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2004
The False Mirror
Tale of The Snow Queen
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Far hence, in a country to which the swallows fly in our winter-time, there dwelt a King who had eleven sons, and one daughter, the beautiful Elise.

The eleven brothers — they were princes — went to school with stars on their breasts and swords by their sides; they wrote on golden tablets with diamond pens, and could read either with a book or without one; in short, it was easy to perceive that they were princes. Their sister, Elise, used to sit upon a little glass stool, and had a picture-book which had cost the half of a kingdom. Oh, the children were so happy! but happy they could not always be.

Their father, the King, married a very wicked Queen, who was not at all kind to the poor children; they found this out on the first day after the marriage, when there was a grand gala at the palace; for, when the children played at receiving company, instead of having as many cakes and sweetmeats as they liked, the Queen gave them only some sand in a little dish, and told them to imagine that was something nice.
The week after, she sent little Elise to be brought up by a peasant and his wife in the country, and it was not long before she told the King so many falsehoods about the poor Princes that he would have nothing more to do with them. "Away, out into the world, and take care of yourselves," said the wicked Queen; "fly away in the form of great speechless birds." But she could not make them so ugly as she wished; the Princes were changed into eleven white Swans. Sending forth a strange cry, they flew out of the palace windows, over the park and over the wood.

It was still early in the morning when they passed by the place where Elise lay sleeping in the peasant's cottage; they flew several times round the roof, stretched their long necks, and flapped their wings, but no one either heard or saw them; they were forced to fly away, up to the clouds and into the wide world; so on they went to the wide, dark forest which extended far away to the sea-shore.

Poor little Elise stood in the peasant's cottage amusing herself with a green leaf, for she had no other plaything. She pricked a hole in the leaf, and peeped through it at the sun, and then she fancied she saw her brothers' bright eyes; and whenever the warm sunbeams shone full upon her cheeks, she thought of her brothers' kisses.

One day passed exactly like the other. When the wind blew through the thick hedge of rose-trees in front of the house, she would whisper to the Roses, "Who is more beautiful than you?" but the Roses would shake their heads, and say, "Elise." And
when the peasant's wife sat on Sundays at the door of her cottage reading her hymn-book, the Wind would flutter the leaves and say to the book, “Who is more pious than thou?” “Elise,” replied the Hymn-book. And what the Roses and the Hymn-book said was no more than the truth.

When Elise was fifteen years old, she was brought home; but the Queen saw how beautiful she was, and she hated her the more, and would willingly have transformed her into a wild swan, like her brothers, but she dared not do so, because the King wished to see his daughter.

So the next morning the Queen went into her bathroom; it was made of marble, and had soft pillows and the gayest carpets; she took three toads, kissed them, and said to one, “Settle thou upon Elise’s head, that she may become dull and sleepy like thee.” “Settle thou upon her forehead,” said she to another, “and let her become ugly like thee, so that her father may not know her again.” And “do thou place thyself upon her bosom,” whispered she to the third, “that her heart may become corrupt and evil, a torment to herself.” She then put the toads into the clear water, which immediately turned green; and having called Elise, she took off her clothes and made her get into the bath. And one toad sat on her hair; another on her forehead, and a third on her bosom; but Elise seemed not at all aware of it, she rose up, and three poppies were seen swimming on the water. Had not the animals been poisonous and kissed by a witch, they would have been changed into roses whilst they
rested on Elise's head and heart,—she was too good for magic to have any power over her. When the Queen perceived this, she rubbed walnut-juice all over the maiden's skin, so that it became quite swarthy, smeared a nasty salve over her lovely face, and entangled her long, thick hair; it was impossible to recognize the beautiful Elise after this.

So when her father saw her he was shocked, and said she could not be his daughter; no one would have anything to do with her but the mastiff and the swallows; but they, poor things, could not say anything in her favor.

Poor Elise wept, and thought of her eleven brothers, not one of whom she saw at the palace. In great distress, she stole away, and wandered the whole day over fields and moors, till she reached the forest. She knew not where to go; but she was so sad, and longed so much to see her brothers, who had been driven out into the world, that she determined to seek and find them.

She had not been long in the forest when night came on, and she lost her way amid the darkness. So she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the trunk of a tree. It was very still in the forest, the air was mild, and from the grass and mould around gleamed the green light of many hundred glowworms; and, when Elise lightly touched one of the branches hanging over her, the bright insects fell down upon her like falling stars.

All night long she dreamed of her brothers. They
were all children again, playing together, writing with diamond pens upon golden tablets, and looking at the pictures in the beautiful book which had cost half of a kingdom. But they did not, as formerly, make straight strokes and pothooks upon the tablets,—no, they wrote of the bold actions they had performed, and the strange adventures they had encountered, and in the picture-book everything seemed alive; the birds sang, men and women stepped from the book, and talked to Elise and her brothers; however, when she turned over the leaves, they jumped back into their places, so that the pictures did not get confused together.

When Elise awoke, the sun was already high in the heavens. She could not see it certainly; for the tall trees of the forest closely entwined their thickly leaved branches, which, as the sunbeams played upon them, looked like a golden veil waving to and fro. And the air was fragrant, and the birds perched upon Elise's shoulders. She heard the noise of water; there were several springs forming a pool with the prettiest pebbles at the bottom, bushes were growing thickly round; but the deer had trodden a broad path through them, and by this path Elise went down to the water's edge. The water was so clear that, had not the boughs and bushes around been moved to and fro by the wind, you might have fancied they were painted upon the smooth surface, so distinctly was each little leaf mirrored upon it, whether glowing in the sunlight or lying in the shade.

As soon as Elise saw her face reflected in the water
Andersen's fairy tales.

she was quite startled, so brown and ugly did it look; however, when she had wetted her little hand, and rubbed her brow and eyes, the white skin again appeared. So Elise took off her clothes, stepped into the fresh water, and in the whole world there was not a king's daughter more beautiful than she then appeared.

After she had again dressed herself, and had braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of the hollow of her hand, and then wandered farther into the forest. She knew not where she was going; but she thought of her brothers, and of the good God, who, she felt, would never forsake her.

He it was who made the wild crab-trees grow, in order to feed the hungry, and who showed her a tree the boughs of which bent under the weight of their fruit. She made her noonday meal under its shade, propped up the boughs, and then walked on amid the dark twilight of the forest. It was so still that she could hear her own footsteps, and the rustling of each little withered leaf that she crushed beneath her feet; not a bird was to be seen, not a single sunbeam penetrated through the thick foliage; and the tall stems of the trees stood so close together, that, when she looked straight before her, she seemed enclosed by trellis-work upon trellis-work. Oh! there was a solitude in this forest such as Elise had never known before.

And the night was so dark! not a single glowworm sent forth its light. Sad and melancholy, she lay down to sleep; and then it seemed to her as if
the boughs above her opened, and that she saw the Angel of God looking down upon her with gentle aspect, and a thousand little cherubs all around him. When she awoke in the morning she could not tell whether this was a dream, or whether she had really been so watched.

She walked on a little farther, and met an old woman with a basketful of berries; the old woman gave her some of them, and Elise asked if she had not seen eleven Princes ride through the wood.

"No," said the old woman, "but I saw yesterday eleven Swans with golden crowns on their heads swim down the brook near this place."

And she led Elise on a little farther to a precipice, the base of which was washed by a brook; the trees on each side stretched their long leafy branches towards one another, and where they could not unite, the roots had disengaged themselves from the earth, and hung their interlaced fibres over the water.

Elise bade the old woman farewell, and wandered by the side of the stream till she came to the place where it reached the open sea.

The great, the beautiful sea lay extended before the maiden's eyes, but not a ship, not a boat was to be seen; how was she to go on? She observed the numberless little stones on the shore, all of which the waves had washed into a round form; glass, iron, stone, everything that lay scattered there, had been moulded into shape, and yet the water which had effected this was much softer than Elise's delicate little hand. "It rolls on unweariedly," said she,
“and subdues what is so hard; I will be no less unwearied! Thank you for the lesson you have given me, ye bright rolling waves! some day, my heart tells me, you shall carry me to my dear brothers!"

There lay upon the wet seaweed eleven white swan-feathers; Elise collected them together; drops of water hung about them, whether dew or tears she could not tell. She was quite alone on the sea-shore, but she did not care for that; the sea presented an eternal variety to her — more, indeed, in a few hours than the gentle inland waters would have offered in a whole year. When a black cloud passed over the sky, it seemed as if the sea would say, “I, too, can look dark;” and then the wind would blow, and the waves fling out their white foam; but when the clouds shone with a bright red tint, and the winds were asleep, the sea also became like a rose-leaf in hue. It was now green, now white, but it reposed peacefully; sometimes a light breeze would be astir on the shore, causing the water to heave gently, like the bosom of a sleeping child.

- At sunset Elise saw eleven White Swans with golden crowns on their heads fly towards the land; they flew one behind another, looking like a streaming white ribbon. Elise climbed the precipice, and concealed herself behind a bush; the Swans settled closed to her, and flapped their long white wings.

As the sun sank beneath the water, the Swans also vanished; and in their place stood eleven handsome Princes, the brothers of Elise. She uttered a loud cry; for although they were very much altered, Elise
knew that they were,—felt that they must be,—her brothers. She ran into their arms, called them by their names; and how happy were they to see and recognize their sister, now grown so tall and so beautiful! They laughed and wept, and soon told each other how wickedly their stepmother had acted towards them.

"We," said the eldest of the brothers, "fly or swim as long as the sun is above the horizon; but when it sinks below, we appear again in our human form. We are therefore obliged to look out for a safe resting-place; for if, at sunset, we were flying among the clouds, we should fall down as soon as we resumed our own form. We do not dwell here; a land quite as beautiful as this lies on the opposite side of the sea, but it is far off. To reach it, we have to cross the deep waters, and there is no island midway on which we may rest at night; one little solitary rock rises from the waves, and upon it we only just find room enough to stand side by side. There we spend the night in our human form, and when the sea is rough, we are sprinkled by its foam; but we are thankful for this resting-place, for without it we should never be able to visit our dear native country. Only once in a year is this visit to the home of our fathers permitted; we require two of the longest days for our flight, and can remain here only eleven days, during which time we fly over the large forest, whence we can see the palace in which we were born, where our father dwells, and the tower of the church in which our mother was buried. Here even the
trees and bushes seem of kin to us; here the wild horses still race over the plains, as in the days of our childhood; here the charcoal-burner still sings the same old tunes to which we used to dance in our youth; hither we are still attracted; and here we have found thee, thou dear little sister! We have yet two days longer to stay here; then we must fly over the sea to a land beautiful indeed, but not our fatherland. How shall we take thee with us? we have neither ship nor boat."

"How shall I be able to release you?" said the sister. And so they went on talking almost the whole of the night; they slumbered only a few hours.

Elise was awakened by the rustling of swans’ wings, which were fluttering above her. Her brothers were again transformed, and for some time flew round in large circles; at last they flew far, far away; only one of them remained behind—it was the youngest; he laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his white wings; they remained the whole day together. Towards evening the others came back; and when the sun was set, again they stood on the firm ground in their natural form.

"To-morrow we shall fly away, and may not return for a year, but we cannot leave thee; hast thou courage to accompany us? My arm is strong enough to bear thee through the forest; shall we not have sufficient strength in our wings to transport thee over the sea?"

"Yes; take me with you," said Elise. They spent the whole night in weaving a mat of the pliant willow bark and tough rushes, and their mat was thick and
strong. Elise lay down upon it; and when the sun had risen, and the brothers were again transformed into Wild Swans, they seized the mat with their beaks, and flew up high among the clouds with their dear sister, who was still sleeping. The sunbeams shone full upon her face; so one of the Swans flew over her head, and shaded her with his broad wings.

They were already far from land when Elise awoke; she thought she was still dreaming, so strange did it appear to her to be travelling through the air and over the sea. By her side lay a cluster of pretty berries and a handful of savory roots. Her youngest brother had collected and laid them there; and she thanked him with a smile, for she knew him as the Swan who flew overhead, and shaded her with his wings.

They flew so high, that the first ship they saw beneath them seemed like a white sea-gull skimming over the water. Elise saw behind her a large cloud; it looked liked a mountain; and on it she saw the gigantic shadows of herself and the eleven Swans: it formed a picture more splendid than any she had ever yet seen. Soon, however, the sun rose higher, the cloud remained far behind, and then the floating, shadowy picture disappeared.

The whole day they continued flying with a whizzing noise somewhat like that of an arrow; but yet they went slower than usual — they had their sister to carry. A heavy tempest was gathering — the evening approached; anxiously did Elise watch the sun — it was setting; still the solitary rock could not be seen;
it appeared to her that the Swans plied their wings with increasing vigor. Alas! it would be her fault if her brothers did not arrive at the place in time! They would become human beings when the sun set; and if this happened before they reached the rock, they must fall into the sea and be drowned. She prayed to God most fervently—still no rock was to be seen; the black clouds drew nearer—violent gusts of wind announced the approach of the tempest—the clouds rested on the waves which rolled swiftly forward—one flash of lightning rapidly succeeded another.

The sun was now on the rim of the sea. Elise's heart beat violently; the Swans shot downward so swiftly that she thought she must fall, but again they began to hover; the sun was half sunk beneath the water, and at that moment she saw the little rock below her; it looked like a seal's head when he raises it just above the water. And the sun was sinking fast—it seemed scarcely larger than a star; her foot touched the hard ground, and it vanished altogether, like the last spark on a burnt piece of paper.

Arm in arm stood her brothers around her; there was only just room for her and them; the sea beat tempestuously against the rock, flinging over them a shower of foam; the sky seemed in a continual blaze with the fast-succeeding flashes of fire that lightened it, and peal after peal rolled the thunder, but sister and brothers kept firm hold of each others' hands. They sang a hymn, and their hymn gave them comfort and courage.

By daybreak the air was pure and still, and as soon
as the sun rose, the Swans flew away with Elise from the rock. The waves rose higher and higher; and when they looked from the clouds down upon the blackish-green sea, covered as it was with white foam, they might have fancied that millions of swans were swimming on its surface.

As day advanced, Elise saw floating in the air before her a land of mountains intermixed with glaciers, and in the centre a palace a mile in length, with splendid colonnades rising one above another, palm-trees and gorgeous-looking flowers as large as millwheels growing beneath. She asked if this were the country to which they were flying; but the Swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the beautiful airy castle of the fairy Morgana, where no human being was admitted; and whilst Elise still bent her eyes upon it, mountains, trees, and castle all disappeared, and in their place stood twelve churches with high towers and pointed windows. She fancied she heard the organ play, but it was only the murmur of the sea. She was now close to these churches; but, behold! they had changed into a large fleet sailing under them. She looked down, and saw it was only a sea-mist passing rapidly over the water. An eternal variety floated before her eyes, till at last the actual land whither she was bound appeared in sight. Beautiful blue mountains, cedar woods, towns, and castles rose to view. Long before sunset Elise sat down among the mountains, in front of a large cavern; delicate young creepers grew around so thickly that it appeared covered with gay embroidered carpets.
“Now we shall see what thou wilt dream of to-night!” said her youngest brother, as he showed her the sleeping-chamber destined for her.

“Oh, that I could dream how you might be released from the spell!” said she. And this thought completely occupied her; she prayed most earnestly for God’s assistance; nay, even in her dreams she continued praying; and it appeared to her that she was flying up high in the air towards the castle of the fairy Morgana. The fairy came forward to meet her, radiant and beautiful; and yet she fancied she resembled the old woman who had given her berries in the forest, and told her of the Swans with golden crowns.

“Thou canst release thy brothers,” said she; “but hast thou courage and patience sufficient? The water is indeed softer than thy delicate hands, and yet can mould the hard stones to its will, but then it cannot feel the pain which thy tender fingers will feel; it has no heart, and cannot suffer the anxiety and grief which thou must suffer. Dost thou see these stinging-nettles which I have in my hand? there are many of the same kind growing round the cave where thou art sleeping; only those that grow there or on the graves in the churchyard are of use — remember that! Thou must pluck them, although they will sting thy hand; thou must trample on the nettles with thy feet, and get yarn from them; and with this yarn thou must weave eleven shirts with long sleeves: throw them over the eleven Wild Swans, and the spell is broken. But, mark this! from the moment that thou beginnest thy work till it is completed, even should it
occupy thee for years, thou must not speak a word; the first syllable that escapes thy lips will fall like a dagger into the hearts of thy brothers; on thy tongue depends their life. Mark well all this!"

And at the same moment the fairy touched Elise's hands with a nettle, which made them burn like fire, and Elise awoke. It was broad daylight, and close to her lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell upon her knees, thanked God, and then went out of the cave in order to begin her work. She plucked with her own delicate hands the disagreeable stinging-nettles; they burned large blisters on her hands and arms, but she bore the pain willingly in the hope of releasing her dear brothers. She trampled on the nettles with her naked feet, and spun the green yarn.

At sunset came her brothers. Elise's silence quite frightened them; they thought it must be the effect of some fresh spell of their wicked stepmother; but when they saw her blistered hands, they found out what their sister was doing for their sakes. The youngest brother wept; and when his tears fell upon her hands, Elise felt no more pain — the blisters disappeared.

The whole night she spent in her work, for she could not rest till she had released her brothers. All the following day she sat in her solitude, for the Swans had flown away; but never had time passed so quickly. One shirt was ready; she now began the second.

Suddenly a hunting-horn resounded among the
mountains. Elise was frightened. The noise came nearer; she heard the hounds barking. In great terror she fled into the cave, bound up the nettles which she had gathered and combed into a bundle, and sat down upon it.

In the same moment a large dog sprang out from the bushes; two others immediately followed; they barked loudly, ran away, and then returned. It was not long before the hunters stood in front of the cave; the handsomest among them was the King of that country; he stepped up to Elise. Never had he seen a lovelier maiden.

"How camest thou here, thou beautiful child?" said he. Elise shook her head; she dared not speak; a word might have cost her the life of her brothers, and she hid her hands under her apron lest the King should see how she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he, "thou must not stay here! If thou art good as thou art beautiful, I will dress thee in velvet and silk; I will put a gold crown upon thy head, and thou shalt dwell in my palace!" So he lifted her upon his horse, while she wept and wrung her hands; but the King said, "I only desire thy happiness! thou shalt thank me for this some day!" and away he rode over mountains and valleys, holding her on his horse in front, whilst the other hunters followed. When the sun set, the King's magnificent capital, with its churches and cupolas, lay before them; and the King led Elise into the palace, where, in a high marble hall, fountains were playing, and the walls and ceiling displayed the most
beautiful paintings. But Elise cared not for all this splendor; she wept and mourned in silence, even whilst some female attendants dressed her in royal robes, wove costly pearls in her hair, and drew soft gloves over her blistered hands.

And now she was full dressed; and as she stood in her splendid attire, her beauty was so dazzling that the courtiers all bowed low before her, and the King chose her for his bride, although the Archbishop shook his head, and whispered that "the beautiful lady of the wood must certainly be a witch, who had blinded their eyes, and infatuated the King's heart."

But the King did not listen; he ordered music to be played, and a sumptuous banquet served up; the loveliest maidens danced round the bride, and she was led through fragrant gardens into magnificent halls, but not a smile was seen to play upon her lips or beam from her eyes. The King then opened a small room next her sleeping apartment; it was adorned with costly green tapestry, and exactly resembled the cave in which she had been found: upon the ground lay the bundle of yarn which she had spun from the nettles, and by the wall hung the shirt she had completed. One of the hunters had brought all this, thinking there must be something wonderful in it.

"Here thou mayest dream of thy former home," said the King; "here is the work which employed thee; amidst all thy present splendor it may sometimes give thee pleasure to fancy thyself there again."
When Elise saw what was so dear to her heart, she smiled, and the blood returned to her cheeks; she thought her brothers might still be released, and she kissed the King's hand; he pressed her to his heart, and ordered the bells of all the churches in the city to be rung, to announce the celebration of their wedding. The beautiful dumb maiden of the wood was to become Queen of the land.

The Archbishop whispered evil words in the King's ear, but they made no impression upon him; the marriage was solemnized, and the Archbishop himself was obliged to put the crown upon her head. In his rage he pressed the narrow rim so firmly on her forehead that it hurt her; but a heavier weight—sorrow for her brothers—lay upon her heart; she did not feel bodily pain. She was still silent—a single word would have killed her brothers. Her eyes, however, beamed with heartfelt love to the King, so good and handsome, who had done so much to make her happy. She became more warmly attached to him every day. Oh, how much she wished she might confide to him all her sorrows! but she was forced to remain silent; she could not speak until her work was completed! To this end she stole away every night, and went into the little room that was fitted up in imitation of the cave; there she worked at her shirts, but by the time she had begun the seventh all her yarn was spent.

She knew that the nettles she needed grew in the churchyard, but she must gather them herself; how was she to get them?
"Oh, what is the pain in my fingers compared to the anguish my heart suffers!" thought she. "I must venture to the churchyard; the good God will not withdraw his protection from me!"

Fearful, as though she were about to do something wrong, one moonlight night she crept down to the garden, and through the long avenues got into the lonely road leading to the churchyard. She saw sitting on one of the broadest tombstones a number of ugly old witches. They took off their ragged clothes as if they were going to bathe, and digging with their long, lean fingers into the fresh grass, drew up the dead bodies and devoured the flesh. Elise was obliged to pass close by them, and the witches fixed their wicked eyes upon her; but she repeated her prayer, gathered the stinging-nettles, and took them back with her into the palace. One person only had seen her—it was the Archbishop; he was awake when others slept. Now he was convinced that all was not right about the Queen; she must be a witch, who had through her enchantments infatuated the King and all the people.

In the confessional he told the King what he had seen and what he feared; and when the slanderous words came from his lips, the sculptured images of the saints shook their heads, as though they would say, "It is untrue; Elise is innocent!" But the Archbishop explained the omen quite otherwise; he thought it was a testimony against her that the holy images shook their heads at hearing of her sin.

Two large tears rolled down the King's cheeks; he returned home in doubt; he pretended to sleep at
night, though sleep never visited him; and he noticed that Elise rose from her bed every night, and every time he followed her secretly, and saw her enter her little room.

His countenance became darker every day; Elise perceived it, though she knew not the cause. She was much pained; and, besides, what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers! Her bitter tears ran down on the royal velvet and purple; they looked like bright diamonds, and all who saw the magnificence that surrounded her wished themselves in her place. She had now nearly finished her work — only one shirt was wanting; unfortunately, yarn was wanting also, she had not a single nettle left. Once more, only this one time, she must go to the churchyard and gather a few handfuls. She shuddered when she thought of the solitary walk and the horrid witches, but her resolution was as firm as her trust in God.

Elise went; the King and the Archbishop followed her. They saw her disappear at the churchyard door, and when they came nearer, they saw the witches sitting on the tombstones, as Elise had seen them; and the King turned away, for he believed her whose head had rested on his bosom that very evening to be amongst them. "Let the people judge her!" said he. And the people condemned her to be burnt.

She was now dragged from the King's sumptuous apartments into a dark, damp prison, where the wind whistled through the grated window. Instead of velvet and silk, they gave her the bundle of nettles she had gathered — on that must she lay her head; the
shirts she had woven had to serve her as mattress and counterpane; but they could not have given her anything she valued so much: and she continued her work, at the same time praying earnestly to her God. The boys sang jeering songs about her in front of her prison; not a soul comforted her with a kindly word.

Towards evening she heard the rustling of Swans' wings at the grating. It was the youngest of her brothers, who had at last found his sister; and she sobbed aloud for joy, although she knew that the coming night would probably be the last of her life; but then her work was almost finished, and her brother was near.

The Archbishop came in order to spend the last hour with her; he had promised the King he would; but she shook her head, and entreated him with her eyes and gestures to go. This night she must finish her work, or all she had suffered—her pain, her anxiety, her sleepless nights—would be in vain. The Archbishop went away with many angry words; but the unfortunate Elise knew herself to be perfectly innocent, and went on with her work.

Little mice ran busily about, and dragged the nettles to her feet, wishing to help her; and the thrush perched on the iron bars of the window, and sang all night as merrily as he could, that Elise might not lose courage.

It was still twilight, just an hour before sunrise, when the eleven brothers stood before the palace-gates, requesting an audience with the King; but it could
not be, they were told; it was still night, the King was asleep, and they dared not wake him. They entreated, they threatened, the guard came up, the King himself at last stepped out to ask what was the matter; at that moment the sun rose, the brothers could be seen no longer, and eleven white Swans flew away over the palace.

The people poured forth from the gates of the city, all eager to see the witch burned. One wretched horse drew the cart in which Elise was placed, a coarse frock of sackcloth had been put on her, her beautiful long hair hung loosely over her shoulders, her cheeks were of a deadly paleness, her lips moved gently, and her fingers wove the green yarn; even on her way to her cruel death she did not give up her work; the ten shirts lay at her feet, she was now laboring to complete the eleventh. The rabble insulted her.

"Look at the witch, how she mutters! she has not a hymn-book in her hand: no, there she sits, with her accursed witchery. Tear it from her! tear it into a thousand pieces!"

And they all crowded about her, and were on the point of snatching away the shirts, when eleven white Swans came flying towards the cart; they settled all round her, and flapped their wings. The crowd gave way in terror.

"It is a sign from Heaven! she is certainly innocent!" whispered some; they dared not say so aloud.

As the executioner seized her by the hand to lift her from the cart, she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the Swans, and eleven handsome Princes appeared
in their place. The youngest had, however, only one arm, and a wing instead of the other, for one sleeve was deficient in his shirt—it had not been quite finished.

"Now I may speak," said she; "I am innocent!"

And the people who had seen what had happened bowed before her as before a saint. She, however, sank fainting in her brothers' arms; suspense, fear, and grief had quite exhausted her.

"Yes, she is innocent," said her eldest brother; and he now related their wonderful history. Whilst he spoke, a fragrance as delicious as if it proceeded from millions of roses diffused itself around, for every piece of wood in the funeral pile had taken root and sent forth branches; a hedge of blooming red roses surrounded Elise, and above all the others blossomed a flower of dazzling white color, bright as a star; the King plucked it, and laid it on Elise's bosom, whereupon she awoke from her trance with peace and joy in her heart.

And all the church-bells began to ring of their own accord, and birds flew to the spot in swarms, and there was a festive procession back to the palace, such as no King had ever seen before.
THE UGLY DUCKLING.

It was beautiful in the country; it was summertime; the wheat was yellow, the oats were green, the hay was stacked up in the green meadows, and the stork paraded about on his long red legs, discoursing in Egyptian, which language he had learned from his mother. The fields and meadows were skirted by thick woods, and a deep lake lay in the midst of the woods. Yes, it was indeed beautiful in the country!

The sunshine fell warmly on an old mansion, surrounded by deep canals; and from the walls down to the water’s edge there grew large burdock-leaves, so high that children could stand upright among them without being perceived. This place was as wild and unfrequented as the thickest part of the wood, and on that account a Duck had chosen to make her nest there. She was sitting on her eggs; but the pleasure she had felt at first was now almost gone, because she had been there so long, and had so few visitors, for the other ducks preferred swimming on the canals to sitting among the burdock-leaves gossipping with her.

At last the eggs cracked one after another, “Tchick, tchick!” All the eggs were alive, and one little head after another peered forth. “Quack, quack!” said the Duck, and all got up as well as they could; they peeped about from under the green leaves; and as
green is good for the eyes, their mother let them look as long as they pleased.

"How large the world is!" said the little ones; for they found their present situation very different to their former confined one, while yet in the egg-shells.

"Do you imagine this to be the whole of the world?" said the mother; "it extends far beyond on the other side of the garden to the pastor's field; but I have never been there. Are you all here?" And then she got up. "No, not all; but the largest egg is still here. How long will this last? I am so weary of it!" And then she sat down again.

"Well, and how are you getting on?" asked an old Duck, who had come to pay her a visit.

"This one egg keeps me so long," said the mother, "it will not break; but you should see the others! they are the prettiest little ducklings I have seen in all my days; they are all like their father,—the good-for-nothing fellow, he has not been to visit me once!"

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old Duck; "depend upon it, it is a turkey's egg. I was cheated in the same way once myself, and I had such trouble with the young ones; for they were afraid of the water, and I could not get them there. I called and scolded, but it was all of no use. But let me see the egg — ah, yes! to be sure, that is a turkey's egg. Leave it, and teach the other little ones to swim."

"I will sit on it a little longer," said the Duck. "I have been sitting so long, that I may as well spend the harvest here."
"It is no business of mine," said the old Duck, and away she waddled.

The great egg burst at last. "Tchick, tchick!" said the little one; and out it tumbled—but, oh, how large and ugly it was! The Duck looked at it. "That is a great, strong creature," said she; "none of the others are at all like it; can it be a young turkey-cock? Well, we shall soon find out; it must go into the water, though I push it in myself."

The next day there was delightful weather, and the sun shone warmly upon all the green leaves when Mother Duck with all her family went down to the canal: plump she went into the water. "Quack! quack!" cried she, and one duckling after another jumped in. The water closed over their heads; but all came up again, and swam together in the pleasantest manner; their legs moved without effort. All were there, even the ugly gray one.

"No! it is not a turkey," said the old Duck; "only see how prettily it moves its legs! how upright it holds itself! it is my own child; it is also really very pretty, when one looks more closely at it. Quack! quack! now come with me, I will take you into the world, and introduce you in the duck-yard; but keep close to me, or some one may tread on you; and beware of the cat."

So they came into the duck-yard. There was a horrid noise; two families were quarrelling about the remains of an eel, which in the end was secured by the cat.

"See, my children, such is the way of the world,"
said the Mother Duck, wiping her beak, for she, too, 
was fond of eels. "Now use your legs," said she, 
"keep together, and bow to the old Duck you see 
yonder. She is the most distinguished of all the 
fowls present, and is of Spanish blood, which ac-
counts for her dignified appearance and manners. 
And look, she has a red rag on her leg; that is con-
sidered extremely handsome, and is the greatest dis-
tinction a duck can have. Don't turn your feet 
inwards; a well-educated duckling always keeps his 
legs far apart, like his father and mother, just so— 
look! now bow your necks and say 'quack.'"

And they did as they were told. But the other 
Ducks who were in the yard looked at them, and 
said aloud, "Only see, now we have another brood, 
as if there were not enough of us already; and fie! 
how ugly that one is; we will not endure it;" and 
immediately one of the Ducks flew at him, and bit 
him in the neck.

"Leave him alone," said the mother, "he is doing 
no one any harm."

"Yes, but he is so large, and so strange-looking, 
and therefore he shall be teased."

"Those are fine children that our good mother 
has," said the old Duck with the red rag on her leg. 
"All are pretty except one, and that has not turned 
out well; I almost wish it could be hatched over 
again."

"That cannot be, please your highness," said the 
mother. "Certainly he is not handsome; but he is a 
very good child, and swims as well as the others, in-
deed rather better. I think he will grow like the others all in good time, and perhaps will look smaller. He stayed so long in the egg-shell, that is the cause of the difference;” and she scratched the Duckling’s neck, and stroked his whole body. “Besides,” added she, “he is a drake; I think he will be very strong, therefore it does not matter so much; he will fight his way through.”

“The other ducks are very pretty,” said the old Duck. “Pray make yourselves at home, and if you find an eel’s head you can bring it to me.”

And accordingly they made themselves at home.

But the poor little Duckling who had come last out of its egg-shell, and who was so ugly, was bitten, pecked, and teased by both Ducks and Hens. “It is so large!” said they all. And the Turkey-cock, who had come into the world with spurs on, and therefore fancied he was an emperor, puffed himself up like a ship in full sail, and marched up to the Duckling quite red with passion. The poor little thing scarcely knew what to do; he was quite distressed, because he was so ugly, and because he was the jest of the poultry-yard.

So passed the first day, and afterwards matters grew worse and worse — the poor Duckling was scorned by all. Even his brothers and sisters behaved unkindly, and were constantly saying, “The cat fetch thee, thou nasty creature!” The mother said, “Ah, if thou wert only far away!” The Ducks bit him, the Hens pecked him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him. He ran over the hedge; the little birds in the bushes
were terrified. "That is because I am so ugly," thought the Duckling, shutting his eyes, but he ran on. At last he came to a wide moor, where lived some Wild Ducks; here he lay the whole night, so tired and so comfortless. In the morning the Wild Ducks flew up, and perceived their new companion. "Pray who are you?" asked they; and our little Duckling turned himself in all directions, and greeted them as politely as possible.

"You are really uncommonly ugly!" said the Wild Ducks; "however, that does not matter to us, provided you do not marry into our families." Poor thing! he had never thought of marrying; he only begged permission to lie among the reeds, and drink the water of the moor.

There he lay for two whole days — on the third day there came two Wild Geese, or rather Ganders, who had not been long out of their egg-shells, which accounts for their impertinence.

"Hark ye," said they, "you are so ugly that we like you infinitely well; will you come with us, and be a bird of passage? On another moor, not far from this, are some dear, sweet wild geese, as lovely creatures as have ever said 'hiss, hiss.' You are truly in the way to make your fortune, ugly as you are."

Bang! a gun went off all at once, and both Wild Geese were stretched dead among the reeds; the water became red with blood; bang! a gun went off again; whole flocks of wild geese flew up from among the reeds, and another report followed.

