Fairy Tales
(part 1)

SPHINX-BOOKS ©

All Rights Reserved

First Edition 2017

ISBN:978-1544694856

Sphinx-Books

SPHINX AGENCY

7 Maarouf St. Down Town

Cairo, 11111 Egypt

Tel: 002 02 25792865

www.sphinxagency.com

Fairy Tales (part 1)

Hans Christian Andersen

Fairy Tales
(part 1)

by

Hans Christian Andersen

Sphinx-Books

A STORY

In the garden all the apple-trees were in blossom. They had hastened to bring forth flowers before they got green leaves, and in the yard all the ducklings walked up and down, and the cat too: it basked in the sun and licked the sunshine from its own paws. And when one looked at the fields, how beautifully the corn stood and how green it shone, without comparison! and there was a twittering and a fluttering of all the little birds, as if the day were a great festival; and so it was, for it was Sunday. All the bells were ringing, and all the people went to church, looking cheerful, and dressed in their best clothes. There was a look of cheerfulness on everything. The day was so warm and beautiful that one might well have said: "God's kindness to us men is beyond all limits." But inside the church the pastor stood in the pulpit, and spoke very loudly and angrily. He said that all men were wicked, and God would punish them for their sins, and that the wicked, when they died, would be cast into hell, to burn for ever and ever. He spoke very excitedly, saying that their evil propensities would not be destroyed, nor would the fire be extinguished, and they should never find rest. That was terrible to hear, and he said it in such a tone of conviction; he described hell to them as a miserable hole where all the refuse of the world gathers. There was no air beside the hot burning sulphur flame, and there was no ground under their feet; they, the wicked ones, sank deeper and deeper, while eternal silence surrounded them! It was dreadful to hear all that, for the preacher spoke from his heart, and all the people in the church were terrified. Meanwhile, the birds sang merrily outside, and the sun was shining so beautifully warm, it seemed as though every little flower said: "God, Thy kindness towards us all is without limits." Indeed, outside it was not at all like the pastor's sermon.

The same evening, upon going to bed, the pastor noticed his wife sitting there quiet and pensive.

"What is the matter with you?" he asked her.

"Well, the matter with me is," she said, "that I cannot collect my thoughts, and am unable to grasp the meaning of what you said to-day in church—that there are so many wicked people, and that they should burn eternally. Alas! eternally—how long! I am only a woman and a sinner before God, but I should not have the heart to let even the worst sinner burn for ever, and how could our Lord to do so, who is so infinitely good, and who knows how the wickedness comes from without and within? No, I am unable to imagine that, although you say so."

It was autumn; the trees dropped their leaves, the earnest and severe pastor sat at the bedside of a dying person. A pious, faithful soul closed her eyes for ever; she was the pastor's wife.

..."If any one shall find rest in the grave and mercy before our Lord you shall certainly do so," said the pastor. He folded her hands and read a psalm over the dead woman.

She was buried; two large tears rolled over the cheeks of the earnest man, and in the parsonage it was empty and still, for its sun had set for ever. She had gone home.

It was night. A cold wind swept over the pastor's head; he opened his eyes, and it seemed to him as if the moon was shining into his room. It was not so, however; there was a being standing before his bed, and looking like the ghost of his deceased wife. She fixed her eyes upon him with such a kind and sad expression, just as if she wished to say something to him. The pastor raised himself in bed and stretched his arms towards her, saying, "Not even you can find eternal rest! You suffer, you best and most pious woman?"

The dead woman nodded her head as if to say "Yes," and put her hand on her breast.

"And can I not obtain rest in the grave for you?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"And how?"

"Give me one hair—only one single hair—from the head of the sinner for whom the fire shall never be extinguished, of the sinner whom God will condemn to eternal punishment in hell."

"Yes, one ought to be able to redeem you so easily, you pure, pious woman," he said.

"Follow me," said the dead woman. "It is thus granted to us. By my side you will be able to fly wherever your thoughts wish to go. Invisible to men, we shall penetrate into their most secret chambers; but with sure hand you must find out him who is destined to eternal torture, and before the cock crows he must be found!" As quickly as if carried by the winged thoughts they were in the great city, and from the walls the names of the deadly sins shone in flaming letters: pride, avarice, drunkenness, wantonness—in short, the whole seven-coloured bow of sin.

"Yes, therein, as I believed, as I knew it," said the pastor, "are living those who are abandoned to the eternal fire." And they were standing before the magnificently illuminated gate; the broad steps were adorned with carpets and flowers, and dance music was sounding through the festive halls. A footman dressed in silk and velvet stood with a large silver-mounted rod near the entrance.

"Our ball can compare favourably with the king's," he said, and turned with contempt towards the gazing crowd in the street. What he thought was sufficiently expressed in his features and movements: "Miserable beggars, who are looking in, you are nothing in comparison to me."
"Pride," said the dead woman; "do you see him?"
"The footman?" asked the pastor. "He is but a poor fool, and not doomed to be tortured eternally by fire!"
"Only a fool!" It sounded through the whole house of pride: they were all fools there.
Then they flew within the four naked walls of the miser. Lean as a skeleton, trembling with cold, and hunger, the old man was clinging with all his thoughts to his money. They saw him jump up feverishly from his miserable couch and take a loose stone out of the wall; there lay gold coins in an old stocking. They saw him anxiously feeling over an old ragged coat in which pieces of gold were sewn, and his clammy fingers trembled.
"He is ill! That is madness—a joyless madness—besieged by fear and dreadful dreams!"
They quickly went away and came before the beds of the criminals; these unfortunate people slept side by side, in long rows. Like a ferocious animal, one of them rose out of his sleep and uttered a horrible cry, and gave his comrade a violent dig in the ribs with his pointed elbow, and this one turned round in his sleep:
"Be quiet, monster—sleep! This happens every night!"
"Every night!" repeated the other. "Yes, every night he comes and tortures me! In my violence I have done this and that. I was born with an evil mind, which has brought me hither for the second time; but if I have done wrong I suffer punishment for it. One thing, however, I have not yet confessed. When I came out a little while ago, and passed by the yard of my former master, evil thoughts rose within me when I remembered this and that. I struck a match a little bit on the wall; probably it came a little too close to the thatched roof. All burnt down—a great heat rose, such as sometimes overcomes me. I myself helped to rescue cattle and things, nothing alive burnt, except a flight of pigeons, which flew into the fire, and the yard dog, of which I had not thought; one could hear him howl out of the fire, and this howling I still hear when I wish to sleep; and when I have fallen asleep, the great rough dog comes and places himself upon me, and howls, presses, and tortures me. Now listen to what I tell you! You can snore; you are snoring the whole night, and I hardly a quarter of an hour!" And the blood rose to the head of the excited criminal; he threw himself upon his comrade, and beat him with his clenched fist in the face.

"Wicked Matz has become mad again!" they said amongst themselves. The other criminals seized him, wrestled with him, and bent him double, so that his head rested between his knees, and they tied him, so that the blood almost came out of his eyes and out of all his pores.

"You are killing the unfortunate man," said the pastor, and as he stretched out his hand to protect him who already suffered too much, the scene changed. They flew through rich halls and wretched hovels; wantonness and envy, all the deadly sins, passed before them. An angel of justice read their crimes and their defence; the latter was not a brilliant one, but it was read before God, Who reads the heart, Who knows everything, the wickedness that comes from within and from without, Who is mercy and love personified. The pastor's hand trembled; he dared not stretch it out, he did not venture to pull a hair out of the sinner's head. And tears gushed from his eyes like a stream of mercy and love, the cooling waters of which extinguished the eternal fire of hell.

Just then the cock crowed.

"Father of all mercy, grant Thou to her the peace that I was unable to procure for her!"

"I have it now!" said the dead woman. "It was your hard words, your despair of mankind, your gloomy belief in God and His creation, which drove me to you. Learn to know mankind! Even in the wicked one lives a part of God—and this extinguishes and conquers the flame of hell!"

The pastor felt a kiss on his lips; a gleam of light surrounded him—God's bright sun shone into the room, and his wife, alive, sweet and full of love, awoke him from a dream which God had sent him!

BY THE ALMSHOUSE WINDOW

Near the grass-covered rampart which encircles Copenhagen lies a great red house. Balsams and other flowers greet us from the long rows of windows in the house, whose interior is sufficiently poverty-stricken; and poor and old are the people who inhabit it. The building is the Warton Almshouse.

Look! at the window there leans an old maid. She plucks the withered leaf from the balsam, and looks at the grass-covered rampart, on which many children are playing. What is the old maid thinking of? A whole life drama is unfolding itself before her inward gaze.

"The poor little children, how happy they are—how merrily they play and romp together! What red cheeks and what angels' eyes! but they have no shoes nor stockings. They dance on the green rampart, just on the place where, according to the old story, the ground always sank in, and where a sportive, frolicsome child had been lured by means of flowers, toys and sweetmeats into an open grave ready dug for it, and which was afterwards closed over the child; and from that moment, the old story says, the ground gave way no longer, the mound remained firm and fast, and was quickly covered with the green turf. The little people who now play on that spot know nothing of the old tale, else would they fancy they heard a child crying deep below the earth, and the dewdrops on each blade of grass would be to them tears of woe. Nor do they know anything of the Danish King who here, in the face of the coming foe, took an oath before all his trembling courtiers that he would hold out with the citizens of his capital, and die here in his nest; they know nothing of the men who have fought here, or of the women who from here have drenched with boiling water the enemy, clad in white, and 'biding in the snow to surprise the city.

"No! the poor little ones are playing with light, childish spirits. Play on, play on, thou little maiden! Soon the years will come—yes, those glorious years. The priestly hands have been laid on the candidates for confirmation; hand in hand they walk on the green rampart. Thou hast a white frock on; it has cost thy mother much labor, and yet it is only cut down for thee out of an old larger dress! You will also wear a red shawl; and what if it hang too far down? People will only see how large, how very large it is. You are thinking of your dress, and of the Giver of all good—so glorious is it to wander on the green rampart!

"And the years roll by; they have no lack of dark days, but you have your cheerful young spirit, and you have gained a friend—you know not how. You met, oh, how often! You walk together on the rampart in the fresh

spring, on the high days and holidays, when all the world come out to walk upon the ramparts, and all the bells of the church steeples seem to be singing a song of praise for the coming spring.

"Scarcely have the violets come forth, but there on the rampart, just opposite the beautiful Castle of Rosenberg, there is a tree bright with the first green buds. Every year this tree sends forth fresh green shoots. Alas! It is not so with the human heart! Dark mists, more in number than those that cover the northern skies, cloud the human heart. Poor child! thy friend's bridal chamber is a black coffin, and thou becomest an old maid. From the almshouse window, behind the balsams, thou shalt look on the merry children at play, and shalt see thine own history renewed."

And that is the life drama that passes before the old maid while she looks out upon the rampart, the green, sunny rampart, where the children, with their red cheeks and bare shoeless feet, are rejoicing merrily, like the other free little birds.

THE ANGEL

"Whenever a good child dies, an angel of God comes down from heaven, takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies with him over all the places which the child had loved during his life. Then he gathers a large handful of flowers, which he carries up to the Almighty, that they may bloom more brightly in heaven than they do on earth. And the Almighty presses the flowers to His heart, but He kisses the flower that pleases Him best, and it receives a voice, and is able to join the song of the chorus of bliss."

These words were spoken by an angel of God, as he carried a dead child up to heaven, and the child listened as if in a dream. Then they passed over well-known spots, where the little one had often played, and through beautiful gardens full of lovely flowers.

"Which of these shall we take with us to heaven to be transplanted there?" asked the angel.

Close by grew a slender, beautiful, rose-bush, but some wicked hand had broken the stem, and the half-opened rosebuds hung faded and withered on the trailing branches.

"Poor rose-bush!" said the child, "let us take it with us to heaven, that it may bloom above in God's garden."

The angel took up the rose-bush; then he kissed the child, and the little one half opened his eyes. The angel gathered also some beautiful flowers, as well as a few humble buttercups and heart's-ease.

"Now we have flowers enough," said the child; but the angel only nodded, he did not fly upward to heaven.

It was night, and quite still in the great town. Here they remained, and the angel hovered over a small, narrow street, in which lay a large heap of straw, ashes, and sweepings from the houses of people who had removed. There lay fragments of plates, pieces of plaster, rags, old hats, and other rubbish not pleasant to see. Amidst all this confusion, the angel pointed to the pieces of a broken flower-pot, and to a lump of earth which had fallen out of it. The earth had been kept from falling to pieces by the roots of a withered field-flower, which had been thrown amongst the rubbish.

"We will take this with us," said the angel, "I will tell you why as we fly along."

And as they flew the angel related the history.

"Down in that narrow lane, in a low cellar, lived a poor sick boy; he had been afflicted from his childhood, and even in his best days he could just manage to walk up and down the room on crutches once or twice, but no more. During some days in summer, the sunbeams would lie on the floor of the cellar for about half an hour. In this spot the poor sick boy would sit warming himself in the sunshine, and watching the red blood through his delicate fingers as he held them before his face. Then he would say he had been out, yet he knew nothing of the green forest in its spring verdure, till a neighbor's son brought him a green bough from a beech-tree. This he would place over his head, and fancy that he was in the beech-wood while the sun shone, and the birds carolled gayly. One spring day the neighbor's boy brought him some field-flowers, and among them was one to which the root still adhered. This he carefully planted in a flower-pot, and placed in a window-seat near his bed. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand, for it grew, put forth fresh shoots, and blossomed every year. It became a splendid flower-garden to the sick boy, and his little treasure upon earth. He watered it, and cherished it, and took care it should have the benefit of every sunbeam that found its way into the cellar, from the earliest morning ray to the evening sunset. The flower entwined itself even in his dreams—for him it bloomed, for him spread its perfume. And it gladdened his eyes, and to the flower he turned, even in death, when the Lord called him. He has been one year with God. During that time the flower has stood in the window, withered and forgotten, till at length cast out among the sweepings into the street, on the day of the lodgers' removal. And this poor

flower, withered and faded as it is, we have added to our nosegay, because it gave more real joy than the most beautiful flower in the garden of a queen."
"But how do you know all this?" asked the child whom the angel was carrying to heaven.
"I know it," said the angel, "because I myself was the poor sick boy who walked upon crutches, and I know my own flower well."
Then the child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious happy face of the angel, and at the same moment they found themselves in that heavenly home where all is happiness and joy. And God pressed the dead child to His heart, and wings were given him so that he could fly with the angel, hand in hand. Then the Almighty pressed all the flowers to His heart; but He kissed the withered field-flower, and it received a voice. Then it joined in the song of the angels, who surrounded the throne, some near, and others in a distant circle, but all equally happy. They all joined in the chorus of praise, both great and small,—the good, happy child, and the poor field-flower, that once lay withered and cast away on a heap of rubbish in a narrow, dark street.

ANNE LISBETH

Anne Lisbeth was a beautiful young woman, with a red and white complexion, glittering white teeth, and clear soft eyes; and her footstep was light in the dance, but her mind was lighter still. She had a little child, not at all pretty; so he was put out to be nursed by a laborer's wife, and his mother went to the count's castle. She sat in splendid rooms, richly decorated with silk and velvet; not a breath of air was allowed to blow upon her, and no one was allowed to speak to her harshly, for she was nurse to the count's child. He was fair and delicate as a prince, and beautiful as an angel; and how she loved this child! Her own boy was provided for by being at the laborer's where the mouth watered more frequently than the pot boiled, and where in general no one was at home to take care of the child. Then he would cry, but what nobody knows nobody cares for; so he would cry till he was tired, and then fall asleep; and while we are asleep we can feel neither hunger nor thirst. Ah, yes; sleep is a capital invention.
As years went on, Anne Lisbeth's child grew apace like weeds, although they said his growth had been stunted. He had become quite a member of the family in which he dwelt; they received money to keep him, so that his mother got rid of him altogether. She had become quite a lady; she had a comfortable home of her own in the town; and out of doors, when she went for a walk, she wore a bonnet; but she never walked out to see the laborer:

that was too far from the town, and, indeed, she had nothing to go for, the boy now belonged to these laboring people. He had food, and he could also do something towards earning his living; he took care of Mary's red cow, for he knew how to tend cattle and make himself useful.

The great dog by the yard gate of a nobleman's mansion sits proudly on the top of his kennel when the sun shines, and barks at every one that passes; but if it rains, he creeps into his house, and there he is warm and dry. Anne Lisbeth's boy also sat in the sunshine on the top of the fence, cutting out a little toy. If it was spring-time, he knew of three strawberry-plants in blossom, which would certainly bear fruit. This was his most hopeful thought, though it often came to nothing. And he had to sit out in the rain in the worst weather, and get wet to the skin, and let the cold wind dry the clothes on his back afterwards. If he went near the farmyard belonging to the count, he was pushed and knocked about, for the men and the maids said he was so horrible ugly; but he was used to all this, for nobody loved him. This was how the world treated Anne Lisbeth's boy, and how could it be otherwise. It was his fate to be beloved by no one. Hitherto he had been a land crab; the land at last cast him adrift. He went to sea in a wretched vessel, and sat at the helm, while the skipper sat over the grog-can. He was dirty and ugly, half-frozen and half-starved; he always looked as if he never had enough to eat, which was really the case.

Late in the autumn, when the weather was rough, windy, and wet, and the cold penetrated through the thickest clothing, especially at sea, a wretched boat went out to sea with only two men on board, or, more correctly, a man and a half, for it was the skipper and his boy. There had only been a kind of twilight all day, and it soon grew quite dark, and so bitterly cold, that the skipper took a dram to warm him. The bottle was old, and the glass too. It was perfect in the upper part, but the foot was broken off, and it had therefore been fixed upon a little carved block of wood, painted blue. A dram is a great comfort, and two are better still, thought the skipper, while the boy sat at the helm, which he held fast in his hard seamed hands. He was ugly, and his hair was matted, and he looked crippled and stunted; they called him the field-laborer's boy, though in the church register he was entered as Anne Lisbeth's son. The wind cut through the rigging, and the boat cut through the sea. The sails, filled by the wind, swelled out and carried them along in wild career. It was wet and rough above and below, and might still be worse. Hold! what is that? What has struck the boat? Was it a waterspout, or a heavy sea rolling suddenly upon them?

"Heaven help us!" cried the boy at the helm, as the boat heeled over and

lay on its beam ends. It had struck on a rock, which rose from the depths of the sea, and sank at once, like an old shoe in a puddle. “It sank at once with mouse and man,” as the saying is. There might have been mice on board, but only one man and a half, the skipper and the laborer’s boy. No one saw it but the skimming sea-gulls and the fishes beneath the water; and even they did not see it properly, for they darted back with terror as the boat filled with water and sank. There it lay, scarcely a fathom below the surface, and those two were provided for, buried, and forgotten. The glass with the foot of blue wood was the only thing that did not sink, for the wood floated and the glass drifted away to be cast upon the shore and broken; where and when, is indeed of no consequence. It had served its purpose, and it had been loved, which Anne Lisbeth’s boy had not been. But in heaven no soul will be able to say, “Never loved.”

Anne Lisbeth had now lived in the town many years; she was called “Madame,” and felt dignified in consequence; she remembered the old, noble days, in which she had driven in the carriage, and had associated with countess and baroness. Her beautiful, noble child had been a dear angel, and possessed the kindest heart; he had loved her so much, and she had loved him in return; they had kissed and loved each other, and the boy had been her joy, her second life. Now he was fourteen years of age, tall, handsome, and clever. She had not seen him since she carried him in her arms; neither had she been for years to the count’s palace; it was quite a journey thither from the town.

“I must make one effort to go,” said Anne Lisbeth, “to see my darling, the count’s sweet child, and press him to my heart. Certainly he must long to see me, too, the young count; no doubt he thinks of me and loves me, as in those days when he would fling his angel-arms round my neck, and lisp ‘Anne Liz.’ It was music to my ears. Yes, I must make an effort to see him again.” She drove across the country in a grazier’s cart, and then got out, and continued her journey on foot, and thus reached the count’s castle. It was as great and magnificent as it had always been, and the garden looked the same as ever; all the servants were strangers to her, not one of them knew Anne Lisbeth, nor of what consequence she had once been there; but she felt sure the countess would soon let them know it, and her darling boy, too: how she longed to see him!

Now that Anne Lisbeth was at her journey’s end, she was kept waiting a long time; and for those who wait, time passes slowly. But before the great people went in to dinner, she was called in and spoken to very graciously. She was to go in again after dinner, and then she would see her sweet boy

once more. How tall, and slender, and thin he had grown; but the eyes and the sweet angel mouth were still beautiful. He looked at her, but he did not speak, he certainly did not know who she was. He turned round and was going away, but she seized his hand and pressed it to her lips.

"Well, well," he said; and with that he walked out of the room. He who filled her every thought! he whom she loved best, and who was her whole earthly pride!

Anne Lisbeth went forth from the castle into the public road, feeling mournful and sad; he whom she had nursed day and night, and even now carried about in her dreams, had been cold and strange, and had not a word or thought respecting her. A great black raven darted down in front of her on the high road, and croaked dismally.

"Ah," said she, "what bird of ill omen art thou?" Presently she passed the laborer's hut; his wife stood at the door, and the two women spoke to each other.

"You look well," said the woman; "you're fat and plump; you are well off."

"Oh yes," answered Anne Lisbeth.

"The boat went down with them," continued the woman; "Hans the skipper and the boy were both drowned; so there's an end of them. I always thought the boy would be able to help me with a few dollars. He'll never cost you anything more, Anne Lisbeth."

"So they were drowned," repeated Anne Lisbeth; but she said no more, and the subject was dropped. She felt very low-spirited, because her count-child had shown no inclination to speak to her who loved him so well, and who had travelled so far to see him. The journey had cost money too, and she had derived no great pleasure from it. Still she said not a word of all this; she could not relieve her heart by telling the laborer's wife, lest the latter should think she did not enjoy her former position at the castle. Then the raven flew over her, screaming again as he flew.

"The black wretch!" said Anne Lisbeth, "he will end by frightening me today." She had brought coffee and chicory with her, for she thought it would be a charity to the poor woman to give them to her to boil a cup of coffee, and then she would take a cup herself.

The woman prepared the coffee, and in the meantime Anne Lisbeth seated her in a chair and fell asleep. Then she dreamed of something which she had never dreamed before; singularly enough she dreamed of her own child, who had wept and hungered in the laborer's hut, and had been knocked about in heat and in cold, and who was now lying in the depths of the sea, in a spot only known by God. She fancied she was still sitting in the hut, where the woman was busy preparing the coffee, for she could smell

the coffee-berries roasting. But suddenly it seemed to her that there stood on the threshold a beautiful young form, as beautiful as the count's child, and this apparition said to her, "The world is passing away; hold fast to me, for you are my mother after all; you have an angel in heaven, hold me fast;" and the child-angel stretched out his hand and seized her. Then there was a terrible crash, as of a world crumbling to pieces, and the angel-child was rising from the earth, and holding her by the sleeve so tightly that she felt herself lifted from the ground; but, on the other hand, something heavy hung to her feet and dragged her down, and it seemed as if hundreds of women were clinging to her, and crying, "If thou art to be saved, we must be saved too. Hold fast, hold fast." And then they all hung on her, but there were too many; and as they clung the sleeve was torn, and Anne Lisbeth fell down in horror, and awoke. Indeed she was on the point of falling over in reality with the chair on which she sat; but she was so startled and alarmed that she could not remember what she had dreamed, only that it was something very dreadful.

They drank their coffee and had a chat together, and then Anne Lisbeth went away towards the little town where she was to meet the carrier, who was to drive her back to her own home. But when she came to him she found that he would not be ready to start till the evening of the next day. Then she began to think of the expense, and what the distance would be to walk. She remembered that the route by the sea-shore was two miles shorter than by the high road; and as the weather was clear, and there would be moonlight, she determined to make her way on foot, and to start at once, that she might reach home the next day.

The sun had set, and the evening bells sounded through the air from the tower of the village church, but to her it was not the bells, but the cry of the frogs in the marshes. Then they ceased, and all around became still; not a bird could be heard, they were all at rest, even the owl had not left her hiding place; deep silence reigned on the margin of the wood by the sea-shore. As Anne Lisbeth walked on she could hear her own footsteps in the sands; even the waves of the sea were at rest, and all in the deep waters had sunk into silence. There was quiet among the dead and the living in the deep sea. Anne Lisbeth walked on, thinking of nothing at all, as people say, or rather her thoughts wandered, but not away from her, for thought is never absent from us, it only slumbers. Many thoughts that have lain dormant are roused at the proper time, and begin to stir in the mind and the heart, and seem even to come upon us from above. It is written, that a good deed bears a blessing for its fruit; and it is also written, that the wages of sin is death.

Much has been said and much written which we pass over or know nothing of. A light arises within us, and then forgotten things make themselves remembered; and thus it was with Anne Lisbeth. The germ of every vice and every virtue lies in our heart, in yours and in mine; they lie like little grains of seed, till a ray of sunshine, or the touch of an evil hand, or you turn the corner to the right or to the left, and the decision is made. The little seed is stirred, it swells and shoots up, and pours its sap into your blood, directing your course either for good or evil. Troublesome thoughts often exist in the mind, fermenting there, which are not realized by us while the senses are as it were slumbering; but still they are there. Anne Lisbeth walked on thus with her senses half asleep, but the thoughts were fermenting within her.

From one Shrove Tuesday to another, much may occur to weigh down the heart; it is the reckoning of a whole year; much may be forgotten, sins against heaven in word and thought, sins against our neighbor, and against our own conscience. We are scarcely aware of their existence; and Anne Lisbeth did not think of any of her errors. She had committed no crime against the law of the land; she was an honorable person, in a good position—that she knew.

She continued her walk along by the margin of the sea. What was it she saw lying there? An old hat; a man's hat. Now when might that have been washed overboard? She drew nearer, she stopped to look at the hat; "Ha! what was lying yonder?" She shuddered; yet it was nothing save a heap of grass and tangled seaweed flung across a long stone, but it looked like a corpse. Only tangled grass, and yet she was frightened at it. As she turned to walk away, much came into her mind that she had heard in her childhood: old superstitions of spectres by the sea-shore; of the ghosts of drowned but unburied people, whose corpses had been washed up on the desolate beach. The body, she knew, could do no harm to any one, but the spirit could pursue the lonely wanderer, attach itself to him, and demand to be carried to the churchyard, that it might rest in consecrated ground. "Hold fast! hold fast!" the spectre would cry; and as Anne Lisbeth murmured these words to herself, the whole of her dream was suddenly recalled to her memory, when the mother had clung to her, and uttered these words, when, amid the crashing of worlds, her sleeve had been torn, and she had slipped from the grasp of her child, who wanted to hold her up in that terrible hour. Her child, her own child, which she had never loved, lay now buried in the sea, and might rise up, like a spectre, from the waters, and cry, "Hold fast; carry me to consecrated ground!"

As these thoughts passed through her mind, fear gave speed to her feet, so that she walked faster and faster. Fear came upon her as if a cold, clammy hand had been laid upon her heart, so that she almost fainted. As she looked across the sea, all there grew darker; a heavy mist came rolling onwards, and clung to bush and tree, distorting them into fantastic shapes. She turned and glanced at the moon, which had risen behind her. It looked like a pale, rayless surface, and a deadly weight seemed to hang upon her limbs. "Hold," thought she; and then she turned round a second time to look at the moon. A white face appeared quite close to her, with a mist, hanging like a garment from its shoulders. "Stop! carry me to consecrated earth," sounded in her ears, in strange, hollow tones. The sound did not come from frogs or ravens; she saw no sign of such creatures. "A grave! dig me a grave!" was repeated quite loud. Yes, it was indeed the spectre of her child. The child that lay beneath the ocean, and whose spirit could have no rest until it was carried to the churchyard, and until a grave had been dug for it in consecrated ground. She would go there at once, and there she would dig. She turned in the direction of the church, and the weight on her heart seemed to grow lighter, and even to vanish altogether; but when she turned to go home by the shortest way, it returned. "Stop! stop!" and the words came quite clear, though they were like the croak of a frog, or the wail of a bird. "A grave! dig me a grave!"

The mist was cold and damp, her hands and face were moist and clammy with horror, a heavy weight again seized her and clung to her, her mind became clear for thoughts that had never before been there.

In these northern regions, a beech-wood often buds in a single night and appears in the morning sunlight in its full glory of youthful green. So, in a single instant, can the consciousness of the sin that has been committed in thoughts, words, and actions of our past life, be unfolded to us. When once the conscience is awakened, it springs up in the heart spontaneously, and God awakens the conscience when we least expect it. Then we can find no excuse for ourselves; the deed is there and bears witness against us. The thoughts seem to become words, and to sound far out into the world. We are horrified at the thought of what we have carried within us, and at the consciousness that we have not overcome the evil which has its origin in thoughtlessness and pride. The heart conceals within itself the vices as well as the virtues, and they grow in the shallowest ground. Anne Lisbeth now experienced in thought what we have clothed in words. She was overpowered by them, and sank down and crept along for some distance on the ground. "A grave! dig me a grave!" sounded again in her ears, and she would have gladly buried herself, if in the grave she could have found forgetfulness of her actions.

It was the first hour of her awakening, full of anguish and horror. Superstition made her alternately shudder with cold or burn with the heat of fever. Many things, of which she had feared even to speak, came into her mind. Silently, as the cloud-shadows in the moonshine, a spectral apparition flitted by her; she had heard of it before. Close by her galloped four snorting steeds, with fire flashing from their eyes and nostrils. They dragged a burning coach, and within it sat the wicked lord of the manor, who had ruled there a hundred years before. The legend says that every night, at twelve o'clock, he drove into his castleyard and out again. He was not as pale as dead men are, but black as a coal. He nodded, and pointed to Anne Lisbeth, crying out, "Hold fast! hold fast! and then you may ride again in a nobleman's carriage, and forget your child."

She gathered herself up, and hastened to the churchyard; but black crosses and black ravens danced before her eyes, and she could not distinguish one from the other. The ravens croaked as the raven had done which she saw in the daytime, but now she understood what they said. "I am the raven-mother; I am the raven-mother," each raven croaked, and Anne Lisbeth felt that the name also applied to her; and she fancied she should be transformed into a black bird, and have to cry as they cried, if she did not dig the grave. And she threw herself upon the earth, and with her hands dug a grave in the hard ground, so that the blood ran from her fingers. "A grave! dig me a grave!" still sounded in her ears; she was fearful that the cock might crow, and the first red streak appear in the east, before she had finished her work; and then she would be lost. And the cock crowed, and the day dawned in the east, and the grave was only half dug. An icy hand passed over her head and face, and down towards her heart. "Only half a grave," a voice wailed, and fled away. Yes, it fled away over the sea; it was the ocean spectre; and, exhausted and overpowered, Anne Lisbeth sunk to the ground, and her senses left her.

It was a bright day when she came to herself, and two men were raising her up; but she was not lying in the churchyard, but on the sea-shore, where she had dug a deep hole in the sand, and cut her hand with a piece of broken glass, whose sharp stern was stuck in a little block of painted wood. Anne Lisbeth was in a fever. Conscience had roused the memories of superstitions, and had so acted upon her mind, that she fancied she had only half a soul, and that her child had taken the other half down into the sea. Never would she be able to cling to the mercy of Heaven till she had recovered this other half which was now held fast in the deep water.

Anne Lisbeth returned to her home, but she was no longer the woman she had been. Her thoughts were like a confused, tangled skein; only one thread,

only one thought was clear to her, namely that she must carry the spectre of the sea-shore to the churchyard, and dig a grave for him there; that by so doing she might win back her soul. Many a night she was missed from her home, and was always found on the sea-shore waiting for the spectre. In this way a whole year passed; and then one night she vanished again, and was not to be found. The whole of the next day was spent in a useless search after her.

Towards evening, when the clerk entered the church to toll the vesper bell, he saw by the altar Anne Lisbeth, who had spent the whole day there. Her powers of body were almost exhausted, but her eyes flashed brightly, and on her cheeks was a rosy flush. The last rays of the setting sun shone upon her, and gleamed over the altar upon the shining clasps of the Bible, which lay open at the words of the prophet Joel, "Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord."

"That was just a chance," people said; but do things happen by chance? In the face of Anne Lisbeth, lighted up by the evening sun, could be seen peace and rest. She said she was happy now, for she had conquered. The spectre of the shore, her own child, had come to her the night before, and had said to her, "Thou hast dug me only half a grave: but thou hast now, for a year and a day, buried me altogether in thy heart, and it is there a mother can best hide her child!" And then he gave her back her lost soul, and brought her into the church. "Now I am in the house of God," she said, "and in that house we are happy."

When the sun set, Anne Lisbeth's soul had risen to that region where there is no more pain; and Anne Lisbeth's troubles were at an end.

THE CONCEITED APPLE-BRANCH

It was the month of May. The wind still blew cold; but from bush and tree, field and flower, came the welcome sound, "Spring is come." Wild-flowers in profusion covered the hedges. Under the little apple-tree, Spring seemed busy, and told his tale from one of the branches which hung fresh and blooming, and covered with delicate pink blossoms that were just ready to open. The branch well knew how beautiful it was; this knowledge exists as much in the leaf as in the blood; I was therefore not surprised when a nobleman's carriage, in which sat the young countess, stopped in the road just by. She said that an apple-branch was a most lovely object, and an emblem of spring in its most charming aspect. Then the branch was broken off for her, and she

held it in her delicate hand, and sheltered it with her silk parasol. Then they drove to the castle, in which were lofty halls and splendid drawing-rooms. Pure white curtains fluttered before the open windows, and beautiful flowers stood in shining, transparent vases; and in one of them, which looked as if it had been cut out of newly fallen snow, the apple-branch was placed, among some fresh, light twigs of beech. It was a charming sight. Then the branch became proud, which was very much like human nature.

People of every description entered the room, and, according to their position in society, so dared they to express their admiration. Some few said nothing, others expressed too much, and the apple-branch very soon got to understand that there was as much difference in the characters of human beings as in those of plants and flowers. Some are all for pomp and parade, others have a great deal to do to maintain their own importance, while the rest might be spared without much loss to society. So thought the apple-branch, as he stood before the open window, from which he could see out over gardens and fields, where there were flowers and plants enough for him to think and reflect upon; some rich and beautiful, some poor and humble indeed.

"Poor, despised herbs," said the apple-branch; "there is really a difference between them and such as I am. How unhappy they must be, if they can feel as those in my position do! There is a difference indeed, and so there ought to be, or we should all be equals."

And the apple-branch looked with a sort of pity upon them, especially on a certain little flower that is found in fields and in ditches. No one bound these flowers together in a nosegay; they were too common; they were even known to grow between the paving-stones, shooting up everywhere, like bad weeds; and they bore the very ugly name of "dog-flowers" or "dandelions."

"Poor, despised plants," said the apple-bough, "it is not your fault that you are so ugly, and that you have such an ugly name; but it is with plants as with men,—there must be a difference."

"A difference!" cried the sunbeam, as he kissed the blooming apple-branch, and then kissed the yellow dandelion out in the fields. All were brothers, and the sunbeam kissed them—the poor flowers as well as the rich.

The apple-bough had never thought of the boundless love of God, which extends over all the works of creation, over everything which lives, and moves, and has its being in Him; he had never thought of the good and beautiful which are so often hidden, but can never remain forgotten by Him,—not only among the lower creation, but also among men. The sunbeam, the ray of light, knew better.

“You do not see very far, nor very clearly,” he said to the apple-branch. “Which is the despised plant you so specially pity?”

“The dandelion,” he replied. “No one ever places it in a nosegay; it is often trodden under foot, there are so many of them; and when they run to seed, they have flowers like wool, which fly away in little pieces over the roads, and cling to the dresses of the people. They are only weeds; but of course there must be weeds. O, I am really very thankful that I was not made like one of these flowers.”

There came presently across the fields a whole group of children, the youngest of whom was so small that it had to be carried by the others; and when he was seated on the grass, among the yellow flowers, he laughed aloud with joy, kicked out his little legs, rolled about, plucked the yellow flowers, and kissed them in childlike innocence. The elder children broke off the flowers with long stems, bent the stalks one round the other, to form links, and made first a chain for the neck, then one to go across the shoulders, and hang down to the waist, and at last a wreath to wear round the head, so that they looked quite splendid in their garlands of green stems and golden flowers. But the eldest among them gathered carefully the faded flowers, on the stem of which was grouped together the seed, in the form of a white feathery coronal. These loose, airy wool-flowers are very beautiful, and look like fine snowy feathers or down. The children held them to their mouths, and tried to blow away the whole coronal with one puff of the breath. They had been told by their grandmothers that who ever did so would be sure to have new clothes before the end of the year. The despised flower was by this raised to the position of a prophet or foreteller of events.

“Do you see,” said the sunbeam, “do you see the beauty of these flowers? do you see their powers of giving pleasure?”

“Yes, to children,” said the apple-bough.

By-and-by an old woman came into the field, and, with a blunt knife without a handle, began to dig round the roots of some of the dandelion-plants, and pull them up. With some of these she intended to make tea for herself; but the rest she was going to sell to the chemist, and obtain some money.

“But beauty is of higher value than all this,” said the apple-tree branch; “only the chosen ones can be admitted into the realms of the beautiful. There is a difference between plants, just as there is a difference between men.”

Then the sunbeam spoke of the boundless love of God, as seen in creation, and over all that lives, and of the equal distribution of His gifts, both in time and in eternity.

“That is your opinion,” said the apple-bough.

Then some people came into the room, and, among them, the young countess,—the lady who had placed the apple-bough in the transparent vase, so pleasantly beneath the rays of the sunlight. She carried in her hand something that seemed like a flower. The object was hidden by two or three great leaves, which covered it like a shield, so that no draught or gust of wind could injure it, and it was carried more carefully than the apple-branch had ever been. Very cautiously the large leaves were removed, and there appeared the feathery seed-crown of the despised dandelion. This was what the lady had so carefully plucked, and carried home so safely covered, so that not one of the delicate feathery arrows of which its mist-like shape was so lightly formed, should flutter away. She now drew it forth quite uninjured, and wondered at its beautiful form, and airy lightness, and singular construction, so soon to be blown away by the wind.

"See," she exclaimed, "how wonderfully God has made this little flower. I will paint it with the apple-branch together. Every one admires the beauty of the apple-bough; but this humble flower has been endowed by Heaven with another kind of loveliness; and although they differ in appearance, both are the children of the realms of beauty."

Then the sunbeam kissed the lowly flower, and he kissed the blooming apple-branch, upon whose leaves appeared a rosy blush.

BEAUTY OF FORM AND BEAUTY OF MIND

There was once a sculptor, named Alfred, who having won the large gold medal and obtained a travelling scholarship, went to Italy, and then came back to his native land. He was young at that time—indeed, he is young still, although he is ten years older than he was then. On his return, he went to visit one of the little towns in the island of Zealand. The whole town knew who the stranger was; and one of the richest men in the place gave a party in his honor, and all who were of any consequence, or who possessed some property, were invited. It was quite an event, and all the town knew of it, so that it was not necessary to announce it by beat of drum. Apprentice-boys, children of the poor, and even the poor people themselves, stood before the house, watching the lighted windows; and the watchman might easily fancy he was giving a party also, there were so many people in the streets. There was quite an air of festivity about it, and the house was full of it; for Mr. Alfred, the sculptor, was there. He talked and told anecdotes, and every one listened to him with pleasure, not unmingled with awe; but none

felt so much respect for him as did the elderly widow of a naval officer. She seemed, so far as Mr. Alfred was concerned, to be like a piece of fresh blotting-paper that absorbed all he said and asked for more. She was very appreciative, and incredibly ignorant—a kind of female Gaspar Hauser.

"I should like to see Rome," she said; "it must be a lovely city, or so many foreigners would not be constantly arriving there. Now, do give me a description of Rome. How does the city look when you enter in at the gate?"

"I cannot very well describe it," said the sculptor; "but you enter on a large open space, in the centre of which stands an obelisk, which is a thousand years old."

"An organist!" exclaimed the lady, who had never heard the word 'obelisk.' Several of the guests could scarcely forbear laughing, and the sculptor would have had some difficulty in keeping his countenance, but the smile on his lips faded away; for he caught sight of a pair of dark-blue eyes close by the side of the inquisitive lady. They belonged to her daughter; and surely no one who had such a daughter could be silly. The mother was like a fountain of questions; and the daughter, who listened but never spoke, might have passed for the beautiful maid of the fountain. How charming she was! She was a study for the sculptor to contemplate, but not to converse with; for she did not speak, or, at least, very seldom.

"Has the pope a great family?" inquired the lady.

The young man answered considerately, as if the question had been a different one, "No; he does not come from a great family."

"That is not what I asked," persisted the widow; "I mean, has he a wife and children?"

"The pope is not allowed to marry," replied the gentleman.

"I don't like that," was the lady's remark.

She certainly might have asked more sensible questions; but if she had not been allowed to say just what she liked, would her daughter have been there, leaning so gracefully on her shoulder, and looking straight before her, with a smile that was almost mournful on her face?

Mr. Alfred again spoke of Italy, and of the glorious colors in Italian scenery; the purple hills, the deep blue of the Mediterranean, the azure of southern skies, whose brightness and glory could only be surpassed in the north by the deep-blue eyes of a maiden; and he said this with a peculiar intonation; but she who should have understood his meaning looked quite unconscious of it, which also was charming.

"Beautiful Italy!" sighed some of the guests.

"Oh, to travel there!" exclaimed others.

"Charming! Charming!" echoed from every voice.

“I may perhaps win a hundred thousand dollars in the lottery,” said the naval officer’s widow; “and if I do, we will travel—I and my daughter; and you, Mr. Alfred, must be our guide. We can all three travel together, with one or two more of our good friends.” And she nodded in such a friendly way at the company, that each imagined himself to be the favored person who was to accompany them to Italy. “Yes, we must go,” she continued; “but not to those parts where there are robbers. We will keep to Rome. In the public roads one is always safe.”

The daughter sighed very gently; and how much there may be in a sigh, or attributed to it! The young man attributed a great deal of meaning to this sigh. Those deep-blue eyes, which had been lit up this evening in honor of him, must conceal treasures, treasures of heart and mind, richer than all the glories of Rome; and so when he left the party that night, he had lost it completely to the young lady. The house of the naval officer’s widow was the one most constantly visited by Mr. Alfred, the sculptor. It was soon understood that his visits were not intended for that lady, though they were the persons who kept up the conversation. He came for the sake of the daughter. They called her Kaela. Her name was really Karen Malena, and these two names had been contracted into the one name Kaela. She was really beautiful; but some said she was rather dull, and slept late of a morning.

“She has been accustomed to that,” her mother said. “She is a beauty, and they are always easily tired. She does sleep rather late; but that makes her eyes so clear.”

What power seemed to lie in the depths of those dark eyes! The young man felt the truth of the proverb, “Still waters run deep:” and his heart had sunk into their depths. He often talked of his adventures, and the mamma was as simple and eager in her questions as on the first evening they met. It was a pleasure to hear Alfred describe anything. He showed them colored plates of Naples, and spoke of excursions to Mount Vesuvius, and the eruptions of fire from it. The naval officer’s widow had never heard of them before.

“Good heavens!” she exclaimed. “So that is a burning mountain; but is it not very dangerous to the people who live near it?”

“Whole cities have been destroyed,” he replied; “for instance, Herculaneum and Pompeii.”

“Oh, the poor people! And you saw all that with your own eyes?”

“No; I did not see any of the eruptions which are represented in those pictures; but I will show you a sketch of my own, which represents an eruption I once saw.”

He placed a pencil sketch on the table; and mamma, who had been

over-powered with the appearance of the colored plates, threw a glance at the pale drawing and cried in astonishment, "What, did you see it throw up white fire?"

For a moment, Alfred's respect for Kaela's mamma underwent a sudden shock, and lessened considerably; but, dazzled by the light which surrounded Kaela, he soon found it quite natural that the old lady should have no eye for color. After all, it was of very little consequence; for Kaela's mamma had the best of all possessions; namely, Kaela herself.

Alfred and Kaela were betrothed, which was a very natural result; and the betrothal was announced in the newspaper of the little town. Mama purchased thirty copies of the paper, that she might cut out the paragraph and send it to friends and acquaintances. The betrothed pair were very happy, and the mother was happy too. She said it seemed like connecting herself with Thorwalsden.

"You are a true successor of Thorwalsden," she said to Alfred; and it seemed to him as if, in this instance, mamma had said a clever thing. Kaela was silent; but her eyes shone, her lips smiled, every movement was graceful,—in fact, she was beautiful; that cannot be repeated too often. Alfred decided to take a bust of Kaela as well as of her mother. They sat to him accordingly, and saw how he moulded and formed the soft clay with his fingers.

"I suppose it is only on our account that you perform this common-place work yourself, instead of leaving it to your servant to do all that sticking together."

"It is really necessary that I should mould the clay myself," he replied.

"Ah, yes, you are always so polite," said mamma, with a smile; and Kaela silently pressed his hand, all soiled as it was with the clay.

Then he unfolded to them both the beauties of Nature, in all her works; he pointed out to them how, in the scale of creation, inanimate matter was inferior to animate nature; the plant above the mineral, the animal above the plant, and man above them all. He strove to show them how the beauty of the mind could be displayed in the outward form, and that it was the sculptor's task to seize upon that beauty of expression, and produce it in his works. Kaela stood silent, but nodded in approbation of what he said, while mamma-in-law made the following confession:—

"It is difficult to follow you; but I go hobbling along after you with my thoughts, though what you say makes my head whirl round and round. Still I contrive to lay hold on some of it."

Kaela's beauty had a firm hold on Alfred; it filled his soul, and held a mastery over him. Beauty beamed from Kaela's every feature, glittered in her eyes, lurked in the corners of her mouth, and pervaded every movement

of her agile fingers. Alfred, the sculptor, saw this. He spoke only to her, thought only of her, and the two became one; and so it may be said she spoke much, for he was always talking to her; and he and she were one. Such was the betrothal, and then came the wedding, with bride's-maids and wedding presents, all duly mentioned in the wedding speech. Mamma-in-law had set up Thorwalsden's bust at the end of the table, attired in a dressing-gown; it was her fancy that he should be a guest. Songs were sung, and cheers given; for it was a gay wedding, and they were a handsome pair.

"Pygmalion loved his Galatea," said one of the songs.

"Ah, that is some of your mythologies," said mamma-in-law.

Next day the youthful pair started for Copenhagen, where they were to live; mamma-in-law accompanied them, to attend to the "coarse work," as she always called the domestic arrangements. Kaela looked like a doll in a doll's house, for everything was bright and new, and so fine. There they sat, all three; and as for Alfred, a proverb may describe his position—he looked like a swan amongst the geese. The magic of form had enchanted him; he had looked at the casket without caring to inquire what it contained, and that omission often brings the greatest unhappiness into married life. The casket may be injured, the gilding may fall off, and then the purchaser regrets his bargain.

In a large party it is very disagreeable to find a button giving way, with no studs at hand to fall back upon; but it is worse still in a large company to be conscious that your wife and mother-in-law are talking nonsense, and that you cannot depend upon yourself to produce a little ready wit to carry off the stupidity of the whole affair.

The young married pair often sat together hand in hand; he would talk, but she could only now and then let fall a word in the same melodious voice, the same bell-like tones. It was a mental relief when Sophy, one of her friends, came to pay them a visit. Sophy was not, pretty. She was, however, quite free from any physical deformity, although Kaela used to say she was a little crooked; but no eye, save an intimate acquaintance, would have noticed it. She was a very sensible girl, yet it never occurred to her that she might be a dangerous person in such a house. Her appearance created a new atmosphere in the doll's house, and air was really required, they all owned that. They felt the want of a change of air, and consequently the young couple and their mother travelled to Italy.

"Thank heaven we are at home again within our own four walls," said mamma-in-law and daughter both, on their return after a year's absence. "There is no real pleasure in travelling," said mamma; "to tell the truth,

it's very wearisome; I beg pardon for saying so. I was soon very tired of it, although I had my children with me; and, besides, it's very expensive work travelling, very expensive. And all those galleries one is expected to see, and the quantity of things you are obliged to run after! It must be done, for very shame; you are sure to be asked when you come back if you have seen everything, and will most likely be told that you've omitted to see what was best worth seeing of all. I got tired at last of those endless Madonnas; I began to think I was turning into a Madonna myself."

"And then the living, mamma," said Kaela.

"Yes, indeed," she replied, "no such a thing as a respectable meat soup—their cookery is miserable stuff."

The journey had also tired Kaela; but she was always fatigued, that was the worst of it. So they sent for Sophy, and she was taken into the house to reside with them, and her presence there was a great advantage. Mamma-in-law acknowledged that Sophy was not only a clever housewife, but well-informed and accomplished, though that could hardly be expected in a person of her limited means. She was also a generous-hearted, faithful girl; she showed that thoroughly while Kaela lay sick, fading away. When the casket is everything, the casket should be strong, or else all is over. And all was over with the casket, for Kaela died.

"She was beautiful," said her mother; "she was quite different from the beauties they call 'antiques,' for they are so damaged. A beauty ought to be perfect, and Kaela was a perfect beauty."

Alfred wept, and mamma wept, and they both wore mourning. The black dress suited mamma very well, and she wore mourning the longest. She had also to experience another grief in seeing Alfred marry again, marry Sophy, who was nothing at all to look at. "He's gone to the very extreme," said mamma-in-law; "he has gone from the most beautiful to the ugliest, and he has forgotten his first wife. Men have no constancy. My husband was a very different man,—but then he died before me."

"'Pygmalion loved his Galatea,' was in the song they sung at my first wedding," said Alfred; "I once fell in love with a beautiful statue, which awoke to life in my arms; but the kindred soul, which is a gift from heaven, the angel who can feel and sympathize with and elevate us, I have not found and won till now. You came, Sophy, not in the glory of outward beauty, though you are even fairer than is necessary. The chief thing still remains. You came to teach the sculptor that his work is but dust and clay only, an outward form made of a material that decays, and that what we should seek to obtain is the ethereal essence of mind and spirit. Poor Kaela! our life was

but as a meeting by the way-side; in yonder world, where we shall know each other from a union of mind, we shall be but mere acquaintances."

"That was not a loving speech," said Sophy, "nor spoken like a Christian. In a future state, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, but where, as you say, souls are attracted to each other by sympathy; there everything beautiful develops itself, and is raised to a higher state of existence: her soul will acquire such completeness that it may harmonize with yours, even more than mine, and you will then once more utter your first rapturous exclamation of your love, 'Beautiful, most beautiful!'"

THE BEETLE WHO WENT ON HIS TRAVELS

There was once an Emperor who had a horse shod with gold. He had a golden shoe on each foot, and why was this? He was a beautiful creature, with slender legs, bright, intelligent eyes, and a mane that hung down over his neck like a veil. He had carried his master through fire and smoke in the battle-field, with the bullets whistling round him; he had kicked and bitten, and taken part in the fight, when the enemy advanced; and, with his master on his back, he had dashed over the fallen foe, and saved the golden crown and the Emperor's life, which was of more value than the brightest gold. This is the reason of the Emperor's horse wearing golden shoes.

A beetle came creeping forth from the stable, where the farrier had been shoeing the horse. "Great ones, first, of course," said he, "and then the little ones; but size is not always a proof of greatness." He stretched out his thin leg as he spoke.

"And pray what do you want?" asked the farrier.

"Golden shoes," replied the beetle.

"Why, you must be out of your senses," cried the farrier. "Golden shoes for you, indeed!"

"Yes, certainly; golden shoes," replied the beetle. "Am I not just as good as that great creature yonder, who is waited upon and brushed, and has food and drink placed before him? And don't I belong to the royal stables?"

"But why does the horse have golden shoes?" asked the farrier; "of course you understand the reason?"

"Understand! Well, I understand that it is a personal slight to me," cried

the beetle. “It is done to annoy me, so I intend to go out into the world and seek my fortune.”
“Go along with you,” said the farrier.
“You’re a rude fellow,” cried the beetle, as he walked out of the stable; and then he flew for a short distance, till he found himself in a beautiful flower-garden, all fragrant with roses and lavender. The lady-birds, with red and black shells on their backs, and delicate wings, were flying about, and one of them said, “Is it not sweet and lovely here? Oh, how beautiful everything is.”
“I am accustomed to better things,” said the beetle. “Do you call this beautiful? Why, there is not even a dung-heap.” Then he went on, and under the shadow of a large haystack he found a caterpillar crawling along. “How beautiful this world is!” said the caterpillar. “The sun is so warm, I quite enjoy it. And soon I shall go to sleep, and die as they call it, but I shall wake up with beautiful wings to fly with, like a butterfly.”
“How conceited you are!” exclaimed the beetle. “Fly about as a butterfly, indeed! what of that. I have come out of the Emperor’s stable, and no one there, not even the Emperor’s horse, who, in fact, wears my cast-off golden shoes, has any idea of flying, excepting myself. To have wings and fly! why, I can do that already;” and so saying, he spread his wings and flew away.
“I don’t want to be disgusted,” he said to himself, “and yet I can’t help it.” Soon after, he fell down upon an extensive lawn, and for a time pretended to sleep, but at last fell asleep in earnest. Suddenly a heavy shower of rain came falling from the clouds. The beetle woke up with the noise and would have been glad to creep into the earth for shelter, but he could not. He was tumbled over and over with the rain, sometimes swimming on his stomach and sometimes on his back; and as for flying, that was out of the question. He began to doubt whether he should escape with his life, so he remained, quietly lying where he was. After a while the weather cleared up a little, and the beetle was able to rub the water from his eyes, and look about him. He saw something gleaming, and he managed to make his way up to it. It was linen which had been laid to bleach on the grass. He crept into a fold of the damp linen, which certainly was not so comfortable a place to lie in as the warm stable, but there was nothing better, so he remained lying there for a whole day and night, and the rain kept on all the time. Towards morning he crept out of his hiding-place, feeling in a very bad temper with the climate. Two frogs were sitting on the linen, and their bright eyes actually glistened with pleasure.
“Wonderful weather this,” cried one of them, “and so refreshing. This linen holds the water together so beautifully, that my hind legs quiver as if I were

going to swim."
"I should like to know," said another, "If the swallow who flies so far in her many journeys to foreign lands, ever met with a better climate than this. What delicious moisture! It is as pleasant as lying in a wet ditch. I am sure any one who does not enjoy this has no love for his fatherland."
"Have you ever been in the Emperor's stable?" asked the beetle. "There the moisture is warm and refreshing; that's the climate for me, but I could not take it with me on my travels. Is there not even a dunghill here in this garden, where a person of rank, like myself, could take up his abode and feel at home?" But the frogs either did not or would not understand him.
"I never ask a question twice," said the beetle, after he had asked this one three times, and received no answer. Then he went on a little farther and stumbled against a piece of broken crockery-ware, which certainly ought not to have been lying there. But as it was there, it formed a good shelter against wind and weather to several families of earwigs who dwelt in it. Their requirements were not many, they were very sociable, and full of affection for their children, so much so that each mother considered her own child the most beautiful and clever of them all.
"Our dear son has engaged himself," said one mother, "dear innocent boy; his greatest ambition is that he may one day creep into a clergyman's ear. That is a very artless and loveable wish; and being engaged will keep him steady. What happiness for a mother!"
"Our son," said another, "had scarcely crept out of the egg, when he was off on his travels. He is all life and spirits, I expect he will wear out his horns with running. How charming this is for a mother, is it not Mr. Beetle?" for she knew the stranger by his horny coat.
"You are both quite right," said he; so they begged him to walk in, that is to come as far as he could under the broken piece of earthenware.
"Now you shall also see my little earwigs," said a third and a fourth mother, "they are lovely little things, and highly amusing. They are never ill-behaved, except when they are uncomfortable in their inside, which unfortunately often happens at their age."
Thus each mother spoke of her baby, and their babies talked after their own fashion, and made use of the little nippers they have in their tails to nip the beard of the beetle.
"They are always busy about something, the little rogues," said the mother, beaming with maternal pride; but the beetle felt it a bore, and he therefore inquired the way to the nearest dung-heap.
"That is quite out in the great world, on the other side of the ditch," an-

swered an earwig, “I hope none of my children will ever go so far, it would be the death of me.”
“But I shall try to get so far,” said the beetle, and he walked off without taking any formal leave, which is considered a polite thing to do.
When he arrived at the ditch, he met several friends, all them beetles; “We live here,” they said, “and we are very comfortable. May we ask you to step down into this rich mud, you must be fatigued after your journey.”
“Certainly,” said the beetle, “I shall be most happy; I have been exposed to the rain, and have had to lie upon linen, and cleanliness is a thing that greatly exhausts me; I have also pains in one of my wings from standing in the draught under a piece of broken crockery. It is really quite refreshing to be with one’s own kindred again.”
“Perhaps you came from a dung-heap,” observed the oldest of them.
“No, indeed, I came from a much grander place,” replied the beetle; “I came from the emperor’s stable, where I was born, with golden shoes on my feet. I am travelling on a secret embassy, but you must not ask me any questions, for I cannot betray my secret.”
Then the beetle stepped down into the rich mud, where sat three young-lady beetles, who tittered, because they did not know what to say.
“None of them are engaged yet,” said their mother, and the beetle maidens tittered again, this time quite in confusion.
“I have never seen greater beauties, even in the royal stables,” exclaimed the beetle, who was now resting himself.
“Don’t spoil my girls,” said the mother; “and don’t talk to them, pray, unless you have serious intentions.”
But of course the beetle’s intentions were serious, and after a while our friend was engaged. The mother gave them her blessing, and all the other beetles cried “hurrah.”
Immediately after the betrothal came the marriage, for there was no reason to delay. The following day passed very pleasantly, and the next was tolerably comfortable; but on the third it became necessary for him to think of getting food for his wife, and, perhaps, for children.
“I have allowed myself to be taken in,” said our beetle to himself, “and now there’s nothing to be done but to take them in, in return.”
No sooner said than done. Away he went, and stayed away all day and all night, and his wife remained behind a forsaken widow.
“Oh,” said the other beetles, “this fellow that we have received into our family is nothing but a complete vagabond. He has gone away and left his wife a burden upon our hands.”

"Well, she can be unmarried again, and remain here with my other daughters," said the mother. "Fie on the villain that forsook her!"

In the mean time the beetle, who had sailed across the ditch on a cabbage leaf, had been journeying on the other side. In the morning two persons came up to the ditch. When they saw him they took him up and turned him over and over, looking very learned all the time, especially one, who was a boy. "Allah sees the black beetle in the black stone, and the black rock. Is not that written in the Koran?" he asked.

Then he translated the beetle's name into Latin, and said a great deal upon the creature's nature and history. The second person, who was older and a scholar, proposed to carry the beetle home, as they wanted just such good specimens as this. Our beetle considered this speech a great insult, so he flew suddenly out of the speaker's hand. His wings were dry now, so they carried him to a great distance, till at last he reached a hothouse, where a sash of the glass roof was partly open, so he quietly slipped in and buried himself in the warm earth. "It is very comfortable here," he said to himself, and soon after fell asleep. Then he dreamed that the emperor's horse was dying, and had left him his golden shoes, and also promised that he should have two more. All this was very delightful, and when the beetle woke up he crept forth and looked around him. What a splendid place the hothouse was! At the back, large palm-trees were growing; and the sunlight made the leaves—look quite glossy; and beneath them what a profusion of luxuriant green, and of flowers red like flame, yellow as amber, or white as new-fallen snow! "What a wonderful quantity of plants," cried the beetle; "how good they will taste when they are decayed! This is a capital store-room. There must certainly be some relations of mine living here; I will just see if I can find any one with whom I can associate. I'm proud, certainly; but I'm also proud of being so." Then he prowled about in the earth, and thought what a pleasant dream that was about the dying horse, and the golden shoes he had inherited. Suddenly a hand seized the beetle, and squeezed him, and turned him round and round. The gardener's little son and his playfellow had come into the hothouse, and, seeing the beetle, wanted to have some fun with him. First, he was wrapped, in a vine-leaf, and put into a warm trousers' pocket. He twisted and turned about with all his might, but he got a good squeeze from the boy's hand, as a hint for him to keep quiet. Then the boy went quickly towards a lake that lay at the end of the garden. Here the beetle was put into an old broken wooden shoe, in which a little stick had been fastened upright for a mast, and to this mast the beetle was bound with a piece of worsted. Now he was a sailor, and had to sail away. The

lake was not very large, but to the beetle it seemed an ocean, and he was so astonished at its size that he fell over on his back, and kicked out his legs. Then the little ship sailed away; sometimes the current of the water seized it, but whenever it went too far from the shore one of the boys turned up his trousers, and went in after it, and brought it back to land. But at last, just as it went merrily out again, the two boys were called, and so angrily, that they hastened to obey, and ran away as fast as they could from the pond, so that the little ship was left to its fate. It was carried away farther and farther from the shore, till it reached the open sea. This was a terrible prospect for the beetle, for he could not escape in consequence of being bound to the mast. Then a fly came and paid him a visit. "What beautiful weather," said the fly; "I shall rest here and sun myself. You must have a pleasant time of it."

"You speak without knowing the facts," replied the beetle; "don't you see that I am a prisoner?"

"Ah, but I'm not a prisoner," remarked the fly, and away he flew.

"Well, now I know the world," said the beetle to himself; "it's an abominable world; I'm the only respectable person in it. First, they refuse me my golden shoes; then I have to lie on damp linen, and to stand in a draught; and to crown all, they fasten a wife upon me. Then, when I have made a step forward in the world, and found out a comfortable position, just as I could wish it to be, one of these human boys comes and ties me up, and leaves me to the mercy of the wild waves, while the emperor's favorite horse goes prancing about proudly on his golden shoes. This vexes me more than anything. But it is useless to look for sympathy in this world. My career has been very interesting, but what's the use of that if nobody knows anything about it? The world does not deserve to be made acquainted with my adventures, for it ought to have given me golden shoes when the emperor's horse was shod, and I stretched out my feet to be shod, too. If I had received golden shoes I should have been an ornament to the stable; now I am lost to the stable and to the world. It is all over with me."

But all was not yet over. A boat, in which were a few young girls, came rowing up. "Look, yonder is an old wooden shoe sailing along," said one of the younger girls.

"And there's a poor little creature bound fast in it," said another.

