than that. I will be an architect, which will place me among those who possess riches and intellect, and who speculate in art. I shall certainly have to rise by my own endeavors from a bricklayer's laborer, or as a carpenter's apprentice—a lad wearing a paper cap, although I now wear a silk hat. I shall have to fetch beer and spirits for the journeymen, and they will call me 'thou,' which will be an insult. I shall endure it, however, for I shall look upon it all as a mere representation, a masquerade, a mummery, which to-morrow, that is, when I myself as a journeyman, shall have served my time, will vanish, and I shall go my way, and all that has passed will be nothing to me. Then I shall enter the academy, and get instructed in drawing, and be called an architect. I may even attain to rank, and have something placed before or after my name, and I shall build as others have done before me. By this there will be always 'something' to make me remembered, and is not that worth living for?"

"Not in my opinion," said the fourth; "I will never follow the lead of others, and only imitate what they have done. I will be a genius, and become greater than all of you together. I will create a new style of building, and introduce a plan for erecting houses suitable to the climate, with material easily obtained in the country, and thus suit national feeling and the developments of the age, besides building a storey for my own genius."

"But supposing the climate and the material are not good for much," said the fifth brother, "that would be very unfortunate for you, and have an influ-

ence over your experiments. Nationality may assert itself until it becomes affectation, and the developments of a century may run wild, as youth often does. I see clearly that none of you will ever really be anything worth notice, however you may now fancy it. But do as you like, I shall not imitate you. I mean to keep clear of all these things, and criticize what you do. In every action something imperfect may be discovered, something not right, which I shall make it my business to find out and expose; that will be something, I fancy." And he kept his word, and became a critic.

People said of this fifth brother, "There is something very precise about him; he has a good head-piece, but he does nothing." And on that very account they thought he must be something.

Now, you see, this is a little history which will never end; as long as the world exists, there will always be men like these five brothers. And what became of them? Were they each nothing or something? You shall hear; it is quite a history.

The eldest brother, he who fabricated bricks, soon discovered that each brick, when finished, brought him in a small coin, if only a copper one; and many copper pieces, if placed one upon another, can be changed into a shining shilling; and at whatever door a person knocks, who has a number of these in his hands, whether it be the baker's, the butcher's, or the tailor's, the door flies open, and he can get all he wants. So you see the value of bricks. Some of the bricks, however, crumbled to pieces, or were broken, but the elder brother found a use for even these.

On the high bank of earth, which formed a dyke on the sea-coast, a poor woman named Margaret wished to build herself a house, so all the imperfect bricks were given to her, and a few whole ones with them; for the eldest brother was a kind-hearted man, although he never achieved anything higher than making bricks. The poor woman built herself a little house—it was small and narrow, and the window was quite crooked, the door too low, and the straw roof might have been better thatched. But still it was a shelter, and from within you could look far over the sea, which dashed wildly against the sea-wall on which the little house was built. The salt waves sprinkled their white foam over it, but it stood firm, and remained long after he who had given the bricks to build it was dead and buried.

The second brother of course knew better how to build than poor Margaret, for he served an apprenticeship to learn it. When his time was up, he packed up his knapsack, and went on his travels, singing the journeyman's song,— "While young, I can wander without a care, And build new houses everywhere; Fair and bright are my dreams of home, Always thought of wherever I roam.

Hurrah for a workman's life of glee! There's a loved one at home who thinks of me; Home and friends I can ne'er forget, And I mean to be a master yet."

And that is what he did. On his return home, he became a master builder,—built one house after another in the town, till they formed quite a street, which, when finished, became really an ornament to the town. These houses built a house for him in return, which was to be his own. But how can houses build a house? If the houses were asked, they could not answer; but the people would understand, and say, "Certainly the street built his house for him." It was not very large, and the floor was of lime; but when he danced with his bride on the lime-covered floor, it was to him white and shining, and from every stone in the wall flowers seemed to spring forth and decorate the room as with the richest tapestry. It was really a pretty house, and in it were a happy pair. The flag of the corporation fluttered before it, and the journeymen and apprentices shouted "Hurrah." He had gained his position, he had made himself something, and at last he died, which was "something" too.

Now we come to the architect, the third brother, who had been first a carpenter's apprentice, had worn a cap, and served as an errand boy, but afterwards went to the academy, and risen to be an architect, a high and noble gentleman. Ah yes, the houses of the new street, which the brother who was a master builder erected, may have built his house for him, but the street received its name from the architect, and the handsomest house in the street became his property. That was something, and he was "something," for he had a list of titles before and after his name. His children were called "wellborn," and when he died, his widow was treated as a lady of position, and that was "something." His name remained always written at the corner of the street, and lived in every one's mouth as its name. Yes, this also was "something."

And what about the genius of the family—the fourth brother—who wanted to invent something new and original? He tried to build a lofty storey himself, but it fell to pieces, and he fell with it and broke his neck. However, he had a splendid funeral, with the city flags and music in the procession; flowers were strewn on the pavement, and three orations were spoken over his grave, each one longer than the other. He would have liked this very much during his life, as well as the poems about him in the papers, for he liked nothing so well as to be talked of. A monument was also erected over his grave. It was only another storey over him, but that was "something," Now he was dead, like the three other brothers.

The youngest—the critic—outlived them all, which was quite right for

him. It gave him the opportunity of having the last word, which to him was of great importance. People always said he had a good head-piece. At last his hour came, and he died, and arrived at the gates of heaven. Souls always enter these gates in pairs; so he found himself standing and waiting for admission with another; and who should it be but old dame Margaret, from the house on the dyke! "It is evidently for the sake of contrast that I and this wretched soul should arrive here exactly at the same time," said the critic. "Pray who are you, my good woman?" said he; "do you want to get in here too?"

And the old woman curtsied as well as she could; she thought it must be St. Peter himself who spoke to her. "I am a poor old woman," she said, "without my family. I am old Margaret, that lived in the house on the dyke."

"Well, and what have you done—what great deed have you performed down below?"

"I have done nothing at all in the world that could give me a claim to have these doors open for me," she said. "It would be only through mercy that I can be allowed to slip in through the gate."

"In what manner did you leave the world?" he asked, just for the sake of saying something; for it made him feel very weary to stand there and wait.

"How I left the world?" she replied; "why, I can scarcely tell you. During the last years of my life I was sick and miserable, and I was unable to bear creeping out of bed suddenly into the frost and cold. Last winter was a hard winter, but I have got over it all now. There were a few mild days, as your honor, no doubt, knows. The ice lay thickly on the lake, as far one could see. The people came from the town, and walked upon it, and they say there were dancing and skating upon it, I believe, and a great feasting. The sound of beautiful music came into my poor little room where I lay. Towards evening, when the moon rose beautifully, though not yet in her full splendor, I glanced from my bed over the wide sea; and there, just where the sea and sky met, rose a curious white cloud. I lay looking at the cloud till I observed a little black spot in the middle of it, which gradually grew larger and larger, and then I knew what it meant—I am old and experienced; and although this token is not often seen, I knew it, and a shuddering seized me. Twice in my life had I seen this same thing, and I knew that there would be an awful storm, with a spring tide, which would overwhelm the poor people who were now out on the ice, drinking, dancing, and making merry. Young and old, the whole city, were there; who was to warn them, if no one noticed the sign, or knew what it meant as I did? I was so alarmed, that I felt more strength and life than I had done for some time. I got out of bed, and

reached the window; I could not crawl any farther from weakness and exhaustion; but I managed to open the window. I saw the people outside running and jumping about on the ice; I saw the beautiful flags waving in the wind; I heard the boys shouting, 'Hurrah!' and the lads and lasses singing, and everything full of merriment and joy. But there was the white cloud with the black spot hanging over them. I cried out as loudly as I could, but no one heard me; I was too far off from the people. Soon would the storm burst, the ice break, and all who were on it be irretrievably lost. They could not hear me, and to go to them was quite out of my power. Oh, if I could only get them safe on land! Then came the thought, as if from heaven, that I would rather set fire to my bed, and let the house be burnt down, than that so many people should perish miserably. I got a light, and in a few moments the red flames leaped up as a beacon to them. I escaped fortunately as far as the threshold of the door; but there I fell down and remained: I could go no farther. The flames rushed out towards me, flickered on the window, and rose high above the roof. The people on the ice became aware of the fire, and ran as fast as possible to help a poor sick woman, who, as they thought, was being burnt to death. There was not one who did not run. I heard them coming, and I also at the same time was conscious of a rush of air and a sound like the roar of heavy artillery. The spring flood was lifting the ice covering, which brake into a thousand pieces. But the people had reached the sea-wall, where the sparks were flying round. I had saved them all; but I suppose I could not survive the cold and fright; so I came up here to the gates of paradise. I am told they are open to poor creatures such as I am, and I have now no house left on earth; but I do not think that will give me a claim to be admitted here."

Then the gates were opened, and an angel led the old woman in. She had dropped one little straw out of her straw bed, when she set it on fire to save the lives of so many. It had been changed into the purest gold—into gold that constantly grew and expanded into flowers and fruit of immortal beauty.

"See," said the angel, pointing to the wonderful straw, "this is what the poor woman has brought. What dost thou bring? I know thou hast accomplished nothing, not even made a single brick. Even if thou couldst return, and at least produce so much, very likely, when made, the brick would be useless, unless done with a good will, which is always something. But thou canst not return to earth, and I can do nothing for thee."

Then the poor soul, the old mother who had lived in the house on the dyke, pleaded for him. She said, "His brother made all the stone and bricks, and sent them to me to build my poor little dwelling, which was a great deal to

do for a poor woman like me. Could not all these bricks and pieces be as a wall of stone to prevail for him? It is an act of mercy; he is wanting it now; and here is the very fountain of mercy."

"Then," said the angel, "thy brother, he who has been looked upon as the meanest of you all, he whose honest deeds to thee appeared so humble,—it is he who has sent you this heavenly gift. Thou shalt not be turned away. Thou shalt have permission to stand without the gate and reflect, and repent of thy life on earth; but thou shalt not be admitted here until thou hast performed one good deed of repentance, which will indeed for thee be something."

"I could have expressed that better," thought the critic; but he did not say it aloud, which for him was SOMETHING, after all.

SOUP FROM A SAUSAGE SKEWER

"We had such an excellent dinner yesterday," said an old mouse of the female sex to another who had not been present at the feast. "I sat number twenty-one below the mouse-king, which was not a bad place. Shall I tell you what we had? Everything was first rate. Mouldy bread, tallow candle, and sausage. And then, when we had finished that course, the same came on all over again; it was as good as two feasts. We were very sociable, and there was as much joking and fun as if we had been all of one family circle. Nothing was left but the sausage skewers, and this formed a subject of conversation, till at last it turned to the proverb, 'Soup from sausage skins;' or, as the people in the neighboring country call it, 'Soup from a sausage skewer.' Every one had heard the proverb, but no one had ever tasted the soup, much less prepared it. A capital toast was drunk to the inventor of the soup, and some one said he ought to be made a relieving officer to the poor. Was not that witty? Then the old mouse-king rose and promised that the young lady-mouse who should learn how best to prepare this much-admired and savory soup should be his queen, and a year and a day should be allowed for the purpose."

"That was not at all a bad proposal," said the other mouse; "but how is the soup made?"

"Ah, that is more than I can tell you. All the young lady mice were asking the same question. They wished very much to be queen, but they did not want to take the trouble of going out into the world to learn how to make soup, which was absolutely necessary to be done first. But it is not every one who would care to leave her family, or her happy corner by the fire-

side at home, even to be made queen. It is not always easy to find bacon and cheese-rind in foreign lands every day, and it is not pleasant to have to endure hunger, and be perhaps, after all, eaten up alive by the cat."
Most probably some such thoughts as these discouraged the majority from going out into the world to collect the required information. Only four mice gave notice that they were ready to set out on the journey. They were young and lively, but poor. Each of them wished to visit one of the four divisions of the world, so that it might be seen which was the most favored by fortune. Every one took a sausage skewer as a traveller's staff, and to remind them of the object of their journey. They left home early in May, and none of them returned till the first of May in the following year, and then only three of them. Nothing was seen or heard of the fourth, although the day of decision was close at hand. "Ah, yes, there is always some trouble mixed up with the greatest pleasure," said the mouse-king; but he gave orders that all the mice within a circle of many miles should be invited at once. They were to assemble in the kitchen, and the three travelled mice were to stand in a row before them, while a sausage skewer, covered with crape, was to be stuck up instead of the missing mouse. No one dared to express an opinion until the king spoke, and desired one of them to go on with her story. And now we shall hear what she said.

WHAT THE FIRST LITTLE MOUSE SAW AND HEARD ON HER TRAVELS

"When I first went out into the world," said the little mouse, "I fancied, as so many of my age do, that I already knew everything, but it was not so. It takes years to acquire great knowledge. I went at once to sea in a ship bound for the north. I had been told that the ship's cook must know how to prepare every dish at sea, and it is easy enough to do that with plenty of sides of bacon, and large tubs of salt meat and mouldy flour. There I found plenty of delicate food, but no opportunity for learning how to make soup from a sausage skewer. We sailed on for many days and nights; the ship rocked fearfully, and we did not escape without a wetting. As soon as we arrived at the port to which the ship was bound, I left it, and went on shore at a place far towards the north. It is a wonderful thing to leave your own little corner at home, to hide yourself in a ship where there are sure to be some nice snug corners for shelter, then suddenly to find yourself thousands of miles away in a foreign land. I saw large pathless forests of pine and birch trees, which smelt so strong that I sneezed and thought of sau-

sage. There were great lakes also which looked as black as ink at a distance, but were quite clear when I came close to them. Large swans were floating upon them, and I thought at first they were only foam, they lay so still; but when I saw them walk and fly, I knew what they were directly. They belong to the goose species, one can see that by their walk. No one can attempt to disguise family descent. I kept with my own kind, and associated with the forest and field mice, who, however, knew very little, especially about what I wanted to know, and which had actually made me travel abroad. The idea that soup could be made from a sausage skewer was to them such an out-of-the-way, unlikely thought, that it was repeated from one to another through the whole forest. They declared that the problem would never be solved, that the thing was an impossibility. How little I thought that in this place, on the very first night, I should be initiated into the manner of its preparation.
"It was the height of summer, which the mice told me was the reason that the forest smelt so strong, and that the herbs were so fragrant, and the lakes with the white swimming swans so dark, and yet so clear. On the margin of the wood, near to three or four houses, a pole, as large as the mainmast of a ship, had been erected, and from the summit hung wreaths of flowers and fluttering ribbons; it was the Maypole. Lads and lasses danced round the pole, and tried to outdo the violins of the musicians with their singing. They were as merry as ever at sunset and in the moonlight, but I took no part in the merry-making. What has a little mouse to do with a Maypole dance? I sat in the soft moss, and held my sausage skewer tight. The moon threw its beams particularly on one spot where stood a tree covered with exceedingly fine moss. I may almost venture to say that it was as fine and soft as the fur of the mouse-king, but it was green, which is a color very agreeable to the eye. All at once I saw the most charming little people marching towards me. They did not reach higher than my knee; they looked like human beings, but were better proportioned, and they called themselves elves. Their clothes were very delicate and fine, for they were made of the leaves of flowers, trimmed with the wings of flies and gnats, which had not a bad effect. By their manner, it appeared as if they were seeking for something. I knew not what, till at last one of them espied me and came towards me, and the foremost pointed to my sausage skewer, and said, 'There, that is just what we want; see, it is pointed at the top; is it not capital?' and the longer he looked at my pilgrim's staff, the more delighted he became. 'I will lend it to you,' said I, 'but not to keep.'
"'Oh no, we won't keep it!' they all cried; and then they seized the skewer, which I gave up to them, and danced with it to the spot where the delicate

moss grew, and set it up in the middle of the green. They wanted a maypole, and the one they now had seemed cut out on purpose for them. Then they decorated it so beautifully that it was quite dazzling to look at. Little spiders spun golden threads around it, and then it was hung with fluttering veils and flags so delicately white that they glittered like snow in the moonshine. After that they took colors from the butterfly's wing, and sprinkled them over the white drapery which gleamed as if covered with flowers and diamonds, so that I could not recognize my sausage skewer at all. Such a maypole had never been seen in all the world as this. Then came a great company of real elves. Nothing could be finer than their clothes, and they invited me to be present at the feast; but I was to keep at a certain distance, because I was too large for them. Then commenced such music that it sounded like a thousand glass bells, and was so full and strong that I thought it must be the song of the swans. I fancied also that I heard the voices of the cuckoo and the black-bird, and it seemed at last as if the whole forest sent forth glorious melodies—the voices of children, the tinkling of bells, and the songs of the birds; and all this wonderful melody came from the elfin maypole. My sausage peg was a complete peal of bells. I could scarcely believe that so much could have been produced from it, till I remembered into what hands it had fallen. I was so much affected that I wept tears such as a little mouse can weep, but they were tears of joy. The night was far too short for me; there are no long nights there in summer, as we often have in this part of the world. When the morning dawned, and the gentle breeze rippled the glassy mirror of the forest lake, all the delicate veils and flags fluttered away into thin air; the waving garlands of the spider's web, the hanging bridges and galleries, or whatever else they may be called, vanished away as if they had never been. Six elves brought me back my sausage skewer, and at the same time asked me to make any request, which they would grant if in their power; so I begged them, if they could, to tell me how to make soup from a sausage skewer.

"'How do we make it?' said the chief of the elves with a smile. 'Why you have just seen it; you scarcely knew your sausage skewer again, I am sure.'

"They think themselves very wise, thought I to myself. Then I told them all about it, and why I had travelled so far, and also what promise had been made at home to the one who should discover the method of preparing this soup. 'What use will it be,' I asked, 'to the mouse-king or to our whole mighty kingdom that I have seen all these beautiful things? I cannot shake the sausage peg and say, Look, here is the skewer, and now the soup will come. That would only produce a dish to be served when people were keeping a fast.'

“Then the elf dipped his finger into the cup of a violet, and said to me, ‘Look here, I will anoint your pilgrim’s staff, so that when you return to your own home and enter the king’s castle, you have only to touch the king with your staff, and violets will spring forth and cover the whole of it, even in the coldest winter time; so I think I have given you really something to carry home, and a little more than something.’”

But before the little mouse explained what this something more was, she stretched her staff out to the king, and as it touched him the most beautiful bunch of violets sprang forth and filled the place with perfume. The smell was so powerful that the mouse-king ordered the mice who stood nearest the chimney to thrust their tails into the fire, that there might be a smell of burning, for the perfume of the violets was overpowering, and not the sort of scent that every one liked.

“But what was the something more of which you spoke just now?” asked the mouse-king.

“Why,” answered the little mouse, “I think it is what they call ‘effect;’” and thereupon she turned the staff round, and behold not a single flower was to be seen upon it! She now only held the naked skewer, and lifted it up as a conductor lifts his baton at a concert. “Violets, the elf told me,” continued the mouse, “are for the sight, the smell, and the touch; so we have only now to produce the effect of hearing and tasting;” and then, as the little mouse beat time with her staff, there came sounds of music, not such music as was heard in the forest, at the elfin feast, but such as is often heard in the kitchen—the sounds of boiling and roasting. It came quite suddenly, like wind rushing through the chimneys, and seemed as if every pot and kettle were boiling over. The fire-shovel clattered down on the brass fender; and then, quite as suddenly, all was still,—nothing could be heard but the light, vapory song of the tea-kettle, which was quite wonderful to hear, for no one could rightly distinguish whether the kettle was just beginning to boil or going to stop. And the little pot steamed, and the great pot simmered, but without any regard for each; indeed there seemed no sense in the pots at all. And as the little mouse waved her baton still more wildly, the pots foamed and threw up bubbles, and boiled over; while again the wind roared and whistled through the chimney, and at last there was such a terrible hubbub, that the little mouse let her stick fall.

“That is a strange sort of soup,” said the mouse-king; “shall we not now hear about the preparation?”

“That is all,” answered the little mouse, with a bow.

“That all!” said the mouse-king; “then we shall be glad to hear what information the next may have to give us.”

WHAT THE SECOND MOUSE HAD TO TELL

"I was born in the library, at a castle," said the second mouse. "Very few members of our family ever had the good fortune to get into the dining-room, much less the store-room. On my journey, and here to-day, are the only times I have ever seen a kitchen. We were often obliged to suffer hunger in the library, but then we gained a great deal of knowledge. The rumor reached us of the royal prize offered to those who should be able to make soup from a sausage skewer. Then my old grandmother sought out a manuscript which, however, she could not read, but had heard it read, and in it was written, 'Those who are poets can make soup of sausage skewers.' She then asked me if I was a poet. I felt myself quite innocent of any such pretensions. Then she said I must go out and make myself a poet. I asked again what I should be required to do, for it seemed to me quite as difficult as to find out how to make soup of a sausage skewer. My grandmother had heard a great deal of reading in her day, and she told me three principal qualifications were necessary—understanding, imagination, and feeling. 'If you can manage to acquire these three, you will be a poet, and the sausage-skewer soup will be quite easy to you.'

"So I went forth into the world, and turned my steps towards the west, that I might become a poet. Understanding is the most important matter in everything. I knew that, for the two other qualifications are not thought much of; so I went first to seek for understanding. Where was I to find it? 'Go to the ant and learn wisdom,' said the great Jewish king. I knew that from living in a library. So I went straight on till I came to the first great ant-hill, and then I set myself to watch, that I might become wise. The ants are a very respectable people, they are wisdom itself. All they do is like the working of a sum in arithmetic, which comes right. 'To work and to lay eggs,' say they, and to provide for posterity, is to live out your time properly;' and that they truly do. They are divided into the clean and the dirty ants, their rank is pointed out by a number, and the ant-queen is number ONE; and her opinion is the only correct one on everything; she seems to have the whole wisdom of the world in her, which was just the important matter I wished to acquire. She said a great deal which was no doubt very clever; yet to me it sounded like nonsense. She said the ant-hill was the loftiest thing in the world, and yet close to the mound stood a tall tree, which no one could deny was loftier, much loftier, but no mention was made of the tree. One evening an ant lost herself on this tree; she had crept up the stem, not nearly to the top, but higher than any ant had ever ventured; and when at

last she returned home she said that she had found something in her travels much higher than the ant-hill. The rest of the ants considered this an insult to the whole community; so she was condemned to wear a muzzle and to live in perpetual solitude. A short time afterwards another ant got on the tree, and made the same journey and the same discovery, but she spoke of it cautiously and indefinitely, and as she was one of the superior ants and very much respected, they believed her, and when she died they erected an eggshell as a monument to her memory, for they cultivated a great respect for science. I saw," said the little mouse, "that the ants were always running to and fro with her burdens on their backs. Once I saw one of them drop her load; she gave herself a great deal of trouble in trying to raise it again, but she could not succeed. Then two others came up and tried with all their strength to help her, till they nearly dropped their own burdens in doing so; then they were obliged to stop for a moment in their help, for every one must think of himself first. And the ant-queen remarked that their conduct that day showed that they possessed kind hearts and good understanding. 'These two qualities,' she continued, 'place us ants in the highest degree above all other reasonable beings. Understanding must therefore be seen among us in the most prominent manner, and my wisdom is greater than all.' And so saying she raised herself on her two hind legs, that no one else might be mistaken for her. I could not therefore make an error, so I ate her up. We are to go to the ants to learn wisdom, and I had got the queen.

"I now turned and went nearer to the lofty tree already mentioned, which was an oak. It had a tall trunk with a wide-spreading top, and was very old. I knew that a living being dwelt here, a dryad as she is called, who is born with the tree and dies with it. I had heard this in the library, and here was just such a tree, and in it an oak-maiden. She uttered a terrible scream when she caught sight of me so near to her; like many women, she was very much afraid of mice. And she had more real cause for fear than they have, for I might have gnawed through the tree on which her life depended. I spoke to her in a kind and friendly manner, and begged her to take courage. At last she took me up in her delicate hand, and then I told her what had brought me out into the world, and she promised me that perhaps on that very evening she should be able to obtain for me one of the two treasures for which I was seeking. She told me that Phantaesus was her very dear friend, that he was as beautiful as the god of love, that he remained often for many hours with her under the leafy boughs of the tree which then rustled and waved more than ever over them both. He called her his dryad, she said, and the tree his tree; for the grand old oak, with its gnarled trunk, was just to his

taſte. The root, spreading deep into the earth, the top rising high in the fresh air, knew the value of the drifted snow, the keen wind, and the warm sunshine, as it ought to be known. 'Yes,' continued the dryad, 'the birds sing up above in the branches, and talk to each other about the beautiful fields they have visited in foreign lands; and on one of the withered boughs a ſtork has built his neſt,—it is beautifully arranged, and besides it is pleasant to hear a little about the land of the pyramids. All this pleases Phantaesus, but it is not enough for him; I am obliged to relate to him of my life in the woods; and to go back to my childhood, when I was little, and the tree so small and delicate that a ſtinging-nettle could overshadow it, and I have to tell everything that has happened since then till now that the tree is so large and ſtrong. Sit you down now under the green bindwood and pay attention, when Phantaesus comes I will find an opportunity to lay hold of his wing and to pull out one of the little feathers. That feather you shall have; a better was never given to any poet, it will be quite enough for you.'

"And when Phantaesus came the feather was plucked, and," said the little mouse, "I seized and put it in water, and kept it there till it was quite soft. It was very heavy and indigeſtible, but I managed to nibble it up at laſt. It is not so easy to nibble one's self into a poet, there are so many things to get through. Now, however, I had two of them, underſtanding and imagination; and through these I knew that the third was to be found in the library. A great man has said and written that there are novels whose sole and only use appeared to be that they might relieve mankind of overflowing tears—a kind of sponge, in fact, for sucking up feelings and emotions. I remembered a few of these books, they had always appeared tempting to the appetite; they had been much read, and were so greasy, that they muſt have absorbed no end of emotions in themselves. I retraced my ſteps to the library, and literally devoured a whole novel, that is, properly speaking, the interior or soft part of it; the cruſt, or binding, I left. When I had digeſted not only this, but a second, I felt a ſtirring within me; then I ate a small piece of a third romance, and felt myself a poet. I said it to myself, and told others the same. I had head-ache and back-ache, and I cannot tell what aches besides. I thought over all the ſtories that may be said to be connected with sausage pegs, and all that has ever been written about skewers, and ſticks, and ſtaves, and splinters came to my thoughts; the ant-queen muſt have had a wonderfully clear underſtanding. I remembered the man who placed a white ſtick in his mouth by which he could make himself and the ſtick invisible. I thought of ſticks as hobby-horses, ſtaves of music or rhyme, of breaking a ſtick over a man's back, and heaven knows how many more

phrases of the same sort relating to sticks, staves, and skewers. All my thoughts rein on skewers, sticks of wood, and staves; and as I am, at last, a poet, and I have worked terribly hard to make myself one, I can of course make poetry on anything. I shall therefore be able to wait upon you every day in the week with a poetical history of a skewer. And that is my soup."
"In that case," said the mouse-king, "we will hear what the third mouse has to say."
"Squeak, squeak," cried a little mouse at the kitchen door; it was the fourth, and not the third, of the four who were contending for the prize, one whom the rest supposed to be dead. She shot in like an arrow, and overturned the sausage peg that had been covered with crape. She had been running day and night. She had watched an opportunity to get into a goods train, and had travelled by the railway; and yet she had arrived almost too late. She pressed forward, looking very much ruffled. She had lost her sausage skewer, but not her voice; for she began to speak at once as if they only waited for her, and would hear her only, and as if nothing else in the world was of the least consequence. She spoke out so clearly and plainly, and she had come in so suddenly, that no one had time to stop her or to say a word while she was speaking. And now let us hear what she said.

WHAT THE FOURTH MOUSE, WHO SPOKE BEFORE THE THIRD, HAD TO TELL

"I started off at once to the largest town," said she, "but the name of it has escaped me. I have a very bad memory for names. I was carried from the railway, with some forfeited goods, to the jail, and on arriving I made my escape, and ran into the house of the turnkey. The turnkey was speaking of his prisoners, especially of one who had uttered thoughtless words. These words had given rise to other words, and at length they were written down and registered: 'The whole affair is like making soup of sausage skewers,' said he, 'but the soup may cost him his neck.'
"Now this raised in me an interest for the prisoner," continued the little mouse, "and I watched my opportunity, and slipped into his apartment, for there is a mouse-hole to be found behind every closed door. The prisoner looked pale; he had a great beard and large, sparkling eyes. There was a lamp burning, but the walls were so black that they only looked the blacker for it. The prisoner scratched pictures and verses with white chalk on the black walls, but I did not read the verses. I think he found his confinement wearisome, so that I was a welcome guest. He enticed me

with bread-crumbs, with whistling, and with gentle words, and seemed so friendly towards me, that by degrees I gained confidence in him, and we became friends; he divided his bread and water with me, gave me cheese and sausage, and I really began to love him. Altogether, I must own that it was a very pleasant intimacy. He let me run about on his hand, and on his arm, and into his sleeve; and I even crept into his beard, and he called me his little friend. I forgot what I had come out into the world for; forgot my sausage skewer which I had laid in a crack in the floor—it is lying there still. I wished to stay with him always where I was, for I knew that if I went away the poor prisoner would have no one to be his friend, which is a sad thing. I stayed, but he did not. He spoke to me so mournfully for the last time, gave me double as much bread and cheese as usual, and kissed his hand to me. Then he went away, and never came back. I know nothing more of his history.

"The jailer took possession of me now. He said something about soup from a sausage skewer, but I could not trust him. He took me in his hand certainly, but it was to place me in a cage like a tread-mill. Oh how dreadful it was! I had to run round and round without getting any farther in advance, and only to make everybody laugh. The jailer's grand-daughter was a charming little thing. She had curly hair like the brightest gold, merry eyes, and such a smiling mouth.

"'You poor little mouse,' said she, one day as she peeped into my cage, 'I will set you free.' She then drew forth the iron fastening, and I sprang out on the window-sill, and from thence to the roof. Free! free! that was all I could think of; not of the object of my journey. It grew dark, and as night was coming on I found a lodging in an old tower, where dwelt a watchman and an owl. I had no confidence in either of them, least of all in the owl, which is like a cat, and has a great failing, for she eats mice. One may however be mistaken sometimes; and so was I, for this was a respectable and well-educated old owl, who knew more than the watchman, and even as much as I did myself. The young owls made a great fuss about everything, but the only rough words she would say to them were, 'You had better go and make some soup from sausage skewers.' She was very indulgent and loving to her children. Her conduct gave me such confidence in her, that from the crack where I sat I called out 'squeak.' This confidence of mine pleased her so much that she assured me she would take me under her own protection, and that not a creature should do me harm. The fact was, she wickedly meant to keep me in reserve for her own eating in winter, when food would be scarce. Yet she was a very clever lady-owl; she explained

to me that the watchman could only hoot with the horn that hung loose at his side; and then she said he is so terribly proud of it, that he imagines himself an owl in the tower;—wants to do great things, but only succeeds in small; all soup on a sausage skewer. Then I begged the owl to give me the recipe for this soup. 'Soup from a sausage skewer,' said she, 'is only a proverb amongst mankind, and may be understood in many ways. Each believes his own way the best, and after all, the proverb signifies nothing.' 'Nothing!' I exclaimed. I was quite struck. Truth is not always agreeable, but truth is above everything else, as the old owl said. I thought over all this, and saw quite plainly that if truth was really so far above everything else, it must be much more valuable than soup from a sausage skewer. So I hastened to get away, that I might be home in time, and bring what was highest and best, and above everything—namely, the truth. The mice are an enlightened people, and the mouse-king is above them all. He is therefore capable of making me queen for the sake of truth."

"Your truth is a falsehood," said the mouse who had not yet spoken; "I can prepare the soup, and I mean to do so."

HOW IT WAS PREPARED

"I did not travel," said the third mouse; "I stayed in this country: that was the right way. One gains nothing by travelling—everything can be acquired here quite as easily; so I stayed at home. I have not obtained what I know from supernatural beings. I have neither swallowed it, nor learnt it from conversing with owls. I have got it all from my reflections and thoughts. Will you now set the kettle on the fire—so? Now pour the water in—quite full—up to the brim; place it on the fire; make up a good blaze; keep it burning, that the water may boil; it must boil over and over. There, now I throw in the skewer. Will the mouse-king be pleased now to dip his tail into the boiling water, and stir it round with the tail. The longer the king stirs it, the stronger the soup will become. Nothing more is necessary, only to stir it."

"Can no one else do this?" asked the king.

"No," said the mouse; "only in the tail of the mouse-king is this power contained."

And the water boiled and bubbled, as the mouse-king stood close beside the kettle. It seemed rather a dangerous performance; but he turned round, and put out his tail, as mice do in a dairy, when they wish to skim the cream from a pan of milk with their tails and afterwards lick it off. But the mouse-king's tail had only just touched the hot steam, when he sprang away from

the chimney in a great hurry, exclaiming, “Oh, certainly, by all means, you must be my queen; and we will let the soup question rest till our golden wedding, fifty years hence; so that the poor in my kingdom, who are then to have plenty of food, will have something to look forward to for a long time, with great joy.”

And very soon the wedding took place. But many of the mice, as they were returning home, said that the soup could not be properly called “soup from a sausage skewer,” but “soup from a mouse’s tail.” They acknowledged also that some of the stories were very well told; but that the whole could have been managed differently. “I should have told it so—and so—and so.” These were the critics who are always so clever afterwards.

When this story was circulated all over the world, the opinions upon it were divided; but the story remained the same. And, after all, the best way in everything you undertake, great as well as small, is to expect no thanks for anything you may do, even when it refers to “soup from a sausage skewer.”

THE STORKS

On the last house in a little village the storks had built a nest, and the mother stork sat in it with her four young ones, who stretched out their necks and pointed their black beaks, which had not yet turned red like those of the parent birds. A little way off, on the edge of the roof, stood the father stork, quite upright and stiff; not liking to be quite idle, he drew up one leg, and stood on the other, so still that it seemed almost as if he were carved in wood. “It must look very grand,” thought he, “for my wife to have a sentry guarding her nest. They do not know that I am her husband; they will think I have been commanded to stand here, which is quite aristocratic;” and so he continued standing on one leg.

In the street below were a number of children at play, and when they caught sight of the storks, one of the boldest amongst the boys began to sing a song about them, and very soon he was joined by the rest. These are the words of the song, but each only sang what he could remember of them in his own way.

“Stork, stork, fly away, Stand not on one leg, I pray, See your wife is in her nest, With her little ones at rest.

They will hang one, And fry another; They will shoot a third, And roast his brother.”

“Just hear what those boys are singing,” said the young storks; “they say we shall be hanged and roasted.”

“Never mind what they say; you need not listen,” said the mother. “They can do no harm.”

But the boys went on singing and pointing at the storks, and mocking at them, excepting one of the boys whose name was Peter; he said it was a shame to make fun of animals, and would not join with them at all. The mother stork comforted her young ones, and told them not to mind. “See,” she said, “How quiet your father stands, although he is only on one leg.”

“But we are very much frightened,” said the young storks, and they drew back their heads into the nests.

The next day when the children were playing together, and saw the storks, they sang the song again—

“They will hang one,
And roast another.”