There was a grand hunting party; the hunters lay in
ambush all around; some were even sitting in the trees, whose huge branches stretched far over the moor. The blue smoke rose through the thick trees like a mist, and was dispersed as it fell over the water; the hounds splashed about in the mud, the reeds and rushes bent in all directions. How frightened the poor little Duck was! he turned his head, thinking to hide it under his wings, and in a moment a most formidable-looking dog stood close to him, his tongue hanging out of his mouth, his eyes sparkling fearfully. He opened wide his jaws at the sight of our Duckling, showed him his sharp white teeth, and, splash, splash! he was gone, — gone without hurting him.

"Well! let me be thankful," sighed he; "I am so ugly that even the dog will not eat me."

And now he lay still, though the shooting continued among the reeds, shot following shot.

The noise did not cease till late in the day, and even then the poor little thing dared not stir; he waited several hours before he looked around him, and then hastened away from the moor as fast as he could; he ran over fields and meadows, though the wind was so high that he had some difficulty in proceeding.

Towards evening he reached a wretched little hut, so wretched that it knew not on which side to fall, and therefore remained standing. The wind blew violently, so that our poor little Duckling was obliged to support himself on his tail, in order to stand against it; but it became worse and worse. He then remarked that the door had lost one of its hinges, and hung so
much awry that he could creep through the crevice into the room, which he did.

In this room lived an old woman, with her Tom-cat and her Hen; and the Cat, whom she called her little son, knew how to set up his back and purr; indeed, he could even emit sparks when stroked the wrong way. The Hen had very short legs, and was therefore called “Cuckoo Short-legs;” she laid very good eggs, and the old woman loved her as an own child.

The next morning the new guest was perceived; the Cat began to mew and the Hen to cackle.

“What is the matter?” asked the old woman, looking round; however, her eyes were not good, so she took the young Duckling to be a fat duck who had lost her way. “This is a capital catch,” said she; “I shall now have ducks’ eggs, if it be not a drake; we must try.”

And so the Duckling was put to the proof for three weeks, but no eggs made their appearance.

Now, the Cat was the master of the house, and the Hen was the mistress; and they used always to say, “We and the world,” for they imagined themselves to be not only the half of the world, but also by far the better half. The Duckling thought it was possible to be of a different opinion, but that the Hen would not allow.

“Can you lay eggs?” asked she.

“No.”

“Well, then, hold your tongue.”

And the Cat said, “Can you set up your back? can you purr?”
"No."

"Well, then, you should have no opinion when reasonable persons are speaking."

So the Duckling sat alone in a corner, and was in a very bad humor; however, he happened to think of the fresh air and bright sunshine, and these thoughts gave him such a strong desire to swim again, that he could not help telling it to the Hen.

"What ails you?" said the Hen. "You have nothing to do, and therefore brood over these fancies; either lay eggs or purr, then you will forget them."

"But it is so delicious to swim!" said the Duckling; "so delicious when the waters close over your head, and you plunge to the bottom!"

"Well, that is a queer sort of pleasure," said the Hen; "I think you must be crazy. Not to speak of myself, ask the Cat — he is the most sensible animal I know — whether he would like to swim, or to plunge to the bottom of the water. Ask the mistress, the old woman, — there is no one in the world wiser than she; do you think she would take pleasure in swimming, and in the waters closing over her head?"

"You do not understand me," said the Duckling.

"What, we do not understand you! So you think yourself wiser than the Cat and the old woman, not to speak of myself. Do not fancy any such thing, child, but be thankful for all the kindness that has been shown you. Are you not lodged in a warm room? and have you not the advantage of society from which you can learn something? But you are a simpleton,
and it is wearisome to have anything to do with you. Believe me, I wish you well. I tell you unpleasant truths, but it is thus that real friendship is shown. Come, for once give yourself the trouble to learn to purr or to lay eggs."

"I think I will go out into the wide world again," said the Duckling.

"Well, go," answered the Hen.

So the Duckling went. He swam on the surface of the water, he plunged beneath; but all animals passed him by on account of his ugliness. And the autumn came, the leaves turned yellow and brown, the wind caught them and danced them about, the air was very cold, the clouds were heavy with hail or snow, and the raven sat on the hedge and croaked — the poor Duckling was certainly not very comfortable!

One evening, just as the sun was setting with unusual brilliancy, a flock of large, beautiful birds rose from out of the brushwood; the Duckling had never seen anything so beautiful before; their plumage was of a dazzling white, and they had long, slender necks. They were swans; they uttered a singular cry, spread out their long, splendid wings, and flew away from these cold regions to warmer countries, across the open sea. They flew so high, so very high! and the little ugly Duckling's feelings were so strange; he turned round and round in the water like a mill-wheel, strained his neck to look after them, and sent forth such a loud and strange cry, that it almost frightened himself. Ah! he could not forget them, those noble birds! When he could see them no longer, he plunged to the
bottom of the water, and when he rose again was almost beside himself. The Duckling knew not what the birds were called, knew not whither they were flying, yet he loved them as he had never before loved anything; he envied them not; it would never have occurred to him to wish such beauty for himself; he would have been quite contented if the ducks in the duck-yard had but endured his company — the poor, ugly animal!

And the winter was so cold, so cold! The Duckling was obliged to swim round and round in the water to keep it from freezing; but every night the opening in which he swam became smaller and smaller; it froze so that the crust of ice crackled; the Duckling was obliged to make good use of his legs to prevent the water from freezing entirely; at last, wearied out, he lay stiff and cold in the ice.

Early in the morning there passed by a peasant, who saw him, broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and brought him home to his wife.

He now revived; the children would have played with him; but our Duckling thought they wished to tease him, and in his terror jumped into the milk-pail, so that the milk was spilled about the room. The good woman screamed and clapped her hands; he flew thence into the pan where the butter was kept, and thence into the meal-barrel, and out again, and then how strange he looked!

The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs, the children ran races with each other trying to catch him, and laughed and screamed likewise. It was
well for him that the door stood open; he jumped out among the bushes into the new-fallen snow—he lay there as in a dream.

But it would be too melancholy to relate all the trouble and misery that he was obliged to suffer during the severity of the winter; he was lying on a moor among the reeds, when the sun began to shine warmly again, the larks sang, and beautiful spring had returned.

And once more he shook his wings. They were stronger than formerly, and bore him forwards quickly, and before he was well aware of it, he was in a large garden where the apple-trees stood in full bloom, where the syringas sent forth their fragrance, and hung their long green branches down into the winding canal. Oh, everything was so lovely, so full of the freshness of spring! And out of the thicket came three beautiful white Swans. They displayed their feathers so proudly, and swam so lightly, so lightly! The Duckling knew the glorious creatures, and was seized with a strange melancholy.

"I will fly to them, those kingly birds!" said he. "They will kill me because I, ugly as I am, have presumed to approach them; but it matters not, better to be killed by them than to be bitten by the ducks, pecked by the hens, kicked by the girl who feeds the poultry, and to have so much to suffer during the winter!" He flew into the water, and swam towards the beautiful creatures; they saw him, and shot forward to meet him. "Only kill me," said the poor animal, and he bowed his head low, expecting death; but what
did he see in the water? He saw beneath him his own form, no longer that of a plump, ugly, gray bird—it was that of a Swan.

It matters not to have been born in a duck-yard, if one has been hatched from a swan’s egg.

The good creature felt himself really elevated by all the troubles and adversities he had experienced. He could now rightly estimate his own happiness, and the larger Swans swam round him, and stroked him with their beaks.

Some little children were running about in the garden; they threw grain and bread into the water, and the youngest exclaimed, “There is a new one!” the others cried out, “Yes, there is a new Swan come!” and they clapped their hands and danced around. They ran to their father and mother, bread and cake were thrown into the water, and every one said, “The new one is the best, so young and so beautiful!” and the old Swans bowed before him. The young Swan felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wings; he scarcely knew what to do, he was all too happy, but still not proud, for a good heart is never proud.

He remembered how he had been persecuted and derided, and he now heard every one say he was the most beautiful of all beautiful birds. The syringas bent down their branches towards him low into the water, and the sun shone so warmly and brightly—he shook his feathers, stretched his slender neck, and in the joy of his heart said, “How little did I dream of so much happiness when I was the ugly, despised Duckling!”
Far out in the wide sea, where the water is blue as the loveliest cornflower, and clear as the purest crystal, where it is so deep that very, very many church-towers must be heaped one upon another in order to reach from the lowest depth to the surface above, dwell the Mer-people.

Now, you must not imagine that there is nothing but sand below the water: no, indeed, far from it! Trees and plants of wondrous beauty grow there, whose stems and leaves are so light that they are waved to and fro by the slightest motion of the water, almost as if they were living beings. Fishes, great and small, glide in and out among the branches, just as birds fly about among our trees.

Where the water is deepest stands the palace of the Mer-king. The walls of this palace are of coral; and the high, pointed windows are of amber; the roof, however, is composed of mussel-shells, which, as the billows pass over them, are continually opening and shutting. This looks exceedingly pretty, especially as each of these mussel-shells contains a number of bright, glittering pearls, one only of which would be the most costly ornament in the diadem of a king in the upper world.

The Mer-king, who lived in this palace, had been
for many years a widower; his old mother managed the household affairs for him. She was, on the whole, a sensible sort of a lady, although extremely proud of her high birth and station, on which account she wore twelve oysters on her tail, whilst the other inhabitants of the sea, even those of distinction, were allowed only six. In every other respect she merited unlimited praise, especially for the affection she showed to the six little Princesses, her granddaughters. These were all very beautiful children; the youngest was, however, the most lovely; her skin was as soft and delicate as a rose-leaf, her eyes were of as deep a blue as the sea; but, like all other mermaids, she had no feet, her body ended in a tail like that of a fish.

The whole day long the children used to play in the spacious apartments of the palace, where beautiful flowers grew out of the walls on all sides around them. When the great amber windows were opened, fishes would swim into these apartments as swallows fly into our rooms; but the fishes were bolder than the swallows—they swam straight up to the little Princesses, ate from their hands, and allowed themselves to be caressed.

In front of the palace there was a large garden, full of fiery red and dark-blue trees; the fruit upon them glittered like gold, and the flowers resembled a bright burning sun. The sand that formed the soil of the garden was of a bright blue color, somewhat like flames of sulphur; and a strangely beautiful blue was spread over the whole, so that one might have fancied one's
self raised very high in the air, with the sky at once above and below — certainly not at the bottom of the sea. When the waters were quite still, the sun might be seen looking like a purple flower, out of the cup of which streamed forth the light of the world.

Each of the little Princesses had her own plot in the garden, where she might plant and sow at her pleasure. One chose hers to be made in the shape of a whale, another preferred the figure of a mermaid; but the youngest had hers quite round like the sun, and planted in it only those flowers that were red, as the sun seemed to her. She was certainly a singular child, very quiet and thoughtful. Whilst her sisters were adorning themselves with all sorts of gay things that came out of a ship which had been wrecked, she asked for nothing but a beautiful white marble statue of a boy, which had been found in it. She put the statue in her garden, and planted a red weeping-willow by its side. The tree grew up quickly, and let its long boughs fall upon the bright blue ground, where ever-moving shadows played in violet hues, as if boughs and root were embracing.

Nothing pleased the little Princess more than to hear about the world of human beings living above the sea. She made her old grandmother tell her everything she knew about ships, towns, men, and land animals, and was particularly pleased when she heard that the flowers of the upper world had a pleasant fragrance (for the flowers of the sea are scentless), and that the woods were green, and the fishes fluttering among the branches of various gay colors, and that
they could sing with a loud, clear voice. The old lady meant birds; but she called them fishes, because her grandchildren, having never seen a bird, would not otherwise have understood her.

"When you have attained your fifteenth year," added she, "you will be permitted to rise to the surface of the sea; you will then sit by moonlight in the clefts of the rocks, see the ships sail by, and learn to distinguish towns and men."

The next year the eldest of the sisters reached this happy age; but the others—alas! the second sister was a year younger than the eldest, the third a year younger than the second, and so on. The youngest had still five whole years to wait till that joyful time should come when she also might rise to the surface of the water, and see what was going on in the upper world; however, the eldest promised to tell the others about everything she might see, when the first day of her being of age arrived; for the grandmother gave them but little information, and there was so much that they wished to hear.

But none of all the sisters longed so ardently for the day when she should be released from childish restraint as the youngest—she who had longest to wait, and was so quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, looking up through the clear blue water, whilst the fishes were leaping and playing around her. She could see the sun and the moon; their light was pale, but they appeared larger than they do to those who live in the upper world. If a shadow passed over them, she knew it must be either
a whale, or a ship sailing by full of human beings. Never could these last have imagined that, far beneath them, a little Mermaiden was passionately stretching forth her white hands towards their ship's keel.

The day had now arrived when the eldest Princess had attained her fifteenth year, and was therefore allowed to rise up to the surface of the sea. When she returned she had a thousand things to relate. Her chief pleasure had been to sit upon a sand-bank in the moonlight, looking at a large town which lay on the coast, where lights were beaming like stars, and where music was playing; she had heard the distant noise of men and carriages, she had seen the high church-towers, had listened to the ringing of the bells; and just because she could not go on shore, she longed the more after all these things.

How attentively did her youngest sister listen to her words! And when she next stood at night-time by her open window, gazing upward through the blue waters, her thoughts dwelt so eagerly upon the great city, full of life and sound, that she fancied she could hear the church-bells ringing.

Next year the second sister received permission to swim wherever she pleased. She rose to the surface of the sea just when the sun was setting; and this sight so delighted her that she declared it to be more beautiful than anything else she had seen above the waters.

"The whole sky seemed tinged with gold," said she; "and it is impossible for me to describe to you the beauty of the clouds. Now red, now violet, they
glided over me; but still more swiftly flew over the water a flock of white swans, just where the sun was descending. I looked after them; but the sun disappeared, and the bright rosy light on the surface of the sea and on the edges of the clouds died away gradually."

It was now time for the third sister to visit the upper world. She was the boldest of the six, and ventured up a river. On its shores she saw green hills, covered with woods and vineyards, from among which arose houses and castles. She heard the birds singing; and the sun shone with so much power that she was continually obliged to plunge below, in order to cool her burning face. In a little bay she met with a number of children, who were bathing and jumping about; she would have joined in their gambols, but the children fled back to land in great terror, and a little black animal barked at her in such a manner, that she herself was frightened at last, and swam back to the sea. But never could she forget the green woods, the verdant hills, and the pretty children, who, although they had no fins, were swimming about in the river so fearlessly.

The fourth sister was not so bold; she remained in the open sea, and said, on her return home, she thought nothing could be more beautiful. She had seen ships sailing by, so far off that they looked like sea-gulls; she had watched the merry dolphins gambolling in the water, and the enormous whales sending up into the air a thousand sparkling fountains.

The year after, the fifth sister attained her fifteenth
year,—her birthday happened at a different season from that of her sisters; it was winter, the sea was of a green color, and immense icebergs were floating on its surface. These, she said, looked like pearls, although all were much larger than the church-towers in the land of human beings. She sat down upon one of these pearls, and let the wind play with her long hair; but then all the ships hoisted their sails in terror, and escaped as quickly as possible. In the evening the sky was covered with clouds; and whilst the great mountains of ice alternately sank and rose again, and beamed with a reddish glow, flashes of lightning burst forth from the clouds, and the thunder rolled on, peal after peal. The sails of all the ships were instantly furled, and horror and affright reigned on board; but the Princess sat still on the iceberg, looking unconcernedly at the blue zig-zag of the flashes.

The first time that either of these sisters rose out of the sea, she was quite enchanted at the sight of so many new and beautiful objects; but the novelty was soon over, and it was not long ere their own home appeared far more attractive than the upper world.

Many an evening would the five sisters rise hand in hand from the depths of the ocean. Their voices were far sweeter than any human voice; and when a storm was coming on, they would swim in front of the ships and sing,—oh, how sweetly did they sing!—describing the happiness of those who live at the bottom of the sea, and entreat ing the sailors not to be afraid, but to come down to them.

But the mariners did not understand their words,—
they fancied the song was only the whistling of the wind, — and thus they lost the hidden glories of the sea; for, if their ships were wrecked, all on board were drowned, and none but dead men ever entered the Mer-king’s palace.

Whilst the sisters were swimming at evening time, the youngest would remain motionless and alone in her father’s palace, looking up after them. She would have wept; but Mermaids cannot weep, and therefore, when they are troubled, suffer infinitely more than human beings do.

“Oh, if I were but fifteen!” sighed she; “I know that I should love the upper world and its inhabitants so much!”

At last the time she had so longed for arrived.

“Well, now it is your turn,” said the grandmother; “come here that I may adorn you like your sisters.” And winding around her hair a wreath of white lilies, whose every petal was the half of a pearl, she commanded eight large oysters to fasten themselves to the Princess’s tail, in token of her high rank.

“But that is so very uncomfortable!” said the little Princess.

“One must not mind slight inconveniences when one wishes to look well,” said the old lady.

How willingly the Princess would have given up all this splendor, and exchanged her heavy crown for the red flowers of her garden, which were so much more becoming to her. But she dared not do so. “Farewell!” said she; and she rose from the sea, light as a flake of foam.
When, for the first time in her life, she appeared on the surface of the water, the sun had just sunk below the horizon, the clouds were beaming with bright golden and rosy hues, the evening star was shining in the pale western sky, the air was mild and refreshing, and the sea as smooth as a looking-glass. A large ship with three masts lay on the still waters; one sail only was unfurled; for not a breath was stirring, and the sailors were quietly seated on the cordage and ladders of the vessel. Music and song resounded from the deck; and after it grew dark hundreds of lamps all on a sudden burst forth into light, whilst innumerable flags were fluttering overhead. The little Mermaid swam close up to the captain's cabin; and every now and then, when the ship was raised by the motion of the water, she could look through the clear window-panes. She saw within many richly dressed men; the handsomest among them was a young Prince with large black eyes. He could not certainly be more than sixteen years old, and it was in honor of his birthday that a grand festival was being celebrated. The crew were dancing on the deck; and when the young Prince appeared among them, a hundred rockets were sent up into the air, turning night into day, and so terrifying the little Mermaid, that for some minutes she plunged beneath the water. However, she soon raised her little head again, and then it seemed as if all the stars were falling down upon her. Such a fiery shower she had never seen before,—never had she heard that men possessed such wonderful powers. Large suns revolved around her, bright fishes floated in the air,
and all these marvels were reflected on the clear surface of the sea. It was so light in the ship, that everything could be seen distinctly. Oh, how happy the young Prince was! he shook hands with the sailors, laughed and jested with them, whilst sweet notes of music mingled with the silence of the night.

It was now late, but the little Mermaid could not tear herself away from the ship and the handsome young Prince. She remained looking through the cabin-window, rocked to and fro by the waves. There was a foaming and fermentation in the depths beneath, and the ship began to move on faster. The sails were spread, the waves rose high, thick clouds gathered over the sky, and the noise of distant thunder was heard. The sailors perceived that a storm was coming on, so they again furled the sails. The great vessel was tossed about on the tempestuous ocean like a light boat; and the waves arose to an immense height, towering over the ship, which alternately sank beneath and rose above them. To the little Mermaid this seemed most delightful, but the ship's crew thought very differently. The vessel cracked, the stout masts bent under the violence of the billows, the water rushed in. For a minute the ship tottered to and fro, then the mainmast broke, as if it had been a reed; the ship turned over, and was filled with water. The little Mermaid now perceived that the crew were in danger; for she herself was forced to beware of the beams and splinters torn from the vessel, and floating about on the waves. But at the same time it became pitch dark, so that she could not distinguish anything; pres-
THE LITTLE MERMAID.

ently, however, a dreadful flash of lightning disclosed to her the whole of the wreck. Her eyes sought the young Prince; the same instant the ship sank to the bottom. At first she was delighted, thinking that the Prince must now come to her abode; but she soon remembered that man cannot live in water, and that therefore, if the Prince ever entered her palace, it would be as a corpse.

"Die! no, he must not die!" She swam through the fragments with which the water was strewn, regardless of the danger she was incurring, and at last found the Prince all but exhausted, and with great difficulty keeping his head above water. He had already closed his eyes, and must inevitably have been drowned, had not the little Mermaid come to his rescue. She seized hold of him, and kept him above water, suffering the current to bear them on together.

Towards morning the storm was hushed; no trace, however, remained of the ship. The sun rose like fire out of the sea; his beams seemed to restore color to the Prince’s cheeks, but his eyes were still closed. The Mermaid kissed his high forehead, and stroked his wet hair away from his face. He looked like the marble statue in her garden; she kissed him again, and wished most fervently that he might recover.

She now saw the dry land with its mountains glittering with snow. A green wood extended along the coast; and at the entrance of the wood stood a chapel or convent, she could not be sure which. Citron- and melon-trees grew in the garden adjoining it; an avenue of tall palm-trees led up to the door. The sea here
A little bay, in which the water was quite smooth, but very deep, and under the cliffs there were dry, firm sands. Hither swam the little Mermaid with the seemingly dead Prince; she laid him upon the warm sand, and took care to place his head high, and to turn his face to the sun.

The bells began to ring in the large white building which stood before her, and a number of young girls came out to walk in the garden. The Mermaid went away from the shore, hid herself behind some stones, covered her head with foam, so that her little face could not be seen, and watched the Prince with unremitting attention.

It was not long before one of the young girls approached; she seemed quite frightened at finding the Prince in this state, apparently dead; soon, however, she recovered herself, and ran back to call her sisters. The little Mermaid saw that the Prince revived, and that all around smiled kindly and joyfully upon him; for her, however, he looked not; he knew not that it was she who had saved him; and when the Prince was taken into the house, she felt so sad that she immediately plunged beneath the water, and returned to her father's palace.

If she had been before quiet and thoughtful, she now grew still more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen in the upper world, but she made no answer.

Many an evening she rose to the place where she had left the prince. She saw the snow on the mountains melt, the fruits in the garden ripen and gather...
ered, but the Prince she never saw; so she always returned sorrowfully to her home under the sea. Her only pleasure was to sit in her little garden, gazing on the beautiful statue so like the Prince. She cared no longer for her flowers; they grew up in wild luxuriance, covered the steps, and entwined their long stems and tendrils among the boughs of the trees, until her whole garden became a bower.

At last, being unable to conceal her sorrow any longer, she revealed the secret to one of her sisters, who told it to the other Princesses, and they to some of their friends. Among them was a young Mermaid who recollected the Prince, having been an eye-witness herself to the festivities in the ship; she knew also in what country the Prince lived, and the name of its king.

"Come, little sister!" said the Princesses; and, embracing her, they rose together arm in arm, out of the water, just in front of the Prince's palace.

This palace was built of bright yellow stones; a flight of white marble steps led from it down to the sea. A gilded cupola crowned the building; and white marble figures, which might almost have been taken for real men and women, were placed among the pillars surrounding it. Through the clear glass of the high windows one might look into magnificent apartments hung with silken curtains, the walls adorned with beautiful paintings. It was a real treat to the little royal Mermaids to behold so splendid an abode; they gazed through the windows of one of the largest rooms, and in the centre saw a fountain playing whose waters
sprang up so high as to reach the glittering cupola above, through which fell the sunbeams dancing on the water, and brightening the pretty plants which grew around it.

The little Mermaid now knew where her beloved Prince dwelt, and henceforth she went there almost every evening. She often approached nearer the land than her sisters had ventured, and even swam up the narrow channel that flowed under the marble balcony. Here, on bright moonlight nights, she would watch the young Prince whilst he believed himself alone. Sometimes she saw him sailing on the water in a gayly painted boat, with many colored flags waving above. She would then hide among the green reeds which grew on the banks, listening to his voice; and if any one in the boat noticed the rustling of her long silver veil when it was caught now and then by the light breeze, they only fancied it was a swan flapping his wings.

Many a night when the fishermen were casting their nets by the beacon’s light she heard them talking of the Prince, and relating the noble actions he had performed. She was then so happy, thinking how she had saved his life when struggling with the waves, and remembering how his head had rested on her bosom, and how she had kissed him when he knew nothing of it, and could never even dream of her existence.

Human beings became more and more dear to her every day; she wished that she were one of them. Their world seemed to her much larger than that of the Mer-people; they could fly over the ocean in
their ships, as well as climb to the summits of those high mountains that rose above the clouds; and their wooded domains extended much farther than a Mermaid’s eye could penetrate.

There were many things that she wished to hear explained, but her sisters could not give her any satisfactory answer; she was again obliged to have recourse to the old Queen-mother, who knew a great deal about the upper world, which she used to call “the country above the sea.”

“Do men, when they are not drowned, live forever?” she asked one day; “do they not die as we do who live at the bottom of the sea?”

“Yes,” was the grandmother’s reply; “they must die like us, and their life is much shorter than ours. We live to the age of three hundred years; but, when we die, we become foam on the sea, and are not allowed even to share a grave among those that are dear to us. We have no immortal souls, we can never live again, and are like the green rushes which when once cut down are withered forever. Human beings, on the contrary, have souls that continue to live when their bodies become dust; and as we rise out of the water to admire the abode of man, even so these souls ascend to glorious unknown dwellings in the skies, which we are not permitted to see.”

“Why have not we immortal souls?” asked the little Mermaid. “I would willingly give up my three hundred years to be a human being for only one day, thus to become entitled to that heavenly world above.”

“You must not think of that,” answered her grand-
mother; "it is much better as it is; we live longer and are far happier than human beings."

"So I must die, and be dashed like foam over the sea, never to rise again and hear the gentle murmur of the ocean, never again to see the beautiful flowers and the bright sun!—Tell me, dear grandmother, are there no means by which I may obtain an immortal soul?"

"No!" replied the old lady. "It is true, that if thou couldest so win the affections of a human being as to become dearer to him than either father or mother; if he loved thee with all his heart, and promised, whilst the priest joined his hands with thine, to be always faithful to thee,—then his soul would flow into thine, and thou wouldest become partaker of human bliss. But that can never be! for what in our eyes is the most beautiful part of our body, the tail, the inhabitants of the earth think hideous; they cannot bear it. To appear handsome to them, the body must have two clumsy props, which they call legs."

The little Mermaid sighed, and looked mournfully at the scaly part of her form, otherwise so fair and delicate.

"We are happy," added the old lady; "we shall jump and swim about merrily for three hundred years; that is a long time, and afterwards we shall repose peacefully in death. This evening we have a court-ball."

The ball which the Queen-mother spoke of was far more splendid than any that earth has ever seen. The walls of the saloon were of crystal, very thick, but yet very clear; hundreds of large mussel-shells were
planted in rows along them; these shells were some of rose-color, some green as grass, but all sending forth a bright light, which not only illuminated the whole apartment, but also shone through the glassy walls so as to light up the waters around, and making the scales of the numberless fishes, great and small, crimson and purple, silver- and gold-colored, appear more brilliant than ever.

Through the centre of the saloon flowed a bright, clear stream, on the surface of which danced Mermen and Mermaids to the melody of their own sweet voices, — voices far sweeter than those of the dwellers upon earth. The little Princess sang most sweetly of all, and they clapped their hands and applauded her. For a moment it pleased her to be thus reminded that there was neither on earth nor in the sea a more beautiful voice than hers. But her thoughts soon returned to the world above her; she could not forget the handsome Prince; she could not control her sorrow at not having an immortal soul. She stole away from her father’s palace; and whilst all was joy within she sat alone, lost in thought, in her little neglected garden. On a sudden she heard the tones of horns resounding over the water far away in the distance; and she said to herself, “Now he is going out to hunt — he whom I love more than my father and my mother, with whom my thoughts are constantly occupied, and to whom I would so willingly trust the happiness of my life! All, all! will I risk to win him — and an immortal soul! Whilst my sisters are still dancing in the palace, I will go to the enchantress whom I have
hitherto feared so much, but who is, nevertheless, the only person who can advise and help me."

So the little Mermaid left the garden, and went to the foaming whirlpool beyond which dwelt the enchantress. She had never been this way before; neither flowers nor sea-grass bloomed along her path; she had to traverse an extent of bare, gray sand till she reached the whirlpool, the waters of which were eddying and whizzing like mill-wheels, tearing everything they could seize along with them into the abyss below. She was obliged to make her way through this horrible place, in order to arrive at the territory of the enchantress. Then she had to pass through a boiling, slimy bog, which the enchantress called her turf-moor; her house stood in a wood beyond this, and a strange abode it was. All the trees and bushes around were polypi, looking like hundred-headed serpents shooting up out of the ground; their branches were long, slimy arms with fingers of worms, every member, from the root to the uttermost tip, ceaselessly moving and extending on all sides. Whatever they seized they fastened upon so that it could not loosen itself from their grasp. The little Mermaid stood still for a minute, looking at this horrible wood; her heart beat with fear, and she would certainly have returned without attaining her object, had she not remembered the Prince — and immortality. The thought gave her new courage; she bound up her long waving hair, that the polypi might not catch hold of it, crossed her delicate arms over her bosom, and swifter than a fish can glide through the water, she passed these unseemly trees,
who stretched their eager arms after her in vain. She could not, however, help seeing that every polypus had something in its grasp, held as firmly by a thousand little arms as if enclosed by iron bands. The whitened skulls of a number of human beings who had been drowned in the sea, and had sunk into the abyss, grinned horribly from the arms of these polypi; helms, chests, skeletons of land animals, were also held in their embrace; among other things might be seen even a little Mermaid whom they had seized and strangled! What a fearful sight for the unfortunate Princess!

But she got safely through this wood of horrors, and then arrived at a slimy place, where immense fat snails were crawling about, and in the midst of this place stood a house built of the bones of unfortunate people who had been shipwrecked. Here sat the witch, caressing a toad in the same manner as some persons would a pet bird. The ugly fat snails she called her chickens, and she permitted them to crawl about her.

"I know well what you would ask of me," said she to the little Princess. "Your wish is foolish enough; yet it shall be fulfilled, though its accomplishment is sure to bring misfortune on you, my fairest Princess. You wish to get rid of your tail, and to have instead two stilts, like those of human beings, in order that a young Prince may fall in love with you, and that you may obtain an immortal soul—is it not so?" Whilst the witch spoke these words, she laughed so violently that her pet toad and snails fell from her lap. "You come just at the right time," continued she; "had
you come after sunset, it would not have been in my power to have helped you before another year. I will prepare for you a drink, with which you must swim to land; you must sit down upon the shore and swallow it, and then your tail will fall and shrink up to the things which men call legs. This transformation will, however, be very painful; you will feel as if a sharp knife passed through your body. All who look on you, after you have been thus changed, will say that you are the loveliest child of earth they have ever seen; you will retain your peculiar undulating movements, and no dancer will move so lightly, but every step you take will cause you pain all but unbearable; it will seem to you as if you were walking on the sharp edges of swords, and your blood will flow. Can you endure all this suffering? If so, I will grant your request."

"Yes, I will," answered the Princess with a faltering voice; for she remembered her dear Prince, and the immortal soul which her suffering might win.

"Only consider," said the witch, "that you can never again become a Mermaid, when once you have received a human form. You may never return to your sisters and your father's palace; and unless you shall win the Prince's love to such a degree that he shall leave father and mother for you, that you shall be mixed up with all his thoughts and wishes, and unless the priest join your hands, so that you become man and wife, you will never obtain the immortality you seek. The morrow of the day on which he is united to another will see your death; your heart will
break with sorrow, and you will be changed to foam on the sea."

"Still I will venture!" said the little Mermaid, pale and trembling as a dying person.

"Besides all this, I must be paid; and it is no slight thing that I require for my trouble. Thou hast the sweetest voice of all the dwellers in the sea, and thou thinkest by its means to charm the Prince; this voice, however, I demand as my recompense. The best thing thou possesest I require in exchange for my magic drink; for I shall be obliged to sacrifice my own blood, in order to give it the sharpness of a two-edged sword."

"But if you take my voice from me," said the Princess, "what have I left with which to charm the Prince?"

"Thy graceful form," replied the witch, "thy undulating motion and speaking eyes. With such as these, it will be easy to infatuate a vain human heart. Well, now! hast thou lost courage? Put out thy little tongue, that I may cut it off, and take it for myself, in return for my magic elixir."

"Be it so!" said the Princess; and the witch took up her caldron, in order to mix her potion. "Cleanliness is a good thing," remarked she, as she began to rub the caldron with a handful of snails. She then scratched her bosom, and let the black blood trickle down into the caldron, every moment throwing in new ingredients, the smoke from the mixture assuming such horrible forms as were enough to fill beholders with terror, and a moaning and groaning proceeding from it which might be compared to the weeping of
crocodiles. The magic drink at length became clear and transparent as pure water: it was ready.

"Here it is!" said the witch to the Princess, cutting out her tongue at the same moment. The poor little Mermaid was now dumb — she could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polypi should attempt to seize you as you pass through my little grove," said the witch, "you have only to sprinkle some of this liquid over them, and their arms will burst into a thousand pieces."

But the Princess had no need of this counsel, for the polypi drew hastily back, as soon as they perceived the bright phial that glittered in her hand like a star; thus she passed safely through the formidable wood, over the moor, and across the foaming mill-stream.

She now looked once again at her father's palace; the lamps in the saloon were extinguished, and all the family were asleep. She would not go in, for she could not speak if she did; she was about to leave her home forever; her heart was ready to break with sorrow at the thought. She stole into the garden, plucked a flower from the bed of each of her sisters as a remembrance, kissed her hand again and again, and then rose through the dark blue waters to the world above.