The boat now came close to our beetle's ship, and the young girls fished it out of the water. One of them drew a small pair of scissors from her pocket, and cut the worsted without hurting the beetle, and when she stepped on shore she placed him on the grass. "There," she said, "creep away, or fly, if thou canst. It is a splendid thing to have thy liberty." Away flew the beetle, straight through the open window of a large building; there he sank down,

tired and exhausted, exactly on the mane of the emperor's favorite horse, who was standing in his stable; and the beetle found himself at home again. For some time he clung to the mane, that he might recover himself. "Well," he said, "here I am, seated on the emperor's favorite horse,—sitting upon him as if I were the emperor himself. But what was it the farrier asked me? Ah, I remember now,—that's a good thought,—he asked me why the golden shoes were given to the horse. The answer is quite clear to me, now. They were given to the horse on my account." And this reflection put the beetle into a good temper. The sun's rays also came streaming into the stable, and shone upon him, and made the place lively and bright. "Travelling expands the mind very much," said the beetle. "The world is not so bad after all, if you know how to take things as they come."

THE BELL

In the narrow streets of a large town people often heard in the evening, when the sun was setting, and his last rays gave a golden tint to the chimney-pots, a strange noise which resembled the sound of a church bell; it only lasted an instant, for it was lost in the continual roar of traffic and hum of voices which rose from the town. "The evening bell is ringing," people used to say; "the sun is setting!" Those who walked outside the town, where the houses were less crowded and interspersed by gardens and little fields, saw the evening sky much better, and heard the sound of the bell much more clearly. It seemed as though the sound came from a church, deep in the calm, fragrant wood, and thither people looked with devout feelings.

A considerable time elapsed: one said to the other, "I really wonder if there is a church out in the wood. The bell has indeed a strange sweet sound! Shall we go there and see what the cause of it is?" The rich drove, the poor walked, but the way seemed to them extraordinarily long, and when they arrived at a number of willow trees on the border of the wood they sat down, looked up into the great branches and thought they were now really in the wood. A confectioner from the town also came out and put up a stall there; then came another confectioner who hung a bell over his stall, which was covered with pitch to protect it from the rain, but the clapper was wanting.

When people came home they used to say that it had been very romantic, and that really means something else than merely taking tea. Three persons declared that they had gone as far as the end of the wood; they had always

heard the strange sound, but there it seemed to them as if it came from the town. One of them wrote verses about the bell, and said that it was like the voice of a mother speaking to an intelligent and beloved child; no tune, he said, was sweeter than the sound of the bell.

The emperor of the country heard of it, and declared that he who would really find out where the sound came from should receive the title of "Bell-ringer to the World," even if there was no bell at all.

Now many went out into the wood for the sake of this splendid berth; but only one of them came back with some sort of explanation. None of them had gone far enough, nor had he, and yet he said that the sound of the bell came from a large owl in a hollow tree. It was a wisdom owl, which continually knocked its head against the tree, but he was unable to say with certainty whether its head or the hollow trunk of the tree was the cause of the noise. He was appointed "Bellringer to the World," and wrote every year a short dissertation on the owl, but by this means people did not become any wiser than they had been before.

It was just confirmation-day. The clergyman had delivered a beautiful and touching sermon, the candidates were deeply moved by it; it was indeed a very important day for them; they were all at once transformed from mere children to grown-up people; the childish soul was to fly over, as it were, into a more reasonable being.

The sun shone most brightly; and the sound of the great unknown bell was heard more distinctly than ever. They had a mind to go thither, all except three. One of them wished to go home and try on her ball dress, for this very dress and the ball were the cause of her being confirmed this time, otherwise she would not have been allowed to go. The second, a poor boy, had borrowed a coat and a pair of boots from the son of his landlord to be confirmed in, and he had to return them at a certain time. The third said that he never went into strange places if his parents were not with him; he had always been a good child, and wished to remain so, even after being confirmed, and they ought not to tease him for this; they, however, did it all the same. These three, therefore did not go; the others went on. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and the confirmed children sang too, holding each other by the hand, for they had no position yet, and they were all equal in the eyes of God. Two of the smallest soon became tired and returned to the town; two little girls sat down and made garlands of flowers, they, therefore, did not go on. When the others arrived at the willow trees, where the confectioner had put up his stall, they said: "Now we are out here; the bell does not in reality exist—it is only something that people imagine!"

Then suddenly the sound of the bell was heard so beautifully and solemnly from the wood that four or five made up their minds to go still further on. The wood was very thickly grown. It was difficult to advance: wood lilies and anemones grew almost too high; flowering convolvuli and brambles were hanging like garlands from tree to tree; while the nightingales were singing and the sunbeams played. That was very beautiful! But the way was unfit for the girls; they would have torn their dresses. Large rocks, covered with moss of various hues, were lying about; the fresh spring water rippled forth with a peculiar sound. "I don't think that can be the bell," said one of the confirmed children, and then he lay down and listened. "We must try to find out if it is!" And there he remained, and let the others walk on.

They came to a hut built of the bark of trees and branches; a large crab-apple tree spread its branches over it, as if it intended to pour all its fruit on the roof, upon which roses were blooming; the long boughs covered the gable, where a little bell was hanging. Was this the one they had heard? All agreed that it must be so, except one who said that the bell was too small and too thin to be heard at such a distance, and that it had quite a different sound to that which had so touched men's hearts.

He who spoke was a king's son, and therefore the others said that such a one always wishes to be cleverer than other people.

Therefore they let him go alone; and as he walked on, the solitude of the wood produced a feeling of reverence in his breast; but still he heard the little bell about which the others rejoiced, and sometimes, when the wind blew in that direction, he could hear the sounds from the confectioner's stall, where the others were singing at tea. But the deep sounds of the bell were much stronger; soon it seemed to him as if an organ played an accompaniment—the sound came from the left, from the side where the heart is.

Now something rustled among the bushes, and a little boy stood before the king's son, in wooden shoes and such a short jacket that the sleeves did not reach to his wrists. They knew each other: the boy was the one who had not been able to go with them because he had to take the coat and boots back to his landlord's son. That he had done, and had started again in his wooden shoes and old clothes, for the sound of the bell was too enticing—he felt he must go on.

"We might go together," said the king's son. But the poor boy with the wooden shoes was quite ashamed; he pulled at the short sleeves of his jacket, and said that he was afraid he could not walk so fast; besides, he was of opinion that the bell ought to be sought at the right, for there was all that was grand and magnificent.

"Then we shall not meet," said the king's son, nodding to the poor boy, who went into the deepest part of the wood, where the thorns tore his shabby clothes and scratched his hands, face, and feet until they bled. The king's son also received several good scratches, but the sun was shining on his way, and it is he whom we will now follow, for he was a quick fellow. "I will and must find the bell," he said, "if I have to go to the end of the world."

Ugly monkeys sat high in the branches and clenched their teeth. "Shall we beat him?" they said. "Shall we thrash him? He is a king's son!"

But he walked on undaunted, deeper and deeper into the wood, where the most wonderful flowers were growing; there were standing white star lilies with blood-red stamens, sky-blue tulips shining when the wind moved them; apple-trees covered with apples like large glittering soap bubbles: only think how resplendent these trees were in the sunshine! All around were beautiful green meadows, where hart and hind played in the grass. There grew magnificent oaks and beech-trees; and if the bark was split of any of them, long blades of grass grew out of the clefts; there were also large smooth lakes in the wood, on which the swans were swimming about and flapping their wings. The king's son often stood still and listened; sometimes he thought that the sound of the bell rose up to him out of one of these deep lakes, but soon he found that this was a mistake, and that the bell was ringing still farther in the wood. Then the sun set, the clouds were as red as fire; it became quiet in the wood; he sank down on his knees, sang an evening hymn and said: "I shall never find what I am looking for! Now the sun is setting, and the night, the dark night, is approaching. Yet I may perhaps see the round sun once more before he disappears beneath the horizon. I will climb up these rocks, they are as high as the highest trees!" And then, taking hold of the creepers and roots, he climbed up on the wet stones, where water-snakes were wriggling and the toads, as it were, barked at him: he reached the top before the sun, seen from such a height, had quite set. "Oh, what a splendour!" The sea, the great majestic sea, which was rolling its long waves against the shore, stretched out before him, and the sun was standing like a large bright altar and there where sea and heaven met—all melted together in the most glowing colours; the wood was singing, and his heart too. The whole of nature was one large holy church, in which the trees and hovering clouds formed the pillars, the flowers and grass the woven velvet carpet, and heaven itself was the great cupola; up there the flame colour vanished as soon as the sun disappeared, but millions of stars were lighted; diamond lamps were shining, and the king's son stretched his arms out towards heaven, towards the sea, and towards the wood. Then suddenly

the poor boy with the short-sleeved jacket and the wooden shoes appeared; he had arrived just as quickly on the road he had chosen. And they ran towards each other and took one another's hand, in the great cathedral of nature and poesy, and above them sounded the invisible holy bell; happy spirits surrounded them, singing hallelujahs and rejoicing.

THE BELL-DEEP

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" It sounds up from the "bell-deep" in the Odense-Au. Every child in the old town of Odense, on the island of Funen, knows the Au, which washes the gardens round about the town, and flows on under the wooden bridges from the dam to the water-mill. In the Au grow the yellow water-lilies and brown feathery reeds; the dark velvety flag grows there, high and thick; old and decayed willows, slanting and tottering, hang far out over the stream beside the monk's meadow and by the bleaching ground; but opposite there are gardens upon gardens, each different from the rest, some with pretty flowers and bowers like little dolls' pleasure grounds, often displaying cabbage and other kitchen plants; and here and there the gardens cannot be seen at all, for the great elder trees that spread themselves out by the bank, and hang far out over the streaming waters, which are deeper here and there than an oar can fathom. Opposite the old nunnery is the deepest place, which is called the "bell-deep," and there dwells the old water spirit, the "Au-mann." This spirit sleeps through the day while the sun shines down upon the water; but in starry and moonlit nights he shows himself. He is very old. Grandmother says that she has heard her own grandmother tell of him; he is said to lead a solitary life, and to have nobody with whom he can converse save the great old church Bell. Once the Bell hung in the church tower; but now there is no trace left of the tower or of the church, which was called St. Alban's.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" sounded the Bell, when the tower still stood there; and one evening, while the sun was setting, and the Bell was swinging away bravely, it broke loose and came flying down through the air, the brilliant metal shining in the ruddy beam.

"Ding-dong! ding-dong! Now I'll retire to rest!" sang the Bell, and flew down into the Odense-Au, where it is deepest; and that is why the place is called the "bell-deep."

But the Bell got neither rest nor sleep. Down in the Au-mann's haunt it sounds and rings, so that the tones sometimes pierce upward through the waters; and many people maintain that its strains forebode the death of

some one; but that is not true, for the Bell is only talking with the Au-mann, who is now no longer alone.

And what is the Bell telling? It is old, very old, as we have already observed; it was there long before grandmother's grandmother was born; and yet it is but a child in comparison with the Au-mann, who is quite an old quiet personage, an oddity, with his hose of eel-skin, and his scaly Jacket with the yellow lilies for buttons, and a wreath of reed in his hair and seaweed in his beard; but he looks very pretty for all that.

What the Bell tells? To repeat it all would require years and days; for year by year it is telling the old stories, sometimes short ones, sometimes long ones, according to its whim; it tells of old times, of the dark hard times, thus:

"In the church of St. Alban, the monk had mounted up into the tower. He was young and handsome, but thoughtful exceedingly. He looked through the loophole out upon the Odense-Au, when the bed of the water was yet broad, and the monks' meadow was still a lake. He looked out over it, and over the rampart, and over the nuns' hill opposite, where the convent lay, and the light gleamed forth from the nun's cell. He had known the nun right well, and he thought of her, and his heart beat quicker as he thought. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Yes, this was the story the Bell told.

"Into the tower came also the dapper man-servant of the bishop; and when I, the Bell, who am made of metal, rang hard and loud, and swung to and fro, I might have beaten out his brains. He sat down close under me, and played with two little sticks as if they had been a stringed instrument; and he sang to it. 'Now I may sing it out aloud, though at other times I may not whisper it. I may sing of everything that is kept concealed behind lock and bars. Yonder it is cold and wet. The rats are eating her up alive! Nobody knows of it! Nobody hears of it! Not even now, for the bell is ringing and singing its loud Ding-dong, ding-dong!'

"There was a King in those days. They called him Canute. He bowed himself before bishop and monk; but when he offended the free peasants with heavy taxes and hard words, they seized their weapons and put him to flight like a wild beast. He sought shelter in the church, and shut gate and door behind him. The violent band surrounded the church; I heard tell of it. The crows, ravens and magpies started up in terror at the yelling and shouting that sounded around. They flew into the tower and out again, they looked down upon the throng below, and they also looked into the windows of the church, and screamed out aloud what they saw there. King Canute knelt before the altar in prayer; his brothers Eric and Benedict stood by him as

a guard with drawn swords; but the King's servant, the treacherous Blake, betrayed his master. The throng in front of the church knew where they could hit the King, and one of them flung a stone through a pane of glass, and the King lay there dead! The cries and screams of the savage horde and of the birds sounded through the air, and I joined in it also; for I sang 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"The church bell hangs high, and looks far around, and sees the birds around it, and understands their language. The wind roars in upon it through windows and loopholes; and the wind knows everything, for he gets it from the air, which encircles all things, and the church bell understands his tongue, and rings it out into the world, 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

"But it was too much for me to hear and to know; I was not able any longer to ring it out. I became so tired, so heavy, that the beam broke, and I flew out into the gleaming Au, where the water is deepest, and where the Au-mann lives, solitary and alone; and year by year I tell him what I have heard and what I know. Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

Thus it sounds complainingly out of the bell-deep in the Odense-Au. That is what grandmother told us.

But the schoolmaster says that there was not any bell that rung down there, for that it could not do so; and that no Au-mann dwelt yonder, for there was no Au-mann at all! And when all the other church bells are sounding sweetly, he says that it is not really the bells that are sounding, but that it is the air itself which sends forth the notes; and grandmother said to us that the Bell itself said it was the air who told it to him, consequently they are agreed on that point, and this much is sure.

"Be cautious, cautious, and take good heed to thyself," they both say.

The air knows everything. It is around us, it is in us, it talks of our thoughts and of our deeds, and it speaks longer of them than does the Bell down in the depths of the Odense-Au where the Au-mann dwells. It rings it out in the vault of heaven, far, far out, forever and ever, till the heaven bells sound "Ding-dong! ding-dong!"

THE BIRD OF POPULAR SONG

In is winter-time. The earth wears a snowy garment, and looks like marble hewn out of the rock; the air is bright and clear; the wind is sharp as a well-tempered sword, and the trees stand like branches of white coral or blooming almond twigs, and here it is keen as on the lofty Alps.

The night is splendid in the gleam of the Northern Lights, and in the glitter of innumerable twinkling stars.

But we sit in the warm room, by the hot stove, and talk about the old times. And we listen to this story:

By the open sea was a giant's grave; and on the grave-mound sat at midnight the spirit of the buried hero, who had been a king. The golden circlet gleamed on his brow, his hair fluttered in the wind, and he was clad in steel and iron. He bent his head mournfully, and sighed in deep sorrow, as an unquiet spirit might sigh.

And a ship came sailing by. Presently the sailors lowered the anchor and landed. Among them was a singer, and he approached the royal spirit, and said, "Why mournest thou, and wherefore dost thou suffer thus?"

And the dead man answered,

"No one has sung the deeds of my life; they are dead and forgotten. Song doth not carry them forth over the lands, nor into the hearts of men; therefore I have no rest and no peace."

And he spoke of his works, and of his warlike deeds, which his contemporaries had known, but which had not been sung, because there was no singer among his companions.

Then the old bard struck the strings of his harp, and sang of the youthful courage of the hero, of the strength of the man, and of the greatness of his good deeds. Then the face of the dead one gleamed like the margin of the cloud in the moonlight. Gladly and of good courage, the form arose in splendor and in majesty, and vanished like the glancing of the northern light. Nought was to be seen but the green turfy mound, with the stones on which no Runic record has been graven; but at the last sound of the harp there soared over the hill, as though he had fluttered from the harp, a little bird, a charming singing-bird, with ringing voice of the thrush, with the moving voice pathos of the human heart, with a voice that told of home, like the voice that is heard by the bird of passage. The singing-bird soared away, over mountain and valley, over field and wood—he was the Bird of Popular Song, who never dies.

We hear his song—we hear it now in the room while the white bees are

swarming without, and the storm clutches the windows. The bird sings not alone the requiem of heroes; he sings also sweet gentle songs of love, so many and so warm, of Northern fidelity and truth. He has stories in words and in tones; he has proverbs and snatches of proverbs; songs which, like Runes laid under a dead man's tongue, force him to speak; and thus Popular Song tells of the land of his birth.

In the old heathen days, in the times of the Vikings, the popular speech was enshrined in the harp of the bard.

In the days of knightly castles, when the strongest fist held the scales of justice, when only might was right, and a peasant and a dog were of equal importance, where did the Bird of Song find shelter and protection? Neither violence nor stupidity gave him a thought.

But in the gabled window of the knightly castle, the lady of the castle sat with the parchment roll before her, and wrote down the old recollections in song and legend, while near her stood the old woman from the wood, and the travelling peddler who went wandering through the country. As these told their tales, there fluttered around them, with twittering and song, the Bird of Popular Song, who never dies so long as the earth has a hill upon which his foot may rest.

And now he looks in upon us and sings. Without are the night and the snow-storm. He lays the Runes beneath our tongues, and we know the land of our home. Heaven speaks to us in our native tongue, in the voice of the Bird of Popular Song. The old remembrances awake, the faded colors glow with a fresh lustre, and story and song pour us a blessed draught which lifts up our minds and our thoughts, so that the evening becomes as a Christmas festival. The snow-flakes chase each other, the ice cracks, the storm rules without, for he has the might, he is lord—but not the LORD OF ALL.

It is winter time. The wind is sharp as a two-edged sword, the snow-flakes chase each other; it seems as though it had been snowing for days and weeks, and the snow lies like a great mountain over the whole town, like a heavy dream of the winter night. Everything on the earth is hidden away, only the golden cross of the church, the symbol of faith, arises over the snow grave, and gleams in the blue air and in the bright sunshine.

And over the buried town fly the birds of heaven, the small and the great; they twitter and they sing as best they may, each bird with his beak.

First comes the band of sparrows: they pipe at every trifle in the streets and lanes, in the nests and the houses; they have stories to tell about the front buildings and the back buildings.

"We know the buried town," they say; "everything living in it is piep! piep! piep!"

The black ravens and crows flew on over the white snow.

"Grub, grub!" they cried. "There's something to be got down there; something to swallow, and that's most important. That's the opinion of most of them down there, and the opinion is goo-goo-good!"
The wild swans come flying on whirring pinions, and sing of the noble and the great, that will still sprout in the hearts of men, down in the town which is resting beneath its snowy veil.
No death is there—life reigns yonder; we hear it on the notes that swell onward like the tones of the church organ, which seize us like sounds from the elf-hill, like the songs of Ossian, like the rushing swoop of the wandering spirits' wings. What harmony! That harmony speaks to our hearts, and lifts up our souls! It is the Bird of Popular Song whom we hear.
And at this moment the warm breath of heaven blows down from the sky. There are gaps in the snowy mountains, the sun shines into the clefts; spring is coming, the birds are returning, and new races are coming with the same home sounds in their hearts.
Hear the story of the year: "The night of the snow-storm, the heavy dream of the winter night, all shall be dissolved, all shall rise again in the beauteous notes of the Bird of Popular Song, who never dies!"

THE BISHOP OF BORGLUM AND HIS WARRIORS

Our scene is laid in Northern Jutland, in the so-called "wild moor." We hear what is called the "Wester-wow-wow"—the peculiar roar of the North Sea as it breaks against the western coast of Jutland. It rolls and thunders with a sound that penetrates for miles into the land; and we are quite near the roaring. Before us rises a great mound of sand—a mountain we have long seen, and towards which we are wending our way, driving slowly along through the deep sand. On this mountain of sand is a lofty old building—the convent of Borglum. In one of its wings (the larger one) there is still a church. And at this convent we now arrive in the late evening hour; but the weather is clear in the bright June night around us, and the eye can range far, far over field and moor to the Bay of Aalborg, over heath and meadow, and far across the deep blue sea.
Now we are there, and roll past between barns and other farm buildings; and at the left of the gate we turn aside to the Old Castle Farm, where the lime trees stand in lines along the walls, and, sheltered from the wind and weather, grow so luxuriantly that their twigs and leaves almost conceal the windows. We mount the winding staircase of stone, and march through the long passages under the heavy roof-beams. The wind moans very strangely here,

both within and without. It is hardly known how, but the people say—yes, people say a great many things when they are frightened or want to frighten others—they say that the old dead choir-men glide silently past us into the church, where mass is sung. They can be heard in the rushing of the storm, and their singing brings up strange thoughts in the hearers—thoughts of the old times into which we are carried back.

On the coast a ship is stranded; and the bishop's warriors are there, and spare not those whom the sea has spared. The sea washes away the blood that has flowed from the cloven skulls. The stranded goods belong to the bishop, and there is a store of goods here. The sea casts up tubs and barrels filled with costly wine for the convent cellar, and in the convent is already good store of beer and mead. There is plenty in the kitchen—dead game and poultry, hams and sausages; and fat fish swim in the ponds without.

The Bishop of Borglum is a mighty lord. He has great possessions, but still he longs for more—everything must bow before the mighty Olaf Glob. His rich cousin at Thyland is dead, and his widow is to have the rich inheritance. But how comes it that one relation is always harder towards another than even strangers would be? The widow's husband had possessed all Thyland, with the exception of the church property. Her son was not at home. In his boyhood he had already started on a journey, for his desire was to see foreign lands and strange people. For years there had been no news of him. Perhaps he had been long laid in the grave, and would never come back to his home, to rule where his mother then ruled.

"What has a woman to do with rule?" said the bishop.

He summoned the widow before a law court; but what did he gain thereby? The widow had never been disobedient to the law, and was strong in her just rights.

Bishop Olaf of Borglum, what dost thou purpose? What writest thou on yonder smooth parchment, sealing it with thy seal, and intrusting it to the horsemen and servants, who ride away, far away, to the city of the Pope? It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon icy winter will come.

Twice had icy winter returned before the bishop welcomed the horsemen and servants back to their home. They came from Rome with a papal decree—a ban, or bull, against the widow who had dared to offend the pious bishop. "Cursed be she and all that belongs to her. Let her be expelled from the congregation and the Church. Let no man stretch forth a helping hand to her, and let friends and relations avoid her as a plague and a pestilence!"

"What will not bend must break," said the Bishop of Borglum And all forsake the widow; but she holds fast to her God. He is her helper and defender.

One servant only—an old maid—remained faithful to her; and with the old servant, the widow herself followed the plough; and the crop grew, although the land had been cursed by the Pope and by the bishop.

"Thou child of perdition, I will yet carry out my purpose!" cried the Bishop of Borglum. "Now will I lay the hand of the Pope upon thee, to summon thee before the tribunal that shall condemn thee!"

Then did the widow yoke the last two oxen that remained to her to a wagon, and mounted up on the wagon, with her old servant, and travelled away across the heath out of the Danish land. As a stranger she came into a foreign country, where a strange tongue was spoken and where new customs prevailed. Farther and farther she journeyed, to where green hills rise into mountains, and the vine clothes their sides. Strange merchants drive by her, and they look anxiously after their wagons laden with merchandise. They fear an attack from the armed followers of the robber-knights. The two poor women, in their humble vehicle drawn by two black oxen, travel fearlessly through the dangerous sunken road and through the darksome forest. And now they were in Franconia. And there met them a stalwart knight, with a train of twelve armed followers. He paused, gazed at the strange vehicle, and questioned the women as to the goal of their journey and the place whence they came. Then one of them mentioned Thyland in Denmark, and spoke of her sorrows, of her woes, which were soon to cease, for so Divine Providence had willed it. For the stranger knight is the widow's son! He seized her hand, he embraced her, and the mother wept. For years she had not been able to weep, but had only bitten her lips till the blood started.

It is the time of falling leaves and of stranded ships, and soon will icy winter come.

The sea rolled wine-tubs to the shore for the bishop's cellar. In the kitchen the deer roasted on the spit before the fire. At Borglum it was warm and cheerful in the heated rooms, while cold winter raged without, when a piece of news was brought to the bishop. "Jens Glob, of Thyland, has come back, and his mother with him." Jens Glob laid a complaint against the bishop, and summoned him before the temporal and the spiritual court.

"That will avail him little," said the bishop. "Best leave off thy efforts, knight Jens."

Again it is the time of falling leaves and stranded ships. Icy winter comes again, and the "white bees" are swarming, and sting the traveller's face till they melt.

"Keen weather to-day!" say the people, as they step in.

Jens Glob stands so deeply wrapped in thought, that he singes the skirt of his wide garment.

“Thou Borglum bishop,” he exclaims, “I shall subdue thee after all! Under the shield of the Pope, the law cannot reach thee; but Jens Glob shall reach thee!”
Then he writes a letter to his brother-in-law, Olaf Hase, in Sallingland, and prays that knight to meet him on Christmas eve, at mass, in the church at Widberg. The bishop himself is to read the mass, and consequently will journey from Borglum to Thyland; and this is known to Jens Glob.
Moorland and meadow are covered with ice and snow. The marsh will bear horse and rider, the bishop with his priests and armed men. They ride the shortest way, through the waving reeds, where the wind moans sadly.
Blow thy brazen trumpet, thou trumpeter clad in fox-skin! it sounds merrily in the clear air. So they ride on over heath and moorland—over what is the garden of Fata Morgana in the hot summer, though now icy, like all the country—towards the church of Widberg.
The wind is blowing his trumpet too—blowing it harder and harder. He blows up a storm—a terrible storm—that increases more and more. Towards the church they ride, as fast as they may through the storm. The church stands firm, but the storm careers on over field and moorland, over land and sea.
Borglum’s bishop reaches the church; but Olaf Hase will scarce do so, however hard he may ride. He journeys with his warriors on the farther side of the bay, in order that he may help Jens Glob, now that the bishop is to be summoned before the judgment seat of the Highest.
The church is the judgment hall; the altar is the council table. The lights burn clear in the heavy brass candelabra. The storm reads out the accusation and the sentence, roaming in the air over moor and heath, and over the rolling waters. No ferry-boat can sail over the bay in such weather as this.
Olaf Hase makes halt at Ottesworde. There he dismisses his warriors, presents them with their horses and harness, and gives them leave to ride home and greet his wife. He intends to risk his life alone in the roaring waters; but they are to bear witness for him that it is not his fault if Jens Glob stands without reinforcement in the church at Widberg. The faithful warriors will not leave him, but follow him out into the deep waters. Ten of them are carried away; but Olaf Hase and two of the youngest men reach the farther side. They have still four miles to ride.
It is past midnight. It is Christmas. The wind has abated. The church is lighted up; the gleaming radiance shines through the window-frames, and pours out over meadow and heath. The mass has long been finished, silence reigns in the church, and the wax is heard dropping from the candles to the stone pavement. And now Olaf Hase arrives.

In the forecourt Jens Glob greets him kindly, and says,
"I have just made an agreement with the bishop."
"Sayest thou so?" replied Olaf Hase. "Then neither thou nor the bishop shall quit this church alive."
And the sword leaps from the scabbard, and Olaf Hase deals a blow that makes the panel of the church door, which Jens Glob hastily closes between them, fly in fragments.
"Hold, brother! First hear what the agreement was that I made. I have slain the bishop and his warriors and priests. They will have no word more to say in the matter, nor will I speak again of all the wrong that my mother has endured."
The long wicks of the altar lights glimmer red; but there is a redder gleam upon the pavement, where the bishop lies with cloven skull, and his dead warriors around him, in the quiet of the holy Christmas night.
And four days afterwards the bells toll for a funeral in the convent of Borglum. The murdered bishop and the slain warriors and priests are displayed under a black canopy, surrounded by candelabra decked with crape. There lies the dead man, in the black cloak wrought with silver; the crozier in the powerless hand that was once so mighty. The incense rises in clouds, and the monks chant the funeral hymn. It sounds like a wail—it sounds like a sentence of wrath and condemnation, that must be heard far over the land, carried by the wind—sung by the wind—the wail that sometimes is silent, but never dies; for ever again it rises in song, singing even into our own time this legend of the Bishop of Borglum and his hard nephew. It is heard in the dark night by the frightened husbandman, driving by in the heavy sandy road past the convent of Borglum. It is heard by the sleepless listener in the thickly-walled rooms at Borglum. And not only to the ear of superstition is the sighing and the tread of hurrying feet audible in the long echoing passages leading to the convent door that has long been locked. The door still seems to open, and the lights seem to flame in the brazen candlesticks; the fragrance of incense arises; the church gleams in its ancient splendor; and the monks sing and say the mass over the slain bishop, who lies there in the black silver-embroidered mantle, with the crozier in his powerless hand; and on his pale proud forehead gleams the red wound like fire, and there burn the worldly mind and the wicked thoughts. Sink down into his grave—into oblivion—ye terrible shapes of the times of old!
Hark to the raging of the angry wind, sounding above the rolling sea! A storm approaches without, calling aloud for human lives. The sea has not put on a new mind with the new time. This night it is a horrible pit to de-

vour up lives, and to-morrow, perhaps, it may be a glassy mirror—even as in the old time that we have buried. Sleep sweetly, if thou canst sleep!
Now it is morning.
The new time flings sunshine into the room. The wind still keeps up mightily. A wreck is announced—as in the old time.
During the night, down yonder by Lokken, the little fishing village with the red-tiled roofs—we can see it up here from the window—a ship has come ashore. It has struck, and is fast embedded in the sand; but the rocket apparatus has thrown a rope on board, and formed a bridge from the wreck to the mainland; and all on board are saved, and reach the land, and are wrapped in warm blankets; and to-day they are invited to the farm at the convent of Borglum. In comfortable rooms they encounter hospitality and friendly faces. They are addressed in the language of their country, and the piano sounds for them with melodies of their native land; and before these have died away, the chord has been struck, the wire of thought that reaches to the land of the sufferers announces that they are rescued. Then their anxieties are dispelled; and at even they join in the dance at the feast given in the great hall at Borglum. Waltzes and Styrian dances are given, and Danish popular songs, and melodies of foreign lands in these modern times.
Blessed be thou, new time! Speak thou of summer and of purer gales! Send thy sunbeams gleaming into our hearts and thoughts! On thy glowing canvas let them be painted—the dark legends of the rough hard times that are past!

THE BOTTLE NECK

Close to the corner of a street, among other abodes of poverty, stood an exceedingly tall, narrow house, which had been so knocked about by time that it seemed out of joint in every direction. This house was inhabited by poor people, but the deepest poverty was apparent in the garret lodging in the gable. In front of the little window, an old bent bird-cage hung in the sunshine, which had not even a proper water-glass, but instead of it the broken neck of a bottle, turned upside down, and a cork stuck in to make it hold the water with which it was filled. An old maid stood at the window; she had hung chickweed over the cage, and the little linnet which it contained hopped from perch to perch and sang and twittered merrily.
"Yes, it's all very well for you to sing," said the bottle neck: that is, he did not really speak the words as we do, for the neck of a bottle cannot speak; but he thought them to himself in his own mind, just as people sometimes talk quietly to themselves.

"Yes, you may sing very well, you have all your limbs uninjured; you should feel what it is like to lose your body, and only have a neck and a mouth left, with a cork stuck in it, as I have: you wouldn't sing then, I know. After all, it is just as well that there are some who can be happy. I have no reason to sing, nor could I sing now if I were ever so happy; but when I was a whole bottle, and they rubbed me with a cork, didn't I sing then? I used to be called a complete lark. I remember when I went out to a picnic with the furrier's family, on the day his daughter was betrothed,—it seems as if it only happened yesterday. I have gone through a great deal in my time, when I come to recollect: I have been in the fire and in the water, I have been deep in the earth, and have mounted higher in the air than most other people, and now I am swinging here, outside a bird-cage, in the air and the sunshine. Oh, indeed, it would be worth while to hear my history; but I do not speak it aloud, for a good reason—because I cannot."

Then the bottle neck related his history, which was really rather remarkable; he, in fact, related it to himself, or, at least, thought it in his own mind. The little bird sang his own song merrily; in the street below there was driving and running to and fro, every one thought of his own affairs, or perhaps of nothing at all; but the bottle neck thought deeply. He thought of the blazing furnace in the factory, where he had been blown into life; he remembered how hot it felt when he was placed in the heated oven, the home from which he sprang, and that he had a strong inclination to leap out again directly; but after a while it became cooler, and he found himself very comfortable. He had been placed in a row, with a whole regiment of his brothers and sisters all brought out of the same furnace; some of them had certainly been blown into champagne bottles, and others into beer bottles, which made a little difference between them. In the world it often happens that a beer bottle may contain the most precious wine, and a champagne bottle be filled with blacking, but even in decay it may always be seen whether a man has been well born. Nobility remains noble, as a champagne bottle remains the same, even with blacking in its interior. When the bottles were packed our bottle was packed amongst them; it little expected then to finish its career as a bottle neck, or to be used as a water-glass to a bird's-cage, which is, after all, a place of honor, for it is to be of some use in the world. The bottle did not behold the light of day again, until it was unpacked with the rest in the wine merchant's cellar, and, for the first time, rinsed with water, which caused some very curious sensations. There it lay empty, and without a cork, and it had a peculiar feeling, as if it wanted something it knew not what. At last it was filled with rich and costly wine, a cork was placed

in it, and sealed down. Then it was labelled "first quality," as if it had carried off the first prize at an examination; besides, the wine and the bottle were both good, and while we are young is the time for poetry. There were sounds of song within the bottle, of things it could not understand, of green sunny mountains, where the vines grow and where the merry vine-dressers laugh, sing, and are merry. "Ah, how beautiful is life." All these tones of joy and song in the bottle were like the working of a young poet's brain, who often knows not the meaning of the tones which are sounding within him. One morning the bottle found a purchaser in the furrier's apprentice, who was told to bring one of the best bottles of wine. It was placed in the provision basket with ham and cheese and sausages. The sweetest fresh butter and the finest bread were put into the basket by the furrier's daughter herself, for she packed it. She was young and pretty; her brown eyes laughed, and a smile lingered round her mouth as sweet as that in her eyes. She had delicate hands, beautifully white, and her neck was whiter still. It could easily be seen that she was a very lovely girl, and as yet she was not engaged. The provision basket lay in the lap of the young girl as the family drove out to the forest, and the neck of the bottle peeped out from between the folds of the white napkin. There was the red wax on the cork, and the bottle looked straight at the young girl's face, and also at the face of the young sailor who sat near her. He was a young friend, the son of a portrait painter. He had lately passed his examination with honor, as mate, and the next morning he was to sail in his ship to a distant coast. There had been a great deal of talk on this subject while the basket was being packed, and during this conversation the eyes and the mouth of the furrier's daughter did not wear a very joyful expression. The young people wandered away into the green wood, and talked together. What did they talk about? The bottle could not say, for he was in the provision basket. It remained there a long time; but when at last it was brought forth it appeared as if something pleasant had happened, for every one was laughing; the furrier's daughter laughed too, but she said very little, and her cheeks were like two roses. Then her father took the bottle and the cork-screw into his hands. What a strange sensation it was to have the cork drawn for the first time! The bottle could never after that forget the performance of that moment; indeed there was quite a convulsion within him as the cork flew out, and a gurgling sound as the wine was poured forth into the glasses.

"Long life to the betrothed," cried the papa, and every glass was emptied to the dregs, while the young sailor kissed his beautiful bride.

"Happiness and blessing to you both," said the old people-father and mother, and the young man filled the glasses again.

"Safe return, and a wedding this day next year," he cried; and when the glasses were empty he took the bottle, raised it on high, and said, "Thou hast been present here on the happiest day of my life; thou shalt never be used by others!" So saying, he hurled it high in the air.

The furrier's daughter thought she should never see it again, but she was mistaken. It fell among the rushes on the borders of a little woodland lake. The bottle neck remembered well how long it lay there unseen. "I gave them wine, and they gave me muddy water," he had said to himself, "but I suppose it was all well meant." He could no longer see the betrothed couple, nor the cheerful old people; but for a long time he could hear them rejoicing and singing. At length there came by two peasant boys, who peeped in among the reeds and spied out the bottle. Then they took it up and carried it home with them, so that once more it was provided for. At home in their wooden cottage these boys had an elder brother, a sailor, who was about to start on a long voyage. He had been there the day before to say farewell, and his mother was now very busy packing up various things for him to take with him on his voyage. In the evening his father was going to carry the parcel to the town to see his son once more, and take him a farewell greeting from his mother. A small bottle had already been filled with herb tea, mixed with brandy, and wrapped in a parcel; but when the boys came in they brought with them a larger and stronger bottle, which they had found. This bottle would hold so much more than the little one, and they all said the brandy would be so good for complaints of the stomach, especially as it was mixed with medical herbs. The liquid which they now poured into the bottle was not like the red wine with which it had once been filled; these were bitter drops, but they are of great use sometimes-for the stomach. The new large bottle was to go, not the little one: so the bottle once more started on its travels. It was taken on board (for Peter Jensen was one of the crew) the very same ship in which the young mate was to sail. But the mate did not see the bottle: indeed, if he had he would not have known it, or supposed it was the one out of which they had drunk to the felicity of the betrothed and to the prospect of a marriage on his own happy return. Certainly the bottle no longer poured forth wine, but it contained something quite as good; and so it happened that whenever Peter Jensen brought it out, his messmates gave it the name of "the apothecary," for it contained the best medicine to cure the stomach, and he gave it out quite willingly as long as a drop remained. Those were happy days, and the bottle would sing when rubbed with a cork, and it was called a great lark, "Peter Jensen's lark."

Long days and months rolled by, during which the bottle stood empty in a

corner, when a storm arose—whether on the passage out or home it could not tell, for it had never been ashore. It was a terrible storm, great waves arose, darkly heaving and tossing the vessel to and fro. The main mast was split asunder, the ship sprang a leak, and the pumps became useless, while all around was black as night. At the last moment, when the ship was sinking, the young mate wrote on a piece of paper, "We are going down: God's will be done." Then he wrote the name of his betrothed, his own name, and that of the ship. Then he put the leaf in an empty bottle that happened to be at hand, corked it down tightly, and threw it into the foaming sea. He knew not that it was the very same bottle from which the goblet of joy and hope had once been filled for him, and now it was tossing on the waves with his last greeting, and a message from the dead. The ship sank, and the crew sank with her; but the bottle flew on like a bird, for it bore within it a loving letter from a loving heart. And as the sun rose and set, the bottle felt as at the time of its first existence, when in the heated glowing stove it had a longing to fly away. It outlived the storms and the calm, it struck against no rocks, was not devoured by sharks, but drifted on for more than a year, sometimes towards the north, sometimes towards the south, just as the current carried it. It was in all other ways its own master, but even of that one may get tired. The written leaf, the last farewell of the bridegroom to his bride, would only bring sorrow when once it reached her hands; but where were those hands, so soft and delicate, which had once spread the table-cloth on the fresh grass in the green wood, on the day of her betrothal? Ah, yes! where was the furrier's daughter? and where was the land which might lie nearest to her home?

The bottle knew not, it travelled onward and onward, and at last all this wandering about became wearisome; at all events it was not its usual occupation. But it had to travel, till at length it reached land—a foreign country. Not a word spoken in this country could the bottle understand; it was a language it had never before heard, and it is a great loss not to be able to understand a language. The bottle was fished out of the water, and examined on all sides. The little letter contained within it was discovered, taken out, and turned and twisted in every direction; but the people could not understand what was written upon it. They could be quite sure that the bottle had been thrown overboard from a vessel, and that something about it was written on this paper: but what was written? that was the question,—so the paper was put back into the bottle, and then both were put away in a large cupboard of one of the great houses of the town. Whenever any strangers arrived, the paper was taken out and turned over and over, so that the address, which

was only written in pencil, became almost illegible, and at last no one could distinguish any letters on it at all. For a whole year the bottle remained standing in the cupboard, and then it was taken up to the loft, where it soon became covered with dust and cobwebs. Ah! how often then it thought of those better days—of the times when in the fresh, green wood, it had poured forth rich wine; or, while rocked by the swelling waves, it had carried in its bosom a secret, a letter, a last parting sigh. For full twenty years it stood in the loft, and it might have stayed there longer but that the house was going to be rebuilt. The bottle was discovered when the roof was taken off; they talked about it, but the bottle did not understand what they said—a language is not to be learnt by living in a loft, even for twenty years. "If I had been down stairs in the room," thought the bottle, "I might have learnt it." It was now washed and rinsed, which process was really quite necessary, and afterwards it looked clean and transparent, and felt young again in its old age; but the paper which it had carried so faithfully was destroyed in the washing. They filled the bottle with seeds, though it scarcely knew what had been placed in it. Then they corked it down tightly, and carefully wrapped it up. There not even the light of a torch or lantern could reach it, much less the brightness of the sun or moon. "And yet," thought the bottle, "men go on a journey that they may see as much as possible, and I can see nothing." However, it did something quite as important; it travelled to the place of its destination, and was unpacked.

"What trouble they have taken with that bottle over yonder!" said one, "and very likely it is broken after all." But the bottle was not broken, and, better still, it understood every word that was said: this language it had heard at the furnaces and at the wine merchant's; in the forest and on the ship,—it was the only good old language it could understand. It had returned home, and the language was as a welcome greeting. For very joy, it felt ready to jump out of people's hands, and scarcely noticed that its cork had been drawn, and its contents emptied out, till it found itself carried to a cellar, to be left there and forgotten. "There's no place like home, even if it's a cellar." It never occurred to him to think that he might lie there for years, he felt so comfortable. For many long years he remained in the cellar, till at last some people came to carry away the bottles, and ours amongst the number.

Out in the garden there was a great festival. Brilliant lamps hung in festoons from tree to tree; and paper lanterns, through which the light shone till they looked like transparent tulips. It was a beautiful evening, and the weather mild and clear. The stars twinkled; and the new moon, in the form of a crescent, was surrounded by the shadowy disc of the whole moon, and

looked like a gray globe with a golden rim: it was a beautiful sight for those who had good eyes. The illumination extended even to the most retired of the garden walks, at least not so retired that any one need lose himself there. In the borders were placed bottles, each containing a light, and among them the bottle with which we are acquainted, and whose fate it was, one day, to be only a bottle neck, and to serve as a water-glass to a bird's-cage. Everything here appeared lovely to our bottle, for it was again in the green wood, amid joy and feasting; again it heard music and song, and the noise and murmur of a crowd, especially in that part of the garden where the lamps blazed, and the paper lanterns displayed their brilliant colors. It stood in a distant walk certainly, but a place pleasant for contemplation; and it carried a light; and was at once useful and ornamental. In such an hour it is easy to forget that one has spent twenty years in a loft, and a good thing it is to be able to do so. Close before the bottle passed a single pair, like the bridal pair—the mate and the furrier's daughter—who had so long ago wandered in the wood. It seemed to the bottle as if he were living that time over again. Not only the guests but other people were walking in the garden, who were allowed to witness the splendor and the festivities. Among the latter came an old maid, who seemed to be quite alone in the world. She was thinking, like the bottle, of the green wood, and of a young betrothed pair, who were closely connected with herself; she was thinking of that hour, the happiest of her life, in which she had taken part, when she had herself been one of that betrothed pair; such hours are never to be forgotten, let a maiden be as old as she may. But she did not recognize the bottle, neither did the bottle notice the old maid. And so we often pass each other in the world when we meet, as did these two, even while together in the same town.

The bottle was taken from the garden, and again sent to a wine merchant, where it was once more filled with wine, and sold to an aeronaut, who was to make an ascent in his balloon on the following Sunday. A great crowd assembled to witness the sight; military music had been engaged, and many other preparations made. The bottle saw it all from the basket in which he lay close to a live rabbit. The rabbit was quite excited because he knew that he was to be taken up, and let down again in a parachute. The bottle, however, knew nothing of the "up," or the "down;" he saw only that the balloon was swelling larger and larger till it could swell no more, and began to rise and be restless. Then the ropes which held it were cut through, and the aerial ship rose in the air with the aeronaut and the basket containing the bottle and the rabbit, while the music sounded and all the people shouted "Hurrah."

"This is a wonderful journey up into the air," thought the bottle; "it is a new

way of sailing, and here, at least, there is no fear of striking against anything."
Thousands of people gazed at the balloon, and the old maid who was in the garden saw it also; for she stood at the open window of the garret, by which hung the cage containing the linnet, who then had no water-glass, but was obliged to be contented with an old cup. In the window-sill stood a myrtle in a pot, and this had been pushed a little on one side, that it might not fall out; for the old maid was leaning out of the window, that she might see. And she did see distinctly the aeronaut in the balloon, and how he let down the rabbit in the parachute, and then drank to the health of all the spectators in the wine from the bottle. After doing this, he hurled it high into the air. How little she thought that this was the very same bottle which her friend had thrown aloft in her honor, on that happy day of rejoicing, in the green wood, in her youthful days. The bottle had no time to think, when raised so suddenly; and before it was aware, it reached the highest point it had ever attained in its life. Steeples and roofs lay far, far beneath it, and the people looked as tiny as possible. Then it began to descend much more rapidly than the rabbit had done, made somersaults in the air, and felt itself quite young and unfettered, although it was half full of wine. But this did not last long. What a journey it was! All the people could see the bottle; for the sun shone upon it. The balloon was already far away, and very soon the bottle was far away also; for it fell upon a roof, and broke in pieces. But the pieces had got such an impetus in them, that they could not stop themselves. They went jumping and rolling about, till at last they fell into the court-yard, and were broken into still smaller pieces; only the neck of the bottle managed to keep whole, and it was broken off as clean as if it had been cut with a diamond.
"That would make a capital bird's glass," said one of the cellar-men; but none of them had either a bird or a cage, and it was not to be expected they would provide one just because they had found a bottle neck that could be used as a glass. But the old maid who lived in the garret had a bird, and it really might be useful to her; so the bottle neck was provided with a cork, and taken up to her; and, as it often happens in life, the part that had been uppermost was now turned downwards, and it was filled with fresh water. Then they hung it in the cage of the little bird, who sang and twittered more merrily than ever.
"Ah, you have good reason to sing," said the bottle neck, which was looked upon as something very remarkable, because it had been in a balloon; nothing further was known of its history. As it hung there in the bird's-cage, it could hear the noise and murmur of the people in the street below, as well as the conversation of the old maid in the room within. An old friend had just come to visit her, and they talked, not about the bottle neck, but of the

myrtle in the window.
"No, you must not spend a dollar for your daughter's bridal bouquet," said the old maid; "you shall have a beautiful little bunch for a nosegay, full of blossoms. Do you see how splendidly the tree has grown? It has been raised from only a little sprig of myrtle that you gave me on the day after my betrothal, and from which I was to make my own bridal bouquet when a year had passed: but that day never came; the eyes were closed which were to have been my light and joy through life. In the depths of the sea my beloved sleeps sweetly; the myrtle has become an old tree, and I am a still older woman. Before the sprig you gave me faded, I took a spray, and planted it in the earth; and now, as you see, it has become a large tree, and a bunch of the blossoms shall at last appear at a wedding festival, in the bouquet of your daughter."
There were tears in the eyes of the old maid, as she spoke of the beloved of her youth, and of their betrothal in the wood. Many thoughts came into her mind; but the thought never came, that quite close to her, in that very window, was a remembrance of those olden times,—the neck of the bottle which had, as it were shouted for joy when the cork flew out with a bang on the betrothal day. But the bottle neck did not recognize the old maid; he had not been listening to what she had related, perhaps because he was thinking so much about her.

THE BUCKWHEAT

Very often, after a violent thunder-storm, a field of buckwheat appears blackened and singed, as if a flame of fire had passed over it. The country people say that this appearance is caused by lightning; but I will tell you what the sparrow says, and the sparrow heard it from an old willow-tree which grew near a field of buckwheat, and is there still. It is a large venerable tree, though a little crippled by age. The trunk has been split, and out of the crevice grass and brambles grow. The tree bends for-ward slightly, and the branches hang quite down to the ground just like green hair. Corn grows in the surrounding fields, not only rye and barley, but oats,-pretty oats that, when ripe, look like a number of little golden canary-birds sitting on a bough. The corn has a smiling look and the heaviest and richest ears bend their heads low as if in pious humility. Once there was also a field of buckwheat, and this field was exactly opposite to old willow-tree. The buckwheat did not bend like the other grain, but erected its head proudly and stiffly on the stem. "I am as valuable as any other corn," said he, "and I am much handsomer; my flowers

are as beautiful as the bloom of the apple blossom, and it is a pleasure to look at us. Do you know of anything prettier than we are, you old willow-tree?"
And the willow-tree nodded his head, as if he would say, "Indeed I do."
But the buckwheat spread itself out with pride, and said, "Stupid tree; he is so old that grass grows out of his body."
There arose a very terrible storm. All the field-flowers folded their leaves together, or bowed their little heads, while the storm passed over them, but the buckwheat stood erect in its pride. "Bend your head as we do," said the flowers.
"I have no occasion to do so," replied the buckwheat.
"Bend your head as we do," cried the ears of corn; "the angel of the storm is coming; his wings spread from the sky above to the earth beneath. He will strike you down before you can cry for mercy."
"But I will not bend my head," said the buckwheat.
"Close your flowers and bend your leaves," said the old willow-tree. "Do not look at the lightning when the cloud bursts; even men cannot do that. In a flash of lightning heaven opens, and we can look in; but the sight will strike even human beings blind. What then must happen to us, who only grow out of the earth, and are so inferior to them, if we venture to do so?"
"Inferior, indeed!" said the buckwheat. "Now I intend to have a peep into heaven." Proudly and boldly he looked up, while the lightning flashed across the sky as if the whole world were in flames.
When the dreadful storm had passed, the flowers and the corn raised their drooping heads in the pure still air, refreshed by the rain, but the buckwheat lay like a weed in the field, burnt to blackness by the lightning. The branches of the old willow-tree rustled in the wind, and large water-drops fell from his green leaves as if the old willow were weeping. Then the sparrows asked why he was weeping, when all around him seemed so cheerful. "See," they said, "how the sun shines, and the clouds float in the blue sky. Do you not smell the sweet perfume from flower and bush? Wherefore do you weep, old willow-tree?" Then the willow told them of the haughty pride of the buckwheat, and of the punishment which followed in consequence.
This is the story told me by the sparrows one evening when I begged them to relate some tale to me.

THE BUTTERFLY

There was once a butterfly who wished for a bride, and, as may be supposed, he wanted to choose a very pretty one from among the flowers. He glanced, with a very critical eye, at all the flower-beds, and found that the flowers were seated quietly and demurely on their stalks, just as maidens should sit before they are engaged; but there was a great number of them, and it appeared as if his search would become very wearisome. The butterfly did not like to take too much trouble, so he flew off on a visit to the daisies. The French call this flower "Marguerite," and they say that the little daisy can prophesy. Lovers pluck off the leaves, and as they pluck each leaf, they ask a question about their lovers; thus: "Does he or she love me?—Ardently? Distractedly? Very much? A little? Not at all?" and so on. Every one speaks these words in his own language. The butterfly came also to Marguerite to inquire, but he did not pluck off her leaves; he pressed a kiss on each of them, for he thought there was always more to be done by kindness.

"Darling Marguerite daisy," he said to her, "you are the wisest woman of all the flowers. Pray tell me which of the flowers I shall choose for my wife. Which will be my bride? When I know, I will fly directly to her, and propose."

But Marguerite did not answer him; she was offended that he should call her a woman when she was only a girl; and there is a great difference. He asked her a second time, and then a third; but she remained dumb, and answered not a word. Then he would wait no longer, but flew away, to commence his wooing at once. It was in the early spring, when the crocus and the snowdrop were in full bloom.

"They are very pretty," thought the butterfly; "charming little lasses; but they are rather formal."

Then, as the young lads often do, he looked out for the elder girls. He next flew to the anemones; these were rather sour to his taste. The violet, a little too sentimental. The lime-blossoms, too small, and besides, there was such a large family of them. The apple-blossoms, though they looked like roses, bloomed to-day, but might fall off to-morrow, with the first wind that blew; and he thought that a marriage with one of them might last too short a time. The pea-blossom pleased him most of all; she was white and red, graceful and slender, and belonged to those domestic maidens who have a pretty appearance, and can yet be useful in the kitchen. He was just about to make her an offer, when, close by the maiden, he saw a pod, with a withered flower hanging at the end.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"That is my sister," replied the pea-blossom.

"Oh, indeed; and you will be like her some day," said he; and he flew away directly, for he felt quite shocked.
A honeysuckle hung forth from the hedge, in full bloom; but there were so many girls like her, with long faces and sallow complexions. No; he did not like her. But which one did he like?
Spring went by, and summer drew towards its close; autumn came; but he had not decided. The flowers now appeared in their most gorgeous robes, but all in vain; they had not the fresh, fragrant air of youth. For the heart asks for fragrance, even when it is no longer young; and there is very little of that to be found in the dahlias or the dry chrysanthemums; therefore the butterfly turned to the mint on the ground. You know, this plant has no blossom; but it is sweetness all over,—full of fragrance from head to foot, with the scent of a flower in every leaf.
"I will take her," said the butterfly; and he made her an offer. But the mint stood silent and stiff, as she listened to him. At last she said,—
"Friendship, if you please; nothing more. I am old, and you are old, but we may live for each other just the same; as to marrying—no; don't let us appear ridiculous at our age."
And so it happened that the butterfly got no wife at all. He had been too long choosing, which is always a bad plan. And the butterfly became what is called an old bachelor.
It was late in the autumn, with rainy and cloudy weather. The cold wind blew over the bowed backs of the willows, so that they creaked again. It was not the weather for flying about in summer clothes; but fortunately the butterfly was not out in it. He had got a shelter by chance. It was in a room heated by a stove, and as warm as summer. He could exist here, he said, well enough.
"But it is not enough merely to exist," said he, "I need freedom, sunshine, and a little flower for a companion."
Then he flew against the window-pane, and was seen and admired by those in the room, who caught him, and stuck him on a pin, in a box of curiosities. They could not do more for him.
"Now I am perched on a stalk, like the flowers," said the butterfly. "It is not very pleasant, certainly; I should imagine it is something like being married; for here I am stuck fast." And with this thought he consoled himself a little.
"That seems very poor consolation," said one of the plants in the room, that grew in a pot.
"Ah," thought the butterfly, "one can't very well trust these plants in pots; they have too much to do with mankind."

A CHEERFUL TEMPER

From my father I received the best inheritance, namely a "good temper." "And who was my father?" That has nothing to do with the good temper; but I will say he was lively, good-looking round, and fat; he was both in appearance and character a complete contradiction to his profession. "And pray what was his profession and his standing in respectable society?" Well, perhaps, if in the beginning of a book these were written and printed, many, when they read it, would lay the book down and say, "It seems to me a very miserable title, I don't like things of this sort." And yet my father was not a skin-dresser nor an executioner; on the contrary, his employment placed him at the head of the grandest people of the town, and it was his place by right. He had to precede the bishop, and even the princes of the blood; he always went first,—he was a hearse driver! There, now, the truth is out. And I will own, that when people saw my father perched up in front of the omnibus of death, dressed in his long, wide, black cloak, and his black-edged, three-cornered hat on his head, and then glanced at his round, jocund face, round as the sun, they could not think much of sorrow or the grave. That face said, "It is nothing, it will all end better than people think." So I have inherited from him, not only my good temper, but a habit of going often to the churchyard, which is good, when done in a proper humor; and then also I take in the Intelligencer, just as he used to do.

I am not very young, I have neither wife nor children, nor a library, but, as I said, I read the Intelligencer, which is enough for me; it is to me a delightful paper, and so it was to my father. It is of great use, for it contains all that a man requires to know; the names of the preachers at the church, and the new books which are published; where houses, servants, clothes, and provisions may be obtained. And then what a number of subscriptions to charities, and what innocent verses! Persons seeking interviews and engagements, all so plainly and naturally stated. Certainly, a man who takes in the Intelligencer may live merrily and be buried contentedly, and by the end of his life will have such a capital stock of paper that he can lie on a soft bed of it, unless he prefers wood shavings for his resting-place. The newspaper and the churchyard were always exciting objects to me. My walks to the latter were like bathing-places to my good humor. Every one can read the newspaper for himself, but come with me to the churchyard while the sun shines and the trees are green, and let us wander among the graves. Each of them is like a closed book, with the back uppermost, on which we can read the title of what the book contains, but nothing more. I had a great

deal of information from my father, and I have noticed a great deal myself. I keep it in my diary, in which I write for my own use and pleasure a history of all who lie here, and a few more beside.

Now we are in the churchyard. Here, behind the white iron railings, once a rose-tree grew; it is gone now, but a little bit of evergreen, from a neighboring grave, stretches out its green tendrils, and makes some appearance; there rests a very unhappy man, and yet while he lived he might be said to occupy a very good position. He had enough to live upon, and something to spare; but owing to his refined tastes the least thing in the world annoyed him. If he went to a theatre of an evening, instead of enjoying himself he would be quite annoyed if the machinist had put too strong a light into one side of the moon, or if the representations of the sky hung over the scenes when they ought to have hung behind them; or if a palm-tree was introduced into a scene representing the Zoological Gardens of Berlin, or a cactus in a view of Tyrol, or a beech-tree in the north of Norway. As if these things were of any consequence! Why did he not leave them alone? Who would trouble themselves about such trifles? especially at a comedy, where every one is expected to be amused. Then sometimes the public applauded too much, or too little, to please him. "They are like wet wood," he would say, looking round to see what sort of people were present, "this evening; nothing fires them." Then he would vex and fret himself because they did not laugh at the right time, or because they laughed in the wrong places; and so he fretted and worried himself till at last the unhappy man fretted himself into the grave.

Here rests a happy man, that is to say, a man of high birth and position, which was very lucky for him, otherwise he would have been scarcely worth notice. It is beautiful to observe how wisely nature orders these things. He walked about in a coat embroidered all over, and in the drawing-rooms of society looked just like one of those rich pearl-embroidered bell-pulls, which are only made for show; and behind them always hangs a good thick cord for use. This man also had a stout, useful substitute behind him, who did duty for him, and performed all his dirty work. And there are still, even now, these serviceable cords behind other embroidered bell-ropes. It is all so wisely arranged, that a man may well be in a good humor.

Here rests,—ah, it makes one feel mournful to think of him!—but here rests a man who, during sixty-seven years, was never remembered to have said a good thing; he lived only in the hope of having a good idea. At last he felt convinced, in his own mind, that he really had one, and was so delighted that he positively died of joy at the thought of having at last caught an

idea. Nobody got anything by it; indeed, no one even heard what the good thing was. Now I can imagine that this same idea may prevent him from resting quietly in his grave; for suppose that to produce a good effect, it is necessary to bring out his new idea at breakfast, and that he can only make his appearance on earth at midnight, as ghosts are believed generally to do; why then this good idea would not suit the hour, and the man would have to carry it down again with him into the grave—that must be a troubled grave.
The woman who lies here was so remarkably stingy, that during her life she would get up in the night and mew, that her neighbors might think she kept a cat. What a miser she was!
Here rests a young lady, of a good family, who would always make her voice heard in society, and when she sang "Mi manca la voce,"[1] it was the only true thing she ever said in her life.
Here lies a maiden of another description. She was engaged to be married,—but, her story is one of every-day life; we will leave her to rest in the grave.
Here rests a widow, who, with music in her tongue, carried gall in her heart. She used to go round among the families near, and search out their faults, upon which she preyed with all the envy and malice of her nature. This is a family grave. The members of this family held so firmly together in their opinions, that they would believe in no other. If the newspapers, or even the whole world, said of a certain subject, "It is so-and-so;" and a little schoolboy declared he had learned quite differently, they would take his assertion as the only true one, because he belonged to the family. And it is well known that if the yard-cock belonging to this family happened to crow at midnight, they would declare it was morning, although the watchman and all the clocks in the town were proclaiming the hour of twelve at night.
The great poet Goethe concludes his Faust with the words, "may be continued;" so might our wanderings in the churchyard be continued. I come here often, and if any of my friends, or those who are not my friends, are too much for me, I go out and choose a plot of ground in which to bury him or her. Then I bury them, as it were; there they lie, dead and powerless, till they come back new and better characters. Their lives and their deeds, looked at after my own fashion, I write down in my diary, as every one ought to do. Then, if any of our friends act absurdly, no one need to be vexed about it. Let them bury the offenders out of sight, and keep their good temper. They can also read the Intelligencer, which is a paper written by the people, with their hands guided. When the time comes for the history of my life, to be bound by the grave, then they will write upon it as my epitaph—
"The man with a cheerful temper." And this is my story.
[1] "I want a voice," or, "I have no voice."

THE CHILD IN THE GRAVE

It was a very sad day, and every heart in the house felt the deepest grief; for the youngest child, a boy of four years old, the joy and hope of his parents, was dead. Two daughters, the elder of whom was going to be confirmed, still remained: they were both good, charming girls; but the lost child always seems the dearest; and when it is youngest, and a son, it makes the trial still more heavy. The sisters mourned as young hearts can mourn, and were especially grieved at the sight of their parents' sorrow. The father's heart was bowed down, but the mother sunk completely under the deep grief. Day and night she had attended to the sick child, nursing and carrying it in her bosom, as a part of herself. She could not realize the fact that the child was dead, and must be laid in a coffin to rest in the ground. She thought God could not take her darling little one from her; and when it did happen notwithstanding her hopes and her belief, and there could be no more doubt on the subject, she said in her feverish agony, "God does not know it. He has hard-hearted ministering spirits on earth, who do according to their own will, and heed not a mother's prayers." Thus in her great grief she fell away from her faith in God, and dark thoughts arose in her mind respecting death and a future state. She tried to believe that man was but dust, and that with his life all existence ended. But these doubts were no support to her, nothing on which she could rest, and she sunk into the fathomless depths of despair. In her darkest hours she ceased to weep, and thought not of the young daughters who were still left to her. The tears of her husband fell on her forehead, but she took no notice of him; her thoughts were with her dead child; her whole existence seemed wrapped up in the remembrances of the little one and of every innocent word it had uttered.