“Shall we be hanged and roasted?” asked the young storks.

“No, certainly not,” said the mother. “I will teach you to fly, and when you have learnt, we will fly into the meadows, and pay a visit to the frogs, who will bow themselves to us in the water, and cry ‘Croak, croak,’ and then we shall eat them up; that will be fun.”

“And what next?” asked the young storks.

“Then,” replied the mother, “all the storks in the country will assemble together, and go through their autumn manoeuvres, so that it is very important for every one to know how to fly properly. If they do not, the general will thrust them through with his beak, and kill them. Therefore you must take pains and learn, so as to be ready when the drilling begins.”

“Then we may be killed after all, as the boys say; and hark! they are singing again.”

“Listen to me, and not to them,” said the mother stork. “After the great review is over, we shall fly away to warm countries far from hence, where there are mountains and forests. To Egypt, where we shall see three-cornered houses built of stone, with pointed tops that reach nearly to the clouds. They are called Pyramids, and are older than a stork could imagine; and in that country, there is a river that overflows its banks, and then goes back, leaving nothing but mire; there we can walk about, and eat frogs in abundance.”

“Oh, o—h!” cried the young storks.

“Yes, it is a delightful place; there is nothing to do all day long but eat, and while we are so well off out there, in this country there will not be a single green leaf on the trees, and the weather will be so cold that the clouds will freeze, and fall on the earth in little white rags.” The stork meant snow, but she could not explain it in any other way.

“Will the naughty boys freeze and fall in pieces?” asked the young storks.
“No, they will not freeze and fall into pieces,” said the mother, “but they will be very cold, and be obliged to sit all day in a dark, gloomy room, while we shall be flying about in foreign lands, where there are blooming flowers and warm sunshine.”
Time passed on, and the young storks grew so large that they could stand upright in the nest and look about them. The father brought them, every day, beautiful frogs, little snakes, and all kinds of stork-dainties that he could find. And then, how funny it was to see the tricks he would perform to amuse them. He would lay his head quite round over his tail, and clatter with his beak, as if it had been a rattle; and then he would tell them stories all about the marshes and fens.
“Come,” said the mother one day, “Now you must learn to fly.” And all the four young ones were obliged to come out on the top of the roof. Oh, how they tottered at first, and were obliged to balance themselves with their wings, or they would have fallen to the ground below.
“Look at me,” said the mother, “you must hold your heads in this way, and place your feet so. Once, twice, once, twice—that is it. Now you will be able to take care of yourselves in the world.”
Then she flew a little distance from them, and the young ones made a spring to follow her; but down they fell plump, for their bodies were still too heavy.
“I don’t want to fly,” said one of the young storks, creeping back into the nest. “I don’t care about going to warm countries.”
“Would you like to stay here and freeze when the winter comes?” said the mother, “or till the boys comes to hang you, or to roast you?—Well then, I’ll call them.”
“Oh no, no,” said the young stork, jumping out on the roof with the others; and now they were all attentive, and by the third day could fly a little. Then they began to fancy they could soar, so they tried to do so, resting on their wings, but they soon found themselves falling, and had to flap their wings as quickly as possible. The boys came again in the street singing their song:—
“Stork, stork, fly away.”
“Shall we fly down, and pick their eyes out?” asked the young storks.
“No; leave them alone,” said the mother. “Listen to me; that is much more important. Now then. One-two-three. Now to the right. One-two-three. Now to the left, round the chimney. There now, that was very good. That last flap of the wings was so easy and graceful, that I shall give you per-

mission to fly with me to-morrow to the marshes. There will be a number of very superior storks there with their families, and I expect you to show them that my children are the best brought up of any who may be present. You must strut about proudly—it will look well and make you respected."
"But may we not punish those naughty boys?" asked the young storks.
"No; let them scream away as much as they like. You can fly from them now up high amid the clouds, and will be in the land of the pyramids when they are freezing, and have not a green leaf on the trees or an apple to eat."
"We will revenge ourselves," whispered the young storks to each other, as they again joined the exercising.
Of all the boys in the street who sang the mocking song about the storks, not one was so determined to go on with it as he who first began it. Yet he was a little fellow not more than six years old. To the young storks he appeared at least a hundred, for he was so much bigger than their father and mother. To be sure, storks cannot be expected to know how old children and grown-up people are. So they determined to have their revenge on this boy, because he began the song first and would keep on with it. The young storks were very angry, and grew worse as they grew older; so at last their mother was obliged to promise that they should be revenged, but not until the day of their departure.
"We must see first, how you acquit yourselves at the grand review," said she. "If you get on badly there, the general will thrust his beak through you, and you will be killed, as the boys said, though not exactly in the same manner. So we must wait and see."
"You shall see," said the young birds, and then they took such pains and practised so well every day, that at last it was quite a pleasure to see them fly so lightly and prettily. As soon as the autumn arrived, all the storks began to assemble together before taking their departure for warm countries during the winter. Then the review commenced. They flew over forests and villages to show what they could do, for they had a long journey before them. The young storks performed their part so well that they received a mark of honor, with frogs and snakes as a present. These presents were the best part of the affair, for they could eat the frogs and snakes, which they very quickly did.
"Now let us have our revenge," they cried.
"Yes, certainly," cried the mother stork. "I have thought upon the best way to be revenged. I know the pond in which all the little children lie, waiting till the storks come to take them to their parents. The prettiest little babies lie there dreaming more sweetly than they will ever dream in the time to

come. All parents are glad to have a little child, and children are so pleased with a little brother or sister. Now we will fly to the pond and fetch a little baby for each of the children who did not sing that naughty song to make game of the storks."
"But the naughty boy, who began the song first, what shall we do to him?" cried the young storks.
"There lies in the pond a little dead baby who has dreamed itself to death," said the mother. "We will take it to the naughty boy, and he will cry because we have brought him a little dead brother. But you have not forgotten the good boy who said it was a shame to laugh at animals: we will take him a little brother and sister too, because he was good. He is called Peter, and you shall all be called Peter in future."
So they all did what their mother had arranged, and from that day, even till now, all the storks have been called Peter.

THE STORM SHAKES THE SHIELD

In the old days, when grandpapa was quite a little boy, and ran about in little red breeches and a red coat, and a feather in his cap—for that's the costume the little boys wore in his time when they were dressed in their best—many things were very different from what they are now. There was often a good deal of show in the streets—show that we don't see nowadays, because it has been abolished as too old-fashioned. Still, it is very interesting to hear grandfather tell about it.
It must really have been a gorgeous sight to behold, in those days, when the shoemaker brought over the shield, when the court-house was changed. The silken flag waved to and fro, on the shield itself a double eagle was displayed, and a big boot; the youngest lads carried the "welcome," and the chest of the workmen's guild, and their shirt-sleeves were adorned with red and white ribbons; the elder ones carried drawn swords, each with a lemon stuck on its point. There was a full band of music, and the most splendid of all the instruments was the "bird," as grandfather called the big stick with the crescent on the top, and all manner of dingle-dangles hanging to it—a perfect Turkish clatter of music. The stick was lifted high in the air, and swung up and down till it jingled again, and quite dazzled one's eyes when the sun shone on all its glory of gold, and silver, and brass.
In front of the procession ran the Harlequin, dressed in clothes made of all kinds of colored patches artfully sewn together, with a black face, and bells on his head like a sledge horse. He beat the people with his bat, which

made a great clattering without hurting them, and the people would crowd together and fall back, only to advance again the next moment. Little boys and girls fell over their own toes into the gutter, old women dispensed digs with their elbows, and looked sour, and took snuff. One laughed, another chatted; the people thronged the windows and door-steps, and even all the roofs. The sun shone; and although they had a little rain too, that was good for the farmer; and when they got wetted thoroughly, they only thought what a blessing it was for the country.

And what stories grandpapa could tell! As a little boy he had seen all these fine doings in their greatest pomp. The oldest of the policemen used to make a speech from the platform on which the shield was hung up, and the speech was in verse, as if it had been made by a poet, as, indeed it had; for three people had concocted it together, and they had first drunk a good bowl of punch, so that the speech might turn out well.

And the people gave a cheer for the speech, but they shouted much louder for the Harlequin, when he appeared in front of the platform, and made a grimace at them.

The fools played the fool most admirably, and drank mead out of spirit-glasses, which they then flung among the crowd, by whom they were caught up. Grandfather was the possessor of one of these glasses, which had been given him by a working mason, who had managed to catch it. Such a scene was really very pleasant; and the shield on the new court-house was hung with flowers and green wreaths.

"One never forgets a feast like that, however old one may grow," said grandfather. Nor did he forget it, though he saw many other grand spectacles in his time, and could tell about them too; but it was most pleasant of all to hear him tell about the shield that was brought in the town from the old to the new court-house.

Once, when he was a little boy, grandpapa had gone with his parents to see this festivity. He had never yet been in the metropolis of the country. There were so many people in the streets, that he thought that the shield was being carried. There were many shields to be seen; a hundred rooms might have been filled with pictures, if they had been hung up inside and outside. At the tailor's were pictures of all kinds of clothing, to show that he could stitch up people from the coarsest to the finest; at the tobacco manufacturer's were pictures of the most charming little boys, smoking cigars, just as they do in reality; there were signs with painted butter, and herring, clerical collars, and coffins, and inscriptions and announcements into the bargain. A person could walk up and down for a whole day through the streets, and

tire himself out with looking at the pictures; and then he would know all about what people lived in the houses, for they had hung out their shields or signs; and, as grandfather said, it was a very instructive thing, in a great town, to know at once who the inhabitants were.

And this is what happened with these shields, when grandpapa came to the town. He told it me himself, and he hadn't "a rogue on his back," as mother used to tell me he had when he wanted to make me believe something outrageous, for now he looked quite trustworthy.

The first night after he came to the town had been signalized by the most terrible gale ever recorded in the newspapers—a gale such as none of the inhabitants had ever before experienced. The air was dark with flying tiles; old wood-work crashed and fell; and a wheelbarrow ran up the streets all alone, only to get out of the way. There was a groaning in the air, and a howling and a shrieking, and altogether it was a terrible storm. The water in the canal rose over the banks, for it did not know where to run. The storm swept over the town, carrying plenty of chimneys with it, and more than one proud weathercock on a church tower had to bow, and has never got over it from that time.

There was a kind of sentry-house, where dwelt the venerable old superintendent of the fire brigade, who always arrived with the last engine. The storm would not leave this little sentry-house alone, but must needs tear it from its fastenings, and roll it down the street; and, wonderfully enough, it stopped opposite to the door of the dirty journeyman plasterer, who had saved three lives at the last fire, but the sentry-house thought nothing of that.

The barber's shield, the great brazen dish, was carried away, and hurled straight into the embrasure of the councillor of justice; and the whole neighborhood said this looked almost like malice, inasmuch as they, and nearly all the friends of the councillor's wife, used to call that lady "the Razor" for she was so sharp that she knew more about other people's business than they knew about it themselves.

A shield with a dried salt fish painted on it flew exactly in front of the door of a house where dwelt a man who wrote a newspaper. That was a very poor joke perpetrated by the gale, which seemed to have forgotten that a man who writes in a paper is not the kind of person to understand any liberty taken with him; for he is a king in his own newspaper, and likewise in his own opinion.

The weathercock flew to the opposite house, where he perched, looking the picture of malice—so the neighbors said.

The cooper's tub stuck itself up under the head of "ladies' costumes."

The eating-house keeper's bill of fare, which had hung at his door in a heavy frame, was posted by the storm over the entrance to the theatre, where nobody went. "It was a ridiculous list—horse-radish, soup, and stuffed cabbage." And now people came in plenty.

The fox's skin, the honorable sign of the furrier, was found fastened to the bell-pull of a young man who always went to early lecture, and looked like a furled umbrella. He said he was striving after truth, and was considered by his aunt "a model and an example."

The inscription "Institution for Superior Education" was found near the billiard club, which place of resort was further adorned with the words, "Children brought up by hand." Now, this was not at all witty; but, you see, the storm had done it, and no one has any control over that.

It was a terrible night, and in the morning—only think!—nearly all the shields had changed places. In some places the inscriptions were so malicious, that grandfather would not speak of them at all; but I saw that he was chuckling secretly, and there may have been some inaccuracy in his description, after all.

The poor people in the town, and still more the strangers, were continually making mistakes in the people they wanted to see; nor was this to be avoided, when they went according to the shields that were hung up. Thus, for instance, some who wanted to go to a very grave assembly of elderly men, where important affairs were to be discussed, found themselves in a noisy boys' school, where all the company were leaping over the chairs and tables.

There were also people who made a mistake between the church and the theatre, and that was terrible indeed!

Such a storm we have never witnessed in our day; for that only happened in grandpapa's time, when he was quite a little boy. Perhaps we shall never experience a storm of the kind, but our grandchildren may; and we can only hope and pray that all may stay at home while the storm is moving the shields.

THE STORY OF A MOTHER

A mother sat by her little child; she was very sad, for she feared it would die. It was quite pale, and its little eyes were closed, and sometimes it drew a heavy deep breath, almost like a sigh; and then the mother gazed more sadly than ever on the poor little creature. Some one knocked at the door, and a poor old man walked in. He was wrapped in something that looked like a great horse-cloth; and he required it truly to keep him warm, for it was cold winter; the country everywhere lay covered with snow and ice, and the wind blew so sharply that it cut one's face. The little child had dozed off to sleep for a moment, and the mother, seeing that the old man shivered with the cold, rose and placed a small mug of beer on the stove to warm for him. The old man sat and rocked the cradle; and the mother seated herself on a chair near him, and looked at her sick child who still breathed heavily, and took hold of its little hand.

"You think I shall keep him, do you not?" she said. "Our all-merciful God will surely not take him away from me."

The old man, who was indeed Death himself, nodded his head in a peculiar manner, which might have signified either Yes, or No; and the mother cast down her eyes, while the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then her head became heavy, for she had not closed her eyes for three days and nights, and she slept, but only for a moment. Shivering with cold, she started up and looked round the room. The old man was gone, and her child—it was gone too!—the old man had taken it with him. In the corner of the room the old clock began to strike; "whirr" went the chains, the heavy weight sank to the ground, and the clock stopped; and the poor mother rushed out of the house calling for her child. Out in the snow sat a woman in long black garments, and she said to the mother, "Death has been with you in your room. I saw him hastening away with your little child; he strides faster than the wind, and never brings back what he has taken away."

"Only tell me which way he has gone," said the mother; "tell me the way, I will find him."

"I know the way," said the woman in the black garments; "but before I tell you, you must sing to me all the songs that you have sung to your child; I love these songs, I have heard them before. I am Night, and I saw your tears flow as you sang."

"I will sing them all to you," said the mother; "but do not detain me now. I must overtake him, and find my child."

But Night sat silent and still. Then the mother wept and sang, and wrung

her hands. And there were many songs, and yet even more tears; till at length Night said, “Go to the right, into the dark forest of fir-trees; for I saw Death take that road with your little child.”
Within the wood the mother came to cross roads, and she knew not which to take. Just by stood a thorn-bush; it had neither leaf nor flower, for it was the cold winter time, and icicles hung on the branches. “Have you not seen Death go by, with my little child?” she asked.
“Yes,” replied the thorn-bush; “but I will not tell you which way he has taken until you have warmed me in your bosom. I am freezing to death here, and turning to ice.”
Then she pressed the bramble to her bosom quite close, so that it might be thawed, and the thorns pierced her flesh, and great drops of blood flowed; but the bramble shot forth fresh green leaves, and they became flowers on the cold winter’s night, so warm is the heart of a sorrowing mother. Then the bramble-bush told her the path she must take. She came at length to a great lake, on which there was neither ship nor boat to be seen. The lake was not frozen sufficiently for her to pass over on the ice, nor was it open enough for her to wade through; and yet she must cross it, if she wished to find her child. Then she laid herself down to drink up the water of the lake, which was of course impossible for any human being to do; but the bereaved mother thought that perhaps a miracle might take place to help her.
“You will never succeed in this,” said the lake; “let us make an agreement together which will be better. I love to collect pearls, and your eyes are the purest I have ever seen. If you will weep those eyes away in tears into my waters, then I will take you to the large hothouse where Death dwells and rears flowers and trees, every one of which is a human life.”
“Oh, what would I not give to reach my child!” said the weeping mother; and as she still continued to weep, her eyes fell into the depths of the lake, and became two costly pearls.
Then the lake lifted her up, and wafted her across to the opposite shore as if she were on a swing, where stood a wonderful building many miles in length. No one could tell whether it was a mountain covered with forests and full of caves, or whether it had been built. But the poor mother could not see, for she had wept her eyes into the lake. “Where shall I find Death, who went away with my little child?” she asked.
“He has not arrived here yet,” said an old gray-haired woman, who was walking about, and watering Death’s hothouse. “How have you found your way here? and who helped you?”
“God has helped me,” she replied. “He is merciful; will you not be merciful too? Where shall I find my little child?”

“I did not know the child,” said the old woman; “and you are blind. Many flowers and trees have faded to-night, and Death will soon come to transplant them. You know already that every human being has a life-tree or a life-flower, just as may be ordained for him. They look like other plants; but they have hearts that beat. Children’s hearts also beat: from that you may perhaps be able to recognize your child. But what will you give me, if I tell you what more you will have to do?

“I have nothing to give,” said the afflicted mother; “but I would go to the ends of the earth for you.”

“I can give you nothing to do for me there,” said the old woman; “but you can give me your long black hair. You know yourself that it is beautiful, and it pleases me. You can take my white hair in exchange, which will be something in return.”

“Do you ask nothing more than that?” said she. “I will give it to you with pleasure.”

And she gave up her beautiful hair, and received in return the white locks of the old woman. Then they went into Death’s vast hothouse, where flowers and trees grew together in wonderful profusion. Blooming hyacinths, under glass bells, and peonies, like strong trees. There grew water-plants, some quite fresh, and others looking sickly, which had water-snakes twining round them, and black crabs clinging to their stems. There stood noble palm-trees, oaks, and plantains, and beneath them bloomed thyme and parsley. Each tree and flower had a name; each represented a human life, and belonged to men still living, some in China, others in Greenland, and in all parts of the world. Some large trees had been planted in little pots, so that they were cramped for room, and seemed about to burst the pot to pieces; while many weak little flowers were growing in rich soil, with moss all around them, carefully tended and cared for. The sorrowing mother bent over the little plants, and heard the human heart beating in each, and recognized the beatings of her child’s heart among millions of others.

“That is it,” she cried, stretching out her hand towards a little crocus-flower which hung down its sickly head.

“Do not touch the flower,” exclaimed the old woman; “but place yourself here; and when Death comes—I expect him every minute—do not let him pull up that plant, but threaten him that if he does you will serve the other flowers in the same manner. This will make him afraid; for he must account to God for each of them. None can be uprooted, unless he receives permission to do so.”

There rushed through the hothouse a chill of icy coldness, and the blind mother felt that Death had arrived.

“How did you find your way hither?” asked he; “how could you come here faster than I have?”
“I am a mother,” she answered.
And Death stretched out his hand towards the delicate little flower; but she held her hands tightly round it, and held it fast at same time, with the most anxious care, lest she should touch one of the leaves. Then Death breathed upon her hands, and she felt his breath colder than the icy wind, and her hands sank down powerless.
“You cannot prevail against me,” said Death.
“But a God of mercy can,” said she.
“I only do His will,” replied Death. “I am his gardener. I take all His flowers and trees, and transplant them into the gardens of Paradise in an unknown land. How they flourish there, and what that garden resembles, I may not tell you.”
“Give me back my child,” said the mother, weeping and imploring; and she seized two beautiful flowers in her hands, and cried to Death, “I will tear up all your flowers, for I am in despair.”
“Do not touch them,” said Death. “You say you are unhappy; and would you make another mother as unhappy as yourself?”
“Another mother!” cried the poor woman, setting the flowers free from her hands.
“There are your eyes,” said Death. “I fished them up out of the lake for you. They were shining brightly; but I knew not they were yours. Take them back—they are clearer now than before—and then look into the deep well which is close by here. I will tell you the names of the two flowers which you wished to pull up; and you will see the whole future of the human beings they represent, and what you were about to frustrate and destroy.”
Then she looked into the well; and it was a glorious sight to behold how one of them became a blessing to the world, and how much happiness and joy it spread around. But she saw that the life of the other was full of care and poverty, misery and woe.
“Both are the will of God,” said Death.
“Which is the unhappy flower, and which is the blessed one?” she said.
“That I may not tell you,” said Death; “but thus far you may learn, that one of the two flowers represents your own child. It was the fate of your child that you saw,—the future of your own child.”
Then the mother screamed aloud with terror, “Which of them belongs to my child? Tell me that. Deliver the unhappy child. Release it from so much misery. Rather take it away. Take it to the kingdom of God. Forget my tears and my entreaties; forget all that I have said or done.”

“I do not understand you,” said Death. “Will you have your child back? or shall I carry him away to a place that you do not know?”
Then the mother wrung her hands, fell on her knees, and prayed to God, “Grant not my prayers, when they are contrary to Thy will, which at all times must be the best. Oh, hear them not;” and her head sank on her bosom.
Then Death carried away her child to the unknown land.

THE SUNBEAM AND THE CAPTIVE

It is autumn. We stand on the ramparts, and look out over the sea. We look at the numerous ships, and at the Swedish coast on the opposite side of the sound, rising far above the surface of the waters which mirror the glow of the evening sky. Behind us the wood is sharply defined; mighty trees surround us, and the yellow leaves flutter down from the branches. Below, at the foot of the wall, stands a gloomy looking building enclosed in palisades. The space between is dark and narrow, but still more dismal must it be behind the iron gratings in the wall which cover the narrow loopholes or windows, for in these dungeons the most depraved of the criminals are confined. A ray of the setting sun shoots into the bare cells of one of the captives, for God’s sun shines upon the evil and the good. The hardened criminal casts an impatient look at the bright ray. Then a little bird flies towards the grating, for birds twitter to the just as well as to the unjust. He only cries, “Tweet, tweet,” and then perches himself near the grating, flutters his wings, pecks a feather from one of them, puffs himself out, and sets his feathers on end round his breast and throat. The bad, chained man looks at him, and a more gentle expression comes into his hard face. In his breast there rises a thought which he himself cannot rightly analyze, but the thought has some connection with the sunbeam, with the bird, and with the scent of violets, which grow luxuriantly in spring at the foot of the wall. Then there comes the sound of the hunter’s horn, merry and full. The little bird starts, and flies away, the sunbeam gradually vanishes, and again there is darkness in the room and in the heart of that bad man. Still the sun has shone into that heart, and the twittering of the bird has touched it.
Sound on, ye glorious strains of the hunter’s horn; continue your stirring tones, for the evening is mild, and the surface of the sea, heaving slowly and calmly, is smooth as a mirror.

THE SWAN'S NEST

Between the Baltic and the North Sea there lies an old swan's nest, wherein swans are born and have been born that shall never die.

In olden times a flock of swans flew over the Alps to the green plains around Milan, where it was delightful to dwell. This flight of swans men called the Lombards.

Another flock, with shining plumage and honest eyes, soared southward to Byzantium; the swans established themselves there close by the Emperor's throne, and spread their wings over him as shields to protect him. They received the name of Varangians.

On the coast of France there sounded a cry of fear, for the blood-stained swans that came from the North with fire under their wings; and the people prayed, "Heaven deliver us from the wild Northmen."

On the fresh sward of England stood the Danish swan by the open seashore, with the crown of three kingdoms on his head; and he stretched out his golden sceptre over the land. The heathens on the Pomerian coast bent the knee, and the Danish swans came with the banner of the Cross and with the drawn sword.

"That was in the very old times," you say.

In later days two mighty swans have been seen to fly from the nest. A light shone far through the air, far over the lands of the earth; the swan, with the strong beating of his wings, scattered the twilight mists, and the starry sky was seen, and it was as if it came nearer to the earth. That was the swan Tycho Brahe.

"Yes, then," you say; "but in our own days?"

We have seen swan after swan soar by in glorious flight. One let his pinions glide over the strings of the golden harp, and it resounded through the North. Norway's mountains seemed to rise higher in the sunlight of former days; there was a rustling among the pine trees and the birches; the gods of the North, the heroes, and the noble women, showed themselves in the dark forest depths.

We have seen a swan beat with his wings upon the marble crag, so that it burst, and the forms of beauty imprisoned in the stone stepped out to the sunny day, and men in the lands round about lifted up their heads to behold these mighty forms.

We have seen a third swan spinning the thread of thought that is fastened from country to country round the world, so that the word may fly with lightning speed from land to land.

And our Lord loves the old swan's nest between the Baltic and the North Sea. And when the mighty birds come soaring through the air to destroy it, even the callow young stand round in a circle on the margin of the nest, and though their breasts may be struck so that their blood flows, they bear it, and strike with their wings and their claws.
Centuries will pass by, swans will fly forth from the nest, men will see them and hear them in the world, before it shall be said in spirit and in truth, "This is the last swan—the last song from the swan's nest."

THE SWINEHERD

Once upon a time lived a poor prince; his kingdom was very small, but it was large enough to enable him to marry, and marry he would. It was rather bold of him that he went and asked the emperor's daughter: "Will you marry me?" but he ventured to do so, for his name was known far and wide, and there were hundreds of princesses who would have gladly accepted him, but would she do so? Now we shall see.
On the grave of the prince's father grew a rose-tree, the most beautiful of its kind. It bloomed only once in five years, and then it had only one single rose upon it, but what a rose! It had such a sweet scent that one instantly forgot all sorrow and grief when one smelt it. He had also a nightingale, which could sing as if every sweet melody was in its throat. This rose and the nightingale he wished to give to the princess; and therefore both were put into big silver cases and sent to her.
The emperor ordered them to be carried into the great hall where the princess was just playing "Visitors are coming" with her ladies-in-waiting; when she saw the large cases with the presents therein, she clapped her hands for joy.
"I wish it were a little pussy cat," she said. But then the rose-tree with the beautiful rose was unpacked.
"Oh, how nicely it is made," exclaimed the ladies.
"It is more than nice," said the emperor, "it is charming."
The princess touched it and nearly began to cry.
"For shame, pa," she said, "it is not artificial, it is natural!"
"For shame, it is natural," repeated all her ladies.
"Let us first see what the other case contains before we are angry," said the emperor; then the nightingale was taken out, and it sang so beautifully that no one could possibly say anything unkind about it.
"Superbe, charmant," said the ladies of the court, for they all prattled French, one worse than the other.

“How much the bird reminds me of the musical box of the late lamented empress,” said an old courtier, “it has exactly the same tone, the same execution.”
“You are right,” said the emperor, and began to cry like a little child.
“I hope it is not natural,” said the princess.
“Yes, certainly it is natural,” replied those who had brought the presents.
“Then let it fly,” said the princess, and refused to see the prince.
But the prince was not discouraged. He painted his face, put on common clothes, pulled his cap over his forehead, and came back.
“Good day, emperor,” he said, “could you not give me some employment at the court?”
“There are so many,” replied the emperor, “who apply for places, that for the present I have no vacancy, but I will remember you. But wait a moment; it just comes into my mind, I require somebody to look after my pigs, for I have a great many.”
Thus the prince was appointed imperial swineherd, and as such he lived in a wretchedly small room near the pigsty; there he worked all day long, and when it was night he had made a pretty little pot. There were little bells round the rim, and when the water began to boil in it, the bells began to play the old tune:
“A jolly old sow once lived in a sty,
Three little piggies had she,” &c.
But what was more wonderful was that, when one put a finger into the steam rising from the pot, one could at once smell what meals they were preparing on every fire in the whole town. That was indeed much more remarkable than the rose. When the princess with her ladies passed by and heard the tune, she stopped and looked quite pleased, for she also could play it—in fact, it was the only tune she could play, and she played it with one finger.
“That is the tune I know,” she exclaimed. “He must be a well-educated swineherd. Go and ask him how much the instrument is.”
One of the ladies had to go and ask; but she put on pattens.
“What will you take for your pot?” asked the lady.
“I will have ten kisses from the princess,” said the swineherd.
“God forbid,” said the lady.
“Well, I cannot sell it for less,” replied the swineherd.
“What did he say?” said the princess.
“I really cannot tell you,” replied the lady.
“You can whisper it into my ear.”

“It is very naughty,” said the princess, and walked off.
But when she had gone a little distance, the bells rang again so sweetly:
“A jolly old sow once lived in a sty,
Three little piggies had she,” &c.
“Ask him,” said the princess, “if he will be satisfied with ten kisses from one of my ladies.”
“No, thank you,” said the swineherd: “ten kisses from the princess, or I keep my pot.”
“That is tiresome,” said the princess. “But you must stand before me, so that nobody can see it.”
The ladies placed themselves in front of her and spread out their dresses, and she gave the swineherd ten kisses and received the pot.
That was a pleasure! Day and night the water in the pot was boiling; there was not a single fire in the whole town of which they did not know what was preparing on it, the chamberlain’s as well as the shoemaker’s. The ladies danced and clapped their hands for joy.
“We know who will eat soup and pancakes; we know who will eat porridge and cutlets; oh, how interesting!”
“Very interesting, indeed,” said the mistress of the household. “But you must not betray me, for I am the emperor’s daughter.”
“Of course not,” they all said.
The swineherd—that is to say, the prince—but they did not know otherwise than that he was a real swineherd—did not waste a single day without doing something; he made a rattle, which, when turned quickly round, played all the waltzes, galops, and polkas known since the creation of the world.
“But that is superbe,” said the princess passing by. “I have never heard a more beautiful composition. Go down and ask him what the instrument costs; but I shall not kiss him again.”
“He will have a hundred kisses from the princess,” said the lady, who had gone down to ask him.
“I believe he is mad,” said the princess, and walked off, but soon she stopped. “One must encourage art,” she said. “I am the emperor’s daughter! Tell him I will give him ten kisses, as I did the other day; the remainder one of my ladies can give him.
“But we do not like to kiss him,” said the ladies.
“That is nonsense,” said the princess; “if I can kiss him, you can also do it. Remember that I give you food and employment.” And the lady had to go down once more.
“A hundred kisses from the princess,” said the swineherd, “or everybody keeps his own.”

"Place yourselves before me," said the princess then. They did as they were bidden, and the princess kissed him.
"I wonder what that crowd near the pigsty means!" said the emperor, who had just come out on his balcony. He rubbed his eyes and put his spectacles on.
"The ladies of the court are up to some mischief, I think. I shall have to go down and see." He pulled up his shoes, for they were down at the heels, and he was very quick about it. When he had come down into the courtyard he walked quite softly, and the ladies were so busily engaged in counting the kisses, that all should be fair, that they did not notice the emperor. He raised himself on tiptoe.
"What does this mean?" he said, when he saw that his daughter was kissing the swineherd, and then hit their heads with his shoe just as the swineherd received the sixty-eighth kiss.
"Go out of my sight," said the emperor, for he was very angry; and both the princess and the swineherd were banished from the empire. There she stood and cried, the swineherd scolded her, and the rain came down in torrents.
"Alas, unfortunate creature that I am!" said the princess, "I wish I had accepted the prince. Oh, how wretched I am!"
The swineherd went behind a tree, wiped his face, threw off his poor attire and stepped forth in his princely garments; he looked so beautiful that the princess could not help bowing to him.
"I have now learnt to despise you," he said. "You refused an honest prince; you did not appreciate the rose and the nightingale; but you did not mind kissing a swineherd for his toys; you have no one but yourself to blame!"
And then he returned into his kingdom and left her behind. She could now sing at her leisure:
"A jolly old sow once lived in a sty,
Three little piggies has she," &c.

THE THISTLE'S EXPERIENCES

Belonging to the lordly manor-house was beautiful, well-kept garden, with rare trees and flowers; the guests of the proprietor declared their admiration of it; the people of the neighborhood, from town and country, came on Sundays and holidays, and asked permission to see the garden; indeed, whole schools used to pay visits to it.
Outside the garden, by the palings at the road-side, stood a great mighty Thistle, which spread out in many directions from the root, so that it might have been called a thistle bush. Nobody looked at it, except the old Ass

which drew the milk-maid's cart. This Ass used to stretch out his neck towards the Thistle, and say, "You are beautiful; I should like to eat you!" But his halter was not long enough to let him reach it and eat it.

There was great company at the manor-house—some very noble people from the capital; young pretty girls, and among them a young lady who came from a long distance. She had come from Scotland, and was of high birth, and was rich in land and in gold—a bride worth winning, said more than one of the young gentlemen; and their lady mothers said the same thing.

The young people amused themselves on the lawn, and played at ball; they wandered among the flowers, and each of the young girls broke off a flower, and fastened it in a young gentleman's buttonhole. But the young Scotch lady looked round, for a long time, in an undecided way. None of the flowers seemed to suit her taste. Then her eye glanced across the paling—outside stood the great thistle bush, with the reddish-blue, sturdy flowers; she saw them, she smiled, and asked the son of the house to pluck one for her.

"It is the flower of Scotland," she said. "It blooms in the scutcheon of my country. Give me yonder flower."

And he brought the fairest blossom, and pricked his fingers as completely as if it had grown on the sharpest rose bush.

She placed the thistle-flower in the buttonhole of the young man, and he felt himself highly honored. Each of the other young gentlemen would willingly have given his own beautiful flower to have worn this one, presented by the fair hand of the Scottish maiden. And if the son of the house felt himself honored, what were the feelings of the Thistle bush? It seemed to him as if dew and sunshine were streaming through him.

"I am something more than I knew of," said the Thistle to itself. "I suppose my right place is really inside the palings, and not outside. One is often strangely placed in this world; but now I have at least managed to get one of my people within the pale, and indeed into a buttonhole!"

The Thistle told this event to every blossom that unfolded itself, and not many days had gone by before the Thistle heard, not from men, not from the twittering of the birds, but from the air itself, which stores up the sounds, and carries them far around—out of the most retired walks of the garden, and out of the rooms of the house, in which doors and windows stood open, that the young gentleman who had received the thistle-flower from the hand of the fair Scottish maiden had also now received the heart and hand of the lady in question. They were a handsome pair—it was a good match.

"That match I made up!" said the Thistle; and he thought of the flower he had given for the buttonhole. Every flower that opened heard of this occurrence.