The sun had not yet risen when she arrived at the Prince's dwelling, and ascended those well-known marble steps. The moon still shone in the sky when the little Mermaid drank off the wonderful liquid contained in her phial; she felt it run through her like a sharp knife, and she fell down in a swoon. When the
sun rose she woke, and felt a burning pain in all her limbs; but — she saw standing close to her the object of her love, the handsome young Prince, whose coal-black eyes were fixed inquiringly upon her. Full of shame, she cast down her own, and perceived, instead of the long, fish-like tail she had hitherto borne, two slender legs; but she was quite naked, and tried in vain to cover herself with her long, thick hair. The Prince asked who she was, and how she had got there; and she, in reply, smiled, and gazed upon him with her bright blue eyes, for, alas! she could not speak. He then led her by the hand into the palace. She found that the witch had told her true; she felt as if she were walking on the edges of sharp swords, but she bore the pain willingly; on she passed, light as a zephyr, and all who saw her wondered at her light, undulating movements.

When she entered the palace, rich clothes of muslin and silk were brought to her; she was lovelier than all who dwelt there, but she could neither speak nor sing. Some female slaves, gayly dressed in silk and gold brocade, sung before the Prince and his royal parents; and one of them distinguished herself by her clear, sweet voice, which the Prince applauded by clapping his hands. This made the little Mermaid very sad, for she knew that she used to sing far better than the young slave. "Alas!" thought she, "if he did but know that for his sake I have given away my voice forever."

The slaves began to dance; our lovely little Mermaiden then arose, stretched out her delicate white
arms, and hovered gracefully about the room. Every motion displayed more and more the perfect symmetry and elegance of her figure; and the expression which beamed in her speaking eyes touched the hearts of the spectators far more than the song of the slaves.

All present were enchanted, but especially the young Prince, who called her his dear little foundling. And she danced again and again, although every step cost her excessive pain. The Prince then said she should always be with him; and accordingly a sleeping-place was prepared for her on velvet cushions in the anteroom of his own apartment.

The Prince caused a suit of male apparel to be made for her, in order that she might accompany him in his rides; so together they traversed the fragrant woods, where green boughs brushed against their shoulders, and the birds sang merrily among the fresh leaves. With him she climbed up steep mountains; and although her tender feet bled, so as to be remarked by the attendants, she only smiled, and followed her dear Prince to the heights, whence they could see the clouds chasing each other beneath them, like a flock of birds migrating to other countries.

During the night she would, when all in the palace were at rest, walk down the marble steps, in order to cool her burning feet in the deep waters; she would then think of those beloved ones who dwelt in the lower world.

One night, as she was thus bathing her feet, her sisters swam together to the spot, arm in arm and singing, but, alas! so mournfully! She beckoned to
them; and they immediately recognized her, and told her how great was the mourning in her father’s house for her loss. From this time the sisters visited her every night; and once they brought with them the old grandmother, who had not seen the upper world for a great many years; they likewise brought their father, the Mer-king, with his crown on his head; but these two old people did not venture near enough to land to be able to speak to her.

The little Mermaiden became dearer and dearer to the Prince every day; but he only looked upon her as a sweet, gentle child; and the thought of making her his wife never entered his head. And yet his wife she must be, ere she could receive an immortal soul; his wife she must be, or she would change into foam, and be driven restlessly over the billows of the sea!

“Dost thou not love me above all others?” her eyes seemed to ask, as he pressed her fondly in his arms, and kissed her lovely brow.

“Yes,” the Prince would say, “thou art dearer to me than any other, for no one is as good as thou art! Thou loveth me so much; and thou art so like a young maiden whom I have seen but once, and may never see again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked by a sudden tempest; the waves threw me on the shore, near a holy temple, where a number of young girls are occupied constantly with religious services. The youngest of them found me on the shore, and saved my life. I saw her only once; but her image is vividly impressed upon my memory, and her alone
can I love. But she belongs to the holy temple; and thou, who resembllest her so much, hast been given to me for consolation; never will we be parted!"

"Alas! he does not know that it was I who saved his life," thought the little Mermaiden, sighing deeply; "I bore him over the wild waves, into the wooded bay, where the holy temple stood; I sat behind the rocks, waiting till some one should come. I saw the pretty maiden approach, whom he loves more than me," — and again she heaved a deep sigh, for she could not weep; "he said that the young girl belongs to the holy temple; she never comes out into the world, so they cannot meet each other again,— and I am always with him, see him daily; I will love him, and devote my whole life to him."

"So the Prince is going to be married to the beautiful daughter of the neighboring king," said the courtiers; "that is why he is having that splendid ship fitted out. It is announced that he wishes to travel, but in reality he goes to see the princess; a numerous retinue will accompany him." The little Mermaiden smiled at these and similar conjectures, for she knew the Prince’s intentions better than any one else.

"I must go," he said to her; "I must see the beautiful princess; my parents require me to do so; but they will not compel me to marry her, and bring her home as my bride. And it is quite impossible for me to love her, for she cannot be so like the beautiful girl in the temple as thou art; and if I were obliged to choose, I should prefer thee, my little silent foundling with the speaking eyes." And he kissed her rosy
lips, played with her locks, and folded her in his arms, whereupon arose in her heart a sweet vision of human happiness and immortal bliss.

"Thou art not afraid of the sea, art thou, my sweet, silent child?" asked he tenderly, as they stood together in the splendid ship which was to take them to the country of the neighboring king. And then he told her of the storms that sometimes agitate the waters, of the strange fishes that inhabit the deep, and of the wonderful things seen by divers. But she smiled at his words, for she knew better than any child of earth what went on in the depths of the ocean.

At night-time, when the moon shone brightly, and when all on board were fast asleep, she sat in the ship's gallery, looking down into the sea. It seemed to her, as she gazed through the foamy track made by the ship's keel, that she saw her father's palace and her grandmother's silver crown. She then saw her sisters rise out of the water, looking sorrowful, and stretching out their hands towards her. She nodded to them, smiled, and would have explained that everything was going on quite according to her wishes; but just then the cabin-boy approached, upon which the sisters plunged beneath the water so suddenly that the boy thought what he had seen on the waves was nothing but foam.

The next morning the ship entered the harbor of the king's splendid capital. Bells were rung, trumpets sounded, and soldiers marched in procession through the city, with waving banners and glittering bayonets. Every day witnessed some new entertain-
ment; balls and parties followed each other. The princess, however, was not yet in the town; she had been sent to a distant convent for education, there to be taught the practice of all royal virtues. At last she arrived at the palace.

The little Mermaid had been anxious to see this unparalleled princess, and she was now obliged to confess that she had never before seen so beautiful a creature.

The skin of the princess was so white and delicate that the veins might be seen through it, and her dark eyes sparkled beneath a pair of finely formed eyebrows.

"It is herself!" exclaimed the Prince, when they met; "it is she who saved my life, when I lay like a corpse on the seashore!" and he pressed his blushing bride to his beating heart.

"Oh, I am all too happy!" said he to his dumb foundling, "what I never dared to hope for has come to pass. Thou must rejoice in my happiness, for thou lovest me more than all others who surround me." And the little Mermaid kissed his hand in silent sorrow; it seemed to her as if her heart was breaking already, although the morrow of his marriage-day, which must inevitably see her death, had not yet dawned.

Again rang the church bells, whilst heralds rode through the streets of the capital to announce the approaching bridal. Odorous flames burned in silver candlesticks on all the altars, the priests swung their golden censers, and bride and bridegroom joined hands
whilst the holy words that united them were spoken. The little Mermaid, clad in silk and cloth of gold, stood behind the princess, and held the train of the bridal dress; but her ear heard nothing of the solemn music; her eye saw not the holy ceremony; she remembered her approaching end; she remembered that she had lost both this world and the next.

That very same evening bride and bridegroom went on board the ship; cannons were fired, flags waved with the breeze, and in the centre of the deck was raised a magnificent pavilion of purple and cloth of gold, fitted up with the richest and softest couches. Here the princely pair were to spend the night. A favorable wind swelled the sails, and the ship glided lightly over the blue waters.

As soon as it was dark, colored lamps were hung out, and dancing began on the deck. The little Mermaid was thus involuntarily reminded of what she had seen the first time she rose to the upper world. The spectacle that now presented itself was equally splendid; and she was obliged to join in the dance, hovering lightly as a bird over the ship-boards. All applauded her, for never had she danced with more enchanting grace. Her little feet suffered extremely, but she no longer felt the pain; the anguish her heart suffered was much greater. It was the last evening she might see him for whose sake she had forsaken her home and family, had given away her beautiful voice, and suffered daily the most violent pain,—all without his having the least suspicion of it. It was the last evening that she might breathe the same
atmosphere in which he, the beloved one, lived; the last evening when she might behold the deep blue sea, and the starry heavens,—an eternal night, in which she might neither think nor dream, awaited her. And all was joy in the ship; and she, her heart filled with thoughts of death and annihilation, smiled and danced with the others till past midnight. Then the Prince kissed his lovely bride, and arm in arm they entered the magnificent tent prepared for their repose.

All was now still; the steersman alone stood at the ship's helm. The little Mermaid leaned her white arms on the gallery, and looked towards the east, watching for the dawn; she well knew that the first sunbeam would witness her dissolution. She saw her sisters rise out of the sea; deadly pale were their features, and their long hair no more fluttered over their shoulders—it had all been cut off.

"We have given it to the witch," said they, "to induce her to help thee, so that thou mayst not die. She has given to us a penknife—here it is! Before the sun rises, thou must plunge it into the Prince's heart; and when his warm blood trickles down upon thy feet, they will again be changed to a fish-like tail; thou wilt once more become a Mermaid, and wilt live thy full three hundred years, ere thou changest to foam on the sea. But hasten! either he or thou must die before sunrise. Our aged mother mourns for thee so much her gray hair has fallen off through sorrow, as ours fell before the scissors of the witch. Kill the Prince, and come down to us! Hasten!
hasten! dost thou not see the red streaks on the eastern sky, announcing the near approach of the sun? A few minutes more and he rises, and then all will be over with thee.” At these words they sighed deeply, and vanished.

The little Mermaid drew aside the purple curtains of the pavilion, where lay the bride and bridegroom; bending over them, she kissed the Prince’s forehead, and then, glancing at the sky, she saw that the dawning light became every moment brighter. The Prince’s lips unconsciously murmured the name of his bride — he was dreaming of her, and her only, whilst the fatal penknife trembled in the hand of the unhappy Mermaid. All at once she threw far out into the sea that instrument of death; the waves rose like bright blazing flames around, and the water where it fell seemed tinged with blood. With eyes fast becoming dim and fixed, she looked once more at her beloved Prince, then plunged from the ship into the sea, and felt her body slowly but surely dissolved into foam.

The sun rose from his watery bed; his beams fell so softly and warmly upon her, that our little Mermaid was scarcely sensible of dying. She still saw the glorious sun; and over her head hovered a thousand beautiful, transparent forms, — so transparent were they that through them she could distinguish the white sails of the ship and the bright red clouds in the sky; the voices of these airy creatures had a melody so sweet and soothing that a human ear would be as little able to catch the sound as the eye to discern their forms; they hovered around her without
wings, borne by their own lightness through the air. The little Mermaid at last saw that she had a body transparent as theirs, and felt herself raised gradually from the foam of the sea to higher regions.

"Where are they taking me?" asked she; and her accents sounded just like the voices of those heavenly beings.

"Speak you to the daughters of air?" was the answer. "The Mermaid has no immortal soul, and can only acquire that heavenly gift by winning the love of one of the sons of men; her immortality depends upon union with man. Neither do the daughters of air possess immortal souls, but they can acquire them by their own good deeds. We fly to hot countries, where the children of earth are wasting away under sultry, pestilential breezes — our fresh, cooling breath revives them. We diffuse ourselves through the atmosphere; we perfume it with the delicious fragrance of flowers, and thus spread delight and health over the earth. By doing good in this manner for three hundred years, we win immortality, and receive a share of the eternal bliss of human beings. And thou, poor little Mermaid! who, following the impulse of thine own heart, hast done and suffered so much, thou art now raised to the airy world of spirits, that, by performing deeds of kindness for three hundred years, thou mayest acquire an immortal soul."

The little Mermaid stretched out her transparent arms to the sun, and, for the first time in her life, tears moistened her eyes.

And now again all were awake and rejoicing in the
ship; she saw the Prince, with his pretty bride; they had missed her; they looked sorrowfully down on the foamy waters, as if they knew she had plunged into the sea; unseen, she kissed the bridegroom’s forehead, smiled upon him, and then, with the rest of the children of air, soared high above the rosy cloud which was sailing so peacefully over the ship.

“After three hundred years we shall fly in the kingdom of heaven!”

“We may arrive there even sooner,” whispered one of her sisters. “We fly invisibly through the dwellings of men, where there are children; and whenever we find a good child, who gives pleasure to his parents and deserves their love, the good God shortens our time of probation. No child is aware that we are flitting about his room, and that whenever joy draws from us a smile a year is struck out of our three hundred. But when we see a rude, naughty child, we weep bitter tears of sorrow; and every tear we shed adds a day to our time of probation.”
THE STORKS.

On the roof of a house situated at the extremity of a small town, a stork had built his nest. There sat the mother-stork, with her four young ones, who all stretched out their little black bills, which had not yet become red. Not far off, upon the parapet, erect and proud, stood the father-stork; he had drawn one of his legs under him, being weary of standing on two. You might have fancied him carved in wood, he stood so motionless. "It looks so grand," thought he, "for my wife to have a sentinel to keep guard over her nest; people cannot know that I am her husband; they will certainly think that I am commanded to stand here — how well it looks!" and so he remained standing on one leg.

In the street below, a number of children were playing together. When they saw the storks, one of the liveliest amongst them began to sing as much as he could remember of some old rhymes about storks, in which he was soon joined by the others:—

"Stork! stork! long-legged stork!
Into thy nest I prithee walk;
There sits thy mate,
With her four children so great.

The first we'll hang like a cat,
The second we'll burn,
The third on a spit we'll turn,
The fourth drown dead as a rat!"
"Only listen to what the boys are singing," said the little storks; "they say we shall be hanged and burnt!"

"Never mind," said the mother, "don't listen to them; they will do you no harm."

But the boys went on singing, and pointed their fingers at the storks; only one little boy, called Peter, said, "It was a sin to mock and tease animals, and that he would have nothing to do with it."

The mother-stork again tried to comfort her little ones. "Never mind," said she; "see how composedly your father is standing there, and upon one leg only."

"But we are so frightened!" said the young ones, drawing their heads down into the nest.

The next day, when the children were again assembled to play together, and saw the storks, they again began their song:

"The first we'll hang like a cat,
The second we'll burn!"—

"And are we really to be hanged and burnt?" asked the young storks.

"No, indeed!" said the mother. "You shall learn to fly; I will teach you myself. Then we can fly over to the meadow, and pay a visit to the frogs. They will bow to us in the water, and say, 'Croak, croak!' and then we shall eat them; will not that be nice?"

"And what then?" asked the little storks.

"Then all the storks in the country will gather together, and the autumnal exercise will begin. It is of the greatest consequence that you should fly well
then; for every one who does not, the general will stab to death with his bill; so you must pay great attention when we begin to drill you, and learn very quickly."

"Then we shall really be killed after all! as the boys said. Oh, listen! they are singing it again!"

"Attend to me, and not to them!" said the mother.

After the grand exercise, we shall fly to warm countries, far, far away from here, over mountains and forests. We shall fly to Egypt, where are the three-cornered stone houses whose summits reach the clouds; they are called pyramids, and are older than it is possible for storks to imagine. There is a river, too, which overflows its banks, so as to make the whole country like a marsh; and we shall go into the marsh and eat frogs."

"Oh!" said the young ones.

"Yes, it is delightful! one does nothing but eat all the day long. And whilst we are so comfortable, in this country not a single green leaf is left on the trees; and it is so cold that the clouds are frozen, and fall down upon the earth in little white pieces." She meant snow, but she could not express herself more clearly.

"And will the naughty boys be frozen to pieces too?" asked the young storks.

"No, they will not be frozen to pieces; but they will be nearly as badly off as if they were; they will be obliged to crowd round the fire in their little dark rooms; while you, on the contrary, will be flying about in foreign lands, where there are beautiful flowers and warm sunshine."
Well, time passed away, and the young storks grew so tall that when they stood upright in the nests they could see the country around to a great distance. The father-stork used to bring them every day the nicest little frogs, as well as snails, and all the other stork tidbits he could find. Oh! it was so droll to see him show them his tricks; he would lay his head upon his tail, make a rattling noise with his bill, and then tell them such charming stories, all about the moors.

"Now you must learn to fly!" said the mother one day; and accordingly all the four young storks were obliged to come out upon the parapet. Oh! how they trembled! And though they balanced themselves on their wings, they were very near falling.

"Only look at me," said the mother. "This is the way you must hold your heads; and in this manner place your feet—one, two! one, two! this will help you to get on." She flew a little way, and the young ones made an awkward spring after her,—bounce! down they fell, for their bodies were heavy.

"I will not fly!" said one of the young ones, as he crept back into the nest; "I do not want to go into the warm countries!"

"Do you want to be frozen to death during the winter? shall the boys come, and hang, burn, or roast you? Wait a little, I will call them!"

"Oh, no!" said the little stork; and again he began to hop about on the roof like the others. By the third day they could fly pretty well, and so they thought they could also sit and take their ease in the air; but bounce! down they tumbled, and found them-
selves obliged to make use of their wings. The boys now came into their street, singing their favorite song,—

“Stork! stork! long-legged stork!”

“Shall not we fly down and peck out their eyes?” said the young ones.

“No, leave them alone!” said the mother. “Attend to me, that is of much more importance! — one, two, three, now to the right! — one, two, three, now to the left, round the chimney-pot! That was very well; you managed your wings so neatly last time that I will permit you to come with me to-morrow to the marsh; several first-rate stork families will be there with their children. Let it be said that mine are the prettiest and best behaved of all; and remember to stand very upright, and to throw out your chest; that looks well, and gives such an air of distinction!”

“But are we not to take revenge upon those rude boys?” asked the young ones.

“Let them screech as much as they please! You will fly among the clouds, you will go to the lands of the pyramids, when they must shiver with cold, and have not a single green leaf to look at, nor a single sweet apple to eat!”

“Yes, we shall be revenged!” whispered they, one to another. And then they were drilled again.

Of all the boys in the town, the forwardest in singing nonsensical verses was always the same one who had begun teasing the storks, a little urchin not more than six years old. The young storks, indeed, fan-
cried him a hundred years old, because he was bigger than either their father or mother; and what should they know about the ages of children or grown-up human beings! All their schemes of revenge were aimed at this little boy; he had been the first to tease them, and he teased them still. The young storks were highly excited about it; and, the older they grew, the less they were inclined to endure persecution. Their mother, in order to pacify them, at last promised that they should be revenged, but not until the last day of their stay in this place.

"We must first see how you behave yourselves at the grand exercise; if then you should fly badly, and the general should thrust his beak into your breast, the boys will, in some measure, be proved in the right. Let me see how well you will behave!"

"Yes, that you shall!" said the young ones. And now they really took great pains, practised every day, and at last flew so lightly and prettily that it was a pleasure to see them.

Well, now came the autumn. All the storks assembled, in order to fly together to warm countries for the winter. What a practising there was! Away they went over woods and fields, towns and villages, merely to see how well they could fly, for they had a long journey before them. The young storks distinguished themselves so honorably that they were pronounced "worthy of frogs and serpents." This was the highest character they could obtain; now they were allowed to eat frogs and serpents—and eat them they did.
“Now we will have our revenge!” said they.

“Very well!” said the mother; “I have been thinking what will be best. I know where is the pool in which all the little human children lie until the storks come and take them to their parents; the pretty little things sleep and dream so pleasantly as they will never dream again. All parents like to have a little child, and all children like to have a little brother or sister. We will fly to the pool, and fetch one for each of the boys who has not sung that wicked song, nor made a jest of the storks; and the other naughty children shall have none.”

“But he who first sung those naughty rhymes—that great ugly fellow! what shall we do to him?” cried the young storks.

“In the pool there lies a little child who has dreamed away his life; we will take it for him, and he will weep because he has only a little dead brother. But as to the good boy who said it was a sin to mock and tease animals, surely you have not forgotten him? We will bring him two little ones, a brother and a sister. And as this little boy’s name is Peter, you, too, shall for the future be called ‘Peter!’”

And it came to pass just as the mother said; and all the storks were called “Peter,” and are still so called to this very day.
"My poor flowers are quite faded!" said little Ida. "Only yesterday evening they were so pretty, and now they are all drooping! What can be the reason of it?" asked she of the Student, who was sitting on the sofa, and who was a great favorite with her, because he used to tell her stories, and cut out all sorts of pretty things for her in paper, such as hearts with little ladies dancing in them, high castles with open doors, etc. "Why do these flowers look so deplorable?" asked she again, showing him a bouquet of faded flowers.

"Do you not know?" replied the Student. "Your flowers went to a ball last night, and are tired; that is why they all hang their heads."

"Surely flowers cannot dance!" exclaimed little Ida.

"Of course they can dance! When it is dark, and we are all gone to bed, they jump about as merrily as possible. They have a ball almost every night."

"May their children go to the ball too?" asked Ida. "Yes," said the Student; "little daisies, and lilies of the valley."

"And where do the prettiest flowers dance?"

"Have you never been in the large garden in front of the King's beautiful summer palace, the garden so
full of flowers? Surely you recollect the swans which come swimming up to you when you throw them crumbs of bread? There you may imagine they have splendid balls."

"I was there yesterday with my mother," said Ida; "but there were no leaves on the trees, neither did I see a single flower. What could have become of them? There were so many in the summer-time!"

"They are now at the palace," answered the Student. "As soon as the King leaves his summer residence, and returns with all his court to the town, the flowers likewise hasten out of the garden and into the palace, where they enjoy themselves famously. Oh, if you could but see them! The two loveliest roses sit on the throne, and act King and Queen. The red cocks-combs then arrange themselves in rows before them, bowing very low; they are the gentlemen of the bed-chamber. After that the prettiest among the flowers come in, and open the ball. The blue violets represent midshipmen, and begin dancing with the hyacinths and crocuses, who take the part of young ladies. The tulips and the tall orange-lilies are old dowagers, whose business it is to see that everything goes on with perfect propriety."

"But," asked the astonished little Ida, "may the flowers give their ball in the King's palace?"

"No one knows anything about it," replied the Student. "Perhaps once during the night the old Castellan may come in, with his great bunch of keys, to see that all is right; but as soon as the flowers hear the clanking of the keys they are quite still, and
hide themselves behind the long silk window-jeurtains. 'I smell flowers here,' says the old Castellan, but he is not able to find them."

"That is very funny," said Ida, clapping her little hands; "but could not I see the flowers?"

"To be sure you can see them!" returned the Student. "You have only to peep in at the window next time you go to the palace. I did so to-day, and saw a long yellow lily lying on the sofa. That was a court lady."

"Can the flowers in the Botanic Garden go there too? Can they go so far?" asked Ida.

"Certainly, for flowers can fly if they wish it. The pretty red and yellow butterflies, that look so much like flowers, are in fact nothing else. They jump from their stalks, move their petals as if they were little wings, and fly about; as a reward for always behaving themselves well, they are allowed, instead of sitting quietly on their stalks, to flutter hither and thither all day long, till wings actually grow out of their petals. You have often seen it yourself. For the rest, it may be that the flowers in the Botanic Garden have not heard what merry-making goes on every night at the palace; but I assure you, if next time you go into the garden, you whisper to one of the flowers that a ball is to be given at night at Fredericksberg the news will be repeated from flower to flower, and thither they will all fly to a certainty. Then, should the Professor come into the garden, and find all his flowers gone, he will not be able to imagine what is become of them."
"Indeed!" said Ida; "and, pray, how can the flowers repeat to each other what I say to them? I am sure that flowers cannot speak."

"No, they cannot speak—you are right there," returned the Student; "but they make themselves understood by pantomime. Have you never seen them move to and fro at the least breath of air? They can understand each other this way as well as we can by talking."

"And does the Professor understand their pantomime?" asked Ida.

"Oh, certainly! One morning he came into the garden, and perceived that a tall nettle was conversing in pantomime with a pretty red carnation. 'Thou art so beautiful;' said he to the carnation, 'and I love thee so much!' But the Professor could not allow such things; so he gave a rap at the nettle's leaves, which are his fingers, and in doing so he stung himself, and since then has never dared to touch a nettle."

"Ah, ah!" laughed little Ida; "that was very droll."

"What do you mean by this?" here interrupted the tedious Counsellor, who had come on a visit; "putting such trash into the child's head!" He could not endure the Student, and always used to scold when he saw him cutting out pasteboard figures; as, for instance, a man on the gallows holding a heart in his hand, which was meant for a heart-stealer; or an old witch, riding on a broomstick, and carrying her husband on the tip of her nose. He used always to say then, as now, "What do you mean by putting
such trash into the child’s head? It is all fantastical nonsense!”

However, little Ida thought what the Student had told her about the flowers was very droll, and she could not leave off thinking of it. She was now sure that her flowers hung their heads because they were tired with dancing so much the night before. So she took them to the pretty little table where her playthings were arranged. Her doll lay sleeping in the cradle; but Ida said to her, “You must get up, Sophy, and be content to sleep to-night in the table-drawer, for the poor flowers are ill, and must sleep in your bed; perhaps they will be well again by to-morrow.” She then took the doll out of the bed; but the good lady looked vexed at having to give up her cradle to the flowers.

Ida then laid the faded flowers in her doll’s bed, drew the covering over them, and told them to lie quite still, whilst she made some tea for them to drink, in order that they might be well again the next day. And she drew the curtains round the bed, that the sun might not dazzle their eyes.

All the evening she thought of nothing but the Student’s words; and just before she went to bed she ran up to the window, where her mother’s tulips and hyacinths stood, behind the blinds, and whispered to them, “I know very well that you are going to a ball to-night.” But the flowers moved not a leaf, and seemed not to have heard her.

After she was in bed, she thought for a long time how delightful it must be to see the flowers dancing
in the palace, and said to herself, “I wonder whether my flowers have been there?” but before she could determine the point, she fell asleep. During the night she awoke; she had been dreaming of the Student and the flowers, and of the Counsellor, who told her that they were making game of her. All was still in the room, the night-lamp was burning on the table, and her father and mother were both asleep.

“I wonder whether my flowers are still lying in Sophy’s bed?” said she. “I should very much like to know.” She raised herself a little, and looking towards the door, which stood half open, she saw that the flowers and all her playthings were just as she had left them. She listened, and it seemed to her as if some one must be playing on the harpsichord; but the tones were lower and sweeter than she had ever heard before.

“Now my flowers must certainly be dancing,” said she. “Oh, how I should like to see them!” but she dared not get up, for fear of waking her father and mother. “If they would only come in here!” Still, the flowers did not come, and the music sounded so sweetly. At last she could restrain herself no longer; she must see the dancing. So she crept lightly out of the bed, and stole towards the door of the room. Oh, what wonderful things she saw then!

There was no night-lamp burning here; however, it was quite light in the room, for the moon shone brightly through the windows on the floor. All the hyacinths and tulips stood there in two rows, whilst their empty pots might still be seen in front of the
windows; they performed figures, and took hold of each other by the long green leaves. At the harpsichord sat a large yellow lily, which Ida fancied she must have seen before; for she remembered the Student's saying that this flower was exceedingly like Miss Laura, and how every one had laughed at his remark. Now she herself agreed that the lily did resemble this young lady; for she had exactly her way of playing, bowing her long yellow face now on one side, now on the other, and nodding her head to mark the time. A tall blue crocus now stepped forward, sprang upon the table on which lay Ida's playthings, went straight up to the bed, and drew back the curtains. There lay the sick flowers; but they rose immediately, and greeted the other flowers, who invited them to dance with them. The sick flowers appeared quite well again, and danced as merrily as the rest.

Suddenly a heavy noise, as of something falling from the table, was heard. Ida cast a glance that way, and saw that it was the rod which she had found on her bed on the morning of Shrove Tuesday, and which seemed desirous of ranking itself among the flowers. It was certainly a very pretty rod; for a wax-doll was fixed on the top, wearing a hat as broad-brimmed as the Counsellor's, with a blue-and-red ribbon tied round it. It hopped upon its three red stilts in the middle of the flowers, and stamped the floor merrily with its feet. It was dancing the mazurka, which the flowers could not dance; they were too light-footed to stamp.

All at once the wax-doll on the rod swelled out to
a giant, tall and broad, and exclaimed in a loud voice, "What do you mean by putting such trash into the child's head? It is all fantastical nonsense!" And now the doll looked as much like the Counsellor in his broad-brimmed hat, as one drop of water resembles another; her countenance looked as yellow and peevish as his; the paper flowers on the rod, however, pinched her thin legs, whereupon she shrank up to her original size. The little Ida thought this scene so droll that she could not help laughing; the ball company, however, did not notice it, and the rod continued to stamp about, till at last the doll-counsellor was obliged to dance too, whether she would or no, and make herself now thin, now thick, now tall, now short, till at last the flowers interceded for her, and the rod then left her in peace.

A loud knocking was now heard from the drawer in which lay Ida's doll. It was Sophy who made the noise. She put her head out of the drawer and asked, in great astonishment, "Is there a ball here? why has no one told me of it?"

"Will you dance with me?" asked the nutcrackers. 
"Certainly you are a very fit person to dance with me!" said Sophy, turning her back upon him. She then sat down on the table, expecting that one of the flowers would come and ask her to dance, but no one came. She coughed — "hem! hem!" still no one came. Meantime the nutcrackers danced by himself, and his steps were not at all badly made.

As no flowers came forward to ask Sophy to dance, all at once she let herself fall down upon the floor,
which excited a general commotion, so that all the flowers ran up to ask her whether she had hurt herself. But she had received no injury. The flowers, however, were all very polite, especially Ida’s flowers, who took the opportunity of thanking her for the comfortable bed in which they had slept so quietly, and then seized her hands to dance with her, whilst all the other flowers stood in a circle round them. Sophy was now quite happy, and begged Ida’s flowers to make use of her bed again after the ball, as she did not at all mind sleeping one night in the table-drawer.

But the flowers said, “We owe you many thanks for your kindness; we shall not live long enough to need it; we shall be quite dead by to-morrow; but request the little Ida to bury us in the garden near her canary-bird, then we shall grow again next summer, and be even more beautiful than we have been this year.”

“No, you must not die!” replied Sophy warmly, as she kissed the flowers. Just then the door was suddenly opened, and a number of flowers danced into the room. Ida could not conceive where these flowers came from, unless from the King’s garden. First of all entered two beautiful roses wearing golden crowns, then followed stocks and pinks, bowing to the company on all sides. They had also a band of music with them; great poppies and peonies blew upon pea-shells till they were quite red in the face, whilst blue and white campanulas rang a merry peal of bells. These were followed by an immense number of different flowers, all dancing; violets, daisies, lilies of the
valley, narcissuses, and others, who all moved so gracefully that it was delightful to see them.

At last these happy flowers wished one another "good-night;" so little Ida once more crept into bed to dream of all the beautiful things she had seen.

The next morning, as soon as she was up and dressed, she went to her little table to see if her flowers were there. She drew aside the bed-curtains—yes! there lay the flowers, but they were to-day much more faded than yesterday; Sophy, too, was lying in the drawer, but she looked uncommonly sleepy.

"Can you not remember what you have to say to me?" asked little Ida of her; but Sophy made a most stupid face, and answered not a syllable.

"You are not at all good!" said Ida; "and yet all the flowers let you dance with them." She then chose out from her playthings a little pasteboard box with birds painted on it, and therein she placed the faded flowers. "That shall be your coffin," said she; "and when my Norwegian cousins come to see me, they shall go with me to bury you in the garden, in order that next summer you may bloom again, and be still more beautiful than you have been this year."

The two Norwegian cousins, of whom she spoke, were two lively boys, called Jonas and Adolph. Their father had given them two new crossbows, which they brought with them to show to Ida. She told them of the poor flowers that were dead, and were to be buried in the garden. The two boys walked in front with their bows slung across their
shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the dead flowers in their pretty coffin. A grave was dug for them in the garden. Ida kissed the flowers once more, then laid the box down in the hollow, and Jonas and Adolph shot arrows over the grave with their crossbows, for they had neither guns nor cannon.
THE SWINEHERD.

There was once a poor Prince who had a kingdom: his kingdom was very small, but still quite large enough to marry upon; and he wished to marry. It was certainly rather cool of him to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But so he did; for his name was renowned far and wide; and there were a hundred Princesses who would have answered "Yes!" and "Thank you kindly." We shall see what this Princess said. Listen!

It happened that where the Prince's father lay buried there grew a rose-tree, — a most beautiful rose-tree, which blossomed only once in every five years, and even then bore only one flower, but that was a rose! It smelt so sweet that all cares and sorrows were forgotten by him who inhaled its fragrance.

And, furthermore, the Prince had a nightingale, who could sing in such a manner that it seemed as if all sweet melodies dwelt in her little throat. So the Princess was to have the rose and the nightingale; and they were accordingly put into large silver caskets, and sent to her.

The Emperor had them brought into a large hall, where the Princess was playing at "Visiting," with the ladies of the court; and when she saw the caskets with the presents, she clapped her hands for joy.
"Ah, if it were but a little pussy-cat!" exclaimed she; but the rose-tree, with its beautiful rose, came to view.

"Oh, how prettily it is made!" said all the court-ladies.