The day of the little child's funeral came. For nights previously the mother had not slept, but in the morning twilight of this day she sunk from weariness into a deep sleep; in the mean time the coffin was carried into a distant room, and there nailed down, that she might not hear the blows of the hammer. When she awoke, and wanted to see her child, the husband, with tears, said, "We have closed the coffin; it was necessary to do so."

"When God is so hard to me, how can I expect men to be better?" she said with groans and tears.

The coffin was carried to the grave, and the disconsolate mother sat with her young daughters. She looked at them, but she saw them not; for her thoughts were far away from the domestic hearth. She gave herself up to her grief, and it tossed her to and fro, as the sea tosses a ship without compass or rudder. So

the day of the funeral passed away, and similar days followed, of dark, wearisome pain. With tearful eyes and mournful glances, the sorrowing daughters and the afflicted husband looked upon her who would not hear their words of comfort; and, indeed, what comforting words could they speak, when they were themselves so full of grief? It seemed as if she would never again know sleep, and yet it would have been her best friend, one who would have strengthened her body and poured peace into her soul. They at last persuaded her to lie down, and then she would lie as still as if she slept.

One night, when her husband listened, as he often did, to her breathing, he quite believed that she had at length found rest and relief in sleep. He folded his arms and prayed, and soon sunk himself into healthful sleep; therefore he did not notice that his wife arose, threw on her clothes, and glided silently from the house, to go where her thoughts constantly lingered—to the grave of her child. She passed through the garden, to a path across a field that led to the churchyard. No one saw her as she walked, nor did she see any one; for her eyes were fixed upon the one object of her wanderings. It was a lovely starlight night in the beginning of September, and the air was mild and still. She entered the churchyard, and stood by the little grave, which looked like a large nosegay of fragrant flowers. She sat down, and bent her head low over the grave, as if she could see her child through the earth that covered him—her little boy, whose smile was so vividly before her, and the gentle expression of whose eyes, even on his sick-bed, she could not forget. How full of meaning that glance had been, as she leaned over him, holding in hers the pale hand which he had no longer strength to raise! As she had sat by his little cot, so now she sat by his grave; and here she could weep freely, and her tears fell upon it.

"Thou wouldst gladly go down and be with thy child," said a voice quite close to her,—a voice that sounded so deep and clear, that it went to her heart. She looked up, and by her side stood a man wrapped in a black cloak, with a hood closely drawn over his face; but her keen glance could distinguish the face under the hood. It was stern, yet awakened confidence, and the eyes beamed with youthful radiance.

"Down to my child," she repeated; and tones of despair and entreaty sounded in the words.

"Darest thou to follow me?" asked the form. "I am Death."

She bowed her head in token of assent. Then suddenly it appeared as if all the stars were shining with the radiance of the full moon on the many-colored flowers that decked the grave. The earth that covered it was drawn back like a floating drapery. She sunk down, and the spectre covered her

with a black cloak; night closed around her, the night of death. She sank deeper than the spade of the sexton could penetrate, till the churchyard became a roof above her. Then the cloak was removed, and she found herself in a large hall, of wide-spreading dimensions, in which there was a subdued light, like twilight, reigning, and in a moment her child appeared before her, smiling, and more beautiful than ever; with a silent cry she pressed him to her heart. A glorious strain of music sounded—now distant, now near. Never had she listened to such tones as these; they came from beyond a large dark curtain which separated the regions of death from the land of eternity.

"My sweet, darling mother," she heard the child say. It was the well-known, beloved voice; and kiss followed kiss, in boundless delight. Then the child pointed to the dark curtain. "There is nothing so beautiful on earth as it is here. Mother, do you not see them all? Oh, it is happiness indeed."

But the mother saw nothing of what the child pointed out, only the dark curtain. She looked with earthly eyes, and could not see as the child saw,—he whom God has called to be with Himself. She could hear the sounds of music, but she heard not the words, the Word in which she was to trust.

"I can fly now, mother," said the child; "I can fly with other happy children into the presence of the Almighty. I would fain fly away now; but if you weep for me as you are weeping now, you may never see me again. And yet I would go so gladly. May I not fly away? And you will come to me soon, will you not, dear mother?"

"Oh, stay, stay!" implored the mother; "only one moment more; only once more, that I may look upon thee, and kiss thee, and press thee to my heart." Then she kissed and fondled her child. Suddenly her name was called from above; what could it mean? her name uttered in a plaintive voice.

"Hearest thou?" said the child. "It is my father who calls thee." And in a few moments deep sighs were heard, as of children weeping. "They are my sisters," said the child. "Mother, surely you have not forgotten them."

And then she remembered those she left behind, and a great terror came over her. She looked around her at the dark night. Dim forms flitted by. She seemed to recognize some of them, as they floated through the regions of death towards the dark curtain, where they vanished. Would her husband and her daughters flit past? No; their sighs and lamentations still sounded from above; and she had nearly forgotten them, for the sake of him who was dead.

"Mother, now the bells of heaven are ringing," said the child; "mother, the sun is going to rise."

An overpowering light streamed in upon her, the child had vanished, and she was being borne upwards. All around her became cold; she lifted her

head, and saw that she was lying in the churchyard, on the grave of her child. The Lord, in a dream, had been a guide to her feet and a light to her spirit. She bowed her knees, and prayed for forgiveness. She had wished to keep back a soul from its immortal flight; she had forgotten her duties towards the living who were left her. And when she had offered this prayer, her heart felt lighter. The sun burst forth, over her head a little bird carolled his song, and the church-bells sounded for the early service. Everything around her seemed holy, and her heart was chastened. She acknowledged the goodness of God, she acknowledged the duties she had to perform, and eagerly she returned home. She bent over her husband, who still slept; her warm, devoted kiss awakened him, and words of heartfelt love fell from the lips of both. Now she was gentle and strong as a wife can be; and from her lips came the words of faith: "Whatever He doeth is right and best."

Then her husband asked, "From whence hast thou all at once derived such strength and comforting faith?"

And as she kissed him and her children, she said, "It came from God, through my child in the grave."

CHILDREN'S PRATTLE

At a rich merchant's house there was a children's party, and the children of rich and great people were there. The merchant was a learned man, for his father had sent him to college, and he had passed his examination. His father had been at first only a cattle dealer, but always honest and industrious, so that he had made money, and his son, the merchant, had managed to increase his store. Clever as he was, he had also a heart; but there was less said of his heart than of his money. All descriptions of people visited at the merchant's house, well born, as well as intellectual, and some who possessed neither of these recommendations.

Now it was a children's party, and there was children's prattle, which always is spoken freely from the heart. Among them was a beautiful little girl, who was terribly proud; but this had been taught her by the servants, and not by her parents, who were far too sensible people.

Her father was groom of the Chambers, which is a high office at court, and she knew it. "I am a child of the court," she said; now she might just as well have been a child of the cellar, for no one can help his birth; and then she told the other children that she was well-born, and said that no one who was not well-born could rise in the world. It was no use to read and be industrious, for if a person was not well-born, he could never achieve anything. "And those whose names end with 'sen,'" said she, "can never

be anything at all. We must put our arms akimbo, and make the elbow quite pointed, so as to keep these 'sen' people at a great distance." And then she stuck out her pretty little arms, and made the elbows quite pointed, to show how it was to be done; and her little arms were very pretty, for she was a sweet-looking child.

But the little daughter of the merchant became very angry at this speech, for her father's name was Petersen, and she knew that the name ended in "sen," and therefore she said as proudly as she could, "But my papa can buy a hundred dollars' worth of bonbons, and give them away to children. Can your papa do that?"

"Yes; and my papa," said the little daughter of the editor of a paper, "my papa can put your papa and everybody's papa into the newspaper. All sorts of people are afraid of him, my mamma says, for he can do as he likes with the paper." And the little maiden looked exceedingly proud, as if she had been a real princess, who may be expected to look proud.

But outside the door, which stood ajar, was a poor boy, peeping through the crack of the door. He was of such a lowly station that he had not been allowed even to enter the room. He had been turning the spit for the cook, and she had given him permission to stand behind the door and peep in at the well-dressed children, who were having such a merry time within; and for him that was a great deal. "Oh, if I could be one of them," thought he, and then he heard what was said about names, which was quite enough to make him more unhappy. His parents at home had not even a penny to spare to buy a newspaper, much less could they write in one; and worse than all, his father's name, and of course his own, ended in "sen," and therefore he could never turn out well, which was a very sad thought. But after all, he had been born into the world, and the station of life had been chosen for him, therefore he must be content.

And this is what happened on that evening.

Many years passed, and most of the children became grown-up persons.

There stood a splendid house in the town, filled with all kinds of beautiful and valuable objects. Everybody wished to see it, and people even came in from the country round to be permitted to view the treasures it contained.

Which of the children whose prattle we have described, could call this house his own? One would suppose it very easy to guess. No, no; it is not so very easy. The house belonged to the poor little boy who had stood on that night behind the door. He had really become something great, although his name ended in "sen,"—for it was Thorwaldsen.

And the three other children—the children of good birth, of money, and of intellectual pride,—well, they were respected and honored in the world, for they had been well provided for by birth and position, and they had no cause to reproach themselves with what they had thought and spoken on that evening long ago, for, after all, it was mere "children's prattle."

THE FARM-YARD COCK AND THE WEATHER-COCK

There were two cocks—one on the dung-hill, the other on the roof. They were both arrogant, but which of the two rendered most service? Tell us your opinion—we'll keep to ours just the same though.

The poultry yard was divided by some planks from another yard in which there was a dung-hill, and on the dung-hill lay and grew a large cucumber which was conscious of being a hot-bed plant.

"One is born to that," said the cucumber to itself. "Not all can be born cucumbers; there must be other things, too. The hens, the ducks, and all the animals in the next yard are creatures too. Now I have a great opinion of the yard cock on the plank; he is certainly of much more importance than the weather-cock who is placed so high and can't even creak, much less crow. The latter has neither hens nor chicks, and only thinks of himself and perspires verdigris. No, the yard cock is really a cock! His step is a dance! His crowing is music, and wherever he goes one knows what a trumpeter is like! If he would only come in here! Even if he ate me up stump, stalk, and all, and I had to dissolve in his body, it would be a happy death," said the cucumber.

In the night there was a terrible storm. The hens, chicks, and even the cock sought shelter; the wind tore down the planks between the two yards with a crash; the tiles came tumbling down, but the weather-cock sat firm. He did not even turn round, for he could not; and yet he was young and freshly cast, but prudent and sedate. He had been born old, and did not at all resemble the birds flying in the air—the sparrows, and the swallows; no, he despised them, these mean little piping birds, these common whistlers. He admitted that the pigeons, large and white and shining like mother-o'-pearl, looked like a kind of weather-cock; but they were fat and stupid, and all their thoughts and endeavours were directed to filling themselves with food, and besides, they were tiresome things to converse with. The birds of passage had also paid the weather-cock a visit and told him of foreign countries, of airy caravans and robber stories that made one's hair stand on end. All this was new and interesting; that is, for the first time, but afterwards, as the weather-cock found out, they repeated themselves and always

told the same stories, and that's very tedious, and there was no one with whom one could associate, for one and all were stale and small-minded.
"The world is no good!" he said. "Everything in it is so stupid."
The weather-cock was puffed up, and that quality would have made him interesting in the eyes of the cucumber if it had known it, but it had eyes only for the yard cock, who was now in the yard with it.
The wind had blown the planks, but the storm was over.
"What do you think of that crowing?" said the yard cock to the hens and chickens. "It was a little rough—it wanted elegance."
And the hens and chickens came up on the dung-hill, and the cock strutted about like a lord.
"Garden plant!" he said to the cucumber, and in that one word his deep learning showed itself, and it forgot that he was pecking at her and eating it up. "A happy death!"
The hens and the chickens came, for where one runs the others run too; they clucked, and chirped, and looked at the cock, and were proud that he was of their kind.
"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" he crowed, "the chickens will grow up into great hens at once, if I cry it out in the poultry-yard of the world!"
And hens and chicks clucked and chirped, and the cock announced a great piece of news.
"A cock can lay an egg! And do you know what's in that egg? A basilisk. No one can stand the sight of such a thing; people know that, and now you know it too—you know what is in me, and what a champion of all cocks I am!"
With that the yard cock flapped his wings, made his comb swell up, and crowed again; and they all shuddered, the hens and the little chicks—but they were very proud that one of their number was such a champion of all cocks. They clucked and chirped till the weather-cock heard; he heard it; but he did not stir.
"Everything is very stupid," the weather-cock said to himself. "The yard cock lays no eggs, and I am too lazy to do so; if I liked, I could lay a wind-egg. But the world is not worth even a wind-egg. Everything is so stupid! I don't want to sit here any longer."
With that the weather-cock broke off; but he did not kill the yard cock, although the hens said that had been his intention. And what is the moral? "Better to crow than to be puffed up and break off!"

THE DAISY

Now listen! In the country, close by the high road, stood a farmhouse; perhaps you have passed by and seen it yourself. There was a little flower garden with painted wooden palings in front of it; close by was a ditch, on its fresh green bank grew a little daisy; the sun shone as warmly and brightly upon it as on the magnificent garden flowers, and therefore it thrived well. One morning it had quite opened, and its little snow-white petals stood round the yellow centre, like the rays of the sun. It did not mind that nobody saw it in the grass, and that it was a poor despised flower; on the contrary, it was quite happy, and turned towards the sun, looking upward and listening to the song of the lark high up in the air.

The little daisy was as happy as if the day had been a great holiday, but it was only Monday. All the children were at school, and while they were sitting on the forms and learning their lessons, it sat on its thin green stalk and learnt from the sun and from its surroundings how kind God is, and it rejoiced that the song of the little lark expressed so sweetly and distinctly its own feelings. With a sort of reverence the daisy looked up to the bird that could fly and sing, but it did not feel envious. "I can see and hear," it thought; "the sun shines upon me, and the forest kisses me. How rich I am!"

In the garden close by grew many large and magnificent flowers, and, strange to say, the less fragrance they had the haughtier and prouder they were. The peonies puffed themselves up in order to be larger than the roses, but size is not everything! The tulips had the finest colours, and they knew it well, too, for they were standing bolt upright like candles, that one might see them the better. In their pride they did not see the little daisy, which looked over to them and thought, "How rich and beautiful they are! I am sure the pretty bird will fly down and call upon them. Thank God, that I stand so near and can at least see all the splendour." And while the daisy was still thinking, the lark came flying down, crying "Tweet," but not to the peonies and tulips—no, into the grass to the poor daisy. Its joy was so great that it did not know what to think. The little bird hopped round it and sang, "How beautifully soft the grass is, and what a lovely little flower with its golden heart and silver dress is growing here." The yellow centre in the daisy did indeed look like gold, while the little petals shone as brightly as silver.

How happy the daisy was! No one has the least idea. The bird kissed it with its beak, sang to it, and then rose again up to the blue sky. It was certainly more than a quarter of an hour before the daisy recovered its senses. Half ashamed, yet glad at heart, it looked over to the other flowers in the garden;

surely they had witnessed its pleasure and the honour that had been done to it; they understood its joy. But the tulips stood more stiffly than ever, their faces were pointed and red, because they were vexed. The peonies were sulky; it was well that they could not speak, otherwise they would have given the daisy a good lecture. The little flower could very well see that they were ill at ease, and pitied them sincerely.

Shortly after this a girl came into the garden, with a large sharp knife. She went to the tulips and began cutting them off, one after another. "Ugh!" sighed the daisy, "that is terrible; now they are done for."

The girl carried the tulips away. The daisy was glad that it was outside, and only a small flower—it felt very grateful. At sunset it folded its petals, and fell asleep, and dreamt all night of the sun and the little bird.

On the following morning, when the flower once more stretched forth its tender petals, like little arms, towards the air and light, the daisy recognised the bird's voice, but what it sang sounded so sad. Indeed the poor bird had good reason to be sad, for it had been caught and put into a cage close by the open window. It sang of the happy days when it could merrily fly about, of fresh green corn in the fields, and of the time when it could soar almost up to the clouds. The poor lark was most unhappy as a prisoner in a cage. The little daisy would have liked so much to help it, but what could be done? Indeed, that was very difficult for such a small flower to find out. It entirely forgot how beautiful everything around it was, how warmly the sun was shining, and how splendidly white its own petals were. It could only think of the poor captive bird, for which it could do nothing. Then two little boys came out of the garden; one of them had a large sharp knife, like that with which the girl had cut the tulips. They came straight towards the little daisy, which could not understand what they wanted.

"Here is a fine piece of turf for the lark," said one of the boys, and began to cut out a square round the daisy, so that it remained in the centre of the grass.

"Pluck the flower off," said the other boy, and the daisy trembled for fear, for to be pulled off meant death to it; and it wished so much to live, as it was to go with the square of turf into the poor captive lark's cage.

"No let it stay," said the other boy, "it looks so pretty."

And so it stayed, and was brought into the lark's cage. The poor bird was lamenting its lost liberty, and beating its wings against the wires; and the little daisy could not speak or utter a consoling word, much as it would have liked to do so. So the forenoon passed.

"I have no water," said the captive lark, "they have all gone out, and forgotten to give me anything to drink. My throat is dry and burning. I feel

as if I had fire and ice within me, and the air is so oppressive. Alas! I must die, and part with the warm sunshine, the fresh green meadows, and all the beauty that God has created." And it thrust its beak into the piece of grass, to refresh itself a little. Then it noticed the little daisy, and nodded to it, and kissed it with its beak and said: "You must also fade in here, poor little flower. You and the piece of grass are all they have given me in exchange for the whole world, which I enjoyed outside. Each little blade of grass shall be a green tree for me, each of your white petals a fragrant flower. Alas! you only remind me of what I have lost."

"I wish I could console the poor lark," thought the daisy. It could not move one of its leaves, but the fragrance of its delicate petals streamed forth, and was much stronger than such flowers usually have: the bird noticed it, although it was dying with thirst, and in its pain tore up the green blades of grass, but did not touch the flower.

The evening came, and nobody appeared to bring the poor bird a drop of water; it opened its beautiful wings, and fluttered about in its anguish; a faint and mournful "Tweet, tweet," was all it could utter, then it bent its little head towards the flower, and its heart broke for want and longing. The flower could not, as on the previous evening, fold up its petals and sleep; it dropped sorrowfully. The boys only came the next morning; when they saw the dead bird, they began to cry bitterly, dug a nice grave for it, and adorned it with flowers. The bird's body was placed in a pretty red box; they wished to bury it with royal honours. While it was alive and sang they forgot it, and let it suffer want in the cage; now, they cried over it and covered it with flowers. The piece of turf, with the little daisy in it, was thrown out on the dusty highway. Nobody thought of the flower which had felt so much for the bird and had so greatly desired to comfort it.

THE DARNING-NEEDLE

There was once a darning-needle who thought herself so fine that she fancied she must be fit for embroidery. "Hold me tight," she would say to the fingers, when they took her up, "don't let me fall; if you do I shall never be found again, I am so very fine."

"That is your opinion, is it?" said the fingers, as they seized her round the body.

"See, I am coming with a train," said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread after her; but there was no knot in the thread.

The fingers then placed the point of the needle against the cook's slipper. There was a crack in the upper leather, which had to be sewn together.

“What coarse work!” said the darning-needle, “I shall never get through. I shall break!—I am breaking!” and sure enough she broke. “Did I not say so?” said the darning-needle, “I know I am too fine for such work as that.” “This needle is quite useless for sewing now,” said the fingers; but they still held it fast, and the cook dropped some sealing-wax on the needle, and fastened her handkerchief with it in front.

“So now I am a breast-pin,” said the darning-needle; “I knew very well I should come to honor some day: merit is sure to rise;” and she laughed, quietly to herself, for of course no one ever saw a darning-needle laugh. And there she sat as proudly as if she were in a state coach, and looked all around her. “May I be allowed to ask if you are made of gold?” she inquired of her neighbor, a pin; “you have a very pretty appearance, and a curious head, although you are rather small. You must take pains to grow, for it is not every one who has sealing-wax dropped upon him;” and as she spoke, the darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell out of the handkerchief right into the sink, which the cook was cleaning. “Now I am going on a journey,” said the needle, as she floated away with the dirty water, “I do hope I shall not be lost.” But she really was lost in a gutter. “I am too fine for this world,” said the darning-needle, as she lay in the gutter; “but I know who I am, and that is always some comfort.” So the darning-needle kept up her proud behavior, and did not lose her good humor. Then there floated over her all sorts of things,—chips and straws, and pieces of old newspaper. “See how they sail,” said the darning-needle; “they do not know what is under them. I am here, and here I shall stick. See, there goes a chip, thinking of nothing in the world but himself—only a chip. There’s a straw going by now; how he turns and twists about! Don’t be thinking too much of yourself, or you may chance to run against a stone. There swims a piece of newspaper; what is written upon it has been forgotten long ago, and yet it gives itself airs. I sit here patiently and quietly. I know who I am, so I shall not move.”

One day something lying close to the darning-needle glittered so splendidly that she thought it was a diamond; yet it was only a piece of broken bottle. The darning-needle spoke to it, because it sparkled, and represented herself as a breast-pin. “I suppose you are really a diamond?” she said.

“Why yes, something of the kind,” he replied; and so each believed the other to be very valuable, and then they began to talk about the world, and the conceited people in it.

“I have been in a lady’s work-box,” said the darning-needle, “and this lady was the cook. She had on each hand five fingers, and anything so conceited

as these five fingers I have never seen; and yet they were only employed to take me out of the box and to put me back again."
"Were they not high-born?"
"High-born!" said the darning-needle, "no indeed, but so haughty. They were five brothers, all born fingers; they kept very proudly together, though they were of different lengths. The one who stood first in the rank was named the thumb, he was short and thick, and had only one joint in his back, and could therefore make but one bow; but he said that if he were cut off from a man's hand, that man would be unfit for a soldier. Sweet-tooth, his neighbor, dipped himself into sweet or sour, pointed to the sun and moon, and formed the letters when the fingers wrote. Longman, the middle finger, looked over the heads of all the others. Gold-band, the next finger, wore a golden circle round his waist. And little Playman did nothing at all, and seemed proud of it. They were boasters, and boasters they will remain; and therefore I left them."
"And now we sit here and glitter," said the piece of broken bottle.
At the same moment more water streamed into the gutter, so that it overflowed, and the piece of bottle was carried away.
"So he is promoted," said the darning-needle, "while I remain here; I am too fine, but that is my pride, and what do I care?" And so she sat there in her pride, and had many such thoughts as these,—"I could almost fancy that I came from a sunbeam, I am so fine. It seems as if the sunbeams were always looking for me under the water. Ah! I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. Had I still my old eye, which was broken off, I believe I should weep; but no, I would not do that, it is not genteel to cry."
One day a couple of street boys were paddling in the gutter, for they sometimes found old nails, farthings, and other treasures. It was dirty work, but they took great pleasure in it. "Hallo!" cried one, as he pricked himself with the darning-needle, "here's a fellow for you."
"I am not a fellow, I am a young lady," said the darning-needle; but no one heard her.
The sealing-wax had come off, and she was quite black; but black makes a person look slender, so she thought herself even finer than before.
"Here comes an egg-shell sailing along," said one of the boys; so they stuck the darning-needle into the egg-shell.
"White walls, and I am black myself," said the darning-needle, "that looks well; now I can be seen, but I hope I shall not be sea-sick, or I shall break again." She was not sea-sick, and she did not break. "It is a good thing against sea-sickness to have a steel stomach, and not to forget one's own importance. Now my sea-sickness has past: delicate people can bear a great deal."

Crack went the egg-shell, as a waggon passed over it. “Good heavens, how it crushes!” said the darning-needle. “I shall be sick now. I am breaking!” but she did not break, though the waggon went over her as she lay at full length; and there let her lie.

DELAYING IS NOT FORGETTING

There was an old mansion surrounded by a marshy ditch with a drawbridge which was but seldom let down:—not all guests are good people. Under the roof were loopholes to shoot through, and to pour down boiling water or even molten lead on the enemy, should he approach. Inside the house the rooms were very high and had ceilings of beams, and that was very useful considering the great deal of smoke which rose up from the chimney fire where the large, damp logs of wood smouldered. On the walls hung pictures of knights in armour and proud ladies in gorgeous dresses; the most stately of all walked about alive. She was called Meta Mogen; she was the mistress of the house, to her belonged the castle.

Towards the evening robbers came; they killed three of her people and also the yard-dog, and attached Mrs. Meta to the kennel by the chain, while they themselves made good cheer in the hall and drank the wine and the good ale out of her cellar. Mrs. Meta was now on the chain, she could not even bark. But lo! the servant of one of the robbers secretly approached her; they must not see it, otherwise they would have killed him.

“Mrs. Meta Mogen,” said the fellow, “do you still remember how my father, when your husband was still alive, had to ride on the wooden horse? You prayed for him, but it was no good, he was to ride until his limbs were paralysed; but you stole down to him, as I steal now to you, you yourself put little stones under each of his feet that he might have support, nobody saw it, or they pretended not to see it, for you were then the young gracious mistress. My father has told me this, and I have not forgotten it! Now I will free you, Mrs. Meta Mogen!”

Then they pulled the horses out of the stable and rode off in rain and wind to obtain the assistance of friends.

“Thus the small service done to the old man was richly rewarded!” said Meta Mogen.

“Delaying is not forgetting,” said the fellow.

The robbers were hanged.

There was an old mansion, it is still there; it did not belong to Mrs. Meta Mogen, it belonged to another old noble family.

We are now in the present time. The sun is shining on the gilt knob of the tower, little wooded islands lie like bouquets on the water, and wild swans are swimming round them. In the garden grow roses; the mistress of the house is herself the finest rose petal, she beams with joy, the joy of good deeds: however, not done in the wide world, but in her heart, and what is preserved there is not forgotten. Delaying is not forgetting!

Now she goes from the mansion to a little peasant hut in the field. Therein lives a poor paralysed girl; the window of her little room looks northward, the sun does not enter here. The girl can only see a small piece of field which is surrounded by a high fence. But to-day the sun shines here—the warm, beautiful sun of God is within the little room; it comes from the south through the new window, where formerly the wall was.

The paralysed girl sits in the warm sunshine and can see the wood and the lake; the world had become so large, so beautiful, and only through a single word from the kind mistress of the mansion.

"The word was so easy, the deed so small," she said, "the joy it afforded me was infinitely great and sweet!"

And therefore she does many a good deed, thinks of all in the humble cottages and in the rich mansions, where there are also afflicted ones. It is concealed and hidden, but God does not forget it. Delayed is not forgotten!

An old house stood there; it was in the large town with its busy traffic. There are rooms and halls in it, but we do not enter them, we remain in the kitchen, where it is warm and light, clean and tidy; the copper utensils are shining, the table as if polished with beeswax; the sink looks like a freshly scoured meatboard. All this a single servant has done, and yet she has time to spare as if she wished to go to church; she wears a bow on her cap, a black bow, that signifies mourning. But she has no one to mourn, neither father nor mother, neither relations nor sweetheart. She is a poor girl. One day she was engaged to a poor fellow; they loved each other dearly.

One day he came to her and said:

"We both have nothing! The rich widow over the way in the basement has made advances to me; she will make me rich, but you are in my heart; what do you advise me to do?"

"I advise you to do what you think will turn out to your happiness," said the girl. "Be kind and good to her, but remember this; from the hour we part we shall never see each other again."

Years passed; then one day she met the old friend and sweetheart in the street; he looked ill and miserable, and she could not help asking him, "How are you?"

"Rich and prospering in every respect," he said; "the woman is brave and good, but you are in my heart. I have fought the battle, it will soon be ended; we shall not see each other again now until we meet before God!"
A week has passed; this morning his death was in the newspaper, that is the reason of the girl's mourning! Her old sweetheart is dead and has left a wife and three step-children, as the paper says; it sounds as if there is a crack, but the metal is pure.
The black bow signifies mourning, the girl's face points to the same in a still higher degree; it is preserved in the heart and will never be forgotten. Delaying is not forgetting!
These are three stories you see, three leaves on the same stalk. Do you wish for some more trefoil leaves? In the little heartbook are many more of them. Delaying is not forgetting!

THE DROP OF WATER

Of course you know what is meant by a magnifying glass—one of those round spectacle-glasses that make everything look a hundred times bigger than it is? When any one takes one of these and holds it to his eye, and looks at a drop of water from the pond yonder, he sees above a thousand wonderful creatures that are otherwise never discerned in the water. But there they are, and it is no delusion. It almost looks like a great plateful of spiders jumping about in a crowd. And how fierce they are! They tear off each other's legs and arms and bodies, before and behind; and yet they are merry and joyful in their way.
Now, there once was an old man whom all the people called Kribble-Krabble, for that was his name. He always wanted the best of everything, and when he could not manage it otherwise, he did it by magic.
There he sat one day, and held his magnifying-glass to his eye, and looked at a drop of water that had been taken out of a puddle by the ditch. But what a kribbling and krabbling was there! All the thousands of little creatures hopped and sprang and tugged at one another, and ate each other up.
"That is horrible!" said old Kribble-Krabble. "Can one not persuade them to live in peace and quietness, so that each one may mind his own business?"
And he thought it over and over, but it would not do, and so he had recourse to magic.
"I must give them color, that they may be seen more plainly," said he; and he poured something like a little drop of red wine into the drop of water, but it was witches' blood from the lobes of the ear, the finest kind, at ninepence

a drop. And now the wonderful little creatures were pink all over. It looked like a whole town of naked wild men.
"What have you there?" asked another old magician, who had no name—and that was the best thing about him.
"Yes, if you can guess what it is," said Kribble-Krabble, "I'll make you a present of it."
But it is not so easy to find out if one does not know.
And the magician who had no name looked through the magnifying-glass. It looked really like a great town reflected there, in which all the people were running about without clothes. It was terrible! But it was still more terrible to see how one beat and pushed the other, and bit and hacked, and tugged and mauled him. Those at the top were being pulled down, and those at the bottom were struggling upwards.
"Look! look! his leg is longer than mine! Bah! Away with it! There is one who has a little bruise. It hurts him, but it shall hurt him still more."
And they hacked away at him, and they pulled at him, and ate him up, because of the little bruise. And there was one sitting as still as any little maiden, and wishing only for peace and quietness. But now she had to come out, and they tugged at her, and pulled her about, and ate her up.
"That's funny!" said the magician.
"Yes; but what do you think it is?" said Kribble-Krabble. "Can you find that out?"
"Why, one can see that easily enough," said the other. "That's Paris, or some other great city, for they're all alike. It's a great city!"
"It's a drop of puddle water!" said Kribble-Krabble.

THE DRYAD

We are travelling to Paris to the Exhibition.
Now we are there. That was a journey, a flight without magic. We flew on the wings of steam over the sea and across the land.
Yes, our time is the time of fairy tales.
We are in the midst of Paris, in a great hotel. Blooming flowers ornament the staircases, and soft carpets the floors.
Our room is a very cosy one, and through the open balcony door we have a view of a great square. Spring lives down there; it has come to Paris, and arrived at the same time with us. It has come in the shape of a glorious young chestnut tree, with delicate leaves newly opened. How the tree gleams, dressed in its spring garb, before all the other trees in the place!

One of these latter had been struck out of the list of living trees. It lies on the ground with roots exposed. On the place where it stood, the young chestnut tree is to be planted, and to flourish.

It still stands towering aloft on the heavy wagon which has brought it this morning a distance of several miles to Paris. For years it had stood there, in the protection of a mighty oak tree, under which the old venerable clergyman had often sat, with children listening to his stories.

The young chestnut tree had also listened to the stories; for the Dryad who lived in it was a child also. She remembered the time when the tree was so little that it only projected a short way above the grass and ferns around. These were as tall as they would ever be; but the tree grew every year, and enjoyed the air and the sunshine, and drank the dew and the rain. Several times it was also, as it must be, well shaken by the wind and the rain; for that is a part of education.

The Dryad rejoiced in her life, and rejoiced in the sunshine, and the singing of the birds; but she was most rejoiced at human voices; she understood the language of men as well as she understood that of animals.

Butterflies, cockchafers, dragon-flies, everything that could fly came to pay a visit. They could all talk. They told of the village, of the vineyard, of the forest, of the old castle with its parks and canals and ponds. Down in the water dwelt also living beings, which, in their way, could fly under the water from one place to another—beings with knowledge and delineation. They said nothing at all; they were so clever!

And the swallow, who had dived, told about the pretty little goldfish, of the thick turbot, the fat brill, and the old carp. The swallow could describe all that very well, but, "Self is the man," she said. "One ought to see these things one's self." But how was the Dryad ever to see such beings? She was obliged to be satisfied with being able to look over the beautiful country and see the busy industry of men.

It was glorious; but most glorious of all when the old clergyman sat under the oak tree and talked of France, and of the great deeds of her sons and daughters, whose names will be mentioned with admiration through all time. Then the Dryad heard of the shepherd girl, Joan of Arc, and of Charlotte Corday; she heard about Henry the Fourth, and Napoleon the First; she heard names whose echo sounds in the hearts of the people.

The village children listened attentively, and the Dryad no less attentively; she became a school-child with the rest. In the clouds that went sailing by she saw, picture by picture, everything that she heard talked about. The cloudy sky was her picture-book.

She felt so happy in beautiful France, the fruitful land of genius, with the crater of freedom. But in her heart the sting remained that the bird, that every animal that could fly, was much better off than she. Even the fly could look about more in the world, far beyond the Dryad's horizon.

France was so great and so glorious, but she could only look across a little piece of it. The land stretched out, world-wide, with vineyards, forests and great cities. Of all these Paris was the most splendid and the mightiest. The birds could get there; but she, never!

Among the village children was a little ragged, poor girl, but a pretty one to look at. She was always laughing or singing and twining red flowers in her black hair.

"Don't go to Paris!" the old clergyman warned her. "Poor child! if you go there, it will be your ruin."

But she went for all that.

The Dryad often thought of her; for she had the same wish, and felt the same longing for the great city.

The Dryad's tree was bearing its first chestnut blossoms; the birds were twittering round them in the most beautiful sunshine. Then a stately carriage came rolling along that way, and in it sat a grand lady driving the spirited, light-footed horses. On the back seat a little smart groom balanced himself. The Dryad knew the lady, and the old clergyman knew her also. He shook his head gravely when he saw her, and said:

"So you went there after all, and it was your ruin, poor Mary!"

"That one poor?" thought the Dryad. "No; she wears a dress fit for a countess" (she had become one in the city of magic changes). "Oh, if I were only there, amid all the splendor and pomp! They shine up into the very clouds at night; when I look up, I can tell in what direction the town lies."

Towards that direction the Dryad looked every evening. She saw in the dark night the gleaming cloud on the horizon; in the clear moonlight nights she missed the sailing clouds, which showed her pictures of the city and pictures from history.

The child grasps at the picture-books, the Dryad grasped at the cloud-world, her thought-book. A sudden, cloudless sky was for her a blank leaf; and for several days she had only had such leaves before her.

It was in the warm summer-time: not a breeze moved through the glowing hot days. Every leaf, every flower, lay as if it were torpid, and the people seemed torpid, too.

Then the clouds arose and covered the region round about where the gleaming mist announced "Here lies Paris."

The clouds piled themselves up like a chain of mountains, hurried on through the air, and spread themselves abroad over the whole landscape, as far as the Dryad's eye could reach.

Like enormous blue-black blocks of rock, the clouds lay piled over one another. Gleams of lightning shot forth from them.

"These also are the servants of the Lord God," the old clergyman had said.

And there came a bluish dazzling flash of lightning, a lighting up as if of the sun itself, which could burst blocks of rock asunder. The lightning struck and split to the roots the old venerable oak. The crown fell asunder. It seemed as if the tree were stretching forth its arms to clasp the messengers of the light.

No bronze cannon can sound over the land at the birth of a royal child as the thunder sounded at the death of the old oak. The rain streamed down; a refreshing wind was blowing; the storm had gone by, and there was quite a holiday glow on all things. The old clergyman spoke a few words for honorable remembrance, and a painter made a drawing, as a lasting record of the tree.

"Everything passes away," said the Dryad, "passes away like a cloud, and never comes back!"

The old clergyman, too, did not come back. The green roof of his school was gone, and his teaching-chair had vanished. The children did not come; but autumn came, and winter came, and then spring also. In all this change of seasons the Dryad looked toward the region where, at night, Paris gleamed with its bright mist far on the horizon.

Forth from the town rushed engine after engine, train after train, whistling and screaming at all hours in the day. In the evening, towards midnight, at daybreak, and all the day through, came the trains. Out of each one, and into each one, streamed people from the country of every king. A new wonder of the world had summoned them to Paris.

In what form did this wonder exhibit itself?

"A splendid blossom of art and industry," said one, "has unfolded itself in the Champ de Mars, a gigantic sunflower, from whose petals one can learn geography and statistics, and can become as wise as a lord mayor, and raise one's self to the level of art and poetry, and study the greatness and power of the various lands."

"A fairy tale flower," said another, "a many-colored lotus-plant, which spreads out its green leaves like a velvet carpet over the sand. The opening spring has brought it forth, the summer will see it in all its splendor, the autumn winds will sweep it away, so that not a leaf, not a fragment of its root shall remain."

In front of the Military School extends in time of peace the arena of war—a field without a blade of grass, a piece of sandy steppe, as if cut out of the Desert of Africa, where Fata Morgana displays her wondrous airy castles and hanging gardens. In the Champ de Mars, however, these were to be seen more splendid, more wonderful than in the East, for human art had converted the airy deceptive scenes into reality.

"The Aladdin's Palace of the present has been built," it was said. "Day by day, hour by hour, it unfolds more of its wonderful splendor."

The endless halls shine in marble and many colors. "Master Bloodless" here moves his limbs of steel and iron in the great circular hall of machinery. Works of art in metal, in stone, in Gobelins tapestry, announce the vitality of mind that is stirring in every land. Halls of paintings, splendor of flowers, everything that mind and skill can create in the workshop of the artisan, has been placed here for show. Even the memorials of ancient days, out of old graves and turf-moors, have appeared at this general meeting.

The overpowering great variegated whole must be divided into small portions, and pressed together like a plaything, if it is to be understood and described.

Like a great table on Christmas Eve, the Champ de Mars carried a wonder-castle of industry and art, and around this knickknacks from all countries had been ranged, knickknacks on a grand scale, for every nation found some remembrance of home.

Here stood the royal palace of Egypt, there the caravanserai of the desert land. The Bedouin had quitted his sunny country, and hastened by on his camel. Here stood the Russian stables, with the fiery glorious horses of the steppe. Here stood the simple straw-thatched dwelling of the Danish peasant, with the Dannebrog flag, next to Gustavus Vasa's wooden house from Dalarne, with its wonderful carvings. American huts, English cottages, French pavilions, kiosks, theatres, churches, all strewn around, and between them the fresh green turf, the clear springing water, blooming bushes, rare trees, hothouses, in which one might fancy one's self transported into the tropical forest; whole gardens brought from Damascus, and blooming under one roof. What colors, what fragrance!

Artificial grottoes surrounded bodies of fresh or salt water, and gave a glimpse into the empire of the fishes; the visitor seemed to wander at the bottom of the sea, among fishes and polypi.

"All this," they said, "the Champ de Mars offers;" and around the great richly-spread table the crowd of human beings moves like a busy swarm of ants, on foot or in little carriages, for not all feet are equal to such a fatiguing journey.

Hither they swarm from morning till late in the evening. Steamer after steamer, crowded with people, glides down the Seine. The number of carriages is continually on the increase. The swarm of people on foot and on horseback grows more and more dense. Carriages and omnibuses are crowded, stuffed and embroidered with people. All these tributary streams flow in one direction—towards the Exhibition. On every entrance the flag of France is displayed; around the world's bazaar wave the flags of all nations. There is a humming and a murmuring from the hall of the machines; from the towers the melody of the chimes is heard; with the tones of the organs in the churches mingle the hoarse nasal songs from the cafes of the East. It is a kingdom of Babel, a wonder of the world!

In very truth it was. That's what all the reports said, and who did not hear them? The Dryad knew everything that is told here of the new wonder in the city of cities.

"Fly away, ye birds! fly away to see, and then come back and tell me," said the Dryad.

The wish became an intense desire—became the one thought of a life. Then, in the quiet silent night, while the full moon was shining, the Dryad saw a spark fly out of the moon's disc, and fall like a shooting star. And before the tree, whose leaves waved to and fro as if they were stirred by a tempest, stood a noble, mighty, and grand figure. In tones that were at once rich and strong, like the trumpet of the Last Judgment bidding farewell to life and summoning to the great account, it said:

"Thou shalt go to the city of magic; thou shalt take root there, and enjoy the mighty rushing breezes, the air and the sunshine there. But the time of thy life shall then be shortened; the line of years that awaited thee here amid the free nature shall shrink to but a small tale. Poor Dryad! It shall be thy destruction. Thy yearning and longing will increase, thy desire will grow more stormy, the tree itself will be as a prison to thee, thou wilt quit thy cell and give up thy nature to fly out and mingle among men. Then the years that would have belonged to thee will be contracted to half the span of the ephemeral fly, that lives but a day: one night, and thy life-taper shall be blown out—the leaves of the tree will wither and be blown away, to become green never again!"

Thus the words sounded. And the light vanished away, but not the longing of the Dryad. She trembled in the wild fever of expectation.

"I shall go there!" she cried, rejoicingly. "Life is beginning and swells like a cloud; nobody knows whither it is hastening."

When the gray dawn arose and the moon turned pale and the clouds were

tinted red, the wished-for hour struck. The words of promise were fulfilled. People appeared with spades and poles; they dug round the roots of the tree, deeper and deeper, and beneath it. A wagon was brought out, drawn by many horses, and the tree was lifted up, with its roots and the lumps of earth that adhered to them; matting was placed around the roots, as though the tree had its feet in a warm bag. And now the tree was lifted on the wagon and secured with chains. The journey began—the journey to Paris. There the tree was to grow as an ornament to the city of French glory.

The twigs and the leaves of the chestnut tree trembled in the first moments of its being moved; and the Dryad trembled in the pleasurable feeling of expectation.

"Away! away!" it sounded in every beat of her pulse. "Away! away" sounded in words that flew trembling along. The Dryad forgot to bid farewell to the regions of home; she thought not of the waving grass and of the innocent daisies, which had looked up to her as to a great lady, a young Princess playing at being a shepherdess out in the open air.

The chestnut tree stood upon the wagon, and nodded his branches; whether this meant "farewell" or "forward," the Dryad knew not; she dreamed only of the marvellous new things, that seemed yet so familiar, and that were to unfold themselves before her. No child's heart rejoicing in innocence—no heart whose blood danced with passion—had set out on the journey to Paris more full of expectation than she.

Her "farewell" sounded in the words "Away! away!"

The wheels turned; the distant approached; the present vanished. The region was changed, even as the clouds change. New vineyards, forests, villages, villas appeared—came nearer—vanished!

The chestnut tree moved forward, and the Dryad went with it. Steam-engine after steam-engine rushed past, sending up into the air vapory clouds, that formed figures which told of Paris, whence they came, and whither the Dryad was going.

Everything around knew it, and must know whither she was bound. It seemed to her as if every tree she passed stretched out its leaves towards her, with the prayer—"Take me with you! take me with you!" for every tree enclosed a longing Dryad.

What changes during this flight! Houses seemed to be rising out of the earth—more and more—thicker and thicker. The chimneys rose like flower-pots ranged side by side, or in rows one above the other, on the roofs. Great inscriptions in letters a yard long, and figures in various colors, covering the walls from cornice to basement, came brightly out.

"Where does Paris begin, and when shall I be there?" asked the Dryad.

The crowd of people grew; the tumult and the bustle increased; carriage followed upon carriage; people on foot and people on horseback were mingled together; all around were shops on shops, music and song, crying and talking. The Dryad, in her tree, was now in the midst of Paris. The great heavy wagon all at once stopped on a little square planted with trees. The high houses around had all of them balconies to the windows, from which the inhabitants looked down upon the young fresh chestnut tree, which was coming to be planted here as a substitute for the dead tree that lay stretched on the ground.

The passers-by stood still and smiled in admiration of its pure vernal freshness. The older trees, whose buds were still closed, whispered with their waving branches, "Welcome! welcome!" The fountain, throwing its jet of water high up in the air, to let it fall again in the wide stone basin, told the wind to sprinkle the new-comer with pearly drops, as if it wished to give him a refreshing draught to welcome him.

The Dryad felt how her tree was being lifted from the wagon to be placed in the spot where it was to stand. The roots were covered with earth, and fresh turf was laid on top. Blooming shrubs and flowers in pots were ranged around; and thus a little garden arose in the square.

The tree that had been killed by the fumes of gas, the steam of kitchens, and the bad air of the city, was put upon the wagon and driven away. The passers-by looked on. Children and old men sat upon the bench, and looked at the green tree. And we who are telling this story stood upon a balcony, and looked down upon the green spring sight that had been brought in from the fresh country air, and said, what the old clergyman would have said, "Poor Dryad!"

"I am happy! I am happy!" the Dryad cried, rejoicing; "and yet I cannot realize, cannot describe what I feel. Everything is as I fancied it, and yet as I did not fancy it."

The houses stood there, so lofty, so close! The sunlight shone on only one of the walls, and that one was stuck over with bills and placards, before which the people stood still; and this made a crowd.

Carriages rushed past, carriages rolled past; light ones and heavy ones mingled together. Omnibuses, those over-crowded moving houses, came rattling by; horsemen galloped among them; even carts and wagons asserted their rights.

The Dryad asked herself if these high-grown houses, which stood so close around her, would not remove and take other shapes, like the clouds in the sky, and draw aside, so that she might cast a glance into Paris, and over it. Notre Dame must show itself, the Vendome Column, and the wondrous

building which had called and was still calling so many strangers to the city. But the houses did not stir from their places. It was yet day when the lamps were lit. The gas-jets gleamed from the shops, and shone even into the branches of the trees, so that it was like sunlight in summer. The stars above made their appearance, the same to which the Dryad had looked up in her home. She thought she felt a clear pure stream of air which went forth from them. She felt herself lifted up and strengthened, and felt an increased power of seeing through every leaf and through every fibre of the root. Amid all the noise and the turmoil, the colors and the lights, she knew herself watched by mild eyes.

From the side streets sounded the merry notes of fiddles and wind instruments. Up! to the dance, to the dance! to jollity and pleasure! that was their invitation. Such music it was, that horses, carriages, trees, and houses would have danced, if they had known how. The charm of intoxicating delight filled the bosom of the Dryad.

"How glorious, how splendid it is!" she cried, rejoicingly. "Now I am in Paris!"

The next day that dawned, the next night that fell, offered the same spectacle, similar bustle, similar life; changing, indeed, yet always the same; and thus it went on through the sequence of days.

"Now I know every tree, every flower on the square here! I know every house, every balcony, every shop in this narrow cut-off corner, where I am denied the sight of this great mighty city. Where are the arches of triumph, the Boulevards, the wondrous building of the world? I see nothing of all this. As if shut up in a cage, I stand among the high houses, which I now know by heart, with their inscriptions, signs, and placards; all the painted confectionery, that is no longer to my taste. Where are all the things of which I heard, for which I longed, and for whose sake I wanted to come hither? what have I seized, found, won? I feel the same longing I felt before; I feel that there is a life I should wish to grasp and to experience. I must go out into the ranks of living men, and mingle among them. I must fly about like a bird. I must see and feel, and become human altogether. I must enjoy the one half-day, instead of vegetating for years in every-day sameness and weariness, in which I become ill, and at last sink and disappear like the dew on the meadows. I will gleam like the cloud, gleam in the sunshine of life, look out over the whole like the cloud, and pass away like it, no one knoweth whither." Thus sighed the Dryad; and she prayed:

"Take from me the years that were destined for me, and give me but half of the life of the ephemeral fly! Deliver me from my prison! Give me human life, human happiness, only a short span, only the one night, if it cannot

be otherwise; and then punish me for my wish to live, my longing for life! Strike me out of thy list. Let my shell, the fresh young tree, wither, or be hewn down, and burnt to ashes, and scattered to all the winds!"

A rustling went through the leaves of the tree; there was a trembling in each of the leaves; it seemed as if fire streamed through it. A gust of wind shook its green crown, and from the midst of that crown a female figure came forth. In the same moment she was sitting beneath the brightly-illuminated leafy branches, young and beautiful to behold, like poor Mary, to whom the clergyman had said, "The great city will be thy destruction."

The Dryad sat at the foot of the tree—at her house door, which she had locked, and whose key had thrown away. So young! so fair! The stars saw her, and blinked at her. The gas-lamps saw her, and gleamed and beckoned to her. How delicate she was, and yet how blooming!—a child, and yet a grown maiden! Her dress was fine as silk, green as the freshly-opened leaves on the crown of the tree; in her nut-brown hair clung a half-opened chestnut blossom. She looked like the Goddess of Spring.

For one short minute she sat motionless; then she sprang up, and, light as a gazelle, she hurried away. She ran and sprang like the reflection from the mirror that, carried by the sunshine, is cast, now here, now there. Could any one have followed her with his eyes, he would have seen how marvellously her dress and her form changed, according to the nature of the house or the place whose light happened to shine upon her.

She reached the Boulevards. Here a sea of light streamed forth from the gas-flames of the lamps, the shops and the cafes. Here stood in a row young and slender trees, each of which concealed its Dryad, and gave shade from the artificial sunlight. The whole vast pavement was one great festive hall, where covered tables stood laden with refreshments of all kinds, from champagne and Chartreuse down to coffee and beer. Here was an exhibition of flowers, statues, books, and colored stuffs.

From the crowd close by the lofty houses she looked forth over the terrific stream beyond the rows of trees. Yonder heaved a stream of rolling carriages, cabriolets, coaches, omnibuses, cabs, and among them riding gentlemen and marching troops. To cross to the opposite shore was an undertaking fraught with danger to life and limb. Now lanterns shed their radiance abroad; now the gas had the upper hand; suddenly a rocket rises! Whence? Whither?

Here are sounds of soft Italian melodies; yonder, Spanish songs are sung, accompanied by the rattle of the castanets; but strongest of all, and predominating over the rest, the street-organ tunes of the moment, the exciting "Can-

Can" music, which Orpheus never knew, and which was never heard by the "Belle Helene." Even the barrow was tempted to hop upon one of its wheels. The Dryad danced, floated, flew, changing her color every moment, like a humming-bird in the sunshine; each house, with the world belonging to it, gave her its own reflections.

As the glowing lotus-flower, torn from its stem, is carried away by the stream, so the Dryad drifted along. Whenever she paused, she was another being, so that none was able to follow her, to recognize her, or to look more closely at her.

Like cloud-pictures, all things flew by her. She looked into a thousand faces, but not one was familiar to her; she saw not a single form from home. Two bright eyes had remained in her memory. She thought of Mary, poor Mary, the ragged merry child, who wore the red flowers in her black hair. Mary was now here, in the world-city, rich and magnificent as in that day when she drove past the house of the old clergyman, and past the tree of the Dryad, the old oak.

Here she was certainly living, in the deafening tumult. Perhaps she had just stepped out of one of the gorgeous carriages in waiting. Handsome equipages, with coachmen in gold braid and footmen in silken hose, drove up. The people who alighted from them were all richly-dressed ladies. They went through the opened gate, and ascended the broad staircase that led to a building resting on marble pillars. Was this building, perhaps, the wonder of the world? There Mary would certainly be found.

"Sancta Maria!" resounded from the interior. Incense floated through the lofty painted and gilded aisles, where a solemn twilight reigned.

It was the Church of the Madeleine.

Clad in black garments of the most costly stuffs, fashioned according to the latest mode, the rich feminine world of Paris glided across the shining pavement. The crests of the proprietors were engraved on silver shields on the velvet-bound prayer-books, and embroidered in the corners of perfumed handkerchiefs bordered with Brussels lace. A few of the ladies were kneeling in silent prayer before the altars; others resorted to the confessionals.

Anxiety and fear took possession of the Dryad; she felt as if she had entered a place where she had no right to be. Here was the abode of silence, the hall of secrets. Everything was said in whispers, every word was a mystery. The Dryad saw herself enveloped in lace and silk, like the women of wealth and of high birth around her. Had, perhaps, every one of them a longing in her breast, like the Dryad?

A deep, painful sigh was heard. Did it escape from some confessional in a

distant corner, or from the bosom of the Dryad? She drew the veil closer around her; she breathed incense, and not the fresh air. Here was not the abiding-place of her longing.

Away! away—a hastening without rest. The ephemeral fly knows not repose, for her existence is flight.

She was out again among the gas candelabra, by a magnificent fountain.

"All its streaming waters are not able to wash out the innocent blood that was spilt here."

Such were the words spoken. Strangers stood around, carrying on a lively conversation, such as no one would have dared to carry on in the gorgeous hall of secrets whence the Dryad came.

A heavy stone slab was turned and then lifted. She did not understand why. She saw an opening that led into the depths below. The strangers stepped down, leaving the starlit air and the cheerful life of the upper world behind them.

"I am afraid," said one of the women who stood around, to her husband, "I cannot venture to go down, nor do I care for the wonders down yonder. You had better stay here with me."

"Indeed, and travel home," said the man, "and quit Paris without having seen the most wonderful thing of all—the real wonder of the present period, created by the power and resolution of one man!"

"I will not go down for all that," was the reply.

"The wonder of the present time," it had been called. The Dryad had heard and had understood it. The goal of her ardent longing had thus been reached, and here was the entrance to it. Down into the depths below Paris? She had not thought of such a thing; but now she heard it said, and saw the strangers descending, and went after them.

The staircase was of cast iron, spiral, broad and easy. Below there burned a lamp, and farther down, another. They stood in a labyrinth of endless halls and arched passages, all communicating with each other. All the streets and lanes of Paris were to be seen here again, as in a dim reflection. The names were painted up; and every house above had its number down here also, and struck its roots under the macadamized quays of a broad canal, in which the muddy water flowed onward. Over it the fresh streaming water was carried on arches; and quite at the top hung the tangled net of gas-pipes and telegraph-wires.

In the distance lamps gleamed, like a reflection from the world-city above. Every now and then a dull rumbling was heard. This came from the heavy wagons rolling over the entrance bridges.

Whither had the Dryad come?

You have, no doubt, heard of the CATACOMBS? Now they are vanishing points in that new underground world—that wonder of the present day—the sewers of Paris. The Dryad was there, and not in the world's Exhibition in the Champ de Mars.

She heard exclamations of wonder and admiration.

"From here go forth health and life for thousands upon thousands up yonder! Our time is the time of progress, with its manifold blessings."

Such was the opinion and the speech of men; but not of those creatures who had been born here, and who built and dwelt here—of the rats, namely, who were squeaking to one another in the clefts of a crumbling wall, quite plainly, and in a way the Dryad understood well.

A big old Father-Rat, with his tail bitten off, was relieving his feelings in loud squeaks; and his family gave their tribute of concurrence to every word he said: "I am disgusted with this man-mewing," he cried—"with these outbursts of ignorance. A fine magnificence, truly! all made up of gas and petroleum! I can't eat such stuff as that. Everything here is so fine and bright now, that one's ashamed of one's self, without exactly knowing why. Ah, if we only lived in the days of tallow candles! and it does not lie so very far behind us. That was a romantic time, as one may say."

"What are you talking of there?" asked the Dryad. "I have never seen you before. What is it you are talking about?"

"Of the glorious days that are gone," said the Rat—"of the happy time of our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers. Then it was a great thing to get down here. That was a rat's nest quite different from Paris. Mother Plague used to live here then; she killed people, but never rats. Robbers and smugglers could breathe freely here. Here was the meeting-place of the most interesting personages, whom one now only gets to see in the theatres where they act melodrama, up above. The time of romance is gone even in our rat's nest; and here also fresh air and petroleum have broken in."

Thus squeaked the Rat; he squeaked in honor of the old time, when Mother Plague was still alive.

A carriage stopped, a kind of open omnibus, drawn by swift horses. The company mounted and drove away along the Boulevard de Sebastopol, that is to say, the underground boulevard, over which the well-known crowded street of that name extended.

The carriage disappeared in the twilight; the Dryad disappeared, lifted to the cheerful freshness above. Here, and not below in the vaulted passages, filled with heavy air, the wonder work must be found which she was to seek in her short lifetime. It must gleam brighter than all the gas-flames, stronger than the moon that was just gliding past.

Yes, certainly, she saw it yonder in the distance, it gleamed before her, and twinkled and glittered like the evening star in the sky.

She saw a glittering portal open, that led to a little garden, where all was brightness and dance music. Colored lamps surrounded little lakes, in which were water-plants of colored metal, from whose flowers jets of water spurted up. Beautiful weeping willows, real products of spring, hung their fresh branches over these lakes like a fresh, green, transparent, and yet screening veil. In the bushes burnt an open fire, throwing a red twilight over the quiet huts of branches, into which the sounds of music penetrated—an ear tickling, intoxicating music, that sent the blood coursing through the veins.

Beautiful girls in festive attire, with pleasant smiles on their lips, and the light spirit of youth in their hearts—"Marys," with roses in their hair, but without carriage and postilion—flitted to and fro in the wild dance.

Where were the heads, where the feet? As if stung by tarantulas, they sprang, laughed, rejoiced, as if in their ecstacies they were going to embrace all the world.

The Dryad felt herself torn with them into the whirl of the dance. Round her delicate foot clung the silken boot, chestnut brown in color, like the ribbon that floated from her hair down upon her bare shoulders. The green silk dress waved in large folds, but did not entirely hide the pretty foot and ankle.

Had she come to the enchanted Garden of Armida? What was the name of the place?

The name glittered in gas-jets over the entrance. It was "Mabille."

The soaring upwards of rockets, the splashing of fountains, and the popping of champagne corks accompanied the wild bacchantic dance. Over the whole glided the moon through the air, clear, but with a somewhat crooked face.

A wild joviality seemed to rush through the Dryad, as though she were intoxicated with opium. Her eyes spoke, her lips spoke, but the sound of violins and of flutes drowned the sound of her voice. Her partner whispered words to her which she did not understand, nor do we understand them. He stretched out his arms to draw her to him, but he embraced only the empty air.

The Dryad had been carried away, like a rose-leaf on the wind. Before her she saw a flame in the air, a flashing light high up on a tower. The beacon light shone from the goal of her longing, shone from the red lighthouse tower of the Fata Morgana of the Champ de Mars. Thither she was carried by the wind. She circled round the tower; the workmen thought it was a butterfly that had come too early, and that now sank down dying.

The moon shone bright, gas-lamps spread light around, through the halls, over the all-world's buildings scattered about, over the rose-hills and the

rocks produced by human ingenuity, from which waterfalls, driven by the power of "Master Bloodless," fell down. The caverns of the sea, the depths of the lakes, the kingdom of the fishes were opened here. Men walked as in the depths of the deep pond, and held converse with the sea, in the diving-bell of glass. The water pressed against the strong glass walls above and on every side. The polypi, eel-like living creatures, had fastened themselves to the bottom, and stretched out arms, fathoms long, for prey. A big turbot was making himself broad in front, quietly enough, but not without casting some suspicious glances aside. A crab clambered over him, looking like a gigantic spider, while the shrimps wandered about in restless haste, like the butterflies and moths of the sea.

In the fresh water grew water-lilies, nymphaea, and reeds; the gold-fishes stood up below in rank and file, all turning their heads one way, that the streaming water might flow into their mouths. Fat carps stared at the glass wall with stupid eyes. They knew that they were here to be exhibited, and that they had made the somewhat toilsome journey hither in tubs filled with water; and they thought with dismay of the land-sickness from which they had suffered so cruelly on the railway.

They had come to see the Exhibition, and now contemplated it from their fresh or salt-water position. They looked attentively at the crowds of people who passed by them early and late. All the nations in the world, they thought, had made an exhibition of their inhabitants, for the edification of the soles and haddocks, pike and carp, that they might give their opinions upon the different kinds.

"Those are scaly animals" said a little slimy Whiting. "They put on different scales two or three times a day, and they emit sounds which they call speaking. We don't put on scales, and we make ourselves understood in an easier way, simply by twitching the corners of our mouths and staring with our eyes. We have a great many advantages over mankind."

"But they have learned swimming of us," remarked a well-educated Codling. "You must know I come from the great sea outside. In the hot time of the year the people yonder go into the water; first they take off their scales, and then they swim. They have learnt from the frogs to kick out with their hind legs, and row with their fore paws. But they cannot hold out long. They want to be like us, but they cannot come up to us. Poor people!"

And the fishes stared. They thought that the whole swarm of people whom they had seen in the bright daylight were still moving around them; they were certain they still saw the same forms that had first caught their attention.

A pretty Barbel, with spotted skin, and an enviably round back, declared that the "human fry" were still there.

“I can see a well set-up human figure quite well,” said the Barbel. “She was called ‘contumacious lady,’ or something of that kind. She had a mouth and staring eyes, like ours, and a great balloon at the back of her head, and something like a shut-up umbrella in front; there were a lot of dangling bits of seaweed hanging about her. She ought to take all the rubbish off, and go as we do; then she would look something like a respectable barbel, so far as it is possible for a person to look like one!”

“What’s become of that one whom they drew away with the hook? He sat on a wheel-chair, and had paper, and pen, and ink, and wrote down everything. They called him a ‘writer.’”

“They’re going about with him still,” said a hoary old maid of a Carp, who carried her misfortune about with her, so that she was quite hoarse. In her youth she had once swallowed a hook, and still swam patiently about with it in her gullet. “A writer? That means, as we fishes describe it, a kind of cuttle or ink-fish among men.”

Thus the fishes gossipped in their own way; but in the artificial water-grotto the laborers were busy; who were obliged to take advantage of the hours of night to get their work done by daybreak. They accompanied with blows of their hammers and with songs the parting words of the vanishing Dryad.

“So, at any rate, I have seen you, you pretty gold-fishes,” she said. “Yes, I know you;” and she waved her hand to them. “I have known about you a long time in my home; the swallow told me about you. How beautiful you are! how delicate and shining! I should like to kiss every one of you. You others, also. I know you all; but you do not know me.”

The fishes stared out into the twilight. They did not understand a word of it. The Dryad was there no longer. She had been a long time in the open air, where the different countries—the country of black bread, the codfish coast, the kingdom of Russia leather, and the banks of eau-de-Cologne, and the gardens of rose oil—exhaled their perfumes from the world-wonder flower. When, after a night at a ball, we drive home half asleep and half awake, the melodies still sound plainly in our ears; we hear them, and could sing them all from memory. When the eye of the murdered man closes, the picture of what it saw last clings to it for a time like a photographic picture.