“I shall certainly be transplanted into the garden,” thought the Thistle, “and perhaps put into a pot, which crowds one in. That is said to be the greatest of all honors.”
And the Thistle pictured this to himself in such a lively manner, that at last he said, with full conviction, “I am to be transplanted into a pot.”
Then he promised every little thistle flower which unfolded itself that it also should be put into a pot, and perhaps into a buttonhole, the highest honor that could be attained. But not one of them was put into a pot, much less into a buttonhole. They drank in the sunlight and the air; lived on the sunlight by day, and on the dew by night; bloomed—were visited by bees and hornets, who looked after the honey, the dowry of the flower, and they took the honey, and left the flower where it was.
“The thievish rabble!” said the Thistle. “If I could only stab every one of them! But I cannot.”
The flowers hung their heads and faded; but after a time new ones came.
“You come in good time,” said the Thistle. “I am expecting every moment to get across the fence.”
A few innocent daisies, and a long thin dandelion, stood and listened in deep admiration, and believed everything they heard.
The old Ass of the milk-cart stood at the edge of the field-road, and glanced across at the blooming thistle bush; but his halter was too short, and he could not reach it.
And the Thistle thought so long of the thistle of Scotland, to whose family he said he belonged, that he fancied at last that he had come from Scotland, and that his parents had been put into the national escutcheon. That was a great thought; but, you see, a great thistle has a right to a great thought.
“One is often of so grand a family, that one may not know it,” said the Nettle, who grew close by. He had a kind of idea that he might be made into cambric if he were rightly treated.
And the summer went by, and the autumn went by. The leaves fell from the trees, and the few flowers left had deeper colors and less scent. The gardener’s boy sang in the garden, across the palings:
“Up the hill, down the dale we wend,
That is life, from beginning to end.”
The young fir trees in the forest began to long for Christmas, but it was a long time to Christmas yet.
“Here I am standing yet!” said the Thistle. “It is as if nobody thought of me, and yet I managed the match. They were betrothed, and they have had their wedding; it is now a week ago. I won’t take a single step-because I can’t.”

A few more weeks went by. The Thistle stood there with his last single flower large and full. This flower had shot up from near the roots; the wind blew cold over it, and the colors vanished, and the flower grew in size, and looked like a silvered sunflower.

One day the young pair, now man and wife, came into the garden. They went along by the paling, and the young wife looked across it.

"There's the great thistle still growing," she said. "It has no flowers now."

"Oh, yes, the ghost of the last one is there still," said he. And he pointed to the silvery remains of the flower, which looked like a flower themselves.

"It is pretty, certainly," she said. "Such an one must be carved on the frame of our picture."

And the young man had to climb across the palings again, and to break off the calyx of the thistle. It pricked his fingers, but then he had called it a ghost. And this thistle-calyx came into the garden, and into the house, and into the drawing-room. There stood a picture—"Young Couple." A thistle-flower was painted in the buttonhole of the bridegroom. They spoke about this, and also about the thistle-flower they brought, the last thistle-flower, now gleaming like silver, whose picture was carved on the frame.

And the breeze carried what was spoken away, far away.

"What one can experience!" said the Thistle Bush. "My first born was put into a buttonhole, and my youngest has been put in a frame. Where shall I go?"

And the Ass stood by the road-side, and looked across at the Thistle.

"Come to me, my nibble darling!" said he. "I can't get across to you."

But the Thistle did not answer. He became more and more thoughtful—kept on thinking and thinking till near Christmas, and then a flower of thought came forth.

"If the children are only good, the parents do not mind standing outside the garden pale." "That's an honorable thought," said the Sunbeam. "You shall also have a good place." "In a pot or in a frame?" asked the Thistle.

"In a story," replied the Sunbeam.

THE THORNY ROAD OF HONOR

An old story yet lives of the "Thorny Road of Honor," of a marksman, who indeed attained to rank and office, but only after a lifelong and weary strife against difficulties. Who has not, in reading this story, thought of his own strife, and of his own numerous "difficulties?" The story is very closely akin to reality; but still it has its harmonious explanation here on earth, while reality often points beyond the confines of life to the regions of eter-

nity. The history of the world is like a magic lantern that displays to us, in light pictures upon the dark ground of the present, how the benefactors of mankind, the martyrs of genius, wandered along the thorny road of honor. From all periods, and from every country, these shining pictures display themselves to us. Each only appears for a few moments, but each represents a whole life, sometimes a whole age, with its conflicts and victories. Let us contemplate here and there one of the company of martyrs—the company which will receive new members until the world itself shall pass away.

We look down upon a crowded amphitheatre. Out of the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, satire and humor are pouring down in streams upon the audience; on the stage Socrates, the most remarkable man in Athens, he who had been the shield and defence of the people against the thirty tyrants, is held up mentally and bodily to ridicule—Socrates, who saved Alcibiades and Xenophon in the turmoil of battle, and whose genius soared far above the gods of the ancients. He himself is present; he has risen from the spectator's bench, and has stepped forward, that the laughing Athenians may well appreciate the likeness between himself and the caricature on the stage. There he stands before them, towering high above them all.

Thou juicy, green, poisonous hemlock, throw thy shadow over Athens—not thou, olive tree of fame!

Seven cities contended for the honor of giving birth to Homer—that is to say, they contended after his death! Let us look at him as he was in his lifetime. He wanders on foot through the cities, and recites his verses for a livelihood; the thought for the morrow turns his hair gray! He, the great seer, is blind, and painfully pursues his way—the sharp thorn tears the mantle of the king of poets. His song yet lives, and through that alone live all the heroes and gods of antiquity.

One picture after another springs up from the east, from the west, far removed from each other in time and place, and yet each one forming a portion of the thorny road of honor, on which the thistle indeed displays a flower, but only to adorn the grave.

The camels pass along under the palm trees; they are richly laden with indigo and other treasures of value, sent by the ruler of the land to him whose songs are the delight of the people, the fame of the country. He whom envy and falsehood have driven into exile has been found, and the caravan approaches the little town in which he has taken refuge. A poor corpse is carried out of the town gate, and the funeral procession causes the caravan to halt. The dead man is he whom they have been sent to seek—Firdusi—who has wandered the Thorny road of honor even to the end.

The African, with blunt features, thick lips, and woolly hair, sits on the marble steps of the palace in the capital of Portugal, and begs. He is the submissive slave of Camoens, and but for him, and for the copper coins thrown to him by the passers-by, his master, the poet of the "Lusiad," would die of hunger. Now, a costly monument marks the grave of Camoens.

There is a new picture.

Behind the iron grating a man appears, pale as death, with long unkempt beard.

"I have made a discovery," he says, "the greatest that has been made for centuries; and they have kept me locked up here for more than twenty years!" Who is the man?

"A madman," replies the keeper of the madhouse. "What whimsical ideas these lunatics have! He imagines that one can propel things by means of steam." It is Solomon de Cares, the discoverer of the power of steam, whose theory, expressed in dark words, is not understood by Richelieu; and he dies in the madhouse.

Here stands Columbus, whom the street boys used once to follow and jeer, because he wanted to discover a new world; and he has discovered it. Shouts of joy greet him from the breasts of all, and the clash of bells sounds to celebrate his triumphant return; but the clash of the bells of envy soon drowns the others. The discoverer of a world—he who lifted the American gold land from the sea, and gave it to his king—he is rewarded with iron chains. He wishes that these chains may be placed in his coffin, for they witness to the world of the way in which a man's contemporaries reward good service.

One picture after another comes crowding on; the thorny path of honor and of fame is over-filled.

Here in dark night sits the man who measured the mountains in the moon; he who forced his way out into the endless space, among stars and planets; he, the mighty man who understood the spirit of nature, and felt the earth moving beneath his feet—Galileo. Blind and deaf he sits—an old man thrust through with the spear of suffering, and amid the torments of neglect, scarcely able to lift his foot—that foot with which, in the anguish of his soul, when men denied the truth, he stamped upon the ground, with the exclamation, "Yet it moves!"

Here stands a woman of childlike mind, yet full of faith and inspiration. She carries the banner in front of the combating army, and brings victory and salvation to her fatherland. The sound of shouting arises, and the pile flames up. They are burning the witch, Joan of Arc. Yes, and a future cen-

tury jeers at the White Lily. Voltaire, the satyr of human intellect, writes "La Pucelle."

At the Thing or Assembly at Viborg, the Danish nobles burn the laws of the king. They flame up high, illuminating the period and the lawgiver, and throw a glory into the dark prison tower, where an old man is growing gray and bent. With his finger he marks out a groove in the stone table. It is the popular king who sits there, once the ruler of three kingdoms, the friend of the citizen and the peasant. It is Christian the Second. Enemies wrote his history. Let us remember his improvements of seven and twenty years, if we cannot forget his crime.

A ship sails away, quitting the Danish shores. A man leans against the mast, casting a last glance towards the Island Hueen. It is Tycho Brahe. He raised the name of Denmark to the stars, and was rewarded with injury, loss and sorrow. He is going to a strange country.

"The vault of heaven is above me everywhere," he says, "and what do I want more?"

And away sails the famous Dane, the astronomer, to live honored and free in a strange land.

"Ay, free, if only from the unbearable sufferings of the body!" comes in a sigh through time, and strikes upon our ear. What a picture! Griffenfeldt, a Danish Prometheus, bound to the rocky island of Munkholm.

We are in America, on the margin of one of the largest rivers; an innumerable crowd has gathered, for it is said that a ship is to sail against the wind and weather, bidding defiance to the elements. The man who thinks he can solve the problem is named Robert Fulton. The ship begins its passage, but suddenly it stops. The crowd begins to laugh and whistle and hiss—the very father of the man whistles with the rest.

"Conceit! Foolery!" is the cry. "It has happened just as he deserved. Put the crack-brain under lock and key!" Then suddenly a little nail breaks, which had stopped the machine for a few moments; and now the wheels turn again, the floats break the force of the waters, and the ship continues its course; and the beam of the steam engine shortens the distance between far lands from hours into minutes.

O human race, canst thou grasp the happiness of such a minute of consciousness, this penetration of the soul by its mission, the moment in which all dejection, and every wound—even those caused by one's own fault—is changed into health and strength and clearness—when discord is converted to harmony—the minute in which men seem to recognize the manifestation of the heavenly grace in one man, and feel how this one imparts it to all?

Thus the thorny path of honor shows itself as a glory, surrounding the earth with its beams. Thrice happy he who is chosen to be a wanderer there, and, without merit of his own, to be placed between the builder of the bridge and the earth—between Providence and the human race.

On mighty wings the spirit of history floats through the ages, and shows—giving courage and comfort, and awakening gentle thoughts—on the dark nightly background, but in gleaming pictures, the thorny path of honor, which does not, like a fairy tale, end in brilliancy and joy here on earth, but stretches out beyond all time, even into eternity!

IN A THOUSAND YEARS

Yes, in a thousand years people will fly on the wings of steam through the air, over the ocean! The young inhabitants of America will become visitors of old Europe. They will come over to see the monuments and the great cities, which will then be in ruins, just as we in our time make pilgrimages to the tottering splendors of Southern Asia. In a thousand years they will come! The Thames, the Danube, and the Rhine still roll their course, Mont Blanc stands firm with its snow-capped summit, and the Northern Lights gleam over the land of the North; but generation after generation has become dust, whole rows of the mighty of the moment are forgotten, like those who already slumber under the hill on which the rich trader, whose ground it is, has built a bench, on which he can sit and look out across his waving corn fields.

"To Europe!" cry the young sons of America; "to the land of our ancestors, the glorious land of monuments and fancy—to Europe!"

The ship of the air comes. It is crowded with passengers, for the transit is quicker than by sea. The electro-magnetic wire under the ocean has already telegraphed the number of the aerial caravan. Europe is in sight. It is the coast of Ireland that they see, but the passengers are still asleep; they will not be called till they are exactly over England. There they will first step on European shore, in the land of Shakespeare, as the educated call it; in the land of politics, the land of machines, as it is called by others.

Here they stay a whole day. That is all the time the busy race can devote to the whole of England and Scotland. Then the journey is continued through the tunnel under the English Channel, to France, the land of Charlemagne and Napoleon. Moliere is named, the learned men talk of the classic school of remote antiquity. There is rejoicing and shouting for the names of heroes, poets, and men of science, whom our time does not know, but who

will be born after our time in Paris, the centre of Europe, and elsewhere.
The air steamboat flies over the country whence Columbus went forth, where Cortez was born, and where Calderon sang dramas in sounding verse. Beautiful black-eyed women live still in the blooming valleys, and the oldest songs speak of the Cid and the Alhambra.
Then through the air, over the sea, to Italy, where once lay old, everlasting Rome. It has vanished! The Campagna lies desert. A single ruined wall is shown as the remains of St. Peter's, but there is a doubt if this ruin be genuine.
Next to Greece, to sleep a night in the grand hotel at the top of Mount Olympus, to say that they have been there; and the journey is continued to the Bosphorus, to rest there a few hours, and see the place where Byzantium lay; and where the legend tells that the harem stood in the time of the Turks, poor fishermen are now spreading their nets.
Over the remains of mighty cities on the broad Danube, cities which we in our time know not, the travellers pass; but here and there, on the rich sites of those that time shall bring forth, the caravan sometimes descends, and departs thence again.
Down below lies Germany, that was once covered with a close net of railway and canals, the region where Luther spoke, where Goethe sang, and Mozart once held the sceptre of harmony. Great names shine there, in science and in art, names that are unknown to us. One day devoted to seeing Germany, and one for the North, the country of Oersted and Linnaeus, and for Norway, the land of the old heroes and the young Normans. Iceland is visited on the journey home. The geysers burn no more, Hecla is an extinct volcano, but the rocky island is still fixed in the midst of the foaming sea, a continual monument of legend and poetry.
"There is really a great deal to be seen in Europe," says the young American, "and we have seen it in a week, according to the directions of the great traveller" (and here he mentions the name of one of his contemporaries) "in his celebrated work, 'How to See All Europe in a Week.'"

THE BRAVE TIN SOLDIER

There were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they had been made out of the same old tin spoon. They shouldered arms and looked straight before them, and wore a splendid uniform, red and blue. The first thing in the world they ever heard were the words, "Tin soldiers!" uttered by a little boy, who clapped his hands with delight when the lid of the box, in which they lay, was taken off. They were given him for a birthday

present, and he stood at the table to set them up. The soldiers were all exactly alike, excepting one, who had only one leg; he had been left to the last, and then there was not enough of the melted tin to finish him, so they made him to stand firmly on one leg, and this caused him to be very remarkable.

The table on which the tin soldiers stood, was covered with other playthings, but the most attractive to the eye was a pretty little paper castle. Through the small windows the rooms could be seen. In front of the castle a number of little trees surrounded a piece of looking-glass, which was intended to represent a transparent lake. Swans, made of wax, swam on the lake, and were reflected in it. All this was very pretty, but the prettiest of all was a tiny little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she, also, was made of paper, and she wore a dress of clear muslin, with a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders just like a scarf. In front of these was fixed a glittering tinsel rose, as large as her whole face. The little lady was a dancer, and she stretched out both her arms, and raised one of her legs so high, that the tin soldier could not see it at all, and he thought that she, like himself, had only one leg. "That is the wife for me," he thought; "but she is too grand, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box to live in, five-and-twenty of us altogether, that is no place for her. Still I must try and make her acquaintance." Then he laid himself at full length on the table behind a snuff-box that stood upon it, so that he could peep at the little delicate lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance. When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to have their own games together, to pay visits, to have sham fights, and to give balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box; they wanted to get out and join the amusements, but they could not open the lid. The nut-crackers played at leap-frog, and the pencil jumped about the table. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, and in poetry too. Only the tin soldier and the dancer remained in their places. She stood on tiptoe, with her legs stretched out, as firmly as he did on his one leg. He never took his eyes from her for even a moment. The clock struck twelve, and, with a bounce, up sprang the lid of the snuff-box; but, instead of snuff, there jumped up a little black goblin; for the snuff-box was a toy puzzle.

"Tin soldier," said the goblin, "don't wish for what does not belong to you." But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Very well; wait till to-morrow, then," said the goblin.

When the children came in the next morning, they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught,

is not known, but the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier, heels over head, from the third story, into the street beneath. It was a terrible fall; for he came head downwards, his helmet and his bayonet stuck in between the flagstones, and his one leg up in the air. The servant maid and the little boy went down stairs directly to look for him; but he was nowhere to be seen, although once they nearly trod upon him. If he had called out, "Here I am," it would have been all right, but he was too proud to cry out for help while he wore a uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a heavy shower. When it was over, two boys happened to pass by, and one of them said, "Look, there is a tin soldier. He ought to have a boat to sail in."

So they made a boat out of a newspaper, and placed the tin soldier in it, and sent him sailing down the gutter, while the two boys ran by the side of it, and clapped their hands. Good gracious, what large waves arose in that gutter! and how fast the stream rolled on! for the rain had been very heavy. The paper boat rocked up and down, and turned itself round sometimes so quickly that the tin soldier trembled; yet he remained firm; his countenance did not change; he looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket. Suddenly the boat shot under a bridge which formed a part of a drain, and then it was as dark as the tin soldier's box.

"Where am I going now?" thought he. "This is the black goblin's fault, I am sure. Ah, well, if the little lady were only here with me in the boat, I should not care for any darkness."

Suddenly there appeared a great water-rat, who lived in the drain.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat, "give it to me at once." But the tin soldier remained silent and held his musket tighter than ever. The boat sailed on and the rat followed it. How he did gnash his teeth and cry out to the bits of wood and straw, "Stop him, stop him; he has not paid toll, and has not shown his pass." But the stream rushed on stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already see daylight shining where the arch ended. Then he heard a roaring sound quite terrible enough to frighten the bravest man. At the end of the tunnel the drain fell into a large canal over a steep place, which made it as dangerous for him as a waterfall would be to us. He was too close to it to stop, so the boat rushed on, and the poor tin soldier could only hold himself as stiffly as possible, without moving an eyelid, to show that he was not afraid. The boat whirled round three or four times, and then filled with water to the very edge; nothing could save it from sinking. He now stood up to his neck in water, while deeper and deeper sank the boat, and the paper became soft and loose with the wet, till at last the water

closed over the soldier's head. He thought of the elegant little dancer whom he should never see again, and the words of the song sounded in his ears—"Farewell, warrior! ever brave, Drifting onward to thy grave."

Then the paper boat fell to pieces, and the soldier sank into the water and immediately afterwards was swallowed up by a great fish. Oh how dark it was inside the fish! A great deal darker than in the tunnel, and narrower too, but the tin soldier continued firm, and lay at full length shouldering his musket. The fish swam to and fro, making the most wonderful movements, but at last he became quite still. After a while, a flash of lightning seemed to pass through him, and then the daylight approached, and a voice cried out, "I declare here is the tin soldier." The fish had been caught, taken to the market and sold to the cook, who took him into the kitchen and cut him open with a large knife. She picked up the soldier and held him by the waist between her finger and thumb, and carried him into the room. They were all anxious to see this wonderful soldier who had travelled about inside a fish; but he was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and—how many curious things do happen in the world!—there he was in the very same room from the window of which he had fallen, there were the same children, the same playthings, standing on the table, and the pretty castle with the elegant little dancer at the door; she still balanced herself on one leg, and held up the other, so she was as firm as himself. It touched the tin soldier so much to see her that he almost wept tin tears, but he kept them back. He only looked at her and they both remained silent. Presently one of the little boys took up the tin soldier, and threw him into the stove. He had no reason for doing so, therefore it must have been the fault of the black goblin who lived in the snuff-box. The flames lighted up the tin soldier, as he stood, the heat was very terrible, but whether it proceeded from the real fire or from the fire of love he could not tell. Then he could see that the bright colors were faded from his uniform, but whether they had been washed off during his journey or from the effects of his sorrow, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, and she looked at him. He felt himself melting away, but he still remained firm with his gun on his shoulder. Suddenly the door of the room flew open and the draught of air caught up the little dancer, she fluttered like a sylph right into the stove by the side of the tin soldier, and was instantly in flames and was gone. The tin soldier melted down into a lump, and the next morning, when the maid servant took the ashes out of the stove, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the little dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, which was burnt black as a cinder.

THE TINDER-BOX

A soldier came marching along the high road: "Left, right—left, right." He had his knapsack on his back, and a sword at his side; he had been to the wars, and was now returning home.

As he walked on, he met a very frightful-looking old witch in the road. Her under-lip hung quite down on her breast, and she stopped and said, "Good evening, soldier; you have a very fine sword, and a large knapsack, and you are a real soldier; so you shall have as much money as ever you like."

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"Do you see that large tree," said the witch, pointing to a tree which stood beside them. "Well, it is quite hollow inside, and you must climb to the top, when you will see a hole, through which you can let yourself down into the tree to a great depth. I will tie a rope round your body, so that I can pull you up again when you call out to me."

"But what am I to do, down there in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Get money," she replied; "for you must know that when you reach the ground under the tree, you will find yourself in a large hall, lighted up by three hundred lamps; you will then see three doors, which can be easily opened, for the keys are in all the locks. On entering the first of the chambers, to which these doors lead, you will see a large chest, standing in the middle of the floor, and upon it a dog seated, with a pair of eyes as large as teacups. But you need not be at all afraid of him; I will give you my blue checked apron, which you must spread upon the floor, and then boldly seize hold of the dog, and place him upon it. You can then open the chest, and take from it as many pence as you please, they are only copper pence; but if you would rather have silver money, you must go into the second chamber. Here you will find another dog, with eyes as big as mill-wheels; but do not let that trouble you. Place him upon my apron, and then take what money you please. If, however, you like gold best, enter the third chamber, where there is another chest full of it. The dog who sits on this chest is very dreadful; his eyes are as big as a tower, but do not mind him. If he also is placed upon my apron, he cannot hurt you, and you may take from the chest what gold you will."

"This is not a bad story," said the soldier; "but what am I to give you, you old witch? for, of course, you do not mean to tell me all this for nothing."

"No," said the witch; "but I do not ask for a single penny. Only promise to bring me an old tinder-box, which my grandmother left behind the last time she went down there."

"Very well; I promise. Now tie the rope round my body."

“Here it is,” replied the witch; “and here is my blue checked apron.”
As soon as the rope was tied, the soldier climbed up the tree, and let himself down through the hollow to the ground beneath; and here he found, as the witch had told him, a large hall, in which many hundred lamps were all burning. Then he opened the first door. “Ah!” there sat the dog, with the eyes as large as teacups, staring at him.
“You’re a pretty fellow,” said the soldier, seizing him, and placing him on the witch’s apron, while he filled his pockets from the chest with as many pieces as they would hold. Then he closed the lid, seated the dog upon it again, and walked into another chamber, And, sure enough, there sat the dog with eyes as big as mill-wheels.
“You had better not look at me in that way,” said the soldier; “you will make your eyes water;” and then he seated him also upon the apron, and opened the chest. But when he saw what a quantity of silver money it contained, he very quickly threw away all the coppers he had taken, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with nothing but silver.
Then he went into the third room, and there the dog was really hideous; his eyes were, truly, as big as towers, and they turned round and round in his head like wheels.
“Good morning,” said the soldier, touching his cap, for he had never seen such a dog in his life. But after looking at him more closely, he thought he had been civil enough, so he placed him on the floor, and opened the chest. Good gracious, what a quantity of gold there was! enough to buy all the sugar-sticks of the sweet-stuff women; all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking-horses in the world, or even the whole town itself There was, indeed, an immense quantity. So the soldier now threw away all the silver money he had taken, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with gold instead; and not only his pockets and his knapsack, but even his cap and boots, so that he could scarcely walk.
He was really rich now; so he replaced the dog on the chest, closed the door, and called up through the tree, “Now pull me out, you old witch.”
“Have you got the tinder-box?” asked the witch.
“No; I declare I quite forgot it.” So he went back and fetched the tinderbox, and then the witch drew him up out of the tree, and he stood again in the high road, with his pockets, his knapsack, his cap, and his boots full of gold.
“What are you going to do with the tinder-box?” asked the soldier.
“That is nothing to you,” replied the witch; “you have the money, now give me the tinder-box.”
“I tell you what,” said the soldier, “if you don’t tell me what you are going to do with it, I will draw my sword and cut off your head.”

"No," said the witch.
The soldier immediately cut off her head, and there she lay on the ground. Then he tied up all his money in her apron, and slung it on his back like a bundle, put the tinderbox in his pocket, and walked off to the nearest town. It was a very nice town, and he put up at the best inn, and ordered a dinner of all his favorite dishes, for now he was rich and had plenty of money.
The servant, who cleaned his boots, thought they certainly were a shabby pair to be worn by such a rich gentleman, for he had not yet bought any new ones. The next day, however, he procured some good clothes and proper boots, so that our soldier soon became known as a fine gentleman, and the people visited him, and told him all the wonders that were to be seen in the town, and of the king's beautiful daughter, the princess.
"Where can I see her?" asked the soldier.
"She is not to be seen at all," they said; "she lives in a large copper castle, surrounded by walls and towers. No one but the king himself can pass in or out, for there has been a prophecy that she will marry a common soldier, and the king cannot bear to think of such a marriage."
"I should like very much to see her," thought the soldier; but he could not obtain permission to do so. However, he passed a very pleasant time; went to the theatre, drove in the king's garden, and gave a great deal of money to the poor, which was very good of him; he remembered what it had been in olden times to be without a shilling. Now he was rich, had fine clothes, and many friends, who all declared he was a fine fellow and a real gentleman, and all this gratified him exceedingly. But his money would not last forever; and as he spent and gave away a great deal daily, and received none, he found himself at last with only two shillings left. So he was obliged to leave his elegant rooms, and live in a little garret under the roof, where he had to clean his own boots, and even mend them with a large needle. None of his friends came to see him, there were too many stairs to mount up. One dark evening, he had not even a penny to buy a candle; then all at once he remembered that there was a piece of candle stuck in the tinder-box, which he had brought from the old tree, into which the witch had helped him.
He found the tinder-box, but no sooner had he struck a few sparks from the flint and steel, than the door flew open and the dog with eyes as big as teacups, whom he had seen while down in the tree, stood before him, and said, "What orders, master?"
"Hallo," said the soldier; "well this is a pleasant tinderbox, if it brings me all I wish for." "Bring me some money," said he to the dog.
He was gone in a moment, and presently returned, carrying a large bag of

coppers in his month. The soldier very soon discovered after this the value of the tinder-box. If he struck the flint once, the dog who sat on the chest of copper money made his appearance; if twice, the dog came from the chest of silver; and if three times, the dog with eyes like towers, who watched over the gold. The soldier had now plenty of money; he returned to his elegant rooms, and reappeared in his fine clothes, so that his friends knew him again directly, and made as much of him as before.

After a while he began to think it was very strange that no one could get a look at the princess. "Every one says she is very beautiful," thought he to himself; "but what is the use of that if she is to be shut up in a copper castle surrounded by so many towers. Can I by any means get to see her. Stop! where is my tinder-box?" Then he struck a light, and in a moment the dog, with eyes as big as teacups, stood before him.

"It is midnight," said the soldier, "yet I should very much like to see the princess, if only for a moment."

The dog disappeared instantly, and before the soldier could even look round, he returned with the princess. She was lying on the dog's back asleep, and looked so lovely, that every one who saw her would know she was a real princess. The soldier could not help kissing her, true soldier as he was. Then the dog ran back with the princess; but in the morning, while at breakfast with the king and queen, she told them what a singular dream she had had during the night, of a dog and a soldier, that she had ridden on the dog's back, and been kissed by the soldier.

"That is a very pretty story, indeed," said the queen. So the next night one of the old ladies of the court was set to watch by the princess's bed, to discover whether it really was a dream, or what else it might be.

The soldier longed very much to see the princess once more, so he sent for the dog again in the night to fetch her, and to run with her as fast as ever he could. But the old lady put on water boots, and ran after him as quickly as he did, and found that he carried the princess into a large house. She thought it would help her to remember the place if she made a large cross on the door with a piece of chalk. Then she went home to bed, and the dog presently returned with the princess. But when he saw that a cross had been made on the door of the house, where the soldier lived, he took another piece of chalk and made crosses on all the doors in the town, so that the lady-in-waiting might not be able to find out the right door.

Early the next morning the king and queen accompanied the lady and all the officers of the household, to see where the princess had been.

"Here it is," said the king, when they came to the first door with a cross on it.

"No, my dear husband, it must be that one," said the queen, pointing to a second door having a cross also.
"And here is one, and there is another!" they all exclaimed; for there were crosses on all the doors in every direction.
So they felt it would be useless to search any farther. But the queen was a very clever woman; she could do a great deal more than merely ride in a carriage. She took her large gold scissors, cut a piece of silk into squares, and made a neat little bag. This bag she filled with buckwheat flour, and tied it round the princess's neck; and then she cut a small hole in the bag, so that the flour might be scattered on the ground as the princess went along. During the night, the dog came again and carried the princess on his back, and ran with her to the soldier, who loved her very much, and wished that he had been a prince, so that he might have her for a wife. The dog did not observe how the flour ran out of the bag all the way from the castle wall to the soldier's house, and even up to the window, where he had climbed with the princess. Therefore in the morning the king and queen found out where their daughter had been, and the soldier was taken up and put in prison. Oh, how dark and disagreeable it was as he sat there, and the people said to him, "To-morrow you will be hanged." It was not very pleasant news, and besides, he had left the tinder-box at the inn. In the morning he could see through the iron grating of the little window how the people were hastening out of the town to see him hanged; he heard the drums beating, and saw the soldiers marching. Every one ran out to look at them, and a shoemaker's boy, with a leather apron and slippers on, galloped by so fast, that one of his slippers flew off and struck against the wall where the soldier sat looking through the iron grating. "Hallo, you shoemaker's boy, you need not be in such a hurry," cried the soldier to him. "There will be nothing to see till I come; but if you will run to the house where I have been living, and bring me my tinder-box, you shall have four shillings, but you must put your best foot foremost."
The shoemaker's boy liked the idea of getting the four shillings, so he ran very fast and fetched the tinder-box, and gave it to the soldier. And now we shall see what happened. Outside the town a large gibbet had been erected, round which stood the soldiers and several thousands of people. The king and the queen sat on splendid thrones opposite to the judges and the whole council. The soldier already stood on the ladder; but as they were about to place the rope around his neck, he said that an innocent request was often granted to a poor criminal before he suffered death. He wished very much to smoke a pipe, as it would be the last pipe he should ever smoke in the world. The king could not refuse this request, so the soldier took his tin-

der-box, and struck fire, once, twice, thrice,—and there in a moment stood all the dogs;—the one with eyes as big as teacups, the one with eyes as large as mill-wheels, and the third, whose eyes were like towers. "Help me now, that I may not be hanged," cried the soldier.

And the dogs fell upon the judges and all the councillors; seized one by the legs, and another by the nose, and tossed them many feet high in the air, so that they fell down and were dashed to pieces.

"I will not be touched," said the king. But the largest dog seized him, as well as the queen, and threw them after the others. Then the soldiers and all the people were afraid, and cried, "Good soldier, you shall be our king, and you shall marry the beautiful princess."

So they placed the soldier in the king's carriage, and the three dogs ran on in front and cried "Hurrah!" and the little boys whistled through their fingers, and the soldiers presented arms. The princess came out of the copper castle, and became queen, which was very pleasing to her. The wedding festivities lasted a whole week, and the dogs sat at the table, and stared with all their eyes.

THE TOAD

The well was deep, and therefore the rope had to be a long one; it was heavy work turning the handle when any one had to raise a bucketful of water over the edge of the well. Though the water was clear, the sun never looked down far enough into the well to mirror itself in the waters; but as far as its beams could reach, green things grew forth between the stones in the sides of the well.

Down below dwelt a family of the Toad race. They had, in fact, come head-over-heels down the well, in the person of the old Mother-Toad, who was still alive. The green Frogs, who had been established there a long time, and swam about in the water, called them "well-guests." But the new-comers seemed determined to stay where they were, for they found it very agreeable living "in a dry place," as they called the wet stones.

The Mother-Frog had once been a traveller. She happened to be in the water-bucket when it was drawn up, but the light became too strong for her, and she got a pain in her eyes. Fortunately she scrambled out of the bucket; but she fell into the water with a terrible flop, and had to lie sick for three days with pains in her back. She certainly had not much to tell of the things up above, but she knew this, and all the Frogs knew it, that the well was not all the world. The Mother-Toad might have told this and that, if she had

chosen, but she never answered when they asked her anything, and so they left off asking.
"She's thick, and fat and ugly," said the young green Frogs; "and her children will be just as ugly as she is."
"That may be," retorted the mother-Toad, "but one of them has a jewel in his head, or else I have the jewel."
The young frogs listened and stared; and as these words did not please them, they made grimaces and dived down under the water. But the little Toads kicked up their hind legs from mere pride, for each of them thought that he must have the jewel; and then they sat and held their heads quite still. But at length they asked what it was that made them so proud, and what kind of a thing a jewel might be.
"Oh, it is such a splendid and precious thing, that I cannot describe it," said the Mother-Toad. "It's something which one carries about for one's own pleasure, and that makes other people angry. But don't ask me any questions, for I shan't answer you."
"Well, I haven't got the jewel," said the smallest of the Toads; she was as ugly as a toad can be. "Why should I have such a precious thing? And if it makes others angry, it can't give me any pleasure. No, I only wish I could get to the edge of the well, and look out; it must be beautiful up there."
"You'd better stay where you are," said the old Mother-Toad, "for you know everything here, and you can tell what you have. Take care of the bucket, for it will crush you to death; and even if you get into it safely, you may fall out. And it's not every one who falls so cleverly as I did, and gets away with whole legs and whole bones.
"Quack!" said the little Toad; and that's just as if one of us were to say, "Aha!" She had an immense desire to get to the edge of the well, and to look over; she felt such a longing for the green, up there; and the next morning, when it chanced that the bucket was being drawn up, filled with water, and stopped for a moment just in front of the stone on which the Toad sat, the little creature's heart moved within it, and our Toad jumped into the filled bucket, which presently was drawn to the top, and emptied out.
"Ugh, you beast!" said the farm laborer who emptied the bucket, when he saw the toad. "You're the ugliest thing I've seen for one while." And he made a kick with his wooden shoe at the toad, which just escaped being crushed by managing to scramble into the nettles which grew high by the well's brink. Here she saw stem by stem, but she looked up also; the sun shone through the leaves, which were quite transparent; and she felt as a person would feel who steps suddenly into a great forest, where the sun looks in between the branches and leaves.

"It's much nicer here than down in the well! I should like to stay here my whole life long!" said the little Toad. So she lay there for an hour, yes, for two hours. "I wonder what is to be found up here? As I have come so far, I must try to go still farther." And so she crawled on as fast as she could crawl, and got out upon the highway, where the sun shone upon her, and the dust powdered her all over as she marched across the way.

"I've got to a dry place now, and no mistake," said the Toad. "It's almost too much of a good thing here; it tickles one so."

She came to the ditch; and forget-me-nots were growing there, and meadow-sweet; and a very little way off was a hedge of whitethorn, and elder bushes grew there, too, and bindweed with white flowers. Gay colors were to be seen here, and a butterfly, too, was flitting by. The Toad thought it was a flower which had broken loose that it might look about better in the world, which was quite a natural thing to do.

"If one could only make such a journey as that!" said the Toad. "Croak! how capital that would be."

Eight days and eight nights she stayed by the well, and experienced no want of provisions. On the ninth day she thought, "Forward! onward!" But what could she find more charming and beautiful? Perhaps a little toad or a few green frogs. During the last night there had been a sound borne on the breeze, as if there were cousins in the neighborhood.

"It's a glorious thing to live! glorious to get out of the well, and to lie among the stinging-nettles, and to crawl along the dusty road. But onward, onward! that we may find frogs or a little toad. We can't do without that; nature alone is not enough for one." And so she went forward on her journey.

She came out into the open field, to a great pond, round about which grew reeds; and she walked into it.

"It will be too damp for you here," said the Frogs; "but you are very welcome! Are you a he or a she? But it doesn't matter; you are equally welcome."