"It is more than pretty," said the Emperor; "it is charming!"

But the Princess touched it, and was almost ready to cry.

"Fie, papa!" said she, "it is not made at all, it is natural!"

"Fie!" cried all the courtiers, "it is natural!"

"Let us see what is in the other casket before we get into a bad humor," proposed the Emperor. So the nightingale came forth, and sang so delightfully that at first no one could say anything ill-humored of her.

"Superbe! charmant!" exclaimed the ladies; for they all used to chatter French, each one worse than her neighbor.

"How much the bird reminds me of the musical box that belonged to our blessed Empress!" remarked an old Knight. "Oh, yes! these are the same tones, the same execution."

"Yes! yes!" said the Emperor; and he wept like a child at the remembrance.

"I will still hope that it is not a real bird," said the Princess.

"Yet it is a real bird," said those who had brought it.

"Well, then let the bird fly," returned the Princess; and she positively refused to see the Prince.

However, he was not to be discouraged; he daubed
his face over brown and black, pulled his cap over his ears, and knocked at the door.

"Good-day to my lord the Emperor!" said he. "Can I have employment at the palace?"

"Why, yes," said the Emperor; "I want some one to take care of the pigs, for we have a great many of them."

So the Prince was appointed "Imperial Swineherd." He had a dirty little room close by the pigsty; and there he sat the whole day, and worked. By the evening, he had made a pretty little saucepan. Little bells were hung all round it; and when the pot was boiling, these bells tinkled in the most charming manner, and played the old melody:

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!" ¹

But what was still more curious, whoever held his finger in the smoke of this saucepan immediately smelt all the dishes that were cooking on every hearth in the city; this, you see, was something quite different from the rose.

Now, the Princess happened to walk that way; and when she heard the tune, she stood quite still, and seemed pleased; for she could play "Lieber Augustin;" it was the only piece she knew, and she played it with one finger.

"Why, there is my piece!" said the Princess; "that

¹ "Ah! dear Augustine!
All is lost, lost, lost!"

swineherd must certainly have been well educated! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument."

So one of the court-ladies had to run in; however, she drew on wooden slippers first.

"What will you take for the saucepan?" inquired the lady.

"I will have ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Indeed!" said the lady.

"I cannot sell it for less," rejoined the swineherd.

"Well, what does he say?" asked the Princess.

"I cannot tell you, really," replied the lady; "it is too bad!"

"Then you can whisper it!" So the lady whispered it.

"He is an impudent fellow!" said the Princess, and she walked on; but when she had gone a little way, the bells tinkled so prettily,—

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!"

"Stay," said the Princess. "Ask him if he will have ten kisses from the ladies of my court."

"No, thank you!" answered the swineherd; "ten kisses from the Princess, or I keep the saucepan myself."

"That must not be either!" said the Princess; "but do you all stand before me, that no one may see us."

And the court-ladies placed themselves in front of her, and spread out their dresses; the swineherd got ten kisses, and the Princess — the saucepan.
That was delightful! the saucepan was kept boiling all the evening, and the whole of the following day. They knew perfectly well what was cooking at every fire throughout the city, from the chamberlain's to the cobbler's; the court-ladies danced, and clapped their hands.

"We know who has soup and who has pancakes for dinner to-day, who has cutlets, and who has eggs. How interesting!"

"Yes, but keep my secret; for I am an Emperor's daughter."

The swineherd — that is to say the Prince, for no one knew that he was other than an ill-favored swineherd — let not a day pass without working at something; he at last constructed a rattle, which, when it was swung round, played all the waltzes and jig-tunes which have ever been heard since the creation of the world.

"Ah, that is superbe!" said the Princess when she passed by; "I have never heard prettier compositions! Go in and ask him the price of the instrument; but mind, he shall have no more kisses!"

"He will have a hundred kisses from the Princess!" said the lady who had been to ask.

"I think he is not in his right senses!" replied the Princess, and walked on; but when she had gone a little way, she stopped again. "One must encourage art," said she; "I am the Emperor's daughter. Tell him, he shall, as on yesterday, have ten kisses from me, and may take the rest from the ladies of the court."
"Oh!—but we should not like that at all!" said they.

"What are you muttering?" asked the Princess; "if I can kiss him, surely you can! Remember that you owe everything to me."

So the ladies were obliged to go to him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess!" said he, "or else let every one keep his own."

"Stand round!" said she; and all the ladies stood round her whilst the kissing was going on.

"What can be the reason for such a crowd close by the pigsty?" said the Emperor, who happened just then to step out on the balcony; he rubbed his eyes and put on his spectacles. "They are the ladies of the court; I must go down and see what they are about!" So he pulled up his slippers at the heel, for he had trodden them down.

As soon as he had got into the courtyard, he moved very softly; and the ladies were so much engrossed with counting the kisses, that all might go on fairly, that they did not perceive the Emperor. He rose on his tiptoes.

"What is all this?" said he, when he saw what was going on; and he boxed the Princess's ears with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"March out!" cried the Emperor, for he was very angry; and both Princess and swineherd were thrust out of the city.

The Princess now stood and wept, the swineherd scolded, and the rain poured down.
"Alas! unhappy creature that I am!" said the Princess. "If I had but married the handsome young Prince! Ah! how unfortunate I am!"

And the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the black-and-brown color from his face, threw off his dirty clothes, and stepped forth in his princely robes; he looked so noble that the Princess could not help bowing before him.

"I am come to despise thee," said he. "Thou wouldst not have an honorable prince! thou couldst not prize the rose and the nightingale, but thou wast ready to kiss the swineherd for the sake of a trumpery plaything. Thou art rightly served."

He then went back to his own little kingdom, and shut the door of his palace in her face. Now she might well sing,—

"Ach! du lieber Augustin,
Alles ist weg, weg, weg!"
THEKE is no one in the whole world who knows so many stories as Ole Lucköie, the Dustman—oh! his are delightful stories.

In the evening, when children are sitting quietly at table, or on their little stools, he takes off his shoes, comes softly up-stairs, opens the door very gently, and all on a sudden throws dust into the children's eyes. He then glides behind them, and breathes lightly, very lightly, upon their necks, whereupon their heads become immediately so heavy! But it does them no harm, for the Dustman means it kindly; he only wants the children to be quiet, and they are most quiet when they are in bed. They must be quiet, in order that he may tell them his stories.

When the children are asleep, the Dustman sits down upon the bed; he is gayly dressed, his coat is of silk, but of what color it is impossible to say, for it seems now green, now red, now blue, according to the light. Under each arm he holds an umbrella; one, which has pictures painted on it, he holds over good children, it makes them have the most delightful dreams all night long; and the other, which has nothing on it, he holds over naughty children, so that they sleep heavily, and awake in the morning without having dreamed at all.
Now let us hear what stories the Dustman told to a little boy of the name of Hialmar, to whom he came every evening for a whole week through. There are seven stories altogether, for the week has seven days.

MONDAY.

"Listen to me," said Ole Lucköie, as soon as he had got Hialmar into bed. "Now I will decorate your room;" and all at once, as he was speaking, the flowers in the flower-pots grew up into large trees, the long branches of which extended to the ceiling, and along the walls, so that the room looked like a beautiful arbor. All these branches were full of flowers; and every flower was more beautiful even than the rose, and had so pleasant a smell. Moreover, could you have tasted them, you would have found them sweeter than preserves. And fruit which shone like gold hung from the trees, also dumplings full of currants; never was the like seen before. But, at the same time, a loud lamentation was heard in the table-drawer, where Hialmar's school-books were kept.

"What is the matter?" said the Dustman, going up to the table, and taking out the drawer. There lay the slate, on which the figures were pressing and squeezing together, because a wrong figure had got into the sum, so that it was near falling to pieces; the pencil hopped and tugged at its string like a little dog — he wanted to help the sum, but he could not. And a little farther off lay Hialmar's copy-book: a complaining and moaning came thence also, it was quite unpleasant to hear it; at the beginning of every
It makes them have the most delightful dreams.
line, on each page, there stood a large letter with a little letter by its side; this was the copy: and underneath them stood other letters, intended to look like the copy. Hialmar had written these; but they seemed to have fallen over the lines, upon which they ought to have stood.

"Look, this is the way you must hold yourselves," said the copy; "look slanting—just so, with a graceful curve."

"Oh! we would do so willingly," said Hialmar's letters; "but we cannot, we are so badly made!"

"Then you shall have some of the children's powders," said the Dustman.

"Oh, no!" cried they, and stood so straight that it was a pleasure to see them.

"Well, I cannot tell you any more stories now," said the Dustman; "I must drill these letters: right, left—right, left!" So he drilled the letters till they looked as straight and perfect as only the letters in a copy can be. However, after the Dustman had gone away, and when Hialmar looked at them the next morning, they were as miserable and badly formed as before.

TUESDAY.

As soon as Hialmar was in bed, the Dustman touched with his little magic wand all the pieces of furniture in the room; whereupon they all began to talk: and they all talked about themselves, excepting the spittoon, who stood quite still, and was much vexed at their being so vain, all talking about themselves, without ever thinking of him who stood so
modestly in the corner, and suffered himself to be spat upon.

Over the wardrobe, there hung a large picture in a gilt frame; it was a landscape; there you might see tall trees, flowers blossoming in the grass, and a river that wound itself round the wood, passing many a grand old castle on its way to the sea.

The Dustman touched the picture with his magic wand; and immediately the birds began to sing, the boughs of the trees waved to and fro, and the clouds actually flew; one could see their shadows flit over the landscape.

The Dustman then lifted little Hialmar up to the frame, and Hialmar put his legs into the picture; there he stood amid the tall grass. He ran to the water’s edge, and sat down in a little boat, painted red and white, with sails glittering like silver; six swans, with golden wreaths round their necks, and bright blue stars upon their heads, drew the boat along, near a green wood, where the trees were telling stories about robbers and witches, and the flowers were talking of the pretty little fairies, and of what the butterflies had said to them.

Most beautiful fishes, with scales like gold and silver, swam behind the boat, every now and then leaping up, so that the water was splashed over Hialmar’s head; birds red and blue, great and small, flew after him in two long rows; the gnats danced, and the cockchafers said, “Boom, boom.” They all wished to accompany Hialmar, and every one of them had a story to tell.
A pleasant voyage was that! The woods were now thick and gloomy, now like beautiful gardens beam-ing with flowers and sunshine. Large palaces built of glass or marble rose from among the trees; young princesses stood in the balconies — these were all little girls whom Hialmar knew well, and with whom he had often played. They stretched out their hands to him, each holding a pretty little image made of sugar, such as are seen in confectioners’ shops. Hialmar seized the end of one of these little images as he sailed by, and a princess kept hold of the other, so each got half, the princess the smaller, Hialmar the larger. At every castle little princes were keeping guard; they shouldered their golden scimitars, and showered down raisins and tin soldiers — these were real princes! Hialmar sailed sometimes through woods, sometimes through large halls, or the middle of a town. Among others, he passed through the town where his nurse lived, she who had brought him up from his infancy, and who loved him so much. She nodded and beckoned to him as he passed by, and sang the pretty verses she had herself composed and sent to him: —

"How many, many hours I think on thee,
   My own dear Hialmar, still my pride and joy!
How have I hung delighted over thee,
   Kissing thy rosy cheeks, my darling boy!

Thy first low accents it was mine to hear;
   To-day my farewell words to thee shall fly.
Oh! may the Lord thy shield be ever near,
   And fit thee for a mansion in the sky!"
And all the birds sang with her, the flowers danced upon their stalks, and the old trees nodded their heads, whilst the Dustman told stories to them also.

**WEDNESDAY.**

Oh, how the rain was pouring down! Hialmar could hear it even in his sleep, and when the Dustman opened the window the water came in upon the ledge; there was quite a lake in front of the house, and on it a splendid ship.

"Will you sail with me, little Hialmar?" said the Dustman; "if you will, you shall visit foreign lands to-night, and be here again by the morning."

And now Hialmar, dressed in his Sunday clothes, was in the ship; the weather immediately cleared up, and they floated down the street, cruised round the church, and were soon sailing upon the wide sea. They quickly lost sight of land, and could see only a number of storks, who had all come from Hialmar's country, and were going to a warmer one. The storks were flying one after another, and were already very far from land. One of them, however, was so weary that his wings could scarcely bear him up any longer; he was last in the train, and was soon far behind the others; he sank lower and lower, with his wings outspread; he still endeavored to move them, but in vain; his wings touched the ship's cordage, he slid down the sail, and—bounce! there he stood on the deck.

So the cabin-boy put him into the place where the hens, ducks, and turkeys were kept; the poor Stork stood amongst them quite confounded.
"Only look, what a foolish fellow!" said all the Hens. And the Turkey-cock made himself as big as he could, and asked him who he was; and the Ducks waddled backwards and pushed each other, crying "Quack, quack!"

The Stork then told them about his warm Africa, about the pyramids, and about the ostrich, who races through the desert like a wild horse; but the Ducks did not understand him, and again pushed each other, saying, "Do not we all agree in thinking him very stupid?"

"Yes, indeed, he is stupid!" said the Turkey-cock, and began to gobble.

So the Stork was silent, and thought of his Africa. "You have really very pretty slender legs!" said the Turkey-cock. "What did they cost you per yard?"

"Quack, quack, quack!" all the Ducks began to titter; but the Stork seemed not to have heard the question.

"You might just as well have laughed with them," said the Turkey-cock to him, "for it was a capital joke! But perhaps it was not high enough for you? Ah! ah! he has very grand ideas; let us go on amusing ourselves." And then he gobbled, the Hens cackled, and the Ducks quacked; they made a horrid noise with their amusements.

But Hialmar went to the hen-house, opened the door, and called the Stork, who immediately jumped on deck; he had now rested himself sufficiently, and bowed his head to Hialmar, as if to thank him. He then spread his wings and flew away — whilst the
Hens cackled, the Ducks quacked, and the Turkey-cock turned red as fire.

"To-morrow we will have you all made into soup!" said Hialmar; whereupon he awoke, and found himself in his own little bed. A strange journey had the Dustman taken him that night!

THURSDAY.

"I'll tell you what!" said the Dustman, "do not be afraid, and you shall see a little mouse!" and he held out his hand, with the pretty little animal in it. "She is come to invite you to a wedding; there are two little mice here, who intend this very night to enter into matrimony. They live under the floor of the dining-room; theirs must be such a pretty house!"

"But how can I get through the little hole?" asked Hialmar. "Let me take care of that," said the Dustman. "I will make you very little!" and he touched Hialmar with his magic wand, and Hialmar became smaller and smaller, till at last he was no larger than his own fingers. "Now you can borrow the tin soldier's clothes; I think they will just fit you; and it looks so grand to wear uniform when you are in company."

"Ah, yes!" said Hialmar, and in another moment he was dressed like the prettiest little tin soldier.

"Will you have the goodness to sit down in your mother's thimble?" said the little Mouse. "In that case, I shall feel honored by drawing you."

"What! will you really take so much trouble?"
said Hialmar; and away they went to the Mouse's wedding.

They first came to a long passage under the floor, which was high enough for the thimble to be drawn along through it, and was illuminated with lighted tinder throughout.

"Is there not a pleasant smell here?" said the Mouse who was drawing the thimble. "The whole passage is covered with rind of bacon; there is nothing more delightful!"

They now entered the bridal apartment; the lady Mice stood on the right-hand side, whispering to gether, seemingly very merry; on the left side stood the gentlemen Mice, who were all stroking their whiskers with their paws. In the middle of the room the bride and bridegroom were seen, standing in the scooped-out rind of a cheese, and kissing each other incessantly, before the eyes of all present. They were already betrothed, and were to be married immediately. Strangers were arriving every moment; the Mice almost trod each other to death; and the bridal pair had placed themselves just in the centre of the doorway, so that one could neither get out nor get in. The whole room was, like the passage, covered with the rind of bacon; this was all the entertainment given; for dessert, however, a pea was exhibited, in which a little Mouse belonging to the family had bitten the initials of the married couple. Was not this an exquisite idea?

All the Mice agreed that the wedding had been extremely genteel, and the conversation delightful.
So now Hialmar returned home; he had certainly been in most distinguished company; but still he felt as if he had rather lowered himself, by becoming so small, and wearing the uniform of one of his own tin soldiers.

FRIDAY.

"It is incredible what a number of old people there are always wanting to have me with them," said the Dustman, "especially those who have done anything wicked. 'Dear, good Dustman,' they say to me, 'we cannot sleep a wink all night; we lie awake and see all our bad deeds sitting on the edge of the bed, like little ugly goblins, and sprinkling scalding water over us. If you would but come and drive them away, so that we could have a little sleep,' and then they sigh so deeply, 'we will be sure to pay you well,—good-night, Dustman, the money is lying at the window.' But I do not come for money," added Old Lucköie.

"What are we to do to-night?" asked Hialmar.

"Why, I do not know whether you would like to go again to a wedding? The one of which I am now speaking is quite of another kind from yesterday's. Your sister's great doll, that looks like a man, and is called Herman, is going to marry the doll Bertha; moreover, it is a birthday; so they will doubtless receive a great many presents."

"Oh, yes! I know that already," said Hialmar; "whenever the dolls want new clothes, my sister calls it either their birthday or their wedding-day."
They must certainly have been married a hundred times already."

"Yes, but to-night they will be married for the hundred and first time; and when it has come to that number, they can never be married again. So this time the wedding will be splendid! Only look!"

And Hialmar looked upon the table, where stood the little doll's house; the windows were lighted up, and tin soldiers presented arms at the door. The bride and bridegroom were sitting on the ground, and leaning against the leg of the table; they seemed very thoughtful,—there was, perhaps, good reason for being so. But the Dustman had, meanwhile, put on his grandmother's black gown, and married them. When the ceremony was over, all the furniture in the room began singing the following pretty song, which had been written by the Lead-pencil:

"Waft, gentle breeze, our kind farewell
To the tiny house where the bridefolks dwell,
With their skin of kid-leather fitting so well;
They are straight and upright as a tailor's ell.
Hurrah, hurrah for beau and belle!
Let echo repeat our kind farewell!"

And now presents were brought to them; all eatables, however, they declined accepting; love was enough for them to live upon.

"Shall we go into the country, or make a tour in some foreign land?" asked the bridegroom. So the Swallow, who had travelled a good deal, and the old Hen, who had hatched five broods of chickens, were consulted. And the Swallow spoke of those beauti-
ful, warm countries, where bunches of grapes, large and heavy, hang on the vines; where the air is so balmy, and the mountains are tinged with various hues, such as are never known here.

“But then they have not our green cabbages!” said the Hen. “One summer, I and all my chickens lived in the country; there was a gravel-pit, in which we might go and scrape about; besides, we had access to a garden full of green cabbages. Oh, how green they were! I cannot imagine anything more beautiful!”

“But one head of cabbage looks exactly like another,” said the Swallow; “and then we so often have wet weather here!”

“One gets accustomed to that,” said the Hen.

“But it is so cold, it freezes!”

“That is good for the cabbages,” said the Hen; “besides which, it can be warm sometimes. Did we not, four years ago, have a summer which lasted five weeks? It was so hot, that one could hardly breathe. Then, too, we have not all the poisonous animals which they have in foreign countries; and we are free from robbers. He is a blockhead who does not think our country the most beautiful of all! he does not deserve to live here!” and at these words tears rolled down the Hen’s cheeks. “I, too, have travelled; I have been twelve miles in a coop. There is no pleasure at all in travelling.”

“Yes, the Hen is a sensible animal!” said the doll Bertha. “I do not wish to travel over the mountains; one is always going up and down! No, we
will go to the gravel-pit, and walk in the garden among the cabbages."

And so it was settled.

SATURDAY.

"Now may I have some stories?" asked little Hialmar, as soon as the Dustman had put him to sleep.

"We shall have no time for them this evening," said the Dustman, spreading his picture-umbrella over him. "Look at these Chinese!" The umbrella resembled a large Chinese plate, with blue trees and pointed bridges; little Chinese men and women stood nodding their heads among them.

"By to-morrow morning all the world must be put in order," said the Dustman; "it is a festival day—it is Sunday. I must go to the church-tower, to see whether the little Nisses are rubbing the bells, so as to make them ring merrily. I must away to the fields, to see that the winds are sweeping the dust off the grass and leaves. I must take down the stars, in order to brighten them. I put them into my apron, but first they must be numbered; and the holes in which they fit, up in the sky, must be numbered also, that every one may return to his proper place; else they would not sit firmly, and we should have too many falling stars, one coming down after another."

"Listen to me, good Mr. Ole Lucköie," said an old Portrait, which hung by the wall, near where Hialmar was sleeping. "Do you know that I am Hialmar's great-grandfather? I am much obliged to you for
telling the boy stories, but you must not puzzle him. Stars cannot be taken down and brightened; they are bodies like our earth.”

“Many thanks, old Great-grandfather!” said the Dustman, “many thanks! Thou art certainly very old, but I am older still! I am an old heathen; the Greeks and Romans called me the God of Dreams. I have been in families of the greatest distinction, and I go there still! I know how to deal with great and small! Now it is thy turn; say what thou pleasest!”

“So one is no longer allowed to speak one’s mind!” muttered the old Portrait.

And presently Hialmar awoke.

SUNDAY.

“Good-evening!” said the Dustman; and Hialmar nodded his head to him, and jumped up to turn his great-grandfather’s Portrait to the wall, in order that he might not interrupt them, as yesterday.

“Now you shall tell me stories about the five green peas who all lived in one pod; and about the cock courting the hen; and about the darning-needle, who was so fine that she fancied herself a sewing-needle.”

“One may have too much of a good thing!” said the Dustman. “I would rather show you something else; I will show you my brother. He never comes more than once to any one; and whomsoever he visits he takes on his horse, and tells him a story. He knows only two stories; the one unspeakably delightful, such as no one in the world can imagine; the other so dreadful, so horrible — it is not to be de-
scribed." And the Dustman lifted little Hialmar up to the window, saying, "There is my brother, the other Dustman; he is also called Death! You see he is not so frightful as he is represented in picture-books, where he seems to be all bones; no, he wears clothes embroidered with silver; it is the gayest of uniforms! a mantle of black velvet flutters over his horse, behind him. See how he gallops!"

And Hialmar saw the other Dustman ride on, and take old and young with him on his horse: some he placed in front, and others behind; but he always asked first what sort of a journal they had to show.

"Good," they all replied. "Yes, but let me see it," said he; so they were obliged to show it to him; and all those who had "Very good" written in it were put in front of the horse, and heard the story that was so delightful; but those who had "Pretty good," or "Bad," inscribed in their journals, were obliged to get up behind, and listen to the horrible story. They trembled and wept; they tried to jump down from the horse's back; but that they could not do, for they were as firmly fixed on as if they had grown there.

"Death is a most beautiful Dustman," said Hialmar; "I am not afraid of him."

"That you should not be," said the Dustman; "only take care to have a good journal to show."

"Ah, this is very instructive!" muttered the great-grandfather's Portrait. "It is always of use to give one's opinion." He was now satisfied.

These are the stories of Ole Lucköie; perhaps he may tell you more this very evening.
LISTEN to my story!

In the country, close by the roadside, there stands a summer-house — you must certainly have seen it. In front is a little garden full of flowers, enclosed by white palings; and on a bank outside the palings there grew, amidst the freshest green grass, a little Daisy. The sun shone as brightly and warmly upon the Daisy as upon the splendid large flowers within the garden; and therefore it grew hourly, so that one morning it stood fully open, with its delicate white gleaming leaves, which, like rays, surrounded the little yellow sun in their centre.

It never occurred to the little flower that no one saw her, hidden as she was among the grass; she was quite contented; she turned towards the warm sun, looked at it, and listened to the Lark who was singing in the air.

The Daisy was as happy as if it were the day of some high festival, and yet it was only Monday. The children were at school; and whilst they sat upon their forms, and learned their lessons, the little flower upon her green stalk learned from the warm sun, and everything around her, how good God is. Meanwhile all that she felt in silence was expressed clearly and beautifully by the little Lark! And the flower looked
up with a sort of reverence to the happy bird who could fly and sing; it did not distress her that she could not do the same. "I can see and listen," thought she; "the sun shines on me, and the wind kisses me. Oh! how richly am I blessed."

There stood within the palings several grand, stiff-looking flowers; the less fragrance they had the more airs they gave themselves. The Peonies puffed themselves out, in order to make themselves larger than the Roses. The Tulips had the gayest colors of all; they were perfectly aware of it, and held themselves as straight as a candle, that they might be the better seen. They took no notice at all of the little flower outside the palings; but she looked all the more upon them, thinking, "How rich and beautiful they are! Yes, that noble bird will surely fly down and visit them. How happy am I, who live so near them, and can see their beauty!" Just at that moment, "Quirrevit!" the Lark did fly down, but he came not to the Peonies or the Tulips: no, he flew down to the poor little Daisy in the grass, who was almost frightened from pure joy, and knew not what to think, she was so surprised.

The little bird hopped about and sang, "Oh, how soft is this grass! and what a sweet little flower blooms here, with its golden heart and silver garment!" for the yellow centre of the Daisy looked just like gold, and the little petals around gleamed silver white.

How happy the little Daisy was! no one can imagine how happy. The bird kissed her with his beak,
sang to her, and then flew up again into the blue sky. It was a full quarter of an hour ere the flower recovered herself. Half ashamed, and yet completely happy, she looked at the flowers in the garden; they must certainly be aware of the honor and happiness that had been conferred upon her, they must know how delighted she was. But the Tulips held themselves twice as stiff as before, and their faces grew quite red with anger. As to the thick-headed Poppies, it was, indeed, well that they could not speak, or the little Daisy would have heard something not very pleasant. The poor little flower could see well that they were in an ill-humor, and she was much grieved at it. Soon after, a girl came into the garden with a knife sharp and bright; she went up to the Tulips and cut off one after another. “Ugh! that is horrible,” sighed the Daisy; “it is now all over with them.” The girl then went away with the Tulips. How glad was the Daisy that she grew in the grass outside the palings, and was a despised little flower! She felt really thankful; and when the sun set, she folded her leaves, went to sleep, and dreamed all night of the sun and the beautiful bird.

The next morning, when our little flower, fresh and cheerful, again spread out all her white leaves in the bright sunshine and clear blue air, she heard the voice of the bird; but he sang so mournfully. Alas! the poor Lark had good reason for sorrow; he had been caught, and put into a cage close by the open window. He sang of the joys of a free and and unrestrained flight; he sang of the young green corn in
the fields, and of the pleasure of being borne up by his wings in the open air. The poor bird was certainly very unhappy — he sat a prisoner in his narrow cage!

The little Daisy would so willingly have helped him, but how could she? Ah, that she knew not; she quite forgot how beautiful it was all around her, how warmly the sun shone, how pretty and white were her leaves. Alas! she could only think of the imprisoned bird — whom it was not in her power to help.

All at once two little boys came out of the garden; one of them had a knife in his hand, as large and as sharp as that with which the girl had cut the Tulips. They went up straight to the little Daisy, who could not imagine what they wanted.

"Here we can cut a nice piece of turf for the Lark," said one of the boys; and he began to cut deep all around the Daisy, leaving her in the centre.

"Tear out the flower," said the other boy; and the little Daisy trembled all over for fear; for she knew that if she were torn out she would die, and she wished so much to live, as she was to be put into the cage with the imprisoned Lark.

"No, leave it alone!" said the first, "it looks so pretty;" and so she was let alone, and was put into the Lark's cage.

But the poor bird loudly lamented the loss of his freedom, and beat his wings against the iron bars of his cage; and the little flower could not speak — could not say a single word of comfort to him, much
as she wished to do so. Thus passed the whole morning.

"There is no water here!" sang the captive Lark; "they have all gone out and forgotten me; not a drop of water to drink! my throat is dry and burning! there is fire and ice within me, and the air is so heavy! Alas! I must die; I must leave the warm sunshine, the fresh green trees, and all the beautiful things which God has created!" And then he pierced his beak into the cool grass, in order to refresh himself a little — and his eye fell upon the Daisy, and the bird bowed to her, and said, "Thou, too, wilt wither here, thou poor little flower! They have given me thee, and the piece of green around thee, instead of the whole world which I possessed before! Every little blade of grass is to be to me a green tree, thy every white petal a fragrant flower! Alas! thou only remindest me of what I have lost."

"Oh! that I could comfort him!" thought the Daisy; but she could not move a single petal; yet the fragrance which came from her delicate blossom was stronger than is usual with this flower; the bird noticed it, and although, panting with thirst, he tore the green blades in very anguish, he did not touch the flower.

It was evening, and yet no one came to bring the poor bird a drop of water; he stretched out his slender wings, and shook them convulsively; his song was a mournful wail; his little head bent towards the flower, and the bird's heart broke from thirst and desire. The flower could not now, as on the pre-
ceding evening, fold together her leaves and sleep: sad and sick, she drooped to the ground.

The boys did not come till the next morning; and when they saw the bird was dead, they wept bitterly. They dug a pretty grave, which they adorned with flower-petals; the bird’s corpse was put into a pretty red box; royally was the poor bird buried! Whilst he yet lived and sang they forgot him — left him suffering in his cage — and now he was highly honored and bitterly bewailed.

But the piece of turf with the Daisy in it was thrown out into the street; no one thought of her who had felt most for the little bird, and who had so much wished to comfort him!
THE BUCKWHEAT.

If, after a tempest, you chance to walk through a field where Buckwheat is growing, you may observe that it is burnt as black as though a flame of fire had passed over it; and should you ask the reason, the peasant will tell you, "That the lightning has done it."

But how is it that the lightning has done it? I will tell you what the Sparrow told me; and the Sparrow heard the story from an old Willow-tree, which grew, and still grows, close to a field of Buckwheat.

This Willow-tree is tall and highly respectable, but at the same time old and wrinkled: its trunk has been riven asunder from top to bottom; grass and brambles grow out of the gap; the tree bends forward, and the branches hang down almost to the ground, looking like long green hair.

There were different kinds of corn growing in the fields around the Willow; rye, wheat, and oats—the beautiful oats, whose ears, when they are ripe, look like a number of little yellow canary birds sitting upon one branch. The corn-ears were richly blessed; and the fuller they were, the lower they bowed their heads in pious humility.

But there was also a field of Buckwheat, lying just
in front of the old Willow-tree; the Buckwheat bowed not like the rest of the corn; he stood stiff and proud.

"I am quite as rich as the wheat," said he; "and, besides, I am so much more handsome; my flowers are as beautiful as the blossoms of the apple-tree; it is delightful to look at me and my companions. Do you know anything more beautiful than we are, you old Willow-tree?"

And the Willow-tree bent his head, as much as to say, "Yes, indeed I do!" But the Buckwheat was puffed up with pride, and said, "The stupid tree! he is so old that grass is growing out of his body."

Now came on a dreadful storm; all the flowers of the field folded their leaves, or bent their heads, as it passed over them; the Buckwheat however, in his pride, still stood erect.

"Bow thy head as we do!" said the Flowers.

"I have no need," said the Buckwheat.

"Bow thy head as we do!" said the Corn. "The angel of storms comes flying hitherward; he has wings which reach from the clouds to the earth; he will strike thee down before thou hast time to entreat for mercy!"

"No, I will not bow!" said the Buckwheat.

"Close thy flowers, and fold thy leaves," said the old Willow-tree; "look not into the flash, when the cloud breaks. Men even dare not to do that; for the flash reveals to us God's heaven, and that sight must dazzle even human eyes; what, then, would it prove to mere vegetables like us, if we should dare to look into it,—we, who are so inferior to men?"
“So inferior, indeed!” said the Buckwheat. “Now, then, I will look right into God’s heaven.” And, in his pride and haughtiness, he did gaze upon the lightning without shrinking. Such was the flash, that it seemed as if the whole world was in flames.

When the tempest was over, Flowers and Corn, greatly refreshed by the rain, once more breathed pure air; but the Buckwheat had been burnt as black as a coal by the lightning: it stood on the field a dead, useless plant.

And the old Willow-tree waved its branches to and fro in the wind, and large drops of water fell from the green leaves, as though the tree wept. And the Sparrows asked, “Why weepest thou? it is so beautiful here! See how the sun shines; how the clouds pass over the clear sky; how sweet is the fragrance of the flowers! Why, then, weepest thou, old Willow-tree?”

And the Willow-tree told of the Buckwheat’s pride and haughtiness, and of the punishment which followed. I, who relate this story, heard it from the Sparrows — they told it to me one evening when I asked them for a tale.
THE REAL PRINCESS.

THERE was once a Prince who wished to marry a Princess, but then she must be a real Princess. He travelled all over the world in hopes of finding such a lady, but there was always something wrong. Princesses he found in plenty; but whether they were real Princesses it was impossible for him to decide, for now one thing, now another, seemed to him not quite right about the ladies. At last he returned to his palace quite cast down, because he wished so much to have a real Princess for his wife.

One evening a fearful tempest arose, it thundered and lightened, and the rain poured down from the sky in torrents; besides, it was as dark as pitch. All at once there was heard a violent knocking at the door; and the old King, the Prince's father, went out himself to open it.

It was a Princess who was standing outside the door. What with the rain and the wind, she was in a sad condition; the water trickled down from her hair, and her clothes clung to her body. She said she was a real Princess.

"Ah! we shall soon see that!" thought the old Queen; however, she said not a word of what she was going to do, but went quietly into the bedroom, took all the bed-clothes off the bed, and put one little
pea on the bedstead. She then laid twenty mattresses one upon another over the pea, and put twenty feather-beds over the mattresses.