So it was likewise here. The bustling life of day had not yet disappeared in the quiet night. The Dryad had seen it; she knew, thus it will be repeated tomorrow. The Dryad stood among the fragrant roses, and thought she knew them, and had seen them in her own home. She also saw red pomegranate flowers, like those that little Mary had worn in her dark hair.

Remembrances from the home of her childhood flashed through her thoughts; her eyes eagerly drank in the prospect around, and feverish restlessness chased her through the wonder-filled halls.

A weariness that increased continually, took possession of her. She felt a longing to rest on the soft Oriental carpets within, or to lean against the weeping willow without by the clear water. But for the ephemeral fly there was no rest. In a few moments the day had completed its circle.

Her thoughts trembled, her limbs trembled, she sank down on the grass by the bubbling water.

"Thou wilt ever spring living from the earth," she said mournfully. "Moisten my tongue—bring me a refreshing draught."

"I am no living water," was the answer. "I only spring upward when the machine wills it." "Give me something of thy freshness, thou green grass," implored the Dryad; "give me one of thy fragrant flowers."

"We must die if we are torn from our stalks," replied the Flowers and the Grass.

"Give me a kiss, thou fresh stream of air—only a single life-kiss."

"Soon the sun will kiss the clouds red," answered the Wind; "then thou wilt be among the dead—blown away, as all the splendor here will be blown away before the year shall have ended. Then I can play again with the light loose sand on the place here, and whirl the dust over the land and through the air. All is dust!"

The Dryad felt a terror like a woman who has cut asunder her pulse-artery in the bath, but is filled again with the love of life, even while she is bleeding to death. She raised herself, tottered forward a few steps, and sank down again at the entrance to a little church. The gate stood open, lights were burning upon the altar, and the organ sounded.

What music! Such notes the Dryad had never yet heard; and yet it seemed to her as if she recognized a number of well-known voices among them. They came deep from the heart of all creation. She thought she heard the stories of the old clergyman, of great deeds, and of the celebrated names, and of the gifts that the creatures of God must bestow upon posterity, if they would live on in the world.

The tones of the organ swelled, and in their song there sounded these words: "Thy wishing and thy longing have torn thee, with thy roots, from the place which God appointed for thee. That was thy destruction, thou poor Dryad!"

The notes became soft and gentle, and seemed to die away in a wail.

In the sky the clouds showed themselves with a ruddy gleam. The Wind sighed: "Pass away, ye dead! now the sun is going to rise!"

The first ray fell on the Dryad. Her form was irradiated in changing colors, like the soap-bubble when it is bursting and becomes a drop of water; like a tear that falls and passes away like a vapor.

Poor Dryad! Only a dew-drop, only a tear, poured upon the earth, and vanished away!

JACK THE DULLARD

AN OLD STORY TOLD ANEW

Far in the interior of the country lay an old baronial hall, and in it lived an old proprietor, who had two sons, which two young men thought themselves too clever by half. They wanted to go out and woo the King's daughter; for the maiden in question had publicly announced that she would choose for her husband that youth who could arrange his words best.

So these two geniuses prepared themselves a full week for the wooing—this was the longest time that could be granted them; but it was enough, for they had had much preparatory information, and everybody knows how useful that is. One of them knew the whole Latin dictionary by heart, and three whole years of the daily paper of the little town into the bargain, and so well, indeed, that he could repeat it all either backwards or forwards, just as he chose. The other was deeply read in the corporation laws, and knew by heart what every corporation ought to know; and accordingly he thought he could talk of affairs of state, and put his spoke in the wheel in the council. And he knew one thing more: he could embroider suspenders with roses and other flowers, and with arabesques, for he was a tasty, light-fingered fellow.

"I shall win the Princess!" So cried both of them. Therefore their old papa gave to each of them a handsome horse. The youth who knew the dictionary and newspaper by heart had a black horse, and he who knew all about the corporation laws received a milk-white steed. Then they rubbed the corners of their mouths with fish-oil, so that they might become very smooth and glib. All the servants stood below in the courtyard, and looked on while they mounted their horses; and just by chance the third son came up. For the proprietor had really three sons, though nobody counted the third with his brothers, because he was not so learned as they, and indeed he was generally known as "Jack the Dullard."

"Hallo!" said Jack the Dullard, "where are you going? I declare you have put on your Sunday clothes!"

"We're going to the King's court, as suitors to the King's daughter. Don't you know the announcement that has been made all through the country?" And they told him all about it.

"My word! I'll be in it too!" cried Jack the Dullard; and his two brothers burst out laughing at him, and rode away.

"Father, dear," said Jack, "I must have a horse too. I do feel so desperately inclined to marry! If she accepts me, she accepts me; and if she won't have me, I'll have her; but she shall be mine!"

“Don’t talk nonsense,” replied the old gentleman. “You shall have no horse from me. You don’t know how to speak—you can’t arrange your words. Your brothers are very different fellows from you.”
“Well,” quoth Jack the Dullard, “If I can’t have a horse, I’ll take the Billy-goat, who belongs to me, and he can carry me very well!”
And so said, so done. He mounted the Billy-goat, pressed his heels into its sides, and galloped down the high street like a hurricane.
“Hei, houp! that was a ride! Here I come!” shouted Jack the Dullard, and he sang till his voice echoed far and wide.
But his brothers rode slowly on in advance of him. They spoke not a word, for they were thinking about the fine extempore speeches they would have to bring out, and these had to be cleverly prepared beforehand.
“Hallo!” shouted Jack the Dullard. “Here am I! Look what I have found on the high road.” And he showed them what it was, and it was a dead crow.
“Dullard!” exclaimed the brothers, “what are you going to do with that?”
“With the crow? why, I am going to give it to the Princess.”
“Yes, do so,” said they; and they laughed, and rode on.
“Hallo, here I am again! just see what I have found now: you don’t find that on the high road every day!”
And the brothers turned round to see what he could have found now.
“Dullard!” they cried, “that is only an old wooden shoe, and the upper part is missing into the bargain; are you going to give that also to the Princess?”
“Most certainly I shall,” replied Jack the Dullard; and again the brothers laughed and rode on, and thus they got far in advance of him; but—
“Hallo—hop rara!” and there was Jack the Dullard again. “It is getting better and better,” he cried. “Hurrah! it is quite famous.”
“Why, what have you found this time?” inquired the brothers.
“Oh,” said Jack the Dullard, “I can hardly tell you. How glad the Princess will be!”
“Bah!” said the brothers; “that is nothing but clay out of the ditch.”
“Yes, certainly it is,” said Jack the Dullard; “and clay of the finest sort. See, it is so wet, it runs through one’s fingers.” And he filled his pocket with the clay.
But his brothers galloped on till the sparks flew, and consequently they arrived a full hour earlier at the town gate than could Jack. Now at the gate each suitor was provided with a number, and all were placed in rows immediately on their arrival, six in each row, and so closely packed together that they could not move their arms; and that was a prudent arrangement, for they would certainly have come to blows, had they been able, merely because one of them stood before the other.

All the inhabitants of the country round about stood in great crowds around the castle, almost under the very windows, to see the Princess receive the suitors; and as each stepped into the hall, his power of speech seemed to desert him, like the light of a candle that is blown out. Then the Princess would say, "He is of no use! Away with him out of the hall!"

At last the turn came for that brother who knew the dictionary by heart; but he did not know it now; he had absolutely forgotten it altogether; and the boards seemed to re-echo with his footsteps, and the ceiling of the hall was made of looking-glass, so that he saw himself standing on his head; and at the window stood three clerks and a head clerk, and every one of them was writing down every single word that was uttered, so that it might be printed in the newspapers, and sold for a penny at the street corners. It was a terrible ordeal, and they had, moreover, made such a fire in the stove, that the room seemed quite red hot.

"It is dreadfully hot here!" observed the first brother.

"Yes," replied the Princess, "my father is going to roast young pullets today."

"Baa!" there he stood like a baa-lamb. He had not been prepared for a speech of this kind, and had not a word to say, though he intended to say something witty. "Baa!"

"He is of no use!" said the Princess. "Away with him!"

And he was obliged to go accordingly.

And now the second brother came in.

"It is terribly warm here!" he observed.

"Yes, we're roasting pullets to-day," replied the Princess.

"What—what were you—were you pleased to ob-" stammered he—and all the clerks wrote down, "pleased to ob-"

"He is of no use!" said the Princess. "Away with him!"

Now came the turn of Jack the Dullard. He rode into the hall on his goat.

"Well, it's most abominably hot here."

"Yes, because I'm roasting young pullets," replied the Princess.

"Ah, that's lucky!" exclaimed Jack the Dullard, "for I suppose you'll let me roast my crow at the same time?"

"With the greatest pleasure," said the Princess. "But have you anything you can roast it in? for I have neither pot nor pan."

"Certainly I have!" said Jack. "Here's a cooking utensil with a tin handle."

And he brought out the old wooden shoe, and put the crow into it.

"Well, that is a famous dish!" said the Princess. "But what shall we do for sauce?"

"Oh, I have that in my pocket," said Jack; "I have so much of it that I can af-

ford to throw some away;" and he poured some of the clay out of his pocket.
"I like that!" said the Princess. "You can give an answer, and you have something to say for yourself, and so you shall be my husband. But are you aware that every word we speak is being taken down, and will be published in the paper to-morrow? Look yonder, and you will see in every window three clerks and a head clerk; and the old head clerk is the worst of all, for he can't understand anything."
But she only said this to frighten Jack the Dullard; and the clerks gave a great crow of delight, and each one spurted a blot out of his pen on to the floor.
"Oh, those are the gentlemen, are they?" said Jack; "then I will give the best I have to the head clerk." And he turned out his pockets, and flung the wet clay full in the head clerk's face.
"That was very cleverly done," observed the Princess. "I could not have done that; but I shall learn in time."
And accordingly Jack the Dullard was made a king, and received a crown and a wife, and sat upon a throne. And this report we have wet from the press of the head clerk and the corporation of printers—but they are not to be depended upon in the least.

THE DUMB BOOK

In the high-road which led through a wood stood a solitary farm-house; the road, in fact, ran right through its yard. The sun was shining and all the windows were open; within the house people were very busy. In the yard, in an arbour formed by lilac bushes in full bloom, stood an open coffin; thither they had carried a dead man, who was to be buried that very afternoon. Nobody shed a tear over him; his face was covered over with a white cloth, under his head they had placed a large thick book, the leaves of which consisted of folded sheets of blotting-paper, and withered flowers lay between them; it was the herbarium which he had gathered in various places and was to be buried with him, according to his own wish. Every one of the flowers in it was connected with some chapter of his life.
"Who is the dead man?" we asked.
"The old student," was the reply. "They say that he was once an energetic young man, that he studied the dead languages, and sang and even composed many songs; then something had happened to him, and in consequence of this he gave himself up to drink, body and mind. When at last he had ruined his health, they brought him into the country, where someone paid for his board and residence. He was gentle as a child as long as the

sullen mood did not come over him; but when it came he was fierce, became as strong as a giant, and ran about in the wood like a chased deer. But when we succeeded in bringing him home, and prevailed upon him to open the book with the dried-up plants in it, he would sometimes sit for a whole day looking at this or that plant, while frequently the tears rolled over his cheeks. God knows what was in his mind; but he requested us to put the book into his coffin, and now he lies there. In a little while the lid will be placed upon the coffin, and he will have sweet rest in the grave!"

The cloth which covered his face was lifted up; the dead man's face expressed peace—a sunbeam fell upon it. A swallow flew with the swiftness of an arrow into the arbour, turning in its flight, and twittered over the dead man's head.

What a strange feeling it is—surely we all know it—to look through old letters of our young days; a different life rises up out of the past, as it were, with all its hopes and sorrows. How many of the people with whom in those days we used to be on intimate terms appear to us as if dead, and yet they are still alive—only we have not thought of them for such a long time, whom we imagined we should retain in our memories for ever, and share every joy and sorrow with them.

The withered oak leaf in the book here recalled the friend, the schoolfellow, who was to be his friend for life. He fixed the leaf to the student's cap in the green wood, when they vowed eternal friendship. Where does he dwell now? The leaf is kept, but the friendship does no longer exist. Here is a foreign hothouse plant, too tender for the gardens of the North. It is almost as if its leaves still smelt sweet! She gave it to him out of her own garden—a nobleman's daughter.

Here is a water-lily that he had plucked himself, and watered with salt tears—a lily of sweet water. And here is a nettle: what may its leaves tell us? What might he have thought when he plucked and kept it? Here is a little snowdrop out of the solitary wood; here is an evergreen from the flower-pot at the tavern; and here is a simple blade of grass.

The lilac bends its fresh fragrant flowers over the dead man's head; the swallow passes again—"twit, twit;" now the men come with hammer and nails, the lid is placed over the dead man, while his head rests on the dumb book—so long cherished, now closed for ever!

THE ELF OF THE ROSE

In the midst of a garden grew a rose-tree, in full blossom, and in the prettiest of all the roses lived an elf. He was such a little wee thing, that no human eye could see him. Behind each leaf of the rose he had a sleeping chamber. He was as well formed and as beautiful as a little child could be, and had wings that reached from his shoulders to his feet. Oh, what sweet fragrance there was in his chambers! and how clean and beautiful were the walls! for they were the blushing leaves of the rose.

During the whole day he enjoyed himself in the warm sunshine, flew from flower to flower, and danced on the wings of the flying butterflies. Then he took it into his head to measure how many steps he would have to go through the roads and cross-roads that are on the leaf of a linden-tree. What we call the veins on a leaf, he took for roads; ay, and very long roads they were for him; for before he had half finished his task, the sun went down: he had commenced his work too late. It became very cold, the dew fell, and the wind blew; so he thought the best thing he could do would be to return home. He hurried himself as much as he could; but he found the roses all closed up, and he could not get in; not a single rose stood open. The poor little elf was very much frightened. He had never before been out at night, but had always slumbered secretly behind the warm rose-leaves. Oh, this would certainly be his death. At the other end of the garden, he knew there was an arbor, overgrown with beautiful honey-suckles. The blossoms looked like large painted horns; and he thought to himself, he would go and sleep in one of these till the morning. He flew thither; but "hush!" two people were in the arbor,—a handsome young man and a beautiful lady. They sat side by side, and wished that they might never be obliged to part. They loved each other much more than the best child can love its father and mother.

"But we must part," said the young man; "your brother does not like our engagement, and therefore he sends me so far away on business, over mountains and seas. Farewell, my sweet bride; for so you are to me."

And then they kissed each other, and the girl wept, and gave him a rose; but before she did so, she pressed a kiss upon it so fervently that the flower opened. Then the little elf flew in, and leaned his head on the delicate, fragrant walls. Here he could plainly hear them say, "Farewell, farewell;" and he felt that the rose had been placed on the young man's breast. Oh, how his heart did beat! The little elf could not go to sleep, it thumped so loudly. The young man took it out as he walked through the dark wood alone, and kissed the flower so often and so violently, that the little elf was almost

crushed. He could feel through the leaf how hot the lips of the young man were, and the rose had opened, as if from the heat of the noonday sun.

There came another man, who looked gloomy and wicked. He was the wicked brother of the beautiful maiden. He drew out a sharp knife, and while the other was kissing the rose, the wicked man stabbed him to death; then he cut off his head, and buried it with the body in the soft earth under the linden-tree.

"Now he is gone, and will soon be forgotten," thought the wicked brother; "he will never come back again. He was going on a long journey over mountains and seas; it is easy for a man to lose his life in such a journey. My sister will suppose he is dead; for he cannot come back, and she will not dare to question me about him."

Then he scattered the dry leaves over the light earth with his foot, and went home through the darkness; but he went not alone, as he thought,—the little elf accompanied him. He sat in a dry rolled-up linden-leaf, which had fallen from the tree on to the wicked man's head, as he was digging the grave. The hat was on the head now, which made it very dark, and the little elf shuddered with fright and indignation at the wicked deed.

It was the dawn of morning before the wicked man reached home; he took off his hat, and went into his sister's room. There lay the beautiful, blooming girl, dreaming of him whom she loved so, and who was now, she supposed, travelling far away over mountain and sea. Her wicked brother stopped over her, and laughed hideously, as fiends only can laugh. The dry leaf fell out of his hair upon the counterpane; but he did not notice it, and went to get a little sleep during the early morning hours. But the elf slipped out of the withered leaf, placed himself by the ear of the sleeping girl, and told her, as in a dream, of the horrid murder; described the place where her brother had slain her lover, and buried his body; and told her of the linden-tree, in full blossom, that stood close by.

"That you may not think this is only a dream that I have told you," he said, "you will find on your bed a withered leaf."

Then she awoke, and found it there. Oh, what bitter tears she shed! and she could not open her heart to any one for relief.

The window stood open the whole day, and the little elf could easily have reached the roses, or any of the flowers; but he could not find it in his heart to leave one so afflicted. In the window stood a bush bearing monthly roses. He seated himself in one of the flowers, and gazed on the poor girl. Her brother often came into the room, and would be quite cheerful, in spite of his base conduct; so she dare not say a word to him of her heart's grief.

As soon as night came on, she slipped out of the house, and went into the wood, to the spot where the linden-tree stood; and after removing the leaves from the earth, she turned it up, and there found him who had been murdered. Oh, how she wept and prayed that she also might die! Gladly would she have taken the body home with her; but that was impossible; so she took up the poor head with the closed eyes, kissed the cold lips, and shook the mould out of the beautiful hair.

"I will keep this," said she; and as soon as she had covered the body again with the earth and leaves, she took the head and a little sprig of jasmine that bloomed in the wood, near the spot where he was buried, and carried them home with her. As soon as she was in her room, she took the largest flower-pot she could find, and in this she placed the head of the dead man, covered it up with earth, and planted the twig of jasmine in it.

"Farewell, farewell," whispered the little elf. He could not any longer endure to witness all this agony of grief, he therefore flew away to his own rose in the garden. But the rose was faded; only a few dry leaves still clung to the green hedge behind it.

"Alas! how soon all that is good and beautiful passes away," sighed the elf. After a while he found another rose, which became his home, for among its delicate fragrant leaves he could dwell in safety. Every morning he flew to the window of the poor girl, and always found her weeping by the flower pot. The bitter tears fell upon the jasmine twig, and each day, as she became paler and paler, the sprig appeared to grow greener and fresher. One shoot after another sprouted forth, and little white buds blossomed, which the poor girl fondly kissed. But her wicked brother scolded her, and asked her if she was going mad. He could not imagine why she was weeping over that flower-pot, and it annoyed him. He did not know whose closed eyes were there, nor what red lips were fading beneath the earth. And one day she sat and leaned her head against the flower-pot, and the little elf of the rose found her asleep. Then he seated himself by her ear, talked to her of that evening in the arbor, of the sweet perfume of the rose, and the loves of the elves. Sweetly she dreamed, and while she dreamt, her life passed away calmly and gently, and her spirit was with him whom she loved, in heaven. And the jasmine opened its large white bells, and spread forth its sweet fragrance; it had no other way of showing its grief for the dead. But the wicked brother considered the beautiful blooming plant as his own property, left to him by his sister, and he placed it in his sleeping room, close by his bed, for it was very lovely in appearance, and the fragrance sweet and delightful. The little elf of the rose followed it, and flew from flower to

flower, telling each little spirit that dwelt in them the story of the murdered young man, whose head now formed part of the earth beneath them, and of the wicked brother and the poor sister. "We know it," said each little spirit in the flowers, "we know it, for have we not sprung from the eyes and lips of the murdered one. We know it, we know it," and the flowers nodded with their heads in a peculiar manner. The elf of the rose could not understand how they could rest so quietly in the matter, so he flew to the bees, who were gathering honey, and told them of the wicked brother. And the bees told it to their queen, who commanded that the next morning they should go and kill the murderer. But during the night, the first after the sister's death, while the brother was sleeping in his bed, close to where he had placed the fragrant jasmine, every flower cup opened, and invisibly the little spirits stole out, armed with poisonous spears. They placed themselves by the ear of the sleeper, told him dreadful dreams and then flew across his lips, and pricked his tongue with their poisoned spears. "Now have we revenged the dead," said they, and flew back into the white bells of the jasmine flowers. When the morning came, and as soon as the window was opened, the rose elf, with the queen bee, and the whole swarm of bees, rushed in to kill him. But he was already dead. People were standing round the bed, and saying that the scent of the jasmine had killed him. Then the elf of the rose understood the revenge of the flowers, and explained it to the queen bee, and she, with the whole swarm, buzzed about the flower-pot. The bees could not be driven away. Then a man took it up to remove it, and one of the bees stung him in the hand, so that he let the flower-pot fall, and it was broken to pieces. Then every one saw the whitened skull, and they knew the dead man in the bed was a murderer. And the queen bee hummed in the air, and sang of the revenge of the flowers, and of the elf of the rose and said that behind the smallest leaf dwells One, who can discover evil deeds, and punish them also.

THE ELFIN HILL

A few large lizards were running nimbly about in the clefts of an old tree; they could understand one another very well, for they spoke the lizard language.

"What a buzzing and a rumbling there is in the elfin hill," said one of the lizards; "I have not been able to close my eyes for two nights on account of the noise; I might just as well have had the toothache, for that always keeps me awake."

"There is something going on within there," said the other lizard; "they

propped up the top of the hill with four red posts, till cock-crow this morning, so that it is thoroughly aired, and the elfin girls have learnt new dances; there is something."

"I spoke about it to an earth-worm of my acquaintance," said a third lizard; "the earth-worm had just come from the elfin hill, where he has been groping about in the earth day and night. He has heard a great deal; although he cannot see, poor miserable creature, yet he understands very well how to wriggle and lurk about. They expect friends in the elfin hill, grand company, too; but who they are the earth-worm would not say, or, perhaps, he really did not know. All the will-o'-the-wisps are ordered to be there to hold a torch dance, as it is called. The silver and gold which is plentiful in the hill will be polished and placed out in the moonlight."

"Who can the strangers be?" asked the lizards; "what can the matter be? Hark, what a buzzing and humming there is!"

Just at this moment the elfin hill opened, and an old elfin maiden, hollow behind, came tripping out; she was the old elf king's housekeeper, and a distant relative of the family; therefore she wore an amber heart on the middle of her forehead. Her feet moved very fast, "trip, trip;" good gracious, how she could trip right down to the sea to the night-raven.

"You are invited to the elf hill for this evening," said she; "but will you do me a great favor and undertake the invitations? you ought to do something, for you have no housekeeping to attend to as I have. We are going to have some very grand people, conjurors, who have always something to say; and therefore the old elf king wishes to make a great display."

"Who is to be invited?" asked the raven.

"All the world may come to the great ball, even human beings, if they can only talk in their sleep, or do something after our fashion. But for the feast the company must be carefully selected; we can only admit persons of high rank; I have had a dispute myself with the elf king, as he thought we could not admit ghosts. The merman and his daughter must be invited first, although it may not be agreeable to them to remain so long on dry land, but they shall have a wet stone to sit on, or perhaps something better; so I think they will not refuse this time. We must have all the old demons of the first class, with tails, and the hobgoblins and imps; and then I think we ought not to leave out the death-horse, or the grave-pig, or even the church dwarf, although they do belong to the clergy, and are not reckoned among our people; but that is merely their office, they are nearly related to us, and visit us very frequently."

"Croak," said the night-raven as he flew away with the invitations.

The elfin maidens we're already dancing on the elf hill, and they danced in shawls woven from moonshine and mist, which look very pretty to those who like such things. The large hall within the elf hill was splendidly decorated; the floor had been washed with moonshine, and the walls had been rubbed with magic ointment, so that they glowed like tulip-leaves in the light. In the kitchen were frogs roasting on the spit, and dishes preparing of snail skins, with children's fingers in them, salad of mushroom seed, hemlock, noses and marrow of mice, beer from the marsh woman's brewery, and sparkling salt-petre wine from the grave cellars. These were all substantial food. Rusty nails and church-window glass formed the dessert. The old elf king had his gold crown polished up with powdered slate-pencil; it was like that used by the first form, and very difficult for an elf king to obtain. In the bedrooms, curtains were hung up and fastened with the slime of snails; there was, indeed, a buzzing and humming everywhere.

"Now we must fumigate the place with burnt horse-hair and pig's bristles, and then I think I shall have done my part," said the elf man-servant.

"Father, dear," said the youngest daughter, "may I now hear who our high-born visitors are?"

"Well, I suppose I must tell you now," he replied; "two of my daughters must prepare themselves to be married, for the marriages certainly will take place. The old goblin from Norway, who lives in the ancient Dovre mountains, and who possesses many castles built of rock and freestone, besides a gold mine, which is better than all, so it is thought, is coming with his two sons, who are both seeking a wife. The old goblin is a true-hearted, honest, old Norwegian graybeard; cheerful and straightforward. I knew him formerly, when we used to drink together to our good fellowship: he came here once to fetch his wife, she is dead now. She was the daughter of the king of the chalk-hills at Moen. They say he took his wife from chalk; I shall be delighted to see him again. It is said that the boys are ill-bred, forward lads, but perhaps that is not quite correct, and they will become better as they grow older. Let me see that you know how to teach them good manners."

"And when are they coming?" asked the daughter.

"That depends upon wind and weather," said the elf king; "they travel economically. They will come when there is the chance of a ship. I wanted them to come over to Sweden, but the old man was not inclined to take my advice. He does not go forward with the times, and that I do not like."

Two will-o'-the-wisps came jumping in, one quicker than the other, so of course, one arrived first. "They are coming! they are coming!" he cried.

"Give me my crown," said the elf king, "and let me stand in the moonshine." The daughters drew on their shawls and bowed down to the ground. There stood the old goblin from the Dovre mountains, with his crown of hardened ice and polished fir-cones. Besides this, he wore a bear-skin, and great, warm boots, while his sons went with their throats bare and wore no braces, for they were strong men.

"Is that a hill?" said the youngest of the boys, pointing to the elf hill, "we should call it a hole in Norway."

"Boys," said the old man, "a hole goes in, and a hill stands out; have you no eyes in your heads?"

Another thing they wondered at was, that they were able without trouble to understand the language.

"Take care," said the old man, "or people will think you have not been well brought up."

Then they entered the elfin hill, where the select and grand company were assembled, and so quickly had they appeared that they seemed to have been blown together. But for each guest the neatest and pleasantest arrangement had been made. The sea folks sat at table in great water-tubs, and they said it was just like being at home. All behaved themselves properly excepting the two young northern goblins; they put their legs on the table and thought they were all right.

"Feet off the table-cloth!" said the old goblin. They obeyed, but not immediately. Then they tickled the ladies who waited at table, with the fir-cones, which they carried in their pockets. They took off their boots, that they might be more at ease, and gave them to the ladies to hold. But their father, the old goblin, was very different; he talked pleasantly about the stately Norwegian rocks, and told fine tales of the waterfalls which dashed over them with a clattering noise like thunder or the sound of an organ, spreading their white foam on every side. He told of the salmon that leaps in the rushing waters, while the water-god plays on his golden harp. He spoke of the bright winter nights, when the sledge bells are ringing, and the boys run with burning torches across the smooth ice, which is so transparent that they can see the fishes dart forward beneath their feet. He described everything so clearly, that those who listened could see it all; they could see the saw-mills going, the men-servants and the maidens singing songs, and dancing a rattling dance,—when all at once the old goblin gave the old elfin maiden a kiss, such a tremendous kiss, and yet they were almost strangers to each other.

Then the elfin girls had to dance, first in the usual way, and then with stamping feet, which they performed very well; then followed the artistic and

solo dance. Dear me, how they did throw their legs about! No one could tell where the dance begun, or where it ended, nor indeed which were legs and which were arms, for they were all flying about together, like the shavings in a saw-pit! And then they spun round so quickly that the death-horse and the grave-pig became sick and giddy, and were obliged to leave the table.

"Stop!" cried the old goblin, "is that the only house-keeping they can perform? Can they do anything more than dance and throw about their legs, and make a whirlwind?"

"You shall soon see what they can do," said the elf king. And then he called his youngest daughter to him. She was slender and fair as moonlight, and the most graceful of all the sisters. She took a white chip in her mouth, and vanished instantly; this was her accomplishment. But the old goblin said he should not like his wife to have such an accomplishment, and thought his boys would have the same objection. Another daughter could make a figure like herself follow her, as if she had a shadow, which none of the goblin folk ever had. The third was of quite a different sort; she had learnt in the brew-house of the moor witch how to lard elfin puddings with glow-worms.

"She will make a good housewife," said the old goblin, and then saluted her with his eyes instead of drinking her health; for he did not drink much. Now came the fourth daughter, with a large harp to play upon; and when she struck the first chord, every one lifted up the left leg (for the goblins are left-legged), and at the second chord they found they must all do just what she wanted.

"That is a dangerous woman," said the old goblin; and the two sons walked out of the hill; they had had enough of it. "And what can the next daughter do?" asked the old goblin.

"I have learnt everything that is Norwegian," said she; "and I will never marry, unless I can go to Norway."

Then her youngest sister whispered to the old goblin, "That is only because she has heard, in a Norwegian song, that when the world shall decay, the cliffs of Norway will remain standing like monuments; and she wants to get there, that she may be safe; for she is so afraid of sinking."

"Ho! ho!" said the old goblin, "is that what she means? Well, what can the seventh and last do?"

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the elf king, for he could reckon; but the sixth would not come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," said she. "No one cares for me, nor troubles himself about me; and I have enough to do to sew my grave clothes."

So the seventh and last came; and what could she do? Why, she could tell stories, as many as you liked, on any subject.

“Here are my five fingers,” said the old goblin; “now tell me a story for each of them.”
So she took him by the wrist, and he laughed till he nearly choked; and when she came to the fourth finger, there was a gold ring on it, as if it knew there was to be a betrothal. Then the old goblin said, “Hold fast what you have: this hand is yours; for I will have you for a wife myself.”
Then the elfin girl said that the stories about the ring-finger and little Peter Playman had not yet been told.
“We will hear them in the winter,” said the old goblin, “and also about the fir and the birch-trees, and the ghost stories, and of the tingling frost. You shall tell your tales, for no one over there can do it so well; and we will sit in the stone rooms, where the pine logs are burning, and drink mead out of the golden drinking-horn of the old Norwegian kings. The water-god has given me two; and when we sit there, Nix comes to pay us a visit, and will sing you all the songs of the mountain shepherdesses. How merry we shall be! The salmon will be leaping in the waterfalls, and dashing against the stone walls, but he will not be able to come in. It is indeed very pleasant to live in old Norway. But where are the lads?”
Where indeed were they? Why, running about the fields, and blowing out the will-o’-the-wisps, who so good-naturedly came and brought their torches.
“What tricks have you been playing?” said the old goblin. “I have taken a mother for you, and now you may take one of your aunts.”
But the youngsters said they would rather make a speech and drink to their good fellowship; they had no wish to marry. Then they made speeches and drank toasts, and tipped their glasses, to show that they were empty. Then they took off their coats, and lay down on the table to sleep; for they made themselves quite at home. But the old goblin danced about the room with his young bride, and exchanged boots with her, which is more fashionable than exchanging rings.
“The cock is crowing,” said the old elfin maiden who acted as housekeeper; “now we must close the shutters, that the sun may not scorch us.”
Then the hill closed up. But the lizards continued to run up and down the riven tree; and one said to the other, “Oh, how much I was pleased with the old goblin!”
“The boys pleased me better,” said the earth-worm. But then the poor miserable creature could not see.

THE EMPEROR'S NEW SUIT

Many, many years ago lived an emperor, who thought so much of new clothes that he spent all his money in order to obtain them; his only ambition was to be always well dressed. He did not care for his soldiers, and the theatre did not amuse him; the only thing, in fact, he thought anything of was to drive out and show a new suit of clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and as one would say of a king "He is in his cabinet," so one could say of him, "The emperor is in his dressing-room."

The great city where he resided was very gay; every day many strangers from all parts of the globe arrived. One day two swindlers came to this city; they made people believe that they were weavers, and declared they could manufacture the finest cloth to be imagined. Their colours and patterns, they said, were not only exceptionally beautiful, but the clothes made of their material possessed the wonderful quality of being invisible to any man who was unfit for his office or unpardonably stupid.

"That must be wonderful cloth," thought the emperor. "If I were to be dressed in a suit made of this cloth I should be able to find out which men in my empire were unfit for their places, and I could distinguish the clever from the stupid. I must have this cloth woven for me without delay." And he gave a large sum of money to the swindlers, in advance, that they should set to work without any loss of time. They set up two looms, and pretended to be very hard at work, but they did nothing whatever on the looms. They asked for the finest silk and the most precious gold-cloth; all they got they did away with, and worked at the empty looms till late at night.

"I should very much like to know how they are getting on with the cloth," thought the emperor. But he felt rather uneasy when he remembered that he who was not fit for his office could not see it. Personally, he was of opinion that he had nothing to fear, yet he thought it advisable to send somebody else first to see how matters stood. Everybody in the town knew what a remarkable quality the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or stupid their neighbours were.

"I shall send my honest old minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He can judge best how the stuff looks, for he is intelligent, and nobody understands his office better than he."

The good old minister went into the room where the swindlers sat before the empty looms. "Heaven preserve us!" he thought, and opened his eyes wide, "I cannot see anything at all," but he did not say so. Both swindlers requested him to come near, and asked him if he did not admire the exqui-

site pattern and the beautiful colours, pointing to the empty looms. The poor old minister tried his very best, but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to be seen. "Oh dear," he thought, "can I be so stupid? I should never have thought so, and nobody must know it! Is it possible that I am not fit for my office? No, no, I cannot say that I was unable to see the cloth."

"Now, have you got nothing to say?" said one of the swindlers, while he pretended to be busily weaving.

"Oh, it is very pretty, exceedingly beautiful," replied the old minister looking through his glasses. "What a beautiful pattern, what brilliant colours! I shall tell the emperor that I like the cloth very much."

"We are pleased to hear that," said the two weavers, and described to him the colours and explained the curious pattern. The old minister listened attentively, that he might relate to the emperor what they said; and so he did.

Now the swindlers asked for more money, silk and gold-cloth, which they required for weaving. They kept everything for themselves, and not a thread came near the loom, but they continued, as hitherto, to work at the empty looms.

Soon afterwards the emperor sent another honest courtier to the weavers to see how they were getting on, and if the cloth was nearly finished. Like the old minister, he looked and looked but could see nothing, as there was nothing to be seen.

"Is it not a beautiful piece of cloth?" asked the two swindlers, showing and explaining the magnificent pattern, which, however, did not exist.

"I am not stupid," said the man. "It is therefore my good appointment for which I am not fit. It is very strange, but I must not let any one know it;" and he praised the cloth, which he did not see, and expressed his joy at the beautiful colours and the fine pattern. "It is very excellent," he said to the emperor.

Everybody in the whole town talked about the precious cloth. At last the emperor wished to see it himself, while it was still on the loom. With a number of courtiers, including the two who had already been there, he went to the two clever swindlers, who now worked as hard as they could, but without using any thread.

"Is it not magnificent?" said the two old statesmen who had been there before. "Your Majesty must admire the colours and the pattern." And then they pointed to the empty looms, for they imagined the others could see the cloth.

"What is this?" thought the emperor, "I do not see anything at all. That is terrible! Am I stupid? Am I unfit to be emperor? That would indeed be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me."

"Really," he said, turning to the weavers, "your cloth has our most gracious approval;" and nodding contentedly he looked at the empty loom, for he did

not like to say that he saw nothing. All his attendants, who were with him, looked and looked, and although they could not see anything more than the others, they said, like the emperor, “It is very beautiful.” And all advised him to wear the new magnificent clothes at a great procession which was soon to take place. “It is magnificent, beautiful, excellent,” one heard them say; everybody seemed to be delighted, and the emperor appointed the two swindlers “Imperial Court weavers.”

The whole night previous to the day on which the procession was to take place, the swindlers pretended to work, and burned more than sixteen candles. People should see that they were busy to finish the emperor’s new suit. They pretended to take the cloth from the loom, and worked about in the air with big scissors, and sewed with needles without thread, and said at last: “The emperor’s new suit is ready now.”

The emperor and all his barons then came to the hall; the swindlers held their arms up as if they held something in their hands and said: “These are the trousers!” “This is the coat!” and “Here is the cloak!” and so on. “They are all as light as a cobweb, and one must feel as if one had nothing at all upon the body; but that is just the beauty of them.”

“Indeed!” said all the courtiers; but they could not see anything, for there was nothing to be seen.

“Does it please your Majesty now to graciously undress,” said the swindlers, “that we may assist your Majesty in putting on the new suit before the large looking-glass?”

The emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put the new suit upon him, one piece after another; and the emperor looked at himself in the glass from every side.

“How well they look! How well they fit!” said all. “What a beautiful pattern! What fine colours! That is a magnificent suit of clothes!”

The master of the ceremonies announced that the bearers of the canopy, which was to be carried in the procession, were ready.

“I am ready,” said the emperor. “Does not my suit fit me marvellously?” Then he turned once more to the looking-glass, that people should think he admired his garments.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, stretched their hands to the ground as if they lifted up a train, and pretended to hold something in their hands; they did not like people to know that they could not see anything.

The emperor marched in the procession under the beautiful canopy, and all who saw him in the street and out of the windows exclaimed: “Indeed, the emperor’s new suit is incomparable! What a long train he has! How well

it fits him!" Nobody wished to let others know he saw nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his office or too stupid. Never emperor's clothes were more admired.

"But he has nothing on at all," said a little child at last. "Good heavens! listen to the voice of an innocent child," said the father, and one whispered to the other what the child had said. "But he has nothing on at all," cried at last the whole people. That made a deep impression upon the emperor, for it seemed to him that they were right; but he thought to himself, "Now I must bear up to the end." And the chamberlains walked with still greater dignity, as if they carried the train which did not exist.

THE FIR TREE

Far down in the forest, where the warm sun and the fresh air made a sweet resting-place, grew a pretty little fir-tree; and yet it was not happy, it wished so much to be tall like its companions—the pines and firs which grew around it. The sun shone, and the soft air fluttered its leaves, and the little peasant children passed by, prattling merrily, but the fir-tree heeded them not. Sometimes the children would bring a large basket of raspberries or strawberries, wreathed on a straw, and seat themselves near the fir-tree, and say, "Is it not a pretty little tree?" which made it feel more unhappy than before. And yet all this while the tree grew a notch or joint taller every year; for by the number of joints in the stem of a fir-tree we can discover its age. Still, as it grew, it complained, "Oh! how I wish I were as tall as the other trees, then I would spread out my branches on every side, and my top would over-look the wide world. I should have the birds building their nests on my boughs, and when the wind blew, I should bow with stately dignity like my tall companions." The tree was so discontented, that it took no pleasure in the warm sunshine, the birds, or the rosy clouds that floated over it morning and evening. Sometimes, in winter, when the snow lay white and glittering on the ground, a hare would come springing along, and jump right over the little tree; and then how mortified it would feel! Two winters passed, and when the third arrived, the tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it. Yet it remained unsatisfied, and would exclaim, "Oh, if I could but keep on growing tall and old! There is nothing else worth caring for in the world!" In the autumn, as usual, the wood-cutters came and cut down several of the tallest trees, and the young fir-tree, which was now grown to its full height, shuddered as the noble trees fell to the earth with a crash. After the branches were lopped off, the trunks looked

so slender and bare, that they could scarcely be recognized. Then they were placed upon wagons, and drawn by horses out of the forest. “Where were they going? What would become of them?” The young fir-tree wished very much to know; so in the spring, when the swallows and the storks came, it asked, “Do you know where those trees were taken? Did you meet them?”
The swallows knew nothing, but the stork, after a little reflection, nodded his head, and said, “Yes, I think I do. I met several new ships when I flew from Egypt, and they had fine masts that smelt like fir. I think these must have been the trees; I assure you they were stately, very stately.”
“Oh, how I wish I were tall enough to go on the sea,” said the fir-tree. “What is the sea, and what does it look like?”
“It would take too much time to explain,” said the stork, flying quickly away.
“Rejoice in thy youth,” said the sunbeam; “rejoice in thy fresh growth, and the young life that is in thee.”
And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew watered it with tears; but the fir-tree regarded them not.
Christmas-time drew near, and many young trees were cut down, some even smaller and younger than the fir-tree who enjoyed neither rest nor peace with longing to leave its forest home. These young trees, which were chosen for their beauty, kept their branches, and were also laid on wagons and drawn by horses out of the forest.
“Where are they going?” asked the fir-tree. “They are not taller than I am: indeed, one is much less; and why are the branches not cut off? Where are they going?”
“We know, we know,” sang the sparrows; “we have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them. They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, and adorned with all sorts of beautiful things,—honey cakes, gilded apples, playthings, and many hundreds of wax tapers.”
“And then,” asked the fir-tree, trembling through all its branches, “and then what happens?”
“We did not see any more,” said the sparrows; “but this was enough for us.”
“I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me,” thought the fir-tree. “It would be much better than crossing the sea. I long for it almost with pain. Oh! when will Christmas be here? I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. Oh! that I were now laid on the wagon, or standing in the warm room, with all that brightness and splendor around me! Something better and more beautiful is to come after,

or the trees would not be so decked out. Yes, what follows will be grander and more splendid. What can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know how I feel."

"Rejoice with us," said the air and the sunlight. "Enjoy thine own bright life in the fresh air."

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day; and, winter and summer, its dark-green foliage might be seen in the forest, while passers by would say, "What a beautiful tree!"

A short time before Christmas, the discontented fir-tree was the first to fall. As the axe cut through the stem, and divided the pith, the tree fell with a groan to the earth, conscious of pain and faintness, and forgetting all its anticipations of happiness, in sorrow at leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it should never again see its dear old companions, the trees, nor the little bushes and many-colored flowers that had grown by its side; perhaps not even the birds. Neither was the journey at all pleasant. The tree first recovered itself while being unpacked in the courtyard of a house, with several other trees; and it heard a man say, "We only want one, and this is the prettiest."

Then came two servants in grand livery, and carried the fir-tree into a large and beautiful apartment. On the walls hung pictures, and near the great stove stood great china vases, with lions on the lids. There were rocking chairs, silken sofas, large tables, covered with pictures, books, and playthings, worth a great deal of money,—at least, the children said so. Then the fir-tree was placed in a large tub, full of sand; but green baize hung all around it, so that no one could see it was a tub, and it stood on a very handsome carpet. How the fir-tree trembled! "What was going to happen to him now?" Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree. On one branch they hung little bags cut out of colored paper, and each bag was filled with sweetmeats; from other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above, and all round, were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, which were fastened on the branches. Dolls, exactly like real babies, were placed under the green leaves,—the tree had never seen such things before,—and at the very top was fastened a glittering star, made of tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful!

"This evening," they all exclaimed, "how bright it will be!" "Oh, that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! then I shall know what else is going to happen. Will the trees of the forest come to see me? I wonder if the sparrows will peep in at the windows as they fly? shall I grow faster here, and keep on all these ornaments summer and winter?" But guessing was of very little use; it made his bark ache, and this pain is as bad

for a slender fir-tree, as headache is for us. At last the tapers were lighted, and then what a glistening blaze of light the tree presented! It trembled so with joy in all its branches, that one of the candles fell among the green leaves and burnt some of them. "Help! help!" exclaimed the young ladies, but there was no danger, for they quickly extinguished the fire. After this, the tree tried not to tremble at all, though the fire frightened him; he was so anxious not to hurt any of the beautiful ornaments, even while their brilliancy dazzled him. And now the folding doors were thrown open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they intended to upset the tree; they were followed more silently by their elders. For a moment the little ones stood silent with astonishment, and then they shouted for joy, till the room rang, and they danced merrily round the tree, while one present after another was taken from it.

"What are they doing? What will happen next?" thought the fir. At last the candles burnt down to the branches and were put out. Then the children received permission to plunder the tree.

Oh, how they rushed upon it, till the branches cracked, and had it not been fastened with the glistening star to the ceiling, it must have been thrown down. The children then danced about with their pretty toys, and no one noticed the tree, except the children's maid who came and peeped among the branches to see if an apple or a fig had been forgotten.

"A story, a story," cried the children, pulling a little fat man towards the tree.

"Now we shall be in the green shade," said the man, as he seated himself under it, "and the tree will have the pleasure of hearing also, but I shall only relate one story; what shall it be? Ivede-Avede, or Humpty Dumpty, who fell down stairs, but soon got up again, and at last married a princess."

"Ivede-Avede," cried some. "Humpty Dumpty," cried others, and there was a fine shouting and crying out. But the fir-tree remained quite still, and thought to himself, "Shall I have anything to do with all this?" but he had already amused them as much as they wished. Then the old man told them the story of Humpty Dumpty, how he fell down stairs, and was raised up again, and married a princess. And the children clapped their hands and cried, "Tell another, tell another," for they wanted to hear the story of "Ivede-Avede;" but they only had "Humpty Dumpty." After this the fir-tree became quite silent and thoughtful; never had the birds in the forest told such tales as "Humpty Dumpty," who fell down stairs, and yet married a princess.

"Ah! yes, so it happens in the world," thought the fir-tree; he believed it all, because it was related by such a nice man. "Ah! well," he thought, "who knows? perhaps I may fall down too, and marry a princess;" and he looked forward joyfully to the next evening, expecting to be again decked

out with lights and playthings, gold and fruit. “To-morrow I will not tremble,” thought he; “I will enjoy all my splendor, and I shall hear the story of Humpty Dumpty again, and perhaps Ivede-Avede.” And the tree remained quiet and thoughtful all night. In the morning the servants and the housemaid came in. “Now,” thought the fir, “all my splendor is going to begin again.” But they dragged him out of the room and up stairs to the garret, and threw him on the floor, in a dark corner, where no daylight shone, and there they left him. “What does this mean?” thought the tree, “what am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this,” and he had time enough to think, for days and nights passed and no one came near him, and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put away large boxes in a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight as if it had never existed. “It is winter now,” thought the tree, “the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still I wish this place were not so dark, as well as lonely, with not even a little hare to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by, yes, and jump over me too, although I did not like it then. Oh! it is terrible lonely here.”

“Squeak, squeak,” said a little mouse, creeping cautiously towards the tree; then came another; and they both sniffed at the fir-tree and crept between the branches.

“Oh, it is very cold,” said the little mouse, “or else we should be so comfortable here, shouldn’t we, you old fir-tree?”

“I am not old,” said the fir-tree, “there are many who are older than I am.”

“Where do you come from? and what do you know?” asked the mice, who were full of curiosity. “Have you seen the most beautiful places in the world, and can you tell us all about them? and have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelf, and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there, and go in thin and come out fat.”

“I know nothing of that place,” said the fir-tree, “but I know the wood where the sun shines and the birds sing.” And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth. They had never heard such an account in their lives; and after they had listened to it attentively, they said, “What a number of things you have seen? you must have been very happy.”

“Happy!” exclaimed the fir-tree, and then as he reflected upon what he had been telling them, he said, “Ah, yes! after all those were happy days.” But when he went on and related all about Christmas-eve, and how he had been dressed up with cakes and lights, the mice said, “How happy you must have been, you old fir-tree.”

"I am not old at all," replied the tree, "I only came from the forest this winter, I am now checked in my growth."
"What splendid stories you can relate," said the little mice. And the next night four other mice came with them to hear what the tree had to tell. The more he talked the more he remembered, and then he thought to himself, "Those were happy days, but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell down stairs, and yet he married the princess; perhaps I may marry a princess too." And the fir-tree thought of the pretty little birch-tree that grew in the forest, which was to him a real beautiful princess.
"Who is Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little mice. And then the tree related the whole story; he could remember every single word, and the little mice was so delighted with it, that they were ready to jump to the top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came with them; but they said, it was not a pretty story at all, and the little mice were very sorry, for it made them also think less of it.
"Do you know only one story?" asked the rats.
"Only one," replied the fir-tree; "I heard it on the happiest evening of my life; but I did not know I was so happy at the time."
"We think it is a very miserable story," said the rats. "Don't you know any story about bacon, or tallow in the storeroom."
"No," replied the tree.
"Many thanks to you then," replied the rats, and they marched off.
The little mice also kept away after this, and the tree sighed, and said, "It was very pleasant when the merry little mice sat round me and listened while I talked. Now that is all passed too. However, I shall consider myself happy when some one comes to take me out of this place." But would this ever happen? Yes; one morning people came to clear out the garret, the boxes were packed away, and the tree was pulled out of the corner, and thrown roughly on the garret floor; then the servant dragged it out upon the staircase where the daylight shone. "Now life is beginning again," said the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air. Then it was carried down stairs and taken into the courtyard so quickly, that it forgot to think of itself, and could only look about, there was so much to be seen. The court was close to a garden, where everything looked blooming. Fresh and fragrant roses hung over the little palings. The linden-trees were in blossom; while the swallows flew here and there, crying, "Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming,"—but it was not the fir-tree they meant. "Now I shall live," cried the tree, joyfully spreading out its branches; but alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in a corner amongst weeds and nettles. The star of

gold paper still stuck in the top of the tree and glittered in the sunshine. In the same courtyard two of the merry children were playing who had danced round the tree at Christmas, and had been so happy. The youngest saw the gilded star, and ran and pulled it off the tree. "Look what is sticking to the ugly old fir-tree," said the child, treading on the branches till they crackled under his boots. And the tree saw all the fresh bright flowers in the garden, and then looked at itself, and wished it had remained in the dark corner of the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas evening, and of the little mice who had listened to the story of "Humpty Dumpty." "Past! past!" said the old tree; "Oh, had I but enjoyed myself while I could have done so! but now it is too late." Then a lad came and chopped the tree into small pieces, till a large bundle lay in a heap on the ground. The pieces were placed in a fire under the copper, and they quickly blazed up brightly, while the tree sighed so deeply that each sigh was like a pistol-shot. Then the children, who were at play, came and seated themselves in front of the fire, and looked at it and cried, "Pop, pop." But at each "pop," which was a deep sigh, the tree was thinking of a summer day in the forest; and of Christmas evening, and of "Humpty Dumpty," the only story it had ever heard or knew how to relate, till at last it was consumed. The boys still played in the garden, and the youngest wore the golden star on his breast, with which the tree had been adorned during the happiest evening of its existence. Now all was past; the tree's life was past, and the story also,—for all stories must come to an end at last.

THE FLAX

The flax was in full bloom; it had pretty little blue flowers as delicate as the wings of a moth, or even more so. The sun shone, and the showers watered it; and this was just as good for the flax as it is for little children to be washed and then kissed by their mother. They look much prettier for it, and so did the flax.

"People say that I look exceedingly well," said the flax, "and that I am so fine and long that I shall make a beautiful piece of linen. How fortunate I am; it makes me so happy, it is such a pleasant thing to know that something can be made of me. How the sunshine cheers me, and how sweet and refreshing is the rain; my happiness overpowers me, no one in the world can feel happier than I am."

"Ah, yes, no doubt," said the fern, "but you do not know the world yet as well as I do, for my sticks are knotty;" and then it sung quite mournfully—

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre: The song is ended."

"No, it is not ended," said the flax. "To-morrow the sun will shine, or the rain descend. I feel that I am growing. I feel that I am in full blossom. I am the happiest of all creatures."

Well, one day some people came, who took hold of the flax, and pulled it up by the roots; this was painful; then it was laid in water as if they intended to drown it; and, after that, placed near a fire as if it were to be roasted; all this was very shocking. "We cannot expect to be happy always," said the flax; "by experiencing evil as well as good, we become wise." And certainly there was plenty of evil in store for the flax. It was steeped, and roasted, and broken, and combed; indeed, it scarcely knew what was done to it. At last it was put on the spinning wheel. "Whirr, whirr," went the wheel so quickly that the flax could not collect its thoughts. "Well, I have been very happy," he thought in the midst of his pain, "and must be contented with the past;" and contented he remained till he was put on the loom, and became a beautiful piece of white linen. All the flax, even to the last stalk, was used in making this one piece. "Well, this is quite wonderful; I could not have believed that I should be so favored by fortune. The fern was not wrong with its song of 'Snip, snap, snurre, Basse lurre.' But the song is not ended yet, I am sure; it is only just beginning. How wonderful it is, that after all I have suffered, I am made something of at last; I am the luckiest person in the world—so strong and fine; and how white, and what a length! This is something different to being a mere plant and bearing flowers. Then I had no attention, nor any water unless it rained; now, I am watched and taken care of. Every morning the maid turns me over, and I have a shower-bath from the watering-pot every evening. Yes, and the clergyman's wife noticed me, and said I was the best piece of linen in the whole parish. I cannot be happier than I am now."

After some time, the linen was taken into the house, placed under the scissors, and cut and torn into pieces, and then pricked with needles. This certainly was not pleasant; but at last it was made into twelve garments of that kind which people do not like to name, and yet everybody should wear one. "See, now, then," said the flax; "I have become something of importance. This was my destiny; it is quite a blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, as everyone ought to be; it is the only way to be happy. I am now divided into twelve pieces, and yet we are all one and the same in the whole dozen. It is most extraordinary good fortune."

Years passed away, and at last the linen was so worn it could scarcely hold together. "It must end very soon," said the pieces to each other; "we would gladly have held together a little longer, but it is useless to expect impos-

sibilities." And at length they fell into rags and tatters, and thought it was all over with them, for they were torn to shreds, and steeped in water, and made into a pulp, and dried, and they knew not what besides, till all at once they found themselves beautiful white paper. "Well, now, this is a surprise; a glorious surprise too," said the paper. "I am now finer than ever, and I shall be written upon, and who can tell what fine things I may have written upon me. This is wonderful luck!" And sure enough the most beautiful stories and poetry were written upon it, and only once was there a blot, which was very fortunate. Then people heard the stories and poetry read, and it made them wiser and better; for all that was written had a good and sensible meaning, and a great blessing was contained in the words on this paper.

"I never imagined anything like this," said the paper, "when I was only a little blue flower, growing in the fields. How could I fancy that I should ever be the means of bringing knowledge and joy to man? I cannot understand it myself, and yet it is really so. Heaven knows that I have done nothing myself, but what I was obliged to do with my weak powers for my own preservation; and yet I have been promoted from one joy and honor to another. Each time I think that the song is ended; and then something higher and better begins for me. I suppose now I shall be sent on my travels about the world, so that people may read me. It cannot be otherwise; indeed, it is more than probable; for I have more splendid thoughts written upon me, than I had pretty flowers in olden times. I am happier than ever."

But the paper did not go on its travels; it was sent to the printer, and all the words written upon it were set up in type, to make a book, or rather, many hundreds of books; for so many more persons could derive pleasure and profit from a printed book, than from the written paper; and if the paper had been sent around the world, it would have been worn out before it had got half through its journey.

"This is certainly the wisest plan," said the written paper; "I really did not think of that. I shall remain at home, and be held in honor, like some old grandfather, as I really am to all these new books. They will do some good. I could not have wandered about as they do. Yet he who wrote all this has looked at me, as every word flowed from his pen upon my surface. I am the most honored of all."

Then the paper was tied in a bundle with other papers, and thrown into a tub that stood in the washhouse.

"After work, it is well to rest," said the paper, "and a very good opportunity to collect one's thoughts. Now I am able, for the first time, to think of my real condition; and to know one's self is true progress. What will be done

with me now, I wonder? No doubt I shall still go forward. I have always progressed hitherto, as I know quite well."

Now it happened one day that all the paper in the tub was taken out, and laid on the hearth to be burnt. People said it could not be sold at the shop, to wrap up butter and sugar, because it had been written upon. The children in the house stood round the stove; for they wanted to see the paper burn, because it flamed up so prettily, and afterwards, among the ashes, so many red sparks could be seen running one after the other, here and there, as quick as the wind. They called it seeing the children come out of school, and the last spark was the schoolmaster. They often thought the last spark had come; and one would cry, "There goes the schoolmaster;" but the next moment another spark would appear, shining so beautifully. How they would like to know where the sparks all went to! Perhaps we shall find out some day, but we don't know now.

The whole bundle of paper had been placed on the fire, and was soon alight. "Ugh," cried the paper, as it burst into a bright flame; "ugh." It was certainly not very pleasant to be burning; but when the whole was wrapped in flames, the flames mounted up into the air, higher than the flax had ever been able to raise its little blue flower, and they glistened as the white linen never could have glistened. All the written letters became quite red in a moment, and all the words and thoughts turned to fire.

"Now I am mounting straight up to the sun," said a voice in the flames; and it was as if a thousand voices echoed the words; and the flames darted up through the chimney, and went out at the top. Then a number of tiny beings, as many in number as the flowers on the flax had been, and invisible to mortal eyes, floated above them. They were even lighter and more delicate than the flowers from which they were born; and as the flames were extinguished, and nothing remained of the paper but black ashes, these little beings danced upon it; and whenever they touched it, bright red sparks appeared.

"The children are all out of school, and the schoolmaster was the last of all," said the children. It was good fun, and they sang over the dead ashes,— "Snip, snap, snurre, Basse lure:

The song is ended." But the little invisible beings said, "The song is never ended; the most beautiful is yet to come." But the children could neither hear nor understand this, nor should they; for children must not know everything.

THE FLYING TRUNK

There was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street with gold, and would even then have had enough for a small alley. But he did not do so; he knew the value of money better than to use it in this way. So clever was he, that every shilling he put out brought him a crown; and so he continued till he died. His son inherited his wealth, and he lived a merry life with it; he went to a masquerade every night, made kites out of five pound notes, and threw pieces of gold into the sea instead of stones, making ducks and drakes of them. In this manner he soon lost all his money. At last he had nothing left but a pair of slippers, an old dressing-gown, and four shillings. And now all his friends deserted him, they could not walk with him in the streets; but one of them, who was very good-natured, sent him an old trunk with this message, "Pack up!" "Yes," he said, "it is all very well to say 'pack up,'" but he had nothing left to pack up, therefore he seated himself in the trunk. It was a very wonderful trunk; no sooner did any one press on the lock than the trunk could fly. He shut the lid and pressed the lock, when away flew the trunk up the chimney with the merchant's son in it, right up into the clouds. Whenever the bottom of the trunk cracked, he was in a great fright, for if the trunk fell to pieces he would have made a tremendous somerset over the trees. However, he got safely in his trunk to the land of Turkey. He hid the trunk in the wood under some dry leaves, and then went into the town: he could so this very well, for the Turks always go about dressed in dressing-gowns and slippers, as he was himself. He happened to meet a nurse with a little child. "I say, you Turkish nurse," cried he, "what castle is that near the town, with the windows placed so high?"

"The king's daughter lives there," she replied; "it has been prophesied that she will be very unhappy about a lover, and therefore no one is allowed to visit her, unless the king and queen are present."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son. So he went back to the wood, seated himself in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the castle, and crept through the window into the princess's room. She lay on the sofa asleep, and she was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not help kissing her. Then she awoke, and was very much frightened; but he told her he was a Turkish angel, who had come down through the air to see her, which pleased her very much. He sat down by her side and talked to her: he said her eyes were like beautiful dark lakes, in which the thoughts swam about like little mermaids, and he told her that her forehead was a snowy mountain, which contained splendid halls full of pictures. And then he related to her about

the stork who brings the beautiful children from the rivers. These were delightful stories; and when he asked the princess if she would marry him, she consented immediately.

"But you must come on Saturday," she said; "for then the king and queen will take tea with me. They will be very proud when they find that I am going to marry a Turkish angel; but you must think of some very pretty stories to tell them, for my parents like to hear stories better than anything. My mother prefers one that is deep and moral; but my father likes something funny, to make him laugh."

"Very well," he replied; "I shall bring you no other marriage portion than a story," and so they parted. But the princess gave him a sword which was studded with gold coins, and these he could use.

Then he flew away to the town and bought a new dressing-gown, and afterwards returned to the wood, where he composed a story, so as to be ready for Saturday, which was no easy matter. It was ready however by Saturday, when he went to see the princess. The king, and queen, and the whole court, were at tea with the princess; and he was received with great politeness.

"Will you tell us a story?" said the queen,—"one that is instructive and full of deep learning."

"Yes, but with something in it to laugh at," said the king.

"Certainly," he replied, and commenced at once, asking them to listen attentively. "There was once a bundle of matches that were exceedingly proud of their high descent. Their genealogical tree, that is, a large pine-tree from which they had been cut, was at one time a large, old tree in the wood. The matches now lay between a tinder-box and an old iron saucepan, and were talking about their youthful days. 'Ah! then we grew on the green boughs, and were as green as they; every morning and evening we were fed with diamond drops of dew. Whenever the sun shone, we felt his warm rays, and the little birds would relate stories to us as they sung. We knew that we were rich, for the other trees only wore their green dress in summer, but our family were able to array themselves in green, summer and winter. But the wood-cutter came, like a great revolution, and our family fell under the axe. The head of the house obtained a situation as mainmast in a very fine ship, and can sail round the world when he will. The other branches of the family were taken to different places, and our office now is to kindle a light for common people. This is how such high-born people as we came to be in a kitchen.'

"'Mine has been a very different fate,' said the iron pot, which stood by the matches; 'from my first entrance into the world I have been used to cooking and scouring. I am the first in this house, when anything solid or

useful is required. My only pleasure is to be made clean and shining after dinner, and to sit in my place and have a little sensible conversation with my neighbors. All of us, excepting the water-bucket, which is sometimes taken into the courtyard, live here together within these four walls. We get our news from the market-basket, but he sometimes tells us very unpleasant things about the people and the government. Yes, and one day an old pot was so alarmed, that he fell down and was broken to pieces. He was a liberal, I can tell you.'

"'You are talking too much,' said the tinder-box, and the steel struck against the flint till some sparks flew out, crying, 'We want a merry evening, don't we?'

"'Yes, of course,' said the matches, 'let us talk about those who are the highest born.'

"'No, I don't like to be always talking of what we are,' remarked the saucepan; 'let us think of some other amusement; I will begin. We will tell something that has happened to ourselves; that will be very easy, and interesting as well. On the Baltic Sea, near the Danish shore'—

"'What a pretty commencement!' said the plates; 'we shall all like that story, I am sure.'

"'Yes; well in my youth, I lived in a quiet family, where the furniture was polished, the floors scoured, and clean curtains put up every fortnight.'

"'What an interesting way you have of relating a story,' said the carpet-broom; 'it is easy to perceive that you have been a great deal in women's society, there is something so pure runs through what you say.'

"'That is quite true,' said the water-bucket; and he made a spring with joy, and splashed some water on the floor.