And she was invited to the concert in the evening—the family concert; great enthusiasm and thin voices; we know the sort of thing. No refreshments were given, only there was plenty to drink, for the whole pond was free.

"Now I shall resume my journey," said the little Toad; for she always felt a longing for something better.

She saw the stars shining, so large and so bright, and she saw the moon gleaming; and then she saw the sun rise, and mount higher and higher.

"Perhaps after all, I am still in a well, only in a larger well. I must get higher yet; I feel a great restlessness and longing." And when the moon became round and full, the poor creature thought, "I wonder if that is the bucket

which will be let down, and into which I must step to get higher up? Or is the sun the great bucket? How great it is! how bright it is! It can take up all. I must look out, that I may not miss the opportunity. Oh, how it seems to shine in my head! I don't think the jewel can shine brighter. But I haven't the jewel; not that I cry about that—no, I must go higher up, into splendor and joy! I feel so confident, and yet I am afraid. It's a difficult step to take, and yet it must be taken. Onward, therefore, straight onward!"

She took a few steps, such as a crawling animal may take, and soon found herself on a road beside which people dwelt; but there were flower gardens as well as kitchen gardens. And she sat down to rest by a kitchen garden.

"What a number of different creatures there are that I never knew! and how beautiful and great the world is! But one must look round in it, and not stay in one spot." And then she hopped into the kitchen garden. "How green it is here! how beautiful it is here!"

"I know that," said the Caterpillar, on the leaf, "my leaf is the largest here. It hides half the world from me, but I don't care for the world."

"Cluck, cluck!" And some fowls came. They tripped about in the cabbage garden. The Fowl who marched at the head of them had a long sight, and she spied the Caterpillar on the green leaf, and pecked at it, so that the Caterpillar fell on the ground, where it twisted and writhed.

The Fowl looked at it first with one eye and then with the other, for she did not know what the end of this writhing would be.

"It doesn't do that with a good will," thought the Fowl, and lifted up her head to peck at the Caterpillar.

The Toad was so horrified at this, that she came crawling straight up towards the Fowl.

"Aha, it has allies," quoth the Fowl. "Just look at the crawling thing!" And then the Fowl turned away. "I don't care for the little green morsel; it would only tickle my throat." The other fowls took the same view of it, and they all turned away together.

"I writhed myself free," said the Caterpillar. "What a good thing it is when one has presence of mind! But the hardest thing remains to be done, and that is to get on my leaf again. Where is it?"

And the little Toad came up and expressed her sympathy. She was glad that in her ugliness she had frightened the fowls.

"What do you mean by that?" cried the Caterpillar. "I wriggled myself free from the Fowl. You are very disagreeable to look at. Cannot I be left in peace on my own property? Now I smell cabbage; now I am near my leaf. Nothing is so beautiful as property. But I must go higher up."

"Yes, higher up," said the little Toad; "higher-up! She feels just as I do; but she's not in a good humor to-day. That's because of the fright. We all want to go higher up." And she looked up as high as ever she could.
The stork sat in his nest on the roof of the farm-house. He clapped with his beak, and the Mother-stork clapped with hers.
"How high up they live!" thought the Toad. "If one could only get as high as that!"
In the farm-house lived two young students; the one was a poet and the other a scientific searcher into the secrets of nature. The one sang and wrote joyously of everything that God had created, and how it was mirrored in his heart. He sang it out clearly, sweetly, richly, in well-sounding verses; while the other investigated created matter itself, and even cut it open where need was. He looked upon God's creation as a great sum in arithmetic—subtracted, multiplied, and tried to know it within and without, and to talk with understanding concerning it; and that was a very sensible thing; and he spoke joyously and cleverly of it. They were good, joyful men, those two.
"There sits a good specimen of a toad," said the naturalist. "I must have that fellow in a bottle of spirits." "You have two of them already," replied the poet. "Let the thing sit there and enjoy its life."
"But it's so wonderfully ugly," persisted the first.
"Yes, if we could find the jewel in its head," said the poet, "I too should be for cutting it open.' "A jewel!" cried the naturalist. "You seem to know a great deal about natural history."
"But is there not something beautiful in the popular belief that just as the toad is the ugliest of animals, it should often carry the most precious jewel in its head? Is it not just the same thing with men? What a jewel that was that Aesop had, and still more, Socrates!"
The Toad did not hear any more, nor did she understand half of what she had heard. The two friends walked on, and thus she escaped the fate of being bottled up in spirits.
"Those two also were speaking of the jewel," said the Toad to herself. "What a good thing that I have not got it! I might have been in a very disagreeable position."
Now there was a clapping on the roof of the farm-house. Father-Stork was making a speech to his family, and his family was glancing down at the two young men in the kitchen garden.
"Man is the most conceited creature!" said the Stork. "Listen how their jaws are wagging; and for all that they can't clap properly. They boast of their gifts of eloquence and their language! Yes, a fine language truly! Why,

it changes in every day's journey we make. One of them doesn't understand another. Now, we can speak our language over the whole earth—up in the North and in Egypt. And then men are not able to fly, moreover. They rush along by means of an invention they call 'railway;' but they often break their necks over it. It makes my beak turn cold when I think of it. The world could get on without men. We could do without them very well, so long as we only keep frogs and earth-worms."

"That was a powerful speech," thought the little Toad. "What a great man that is yonder! and how high he sits! Higher than ever I saw any one sit yet; and how he can swim!" she cried, as the Stork soared away through the air with outspread pinions.

And the Mother-Stork began talking in the nest, and told about Egypt and the waters of the Nile, and the incomparable mud that was to be found in that strange land; and all this sounded new and very charming to the little Toad.

"I must go to Egypt!" said she. "If the Stork or one of his young ones would only take me! I would oblige him in return. Yes, I shall get to Egypt, for I feel so happy! All the longing and all the pleasure that I feel is much better than having a jewel in one's head."

And it was just she who had the jewel. That jewel was the continual striving and desire to go upward—ever upward. It gleamed in her head, gleamed in joy, beamed brightly in her longing.

Then, suddenly, up came the Stork. He had seen the Toad in the grass, and stooped down and seized the little creature anything but gently. The Stork's beak pinched her, and the wind whistled; it was not exactly agreeable, but she was going upward—upward towards Egypt—and she knew it; and that was why her eyes gleamed, and a spark seemed to fly out of them.

"Quunk!—ah!"

The body was dead—the Toad was killed! But the spark that had shot forth from her eyes; what became of that?

The sunbeam took it up; the sunbeam carried the jewel from the head of the toad. Whither?

Ask not the naturalist; rather ask the poet. He will tell it thee under the guise of a fairy tale; and the Caterpillar on the cabbage, and the Stork family belong to the story. Think! the Caterpillar is changed, and turns into a beautiful butterfly; the Stork family flies over mountains and seas, to the distant Africa, and yet finds the shortest way home to the same country—to the same roof. Nay, that is almost too improbable; and yet it is true. You may ask the naturalist, he will confess it is so; and you know it yourself, for you have seen it.

But the jewel in the head of the toad?
Seek it in the sun; see it there if you can.
The brightness is too dazzling there. We have not yet such eyes as can see into the glories which God has created, but we shall receive them by-and-by; and that will be the most beautiful story of all, and we shall all have our share in it.

THE TOP AND BALL

A whipping top and a little ball lay together in a box, among other toys, and the top said to the ball, "Shall we be married, as we live in the same box?" But the ball, which wore a dress of morocco leather, and thought as much of herself as any other young lady, would not even condescend to reply.
The next day came the little boy to whom the playthings belonged, and he painted the top red and yellow, and drove a brass-headed nail into the middle, so that while the top was spinning round it looked splendid.
"Look at me," said the top to the ball. "What do you say now? Shall we be engaged to each other? We should suit so well; you spring, and I dance. No one could be happier than we should be."
"Indeed! do you think so? Perhaps you do not know that my father and mother were morocco slippers, and that I have a Spanish cork in my body."
"Yes; but I am made of mahogany," said the top. "The major himself turned me. He has a turning lathe of his own, and it is a great amusement to him."
"Can I believe it?" asked the ball.
"May I never be whipped again," said the top, "if I am not telling you the truth."
"You certainly know how to speak for yourself very well," said the ball; "but I cannot accept your proposal. I am almost engaged to a swallow. Every time I fly up in the air, he puts his head out of the nest, and says, 'Will you?' and I have said, 'Yes,' to myself silently, and that is as good as being half engaged; but I will promise never to forget you."
"Much good that will be to me," said the top; and they spoke to each other no more.
Next day the ball was taken out by the boy. The top saw it flying high in the air, like a bird, till it would go quite out of sight. Each time it came back, as it touched the earth, it gave a higher leap than before, either because it longed to fly upwards, or from having a Spanish cork in its body. But the ninth time it rose in the air, it remained away, and did not return. The boy searched everywhere for it, but he searched in vain, for it could not be found; it was gone.

“I know very well where she is,” sighed the top; “she is in the swallow’s nest, and has married the swallow.”
The more the top thought of this, the more he longed for the ball. His love increased the more, just because he could not get her; and that she should have been won by another, was the worst of all. The top still twirled about and hummed, but he continued to think of the ball; and the more he thought of her, the more beautiful she seemed to his fancy.
Thus several years passed by, and his love became quite old. The top, also, was no longer young; but there came a day when he looked handsomer than ever; for he was gilded all over. He was now a golden top, and whirled and danced about till he hummed quite loud, and was something worth looking at; but one day he leaped too high, and then he, also, was gone. They searched everywhere, even in the cellar, but he was nowhere to be found. Where could he be? He had jumped into the dust-bin, where all sorts of rubbish were lying: cabbage-stalks, dust, and rain-droppings that had fallen down from the gutter under the roof.
“Now I am in a nice place,” said he; “my gilding will soon be washed off here. Oh dear, what a set of rabble I have got amongst!” And then he glanced at a curious round thing like an old apple, which lay near a long, leafless cabbage-stalk. It was, however, not an apple, but an old ball, which had lain for years in the gutter, and was soaked through with water.
“Thank goodness, here comes one of my own class, with whom I can talk,” said the ball, examining the gilded top. “I am made of morocco,” she said. “I was sewn together by a young lady, and I have a Spanish cork in my body; but no one would think it, to look at me now. I was once engaged to a swallow; but I fell in here from the gutter under the roof, and I have lain here more than five years, and have been thoroughly drenched. Believe me, it is a long time for a young maiden.”
The top said nothing, but he thought of his old love; and the more she said, the more clear it became to him that this was the same ball.
The servant then came to clean out the dust-bin.
“Ah,” she exclaimed, “here is a gilt top.” So the top was brought again to notice and honor, but nothing more was heard of the little ball. He spoke not a word about his old love; for that soon died away. When the beloved object has lain for five years in a gutter, and has been drenched through, no one cares to know her again on meeting her in a dust-bin.

THE TRAVELLING COMPANION

Poor John was very sad; for his father was so ill, he had no hope of his recovery. John sat alone with the sick man in the little room, and the lamp had nearly burnt out; for it was late in the night.

"You have been a good son, John," said the sick father, "and God will help you on in the world." He looked at him, as he spoke, with mild, earnest eyes, drew a deep sigh, and died; yet it appeared as if he still slept.

John wept bitterly. He had no one in the wide world now; neither father, mother, brother, nor sister. Poor John! he knelt down by the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and wept many, many bitter tears. But at last his eyes closed, and he fell asleep with his head resting against the hard bedpost. Then he dreamed a strange dream; he thought he saw the sun shining upon him, and his father alive and well, and even heard him laughing as he used to do when he was very happy. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown on her head, and long, shining hair, gave him her hand; and his father said, "See what a bride you have won. She is the loveliest maiden on the whole earth." Then he awoke, and all the beautiful things vanished before his eyes, his father lay dead on the bed, and he was all alone. Poor John!

During the following week the dead man was buried. The son walked behind the coffin which contained his father, whom he so dearly loved, and would never again behold. He heard the earth fall on the coffin-lid, and watched it till only a corner remained in sight, and at last that also disappeared. He felt as if his heart would break with its weight of sorrow, till those who stood round the grave sang a psalm, and the sweet, holy tones brought tears into his eyes, which relieved him. The sun shone brightly down on the green trees, as if it would say, "You must not be so sorrowful, John. Do you see the beautiful blue sky above you? Your father is up there, and he prays to the loving Father of all, that you may do well in the future."

"I will always be good," said John, "and then I shall go to be with my father in heaven. What joy it will be when we see each other again! How much I shall have to relate to him, and how many things he will be able to explain to me of the delights of heaven, and teach me as he once did on earth. Oh, what joy it will be!"

He pictured it all so plainly to himself, that he smiled even while the tears ran down his cheeks.

The little birds in the chestnut-trees twittered, "Tweet, tweet;" they were so happy, although they had seen the funeral; but they seemed as if they knew that the dead man was now in heaven, and that he had wings much larger

and more beautiful than their own; and he was happy now, because he had been good here on earth, and they were glad of it. John saw them fly away out of the green trees into the wide world, and he longed to fly with them; but first he cut out a large wooden cross, to place on his father's grave; and when he brought it there in the evening, he found the grave decked out with gravel and flowers. Strangers had done this; they who had known the good old father who was now dead, and who had loved him very much.

Early the next morning, John packed up his little bundle of clothes, and placed all his money, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few shillings, in his girdle; with this he determined to try his fortune in the world. But first he went into the churchyard; and, by his father's grave, he offered up a prayer, and said, "Farewell."

As he passed through the fields, all the flowers looked fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine, and nodded in the wind, as if they wished to say, "Welcome to the green wood, where all is fresh and bright."

Then John turned to have one more look at the old church, in which he had been christened in his infancy, and where his father had taken him every Sunday to hear the service and join in singing the psalms. As he looked at the old tower, he espied the ringer standing at one of the narrow openings, with his little pointed red cap on his head, and shading his eyes from the sun with his bent arm. John nodded farewell to him, and the little ringer waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to him a great many times, to show that he felt kindly towards him, and wished him a prosperous journey.

John continued his journey, and thought of all the wonderful things he should see in the large, beautiful world, till he found himself farther away from home than ever he had been before. He did not even know the names of the places he passed through, and could scarcely understand the language of the people he met, for he was far away, in a strange land. The first night he slept on a haystack, out in the fields, for there was no other bed for him; but it seemed to him so nice and comfortable that even a king need not wish for a better. The field, the brook, the haystack, with the blue sky above, formed a beautiful sleeping-room. The green grass, with the little red and white flowers, was the carpet; the elder-bushes and the hedges of wild roses looked like garlands on the walls; and for a bath he could have the clear, fresh water of the brook; while the rushes bowed their heads to him, to wish him good morning and good evening. The moon, like a large lamp, hung high up in the blue ceiling, and he had no fear of its setting fire to his curtains. John slept here quite safely all night; and when he awoke,

the sun was up, and all the little birds were singing round him, “Good morning, good morning. Are you not up yet?”
It was Sunday, and the bells were ringing for church. As the people went in, John followed them; he heard God’s word, joined in singing the psalms, and listened to the preacher. It seemed to him just as if he were in his own church, where he had been christened, and had sung the psalms with his father. Out in the churchyard were several graves, and on some of them the grass had grown very high. John thought of his father’s grave, which he knew at last would look like these, as he was not there to weed and attend to it. Then he set to work, pulled up the high grass, raised the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and replaced the wreaths which had been blown away from their places by the wind, thinking all the time, “Perhaps some one is doing the same for my father’s grave, as I am not there to do it.”
Outside the church door stood an old beggar, leaning on his crutch. John gave him his silver shillings, and then he continued his journey, feeling lighter and happier than ever. Towards evening, the weather became very stormy, and he hastened on as quickly as he could, to get shelter; but it was quite dark by the time he reached a little lonely church which stood on a hill. “I will go in here,” he said, “and sit down in a corner; for I am quite tired, and want rest.”
So he went in, and seated himself; then he folded his hands, and offered up his evening prayer, and was soon fast asleep and dreaming, while the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed without. When he awoke, it was still night; but the storm had ceased, and the moon shone in upon him through the windows. Then he saw an open coffin standing in the centre of the church, which contained a dead man, waiting for burial. John was not at all timid; he had a good conscience, and he knew also that the dead can never injure any one. It is living wicked men who do harm to others. Two such wicked persons stood now by the dead man, who had been brought to the church to be buried. Their evil intentions were to throw the poor dead body outside the church door, and not leave him to rest in his coffin.
“Why do you do this?” asked John, when he saw what they were going to do; “it is very wicked. Leave him to rest in peace, in Christ’s name.”
“Nonsense,” replied the two dreadful men. “He has cheated us; he owed us money which he could not pay, and now he is dead we shall not get a penny; so we mean to have our revenge, and let him lie like a dog outside the church door.”
“I have only fifty dollars,” said John, “it is all I possess in the world, but I will give it to you if you will promise me faithfully to leave the dead man in

peace. I shall be able to get on without the money; I have strong and healthy limbs, and God will always help me."
"Why, of course," said the horrid men, "if you will pay his debt we will both promise not to touch him. You may depend upon that;" and then they took the money he offered them, laughed at him for his good nature, and went their way.
Then he laid the dead body back in the coffin, folded the hands, and took leave of it; and went away contentedly through the great forest. All around him he could see the prettiest little elves dancing in the moonlight, which shone through the trees. They were not disturbed by his appearance, for they knew he was good and harmless among men. They are wicked people only who can never obtain a glimpse of fairies. Some of them were not taller than the breadth of a finger, and they wore golden combs in their long, yellow hair. They were rocking themselves two together on the large dew-drops with which the leaves and the high grass were sprinkled. Sometimes the dew-drops would roll away, and then they fell down between the stems of the long grass, and caused a great deal of laughing and noise among the other little people. It was quite charming to watch them at play. Then they sang songs, and John remembered that he had learnt those pretty songs when he was a little boy. Large speckled spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, were employed to spin suspension bridges and palaces from one hedge to another, and when the tiny drops fell upon them, they glittered in the moonlight like shining glass. This continued till sunrise. Then the little elves crept into the flower-buds, and the wind seized the bridges and palaces, and fluttered them in the air like cobwebs.
As John left the wood, a strong man's voice called after him, "Hallo, comrade, where are you travelling?"
"Into the wide world," he replied; "I am only a poor lad, I have neither father nor mother, but God will help me."
"I am going into the wide world also," replied the stranger; "shall we keep each other company?"
"With all my heart," he said, and so they went on together. Soon they began to like each other very much, for they were both good; but John found out that the stranger was much more clever than himself. He had travelled all over the world, and could describe almost everything. The sun was high in the heavens when they seated themselves under a large tree to eat their breakfast, and at the same moment an old woman came towards them. She was very old and almost bent double. She leaned upon a stick and carried on her back a bundle of firewood, which she had collected in the forest;

her apron was tied round it, and John saw three great stems of fern and some willow twigs peeping out. Just as she came close up to them, her foot slipped and she fell to the ground screaming loudly; poor old woman, she had broken her leg! John proposed directly that they should carry the old woman home to her cottage; but the stranger opened his knapsack and took out a box, in which he said he had a salve that would quickly make her leg well and strong again, so that she would be able to walk home herself, as if her leg had never been broken. And all that he would ask in return was the three fern stems which she carried in her apron.

"That is rather too high a price," said the old woman, nodding her head quite strangely. She did not seem at all inclined to part with the fern stems. However, it was not very agreeable to lie there with a broken leg, so she gave them to him; and such was the power of the ointment, that no sooner had he rubbed her leg with it than the old mother rose up and walked even better than she had done before. But then this wonderful ointment could not be bought at a chemist's.

"What can you want with those three fern rods?" asked John of his fellow-traveller.

"Oh, they will make capital brooms," said he; "and I like them because I have strange whims sometimes." Then they walked on together for a long distance.

"How dark the sky is becoming," said John; "and look at those thick, heavy clouds."

"Those are not clouds," replied his fellow-traveller; "they are mountains—large lofty mountains—on the tops of which we should be above the clouds, in the pure, free air. Believe me, it is delightful to ascend so high, tomorrow we shall be there." But the mountains were not so near as they appeared; they had to travel a whole day before they reached them, and pass through black forests and piles of rock as large as a town. The journey had been so fatiguing that John and his fellow-traveller stopped to rest at a roadside inn, so that they might gain strength for their journey on the morrow. In the large public room of the inn a great many persons were assembled to see a comedy performed by dolls. The showman had just erected his little theatre, and the people were sitting round the room to witness the performance. Right in front, in the very best place, sat a stout butcher, with a great bull-dog by his side who seemed very much inclined to bite. He sat staring with all his eyes, and so indeed did every one else in the room. And then the play began. It was a pretty piece, with a king and a queen in it, who sat on a beautiful throne, and had gold crowns on their

heads. The trains to their dresses were very long, according to the fashion; while the prettiest of wooden dolls, with glass eyes and large mustaches, stood at the doors, and opened and shut them, that the fresh air might come into the room. It was a very pleasant play, not at all mournful; but just as the queen stood up and walked across the stage, the great bull-dog, who should have been held back by his master, made a spring forward, and caught the queen in the teeth by the slender wrist, so that it snapped in two. This was a very dreadful disaster. The poor man, who was exhibiting the dolls, was much annoyed, and quite sad about his queen; she was the prettiest doll he had, and the bull-dog had broken her head and shoulders off. But after all the people were gone away, the stranger, who came with John, said that he could soon set her to rights. And then he brought out his box and rubbed the doll with some of the salve with which he had cured the old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as this was done the doll's back became quite right again; her head and shoulders were fixed on, and she could even move her limbs herself: there was now no occasion to pull the wires, for the doll acted just like a living creature, excepting that she could not speak. The man to whom the show belonged was quite delighted at having a doll who could dance of herself without being pulled by the wires; none of the other dolls could do this.

During the night, when all the people at the inn were gone to bed, some one was heard to sigh so deeply and painfully, and the sighing continued for so long a time, that every one got up to see what could be the matter. The showman went at once to his little theatre and found that it proceeded from the dolls, who all lay on the floor sighing piteously, and staring with their glass eyes; they all wanted to be rubbed with the ointment, so that, like the queen, they might be able to move of themselves. The queen threw herself on her knees, took off her beautiful crown, and, holding it in her hand, cried, "Take this from me, but do rub my husband and his courtiers." The poor man who owned the theatre could scarcely refrain from weeping; he was so sorry that he could not help them. Then he immediately spoke to John's comrade, and promised him all the money he might receive at the next evening's performance, if he would only rub the ointment on four or five of his dolls. But the fellow-traveller said he did not require anything in return, excepting the sword which the showman wore by his side. As soon as he received the sword he anointed six of the dolls with the ointment, and they were able immediately to dance so gracefully that all the living girls in the room could not help joining in the dance. The coachman danced with the cook, and the waiters with the chambermaids, and all the

strangers joined; even the tongs and the fire-shovel made an attempt, but they fell down after the first jump. So after all it was a very merry night. The next morning John and his companion left the inn to continue their journey through the great pine-forests and over the high mountains. They arrived at last at such a great height that towns and villages lay beneath them, and the church steeples looked like little specks between the green trees. They could see for miles round, far away to places they had never visited, and John saw more of the beautiful world than he had ever known before. The sun shone brightly in the blue firmament above, and through the clear mountain air came the sound of the huntsman's horn, and the soft, sweet notes brought tears into his eyes, and he could not help exclaiming, "How good and loving God is to give us all this beauty and loveliness in the world to make us happy!"

His fellow-traveller stood by with folded hands, gazing on the dark wood and the towns bathed in the warm sunshine. At this moment there sounded over their heads sweet music. They looked up, and discovered a large white swan hovering in the air, and singing as never bird sang before. But the song soon became weaker and weaker, the bird's head drooped, and he sunk slowly down, and lay dead at their feet.

"It is a beautiful bird," said the traveller, "and these large white wings are worth a great deal of money. I will take them with me. You see now that a sword will be very useful."

So he cut off the wings of the dead swan with one blow, and carried them away with him.

They now continued their journey over the mountains for many miles, till they at length reached a large city, containing hundreds of towers, that shone in the sunshine like silver. In the midst of the city stood a splendid marble palace, roofed with pure red gold, in which dwelt the king. John and his companion would not go into the town immediately; so they stopped at an inn outside the town, to change their clothes; for they wished to appear respectable as they walked through the streets. The landlord told them that the king was a very good man, who never injured any one: but as to his daughter, "Heaven defend us!"

She was indeed a wicked princess. She possessed beauty enough—nobody could be more elegant or prettier than she was; but what of that? for she was a wicked witch; and in consequence of her conduct many noble young princes had lost their lives. Any one was at liberty to make her an offer; were he a prince or a beggar, it mattered not to her. She would ask him to guess three things which she had just thought of, and if he succeed, he was

to marry her, and be king over all the land when her father died; but if he could not guess these three things, then she ordered him to be hanged or to have his head cut off. The old king, her father, was very much grieved at her conduct, but he could not prevent her from being so wicked, because he once said he would have nothing more to do with her lovers; she might do as she pleased. Each prince who came and tried the three guesses, so that he might marry the princess, had been unable to find them out, and had been hanged or beheaded. They had all been warned in time, and might have left her alone, if they would. The old king became at last so distressed at all these dreadful circumstances, that for a whole day every year he and his soldiers knelt and prayed that the princess might become good; but she continued as wicked as ever. The old women who drank brandy would color it quite black before they drank it, to show how they mourned; and what more could they do?

"What a horrible princess!" said John; "she ought to be well flogged. If I were the old king, I would have her punished in some way."

Just then they heard the people outside shouting, "Hurrah!" and, looking out, they saw the princess passing by; and she was really so beautiful that everybody forgot her wickedness, and shouted "Hurrah!" Twelve lovely maidens in white silk dresses, holding golden tulips in their hands, rode by her side on coal-black horses. The princess herself had a snow-white steed, decked with diamonds and rubies. Her dress was of cloth of gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam. The golden crown on her head glittered like the stars of heaven, and her mantle was formed of thousands of butterflies' wings sewn together. Yet she herself was more beautiful than all.

When John saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could scarcely utter a word. The princess looked exactly like the beautiful lady with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamed on the night his father died. She appeared to him so lovely that he could not help loving her.

"It could not be true," he thought, "that she was really a wicked witch, who ordered people to be hanged or beheaded, if they could not guess her thoughts. Every one has permission to go and ask her hand, even the poorest beggar. I shall pay a visit to the palace," he said; "I must go, for I cannot help myself."

Then they all advised him not to attempt it; for he would be sure to share the same fate as the rest. His fellow-traveller also tried to persuade him against it; but John seemed quite sure of success. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his soft flaxen hair, and then went out alone into the town, and walked to the palace.

“Come in,” said the king, as John knocked at the door. John opened it, and the old king, in a dressing gown and embroidered slippers, came towards him. He had the crown on his head, carried his sceptre in one hand, and the orb in the other. “Wait a bit,” said he, and he placed the orb under his arm, so that he could offer the other hand to John; but when he found that John was another suitor, he began to weep so violently, that both the sceptre and the orb fell to the floor, and he was obliged to wipe his eyes with his dressing gown. Poor old king! “Let her alone,” he said; “you will fare as badly as all the others. Come, I will show you.” Then he led him out into the princess’s pleasure gardens, and there he saw a frightful sight. On every tree hung three or four king’s sons who had wooed the princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she gave them. Their skeletons rattled in every breeze, so that the terrified birds never dared to venture into the garden. All the flowers were supported by human bones instead of sticks, and human skulls in the flower-pots grinned horribly. It was really a doleful garden for a princess. “Do you see all this?” said the old king; “your fate will be the same as those who are here, therefore do not attempt it. You really make me very unhappy,—I take these things to heart so very much.” John kissed the good old king’s hand, and said he was sure it would be all right, for he was quite enchanted with the beautiful princess. Then the princess herself came riding into the palace yard with all her ladies, and he wished her “Good morning.” She looked wonderfully fair and lovely when she offered her hand to John, and he loved her more than ever. How could she be a wicked witch, as all the people asserted? He accompanied her into the hall, and the little pages offered them gingerbread nuts and sweetmeats, but the old king was so unhappy he could eat nothing, and besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him. It was decided that John should come to the palace the next day, when the judges and the whole of the counsellors would be present, to try if he could guess the first riddle. If he succeeded, he would have to come a second time; but if not, he would lose his life,—and no one had ever been able to guess even one. However, John was not at all anxious about the result of his trial; on the contrary, he was very merry. He thought only of the beautiful princess, and believed that in some way he should have help, but how he knew not, and did not like to think about it; so he danced along the high-road as he went back to the inn, where he had left his fellow-traveller waiting for him. John could not refrain from telling him how gracious the princess had been, and how beautiful she looked. He longed for the next day so much, that he might go to the palace and try his luck at guessing the riddles. But his comrade shook his head, and

looked very mournful. “I do so wish you to do well,” said he; “we might have continued together much longer, and now I am likely to lose you; you poor dear John! I could shed tears, but I will not make you unhappy on the last night we may be together. We will be merry, really merry this evening; to-morrow, after you are gone, shall be able to weep undisturbed.”

It was very quickly known among the inhabitants of the town that another suitor had arrived for the princess, and there was great sorrow in consequence. The theatre remained closed, the women who sold sweetmeats tied crape round the sugar-sticks, and the king and the priests were on their knees in the church. There was a great lamentation, for no one expected John to succeed better than those who had been suitors before.

In the evening John’s comrade prepared a large bowl of punch, and said, “Now let us be merry, and drink to the health of the princess.” But after drinking two glasses, John became so sleepy, that he could not keep his eyes open, and fell fast asleep. Then his fellow-traveller lifted him gently out of his chair, and laid him on the bed; and as soon as it was quite dark, he took the two large wings which he had cut from the dead swan, and tied them firmly to his own shoulders. Then he put into his pocket the largest of the three rods which he had obtained from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg. After this he opened the window, and flew away over the town, straight towards the palace, and seated himself in a corner, under the window which looked into the bedroom of the princess.

The town was perfectly still when the clocks struck a quarter to twelve. Presently the window opened, and the princess, who had large black wings to her shoulders, and a long white mantle, flew away over the city towards a high mountain. The fellow-traveller, who had made himself invisible, so that she could not possibly see him, flew after her through the air, and whipped the princess with his rod, so that the blood came whenever he struck her. Ah, it was a strange flight through the air! The wind caught her mantle, so that it spread out on all sides, like the large sail of a ship, and the moon shone through it. “How it hails, to be sure!” said the princess, at each blow she received from the rod; and it served her right to be whipped. At last she reached the side of the mountain, and knocked. The mountain opened with a noise like the roll of thunder, and the princess went in. The traveller followed her; no one could see him, as he had made himself invisible. They went through a long, wide passage. A thousand gleaming spiders ran here and there on the walls, causing them to glitter as if they were illuminated with fire. They next entered a large hall built of silver and gold. Large red and blue flowers shone on the walls, looking like sunflowers in

size, but no one could dare to pluck them, for the stems were hideous poisonous snakes, and the flowers were flames of fire, darting out of their jaws. Shining glow-worms covered the ceiling, and sky-blue bats flapped their transparent wings. Altogether the place had a frightful appearance. In the middle of the floor stood a throne supported by four skeleton horses, whose harness had been made by fiery-red spiders. The throne itself was made of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black mice, each biting the other's tail. Over it hung a canopy of rose-colored spider's webs, spotted with the prettiest little green flies, which sparkled like precious stones. On the throne sat an old magician with a crown on his ugly head, and a sceptre in his hand. He kissed the princess on the forehead, seated her by his side on the splendid throne, and then the music commenced. Great black grasshoppers played the mouth organ, and the owl struck herself on the body instead of a drum. It was altogether a ridiculous concert. Little black goblins with false lights in their caps danced about the hall; but no one could see the traveller, and he had placed himself just behind the throne where he could see and hear everything. The courtiers who came in afterwards looked noble and grand; but any one with common sense could see what they really were, only broomsticks, with cabbages for heads. The magician had given them life, and dressed them in embroidered robes. It answered very well, as they were only wanted for show. After there had been a little dancing, the princess told the magician that she had a new suitor, and asked him what she could think of for the suitor to guess when he came to the castle the next morning.

"Listen to what I say," said the magician, "you must choose something very easy, he is less likely to guess it then. Think of one of your shoes, he will never imagine it is that. Then cut his head off; and mind you do not forget to bring his eyes with you to-morrow night, that I may eat them."

The princess curtsied low, and said she would not forget the eyes.

The magician then opened the mountain and she flew home again, but the traveller followed and flogged her so much with the rod, that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hail-storm, and made as much haste as she could to get back to her bedroom through the window. The traveller then returned to the inn where John still slept, took off his wings and laid down on the bed, for he was very tired. Early in the morning John awoke, and when his fellow-traveller got up, he said that he had a very wonderful dream about the princess and her shoe, he therefore advised John to ask her if she had not thought of her shoe. Of course the traveller knew this from what the magician in the mountain had said.

“I may as well say that as anything,” said John. “Perhaps your dream may come true; still I will say farewell, for if I guess wrong I shall never see you again.”

Then they embraced each other, and John went into the town and walked to the palace. The great hall was full of people, and the judges sat in arm-chairs, with eider-down cushions to rest their heads upon, because they had so much to think of. The old king stood near, wiping his eyes with his white pocket-handkerchief. When the princess entered, she looked even more beautiful than she had appeared the day before, and greeted every one present most gracefully; but to John she gave her hand, and said, “Good morning to you.”

Now came the time for John to guess what she was thinking of; and oh, how kindly she looked at him as she spoke. But when he uttered the single word shoe, she turned as pale as a ghost; all her wisdom could not help her, for he had guessed rightly. Oh, how pleased the old king was! It was quite amusing to see how he capered about. All the people clapped their hands, both on his account and John’s, who had guessed rightly the first time. His fellow-traveller was glad also, when he heard how successful John had been. But John folded his hands, and thanked God, who, he felt quite sure, would help him again; and he knew he had to guess twice more.

The evening passed pleasantly like the one preceding. While John slept, his companion flew behind the princess to the mountain, and flogged her even harder than before; this time he had taken two rods with him. No one saw him go in with her, and he heard all that was said. The princess this time was to think of a glove, and he told John as if he had again heard it in a dream. The next day, therefore, he was able to guess correctly the second time, and it caused great rejoicing at the palace. The whole court jumped about as they had seen the king do the day before, but the princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. All now depended upon John. If he only guessed rightly the third time, he would marry the princess, and reign over the kingdom after the death of the old king: but if he failed, he would lose his life, and the magician would have his beautiful blue eyes.

That evening John said his prayers and went to bed very early, and soon fell asleep calmly. But his companion tied on his wings to his shoulders, took three rods, and, with his sword at his side, flew to the palace. It was a very dark night, and so stormy that the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses, and the trees in the garden upon which the skeletons hung bent themselves like reeds before the wind. The lightning flashed, and the thunder rolled in one long-continued peal all night. The window of the castle opened, and

the princess flew out. She was pale as death, but she laughed at the storm as if it were not bad enough. Her white mantle fluttered in the wind like a large sail, and the traveller flogged her with the three rods till the blood trickled down, and at last she could scarcely fly; she contrived, however, to reach the mountain. "What a hail-storm!" she said, as she entered; "I have never been out in such weather as this."