Upon this bed the Princess was to pass the night.

The next morning, she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly indeed!" she replied. "I have scarcely closed my eyes the whole night through. I do not know what was in my bed, but I had something hard under me, and am all over black and blue. It has hurt me so much!"

Now it was plain that the lady must be a real Princess, since she had been able to feel the one little pea through the twenty mattresses and twenty feather-beds. None but a real Princess could have had such a delicate sense of feeling.

The Prince accordingly made her his wife, being now convinced that he had found a real Princess. The pea, however, was put into the cabinet of curiosities, where it is still to be seen, provided it be not lost.

Was not this a lady of real delicacy?
The Real Princess.

“She said she was a real Princess.”
Far away in the deep forest, there once grew a pretty Fir-Tree; the situation was delightful, the sun shone full upon him, the breeze played freely around him, and in the neighborhood grew many companion fir-trees, some older, some younger. But the little Fir-Tree was not happy: he was always longing to be tall; he thought not of the warm sun and the fresh air; he cared not for the merry, prattling peasant children who came to the forest to look for strawberries and raspberries. Except, indeed, sometimes, when after having filled their pitchers, or threaded the bright berries on a straw, they would sit down near the little Fir-Tree, and say, "What a pretty little tree this is!" and then the Fir-Tree would feel very much vexed.

Year by year he grew, a long green shoot sent he forth every year; for you may always tell how many years a fir-tree has lived by counting the number of joints in its stem.

"Oh, that I was as tall as the others are," sighed the little Tree, "Then I should spread out my branches so far, and my crown should look out over the wide world around! the birds would build their nests among my branches, and when the wind blew I should bend my head so grandly, just as the others do!"
He had no pleasure in the sunshine, in the song of
the birds, or in the red clouds that sailed over him
every morning and evening.

In the winter-time, when the ground was covered
with the white, glistening snow, there was a hare
that would come continually scampering about, and
jumping right over the little Tree’s head — and that
was most provoking! However, two winters passed
away, and by the third the Tree was so tall that the
hare was obliged to run round it. “Oh! to grow, to
grow, to become tall and old, that is the only thing
in the world worth living for;” — so thought the
Tree.

The wood-cutters came in the autumn and felled
some among the largest of the trees; this happened
every year, and our young Fir, who was by this
time a tolerable height, shuddered, when he saw
those grand, magnificent trees fall with a tremen-
dous crash, crackling to the earth: their boughs were
then all cut off; terribly naked, and lanky, and long
did the stems look after this — they could hardly be
recognized. They were laid one upon another in
wagons, and horses drew them away, far, far away,
from the forest. Where could they be going? What
might be their fortunes?

So next spring, when the Swallows and the Storks
had returned from abroad, the Tree asked them, say-
ing, “Know you not whither they are taken? have
you not met them?”

The Swallows knew nothing about the matter;
but the Stork looked thoughtful for a moment, then
nodded his head, and said, “Yes, I believe I have seen them! As I was flying from Egypt to this place I met several ships; those ships had splendid masts. I have little doubt that they were the trees that you speak of; they smelled like fir-wood. I may congratulate you, for they sailed gloriously, quite gloriously!”

“Oh, that I, too, were tall enough to sail upon the sea! Tell me what it is, this sea, and what it looks like.”

“Thank you, it would take too long, a great deal!” said the Stork, and away he stalked.

“Rejoice in thy youth!” said the Sunbeams; “rejoice in thy luxuriant youth, in the fresh life that is within thee!”

And the Wind kissed the Tree, and the Dew wept tears over him, but the Fir-Tree understood them not.

When Christmas approached, many quite young trees were felled — trees which were some of them not so tall or of just the same height as the young restless Fir-Tree who was always longing to be away; these young trees were chosen from the most beautiful, their branches were not cut off, they were laid in a wagon, and horses drew them away, far, far away, from the forest.

“Where are they going?” asked the Fir-Tree. “They are not larger than I am; indeed, one of them was much less; why do they keep all their branches? where can they be gone?”

“We know! we know!” twittered the Sparrows. “We peeped in through the windows of the town
below! we know where they are gone! Oh, you cannot think what honor and glory they receive! We looked through the window-panes, and saw them planted in a warm room, and decked out with such beautiful things—gilded apples, sweetmeats, play-things, and hundreds of bright candles!"

"And then?" asked the Fir-Tree, trembling in every bough; "and then? what happened then?"

"Oh, we saw no more. That was beautiful, beautiful beyond compare!"

"Is this glorious lot destined to be mine?" cried the Fir-Tree, with delight. "This is far better than sailing over the sea. How I long for the time! Oh, that Christmas were come! I am now tall and full of branches, like the others which last year were carried away. Oh, that I were even now in the wagon! that I were in the warm room, honored and adorned! and then—yes, then, something still better must happen, else why should they take the trouble to decorate me? it must be that something still greater, still more splendid, must happen—but what? Oh, I suffer, I suffer with longing! I know not what it is that I feel!"

"Rejoice in our love!" said the Air and the Sunshine. "Rejoice in thy youth and thy freedom!"

But rejoice he never would: he grew and grew, in winter as in summer; he stood there clothed in green, dark-green foliage; the people that saw him said, "That is a beautiful tree!" and next Christmas he was the first that was felled. The axe struck sharply through the wood, the tree fell to the earth with a
heavy groan; he suffered an agony, a faintness, that he had never expected; he quite forgot to think of his good fortune, he felt such sorrow at being compelled to leave his home, the place whence he had sprung; he knew that he should never see again those dear old comrades, or the little bushes and flowers that had flourished under his shadow, perhaps not even the birds. Neither did he find the journey by any means pleasant.

The Tree first came to himself when, in the courtyard to which he was first taken with the other trees, he heard a man say, "This is a splendid one, and the very thing we want!"

Then came two smartly dressed servants, and carried the Fir-Tree into a large and handsome saloon. Pictures hung on the walls, and on the mantel-piece stood large Chinese vases with lions on the lids; there were rocking-chairs, silken sofas, tables covered with picture-books, and toys that had cost a hundred times a hundred rix-dollars—at least so said the children. And the Fir-Tree was planted in a large cask filled with sand, but no one could know that it was a cask, for it was hung with green cloth, and placed upon a carpet woven of many gay colors. Oh, how the Tree trembled! What was to happen next? A young lady, assisted by the servants, now began to adorn him.

Upon some branches they hung little nets cut out of colored paper, every net filled with sugar-plums; from others gilded apples and walnuts were suspended, looking just as if they had grown there; and
more than a hundred little wax-tapers, red, blue, and white, were placed here and there among the boughs. Dolls, that looked almost like men and women—the Tree had never seen such things before—seemed dancing to and fro among the leaves, and highest, on the summit, was fastened a large star of gold tinsel; this was, indeed, splendid, splendid beyond compare! "This evening," they said, "this evening it will be lighted up."

"Would that it were evening!" thought the Tree. "Would that the lights were kindled, for then—what will happen then? Will the trees come out of the forest to see me? Will the sparrows fly here and look in through the window-panes? Shall I stand here adorned, both winter and summer? He thought much of it; he thought till he had bark-ache with longing, and bark-aches with trees are as bad as headaches with us. The candles were lighted—oh, what a blaze of splendor! the Tree trembled in all his branches, so that one of them caught fire. "Oh, dear!" cried the young lady, and it was extinguished in great haste.

So the Tree dared not tremble again; he was so fearful of losing something of his splendor, he felt almost bewildered in the midst of all this glory and brightness. And now, all of a sudden, both folding-doors were flung open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they had a mind to jump over him; the older people followed more quietly; the little ones stood quite silent, but only for a moment! then their jubilee burst forth afresh; they shouted till the walls
re-echoed, they danced round the Tree, one present after another was torn down.

“What are they doing?” thought the Tree; “what will happen now?” And the candles burned down to the branches, so they were extinguished,—and the children were given leave to plunder the Tree. Oh! they rushed upon him in such riot, that the boughs all crackled; had not his summit been festooned with the gold star to the ceiling he would have been overturned.

The children danced and played about with their beautiful playthings; no one thought any more of the Tree except the old nurse, who came and peeped among the boughs, but it was only to see whether perchance a fig or an apple had not been left among them.

“A story! a story!” cried the children, pulling a short thick man towards the tree. He sat down, saying, “It is pleasant to sit under the shade of green boughs; besides, the Tree may be benefited by hearing my story. But I shall only tell you one. Would you like to hear about Ivedy Avedy, or about Humpty Dumpty, who fell down-stairs, and yet came to the throne and won the Princess?”

“Ivedy Avedy!” cried some; “Humpty Dumpty!” cried others; there was a famous uproar; the Fir-Tree alone was silent, thinking to himself, “Ought I to make a noise as they do? or ought I to do nothing at all?” for he most certainly was one of the company, and had done all that had been required of him.

And the short thick man told the story of Humpty Dumpty, who fell down-stairs, and yet came to the
throne and won the Princess. And the children clapped their hands and called out for another; they wanted to hear the story of Ivedy Avedy also, but they did not get it. The Fir-Tree stood meanwhile quite silent and thoughtful—the birds in the forest had never related anything like this. "Humpty Dumpty fell down-stairs, and yet was raised to the throne and won the Princess! Yes, yes, strange things come to pass in the world!" thought the Fir-Tree, who believed it must all be true, because such a pleasant man had related it. "Ah! ah! who knows but I may fall down-stairs and win a Princess?" And he rejoiced in the expectation of being next day again decked out with candles and playthings, gold and fruit.

"To-morrow I will not tremble," thought he. "I will rejoice in my magnificence. To-morrow I shall again hear the story of Humpty Dumpty, and perhaps that about Ivedy Avedy likewise." And the Tree mused thereupon all night.

In the morning the maids came in.

"Now begins my state anew!" thought the Tree. But they dragged him out of the room, up the stairs, and into an attic-chamber, and there thrust him into a dark corner, where not a ray of light could penetrate. "What can be the meaning of this?" thought the Tree. "What am I to do here? What shall I hear in this place?" And he leaned against the wall, and thought, and thought. And plenty of time he had for thinking it over, for day after day, and night after night, passed away, and yet no one ever
came into the room. At last somebody did come in, but it was only to push into the corner some old trunks; the Tree was now entirely hidden from sight, and apparently entirely forgotten.

"It is now winter," thought the Tree. "The ground is hard, and covered with snow; they cannot plant me now, so I am to stay here in shelter till the spring. Men are so clever and prudent! I only wish it were not so dark and so dreadfully lonely! not even a little hare! Oh, how pleasant it was in the forest, when the snow lay on the ground, and the hare scampered about,—yes, even when he jumped over my head, though I did not like it then. It is so terribly lonely here."

"Squeak! squeak!" cried a little Mouse, just then gliding forward. Another followed; they snuffed about the Fir-Tree, and then slipped in and out among the branches.

"It is horribly cold!" said the little Mice. "Otherwise it is very comfortable here. Don't you think so, you old Fir-Tree?"

"I am not old," said the Fir-Tree; "there are many who are much older than I am."

"How came you here?" asked the Mice; "and what do you know?" They were most uncommonly curious. "Tell us about the most delightful place on earth? Have you ever been there? Have you been into the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelves, and bacon hangs from the ceiling; where one can dance over tallow-candles; where one goes in thin and comes out fat?"
"I know nothing about that," said the Tree; "but I know the forest, where the sun shines and where the birds sing!" and then he spoke of his youth and its pleasures. The little Mice had never heard anything like it before; they listened so attentively and said, "Well, to be sure! how much you have seen! how happy you have been!"

"Happy!" repeated the Fir-Tree, in surprise; and he thought a moment over all that he had been saying, "Yes, on the whole, those were pleasant times!" He then told them about the Christmas Eve, when he had been decked out with cakes and candles.

"Oh!" cried the little Mice, "how happy you have been, you old Fir-Tree!"

"I am not old at all!" returned the Fir; "it is only this winter that I have left the forest; I am just in the prime of life!"

"How well you can talk!" said the little Mice; and the next night they came again, and brought with them four other little Mice, who wanted also to hear the Tree’s history; and the more the Tree spoke of his youth in the forest, the more vividly he remembered it, and said, "Yes, those were pleasant times! but they may come again, they may come again! Humpty Dumpty fell down-stairs, and for all that he won the Princess; perhaps I, too, may win a Princess;" and then the Fir-Tree thought of a pretty little delicate Birch-Tree that grew in the forest,—a real Princess, a very lovely Princess, was she to the Fir-Tree.

"Who is this Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little
Mice. Whereupon he related the tale; he could remember every word of it perfectly; and the little Mice were ready to jump to the top of the Tree for joy. The night following several more Mice came, and on Sunday came also two Rats; they, however, declared that the story was not at all amusing, which much vexed the little Mice, who, after hearing their opinion, could not like it so well either.

“Do you know only that one story?” asked the Rats.

“Only that one!” answered the Tree; “I heard it on the happiest evening of my life, though I did not then know how happy I was.”

“It is a miserable story! Do you know none about pork and tallow? — no storeroom story?”

“No,” said the Tree.

“Well, then, we have heard enough of it!” returned the Rats, and they went their ways.

The little Mice, too, never came again. The Tree sighed. “It was pleasant when they sat round me, those busy little Mice, listening to my words. Now that, too, is all past! However, I shall have pleasure in remembering it when I am taken away from this place.”

But when would that be? One morning people came and routed out the lumber-room; the trunks were taken away, the Tree, too, was dragged out of the corner; they threw him carelessly on the floor, but one of the servants picked him up and carried him down-stairs. Once more he beheld the light of day.

“Now life begins again!” thought the Tree; he
felt the fresh air, the warm sunbeams — he was out in the court. All happened so quickly that the Tree quite forgot to look at himself,—there was so much to look at all around. The court joined a garden, everything was so fresh and blooming, the roses clustered so bright and so fragrant round the trellis-work, the lime-trees were in full blossom, and the swallows flew backwards and forwards, twittering, "Quirri-virri-vit, my beloved is come!" but it was not the Fir-Tree whom they meant.

"I shall live! I shall live!" He was filled with delightful hope; he tried to spread out his branches, but, alas! they were all dried up and yellow. He was thrown down upon a heap of weeds and nettles. The star of gold tinsel that had been left fixed on his crown now sparkled brightly in the sunshine.

Some merry children were playing in the court, the same who at Christmas-time had danced round the Tree. One of the youngest now perceived the gold star, and ran to tear it off.

"Look at it, still fastened to the ugly old Christmas-Tree!" cried he, trampling upon the boughs till they broke under his boots.

And the Tree looked on all the flowers of the garden, now blooming in the freshness of their beauty; he looked upon himself, and he wished from his heart that he had been left to wither alone in the dark corner of the lumber-room; he called to mind his happy forest-life, the merry Christmas Eve, and the little Mice who had listened so eagerly when he related the story of Humpty Dumpty.
“Past, all past!” said the poor Tree. “Had I but been happy, as I might have been! Past, all past!”

And the servant came, and broke the Tree into small pieces, heaped them up, and set fire to them. And the Tree groaned deeply, and every groan sounded like a little shot; the children all ran up to the place, and jumped about in front of the blaze, looking into it, and crying, “Piff! piff!” But at each of those heavy groans the Fir-Tree thought of a bright summer’s day, or a starry winter’s night in the forest, of Christmas Eve, or of Humpty Dumpty, the only story that he knew and could relate. And at last the Tree was burned.

The boys played about in the court; on the bosom of the youngest sparkled the gold star that the Tree had worn on the happiest evening of his life; but that was past, and the Tree was past, and the story also, past! past! for all stories must come to an end some time or other.
THERE was once a little boy who had caught a cold by getting his feet wet; how he had managed it no one could conceive, for the weather was perfectly fine and dry. His mother took off his clothes, put him to bed, and brought in the teapot, intending to make him a cup of good, warm elder-tea. Just then the pleasant old man who lodged in the uppermost floor of the house came in. He lived quite alone, poor man! for he had neither wife nor children of his own; but he loved all his neighbors' children very fondly, and had so many charming stories and fairy tales to tell them, that it was a pleasure to see him among them.

"Now drink your tea, like a good boy," said the mother, "and who knows but you may hear a story."

"Ah, yes, if one could only think of something new!" said the old man, smiling and nodding his head. "But where did the little one get his feet wet?" asked he.

"Where, indeed?" said the mother; "that's just what nobody can make out."

"May not I have a story?" asked the boy.

"Yes, if you can tell me exactly how deep the gutter is in the little street yonder, along which you go to school. I want to know that first."
"The water just comes up to the middle of my boot," replied the boy, "but not unless I walk through the deep hole."

"Ah, then, that's where we got our wet feet!" said the old man. "And now, I suppose, you will call upon me for a tale; but really I don't know any more."

"But you can get one ready in a moment," insisted the boy. "Mother says that everything you look at quickly becomes a fairy tale, and that everything you touch you turn into a story."

"Yes, but those stories and fairy tales are not good for much! the right sort come of their own accord; they tap at my forehead, and cry, 'Here we are!'"

"I hope they will soon come and tap!" said the little boy; and his mother laughed, put some elder-flowers into the teapot, and poured boiling water over them.

"Come, now for a story! tell me one, pray!"

"Yes, if the stories would but come; but they are proud, and will only visit me when it so pleases them. Hush!" cried he all of a sudden, "here we have it; keep a good lookout; now it is in the teapot."

And the little boy looked at the teapot; he saw the lid rise up, and the elder-flowers spring forth, so fresh and white they were, and they shot out long, thick branches,—even out of the spout they shot forth,—spreading on all sides, and growing larger and larger, till at last there stood by the bedside a
most charming elder-bush, a perfect tree, some of its boughs stretching over the bed and thrusting the curtains aside. Oh, how full of blossoms was this tree, and how fragrant were those blossoms! and in the midst of the tree sat a kind-looking old dame, wearing the strangest dress in the world; it was green like the elder-leaves, and with a pattern of large white elder-flower clusters spreading all over it; one could not be sure whether it were actually a gown, or real, living green leaves and flowers.

"What is her name?" inquired the little boy.

"Why, those old Greeks and Roman," replied the old man, "used to call her a Dryad, but we don't understand those outlandish names; the sailors in the New Booths¹ have a much better name for her; they call her Mother Elder, and that suits her very well. Now listen to me, and keep looking at the pretty elder-tree the while.

"Just such another large, blooming tree as that stands among the New Booths; it has grown up in the corner of a miserable little courtyard. Under the shade of this tree, there sat one afternoon, the glorious sunshine around them, two old people,—a very, very old sailor, and his very, very old wife. They were great-grandparents already, and would soon have to keep their Golden Wedding-day; but they could not exactly remember on what day it would fall, and Mother Elder sat in the tree above them, looking so pleased, just as she does now. 'Ah,

¹ Nyboder (New Booths) is a quarter of Copenhagen inhabited by the seamen.
I know which is the Golden Wedding-day!'' said she; but they did not hear her,—there they sat, talking over old times.

"'Can't you remember,' said the old sailor, 'the days when we were quite little ones, and used to be always running and playing about in this very same yard where we are sitting now; and how we stuck slips in the ground to make a garden?'

"'To be sure I remember it,' replied the old woman. 'We watered the slips every day, but only one of them took root, and that was an elder-slip; and it shot out its green shoots till it grew up to be this large tree that we old folks are now sitting under.'

"'So it did!' said the sailor; 'and in the corner yonder used to stand a water-pail, where I swam my boats. I carved them out with my own hand—such famous boats they were!—but I soon had to sail myself in rather larger vessels than those, though.'

"'Yes, but first we went to school to be made scholars of,' said his wife; 'and then we were confirmed: we both of us cried, I remember; and in the afternoon we went hand in hand up to the Round Tower, and looked out upon the world; out over all Copenhagen and the sea; and then we went to Fredericksberg, where the King and Queen were sailing about the canals in their magnificent barges.'

"'But those barges were scarcely more like the great ships I sailed in than my poor little boats were;

1 The fiftieth anniversary of a wedding-day is in Denmark called the Golden Wedding-day, and is kept as a domestic festival.
and, oh, for how many, many years I was away on those long voyages!

"Yes, and how often I wept for you!" said she. I believed you must be dead, and gone forever, lying far, far down beneath the deep waters. Many a night have I got up to look at the weather-cock, to see if the wind had changed; and change it did, over and over again, but still you did not return. There is one day I shall never forget; it was pouring with rain; the dustmen had come to the house where I was in service. I came down with the dust-box, and remained standing at the door; — oh, what weather it was! and while I stood there, the postman came up and gave me a letter; it was from you. What a journey that letter had made! I tore it open and read it; I laughed and cried by turns, I was so happy. The letter told me you were in the warm countries, where the coffee-trees grow — what charming countries those must be! — it told me so many things, and I fancied I could see all that you had described; and the rain still kept pouring down in torrents, and there I stood at the door with the dust-box. Just then somebody came up behind me, and took hold of me —

"Yes, indeed, and didn’t you give him a good box on the ear? didn’t his ear tingle after it?"

"But I did not know that it was you. You had arrived as soon as your letter, and you were so handsome, — but that you are still; — and you had a large yellow silk handkerchief in your pocket and a new hat on your head. Oh, what weather it was! the streets were quite flooded."
‘And then we were married,’ said the sailor; ‘don’t you remember that? and then we had our first little boy, and after him we had Marie, and Niels, and Peter, and Hans Christian.’

‘Ah! and how happy it was that they should all grow up to be good, honest, and industrious, and to be loved by everybody.’

‘And their children, too, they have little ones now,’ added the old sailor; ‘yes, they are fine healthy babies, those great-grandchildren of ours! And so it was, I fancy, just about this time of year that we had our wedding.’

‘Yes, this very day is your Golden Wedding-day!’ said Mother Elder, putting out her head between the two old people; but they fancied she was their neighbor nodding to them. They gave little heed to her, but again looked at each other, and took hold of each other’s hand. Presently their children and grandchildren came out into the court; they knew well that this was the Golden Wedding-day, and had come that very morning to congratulate their parents; but the two old people had quite forgotten that, although they could remember so clearly things that had happened half a century ago. And the elder-blossoms smelled so sweetly, and the sun, which was near setting, shone full into the old couple’s faces — such a red rosy light he shed over their features, and the youngest of the grandchildren danced round them, shouting with glee that this evening there should be a grand feast, for they were all to have hot potatoes for supper; and Mother Elder nodded her head to
them from the tree, and shouted, 'Hurrah!' as loudly as they did."

"But I don't call that a tale at all," said the little boy in the bed.

"Don't you?" said the kind old story-teller; "well, suppose we ask Mother Elder what she thinks about it."

"No, you are right, that was not a tale," replied Mother Elder; "but now you shall have one. I will show you how the most charming fairy tales spring out of the commonest incidents of every-day life; were it not so, you know my pretty elder-bush could hardly have grown out of the teapot!" And then she took the little boy out of bed, pillowing his head upon her bosom, and the elder-boughs so richly laden with blossoms entwined around them, so that they seemed to be sitting in a thick-leaved, fragrant arbor, and the arbor flew away with them through the air—that was most delightful! Mother Elder had, all of a sudden, changed into a pretty and graceful young girl; her robe was still of the same fresh-green, white-flowered material that Mother Elder had worn; on her bosom rested a real elder-flower cluster, and a whole garland of elder-flowers was wreathed among her curling flaxen hair; her eyes were large and blue—it was a delight to behold a creature so lovely! And she and the boy embraced, and immediately they were of the same age; they loved each other, and were unspeakably happy.

Hand in hand they walked out of the arbor, and were now in the pretty flower-garden of their home.
On the grass-plot they found their father's walking-stick. For the children, it seemed, there was life in this stick: as soon as they got astride it, the bright knob of the handle became a fiery, neighing head, a long black mane fluttered to and fro in the wind, four long, slender legs shot out,—a fine spirited creature was their new steed, and off he galloped with them round the grass-plot—hurrah!

"Now we will ride many miles away," said the boy. "Let us ride to the dear old manor-house we went to last year."

And still they rode round and round the grass-plot; the little girl, who, as we know, was no other than Mother Elder, crying out all the while, "Now we are in the country. Seest thou not yonder pretty cottage? The elder-tree lowers its branches over it; and the cock is strutting about, and scraping up the ground for the hens. See how proudly he strides! And now we are close to the church; it stands high on the hill, among the great oak-trees, one of which is quite hollow. Now we are at the smithy; the fire is blazing, and the half-naked men are banging away with their hammers, and the sparks are flying about all round. Away, away, to the old manor-house!"

And all that the little maiden riding on the stick described flew past them,—the boy saw it all,—and still they only rode round and round the grass-plot. Then the children played in one of the walks, and marked out a tiny garden for themselves in the mould; and the girl took one of the elder-blossoms out of her hair, and planted it, and it grew up, just as the elder-
sprig grew which was planted among the New Booths by the old sailor and his wife when they were little ones, as has been told already. And, hand in hand, the children now went on together, just as the children in the New Booths had done; but not up to the Round Tower nor to the Gardens of Fredericksberg. No, the little girl threw her arms round the little boy's waist, and then away they flew over all Denmark. And spring deepened into summer, and summer mellowed into autumn, and autumn faded away into pale, cold winter, and a thousand pictures were mirrored in the boy's eyes and heart; and still the little girl sang to him, "Never, oh never, forget thou this!" And wheresoever they flew, the sweet, strong perfume of the elder-tree floated round them; the little boy could distinguish the delicious fragrance of the roses blooming in the gardens he flew past, and the wind wafted to him the fresh odor of the beech-trees: but the elder-perfume far excelled these, he thought; for its blossoms nestled to his fairy-like maiden's heart, and over those blossoms he continually bowed his head whilst flying.

"How beautiful is spring!" exclaimed the young girl, as they stood together in the beech-wood, where the trees had newly burst into fresh vernal loveliness, where the sweet-scented woodroof grew at their feet, the pale-tinted anemones looking up so prettily amid its green. "Oh, would it were always spring in the fragrant Danish beech-wood!"

"How beautiful is summer!" said she again, as they passed an ancient baronial castle; its red, stained
walls and battlements mirrored in the moat encircling them; swans swimming in the moat, and peering inquisitively up into the cool, shady avenues. A sea of green corn waved to and fro in the fields; tiny red and golden blossoms peeped out of the ditches, and the hedges were enwreathed with wild, wantoning hops and the bell-flowered white bindweed. It was evening; the moon rose large and round; the meadows were odorous with the scent of haystacks. "Never, oh never, forget thou this!"

"How beautiful is autumn!" exclaimed the little maiden; and the vault of heaven seemed to rise higher, and to grow more intensely blue, and the woods became flushed with the richest and most varied hues of crimson, green, and yellow. The hounds bounded past in full cry; whole flocks of wild fowl flew screaming over the cairn-stones, to which luxuriant brambles were clinging. In the far distance lay the deep blue sea, dotted over with white sails; old women, young maids, and children were assembled in a barn, picking hops into a great cask; the young ones of the party were singing, and the ancient dames were telling old legends of fairies and enchantments. What could be pleasanter than this?

"How beautiful is winter!" declared our young damsels; and, behold! the trees stood around them all covered with hoar-frost—like white, branching corals they looked; the snow crisped under the children's feet with a noise as if they had creaking new boots on, and falling stars, one after another, shot across the sky. The Christmas-tree was lighted up
in the parlor; everybody had had presents given him, and everybody was in good humor; the peasant's cot in the country was merry with the sound of the violin, — and the pancakes disappeared so fast! Even the poorest child might have reason to echo the words, "How beautiful is winter!"

Yes, truly, it was beautiful! and it was our fairy maiden who showed all these fair sights to the little boy; and still the elder-perfume floated round him, when a new picture rose up before his eyes, — the red flag with its white cross fluttering in the breeze, — the very same flag under which the old mariner in the New Booths had sailed. And the boy felt that he was now grown up to be a youth, and that he must go to seek his fortune in the wide world, — far away must he go to the warm countries, where grow the coffee-trees; but at their parting the young maiden took the cluster of elder-blossoms from her bosom, and gave it to him. And he kept it carefully, — he kept it between the leaves of his hymn-book; and when he was in foreign lands he never took up the book but it opened upon the place where the flower of memory lay, and the oftener he looked at it the fresher, he fancied, it became; he seemed, while he looked at it, to breath the sweet air of the Danish beech-groves, to see peeping among the tiny elder-flowerets the pretty maiden with her bright blue eyes, and to hear her low whisper, "How beautiful is Denmark in spring, in summer, in autumn, and in winter!" And a hundred fair visions of the past flitted unbidden across his mind.
Many, very many years passed away, and he was now an old man sitting with his old wife under a flowering tree; they held each other by the hand just as the old couple in the New Booths had done, and they talked, too, of old times, and of their Golden Wedding-day. The little maiden, with the blue eyes and the elder-blossoms in her hair, sat on the tree above, and nodded her head to them, saying, "To-day is your Golden Wedding-day!" and then she took two flower-clusters out of her hair, and kissed them twice; at the first kiss they shone like silver, after the second, like gold, and when she had set them on the two old people's heads, each cluster became a gold crown. And thus the two sat there like a crowned King and Queen, under the fragrant elder-tree; and the old man began to tell his wife the story about Mother Elder, which had been told him when a little boy; and it seemed to them both that a great part of the story was very like their own real history, and they liked that part far the best.

"Yes, so it is," said the little maiden in the tree. "Some call me Mother Elder, others call me a Dryad; but my proper name is Memory. Here I sit in the tree whilst it grows and grows; I never forget; I remember all things well; I could tell such famous stories! Now let me see if you still have your flower safe?"

And the old man opened his hymn-book; there lay the elder-flower, as fresh as if it had but just been laid between the leaves; and Memory nodded her head; and the two old people with their gold crowns sat
under the tree, their faces flushed with the red evening sunlight; they closed their eyes — and then — and then — why, then, there was an end of the tale.

The little boy lay in his bed; he did not rightly know whether he had been dreaming all this, or whether it had been told him. The teapot stood on the table, but no elder-tree was growing out of it; and his friend, the old story-teller, was just on the point of going out at the door. Whilst the boy was rubbing his eyes he was gone.

"How pleasant that was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been to the warm countries."

"Yes, I have no doubt of that!" replied the mother; "after you had drunk two brimful cups of good hot elder-tea, you were likely enough to get into the warm countries!" and she covered him up well for fear he should get chilled. "You have had such a famous sound sleep while I sat disputing with him as to whether it were a fairy tale, or a real, true history."

"And where is Mother Elder?" asked the boy.

"She is in the teapot," said his mother; "and there she may stay."
THE SNOW QUEEN.

IN SEVEN PARTS.

PART THE FIRST,

WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND ITS FRAGMENTS.

LISTEN! We are beginning our story! When we
arrive at the end of it we shall, it is to be hoped, know more than we do now.
There was once a magician! a wicked magician!!
a most wicked magician!!! Great was his delight
at having constructed a mirror possessing this pecu-
liarity, viz., that everything good and beautiful, when reflected in it, shrank up almost to nothing, whilst those things that were ugly and useless were magni-
fied, and made to appear ten times worse than before. The loveliest landscapes reflected in this mirror looked like boiled spinach; and the handsomest persons ap-
peared odious, or as if standing upon their heads, their features being so distorted that their friends could never have recognized them. Moreover, if one of them had a freckle, he might be sure that it would seem to spread over the nose and mouth; and if a good or pious thought glanced across his mind, a wrinkle was seen in the mirror. All this the magician thought
highly entertaining, and he chuckled with delight at his own clever invention. Those who frequented the school of magic where he taught spread abroad the fame of this wonderful mirror, and declared that by its means the world and its inhabitants might be seen now, for the first time, as they really were. They carried the mirror from place to place, till at last there was no country nor person that had not been misrepresented in it. Its admirers now must needs fly up to the sky with it, to see if they could not carry on their sport even there. But the higher they flew the more wrinkled did the mirror become,—they could scarcely hold it together. They flew on and on, higher and higher, till at last the mirror trembled so fearfully that it escaped from their hands, and fell to the earth, breaking into millions, billions, and trillions of pieces. And then it caused far greater unhappiness than before; for fragments of it, scarcely so large as a grain of sand, would be flying about in the air, and sometimes get into people's eyes, causing them to view everything the wrong way, or to have power to see only what was perverted and corrupt, each little fragment having retained the peculiar properties of the entire mirror. Some people were so unfortunate as to receive a little splinter into their hearts,—that was terrible! the heart became cold and hard, like a lump of ice. Some pieces were large enough to be used as window-panes, but it was of no use to look at one's friends through such panes as those. Other fragments were made into spectacles; and then what trouble people had with setting and
THE SNOW QUEEN.
"THEIR SHAPES WERE THE STRANGEST THAT COULD BE IMAGINED."
resetting them! The wicked magician was greatly amused with all this, and he laughed till his sides ached.

There are still some little splinters of this mischievous mirror flying about in the air; we shall hear more about them very soon.

PART THE SECOND.

A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL.

In a large town, where there are so many houses and inhabitants that there is not room enough for all the people to possess a little garden of their own, and therefore many are obliged to content themselves with keeping a few plants in pots, there dwelt two poor children whose garden was somewhat larger than a flower-pot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other as much as if they had been; and their parents lived in two attics exactly opposite. The roof of one neighbor's house nearly joined the other, the gutter ran along between, and there was in each roof a little window, so that you could stride across the gutter from one window to the other.