"Then the saucepan went on with his story, and the end was as good as the beginning.

"The plates rattled with pleasure, and the carpet-broom brought some green parsley out of the dust-hole and crowned the saucepan, for he knew it would vex the others; and he thought, 'If I crown him to-day he will crown me to-morrow.'

"'Now, let us have a dance,' said the fire-tongs; and then how they danced and stuck up one leg in the air. The chair-cushion in the corner burst with laughter when she saw it.

"'Shall I be crowned now?' asked the fire-tongs; so the broom found another wreath for the tongs.

"'They were only common people after all,' thought the matches. The tea-urn was now asked to sing, but she said she had a cold, and could not sing without boiling heat. They all thought this was affectation, and because

she did not wish to sing excepting in the parlor, when on the table with the grand people.

"In the window sat an old quill-pen, with which the maid generally wrote. There was nothing remarkable about the pen, excepting that it had been dipped too deeply in the ink, but it was proud of that.

"'If the tea-urn won't sing,' said the pen, 'she can leave it alone; there is a nightingale in a cage who can sing; she has not been taught much, certainly, but we need not say anything this evening about that.'

"'I think it highly improper,' said the tea-kettle, who was kitchen singer, and half-brother to the tea-urn, 'that a rich foreign bird should be listened to here. Is it patriotic? Let the market-basket decide what is right.'

"'I certainly am vexed,' said the basket; 'inwardly vexed, more than any one can imagine. Are we spending the evening properly? Would it not be more sensible to put the house in order? If each were in his own place I would lead a game; this would be quite another thing.'

"'Let us act a play,' said they all. At the same moment the door opened, and the maid came in. Then not one stirred; they all remained quite still; yet, at the same time, there was not a single pot amongst them who had not a high opinion of himself, and of what he could do if he chose.

"'Yes, if we had chosen,' they each thought, 'we might have spent a very pleasant evening.'

"The maid took the matches and lighted them; dear me, how they sputtered and blazed up!

"'Now then,' they thought, 'every one will see that we are the first. How we shine; what a light we give!' Even while they spoke their light went out.

"What a capital story," said the queen, "I feel as if I were really in the kitchen, and could see the matches; yes, you shall marry our daughter."

"Certainly," said the king, "thou shalt have our daughter." The king said thou to him because he was going to be one of the family. The wedding-day was fixed, and, on the evening before, the whole city was illuminated. Cakes and sweetmeats were thrown among the people. The street boys stood on tiptoe and shouted "hurrah," and whistled between their fingers; altogether it was a very splendid affair.

"I will give them another treat," said the merchant's son. So he went and bought rockets and crackers, and all sorts of fire-works that could be thought of, packed them in his trunk, and flew up with it into the air. What a whizzing and popping they made as they went off! The Turks, when they saw such a sight in the air, jumped so high that their slippers flew about their ears. It was easy to believe after this that the princess was really going to marry a Turkish angel.

As soon as the merchant's son had come down in his flying trunk to the wood after the fireworks, he thought, "I will go back into the town now, and hear what they think of the entertainment." It was very natural that he should wish to know. And what strange things people did say, to be sure! every one whom he questioned had a different tale to tell, though they all thought it very beautiful.

"'I saw the Turkish angel myself," said one; "he had eyes like glittering stars, and a head like foaming water."

"He flew in a mantle of fire," cried another, "and lovely little cherubs peeped out from the folds."

He heard many more fine things about himself, and that the next day he was to be married. After this he went back to the forest to rest himself in his trunk. It had disappeared! A spark from the fireworks which remained had set it on fire; it was burnt to ashes! So the merchant's son could not fly any more, nor go to meet his bride. She stood all day on the roof waiting for him, and most likely she is waiting there still; while he wanders through the world telling fairy tales, but none of them so amusing as the one he related about the matches.

THE SHEPHERD'S STORY OF THE BOND OF FRIENDSHIP

The little dwelling in which we lived was of clay, but the door-posts were columns of fluted marble, found near the spot on which it stood. The roof sloped nearly to the ground. It was at this time dark, brown, and ugly, but had originally been formed of blooming olive and laurel branches, brought from beyond the mountains. The house was situated in a narrow gorge, whose rocky walls rose to a perpendicular height, naked and black, while round their summits clouds often hung, looking like white living figures. Not a singing bird was ever heard there, neither did men dance to the sound of the pipe. The spot was one sacred to olden times; even its name recalled a memory of the days when it was called "Delphi." Then the summits of the dark, sacred mountains were covered with snow, and the highest, mount Parnassus, glowed longest in the red evening light. The brook which rolled from it near our house, was also sacred. How well I can remember every spot in that deep, sacred solitude! A fire had been kindled in the midst of the hut, and while the hot ashes lay there red and glowing, the bread was baked in them. At times the snow would be piled so high around our hut as almost

to hide it, and then my mother appeared most cheerful. She would hold my head between her hands, and sing the songs she never sang at other times, for the Turks, our masters, would not allow it. She sang,—

"On the summit of mount Olympus, in a forest of dwarf firs, lay an old stag. His eyes were heavy with tears, and glittering with colors like dewdrops; and there came by a roebuck, and said, 'What ailest thee, that thou weepest blue and red tears?' And the stag answered, 'The Turk has come to our city; he has wild dogs for the chase, a goodly pack.' 'I will drive them away across the islands!' cried the young roebuck; 'I will drive them away across the islands into the deep sea.' But before evening the roebuck was slain, and before night the hunted stag was dead."

And when my mother sang thus, her eyes would become moist; and on the long eyelashes were tears, but she concealed them and watched the black bread baking in the ashes. Then I would clench my fist, and cry, "We will kill these Turks!" But she repeated the words of the song, "I will drive them across the islands to the deep sea; but before evening came the roebuck was slain, and before the night the hunted stag was dead."

We had been lonely in our hut for several days and nights when my father came home. I knew he would bring me some shells from the gulf of Lepanto, or perhaps a knife with a shining blade. This time he brought, under his sheep-skin cloak, a little child, a little half-naked girl. She was wrapped in a fur; but when this was taken off, and she lay in my mother's lap, three silver coins were found fastened in her dark hair; they were all her possessions. My father told us that the child's parents had been killed by the Turks, and he talked so much about them that I dreamed of Turks all night. He himself had been wounded, and my mother bound up his arm. It was a deep wound, and the thick sheep-skin cloak was stiff with congealed blood. The little maiden was to be my sister. How pretty and bright she looked: even my mother's eyes were not more gentle than hers. Anastasia, as she was called, was to be my sister, because her father had been united to mine by an old custom, which we still follow. They had sworn brotherhood in their youth, and the most beautiful and virtuous maiden in the neighborhood was chosen to perform the act of consecration upon this bond of friendship. So now this little girl was my sister. She sat in my lap, and I brought her flowers, and feathers from the birds of the mountain. We drank together of the waters of Parnassus, and dwelt for many years beneath the laurel roof of the hut, while, winter after winter, my mother sang her song of the stag who shed red tears. But as yet I did not understand that the sorrows of my own countrymen were mirrored in those tears.

One day there came to our hut Franks, men from a far country, whose dress was different to ours. They had tents and beds with them, carried by horses; and they were accompanied by more than twenty Turks, all armed with swords and muskets. These Franks were friends of the Pacha, and had letters from him, commanding an escort for them. They only came to see our mountain, to ascend Parnassus amid the snow and clouds, and to look at the strange black rocks which raised their steep sides near our hut. They could not find room in the hut, nor endure the smoke that rolled along the ceiling till it found its way out at the low door; so they pitched their tents on a small space outside our dwelling. Roasted lambs and birds were brought forth, and strong, sweet wine, of which the Turks are forbidden to partake.

When they departed, I accompanied them for some distance, carrying my little sister Anastasia, wrapped in a goat-skin, on my back. One of the Frankish gentlemen made me stand in front of a rock, and drew us both as we stood there, so that we looked like one creature. I did not think of it then, but Anastasia and I were really one. She was always sitting on my lap, or riding in the goat-skin on my back; and in my dreams she always appeared to me.

Two nights after this, other men, armed with knives and muskets, came into our tent. They were Albanians, brave men, my mother told me. They only stayed a short time. My sister Anastasia sat on the knee of one of them; and when they were gone, she had not three, but two silver coins in her hair—one had disappeared. They wrapped tobacco in strips of paper, and smoked it; and I remember they were uncertain as to the road they ought to take. But they were obliged to go at last, and my father went with them. Soon after, we heard the sound of firing. The noise continued, and presently soldiers rushed into our hut, and took my mother and myself and Anastasia prisoners. They declared that we had entertained robbers, and that my father had acted as their guide, and therefore we must now go with them. The corpses of the robbers, and my father's corpse, were brought into the hut. I saw my poor dead father, and cried till I fell asleep. When I awoke, I found myself in a prison; but the room was not worse than our own in the hut. They gave me onions and musty wine from a tarred cask; but we were not accustomed to much better fare at home. How long we were kept in prison, I do not know; but many days and nights passed by. We were set free about Easter-time. I carried Anastasia on my back, and we walked very slowly; for my mother was very weak, and it is a long way to the sea, to the Gulf of Lepanto.

On our arrival, we entered a church, in which there were beautiful pictures in golden frames. They were pictures of angels, fair and bright; and yet our little Anastasia looked equally beautiful, as it seemed to me. In the centre

of the floor stood a coffin filled with roses. My mother told me it was the Lord Jesus Christ who was represented by these roses. Then the priest announced, "Christ is risen," and all the people greeted each other. Each one carried a burning taper in his hand, and one was given to me, as well as to little Anastasia. The music sounded, and the people left the church hand-in-hand, with joy and gladness. Outside, the women were roasting the paschal lamb. We were invited to partake; and as I sat by the fire, a boy, older than myself, put his arms round my neck, and kissed me, and said, "Christ is risen." And thus it was that for the first time I met Aphtanides.

My mother could make fishermen's nets, for which there was a great demand here in the bay; and we lived a long time by the side of the sea, the beautiful sea, that had a taste like tears, and in its colors reminded me of the stag that wept red tears; for sometimes its waters were red, and sometimes green or blue. Aphtanides knew how to manage our boat, and I often sat in it, with my little Anastasia, while it glided on through the water, swift as a bird flying through the air. Then, when the sun set, how beautifully, deeply blue, would be the tint on the mountains, one rising above the other in the far distance, and the summit of mount Parnassus rising above them all like a glorious crown. Its top glittered in the evening rays like molten gold, and it seemed as if the light came from within it; for long after the sun had sunk beneath the horizon, the mountain-top would glow in the clear, blue sky. The white aquatic birds skimmed the surface of the water in their flight, and all was calm and still as amid the black rocks at Delphi. I lay on my back in the boat, Anastasia leaned against me, while the stars above us glittered more brightly than the lamps in our church. They were the same stars, and in the same position over me as when I used to sit in front of our hut at Delphi, and I had almost begun to fancy I was still there, when suddenly there was a splash in the water—Anastasia had fallen in; but in a moment Aphtanides has sprung in after her, and was now holding her up to me. We dried her clothes as well as we were able, and remained on the water till they were dry; for we did not wish it to be known what a fright we had had, nor the danger which our little adopted sister had incurred, in whose life Aphtanides had now a part.

The summer came, and the burning heat of the sun tinted the leaves of the trees with lines of gold. I thought of our cool mountain-home, and the fresh water that flowed near it; my mother, too, longed for if, and one evening we wandered towards home. How peaceful and silent it was as we walked on through the thick, wild thyme, still fragrant, though the sun had scorched the leaves. Not a single herdsman did we meet, not a solitary hut did we pass; everything appeared lonely and deserted—only a shooting star showed that

in the heavens there was yet life. I know not whether the clear, blue atmosphere gleamed with its own light, or if the radiance came from the stars; but we could distinguish quite plainly the outline of the mountains. My mother lighted a fire, and roasted some roots she had brought with her, and I and my little sister slept among the bushes, without fear of the ugly smidraki, from whose throat issues fire, or of the wolf and the jackal; for my mother sat by us, and I considered her presence sufficient protection.

We reached our old home; but the cottage was in ruins, and we had to build a new one. With the aid of some neighbors, chiefly women, the walls were in a few days erected, and very soon covered with a roof of olive-branches. My mother obtained a living by making bottle-cases of bark and skins, and I kept the sheep belonging to the priests, who were sometimes peasants, while I had for my playfellows Anastasia and the turtles.

Once our beloved Aphtanides paid us a visit. He said he had been longing to see us so much; and he remained with us two whole happy days. A month afterwards he came again to wish us good-bye, and brought with him a large fish for my mother. He told us he was going in a ship to Corfu and Patras, and could relate a great many stories, not only about the fishermen who lived near the gulf of Lepanto, but also of kings and heroes who had once possessed Greece, just as the Turks possess it now.

I have seen a bud on a rose-bush gradually, in the course of a few weeks, unfold its leaves till it became a rose in all its beauty; and, before I was aware of it, I beheld it blooming in rosy loveliness. The same thing had happened to Anastasia. Unnoticed by me, she had gradually become a beautiful maiden, and I was now also a stout, strong youth. The wolf-skins that covered the bed in which my mother and Anastasia slept, had been taken from wolves which I had myself shot.

Years had gone by when, one evening, Aphtanides came in. He had grown tall and slender as a reed, with strong limbs, and a dark, brown skin. He kissed us all, and had so much to tell of what he had seen of the great ocean, of the fortifications at Malta, and of the marvellous sepulchres of Egypt, that I looked up to him with a kind of veneration. His stories were as strange as the legends of the priests of olden times.

"How much you know!" I exclaimed, "and what wonders you can relate?"

"I think what you once told me, the finest of all," he replied; "you told me of a thing that has never been out of my thoughts—of the good old custom of 'the bond of friendship,'—a custom I should like to follow. Brother, let you and I go to church, as your father and Anastasia's father once did. Your sister Anastasia is the most beautiful and most innocent of maidens, and she shall

consecrate the deed. No people have such grand old customs as we Greeks."
Anastasia blushed like a young rose, and my mother kissed Aphtanides.
At about two miles from our cottage, where the earth on the hill is sheltered by a few scattered trees, stood the little church, with a silver lamp hanging before the altar. I put on my best clothes, and the white tunic fell in graceful folds over my hips. The red jacket fitted tight and close, the tassel on my Fez cap was of silver, and in my girdle glittered a knife and my pistols. Aphtanides was clad in the blue dress worn by the Greek sailors; on his breast hung a silver medal with the figure of the Virgin Mary, and his scarf was as costly as those worn by rich lords. Every one could see that we were about to perform a solemn ceremony. When we entered the little, unpretending church, the evening sunlight streamed through the open door on the burning lamp, and glittered on the golden picture frames. We knelt down together on the altar steps, and Anastasia drew near and stood beside us. A long, white garment fell in graceful folds over her delicate form, and on her white neck and bosom hung a chain entwined with old and new coins, forming a kind of collar. Her black hair was fastened into a knot, and confined by a headdress formed of gold and silver coins which had been found in an ancient temple. No Greek girl had more beautiful ornaments than these. Her countenance glowed, and her eyes were like two stars. We all three offered a silent prayer, and then she said to us, "Will you be friends in life and in death?"
"Yes," we replied.
"Will you each remember to say, whatever may happen, 'My brother is a part of myself; his secret is my secret, my happiness is his; self-sacrifice, patience, everything belongs to me as they do to him?'"
And we again answered, "Yes." Then she joined out hands and kissed us on the forehead, and we again prayed silently. After this a priest came through a door near the altar, and blessed us all three. Then a song was sung by other holy men behind the altar-screen, and the bond of eternal friendship was confirmed. When we arose, I saw my mother standing by the church door, weeping.
How cheerful everything seemed now in our little cottage by the Delphian springs! On the evening before his departure, Aphtanides sat thoughtfully beside me on the slopes of the mountain. His arm was flung around me, and mine was round his neck. We spoke of the sorrows of Greece, and of the men of the country who could be trusted. Every thought of our souls lay clear before us. Presently I seized his hand: "Aphtanides," I exclaimed, "there is one thing still that you must know,—one thing that till now has been a secret between myself and Heaven. My whole soul is filled with love,—with a love stronger than the love I bear to my mother and to thee.

"And whom do you love?" asked Aphtanides. And his face and neck grew red as fire.
"I love Anastasia," I replied.
Then his hand trembled in mine, and he became pale as a corpse. I saw it, I understood the cause, and I believe my hand trembled too. I bent towards him, I kissed his forehead, and whispered, "I have never spoken of this to her, and perhaps she does not love me. Brother, think of this; I have seen her daily, she has grown up beside me, and has become a part of my soul."
"And she shall be thine," he exclaimed; "thine! I may not wrong thee, nor will I do so. I also love her, but tomorrow I depart. In a year we will see each other again, but then you will be married; shall it not be so? I have a little gold of my own, it shall be yours. You must and shall take it."
We wandered silently homeward across the mountains. It was late in the evening when we reached my mother's door. Anastasia held the lamp as we entered; my mother was not there. She looked at Aphtanides with a sweet but mournful expression on her face. "To-morrow you are going to leave us," she said. "I am very sorry."
"Sorry!" he exclaimed, and his voice was troubled with a grief as deep as my own. I could not speak; but he seized her hand and said, "Our brother yonder loves you, and is he not dear to you? His very silence now proves his affection."
Anastasia trembled, and burst into tears. Then I saw no one, thought of none, but her. I threw my arms round her, and pressed my lips to hers. As she flung her arms round my neck, the lamp fell to the ground, and we were in darkness, dark as the heart of poor Aphtanides.
Before daybreak he rose, kissed us all, and said "Farewell," and went away. He had given all his money to my mother for us. Anastasia was betrothed to me, and in a few days afterwards she became my wife.

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF

There was once a girl who trod on a loaf to avoid soiling her shoes, and the misfortunes that happened to her in consequence are well known. Her name was Inge; she was a poor child, but proud and presuming, and with a bad and cruel disposition. When quite a little child she would delight in catching flies, and tearing off their wings, so as to make creeping things of them. When older, she would take cockchafers and beetles, and stick pins through them. Then she pushed a green leaf, or a little scrap of paper towards their feet, and when the poor creatures would seize it and hold it fast, and turn over and over

in their struggles to get free from the pin, she would say, “The cockchafer is reading; see how he turns over the leaf.” She grew worse instead of better with years, and, unfortunately, she was pretty, which caused her to be excused, when she should have been sharply reproved.

“Your headstrong will requires severity to conquer it,” her mother often said to her. “As a little child you used to trample on my apron, but one day I fear you will trample on my heart.” And, alas! this fear was realized.

Inge was taken to the house of some rich people, who lived at a distance, and who treated her as their own child, and dressed her so fine that her pride and arrogance increased.

When she had been there about a year, her patroness said to her, “You ought to go, for once, and see your parents, Inge.”

So Inge started to go and visit her parents; but she only wanted to show herself in her native place, that the people might see how fine she was. She reached the entrance of the village, and saw the young laboring men and maidens standing together chatting, and her own mother amongst them. Inge’s mother was sitting on a stone to rest, with a fagot of sticks lying before her, which she had picked up in the wood. Then Inge turned back; she who was so finely dressed she felt ashamed of her mother, a poorly clad woman, who picked up wood in the forest. She did not turn back out of pity for her mother’s poverty, but from pride.

Another half-year went by, and her mistress said, “you ought to go home again, and visit your parents, Inge, and I will give you a large wheaten loaf to take to them, they will be glad to see you, I am sure.”

So Inge put on her best clothes, and her new shoes, drew her dress up around her, and set out, stepping very carefully, that she might be clean and neat about the feet, and there was nothing wrong in doing so. But when she came to the place where the footpath led across the moor, she found small pools of water, and a great deal of mud, so she threw the loaf into the mud, and trod upon it, that she might pass without wetting her feet. But as she stood with one foot on the loaf and the other lifted up to step forward, the loaf began to sink under her, lower and lower, till she disappeared altogether, and only a few bubbles on the surface of the muddy pool remained to show where she had sunk. And this is the story.

But where did Inge go? She sank into the ground, and went down to the Marsh Woman, who is always brewing there.

The Marsh Woman is related to the elf maidens, who are well-known, for songs are sung and pictures painted about them. But of the Marsh Woman nothing is known, excepting that when a mist arises from the meadows,

in summer time, it is because she is brewing beneath them. To the Marsh Woman's brewery Inge sunk down to a place which no one can endure for long. A heap of mud is a palace compared with the Marsh Woman's brewery; and as Inge fell she shuddered in every limb, and soon became cold and stiff as marble. Her foot was still fastened to the loaf, which bowed her down as a golden ear of corn bends the stem.

An evil spirit soon took possession of Inge, and carried her to a still worse place, in which she saw crowds of unhappy people, waiting in a state of agony for the gates of mercy to be opened to them, and in every heart was a miserable and eternal feeling of unrest. It would take too much time to describe the various tortures these people suffered, but Inge's punishment consisted in standing there as a statue, with her foot fastened to the loaf. She could move her eyes about, and see all the misery around her, but she could not turn her head; and when she saw the people looking at her she thought they were admiring her pretty face and fine clothes, for she was still vain and proud. But she had forgotten how soiled her clothes had become while in the Marsh Woman's brewery, and that they were covered with mud; a snake had also fastened itself in her hair, and hung down her back, while from each fold in her dress a great toad peeped out and croaked like an asthmatic poodle. Worse than all was the terrible hunger that tormented her, and she could not stoop to break off a piece of the loaf on which she stood. No; her back was too stiff, and her whole body like a pillar of stone. And then came creeping over her face and eyes flies without wings; she winked and blinked, but they could not fly away, for their wings had been pulled off; this, added to the hunger she felt, was horrible torture.

"If this lasts much longer," she said, "I shall not be able to bear it." But it did last, and she had to bear it, without being able to help herself.

A tear, followed by many scalding tears, fell upon her head, and rolled over her face and neck, down to the loaf on which she stood. Who could be weeping for Inge? She had a mother in the world still, and the tears of sorrow which a mother sheds for her child will always find their way to the child's heart, but they often increase the torment instead of being a relief. And Inge could hear all that was said about her in the world she had left, and every one seemed cruel to her. The sin she had committed in treading on the loaf was known on earth, for she had been seen by the cowherd from the hill, when she was crossing the marsh and had disappeared.

When her mother wept and exclaimed, "Ah, Inge! what grief thou hast caused thy mother" she would say, "Oh that I had never been born! My mother's tears are useless now."

And then the words of the kind people who had adopted her came to her ears, when they said, “Inge was a sinful girl, who did not value the gifts of God, but trampled them under her feet.”

“Ah,” thought Inge, “they should have punished me, and driven all my naughty tempers out of me.”

A song was made about “The girl who trod on a loaf to keep her shoes from being soiled,” and this song was sung everywhere. The story of her sin was also told to the little children, and they called her “wicked Inge,” and said she was so naughty that she ought to be punished. Inge heard all this, and her heart became hardened and full of bitterness.

But one day, while hunger and grief were gnawing in her hollow frame, she heard a little, innocent child, while listening to the tale of the vain, haughty Inge, burst into tears and exclaim, “But will she never come up again?”

And she heard the reply, “No, she will never come up again.”

“But if she were to say she was sorry, and ask pardon, and promise never to do so again?” asked the little one.

“Yes, then she might come; but she will not beg pardon,” was the answer.

“Oh, I wish she would!” said the child, who was quite unhappy about it. “I should be so glad. I would give up my doll and all my playthings, if she could only come here again. Poor Inge! it is so dreadful for her.”

These pitying words penetrated to Inge’s inmost heart, and seemed to do her good. It was the first time any one had said, “Poor Inge!” without saying something about her faults. A little innocent child was weeping, and praying for mercy for her. It made her feel quite strange, and she would gladly have wept herself, and it added to her torment to find she could not do so. And while she thus suffered in a place where nothing changed, years passed away on earth, and she heard her name less frequently mentioned. But one day a sigh reached her ear, and the words, “Inge! Inge! what a grief thou hast been to me! I said it would be so.” It was the last sigh of her dying mother.

After this, Inge heard her kind mistress say, “Ah, poor Inge! shall I ever see thee again? Perhaps I may, for we know not what may happen in the future.” But Inge knew right well that her mistress would never come to that dreadful place.

Time passed—a long bitter time—then Inge heard her name pronounced once more, and saw what seemed two bright stars shining above her. They were two gentle eyes closing on earth. Many years had passed since the little girl had lamented and wept about “poor Inge.” That child was now an old woman, whom God was taking to Himself. In the last hour of existence the events of a whole life often appear before us; and this hour the old

woman remembered how, when a child, she had shed tears over the story of Inge, and she prayed for her now. As the eyes of the old woman closed to earth, the eyes of the soul opened upon the hidden things of eternity, and then she, in whose last thoughts Inge had been so vividly present, saw how deeply the poor girl had sunk. She burst into tears at the sight, and in heaven, as she had done when a little child on earth, she wept and prayed for poor Inge. Her tears and her prayers echoed through the dark void that surrounded the tormented captive soul, and the unexpected mercy was obtained for it through an angel's tears. As in thought Inge seemed to act over again every sin she had committed on earth, she trembled, and tears she had never yet been able to weep rushed to her eyes. It seemed impossible that the gates of mercy could ever be opened to her; but while she acknowledged this in deep penitence, a beam of radiant light shot suddenly into the depths upon her. More powerful than the sunbeam that dissolves the man of snow which the children have raised, more quickly than the snowflake melts and becomes a drop of water on the warm lips of a child, was the stony form of Inge changed, and as a little bird she soared, with the speed of lightning, upward to the world of mortals. A bird that felt timid and shy to all things around it, that seemed to shrink with shame from meeting any living creature, and hurriedly sought to conceal itself in a dark corner of an old ruined wall; there it sat cowering and unable to utter a sound, for it was voiceless. Yet how quickly the little bird discovered the beauty of everything around it. The sweet, fresh air; the soft radiance of the moon, as its light spread over the earth; the fragrance which exhaled from bush and tree, made it feel happy as it sat there clothed in its fresh, bright plumage. All creation seemed to speak of beneficence and love. The bird wanted to give utterance to thoughts that stirred in his breast, as the cuckoo and the nightingale in the spring, but it could not. Yet in heaven can be heard the song of praise, even from a worm; and the notes trembling in the breast of the bird were as audible to Heaven even as the psalms of David before they had fashioned themselves into words and song.

Christmas-time drew near, and a peasant who dwelt close by the old wall stuck up a pole with some ears of corn fastened to the top, that the birds of heaven might have feast, and rejoice in the happy, blessed time. And on Christmas morning the sun arose and shone upon the ears of corn, which were quickly surrounded by a number of twittering birds. Then, from a hole in the wall, gushed forth in song the swelling thoughts of the bird as he issued from his hiding place to perform his first good deed on earth,—and in heaven it was well known who that bird was.

The winter was very hard; the ponds were covered with ice, and there was very little food for either the beasts of the field or the birds of the air. Our little bird flew away into the public roads, and found here and there, in the ruts of the sledges, a grain of corn, and at the halting places some crumbs. Of these he ate only a few, but he called around him the other birds and the hungry sparrows, that they too might have food. He flew into the towns, and looked about, and wherever a kind hand had strewed bread on the window-sill for the birds, he only ate a single crumb himself, and gave all the rest to the rest of the other birds. In the course of the winter the bird had in this way collected many crumbs and given them to other birds, till they equalled the weight of the loaf on which Inge had trod to keep her shoes clean; and when the last bread-crumb had been found and given, the gray wings of the bird became white, and spread themselves out for flight.

"See, yonder is a sea-gull!" cried the children, when they saw the white bird, as it dived into the sea, and rose again into the clear sunlight, white and glittering. But no one could tell whither it went then although some declared it flew straight to the sun.

THE GOBLIN AND THE HUCKSTER

There was once a regular student, who lived in a garret, and had no possessions. And there was also a regular huckster, to whom the house belonged, and who occupied the ground floor. A goblin lived with the huckster, because at Christmas he always had a large dish full of jam, with a great piece of butter in the middle. The huckster could afford this; and therefore the goblin remained with the huckster, which was very cunning of him.

One evening the student came into the shop through the back door to buy candles and cheese for himself, he had no one to send, and therefore he came himself; he obtained what he wished, and then the huckster and his wife nodded good evening to him, and she was a woman who could do more than merely nod, for she had usually plenty to say for herself. The student nodded in return as he turned to leave, then suddenly stopped, and began reading the piece of paper in which the cheese was wrapped. It was a leaf torn out of an old book, a book that ought not to have been torn up, for it was full of poetry.

"Yonder lies some more of the same sort," said the huckster: "I gave an old woman a few coffee berries for it; you shall have the rest for sixpence, if you will."

"Indeed I will," said the student; "give me the book instead of the cheese;

I can eat my bread and butter without cheese. It would be a sin to tear up a book like this. You are a clever man; and a practical man; but you understand no more about poetry than that cask yonder."

This was a very rude speech, especially against the cask; but the huckster and the student both laughed, for it was only said in fun. But the goblin felt very angry that any man should venture to say such things to a huckster who was a householder and sold the best butter. As soon as it was night, and the shop closed, and every one in bed except the student, the goblin stepped softly into the bedroom where the huckster's wife slept, and took away her tongue, which of course, she did not then want. Whatever object in the room he placed his tongue upon immediately received voice and speech, and was able to express its thoughts and feelings as readily as the lady herself could do. It could only be used by one object at a time, which was a good thing, as a number speaking at once would have caused great confusion. The goblin laid the tongue upon the cask, in which lay a quantity of old newspapers.

"Is it really true," he asked, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Of course I know," replied the cask: "poetry is something that always stand in the corner of a newspaper, and is sometimes cut out; and I may venture to affirm that I have more of it in me than the student has, and I am only a poor tub of the huckster's."

Then the goblin placed the tongue on the coffee mill; and how it did go to be sure! Then he put it on the butter tub and the cash box, and they all expressed the same opinion as the waste-paper tub; and a majority must always be respected.

"Now I shall go and tell the student," said the goblin; and with these words he went quietly up the back stairs to the garret where the student lived. He had a candle burning still, and the goblin peeped through the keyhole and saw that he was reading in the torn book, which he had brought out of the shop. But how light the room was! From the book shot forth a ray of light which grew broad and full, like the stem of a tree, from which bright rays spread upward and over the student's head. Each leaf was fresh, and each flower was like a beautiful female head; some with dark and sparkling eyes, and others with eyes that were wonderfully blue and clear. The fruit gleamed like stars, and the room was filled with sounds of beautiful music. The little goblin had never imagined, much less seen or heard of, any sight so glorious as this. He stood still on tiptoe, peeping in, till the light went out in the garret. The student no doubt had blown out his candle and gone to bed; but the little goblin remained standing there nevertheless, and listening to the music which still sounded on, soft and beautiful, a sweet cradle-song for the student, who had lain down to rest.

"This is a wonderful place," said the goblin; "I never expected such a thing. I should like to stay here with the student;" and the little man thought it over, for he was a sensible little spirit. At last he sighed, "but the student has no jam!" So he went down stairs again into the huckster's shop, and it was a good thing he got back when he did, for the cask had almost worn out the lady's tongue; he had given a description of all that he contained on one side, and was just about to turn himself over to the other side to describe what was there, when the goblin entered and restored the tongue to the lady. But from that time forward, the whole shop, from the cash box down to the pinewood logs, formed their opinions from that of the cask; and they all had such confidence in him, and treated him with so much respect, that when the huckster read the criticisms on theatricals and art of an evening, they fancied it must all come from the cask.

But after what he had seen, the goblin could no longer sit and listen quietly to the wisdom and understanding down stairs; so, as soon as the evening light glimmered in the garret, he took courage, for it seemed to him as if the rays of light were strong cables, drawing him up, and obliging him to go and peep through the keyhole; and, while there, a feeling of vastness came over him such as we experience by the ever-moving sea, when the storm breaks forth; and it brought tears into his eyes. He did not himself know why he wept, yet a kind of pleasant feeling mingled with his tears. "How wonderfully glorious it would be to sit with the student under such a tree;" but that was out of the question, he must be content to look through the keyhole, and be thankful for even that.

There he stood on the old landing, with the autumn wind blowing down upon him through the trap-door. It was very cold; but the little creature did not really feel it, till the light in the garret went out, and the tones of music died away. Then how he shivered, and crept down stairs again to his warm corner, where it felt home-like and comfortable. And when Christmas came again, and brought the dish of jam and the great lump of butter, he liked the huckster best of all.

Soon after, in the middle of the night, the goblin was awoke by a terrible noise and knocking against the window shutters and the house doors, and by the sound of the watchman's horn; for a great fire had broken out, and the whole street appeared full of flames. Was it in their house, or a neighbor's? No one could tell, for terror had seized upon all. The huckster's wife was so bewildered that she took her gold ear-rings out of her ears and put them in her pocket, that she might save something at least. The huckster ran to get his business papers, and the servant resolved to save her blue silk mantle, which she had managed to buy. Each wished to keep the best

things they had. The goblin had the same wish; for, with one spring, he was up stairs and in the student's room, whom he found standing by the open window, and looking quite calmly at the fire, which was raging at the house of a neighbor opposite. The goblin caught up the wonderful book which lay on the table, and popped it into his red cap, which he held tightly with both hands. The greatest treasure in the house was saved; and he ran away with it to the roof, and seated himself on the chimney. The flames of the burning house opposite illuminated him as he sat, both hands pressed tightly over his cap, in which the treasure lay; and then he found out what feelings really reigned in his heart, and knew exactly which way they tended. And yet, when the fire was extinguished, and the goblin again began to reflect, he hesitated, and said at last, "I must divide myself between the two; I cannot quite give up the huckster, because of the jam."

And this is a representation of human nature. We are like the goblin; we all go to visit the huckster "because of the jam."

THE GOLDEN TREASURE

The drummer's wife went into the church. She saw the new altar with the painted pictures and the carved angels. Those upon the canvas and in the glory over the altar were just as beautiful as the carved ones; and they were painted and gilt into the bargain. Their hair gleamed golden in the sunshine, lovely to behold; but the real sunshine was more beautiful still. It shone redder, clearer through the dark trees, when the sun went down. It was lovely thus to look at the sunshine of heaven. And she looked at the red sun, and she thought about it so deeply, and thought of the little one whom the stork was to bring, and the wife of the drummer was very cheerful, and looked and looked, and wished that the child might have a gleam of sunshine given to it, so that it might at least become like one of the shining angels over the altar.

And when she really had the little child in her arms, and held it up to its father, then it was like one of the angels in the church to behold, with hair like gold—the gleam of the setting sun was upon it.

"My golden treasure, my riches, my sunshine!" said the mother; and she kissed the shining locks, and it sounded like music and song in the room of the drummer; and there was joy, and life, and movement. The drummer beat a roll—a roll of joy. And the Drum said—the Fire-drum, that was beaten when there was a fire in the town:

"Red hair! the little fellow has red hair! Believe the drum, and not what your mother says! Rub-a dub, rub-a dub!"

And the town repeated what the Fire-drum had said.

The boy was taken to church, the boy was christened. There was nothing much to be said about his name; he was called Peter. The whole town, and the Drum too, called him Peter the drummer's boy with the red hair; but his mother kissed his red hair, and called him her golden treasure.

In the hollow way in the clayey bank, many had scratched their names as a remembrance.

"Celebrity is always something!" said the drummer; and so he scratched his own name there, and his little son's name likewise.

And the swallows came. They had, on their long journey, seen more durable characters engraven on rocks, and on the walls of the temples in Hindostan, mighty deeds of great kings, immortal names, so old that no one now could read or speak them. Remarkable celebrity!

In the clayey bank the martens built their nest. They bored holes in the deep declivity, and the splashing rain and the thin mist came and crumbled and washed the names away, and the drummer's name also, and that of his little son.

"Peter's name will last a full year and a half longer!" said the father.

"Fool!" thought the Fire-drum; but it only said, "Dub, dub, dub, rub-a-dub!"

He was a boy full of life and gladness, this drummer's son with the red hair. He had a lovely voice. He could sing, and he sang like a bird in the woodland. There was melody, and yet no melody.

"He must become a chorister boy," said his mother. "He shall sing in the church, and stand among the beautiful gilded angels who are like him!"

"Fiery cat!" said some of the witty ones of the town.

The Drum heard that from the neighbors' wives.

"Don't go home, Peter," cried the street boys. "If you sleep in the garret, there'll be a fire in the house, and the fire-drum will have to be beaten."

"Look out for the drumsticks," replied Peter; and, small as he was, he ran up boldly, and gave the foremost such a punch in the body with his fist, that the fellow lost his legs and tumbled over, and the others took their legs off with themselves very rapidly.

The town musician was very genteel and fine. He was the son of the royal plate-washer. He was very fond of Peter, and would sometimes take him to his home; and he gave him a violin, and taught him to play it. It seemed as if the whole art lay in the boy's fingers; and he wanted to be more than a drummer—he wanted to become musician to the town.

"I'll be a soldier," said Peter; for he was still quite a little lad, and it seemed to him the finest thing in the world to carry a gun, and to be able to march one, two—one, two, and to wear a uniform and a sword.

"Ah, you learn to long for the drum-skin, drum, dum, dum!" said the Drum.

"Yes, if he could only march his way up to be a general!" observed his

father; “but before he can do that, there must be war.”
“Heaven forbid!” said his mother.
“We have nothing to lose,” remarked the father.
“Yes, we have my boy,” she retorted.
“But suppose he came back a general!” said the father.
“Without arms and legs!” cried the mother. “No, I would rather keep my golden treasure with me.”
“Drum, dum, dum!” The Fire-drum and all the other drums were beating, for war had come. The soldiers all set out, and the son of the drummer followed them. “Red-head. Golden treasure!”
The mother wept; the father in fancy saw him “famous;” the town musician was of opinion that he ought not to go to war, but should stay at home and learn music.
“Red-head,” said the soldiers, and little Peter laughed; but when one of them sometimes said to another, “Foxey,” he would bite his teeth together and look another way—into the wide world. He did not care for the nickname.
The boy was active, pleasant of speech, and good-humored; that is the best canteen, said his old comrades.
And many a night he had to sleep under the open sky, wet through with the driving rain or the falling mist; but his good humor never forsook him. The drum-sticks sounded, “Rub-a-dub, all up, all up!” Yes, he was certainly born to be a drummer.
The day of battle dawned. The sun had not yet risen, but the morning was come. The air was cold, the battle was hot; there was mist in the air, but still more gunpowder-smoke. The bullets and shells flew over the soldiers’ heads, and into their heads—into their bodies and limbs; but still they pressed forward. Here or there one or other of them would sink on his knees, with bleeding temples and a face as white as chalk. The little drummer still kept his healthy color; he had suffered no damage; he looked cheerfully at the dog of the regiment, which was jumping along as merrily as if the whole thing had been got up for his amusement, and as if the bullets were only flying about that he might have a game of play with them.
“March! Forward! March!” This, was the word of command for the drum. The word had not yet been given to fall back, though they might have done so, and perhaps there would have been much sense in it; and now at last the word “Retire” was given; but our little drummer beat “Forward! march!” for he had understood the command thus, and the soldiers obeyed the sound of the drum. That was a good roll, and proved the summons to victory for the men, who had already begun to give way.

Life and limb were lost in the battle. Bombshells tore away the flesh in red strips; bombshells lit up into a terrible glow the strawheaps to which the wounded had dragged themselves, to lie untended for many hours, perhaps for all the hours they had to live.

It's no use thinking of it; and yet one cannot help thinking of it, even far away in the peaceful town. The drummer and his wife also thought of it, for Peter was at the war.

"Now, I'm tired of these complaints," said the Fire-drum.

Again the day of battle dawned; the sun had not yet risen, but it was morning. The drummer and his wife were asleep. They had been talking about their son, as, indeed, they did almost every night, for he was out yonder in God's hand. And the father dreamt that the war was over, that the soldiers had returned home, and that Peter wore a silver cross on his breast. But the mother dreamt that she had gone into the church, and had seen the painted pictures and the carved angels with the gilded hair, and her own dear boy, the golden treasure of her heart, who was standing among the angels in white robes, singing so sweetly, as surely only the angels can sing; and that he had soared up with them into the sunshine, and nodded so kindly at his mother.

"My golden treasure!" she cried out; and she awoke. "Now the good God has taken him to Himself!" She folded her hands, and hid her face in the cotton curtains of the bed, and wept. "Where does he rest now? among the many in the big grave that they have dug for the dead? Perhaps he's in the water in the marsh! Nobody knows his grave; no holy words have been read over it!" And the Lord's Prayer went inaudibly over her lips; she bowed her head, and was so weary that she went to sleep.

And the days went by, in life as in dreams!

It was evening. Over the battle-field a rainbow spread, which touched the forest and the deep marsh.

It has been said, and is preserved in popular belief, that where the rainbow touches the earth a treasure lies buried, a golden treasure; and here there was one. No one but his mother thought of the little drummer, and therefore she dreamt of him.

And the days went by, in life as in dreams!

Not a hair of his head had been hurt, not a golden hair.

"Drum-ma-rum! drum-ma-rum! there he is!" the Drum might have said, and his mother might have sung, if she had seen or dreamt it.

With hurrah and song, adorned with green wreaths of victory, they came home, as the war was at an end, and peace had been signed. The dog of the regiment sprang on in front with large bounds, and made the way three times as long for himself as it really was.

And days and weeks went by, and Peter came into his parents' room. He was as brown as a wild man, and his eyes were bright, and his face beamed like sunshine. And his mother held him in her arms; she kissed his lips, his forehead, and his red hair. She had her boy back again; he had not a silver cross on his breast, as his father had dreamt, but he had sound limbs, a thing the mother had not dreamt. And what a rejoicing was there! They laughed and they wept; and Peter embraced the old Fire-drum.

"There stands the old skeleton still!" he said.

And the father beat a roll upon it.

"One would think that a great fire had broken out here," said the Fire-drum. "Bright day! fire in the heart! golden treasure! skrat! skr-r-at! skr-r-r-r-at!"

And what then? What then!—Ask the town musician.

"Peter's far outgrowing the drum," he said. "Peter will be greater than I."

And yet he was the son of a royal plate-washer; but all that he had learned in half a lifetime, Peter learned in half a year.

There was something so merry about him, something so truly kind-hearted. His eyes gleamed, and his hair gleamed too—there was no denying that!

"He ought to have his hair dyed," said the neighbor's wife. "That answered capitally with the policeman's daughter, and she got a husband."

"But her hair turned as green as duckweed, and was always having to be colored up."

"She knows how to manage for herself," said the neighbors, "and so can Peter. He comes to the most genteel houses, even to the burgomaster's where he gives Miss Charlotte piano-forte lessons."

He could play! He could play, fresh out of his heart, the most charming pieces, that had never been put upon music-paper. He played in the bright nights, and in the dark nights, too. The neighbors declared it was unbearable, and the Fire-drum was of the same opinion.

He played until his thoughts soared up, and burst forth in great plans for the future: "To be famous!" And burgomaster's Charlotte sat at the piano. Her delicate fingers danced over the keys, and made them ring into Peter's heart. It seemed too much for him to bear; and this happened not once, but many times; and at last one day he seized the delicate fingers and the white hand, and kissed it, and looked into her great brown eyes. Heaven knows what he said; but we may be allowed to guess at it. Charlotte blushed to guess at it. She reddened from brow to neck, and answered not a single word; and then strangers came into the room, and one of them was the state councillor's son. He had a lofty white forehead, and carried it so high that it seemed to go back into his neck. And Peter sat by her a long time, and she looked at him with gentle eyes.

At home that evening he spoke of travel in the wide world, and of the golden treasure that lay hidden for him in his violin.
"To be famous!" "Tum-me-lum, tum-me-lum, tum-me-lum!" said the Fire-drum. "Peter has gone clear out of his wits. I think there must be a fire in the house." Next day the mother went to market.
"Shall I tell you news, Peter?" she asked when she came home. "A capital piece of news. Burgomaster's Charlotte has engaged herself to the state councillor's son; the betrothal took place yesterday evening."
"No!" cried Peter, and he sprang up from his chair. But his mother persisted in saying "Yes." She had heard it from the baker's wife, whose husband had it from the burgomaster's own mouth.
And Peter became as pale as death, and sat down again.
"Good Heaven! what's the matter with you?" asked his mother.
"Nothing, nothing; only leave me to myself," he answered but the tears were running down his cheeks.
"My sweet child, my golden treasure!" cried the mother, and she wept; but the Fire-drum sang, not out loud, but inwardly.
"Charlotte's gone! Charlotte's gone! and now the song is done."
But the song was not done; there were many more verses in it, long verses, the most beautiful verses, the golden treasures of a life.
"She behaves like a mad woman," said the neighbor's wife. "All the world is to see the letters she gets from her golden treasure, and to read the words that are written in the papers about his violin playing. And he sends her money too, and that's very useful to her since she has been a widow."
"He plays before emperors and kings," said the town musician. "I never had that fortune, but he's my pupil, and he does not forget his old master."
And his mother said, "His father dreamt that Peter came home from the war with a silver cross. He did not gain one in the war, but it is still more difficult to gain one in this way. Now he has the cross of honor. If his father had only lived to see it!" "He's grown famous!" said the Fire-drum, and all his native town said the same thing, for the drummer's son, Peter with the red hair—Peter whom they had known as a little boy, running about in wooden shoes, and then as a drummer, playing for the dancers—was become famous!
"He played at our house before he played in the presence of kings," said the burgomaster's wife. "At that time he was quite smitten with Charlotte. He was always of an aspiring turn. At that time he was saucy and an enthusiast. My husband laughed when he heard of the foolish affair, and now our Charlotte is a state councillor's wife."
A golden treasure had been hidden in the heart and soul of the poor child,

who had beaten the roll as a drummer—a roll of victory for those who had been ready to retreat. There was a golden treasure in his bosom, the power of sound; it burst forth on his violin as if the instrument had been a complete organ, and as if all the elves of a midsummer night were dancing across the strings. In its sounds were heard the piping of the thrush and the full clear note of the human voice; therefore the sound brought rapture to every heart, and carried his name triumphant through the land. That was a great firebrand—the firebrand of inspiration.

"And then he looks so splendid!" said the young ladies and the old ladies too; and the oldest of all procured an album for famous locks of hair, wholly and solely that she might beg a lock of his rich splendid hair, that treasure, that golden treasure.

And the son came into the poor room of the drummer, elegant as a prince, happier than a king. His eyes were as clear and his face was as radiant as sunshine; and he held his mother in his arms, and she kissed his mouth, and wept as blissfully as any one can weep for joy; and he nodded at every old piece of furniture in the room, at the cupboard with the tea-cups, and at the flower-vase. He nodded at the sleeping-bench, where he had slept as a little boy; but the old Fire-drum he brought out, and dragged it into the middle of the room, and said to it and to his mother: "My father would have beaten a famous roll this evening. Now I must do it!"

And he beat a thundering roll-call on the instrument, and the Drum felt so highly honored that the parchment burst with exultation.

"He has a splendid touch!" said the Drum. "I've a remembrance of him now that will last. I expect that the same thing will happen to his mother, from pure joy over her golden treasure."

And this is the story of the Golden Treasure.

THE GOLOSHES OF FORTUNE

A BEGINNING

In a house in Copenhagen, not far from the king's new market, a very large party had assembled, the host and his family expecting, no doubt, to receive invitations in return. One half of the company were already seated at the card-tables, the other half seemed to be waiting the result of their hostess's question, "Well, how shall we amuse ourselves?"

Conversation followed, which, after a while, began to prove very entertaining. Among other subjects, it turned upon the events of the middle ages, which some persons maintained were more full of interest than our own

times. Counsellor Knapp defended this opinion so warmly that the lady of the house immediately went over to his side, and both exclaimed against Oersted's Essays on Ancient and Modern Times, in which the preference is given to our own. The counsellor considered the times of the Danish king, Hans, as the noblest and happiest.

The conversation on this topic was only interrupted for a moment by the arrival of a newspaper, which did not, however, contain much worth reading, and while it is still going on we will pay a visit to the ante-room, in which cloaks, sticks, and goloshes were carefully placed. Here sat two maidens, one young, and the other old, as if they had come and were waiting to accompany their mistresses home; but on looking at them more closely, it could easily be seen that they were no common servants. Their shapes were too graceful, their complexions too delicate, and the cut of their dresses much too elegant. They were two fairies. The younger was not Fortune herself, but the chambermaid of one of Fortune's attendants, who carries about her more trifling gifts. The elder one, who was named Care, looked rather gloomy; she always goes about to perform her own business in person; for then she knows it is properly done. They were telling each other where they had been during the day. The messenger of Fortune had only transacted a few unimportant matters; for instance, she had preserved a new bonnet from a shower of rain, and obtained for an honest man a bow from a titled nobody, and so on; but she had something extraordinary to relate, after all.

"I must tell you," said she, "that to-day is my birthday; and in honor of it I have been intrusted with a pair of goloshes, to introduce amongst mankind. These goloshes have the property of making every one who puts them on imagine himself in any place he wishes, or that he exists at any period. Every wish is fulfilled at the moment it is expressed, so that for once mankind have the chance of being happy."

"No," replied Care; "you may depend upon it that whoever puts on those goloshes will be very unhappy, and bless the moment in which he can get rid of them."

"What are you thinking of?" replied the other. "Now see; I will place them by the door; some one will take them instead of his own, and he will be the happy man."

This was the end of their conversation.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE COUNSELLOR

It was late when Counsellor Knapp, lost in thought about the times of King Hans, desired to return home; and fate so ordered it that he put on the goloshes of Fortune instead of his own, and walked out into the East Street. Through the magic power of the goloshes, he was at once carried back three hundred years, to the times of King Hans, for which he had been longing when he put them on. Therefore he immediately set his foot into the mud and mire of the street, which in those days possessed no pavement.

"Why, this is horrible; how dreadfully dirty it is!" said the counsellor; "and the whole pavement has vanished, and the lamps are all out."

The moon had not yet risen high enough to penetrate the thick foggy air, and all the objects around him were confused together in the darkness. At the nearest corner, a lamp hung before a picture of the Madonna; but the light it gave was almost useless, for he only perceived it when he came quite close and his eyes fell on the painted figures of the Mother and Child.

"That is most likely a museum of art," thought he, "and they have forgotten to take down the sign."

Two men, in the dress of olden times, passed by him.

"What odd figures!" thought he; "they must be returning from some masquerade."

Suddenly he heard the sound of a drum and fifes, and then a blazing light from torches shone upon him. The counsellor stared with astonishment as he beheld a most strange procession pass before him. First came a whole troop of drummers, beating their drums very cleverly; they were followed by life-guards, with longbows and crossbows. The principal person in the procession was a clerical-looking gentleman. The astonished counsellor asked what it all meant, and who the gentleman might be.

"That is the bishop of Zealand."

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed; "what in the world has happened to the bishop? what can he be thinking about?" Then he shook his head and said, "It cannot possibly be the bishop himself."

While musing on this strange affair, and without looking to the right or left, he walked on through East Street and over Highbridge Place. The bridge, which he supposed led to Palace Square, was nowhere to be found; but instead, he saw a bank and some shallow water, and two people, who sat in a boat.

"Does the gentleman wish to be ferried over the Holm?" asked one.

"To the Holm!" exclaimed the counsellor, not knowing in what age he was now existing; "I want to go to Christian's Haven, in Little Turf Street."

The men stared at him. “Pray tell me where the bridge is!” said he. “It is shameful that the lamps are not lighted here, and it is as muddy as if one were walking in a marsh.” But the more he talked with the boatmen the less they could understand each other.

“I don’t understand your outlandish talk,” he cried at last, angrily turning his back upon them. He could not, however, find the bridge nor any railings. “What a scandalous condition this place is in,” said he; never, certainly, had he found his own times so miserable as on this evening. “I think it will be better for me to take a coach; but where are they?” There was not one to be seen! “I shall be obliged to go back to the king’s new market,” said he, “where there are plenty of carriages standing, or I shall never reach Christian’s Haven.” Then he went towards East Street, and had nearly passed through it, when the moon burst forth from a cloud.

“Dear me, what have they been erecting here?” he cried, as he caught sight of the East gate, which in olden times used to stand at the end of East Street. However, he found an opening through which he passed, and came out upon where he expected to find the new market. Nothing was to be seen but an open meadow, surrounded by a few bushes, through which ran a broad canal or stream. A few miserable-looking wooden booths, for the accommodation of Dutch watermen, stood on the opposite shore.

“Either I behold a fata morgana, or I must be tipsy,” groaned the counsellor. “What can it be? What is the matter with me?” He turned back in the full conviction that he must be ill. In walking through the street this time, he examined the houses more closely; he found that most of them were built of lath and plaster, and many had only a thatched roof.

“I am certainly all wrong,” said he, with a sigh; “and yet I only drank one glass of punch. But I cannot bear even that, and it was very foolish to give us punch and hot salmon; I shall speak about it to our hostess, the agent’s lady. Suppose I were to go back now and say how ill I feel, I fear it would look so ridiculous, and it is not very likely that I should find any one up.” Then he looked for the house, but it was not in existence.

“This is really frightful; I cannot even recognize East Street. Not a shop to be seen; nothing but old, wretched, tumble-down houses, just as if I were at Roeskilde or Ringstedt. Oh, I really must be ill! It is no use to stand upon ceremony. But where in the world is the agent’s house. There is a house, but it is not his; and people still up in it, I can hear. Oh dear! I certainly am very queer.” As he reached the half-open door, he saw a light and went in. It was a tavern of the olden times, and seemed a kind of beershop. The room had the appearance of a Dutch interior. A number of people, consisting of

seamen, Copenhagen citizens, and a few scholars, sat in deep conversation over their mugs, and took very little notice of the new comer.
"Pardon me," said the counsellor, addressing the landlady, "I do not feel quite well, and I should be much obliged if you will send for a fly to take me to Christian's Haven." The woman stared at him and shook her head. Then she spoke to him in German. The counsellor supposed from this that she did not understand Danish; he therefore repeated his request in German. This, as well as his singular dress, convinced the woman that he was a foreigner. She soon understood, however, that he did not find himself quite well, and therefore brought him a mug of water. It had something of the taste of seawater, certainly, although it had been drawn from the well outside. Then the counsellor leaned his head on his hand, drew a deep breath, and pondered over all the strange things that had happened to him.
"Is that to-day's number of the Day?" he asked, quite mechanically, as he saw the woman putting by a large piece of paper. She did not understand what he meant, but she handed him the sheet; it was a woodcut, representing a meteor, which had appeared in the town of Cologne.
"That is very old," said the counsellor, becoming quite cheerful at the sight of this antique drawing. "Where did you get this singular sheet? It is very interesting, although the whole affair is a fable. Meteors are easily explained in these days; they are northern lights, which are often seen, and are no doubt caused by electricity."
Those who sat near him, and heard what he said, looked at him in great astonishment, and one of them rose, took off his hat respectfully, and said in a very serious manner, "You must certainly be a very learned man, monsieur."
"Oh no," replied the counsellor; "I can only discourse on topics which every one should understand."
"Modestia is a beautiful virtue," said the man. "Moreover, I must add to your speech mihi secus videtur; yet in this case I would suspend my judicium."
"May I ask to whom I have the pleasure of speaking?"
"I am a Bachelor of Divinity," said the man. This answer satisfied the counsellor. The title agreed with the dress.
"This is surely," thought he, "an old village schoolmaster, a perfect original, such as one meets with sometimes even in Jutland."
"This is not certainly a locus docendi," began the man; "still I must beg you to continue the conversation. You must be well read in ancient lore."
"Oh yes," replied the counsellor; "I am very fond of reading useful old books, and modern ones as well, with the exception of every-day stories, of which we really have more than enough.
"Every-day stories?" asked the bachelor.
"Yes, I mean the new novels that we have at the present day."

"Oh," replied the man, with a smile; "and yet they are very witty, and are much read at Court. The king likes especially the romance of Messeurs Iffven and Gaudian, which describes King Arthur and his knights of the round table. He has joked about it with the gentlemen of his Court."
"Well, I have certainly not read that," replied the counsellor. "I suppose it is quite new, and published by Heiberg."
"No," answered the man, "it is not by Heiberg; Godfred von Gehman brought it out."
"Oh, is he the publisher? That is a very old name," said the counsellor; "was it not the name of the first publisher in Denmark?"
"Yes; and he is our first printer and publisher now," replied the scholar.
So far all had passed off very well; but now one of the citizens began to speak of a terrible pestilence which had been raging a few years before, meaning the plague of 1484. The counsellor thought he referred to the cholera, and they could discuss this without finding out the mistake. The war in 1490 was spoken of as quite recent. The English pirates had taken some ships in the Channel in 1801, and the counsellor, supposing they referred to these, agreed with them in finding fault with the English. The rest of the talk, however, was not so agreeable; every moment one contradicted the other. The good bachelor appeared very ignorant, for the simplest remark of the counsellor seemed to him either too bold or too fantastic. They stared at each other, and when it became worse the bachelor spoke in Latin, in the hope of being better understood; but it was all useless.
"How are you now?" asked the landlady, pulling the counsellor's sleeve.
Then his recollection returned to him. In the course of conversation he had forgotten all that had happened previously.
"Goodness me! where am I?" said he. It bewildered him as he thought of it.
"We will have some claret, or mead, or Bremen beer," said one of the guests; "will you drink with us?"
Two maids came in. One of them had a cap on her head of two colors. They poured out the wine, bowed their heads, and withdrew.
The counsellor felt a cold shiver run all over him. "What is this? what does it mean?" said he; but he was obliged to drink with them, for they overpowered the good man with their politeness. He became at last desperate; and when one of them said he was tipsy, he did not doubt the man's word in the least—only begged them to get a droschky; and then they thought he was speaking the Muscovite language. Never before had he been in such rough and vulgar company. "One might believe that the country was going back to heathenism," he observed. "This is the most terrible moment of my life."

Just then it came into his mind that he would stoop under the table, and so creep to the door. He tried it; but before he reached the entry, the rest discovered what he was about, and seized him by the feet, when, luckily for him, off came the goloshes, and with them vanished the whole enchantment. The counsellor now saw quite plainly a lamp, and a large building behind it; everything looked familiar and beautiful. He was in East Street, as it now appears; he lay with his legs turned towards a porch, and just by him sat the watchman asleep.

"Is it possible that I have been lying here in the street dreaming?" said he. "Yes, this is East Street; how beautifully bright and gay it looks! It is quite shocking that one glass of punch should have upset me like this."

Two minutes afterwards he sat in a droschky, which was to drive him to Christian's Haven. He thought of all the terror and anxiety which he had undergone, and felt thankful from his heart for the reality and comfort of modern times, which, with all their errors, were far better than those in which he so lately found himself.

THE WATCHMAN'S ADVENTURES

"Well, I declare, there lies a pair of goloshes," said the watchman. "No doubt, they belong to the lieutenant who lives up stairs. They are lying just by his door." Gladly would the honest man have rung, and given them in, for a light was still burning, but he did not wish to disturb the other people in the house; so he let them lie. "These things must keep the feet very warm," said he; "they are of such nice soft leather." Then he tried them on, and they fitted his feet exactly. "Now," said he, "how droll things are in this world! There's that man can lie down in his warm bed, but he does not do so. There he goes pacing up and down the room. He ought to be a happy man. He has neither wife nor children, and he goes out into company every evening. Oh, I wish I were he; then I should be a happy man."

As he uttered this wish, the goloshes which he had put on took effect, and the watchman at once became the lieutenant. There he stood in his room, holding a little piece of pink paper between his fingers, on which was a poem,—a poem written by the lieutenant himself. Who has not had, for once in his life, a moment of poetic inspiration? and at such a moment, if the thoughts are written down, they flow in poetry. The following verses were written on the pink paper:—

"OH WERE I RICH!

"Oh were I rich! How oft, in youth's bright hour,
When youthful pleasures banish every care,
I longed for riches but to gain a power,
The sword and plume and uniform to wear!
The riches and the honor came for me;
Yet still my greatest wealth was poverty:
Ah, help and pity me!
"Once in my youthful hours, when gay and free,
A maiden loved me; and her gentle kiss,
Rich in its tender love and purity,
Taught me, alas! too much of earthly bliss.
Dear child! She only thought of youthful glee;
She loved no wealth, but fairy tales and me.
Thou knowest: ah, pity me!
"Oh were I rich! again is all my prayer:
That child is now a woman, fair and free,
As good and beautiful as angels are.
Oh, were I rich in lovers' poetry,
To tell my fairy tale, love's richest lore!
But no; I must be silent—I am poor.
Ah, wilt thou pity me?
"Oh were I rich in truth and peace below,
I need not then my poverty bewail.
To thee I dedicate these lines of woe;
Wilt thou not understand the mournful tale?
A leaf on which my sorrows I relate—
Dark story of a darker night of fate.
Ah, bless and pity me!"

"Well, yes; people write poems when they are in love, but a wise man will not print them. A lieutenant in love, and poor. This is a triangle, or more properly speaking, the half of the broken die of fortune." The lieutenant felt this very keenly, and therefore leaned his head against the window-frame, and sighed deeply. "The poor watchman in the street," said he, "is far happier than I am. He knows not what I call poverty. He has a home, a wife and children, who weep at his sorrow and rejoice at his joy. Oh, how much happier I should be could I change my being and position with him, and pass through life with his humble expectations and hopes! Yes, he is indeed happier than I am."

At this moment the watchman again became a watchman; for having, through the goloshes of Fortune, passed into the existence of the lieutenant, and found

himself less contented than he expected, he had preferred his former condition, and wished himself again a watchman. "That was an ugly dream," said he, "but droll enough. It seemed to me as if I were the lieutenant up yonder, but there was no happiness for me. I missed my wife and the little ones, who are always ready to smother me with kisses." He sat down again and nodded, but he could not get the dream out of his thoughts, and he still had the goloshes on his feet. A falling star gleamed across the sky. "There goes one!" cried he. "However, there are quite enough left; I should very much like to examine these a little nearer, especially the moon, for that could not slip away under one's hands. The student, for whom my wife washes, says that when we die we shall fly from one star to another. If that were true, it would be very delightful, but I don't believe it. I wish I could make a little spring up there now; I would willingly let my body lie here on the steps."

There are certain things in the world which should be uttered very cautiously; doubly so when the speaker has on his feet the goloshes of Fortune. Now we shall hear what happened to the watchman.