"Yes, there may be too much of a good thing sometimes," said the magician. Then the princess told him that John had guessed rightly the second time, and if he succeeded the next morning, he would win, and she could never come to the mountain again, or practice magic as she had done, and therefore she was quite unhappy. "I will find out something for you to think of which he will never guess, unless he is a greater conjuror than myself. But now let us be merry."

Then he took the princess by both hands, and they danced with all the little goblins and Jack-o'-lanterns in the room. The red spiders sprang here and there on the walls quite as merrily, and the flowers of fire appeared as if they were throwing out sparks. The owl beat the drum, the crickets whistled and the grasshoppers played the mouth-organ. It was a very ridiculous ball. After they had danced enough, the princess was obliged to go home, for fear she should be missed at the palace. The magician offered to go with her, that they might be company to each other on the way. Then they flew away through the bad weather, and the traveller followed them, and broke his three rods across their shoulders. The magician had never been out in such a hail-storm as this. Just by the palace the magician stopped to wish the princess farewell, and to whisper in her ear, "To-morrow think of my head."

But the traveller heard it, and just as the princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the magician turned round to fly back to the mountain, he seized him by the long black beard, and with his sabre cut off the wicked conjuror's head just behind the shoulders, so that he could not even see who it was. He threw the body into the sea to the fishes, and after dipping the head into the water, he tied it up in a silk handkerchief, took it with him to the inn, and then went to bed. The next morning he gave John the handkerchief, and told him not to untie it till the princess asked him what she was thinking of. There were so many people in the great hall of the palace that they stood as thick as radishes tied together in a bundle. The council sat in their arm-chairs with the white cushions. The old king wore new robes, and the golden crown and sceptre had been polished up so that he looked quite smart. But the princess was very pale, and wore a black dress as if she were going to a funeral.

"What have I thought of?" asked the princess, of John. He immediately untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the head of the ugly magician. Every one shuddered, for it was terrible to look at; but the princess sat like a statue, and could not utter a single word. At length she rose and gave John her hand, for he had guessed rightly.

She looked at no one, but sighed deeply, and said, "You are my master now; this evening our marriage must take place."

"I am very pleased to hear it," said the old king. "It is just what I wish."

Then all the people shouted "Hurrah." The band played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake-women took the black crape off the sugar-sticks. There was universal joy. Three oxen, stuffed with ducks and chickens, were roasted whole in the market-place, where every one might help himself to a slice. The fountains spouted forth the most delicious wine, and whoever bought a penny loaf at the baker's received six large buns, full of raisins, as a present. In the evening the whole town was illuminated. The soldiers fired off cannons, and the boys let off crackers. There was eating and drinking, dancing and jumping everywhere. In the palace, the high-born gentlemen and beautiful ladies danced with each other, and they could be heard at a great distance singing the following song:—

"Here are maidens, young and fair, Dancing in the summer air; Like two spinning-wheels at play, Pretty maidens dance away— Dance the spring and summer through Till the sole falls from your shoe."

But the princess was still a witch, and she could not love John. His fellow-traveller had thought of that, so he gave John three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it. He told him to place a large bath full of water by the princess's bed, and put the feathers and the drops into it. Then, at the moment she was about to get into bed, he must give her a little push, so that she might fall into the water, and then dip her three times. This would destroy the power of the magician, and she would love him very much. John did all that his companion told him to do. The princess shrieked aloud when he dipped her under the water the first time, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great black swan with fiery eyes. As she rose the second time from the water, the swan had become white, with a black ring round its neck. John allowed the water to close once more over the bird, and at the same time it changed into a most beautiful princess. She was more lovely even than before, and thanked him, while her eyes sparkled with tears, for having broken the spell of the magician. The next day, the king came with the whole court to offer their congratulations, and stayed till quite late. Last of all came the travelling companion;

he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. John kissed him many times and told him he must not go, he must remain with him, for he was the cause of all his good fortune. But the traveller shook his head, and said gently and kindly, "No: my time is up now; I have only paid my debt to you. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wished to throw out of his coffin? You gave all you possessed that he might rest in his grave; I am that man." As he said this, he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. John and his princess loved each other dearly, and the old king lived to see many a happy day, when he took their little children on his knees and let them play with his sceptre. And John became king over the whole country.

TWO BROTHERS

On one of the Danish islands, where old Thingstones, the seats of justice of our forefathers, still stand in the cornfields, and huge trees rise in the forests of beech, there lies a little town whose low houses are covered with red tiles. In one of these houses strange things were brewing over the glowing coals on the open hearth; there was a boiling going on in glasses, and a mixing and distilling, while herbs were being cut up and pounded in mortars. An elderly man looked after it all.

"One must only do the right thing," he said; "yes, the right—the correct thing. One must find out the truth concerning every created particle, and keep to that."

In the room with the good housewife sat her two sons; they were still small, but had great thoughts. Their mother, too, had always spoken to them of right and justice, and exhorted them to keep to the truth, which she said was the countenance of the Lord in this world.

The elder of the boys looked roguish and enterprising. He took a delight in reading of the forces of nature, of the sun and the moon; no fairy tale pleased him so much. Oh, how beautiful it must be, he thought, to go on voyages of discovery, or to find out how to imitate the wings of birds and then to be able to fly! Yes, to find that out was the right thing. Father was right, and mother was right—truth holds the world together.

The younger brother was quieter, and buried himself entirely in his books. When he read about Jacob dressing himself in sheep-skins to personify Esau, and so to usurp his brother's birthright, he would clench his little fist in anger against the deceiver; when he read of tyrants and of the injustice and wickedness of the world, tears would come into his eyes, and he was quite filled with the thought of the justice and truth which must and would triumph.

One evening he was lying in bed, but the curtains were not yet drawn close, and the light streamed in upon him; he had taken his book into bed with him, for he wanted to finish reading the story of Solon. His thoughts lifted and carried him away a wonderful distance; it seemed to him as if the bed had become a ship flying along under full sail. Was he dreaming, or what was happening? It glided over the rolling waves and across the ocean of time, and to him came the voice of Solon; spoken in a strange tongue, yet intelligible to him, he heard the Danish motto: "By law the land is ruled."

The genius of the human race stood in the humble room, bent down over the bed and imprinted a kiss on the boy's forehead: "Be thou strong in fame and strong in the battle of life! With truth in thy heart fly toward the land of truth!" The elder brother was not yet in bed; he was standing at the window looking out at the mist which rose from the meadows. They were not elves dancing out there, as their old nurse had told him; he knew better—they were vapours which were warmer than the air, and that is why they rose. A shooting star lit up the sky, and the boy's thoughts passed in a second from the vapours of the earth up to the shining meteor. The stars gleamed in the heavens, and it seemed as if long golden threads hung down from them to the earth.

"Fly with me," sang a voice, which the boy heard in his heart. And the mighty genius of mankind, swifter than a bird and than an arrow—swifter than anything of earthly origin—carried him out into space, where the heavenly bodies are bound together by the rays that pass from star to star. Our earth revolved in the thin air, and the cities upon it seemed to lie close to each other. Through the spheres echoed the words:

"What is near, what is far, when thou art lifted by the mighty genius of mind?" And again the boy stood by the window, gazing out, whilst his younger brother lay in bed. Their mother called them by their names: "Anders Sandoe" and "Hans Christian."

Denmark and the whole world knows them—the two brothers Oersted.

TWO MAIDENS

Have you ever seen a maiden? I mean what our pavers call a maiden, a thing with which they ram down the paving-stones in the roads. A maiden of this kind is made altogether of wood, broad below, and girt round with iron rings. At the top she is narrow, and has a stick passed across through her waist, and this stick forms the arms of the maiden.

In the shed stood two Maidens of this kind. They had their place among shovels, hand-carts, wheelbarrows, and measuring-tapes; and to all this

company the news had come that the Maidens were no longer to be called "maidens," but "hand-rammers," which word was the newest and the only correct designation among the pavers for the thing we all know from the old times by the name of "the maiden."

Now, there are among us human creatures certain individuals who are known as "emancipated women," as, for instance, principals of institutions, dancers who stand professionally on one leg, milliners, and sick-nurses; and with this class of emancipated women the two Maidens in the shed associated themselves. They were "maidens" among the paver folk, and determined not to give up this honorable appellation, and let themselves be miscalled "rammers.

"Maiden is a human name, but hand-rammer is a thing, and we won't be called things—that's insulting us."

"My lover would be ready to give up his engagement," said the youngest, who was betrothed to a paver's hammer; and the hammer is the thing which drives great piles into the earth, like a machine, and therefore does on a large scale what ten maidens effect in a similar way. "He wants to marry me as a maiden, but whether he would have me were I a hand-rammer is a question, so I won't have my name changed."

"And I," said the elder one, "would rather have both my arms broken off."

But the Wheelbarrow was of a different opinion; and the Wheelbarrow was looked upon as of some consequence, for he considered himself a quarter of a coach, because he went about upon one wheel.

"I must submit to your notice," he said, "that the name 'maiden' is common enough, and not nearly so refined as 'hand-rammer,' or 'stamper,' which latter has also been proposed, and through which you would be introduced into the category of seals; and only think of the great stamp of state, which impresses the royal seal that gives effect to the laws! No, in your case I would surrender my maiden name."

"No, certainly not!" exclaimed the elder. "I am too old for that."

"I presume you have never heard of what is called 'European necessity?'" observed the honest Measuring Tape. "One must be able to adapt one's self to time and circumstances, and if there is a law that the 'maiden' is to be called 'hand-rammer,' why, she must be called 'hand-rammer,' and no pouting will avail, for everything has its measure."

"No; if there must be a change," said the younger, "I should prefer to be called 'Missy,' for that reminds one a little of maidens."

"But I would rather be chopped to chips," said the elder.

At last they all went to work. The Maidens rode—that is, they were put

in a wheelbarrow, and that was a distinction; but still they were called "hand-rammers."

"Mai—!" they said, as they were bumped upon the pavement. "Mai—!" and they were very nearly pronouncing the whole word "maiden;" but they broke off short, and swallowed the last syllable; for after mature deliberation they considered it beneath their dignity to protest. But they always called each other "maiden," and praised the good old days in which everything had been called by its right name, and those who were maidens were called maidens. And they remained as they were; for the hammer really broke off his engagement with the younger one, for nothing would suit him but he must have a maiden for his bride.

THE UGLY DUCKLING

It was lovely summer weather in the country, and the golden corn, the green oats, and the haystacks piled up in the meadows looked beautiful. The stork walking about on his long red legs chattered in the Egyptian language, which he had learnt from his mother. The corn-fields and meadows were surrounded by large forests, in the midst of which were deep pools. It was, indeed, delightful to walk about in the country. In a sunny spot stood a pleasant old farm-house close by a deep river, and from the house down to the water side grew great burdock leaves, so high, that under the tallest of them a little child could stand upright. The spot was as wild as the centre of a thick wood. In this snug retreat sat a duck on her nest, watching for her young brood to hatch; she was beginning to get tired of her task, for the little ones were a long time coming out of their shells, and she seldom had any visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the river than to climb the slippery banks, and sit under a burdock leaf, to have a gossip with her. At length one shell cracked, and then another, and from each egg came a living creature that lifted its head and cried, "Peep, peep." "Quack, quack," said the mother, and then they all quacked as well as they could, and looked about them on every side at the large green leaves. Their mother allowed them to look as much as they liked, because green is good for the eyes. "How large the world is," said the young ducks, when they found how much more room they now had than while they were inside the egg-shell. "Do you imagine this is the whole world?" asked the mother; "Wait till you have seen the garden; it stretches far beyond that to the parson's field, but I have never ventured to such a distance. Are you all out?" she continued, rising; "No, I declare, the largest egg lies there still. I won-

der how long this is to last, I am quite tired of it;" and she seated herself again on the nest.
"Well, how are you getting on?" asked an old duck, who paid her a visit.
"One egg is not hatched yet," said the duck, "it will not break. But just look at all the others, are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are the image of their father, who is so unkind, he never comes to see."
"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the duck; "I have no doubt it is a turkey's egg. I was persuaded to hatch some once, and after all my care and trouble with the young ones, they were afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. I could not get them to venture in. Let me look at the egg. Yes, that is a turkey's egg; take my advice, leave it where it is and teach the other children to swim."
"I think I will sit on it a little while longer," said the duck; "as I have sat so long already, a few days will be nothing."
"Please yourself," said the old duck, and she went away.
At last the large egg broke, and a young one crept forth crying, "Peep, peep." It was very large and ugly. The duck stared at it and exclaimed, "It is very large and not at all like the others. I wonder if it really is a turkey. We shall soon find it out, however when we go to the water. It must go in, if I have to push it myself."
On the next day the weather was delightful, and the sun shone brightly on the green burdock leaves, so the mother duck took her young brood down to the water, and jumped in with a splash. "Quack, quack," cried she, and one after another the little ducklings jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant, and swam about quite prettily with their legs paddling under them as easily as possible, and the ugly duckling was also in the water swimming with them.
"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a turkey; how well he uses his legs, and how upright he holds himself! He is my own child, and he is not so very ugly after all if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! come with me now, I will take you into grand society, and introduce you to the farmyard, but you must keep close to me or you may be trodden upon; and, above all, beware of the cat."
When they reached the farmyard, there was a great disturbance, two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat. "See, children, that is the way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Come, now, use your legs, and let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them

all, and has Spanish blood, therefore, she is well off. Don't you see she has a red flag tied to her leg, which is something very grand, and a great honor for a duck; it shows that every one is anxious not to lose her, as she can be recognized both by man and beast. Come, now, don't turn your toes, a well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother, in this way; now bend your neck, and say 'quack.'"

The ducklings did as they were bid, but the other duck stared, and said, "Look, here comes another brood, as if there were not enough of us already! and what a queer looking object one of them is; we don't want him here," and then one flew out and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing any harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly," said the spiteful duck "and therefore he must be turned out."

"The others are very pretty children," said the old duck, with the rag on her leg, "all but that one; I wish his mother could improve him a little."

"That is impossible, your grace," replied the mother; "he is not pretty; but he has a very good disposition, and swims as well or even better than the others. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps be smaller; he has remained too long in the egg, and therefore his figure is not properly formed;" and then she stroked his neck and smoothed the feathers, saying, "It is a drake, and therefore not of so much consequence. I think he will grow up strong, and able to take care of himself."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old duck. "Now make yourself at home, and if you can find an eel's head, you can bring it to me."

And so they made themselves comfortable; but the poor duckling, who had crept out of his shell last of all, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and made fun of, not only by the ducks, but by all the poultry. "He is too big," they all said, and the turkey cock, who had been born into the world with spurs, and fancied himself really an emperor, puffed himself out like a vessel in full sail, and flew at the duckling, and became quite red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly and laughed at by the whole farmyard. So it went on from day to day till it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by every one; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him, and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you," and his mother said she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him with her feet. So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings.

"They are afraid of me because I am ugly," he said. So he closed his eyes, and flew still farther, until he came out on a large moor, inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very tired and sorrowful. In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.
He bowed to them, and was as polite as he could be, but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks, "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."
Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes, and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, and were very saucy. "Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling, "you are so ugly, that we like you very well. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some pretty wild geese, all unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife; you may be lucky, ugly as you are."
"Pop, pop," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Pop, pop," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes. The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees, and as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large terrible dog passed quite near him. His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then, "splash, splash," he went into the water without touching him, "Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly; even a dog will not bite me." And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours, and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it. Towards evening, he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only remained standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent, that the

duckling could go no farther; he sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed in consequence of one of the hinges having given way. There was therefore a narrow opening near the bottom large enough for him to slip through, which he did very quietly, and got a shelter for the night. A woman, a tom cat, and a hen lived in this cottage. The tom cat, whom the mistress called, "My little son," was a great favorite; he could raise his back, and purr, and could even throw out sparks from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs, so she was called "Chickie short legs." She laid good eggs, and her mistress loved her as if she had been her own child. In the morning, the strange visitor was discovered, and the tom cat began to purr, and the hen to cluck.

"What is that noise about?" said the old woman, looking round the room, but her sight was not very good; therefore, when she saw the duckling she thought it must be a fat duck, that had strayed from home. "Oh what a prize!" she exclaimed, "I hope it is not a drake, for then I shall have some duck's eggs. I must wait and see." So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks, but there were no eggs. Now the tom cat was the master of the house, and the hen was mistress, and they always said, "We and the world," for they believed themselves to be half the world, and the better half too. The duckling thought that others might hold a different opinion on the subject, but the hen would not listen to such doubts. "Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." "Then have the goodness to hold your tongue." "Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" said the tom cat. "No." "Then you have no right to express an opinion when sensible people are speaking." So the duckling sat in a corner, feeling very low spirited, till the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, and then he began to feel such a great longing for a swim on the water, that he could not help telling the hen.

"What an absurd idea," said the hen. "You have nothing else to do, therefore you have foolish fancies. If you could purr or lay eggs, they would pass away."

"But it is so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling, "and so refreshing to feel it close over your head, while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful, indeed!" said the hen, "why you must be crazy! Ask the cat, he is the cleverest animal I know, ask him how he would like to swim about on the water, or to dive under it, for I will not speak of my own opinion; ask our mistress, the old woman—there is no one in the world more clever than she is. Do you think she would like to swim, or to let the water close over her head?"

“You don’t understand me,” said the duckling.
“We don’t understand you? Who can understand you, I wonder? Do you consider yourself more clever than the cat, or the old woman? I will say nothing of myself. Don’t imagine such nonsense, child, and thank your good fortune that you have been received here. Are you not in a warm room, and in society from which you may learn something. But you are a chatterer, and your company is not very agreeable. Believe me, I speak only for your own good. I may tell you unpleasant truths, but that is a proof of my friendship. I advise you, therefore, to lay eggs, and learn to purr as quickly as possible.”
“I believe I must go out into the world again,” said the duckling.
“Yes, do,” said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage, and soon found water on which it could swim and dive, but was avoided by all other animals, because of its ugly appearance. Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold. Then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell and whirled them in the cold air. The clouds, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood on the ferns crying, “Croak, croak.” It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling. One evening, just as the sun set amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans, and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shown with dazzling whiteness. They uttered a singular cry, as they spread their glorious wings and flew away from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. As they mounted higher and higher in the air, the ugly little duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them. He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds; and when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water, and rose again almost beside himself with excitement. He knew not the names of these birds, nor where they had flown, but he felt towards them as he had never felt for any other bird in the world. He was not envious of these beautiful creatures, but wished to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks had they only given him encouragement. The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could,

to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last, and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning, a peasant, who was passing by, saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm; so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk-pan, and splashed the milk about the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter-cask, then into the meal-tub, and out again. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed, and tumbled over each other, in their efforts to catch him; but luckily he escaped. The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes, and lie down quite exhausted in the newly fallen snow.

It would be very sad, were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard winter; but when it had passed, he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes. He felt the warm sun shining, and heard the lark singing, and saw that all around was beautiful spring. Then the young bird felt that his wings were strong, as he flapped them against his sides, and rose high into the air. They bore him onwards, until he found himself in a large garden, before he well knew how it had happened. The apple-trees were in full blossom, and the fragrant elders bent their long green branches down to the stream which wound round a smooth lawn. Everything looked beautiful, in the freshness of early spring. From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers, and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling remembered the lovely birds, and felt more strangely unhappy than ever.

"I will fly to those royal birds," he exclaimed, "and they will kill me, because I am so ugly, and dare to approach them; but it does not matter: better be killed by them than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter."

Then he flew to the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans. The moment they espied the stranger, they rushed to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor bird; and he bent his head down to the surface of the water, and awaited death.

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image; no longer a dark, gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan. To be born in a duck's nest, in a farmyard, is of no consequence

to a bird, if it is hatched from a swan's egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Into the garden presently came some little children, and threw bread and cake into the water.

"See," cried the youngest, "there is a new one;" and the rest were delighted, and ran to their father and mother, dancing and clapping their hands, and shouting joyously, "There is another swan come; a new one has arrived."

Then they threw more bread and cake into the water, and said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all; he is so young and pretty." And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wing; for he did not know what to do, he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness, and now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder-tree bent down its bows into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck, and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart, "I never dreamed of such happiness as this, while I was an ugly duckling."

UNDER THE WILLOW-TREE

The region round the little town of Kjoge is very bleak and cold. The town lies on the sea shore, which is always beautiful; but here it might be more beautiful than it is, for on every side the fields are flat, and it is a long way to the forest. But when persons reside in a place and get used to it, they can always find something beautiful in it,—something for which they long, even in the most charming spot in the world which is not home. It must be owned that there are in the outskirts of the town some humble gardens on the banks of a little stream that runs on towards the sea, and in summer these gardens look very pretty. Such indeed was the opinion of two little children, whose parents were neighbors, and who played in these gardens, and forced their way from one garden to the other through the gooseberry-bushes that divided them. In one of the gardens grew an elder-tree, and in the other an old willow, under which the children were very fond of playing. They had permission to do so, although the tree stood close by the stream, and they might easily have fallen into the water; but the eye of God watches over the little ones, otherwise they would never be safe. At the same time, these children were very careful not to go too near the wa-

ter; indeed, the boy was so afraid of it, that in the summer, while the other children were splashing about in the sea, nothing could entice him to join them. They jeered and laughed at him, and he was obliged to bear it all as patiently as he could. Once the neighbor's little girl, Joanna, dreamed that she was sailing in a boat, and the boy—Knud was his name—waded out in the water to join her, and the water came up to his neck, and at last closed over his head, and in a moment he had disappeared. When little Knud heard this dream, it seemed as if he could not bear the mocking and jeering again; how could he dare to go into the water now, after Joanna's dream! He never would do it, for this dream always satisfied him. The parents of these children, who were poor, often sat together while Knud and Joanna played in the gardens or in the road. Along this road—a row of willow-trees had been planted to separate it from a ditch on one side of it. They were not very handsome trees, for the tops had been cut off; however, they were intended for use, and not for show. The old willow-tree in the garden was much handsomer, and therefore the children were very fond of sitting under it. The town had a large market-place; and at the fair-time there would be whole rows, like streets, of tents and booths containing silks and ribbons, and toys and cakes, and everything that could be wished for. There were crowds of people, and sometimes the weather would be rainy, and splash with moisture the woollen jackets of the peasants; but it did not destroy the beautiful fragrance of the honey-cakes and gingerbread with which one booth was filled; and the best of it was, that the man who sold these cakes always lodged during the fair-time with little Knud's parents. So every now and then he had a present of gingerbread, and of course Joanna always had a share. And, more delightful still, the gingerbread seller knew all sorts of things to tell and could even relate stories about his own gingerbread. So one evening he told them a story that made such a deep impression on the children that they never forgot it; and therefore I think we may as well hear it too, for it is not very long.

"Once upon a time," said he, "there lay on my counter two gingerbread cakes, one in the shape of a man wearing a hat, the other of a maiden without a bonnet. Their faces were on the side that was uppermost, for on the other side they looked very different. Most people have a best side to their characters, which they take care to show to the world. On the left, just where the heart is, the gingerbread man had an almond stuck in to represent it, but the maiden was honey cake all over. They were placed on the counter as samples, and after lying there a long time they at last fell in love with each other; but neither of them spoke of it to the other, as they should have done

if they expected anything to follow. 'He is a man, he ought to speak the first word,' thought the gingerbread maiden; but she felt quite happy—she was sure that her love was returned. But his thoughts were far more ambitious, as the thoughts of a man often are. He dreamed that he was a real street boy, that he possessed four real pennies, and that he had bought the gingerbread lady, and ate her up. And so they lay on the counter for days and weeks, till they grew hard and dry; but the thoughts of the maiden became ever more tender and womanly. 'Ah well, it is enough for me that I have been able to live on the same counter with him,' said she one day; when suddenly, 'crack,' and she broke in two. 'Ah,' said the gingerbread man to himself, 'if she had only known of my love, she would have kept together a little longer.' And here they both are, and that is their history," said the cake man. "You think the history of their lives and their silent love, which never came to anything, very remarkable; and there they are for you." So saying, he gave Joanna the gingerbread man, who was still quite whole—and to Knud the broken maiden; but the children had been so much impressed by the story, that they had not the heart to eat the lovers up.

The next day they went into the churchyard, and took the two cake figures with them, and sat down under the church wall, which was covered with luxuriant ivy in summer and winter, and looked as if hung with rich tapestry. They stuck up the two gingerbread figures in the sunshine among the green leaves, and then told the story, and all about the silent love which came to nothing, to a group of children. They called it, "love," because the story was so lovely, and the other children had the same opinion. But when they turned to look at the gingerbread pair, the broken maiden was gone! A great boy, out of wickedness, had eaten her up. At first the children cried about it; but afterwards, thinking very probably that the poor lover ought not to be left alone in the world, they ate him up too: but they never forgot the story.

The two children still continued to play together by the elder-tree, and under the willow; and the little maiden sang beautiful songs, with a voice that was as clear as a bell. Knud, on the contrary, had not a note of music in him, but knew the words of the songs, and that of course is something. The people of Kjoge, and even the rich wife of the man who kept the fancy shop, would stand and listen while Joanna was singing, and say, "She has really a very sweet voice."

Those were happy days; but they could not last forever. The neighbors were separated, the mother of the little girl was dead, and her father had thoughts of marrying again and of residing in the capital, where he had been promised a very lucrative appointment as messenger. The neighbors parted with tears, the children wept sadly; but their parents promised that they should write to each other at least once a year.

After this, Knud was bound apprentice to a shoemaker; he was growing a great boy, and could not be allowed to run wild any longer. Besides, he was going to be confirmed. Ah, how happy he would have been on that festal day in Copenhagen with little Joanna; but he still remained at Kjoge, and had never seen the great city, though the town is not five miles from it. But far across the bay, when the sky was clear, the towers of Copenhagen could be seen; and on the day of his confirmation he saw distinctly the golden cross on the principal church glittering in the sun. How often his thoughts were with Joanna! but did she think of him? Yes. About Christmas came a letter from her father to Knud's parents, which stated that they were going on very well in Copenhagen, and mentioning particularly that Joanna's beautiful voice was likely to bring her a brilliant fortune in the future. She was engaged to sing at a concert, and she had already earned money by singing, out of which she sent her dear neighbors at Kjoge a whole dollar, for them to make merry on Christmas eve, and they were to drink her health. She had herself added this in a postscript, and in the same postscript she wrote, "Kind regards to Knud."

The good neighbors wept, although the news was so pleasant; but they wept tears of joy. Knud's thoughts had been daily with Joanna, and now he knew that she also had thought of him; and the nearer the time came for his apprenticeship to end, the clearer did it appear to him that he loved Joanna, and that she must be his wife; and a smile came on his lips at the thought, and at one time he drew the thread so fast as he worked, and pressed his foot so hard against the knee strap, that he ran the awl into his finger; but what did he care for that? He was determined not to play the dumb lover as both the gingerbread cakes had done; the story was a good lesson to him.

At length he become a journeyman; and then, for the first time, he prepared for a journey to Copenhagen, with his knapsack packed and ready. A master was expecting him there, and he thought of Joanna, and how glad she would be to see him. She was now seventeen, and he nineteen years old. He wanted to buy a gold ring for her in Kjoge, but then he recollected how far more beautiful such things would be in Copenhagen. So he took leave of his parents, and on a rainy day, late in the autumn, wandered forth on foot from the town of his birth. The leaves were falling from the trees; and, by the time he arrived at his new master's in the great metropolis, he was wet through. On the following Sunday he intended to pay his first visit to Joanna's father. When the day came, the new journeyman's clothes were brought out, and a new hat, which he had brought in Kjoge. The hat became him very well, for hitherto he had only worn a cap. He found the house

that he sought easily, but had to mount so many stairs that he became quite giddy; it surprised him to find how people lived over one another in this dreadful town.

On entering a room in which everything denoted prosperity, Joanna's father received him very kindly. The new wife was a stranger to him, but she shook hands with him, and offered him coffee.

"Joanna will be very glad to see you," said her father. "You have grown quite a nice young man, you shall see her presently; she is a good child, and is the joy of my heart, and, please God, she will continue to be so; she has her own room now, and pays us rent for it." And the father knocked quite politely at a door, as if he were a stranger, and then they both went in. How pretty everything was in that room! a more beautiful apartment could not be found in the whole town of Kjoge; the queen herself could scarcely be better accommodated. There were carpets, and rugs, and window curtains hanging to the ground. Pictures and flowers were scattered about. There was a velvet chair, and a looking-glass against the wall, into which a person might be in danger of stepping, for it was as large as a door. All this Knud saw at a glance, and yet, in truth, he saw nothing but Joanna. She was quite grown up, and very different from what Knud had fancied her, and a great deal more beautiful. In all Kjoge there was not a girl like her; and how graceful she looked, although her glance at first was odd, and not familiar; but for a moment only, then she rushed towards him as if she would have kissed him; she did not, however, although she was very near it. Yes, she really was joyful at seeing the friend of her childhood once more, and the tears even stood in her eyes. Then she asked so many questions about Knud's parents, and everything, even to the elder-tree and the willow, which she called "elder-mother and willow-father," as if they had been human beings; and so, indeed, they might be, quite as much as the gingerbread cakes. Then she talked about them, and the story of their silent love, and how they lay on the counter together and split in two; and then she laughed heartily; but the blood rushed into Knud's cheeks, and his heart beat quickly. Joanna was not proud at all; he noticed that through her he was invited by her parents to remain the whole evening with them, and she poured out the tea and gave him a cup herself; and afterwards she took a book and read aloud to them, and it seemed to Knud as if the story was all about himself and his love, for it agreed so well with his own thoughts. And then she sang a simple song, which, through her singing, became a true story, and as if she poured forth the feelings of her own heart.

"Oh," he thought, "she knows I am fond of her." The tears he could not

restrain rolled down his cheeks, and he was unable to utter a single word; it seemed as if he had been struck dumb.

When he left, she pressed his hand, and said, "You have a kind heart, Knud: remain always as you are now." What an evening of happiness this had been; to sleep after it was impossible, and Knud did not sleep.

At parting, Joanna's father had said, "Now, you won't quite forget us; you must not let the whole winter go by without paying us another visit;" so that Knud felt himself free to go again the following Sunday evening, and so he did. But every evening after working hours—and they worked by candle-light then—he walked out into the town, and through the street in which Joanna lived, to look up at her window. It was almost always lighted up; and one evening he saw the shadow of her face quite plainly on the window blind; that was a glorious evening for him. His master's wife did not like his always going out in the evening, idling, wasting time, as she called it, and she shook her head.

But his master only smiled, and said, "He is a young man, my dear, you know."

"On Sunday I shall see her," said Knud to himself, "and I will tell her that I love her with my whole heart and soul, and that she must be my little wife. I know I am now only a poor journeyman shoemaker, but I will work and strive, and become a master in time. Yes, I will speak to her; nothing comes from silent love. I learnt that from the gingerbread-cake story."

Sunday came, but when Knud arrived, they were all unfortunately invited out to spend the evening, and were obliged to tell him so.

Joanna pressed his hand, and said, "Have you ever been to the theatre? you must go once; I sing there on Wednesday, and if you have time on that day, I will send you a ticket; my father knows where your master lives." How kind this was of her! And on Wednesday, about noon, Knud received a sealed packet with no address, but the ticket was inside; and in the evening Knud went, for the first time in his life, to a theatre. And what did he see? He saw Joanna, and how beautiful and charming she looked! He certainly saw her being married to a stranger, but that was all in the play, and only a pretence; Knud well knew that. She could never have the heart, he thought, to send him a ticket to go and see it, if it had been real. So he looked on, and when all the people applauded and clapped their hands, he shouted "hurrah." He could see that even the king smiled at Joanna, and seemed delighted with her singing. How small Knud felt; but then he loved her so dearly, and thought she loved him, and the man must speak the first word, as the gingerbread maiden had thought. Ah, how much there was for him in

that childish story. As soon as Sunday arrived, he went again, and felt as if he were about to enter on holy ground. Joanna was alone to welcome him, nothing could be more fortunate.

"I am so glad you are come," she said. "I was thinking of sending my father for you, but I had a presentiment that you would be here this evening. The fact is, I wanted to tell you that I am going to France. I shall start on Friday. It is necessary for me to go there, if I wish to become a first-rate performer."

Poor Knud! it seemed to him as if the whole room was whirling round with him. His courage failed, and he felt as if his heart would burst. He kept down the tears, but it was easy to see how sorrowful he was.

"You honest, faithful soul," she exclaimed; and the words loosened Knud's tongue, and he told her how truly he had loved her, and that she must be his wife; and as he said this, he saw Joanna change color, and turn pale. She let his hand fall, and said, earnestly and mournfully, "Knud, do not make yourself and me unhappy. I will always be a good sister to you, one in whom you can trust; but I can never be anything more." And she drew her white hand over his burning forehead, and said, "God gives strength to bear a great deal, if we only strive ourselves to endure."

At this moment her stepmother came into the room, and Joanna said quickly, "Knud is so unhappy, because I am going away;" and it appeared as if they had only been talking of her journey. "Come, be a man," she added, placing her hand on his shoulder; "you are still a child, and you must be good and reasonable, as you were when we were both children, and played together under the willow-tree."

Knud listened, but he felt as if the world had slid out of its course. His thoughts were like a loose thread fluttering to and fro in the wind. He stayed, although he could not tell whether she had asked him to do so. But she was kind and gentle to him; she poured out his tea, and sang to him; but the song had not the old tone in it, although it was wonderfully beautiful, and made his heart feel ready to burst. And then he rose to go. He did not offer his hand, but she seized it, and said—

"Will you not shake hands with your sister at parting, my old playfellow?" and she smiled through the tears that were rolling down her cheeks. Again she repeated the word "brother," which was a great consolation certainly; and thus they parted.

She sailed to France, and Knud wandered about the muddy streets of Copenhagen. The other journeymen in the shop asked him why he looked so gloomy, and wanted him to go and amuse himself with them, as he was still a young man. So he went with them to a dancing-room. He saw many

handsome girls there, but none like Joanna; and here, where he thought to forget her, she was more life-like before his mind than ever. “God gives us strength to bear much, if we try to do our best,” she had said; and as he thought of this, a devout feeling came into his mind, and he folded his hands. Then, as the violins played and the girls danced round the room, he started; for it seemed to him as if he were in a place where he ought not to have brought Joanna, for she was here with him in his heart; and so he went out at once. As he went through the streets at a quick pace, he passed the house where she used to live; it was all dark, empty, and lonely. But the world went on its course, and Knud was obliged to go on too.

Winter came; the water was frozen, and everything seemed buried in a cold grave. But when spring returned, and the first steamer prepared to sail, Knud was seized with a longing to wander forth into the world, but not to France. So he packed his knapsack, and travelled through Germany, going from town to town, but finding neither rest or peace. It was not till he arrived at the glorious old town of Nuremberg that he gained the mastery over himself, and rested his weary feet; and here he remained.