The parents of each child had a large wooden box in which grew herbs for kitchen use; and they had placed these boxes upon the gutter, so near that they almost touched each other. A beautiful little rose-tree grew in each box; scarlet-runners intwined their
long shoots over the windows, and, uniting with the branches of the rose-trees, formed a flowery arch across the street. The boxes were very high, and the children knew that they might not climb over them, but they often obtained leave to sit on their little stools under the rose-trees; and thus they passed many a delightful hour.

But when winter came, there was an end to these pleasures. The windows were often quite frozen over; and then they heated halfpence on the stove, held the warm copper against the frozen pane, and thus made a little round peep-hole, behind which would sparkle a bright, gentle eye, one from each window.

The little boy was called Kay; the little girl's name was Gerda. In summer-time they could get out of window, and jump over to each other; but in winter there were stairs to run down, and stairs to run up, and sometimes the wind roared, and the snow fell without doors.

"Those are the white bees swarming there!" said the old grandmother.

"Have they a queen bee?" asked the little boy; for he knew that the real bees have one.

"They have," said the grandmother. "She flies yonder where they swarm so thickly: she is the largest of them, and never remains upon the earth, but flies up again into the black cloud. Sometimes, on a winter's night, she flies through the streets of the town, and breathes with her frosty breath upon the windows, and then they are covered with strange and beautiful forms, like trees and flowers."
"Yes, I have seen them!" said both the children— they knew that this was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"If she do come in," said the boy, "I will put her on the warm stove, and then she will melt."

And the grandmother stroked his hair, and told him some stories.

That same evening, after little Kay had gone home, and was half-undressed, he crept upon the chair by the window, and peeped through the little round hole. Just then a few snowflakes fell outside; and one, the largest of them, remained lying on the edge of one of the flower-pots. The snowflake appeared larger and larger, and at last took the form of a lady dressed in the finest white crape, her attire being composed of millions of star-like particles. She was exquisitely fair and delicate, but entirely of ice,—glittering, dazzling ice; her eyes gleamed like two bright stars, but there was no rest nor repose in them. She nodded at the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and jumped down from the chair. He then fancied he saw a large bird fly past the window.

There was a clear frost next day; and soon afterwards came spring,—the trees and flowers budded, the swallows built their nests, the windows were opened, and the little children sat once more in their little garden upon the gutter that ran along the roofs of the houses.

The roses blossomed beautifully that summer, and
the little girl had learned a hymn in which there was something about roses; it reminded her of her own. So she sang it to the little boy, and he sang it with her:

“Our roses bloom and fade away,
Our Infant Lord abides for aye.
May we be blessed his face to see,
And ever little children be!”

And the little ones held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, and looked up into the blue sky, talking away all the time. What glorious summer days were those! How delightful it was to sit under those lovely rose-trees, which seemed as if they never intended to leave off blossoming! One day Kay and Gerda were sitting looking at their picture-book, full of birds and animals, when suddenly—the clock on the old church tower was just striking five—Kay exclaimed, “Oh, dear! what was that shooting pain in my heart? And now, again, something has certainly got into my eye!”

The little girl turned and looked at him. He winked his eyes—no, there was nothing to be seen.

“I believe it is gone,” said he; but gone it was not. It was one of those glass splinters from the Magic Mirror,—the wicked glass which made everything great and good reflected in it to appear little and hateful, and which magnified everything ugly and mean. Poor Kay had also received a splinter in his heart. It would now become hard and cold, like a lump of ice. He felt the pain no longer, but the splinter was there.

“Why do you cry?” asked he; “you look so ugly
when you cry! There is nothing the matter with me. Fie!” exclaimed he again, “this rose has an insect in it; and just look at this! After all, they are ugly roses! and it is an ugly box they grow in!” Then he kicked the box, and tore off the roses.

“O Kay! what are you doing?” cried the little girl? But when he saw how it grieved her, he tore off another rose, and jumped down through his own window, away from his once dear little Gerda.

Ever afterwards, when she brought forward the picture-book, he called it a baby's book; and when her grandmother told stories, he interrupted her with a "but;" and sometimes, whenever he could manage it, he would get behind her, put on her spectacles, and speak just as she did. He did this in a very droll manner, and so people laughed at him. Very soon he could mimic everybody in the street. All that was singular and awkward about them Kay could imitate; and his neighbors said, “What a remarkable head that boy has!” But no; it was the glass splinter which had fallen into his eye, the glass splinter which had pierced into his heart—it was these which made him regardless whose feelings he wounded, and even made him tease the little Gerda who loved him so fondly.

His games were now quite different from what they used to be—they were so rational! One winter’s day, when it was snowing, he came out with a large burning-glass in his hand, and, holding up the skirts of his blue coat, let the snowflakes fall upon them.

“Now look through the glass, Gerda!” said he,
returning to the house. Every snowflake seemed much larger, and resembled a splendid flower, or a star with ten points; they were quite beautiful. "See how curious!" said Kay. "These are far more interesting than real flowers. There is not a single blemish in them; they would be quite perfect if only they did not melt."

Soon after this, Kay came in again, with thick gloves on his hands, and his sledge slung across his back; he called out to Gerda, "I have got leave to drive on the great square where the other boys play!" and away he went.

The boldest boys in the square used to fasten their sledges firmly to the wagons of the country people, and thus drive a good way along with them; this they thought particularly pleasant. Whilst they were in the midst of their play, a large sledge, painted white, passed by; in it sat a person wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a rough white cap. When the sledge had driven twice round the square, Kay bound to it his little sledge, and was carried on with it. On they went, faster and faster, into the next street. The person who drove the large sledge turned round and nodded kindly to Kay, just as if they had been old acquaintances; and every time Kay was going to loose his little sledge, turned and nodded again, as if to signify that he must stay. So Kay sat still, and they passed through the gates of the town. Then the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his own hand; but he was still carried on. He tried hastily to unloose the cords
and free himself from the large sledge, but it was of no use; his little carriage could not be unfastened, and glided on as swift as the wind. Then he cried out as loud as he could; but no one heard him. The snow fell and the sledge flew; every now and then it made a spring, as if driving over hedges and ditches. He was very much frightened; he would have repeated, "Our Father," but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snowflakes seemed larger and larger; at last they looked like great white fowls. All at once they fell aside, the large sledge stopped, and the person who drove it arose from the seat. He saw that the cap and coat were entirely of snow; that it was a lady, tall and slender and dazzlingly white—it was the Snow Queen!

"We have driven fast," said she; "but no one likes to be frozen—creep under my bearskin." And she seated him in the sledge by her side, and spread her cloak around him: he felt as if he were sinking into a drift of snow.

"Are you still cold?" asked she, and then she kissed his brow. Oh! her kiss was colder than ice; it went to his heart, although that was half frozen already. He thought he should die. It was, however, only for a moment; directly afterwards he was quite well, and no longer felt the intense cold around.

"My sledge! do not forget my sledge!" He thought first of that. It was fastened to one of the white fowls, which flew behind with it on his back.
The Snow Queen kissed Kay again; and he entirely forgot little Gerda, her grandmother, and all at home.

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

Kay looked at her, she was so beautiful; a more intelligent, more lovely countenance he could not imagine. She no longer appeared to him ice, cold ice, as at the time when she sat outside the window and beckoned to him; in his eyes she was perfect. He felt no fear. He told her how well he could reckon in his head, even fractions; that he knew the number of square miles of every country, and the number of the inhabitants contained in different towns. She smiled; and then it occurred to him that, after all, he did not yet know so very much. He looked up into the wide, wide space, and she flew with him high up into the black cloud while the storm was raging; it seemed now to Kay as though singing songs of olden time.

They flew over woods and over lakes, over sea and over land; beneath them the cold wind whistled, the wolves howled, the snow glittered, and the black crow flew cawing over the plain, whilst above them shone the moon, so clear and tranquil.

Thus did Kay spend the long, long winter night; all day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.
But how fared it with little Gerda, when Kay never returned? Where could he be? No one knew; no one could give any account of him. The boys said that they had seen him fasten his sledge to another larger and very handsome one, which had driven into the street, and thence through the gates of the town. No one knew where he was, and many were the tears that were shed. Little Gerda wept much and long, for the boys said he must be dead; he must have been drowned in the river that flowed not far from the town. Oh, how long and dismal the winter days were now!

At last came the spring, with its warm sunshine.

"Alas, Kay is dead and gone!" said little Gerda.

"That I do not believe," said the Sunshine.

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

"That we do not believe," returned they; and at last little Gerda herself did not believe it.

"I will put on my new red shoes," said she, one morning, "those which Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river and ask after him."

It was quite early; she kissed her old grandmother, who was still sleeping, put on her red shoes, and went alone through the gates of the town towards the river.
"Is it true," said she, "that thou hast taken my little playfellow away? I will give thee my red shoes if thou wilt restore him to me!"

And the wavelets of the river flowed towards her in a manner which she fancied was unusual. She fancied that they intended to accept her offer, so she took off her red shoes, though she prized them more than anything else she possessed, and threw them into the stream; but they fell near the shore, and the little waves bore them back to her, as though they would not take from her what she most prized, as they had not got little Kay. However, she thought she had not thrown the shoes far enough; so she stepped into a little boat which lay among the reeds by the shore, and, standing at the farthest end of it, threw them from thence into the water. The boat was not fastened, and her movements in it caused it to glide away from the shore. She saw this, and hastened to get out; but, by the time she reached the other end of the boat, it was more than a yard distant from the land; she could not escape, and the boat glided on.

Little Gerda was much frightened, and began to cry; but no one besides the Sparrows heard her, and they could not carry her back to the land. However, they flew along the banks, and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are! here we are!" The boat followed the stream; little Gerda sat in it quite still. Her red shoes floated behind her; but they could not overtake the boat, which glided along faster than they did.

Beautiful were the shores of that river,—lovely flowers, stately old trees, and bright green hills dotted
with sheep and cows, were seen in abundance, but not a single human being.

"Perhaps the river may bear me to my dear Kay," thought Gerda; and then she became more cheerful, and amused herself for hours with looking at the lovely country around her. At last she glided past a large cherry-garden, wherein stood a little cottage, with thatched roof and curious red and blue windows; two wooden soldiers stood at the door, who presented arms when they saw the little vessel approach.

Gerda called to them, thinking that they were alive; but they, naturally enough, made no answer. She came close up to them, for the stream drifted the boat to the land.

Gerda called still louder, whereupon an old lady came out of the house, supporting herself on a crutch; she wore a large hat, with most beautiful flowers painted on it.

"Thou poor little child!" said the old woman, "the mighty flowing river has indeed borne thee a long, long way." And she walked right into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and took out the little girl.

Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, although she was a little afraid of the strange old lady.

"Come and tell me who thou art, and how thou camest hither," said she.

And Gerda told her all; and the old lady shook her head, and said, "Hem! hem!" And when Gerda asked if she had seen little Kay, the lady said that
he had not arrived there yet, but that he would be sure to come soon, and that in the meantime Gerda must not be sad; that she might stay with her, might eat her cherries, and look at her flowers, which were prettier than any picture-book, and could each tell her a story.

She then took Gerda by the hand; they went together into the cottage, and the old lady shut the door. The windows were very high, and their panes of different colored glass, red, blue, and yellow, so that when the bright daylight streamed through them, various and beautiful were the hues reflected upon the room. Upon a table in the centre was placed a plate of very fine cherries, and of these Gerda was allowed to eat as many as she liked; and whilst she was eating them, the old dame combed her hair with a golden comb, and the bright flaxen ringlets fell on each side of her pretty, gentle face, which looked as round and as fresh as a rose.

"I have long wished for such a dear little girl," said the old lady. "We shall see if we cannot live very happily together." And, as she combed little Gerda's hair, the child thought less and less of her foster-brother Kay; for the old lady was an enchantress. She did not, however, practise magic for the sake of mischief, but merely for her own amusement. And now she wished very much to keep little Gerda to live with her; so, fearing that if Gerda saw her roses, she would be reminded of her own flowers and of little Kay, and that then she might run away, she went out into the garden, and extended her crutch
over all her rose-bushes, upon which, although they were full of leaves and blossoms, they immediately sank into the black earth, and no one would have guessed that such plants had ever grown there.

Then she led Gerda into this flower-garden. Oh, how beautiful and how fragrant it was! Flowers of all seasons and all climes grew there in fulness of beauty; certainly no picture-book could be compared with it. Gerda bounded with delight, and played among the flowers till the sun set behind the tall cherry-trees; after which a pretty little bed, with crimson silk cushions, stuffed with blue violet leaves, was prepared for her, and here she slept so sweetly, and had such dreams as a queen might have on her bridal eve.

The next day she again played among the flowers in the warm sunshine, and many more days were spent in the same manner. Gerda knew every flower in the garden; but numerous as they were, it seemed to her that one was wanting — she could not tell which. She was sitting one day looking at her hostess's hat, which had flowers painted on it, and behold, the loveliest among them was a rose! The old lady had entirely forgotten the painted rose on her hat when she made the real roses to disappear from her garden and sink into the ground. This is often the case when things are done hastily.

"What!" cried Gerda, "are there no roses in the garden?" And she ran from one bed to another, sought and sought again; but no rose was to be found. She sat down and wept; and it so chanced that her
tears fell on a spot where a rose-tree had formerly stood, and as soon as her warm tears had moistened the earth, the bush shot up anew, as fresh and as blooming as it was before it had sunk into the ground; and Gerda threw her arms around it, kissed the blossoms, and immediately recalled to memory the beautiful roses at home, and her little playfellow Kay.

"Oh, how could I stay here so long?" exclaimed the little maiden; "I left my home to seek for Kay. Do you not know where he is?" she asked of the Roses; "think you that he is dead?"

"Dead, he is not," said the Roses. "We have been down in the earth; the dead are there, but not Kay."

"I thank you," said little Gerda; and she went to the other flowers, bent low over their cups, and asked, "Know you not where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sunshine dreaming its own little tale; they related their stories to Gerda, but none of them knew anything of Kay.

"And what think you?" she asked of the Tiger-lily.

"Listen to the drums beating, boom! boom! They have but two notes; always boom! boom! Listen to the dirge the women are singing! Listen to the chorus of the priests! Enveloped in her long red robes stands the Hindoo wife on the funeral pile; the flames blaze around her and her dead husband, but the Hindoo wife thinks not of the dead. She thinks only of the living, and the anguish which consumes her spirit is keener than the fire which will soon reduce her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart expire amid the flames of the funeral pile?"
"I do not understand that at all!" said little Gerda.

"That is my tale!" said the Tiger-lily.

"What says the Convolvulus?"

"Hanging over a narrow mountain causeway behold an ancient baronial castle; thick evergreens grow amongst the time-stained walls, their leafy branches intwine about the balcony, and there stands a beautiful maiden. She bends over the balustrades, and fixes her eyes with eager expectation on the road winding beneath. The rose hangs not fresher and lovelier on its stem than she; the apple-blossom which the wind threatens every moment to tear from its branch is not more fragile and trembling. Listen to the rustling of her rich silken robe! Listen to her half-whispered words, 'He comes not yet'!

"Is it Kay you mean?" asked little Gerda.

"I do but tell you my tale — my dream," replied the Convolvulus.

"What says the little Snowdrop?"

"Between two trees hangs a swing; two pretty little maidens, their dress as white as snow, and long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, sit and swing themselves in it. Their brother stands up in the swing. He has thrown his arms round the ropes to keep himself steady, for in one hand he holds a little cup, in the other a pipe made of clay; he is blowing soap-bubbles. The swing moves, and the bubbles fly upwards with bright, ever-changing colors; the last hovers on the edge of the pipe, and moves with the wind. The swing is still in motion, and a little black
dog, almost as light as the soap-bubbles, rises on his hind feet, and tries to get into the swing also; away goes the swing, the dog falls, is out of temper, and barks; he is laughed at, and the bubbles burst. A swinging-board, a frothy, fleeting image, is my song."

"What you describe may be all very pretty, but you speak so mournfully, and there is nothing about Kay.

"What say the Hyacinths?"

"There were three fair sisters—transparent and delicate they were; the kirtle of the one was red, that of the second blue, of the third pure white. Hand in hand they danced in the moonlight beside the quiet lake; they were not fairies, but daughters of men. Sweet was the fragrance when the maidens vanished into the wood; the fragrance grew stronger. Three biers, whereon lay the fair sisters, glided out from the depths of the wood and floated upon the lake; the glow-worms flew shining around like little hovering lamps. Sleep the dancing maidens, or are they dead? The odor from the flowers tells us they are corpses. The evening bells peal out their dirge."

"You make me quite sad," said little Gerda. "Your fragrance is so strong, I cannot help thinking of the dead maidens. Alas! and is little Kay dead? The Roses have been under the earth, and they say, 'No.'"

"Ding-dong! ding-dong!" rang the Hyacinth bells. "We toll not for little Kay; we know him not. We do but sing our own song—the only one we know."

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, which shone so brightly from among her smooth green leaves.
"Thou art like a little bright sun," said Gerda; "tell me, if thou canst, where I may find my play-fellow."

And the Buttercup glittered so brightly, and looked at Gerda. What song could the Buttercup sing? Neither was hers about Kay.

"One bright spring morning the sun shone warmly upon a little courtyard; the bright beams streamed down the white walls of a neighboring house, and close by grew the first yellow flower of spring, glittering like gold in the warm sunshine. An old grandmother sat without in her armchair. Her granddaughter, a pretty, lowly maiden, had just returned home from a short visit; she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, pure gold, in that loving kiss:—

"'Gold was the flower!
Gold the fresh, bright morning hour!'

"That is my little story," said the Buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "Yes, she must be wishing for me, just as she wished for little Kay. But I shall soon go home again, and take Kay with me. It is of no use to ask the flowers about him; they only know their own song; they can give me no information." And she folded her little frock round her, that she might run the faster; but, in jumping over the Narcissus, it caught her foot, as if wishing to stop her. So she turned and looked at the tall yellow flower, saying, "Have you any news to give me?" She bent over the Narcissus, waiting for an answer. And what said the Narcissus?
"I can look at myself; I can see myself! Oh, how sweet is my fragrance! Up in the little attic-chamber stands a little dancer. She rests sometimes on one leg, sometimes on two. She has trampled the whole world under her feet; she is nothing but an illusion. She pours water from a teapot upon a piece of cloth she holds in her hand; it is her bodice. Cleanliness is a fine thing. Her white dress hangs on the hook; that has also been washed by the water from the teapot, and dried on the roof of the house. She puts it on, and wraps a saffron-colored handkerchief round her neck; it makes the dress look all the whiter. With one leg extended, there she stands, as though on a stalk. I can look at myself; I see myself!"

"I don't care if you do," said Gerda. "You need not have told me that;" and away she ran to the end of the garden.

The gate was closed, but she pressed upon the rusty lock till it broke; the gate sprang open, and little Gerda, with bare feet, ran out into the wide world. Three times she looked back; there was no one following her. She ran till she could run no longer, and then sat down to rest upon a large stone. Casting a glance around, she saw that the summer was past, that it was now late in the autumn. Of course she had not remarked this in the enchanted garden, where there were sunshine and flowers all the year round.

"How long I must have stayed there!" said little Gerda. "So, it is now autumn! Well, then, there is no time to lose;" and she rose to pursue her way.

Oh, how sore and weary were her little feet! and
all around looked so cold and barren. The long willow-leaves had already turned yellow, and the dew trickled down from them in large drops. The leaves fell off the trees, one by one; the sloe alone bore fruit, and its berries were so sharp and bitter! Cold and gray and sad seemed the world to her that day.

PART THE FOURTH.

THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS.

Gerda was again obliged to stop and take rest. Suddenly a large Raven hopped upon the snow in front of her, saying, "Caw! Caw! Good-day! Good-day!" He had sat for some time on the withered branch of a tree just opposite, eying the little maiden, and wagging his head; and he now came forward to make acquaintance, and to ask her whither she was going all alone. That word "alone" Gerda understood right well; she felt how sad a meaning it has. She told the Raven the history of her life and fortunes, and asked if he had seen Kay.

And the Raven nodded his head, half doubtfully, and said, "That is possible! — possible!"

"Do you think so?" exclaimed the little girl; and she kissed the Raven so vehemently, that it is a wonder she did not squeeze him to death.

"More moderately! — moderately!" said the Raven. "I think I know — I think it may be little
Kay; but he has certainly forsaken thee for the Princess.”

“Dwells he with a Princess?” asked Gerda.

“Listen to me,” said the Raven; “but it is so difficult to speak your language! Do you understand Ravenish? If so, I can tell you much better.”

“No, I have never learned Ravenish,” said Gerda; “but my grandmother knew it, and Pye-language also. Oh, how I wish I had learned it!”

“Never mind,” said the Raven; “I will relate my story in the best manner I can, though bad will be the best;” and he told all he knew.

“In the kingdom wherein we are now sitting there dwells a Princess, a most uncommonly clever Princess. All the newspapers in the world has she read, and forgotten them again, so clever is she. It is not long since she ascended the throne, which I have heard is not quite so agreeable a situation as one would fancy; and immediately after she began to sing a new song, the burden of which was this, ‘Why should I not marry me?’ ‘There is some sense in this song,’ said she, and she determined she would marry; but at the same time declared that the man whom she would choose must be able to answer sensibly whenever people spoke to him, and must be good for something else besides merely looking grand and stately. The ladies of the court were then all drummed together, in order to be informed of her intentions, whereupon they were highly delighted; and one exclaimed, ‘That is just what I wish;’ and another, that she had lately been thinking of the very
same thing. Believe me," continued the Raven, "every word I say is true; for I have a tame beloved who hops at pleasure about the palace, and she has told me all this."

Of course the "beloved" was also a raven, for birds of a feather flock together.

"Proclamations, adorned with borders of hearts, were immediately issued, wherein, after enumerating the style and titles of the Princess, it was set forth that every well-favored youth was free to go to the palace and converse with the Princess; and that whoever should speak in such wise as showed that he felt himself at home, there would be the one the Princess would choose for her husband.

"Yes, indeed," continued the Raven, "you may believe me; all this is as true as that I sit here. The people all crowded to the palace; there was famous pressing and squeezing. But it was all of no use, either the first or the second day; the young men could speak well enough while they were outside the palace-gates, but when they entered, and saw the royal guard in silver uniform, and the lackeys on the staircase in gold, and the spacious saloon all lighted up, they were quite confounded. They stood before the throne where the Princess sat; and when she spoke to them, they could only repeat the last word she had uttered, which, you know, it was not particularly interesting for her to hear over again. It was just as if they had been struck dumb the moment they entered the palace; for as soon as they got out, they could talk fast enough. There was a regular
procession constantly moving from the gates of the town to the gates of the palace. I was there, and saw it with my own eyes,” said the Raven. “They grew both hungry and thirsty whilst waiting at the palace; but no one could get even so much as a glass of water. To be sure, some of them, wiser than the rest, had brought with them slices of bread and butter; but none would give any to his neighbor, for he thought to himself, ‘Let him look hungry, and then the Princess will be sure not to choose him.’”

“But Kay, little Kay, when did he come?” asked Gerda; “was he among the crowd?”

“Presently, presently! We have just come to him. On the third day arrived a youth with neither horse nor carriage; gayly he marched up to the palace. His eyes sparkled like yours; he had long beautiful hair, but was very meanly clad.”

“That was Kay!” exclaimed Gerda. “Oh, then I have found him!” and she clapped her hands with delight.

“He carried a knapsack on his back,” said the Raven.

“No, not a knapsack,” said Gerda, “a sledge; for he had a sledge with him when he left home.”

“It is possible,” rejoined the Raven; “I did not look very closely; but this I heard from my beloved, that when he entered the palace-gates, and saw the royal guard in silver and the lackeys in gold upon the staircase, he did not seem in the least confused, but nodded pleasantly, and said to them, ‘It must be very tedious standing out here; I prefer going in.’” The
halls glistened with light; Cabinet Councillors and Excellencies were walking about barefooted, and carrying golden keys. It was just the place to make a man solemn and silent; and the youth’s boots creaked horribly, yet he was not at all afraid.”

“That most certainly was Kay!” said Gerda. “I know he had new boots; I have heard them creak in my grandmother’s room.”

“Indeed they did creak!” said the Raven; “but merrily went he up to the Princess, who was sitting upon a pearl as large as a spinning-wheel, whilst all the ladies of the court, with the maids of honor and their handmaidens ranged in order, stood on one side, and all the gentlemen in waiting, with their gentlemen, and their gentlemen’s gentlemen, who also kept pages, stood ranged in order on the other side; and the nearer they were to the door the prouder they looked. The gentlemen’s gentlemen’s page, who always wears slippers, one dares hardly look at, so proudly he stands at the door.”

“That must be dreadful!” said little Gerda. “And has Kay really won the Princess?”

“Had I not been a Raven I should have won her myself, notwithstanding my being betrothed. The young man spoke as well as I speak when I converse in Ravenish; that I have heard from my tame beloved. He was handsome and lively. ‘He did not come to woo her,’ he said; ‘he had only come to hear the wisdom of the Princess;’ and he liked her much, and she liked him in return.”

“Yes, to be sure, that was Kay,” said Gerda; “he
was so clever, he could reckon in his head even fractions! Oh, will you not take me into the palace?"

"Ah! that is easily said," replied the Raven; "but how is it to be done? I will talk it over with my tame beloved; she will advise us what to do, for I must tell you that such a little girl as you are will never gain permission to enter publicly."

"Yes, I shall!" cried Gerda. "When Kay knows that I am here, he will immediately come out and fetch me."

"Wait for me at the trellis yonder," said the Raven. He wagged his head, and away he flew.

The Raven did not return till late in the evening. "Caw, caw!" said he. "My tame beloved greets you kindly, and sends you a piece of bread which she took from the kitchen; there is plenty of bread there, and you must certainly be hungry. It is not possible for you to enter the palace, for you have bare feet. The royal guard in silver uniform, and the lackeys in gold, would never permit it; but do not weep, thou shalt go there. My beloved knows a little back-stair-case leading to the sleeping apartments, and she knows also where to find the key."

And they went into the garden, down the grand avenue, where the leaves dropped upon them as they passed along; and, when the lights in the palace one by one had all been extinguished, the Raven took Gerda to a back-door, which stood half open. Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and expectation! It was just as if she was about to do something wrong, although she only wanted to know whether
Kay was really there. Yes, it must be he! She remembered so well his bright eyes and long hair. She would see if his smile were the same it used to be when they sat together under the rose-trees. He would be so glad to see her; to hear how far she had come for his sake; how all at home mourned his absence. Her heart trembled with fear and joy.

They went up the staircase. A small lamp, placed on a cabinet, gave a glimmering light; on the floor stood the tame Raven, who first turned her head on all sides, and then looked at Gerda, who made her courtesy, as her grandmother had taught her.

"My betrothed has told me much about you, my good young maiden," said the tame Raven; "your adventures, too, are extremely interesting. If you will take the lamp, I will show you the way. We are going straight on; we shall not meet any one now."

"It seems to me as if some one were behind us," said Gerda; and, in fact, there was a rushing sound as of something passing,—strange-looking shadows flitted rapidly along the wall; horses with long, slender legs and fluttering manes; huntsmen, knights, and ladies.

"These are only Dreams!" said the Raven; "they come to amuse the great personages here at night; you will have a better opportunity of looking at them when you are in bed. I hope that when you arrive at honors and dignities, you will show a grateful heart."

"Do not talk of that!" said the Wood-Raven.
They now entered the first saloon; its walls were covered with rose-colored satin, embroidered with gold flowers. The Dreams rustled past them, but with such rapidity that Gerda could not see them. The apartments through which they passed vied with each other in splendor, and at last they reached the sleeping-hall. In the centre of this room stood a pillar of gold, resembling the stem of a large palm-tree, whose leaves of glass — costly glass — formed the ceiling; and depending from the tree, hung near the floor, on thick golden stalks, two beds in the form of lilies. The one was white, wherein reposed the Princess; the other was red, and here must Gerda seek her playfellow Kay. She bent aside one of the red leaves, and saw a brown neck. Oh, it must be Kay! She called him by his name aloud — held the lamp close to him; the Dreams again rushed by. He awoke, turned his head, and, behold! it was not Kay.

The Prince resembled him only about the throat; he was, however, young and handsome. And the Princess looked out from the white lily-petals, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her whole story, and what the Ravens had done for her.

"Poor child!" said the Prince and Princess; and they praised the Ravens, and said they were not at all angry with them. Such liberties must never be taken again in their palace, but this time they should be rewarded.

"Would you like to fly away free to the woods?" asked the Princess, addressing the Ravens; "or to
have the appointment secured to you as Court-Ravens, with the perquisites belonging to the kitchen, such as crumbs and leavings?"

And both the Ravens bowed low, and chose the appointment at court; for they thought of old age, and said it would be so comfortable to be well provided for in their declining years.

Then the Prince arose, and made Gerda sleep in his bed; and she folded her little hands, thinking, "How kind both men and animals are to me!" She closed her eyes, and slept soundly and sweetly, and all the Dreams flitted about her. They looked like angels from heaven, and seemed to be drawing a sledge, whereon Kay sat and nodded to her; but this was only fancy, for as soon as she awoke, all the beautiful visions had vanished.

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet. She was invited to stay at the palace and enjoy all sorts of diversions; but she begged only for a little carriage and a horse, and a pair of little boots. All she desired was to go again into the wide world to seek Kay.

And they gave her the boots, and a muff besides. She was dressed so prettily; and as soon as she was ready, there drove up to the door a new carriage of pure gold, with the arms of the Prince and Princess glittering upon it like a star, the coachman, footmen, and outriders all wearing gold crowns. The Prince and Princess themselves helped her into the carriage, and wished her success. The Wood-Raven, who was now married, accompanied her the first three miles; he
sat by her side, for riding backwards was a thing he could not bear. The other Raven stood at the door flapping her wings. She did not go with them on account of a headache she had felt ever since she had received her appointment, in consequence of eating too much. The carriage was well provided with sugar-plums, fruit, and gingerbread-nuts.

"Farewell! farewell!" cried the Prince and Princess; little Gerda wept, and the Raven wept out of sympathy. But his farewell was a far sorer trial; he flew up to the branch of a tree, and flapped his black wings at the carriage till it was out of sight.

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**PART THE FIFTH.**

**THE LITTLE ROBBER-MAIDEN.**

They drove through the dark, dark forest. The carriage shone like a torch. Unfortunately, its brightness attracted the eyes of the robbers who dwelt in the forest-shades: they could not bear it.

"That is gold! gold!" cried they. Forward they rushed, seized the horses, stabbed the outriders, coachman, and footmen to death, and dragged little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is plump; she is pretty; she has been fed on nut-kernels!" said the old Robber-wife, who had a long bristly beard, and eyebrows hanging like bushes over her eyes. "She is like a little fat lamb! and
how smartly she is dressed!” and she drew out her bright dagger, glittering most terribly.

“Oh, oh!” cried the woman; for at the very moment she had lifted her dagger to stab Gerda, her own wild and wilful daughter jumped upon her back and bit her ear violently. “You naughty child!” said the mother.

“She shall play with me,” said the little Robber-maiden. “She shall give me her muff and her pretty frock, and sleep with me in my bed!” And then she bit her mother again, till the Robber-wife sprang up and shrieked with pain, whilst the robbers all laughed, saying, “Look at her playing with her young one!”

“I will get into the carriage!” And so spoiled and wayward was the little Robber-maiden, that she always had her own way, and she and Gerda sat together in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone, farther and farther into the wood. The little Robber-maiden was about as tall as Gerda, but much stronger. She had broad shoulders, and a very dark skin; her eyes were quite black, and had an expression almost melancholy. She put her arm round Gerda’s waist, and said, “She shall not kill thee so long as I love thee! Art thou not a princess?”

“No,” said Gerda; and then she told her all that had happened to her, and how much she loved little Kay.

The Robber-maiden looked earnestly in her face, shook her head, and said, “She shall not kill thee, even if I do quarrel with thee; then, indeed, I would rather do it myself!” And she dried Gerda’s tears,
and put both her hands into the pretty muff that was so soft and warm.

The carriage at last stopped in the middle of the courtyard of the Robbers’ castle. This castle was half-ruined: crows and ravens flew out of the openings, and some fearfully large bull-dogs, looking as if they could devour a man in a moment, jumped round the carriage; they did not bark, for that was forbidden.

The maidens entered a large smoky hall, where a tremendous fire was blazing on the stone floor. The smoke rose up to the ceiling, seeking a way of escape, for there was no chimney; a large caldron, full of soup, was boiling over the fire, whilst hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

“Thou shalt sleep with me and my little pets tonight!” said the Robber-maiden. Then they had some food, and afterwards went to a corner, wherein lay straw and a piece of carpet. Nearly a hundred pigeons were perched on staves and laths around them; they seemed to be asleep, but were startled when the little maidens approached.

“These all belong to me!” said Gerda’s companion; and seizing hold of one of the nearest, she held the poor bird by the feet, and swung it. “Kiss it,” said she, flapping it into Gerda’s face. “The rabble from the wood sit up there,” continued she, pointing to a number of laths fastened across a hole in the wall. “Those are wood-pigeons; they would fly away, if I did not keep them shut up. And here is my old favorite!” She pulled forward by the horn a Rein-
deer, who wore a bright copper ring round his neck, by which he was fastened to a large stone. "We are obliged to chain him up, or he would run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with my sharp dagger, it makes him fear me so much!" and the Robber-maiden drew out a long dagger from a gap in the wall, and passed it over the Reindeer's throat. The poor animal struggled and kicked, but the girl laughed, and then she pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Will you keep the dagger in your hand whilst you sleep?" asked Gerda, looking timidly at the dangerous plaything.