Nearly every one is acquainted with the great power of steam; we have proved it by the rapidity with which we can travel, both on a railroad or in a steamship across the sea. But this speed is like the movements of the sloth, or the crawling march of the snail, when compared to the swiftness with which light travels; light flies nineteen million times faster than the fleetest race-horse, and electricity is more rapid still. Death is an electric shock which we receive in our hearts, and on the wings of electricity the liberated soul flies away swiftly, the light from the sun travels to our earth ninety-five millions of miles in eight minutes and a few seconds; but on the wings of electricity, the mind requires only a second to accomplish the same distance. The space between the heavenly bodies is, to thought, no farther than the distance which we may have to walk from one friend's house to another in the same town; yet this electric shock obliges us to use our bodies here below, unless, like the watchman, we have on the goloshes of Fortune.

In a very few seconds the watchman had travelled more than two hundred thousand miles to the moon, which is formed of a lighter material than our earth, and may be said to be as soft as new fallen snow. He found himself on one of the circular range of mountains which we see represented in Dr. Madler's large map of the moon. The interior had the appearance of a large hollow, bowl-shaped, with a depth about half a mile from the brim. Within this hollow stood a large town; we may form some idea of its appearance by pouring the white of an egg into a glass of water. The materials of which it was built seemed just as soft, and pictured forth cloudy turrets and sail-

like terraces, quite transparent, and floating in the thin air. Our earth hung over his head like a great dark red ball. Presently he discovered a number of beings, which might certainly be called men, but were very different to ourselves. A more fantastical imagination than Herschel's must have discovered these. Had they been placed in groups, and painted, it might have been said, "What beautiful foliage!" They had also a language of their own. No one could have expected the soul of the watchman to understand it, and yet he did understand it, for our souls have much greater capabilities then we are inclined to believe. Do we not, in our dreams, show a wonderful dramatic talent? each of our acquaintance appears to us then in his own character, and with his own voice; no man could thus imitate them in his waking hours. How clearly, too, we are reminded of persons whom we have not seen for many years; they start up suddenly to the mind's eye with all their peculiarities as living realities. In fact, this memory of the soul is a fearful thing; every sin, every sinful thought it can bring back, and we may well ask how we are to give account of "every idle word" that may have been whispered in the heart or uttered with the lips. The spirit of the watchman therefore understood very well the language of the inhabitants of the moon. They were disputing about our earth, and doubted whether it could be inhabited. The atmosphere, they asserted, must be too dense for any inhabitants of the moon to exist there. They maintained that the moon alone was inhabited, and was really the heavenly body in which the old world people lived. They likewise talked politics.

But now we will descend to East Street, and see what happened to the watchman's body. He sat lifeless on the steps. His staff had fallen out of his hand, and his eyes stared at the moon, about which his honest soul was wandering. "What is it o'clock, watchman?" inquired a passenger. But there was no answer from the watchman.

The man then pulled his nose gently, which caused him to lose his balance. The body fell forward, and lay at full length on the ground as one dead.

All his comrades were very much frightened, for he seemed quite dead; still they allowed him to remain after they had given notice of what had happened; and at dawn the body was carried to the hospital. We might imagine it to be no jesting matter if the soul of the man should chance to return to him, for most probably it would seek for the body in East Street without being able to find it. We might fancy the soul inquiring of the police, or at the address office, or among the missing parcels, and then at length finding it at the hospital. But we may comfort ourselves by the certainty that the soul, when acting upon its own impulses, is wiser than we are; it is the body that makes it stupid.

As we have said, the watchman's body had been taken to the hospital, and here it was placed in a room to be washed. Naturally, the first thing done here was to take off the goloshes, upon which the soul was instantly obliged to return, and it took the direct road to the body at once, and in a few seconds the man's life returned to him. He declared, when he quite recovered himself, that this had been the most dreadful night he had ever passed; not for a hundred pounds would he go through such feelings again. However, it was all over now.

The same day he was allowed to leave, but the goloshes remained at the hospital.

THE EVENTFUL MOMENT—A MOST UNUSUAL JOURNEY

Every inhabitant of Copenhagen knows what the entrance to Frederick's Hospital is like; but as most probably a few of those who read this little tale may not reside in Copenhagen, we will give a short description of it.

The hospital is separated from the street by an iron railing, in which the bars stand so wide apart that, it is said, some very slim patients have squeezed through, and gone to pay little visits in the town. The most difficult part of the body to get through was the head; and in this case, as it often happens in the world, the small heads were the most fortunate. This will serve as sufficient introduction to our tale. One of the young volunteers, of whom, physically speaking, it might be said that he had a great head, was on guard that evening at the hospital. The rain was pouring down, yet, in spite of these two obstacles, he wanted to go out just for a quarter of an hour; it was not worth while, he thought, to make a confidant of the porter, as he could easily slip through the iron railings. There lay the goloshes, which the watchman had forgotten. It never occurred to him that these could be goloshes of Fortune. They would be very serviceable to him in this rainy weather, so he drew them on. Now came the question whether he could squeeze through the palings; he certainly had never tried, so he stood looking at them. "I wish to goodness my head was through," said he, and instantly, though it was so thick and large, it slipped through quite easily. The goloshes answered that purpose very well, but his body had to follow, and this was impossible. "I am too fat," he said; "I thought my head would be the worst, but I cannot get my body through, that is certain." Then he tried to pull his head back again, but without success; he could move his neck about easily enough, and that was all. His first feeling was one of anger, and then his spirits sank below zero. The goloshes of Fortune had placed

him in this terrible position, and unfortunately it never occurred to him to wish himself free. No, instead of wishing he kept twisting about, yet did not stir from the spot. The rain poured, and not a creature could be seen in the street. The porter's bell he was unable to reach, and however was he to get loose! He foresaw that he should have to stay there till morning, and then they must send for a smith to file away the iron bars, and that would be a work of time. All the charity children would just be going to school: and all the sailors who inhabited that quarter of the town would be there to see him standing in the pillory. What a crowd there would be. "Ha," he cried, "the blood is rushing to my head, and I shall go mad. I believe I am crazy already; oh, I wish I were free, then all these sensations would pass off." This is just what he ought to have said at first. The moment he had expressed the thought his head was free. He started back, quite bewildered with the fright which the goloshes of Fortune had caused him. But we must not suppose it was all over; no, indeed, there was worse to come yet. The night passed, and the whole of the following day; but no one sent for the goloshes. In the evening a declamatory performance was to take place at the amateur theatre in a distant street. The house was crowded; among the audience was the young volunteer from the hospital, who seemed to have quite forgotten his adventures of the previous evening. He had on the goloshes; they had not been sent for, and as the streets were still very dirty, they were of great service to him. A new poem, entitled "My Aunt's Spectacles," was being recited. It described these spectacles as possessing a wonderful power; if any one put them on in a large assembly the people appeared like cards, and the future events of ensuing years could be easily foretold by them. The idea struck him that he should very much like to have such a pair of spectacles; for, if used rightly, they would perhaps enable him to see into the hearts of people, which he thought would be more interesting than to know what was going to happen next year; for future events would be sure to show themselves, but the hearts of people never. "I can fancy what I should see in the whole row of ladies and gentlemen on the first seat, if I could only look into their hearts; that lady, I imagine, keeps a store for things of all descriptions; how my eyes would wander about in that collection; with many ladies I should no doubt find a large millinery establishment. There is another that is perhaps empty, and would be all the better for cleaning out. There may be some well stored with good articles. Ah, yes," he sighed, "I know one, in which everything is solid, but a servant is there already, and that is the only thing against it. I dare say from many I should hear the words, 'Please to walk in.' I only wish I could slip into the hearts like a little

tiny thought." This was the word of command for the goloshes. The volunteer shrunk up together, and commenced a most unusual journey through the hearts of the spectators in the first row. The first heart he entered was that of a lady, but he thought he must have got into one of the rooms of an orthopedic institution where plaster casts of deformed limbs were hanging on the walls, with this difference, that the casts in the institution are formed when the patient enters, but here they were formed and preserved after the good people had left. These were casts of the bodily and mental deformities of the lady's female friends carefully preserved. Quickly he passed into another heart, which had the appearance of a spacious, holy church, with the white dove of innocence fluttering over the altar. Gladly would he have fallen on his knees in such a sacred place; but he was carried on to another heart, still, however, listening to the tones of the organ, and feeling himself that he had become another and a better man. The next heart was also a sanctuary, which he felt almost unworthy to enter; it represented a mean garret, in which lay a sick mother; but the warm sunshine streamed through the window, lovely roses bloomed in a little flowerbox on the roof, two blue birds sang of childlike joys, and the sick mother prayed for a blessing on her daughter. Next he crept on his hands and knees through an overfilled butcher's shop; there was meat, nothing but meat, wherever he stepped; this was the heart of a rich, respectable man, whose name is doubtless in the directory. Then he entered the heart of this man's wife; it was an old, tumble-down pigeon-house; the husband's portrait served as a weather-cock; it was connected with all the doors, which opened and shut just as the husband's decision turned. The next heart was a complete cabinet of mirrors, such as can be seen in the Castle of Rosenberg. But these mirrors magnified in an astonishing degree; in the middle of the floor sat, like the Grand Lama, the insignificant I of the owner, astonished at the contemplation of his own features. At his next visit he fancied he must have got into a narrow needlecase, full of sharp needles: "Oh," thought he, "this must be the heart of an old maid;" but such was not the fact; it belonged to a young officer, who wore several orders, and was said to be a man of intellect and heart.

The poor volunteer came out of the last heart in the row quite bewildered. He could not collect his thoughts, and imagined his foolish fancies had carried him away. "Good gracious!" he sighed, "I must have a tendency to softening of the brain, and here it is so exceedingly hot that the blood is rushing to my head." And then suddenly recurred to him the strange event of the evening before, when his head had been fixed between the iron railings in front of the hospital. "That is the cause of it all!" he exclaimed,

"I must do something in time. A Russian bath would be a very good thing to begin with. I wish I were lying on one of the highest shelves." Sure enough, there he lay on an upper shelf of a vapor bath, still in his evening costume, with his boots and goloshes on, and the hot drops from the ceiling falling on his face. "Ho!" he cried, jumping down and rushing towards the plunging bath. The attendant stopped him with a loud cry, when he saw a man with all his clothes on. The volunteer had, however, presence of mind enough to whisper, "It is for a wager;" but the first thing he did, when he reached his own room, was to put a large blister on his neck, and another on his back, that his crazy fit might be cured. The next morning his back was very sore, which was all he gained by the goloshes of Fortune.

THE CLERK'S TRANSFORMATION

The watchman, whom we of course have not forgotten, thought, after a while, of the goloshes which he had found and taken to the hospital; so he went and fetched them. But neither the lieutenant nor any one in the street could recognize them as their own, so he gave them up to the police. "They look exactly like my own goloshes," said one of the clerks, examining the unknown articles, as they stood by the side of his own. "It would require even more than the eye of a shoemaker to know one pair from the other." "Master clerk," said a servant who entered with some papers. The clerk turned and spoke to the man; but when he had done with him, he turned to look at the goloshes again, and now he was in greater doubt than ever as to whether the pair on the right or on the left belonged to him. "Those that are wet must be mine," thought he; but he thought wrong, it was just the reverse. The goloshes of Fortune were the wet pair; and, besides, why should not a clerk in a police office be wrong sometimes? So he drew them on, thrust his papers into his pocket, placed a few manuscripts under his arm, which he had to take with him, and to make abstracts from at home. Then, as it was Sunday morning and the weather very fine, he said to himself, "A walk to Fredericksburg will do me good:" so away he went.

There could not be a quieter or more steady young man than this clerk. We will not grudge him this little walk, it was just the thing to do him good after sitting so much. He went on at first like a mere automaton, without thought or wish; therefore the goloshes had no opportunity to display their magic power. In the avenue he met with an acquaintance, one of our young poets, who told him that he intended to start on the following day on a summer excursion. "Are you really going away so soon?" asked the clerk.

"What a free, happy man you are. You can roam about where you will, while such as we are tied by the foot."
"But it is fastened to the bread-tree," replied the poet. "You need have no anxiety for the morrow; and when you are old there is a pension for you."
"Ah, yes; but you have the best of it," said the clerk; "it must be so delightful to sit and write poetry. The whole world makes itself agreeable to you, and then you are your own master. You should try how you would like to listen to all the trivial things in a court of justice." The poet shook his head, so also did the clerk; each retained his own opinion, and so they parted. "They are strange people, these poets," thought the clerk. "I should like to try what it is to have a poetic taste, and to become a poet myself. I am sure I should not write such mournful verses as they do. This is a splendid spring day for a poet, the air is so remarkably clear, the clouds are so beautiful, and the green grass has such a sweet smell. For many years I have not felt as I do at this moment."
We perceive, by these remarks, that he had already become a poet. By most poets what he had said would be considered common-place, or as the Germans call it, "insipid." It is a foolish fancy to look upon poets as different to other men. There are many who are more the poets of nature than those who are professed poets. The difference is this, the poet's intellectual memory is better; he seizes upon an idea or a sentiment, until he can embody it, clearly and plainly in words, which the others cannot do. But the transition from a character of every-day life to one of a more gifted nature is a great transition; and so the clerk became aware of the change after a time. "What a delightful perfume," said he; "it reminds me of the violets at Aunt Lora's. Ah, that was when I was a little boy. Dear me, how long it seems since I thought of those days! She was a good old maiden lady! she lived yonder, behind the Exchange. She always had a sprig or a few blossoms in water, let the winter be ever so severe. I could smell the violets, even while I was placing warm penny pieces against the frozen panes to make peep-holes, and a pretty view it was on which I peeped. Out in the river lay the ships, icebound, and forsaken by their crews; a screaming crow represented the only living creature on board. But when the breezes of spring came, everything started into life. Amidst shouting and cheers the ships were tarred and rigged, and then they sailed to foreign lands.
"I remain here, and always shall remain, sitting at my post at the police office, and letting others take passports to distant lands. Yes, this is my fate," and he sighed deeply. Suddenly he paused. "Good gracious, what has come over me? I never felt before as I do now; it must be the air of spring. It is overpowering, and yet it is delightful."
He felt in his pockets for some of his papers. "These will give me some-

thing else to think of," said he. Casting his eyes on the first page of one, he read, "'Mistress Sigbirth; an original Tragedy, in Five Acts.' What is this?—in my own handwriting, too! Have I written this tragedy?" He read again, "'The Intrigue on the Promenade; or, the Fast-Day. A Vaudeville.' However did I get all this? Some one must have put them into my pocket. And here is a letter!" It was from the manager of a theatre; the pieces were rejected, not at all in polite terms.

"Hem, hem!" said he, sitting down on a bench; his thoughts were very elastic, and his heart softened strangely. Involuntarily he seized one of the nearest flowers; it was a little, simple daisy. All that botanists can say in many lectures was explained in a moment by this little flower. It spoke of the glory of its birth; it told of the strength of the sunlight, which had caused its delicate leaves to expand, and given to it such sweet perfume. The struggles of life which arouse sensations in the bosom have their type in the tiny flowers. Air and light are the lovers of the flowers, but light is the favored one; towards light it turns, and only when light vanishes does it fold its leaves together, and sleep in the embraces of the air."

"It is light that adorns me," said the flower.

"But the air gives you the breath of life," whispered the poet.

Just by him stood a boy, splashing with his stick in a marshy ditch. The water-drops spurted up among the green twigs, and the clerk thought of the millions of animalculae which were thrown into the air with every drop of water, at a height which must be the same to them as it would be to us if we were hurled beyond the clouds. As the clerk thought of all these things, and became conscious of the great change in his own feelings, he smiled, and said to himself, "I must be asleep and dreaming; and yet, if so, how wonderful for a dream to be so natural and real, and to know at the same time too that it is but a dream. I hope I shall be able to remember it all when I wake tomorrow. My sensations seem most unaccountable. I have a clear perception of everything as if I were wide awake. I am quite sure if I recollect all this tomorrow, it will appear utterly ridiculous and absurd. I have had this happen to me before. It is with the clever or wonderful things we say or hear in dreams, as with the gold which comes from under the earth, it is rich and beautiful when we possess it, but when seen in a true light it is but as stones and withered leaves."

"Ah!" he sighed mournfully, as he gazed at the birds singing merrily, or hopping from branch to branch, "they are much better off than I. Flying is a glorious power. Happy is he who is born with wings. Yes, if I could change myself into anything I would be a little lark." At the same moment his

coat-tails and sleeves grew together and formed wings, his clothes changed to feathers, and his goloshes to claws. He felt what was taking place, and laughed to himself. "Well, now it is evident I must be dreaming; but I never had such a wild dream as this." And then he flew up into the green boughs and sang, but there was no poetry in the song, for his poetic nature had left him. The goloshes, like all persons who wish to do a thing thoroughly, could only attend to one thing at a time. He wished to be a poet, and he became one. Then he wanted to be a little bird, and in this change he lost the characteristics of the former one. "Well," thought he, "this is charming; by day I sit in a police-office, amongst the dryest law papers, and at night I can dream that I am a lark, flying about in the gardens of Fredericksburg. Really a complete comedy could be written about it." Then he flew down into the grass, turned his head about in every direction, and tapped his beak on the bending blades of grass, which, in proportion to his size, seemed to him as long as the palm-leaves in northern Africa.

In another moment all was darkness around him. It seemed as if something immense had been thrown over him. A sailor boy had flung his large cap over the bird, and a hand came underneath and caught the clerk by the back and wings so roughly, that he squeaked, and then cried out in his alarm, "You impudent rascal, I am a clerk in the police-office!" but it only sounded to the boy like "tweet, tweet;" so he tapped the bird on the beak, and walked away with him. In the avenue he met two school-boys, who appeared to belong to a better class of society, but whose inferior abilities kept them in the lowest class at school. These boys bought the bird for eightpence, and so the clerk returned to Copenhagen. "It is well for me that I am dreaming," he thought; "otherwise I should become really angry. First I was a poet, and now I am a lark. It must have been the poetic nature that changed me into this little creature. It is a miserable story indeed, especially now I have fallen into the hands of boys. I wonder what will be the end of it." The boys carried him into a very elegant room, where a stout, pleasant-looking lady received them, but she was not at all gratified to find that they had brought a lark—a common field-bird as she called it. However, she allowed them for one day to place the bird in an empty cage that hung near the window. "It will please Polly perhaps," she said, laughing at a large gray parrot, who was swinging himself proudly on a ring in a handsome brass cage. "It is Polly's birthday," she added in a simpering tone, "and the little field-bird has come to offer his congratulations."

Polly did not answer a single word, he continued to swing proudly to and fro; but a beautiful canary, who had been brought from his own warm, fragrant fatherland, the summer previous, began to sing as loud as he could.

“You screamer!” said the lady, throwing a white handkerchief over the cage.
“Tweet, tweet,” sighed he, “what a dreadful snowstorm!” and then he became silent.

The clerk, or as the lady called him the field-bird, was placed in a little cage close to the canary, and not far from the parrot. The only human speech which Polly could utter, and which she sometimes chattered forth most comically, was “Now let us be men.” All besides was a scream, quite as unintelligible as the warbling of the canary-bird, excepting to the clerk, who being now a bird, could understand his comrades very well.

“I flew beneath green palm-trees, and amidst the blooming almond-trees,” sang the canary. “I flew with my brothers and sisters over beautiful flowers, and across the clear, bright sea, which reflected the waving foliage in its glittering depths; and I have seen many gay parrots, who could relate long and delightful stories.

“They were wild birds,” answered the parrot, “and totally uneducated. Now let us be men. Why do you not laugh? If the lady and her visitors can laugh at this, surely you can. It is a great failing not to be able to appreciate what is amusing. Now let us be men.”

“Do you remember,” said the canary, “the pretty maidens who used to dance in the tents that were spread out beneath the sweet blossoms? Do you remember the delicious fruit and the cooling juice from the wild herbs?”

“Oh, yes,” said the parrot; “but here I am much better off. I am well fed, and treated politely. I know that I have a clever head; and what more do I want? Let us be men now. You have a soul for poetry. I have deep knowledge and wit. You have genius, but no discretion. You raise your naturally high notes so much, that you get covered over. They never serve me so. Oh, no; I cost them something more than you. I keep them in order with my beak, and fling my wit about me. Now let us be men.

“O my warm, blooming fatherland,” sang the canary bird, “I will sing of thy dark-green trees and thy quiet streams, where the bending branches kiss the clear, smooth water. I will sing of the joy of my brothers and sisters, as their shining plumage flits among the dark leaves of the plants which grow wild by the springs.”

“Do leave off those dismal strains,” said the parrot; “sing something to make us laugh; laughter is the sign of the highest order of intellect. Can a dog or a horse laugh? No, they can cry; but to man alone is the power of laughter given. Ha! ha! ha!” laughed Polly, and repeated his witty saying, “Now let us be men.”

"You little gray Danish bird," said the canary, "you also have become a prisoner. It is certainly cold in your forests, but still there is liberty there. Fly out! they have forgotten to close the cage, and the window is open at the top. Fly, fly!"

Instinctively, the clerk obeyed, and left the cage; at the same moment the half-opened door leading into the next room creaked on its hinges, and, stealthily, with green fiery eyes, the cat crept in and chased the lark round the room. The canary-bird fluttered in his cage, and the parrot flapped his wings and cried, "Let us be men;" the poor clerk, in the most deadly terror, flew through the window, over the houses, and through the streets, till at length he was obliged to seek a resting-place. A house opposite to him had a look of home. A window stood open; he flew in, and perched upon the table. It was his own room. "Let us be men now," said he, involuntarily imitating the parrot; and at the same moment he became a clerk again, only that he was sitting on the table. "Heaven preserve us!" said he; "How did I get up here and fall asleep in this way? It was an uneasy dream too that I had. The whole affair appears most absurd."

THE BEST THING THE GOLOSHES DID

Early on the following morning, while the clerk was still in bed, his neighbor, a young divinity student, who lodged on the same storey, knocked at his door, and then walked in. "Lend me your goloshes," said he; "it is so wet in the garden, but the sun is shining brightly. I should like to go out there and smoke my pipe." He put on the goloshes, and was soon in the garden, which contained only one plum-tree and one apple-tree; yet, in a town, even a small garden like this is a great advantage.

The student wandered up and down the path; it was just six o'clock, and he could hear the sound of the post-horn in the street. "Oh, to travel, to travel!" cried he; "there is no greater happiness in the world: it is the height of my ambition. This restless feeling would be stilled, if I could take a journey far away from this country. I should like to see beautiful Switzerland, to travel through Italy, and,"—It was well for him that the goloshes acted immediately, otherwise he might have been carried too far for himself as well as for us. In a moment he found himself in Switzerland, closely packed with eight others in the diligence. His head ached, his back was stiff, and the blood had ceased to circulate, so that his feet were swelled and pinched by his boots. He wavered in a condition between sleeping and waking. In his right-hand pocket he had a letter of credit; in his left-hand pocket was

his passport; and a few louis d'ors were sewn into a little leather bag which he carried in his breast-pocket. Whenever he dozed, he dreamed that he had lost one or another of these possessions; then he would awake with a start, and the first movements of his hand formed a triangle from his right-hand pocket to his breast, and from his breast to his left-hand pocket, to feel whether they were all safe. Umbrellas, sticks, and hats swung in the net before him, and almost obstructed the prospect, which was really very imposing; and as he glanced at it, his memory recalled the words of one poet at least, who has sung of Switzerland, and whose poems have not yet been printed:—"How lovely to my wondering eyes Mont Blanc's fair summits gently rise; 'Tis sweet to breathe the mountain air,— If you have gold enough to spare."

Grand, dark, and gloomy appeared the landscape around him. The pine-forests looked like little groups of moss on high rocks, whose summits were lost in clouds of mist. Presently it began to snow, and the wind blew keen and cold. "Ah," he sighed, "if I were only on the other side of the Alps now, it would be summer, and I should be able to get money on my letter of credit. The anxiety I feel on this matter prevents me from enjoying myself in Switzerland. Oh, I wish I was on the other side of the Alps."

And there, in a moment, he found himself, far away in the midst of Italy, between Florence and Rome, where the lake Thrasymene glittered in the evening sunlight like a sheet of molten gold between the dark blue mountains. There, where Hannibal defeated Flaminius, the grape vines clung to each other with the friendly grasp of their green tendril fingers; while, by the wayside, lovely half-naked children were watching a herd of coal-black swine under the blossoms of fragrant laurel. Could we rightly describe this picturesque scene, our readers would exclaim, "Delightful Italy!"

But neither the student nor either of his travelling companions felt the least inclination to think of it in this way. Poisonous flies and gnats flew into the coach by thousands. In vain they drove them away with a myrtle branch, the flies stung them notwithstanding. There was not a man in the coach whose face was not swollen and disfigured with the stings. The poor horses looked wretched; the flies settled on their backs in swarms, and they were only relieved when the coachmen got down and drove the creatures off.

As the sun set, an icy coldness filled all nature, not however of long duration. It produced the feeling which we experience when we enter a vault at a funeral, on a summer's day; while the hills and the clouds put on that singular green hue which we often notice in old paintings, and look upon as unnatural until we have ourselves seen nature's coloring in the south. It was

a glorious spectacle; but the stomachs of the travellers were empty, their bodies exhausted with fatigue, and all the longings of their heart turned towards a resting-place for the night; but where to find one they knew not. All the eyes were too eagerly seeking for this resting-place, to notice the beauties of nature.

The road passed through a grove of olive-trees; it reminded the student of the willow-trees at home. Here stood a lonely inn, and close by it a number of crippled beggars had placed themselves; the brightest among them looked, to quote the words of Marryat, "like the eldest son of Famine who had just come of age." The others were either blind, or had withered legs, which obliged them to creep about on their hands and knees, or they had shrivelled arms and hands without fingers. It was indeed poverty arrayed in rags. "Eccellenza, miserabili!" they exclaimed, stretching forth their diseased limbs. The hostess received the travellers with bare feet, untidy hair, and a dirty blouse. The doors were fastened together with string; the floors of the rooms were of brick, broken in many places; bats flew about under the roof; and as to the odor within—

"Let us have supper laid in the stable," said one of the travellers; "then we shall know what we are breathing."

The windows were opened to let in a little fresh air, but quicker than air came in the withered arms and the continual whining sounds, "Miserabili, eccellenza." On the walls were inscriptions, half of them against "la bella Italia."

The supper made its appearance at last. It consisted of watery soup, seasoned with pepper and rancid oil. This last delicacy played a principal part in the salad. Musty eggs and roasted cocks'-combs were the best dishes on the table; even the wine had a strange taste, it was certainly a mixture. At night, all the boxes were placed against the doors, and one of the travellers watched while the others slept. The student's turn came to watch. How close the air felt in that room; the heat overpowered him. The gnats were buzzing about and stinging, while the miserabili, outside, moaned in their dreams.

"Travelling would be all very well," said the student of divinity to himself, "if we had no bodies, or if the body could rest while the soul if flying. Wherever I go I feel a want which oppresses my heart, for something better presents itself at the moment; yes, something better, which shall be the best of all; but where is that to be found? In fact, I know in my heart very well what I want. I wish to attain the greatest of all happiness."

No sooner were the words spoken than he was at home. Long white curtains shaded the windows of his room, and in the middle of the floor stood a black coffin, in which he now lay in the still sleep of death; his wish was fulfilled, his body was at rest, and his spirit travelling.

"Esteem no man happy until he is in his grave," were the words of Solon. Here was a strong fresh proof of their truth. Every corpse is a sphinx of immortality. The sphinx in this sarcophagus might unveil its own mystery in the words which the living had himself written two days before—

"Stern death, thy chilling silence waketh dread;
Yet in thy darkest hour there may be light.
Earth's garden reaper! from the grave's cold bed
The soul on Jacob's ladder takes her flight.
Man's greatest sorrows often are a part
Of hidden griefs, concealed from human eyes,
Which press far heavier on the lonely heart
Than now the earth that on his coffin lies."

Two figures were moving about the room; we know them both. One was the fairy named Care, the other the messenger of Fortune. They bent over the dead.

"Look!" said Care; "what happiness have your goloshes brought to mankind?"

"They have at least brought lasting happiness to him who slumbers here," she said.

"Not so," said Care, "he went away of himself, he was not summoned. His mental powers were not strong enough to discern the treasures which he had been destined to discover. I will do him a favor now." And she drew the goloshes from his feet.

The sleep of death was ended, and the recovered man raised himself. Care vanished, and with her the goloshes; doubtless she looked upon them as her own property.

SHE WAS GOOD FOR NOTHING

The mayor stood at the open window. He looked smart, for his shirt-frill, in which he had stuck a breast-pin, and his ruffles, were very fine. He had shaved his chin uncommonly smooth, although he had cut himself slightly, and had stuck a piece of newspaper over the place. "Hark 'ee, youngster!" cried he.

The boy to whom he spoke was no other than the son of a poor washer-woman, who was just going past the house. He stopped, and respectfully took off his cap. The peak of this cap was broken in the middle, so that he could easily roll it up and put it in his pocket. He stood before the mayor in his poor but clean and well-mended clothes, with heavy wooden shoes on his feet, looking as humble as if it had been the king himself.

"You are a good and civil boy," said the mayor. "I suppose your mother is busy washing the clothes down by the river, and you are going to carry that

thing to her that you have in your pocket. It is very bad for your mother. How much have you got in it?"
"Only half a quartern," stammered the boy in a frightened voice.
"And she has had just as much this morning already?"
"No, it was yesterday," replied the boy.
"Two halves make a whole," said the mayor. "She's good for nothing. What a sad thing it is with these people. Tell your mother she ought to be ashamed of herself. Don't you become a drunkard, but I expect you will though. Poor child! there, go now."
The boy went on his way with his cap in his hand, while the wind fluttered his golden hair till the locks stood up straight. He turned round the corner of the street into the little lane that led to the river, where his mother stood in the water by her washing bench, beating the linen with a heavy wooden bar. The floodgates at the mill had been drawn up, and as the water rolled rapidly on, the sheets were dragged along by the stream, and nearly overturned the bench, so that the washer-woman was obliged to lean against it to keep it steady. "I have been very nearly carried away," she said; "it is a good thing that you are come, for I want something to strengthen me. It is cold in the water, and I have stood here six hours. Have you brought anything for me?"
The boy drew the bottle from his pocket, and the mother put it to her lips, and drank a little.
"Ah, how much good that does, and how it warms me," she said; "it is as good as a hot meal, and not so dear. Drink a little, my boy; you look quite pale; you are shivering in your thin clothes, and autumn has really come. Oh, how cold the water is! I hope I shall not be ill. But no, I must not be afraid of that. Give me a little more, and you may have a sip too, but only a sip; you must not get used to it, my poor, dear child." She stepped up to the bridge on which the boy stood as she spoke, and came on shore. The water dripped from the straw mat which she had bound round her body, and from her gown. "I work hard and suffer pain with my poor hands," said she, "but I do it willingly, that I may be able to bring you up honestly and truthfully, my dear boy."
At the same moment, a woman, rather older than herself, came towards them. She was a miserable-looking object, lame of one leg, and with a large false curl hanging down over one of her eyes, which was blind. This curl was intended to conceal the blind eye, but it made the defect only more visible. She was a friend of the laundress, and was called, among the neighbors, "Lame Martha, with the curl." "Oh, you poor thing; how you do work, standing there in the water!" she exclaimed. "You really do need

something to give you a little warmth, and yet spiteful people cry out about the few drops you take." And then Martha repeated to the laundress, in a very few minutes, all that the mayor had said to her boy, which she had overheard; and she felt very angry that any man could speak, as he had done, of a mother to her own child, about the few drops she had taken; and she was still more angry because, on that very day, the mayor was going to have a dinner-party, at which there would be wine, strong, rich wine, drunk by the bottle. "Many will take more than they ought, but they don't call that drinking! They are all right, you are good for nothing indeed!" cried Martha indignantly.

"And so he spoke to you in that way, did he, my child?" said the washer-woman, and her lips trembled as she spoke. "He says you have a mother who is good for nothing. Well, perhaps he is right, but he should not have said it to my child. How much has happened to me from that house!"

"Yes," said Martha; "I remember you were in service there, and lived in the house when the mayor's parents were alive; how many years ago that is. Bushels of salt have been eaten since then, and people may well be thirsty," and Martha smiled. "The mayor's great dinner-party to-day ought to have been put off, but the news came too late. The footman told me the dinner was already cooked, when a letter came to say that the mayor's younger brother in Copenhagen is dead."

"Dead!" cried the laundress, turning pale as death.

"Yes, certainly," replied Martha; "but why do you take it so much to heart? I suppose you knew him years ago, when you were in service there?"

"Is he dead?" she exclaimed. "Oh, he was such a kind, good-hearted man, there are not many like him," and the tears rolled down her cheeks as she spoke. Then she cried, "Oh, dear me; I feel quite ill: everything is going round me, I cannot bear it. Is the bottle empty?" and she leaned against the plank.

"Dear me, you are ill indeed," said the other woman. "Come, cheer up; perhaps it will pass off. No, indeed, I see you are really ill; the best thing for me to do is to lead you home."

"But my washing yonder?"

"I will take care of that. Come, give me your arm. The boy can stay here and take care of the linen, and I'll come back and finish the washing; it is but a trifle."

The limbs of the laundress shook under her, and she said, "I have stood too long in the cold water, and I have had nothing to eat the whole day since the morning. O kind Heaven, help me to get home; I am in a burning fever. Oh, my poor child," and she burst into tears. And he, poor boy, wept also, as he sat alone by the river, near to and watching the damp linen.

The two women walked very slowly. The laundress slipped and tottered through the lane, and round the corner, into the street where the mayor lived; and just as she reached the front of his house, she sank down upon the pavement. Many persons came round her, and Lame Martha ran into the house for help. The mayor and his guests came to the window.

"Oh, it is the laundress," said he; "she has had a little drop too much. She is good for nothing. It is a sad thing for her pretty little son. I like the boy very well; but the mother is good for nothing."

After a while the laundress recovered herself, and they led her to her poor dwelling, and put her to bed. Kind Martha warmed a mug of beer for her, with butter and sugar—she considered this the best medicine—and then hastened to the river, washed and rinsed, badly enough, to be sure, but she did her best. Then she drew the linen ashore, wet as it was, and laid it in a basket. Before evening, she was sitting in the poor little room with the laundress. The mayor's cook had given her some roasted potatoes and a beautiful piece of fat for the sick woman. Martha and the boy enjoyed these good things very much; but the sick woman could only say that the smell was very nourishing, she thought. By-and-by the boy was put to bed, in the same bed as the one in which his mother lay; but he slept at her feet, covered with an old quilt made of blue and white patchwork. The laundress felt a little better by this time. The warm beer had strengthened her, and the smell of the good food had been pleasant to her.

"Many thanks, you good soul," she said to Martha. "Now the boy is asleep, I will tell you all. He is soon asleep. How gentle and sweet he looks as he lies there with his eyes closed! He does not know how his mother has suffered; and Heaven grant he never may know it. I was in service at the counsellor's, the father of the mayor, and it happened that the youngest of his sons, the student, came home. I was a young wild girl then, but honest; that I can declare in the sight of Heaven. The student was merry and gay, brave and affectionate; every drop of blood in him was good and honorable; a better man never lived on earth. He was the son of the house, and I was only a maid; but he loved me truly and honorably, and he told his mother of it. She was to him as an angel upon earth; she was so wise and loving. He went to travel, and before he started he placed a gold ring on my finger; and as soon as he was out of the house, my mistress sent for me. Gently and earnestly she drew me to her, and spake as if an angel were speaking. She showed me clearly, in spirit and in truth, the difference there was between him and me. 'He is pleased now,' she said, 'with your pretty face; but good looks do not last long. You have not been educated like he

has. You are not equals in mind and rank, and therein lies the misfortune. I esteem the poor,' she added. 'In the sight of God, they may occupy a higher place than many of the rich; but here upon earth we must beware of entering upon a false track, lest we are overturned in our plans, like a carriage that travels by a dangerous road. I know a worthy man, an artisan, who wishes to marry you. I mean Eric, the glovemaker. He is a widower, without children, and in a good position. Will you think it over?' Every word she said pierced my heart like a knife; but I knew she was right, and the thought pressed heavily upon me. I kissed her hand, and wept bitter tears, and I wept still more when I went to my room, and threw myself on the bed. I passed through a dreadful night; God knows what I suffered, and how I struggled. The following Sunday I went to the house of God to pray for light to direct my path. It seemed like a providence that as I stepped out of church Eric came towards me; and then there remained not a doubt in my mind. We were suited to each other in rank and circumstances. He was, even then, a man of good means. I went up to him, and took his hand, and said, 'Do you still feel the same for me?' 'Yes; ever and always,' said he. 'Will you, then, marry a maiden who honors and esteems you, although she cannot offer you her love? but that may come.' 'Yes, it will come,' said he; and we joined our hands together, and I went home to my mistress. The gold ring which her son had given me I wore next to my heart. I could not place it on my finger during the daytime, but only in the evening, when I went to bed. I kissed the ring till my lips almost bled, and then I gave it to my mistress, and told her that the banns were to be put up for me and the glovemaker the following week. Then my mistress threw her arms round me, and kissed me. She did not say that I was 'good for nothing;' very likely I was better then than I am now; but the misfortunes of this world, were unknown to me then. At Michaelmas we were married, and for the first year everything went well with us. We had a journeyman and an apprentice, and you were our servant, Martha."

"Ah, yes, and you were a dear, good mistress," said Martha, "I shall never forget how kind you and your husband were to me."

"Yes, those were happy years when you were with us, although we had no children at first. The student I never met again. Yet I saw him once, although he did not see me. He came to his mother's funeral. I saw him, looking pale as death, and deeply troubled, standing at her grave; for she was his mother. Sometime after, when his father died, he was in foreign lands, and did not come home. I know that he never married, I believe he became a lawyer. He had forgotten me, and even had we met he would not

have known me, for I have lost all my good looks, and perhaps that is all for the best." And then she spoke of the dark days of trial, when misfortune had fallen upon them.

"We had five hundred dollars," she said, "and there was a house in the street to be sold for two hundred, so we thought it would be worth our while to pull it down and build a new one in its place; so it was bought. The builder and carpenter made an estimate that the new house would cost ten hundred and twenty dollars to build. Eric had credit, so he borrowed the money in the chief town. But the captain, who was bringing it to him, was shipwrecked, and the money lost. Just about this time, my dear sweet boy, who lies sleeping there, was born, and my husband was attacked with a severe lingering illness. For three quarters of a year I was obliged to dress and undress him. We were backward in our payments, we borrowed more money, and all that we had was lost and sold, and then my husband died. Since then I have worked, toiled, and striven for the sake of the child. I have scrubbed and washed both coarse and fine linen, but I have not been able to make myself better off; and it was God's will. In His own time He will take me to Himself, but I know He will never forsake my boy." Then she fell asleep. In the morning she felt much refreshed, and strong enough, as she thought, to go on with her work. But as soon as she stepped into the cold water, a sudden faintness seized her; she clutched at the air convulsively with her hand, took one step forward, and fell. Her head rested on dry land, but her feet were in the water; her wooden shoes, which were only tied on by a wisp of straw, were carried away by the stream, and thus she was found by Martha when she came to bring her some coffee.

In the meantime a messenger had been sent to her house by the mayor, to say that she must come to him immediately, as he had something to tell her. It was too late; a surgeon had been sent for to open a vein in her arm, but the poor woman was dead.

"She has drunk herself to death," said the cruel mayor. In the letter, containing the news of his brother's death, it was stated that he had left in his will a legacy of six hundred dollars to the glovemaker's widow, who had been his mother's maid, to be paid with discretion, in large or small sums to the widow or her child.

"There was something between my brother and her, I remember," said the mayor; "it is a good thing that she is out of the way, for now the boy will have the whole. I will place him with honest people to bring him up, that he may become a respectable working man." And the blessing of God rested upon these words. The mayor sent for the boy to come to him, and promised to take

care of him, but most cruelly added that it was a good thing that his mother was dead, for "she was good for nothing." They carried her to the churchyard, the churchyard in which the poor were buried. Martha strewed sand on the grave and planted a rose-tree upon it, and the boy stood by her side.

"Oh, my poor mother!" he cried, while the tears rolled down his cheeks. "Is it true what they say, that she was good for nothing?"

"No, indeed, it is not true," replied the old servant, raising her eyes to heaven; "she was worth a great deal; I knew it years ago, and since the last night of her life I am more certain of it than ever. I say she was a good and worthy woman, and God, who is in heaven, knows I am speaking the truth, though the world may say, even now she was good for nothing."

GRANDMOTHER

Grandmother is very old, her face is wrinkled, and her hair is quite white; but her eyes are like two stars, and they have a mild, gentle expression in them when they look at you, which does you good. She wears a dress of heavy, rich silk, with large flowers worked on it; and it rustles when she moves. And then she can tell the most wonderful stories. Grandmother knows a great deal, for she was alive before father and mother—that's quite certain. She has a hymn-book with large silver clasps, in which she often reads; and in the book, between the leaves, lies a rose, quite flat and dry; it is not so pretty as the roses which are standing in the glass, and yet she smiles at it most pleasantly, and tears even come into her eyes. "I wonder why grandmother looks at the withered flower in the old book that way? Do you know?" Why, when grandmother's tears fall upon the rose, and she is looking at it, the rose revives, and fills the room with its fragrance; the walls vanish as in a mist, and all around her is the glorious green wood, where in summer the sunlight streams through thick foliage; and grandmother, why she is young again, a charming maiden, fresh as a rose, with round, rosy cheeks, fair, bright ringlets, and a figure pretty and graceful; but the eyes, those mild, saintly eyes, are the same,—they have been left to grandmother. At her side sits a young man, tall and strong; he gives her a rose and she smiles. Grandmother cannot smile like that now. Yes, she is smiling at the memory of that day, and many thoughts and recollections of the past; but the handsome young man is gone, and the rose has withered in the old book, and grandmother is sitting there, again an old woman, looking down upon the withered rose in the book.

Grandmother is dead now. She had been sitting in her arm-chair, telling us

a long, beautiful tale; and when it was finished, she said she was tired, and leaned her head back to sleep awhile. We could hear her gentle breathing as she slept; gradually it became quieter and calmer, and on her countenance beamed happiness and peace. It was as if lighted up with a ray of sunshine. She smiled once more, and then people said she was dead. She was laid in a black coffin, looking mild and beautiful in the white folds of the shrouded linen, though her eyes were closed; but every wrinkle had vanished, her hair looked white and silvery, and around her mouth lingered a sweet smile. We did not feel at all afraid to look at the corpse of her who had been such a dear, good grandmother. The hymn-book, in which the rose still lay, was placed under her head, for so she had wished it; and then they buried grandmother.

On the grave, close by the churchyard wall, they planted a rose-tree; it was soon full of roses, and the nightingale sat among the flowers, and sang over the grave. From the organ in the church sounded the music and the words of the beautiful psalms, which were written in the old book under the head of the dead one.

The moon shone down upon the grave, but the dead was not there; every child could go safely, even at night, and pluck a rose from the tree by the churchyard wall. The dead know more than we do who are living. They know what a terror would come upon us if such a strange thing were to happen, as the appearance of a dead person among us. They are better off than we are; the dead return no more. The earth has been heaped on the coffin, and it is earth only that lies within it. The leaves of the hymn-book are dust; and the rose, with all its recollections, has crumbled to dust also. But over the grave fresh roses bloom, the nightingale sings, and the organ sounds and there still lives a remembrance of old grandmother, with the loving, gentle eyes that always looked young. Eyes can never die. Ours will once again behold dear grandmother, young and beautiful as when, for the first time, she kissed the fresh, red rose, that is now dust in the grave.

A GREAT GRIEF

This story really consists of two parts. The first part might be left out, but it gives us a few particulars, and these are useful.

We were staying in the country at a gentleman's seat, where it happened that the master was absent for a few days. In the meantime, there arrived from the next town a lady; she had a pug dog with her, and came, she said, to dispose of shares in her tan-yard. She had her papers with her, and we advised her to put them in an envelope, and to write thereon the address of the proprietor of the estate, "General War-Commissary Knight," &c.

She listened to us attentively, seized the pen, paused, and begged us to repeat the direction slowly. We complied, and she wrote; but in the midst of the "General War-" she struck fast, sighed deeply, and said, "I am only a woman!" Her Puggie had seated itself on the ground while she wrote, and growled; for the dog had come with her for amusement and for the sake of its health; and then the bare floor ought not to be offered to a visitor. His outward appearance was characterized by a snub nose and a very fat back. "He doesn't bite," said the lady; "he has no teeth. He is like one of the family, faithful and grumpy; but the latter is my grandchildren's fault, for they have teased him; they play at wedding, and want to give him the part of the bridesmaid, and that's too much for him, poor old fellow."

And she delivered her papers, and took Puggie upon her arm. And this is the first part of the story which might have been left out.

PUGGIE DIED!! That's the second part.

It was about a week afterwards we arrived in the town, and put up at the inn. Our windows looked into the tan-yard, which was divided into two parts by a partition of planks; in one half were many skins and hides, raw and tanned. Here was all the apparatus necessary to carry on a tannery, and it belonged to the widow. Puggie had died in the morning, and was to be buried in this part of the yard; the grandchildren of the widow (that is, of the tanner's widow, for Puggie had never been married) filled up the grave, and it was a beautiful grave—it must have been quite pleasant to lie there. The grave was bordered with pieces of flower-pots and strewn over with sand; quite at the top they had stuck up half a beer bottle, with the neck upwards, and that was not at all allegorical.

The children danced round the grave, and the eldest of the boys among them, a practical youngster of seven years, made the proposition that there should be an exhibition of Puggie's burial-place for all who lived in the lane; the price of admission was to be a trouser button, for every boy would be sure to have one, and each might also give one for a little girl. This proposal was adopted by acclamation.

And all the children out of the lane—yes, even out of the little lane at the back—flocked to the place, and each gave a button. Many were noticed to go about on that afternoon with only one suspender; but then they had seen Puggie's grave, and the sight was worth much more.

But in front of the tan-yard, close to the entrance, stood a little girl clothed in rags, very pretty to look at, with curly hair, and eyes so blue and clear that it was a pleasure to look into them. The child said not a word, nor did she cry; but each time the little door was opened she gave a long, long look

into the yard. She had not a button—that she knew right well, and therefore she remained standing sorrowfully outside, till all the others had seen the grave and had gone away; then she sat down, held her little brown hands before her eyes, and burst into tears; this girl alone had not seen Puggie's grave. It was a grief as great to her as any grown person can experience.

We saw this from above; and looked at from above, how many a grief of our own and of others can make us smile! That is the story, and whoever does not understand it may go and purchase a share in the tan-yard from the window.

THE HAPPY FAMILY

The largest green leaf in this country is certainly the burdock-leaf. If you hold it in front of you, it is large enough for an apron; and if you hold it over your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, it is so wonderfully large. A burdock never grows alone; where it grows, there are many more, and it is a splendid sight; and all this splendor is good for snails. The great white snails, which grand people in olden times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them, they would say, "O, what a delicious dish!" for these people really thought them good; and these snails lived on burdock-leaves, and for them the burdock was planted.

There was once an old estate where no one now lived to require snails; indeed, the owners had all died out, but the burdock still flourished; it grew over all the beds and walks of the garden—its growth had no check—till it became at last quite a forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or a plum-tree; but for this, nobody would have thought the place had ever been a garden. It was burdock from one end to the other; and here lived the last two surviving snails. They knew not themselves how old they were; but they could remember the time when there were a great many more of them, and that they were descended from a family which came from foreign lands, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from the garden; but they knew that another place once existed in the world, called the Duke's Palace Castle, in which some of their relations had been boiled till they became black, and were then laid on a silver dish; but what was done afterwards they did not know. Besides, they could not imagine exactly how it felt to be boiled and placed on a silver dish; but no doubt it was something very fine and highly genteel. Neither the cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earth-worm, whom they questioned about it, would give them the least information; for none

of their relations had ever been cooked or served on a silver dish. The old white snails were the most aristocratic race in the world,—they knew that. The forest had been planted for them, and the nobleman's castle had been built entirely that they might be cooked and laid on silver dishes.

They lived quite retired and very happily; and as they had no children of their own, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. The little one would not grow, for he was only a common snail; but the old people, particularly the mother-snail, declared that she could easily see how he grew; and when the father said he could not perceive it, she begged him to feel the little snail's shell, and he did so, and found that the mother was right.

One day it rained very fast. "Listen, what a drumming there is on the burdock-leaves; turn, turn, turn; turn, turn, turn," said the father-snail.

"There come the drops," said the mother; "they are trickling down the stalks. We shall have it very wet here presently. I am very glad we have such good houses, and that the little one has one of his own. There has been really more done for us than for any other creature; it is quite plain that we are the most noble people in the world. We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us. I should very much like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There can be nothing better than we have here," said the father-snail; "I wish for nothing more."

"Yes, but I do," said the mother; "I should like to be taken to the palace, and boiled, and laid upon a silver dish, as was done to all our ancestors; and you may be sure it must be something very uncommon."

"The nobleman's castle, perhaps, has fallen to decay," said the snail-father, "or the burdock wood may have grown out. You need not be in a hurry; you are always so impatient, and the youngster is getting just the same. He has been three days creeping to the top of that stalk. I feel quite giddy when I look at him."

"You must not scold him," said the mother-snail; "he creeps so very carefully. He will be the joy of our home; and we old folks have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought where we are to get a wife for him? Do you think that farther out in the wood there may be others of our race?"

"There may be black snails, no doubt," said the old snail; "black snails without houses; but they are so vulgar and conceited too. But we can give the ants a commission; they run here and there, as if they all had so much business to get through. They, most likely, will know of a wife for our youngster."

"I certainly know a most beautiful bride," said one of the ants; "but I fear it would not do, for she is a queen."

“That does not matter,” said the old snail; “has she a house?”
“She has a palace,” replied the ant,—”a most beautiful ant-palace with seven hundred passages.”
“Thank-you,” said the mother-snail; “but our boy shall not go to live in an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we will give the commission to the white gnats; they fly about in rain and sunshine; they know the burdock wood from one end to the other.”
“We have a wife for him,” said the gnats; “a hundred man-steps from here there is a little snail with a house, sitting on a gooseberry-bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to be married. It is only a hundred man-steps from here.”
“Then let her come to him,” said the old people. “He has the whole burdock forest; she has only a bush.”
So they brought the little lady-snail. She took eight days to perform the journey; but that was just as it ought to be; for it showed her to be one of the right breeding. And then they had a wedding. Six glow-worms gave as much light as they could; but in other respects it was all very quiet; for the old snails could not bear festivities or a crowd. But a beautiful speech was made by the mother-snail. The father could not speak; he was too much overcome. Then they gave the whole burdock forest to the young snails as an inheritance, and repeated what they had so often said, that it was the finest place in the world, and that if they led upright and honorable lives, and their family increased, they and their children might some day be taken to the nobleman’s palace, to be boiled black, and laid on a silver dish. And when they had finished speaking, the old couple crept into their houses, and came out no more; for they slept.
The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled or laid in silver dishes, they concluded that the castle had fallen into decay, and that all the people in the world were dead; and as nobody contradicted them, they thought they must be right. And the rain fell upon the burdock-leaves, to play the drum for them, and the sun shone to paint colors on the burdock forest for them, and they were very happy; the whole family were entirely and perfectly happy.

A LEAF FROM HEAVEN

High up in the clear, pure air flew an angel, with a flower plucked from the garden of heaven. As he was kissing the flower a very little leaf fell from it and sunk down into the soft earth in the middle of a wood. It immediately took root, sprouted, and sent out shoots among the other plants.

"What a ridiculous little shoot!" said one. "No one will recognize it; not even the thistle nor the stinging-nettle."

"It must be a kind of garden plant," said another; and so they sneered and despised the plant as a thing from a garden.

"Where are you coming?" said the tall thistles whose leaves were all armed with thorns. "It is stupid nonsense to allow yourself to shoot out in this way; we are not here to support you."

Winter came, and the plant was covered with snow, but the snow glittered over it as if it had sunshine beneath as well as above.

When spring came, the plant appeared in full bloom: a more beautiful object than any other plant in the forest. And now the professor of botany presented himself, one who could explain his knowledge in black and white. He examined and tested the plant, but it did not belong to his system of botany, nor could he possibly find out to what class it did belong. "It must be some degenerate species," said he; "I do not know it, and it is not mentioned in any system."

"Not known in any system!" repeated the thistles and the nettles.

The large trees which grew round it saw the plant and heard the remarks, but they said not a word either good or bad, which is the wisest plan for those who are ignorant.

There passed through the forest a poor innocent girl; her heart was pure, and her understanding increased by her faith. Her chief inheritance had been an old Bible, which she read and valued. From its pages she heard the voice of God speaking to her, and telling her to remember what was said of Joseph's brethren when persons wished to injure her. "They imagined evil in their hearts, but God turned it to good." If we suffer wrongfully, if we are misunderstood or despised, we must think of Him who was pure and holy, and who prayed for those who nailed Him to the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The girl stood still before the wonderful plant, for the green leaves exhaled a sweet and refreshing fragrance, and the flowers glittered and sparkled in the sunshine like colored flames, and the harmony of sweet sounds lingered round them as if each concealed within itself a deep fount of melody, which

thousands of years could not exhaust. With pious gratitude the girl looked upon this glorious work of God, and bent down over one of the branches, that she might examine the flower and inhale the sweet perfume. Then a light broke in on her mind, and her heart expanded. Gladly would she have plucked a flower, but she could not overcome her reluctance to break one off. She knew it would so soon fade; so she took only a single green leaf, carried it home, and laid it in her Bible, where it remained ever green, fresh, and unfading. Between the pages of the Bible it still lay when, a few weeks afterwards, that Bible was laid under the young girl's head in her coffin. A holy calm rested on her face, as if the earthly remains bore the impress of the truth that she now stood in the presence of God.

In the forest the wonderful plant still continued to bloom till it grew and became almost a tree, and all the birds of passage bowed themselves before it. "That plant is a foreigner, no doubt," said the thistles and the burdocks. "We can never conduct ourselves like that in this country." And the black forest snails actually spat at the flower.

Then came the swineherd; he was collecting thistles and shrubs to burn them for the ashes. He pulled up the wonderful plant, roots and all, and placed it in his bundle. "This will be as useful as any," he said; so the plant was carried away.

Not long after, the king of the country suffered from the deepest melancholy. He was diligent and industrious, but employment did him no good. They read deep and learned books to him, and then the lightest and most trifling that could be found, but all to no purpose. Then they applied for advice to one of the wise men of the world, and he sent them a message to say that there was one remedy which would relieve and cure him, and that it was a plant of heavenly origin which grew in the forest in the king's own dominions. The messenger described the flower so that is appearance could not be mistaken.

Then said the swineherd, "I am afraid I carried this plant away from the forest in my bundle, and it has been burnt to ashes long ago. But I did not know any better."

"You did not know, any better! Ignorance upon ignorance indeed!"

The poor swineherd took these words to heart, for they were addressed to him; he knew not that there were others who were equally ignorant. Not even a leaf of the plant could be found. There was one, but it lay in the coffin of the dead; no one knew anything about it.

Then the king, in his melancholy, wandered out to the spot in the wood. "Here is where the plant stood," he said; "it is a sacred place." Then he ordered that the place should be surrounded with a golden railing, and a sentry stationed near it.

The botanical professor wrote a long treatise about the heavenly plant, and for this he was loaded with gold, which improved the position of himself and his family.
And this part is really the most pleasant part of the story. For the plant had disappeared, and the king remained as melancholy and sad as ever, but the sentry said he had always been so.

HOLGER DANSKE

In Denmark there stands an old castle named Kronenburg, close by the Sound of Elsinore, where large ships, both English, Russian, and Prussian, pass by hundreds every day. And they salute the old castle with cannons, "Boom, boom," which is as if they said, "Good-day." And the cannons of the old castle answer "Boom," which means "Many thanks." In winter no ships sail by, for the whole Sound is covered with ice as far as the Swedish coast, and has quite the appearance of a high-road. The Danish and the Swedish flags wave, and Danes and Swedes say, "Good-day," and "Thank you" to each other, not with cannons, but with a friendly shake of the hand; and they exchange white bread and biscuits with each other, because foreign articles taste the best.
But the most beautiful sight of all is the old castle of Kronenburg, where Holger Danske sits in the deep, dark cellar, into which no one goes. He is clad in iron and steel, and rests his head on his strong arm; his long beard hangs down upon the marble table, into which it has become firmly rooted; he sleeps and dreams, but in his dreams he sees everything that happens in Denmark. On each Christmas-eve an angel comes to him and tells him that all he has dreamed is true, and that he may go to sleep again in peace, as Denmark is not yet in any real danger; but should danger ever come, then Holger Danske will rouse himself, and the table will burst asunder as he draws out his beard. Then he will come forth in his strength, and strike a blow that shall sound in all the countries of the world.
An old grandfather sat and told his little grandson all this about Holger Danske, and the boy knew that what his grandfather told him must be true. As the old man related this story, he was carving an image in wood to represent Holger Danske, to be fastened to the prow of a ship; for the old grandfather was a carver in wood, that is, one who carved figures for the heads of ships, according to the names given to them. And now he had carved Holger Danske, who stood there erect and proud, with his long beard, holding in one hand his broad battle-axe, while with the other he leaned on the Danish

arms. The old grandfather told the little boy a great deal about Danish men and women who had distinguished themselves in olden times, so that he fancied he knew as much even as Holger Danske himself, who, after all, could only dream; and when the little fellow went to bed, he thought so much about it that he actually pressed his chin against the counterpane, and imagined that he had a long beard which had become rooted to it. But the old grandfather remained sitting at his work and carving away at the last part of it, which was the Danish arms. And when he had finished he looked at the whole figure, and thought of all he had heard and read, and what he had that evening related to his little grandson. Then he nodded his head, wiped his spectacles and put them on, and said, "Ah, yes; Holger Danske will not appear in my lifetime, but the boy who is in bed there may very likely live to see him when the event really comes to pass." And the old grandfather nodded again; and the more he looked at Holger Danske, the more satisfied he felt that he had carved a good image of him. It seemed to glow with the color of life; the armor glittered like iron and steel. The hearts in the Danish arms grew more and more red; while the lions, with gold crowns on their heads, were leaping up. "That is the most beautiful coat of arms in the world," said the old man. "The lions represent strength; and the hearts, gentleness and love." And as he gazed on the uppermost lion, he thought of King Canute, who chained great England to Denmark's throne; and he looked at the second lion, and thought of Waldemar, who untied Denmark and conquered the Vandals. The third lion reminded him of Margaret, who united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But when he gazed at the red hearts, their colors glowed more deeply, even as flames, and his memory followed each in turn. The first led him to a dark, narrow prison, in which sat a prisoner, a beautiful woman, daughter of Christian the Fourth, Eleanor Ulfeld, and the flame became a rose on her bosom, and its blossoms were not more pure than the heart of this noblest and best of all Danish women. "Ah, yes; that is indeed a noble heart in the Danish arms," said the grandfather, and his spirit followed the second flame, which carried him out to sea, where cannons roared and the ships lay shrouded in smoke, and the flaming heart attached itself to the breast of Hvitfeldt in the form of the ribbon of an order, as he blew himself and his ship into the air in order to save the fleet. And the third flame led him to Greenland's wretched huts, where the preacher, Hans Egede, ruled with love in every word and action. The flame was as a star on his breast, and added another heart to the Danish arms. And as the old grandfather's spirit followed the next hovering flame, he knew whither it would lead him. In a peasant woman's humble room stood Frederick the Sixth, writing his name

with chalk on the beam. The flame trembled on his breast and in his heart, and it was in the peasant's room that his heart became one for the Danish arms. The old grandfather wiped his eyes, for he had known King Frederick, with his silvery locks and his honest blue eyes, and had lived for him, and he folded his hands and remained for some time silent. Then his daughter came to him and said it was getting late, that he ought to rest for a while, and that the supper was on the table.

"What you have been carving is very beautiful, grandfather," said she. "Holger Danske and the old coat of arms; it seems to me as if I have seen the face somewhere."

"No, that is impossible," replied the old grandfather; "but I have seen it, and I have tried to carve it in wood, as I have retained it in my memory. It was a long time ago, while the English fleet lay in the roads, on the second of April, when we showed that we were true, ancient Danes. I was on board the Denmark, in Steene Bille's squadron; I had a man by my side whom even the cannon balls seemed to fear. He sung old songs in a merry voice, and fired and fought as if he were something more than a man. I still remember his face, but from whence he came, or whither he went, I know not; no one knows. I have often thought it might have been Holger Danske himself, who had swam down to us from Kronenburg to help us in the hour of danger. That was my idea, and there stands his likeness."

The wooden figure threw a gigantic shadow on the wall, and even on part of the ceiling; it seemed as if the real Holger Danske stood behind it, for the shadow moved; but this was no doubt caused by the flame of the lamp not burning steadily. Then the daughter-in-law kissed the old grandfather, and led him to a large arm-chair by the table; and she, and her husband, who was the son of the old man and the father of the little boy who lay in bed, sat down to supper with him. And the old grandfather talked of the Danish lions and the Danish hearts, emblems of strength and gentleness, and explained quite clearly that there is another strength than that which lies in a sword, and he pointed to a shelf where lay a number of old books, and amongst them a collection of Holberg's plays, which are much read and are so clever and amusing that it is easy to fancy we have known the people of those days, who are described in them.

"He knew how to fight also," said the old man; "for he lashed the follies and prejudices of people during his whole life."

Then the grandfather nodded to a place above the looking-glass, where hung an almanac, with a representation of the Round Tower upon it, and said "Tycho Brahe was another of those who used a sword, but not one to

cut into the flesh and bone, but to make the way of the stars of heaven clear, and plain to be understood. And then he whose father belonged to my calling,—yes, he, the son of the old image-carver, he whom we ourselves have seen, with his silvery locks and his broad shoulders, whose name is known in all lands;—yes, he was a sculptor, while I am only a carver. Holger Danske can appear in marble, so that people in all countries of the world may hear of the strength of Denmark. Now let us drink the health of Bertel."

But the little boy in bed saw plainly the old castle of Kronenburg, and the Sound of Elsinore, and Holger Danske, far down in the cellar, with his beard rooted to the table, and dreaming of everything that was passing above him.