Nuremberg is a wonderful old city, and looks as if it had been cut out of an old picture-book. The streets seem to have arranged themselves according to their own fancy, and as if the houses objected to stand in rows or rank and file. Gables, with little towers, ornamented columns, and statues, can be seen even to the city gate; and from the singular-shaped roofs, waterspouts, formed like dragons, or long lean dogs, extend far across to the middle of the street. Here, in the market-place, stood Knud, with his knapsack on his back, close to one of the old fountains which are so beautifully adorned with figures, scriptural and historical, and which spring up between the sparkling jets of water. A pretty servant-maid was just filling her pails, and she gave Knud a refreshing draught; she had a handful of roses, and she gave him one, which appeared to him like a good omen for the future. From a neighboring church came the sounds of music, and the familiar tones reminded him of the organ at home at Kjoge; so he passed into the great cathedral. The sunshine streamed through the painted glass windows, and between two lofty slender pillars. His thoughts became prayerful, and calm peace rested on his soul. He next sought and found a good master in Nuremberg, with whom he stayed and learnt the German language.

The old moat round the town had been converted into a number of little kitchen gardens; but the high walls, with their heavy-looking towers, are still standing. Inside these walls the ropemaker twisted his ropes along a walk built like a gallery, and in the cracks and crevices of the walls elder-

bushes grow and stretch their green boughs over the small houses which stand below. In one of these houses lived the master for whom Knud worked; and over the little garret window where he sat, the elder-tree waved its branches. Here he dwelt through one summer and winter, but when spring came again, he could endure it no longer. The elder was in blossom, and its fragrance was so homelike, that he fancied himself back again in the gardens of Kjoge. So Knud left his master, and went to work for another who lived farther in the town, where no elder grew. His work-shop was quite close to one of the old stone bridges, near to a water-mill, round which the roaring stream rushed and foamed always, yet restrained by the neighboring houses, whose old, decayed balconies hung over, and seemed ready to fall into the water. Here grew no elder; here was not even a flower-pot, with its little green plant; but just opposite the workshop stood a great willow-tree, which seemed to hold fast to the house for fear of being carried away by the water. It stretched its branches over the stream just as those of the willow-tree in the garden at Kjoge had spread over the river. Yes, he had indeed gone from elder-mother to willow-father. There was a something about the tree here, especially in the moonlight nights, that went direct to his heart; yet it was not in reality the moonlight, but the old tree itself. However, he could not endure it: and why? Ask the willow, ask the blossoming elder! At all events, he bade farewell to Nuremberg and journeyed onwards. He never spoke of Joanna to any one; his sorrow was hidden in his heart. The old childish story of the two cakes had a deep meaning for him. He understood now why the gingerbread man had a bitter almond in his left side; his was the feeling of bitterness, and Joanna, so mild and friendly, was represented by the honeycake maiden. As he thought upon all this, the strap of his knapsack pressed across his chest so that he could hardly breathe; he loosened it, but gained no relief. He saw but half the world around him; the other half he carried with him in his inward thoughts; and this is the condition in which he left Nuremberg. Not till he caught sight of the lofty mountains did the world appear more free to him; his thoughts were attracted to outer objects, and tears came into his eyes. The Alps appeared to him like the wings of earth folded together; unfolded, they would display the variegated pictures of dark woods, foaming waters, spreading clouds, and masses of snow. “At the last day,” thought he, “the earth will unfold its great wings, and soar upwards to the skies, there to burst like a soap-bubble in the radiant glance of the Deity. Oh,” sighed he, “that the last day were come!”

Silently he wandered on through the country of the Alps, which seemed to him like a fruit garden, covered with soft turf. From the wooden balconies of the houses the young lacemakers nodded as he passed. The summits of the mountains glowed in the red evening sunset, and the green lakes beneath the dark trees reflected the glow. Then he thought of the sea coast by the bay Kjoge, with a longing in his heart that was, however, without pain. There, where the Rhine rolls onward like a great billow, and dissolves itself into snowflakes, where glistening clouds are ever changing as if here was the place of their creation, while the rainbow flutters about them like a many-colored ribbon, there did Knud think of the water-mill at Kjoge, with its rushing, foaming waters. Gladly would he have remained in the quiet Rhenish town, but there were too many elders and willow-trees.

So he travelled onwards, over a grand, lofty chain of mountains, over rugged,—rocky precipices, and along roads that hung on the mountain's side like a swallow's nest. The waters foamed in the depths below him. The clouds lay beneath him. He wandered on, treading upon Alpine roses, thistles, and snow, with the summer sun shining upon him, till at length he bid farewell to the lands of the north. Then he passed on under the shade of blooming chestnut-trees, through vineyards, and fields of Indian corn, till conscious that the mountains were as a wall between him and his early recollections; and he wished it to be so.

Before him lay a large and splendid city, called Milan, and here he found a German master who engaged him as a workman. The master and his wife, in whose workshop he was employed, were an old, pious couple; and the two old people became quite fond of the quiet journeyman, who spoke but little, but worked more, and led a pious, Christian life; and even to himself it seemed as if God had removed the heavy burden from his heart. His greatest pleasure was to climb, now and then, to the roof of the noble church, which was built of white marble. The pointed towers, the decorated and open cloisters, the stately columns, the white statues which smiled upon him from every corner and porch and arch,—all, even the church itself, seemed to him to have been formed from the snow of his native land. Above him was the blue sky; below him, the city and the wide-spreading plains of Lombardy; and towards the north, the lofty mountains, covered with perpetual snow. And then he thought of the church of Kjoge, with its red, ivy-clad walls, but he had no longing to go there; here, beyond the mountains, he would die and be buried.

Three years had passed away since he left his home; one year of that time he had dwelt at Milan.

One day his master took him into the town; not to the circus in which riders performed, but to the opera, a large building, itself a sight well worth seeing. The seven tiers of boxes, which reached from the ground to a dizzy height, near the ceiling, were hung with rich, silken curtains; and in them were seated elegantly-dressed ladies, with bouquets of flowers in their hands. The gentlemen were also in full dress, and many of them wore decorations of gold and silver. The place was so brilliantly lighted that it seemed like sunshine, and glorious music rolled through the building. Everything looked more beautiful than in the theatre at Copenhagen, but then Joanna had been there, and—could it be? Yes—it was like magic,—she was here also: for, when the curtain rose, there stood Joanna, dressed in silk and gold, and with a golden crown upon her head. She sang, he thought, as only an angel could sing; and then she stepped forward to the front and smiled, as only Joanna could smile, and looked directly at Knud. Poor Knud! he seized his master's hand, and cried out loud, "Joanna," but no one heard him, excepting his master, for the music sounded above everything.

"Yes, yes, it is Joanna," said his master; and he drew forth a printed bill, and pointed to her name, which was there in full. Then it was not a dream. All the audience applauded her, and threw wreaths of flowers at her; and every time she went away they called for her again, so that she was always coming and going. In the street the people crowded round her carriage, and drew it away themselves without the horses. Knud was in the foremost row, and shouted as joyously as the rest; and when the carriage stopped before a brilliantly lighted house, Knud placed himself close to the door of her carriage. It flew open, and she stepped out; the light fell upon her dear face, and he could see that she smiled as she thanked them, and appeared quite overcome. Knud looked straight in her face, and she looked at him, but she did not recognize him. A man, with a glittering star on his breast, gave her his arm, and people said the two were engaged to be married. Then Knud went home and packed up his knapsack; he felt he must return to the home of his childhood, to the elder-tree and the willow. "Ah, under that willow-tree!" A man may live a whole life in one single hour.

The old couple begged him to remain, but words were useless. In vain they reminded him that winter was coming, and that the snow had already fallen on the mountains. He said he could easily follow the track of the closely-moving carriages, for which a path must be kept clear, and with nothing but his knapsack on his back, and leaning on his stick, he could step along briskly. So he turned his steps to the mountains, ascended one side and descended the other, still going northward till his strength began

to fail, and not a house or village could be seen. The stars shone in the sky above him, and down in the valley lights glittered like stars, as if another sky were beneath him; but his head was dizzy and his feet stumbled, and he felt ill. The lights in the valley grew brighter and brighter, and more numerous, and he could see them moving to and fro, and then he understood that there must be a village in the distance; so he exerted his failing strength to reach it, and at length obtained shelter in a humble lodging. He remained there that night and the whole of the following day, for his body required rest and refreshment, and in the valley there was rain and a thaw. But early in the morning of the third day, a man came with an organ and played one of the melodies of home; and after that Knud could remain there no longer, so he started again on his journey toward the north. He travelled for many days with hasty steps, as if he were trying to reach home before all whom he remembered should die; but he spoke to no one of this longing. No one would have believed or understood this sorrow of his heart, the deepest that can be felt by human nature. Such grief is not for the world; it is not entertaining even to friends, and poor Knud had no friends; he was a stranger, wandering through strange lands to his home in the north.

He was walking one evening through the public roads, the country around him was flatter, with fields and meadows, the air had a frosty feeling. A willow-tree grew by the roadside, everything reminded him of home. He felt very tired; so he sat down under the tree, and very soon began to nod, then his eyes closed in sleep. Yet still he seemed conscious that the willow-tree was stretching its branches over him; in his dreaming state the tree appeared like a strong, old man—the "willow-father" himself, who had taken his tired son up in his arms to carry him back to the land of home, to the garden of his childhood, on the bleak open shores of Kjoge. And then he dreamed that it was really the willow-tree itself from Kjoge, which had travelled out in the world to seek him, and now had found him and carried him back into the little garden on the banks of the streamlet; and there stood Joanna, in all her splendor, with the golden crown on her head, as he had last seen her, to welcome him back. And then there appeared before him two remarkable shapes, which looked much more like human beings than when he had seen them in his childhood; they were changed, but he remembered that they were the two gingerbread cakes, the man and the woman, who had shown their best sides to the world and looked so good.

"We thank you," they said to Knud, "for you have loosened our tongues; we have learnt from you that thoughts should be spoken freely, or nothing will come of them; and now something has come of our thoughts, for we

are engaged to be married." Then they walked away, hand-in-hand, through the streets of Kjoge, looking very respectable on the best side, which they were quite right to show. They turned their steps to the church, and Knud and Joanna followed them, also walking hand-in-hand; there stood the church, as of old, with its red walls, on which the green ivy grew.

The great church door flew open wide, and as they walked up the broad aisle, soft tones of music sounded from the organ. "Our master first," said the gingerbread pair, making room for Knud and Joanna. As they knelt at the altar, Joanna bent her head over him, and cold, icy tears fell on his face from her eyes. They were indeed tears of ice, for her heart was melting towards him through his strong love, and as her tears fell on his burning cheeks he awoke. He was still sitting under the willow-tree in a strange land, on a cold winter evening, with snow and hail falling from the clouds, and beating upon his face.

"That was the most delightful hour of my life," said he, "although it was only a dream. Oh, let me dream again." Then he closed his eyes once more, and slept and dreamed.

Towards morning there was a great fall of snow; the wind drifted it over him, but he still slept on. The villagers came forth to go to church; by the roadside they found a workman seated, but he was dead! frozen to death under a willow-tree.

IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE SEA

Some years ago, large ships were sent towards the north pole, to explore the distant coasts, and to try how far men could penetrate into those unknown regions. For more than a year one of these ships had been pushing its way northward, amid snow and ice, and the sailors had endured many hardships; till at length winter set in, and the sun entirely disappeared; for many weeks there would be constant night. All around, as far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen but fields of ice, in which the ship remained stuck fast. The snow lay piled up in great heaps, and of these the sailors made huts, in the form of bee-hives, some of them as large and spacious as one of the "Huns' graves," and others only containing room enough to hold three or four men. It was not quite dark; the northern lights shot forth red and blue flames, like continuous fireworks, and the snow glittered, and reflected back the light, so that the night here was one long twilight. When the moon was brightest, the natives came in crowds to see the sailors. They had a very singular appearance in their rough, hairy dresses of fur, and riding in sledges over the ice. They brought with them furs and skins in

great abundance, so that the snow-houses were soon provided with warm carpets, and the furs also served for the sailors to wrap themselves in, when they slept under the roofs of snow, while outside it was freezing with a cold far more severe than in the winter with us. In our country it was still autumn, though late in the season; and they thought of that in their distant exile, and often pictured to themselves the yellow leaves on the trees at home. Their watches pointed to the hours of evening, and time to go to sleep, although in these regions it was now always night.

In one of the huts, two of the men laid themselves down to rest. The younger of these men had brought with him from home his best, his dearest treasure—a Bible, which his grandmother had given him on his departure. Every night the sacred volume rested under his head, and he had known from his childhood what was written in it. Every day he read in the book, and while stretched on his cold couch, the holy words he had learnt would come into his mind: "If I take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thou art with me, and Thy right hand shall uphold me;" and under the influence of that faith which these holy words inspired, sleep came upon him, and dreams, which are the manifestations of God to the spirit. The soul lives and acts, while the body is at rest. He felt this life in him, and it was as if he heard the sound of dear, well-known melodies, as if the breezes of summer floated around him; and over his couch shone a ray of brightness, as if it were shining through the covering of his snow-roof. He lifted his head, and saw that the bright gleaming was not the reflection of the glittering snow, but the dazzling brightness of the pinions of a mighty angel, into whose beaming face he was gazing. As from the cup of a lily, the angel rose from amidst the leaves of the Bible; and, stretching out his arm, the walls of the hut sunk down, as though they had been formed of a light, airy veil of mist, and the green hills and meadows of home, with its ruddy woods, lay spread around him in the quiet sunshine of a lovely autumn day. The nest of the stork was empty, but ripe fruit still hung on the wild apple-tree, although the leaves had fallen. The red hips gleamed on the hedges, and the starling which hung in the green cage outside the window of the peasant's hut, which was his home, whistled the tune which he had taught him. His grandmother hung green birds'-food around the cage, as he, her grandson, had been accustomed to do. The daughter of the village blacksmith, who was young and fair, stood at the well, drawing water. She nodded to the grandmother, and the old woman nodded to her, and pointed to a letter which had come from a long way off. That very morning the letter had arrived from the cold regions of the north;

there, where the absent one was sweetly sleeping under the protecting hand of God. They laughed and wept over the letter; and he, far away, amid ice and snow, under the shadow of the angel's wings, wept and smiled with them in spirit; for he saw and heard it all in his dream. From the letter they read aloud the words of Holy Writ: "In the uttermost parts of the sea, Thy right hand shall uphold me." And as the angel spread his wings like a veil over the sleeper, there was the sound of beautiful music and a hymn. Then the vision fled. It was dark again in the snow-hut: but the Bible still rested beneath his head, and faith and hope dwelt in his heart. God was with him, and he carried home in his heart, even "in the uttermost parts of the sea."

WHAT ONE CAN INVENT

There was once a young man who was studying to be a poet. He wanted to become one by Easter, and to marry, and to live by poetry. To write poems, he knew, only consists in being able to invent something; but he could not invent anything. He had been born too late—everything had been taken up before he came into the world, and everything had been written and told about.

"Happy people who were born a thousand years ago!" said he. "It was an easy matter for them to become immortal. Happy even was he who was born a hundred years ago, for then there was still something about which a poem could be written. Now the world is written out, and what can I write poetry about?"

Then he studied till he became ill and wretched, the wretched man! No doctor could help him, but perhaps the wise woman could. She lived in the little house by the wayside, where the gate is that she opened for those who rode and drove. But she could do more than unlock the gate. She was wiser than the doctor who drives in his own carriage and pays tax for his rank.

"I must go to her," said the young man.

The house in which she dwelt was small and neat, but dreary to behold, for there were no flowers near it—no trees. By the door stood a bee-hive, which was very useful. There was also a little potato-field, very useful, and an earth bank, with sloe bushes upon it, which had done blossoming, and now bore fruit, sloes, that draw one's mouth together if one tastes them before the frost has touched them.

"That's a true picture of our poetryless time, that I see before me now," thought the young man; and that was at least a thought, a grain of gold that he found by the door of the wise woman.

"Write that down!" said she. "Even crumbs are bread. I know why you come

hither. You cannot invent anything, and yet you want to be a poet by Easter."
"Everything has been written down," said he. "Our time is not the old time."
"No," said the woman. "In the old time wise women were burnt, and poets went about with empty stomachs, and very much out at elbows. The present time is good, it is the best of times; but you have not the right way of looking at it. Your ear is not sharpened to hear, and I fancy you do not say the Lord's Prayer in the evening. There is plenty here to write poems about, and to tell of, for any one who knows the way. You can read it in the fruits of the earth, you can draw it from the flowing and the standing water; but you must understand how—you must understand how to catch a sunbeam. Now just you try my spectacles on, and put my ear-trumpet to your ear, and then pray to God, and leave off thinking of yourself."
The last was a very difficult thing to do—more than a wise woman ought to ask.
He received the spectacles and the ear-trumpet, and was posted in the middle of the potato-field. She put a great potato into his hand. Sounds came from within it; there came a song with words, the history of the potato, an every-day story in ten parts, an interesting story. And ten lines were enough to tell it in.
And what did the potato sing?
She sang of herself and of her family, of the arrival of the potato in Europe, of the misrepresentation to which she had been exposed before she was acknowledged, as she is now, to be a greater treasure than a lump of gold.
"We were distributed, by the King's command, from the council-houses through the various towns, and proclamation was made of our great value; but no one believed in it, or even understood how to plant us. One man dug a hole in the earth and threw in his whole bushel of potatoes; another put one potato here and another there in the ground, and expected that each was to come up a perfect tree, from which he might shake down potatoes. And they certainly grew, and produced flowers and green watery fruit, but it all withered away. Nobody thought of what was in the ground—the blessing—the potato. Yes, we have endured and suffered, that is to say, our forefathers have; they and we, it is all one."
What a story it was!
"Well, and that will do," said the woman. "Now look at the sloe bush."
"We have also some near relations in the home of the potatoes, but higher towards the north than they grew," said the Sloes. "There were Northmen, from Norway, who steered westward through mist and storm to an unknown land, where, behind ice and snow, they found plants and green meadows,

and bushes with blue-black grapes—sloe bushes. The grapes were ripened by the frost just as we are. And they called the land 'wine-land,' that is, 'Groenland,' or 'Sloeland.'"

"That is quite a romantic story," said the young man.

"Yes, certainly. But now come with me," said the wise woman, and she led him to the bee-hive.

He looked into it. What life and labor! There were bees standing in all the passages, waving their wings, so that a wholesome draught of air might blow through the great manufactory; that was their business. Then there came in bees from without, who had been born with little baskets on their feet; they brought flower-dust, which was poured out, sorted, and manufactured into honey and wax. They flew in and out. The queen-bee wanted to fly out, but then all the other bees must have gone with her. It was not yet the time for that, but still she wanted to fly out; so the others bit off her majesty's wings, and she had to stay where she was.

"Now get upon the earth bank," said the wise woman. "Come and look out over the highway, where you can see the people."

"What a crowd it is!" said the young man. "One story after another. It whirls and whirls! It's quite a confusion before my eyes. I shall go out at the back."

"No, go straight forward," said the woman. "Go straight into the crowd of people; look at them in the right way. Have an ear to hear and the right heart to feel, and you will soon invent something. But, before you go away, you must give me my spectacles and my ear-trumpet again."

And so saying, she took both from him.

"Now I do not see the smallest thing," said the young man, "and now I don't hear anything more."

"Why, then, you can't be a poet by Easter," said the wise woman.

"But, by what time can I be one?" asked he.

"Neither by Easter nor by Whitsuntide! You will not learn how to invent anything."

"What must I do to earn my bread by poetry?"

"You can do that before Shrove Tuesday. Hunt the poets! Kill their writings and thus you will kill them. Don't be put out of countenance. Strike at them boldly, and you'll have carnival cake, on which you can support yourself and your wife too."

"What one can invent!" cried the young man. And so he hit out boldly at every second poet, because he could not be a poet himself.

We have it from the wise woman. She knows WHAT ONE CAN INVENT.

THE WICKED PRINCE

There lived once upon a time a wicked prince whose heart and mind were set upon conquering all the countries of the world, and on frightening the people; he devastated their countries with fire and sword, and his soldiers trod down the crops in the fields and destroyed the peasants' huts by fire, so that the flames licked the green leaves off the branches, and the fruit hung dried up on the singed black trees. Many a poor mother fled, her naked baby in her arms, behind the still smoking walls of her cottage; but also there the soldiers followed her, and when they found her, she served as new nourishment to their diabolical enjoyments; demons could not possibly have done worse things than these soldiers! The prince was of opinion that all this was right, and that it was only the natural course which things ought to take. His power increased day by day, his name was feared by all, and fortune favoured his deeds.

He brought enormous wealth home from the conquered towns, and gradually accumulated in his residence riches which could nowhere be equalled. He erected magnificent palaces, churches, and halls, and all who saw these splendid buildings and great treasures exclaimed admiringly: "What a mighty prince!" But they did not know what endless misery he had brought upon other countries, nor did they hear the sighs and lamentations which rose up from the debris of the destroyed cities.

The prince often looked with delight upon his gold and his magnificent edifices, and thought, like the crowd: "What a mighty prince! But I must have more—much more. No power on earth must equal mine, far less exceed it."

He made war with all his neighbours, and defeated them. The conquered kings were chained up with golden fetters to his chariot when he drove through the streets of his city. These kings had to kneel at his and his courtiers' feet when they sat at table, and live on the morsels which they left. At last the prince had his own statue erected on the public places and fixed on the royal palaces; nay, he even wished it to be placed in the churches, on the altars, but in this the priests opposed him, saying: "Prince, you are mighty indeed, but God's power is much greater than yours; we dare not obey your orders."

"Well," said the prince. "Then I will conquer God too." And in his haughtiness and foolish presumption he ordered a magnificent ship to be constructed, with which he could sail through the air; it was gorgeously fitted out and of many colours; like the tail of a peacock, it was covered with thousands of eyes, but each eye was the barrel of a gun. The prince sat in the centre of the

ship, and had only to touch a spring in order to make thousands of bullets fly out in all directions, while the guns were at once loaded again. Hundreds of eagles were attached to this ship, and it rose with the swiftness of an arrow up towards the sun. The earth was soon left far below, and looked, with its mountains and woods, like a cornfield where the plough had made furrows which separated green meadows; soon it looked only like a map with indistinct lines upon it; and at last it entirely disappeared in mist and clouds. Higher and higher rose the eagles up into the air; then God sent one of his numberless angels against the ship. The wicked prince showered thousands of bullets upon him, but they rebounded from his shining wings and fell down like ordinary hailstones. One drop of blood, one single drop, came out of the white feathers of the angel's wings and fell upon the ship in which the prince sat, burnt into it, and weighed upon it like thousands of hundredweights, dragging it rapidly down to the earth again; the strong wings of the eagles gave way, the wind roared round the prince's head, and the clouds around—were they formed by the smoke rising up from the burnt cities?—took strange shapes, like crabs many, many miles long, which stretched their claws out after him, and rose up like enormous rocks, from which rolling masses dashed down, and became fire-spitting dragons. The prince was lying half-dead in his ship, when it sank at last with a terrible shock into the branches of a large tree in the wood.

"I will conquer God!" said the prince. "I have sworn it: my will must be done!"

And he spent seven years in the construction of wonderful ships to sail through the air, and had darts cast from the hardest steel to break the walls of heaven with. He gathered warriors from all countries, so many that when they were placed side by side they covered the space of several miles. They entered the ships and the prince was approaching his own, when God sent a swarm of gnats—one swarm of little gnats. They buzzed round the prince and stung his face and hands; angrily he drew his sword and brandished it, but he only touched the air and did not hit the gnats. Then he ordered his servants to bring costly coverings and wrap him in them, that the gnats might no longer be able to reach him. The servants carried out his orders, but one single gnat had placed itself inside one of the coverings, crept into the prince's ear and stung him. The place burnt like fire, and the poison entered into his blood. Mad with pain, he tore off the coverings and his clothes too, flinging them far away, and danced about before the eyes of his ferocious soldiers, who now mocked at him, the mad prince, who wished to make war with God, and was overcome by a single little gnat.

THE WILD SWANS

Far away in the land to which the swallows fly when it is winter, dwelt a king who had eleven sons, and one daughter, named Eliza. The eleven brothers were princes, and each went to school with a star on his breast, and a sword by his side. They wrote with diamond pencils on gold slates, and learnt their lessons so quickly and read so easily that every one might know they were princes. Their sister Eliza sat on a little stool of plate-glass, and had a book full of pictures, which had cost as much as half a kingdom. Oh, these children were indeed happy, but it was not to remain so always. Their father, who was king of the country, married a very wicked queen, who did not love the poor children at all. They knew this from the very first day after the wedding. In the palace there were great festivities, and the children played at receiving company; but instead of having, as usual, all the cakes and apples that were left, she gave them some sand in a tea-cup, and told them to pretend it was cake. The week after, she sent little Eliza into the country to a peasant and his wife, and then she told the king so many untrue things about the young princes, that he gave himself no more trouble respecting them.

"Go out into the world and get your own living," said the queen. "Fly like great birds, who have no voice." But she could not make them ugly as she wished, for they were turned into eleven beautiful wild swans. Then, with a strange cry, they flew through the windows of the palace, over the park, to the forest beyond. It was early morning when they passed the peasant's cottage, where their sister Eliza lay asleep in her room. They hovered over the roof, twisted their long necks and flapped their wings, but no one heard them or saw them, so they were at last obliged to fly away, high up in the clouds; and over the wide world they flew till they came to a thick, dark wood, which stretched far away to the seashore. Poor little Eliza was alone in her room playing with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings, and she pierced a hole through the leaf, and looked through it at the sun, and it was as if she saw her brothers' clear eyes, and when the warm sun shone on her cheeks, she thought of all the kisses they had given her. One day passed just like another; sometimes the winds rustled through the leaves of the rose-bush, and would whisper to the roses, "Who can be more beautiful than you!" But the roses would shake their heads, and say, "Eliza is." And when the old woman sat at the cottage door on Sunday, and read her hymn-book, the wind would flutter the leaves, and say to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and then the hymn-book would answer "Eliza."

And the roses and the hymn-book told the real truth. At fifteen she returned home, but when the queen saw how beautiful she was, she became full of spite and hatred towards her. Willingly would she have turned her into a swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so yet, because the king wished to see his daughter. Early one morning the queen went into the bath-room; it was built of marble, and had soft cushions, trimmed with the most beautiful tapestry. She took three toads with her, and kissed them, and said to one, "When Eliza comes to the bath, seat yourself upon her head, that she may become as stupid as you are." Then she said to another, "Place yourself on her forehead, that she may become as ugly as you are, and that her father may not know her." "Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "then she will have evil inclinations, and suffer in consequence." So she put the toads into the clear water, and they turned green immediately. She next called Eliza, and helped her to undress and get into the bath. As Eliza dipped her head under the water, one of the toads sat on her hair, a second on her forehead, and a third on her breast, but she did not seem to notice them, and when she rose out of the water, there were three red poppies floating upon it. Had not the creatures been venomous or been kissed by the witch, they would have been changed into red roses. At all events they became flowers, because they had rested on Eliza's head, and on her heart. She was too good and too innocent for witchcraft to have any power over her. When the wicked queen saw this, she rubbed her face with walnut-juice, so that she was quite brown; then she tangled her beautiful hair and smeared it with disgusting ointment, till it was quite impossible to recognize the beautiful Eliza.

When her father saw her, he was much shocked, and declared she was not his daughter. No one but the watch-dog and the swallows knew her; and they were only poor animals, and could say nothing. Then poor Eliza wept, and thought of her eleven brothers, who were all away. Sorrowfully, she stole away from the palace, and walked, the whole day, over fields and moors, till she came to the great forest. She knew not in what direction to go; but she was so unhappy, and longed so for her brothers, who had been, like herself, driven out into the world, that she was determined to seek them. She had been but a short time in the wood when night came on, and she quite lost the path; so she laid herself down on the soft moss, offered up her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. All nature was still, and the soft, mild air fanned her forehead. The light of hundreds of glow-worms shone amidst the grass and the moss, like green fire; and if she touched a twig with her hand, ever so lightly, the brilliant insects fell down around her, like shooting-stars.

All night long she dreamt of her brothers. She and they were children again, playing together. She saw them writing with their diamond pencils on golden slates, while she looked at the beautiful picture-book which had cost half a kingdom. They were not writing lines and letters, as they used to do; but descriptions of the noble deeds they had performed, and of all they had discovered and seen. In the picture-book, too, everything was living. The birds sang, and the people came out of the book, and spoke to Eliza and her brothers; but, as the leaves turned over, they darted back again to their places, that all might be in order.

When she awoke, the sun was high in the heavens; yet she could not see him, for the lofty trees spread their branches thickly over her head; but his beams were glancing through the leaves here and there, like a golden mist. There was a sweet fragrance from the fresh green verdure, and the birds almost perched upon her shoulders. She heard water rippling from a number of springs, all flowing in a lake with golden sands. Bushes grew thickly round the lake, and at one spot an opening had been made by a deer, through which Eliza went down to the water. The lake was so clear that, had not the wind rustled the branches of the trees and the bushes, so that they moved, they would have appeared as if painted in the depths of the lake; for every leaf was reflected in the water, whether it stood in the shade or the sunshine. As soon as Eliza saw her own face, she was quite terrified at finding it so brown and ugly; but when she wetted her little hand, and rubbed her eyes and forehead, the white skin gleamed forth once more; and, after she had undressed, and dipped herself in the fresh water, a more beautiful king's daughter could not be found in the wide world. As soon as she had dressed herself again, and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, and drank some water out of the hollow of her hand. Then she wandered far into the forest, not knowing whither she went. She thought of her brothers, and felt sure that God would not forsake her. It is God who makes the wild apples grow in the wood, to satisfy the hungry, and He now led her to one of these trees, which was so loaded with fruit, that the boughs bent beneath the weight. Here she held her noonday repast, placed props under the boughs, and then went into the gloomiest depths of the forest. It was so still that she could hear the sound of her own footsteps, as well as the rustling of every withered leaf which she crushed under her feet. Not a bird was to be seen, not a sunbeam could penetrate through the large, dark boughs of the trees. Their lofty trunks stood so close together, that, when she looked before her, it seemed as if she were enclosed within trellis-work. Such solitude she had never known before. The night was very dark. Not a single glow-worm glittered in the moss.

Sorrowfully she laid herself down to sleep; and, after a while, it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted over her head, and that the mild eyes of angels looked down upon her from heaven. When she awoke in the morning, she knew not whether she had dreamt this, or if it had really been so. Then she continued her wandering; but she had not gone many steps forward, when she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and she gave her a few to eat. Then Eliza asked her if she had not seen eleven princes riding through the forest.

"No," replied the old woman, "But I saw yesterday eleven swans, with gold crowns on their heads, swimming on the river close by." Then she led Eliza a little distance farther to a sloping bank, and at the foot of it wound a little river. The trees on its banks stretched their long leafy branches across the water towards each other, and where the growth prevented them from meeting naturally, the roots had torn themselves away from the ground, so that the branches might mingle their foliage as they hung over the water. Eliza bade the old woman farewell, and walked by the flowing river, till she reached the shore of the open sea. And there, before the young maiden's eyes, lay the glorious ocean, but not a sail appeared on its surface, not even a boat could be seen. How was she to go farther? She noticed how the countless pebbles on the sea-shore had been smoothed and rounded by the action of the water. Glass, iron, stones, everything that lay there mingled together, had taken its shape from the same power, and felt as smooth, or even smoother than her own delicate hand. "The water rolls on without weariness," she said, "till all that is hard becomes smooth; so will I be unwearied in my task. Thanks for your lessons, bright rolling waves; my heart tells me you will lead me to my dear brothers." On the foam-covered seaweeds, lay eleven white swan feathers, which she gathered up and placed together. Drops of water lay upon them; whether they were dew-drops or tears no one could say. Lonely as it was on the sea-shore, she did not observe it, for the ever-moving sea showed more changes in a few hours than the most varying lake could produce during a whole year. If a black heavy cloud arose, it was as if the sea said, "I can look dark and angry too;" and then the wind blew, and the waves turned to white foam as they rolled. When the wind slept, and the clouds glowed with the red sunlight, then the sea looked like a rose leaf. But however quietly its white glassy surface rested, there was still a motion on the shore, as its waves rose and fell like the breast of a sleeping child. When the sun was about to set, Eliza saw eleven white swans with golden crowns on their heads, flying towards the land, one behind the other, like a long white ribbon. Then Eliza went down

the slope from the shore, and hid herself behind the bushes. The swans alighted quite close to her and flapped their great white wings. As soon as the sun had disappeared under the water, the feathers of the swans fell off, and eleven beautiful princes, Eliza's brothers, stood near her. She uttered a loud cry, for, although they were very much changed, she knew them immediately. She sprang into their arms, and called them each by name. Then, how happy the princes were at meeting their little sister again, for they recognized her, although she had grown so tall and beautiful. They laughed, and they wept, and very soon understood how wickedly their mother had acted to them all. "We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans, so long as the sun is in the sky; but as soon as it sinks behind the hills, we recover our human shape. Therefore must we always be near a resting place for our feet before sunset; for if we should be flying towards the clouds at the time we recovered our natural shape as men, we should sink deep into the sea. We do not dwell here, but in a land just as fair, that lies beyond the ocean, which we have to cross for a long distance; there is no island in our passage upon which we could pass, the night; nothing but a little rock rising out of the sea, upon which we can scarcely stand with safety, even closely crowded together. If the sea is rough, the foam dashes over us, yet we thank God even for this rock; we have passed whole nights upon it, or we should never have reached our beloved fatherland, for our flight across the sea occupies two of the longest days in the year. We have permission to visit out home once in every year, and to remain eleven days, during which we fly across the forest to look once more at the palace where our father dwells, and where we were born, and at the church, where our mother lies buried. Here it seems as if the very trees and bushes were related to us. The wild horses leap over the plains as we have seen them in our childhood. The charcoal burners sing the old songs, to which we have danced as children. This is our fatherland, to which we are drawn by loving ties; and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days longer we can remain here, and then must we fly away to a beautiful land which is not our home; and how can we take you with us? We have neither ship nor boat."

"How can I break this spell?" said their sister. And then she talked about it nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours. Eliza was awakened by the rustling of the swans' wings as they soared above. Her brothers were again changed to swans, and they flew in circles wider and wider, till they were far away; but one of them, the youngest swan, remained behind, and laid his head in his sister's lap, while she stroked his wings; and they remained together the whole day. Towards evening, the rest came back, and

as the sun went down they resumed their natural forms. “To-morrow,” said one, “we shall fly away, not to return again till a whole year has passed. But we cannot leave you here. Have you courage to go with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you through the wood; and will not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?”