"I always sleep with my dagger by my side," replied the little Robber-maiden. "One never knows what may happen. But now tell me all over again what you told me before about Kay, and the reason of your coming into the wide world all by yourself." And Gerda again related her history; and the Wood-pigeons imprisoned above listened, but the others were fast asleep. The little Robber-maiden threw one arm round Gerda's neck, and holding the dagger with the other, was also soon asleep. One could hear her heavy breathing; but Gerda could not close her eyes throughout the night: she knew not what would become of her, whether she would even be suffered to live. The robbers sat round the fire drinking and singing. Oh, it was a dreadful night for the poor little girl!

Then spoke the Wood-pigeons, "Coo, coo, coo! We have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge; he himself was in the Snow Queen's chariot, which
passed through the wood whilst we sat in our nest. She breathed upon us young ones as she passed, and all died of her breath excepting us two — coo, coo, coo!"

"What are you saying?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She travels most likely to Lapland, where ice and snow abide all the year round. Ask the Reindeer bound to the rope there."

"Yes, ice and snow are there all through the year. It is a glorious land!" said the Reindeer; "there, free and happy, one can roam through the wide, sparkling valleys! There the Snow Queen has her summer-tent; her strong castle is very far off, near the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen."

"O Kay, dear Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"You must lie still," said the Robber-maiden, "or I will thrust my dagger into your side."

When morning came, Gerda repeated to her what the Wood-pigeons had said, and the little Robber-maiden looked grave for a moment, then nodded her head, saying, "No matter! no matter! Do you know where Lapland is?" asked she of the Reindeer.

"Who should know but I?" returned the animal, his eyes kindling. "There was I born and bred, there how often have I bounded over the wild icy plains!"

"Listen to me!" said the Robber-maiden to Gerda. "You see all our men are gone; my mother is still here, and will remain; but towards noon she will drink a little out of the great flask, and after that
she will sleep; then I will do something for you!" And so saying she jumped out of bed, sprung upon her mother, pulled her by the beard, and said, "My own dear mam, good-morning!" and the mother caressed her so roughly that she was red and blue all over; however, it was from pure love.

When her mother was fast asleep, the Robber-maiden went up to the Reindeer and said, "I should have great pleasure in stroking you a few more times with my sharp dagger, for then you look so droll; but never mind, I will unloose your chain and help you to escape, on condition that you run as fast as you can to Lapland, and take this little girl to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You must have heard her story; for she speaks loud enough, and you know well how to listen."

The Reindeer bounded with joy; and the Robber-maiden lifted Gerda on his back, taking the precaution to bind her on firmly, as well as to give her a little cushion to sit on. "And here," said she, "are your fur boots; you will need them in that cold country. The muff I must keep myself; it is too pretty to part with. But you shall not be frozen; here are my mother's huge gloves, — they reach up to the elbow, — put them on. Now your hands look as clumsy as my old mother's!"

And Gerda shed tears of joy.

"I cannot bear to see you crying!" said the little Robber-maiden; "you ought to look glad. See, here are two loaves and a piece of bacon for you, that you may not be hungry on the way." She fastened this
provender also on the Reindeer's back, opened the
door, called away the great dogs, and then cutting
asunder with her dagger the rope which bound the
Reindeer, shouted to him, "Now, then, run! but take
good care of the little girl."

And Gerda stretched out her hands to the Robber-
maiden, and bade her farewell; and the Reindeer
fleeted through the forest,—over stock and stone,
over desert and heath, over meadow and moor. The
wolves howled and the ravens shrieked. "Isch! isch!"
a red light flashed; one might have fancied the
sky was sneezing.

"Those are my dear old Northern Lights!" said
the Reindeer; "look at them, how beautiful they
are!" And he ran faster than ever; night and day
he ran. The loaves were eaten, so was the bacon;
at last they were in Lapland.

PART THE SIXTH.

THE LAPLAND WOMAN AND THE FINMARK WOMAN.

They stopped at a little hut—a wretched hut it
was; the roof very nearly touched the ground, and
the door was so low, that whoever wished to go either
in or out was obliged to crawl upon hands and knees.
No one was at home except an old Lapland woman,
who was busy boiling fish over a lamp filled with
train-oil. The Reindeer related to her Gerda's whole
history; not, however, till after he had made her acquainted with his own, which appeared to him of much more importance. Poor Gerda, meanwhile, was so overpowered by the cold that she could not speak.

"Ah, poor things!" said the Lapland woman; "you have still a long way before you! You have a hundred miles to run before you can arrive in Finmark. The Snow Queen dwells there, and burns blue lights every evening. I will write for you a few words on a piece of dried stock-fish,—paper I have none,—and you may take it with you to the wise Finmark woman who lives there; she will advise you better than I can."

So when Gerda had well warmed herself and taken some food, the Lapland woman wrote a few words on a dried stock-fish, bade Gerda take care of it, and bound her once more firmly on the Reindeer's back. Onwards they sped. The wondrous Northern Lights, now of the loveliest, brightest blue color, shone all through the night; and amidst these splendid illuminations they arrived in Finmark, and knocked at the chimney of the Wise-woman, for door to her house she had none.

Hot, very hot was it within; so much so, that the Wise-woman wore scarcely any clothing. She was low in stature, and very dirty. She immediately loosened little Gerda's dress, took off her fur boots and thick gloves, laid a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, and then read what was written on the stock-fish. She read it three times; after the third reading she knew it by heart, and threw the fish into the porridge-pot,
for it might make a very excellent supper, and she never wasted anything.

The Reindeer then repeated his own story, and when that was finished he told of little Gerda’s adventures; and the Wise-woman twinkled her wise eyes, but spoke not a word.

"Thou art so powerful," continued the Reindeer, "that I know thou canst twist all the winds of the world into a rope, of which if the pilot loosen one knot, he will have a favorable wind; if he loosen the second, it will blow sharp; and if he loosen the third, so tremendous a storm will arise that the trees of the forest will be uprooted, and the ship wrecked. Wilt thou not mix for this little maiden that wonderful draught which will give her the strength of twelve men, and thus enable her to overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men!" repeated the Wise-woman; "that would be of much use, to be sure!" and she walked away, drew forth a large parchment roll from a shelf, and began to read. What strange characters were seen inscribed on the scroll as the Wise-woman slowly unrolled it! She read so intently, that the perspiration ran down her forehead.

But the Reindeer pleaded so earnestly for little Gerda, and Gerda’s eyes were raised so entreatingly and tearfully, that at last the Wise-woman’s eyes began to twinkle again out of sympathy; and she drew the Reindeer into a corner, and, putting a fresh piece of ice upon his head, whispered thus,—

"Little Kay is still with the Snow Queen, in whose
abode everything is according to his taste, and therefore he believes it to be the best place in the world. But that is because he has a glass splinter in his heart, and a glass splinter in his eye; until he has got rid of them he will never feel like a human being, and the Snow Queen will always maintain her influence over him.”

“But canst thou not give something to little Gerda whereby she may overcome all these evil influences?”

“I can give her no power so great as that which she already possesses. Seest thou not how strong she is? Seest thou not that both men and animals must serve her — a poor little girl, wandering barefoot through the world? Her power is greater than ours; it proceeds from her heart — from her being a loving and innocent child. If this power, which she already possesses, cannot give her access to the Snow Queen’s palace, and enable her to free Kay’s eye and heart from the glass fragment, we can do nothing for her! Two miles hence is the Snow Queen’s garden; thither thou canst carry the little maiden. Put her down close by the bush bearing red berries and half covered with snow; lose no time, and hasten back to this place!”

And the Wise-woman lifted Gerda on the Reindeer’s back, and away they went.

“Oh, I have left my boots behind! I have left my gloves behind!” cried little Gerda, when it was too late. The cold was piercing, but the Reindeer dared not stop; on he ran until he reached the bush with the red berries. Here he set Gerda down, kissed her, the tears rolling down his cheeks the while, and ran
fast back again, which was the best thing he could do. And there stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, alone in that barren region — that terrible icy-cold Finmark.

She ran on as fast as she could — a whole regiment of snowflakes came to meet her. They did not fall from the sky, which was cloudless and bright with the Northern Lights; they ran straight along the ground, and the farther Gerda advanced the larger they grew. Gerda then remembered how large and curious the snowflakes had appeared to her when one day she had looked at them through a burning-glass. These, however, were very much larger — they were living forms; they were, in fact, the Snow Queen's guards. Their shapes were the strangest that could be imagined: some looked like great ugly porcupines; others like snakes rolled into knots with their heads peering forth; and others like little fat bears with bristling hair,—all, however, were alike dazzlingly white, all were living snowflakes.

Little Gerda began to repeat "Our Father." Meanwhile, the cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, which, as it escaped her mouth, ascended into the air like vapor; more dense grew this vapor, and at length shaped itself into the forms of little bright angels, which, as they touched the earth, became larger and more distinct. They wore helmets on their heads, and carried shields and spears in their hands; their number increased so rapidly, that by the time Gerda had finished her prayer a whole legion stood around her. They thrust with their spears
against the horrible snowflakes, which fell into thousands of pieces, and little Gerda walked on, unhurt and undaunted. The angels touched her hands and feet; and then she scarcely felt the cold, and boldly approached the Snow Queen's palace.

But before we accompany her there, let us see what Kay is doing. He is certainly not thinking of little Gerda, least of all can he imagine that she is now standing at the palace-gate.

PART THE SEVENTH,

WHICH TREATS OF THE SNOW QUEEN'S PALACE, AND OF WHAT CAME TO PASS THEREIN.

The walls of the palace were formed of the driven snow, its doors and windows of the cutting winds. There were above a hundred halls, the largest of them many miles in extent, all illuminated by the Northern Lights; all alike vast, empty, icily cold, and dazzlingly white. No sounds of mirth ever resounded through these dreary spaces; no cheerful scene refreshed the sight—not even so much as a bears' ball, such as one might imagine sometimes takes place, the tempest forming a band of musicians, and the polar bears standing on their hind-paws, and exhibiting themselves in the oddest positions. Nor was there ever a card-assembly, wherein the cards might be held in the mouth, and dealt out by the paws; nor even a
small, select coffee-party for the white young lady foxes. Vast, empty, and cold were the Snow Queen’s chambers; and the Northern Lights flashed now high, now low, in regular gradations. In the midst of the empty, interminable snow-saloon lay a frozen lake: it was broken into a thousand pieces; but these pieces so exactly resembled each other, that the breaking of them might well be deemed a work of more than human skill. The Snow Queen, when at home, always sat in the centre of this lake; she used to say that she was then sitting on the Mirror of Reason, and that hers was the best—indeed, the only one—in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue, nay, almost black, with cold; but he did not observe it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away the shrinking feeling he used to experience, and his heart was like a lump of ice. He was busied among the sharp icy fragments, laying and joining them together in every possible way, just as people do with what are called Chinese Puzzles. Kay could form the most curious and complete figures,—this was the ice-puzzle of reason,—and in his eyes these figures were of the utmost importance. He often formed whole words; but there was one word he could never succeed in forming—it was Eternity. The Snow Queen had said to him, “When thou canst put that figure together, thou shalt become thine own master, and I will give thee the whole world, and a new pair of skates besides.” But he could never do it.

“Now I am going to the warm countries,” said the
Snow Queen; "I shall flit through the air, and look into the black caldrons"—she meant the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius. "I shall whiten them a little; that will be good for the citrous and vineyards." So away flew the Snow Queen, leaving Kay sitting all alone in the large, empty hall of ice. He looked at the fragments, and thought and thought till his head ached: he sat so still and so stiff that one might have fancied that he, too, was frozen.

Cold and cutting blew the winds when little Gerda passed through the palace-gates; but she repeated her evening prayer, and they immediately sank to rest. She entered the large, cold, empty hall. She saw Kay, she recognized him; she flew upon his neck, she held him fast, and cried, "Kay! dear, dear Kay! I have found thee at last!"

But he sat still as before—cold, silent, motionless. His unkindness wounded poor Gerda deeply; hot and bitter were the tears she shed. They fell upon his breast, they reached his heart, they thawed the ice, and dissolved the tiny splinter of glass within it; he looked at her whilst she sang her hymn,—

"Our roses bloom and fade away,
Our infant Lord abides for aye.
May we be blessed his face to see,
And ever little children be!"

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept till the glass splinter floated in his eye, and fell with his tears. He knew his old companion immediately, and exclaimed with joy, "Gerda, my dear little Gerda! where hast
thou been all this time? And where have I been?"

He looked around him. "How cold it is here!—how wide and empty!" and he embraced Gerda, whilst she laughed and wept by turns. Even the pieces of ice took part in their joy; they danced about merrily, and when they were wearied and lay down, they formed of their own accord the mystical letters of which the Snow Queen had said, that when Kay could put them together, he should be his own master, and that she would give him the whole world, with a new pair of skates besides.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, whereupon they became fresh and glowing as ever; she kissed his eyes, and they sparkled like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was once more healthy and merry. The Snow Queen might now come home as soon as she liked—it mattered not; Kay's charter of freedom stood written on the mirror in bright icy characters.

They took each other by the hand, and wandered forth out of the palace, talking, meanwhile, about the aged grandmother, and the rose-trees on the roof of their houses; and as they walked on, the winds were hushed into a calm, and the sun burst forth in splendor from among the dark storm-clouds. When they arrived at the bush with the red berries, they found the Reindeer standing by, awaiting their arrival; he had brought with him another and younger Reindeer, whose udders were full, and who gladly gave her warm milk to refresh the young travellers.
The old Reindeer and the young Hind now carried Kay and Gerda on their backs, first to the little hot room of the Wise-woman of Finmark, where they warmed themselves, and received advice how to proceed in their journey home, and afterwards to the abode of the Lapland woman, who made them some new clothes, and provided them with a sledge.

The whole party now ran on together till they came to the boundary of the country; but just where the green leaves began to sprout, the Lapland woman and the two Reindeer took their leave. "Farewell! — farewell!" said they all. And the first little birds they had seen for many a long day began to chirp and warble their pretty songs; and the trees of the forest burst upon them full of rich and variously tinted foliage. Suddenly the green boughs parted asunder, and a spirited horse galloped up. Gerda knew it well, for it was the one which had been harnessed to her gold coach; and on it sat a young girl wearing a bright scarlet cap, and with pistols on the holster before her. It was, indeed, no other than the Robber-maiden, who, weary of her home in the forest, was going on her travels, first to the North, and afterwards to other parts of the world. She at once recognized Gerda, and Gerda had not forgotten her. Most joyful was their greeting!

"A fine gentleman you are, to be sure, you graceless young truant!" said she to Kay. "I should like to know if you deserved that any one should be running to the end of the world on your account!"

But Gerda stroked her cheeks, and asked after the Prince and Princess.
“They are gone travelling into foreign countries,” replied the Robber-maiden.

“And the Raven?” asked Gerda.

“Oh! the Raven is dead,” returned she. “The tame beloved has become a widow; so she hops about with a piece of black worsted wound round her leg. She moans most piteously, and chatters more than ever! But tell me now all that has happened to you, and how you managed to pick up your old play-fellow.”

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

“Snip-snap-snurre-basselurre!” said the Robber-maiden; she pressed the hands of both, promised that if ever she passed through their town she would pay them a visit, and then bade them farewell, and rode away out into the wide world.

Kay and Gerda walked on hand in hand; and wherever they went it was spring, beautiful spring, with its bright flowers and green leaves.

They arrived at a large town; the church bells were ringing merrily, and they immediately recognized the high towers rising into the sky—it was the town wherein they had lived. Joyfully they passed through the streets, joyfully they stopped at the door of Gerda’s grandmother. They walked up the stairs, and entered the well-known room. The clock said “Tick, tick!” and the hands moved as before; only one alteration could they find, and that was in themselves, for they saw that they were now full-grown persons. The rose-trees on the roof blossomed in front of the open window, and there beneath them stood the children’s
stools. Kay and Gerda went and sat down upon them, still holding each other by the hands. The cold, hollow splendor of the Snow Queen’s palace they had forgotten; it seemed to them only an unpleasant dream. The grandmother, meanwhile, sat amid God’s bright sunshine, and read from the Bible these words: “Unless ye become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

And Kay and Gerda gazed on each other; they now understood the words of their hymn,—

“Our roses bloom and fade away,  
Our Infant Lord abides for aye.  
May we be blessed his face to see,  
And ever little children be.”

There they sat, those two happy ones, grown up, and yet children—children in heart, while all around them glowed bright summer—warm, glorious summer.
THE CONSTANT TIN SOLDIER.

There were once five-and-twenty Tin Soldiers, all brothers, for they had all been made out of one old tin spoon. They carried muskets in their arms, and held themselves very upright, and their uniforms were red and blue — very gay indeed. The first word that they heard in this world, when the lid was taken off the box wherein they lay, was, "Tin Soldiers!" It was a little boy who made this exclamation, clapping his hands at the same time. They had been given to him because it was his birthday, and he now set them out on the table. The soldiers resembled one another to a hair; one only was rather different from the rest. He had but one leg, for he had been made last, when there was not quite tin enough left; however, he stood as firmly upon his one leg as the others did upon their two. And this identical Tin Soldier it is whose fortunes seem to us worthy of record.

On the table where the Tin Soldiers were set out were several other playthings; but the most charming of them all was a pretty pasteboard castle. Through its little windows one could look into the rooms. In front of the castle stood some tiny trees, clustering round a little mirror intended to represent a lake, and waxen swans swam in the lake, and were reflected on its surface. All this was very pretty; but prettiest
of all was a little damsel standing in the open doorway of the castle. She, too, was cut out of pasteboard; but she had on a frock of the clearest muslin, a little sky-blue ribbon was flung across her shoulders like a scarf, and in the midst of this scarf was set a bright gold wing. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer, and raised one of her legs so high in the air that the Tin Soldier could not find it, and fancied that she had, like him, only one leg.

"That would be just the wife for me," thought he; "but, then, she is of rather too high rank; she lives in a castle. I have only a box; besides, there are all our five-and-twenty men in it: it is no place for her! However, there will be no harm in my making acquaintance with her." And so he stationed himself behind a snuff-box that stood on the table; from this place he had a full view of the delicate little lady, who still remained standing on one leg, yet without losing her balance.

When evening came, all the other Tin Soldiers were put away into the box, and the people of the house went to bed. The playthings now began to play in their turn; they pretended to visit, to fight battles, and give balls. The Tin Soldiers rattled in the box, for they wanted to play too; but the lid would not come off. The nutcrackers cut capers, and the slate-pencil played at commerce on the slate. There was such a racket that the canary-bird waked up, and began to talk too; but he always talked in verse. The only two who did not move from their places were
the Tin Soldier and the little dancer. She constantly remained in her graceful position, standing on the point of her foot, with outstretched arms; and as for him, he stood just as firmly on his one leg, never for one moment turning his eyes away from her.

Twelve o'clock struck — crash! open sprang the lid of the snuff-box; but there was no snuff inside it. No, out jumped a little black Conjurer; in fact, it was a Jack-in-the-box.

"Tin Soldier!" said the Conjurer, "wilt thou keep thine eyes to thyself?"

But the Tin Soldier pretended not to hear.

"Well, only wait till to-morrow!" quoth the Conjurer.

When the morrow had come, and the children were out of bed, the Tin Soldier was placed on the window-ledge; and, whether the Conjurer or the wind occasioned it, all at once the window flew open, and out fell the Tin Soldier; head foremost, from the third story to the ground. A dreadful fall was that! His one leg turned over and over in the air; and at last he rested, poised on his soldier's cap, with his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The maid-servant and the little boy immediately came down to look for him; but although they very nearly trod on him, they could not see him. If the Tin Soldier had but called out, "Here I am!" they might easily have found him; but he thought it would not be becoming for him to cry out, as he was in uniform.

It now began to rain; every drop fell heavier than
the last: there was a regular shower. When it was over, two boys came by.

“Look,” said one, “here is a Tin Soldier! He shall have a sail for once in his life.”

So they made a boat out of an old newspaper, put the Tin Soldier into it, and away he sailed down the gutter, both the boys running along by the side, and clapping their hands. The paper boat rocked to and fro, and every now and then veered round so quickly that the Tin Soldier became quite giddy; still he moved not a muscle, looked straight forward before him, and held his bayonet tightly clasped.

All at once the boat sailed under a long gutter-board; he found it as dark here as at home in his own box.

“Where shall I get to next?” thought he; “yes, to be sure, it is all that Conjurer’s doing! Ah, if the little maiden were but sailing with me in the boat, I would not care for its being twice as dark!”

Just then a great Water-Rat, that lived under the gutter-board, darted out.

“Have you a passport?” asked the Rat. “Where is your passport?”

But the Tin Soldier was silent, and held his weapon with a still firmer grasp. The boat sailed on, and the Rat followed. Oh! how furiously he showed his teeth, and cried out to sticks and straws, “Stop him, stop him! He has not paid the toll! He has not shown his passport!” But the stream grew stronger and stronger. The Tin Soldier could already catch a glimpse of the bright daylight before the boat came
from under the tunnel; but at the same time he heard a roaring noise, at which the boldest heart might well have trembled. Only fancy! where the tunnel ended, the water of the gutter fell perpendicularly into a great canal; this was as dangerous for the Tin Soldier as sailing down a mighty waterfall would be for us.

He was now so close that he could no longer stand upright. The boat darted forwards; the poor Tin Soldier held himself as stiff and immovable as possible; no one could accuse him of having even blinked. The boat spun round and round, three, nay, four times, and was filled with water to the brim; it had to sink. The Tin-soldier stood up to his neck in water; deeper and deeper sank the boat, softer and softer grew the paper. The water went over the soldier's head; he thought of the pretty little dancer, whom he should never see again, and these words rang in his ears:

"Wild adventure, mortal danger,
Be thy portion, valiant stranger!"

The paper now tore asunder; the Tin Soldier fell through the rent; but in the same moment he was swallowed up by a large fish.

Oh, how dark it was! worse, even, than under the gutter-board, and so narrow too! But the Tin Soldier's resolution was as constant as ever; there he lay at full length, shouldering his arms.

The fish turned and twisted about, and made the strangest movements: at last he became quite still; a flash of lightning, as it were, darted through him. The daylight shone brightly, and some one exclaimed,
"Tin Soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to the market, sold, and brought home into the kitchen, where the servant-girl was cutting him up with a large knife. She seized the Tin Soldier by the middle with two of her fingers, and took him into the parlor, where every one was eager to see the wonderful man who had travelled in the maw of a fish. However, our little warrior was by no means proud. They set him on the table, and there—no! how could anything so extraordinary happen in this world?—the Tin Soldier was in the very same room in which he had been before. He saw the same children, the same playthings stood on the table, among them the beautiful castle with the pretty little dancing maiden, who was still standing upon one leg, whilst she held the other high in the air; she, too, was constant. It quite affected the Tin Soldier; he could have found it in his heart to weep tin tears, but such weakness would have been unbecoming in a soldier. He looked at her, and she looked at him, but neither spoke a word.

And now one of the little boys took the Soldier, and threw him without ceremony into the stove. He did not give any reason for so doing; but, no doubt, the Conjurer in the snuff-box must have had a hand in it.

The Tin Soldier now stood in a blaze of red light; he felt extremely hot. Whether this heat was the result of the actual fire, or of the flames of love within him, he knew not. He had entirely lost his color. Whether this change had happened during his travels, or were the effect of strong emotion, I know not. He looked upon the little damsel, she looked upon him,
and he felt that he was melting; but, constant as ever, he still stood shouldering his arms. A door opened, the wind seized the Dancer, and, like a sylph, she flew straightway into the stove, to the Tin Soldier; they both flamed up into a blaze — and were gone! The Soldier was melted to a hard lump, and when the maid took the ashes out the next day, she found his remains in the shape of a little tin heart: of the Dancer there remained only the gold wing, and that was burnt black as a coal.
THE SHEPHERDESS AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPER.

HAVE you never seen an old-fashioned, oaken-wood cabinet, quite black with age, and covered with varnish and carving-work? Just such a piece of furniture, an old heirloom that had been the property of its present mistress’s great-grandmother, stood once in a parlor; it was carved from top to bottom, roses, tulips, and little stags’ heads with long branching antlers peering forth from amid the curious scrolls and foliage surrounding them. Moreover, in the centre panel of the cabinet was carved the full-length figure of a man, who seemed to be perpetually grinning, perhaps at himself, for in truth he was a most ridiculous figure; he had crooked legs, small horns on his forehead, and a long beard. The children of the house used to call him “the crooked-legged Field-marshall-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant;” for this was a long, hard name, and not many figures, whether carved in wood or in stone, could boast of such a title. There he stood, his eyes always fixed upon the table under the pier-glass; for on this table stood a pretty little porcelain Shepherdess, her mantle gathered gracefully round her, and fastened with a red rose. Her shoes and hat were gilt; her hand held a crook — oh, she was charming! Close by her stood
a little Chimney-sweeper, likewise of porcelain. He was as clean and neat as any of the other figures. Indeed, the manufacturer might just as well have made a prince as a chimney-sweeper of him; for, though elsewhere black as a coal, his face was as fresh and rosy as a girl’s, which was certainly a mistake—it ought to have been black. His ladder in his hand, there he kept his station, close by the little Shepherdess. They had been placed together from the first, had always remained on the same spot, and had thus plighted their troth to each other. They suited each other so well; they were both young people, both of the same kind of porcelain, both alike fragile and delicate.

Not far off stood a figure three times as large as the others. It was an old Chinese Mandarin, who could nod his head. He, too, was of porcelain, and declared that he was grandfather to the little Shepherdess. He could not prove his assertion: however, he insisted that he had authority over her; and so when “the crooked-legged Field-marshial-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant” made proposals to the little Shepherdess, he nodded his head in token of his consent.

“Now you will have a husband,” said the old Mandarin to her,—“a husband who, I verily believe, is of mahogany-wood. You will be the wife of a ‘Field-marshial-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant,’ of a man who has a whole cabinet full of silver-plate, besides a store of no one knows what in the secret drawers!”

“I will not go into that dismal cabinet!” declared
the little Shepherdess. "I have heard say that eleven porcelain ladies are already imprisoned there."

"Then you shall be the twelfth, and you will be in good company!" rejoined the Mandarin. "This very night, when the old cabinet creaks, your nuptials shall be celebrated, as sure as I am a Chinese Mandarin!" Whereupon he nodded his head and fell asleep.

But the little Shepherdess wept, and turned to the beloved of her heart, the porcelain Chimney-sweeper.

"I believe I must ask you," said she, "to go out with me into the wide world, for here we cannot stay."

"I will do everything you wish," replied the little Chimney-sweeper; "let us go at once: I think I can support you by my profession."

"If we could but get off the table!" sighed she. "I shall never be happy till we are away, out in the wide world."

And he comforted her, and showed her how to set her little foot on the carved edges and gilded foliage twining round the leg of the table, till at last they reached the floor. But turning to look at the old cabinet, they saw everything in a grand commotion, all the carved stags putting their little heads farther out, raising their antlers, and moving their throats, whilst "the crooked-legged Field-marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant" sprang up, and shouted out to the old Chinese Mandarin, "Look, they are eloping! they are eloping!"

They were not a little frightened, and quickly jumped into an open drawer for protection.
In this drawer there were three or four incomplete packs of cards, and also a little puppet-theatre. A play was being performed, and all the Queens, whether of Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs, or Spades, sat in the front row fanning themselves with the flowers they held in their hands; behind them stood the Knaves, showing that they had each two heads, one above and one below, as most cards have. The play was about two persons who were crossed in love; and the Shepherdess wept over it, for it was just like her own history.

"I cannot bear this!" said she. "Let us leave the drawer." But when they had again reached the floor, on looking up at the table, they saw that the old Chinese Mandarin had awakened, and was rocking his whole body to and fro with rage.

"Oh, the old Mandarin is coming!" cried the little Shepherdess, and down she fell on her porcelain knees in the greatest distress.

"A sudden thought has struck me," said the Chimney-sweeper; "suppose we creep into the large Pot-pourri Vase that stands in the corner; there we can rest upon roses and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he come near us."

"That will not do at all," said she; "besides, I know that the old Mandarin was once betrothed to the Pot-pourri Vase, and, no doubt, there is still some slight friendship existing between them. No, there is no help for it; we must wander forth together into the wide world."

"Hast thou, indeed, the courage to go with me into the wide world?" asked the Chimney-sweeper.
“Hast thou considered how large it is, and that we may never return home again?”

“I have,” replied she.

And the Chimney-sweeper looked keenly at her, and then said, “My path leads through the chimney! Hast thou, indeed, the courage to creep with me through the stove, through the flues and the tunnel? Well do I know the way! We shall mount up so high that they cannot come near us, and at the top there is a cavern that leads into the wide world.”

And he led her to the door of the stove.

“Oh, how black it looks!” sighed she. However, she went on with him, through the flues, and through the tunnel, where it was dark, pitch dark.

“Now we are in the chimney,” said he; “and look, what a lovely star shines above us!”

And there was actually a star in the sky, shining right down upon them, as if to show them the way. And they crawled and crept—a fearful path was theirs—so high, so very high! But he guided and supported her, and showed her the best places whereon to plant her tiny porcelain feet, till they reached the edge of the chimney, where they sat down to rest, for they were very tired; and indeed not without reason. Heaven with all its stars was above them, and the town with all its roofs lay beneath them; the wide, wide world surrounded them. The poor Shepherdess had never imagined all this; she leant her little head on her Chimney-sweeper’s arm, and wept so vehemently that the gilding broke off from her waistband.

“This is too much!” exclaimed she. “This can I
not endure! The world is all too large! Oh, that I were once more upon the little table under the pierglass! I shall never be happy till I am there again. I have followed thee out into the wide world, surely thou canst follow me home again, if thou Lovest me!"

And the Chimney-sweeper talked very sensibly to her, reminding her of the old Chinese Mandarin and "the crooked-legged Field-marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant;" but she wept so bitterly, and kissed her little Chimney-sweep so fondly, that at last he could not but yield to her request, unreasonable as it was. So with great difficulty they crawled down the chimney, crept through the flues and the tunnel, and at length found themselves once more in the dark stove; but they still lurked behind the door, listening, before they would venture to return into the room. Everything was quite still; they peeped out — alas! on the ground lay the old Chinese Mandarin. In attempting to follow the runaways, he had fallen down off the table, and had broken into three pieces — his head lay shaking in a corner. "The crooked-legged Field-marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant" stood where he had always stood, thinking over what had happened.

"Oh, how shocking!" exclaimed the little Shepherdess; "old grandfather is broken in pieces, and we are the cause! I shall never survive it!" and she wrung her delicate hands.

"He can be put together again," replied the Chimney-sweeper. "He can very easily be put together;
only be not so impatient! If they glue his back together, and put a strong rivet in his neck, then he will be as good as new again, and will be able to say plenty of unpleasant things to us.”

“Do you really think so?” asked she. And then they climbed up the table to the place where they had stood before.

“See how far we have been!” observed the Chimney-sweeper; “we might have spared ourselves all the trouble.”

“If we could but have old grandfather put together!” said the Shepherdess. “Will it cost very much?”

And he was put together. The family had his back glued and his neck riveted; he was as good as new, but could no longer nod his head.

“You have certainly grown very proud since you broke in pieces!” remarked “the crooked-legged Field-marshal-Major-General-Corporal-Sergeant;” “but I must say, for my part, I do not see that there is anything to be proud of. Am I to have her, or am I not? Just answer me that!”

And the Chimney-sweeper and the little Shepherdess looked imploringly at the old Mandarin, they were so afraid lest he should nod his head; but nod he could not, and it was disagreeable to him to tell a stranger that he had a rivet in his neck, so the young porcelain people always remained together; they blessed the grandfather’s rivet, and loved each other till they broke in pieces.
THE RED SHOES.

There was once a little girl, very pretty and delicate, but so poor that in summer-time she went barefoot, and in winter wore large wooden shoes, so that her little ankles grew quite red and sore.

In the village dwelt the shoemaker's mother; she sat down one day, and made out of some old pieces of red cloth a pair of little shoes. They were clumsy enough, certainly; but they fitted the little girl tolerably well, and she gave them to her. The little girl's name was Karen.

It was the day of her mother's funeral when the red shoes were given to Karen; they were not at all suitable for mourning, but she had no others, and in them she walked with bare legs behind the miserable straw bier.

Just then a large old carriage rolled by; in it sat a large old lady. She looked at the little girl, and pitied her; and she said to the priest, "Give me the little girl, and I will take care of her."

And Karen thought it was all for the sake of the red shoes that the old lady had taken this fancy to her; but the old lady said they were frightful, and they were burnt. And Karen was dressed very neatly: she was taught to read and to work, and
people told her she was pretty; but the Mirror said, "Thou art more than pretty; thou art beautiful!"

It happened one day that the Queen travelled through that part of the country with her little daughter, the Princess; and all the people, Karen amongst them, crowded in front of the palace, whilst the little Princess stood, dressed in white, at a window, for every one to see her. She wore neither train nor gold crown, but on her feet were pretty red morocco shoes; much prettier ones, indeed, than those the shoemaker's mother had made for little Karen. Nothing in the world could be compared to these red shoes!