And Holger Danske did dream of the little humble room in which the image-carver sat; he heard all that had been said, and he nodded in his dream, saying, "Ah, yes, remember me, you Danish people, keep me in your memory, I will come to you in the hour of need."

The bright morning light shone over Kronenburg, and the wind brought the sound of the hunting-horn across from the neighboring shores. The ships sailed by and saluted the castle with the boom of the cannon, and Kronenburg returned the salute, "Boom, boom." But the roaring cannons did not awake Holger Danske, for they meant only "Good morning," and "Thank you." They must fire in another fashion before he awakes; but wake he will, for there is energy yet in Holger Danske.

IB AND LITTLE CHRISTINA

In the forest that extends from the banks of the Gudenau, in North Jutland, a long way into the country, and not far from the clear stream, rises a great ridge of land, which stretches through the wood like a wall. Westward of this ridge, and not far from the river, stands a farmhouse, surrounded by such poor land that the sandy soil shows itself between the scanty ears of rye and wheat which grow in it. Some years have passed since the people who lived here cultivated these fields; they kept three sheep, a pig, and two oxen; in fact they maintained themselves very well, they had quite enough to live upon, as people generally have who are content with their lot. They even could have afforded to keep two horses, but it was a saying among the farmers in those parts, "The horse eats himself up;" that is to say, he eats as much as he earns. Jeppe Jans cultivated his fields in summer, and in the winter he made wooden shoes. He also had an assistant, a lad who understood as well as he himself did how to make wooden shoes strong, but light,

and in the fashion. They carved shoes and spoons, which paid well; therefore no one could justly call Jeppe Jans and his family poor people. Little Ib, a boy of seven years old and the only child, would sit by, watching the workmen, or cutting a stick, and sometimes his finger instead of the stick. But one day Ib succeeded so well in his carving that he made two pieces of wood look really like two little wooden shoes, and he determined to give them as a present to Little Christina.

"And who was Little Christina?" She was the boatman's daughter, graceful and delicate as the child of a gentleman; had she been dressed differently, no one would have believed that she lived in a hut on the neighboring heath with her father. He was a widower, and earned his living by carrying firewood in his large boat from the forest to the eel-pond and eel-weir, on the estate of Silkborg, and sometimes even to the distant town of Randers. There was no one under whose care he could leave Little Christina; so she was almost always with him in his boat, or playing in the wood among the blossoming heath, or picking the ripe wild berries. Sometimes, when her father had to go as far as the town, he would take Little Christina, who was a year younger than Ib, across the heath to the cottage of Jeppe Jans, and leave her there. Ib and Christina agreed together in everything; they divided their bread and berries when they were hungry; they were partners in digging their little gardens; they ran, and crept, and played about everywhere. Once they wandered a long way into the forest, and even ventured together to climb the high ridge. Another time they found a few snipes' eggs in the wood, which was a great event. Ib had never been on the heath where Christina's father lived, nor on the river; but at last came an opportunity. Christina's father invited him to go for a sail in his boat; and the evening before, he accompanied the boatman across the heath to his house. The next morning early, the two children were placed on the top of a high pile of firewood in the boat, and sat eating bread and wild strawberries, while Christina's father and his man drove the boat forward with poles. They floated on swiftly, for the tide was in their favor, passing over lakes, formed by the stream in its course; sometimes they seemed quite enclosed by reeds and water-plants, yet there was always room for them to pass out, although the old trees overhung the water and the old oaks stretched out their bare branches, as if they had turned up their sleeves and wished to show their knotty, naked arms. Old alder-trees, whose roots were loosened from the banks, clung with their fibres to the bottom of the stream, and the tops of the branches above the water looked like little woody islands. The water-lilies waved themselves to and fro on the river, everything made the excursion beautiful, and at last they came to the great eel-weir,

where the water rushed through the flood-gates; and the children thought this a beautiful sight. In those days there was no factory nor any town house, nothing but the great farm, with its scanty-bearing fields, in which could be seen a few herd of cattle, and one or two farm laborers. The rushing of the water through the sluices, and the scream of the wild ducks, were almost the only signs of active life at Silkborg. After the firewood had been unloaded, Christina's father bought a whole bundle of eels and a sucking-pig, which were all placed in a basket in the stern of the boat. Then they returned again up the stream; and as the wind was favorable, two sails were hoisted, which carried the boat on as well as if two horses had been harnessed to it. As they sailed on, they came by chance to the place where the boatman's assistant lived, at a little distance from the bank of the river. The boat was moored; and the two men, after desiring the children to sit still, both went on shore. They obeyed this order for a very short time, and then forgot it altogether. First they peeped into the basket containing the eels and the sucking-pig; then they must needs pull out the pig and take it in their hands, and feel it, and touch it; and as they both wanted to hold it at the same time, the consequence was that they let it fall into the water, and the pig sailed away with the stream.

Here was a terrible disaster. Ib jumped ashore, and ran a little distance from the boat.

"Oh, take me with you," cried Christina; and she sprang after him. In a few minutes they found themselves deep in a thicket, and could no longer see the boat or the shore. They ran on a little farther, and then Christina fell down, and began to cry.

Ib helped her up, and said, "Never mind; follow me. Yonder is the house." But the house was not yonder; and they wandered still farther, over the dry rustling leaves of the last year, and treading on fallen branches that crackled under their little feet; then they heard a loud, piercing cry, and they stood still to listen. Presently the scream of an eagle sounded through the wood; it was an ugly cry, and it frightened the children; but before them, in the thickest part of the forest, grew the most beautiful blackberries, in wonderful quantities. They looked so inviting that the children could not help stopping; and they remained there so long eating, that their mouths and cheeks became quite black with the juice.

Presently they heard the frightful scream again, and Christina said, "We shall get into trouble about that pig."

"Oh, never mind," said Ib; "we will go home to my father's house. It is here in the wood." So they went on, but the road led them out of the way; no house could be seen, it grew dark, and the children were afraid. The

solemn stillness that reigned around them was now and then broken by the shrill cries of the great horned owl and other birds that they knew nothing of. At last they both lost themselves in the thicket; Christina began to cry, and then Ib cried too; and, after weeping and lamenting for some time, they stretched themselves down on the dry leaves and fell asleep.

The sun was high in the heavens when the two children woke. They felt cold; but not far from their resting-place, on a hill, the sun was shining through the trees. They thought if they went there they should be warm, and Ib fancied he should be able to see his father's house from such a high spot. But they were far away from home now, in quite another part of the forest. They clambered to the top of the rising ground, and found themselves on the edge of a declivity, which sloped down to a clear transparent lake. Great quantities of fish could be seen through the clear water, sparkling in the sun's rays; they were quite surprised when they came so suddenly upon such an unexpected sight.

Close to where they stood grew a hazel-bush, covered with beautiful nuts. They soon gathered some, cracked them, and ate the fine young kernels, which were only just ripe. But there was another surprise and fright in store for them. Out of the thicket stepped a tall old woman, her face quite brown, and her hair of a deep shining black; the whites of her eyes glittered like a Moor's; on her back she carried a bundle, and in her hand a knotted stick. She was a gypsy. The children did not at first understand what she said. She drew out of her pocket three large nuts, in which she told them were hidden the most beautiful and lovely things in the world, for they were wishing nuts. Ib looked at her, and as she spoke so kindly, he took courage, and asked her if she would give him the nuts; and the woman gave them to him, and then gathered some more from the bushes for herself, quite a pocket full. Ib and Christina looked at the wishing nuts with wide open eyes.

"Is there in this nut a carriage, with a pair of horses?" asked Ib.

"Yes, there is a golden carriage, with two golden horses," replied the woman.

"Then give me that nut," said Christina; so Ib gave it to her, and the strange woman tied up the nut for her in her handkerchief.

Ib held up another nut. "Is there, in this nut, a pretty little neckerchief like the one Christina has on her neck?" asked Ib.

"There are ten neckerchiefs in it," she replied, "as well as beautiful dresses, stockings, and a hat and veil."

"Then I will have that one also," said Christina; "and it is a pretty one too." And then Ib gave her the second nut.

The third was a little black thing. "You may keep that one," said Christina; "it is quite as pretty."

"What is in it?" asked Ib.
"The best of all things for you," replied the gypsy. So Ib held the nut very tight. Then the woman promised to lead the children to the right path, that they might find their way home: and they went forward certainly in quite another direction to the one they meant to take; therefore no one ought to speak against the woman, and say that she wanted to steal the children. In the wild wood-path they met a forester who knew Ib, and, by his help, Ib and Christina reached home, where they found every one had been very anxious about them. They were pardoned and forgiven, although they really had both done wrong, and deserved to get into trouble; first, because they had let the sucking-pig fall into the water; and, secondly, because they had run away. Christina was taken back to her father's house on the heath, and Ib remained in the farm-house on the borders of the wood, near the great land ridge.
The first thing Ib did that evening was to take out of his pocket the little black nut, in which the best thing of all was said to be enclosed. He laid it carefully between the door and the door-post, and then shut the door so that the nut cracked directly. But there was not much kernel to be seen; it was what we should call hollow or worm-eaten, and looked as if it had been filled with tobacco or rich black earth. "It is just what I expected!" exclaimed Ib. "How should there be room in a little nut like this for the best thing of all? Christina will find her two nuts just the same; there will be neither fine clothes or a golden carriage in them."
Winter came; and the new year, and indeed many years passed away; until Ib was old enough to be confirmed, and, therefore, he went during a whole winter to the clergyman of the nearest village to be prepared.
One day, about this time, the boatman paid a visit to Ib's parents, and told them that Christina was going to service, and that she had been remarkably fortunate in obtaining a good place, with most respectable people. "Only think," he said, "She is going to the rich innkeeper's, at the hotel in Herning, many miles west from here. She is to assist the landlady in the housekeeping; and, if afterwards she behaves well and remains to be confirmed, the people will treat her as their own daughter."
So Ib and Christina took leave of each other. People already called them "the betrothed," and at parting the girl showed Ib the two nuts, which she had taken care of ever since the time that they lost themselves in the wood; and she told him also that the little wooden shoes he once carved for her when he was a boy, and gave her as a present, had been carefully kept in a drawer ever since. And so they parted.
After Ib's confirmation, he remained at home with his mother, for he had

become a clever shoemaker, and in summer managed the farm for her quite alone. His father had been dead some time, and his mother kept no farm servants. Sometimes, but very seldom, he heard of Christina, through a postillion or eel-seller who was passing. But she was well off with the rich innkeeper; and after being confirmed she wrote a letter to her father, in which was a kind message to Ib and his mother. In this letter, she mentioned that her master and mistress had made her a present of a beautiful new dress, and some nice under-clothes. This was, of course, pleasant news.

One day, in the following spring, there came a knock at the door of the house where Ib's old mother lived; and when they opened it, lo and behold, in stepped the boatman and Christina. She had come to pay them a visit, and to spend the day. A carriage had to come from the Herning hotel to the next village, and she had taken the opportunity to see her friends once more. She looked as elegant as a real lady, and wore a pretty dress, beautifully made on purpose for her. There she stood, in full dress, while Ib wore only his working clothes. He could not utter a word; he could only seize her hand and hold it fast in his own, but he felt too happy and glad to open his lips. Christina, however, was quite at her ease; she talked and talked, and kissed him in the most friendly manner. Even afterwards, when they were left alone, and she asked, "Did you know me again, Ib?" he still stood holding her hand, and said at last, "You are become quite a grand lady, Christina, and I am only a rough working man; but I have often thought of you and of old times." Then they wandered up the great ridge, and looked across the stream to the heath, where the little hills were covered with the flowering broom. Ib said nothing; but before the time came for them to part, it became quite clear to him that Christina must be his wife: had they not even in childhood been called the betrothed? To him it seemed as if they were really engaged to each other, although not a word had been spoken on the subject. They had only a few more hours to remain together, for Christina was obliged to return that evening to the neighboring village, to be ready for the carriage which was to start the next morning early for Herning. Ib and her father accompanied her to the village. It was a fine moonlight evening; and when they arrived, Ib stood holding Christina's hand in his, as if he could not let her go. His eyes brightened, and the words he uttered came with hesitation from his lips, but from the deepest recesses of his heart: "Christina, if you have not become too grand, and if you can be contented to live in my mother's house as my wife, we will be married some day. But we can wait for a while."

“Oh yes,” she replied; “Let us wait a little longer, Ib. I can trust you, for I believe that I do love you. But let me think it over.” Then he kissed her lips; and so they parted.

On the way home, Ib told the boatman that he and Christina were as good as engaged to each other; and the boatman found out that he had always expected it would be so, and went home with Ib that evening, and remained the night in the farmhouse; but nothing further was said of the engagement. During the next year, two letters passed between Ib and Christina. They were signed, “Faithful till death;” but at the end of that time, one day the boatman came over to see Ib, with a kind greeting from Christina. He had something else to say, which made him hesitate in a strange manner. At last it came out that Christina, who had grown a very pretty girl, was more lucky than ever. She was courted and admired by every one; but her master’s son, who had been home on a visit, was so much pleased with Christina that he wished to marry her. He had a very good situation in an office at Copenhagen, and as she had also taken a liking for him, his parents were not unwilling to consent. But Christina, in her heart, often thought of Ib, and knew how much he thought of her; so she felt inclined to refuse this good fortune, added the boatman. At first Ib said not a word, but he became as white as the wall, and shook his head gently, and then he spoke,—”Christina must not refuse this good fortune.”

“Then will you write a few words to her?” said the boatman.

Ib sat down to write, but he could not get on at all. The words were not what he wished to say, so he tore up the page. The following morning, however, a letter lay ready to be sent to Christina, and the following is what he wrote:— “The letter written by you to your father I have read, and see from it that you are prosperous in everything, and that still better fortune is in store for you. Ask your own heart, Christina, and think over carefully what awaits you if you take me for your husband, for I possess very little in the world. Do not think of me or of my position; think only of your own welfare. You are bound to me by no promises; and if in your heart you have given me one, I release you from it. May every blessing and happiness be poured out upon you, Christina. Heaven will give me the heart’s consolation.”

“Ever your sincere friend, IB.”

This letter was sent, and Christina received it in due time. In the course of the following November, her banns were published in the church on the heath, and also in Copenhagen, where the bridegroom lived. She was taken to Copenhagen under the protection of her future mother-in-law, because the bridegroom could not spare time from his numerous occupations for

a journey so far into Jutland. On the journey, Christina met her father at one of the villages through which they passed, and here he took leave of her. Very little was said about the matter to Ib, and he did not refer to it; his mother, however, noticed that he had grown very silent and pensive. Thinking as he did of old times, no wonder the three nuts came into his mind which the gypsy woman had given him when a child, and of the two which he had given to Christina. These wishing nuts, after all, had proved true fortune-tellers. One had contained a gilded carriage and noble horses, and the other beautiful clothes; all of these Christina would now have in her new home at Copenhagen. Her part had come true. And for him the nut had contained only black earth. The gypsy woman had said it was the best for him. Perhaps it was, and this also would be fulfilled. He understood the gypsy woman's meaning now. The black earth—the dark grave—was the best thing for him now.

Again years passed away; not many, but they seemed long years to Ib. The old innkeeper and his wife died one after the other; and the whole of their property, many thousand dollars, was inherited by their son. Christina could have the golden carriage now, and plenty of fine clothes. During the two long years which followed, no letter came from Christina to her father; and when at last her father received one from her, it did not speak of prosperity or happiness. Poor Christina! Neither she nor her husband understood how to economize or save, and the riches brought no blessing with them, because they had not asked for it.

Years passed; and for many summers the heath was covered with bloom; in winter the snow rested upon it, and the rough winds blew across the ridge under which stood Ib's sheltered home. One spring day the sun shone brightly, and he was guiding the plough across his field. The ploughshare struck against something which he fancied was a firestone, and then he saw glittering in the earth a splinter of shining metal which the plough had cut from something which gleamed brightly in the furrow. He searched, and found a large golden armlet of superior workmanship, and it was evident that the plough had disturbed a Hun's grave. He searched further, and found more valuable treasures, which Ib showed to the clergyman, who explained their value to him. Then he went to the magistrate, who informed the president of the museum of the discovery, and advised Ib to take the treasures himself to the president.

"You have found in the earth the best thing you could find," said the magistrate.

"The best thing," thought Ib; "the very best thing for me,—and found in the earth! Well, if it really is so, then the gypsy woman was right in her prophecy."

So Ib went in the ferry-boat from Aarhus to Copenhagen. To him who had only sailed once or twice on the river near his own home, this seemed like a voyage on the ocean; and at length he arrived at Copenhagen. The value of the gold he had found was paid to him; it was a large sum—six hundred dollars. Then Ib of the heath went out, and wandered about in the great city. On the evening before the day he had settled to return with the captain of the passage-boat, Ib lost himself in the streets, and took quite a different turning to the one he wished to follow. He wandered on till he found himself in a poor street of the suburb called Christian's Haven. Not a creature could be seen. At last a very little girl came out of one of the wretched-looking houses, and Ib asked her to tell him the way to the street he wanted; she looked up timidly at him, and began to cry bitterly. He asked her what was the matter; but what she said he could not understand. So he went along the street with her; and as they passed under a lamp, the light fell on the little girl's face. A strange sensation came over Ib, as he caught sight of it. The living, breathing embodiment of Little Christina stood before him, just as he remembered her in the days of her childhood. He followed the child to the wretched house, and ascended the narrow, crazy staircase which led to a little garret in the roof. The air in the room was heavy and stifling, no light was burning, and from one corner came sounds of moaning and sighing. It was the mother of the child who lay there on a miserable bed. With the help of a match, Ib struck a light, and approached her.

"Can I be of any service to you?" he asked. "This little girl brought me up here; but I am a stranger in this city. Are there no neighbors or any one whom I can call?"

Then he raised the head of the sick woman, and smoothed her pillow. He started as he did so. It was Christina of the heath! No one had mentioned her name to Ib for years; it would have disturbed his peace of mind, especially as the reports respecting her were not good. The wealth which her husband had inherited from his parents had made him proud and arrogant. He had given up his certain appointment, and travelled for six months in foreign lands, and, on his return, had lived in great style, and got into terrible debt. For a time he had trembled on the high pedestal on which he had placed himself, till at last he toppled over, and ruin came. His numerous merry companions, and the visitors at his table, said it served him right, for he had kept house like a madman. One morning his corpse was found in the canal. The cold hand of death had already touched the heart of Christina. Her youngest child, looked for in the midst of prosperity, had sunk into the grave when only a few weeks old; and at last Christina herself became sick

unto death, and lay, forsaken and dying, in a miserable room, amid poverty she might have borne in her younger days, but which was now more painful to her from the luxuries to which she had lately been accustomed. It was her eldest child, also a Little Christina, whom Ib had followed to her home, where she suffered hunger and poverty with her mother.

"It makes me unhappy to think that I shall die, and leave this poor child," sighed she. "Oh, what will become of her?" She could say no more.

Then Ib brought out another match, and lighted a piece of candle which he found in the room, and it threw a glimmering light over the wretched dwelling. Ib looked at the little girl, and thought of Christina in her young days. For her sake, could he not love this child, who was a stranger to him? As he thus reflected, the dying woman opened her eyes, and gazed at him. Did she recognize him? He never knew; for not another word escaped her lips.

In the forest by the river Gudenau, not far from the heath, and beneath the ridge of land, stood the little farm, newly painted and whitewashed. The air was heavy and dark; there were no blossoms on the heath; the autumn winds whirled the yellow leaves towards the boatman's hut, in which strangers dwelt; but the little farm stood safely sheltered beneath the tall trees and the high ridge. The turf blazed brightly on the hearth, and within was sunlight, the sparkling light from the sunny eyes of a child; the birdlike tones from the rosy lips ringing like the song of a lark in spring. All was life and joy. Little Christina sat on Ib's knee. Ib was to her both father and mother; her own parents had vanished from her memory, as a dream-picture vanishes alike from childhood and age. Ib's house was well and prettily furnished; for he was a prosperous man now, while the mother of the little girl rested in the churchyard at Copenhagen, where she had died in poverty. Ib had money now—money which had come to him out of the black earth; and he had Christina for his own, after all.

THE ICE MAIDEN

I. LITTLE RUDY

We will pay a visit to Switzerland, and wander through that country of mountains, whose steep and rocky sides are overgrown with forest trees. Let us climb to the dazzling snow-fields at their summits, and descend again to the green meadows beneath, through which rivers and brooks rush along as if they could not quickly enough reach the sea and vanish. Fiercely shines the sun over those deep valleys, as well as upon the heavy masses of snow which lie on the mountains.

During the year these accumulations thaw or fall in the rolling avalance, or are piled up in shining glaciers. Two of these glaciers lie in the broad, rocky cliffs, between the Schreckhorn and the Wetterhorn, near the little town of Grindelwald. They are wonderful to behold, and therefore in the summer time strangers come here from all parts of the world to see them. They cross snow-covered mountains, and travel through the deep valleys, or ascend for hours, higher and still higher, the valleys appearing to sink lower and lower as they proceed, and become as small as if seen from an air balloon. Over the lofty summits of these mountains the clouds often hang like a dark veil; while beneath in the valley, where many brown, wooden houses are scattered about, the bright rays of the sun may be shining upon a little brilliant patch of green, making it appear almost transparent. The waters foam and dash along in the valleys beneath; the streams from above trickle and murmur as they fall down the rocky mountain's side, looking like glittering silver bands.

On both sides of the mountain-path stand these little wooden houses; and, as within, there are many children and many mouths to feed, each house has its own little potato garden. These children rush out in swarms, and surround travellers, whether on foot or in carriages. They are all clever at making a bargain. They offer for sale the sweetest little toy-houses, models of the mountain cottages in Switzerland. Whether it be rain or sunshine, these crowds of children are always to be seen with their wares.

About twenty years ago, there might be seen occasionally, standing at a short distance from the other children, a little boy, who was also anxious to sell his curious wares. He had an earnest, expressive countenance, and held the box containing his carved toys tightly with both hands, as if unwilling to part with it. His earnest look, and being also a very little boy, made him noticed by the strangers; so that he often sold the most, without knowing why. An hour's walk farther up the ascent lived his grandfather, who cut

and carved the pretty little toy-houses; and in the old man's room stood a large press, full of all sorts of carved things—nut-crackers, knives and forks, boxes with beautifully carved foliage, leaping chamois. It contained everything that could delight the eyes of a child. But the boy, who was named Rudy, looked with still greater pleasure and longing at some old fire-arms which hung upon the rafters, under the ceiling of the room. His grandfather promised him that he should have them some day, but that he must first grow big and strong, and learn how to use them. Small as he was, the goats were placed in his care, and a good goat-keeper should also be a good climber, and such Rudy was; he sometimes, indeed, climbed higher than the goats, for he was fond of seeking for birds'-nests at the top of high trees; he was bold and daring, but was seldom seen to smile, excepting when he stood by the roaring cataract, or heard the descending roll of the avalanche. He never played with the other children, and was not seen with them, unless his grandfather sent him down to sell his curious workmanship. Rudy did not much like trade; he loved to climb the mountains, or to sit by his grandfather and listen to his tales of olden times, or of the people in Meyringen, the place of his birth.

"In the early ages of the world," said the old man, "these people could not be found in Switzerland. They are a colony from the north, where their ancestors still dwell, and are called Swedes."

This was something for Rudy to know, but he learnt more from other sources, particularly from the domestic animals who belonged to the house. One was a large dog, called Ajola, which had belonged to his father; and the other was a tom-cat. This cat stood very high in Rudy's favor, for he had taught him to climb.

"Come out on the roof with me," said the cat; and Rudy quite understood him, for the language of fowls, ducks, cats, and dogs, is as easily understood by a young child as his own native tongue. But it must be at the age when grandfather's stick becomes a neighing horse, with head, legs, and tail. Some children retain these ideas later than others, and they are considered backwards and childish for their age. People say so; but is it so?

"Come out on the roof with me, little Rudy," was the first thing he heard the cat say, and Rudy understood him. "What people say about falling down is all nonsense," continued the cat; "you will not fall, unless you are afraid. Come, now, set one foot here and another there, and feel your way with your fore-feet. Keep your eyes wide open, and move softly, and if you come to a hole jump over it, and cling fast as I do." And this was just what Rudy did. He was often on the sloping roof with the cat, or on the tops

of high trees. But, more frequently, higher still on the ridges of the rocks where puss never came.

"Higher, higher!" cried the trees and the bushes, "see to what height we have grown, and how fast we hold, even to the narrow edges of the rocks."

Rudy often reached the top of the mountain before the sunrise, and there inhaled his morning draught of the fresh, invigorating mountain air,—God's own gift, which men call the sweet fragrance of plant and herb on the mountain-side, and the mint and wild thyme in the valleys. The overhanging clouds absorb all heaviness from the air, and the winds convey them away over the pine-tree summits. The spirit of fragrance, light and fresh, remained behind, and this was Rudy's morning draught. The sunbeams—those blessing-bringing daughters of the sun—kissed his cheeks. Vertigo might be lurking on the watch, but he dared not approach him. The swallows, who had not less than seven nests in his grandfather's house, flew up to him and his goats, singing, "We and you, you and we." They brought him greetings from his grandfather's house, even from two hens, the only birds of the household; but Rudy was not intimate with them.

Although so young and such a little fellow, Rudy had travelled a great deal. He was born in the canton of Valais, and brought to his grandfather over the mountains. He had walked to Staubbach—a little town that seems to flutter in the air like a silver veil—the glittering, snow-clad mountain Jungfrau. He had also been to the great glaciers; but this is connected with a sad story, for here his mother met her death, and his grandfather used to say that all Rudy's childish merriment was lost from that time. His mother had written in a letter, that before he was a year old he had laughed more than he cried; but after his fall into the snow-covered crevasse, his disposition had completely changed. The grandfather seldom spoke of this, but the fact was generally known. Rudy's father had been a postilion, and the large dog which now lived in his grandfather's cottage had always followed him on his journeys over the Simplon to the lake of Geneva. Rudy's relations, on his father's side, lived in the canton of Valais, in the valley of the Rhone. His uncle was a chamois hunter, and a well-known guide. Rudy was only a year old when his father died, and his mother was anxious to return with her child to her own relations, who lived in the Bernese Oberland. Her father dwelt at a few hours' distance from Grindelwald; he was a carver in wood, and gained so much by it that he had plenty to live upon. She set out homewards in the month of June, carrying her infant in her arms, and, accompanied by two chamois hunters, crossed the Gemmi on her way to Grindelwald. They had already left more than half the journey behind

them. They had crossed high ridges, and traversed snow-fields; they could even see her native valley, with its familiar wooden cottages. They had only one more glacier to climb. Some newly fallen snow concealed a cleft which, though it did not extend to the foaming waters in the depths beneath, was still much deeper than the height of a man. The young woman, with the child in her arms, slipped upon it, sank in, and disappeared. Not a shriek, not a groan was heard; nothing but the whining of a little child. More than an hour elapsed before her two companions could obtain from the nearest house ropes and poles to assist in raising them; and it was with much exertion that they at last succeeded in raising from the crevasse what appeared to be two dead bodies. Every means was used to restore them to life. With the child they were successful, but not with the mother; so the old grandfather received his daughter's little son into his house an orphan,—a little boy who laughed more than he cried; but it seemed as if laughter had left him in the cold ice-world into which he had fallen, where, as the Swiss peasants say, the souls of the lost are confined till the judgment-day.

The glaciers appear as if a rushing stream had been frozen in its course, and pressed into blocks of green crystal, which, balanced one upon another, form a wondrous palace of crystal for the Ice Maiden—the queen of the glaciers. It is she whose mighty power can crush the traveller to death, and arrest the flowing river in its course. She is also a child of the air, and with the swiftness of the chamois she can reach the snow-covered mountain tops, where the boldest mountaineer has to cut footsteps in the ice to ascend. She will sail on a frail pine-twig over the raging torrents beneath, and spring lightly from one iceberg to another, with her long, snow-white hair flowing around her, and her dark-green robe glittering like the waters of the deep Swiss lakes. "Mine is the power to seize and crush," she cried. "Once a beautiful boy was stolen from me by man,—a boy whom I had kissed, but had not kissed to death. He is again among mankind, and tends the goats on the mountains. He is always climbing higher and higher, far away from all others, but not from me. He is mine; I will send for him." And she gave Vertigo the commission.

It was summer, and the Ice Maiden was melting amidst the green verdure, when Vertigo swung himself up and down. Vertigo has many brothers, quite a troop of them, and the Ice Maiden chose the strongest among them. They exercise their power in different ways, and everywhere. Some sit on the banisters of steep stairs, others on the outer rails of lofty towers, or spring like squirrels along the ridges of the mountains. Others tread the air as a swimmer treads the water, and lure their victims here and there till they fall into the deep abyss. Vertigo and the Ice Maiden clutch at human beings,

as the polypus seizes upon all that comes within its reach. And now Vertigo was to seize Rudy.

"Seize him, indeed," cried Vertigo; "I cannot do it. That monster of a cat has taught him her tricks. That child of the human race has a power within him which keeps me at a distance; I cannot possibly reach the boy when he hangs from the branches of trees, over the precipice; or I would gladly tickle his feet, and send him heels over head through the air; but I cannot accomplish it."

"We must accomplish it," said the Ice Maiden; "either you or I must; and I will—I will!"

"No, no!" sounded through the air, like an echo on the mountain church bells chime. It was an answer in song, in the melting tones of a chorus from others of nature's spirits—good and loving spirits, the daughters of the sunbeam. They who place themselves in a circle every evening on the mountain peaks; there they spread out their rose-colored wings, which, as the sun sinks, become more flaming red, until the lofty Alps seem to burn with fire. Men call this the Alpine glow. After the sun has set, they disappear within the white snow on the mountain-tops, and slumber there till sunrise, when they again come forth. They have great love for flowers, for butterflies, and for mankind; and from among the latter they had chosen little Rudy. "You shall not catch him; you shall not seize him!" they sang.

"Greater and stronger than he have I seized!" said the Ice Maiden.

Then the daughters of the sun sang a song of the traveller, whose cloak had been carried away by the wind. "The wind took the covering, but not the man; it could even seize upon him, but not hold him fast. The children of strength are more powerful, more ethereal, even than we are. They can rise higher than our parent, the sun. They have the magic words that rule the wind and the waves, and compel them to serve and obey; and they can, at last, cast off the heavy, oppressive weight of mortality, and soar upwards." Thus sweetly sounded the bell-like tones of the chorus.

And each morning the sun's rays shone through the one little window of the grandfather's house upon the quiet child. The daughters of the sunbeam kissed him; they wished to thaw, and melt, and obliterate the ice kiss which the queenly maiden of the glaciers had given him as he lay in the lap of his dead mother, in the deep crevasse of ice from which he had been so wonderfully rescued.

II. THE JOURNEY TO THE NEW HOME

Rudy was just eight years old, when his uncle, who lived on the other side of the mountain, wished to have the boy, as he thought he might obtain a better education with him, and learn something more. His grandfather thought the same, so he consented to let him go. Rudy had many to say farewell to, as well as his grandfather. First, there was Ajola, the old dog.

"Your father was the postilion, and I was the postilion's dog," said Ajola. "We have often travelled the same journey together; I knew all the dogs and men on this side of the mountain. It is not my habit to talk much; but now that we have so little time to converse together, I will say something more than usual. I will relate to you a story, which I have reflected upon for a long time. I do not understand it, and very likely you will not, but that is of no consequence. I have, however, learnt from it that in this world things are not equally divided, neither for dogs nor for men. All are not born to lie on the lap and to drink milk: I have never been petted in this way, but I have seen a little dog seated in the place of a gentleman or lady, and travelling inside a post-chaise. The lady, who was his mistress, or of whom he was master, carried a bottle of milk, of which the little dog now and then drank; she also offered him pieces of sugar to crunch. He sniffed at them proudly, but would not eat one, so she ate them herself. I was running along the dirty road by the side of the carriage as hungry as a dog could be, chewing the cud of my own thoughts, which were rather in confusion. But many other things seemed in confusion also. Why was not I lying on a lap and travelling in a coach? I could not tell; yet I knew I could not alter my own condition, either by barking or growling."

This was Ajola's farewell speech, and Rudy threw his arms round the dog's neck and kissed his cold nose. Then he took the cat in his arms, but he struggled to get free.

"You are getting too strong for me," he said; "but I will not use my claws against you. Clamber away over the mountains; it was I who taught you to climb. Do not fancy you are going to fall, and you will be quite safe." Then the cat jumped down and ran away; he did not wish Rudy to see that there were tears in his eyes.

The hens were hopping about the floor; one of them had no tail; a traveller, who fancied himself a sportsman, had shot off her tail, he had mistaken her for a bird of prey.

"Rudy is going away over the mountains," said one of the hens.

"He is always in such a hurry," said the other; "and I don't like taking leave," so they both hopped out.

But the goats said farewell; they bleated and wanted to go with him, they were so very sorry.

Just at this time two clever guides were going to cross the mountains to the other side of the Gemmi, and Rudy was to go with them on foot. It was a long walk for such a little boy, but he had plenty of strength and invincible courage. The swallows flew with him a little way, singing, "We and you—you and we." The way led across the rushing Lutschine, which falls in numerous streams from the dark clefts of the Grindelwald glaciers. Trunks of fallen trees and blocks of stone form bridges over these streams. After passing a forest of alders, they began to ascend, passing by some blocks of ice that had loosened themselves from the side of the mountain and lay across their path; they had to step over these ice-blocks or walk round them. Rudy crept here and ran there, his eyes sparkling with joy, and he stepped so firmly with his iron-tipped mountain shoe, that he left a mark behind him wherever he placed his foot.

The earth was black where the mountain torrents or the melted ice had poured upon it, but the bluish green, glassy ice sparkled and glittered. They had to go round little pools, like lakes, enclosed between large masses of ice; and, while thus wandering out of their path, they came near an immense stone, which lay balanced on the edge of an icy peak. The stone lost its balance just as they reached it, and rolled over into the abyss beneath, while the noise of its fall was echoed back from every hollow cliff of the glaciers.

They were always going upwards. The glaciers seemed to spread above them like a continued chain of masses of ice, piled up in wild confusion between bare and rugged rocks. Rudy thought for a moment of what had been told him, that he and his mother had once lain buried in one of these cold, heart-chilling fissures; but he soon banished such thoughts, and looked upon the story as fabulous, like many other stories which had been told him. Once or twice, when the men thought the way was rather difficult for such a little boy, they held out their hands to assist him; but he would not accept their assistance, for he stood on the slippery ice as firmly as if he had been a chamois. They came at length to rocky ground; sometimes stepping upon moss-covered stones, sometimes passing beneath stunted fir-trees, and again through green meadows. The landscape was always changing, but ever above them towered the lofty snow-clad mountains, whose names not only Rudy but every other child knew—"The Jungfrau," "The Monk and the Eiger."

Rudy had never been so far away before; he had never trodden on the wide-spreading ocean of snow that lay here with its immovable billows, from which the wind blows off the snowflake now and then, as it cuts the

foam from the waves of the sea. The glaciers stand here so close together it might almost be said they are hand-in-hand; and each is a crystal palace for the Ice Maiden, whose power and will it is to seize and imprison the unwary traveller.

The sun shone warmly, and the snow sparkled as if covered with glittering diamonds. Numerous insects, especially butterflies and bees, lay dead in heaps on the snow. They had ventured too high, or the wind had carried them here and left them to die of cold.

Around the Wetterhorn hung a feathery cloud, like a woolbag, and a threatening cloud too, for as it sunk lower it increased in size, and concealed within was a "fohn," fearful in its violence should it break loose. This journey, with its varied incidents,—the wild paths, the night passed on the mountain, the steep rocky precipices, the hollow clefts, in which the rustling waters from time immemorial had worn away passages for themselves through blocks of stone,—all these were firmly impressed on Rudy's memory.

In a forsaken stone building, which stood just beyond the seas of snow, they one night took shelter. Here they found some charcoal and pine branches, so that they soon made a fire. They arranged couches to lie on as well as they could, and then the men seated themselves by the fire, took out their pipes, and began to smoke. They also prepared a warm, spiced drink, of which they partook and Rudy was not forgotten—he had his share. Then they began to talk of those mysterious beings with which the land of the Alps abounds; the hosts of apparitions which come in the night, and carry off the sleepers through the air, to the wonderful floating town of Venice; of the wild herds-man, who drives the black sheep across the meadows. These flocks are never seen, yet the tinkle of their little bells has often been heard, as well as their unearthly bleating. Rudy listened eagerly, but without fear, for he knew not what fear meant; and while he listened, he fancied he could hear the roaring of the spectral herd. It seemed to come nearer and roar louder, till the men heard it also and listened in silence, till, at length, they told Rudy that he must not dare to sleep. It was a "fohn," that violent storm-wind which rushes from the mountain to the valley beneath, and in its fury snaps asunder the trunks of large trees as if they were but slender reeds, and carries the wooden houses from one side of a river to the other as easily as we could move the pieces on a chess-board. After an hour had passed, they told Rudy that it was all over, and he might go to sleep; and, fatigued with his long walk, he readily slept at the word of command.

Very early the following morning they again set out. The sun on this day lighted up for Rudy new mountains, new glaciers, and new snow-fields.

They had entered the Canton Valais, and found themselves on the ridge of the hills which can be seen from Grindelwald; but he was still far from his new home. They pointed out to him other clefts, other meadows, other woods and rocky paths, and other houses. Strange men made their appearance before him, and what men! They were misshapen, wretched-looking creatures, with yellow complexions; and on their necks were dark, ugly lumps of flesh, hanging down like bags. They were called cretins. They dragged themselves along painfully, and stared at the strangers with vacant eyes. The women looked more dreadful than the men. Poor Rudy! were these the sort of people he should see at his new home?

III. THE UNCLE

Rudy arrived at last at his uncle's house, and was thankful to find the people like those he had been accustomed to see. There was only one cretin amongst them, a poor idiot boy, one of those unfortunate beings who, in their neglected conditions, go from house to house, and are received and taken care of in different families, for a month or two at a time.

Poor Saperli had just arrived at his uncle's house when Rudy came. The uncle was an experienced hunter; he also followed the trade of a cooper; his wife was a lively little person, with a face like a bird, eyes like those of an eagle, and a long, hairy throat. Everything was new to Rudy—the fashion of the dress, the manners, the employments, and even the language; but the latter his childish ear would soon learn. He saw also that there was more wealth here, when compared with his former home at his grandfather's. The rooms were larger, the walls were adorned with the horns of the chamois, and brightly polished guns. Over the door hung a painting of the Virgin Mary, fresh alpine roses and a burning lamp stood near it. Rudy's uncle was, as we have said, one of the most noted chamois hunters in the whole district, and also one of the best guides. Rudy soon became the pet of the house; but there was another pet, an old hound, blind and lazy, who would never more follow the hunt, well as he had once done so. But his former good qualities were not forgotten, and therefore the animal was kept in the family and treated with every indulgence. Rudy stroked the old hound, but he did not like strangers, and Rudy was as yet a stranger; he did not, however, long remain so, he soon endeared himself to every heart, and became like one of the family.

"We are not very badly off, here in the canton Valais," said his uncle one day; "we have the chamois, they do not die so fast as the wild goats, and it is certainly much better here now than in former times. How highly the old

times have been spoken of, but ours is better. The bag has been opened, and a current of air now blows through our once confined valley. Something better always makes its appearance when old, worn-out things fail."

When his uncle became communicative, he would relate stories of his youthful days, and farther back still of the warlike times in which his father had lived. Valais was then, as he expressed it, only a closed-up bag, quite full of sick people, miserable cretins; but the French soldiers came, and they were capital doctors, they soon killed the disease and the sick people, too. The French people knew how to fight in more ways than one, and the girls knew how to conquer too; and when he said this the uncle nodded at his wife, who was a French woman by birth, and laughed. The French could also do battle on the stones. "It was they who cut a road out of the solid rock over the Simplon—such a road, that I need only say to a child of three years old, 'Go down to Italy, you have only to keep in the high road,' and the child will soon arrive in Italy, if he followed my directions."

Then the uncle sang a French song, and cried, "Hurrah! long live Napoleon Buonaparte." This was the first time Rudy had ever heard of France, or of Lyons, that great city on the Rhone where his uncle had once lived. His uncle said that Rudy, in a very few years, would become a clever hunter, he had quite a talent for it; he taught the boy to hold a gun properly, and to load and fire it. In the hunting season he took him to the hills, and made him drink the warm blood of the chamois, which is said to prevent the hunter from becoming giddy; he taught him to know the time when, from the different mountains, the avalanche is likely to fall, namely, at noontide or in the evening, from the effects of the sun's rays; he made him observe the movements of the chamois when he gave a leap, so that he might fall firmly and lightly on his feet. He told him that when on the fissures of the rocks he could find no place for his feet, he must support himself on his elbows, and cling with his legs, and even lean firmly with his back, for this could be done when necessary. He told him also that the chamois are very cunning, they place lookers-out on the watch; but the hunter must be more cunning than they are, and find them out by the scent.

One day, when Rudy went out hunting with his uncle, he hung a coat and hat on an alpine staff, and the chamois mistook it for a man, as they generally do. The mountain path was narrow here; indeed it was scarcely a path at all, only a kind of shelf, close to the yawning abyss. The snow that lay upon it was partially thawed, and the stones crumbled beneath the feet. Every fragment of stone broken off struck the sides of the rock in its fall, till it rolled into the depths beneath, and sunk to rest. Upon this shelf

Rudy's uncle laid himself down, and crept forward. At about a hundred paces behind him stood Rudy, upon the highest point of the rock, watching a great vulture hovering in the air; with a single stroke of his wing the bird might easily cast the creeping hunter into the abyss beneath, and make him his prey. Rudy's uncle had eyes for nothing but the chamois, who, with its young kid, had just appeared round the edge of the rock. So Rudy kept his eyes fixed on the bird, he knew well what the great creature wanted; therefore he stood in readiness to discharge his gun at the proper moment. Suddenly the chamois made a spring, and his uncle fired and struck the animal with the deadly bullet; while the young kid rushed away, as if for a long life he had been accustomed to danger and practised flight. The large bird, alarmed at the report of the gun, wheeled off in another direction, and Rudy's uncle was saved from danger, of which he knew nothing till he was told of it by the boy.

While they were both in pleasant mood, wending their way homewards, and the uncle whistling the tune of a song he had learnt in his young days, they suddenly heard a peculiar sound which seemed to come from the top of the mountain. They looked up, and saw above them, on the over-hanging rock, the snow-covering heave and lift itself as a piece of linen stretched on the ground to dry raises itself when the wind creeps under it. Smooth as polished marble slabs, the waves of snow cracked and loosened themselves, and then suddenly, with the rumbling noise of distant thunder, fell like a foaming cataract into the abyss. An avalanche had fallen, not upon Rudy and his uncle, but very near them. Alas, a great deal too near!

"Hold fast, Rudy!" cried his uncle; "hold fast, with all your might."

Then Rudy clung with his arms to the trunk of the nearest tree, while his uncle climbed above him, and held fast by the branches. The avalanche rolled past them at some distance; but the gust of wind that followed, like the storm-wings of the avalanche, snapped asunder the trees and bushes over which it swept, as if they had been but dry rushes, and threw them about in every direction. The tree to which Rudy clung was thus overthrown, and Rudy dashed to the ground. The higher branches were snapped off, and carried away to a great distance; and among these shattered branches lay Rudy's uncle, with his skull fractured. When they found him, his hand was still warm; but it would have been impossible to recognize his face. Rudy stood by, pale and trembling; it was the first shock of his life, the first time he had ever felt fear. Late in the evening he returned home with the fatal news,—to that home which was now to be so full of sorrow. His uncle's wife uttered not a word, nor shed a tear, till the corpse was brought in; then

her agony burst forth. The poor cretin crept away to his bed, and nothing was seen of him during the whole of the following day. Towards evening, however, he came to Rudy, and said, "Will you write a letter for me? Saperli cannot write; Saperli can only take the letters to the post."
"A letter for you!" said Rudy; "who do you wish to write to?"
"To the Lord Christ," he replied.
"What do you mean?" asked Rudy.
Then the poor idiot, as the cretin was often called, looked at Rudy with a most touching expression in his eyes, clasped his hands, and said, solemnly and devoutly, "Saperli wants to send a letter to Jesus Christ, to pray Him to let Saperli die, and not the master of the house here."
Rudy pressed his hand, and replied, "A letter would not reach Him up above; it would not give him back whom we have lost."
It was not, however, easy for Rudy to convince Saperli of the impossibility of doing what he wished.
"Now you must work for us," said his foster-mother; and Rudy very soon became the entire support of the house.

IV. BABETTE

Who was the best marksman in the canton Valais? The chamois knew well. "Save yourselves from Rudy," they might well say. And who is the handsomest marksman? "Oh, it is Rudy," said the maidens; but they did not say, "Save yourselves from Rudy." Neither did anxious mothers say so; for he bowed to them as pleasantly as to the young girls. He was so brave and cheerful. His cheeks were brown, his teeth white, and his eyes dark and sparkling. He was now a handsome young man of twenty years. The most icy water could not deter him from swimming; he could twist and turn like a fish. None could climb like he, and he clung as firmly to the edges of the rocks as a limpet. He had strong muscular power, as could be seen when he leapt from rock to rock. He had learnt this first from the cat, and more lately from the chamois. Rudy was considered the best guide over the mountains; every one had great confidence in him. He might have made a great deal of money as guide. His uncle had also taught him the trade of a cooper; but he had no inclination for either; his delight was in chamois-hunting, which also brought him plenty of money. Rudy would be a very good match, as people said, if he would not look above his own station. He was also such a famous partner in dancing, that the girls often dreamt about him, and one and another thought of him even when awake.

"He kissed me in the dance," said Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter, to her dearest friend; but she ought not to have told this, even to her dearest friend. It is not easy to keep such secrets; they are like sand in a sieve; they slip out. It was therefore soon known that Rudy, so brave and so good as he was, had kissed some one while dancing, and yet he had never kissed her who was dearest to him.

"Ah, ah," said an old hunter, "he has kissed Annette, has he? he has begun with A, and I suppose he will kiss through the whole alphabet."

But a kiss in the dance was all the busy tongues could accuse him of. He certainly had kissed Annette, but she was not the flower of his heart.

Down in the valley, near Bex, among the great walnut-trees, by the side of a little rushing mountain-stream, lived a rich miller. His dwelling-house was a large building, three storeys high, with little turrets. The roof was covered with chips, bound together with tin plates, that glittered in sunshine and in the moonlight. The largest of the turrets had a weather-cock, representing an apple pierced by a glittering arrow, in memory of William Tell. The mill was a neat and well-ordered place, that allowed itself to be sketched and written about; but the miller's daughter did not permit any to sketch or write about her. So, at least, Rudy would have said, for her image was pictured in his heart; her eyes shone in it so brightly, that quite a flame had been kindled there; and, like all other fires, it had burst forth so suddenly, that the miller's daughter, the beautiful Babette, was quite unaware of it. Rudy had never spoken a word to her on the subject. The miller was rich, and, on that account, Babette stood very high, and was rather difficult to aspire to. But said Rudy to himself, "Nothing is too high for a man to reach: he must climb with confidence in himself, and he will not fail." He had learnt this lesson in his youthful home.

It happened once that Rudy had some business to settle at Bex. It was a long journey at that time, for the railway had not been opened. From the glaciers of the Rhone, at the foot of the Simplon, between its ever-changing mountain summits, stretches the valley of the canton Valais. Through it runs the noble river of the Rhone, which often overflows its banks, covering fields and highways, and destroying everything in its course. Near the towns of Sion and St. Maurice, the valley takes a turn, and bends like an elbow, and behind St. Maurice becomes so narrow that there is only space enough for the bed of the river and a narrow carriage-road. An old tower stands here, as if it were guardian to the canton Valais, which ends at this point; and from it we can look across the stone bridge to the toll-house on the other side, where the canton Vaud commences. Not far from this spot stands the

town of Bex, and at every step can be seen an increase of fruitfulness and verdure. It is like entering a grove of chestnut and walnut-trees. Here and there the cypress and pomegranate blossoms peep forth; and it is almost as warm as an Italian climate. Rudy arrived at Bex, and soon finished the business which had brought him there, and then walked about the town; but not even the miller's boy could be seen, nor any one belonging to the mill, not to mention Babette. This did not please him at all. Evening came on. The air was filled with the perfume of the wild thyme and the blossoms of the lime-trees, and the green woods on the mountains seemed to be covered with a shining veil, blue as the sky. Over everything reigned a stillness, not of sleep or of death, but as if Nature were holding her breath, that her image might be photographed on the blue vault of heaven. Here and there, amidst the trees of the silent valley, stood poles which supported the wires of the electric telegraph. Against one of these poles leaned an object so motionless that it might have been mistaken for the trunk of a tree; but it was Rudy, standing there as still as at that moment was everything around him. He was not asleep, neither was he dead; but just as the various events in the world—matters of momentous importance to individuals—were flying through the telegraph wires, without the quiver of a wire or the slightest tone, so, through the mind of Rudy, thoughts of overwhelming importance were passing, without an outward sign of emotion. The happiness of his future life depended upon the decision of his present reflections. His eyes were fixed on one spot in the distance—a light that twinkled through the foliage from the parlor of the miller's house, where Babette dwelt. Rudy stood so still, that it might have been supposed he was watching for a chamois; but he was in reality like a chamois, who will stand for a moment, looking as if it were chiselled out of the rock, and then, if only a stone rolled by, would suddenly bound forward with a spring, far away from the hunter. And so with Rudy: a sudden roll of his thoughts roused him from his stillness, and made him bound forward with determination to act.

"Never despair!" cried he. "A visit to the mill, to say good evening to the miller, and good evening to little Babette, can do no harm. No one ever fails who has confidence in himself. If I am to be Babette's husband, I must see her some time or other."

Then Rudy laughed joyously, and took courage to go to the mill. He knew what he wanted; he wanted to marry Babette. The clear water of the river rolled over its yellow bed, and willows and lime-trees were reflected in it, as Rudy stepped along the path to the miller's house. But, as the children sing—

"There was no one at home in the house, Only a kitten at play."

The cat standing on the steps put up its back and cried "mew." But Rudy had no inclination for this sort of conversation; he passed on, and knocked at the door. No one heard him, no one opened the door. "Mew," said the cat again; and had Rudy been still a child, he would have understood this language, and known that the cat wished to tell him there was no one at home. So he was obliged to go to the mill and make inquiries, and there he heard that the miller had gone on a journey to Interlachen, and taken Babette with him, to the great shooting festival, which began that morning, and would continue for eight days, and that people from all the German settlements would be there.

Poor Rudy! we may well say. It was not a fortunate day for his visit to Bex. He had just to return the way he came, through St. Maurice and Sion, to his home in the valley. But he did not despair. When the sun rose the next morning, his good spirits had returned; indeed he had never really lost them. "Babette is at Interlachen," said Rudy to himself, "many days' journey from here. It is certainly a long way for any one who takes the high-road, but not so far if he takes a short cut across the mountain, and that just suits a chamois-hunter. I have been that way before, for it leads to the home of my childhood, where, as a little boy, I lived with my grandfather. And there are shooting matches at Interlachen. I will go, and try to stand first in the match. Babette will be there, and I shall be able to make her acquaintance."

Carrying his light knapsack, which contained his Sunday clothes, on his back, and with his musket and his game-bag over his shoulder, Rudy started to take the shortest way across the mountain. Still it was a great distance. The shooting matches were to commence on that day, and to continue for a whole week. He had been told also that the miller and Babette would remain that time with some relatives at Interlachen. So over the Gemmi Rudy climbed bravely, and determined to descend the side of the Grindelwald. Bright and joyous were his feelings as he stepped lightly onwards, inhaling the invigorating mountain air. The valley sunk as he ascended, the circle of the horizon expanded. One snow-capped peak after another rose before him, till the whole of the glittering Alpine range became visible. Rudy knew each ice-clad peak, and he continued his course towards the Schreckhorn, with its white powdered stone finger raised high in the air. At length he had crossed the highest ridges, and before him lay the green pasture lands sloping down towards the valley, which was once his home. The buoyancy of the air made his heart light. Hill and valley were blooming in luxuriant beauty, and his thoughts were youthful dreams, in which old age or death were out of the question. Life, power, and enjoyment were in the future, and he felt free and light as a bird. And the swallows flew

round him, as in the days of his childhood, singing "We and you—you and we." All was overflowing with joy. Beneath him lay the meadows, covered with velvety green, with the murmuring river flowing through them, and dotted here and there were small wooden houses. He could see the edges of the glaciers, looking like green glass against the soiled snow, and the deep chasms beneath the loftiest glacier. The church bells were ringing, as if to welcome him to his home with their sweet tones. His heart beat quickly, and for a moment he seemed to have foregotten Babette, so full were his thoughts of old recollections. He was, in imagination, once more wandering on the road where, when a little boy, he, with other children, came to sell their curiously carved toy houses. Yonder, behind the fir-trees, still stood his grandfather's house, his mother's father, but strangers dwelt in it now. Children came running to him, as he had once done, and wished to sell their wares. One of them offered him an Alpine rose. Rudy took the rose as a good omen, and thought of Babette. He quickly crossed the bridge where the two rivers flow into each other. Here he found a walk over-shadowed with large walnut-trees, and their thick foliage formed a pleasant shade. Very soon he perceived in the distance, waving flags, on which glittered a white cross on a red ground—the standard of the Danes as well as of the Swiss—and before him lay Interlachen.

"It is really a splendid town, like none other that I have ever seen," said Rudy to himself. It was indeed a Swiss town in its holiday dress. Not like the many other towns, crowded with heavy stone houses, stiff and foreign looking. No; here it seemed as if the wooden houses on the hills had run into the valley, and placed themselves in rows and ranks by the side of the clear river, which rushes like an arrow in its course. The streets were rather irregular, it is true, but still this added to their picturesque appearance. There was one street which Rudy thought the prettiest of them all; it had been built since he had visited the town when a little boy. It seemed to him as if all the neatest and most curiously carved toy houses which his grandfather once kept in the large cupboard at home, had been brought out and placed in this spot, and that they had increased in size since then, as the old chestnut trees had done. The houses were called hotels; the woodwork on the windows and balconies was curiously carved. The roofs were gayly painted, and before each house was a flower garden, which separated it from the macadamized high-road. These houses all stood on the same side of the road, so that the fresh, green meadows, in which were cows grazing, with bells on their necks, were not hidden. The sound of these bells is often heard amidst Alpine scenery. These meadows were encircled by lofty hills,

which receded a little in the centre, so that the most beautifully formed of Swiss mountains—the snow-crowned Jungfrau—could be distinctly seen glittering in the distance. A number of elegantly dressed gentlemen and ladies from foreign lands, and crowds of country people from the neighboring cantons, were assembled in the town. Each marksman wore the number of hits he had made twisted in a garland round his hat. Here were music and singing of all descriptions: hand-organs, trumpets, shouting, and noise. The houses and bridges were adorned with verses and inscriptions. Flags and banners were waving. Shot after shot was fired, which was the best music to Rudy's ears. And amidst all this excitement he quite forgot Babette, on whose account only he had come. The shooters were thronging round the target, and Rudy was soon amongst them. But when he took his turn to fire, he proved himself the best shot, for he always struck the bull's-eye.

"Who may that young stranger be?" was the inquiry on all sides. "He speaks French as it is spoken in the Swiss cantons."

"And makes himself understood very well when he speaks German," said some.

"He lived here, when a child, with his grandfather, in a house on the road to Grindelwald," remarked one of the sportsmen.

And full of life was this young stranger; his eyes sparkled, his glance was steady, and his arm sure, therefore he always hit the mark. Good fortune gives courage, and Rudy was always courageous. He soon had a circle of friends gathered round him. Every one noticed him, and did him homage. Babette had quite vanished from his thoughts, when he was struck on the shoulder by a heavy hand, and a deep voice said to him in French, "You are from the canton Valais."

Rudy turned round, and beheld a man with a ruddy, pleasant face, and a stout figure. It was the rich miller from Bex. His broad, portly person, hid the slender, lovely Babette; but she came forward and glanced at him with her bright, dark eyes. The rich miller was very much flattered at the thought that the young man, who was acknowledged to be the best shot, and was so praised by every one, should be from his own canton. Now was Rudy really fortunate: he had travelled all this way to this place, and those he had forgotten were now come to seek him. When country people go far from home, they often meet with those they know, and improve their acquaintance. Rudy, by his shooting, had gained the first place in the shooting-match, just as the miller at home at Bex stood first, because of his money and his mill. So the two men shook hands, which they had never done before. Babette, too, held out her hand to Rudy frankly, and he pressed it

in his, and looked at her so earnestly, that she blushed deeply. The miller talked of the long journey they had travelled, and of the many towns they had seen. It was his opinion that he had really made as great a journey as if he had travelled in a steamship, a railway carriage, or a post-chaise.

"I came by a much shorter way," said Rudy; "I came over the mountains. There is no road so high that a man may not venture upon it."

"Ah, yes; and break your neck," said the miller; "and you look like one who will break his neck some day, you are so daring."

"Oh, nothing ever happens to a man if he has confidence in himself," replied Rudy.

The miller's relations at Interlachen, with whom the miller and Babette were staying, invited Rudy to visit them, when they found he came from the same canton as the miller. It was a most pleasant visit. Good fortune seemed to follow him, as it does those who think and act for themselves, and who remember the proverb, "Nuts are given to us, but they are not cracked for us." And Rudy was treated by the miller's relations almost like one of the family, and glasses of wine were poured out to drink to the welfare of the best shooter. Babette clinked glasses with Rudy, and he returned thanks for the toast. In the evening they all took a delightful walk under the walnut-trees, in front of the stately hotels; there were so many people, and such crowding, that Rudy was obliged to offer his arm to Babette. Then he told her how happy it made him to meet people from the canton Vaud,—for Vaud and Valais were neighboring cantons. He spoke of this pleasure so heartily that Babette could not resist giving his arm a slight squeeze; and so they walked on together, and talked and chatted like old acquaintances. Rudy felt inclined to laugh sometimes at the absurd dress and walk of the foreign ladies; but Babette did not wish to make fun of them, for she knew there must be some good, excellent people amongst them; she, herself, had a godmother, who was a high-born English lady. Eighteen years before, when Babette was christened, this lady was staying at Bex, and she stood godmother for her, and gave her the valuable brooch she now wore in her bosom.

Her godmother had twice written to her, and this year she was expected to visit Interlachen with her two daughters; "but they are old-maids," added Babette, who was only eighteen: "they are nearly thirty." Her sweet little mouth was never still a moment, and all that she said sounded in Rudy's ears as matters of the greatest importance, and at last he told her what he was longing to tell. How often he had been at Bex, how well he knew the mill, and how often he had seen Babette, when most likely she had not noticed him; and lastly, that full of many thoughts which he could not tell her,

he had been to the mill on the evening when she and her father has started on their long journey, but not too far for him to find a way to overtake them. He told her all this, and a great deal more; he told her how much he could endure for her; and that it was to see her, and not the shooting-match, which had brought him to Interlachen. Babette became quite silent after hearing all this; it was almost too much, and it troubled her.

And while they thus wandered on, the sun sunk behind the lofty mountains. The Jungfrau stood out in brightness and splendor, as a back-ground to the green woods of the surrounding hills. Every one stood still to look at the beautiful sight, Rudy and Babette among them.

"Nothing can be more beautiful than this," said Babette.

"Nothing!" replied Rudy, looking at Babette.

"To-morrow I must return home," remarked Rudy a few minutes afterwards.

"Come and visit us at Bex," whispered Babette; "my father will be pleased to see you."

V. ON THE WAY HOME

Oh, what a number of things Rudy had to carry over the mountains, when he set out to return home! He had three silver cups, two handsome pistols, and a silver coffee-pot. This latter would be useful when he began housekeeping. But all these were not the heaviest weight he had to bear; something mightier and more important he carried with him in his heart, over the high mountains, as he journeyed homeward.

The weather was dismally dark, and inclined to rain; the clouds hung low, like a mourning veil on the tops of the mountains, and shrouded their glittering peaks. In the woods could be heard the sound of the axe and the heavy fall of the trunks of the trees, as they rolled down the slopes of the mountains. When seen from the heights, the trunks of these trees looked like slender stems; but on a nearer inspection they were found to be large and strong enough for the masts of a ship. The river murmured monotonously, the wind whistled, and the clouds sailed along hurriedly.

Suddenly there appeared, close by Rudy's side, a young maiden; he had not noticed her till she came quite near to him. She was also going to ascend the mountain. The maiden's eyes shone with an unearthly power, which obliged you to look into them; they were strange eyes,—clear, deep, and unfathomable.

"Hast thou a lover?" asked Rudy; all his thoughts were naturally on love just then.

"I have none," answered the maiden, with a laugh; it was as if she had not spoken the truth.

"Do not let us go such a long way round," said she. "We must keep to the left; it is much shorter."
"Ah, yes," he replied; "and fall into some crevasse. Do you pretend to be a guide, and not know the road better than that?"
"I know every step of the way," said she; "and my thoughts are collected, while yours are down in the valley yonder. We should think of the Ice Maiden while we are up here; men say she is not kind to their race."
"I fear her not," said Rudy. "She could not keep me when I was a child; I will not give myself up to her now I am a man."
Darkness came on, the rain fell, and then it began to snow, and the whiteness dazzled the eyes.
"Give me your hand," said the maiden; "I will help you to mount." And he felt the touch of her icy fingers.
"You help me," cried Rudy; "I do not yet require a woman to help me to climb." And he stepped quickly forwards away from her.
The drifting snow-shower fell like a veil between them, the wind whistled, and behind him he could hear the maiden laughing and singing, and the sound was most strange to hear.
"It certainly must be a spectre or a servant of the Ice Maiden," thought Rudy, who had heard such things talked about when he was a little boy, and had stayed all night on the mountain with the guides.
The snow fell thicker than ever, the clouds lay beneath him; he looked back, there was no one to be seen, but he heard sounds of mocking laughter, which were not those of a human voice.
When Rudy at length reached the highest part of the mountain, where the path led down to the valley of the Rhone, the snow had ceased, and in the clear heavens he saw two bright stars twinkling. They reminded him of Babette and of himself, and of his future happiness, and his heart glowed at the thought.