“Yes, take me with you,” said Eliza. Then they spent the whole night in weaving a net with the pliant willow and rushes. It was very large and strong. Eliza laid herself down on the net, and when the sun rose, and her brothers again became wild swans, they took up the net with their beaks, and flew up to the clouds with their dear sister, who still slept. The sunbeams fell on her face, therefore one of the swans soared over her head, so that his broad wings might shade her. They were far from the land when Eliza woke. She thought she must still be dreaming, it seemed so strange to her to feel herself being carried so high in the air over the sea. By her side lay a branch full of beautiful ripe berries, and a bundle of sweet roots; the youngest of her brothers had gathered them for her, and placed them by her side. She smiled her thanks to him; she knew it was the same who had hovered over her to shade her with his wings. They were now so high, that a large ship beneath them looked like a white sea-gull skimming the waves. A great cloud floating behind them appeared like a vast mountain, and upon it Eliza saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans, looking gigantic in size. Altogether it formed a more beautiful picture than she had ever seen; but as the sun rose higher, and the clouds were left behind, the shadowy picture vanished away. Onward the whole day they flew through the air like a winged arrow, yet more slowly than usual, for they had their sister to carry. The weather seemed inclined to be stormy, and Eliza watched the sinking sun with great anxiety, for the little rock in the ocean was not yet in sight. It appeared to her as if the swans were making great efforts with their wings. Alas! she was the cause of their not advancing more quickly. When the sun set, they would change to men, fall into the sea and be drowned. Then she offered a prayer from her inmost heart, but still no appearance of the rock. Dark clouds came nearer, the gusts of wind told of a coming storm, while from a thick, heavy mass of clouds the lightning burst forth flash after flash. The sun had reached the edge of the sea, when the swans darted down so swiftly, that Eliza’s head trembled; she believed they were falling, but they again soared onward. Presently she caught sight of the rock just below them, and by this time the sun was half hidden by the waves. The rock did not appear larger than a seal’s head thrust out of the water. They sunk so rapidly, that at the moment their feet touched the

rock, it shone only like a star, and at last disappeared like the last spark in a piece of burnt paper. Then she saw her brothers standing closely round her with their arms linked together. There was but just room enough for them, and not the smallest space to spare. The sea dashed against the rock, and covered them with spray. The heavens were lighted up with continual flashes, and peal after peal of thunder rolled. But the sister and brothers sat holding each other's hands, and singing hymns, from which they gained hope and courage. In the early dawn the air became calm and still, and at sunrise the swans flew away from the rock with Eliza. The sea was still rough, and from their high position in the air, the white foam on the dark green waves looked like millions of swans swimming on the water. As the sun rose higher, Eliza saw before her, floating on the air, a range of mountains, with shining masses of ice on their summits. In the centre, rose a castle apparently a mile long, with rows of columns, rising one above another, while, around it, palm-trees waved and flowers bloomed as large as mill wheels. She asked if this was the land to which they were hastening. The swans shook their heads, for what she beheld were the beautiful ever-changing cloud palaces of the "Fata Morgana," into which no mortal can enter. Eliza was still gazing at the scene, when mountains, forests, and castles melted away, and twenty stately churches rose in their stead, with high towers and pointed gothic windows. Eliza even fancied she could hear the tones of the organ, but it was the music of the murmuring sea which she heard. As they drew nearer to the churches, they also changed into a fleet of ships, which seemed to be sailing beneath her; but as she looked again, she found it was only a sea mist gliding over the ocean. So there continued to pass before her eyes a constant change of scene, till at last she saw the real land to which they were bound, with its blue mountains, its cedar forests, and its cities and palaces. Long before the sun went down, she sat on a rock, in front of a large cave, on the floor of which the over-grown yet delicate green creeping plants looked like an embroidered carpet. "Now we shall expect to hear what you dream of to-night," said the youngest brother, as he showed his sister her bedroom.

"Heaven grant that I may dream how to save you," she replied. And this thought took such hold upon her mind that she prayed earnestly to God for help, and even in her sleep she continued to pray. Then it appeared to her as if she were flying high in the air, towards the cloudy palace of the "Fata Morgana," and a fairy came out to meet her, radiant and beautiful in appearance, and yet very much like the old woman who had given her berries in the wood, and who had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their

heads. “Your brothers can be released,” said she, “if you have only courage and perseverance. True, water is softer than your own delicate hands, and yet it polishes stones into shapes; it feels no pain as your fingers would feel, it has no soul, and cannot suffer such agony and torment as you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging nettle which I hold in my hand? Quantities of the same sort grow round the cave in which you sleep, but none will be of any use to you unless they grow upon the graves in a churchyard. These you must gather even while they burn blisters on your hands. Break them to pieces with your hands and feet, and they will become flax, from which you must spin and weave eleven coats with long sleeves; if these are then thrown over the eleven swans, the spell will be broken. But remember, that from the moment you commence your task until it is finished, even should it occupy years of your life, you must not speak. The first word you utter will pierce through the hearts of your brothers like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang upon your tongue. Remember all I have told you.” And as she finished speaking, she touched her hand lightly with the nettle, and a pain, as of burning fire, awoke Eliza.

It was broad daylight, and close by where she had been sleeping lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and offered her thanks to God. Then she went forth from the cave to begin her work with her delicate hands. She groped in amongst the ugly nettles, which burnt great blisters on her hands and arms, but she determined to bear it gladly if she could only release her dear brothers. So she bruised the nettles with her bare feet and spun the flax. At sunset her brothers returned and were very much frightened when they found her dumb. They believed it to be some new sorcery of their wicked step-mother. But when they saw her hands they understood what she was doing on their behalf, and the youngest brother wept, and where his tears fell the pain ceased, and the burning blisters vanished. She kept to her work all night, for she could not rest till she had released her dear brothers. During the whole of the following day, while her brothers were absent, she sat in solitude, but never before had the time flown so quickly. One coat was already finished and she had begun the second, when she heard the huntsman’s horn, and was struck with fear. The sound came nearer and nearer, she heard the dogs barking, and fled with terror into the cave. She hastily bound together the nettles she had gathered into a bundle and sat upon them. Immediately a great dog came bounding towards her out of the ravine, and then another and another; they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. In a very few minutes all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the coun-

try. He advanced towards her, for he had never seen a more beautiful maiden. "How did you come here, my sweet child?" he asked. But Eliza shook her head. She dared not speak, at the cost of her brothers' lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the king might not see how she must be suffering.

"Come with me," he said; "here you cannot remain. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in silk and velvet, I will place a golden crown upon your head, and you shall dwell, and rule, and make your home in my richest castle." And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands, but the king said, "I wish only for your happiness. A time will come when you will thank me for this." And then he galloped away over the mountains, holding her before him on this horse, and the hunters followed behind them. As the sun went down, they approached a fair royal city, with churches, and cupolas. On arriving at the castle the king led her into marble halls, where large fountains played, and where the walls and the ceilings were covered with rich paintings. But she had no eyes for all these glorious sights, she could only mourn and weep. Patiently she allowed the women to array her in royal robes, to weave pearls in her hair, and draw soft gloves over her blistered fingers. As she stood before them in all her rich dress, she looked so dazzlingly beautiful that the court bowed low in her presence. Then the king declared his intention of making her his bride, but the archbishop shook his head, and whispered that the fair young maiden was only a witch who had blinded the king's eyes and bewitched his heart. But the king would not listen to this; he ordered the music to sound, the daintiest dishes to be served, and the loveliest maidens to dance. After-wards he led her through fragrant gardens and lofty halls, but not a smile appeared on her lips or sparkled in her eyes. She looked the very picture of grief. Then the king opened the door of a little chamber in which she was to sleep; it was adorned with rich green tapestry, and resembled the cave in which he had found her. On the floor lay the bundle of flax which she had spun from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the coat she had made. These things had been brought away from the cave as curiosities by one of the huntsmen.

"Here you can dream yourself back again in the old home in the cave," said the king; "here is the work with which you employed yourself. It will amuse you now in the midst of all this splendor to think of that time."

When Eliza saw all these things which lay so near her heart, a smile played around her mouth, and the crimson blood rushed to her cheeks. She thought of her brothers, and their release made her so joyful that she kissed the

king's hand. Then he pressed her to his heart. Very soon the joyous church bells announced the marriage feast, and that the beautiful dumb girl out of the wood was to be made the queen of the country. Then the archbishop whispered wicked words in the king's ear, but they did not sink into his heart. The marriage was still to take place, and the archbishop himself had to place the crown on the bride's head; in his wicked spite, he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly on her forehead that it caused her pain. But a heavier weight encircled her heart—sorrow for her brothers. She felt not bodily pain. Her mouth was closed; a single word would cost the lives of her brothers. But she loved the kind, handsome king, who did everything to make her happy more and more each day; she loved him with all her heart, and her eyes beamed with the love she dared not speak. Oh! if she had only been able to confide in him and tell him of her grief. But dumb she must remain till her task was finished. Therefore at night she crept away into her little chamber, which had been decked out to look like the cave, and quickly wove one coat after another. But when she began the seventh she found she had no more flax. She knew that the nettles she wanted to use grew in the churchyard, and that she must pluck them herself. How should she get out there? "Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the torment which my heart endures?" said she. "I must venture, I shall not be denied help from heaven." Then with a trembling heart, as if she were about to perform a wicked deed, she crept into the garden in the broad moonlight, and passed through the narrow walks and the deserted streets, till she reached the churchyard. Then she saw on one of the broad tombstones a group of ghouls. These hideous creatures took off their rags, as if they intended to bathe, and then clawing open the fresh graves with their long, skinny fingers, pulled out the dead bodies and ate the flesh! Eliza had to pass close by them, and they fixed their wicked glances upon her, but she prayed silently, gathered the burning nettles, and carried them home with her to the castle. One person only had seen her, and that was the archbishop—he was awake while everybody was asleep. Now he thought his opinion was evidently correct. All was not right with the queen. She was a witch, and had bewitched the king and all the people. Secretly he told the king what he had seen and what he feared, and as the hard words came from his tongue, the carved images of the saints shook their heads as if they would say. "It is not so. Eliza is innocent."

But the archbishop interpreted it in another way; he believed that they witnessed against her, and were shaking their heads at her wickedness. Two large tears rolled down the king's cheeks, and he went home with doubt in

his heart, and at night he pretended to sleep, but there came no real sleep to his eyes, for he saw Eliza get up every night and disappear in her own chamber. From day to day his brow became darker, and Eliza saw it and did not understand the reason, but it alarmed her and made her heart tremble for her brothers. Her hot tears glittered like pearls on the regal velvet and diamonds, while all who saw her were wishing they could be queens. In the mean time she had almost finished her task; only one coat of mail was wanting, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more only, and for the last time, must she venture to the churchyard and pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of the solitary walk, and of the horrible ghouls, but her will was firm, as well as her trust in Providence. Eliza went, and the king and the archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish through the wicket gate into the churchyard, and when they came nearer they saw the ghouls sitting on the tombstone, as Eliza had seen them, and the king turned away his head, for he thought she was with them—she whose head had rested on his breast that very evening. "The people must condemn her," said he, and she was very quickly condemned by every one to suffer death by fire. Away from the gorgeous regal halls was she led to a dark, dreary cell, where the wind whistled through the iron bars. Instead of the velvet and silk dresses, they gave her the coats of mail which she had woven to cover her, and the bundle of nettles for a pillow; but nothing they could give her would have pleased her more. She continued her task with joy, and prayed for help, while the street-boys sang jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word. Towards evening, she heard at the grating the flutter of a swan's wing, it was her youngest brother—he had found his sister, and she sobbed for joy, although she knew that very likely this would be the last night she would have to live. But still she could hope, for her task was almost finished, and her brothers were come. Then the archbishop arrived, to be with her during her last hours, as he had promised the king. But she shook her head, and begged him, by looks and gestures, not to stay; for in this night she knew she must finish her task, otherwise all her pain and tears and sleepless nights would have been suffered in vain. The archbishop withdrew, uttering bitter words against her; but poor Eliza knew that she was innocent, and diligently continued her work.

The little mice ran about the floor, they dragged the nettles to her feet, to help as well as they could; and the thrush sat outside the grating of the window, and sang to her the whole night long, as sweetly as possible, to keep up her spirits.

It was still twilight, and at least an hour before sunrise, when the eleven

brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the king. They were told it could not be, it was yet almost night, and as the king slept they dared not disturb him. They threatened, they entreated. Then the guard appeared, and even the king himself, inquiring what all the noise meant. At this moment the sun rose. The eleven brothers were seen no more, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

And now all the people came streaming forth from the gates of the city, to see the witch burnt. An old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had dressed her in a garment of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely hair hung loose on her shoulders, her cheeks were deadly pale, her lips moved silently, while her fingers still worked at the green flax. Even on the way to death, she would not give up her task. The ten coats of mail lay at her feet, she was working hard at the eleventh, while the mob jeered her and said, "See the witch, how she mutters! She has no hymn-book in her hand. She sits there with her ugly sorcery. Let us tear it in a thousand pieces."

And then they pressed towards her, and would have destroyed the coats of mail, but at the same moment eleven wild swans flew over her, and alighted on the cart. Then they flapped their large wings, and the crowd drew on one side in alarm.

"It is a sign from heaven that she is innocent," whispered many of them; but they ventured not to say it aloud.

As the executioner seized her by the hand, to lift her out of the cart, she hastily threw the eleven coats of mail over the swans, and they immediately became eleven handsome princes; but the youngest had a swan's wing, instead of an arm; for she had not been able to finish the last sleeve of the coat.

"Now I may speak," she exclaimed. "I am innocent."

Then the people, who saw what happened, bowed to her, as before a saint; but she sank lifeless in her brothers' arms, overcome with suspense, anguish, and pain.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother; and then he related all that had taken place; and while he spoke there rose in the air a fragrance as from millions of roses. Every piece of faggot in the pile had taken root, and threw out branches, and appeared a thick hedge, large and high, covered with roses; while above all bloomed a white and shining flower, that glittered like a star. This flower the king plucked, and placed in Eliza's bosom, when she awoke from her swoon, with peace and happiness in her heart. And all the church bells rang of themselves, and the birds came in great troops. And a marriage procession returned to the castle, such as no king had ever before seen.

THE WILL-O-THE WISP IS IN THE TOWN, SAYS THE MOOR WOMAN

There was a man who once knew many stories, but they had slipped away from him—so he said. The Story that used to visit him of its own accord no longer came and knocked at his door. And why did it come no longer? It is true enough that for days and years the man had not thought of it, had not expected it to come and knock; and if he had expected it, it would certainly not have come; for without there was war, and within was the care and sorrow that war brings with it.

The stork and the swallows came back from their long journey, for they thought of no danger; and, behold, when they arrived, the nest was burnt, the habitations of men were burnt, the hedges were all in disorder, and everything seemed gone, and the enemy's horses were stamping in the old graves. Those were hard, gloomy times, but they came to an end.

And now they were past and gone—so people said; yet no Story came and knocked at the door, or gave any tidings of its presence.

"I suppose it must be dead, or gone away with many other things," said the man.

But the story never dies. And more than a whole year went by, and he longed—oh, so very much!—for the Story.

"I wonder if the Story will ever come back again and knock?"

And he remembered it so well in all the various forms in which it had come to him, sometimes young and charming, like spring itself, sometimes as a beautiful maiden, with a wreath of thyme in her hair, and a beechen branch in her hand, and with eyes that gleamed like deep woodland lakes in the bright sunshine.

Sometimes it had come to him in the guise of a peddler, and had opened its box and let silver ribbon come fluttering out, with verses and inscriptions of old remembrances.

But it was most charming of all when it came as an old grandmother, with silvery hair, and such large, sensible eyes. She knew so well how to tell about the oldest times, long before the princesses spun with the golden spindles, and the dragons lay outside the castles, guarding them. She told with such an air of truth, that black spots danced before the eyes of all who heard her, and the floor became black with human blood; terrible to see and to hear, and yet so entertaining, because such a long time had passed since it all happened.

“Will it ever knock at my door again?” said the man, and he gazed at the door, so that black spots came before his eyes and upon the floor; he did not know if it was blood, or mourning crape from the dark heavy days.

And as he sat thus, the thought came upon him whether the Story might not have hidden itself, like the princess in the old tale. And he would now go in search of it; if he found it, it would beam in new splendor, lovelier than ever.

“Who knows? Perhaps it has hidden itself in the straw that balances on the margin of the well. Carefully, carefully! Perhaps it lies hidden in a certain flower—that flower in one of the great books on the book-shelf.”

And the man went and opened one of the newest books, to gain information on this point; but there was no flower to be found. There he read about Holger Danske; and the man read that the tale had been invented and put together by a monk in France, that it was a romance, “translated into Danish and printed in that language;” that Holger Danske had never really lived, and consequently could never come again, as we have sung, and have been so glad to believe. And William Tell was treated just like Holger Danske. These were all only myths—nothing on which we could depend; and yet it is all written in a very learned book.

“Well, I shall believe what I believe!” said the man. “There grows no plantain where no foot has trod.”

And he closed the book and put it back in its place, and went to the fresh flowers at the window. Perhaps the Story might have hidden itself in the red tulips, with the golden yellow edges, or in the fresh rose, or in the beaming camellia. The sunshine lay among the flowers, but no Story.

The flowers which had been here in the dark troublous time had been much more beautiful; but they had been cut off, one after another, to be woven into wreaths and placed in coffins, and the flag had waved over them! Perhaps the Story had been buried with the flowers; but then the flowers would have known of it, and the coffin would have heard it, and every little blade of grass that shot forth would have told of it. The Story never dies.

Perhaps it has been here once, and has knocked; but who had eyes or ears for it in those times? People looked darkly, gloomily, and almost angrily at the sunshine of spring, at the twittering birds, and all the cheerful green; the tongue could not even bear the old merry, popular songs, and they were laid in the coffin with so much that our heart held dear. The Story may have knocked without obtaining a hearing; there was none to bid it welcome, and so it may have gone away.

“I will go forth and seek it. Out in the country! out in the wood! and on the open sea beach!”

Out in the country lies an old manor house, with red walls, pointed gables, and a red flag that floats on the tower. The nightingale sings among the finely-fringed beech-leaves, looking at the blooming apple trees of the garden, and thinking that they bear roses. Here the bees are mightily busy in the summer-time, and hover round their queen with their humming song. The autumn has much to tell of the wild chase, of the leaves of the trees, and of the races of men that are passing away together. The wild swans sing at Christmas-time on the open water, while in the old hall the guests by the fireside gladly listen to songs and to old legends.

Down into the old part of the garden, where the great avenue of wild chestnut trees lures the wanderer to tread its shades, went the man who was in search of the Story; for here the wind had once murmured something to him of “Waldemar Daa and his Daughters.” The Dryad in the tree, who was the Story-mother herself, had here told him the “Dream of the Old Oak Tree.” Here, in the time of the ancestral mother, had stood clipped hedges, but now only ferns and stinging nettles grew there, hiding the scattered fragments of old sculptured figures; the moss is growing in their eyes, but they can see as well as ever, which was more than the man could do who was in search of the Story, for he could not find that. Where could it be?

The crows flew past him by hundreds across the old trees, and screamed, “Krah! da!—Krah! da!”

And he went out of the garden and over the grass-plot of the yard, into the alder grove; there stood a little six-sided house, with a poultry-yard and a duck-yard. In the middle of the room sat the old woman who had the management of the whole, and who knew accurately about every egg that was laid, and about every chicken that could creep out of an egg. But she was not the Story of which the man was in search; that she could attest with a Christian certificate of baptism and of vaccination that lay in her drawer.

Without, not far from the house, is a hill covered with red-thorn and broom. Here lies an old grave-stone, which was brought here many years ago from the churchyard of the provincial town, a remembrance of one of the most honored councillors of the place; his wife and his five daughters, all with folded hands and stiff ruffs, stand round him. One could look at them so long, that it had an effect upon the thoughts, and these reacted upon the stones, as if they were telling of old times; at least it had been so with the man who was in search of the Story.

As he came nearer, he noticed a living butterfly sitting on the forehead of

the sculptured councillor. The butterfly flapped its wings, and flew a little bit farther, and then returned fatigued to sit upon the grave-stone, as if to point out what grew there. Four-leaved shamrocks grew there; there were seven specimens close to each other. When fortune comes, it comes in a heap. He plucked the shamrocks and put them in his pocket.

"Fortune is as good as red gold, but a new charming story would be better still," thought the man; but he could not find it here.

And the sun went down, round and large; the meadow was covered with vapor. The moor-woman was at her brewing.

It was evening. He stood alone in his room, and looked out upon the sea, over the meadow, over moor and coast. The moon shone bright, a mist was over the meadow, making it look like a great lake; and, indeed, it was once so, as the legend tells—and in the moonlight the eye realizes these myths.

Then the man thought of what he had been reading in the town, that William Tell and Holger Danske never really lived, but yet live in popular story, like the lake yonder, a living evidence for such myths. Yes, Holger Danske will return again!

As he stood thus and thought, something beat quite strongly against the window. Was it a bird, a bat or an owl? Those are not let in, even when they knock. The window flew open of itself, and an old woman looked in at the man.

"What's your pleasure?" said he. "Who are you? You're looking in at the first floor window. Are you standing on a ladder?"

"You have a four-leaved shamrock in your pocket," she replied. "Indeed, you have seven, and one of them is a six-leaved one."

"Who are you?" asked the man again.

"The Moor-woman," she replied. "The Moor-woman who brews. I was at it. The bung was in the cask, but one of the little moor-imps pulled it out in his mischief, and flung it up into the yard, where it beat against the window; and now the beer's running out of the cask, and that won't do good to anybody."

"Pray tell me some more!" said the man.

"Yes, wait a little," answered the Moor-woman. "I've something else to do just now." And she was gone.

The man was going to shut the window, when the woman already stood before him again.

"Now it's done," she said; "but I shall have half the beer to brew over again to-morrow, if the weather is suitable. Well, what have you to ask me? I've come back, for I always keep my word, and you have seven four-leaved

shamrocks in your pocket, and one of them is a six-leaved one. That inspires respect, for that's an order that grows beside the sandy way; but that every one does not find. What have you to ask me? Don't stand there like a ridiculous oaf, for I must go back again directly to my bung and my cask."
And the man asked about the Story, and inquired if the Moor-woman had met it in her journeyings.
"By the big brewing-vat!" exclaimed the woman, "haven't you got stories enough? I really believe that most people have enough of them. Here are other things to take notice of, other things to examine. Even the children have gone beyond that. Give the little boy a cigar, and the little girl a new crinoline; they like that much better. To listen to stories! No, indeed, there are more important things to be done here, and other things to notice!"
"What do you mean by that?" asked the man, "and what do you know of the world? You don't see anything but frogs and Will-o'-the-Wisps!"
"Yes, beware of the Will-o'-the-Wisps," said the Moor-woman, "for they're out—they're let loose—that's what we must talk about! Come to me in the moor, where my presence is necessary, and I will tell you all about it; but you must make haste, and come while your seven four-leaved shamrocks, for which one has six leaves, are still fresh, and the moon stands high!"
And the Moor-woman was gone.
It struck twelve in the town, and before the last stroke had died away, the man was out in the yard, out in the garden, and stood in the meadow. The mist had vanished, and the Moor-woman stopped her brewing.
"You've been a long time coming!" said the Moor-woman. "Witches get forward faster than men, and I'm glad that I belong to the witch folk!"
"What have you to say to me now?" asked the man. "Is it anything about the Story?"
"Can you never get beyond asking about that?" retorted the woman.
"Can you tell me anything about the poetry of the future?" resumed the man.
"Don't get on your stilts," said the crone, "and I'll answer you. You think of nothing but poetry, and only ask about that Story, as if she were the lady of the whole troop. She's the oldest of us all, but she takes precedence of the youngest. I know her well. I've been young, too, and she's no chicken now. I was once quite a pretty elf-maiden, and have danced in my time with the others in the moonlight, and have heard the nightingale, and have gone into the forest and met the Story-maiden, who was always to be found out there, running about. Sometimes she took up her night's lodging in a half-blown tulip, or in a field flower; sometimes she would slip into the church, and wrap herself in the mourning crape that hung down from the candles on the altar."
"You are capitally well-informed," said the man.

“I ought at least to know as much as you,” answered the Moor-woman. “Stories and poetry—yes, they’re like two yards of the same piece of stuff; they can go and lie down where they like, and one can brew all their prattle, and have it all the better and cheaper. You shall have it from me for nothing. I have a whole cupboard-full of poetry in bottles. It makes essences; and that’s the best of it—bitter and sweet herbs. I have everything that people want of poetry, in bottles, so that I can put a little on my handkerchief, on holidays, to smell.”

“Why, these are wonderful things that you’re telling!” said the man. “You have poetry in bottles?”

“More than you can require,” said the woman. “I suppose you know the history of ‘the Girl who Trod on the Loaf, so that she might not soil her shoes’? That has been written, and printed too.”

“I told that story myself,” said the man.

“Yes, then you must know it; and you must know also that the girl sank into the earth directly, to the Moor-woman, just as Old Bogey’s grandmother was paying her morning visit to inspect the brewery. She saw the girl gliding down, and asked to have her as a remembrance of her visit, and got her too; while I received a present that’s of no use to me—a travelling druggist’s shop—a whole cupboard-full of poetry in bottles. Grandmother told me where the cupboard was to be placed, and there it’s standing still. Just look! You’ve your seven four-leaved shamrocks in your pocket, one of which is a six-leaved one, and so you will be able to see it.”

And really in the midst of the moor lay something like a great knotted block of alder, and that was the old grandmother’s cupboard. The Moor-woman said that this was always open to her and to every one in the land, if they only knew where the cupboard stood. It could be opened either at the front or at the back, and at every side and corner—a perfect work of art, and yet only an old alder stump in appearance. The poets of all lands, and especially those of our own country, had been arranged here; the spirit of them had been extracted, refined, criticised and renovated, and then stored up in bottles. With what may be called great aptitude, if it was not genius the grandmother had taken as it were the flavor of this and of that poet, and had added a little devilry, and then corked up the bottles for use during all future times.

“Pray let me see,” said the man.

“Yes, but there are more important things to hear,” replied the Moor-woman.

“But now we are at the cupboard!” said the man. And he looked in. “Here are bottles of all sizes. What is in this one? and what in that one yonder?”

“Here is what they call may-balm,” replied the woman. “I have not tried it

myself. But I have not yet told you the ‘more important’ thing you were to hear. THE WILL-O’-THE-WISP’S IN THE TOWN! That’s of much more consequence than poetry and stories. I ought, indeed, to hold my tongue; but there must be a necessity—a fate—a something that sticks in my throat, and that wants to come out. Take care, you mortals!”

“I don’t understand a word of all this!” cried the man.

“Be kind enough to seat yourself on that cupboard,” she retorted, “but take care you don’t fall through and break the bottles—you know what’s inside of them. I must tell of the great event. It occurred no longer ago than the day before yesterday. It did not happen earlier. It has now three hundred and sixty-three days to run about. I suppose you know how many days there are in a year?”

And this is what the Moor-woman told:

“There was a great commotion yesterday out here in the marsh! There was a christening feast! A little Will-o’-the-Wisp was born here—in fact, twelve of them were born all together; and they have permission, if they choose to use it, to go abroad among men, and to move about and command among them, just as if they were born mortals. That was a great event in the marsh, and accordingly all the Will-o’-the-Wisps, male and female, went dancing like little lights across the moor. There are some of them of the dog species, but those are not worth mentioning. I sat there on the cupboard, and had all the twelve little new-born Will-o’-the-Wisps upon my lap. They shone like glow-worms; they already began to hop, and increased in size every moment, so that before a quarter of an hour had elapsed, each of them looked just as large as his father or his uncle. Now, it’s an old-established regulation and favor, that when the moon stands just as it did yesterday, and the wind blows just as it blew then, it is allowed and accorded to all Will-o’-the-Wisps—that is, to all those who are born at that minute of time—to become mortals, and individually to exert their power for the space of one year.

“The Will-o’-the-Wisp may run about in the country and through the world, if it is not afraid of falling into the sea, or of being blown out by a heavy storm. It can enter into a person and speak for him, and make all the movements it pleases. The Will-o’-the-Wisp may take whatever form he likes, of man or woman, and can act in their spirit and in their disguise in such a way that he can effect whatever he wishes to do. But he must manage, in the course of the year, to lead three hundred and sixty-five people into a bad way, and in a grand style, too. To lead them away from the right and the truth; and then he reaches the highest point. Such a Will-o’-the-Wisp can attain to the honor of being a runner before the devil’s state coach; and

then he'll wear clothes of fiery yellow, and breathe forth flames out of his throat. That's enough to make a simple Will-o'-the-Wisp smack his lips. But there's some danger in this, and a great deal of work for a Will-o'-the-Wisp who aspires to play so distinguished a part. If the eyes of the man are opened to what he is, and if the man can then blow him away, it's all over with him, and he must come back into the marsh; or if, before the year is up, the Will-o'-the-Wisp is seized with a longing to see his family, and so returns to it and gives the matter up, it is over with him likewise, and he can no longer burn clear, and soon becomes extinguished, and cannot be lit up again; and when the year has elapsed, and he has not led three hundred and sixty-five people away from the truth and from all that is grand and noble, he is condemned to be imprisoned in decayed wood, and to lie glimmering there, without being able to move; and that's the most terrible punishment that can be inflicted on a lively Will-o'-the-Wisp.

"Now, all this I know, and all this I told to the twelve little Will-o'-the-Wisps whom I had on my lap, and who seemed quite crazy with joy.

"I told them that the safest and most convenient course was to give up the honor, and do nothing at all; but the little flames would not agree to this, and already fancied themselves clad in fiery yellow clothes, breathing flames from their throats.

"'Stay with us,' said some of the older ones.

"'Carry on your sport with mortals,' said the others.

"'The mortals are drying up our meadows; they've taken to draining. What will our successors do?'

"'We want to flame; we will flame—flame!' cried the new-born Will-o'the-Wisps.

"And thus the affair was settled.

"And now a ball was given, a minute long; it could not well be shorter. The little elf-maidens whirled round three times with the rest, that they might not appear proud, but they preferred dancing with one another.

"And now the sponsors' gifts were presented, and presents were thrown them. These presents flew like pebbles across the sea-water. Each of the elf-maidens gave a little piece of her veil.

"'Take that,' they said, 'and then you'll know the higher dance, the most difficult turns and twists—that is to say, if you should find them necessary. You'll know the proper deportment, and then you can show yourself in the very pick of society.'

"The night raven taught each of the young Will-o'-the-Wisps to say, 'Goo-goo-good,' and to say it in the right place; and that's a great gift which brings its own reward.

“The owl and the stork—but they said it was not worth mentioning, and so we won’t mention it.

“King Waldemar’s wild chase was just then rushing over the moor, and when the great lords heard of the festivities that were going on, they sent a couple of handsome dogs, which hunt on the spoor of the wind, as a present; and these might carry two or three of the Will-o’-the-Wisps. A couple of old Alpas, spirits who occupy themselves with Alp-pressing, were also at the feast; and from these the young Will-o’-the-Wisps learned the art of slipping through every key-hole, as if the door stood open before them. These Alpas offered to carry the youngsters to the town, with which they were well acquainted. They usually rode through the atmosphere on their own back hair, which is fastened into a knot, for they love a hard seat; but now they sat sideways on the wild hunting dogs, took the young Will-o’-the-Wisps in their laps, who wanted to go into the town to mislead and entice mortals, and, whisk! away they were. Now, this is what happened last night. To-day the Will-o’-the-Wisps are in the town, and have taken the matter in hand—but where and how? Ah, can you tell me that? Still, I’ve a lightning conductor in my great toe, and that will always tell me something.”

“Why, this is a complete story,” exclaimed the man.

“Yes, but it is only the beginning,” replied the woman. “Can you tell me how the Will-o’-the-Wisps deport themselves, and how they behave? and in what shapes they have aforetime appeared and led people into crooked paths?”

“I believe,” replied the man, “that one could tell quite a romance about the Will-o’-the-Wisps, in twelve parts; or, better still, one might make quite a popular play of them.”

“You might write that,” said the woman, “but it’s best let alone.”

“Yes, that’s better and more agreeable,” the man replied, “for then we shall escape from the newspapers, and not be tied up by them, which is just as uncomfortable as for a Will-o’-the-Wisp to lie in decaying wood, to have to gleam, and not to be able to stir.”

“I don’t care about it either way,” cried the woman. “Let the rest write, those who can, and those who cannot likewise. I’ll grant you an old bung from my cask that will open the cupboard where poetry’s kept in bottles, and you may take from that whatever may be wanting. But you, my good man, seem to have blotted your hands sufficiently with ink, and to have come to that age of satiety that you need not be running about every year for stories, especially as there are much more important things to be done. You must have understood what is going on?”

"The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in town," said the man. "I've heard it, and I have understood it. But what do you think I ought to do? I should be thrashed if I were to go to the people and say, 'Look, yonder goes a Will-o'-the-Wisp in his best clothes!'

"They also go in undress," replied the woman. "The Will-o'-the-Wisp can assume all kinds of forms, and appear in every place. He goes into the church, but not for the sake of the service; and perhaps he may enter into one or other of the priests. He speaks in the Parliament, not for the benefit of the country, but only for himself. He's an artist with the color-pot as well as in the theatre; but when he gets all the power into his own hands, then the pot's empty! I chatter and chatter, but it must come out, what's sticking in my throat, to the disadvantage of my own family. But I must now be the woman that will save a good many people. It is not done with my good will, or for the sake of a medal. I do the most insane things I possibly can, and then I tell a poet about it, and thus the whole town gets to know of it directly."

"The town will not take that to heart," observed the man; "that will not disturb a single person; for they will all think I'm only telling them a story if I say, 'The Will-o'-the-Wisp is in the town, says the Moor-woman. Take care of yourselves!'"

THE STORY OF THE WIND

"Near the shores of the great Belt, which is one of the straits that connect the Cattegat with the Baltic, stands an old mansion with thick red walls. I know every stone of it," says the Wind. "I saw it when it was part of the castle of Marck Stig on the promontory. But the castle was obliged to be pulled down, and the stone was used again for the walls of a new mansion on another spot—the baronial residence of Borreby, which still stands near the coast. I knew them well, those noble lords and ladies, the successive generations that dwelt there; and now I'm going to tell you of Waldemar Daa and his daughters. How proud was his bearing, for he was of royal blood, and could boast of more noble deeds than merely hunting the stag and emptying the wine-cup. His rule was despotic: 'It shall be,' he was accustomed to say. His wife, in garments embroidered with gold, stepped proudly over the polished marble floors. The tapestries were gorgeous, and the furniture of costly and artistic taste. She had brought gold and plate with her into the house. The cellars were full of wine. Black, fiery horses, neighed in the stables. There was a look of wealth about the house of Borreby at that time. They had three children, daughters, fair and delicate maid-

ens—Ida, Joanna, and Anna Dorothea; I have never forgotten their names. They were a rich, noble family, born in affluence and nurtured in luxury.
"Whir-r-r, whir-r-r!" roared the Wind, and went on, "I did not see in this house, as in other great houses, the high-born lady sitting among her women, turning the spinning-wheel. She could sweep the sounding chords of the guitar, and sing to the music, not always Danish melodies, but the songs of a strange land. It was 'Live and let live,' here. Stranger guests came from far and near, music sounded, goblets clashed, and I," said the Wind, "was not able to drown the noise. Ostentation, pride, splendor, and display ruled, but not the fear of the Lord.
"It was on the evening of the first day of May," the Wind continued, "I came from the west, and had seen the ships overpowered with the waves, when all on board persisted or were cast shipwrecked on the coast of Jutland. I had hurried across the heath and over Jutland's wood-girt eastern coast, and over the island of Funen, and then I drove across the great belt, sighing and moaning. At length I lay down to rest on the shores of Zeeland, near to the great house of Borreby, where the splendid forest of oaks still flourished. The young men of the neighborhood were collecting branches and brushwood under the oak-trees. The largest and dryest they could find they carried into the village, and piled them up in a heap and set them on fire. Then the men and maidens danced, and sung in a circle round the blazing pile. I lay quite quiet," said the Wind, "but I silently touched a branch which had been brought by one of the handsomest of the young men, and the wood blazed up brightly, blazed brighter than all the rest. Then he was chosen as the chief, and received the name of the Shepherd; and might choose his lamb from among the maidens. There was greater mirth and rejoicing than I had ever heard in the halls of the rich baronial house. Then the noble lady drove by towards the baron's mansion with her three daughters, in a gilded carriage drawn by six horses. The daughters were young and beautiful—three charming blossoms—a rose, a lily, and a white hyacinth. The mother was a proud tulip, and never acknowledged the salutations of any of the men or maidens who paused in their sport to do her honor. The gracious lady seemed like a flower that was rather stiff in the stalk. Rose, lily, and hyacinth—yes, I saw them all three. Whose little lambs will they one day become? thought I; their shepherd will be a gallant knight, perhaps a prince. The carriage rolled on, and the peasants resumed their dancing. They drove about the summer through all the villages near. But one night, when I rose again, the high-born lady lay down to rise again no more; that thing came to her which comes to us all, in which there is nothing new. Waldemar Daa remained for a time silent

and thoughtful. 'The loftiest tree may be bowed without being broken,' said a voice within him. His daughters wept; all the people in the mansion wiped their eyes, but Lady Daa had driven away, and I drove away too," said the Wind. "Whir-r-r, whir-r-r-!

"I returned again; I often returned and passed over the island of Funen and the shores of the Belt. Then I rested by Borreby, near the glorious wood, where the heron made his nest, the haunt of the wood-pigeons, the blue-birds, and the black stork. It was yet spring, some were sitting on their eggs, others had already hatched their young broods; but how they fluttered about and cried out when the axe sounded through the forest, blow upon blow! The trees of the forest were doomed. Waldemar Daa wanted to build a noble ship, a man-of-war, a three-decker, which the king would be sure to buy; and these, the trees of the wood, the landmark of the seamen, the refuge of the birds, must be felled. The hawk started up and flew away, for its nest was destroyed; the heron and all the birds of the forest became homeless, and flew about in fear and anger. I could well understand how they felt. Crows and ravens croaked, as if in scorn, while the trees were cracking and falling around them. Far in the interior of the wood, where a noisy swarm of laborers were working, stood Waldemar Daa and his three daughters, and all were laughing at the wild cries of the birds, excepting one, the youngest, Anna Dorothea, who felt grieved to the heart; and when they made preparations to fell a tree that was almost dead, and on whose naked branches the black stork had built her nest, she saw the poor little things stretching out their necks, and she begged for mercy for them, with the tears in her eyes. So the tree with the black stork's nest was left standing; the tree itself, however, was not worth much to speak of. Then there was a great deal of hewing and sawing, and at last the three-decker was built. The builder was a man of low origin, but possessing great pride; his eyes and forehead spoke of large intellect, and Waldemar Daa was fond of listening to him, and so was Waldemar's daughter Ida, the eldest, now about fifteen years old; and while he was building the ship for the father, he was building for himself a castle in the air, in which he and Ida were to live when they were married. This might have happened, indeed, if there had been a real castle, with stone walls, ramparts, and a moat. But in spite of his clever head, the builder was still but a poor, inferior bird; and how can a sparrow expect to be admitted into the society of peacocks?

"I passed on in my course," said the Wind, "and he passed away also. He was not allowed to remain, and little Ida got over it, because she was obliged to do so. Proud, black horses, worth looking at, were neighing in

the stable. And they were locked up; for the admiral, who had been sent by the king to inspect the new ship, and make arrangements for its purchase, was loud in admiration of these beautiful horses. I heard it all," said the Wind, "for I accompanied the gentlemen through the open door of the stable, and strewed stalks of straw, like bars of gold, at their feet. Waldemar Daa wanted gold, and the admiral wished for the proud black horses; therefore he praised them so much. But the hint was not taken, and consequently the ship was not bought. It remained on the shore covered with boards,—a Noah's ark that never got to the water—Whir-r-r-r—and that was a pity.

"In the winter, when the fields were covered with snow, and the water filled with large blocks of ice which I had blown up to the coast," continued the Wind, "great flocks of crows and ravens, dark and black as they usually are, came and alighted on the lonely, deserted ship. Then they croaked in harsh accents of the forest that now existed no more, of the many pretty birds' nests destroyed and the little ones left without a home; and all for the sake of that great bit of lumber, that proud ship, that never sailed forth. I made the snowflakes whirl till the snow lay like a great lake round the ship, and drifted over it. I let it hear my voice, that it might know what the storm has to say. Certainly I did my part towards teaching it seamanship.

"That winter passed away, and another winter and summer both passed, as they are still passing away, even as I pass away. The snow drifts onwards, the apple-blossoms are scattered, the leaves fall,—everything passes away, and men are passing away too. But the great man's daughters are still young, and little Ida is a rose as fair to look upon as on the day when the shipbuilder first saw her. I often tumbled her long, brown hair, while she stood in the garden by the apple-tree, musing, and not heeding how I strewed the blossoms on her hair, and dishevelled it; or sometimes, while she stood gazing at the red sun and the golden sky through the opening branches of the dark, thick foliage of the garden trees. Her sister Joanna was bright and slender as a lily; she had a tall and lofty carriage and figure, though, like her mother, rather stiff in back. She was very fond of walking through the great hall, where hung the portraits of her ancestors. The women were represented in dresses of velvet and silk, with tiny little hats, embroidered with pearls, on their braided hair. They were all handsome women. The gentlemen appeared clad in steel, or in rich cloaks lined with squirrel's fur; they wore little ruffs, and swords at their sides. Where would Joanna's place be on that wall some day? and how would he look,—her noble lord and husband? This is what she thought of, and often spoke of in a low voice to herself. I heard it as I swept into the long hall, and turned round to

come out again. Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth, a child of fourteen, was quiet and thoughtful; her large, deep, blue eyes had a dreamy look, but a childlike smile still played round her mouth. I was not able to blow it away, neither did I wish to do so. We have met in the garden, in the hollow lane, in the field and meadow, where she gathered herbs and flowers which she knew would be useful to her father in preparing the drugs and mixtures he was always concocting. Waldemar Daa was arrogant and proud, but he was also a learned man, and knew a great deal. It was no secret, and many opinions were expressed on what he did. In his fireplace there was a fire, even in summer time. He would lock himself in his room, and for days the fire would be kept burning; but he did not talk much of what he was doing. The secret powers of nature are generally discovered in solitude, and did he not soon expect to find out the art of making the greatest of all good things—the art of making gold? So he fondly hoped; therefore the chimney smoked and the fire crackled so constantly. Yes, I was there too," said the Wind. "'Leave it alone,' I sang down the chimney; 'leave it alone, it will all end in smoke, air, coals, and ashes, and you will burn your fingers.' But Waldemar Daa did not leave it alone, and all he possessed vanished like smoke blown by me. The splendid black horses, where are they? What became of the cows in the field, the old gold and silver vessels in cupboards and chests, and even the house and home itself? It was easy to melt all these away in the gold-making crucible, and yet obtain no gold. And so it was. Empty are the barns and store-rooms, the cellars and cupboards; the servants decreased in number, and the mice multiplied. First one window became broken, and then another, so that I could get in at other places besides the door. 'Where the chimney smokes, the meal is being cooked,' says the proverb; but here a chimney smoked that devoured all the meals for the sake of gold. I blew round the courtyard," said the Wind, "like a watchman blowing his home, but no watchman was there. I twirled the weather-cock round on the summit of the tower, and it creaked like the snoring of a warder, but no warder was there; nothing but mice and rats. Poverty laid the table-cloth; poverty sat in the wardrobe and in the larder. The door fell off its hinges, cracks and fissures made their appearance everywhere; so that I could go in and out at pleasure, and that is how I know all about it. Amid smoke and ashes, sorrow, and sleepless nights, the hair and beard of the master of the house turned gray, and deep furrows showed themselves around his temples; his skin turned pale and yellow, while his eyes still looked eagerly for gold, the longed-for gold, and the result of his labor was debt instead of gain. I blew the smoke and ashes into his face and beard; I moaned through the

broken window-panes, and the yawning clefts in the walls; I blew into the chests and drawers belonging to his daughters, wherein lay the clothes that had become faded and threadbare, from being worn over and over again. Such a song had not been sung, at the children's cradle as I sung now. The lordly life had changed to a life of penury. I was the only one who rejoiced aloud in that castle," said the Wind. "At last I snowed them up, and they say snow keeps people warm. It was good for them, for they had no wood, and the forest, from which they might have obtained it, had been cut down. The frost was very bitter, and I rushed through loop-holes and passages, over gables and roofs with keen and cutting swiftness. The three high-born daughters were lying in bed because of the cold, and their father crouching beneath his leather coverlet. Nothing to eat, nothing to burn, no fire on the hearth! Here was a life for high-born people! 'Give it up, give it up!' But my Lord Daa would not do that. 'After winter, spring will come,' he said, 'after want, good times. We must not lose patience, we must learn to wait. Now my horses and lands are all mortgaged, it is indeed high time; but gold will come at last—at Easter.'

"I heard him as he thus spoke; he was looking at a spider's web, and he continued, 'Thou cunning little weaver, thou dost teach me perseverance. Let any one tear thy web, and thou wilt begin again and repair it. Let it be entirely destroyed, thou wilt resolutely begin to make another till it is completed. So ought we to do, if we wish to succeed at last.' "It was the morning of Easter-day. The bells sounded from the neighboring church, and the sun seemed to rejoice in the sky. The master of the castle had watched through the night, in feverish excitement, and had been melting and cooling, distilling and mixing. I heard him sighing like a soul in despair; I heard him praying, and I noticed how he held his breath. The lamp burnt out, but he did not observe it. I blew up the fire in the coals on the hearth, and it threw a red glow on his ghastly white face, lighting it up with a glare, while his sunken eyes looked out wildly from their cavernous depths, and appeared to grow larger and more prominent, as if they would burst from their sockets. 'Look at the alchymic glass,' he cried; 'something glows in the crucible, pure and heavy.' He lifted it with a trembling hand, and exclaimed in a voice of agitation, 'Gold! gold!' He was quite giddy, I could have blown him down," said the Wind; "but I only fanned the glowing coals, and accompanied him through the door to the room where his daughter sat shivering. His coat was powdered with ashes, and there were ashes in his beard and in his tangled hair. He stood erect, and held high in the air the brittle glass that contained his costly treasure. 'Found! found! Gold! gold!' he shouted, again holding

the glass aloft, that it might flash in the sunshine; but his hand trembled, and the alchymic glass fell from it, clattering to the ground, and brake in a thousand pieces. The last bubble of his happiness had burst, with a whiz and a whir, and I rushed away from the gold-maker's house.

"Late in the autumn, when the days were short, and the mist sprinkled cold drops on the berries and the leafless branches, I came back in fresh spirits, rushed through the air, swept the sky clear, and snapped off the dry twigs, which is certainly no great labor to do, yet it must be done. There was another kind of sweeping taking place at Waldemar Daa's, in the castle of Borreby. His enemy, Owe Ramel, of Basnas, was there, with the mortgage of the house and everything it contained, in his pocket. I rattled the broken windows, beat against the old rotten doors, and whistled through cracks and crevices, so that Mr. Owe Ramel did not much like to remain there. Ida and Anna Dorothea wept bitterly, Joanna stood, pale and proud, biting her lips till the blood came; but what could that avail? Owe Ramel offered Waldemar Daa permission to remain in the house till the end of his life. No one thanked him for the offer, and I saw the ruined old gentleman lift his head, and throw it back more proudly than ever. Then I rushed against the house and the old lime-trees with such force, that one of the thickest branches, a decayed one, was broken off, and the branch fell at the entrance, and remained there. It might have been used as a broom, if any one had wanted to sweep the place out, and a grand sweeping-out there really was; I thought it would be so. It was hard for any one to preserve composure on such a day; but these people had strong wills, as unbending as their hard fortune. There was nothing they could call their own, excepting the clothes they wore. Yes, there was one thing more, an alchymist's glass, a new one, which had been lately bought, and filled with what could be gathered from the ground of the treasure which had promised so much but failed in keeping its promise. Waldemar Daa hid the glass in his bosom, and, taking his stick in his hand, the once rich gentleman passed with his daughters out of the house of Borreby. I blew coldly upon his flustered cheeks, I stroked his gray beard and his long white hair, and I sang as well as I was able, 'Whir-r-r, whir-r-r. Gone away! Gone away!' Ida walked on one side of the old man, and Anna Dorothea on the other; Joanna turned round, as they left the entrance. Why? Fortune would not turn because she turned. She looked at the stone in the walls which had once formed part of the castle of Marck Stig, and perhaps she thought of his daughters and of the old song,— "The eldest and youngest, hand-in-hand, Went forth alone to a distant land."

These were only two; here there were three, and their father with them

also. They walked along the high-road, where once they had driven in their splendid carriage; they went forth with their father as beggars. They wandered across an open field to a mud hut, which they rented for a dollar and a half a year, a new home, with bare walls and empty cupboards. Crows and magpies fluttered about them, and cried, as if in contempt, 'Caw, caw, turned out of our nest—caw, caw,' as they had done in the wood at Borreby, when the trees were felled. Daa and his daughters could not help hearing it, so I blew about their ears to drown the noise; what use was it that they should listen? So they went to live in the mud hut in the open field, and I wandered away, over moor and meadow, through bare bushes and leafless forests, to the open sea, to the broad shores in other lands, 'Whir-r-r, whir-r-r! Away, away!' year after year."

And what became of Waldemar Daa and his daughters? Listen; the Wind will tell us: "The last I saw of them was the pale hyacinth, Anna Dorothea. She was old and bent then; for fifty years had passed and she had outlived them all. She could relate the history. Yonder, on the heath, near the town of Wiborg, in Jutland, stood the fine new house of the canon. It was built of red brick, with projecting gables. It was inhabited, for the smoke curled up thickly from the chimneys. The canon's gentle lady and her beautiful daughters sat in the bay-window, and looked over the hawthorn hedge of the garden towards the brown heath. What were they looking at? Their glances fell upon a stork's nest, which was built upon an old tumbledown hut. The roof, as far as one existed at all, was covered with moss and lichen. The stork's nest covered the greater part of it, and that alone was in a good condition; for it was kept in order by the stork himself. That is a house to be looked at, and not to be touched," said the Wind. "For the sake of the stork's nest it had been allowed to remain, although it is a blot on the landscape. They did not like to drive the stork away; therefore the old shed was left standing, and the poor woman who dwelt in it allowed to stay. She had the Egyptian bird to thank for that; or was it perchance her reward for having once interceded for the preservation of the nest of its black brother in the forest of Borreby? At that time she, the poor woman, was a young child, a white hyacinth in a rich garden. She remembered that time well; for it was Anna Dorothea.

"'O-h, o-h,' she sighed; for people can sigh like the moaning of the wind among the reeds and rushes. 'O-h, o-h,' she would say, 'no bell sounded at thy burial, Waldemar Daa. The poor school-boys did not even sing a psalm when the former lord of Borreby was laid in the earth to rest. O-h, everything has an end, even misery. Sister Ida became the wife of a peasant; that

was the hardest trial which befell our father, that the husband of his own daughter should be a miserable serf, whom his owner could place for punishment on the wooden horse. I suppose he is under the ground now; and Ida—alas! alas! it is not ended yet; miserable that I am! Kind Heaven, grant me that I may die.' "That was Anna Dorothea's prayer in the wretched hut that was left standing for the sake of the stork. I took pity on the proudest of the sisters," said the Wind. "Her courage was like that of a man; and in man's clothes she served as a sailor on board ship. She was of few words, and of a dark countenance; but she did not know how to climb, so I blew her overboard before any one found out that she was a woman; and, in my opinion, that was well done," said the Wind.

On such another Easter morning as that on which Waldemar Daa imagined he had discovered the art of making gold, I heard the tones of a psalm under the stork's nest, and within the crumbling walls. It was Anna Dorothea's last song. There was no window in the hut, only a hole in the wall; and the sun rose like a globe of burnished gold, and looked through. With what splendor he filled that dismal dwelling! Her eyes were glazing, and her heart breaking; but so it would have been, even had the sun not shone that morning on Anna Dorothea. The stork's nest had secured her a home till her death. I sung over her grave; I sung at her father's grave. I know where it lies, and where her grave is too, but nobody else knows it.

"New times now; all is changed. The old high-road is lost amid cultivated fields; the new one now winds along over covered graves; and soon the railway will come, with its train of carriages, and rush over graves where lie those whose very names are forgoten. All passed away, passed away!

"This is the story of Waldemar Daa and his daughters. Tell it better, any of you, if you know how," said the Wind; and he rushed away, and was gone.

THE WINDMILL

A windmill stood upon the hill, proud to look at, and it was proud too.

"I am not proud at all," it said, "but I am very much enlightened without and within. I have sun and moon for my outward use, and for inward use too; and into the bargain I have stearine candles, train oil and lamps, and tallow candles. I may well say that I'm enlightened. I'm a thinking being, and so well constructed that it's quite delightful. I have a good windpipe in my chest, and I have four wings that are placed outside my head, just beneath my hat. The birds have only two wings, and are obliged to carry them on their backs. I am a Dutchman by birth, that may be seen by my fig-

ure—a flying Dutchman. They are considered supernatural beings, I know, and yet I am quite natural. I have a gallery round my chest, and house-room beneath it; that's where my thoughts dwell. My strongest thought, who rules and reigns, is called by others 'The Man in the Mill.' He knows what he wants, and is lord over the meal and the bran; but he has his companion, too, and she calls herself 'Mother.' She is the very heart of me. She does not run about stupidly and awkwardly, for she knows what she wants, she knows what she can do, she's as soft as a zephyr and as strong as a storm; she knows how to begin a thing carefully, and to have her own way. She is my soft temper, and the father is my hard one. They are two, and yet one; they each call the other 'My half.' These two have some little boys, young thoughts, that can grow. The little ones keep everything in order. When, lately, in my wisdom, I let the father and the boys examine my throat and the hole in my chest, to see what was going on there,—for something in me was out of order, and it's well to examine one's self,—the little ones made a tremendous noise. The youngest jumped up into my hat, and shouted so there that it tickled me. The little thoughts may grow—I know that very well; and out in the world thoughts come too, and not only of my kind, for as far as I can see, I cannot discern anything like myself; but the wingless houses, whose throats make no noise, have thoughts too, and these come to my thoughts, and make love to them, as it is called. It's wonderful enough—yes, there are many wonderful things. Something has come over me, or into me,—something has changed in the mill-work. It seems as if the one half, the father, had altered, and had received a better temper and a more affectionate helpmate—so young and good, and yet the same, only more gentle and good through the course of time. What was bitter has passed away, and the whole is much more comfortable.

"The days go on, and the days come nearer and nearer to clearness and to joy; and then a day will come when it will be over with me; but not over altogether. I must be pulled down that I may be built up again; I shall cease, but yet shall live on. To become quite a different being, and yet remain the same! That's difficult for me to understand, however enlightened I may be with sun, moon, stearine, train oil, and tallow. My old wood-work and my old brick-work will rise again from the dust!

"I will hope that I may keep my old thoughts, the father in the mill, and the mother, great ones and little ones—the family; for I call them all, great and little, the company of thoughts, because I must, and cannot refrain from it.

"And I must also remain 'myself,' with my throat in my chest, my wings on my head, the gallery round my body; else I should not know myself, nor

could the others know me, and say, ‘There’s the mill on the hill, proud to look at, and yet not proud at all.’”
That is what the mill said. Indeed, it said much more, but that is the most important part.
And the days came, and the days went, and yesterday was the last day.
Then the mill caught fire. The flames rose up high, and beat out and in, and bit at the beams and planks, and ate them up. The mill fell, and nothing remained of it but a heap of ashes. The smoke drove across the scene of the conflagration, and the wind carried it away.
Whatever had been alive in the mill remained, and what had been gained by it has nothing to do with this story.
The miller’s family—one soul, many thoughts, and yet only one—built a new, a splendid mill, which answered its purpose. It was quite like the old one, and people said, “Why, yonder is the mill on the hill, proud to look at!” But this mill was better arranged, more according to the time than the last, so that progress might be made. The old beams had become worm-eaten and spongy—they lay in dust and ashes. The body of the mill did not rise out of the dust as they had believed it would do. They had taken it literally, and all things are not to be taken literally.

THE STORY OF THE YEAR

It was near the end of January, and a terrible fall of snow was pelting down, and whirling through the streets and lanes; the windows were plastered with snow on the outside, snow fell in masses from the roofs. Every one seemed in a great hurry; they ran, they flew, fell into each other’s arms, holding fast for a moment as long as they could stand safely. Coaches and horses looked as if they had been frosted with sugar. The footmen stood with their backs against the carriages, so as to turn their faces from the wind. The foot passengers kept within the shelter of the carriages, which could only move slowly on in the deep snow. At last the storm abated, and a narrow path was swept clean in front of the houses; when two persons met in this path they stood still, for neither liked to take the first step on one side into the deep snow to let the other pass him. There they stood silent and motionless, till at last, as if by tacit consent, they each sacrificed a leg and buried it in the deep snow. Towards evening, the weather became calm. The sky, cleared from the snow, looked more lofty and transparent, while the stars shone with new brightness and purity. The frozen snow crackled under foot, and was quite firm enough to bear the sparrows, who hopped

upon it in the morning dawn. They searched for food in the path which had been swept, but there was very little for them, and they were terribly cold.
"Tweet, tweet," said one to another; "they call this a new year, but I think it is worse than the last. We might just as well have kept the old year; I'm quite unhappy, and I have a right to be so."
"Yes, you have; and yet the people ran about and fired off guns, to usher in the new year," said a little shivering sparrow. "They threw things against the doors, and were quite beside themselves with joy, because the old year had disappeared. I was glad too, for I expected we should have some warm days, but my hopes have come to nothing. It freezes harder than ever; I think mankind have made a mistake in reckoning time."
"That they have," said a third, an old sparrow with a white poll; "they have something they call a calendar; it's an invention of their own, and everything must be arranged according to it, but it won't do. When spring comes, then the year begins. It is the voice of nature, and I reckon by that."
"But when will spring come?" asked the others.
"It will come when the stork returns, but he is very uncertain, and here in the town no one knows anything about it. In the country they have more knowledge; shall we fly away there and wait? we shall be nearer to spring then, certainly."
"That may be all very well," said another sparrow, who had been hopping about for a long time, chirping, but not saying anything of consequence, "but I have found a few comforts here in town which, I'm afraid, I should miss out in the country. Here in this neighborhood, there lives a family of people who have been so sensible as to place three or four flower-pots against the wall in the court-yard, so that the openings are all turned inward, and the bottom of each points outward. In the latter a hole has been cut large enough for me to fly in and out. I and my husband have built a nest in one of these pots, and all our young ones, who have now flown away, were brought up there. The people who live there of course made the whole arrangement that they might have the pleasure of seeing us, or they would not have done it. It pleased them also to strew bread-crumbs for us, and so we have food, and may consider ourselves provided for. So I think my husband and I will stay where we are; although we are not very happy, but we shall stay."
"And we will fly into the country," said the others, "to see if spring is coming." And away they flew.
In the country it was really winter, a few degrees colder than in the town. The sharp winds blew over the snow-covered fields. The farmer, wrapped

in warm clothing, sat in his sleigh, and beat his arms across his chest to keep off the cold. The whip lay on his lap. The horses ran till they smoked. The snow crackled, the sparrows hopped about in the wheel-ruts, and shivered, crying, "Tweet, tweet; when will spring come? It is very long in coming."
"Very long indeed," sounded over the field, from the nearest snow-covered hill. It might have been the echo which people heard, or perhaps the words of that wonderful old man, who sat high on a heap of snow, regardless of wind or weather. He was all in white; he had on a peasant's coarse white coat of frieze. He had long white hair, a pale face, and large clear blue eyes.
"Who is that old man?" asked the sparrows.
"I know who he is," said an old raven, who sat on the fence, and was condescending enough to acknowledge that we are all equal in the sight of Heaven, even as little birds, and therefore he talked with the sparrows, and gave them the information they wanted. "I know who the old man is," he said. "It is Winter, the old man of last year; he is not dead yet, as the calendar says, but acts as guardian to little Prince Spring who is coming. Winter rules here still. Ugh! the cold makes you shiver, little ones, does it not?"
"There! Did I not tell you so?" said the smallest of the sparrows. "The calendar is only an invention of man, and is not arranged according to nature. They should leave these things to us; we are created so much more clever than they are."
One week passed, and then another. The forest looked dark, the hard-frozen lake lay like a sheet of lead. The mountains had disappeared, for over the land hung damp, icy mists. Large black crows flew about in silence; it was as if nature slept. At length a sunbeam glided over the lake, and it shone like burnished silver. But the snow on the fields and the hills did not glitter as before. The white form of Winter sat there still, with his un-wandering gaze fixed on the south. He did not perceive that the snowy carpet seemed to sink as it were into the earth; that here and there a little green patch of grass appeared, and that these patches were covered with sparrows.
"Tee-wit, tee-wit; is spring coming at last?"
Spring! How the cry resounded over field and meadow, and through the dark-brown woods, where the fresh green moss still gleamed on the trunks of the trees, and from the south came the two first storks flying through the air, and on the back of each sat a lovely little child, a boy and a girl. They greeted the earth with a kiss, and wherever they placed their feet white flowers sprung up from beneath the snow. Hand in hand they approached the old ice-man, Winter, embraced him and clung to his breast; and as they did so, in a moment all three were enveloped in a thick, damp mist, dark

and heavy, that closed over them like a veil. The wind arose with mighty rustling tone, and cleared away the mist. Then the sun shone out warmly. Winter had vanished away, and the beautiful children of Spring sat on the throne of the year.

"This is really a new year," cried all the sparrows, "now we shall get our rights, and have some return for what we suffered in winter."

Wherever the two children wandered, green buds burst forth on bush and tree, the grass grew higher, and the corn-fields became lovely in delicate green.

The little maiden strewed flowers in her path. She held her apron before her: it was full of flowers; it was as if they sprung into life there, for the more she scattered around her, the more flowers did her apron contain. Eagerly she showered snowy blossoms over apple and peach-trees, so that they stood in full beauty before even their green leaves had burst from the bud. Then the boy and the girl clapped their hands, and troops of birds came flying by, no one knew from whence, and they all twittered and chirped, singing "Spring has come!" How beautiful everything was! Many an old dame came forth from her door into the sunshine, and shuffled about with great delight, glancing at the golden flowers which glittered everywhere in the fields, as they used to do in her young days. The world grew young again to her, as she said, "It is a blessed time out here to-day." The forest already wore its dress of dark-green buds. The thyme blossomed in fresh fragrance. Primroses and anemones sprung forth, and violets bloomed in the shade, while every blade of grass was full of strength and sap. Who could resist sitting down on such a beautiful carpet? and then the young children of Spring seated themselves, holding each other's hands, and sang, and laughed, and grew. A gentle rain fell upon them from the sky, but they did not notice it, for the rain-drops were their own tears of joy. They kissed each other, and were betrothed; and in the same moment the buds of the trees unfolded, and when the sun rose, the forest was green. Hand in hand the two wandered beneath the fresh pendant canopy of foliage, while the sun's rays gleamed through the opening of the shade, in changing and varied colors. The delicate young leaves filled the air with refreshing odor. Merrily rippled the clear brooks and rivulets between the green, velvety rushes, and over the many-colored pebbles beneath. All nature spoke of abundance and plenty. The cuckoo sang, and the lark carolled, for it was now beautiful spring. The careful willows had, however, covered their blossoms with woolly gloves; and this carefulness is rather tedious. Days and weeks went by, and the heat increased. Warm air waved the corn as it grew golden in the sun. The white northern lily spread its large green

leaves over the glossy mirror of the woodland lake, and the fishes sought the shadows beneath them. In a sheltered part of the wood, the sun shone upon the walls of a farm-house, brightening the blooming roses, and ripening the black juicy berries, which hung on the loaded cherry-trees, with his hot beams. Here sat the lovely wife of Summer, the same whom we have seen as a child and a bride; her eyes were fixed on dark gathering clouds, which in wavy outlines of black and indigo were piling themselves up like mountains, higher and higher. They came from every side, always increasing like a rising, rolling sea. Then they swooped towards the forest, where every sound had been silenced as if by magic, every breath hushed, every bird mute. All nature stood still in grave suspense. But in the lanes and the highways, passengers on foot or in carriages were hurrying to find a place of shelter. Then came a flash of light, as if the sun had rushed forth from the sky, flaming, burning, all-devouring, and darkness returned amid a rolling crash of thunder. The rain poured down in streams,—now there was darkness, then blinding light,—now thrilling silence, then deafening din. The young brown reeds on the moor waved to and fro in feathery billows; the forest boughs were hidden in a watery mist, and still light and darkness followed each other, still came the silence after the roar, while the corn and the blades of grass lay beaten down and swamped, so that it seemed impossible they could ever raise themselves again. But after a while the rain began to fall gently, the sun's rays pierced the clouds, and the water-drops glittered like pearls on leaf and stem. The birds sang, the fishes leaped up to the surface of the water, the gnats danced in the sunshine, and yonder, on a rock by the heaving salt sea, sat Summer himself, a strong man with sturdy limbs and long, dripping hair. Strengthened by the cool bath, he sat in the warm sunshine, while all around him renewed nature bloomed strong, luxuriant, and beautiful: it was summer, warm, lovely summer. Sweet and pleasant was the fragrance wafted from the clover-field, where the bees swarmed round the ruined tower, the bramble twined itself over the old altar, which, washed by the rain, glittered in the sunshine; and thither flew the queen bee with her swarm, and prepared wax and honey. But Summer and his bosom-wife saw it with different eyes, to them the altar-table was covered with the offerings of nature. The evening sky shone like gold, no church dome could ever gleam so brightly, and between the golden evening and the blushing morning there was moonlight. It was indeed summer. And days and weeks passed, the bright scythes of the reapers glittered in the corn-fields, the branches of the apple-trees bent low, heavy with the red and golden fruit. The hop, hanging in clusters, filled the air with sweet fra-

grance, and beneath the hazel-bushes, where the nuts hung in great bunches, rested a man and a woman—Summer and his grave consort.

"See," she exclaimed, "what wealth, what blessings surround us. Everything is home-like and good, and yet, I know not why, I long for rest and peace; I can scarcely express what I feel. They are already ploughing the fields again; more and more the people wish for gain. See, the storks are flocking together, and following the plough at a short distance. They are the birds from Egypt, who carried us through the air. Do you remember how we came as children to this land of the north; we brought with us flowers and bright sunshine, and green to the forests, but the wind has been rough with them, and they are now become dark and brown, like the trees of the south, but they do not, like them, bear golden fruit."

"Do you wish to see golden fruit?" said the man, "then rejoice," and he lifted his arm. The leaves of the forest put on colors of red and gold, and bright tints covered the woodlands. The rose-bushes gleamed with scarlet hips, and the branches of the elder-trees hung down with the weight of the full, dark berries. The wild chestnuts fell ripe from their dark, green shells, and in the forests the violets bloomed for the second time. But the queen of the year became more and more silent and pale

"It blows cold," she said, "and night brings the damp mist; I long for the land of my childhood." Then she saw the storks fly away every one, and she stretched out her hands towards them. She looked at the empty nests; in one of them grew a long-stalked corn flower, in another the yellow mustard seed, as if the nest had been placed there only for its comfort and protection, and the sparrows were flying round them all.

"Tweet, where has the master of the nest gone?" cried one, "I suppose he could not bear it when the wind blew, and therefore he has left this country. I wish him a pleasant journey."

The forest leaves became more and more yellow, leaf after leaf fell, and the stormy winds of Autumn howled. The year was now far advanced, and upon the fallen, yellow leaves, lay the queen of the year, looking up with mild eyes at a gleaming star, and her husband stood by her. A gust of wind swept through the foliage, and the leaves fell in a shower. The summer queen was gone, but a butterfly, the last of the year, flew through the cold air. Damp fogs came, icy winds blew, and the long, dark nights of winter approached. The ruler of the year appeared with hair white as snow, but he knew it not; he thought snow-flakes falling from the sky covered his head, as they decked the green fields with a thin, white covering of snow. And then the church bells rang out for Christmas time.

“The bells are ringing for the new-born year,” said the ruler, “soon will a new ruler and his bride be born, and I shall go to rest with my wife in yonder light-giving star.”
In the fresh, green fir-wood, where the snow lay all around, stood the angel of Christmas, and consecrated the young trees that were to adorn his feast.
“May there be joy in the rooms, and under the green boughs,” said the old ruler of the year. In a few weeks he had become a very old man, with hair as white as snow. “My resting-time draws near; the young pair of the year will soon claim my crown and sceptre.”
“But the night is still thine,” said the angel of Christmas, “for power, but not for rest. Let the snow lie warmly upon the tender seed. Learn to endure the thought that another is worshipped whilst thou art still lord. Learn to endure being forgotten while yet thou livest. The hour of thy freedom will come when Spring appears.”
“And when will Spring come?” asked Winter.
“It will come when the stork returns.”
And with white locks and snowy beard, cold, bent, and hoary, but strong as the wintry storm, and firm as the ice, old Winter sat on the snowdrift-covered hill, looking towards the south, where Winter had sat before, and gazed. The ice glittered, the snow crackled, the skaters skimmed over the polished surface of the lakes; ravens and crows formed a pleasing contrast to the white ground, and not a breath of wind stirred, and in the still air old Winter clenched his fists, and the ice lay fathoms deep between the lands. Then came the sparrows again out of the town, and asked, “Who is that old man?” The raven sat there still, or it might be his son, which is the same thing, and he said to them,—
“It is Winter, the old man of the former year; he is not dead, as the calendar says, but he is guardian to the spring, which is coming.”
“When will Spring come?” asked the sparrows, “for we shall have better times then, and a better rule. The old times are worth nothing.”
And in quiet thought old Winter looked at the leafless forest, where the graceful form and bends of each tree and branch could be seen; and while Winter slept, icy mists came from the clouds, and the ruler dreamt of his youthful days and of his manhood, and in the morning dawn the whole forest glittered with hoar frost, which the sun shook from the branches,—and this was the summer dream of Winter.
“When will Spring come?” asked the sparrows. “Spring!” Again the echo sounded from the hills on which the snow lay. The sunshine became warmer, the snow melted, and the birds twittered, “Spring is coming!” And high

in the air flew the first stork, and the second followed; a lovely child sat on the back of each, and they sank down on the open field, kissed the earth, and kissed the quiet old man; and, as the mist from the mountain top, he vanished away and disappeared. And the story of the year was finished.
"This is all very fine, no doubt," said the sparrows, "and it is very beautiful; but it is not according to the calendar, therefore, it must be all wrong."