VI. THE VISIT TO THE MILL

"What beautiful things you have brought home!" said his old foster-mother; and her strange-looking eagle-eyes sparkled, while she wriggled and twisted her skinny neck more quickly and strangely than ever. "You have brought good luck with you, Rudy. I must give you a kiss, my dear boy."
Rudy allowed himself to be kissed; but it could be seen by his countenance that he only endured the infliction as a homely duty.
"How handsome you are, Rudy!" said the old woman.
"Don't flatter," said Rudy, with a laugh; but still he was pleased.

“I must say once more,” said the old woman, “that you are very lucky.”
“Well, in that I believe you are right,” said he, as he thought of Babette. Never had he felt such a longing for that deep valley as he now had. “They must have returned home by this time,” said he to himself, “it is already two days over the time which they fixed upon. I must go to Bex.”
So Rudy set out to go to Bex; and when he arrived there, he found the miller and his daughter at home. They received him kindly, and brought him many greetings from their friends at Interlachen. Babette did not say much. She seemed to have become quite silent; but her eyes spoke, and that was quite enough for Rudy. The miller had generally a great deal to talk about, and seemed to expect that every one should listen to his jokes, and laugh at them; for was not he the rich miller? But now he was more inclined to hear Rudy’s adventures while hunting and travelling, and to listen to his descriptions of the difficulties the chamois-hunter has to overcome on the mountain-tops, or of the dangerous snow-drifts which the wind and weather cause to cling to the edges of the rocks, or to lie in the form of a frail bridge over the abyss beneath. The eyes of the brave Rudy sparkled as he described the life of a hunter, or spoke of the cunning of the chamois and their wonderful leaps; also of the powerful fohn and the rolling avalanche. He noticed that the more he described, the more interested the miller became, especially when he spoke of the fierce vulture and of the royal eagle. Not far from Bex, in the canton Valais, was an eagle’s nest, more curiously built under a high, over-hanging rock. In this nest was a young eagle; but who would venture to take it? A young Englishman had offered Rudy a whole handful of gold, if he would bring him the young eagle alive.
“There is a limit to everything,” was Rudy’s reply. “The eagle could not be taken; it would be folly to attempt it.”
The wine was passed round freely, and the conversation kept up pleasantly; but the evening seemed too short for Rudy, although it was midnight when he left the miller’s house, after this his first visit.
While the lights in the windows of the miller’s house still twinkled through the green foliage, out through the open skylight came the parlor-cat on to the roof, and along the water-pipe walked the kitchen-cat to meet her.
“What is the news at the mill?” asked the parlor-cat. “Here in the house there is secret love-making going on, which the father knows nothing about. Rudy and Babette have been treading on each other’s paws, under the table, all the evening. They trod on my tail twice, but I did not mew; that would have attracted notice.”
“Well, I should have mewed,” said the kitchen-cat.

"What might suit the kitchen would not suit the parlor," said the other. "I am quite curious to know what the miller will say when he finds out this engagement."

Yes, indeed; what would the miller say? Rudy himself was anxious to know that; but to wait till the miller heard of it from others was out of the question. Therefore, not many days after this visit, he was riding in the omnibus that runs between the two cantons, Valais and Vaud. These cantons are separated by the Rhone, over which is a bridge that unites them. Rudy, as usual, had plenty of courage, and indulged in pleasant thoughts of the favorable answer he should receive that evening. And when the omnibus returned, Rudy was again seated in it, going homewards; and at the same time the parlor-cat at the miller's house ran out quickly, crying,—

"Here, you from the kitchen, what do you think? The miller knows all now. Everything has come to a delightful end. Rudy came here this evening, and he and Babette had much whispering and secret conversation together. They stood in the path near the miller's room. I lay at their feet; but they had no eyes or thoughts for me.

"'I will go to your father at once,' said he; 'it is the most honorable way.'

"'Shall I go with you?' asked Babette; 'it will give you courage.'

"'I have plenty of courage,' said Rudy; 'but if you are with me, he must be friendly, whether he says Yes or No.'

"So they turned to go in, and Rudy trod heavily on my tail; he certainly is very clumsy. I mewed; but neither he nor Babette had any ears for me. They opened the door, and entered together. I was before them, and jumped on the back of a chair. I hardly know what Rudy said; but the miller flew into a rage, and threatened to kick him out of the house. He told him he might go to the mountains, and look after the chamois, but not after our little Babette."

"And what did they say? Did they speak?" asked the kitchen-cat.

"What did they say! why, all that people generally do say when they go a-wooing—'I love her, and she loves me; and when there is milk in the can for one, there is milk in the can for two.'

"'But she is so far above you,' said the miller; 'she has heaps of gold, as you know. You should not attempt to reach her.'

"'There is nothing so high that a man cannot reach, if he will,' answered Rudy; for he is a brave youth.

"'Yet you could not reach the young eagle,' said the miller, laughing. 'Babette is higher than the eagle's nest.'

"'I will have them both,' said Rudy.

"'Very well; I will give her to you when you bring me the young eaglet

alive,' said the miller; and he laughed till the tears stood in his eyes. 'But now I thank you for this visit, Rudy; and if you come to-morrow, you will find nobody at home. Good-bye, Rudy.'

"Babette also wished him farewell; but her voice sounded as mournful as the mew of a little kitten that has lost its mother.

"'A promise is a promise between man and man,' said Rudy. 'Do not weep, Babette; I shall bring the young eagle.'

"'You will break your neck, I hope,' said the miller, 'and we shall be relieved from your company.'

"I call that kicking him out of the house," said the parlor-cat. "And now Rudy is gone, and Babette sits and weeps, while the miller sings German songs that he learnt on his journey; but I do not trouble myself on the matter,—it would be of no use."

"Yet, for all that, it is a very strange affair," said the kitchen-cat.

VII. THE EAGLE'S NEST

From the mountain-path came a joyous sound of some person whistling, and it betokened good humor and undaunted courage. It was Rudy, going to meet his friend Vesinaud. "You must come and help," said he. "I want to carry off the young eaglet from the top of the rock. We will take young Ragli with us."

"Had you not better first try to take down the moon? That would be quite as easy a task," said Vesinaud. "You seem to be in good spirits."

"Yes, indeed I am. I am thinking of my wedding. But to be serious, I will tell you all about it, and how I am situated."

Then he explained to Vesinaud and Ragli what he wished to do, and why.

"You are a daring fellow," said they; "but it is no use; you will break your neck." "No one falls, unless he is afraid," said Rudy.

So at midnight they set out, carrying with them poles, ladders, and ropes. The road lay amidst brushwood and underwood, over rolling stones, always upwards higher and higher in the dark night. Waters roared beneath them, or fell in cascades from above. Humid clouds were driving through the air as the hunters reached the precipitous ledge of the rock. It was even darker here, for the sides of the rocks almost met, and the light penetrated only through a small opening at the top. At a little distance from the edge could be heard the sound of the roaring, foaming waters in the yawning abyss beneath them. The three seated themselves on a stone, to await in stillness the dawn of day, when the parent eagle would fly out, as it would be neces-

sary to shoot the old bird before they could think of gaining possession of the young one. Rudy sat motionless, as if he had been part of the stone on which he sat. He held his gun ready to fire, with his eyes fixed steadily on the highest point of the cliff, where the eagle's nest lay concealed beneath the overhanging rock.

The three hunters had a long time to wait. At last they heard a rustling, whirring sound above them, and a large hovering object darkened the air. Two guns were ready to aim at the dark body of the eagle as it rose from the nest. Then a shot was fired; for an instant the bird fluttered its wide-spreading wings, and seemed as if it would fill up the whole of the chasm, and drag down the hunters in its fall. But it was not so; the eagle sunk gradually into the abyss beneath, and the branches of trees and bushes were broken by its weight. Then the hunters roused themselves: three of the longest ladders were brought and bound together; the topmost ring of these ladders would just reach the edge of the rock which hung over the abyss, but no farther. The point beneath which the eagle's nest lay sheltered was much higher, and the sides of the rock were as smooth as a wall. After consulting together, they determined to bind together two more ladders, and to hoist them over the cavity, and so form a communication with the three beneath them, by binding the upper ones to the lower. With great difficulty they contrived to drag the two ladders over the rock, and there they hung for some moments, swaying over the abyss; but no sooner had they fastened them together, than Rudy placed his foot on the lowest step.

It was a bitterly cold morning; clouds of mist were rising from beneath, and Rudy stood on the lower step of the ladder as a fly rests on a piece of swinging straw, which a bird may have dropped from the edge of the nest it was building on some tall factory chimney; but the fly could fly away if the straw were shaken, Rudy could only break his neck. The wind whistled around him, and beneath him the waters of the abyss, swelled by the thawing of the glaciers, those palaces of the Ice Maiden, foamed and roared in their rapid course. When Rudy began to ascend, the ladder trembled like the web of the spider, when it draws out the long, delicate threads; but as soon as he reached the fourth of the ladders, which had been bound together, he felt more confidence,—he knew that they had been fastened securely by skilful hands. The fifth ladder, that appeared to reach the nest, was supported by the sides of the rock, yet it swung to and fro, and flapped about like a slender reed, and as if it had been bound by fishing lines. It seemed a most dangerous undertaking to ascend it, but Rudy knew how to climb; he had learnt that from the cat, and he had no fear. He did not observe

Vertigo, who stood in the air behind him, trying to lay hold of him with his outstretched polypous arms.
When at length he stood on the topmost step of the ladder, he found that he was still some distance below the nest, and not even able to see into it. Only by using his hands and climbing could he possibly reach it. He tried the strength of the stunted trees, and the thick underwood upon which the nest rested, and of which it was formed, and finding they would support his weight, he grasped them firmly, and swung himself up from the ladder till his head and breast were above the nest, and then what an overpowering stench came from it, for in it lay the putrid remains of lambs, chamois, and birds. Vertigo, although he could not reach him, blew the poisonous vapor in his face, to make him giddy and faint; and beneath, in the dark, yawning deep, on the rushing waters, sat the Ice Maiden, with her long, pale, green hair falling around her, and her death-like eyes fixed upon him, like the two barrels of a gun. "I have thee now," she cried.
In a corner of the eagle's nest sat the young eaglet, a large and powerful bird, though still unable to fly. Rudy fixed his eyes upon it, held on by one hand with all his strength, and with the other threw a noose round the young eagle. The string slipped to its legs. Rudy tightened it, and thus secured the bird alive. Then flinging the sling over his shoulder, so that the creature hung a good way down behind him, he prepared to descend with the help of a rope, and his foot soon touched safely the highest step of the ladder. Then Rudy, remembering his early lesson in climbing, "Hold fast, and do not fear," descended carefully down the ladders, and at last stood safely on the ground with the young living eaglet, where he was received with loud shouts of joy and congratulations.

VIII. WHAT FRESH NEWS THE PARLOR-CAT HAD TO TELL

"There is what you asked for," said Rudy, as he entered the miller's house at Bex, and placed on the floor a large basket. He removed the lid as he spoke, and a pair of yellow eyes, encircled by a black ring, stared forth with a wild, fiery glance, that seemed ready to burn and destroy all that came in its way. Its short, strong beak was open, ready to bite, and on its red throat were short feathers, like stubble.
"The young eaglet!" cried the miller.
Babette screamed, and started back, while her eyes wandered from Rudy to the bird in astonishment.
"You are not to be discouraged by difficulties, I see," said the miller.

“And you will keep your word,” replied Rudy. “Each has his own characteristic, whether it is honor or courage.”
“But how is it you did not break your neck?” asked the miller.
“Because I held fast,” answered Rudy; “and I mean to hold fast to Babette.”
“You must get her first,” said the miller, laughing; and Babette thought this a very good sign.
“We must take the bird out of the basket,” said she. “It is getting into a rage; how its eyes glare. How did you manage to conquer it?”
Then Rudy had to describe his adventure, and the miller’s eyes opened wide as he listened.
“With your courage and your good fortune you might win three wives,” said the miller.
“Oh, thank you,” cried Rudy.
“But you have not won Babette yet,” said the miller, slapping the young Alpine hunter on the shoulder playfully.
“Have you heard the fresh news at the mill?” asked the parlor-cat of the kitchen-cat. “Rudy has brought us the young eagle, and he is to take Babette in exchange. They kissed each other in the presence of the old man, which is as good as an engagement. He was quite civil about it; drew in his claws, and took his afternoon nap, so that the two were left to sit and wag their tails as much as they pleased. They have so much to talk about that it will not be finished till Christmas.” Neither was it finished till Christmas. The wind whirled the faded, fallen leaves; the snow drifted in the valleys, as well as upon the mountains, and the Ice Maiden sat in the stately palace which, in winter time, she generally occupied. The perpendicular rocks were covered with slippery ice, and where in summer the stream from the rocks had left a watery veil, icicles large and heavy hung from the trees, while the snow-powdered fir-trees were decorated with fantastic garlands of crystal. The Ice Maiden rode on the howling wind across the deep valleys, the country, as far as Bex, was covered with a carpet of snow, so that the Ice Maiden could follow Rudy, and see him, when he visited the mill; and while in the room at the miller’s house, where he was accustomed to spend so much of his time with Babette. The wedding was to take place in the following summer, and they heard enough of it, for so many of their friends spoke of the matter.
Then came sunshine to the mill. The beautiful Alpine roses bloomed, and joyous, laughing Babette, was like the early spring, which makes all the birds sing of summer time and bridal days.
“How those two do sit and chatter together,” said the parlor-cat; “I have had enough of their mewing.”

IX. THE ICE MAIDEN

The walnut and chestnut trees, which extend from the bridge of St. Maurice, by the river Rhone, to the shores of the lake of Geneva, were already covered with the delicate green garlands of early spring, just bursting into bloom, while the Rhone rushed wildly from its source among the green glaciers which form the ice palace of the Ice Maiden. She sometimes allows herself to be carried by the keen wind to the lofty snow-fields, where she stretches herself in the sunshine on the soft snowy-cushions. From thence she throws her far-seeing glance into the deep valley beneath, where human beings are busily moving about like ants on a stone in the sun. "Spirits of strength, as the children of the sun call you," cried the Ice Maiden, "ye are but worms! Let but a snow-ball roll, and you and your houses and your towns are crushed and swept away." And she raised her proud head, and looked around her with eyes that flashed death from their glance. From the valley came a rumbling sound; men were busily at work blasting the rocks to form tunnels, and laying down roads for the railway. "They are playing at work underground, like moles," said she. "They are digging passages beneath the earth, and the noise is like the reports of cannons. I shall throw down my palaces, for the clamor is louder than the roar of thunder." Then there ascended from the valley a thick vapor, which waved itself in the air like a fluttering veil. It rose, as a plume of feathers, from a steam engine, to which, on the lately-opened railway, a string of carriages was linked, carriage to carriage, looking like a winding serpent. The train shot past with the speed of an arrow. "They play at being masters down there, those spirits of strength!" exclaimed the Ice Maiden; "but the powers of nature are still the rulers." And she laughed and sang till her voice sounded through the valley, and people said it was the rolling of an avalanche. But the children of the sun sang in louder strains in praise of the mind of man, which can span the sea as with a yoke, can level mountains, and fill up valleys. It is the power of thought which gives man the mastery over nature.

Just at this moment there came across the snow-field, where the Ice Maiden sat, a party of travellers. They had bound themselves fast to each other, so that they looked like one large body on the slippery plains of ice encircling the deep abyss.

"Worms!" exclaimed the Ice Maiden. "You, the lords of the powers of nature!" And she turned away and looked maliciously at the deep valley where the railway train was rushing by. "There they sit, these thoughts!" she exclaimed. "There they sit in their power over nature's strength. I see them all.

One sits proudly apart, like a king; others sit together in a group; yonder, half of them are asleep; and when the steam dragon stops, they will get out and go their way. The thoughts go forth into the world," and she laughed.
"There goes another avalanche," said those in the valley beneath.
"It will not reach us," said two who sat together behind the steam dragon.
"Two hearts and one beat," as people say. They were Rudy and Babette, and the miller was with them. "I am like the luggage," said he; "I am here as a necessary appendage."
"There sit those two," said the Ice Maiden. "Many a chamois have I crushed. Millions of Alpine roses have I snapped and broken off; not a root have I spared. I know them all, and their thoughts, those spirits of strength!" and again she laughed.
"There rolls another avalanche," said those in the valley.

X. THE GODMOTHER

At Montreux, one of the towns which encircle the northeast part of the lake of Geneva, lived Babette's godmother, the noble English lady, with her daughters and a young relative. They had only lately arrived, yet the miller had paid them a visit, and informed them of Babette's engagement to Rudy. The whole story of their meeting at Interlachen, and his brave adventure with the eaglet, were related to them, and they were all very much interested, and as pleased about Rudy and Babette as the miller himself. The three were invited to come to Montreux; it was but right for Babette to become acquainted with her godmother, who wished to see her very much. A steamboat started from the town of Villeneuve, at one end of the lake of Geneva, and arrived at Bernex, a little town beyond Montreux, in about half an hour. And in this boat, the miller, with his daughter and Rudy, set out to visit her godmother. They passed the coast which has been so celebrated in song. Here, under the walnut-trees, by the deep blue lake, sat Byron, and wrote his melodious verses about the prisoner confined in the gloomy castle of Chillon. Here, where Clarens, with its weeping-willows, is reflected in the clear water, wandered Rousseau, dreaming of Heloise. The river Rhone glides gently by beneath the lofty snow-capped hills of Savoy, and not far from its mouth lies a little island in the lake, so small that, seen from the shore, it looks like a ship. The surface of the island is rocky; and about a hundred years ago, a lady caused the ground to be covered with earth, in which three acacia-trees were planted, and the whole enclosed with stone walls. The acacia-trees now overshadow every part of the island. Babette

was enchanted with the spot; it seemed to her the most beautiful object in the whole voyage, and she thought how much she should like to land there. But the steam-ship passed it by, and did not stop till it reached Bernex. The little party walked slowly from this place to Montreux, passing the sun-lit walls with which the vineyards of the little mountain town of Montreux are surrounded, and peasants' houses, overshadowed by fig-trees, with gardens in which grow the laurel and the cypress.

Halfway up the hill stood the boarding-house in which Babette's godmother resided. She was received most cordially; her godmother was a very friendly woman, with a round, smiling countenance. When a child, her head must have resembled one of Raphael's cherubs; it was still an angelic face, with its white locks of silvery hair. The daughters were tall, elegant, slender maidens.

The young cousin, whom they had brought with them, was dressed in white from head to foot; he had golden hair and golden whiskers, large enough to be divided amongst three gentlemen; and he began immediately to pay the greatest attention to Babette.

Richly bound books, note-paper, and drawings, lay on the large table. The balcony window stood open, and from it could be seen the beautiful wide extended lake, the water so clear and still, that the mountains of Savoy, with their villages, woods, and snow-crowned peaks, were clearly reflected in it. Rudy, who was usually so lively and brave, did not in the least feel himself at home; he acted as if he were walking on peas, over a slippery floor. How long and wearisome the time appeared; it was like being in a treadmill. And then they went out for a walk, which was very slow and tedious. Two steps forward and one backwards had Rudy to take to keep pace with the others. They walked down to Chillon, and went over the old castle on the rocky island. They saw the implements of torture, the deadly dungeons, the rusty fetters in the rocky walls, the stone benches for those condemned to death, the trap-doors through which the unhappy creatures were hurled upon iron spikes, and impaled alive. They called looking at all these a pleasure. It certainly was the right place to visit. Byron's poetry had made it celebrated in the world. Rudy could only feel that it was a place of execution. He leaned against the stone framework of the window, and gazed down into the deep, blue water, and over to the little island with the three acacias, and wished himself there, away and free from the whole chattering party. But Babette was most unusually lively and good-tempered.

"I have been so amused," she said.

The cousin had found her quite perfect.

"He is a perfect fop," said Rudy; and this was the first time Rudy had said anything that did not please Babette.

The Englishman had made her a present of a little book, in remembrance of their visit to Chillon. It was Byron's poem, "The Prisoner of Chillon," translated into French, so that Babette could read it.
"The book may be very good," said Rudy; "but that finely combed fellow who gave it to you is not worth much."
"He looks something like a flour-sack without any flour," said the miller, laughing at his own wit. Rudy laughed, too, for so had he appeared to him.

XI. THE COUSIN

When Rudy went a few days after to pay a visit to the mill, he found the young Englishman there. Babette was just thinking of preparing some trout to set before him. She understood well how to garnish the dish with parsley, and make it look quite tempting. Rudy thought all this quite unnecessary. What did the Englishman want there? What was he about? Why should he be entertained, and waited upon by Babette? Rudy was jealous, and that made Babette happy. It amused her to discover all the feelings of his heart; the strong points and weak ones. Love was to her as yet only a pastime, and she played with Rudy's whole heart. At the same time it must be acknowledged that her fortune, her whole life, her inmost thoughts, her best and most noble feelings in this world were all for him. Still the more gloomy he looked, the more her eyes laughed. She could almost have kissed the fair Englishman, with the golden whiskers, if by so doing she could have put Rudy in a rage, and made him run out of the house. That would have proved how much he loved her. All this was not right in Babette, but she was only nineteen years of age, and she did not reflect on what she did, neither did she think that her conduct would appear to the young Englishman as light, and not even becoming the modest and much-loved daughter of the miller. The mill at Bex stood in the highway, which passed under the snow-clad mountains, and not far from a rapid mountain-stream, whose waters seemed to have been lashed into a foam like soap-suds. This stream, however, did not pass near enough to the mill, and therefore the mill-wheel was turned by a smaller stream which tumbled down the rocks on the opposite side, where it was opposed by a stone mill-dam, and obtained greater strength and speed, till it fell into a large basin, and from thence through a channel to the mill-wheel. This channel sometimes overflowed, and made the path so slippery that any one passing that way might easily fall in, and be carried towards the mill wheel with frightful rapidity. Such a catastrophe nearly happened to the young Englishman. He had dressed himself in

white clothes, like a miller's man, and was climbing the path to the miller's house, but he had never been taught to climb, and therefore slipped, and nearly went in head-foremost. He managed, however, to scramble out with wet sleeves and bespattered trousers. Still, wet and splashed with mud, he contrived to reach Babette's window, to which he had been guided by the light that shone from it. Here he climbed the old linden-tree that stood near it, and began to imitate the voice of an owl, the only bird he could venture to mimic. Babette heard the noise, and glanced through the thin window curtain; but when she saw the man in white, and guessed who he was, her little heart beat with terror as well as anger. She quickly put out the light, felt if the fastening of the window was secure, and then left him to howl as long as he liked. How dreadful it would be, thought Babette, if Rudy were here in the house. But Rudy was not in the house. No, it was much worse, he was outside, standing just under the linden-tree. He was speaking loud, angry words. He could fight, and there might be murder! Babette opened the window in alarm, and called Rudy's name; she told him to go away, she did not wish him to remain there.

"You do not wish me to stay," cried he; "then this is an appointment you expected—this good friend whom you prefer to me. Shame on you, Babette!"

"You are detestable!" exclaimed Babette, bursting into tears. "Go away. I hate you."

"I have not deserved this," said Rudy, as he turned away, his cheeks burning, and his heart like fire.

Babette threw herself on the bed, and wept bitterly. "So much as I loved thee, Rudy, and yet thou canst think ill of me."

Thus her anger broke forth; it relieved her, however: otherwise she would have been more deeply grieved; but now she could sleep soundly, as youth only can sleep.

XII. EVIL POWERS

Rudy left Bex, and took his way home along the mountain path. The air was fresh, but cold; for here amidst the deep snow, the Ice Maiden reigned. He was so high up that the large trees beneath him, with their thick foliage, appeared like garden plants, and the pines and bushes even less. The Alpine roses grew near the snow, which lay in detached stripes, and looked like linen laid out to bleach. A blue gentian grew in his path, and he crushed it with the butt end of his gun. A little higher up, he espied two chamois. Rudy's eyes glistened, and his thoughts flew at once in a different direction;

but he was not near enough to take a sure aim. He ascended still higher, to a spot where a few rough blades of grass grew between the blocks of stone and the chamois passed quietly on over the snow-fields. Rudy walked hurriedly, while the clouds of mist gathered round him. Suddenly he found himself on the brink of a precipitous rock. The rain was falling in torrents. He felt a burning thirst, his head was hot, and his limbs trembled with cold. He seized his hunting-flask, but it was empty; he had not thought of filling it before ascending the mountain. He had never been ill in his life, nor ever experienced such sensations as those he now felt. He was so tired that he could scarcely resist lying down at his full length to sleep, although the ground was flooded with the rain. Yet when he tried to rouse himself a little, every object around him danced and trembled before his eyes.

Suddenly he observed in the doorway of a hut newly built under the rock, a young maiden. He did not remember having seen this hut before, yet there it stood; and he thought, at first, that the young maiden was Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter, whom he had once kissed in the dance. The maiden was not Annette; yet it seemed as if he had seen her somewhere before, perhaps near Grindelwald, on the evening of his return home from Interlachen, after the shooting-match.

"How did you come here?" he asked.

"I am at home," she replied; "I am watching my flocks."

"Your flocks!" he exclaimed; "where do they find pasture? There is nothing here but snow and rocks."

"Much you know of what grows here," she replied, laughing. "Not far beneath us there is beautiful pasture-land. My goats go there. I tend them carefully; I never miss one. What is once mine remains mine."

"You are bold," said Rudy.

"And so are you," she answered.

"Have you any milk in the house?" he asked; "if so, give me some to drink; my thirst is intolerable."

"I have something better than milk," she replied, "which I will give you. Some travellers who were here yesterday with their guide left behind them a half a flask of wine, such as you have never tasted. They will not come back to fetch it, I know, and I shall not drink it; so you shall have it."

Then the maiden went to fetch the wine, poured some into a wooden cup, and offered it to Rudy.

"How good it is!" said he; "I have never before tasted such warm, invigorating wine." And his eyes sparkled with new life; a glow diffused itself over his frame; it seemed as if every sorrow, every oppression were banished from

his mind, and a fresh, free nature were stirring within him. “You are surely Annette, the schoolmaster’s daughter,” cried he; “will you give me a kiss?”
“Yes, if you will give me that beautiful ring which you wear on your finger.”
“My betrothal ring?” he replied.
“Yes, just so,” said the maiden, as she poured out some more wine, and held it to his lips. Again he drank, and a living joy streamed through every vein.
“The whole world is mine, why therefore should I grieve?” thought he. “Everything is created for our enjoyment and happiness. The stream of life is a stream of happiness; let us flow on with it to joy and felicity.”
Rudy gazed on the young maiden; it was Annette, and yet it was not Annette; still less did he suppose it was the spectral phantom, whom he had met near Grindelwald. The maiden up here on the mountain was fresh as the new fallen snow, blooming as an Alpine rose, and as nimble-footed as a young kid. Still, she was one of Adam’s race, like Rudy. He flung his arms round the beautiful being, and gazed into her wonderfully clear eyes,—only for a moment; but in that moment words cannot express the effect of his gaze. Was it the spirit of life or of death that overpowered him? Was he rising higher, or sinking lower and lower into the deep, deadly abyss? He knew not; but the walls of ice shone like blue-green glass; innumerable clefts yawned around him, and the water-drops tinkled like the chiming of church bells, and shone clearly as pearls in the light of a pale-blue flame. The Ice Maiden, for she it was, kissed him, and her kiss sent a chill as of ice through his whole frame. A cry of agony escaped from him; he struggled to get free, and tottered from her. For a moment all was dark before his eyes, but when he opened them again it was light, and the Alpine maiden had vanished. The powers of evil had played their game; the sheltering hut was no more to be seen. The water trickled down the naked sides of the rocks, and snow lay thickly all around. Rudy shivered with cold; he was wet through to the skin; and his ring was gone,—the betrothal ring that Babette had given him. His gun lay near him in the snow; he took it up and tried to discharge it, but it missed fire. Heavy clouds lay on the mountain clefts, like firm masses of snow. Upon one of these Vertigo sat, lurking after his powerless prey, and from beneath came a sound as if a piece of rock had fallen from the cleft, and was crushing everything that stood in its way or opposed its course.
But, at the miller’s, Babette sat alone and wept. Rudy had not been to see her for six days. He who was in the wrong, and who ought to ask her forgiveness; for did she not love him with her whole heart?

XIII. AT THE MILL

"What strange creatures human beings are," said the parlor-cat to the kitchen-cat; "Babette and Rudy have fallen out with each other. She sits and cries, and he thinks no more about her."

"That does not please me to hear," said the kitchen-cat.

"Nor me either," replied the parlor-cat; "but I do not take it to heart. Babette may fall in love with the red whiskers, if she likes, but he has not been here since he tried to get on the roof."

The powers of evil carry on their game both around us and within us. Rudy knew this, and thought a great deal about it. What was it that had happened to him on the mountain? Was it really a ghostly apparition, or a fever dream? Rudy knew nothing of fever, or any other ailment. But, while he judged Babette, he began to examine his own conduct. He had allowed wild thoughts to chase each other in his heart, and a fierce tornado to break loose. Could he confess to Babette, indeed, every thought which in the hour of temptation might have led him to wrong doing? He had lost her ring, and that very loss had won him back to her. Could she expect him to confess? He felt as if his heart would break while he thought of it, and while so many memories lingered on his mind. He saw her again, as she once stood before him, a laughing, spirited child; many loving words, which she had spoken to him out of the fulness of her love, came like a ray of sunshine into his heart, and soon it was all sunshine as he thought of Babette. But she must also confess she was wrong; that she should do.

He went to the mill—he went to confession. It began with a kiss, and ended with Rudy being considered the offender. It was such a great fault to doubt Babette's truth—it was most abominable of him. Such mistrust, such violence, would cause them both great unhappiness. This certainly was very true, she knew that; and therefore Babette preached him a little sermon, with which she was herself much amused, and during the preaching of which she looked quite lovely. She acknowledged, however, that on one point Rudy was right. Her godmother's nephew was a fop: she intended to burn the book which he had given her, so that not the slightest thing should remain to remind her of him.

"Well, that quarrel is all over," said the kitchen-cat. "Rudy is come back, and they are friends again, which they say is the greatest of all pleasures."

"I heard the rats say one night," said the kitchen-cat, "that the greatest pleasure in the world was to eat tallow candles and to feast on rancid bacon. Which are we to believe, the rats or the lovers?"

"Neither of them," said the parlor-cat; "it is always the safest plan to believe nothing you hear."

The greatest happiness was coming for Rudy and Babette. The happy day, as it is called, that is, their wedding-day, was near at hand. They were not to be married at the church at Bex, nor at the miller's house; Babette's godmother wished the nuptials to be solemnized at Montreux, in the pretty little church in that town. The miller was very anxious that this arrangement should be agreed to. He alone knew what the newly-married couple would receive from Babette's godmother, and he knew also that it was a wedding present well worth a concession. The day was fixed, and they were to travel as far as Villeneuve the evening before, to be in time for the steamer which sailed in the morning for Montreux, and the godmother's daughters were to dress and adorn the bride.

"Here in this house there ought to be a wedding-day kept," said the parlor-cat, "or else I would not give a mew for the whole affair."

"There is going to be great feasting," replied the kitchen-cat. "Ducks and pigeons have been killed, and a whole roebuck hangs on the wall. It makes me lick my lips when I think of it."

"To-morrow morning they will begin the journey."

Yes, to-morrow! And this evening, for the last time, Rudy and Babette sat in the miller's house as an engaged couple. Outside, the Alps glowed in the evening sunset, the evening bells chimed, and the children of the sunbeam sang, "Whatever happens is best."

XIV. NIGHT VISIONS

The sun had gone down, and the clouds lay low on the valley of the Rhone. The wind blew from the south across the mountains; it was an African wind, a wind which scattered the clouds for a moment, and then suddenly fell. The broken clouds hung in fantastic forms upon the wood-covered hills by the rapid Rhone. They assumed the shapes of antediluvian animals, of eagles hovering in the air, of frogs leaping over a marsh, and then sunk down upon the rushing stream and appeared to sail upon it, although floating in the air. An uprooted fir-tree was being carried away by the current, and marking out its path by eddying circles on the water. Vertigo and his sisters were dancing upon it, and raising these circles on the foaming river. The moon lighted up the snow on the mountain-tops, shone on the dark woods, and on the drifting clouds those fantastic forms which at night might be taken for spirits of the powers of nature. The mountain-dweller saw them through the panes of his little window. They sailed in hosts before the Ice Maiden as she came out of her palace of ice. Then she seated

herself on the trunk of the fir-tree as on a broken skiff, and the water from the glaciers carried her down the river to the open lake.

"The wedding guests are coming," sounded from air and sea. These were the sights and sounds without; within there were visions, for Babette had a wonderful dream. She dreamt that she had been married to Rudy for many years, and that, one day when he was out chamois hunting, and she alone in their dwelling at home, the young Englishman with the golden whiskers sat with her. His eyes were quite eloquent, and his words possessed a magic power; he offered her his hand, and she was obliged to follow him. They went out of the house and stepped downwards, always downwards, and it seemed to Babette as if she had a weight on her heart which continually grew heavier. She felt she was committing a sin against Rudy, a sin against God. Suddenly she found herself forsaken, her clothes torn by the thorns, and her hair gray; she looked upwards in her agony, and there, on the edge of the rock, she espied Rudy. She stretched out her arms to him, but she did not venture to call him or to pray; and had she called him, it would have been useless, for it was not Rudy, only his hunting coat and hat hanging on an alpenstock, as the hunters sometimes arrange them to deceive the chamois. "Oh!" she exclaimed in her agony; "oh, that I had died on the happiest day of my life, my wedding-day. O my God, it would have been a mercy and a blessing had Rudy travelled far away from me, and I had never known him. None know what will happen in the future." And then, in ungodly despair, she cast herself down into the deep rocky gulf. The spell was broken; a cry of terror escaped her, and she awoke.

The dream was over; it had vanished. But she knew she had dreamt something frightful about the young Englishman, yet months had passed since she had seen him or even thought of him. Was he still at Montreux, and should she meet him there on her wedding day? A slight shadow passed over her pretty mouth as she thought of this, and she knit her brows; but the smile soon returned to her lip, and joy sparkled in her eyes, for this was the morning of the day on which she and Rudy were to be married, and the sun was shining brightly. Rudy was already in the parlor when she entered it, and they very soon started for Villeneuve. Both of them were overflowing with happiness, and the miller was in the best of tempers, laughing and merry; he was a good, honest soul, and a kind father.

"Now we are masters of the house," said the parlor-cat.

XV. THE CONCLUSION

It was early in the afternoon, and just at dinner-time, when the three joyous travellers reached Villeneuve. After dinner, the miller placed himself in the arm-chair, smoked his pipe, and had a little nap. The bridal pair went arm-in-arm out through the town and along the high road, at the foot of the wood-covered rocks, and by the deep, blue lake.

The gray walls, and the heavy clumsy-looking towers of the gloomy castle of Chillon, were reflected in the clear flood. The little island, on which grew the three acacias, lay at a short distance, looking like a bouquet rising from the lake. "How delightful it must be to live there," said Babette, who again felt the greatest wish to visit the island; and an opportunity offered to gratify her wish at once, for on the shore lay a boat, and the rope by which it was moored could be very easily loosened. They saw no one near, so they took possession of it without asking permission of any one, and Rudy could row very well. The oars divided the pliant water like the fins of a fish—that water which, with all its yielding softness, is so strong to bear and to carry, so mild and smiling when at rest, and yet so terrible in its destroying power. A white streak of foam followed in the wake of the boat, which, in a few minutes, carried them both to the little island, where they went on shore; but there was only just room enough for two to dance. Rudy swung Babette round two or three times; and then, hand-in-hand, they sat down on a little bench under the drooping acacia-tree, and looked into each other's eyes, while everything around them glowed in the rays of the setting sun.

The fir-tree forests on the mountains were covered with a purple hue like the heather bloom; and where the woods terminated, and the rocks became prominent, they looked almost transparent in the rich crimson glow of the evening sky. The surface of the lake was like a bed of pink rose-leaves.

As the evening advanced, the shadows fell upon the snow-capped mountains of Savoy painting them in colors of deep blue, while their topmost peaks glowed like red lava; and for a moment this light was reflected on the cultivated parts of the mountains, making them appear as if newly risen from the lap of earth, and giving to the snow-crested peak of the Dent du Midi the appearance of the full moon as it rises above the horizon.

Rudy and Babette felt that they had never seen the Alpine glow in such perfection before. "How very beautiful it is, and what happiness to be here!" exclaimed Babette.

"Earth has nothing more to bestow upon me," said Rudy; "an evening like this is worth a whole life. Often have I realized my good fortune, but never

more than in this moment. I feel that if my existence were to end now, I should still have lived a happy life. What a glorious world this is; one day ends, and another begins even more beautiful than the last. How infinitely good God is, Babette!"

"I have such complete happiness in my heart," said she.

"Earth has no more to bestow," answered Rudy. And then came the sound of the evening bells, borne upon the breeze over the mountains of Switzerland and Savoy, while still, in the golden splendor of the west, stood the dark blue mountains of Jura.

"God grant you all that is brightest and best!" exclaimed Babette.

"He will," said Rudy. "He will to-morrow. To-morrow you will be wholly mine, my own sweet wife."

"The boat!" cried Babette, suddenly. The boat in which they were to return had broken loose, and was floating away from the island.

"I will fetch it back," said Rudy; throwing off his coat and boots, he sprang into the lake, and swam with strong efforts towards it.

The dark-blue water, from the glaciers of the mountains, was icy cold and very deep. Rudy gave but one glance into the water beneath; but in that one glance he saw a gold ring rolling, glittering, and sparkling before him. His engaged ring came into his mind; but this was larger, and spread into a glittering circle, in which appeared a clear glacier. Deep chasms yawned around it, the water-drops glittered as if lighted with blue flame, and tinkled like the chiming of church bells. In one moment he saw what would require many words to describe. Young hunters, and young maidens—men and women who had sunk in the deep chasms of the glaciers—stood before him here in lifelike forms, with eyes open and smiles on their lips; and far beneath them could be heard the chiming of the church bells of buried villages, where the villagers knelt beneath the vaulted arches of churches in which ice-blocks formed the organ pipes, and the mountain stream the music.

On the clear, transparent ground sat the Ice Maiden. She raised herself towards Rudy, and kissed his feet; and instantly a cold, deathly chill, like an electric shock, passed through his limbs. Ice or fire! It was impossible to tell, the shock was so instantaneous.

"Mine! mine!" sounded around him, and within him; "I kissed thee when thou wert a little child. I once kissed thee on the mouth, and now I have kissed thee from heel to toe; thou art wholly mine." And then he disappeared in the clear, blue water.

All was still. The church bells were silent; the last tone floated away with the last red glimmer on the evening clouds. "Thou art mine," sounded from

the depths below: but from the heights above, from the eternal world, also sounded the words, "Thou art mine!" Happy was he thus to pass from life to life, from earth to heaven. A chord was loosened, and tones of sorrow burst forth. The icy kiss of death had overcome the perishable body; it was but the prelude before life's real drama could begin, the discord which was quickly lost in harmony. Do you think this a sad story? Poor Babette! for her it was unspeakable anguish.

The boat drifted farther and farther away. No one on the opposite shore knew that the betrothed pair had gone over to the little island. The clouds sunk as the evening drew on, and it became dark. Alone, in despair, she waited and trembled. The weather became fearful; flash after flash lighted up the mountains of Jura, Savoy, and Switzerland, while peals of thunder, that lasted for many minutes, rolled over her head. The lightning was so vivid that every single vine stem could be seen for a moment as distinctly as in the sunlight at noon-day; and then all was veiled in darkness. It flashed across the lake in winding, zigzag lines, lighting it up on all sides; while the echoes of the thunder grew louder and stronger. On land, the boats were all carefully drawn up on the beach, every living thing sought shelter, and at length the rain poured down in torrents.

"Where can Rudy and Babette be in this awful weather?" said the miller.

Poor Babette sat with her hands clasped, and her head bowed down, dumb with grief; she had ceased to weep and cry for help.

"In the deep water!" she said to herself; "far down he lies, as if beneath a glacier."

Deep in her heart rested the memory of what Rudy had told her of the death of his mother, and of his own recovery, even after he had been taken up as dead from the cleft in the glacier.

"Ah," she thought, "the Ice Maiden has him at last."

Suddenly there came a flash of lightning, as dazzling as the rays of the sun on the white snow. The lake rose for a moment like a shining glacier; and before Babette stood the pallid, glittering, majestic form of the Ice Maiden, and at her feet lay Rudy's corpse.

"Mine!" she cried, and again all was darkness around the heaving water.

"How cruel," murmured Babette; "why should he die just as the day of happiness drew near? Merciful God, enlighten my understanding, shed light upon my heart; for I cannot comprehend the arrangements of Thy providence, even while I bow to the decree of Thy almighty wisdom and power."

And God did enlighten her heart.

A sudden flash of thought, like a ray of mercy, recalled her dream of the

preceding night; all was vividly represented before her. She remembered the words and wishes she had then expressed, that what was best for her and for Rudy she might piously submit to.

"Woe is me," she said; "was the germ of sin really in my heart? was my dream a glimpse into the course of my future life, whose thread must be violently broken to rescue me from sin? Oh, miserable creature that I am!"

Thus she sat lamenting in the dark night, while through the deep stillness the last words of Rudy seemed to ring in her ears. "This earth has nothing more to bestow." Words, uttered in the fulness of joy, were again heard amid the depths of sorrow.

Years have passed since this sad event happened. The shores of the peaceful lake still smile in beauty. The vines are full of luscious grapes. Steamboats, with waving flags, pass swiftly by. Pleasure-boats, with their swelling sails, skim lightly over the watery mirror, like white butterflies. The railway is opened beyond Chillon, and goes far into the deep valley of the Rhone. At every station strangers alight with red-bound guide-books in their hands, in which they read of every place worth seeing. They visit Chillon, and observe on the lake the little island with the three acacias, and then read in their guide-book the story of the bridal pair who, in the year 1856, rowed over to it. They read that the two were missing till the next morning, when some people on the shore heard the despairing cries of the bride, and went to her assistance, and by her were told of the bridegroom's fate.

But the guide-book does not speak of Babette's quiet life afterwards with her father, not at the mill—strangers dwell there now—but in a pretty house in a row near the station. On many an evening she sits at her window, and looks out over the chestnut-trees to the snow-capped mountains on which Rudy once roamed. She looks at the Alpine glow in the evening sky, which is caused by the children of the sun retiring to rest on the mountain-tops; and again they breathe their song of the traveller whom the whirlwind could deprive of his cloak but not of his life. There is a rosy tint on the mountain snow, and there are rosy gleams in each heart in which dwells the thought, "God permits nothing to happen, which is not the best for us." But this is not often revealed to all, as it was revealed to Babette in her wonderful dream.

THE JEWISH MAIDEN

In a charity school, among the children, sat a little Jewish girl. She was a good, intelligent child, and very quick at her lessons; but the Scripture-lesson class she was not allowed to join, for this was a Christian school. During the hour of this lesson, the Jewish girl was allowed to learn her geography, or to work her sum for the next day; and when her geography lesson was perfect, the book remained open before her, but she read not another word, for she sat silently listening to the words of the Christian teacher. He soon became aware that the little one was paying more attention to what he said than most of the other children. "Read your book, Sarah," he said to her gently.

But again and again he saw her dark, beaming eyes fixed upon him; and once, when he asked her a question, she could answer him even better than the other children. She had not only heard, but understood his words, and pondered them in her heart. Her father, a poor but honest man, had placed his daughter at the school on the conditions that she should not be instructed in the Christian faith. But it might have caused confusion, or raised discontent in the minds of the other children if she had been sent out of the room, so she remained; and now it was evident this could not go on. The teacher went to her father, and advised him to remove his daughter from the school, or to allow her to become a Christian. "I cannot any longer be an idle spectator of those beaming eyes, which express such a deep and earnest longing for the words of the gospel," said he.

Then the father burst into tears. "I know very little of the law of my fathers," said he; "but Sarah's mother was firm in her belief as a daughter of Israel, and I vowed to her on her deathbed that our child should never be baptized. I must keep my vow: it is to me even as a covenant with God Himself." And so the little Jewish girl left the Christian school.

Years rolled by. In one of the smallest provincial towns, in a humble household, lived a poor maiden of the Jewish faith, as a servant. Her hair was black as ebony, her eye dark as night, yet full of light and brilliancy so peculiar to the daughters of the east. It was Sarah. The expression in the face of the grown-up maiden was still the same as when, a child, she sat on the schoolroom form listening with thoughtful eyes to the words of the Christian teacher. Every Sunday there sounded forth from a church close by the tones of an organ and the singing of the congregation. The Jewish girl heard them in the house where, industrious and faithful in all things, she performed her household duties. "Thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy," said the voice of the law in her heart; but her Sabbath was a working day among the Christians, which was a great trouble to her. And then as the thought arose in her mind,

"Does God reckon by days and hours?" her conscience felt satisfied on this question, and she found it a comfort to her, that on the Christian Sabbath she could have an hour for her own prayers undisturbed. The music and singing of the congregation sounded in her ears while at work in her kitchen, till the place itself became sacred to her. Then she would read in the Old Testament, that treasure and comfort to her people, and it was indeed the only Scriptures she could read. Faithfully in her inmost thoughts had she kept the words of her father to her teacher when she left the school, and the vow he had made to her dying mother that she should never receive Christian baptism. The New Testament must remain to her a sealed book, and yet she knew a great deal of its teaching, and the sound of the gospel truths still lingered among the recollections of her childhood.

One evening she was sitting in a corner of the dining-room, while her master read aloud. It was not the gospel he read, but an old story-book; therefore she might stay and listen to him. The story related that a Hungarian knight, who had been taken prisoner by a Turkish pasha, was most cruelly treated by him. He caused him to be yoked with his oxen to the plough, and driven with blows from the whip till the blood flowed, and he almost sunk with exhaustion and pain. The faithful wife of the knight at home gave up all her jewels, mortgaged her castle and land, and his friends raised large sums to make up the ransom demanded for his release, which was most enormously high. It was collected at last, and the knight released from slavery and misery. Sick and exhausted, he reached home.

Ere long came another summons to a struggle with the foes of Christianity. The still living knight heard the sound; he could endure no more, he had neither peace nor rest. He caused himself to be lifted on his war-horse; the color came into his cheeks, and his strength returned to him again as he went forth to battle and to victory. The very same pasha who had yoked him to the plough, became his prisoner, and was dragged to a dungeon in the castle. But an hour had scarcely passed, when the knight stood before the captive pasha, and inquired, "What do you suppose awaiteth thee?"

"I know," replied the pasha; "retribution."

"Yes, the retribution of a Christian," replied the knight. "The teaching of Christ, the Teacher, commands us to forgive our enemies, to love our neighbors; for God is love. Depart in peace: return to thy home. I give thee back to thy loved ones. But in future be mild and humane to all who are in trouble."

Then the prisoner burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh how could I imagine such mercy and forgiveness! I expected pain and torment. It seemed to me so sure that I took poison, which I secretly carried about me; and in a few

hours its effects will destroy me. I must die! Nothing can save me! But before I die, explain to me the teaching which is so full of love and mercy, so great and God-like. Oh, that I may hear his teaching, and die a Christian!" And his prayer was granted.

This was the legend which the master read out of the old story-book. Every one in the house who was present listened, and shared the pleasure; but Sarah, the Jewish girl, sitting so still in a corner, felt her heart burn with excitement. Great tears came into her shining dark eyes; and with the same gentle piety with which she had once listened to the gospel while sitting on the form at school, she felt its grandeur now, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then the last words of her dying mother rose before her, "Let not my child become a Christian;" and with them sounded in her heart the words of the law, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

"I am not admitted among the Christians," she said; "they mock me as a Jewish girl; the neighbors' boys did so last Sunday when I stood looking in through the open church door at the candles burning on the altar, and listening to the singing. Ever since I sat on the school-bench I have felt the power of Christianity; a power which, like a sunbeam, streams into my heart, however closely I may close my eyes against it. But I will not grieve thee, my mother, in thy grave. I will not be unfaithful to my father's vow. I will not read the Bible of the Christian. I have the God of my fathers, and in Him I will trust."

And again years passed by. Sarah's master died, and his widow found herself in such reduced circumstances that she wished to dismiss her servant maid; but Sarah refused to leave the house, and she became a true support in time of trouble, and kept the household together by working till late at night, with her busy hands, to earn their daily bread. Not a relative came forward to assist them, and the widow was confined to a sick bed for months and grew weaker from day to day. Sarah worked hard, but contrived to spare time to amuse her and watch by the sick bed. She was gentle and pious, an angel of blessing in that house of poverty.

"My Bible lies on the table yonder," said the sick woman one day to Sarah. "Read me something from it; the night appears so long, and my spirit thirsts to hear the word of God."

And Sarah bowed her head. She took the book, and folded her hand over the Bible of the Christians, and at last opened it, and read to the sick woman. Tears stood in her eyes as she read, and they shone with brightness, for in her heart it was light.

"Mother," she murmured, "thy child may not receive Christian baptism,

nor be admitted into the congregation of Christian people. Thou hast so willed it, and I will respect thy command. We are therefore still united here on earth; but in the next world there will be a higher union, even with God Himself, who leads and guides His people till death. He came down from heaven to earth to suffer for us, that we should bring forth the fruits of repentance. I understand it now. I know not how I learnt this truth, unless it is through the name of Christ." Yet she trembled as she pronounced the holy name. She struggled against these convictions of the truth of Christianity for some days, till one evening while watching her mistress she was suddenly taken very ill; her limbs tottered under her, and she sank fainting by the bedside of the sick woman.

"Poor Sarah," said the neighbors; "she is overcome with hard work and night watching." And then they carried her to the hospital for the sick poor. There she died; and they bore her to her resting-place in the earth, but not to the churchyard of the Christians. There was no place for the Jewish girl; but they dug a grave for her outside the wall. And God's sun, which shines upon the graves of the churchyard of the Christians, also throws its beams on the grave of the Jewish maiden beyond the wall. And when the psalms of the Christians sound across the churchyard, their echo reaches her lonely resting-place; and she who sleeps there will be counted worthy at the resurrection, through the name of Christ the Lord, who said to His disciples, "John baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

THE JUMPER

The Flea, the Grasshopper, and the Skipjack once wanted to see which of them could jump highest; and they invited the whole world, and whoever else would come, to see the grand sight. And there the three famous jumpers were met together in the room.

"Yes, I'll give my daughter to him who jumps highest," said the King, "for it would be mean to let these people jump for nothing."

The Flea stepped out first. He had very pretty manners, and bowed in all directions, for he had young ladies' blood in his veins, and was accustomed to consort only with human beings; and that was of great consequence.

Then came the Grasshopper: he was certainly much heavier, but he had a good figure, and wore the green uniform that was born with him. This person, moreover, maintained that he belonged to a very old family in the land of Egypt, and that he was highly esteemed there. He had just come from

the field, he said, and had been put into a card house three stories high, and all made of picture cards with the figures turned inwards. There were doors and windows in the house, cut in the body of the Queen of Hearts.

"I sing so," he said, "that sixteen native crickets who have chirped from their youth up, and have never yet had a card house of their own, would become thinner than they are with envy if they were to hear me."

Both of them, the Flea and the Grasshopper, took care to announce who they were, and that they considered themselves entitled to marry a Princess. The Skipjack said nothing, but it was said of him that he thought all the more; and directly the Yard Dog had smelt at him he was ready to assert that the Skipjack was of good family, and formed from the breastbone of an undoubted goose. The old councillor, who had received three medals for holding his tongue, declared that the Skipjack possessed the gift of prophecy; one could tell by his bones whether there would be a severe winter or a mild one; and that's more than one can always tell from the breastbone of the man who writes the almanac.

"I shall not say anything more," said the old King. "I only go on quietly, and always think the best."

Now they were to take their jump. The Flea sprang so high that no one could see him; and then they asserted that he had not jumped at all. That was very mean. The Grasshopper only sprang half as high, but he sprang straight into the King's face, and the King declared that was horribly rude. The Skipjack stood a long time considering; at last people thought that he could not jump at all.

"I only hope he's not become unwell," said the Yard Dog, and then he smelt at him again.

"Tap!" he sprang with a little crooked jump just into the lap of the Princess, who sat on a low golden stool.

Then the King said, "The highest leap was taken by him who jumped up to my daughter; for therein lies the point; but it requires head to achieve that, and the Skipjack has shown that he has a head."

And so he had the Princess.

"I jumped highest, after all," said the Flea. "But it's all the same. Let her have the goose-bone with its lump of wax and bit of stick. I jumped to the highest; but in this world a body is required if one wishes to be seen."

And the Flea went into foreign military service, where it is said he was killed. The Grasshopper seated himself out in the ditch, and thought and considered how things happened in the world. And he too said, "Body is required! body is required!" And then he sang his own melancholy song, and from that we have gathered this story, which they say is not true, though it's in print.

THE LAST DREAM OF THE OLD OAK

In the forest, high up on the steep shore, and not far from the open seacoast, stood a very old oak-tree. It was just three hundred and sixty-five years old, but that long time was to the tree as the same number of days might be to us; we wake by day and sleep by night, and then we have our dreams. It is different with the tree; it is obliged to keep awake through three seasons of the year, and does not get any sleep till winter comes. Winter is its time for rest; its night after the long day of spring, summer, and autumn. On many a warm summer, the Ephemera, the flies that exist for only a day, had fluttered about the old oak, enjoyed life and felt happy and if, for a moment, one of the tiny creatures rested on one of his large fresh leaves, the tree would always say, "Poor little creature! your whole life consists only of a single day. How very short. It must be quite melancholy."

"Melancholy! what do you mean?" the little creature would always reply. "Everything around me is so wonderfully bright and warm, and beautiful, that it makes me joyous."

"But only for one day, and then it is all over."

"Over!" repeated the fly; "what is the meaning of all over? Are you all over too?"

"No; I shall very likely live for thousands of your days, and my day is whole seasons long; indeed it is so long that you could never reckon it out."

"No? then I don't understand you. You may have thousands of my days, but I have thousands of moments in which I can be merry and happy. Does all the beauty of the world cease when you die?"

"No," replied the tree; "it will certainly last much longer,—infinitely longer than I can even think of."

"Well, then," said the little fly, "we have the same time to live; only we reckon differently." And the little creature danced and floated in the air, rejoicing in her delicate wings of gauze and velvet, rejoicing in the balmy breezes, laden with the fragrance of clover-fields and wild roses, elder-blossoms and honeysuckle, from the garden hedges, wild thyme, primroses, and mint, and the scent of all these was so strong that the perfume almost intoxicated the little fly. The long and beautiful day had been so full of joy and sweet delights, that when the sun sank low it felt tired of all its happiness and enjoyment. Its wings could sustain it no longer, and gently and slowly it glided down upon the soft waving blades of grass, nodded its little head as well as it could nod, and slept peacefully and sweetly. The fly was dead.

“Poor little Ephemera!” said the oak; “what a terribly short life!” And so, on every summer day the dance was repeated, the same questions asked, and the same answers given. The same thing was continued through many generations of Ephemera; all of them felt equally merry and equally happy.

The oak remained awake through the morning of spring, the noon of summer, and the evening of autumn; its time of rest, its night drew nigh—winter was coming. Already the storms were singing, “Good-night, good-night.” Here fell a leaf and there fell a leaf. “We will rock you and lull you. Go to sleep, go to sleep. We will sing you to sleep, and shake you to sleep, and it will do your old twigs good; they will even crackle with pleasure. Sleep sweetly, sleep sweetly, it is your three-hundred-and-sixty-fifth night. Correctly speaking, you are but a youngster in the world. Sleep sweetly, the clouds will drop snow upon you, which will be quite a cover-lid, warm and sheltering to your feet. Sweet sleep to you, and pleasant dreams.” And there stood the oak, stripped of all its leaves, left to rest during the whole of a long winter, and to dream many dreams of events that had happened in its life, as in the dreams of men. The great tree had once been small; indeed, in its cradle it had been an acorn. According to human computation, it was now in the fourth century of its existence. It was the largest and best tree in the forest. Its summit towered above all the other trees, and could be seen far out at sea, so that it served as a landmark to the sailors. It had no idea how many eyes looked eagerly for it. In its topmost branches the wood-pigeon built her nest, and the cuckoo carried out his usual vocal performances, and his well-known notes echoed amid the boughs; and in autumn, when the leaves looked like beaten copper plates, the birds of passage would come and rest upon the branches before taking their flight across the sea. But now it was winter, the tree stood leafless, so that every one could see how crooked and bent were the branches that sprang forth from the trunk. Crows and rooks came by turns and sat on them, and talked of the hard times which were beginning, and how difficult it was in winter to obtain food.

It was just about holy Christmas time that the tree dreamed a dream. The tree had, doubtless, a kind of feeling that the festive time had arrived, and in his dream fancied he heard the bells ringing from all the churches round, and yet it seemed to him to be a beautiful summer’s day, mild and warm. His mighty summits was crowned with spreading fresh green foliage; the sunbeams played among the leaves and branches, and the air was full of fragrance from herb and blossom; painted butterflies chased each other; the summer flies danced around him, as if the world had been created merely for them to dance and be merry in. All that had happened to the tree during every year of his life seemed to pass before him, as in a festive procession.

He saw the knights of olden times and noble ladies ride by through the wood on their gallant steeds, with plumes waving in their hats, and falcons on their wrists. The hunting horn sounded, and the dogs barked. He saw hostile warriors, in colored dresses and glittering armor, with spear and halberd, pitching their tents, and anon striking them. The watchfires again blazed, and men sang and slept under the hospitable shelter of the tree. He saw lovers meet in quiet happiness near him in the moonshine, and carve the initials of their names in the grayish-green bark on his trunk. Once, but long years had intervened since then, guitars and Eolian harps had been hung on his boughs by merry travellers; now they seemed to hang there again, and he could hear their marvellous tones. The wood-pigeons cooed as if to explain the feelings of the tree, and the cuckoo called out to tell him how many summer days he had yet to live. Then it seemed as if new life was thrilling through every fibre of root and stem and leaf, rising even to the highest branches. The tree felt itself stretching and spreading out, while through the root beneath the earth ran the warm vigor of life. As he grew higher and still higher, with increased strength, his topmost boughs became broader and fuller; and in proportion to his growth, so was his self-satisfaction increased, and with it arose a joyous longing to grow higher and higher, to reach even to the warm, bright sun itself. Already had his topmost branches pierced the clouds, which floated beneath them like troops of birds of passage, or large white swans; every leaf seemed gifted with sight, as if it possessed eyes to see. The stars became visible in broad daylight, large and sparkling, like clear and gentle eyes. They recalled to the memory the well-known look in the eyes of a child, or in the eyes of lovers who had once met beneath the branches of the old oak. These were wonderful and happy moments for the old tree, full of peace and joy; and yet, amidst all this happiness, the tree felt a yearning, longing desire that all the other trees, bushes, herbs, and flowers beneath him, might be able also to rise higher, as he had done, and to see all this splendor, and experience the same happiness. The grand, majestic oak could not be quite happy in the midst of his enjoyment, while all the rest, both great and small, were not with him. And this feeling of yearning trembled through every branch, through every leaf, as warmly and fervently as if they had been the fibres of a human heart. The summit of the tree waved to and fro, and bent downwards as if in his silent longing he sought for something. Then there came to him the fragrance of thyme, followed by the more powerful scent of honeysuckle and violets; and he fancied he heard the note of the cuckoo. At length his longing was satisfied. Up through the clouds came the green

summits of the forest trees, and beneath him, the oak saw them rising, and growing higher and higher. Bush and herb shot upward, and some even tore themselves up by the roots to rise more quickly. The birch-tree was the quickest of all. Like a lightning flash the slender stem shot upwards in a zigzag line, the branches spreading around it like green gauze and banners. Every native of the wood, even to the brown and feathery rushes, grew with the rest, while the birds ascended with the melody of song. On a blade of grass, that fluttered in the air like a long, green ribbon, sat a grasshopper, cleaning his wings with his legs. May beetles hummed, the bees murmured, the birds sang, each in his own way; the air was filled with the sounds of song and gladness.

"But where is the little blue flower that grows by the water?" asked the oak, "and the purple bell-flower, and the daisy?" You see the oak wanted to have them all with him.

"Here we are, we are here," sounded in voice and song.

"But the beautiful thyme of last summer, where is that? and the lilies-of-the-valley, which last year covered the earth with their bloom? and the wild apple-tree with its lovely blossoms, and all the glory of the wood, which has flourished year after year? even what may have but now sprouted forth could be with us here."

"We are here, we are here," sounded voices higher in the air, as if they had flown there beforehand.

"Why this is beautiful, too beautiful to be believed," said the oak in a joyful tone. "I have them all here, both great and small; not one has been forgotten. Can such happiness be imagined?" It seemed almost impossible.

"In heaven with the Eternal God, it can be imagined, and it is possible," sounded the reply through the air.

And the old tree, as it still grew upwards and onwards, felt that his roots were loosening themselves from the earth.

"It is right so, it is best," said the tree, "no fetters hold me now. I can fly up to the very highest point in light and glory. And all I love are with me, both small and great. All—all are here."

Such was the dream of the old oak: and while he dreamed, a mighty storm came rushing over land and sea, at the holy Christmas time. The sea rolled in great billows towards the shore. There was a cracking and crushing heard in the tree. The root was torn from the ground just at the moment when in his dream he fancied it was being loosened from the earth. He fell—his three hundred and sixty-five years were passed as the single day of the Ephemera. On the morning of Christmas-day, when the sun rose, the

storm had ceased. From all the churches sounded the festive bells, and from every hearth, even of the smallest hut, rose the smoke into the blue sky, like the smoke from the festive thank-offerings on the Druids' altars. The sea gradually became calm, and on board a great ship that had withstood the tempest during the night, all the flags were displayed, as a token of joy and festivity. "The tree is down! The old oak,—our landmark on the coast!" exclaimed the sailors. "It must have fallen in the storm of last night. Who can replace it? Alas! no one." This was a funeral oration over the old tree; short, but well-meant. There it lay stretched on the snow-covered shore, and over it sounded the notes of a song from the ship—a song of Christmas joy, and of the redemption of the soul of man, and of eternal life through Christ's atoning blood.

"Sing aloud on the happy morn, All is fulfilled, for Christ is born; With songs of joy let us loudly sing, 'Hallelujahs to Christ our King.'"

Thus sounded the old Christmas carol, and every one on board the ship felt his thoughts elevated, through the song and the prayer, even as the old tree had felt lifted up in its last, its beautiful dream on that Christmas morn.