Karen was now old enough to be confirmed; she was to have both new frock and new shoes. The rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot. Large glass cases, full of neat shoes and shining boots, were fixed round the room; however, the old lady's sight was not very good, and, naturally enough, she had not so much pleasure in looking at them as Karen had. Amongst the shoes was a pair of red ones, just like those worn by the Princess. How gay they were! and the shoemaker said they had been made for a count's daughter, but had not quite fitted her.

"They are of polished leather," said the old lady; "see how they shine!"

"Yes, they shine beautifully!" exclaimed Karen. And as the shoes fitted her, they were bought; but the old lady did not know that they were red, for she would never have suffered Karen to go to confirmation in red shoes. But Karen did so.
Everybody looked at her feet; and as she walked up the nave to the chancel it seemed to her that even the antique sculptured figures on the monuments, with their stiff ruffs and long black robes, fixed their eyes on her red shoes; of them only she thought when the Bishop laid his hand on her head, when he spoke of Holy Baptism, of her covenant with God, and how that she must now be a full-grown Christian. The organ sent forth its deep, solemn tones; the children's sweet voices mingled with those of the choristers, but Karen still thought only of her red shoes.

That afternoon, when the old lady was told that Karen had worn red shoes at her confirmation, she was much vexed, and told Karen that they were quite unsuitable, and that henceforward, whenever she went to church, she must wear black shoes, were they ever so old.

Next Sunday was the Communion-day. Karen looked first at the red shoes, then at the black ones, then at the red again, and—put them on.

It was beautiful, sunshiny weather. Karen and the old lady walked to church through the cornfields; the path was very dusty.

At the church-door stood an old soldier. He was leaning on crutches, and had a marvellously long beard, not white, but reddish-hued; and he bowed almost to the earth, and asked the old lady if he might wipe the dust off her shoes. And Karen put out her little foot also. "Oh, what pretty dancing shoes!" quoth the old soldier; "take care, and mind you do
not let them slip off when you dance;” and he passed his hands over them.

The old lady gave the soldier a halfpenny, and then went with Karen into church.

And every one looked at Karen’s red shoes; and all the carved figures, too, bent their gaze upon them; and when Karen knelt before the altar, the red shoes still floated before her eyes. She thought of them, and of them only, and she forgot to join in the hymn of praise; she forgot to repeat “Our Father.”

At last all the people came out of church, and the old lady got into her carriage. Karen was just lifting her foot to follow her, when the old soldier standing in the porch exclaimed, “Only look, what pretty dancing-shoes!” And Karen could not help it, she felt she must make a few of her dancing-steps; and after she had once begun, her feet continued to move, just as if the shoes had received power over them. She danced round the churchyard; she could not stop. The coachman was obliged to run after her. He took hold of her, and lifted her into the carriage; but the feet still continued to dance, so as to kick the good old lady most cruelly. At last the shoes were taken off, and the feet had rest.

And now the shoes were put away in a press; but Karen could not help going to look at them every now and then.

The old lady lay ill in bed. The doctor said she could not live much longer. She certainly needed careful nursing; and who should be her nurse and constant attendant but Karen? But there was to be
a grand ball in the town. Karen was invited. She looked at the old lady, who was almost dying; she looked at the red shoes—she put them on: there could be no harm in doing that, at least. She went to the ball, and began to dance.

But when she wanted to move to the right, the shoes bore her to the left; and when she would dance up the room, the shoes danced down the room, danced down the stairs, through the streets, and through the gates of the town. Dance she did, and dance she must, straight out into the dark wood.

Something all at once shone through the trees! She thought at first it must be the moon’s bright face, shining blood-red through the night mists; but no, it was the old soldier with the red beard. He sat there, nodding at her, and repeating, “Only look, what pretty dancing-shoes!”

She was very much frightened, and tried to throw off her red shoes, but could not unclasp them. She hastily tore off her stockings; but the shoes she could not get rid of. They had, it seemed, grown on to her feet. Dance she did, and dance she must, over field and meadow, in rain and in sunshine, by night and by day. By night! That was most horrible! She danced into the lonely churchyard; but the dead there danced not—they were at rest. She would fain have sat down on the poor man’s grave, where the bitter tansy grew; but for her there was neither rest nor respite. She danced past the open church-door. There she saw an Angel, clad in long white robes, and with wings that reached from his shoulders
to the earth. His countenance was grave and stern, and in his hand he held a broad glittering sword.

"Dance shalt thou," said he; "dance on, in thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and thy skin shrinks and crumples up like a skeleton's! Dance shalt thou still, from door to door; and wherever proud, vain children live, thou shalt knock, so that they may hear thee and fear! Dance shalt thou, dance on" —

"Mercy!" cried Karen; but she heard not the Angel's answer, for the shoes carried her through the gate, into the fields, along highways and byways, and still she had to dance.

One morning she danced past a door she knew well; she heard psalm-singing from within, and presently a coffin, strewn with flowers, was borne out. Then Karen knew that the good old lady was dead; and she felt herself a thing forsaken by all mankind, and accursed by the Angel of God.

Dance she did, and dance she must, even through the dark night; the shoes bore her continually over thorns and briers, till her limbs were torn and bleeding. Away she danced over the heath to a little solitary house; she knew that the headsman dwelt there, and she tapped with her fingers against the panes, crying,—

"Come out! come out! — I cannot come in to you; I am dancing."

And the headsman replied, "Surely thou knowest not who I am. I cut off the heads of wicked men, and my axe is very sharp and keen."
“Cut not off my head!” said Karen, “for then I could not live to repent of my sin; but cut off my feet with the red shoes.”

And then she confessed to him all her sin, and the headsman cut off her feet with the red shoes on them; but even after this the shoes still danced away with those little feet over the fields, and into the deep forests.

And the headsman made her a pair of wooden feet, and hewed down some boughs to serve her as crutches, and he taught her the psalm which is always repeated by criminals; and she kissed the hand that had guided the axe, and went her way over the heath.

“Now I have certainly suffered quite enough through the red shoes,” thought Karen; “I will go to church, and let people see me once more!” And she went as fast as she could to the church-porch; but as she approached it, the red shoes danced before her, and she was frightened, and turned back.

All that week through she endured the keenest anguish and shed many bitter tears; however, when Sunday came, she said to herself, “Well, I must have suffered and striven enough by this time; I dare say I am quite as good as many of those who are holding their heads so high in church.” So she took courage and went there; but she had not passed the church-yard-gate before she saw the red shoes again dancing before her, and in great terror she again turned back, and more deeply than ever bewailed her sin.

She then went to the pastor’s house, and begged that some employment might be given her, promising
to work diligently and do all she could. She did not wish for any wages, she said; she only wanted a roof to shelter her, and to dwell with good people. And the pastor’s wife had pity on her, and took her into her service. And Karen was grateful and industrious. Every evening she sat silently listening to the pastor, while he read the Holy Scriptures aloud. All the children loved her; but when she heard them talk about dress and finery, and about being as beautiful as a queen, she would sorrowfully shake her head.

Again Sunday came; all the pastor’s household went to church; and they asked her if she would not go too, but she sighed and looked with tears in her eyes upon her crutches.

When they were all gone, she went into her own little lowly chamber,—it was but just large enough to contain a bed and a chair,—and there she sat down with her psalm-book in her hand; and whilst she was meekly and devoutly reading in it, the wind wafted the tones of the organ from the church into her room, and she lifted up her face to heaven and prayed, with tears, “O God, help me!”

Then the sun shone brightly, so brightly!—and behold! close before her stood the white-robed Angel of God, the same whom she had seen on that night of horror at the church-porch; but his hand wielded not now, as then, a sharp, threatening sword,—he held a lovely green bough, full of roses. With this he touched the ceiling, which immediately rose to a great height, a bright gold star sparkling in the spot
where the Angel’s green bough had touched it. And he touched the walls, whereupon the room widened, and Karen saw the organ, the old monuments, and the congregation all sitting in their richly carved seats and singing from their psalm-books.

For the church had come home to the poor girl in her little narrow chamber, or rather the chamber had grown, as it were, into the church; she sat with the rest of the pastor’s household, and when the psalm was ended, they looked up and nodded to her, saying, “Thou didst well to come, Karen!”

“This is mercy!” said she.

And the organ played again, and the children’s voices in the choir mingled so sweetly and plaintively with it! The bright sunbeams streamed warmly through the windows upon Karen’s seat. Her heart was so full of sunshine, of peace and gladness, that it broke; her soul flew upon a sunbeam to her Father in heaven, where not a look of reproach awaited her — not a word was breathed of the Red Shoes.
THE FLEA, THE GRASSHOPPER, AND THE FROG ONCE WANTED TO TRY WHICH OF THEM COULD JUMP HIGHEST; SO THEY INVITED THE WHOLE WORLD, AND ANYBODY ELSE WHO LIKED TO COME AND SEE THE GRAND SIGHT. THREE FAMOUS JUMPERS WERE THEY, AS WAS SEEN BY EVERY ONE WHEN THEY MET TOGETHER IN THE ROOM.

"I WILL GIVE MY DAUGHTER TO HIM WHO SHALL JUMP HIGHEST," SAID THE KING; "IT WOULD BE TOO BAD FOR YOU TO HAVE THE TROUBLE OF JUMPING, AND FOR US TO OFFER YOU NO PRIZE."

*L The Flea was the first to introduce himself: he had such polite manners, and bowed to the company on every side, for he was of noble blood; besides, he was accustomed to the society of man, which had been a great advantage to him.

Next came the Grasshopper. He was not quite so slightly and elegantly formed as the Flea; however, he knew perfectly well how to conduct himself, and wore a green uniform, which belonged to him by right of birth. Moreover, he declared himself to have sprung from a very ancient and honorable Egyptian family, and that in his present home he was very highly esteemed; so much so, indeed, that he had been taken out of the field and put into a card-house three stories high, built on purpose for him, and all of court-cards,
the colored sides being turned inwards. As for the doors and windows in his house, they were cut out of the body of the Queen of Hearts. "And I can sing so well," added he, "that sixteen parlor-bred crickets, who have chirped and chirped ever since they were born, and yet could never get anybody to build them a card-house, after hearing me have fretted themselves ten times thinner than ever, out of sheer envy."

Both the Flea and the Grasshopper knew very well how to make the most of themselves, and each considered himself quite an equal match for a Princess.

The Frog said not a word: however, it might be that he thought the more; and the house-dog, after going snuffing about him, confessed that the Frog must be of a good family. And the old councillor, who in vain received three orders to hold his tongue, declared that the Frog must be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, for that one could read on his back whether there was to be a severe or a mild winter; which, to be sure, is more than can be read on the back of the man who writes the weather-almanac.

"Ah, I say nothing for the present!" remarked the old King; "but I observe everything, and form my own private opinion thereupon."

And now the match began. The Flea jumped so high that no one could see what had become of him; they insisted that he had not jumped at all, "which was disgraceful, after he had made such a fuss!"

The Grasshopper jumped only half as high, but he jumped right into the King's face, and the King declared he was quite disgusted by his rudeness.
The Frog stood still, as if lost in thought; at last people fancied he did not intend to jump at all.

"I'm afraid he is ill!" said the Dog; and he went snuffing at him again, when lo! all at once he made a little sidelong jump into the lap of the Princess, who was sitting on a low stool close by.

Then spoke the King, "There is nothing higher than my daughter, therefore he who jumps up to her jumps highest; but only a person of good understanding would ever have thought of that, and thus the Frog has shown us that he has understanding. He has brains in his head; that he has!"

And thus the Frog won the Princess.

"I jumped highest for all that!" exclaimed the Flea. "But it's all the same to me; let her have the stiff-legged slimy creature if she like him! I jumped highest, but I am too light and airy for this stupid world; the people can neither see me nor catch me; dulness and heaviness win the day with them!"

And so the Flea went into foreign service, where, it is said, he was killed.

And the Grasshopper sat on a green bank, meditating on the world and its goings on; and at length he repeated the Flea's last words, "Yes, dulness and heaviness win the day! — dulness and heaviness win the day!" And then he again began singing his own peculiar, melancholy song, — and it is from him that we have learnt this history; and yet, my friend, though you read it here in a printed book, it may not be perfectly true.
THE FLYING TRUNK.

There was once a merchant so rich that he might have paved the whole street where he lived, and an alley besides, with pieces of silver; but this he did not do—he knew another way of using his money, and whenever he laid out a shilling, he gained a crown in return. A merchant he lived, and a merchant he died.

All his money then went to his son. But the son lived merrily, and spent all his time in pleasures; went to masquerades every evening, made bank-notes into paper kites, and played at ducks and drakes in the pond with gold pieces instead of stones. In this manner his money soon vanished, until at last he had only a few pennies left, and his wardrobe was reduced to a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown. His friends cared no more about him now that they could no longer walk abroad with him. One of them, however, more good-natured than the rest, sent him an old trunk, with this advice, "Pack up, and be off!"

This was all very fine, but he had nothing that he could pack up; so he put himself into the trunk.

It was a droll trunk. When the lock was pressed close it could fly. The merchant's son did press the lock; and lo, up flew the trunk with him through the chimney, high into the clouds, on and on, higher and
higher. The lower part cracked, which rather frightened him; for, if it had broken in two, a pretty fall he would have had!

However, it descended safely, and he found himself in Turkey. He hid the trunk under a heap of dry leaves in a wood, and walked into the next town; he could do so very well, for, among the Turks, everybody goes about clad as he was, in dressing-gown and slippers. He met a nurse carrying a little child in her arms. "Harkye, Turkish nurse," quoth he. "What palace is that with the high windows, close by the town?"

"The King's daughter dwells there," replied the nurse. "It has been prophesied of her that she shall be made very unhappy by a lover, and therefore no one may visit her except when the King and Queen are with her."

"Thank you," said the merchant's son; and he immediately went back into the wood, sat down in his trunk, flew up to the roof of the palace, and crept through the window into the Princess's apartment. She was lying asleep on the sofa. She was so beautiful that the merchant's son could not help kneeling down to kiss her hand, whereupon she awoke, and was not a little frightened at the sight of this unexpected visitor; but he told her that he was the Turkish Prophet, and had come down from the sky on purpose to woo her; and on hearing this she was well pleased.

So they sat down side by side, and he talked to her about her eyes, how that they were beautiful dark-
blue seas, and that thoughts and feelings floated like mermaidens therein; and he spoke of her brow, how that it was a fair, snowy mountain, with splendid halls and pictures, and many other such like things he told her.

Oh, these were charming stories! and thus he wooed the Princess, and she immediately said, "Yes!"

"But you must come here on Saturday," said she; "the King and Queen have promised to drink tea with me that evening; they will be so proud and so pleased when they hear that I am to marry the Turkish Prophet! And mind you tell them a very pretty story, for they are exceedingly fond of stories; my mother likes them to be very moral and aristocratic, and my father likes them to be merry, so as to make him laugh."

"Yes, I shall bring no other bridal present than a tale," replied the merchant's son; and here they parted, but not before the Princess had given her lover a sabre all covered with gold. He knew excellently well what use to make of this present.

So he flew away, bought a new dressing-gown, and then sat down in the wood to compose the tale which was to be ready by Saturday, and certainly he found composition not the easiest thing in the world.

At last he was ready, and at last Saturday came.

The King, the Queen, and the whole court were waiting tea for him at the Princess's palace. The suitor was received with much ceremony.

"Will you not tell us a story?" asked the Queen; "a story that is instructive and full of deep meaning."
“But let it make us laugh,” said the King.

“With pleasure,” replied the merchant’s son; and now you must hear his story.

“There was once a bundle of Matches, who were all extremely proud of their high descent; for their genealogical tree—that is to say, the tall fir-tree, from which each of them was a splinter—had been a tree of great antiquity, and distinguished by its height from all the other trees of the forest. The Matches were now lying on the mantel-piece, between a Tinder-box and an old iron Saucepan, and to these two they often talked about their youth. ‘Ah, when we were upon the green branches,’ said they; ‘when we really lived upon green branches—that was a happy time! Every morning and evening we had diamond-tea—that is dew; the whole day long we had sunshine, at least whenever the sun shone, and all the little birds used to tell stories to us. It might easily be seen, too, that we were rich, for other trees were clothed with leaves only during the summer, whereas our family could afford to wear green clothes both summer and winter. But at last came the wood-cutters, then was the great revolution, and our family was dispersed. The paternal trunk obtained a situation as mainmast to a magnificent ship, which could sail round the world if it chose; the boughs were transported to various places, and our vocation was henceforth to kindle lights for low, common people. Now you will understand how it comes to pass that persons of such high descent as we are should be living in a kitchen.’

“To be sure, mine is a very different history,’ re-
marked the iron Saucepan, near which the Matches were lying. 'From the moment I came into the world until now, I have been rubbed and scrubbed, and boiled over and over again—oh, how many times! I love to have to do with what is solidly good, and am really of the first importance in this house. My only recreation is to stand clean and bright upon this mantel-piece after dinner, and hold some rational conversation with my companions. However, excepting the Water-pail, who now and then goes out into the court, we all of us lead a very quiet, domestic life here. Our only newsmonger is the Turf-basket, but he talks in such a democratic way about "government" and "the people"—why, I assure you, not long ago, there was an old Jar standing here, who was so much shocked by what he heard said that he fell down from the mantel-piece and broke into a thousand pieces!—that Turf-basket is a Liberal, that's the fact—

"'Now, you talk too much,' interrupted the Tinder-box; and the steel struck the flint, so that the sparks flew out. 'Why not spend a pleasant evening?'

"'Yes, let us settle who is of highest rank among us!' proposed the Matches.

"'Oh, no! for my part, I would rather not speak of myself,' objected the Earthenware Pitcher. 'Suppose we have an intellectual entertainment? I will begin. I will relate something of every-day life, such as we have all experienced; one can easily transport one's-self into it, and that is so interesting! Near the Baltic, among the Danish beech-groves'—
"‘That is a capital beginning!’ cried all the Plates at once; ‘it will certainly be just the sort of story for me!’

‘Yes, there I spent my youth in a very quiet family; the furniture was rubbed, the floors were washed, clean curtains were hung up every fortnight!’

‘How very interesting! what a charming way you have of describing things!’ said the Hair-broom. ‘Any one might guess immediately that it is a lady who is speaking; the tale breathes such a spirit of cleanliness!’

‘Very true; so it does!’ exclaimed the Water-pail; and in the excess of his delight he gave a little jump, so that some of the water splashed upon the floor.

And the Pitcher went on with her tale, and the end proved as good as the beginning.

All the Plates clattered applause; and the Hair-broom took some green parsley out of the sand-hole and crowned the Pitcher, for he knew that this would vex the others; and thought he, ‘If I crown her to-day, she will crown me to-morrow.’

‘Now I will dance,’ said the Fire-tongs, and accordingly she did dance; and oh! it was wonderful to see how high she threw one of her legs up into the air; the old Chair-cover in the corner tore with horror at seeing her. ‘Am not I to be crowned too?’ asked the Tongs; and she was crowned forthwith.

‘These are the vulgar rabble!’ thought the Matches.

The Tea-urn was now called upon to sing; but she
had a cold, she said; she could only sing when she was boiling. However, this was all her pride and affection; the fact was, she never cared to sing except when she was standing on the parlor-table before company.

"On the window-ledge lay an old Quill-pen, with which the maids used to write. There was nothing remarkable about her, except that she had been dipped too deep in the ink; however, she was proud of that. 'If the Tea-urn does not choose to sing,' quoth she, 'she may let it alone. There is a Nightingale in the cage hung just outside; he can sing. To be sure, he has never learnt the notes — never mind, we will not speak evil of any one this evening!'

"'I think it highly indecorous,' observed the Teakettle, who was the vocalist of the kitchen, and a half-brother of the Tea-urn's, 'that a foreign bird should be listened to. Is it patriotic? I appeal to the Turf-basket.'

"'I am only vexed,' said the Turf-basket, 'I am vexed from my inmost soul, that such things are thought of at all. Is it a becoming way of spending the evening? Would it not be much more rational to reform the whole house, and establish a totally new order of things, rather more according to nature? Then every one would get into his right place, and I would undertake to direct the revolution. What say you to it? That would be something worth the doing!'

"'Oh, yes; we will make a grand commotion!' cried they all. Just then the door opened — it was the
They all stood perfectly still, not one dared stir; yet there was not a single kitchen utensil among them all but was thinking about the wonderful things he could have done, and how great was his superiority over the others. ‘Ah, if I had chosen it,’ thought each of them, ‘what a merry evening we might have had!’

“The maid took the Matches and struck a light. Oh, how they sputtered and blazed up!

‘Now every one may see,’ thought they, ‘that we are of highest rank. What a splendid, dazzling light we give, how glorious!’ and in another moment they were burnt out.”

“That is a capital story,” said the Queen. “I quite felt myself transported into the kitchen. Yes, thou shalt have our daughter!”

“With all my heart,” said the King. “On Monday thou shalt marry our daughter.” They said “thou” to him now, since he was so soon to become one of the family. The wedding was a settled thing, and on the evening preceding the whole city was illuminated. Cakes, buns, and sugarplums were thrown out among the people. All the little boys in the streets stood upon tip-toes, shouting “Hurrah!” and whistling through their fingers — it was famous!

“Well, I suppose I ought to do my part too,” thought the merchant’s son; so he went and bought sky-rockets, squibs, Catherine-wheels, Roman-candles, and all kinds of fireworks conceivable, put them all into his trunk, and flew up into the air, letting them off as he flew.
Hurrah! what a glorious sky-rocket was that?
All the Turks jumped up to look, so hastily that their slippers flew about their ears; such a meteor they had never seen before. Now they might be sure that it was indeed the Prophet who was to marry their Princess.

As soon as the merchant’s son had returned in his trunk to the wood, he said to himself, “I will now go into the city and hear what people say about me, and what sort of a figure I made in the air.” And certainly this was a very natural idea.

Oh, what strange accounts were given! Every one whom he accosted had beheld the bright vision in a way peculiar to himself; but all agreed that it was marvellously beautiful.

“I saw the great Prophet with my own eyes,” declared one. “He had eyes like sparkling stars, and a beard like foaming water.”

“He flew enveloped in a mantle of fire,” said another; “the prettiest little cherubs were peeping forth from under its folds.”

Yes, he heard of many beautiful things, and the morrow was to be his wedding-day.

He now went back to the wood, intending to get into his trunk again, but where was it?

Alas! the trunk was burnt. One spark from the fireworks had been left in it, and set it on fire; the trunk now lay in ashes. The poor merchant’s son could never fly again, could never again visit his bride.

She sat the livelong day upon the roof of her
The Flying Trunk:
"He flew up into the air, letting them off as he flew."
palace expecting him; she expects him still. He, meantime, goes about the world telling stories; but none of his stories are so pleasant as that one which he related in the Princess's palace about the Brimstone Matches.
THE OLD STREET LAMP.

HAVE you never heard the history of the Old Street Lamp? Not that it is so extraordinarily entertaining, but I think it will bear telling just for once.

A decent, respectable Old Street Lamp was the one of which I speak. For many, many years she had done good service, but was now to be cashiered. For the very last evening she sat on the lamp-post, giving light to the street; and she felt very much as a superannuated ballet-dancer feels when she is dancing for the last time, and knows that to-morrow and ever after she will sit alone in her attic-chamber, morning, noon, and night, unthought of and uncared for by the generous public. Our Lamp felt just such a horror of the coming day; for she knew that she would then be taken, for the first time in her life, into the Council-room, to be surveyed by the "six-and-thirty men" of the Town-council, in order that they might decide whether she were or were not any longer fit for service. Then, too, would it be determined whether she should be sent out to one of the bridges to give light there, or into the country to one of the manufactories, or, perhaps, to an iron-foundry, to be melted down and made into something new. And this last probability was especially painful to her; for she
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feared that if she were made into something new, she would retain no recollection of ever having been a Street Lamp. Besides, whatever became of her, she was sure to be separated from the watchman and his wife, whom she had known so long that she had learnt to consider herself quite one of their family. The watchman had been made a watchman just at the very same time that she was made a lamp. His wife was somewhat proud and finical in those days; only when she passed the Street Lamp of an evening did she deign to throw a glance up at her—never by day. Now, on the contrary, in these latter years, when all three, watchman, wife, and Lamp, had grown old, the wife had become more friendly, had often cleaned out the Lamp and given her fresh oil. Very honorable people were this man and wife; they had never cheated the Lamp of a single drop that was her due.

It was her last night in the street, and to-morrow she must go into the Council-room; these were two gloomy thoughts for the Lamp; and, naturally enough, she burned with a dimmed and feeble light. But other thoughts besides these passed across her. She had shone upon so many things, she had seen so much, perhaps as much as "the six-and-thirty men," although she never would have said so, for she was a really modest, decorous Old Lantern, and would on no account have given offence to any one, least of all to her superiors. She remembered so much, and in the midst of her recollections her flame suddenly blazed up high as if she were thinking, "Yes, and
there are a few, too, who will remember me. There was, for instance, that handsome young man—ah! it is many years ago now—who came with a letter in his hand; it was written on rose-colored paper, so pretty, so delicate, and with gilt edges, and it was in a lady’s handwriting; he read the letter twice over, and then kissed it, and looked up at me, and his two eyes seemed to say, ‘I am the very happiest man in the world!’ Ah, none but he and I knew what was written in that first letter from his betrothed bride. And I remember well seeing two other eyes—it is strange how thoughts spring up in one. There was a splendid funeral passing through the street, such a beautiful young lady lay in her coffin inside the carriage, wreaths of flowers were thrown upon the coffin, and so many bright torches were there in the procession that my dim light was quite put out by them. A great crowd of people followed the procession; but after they were all passed by, and the torches out of sight, and I looked around me, I saw some one standing by the post weeping: never shall I forget those two sorrowful eyes that then glanced up at me!”

Thus many different thoughts passed across the Old Street Lamp on her last evening of public service. The sentinel upon guard, when he is relieved, at least knows his successor, and can exchange a few words with him; but the Lamp knew not who was to take her place, and thus could not, as otherwise she might have done, give him one or two useful hints concerning rain and sleet, or show how far the moon-
light was wont to spread over the pavement, or from what side the wind blew.

On the gutter-board stood three candidates for the vacant office; they had presented themselves to the Lamp, under the idea that she would have to appoint her own successor. The first of these was a herring's head, which, you know, shines in the dark; and this herring's head was of opinion that his being elevated to the lamp-post would be a great saving of oil. The second was a piece of tinder, which, as it declared, shone brighter in the dark than a stock-fish even; besides, it was a fragment from a tree that had once been the glory and pride of the forest. The third candidate was a glow-worm; how she had got there the Lamp could not conceive. However, there she was, and glittering very prettily; but the herring's head and the piece of tinder were both ready to take their oaths that she could only shine at certain times, and that, consequently, she was quite out of the question.

The Old Lamp explained that not one of them gave sufficient light to be fit to take her place, but this none of the three would believe; and so when they heard that it was not for the Lamp to choose her successor, they said that they were very glad of it, for that she was too much decayed to be able to choose with judgment.

Just then the Wind came rushing round the corner of the street; he blew through the smoke-cowl upon the Old Lantern, exclaiming, "What is this that I hear? that thou wilt really leave us to-morrow? Is
this actually the last evening that I shall meet thee here? Well, if it must be so, I will at least make thee a parting gift,—I will blow into thy brain-pan, so that not only shalt thou remember clearly and plainly whatever thou hast seen and heard, but whenever anything is told or read aloud in thy presence, thou shalt be so clear-headed as to see it as in a picture!"

"Ah, that is a valuable gift, indeed!" replied the Old Street Lamp. "Many thanks!—if only I am not melted down"

"We must hope that will not happen," said the Wind. "And now I blow this faculty into thee; if thou canst get many such gifts thou mayest still enjoy a comfortable old age."

"If only I am not melted down!" sighed the Lamp. "Or canst thou, perhaps, even in that case, secure me my memory?"

"Old Lantern, be reasonable!" exhorted the Wind, and again he blew. And now the Moon stepped forth from the clouds. "What will you give?" inquired the Wind.

"I shall give just nothing at all!" was her reply. "I am now on the wane, and lanterns have never shone for me, long as I have shone for lanterns." And accordingly the Moon retired behind the clouds again, for she was determined not to be plagued into giving anything.

Presently a drop of Water fell down upon the cover of the Lamp. It was like a drop from a roof; but it declared that it came from the gray clouds, and was
sent as a gift, perhaps the very best gift imaginable. "I penetrate into thee, so as to enable thee in one night, if thou shouldst wish it, to become rusty, and thus fall to pieces and return to dust." But to the Lamp this seemed a miserable gift, and so seemed it to the Wind. "Has no one a better — has no one a better to offer?" whistled he as loud as he could; and in that moment there fell a bright, shooting star, glittering in a long trail down the air.

"What was that?" cried the Herring's Head. "Was that a star falling down? I verily believe it went into the Lamp! Well, to be sure, if the office is sought by people of such very high station as that, we had best give up the idea of it!" and so he did; and the two other candidates did the same. But the Lamp suddenly flared up so high and bright: "That was a charming gift!" said she. "The brilliant stars above, whom I have always delighted in so much, and who shine so beautifully, as I have never been able to shine, although it has been the grand aim and effort of my life so to do — those brilliant, beaming stars have taken heed of me, a poor old lantern, and one of them has come down to me with a rare gift, so that in future all that I can myself remember and see so plainly shall also be seen by those whom I love! — a precious gift, indeed; for every enjoyment that cannot be shared with another is only half an enjoyment."

"Very rightly thought; the sentiment does thee honor!" said the Wind. "It seems, though, thou dost not know that unless a wax candle is lighted inside thee, no one will be able to see any pictures through
thy means. But the stars never thought of that; they imagine that everything that shines here below has at least one wax candle in it. But now I am right weary," added the Wind; "I will lay myself down to rest a little while." And so he lay down to rest.

Next day — but we may as well pass over the next day — next evening the Lamp lay in an arm-chair — and where? In the old watchman's room. He had begged of the "six-and-thirty men," in consideration of his long and faithful services, to be allowed to keep the Old Lamp for his own; they laughed at his odd request, and gave it him; and so now the Lamp lay in the arm-chair, close by the warm stove, and she seemed to have grown so much larger as nearly to fill the great arm-chair. And the old people were sitting at supper; and every now and then they threw a kind, friendly glance at the Old Lamp, as though they would gladly have given her a place at the table.

The room wherein they dwelt was properly a cellar; however, it was tolerably warm and comfortable, and very clean and neat; the door was bound round with list, there were curtains to the bedstead and the little windows, and on the window-ledges stood two such strange-looking flower-pots! Neighbor Christian, the sailor, had brought them home from the Indies — whether from the East or the West the old people did not know. They were two earthenware elephants, without backs, and hollow inside, and out of the mould with which they were filled sprang up from one of them the most delicate young leeks — that was their kitchen-garden; from the other, a large geranium full
of blossoms— that was their flower-garden. On the wall hung a large colored print of "The Congress at Vienna"— there were seen King and Emperors both, all so grand! A clock, with heavy leaden weights, kept up an incessant "tick, tick;" it always went too fast, but that was better than going too slow, at least, so said the old folks. And they ate their evening meal; and the Old Street Lamp, as before said, lay in the arm-chair close by the warm stove, and she felt as if she were ruthlessly tossed hither and thither amid the wide world. But when the old watchman looked at her, and began to talk of what they two had lived through together, in moonlight and darkness, in rain and in mist, in the bright, brief summer nights, and in the long, severe hours of winter when the snowflakes drifted thickly about them, and he was so glad to get back to the shelter of his cellar-home,— then, while he talked thus, all was right again with the Old Lamp, for she saw all he spoke of, and she knew that the Wind had not deceived her.

They were so brisk and busy, those old people, not a single hour of theirs was ever dozed or dawdled away. On Sunday afternoons some book or other was always brought forward, generally a book of travels, and the old man would read aloud about Africa, about its vast forests and the wild elephants that roamed at large among them, and the old woman would listen so attentively, and cast a look at the earthenware elephants that served her as flower-pots. "Yes, I can almost fancy that!" she would say. And the Lamp
wished so fervently that a wax candle were lighted and put inside her, for then the good old woman would actually see the whole scene pictured visibly before her, just as the Lamp saw it,—the tall trees, with their thickly leaved, intertwining boughs, the naked black men on horseback, and whole herds of elephants, reeds and underwood breaking and crackling under their broad feet.

“What can all my rare gifts avail when no wax candle is lit within me?” sighed the Lamp. “They have nothing but train-oil and tallow candles, and neither of those will do.”

One day, however, a number of wax-candle ends were brought into the cellar; the larger pieces were burnt out in the candlestick, and the smaller ones the old woman used to wax her thread with when she was at work. This was worse than ever! Here were wax candles in plenty, and no one ever thought of putting one little piece into the Lamp.

“So here I stand with all my rare gifts!” thought the Lamp. “I see so many charming pictures pass before me, but I may never share the enjoyment with you, my friends! Alas, you do not know that I can change these bare white walls to the richest tapestry, to glorious, leafy woods, to everything that you can desire to see—alas, you know it not!”

The Lamp was continually being rubbed clean, and in the corner where it stood it was so placed that every one’s eyes fell upon it; people, truly enough, called it a piece of old rubbish, but the old couple cared nothing for that—they loved it.
One day—it was the old watchman’s birthday—his wife came up to the Lamp, saying, with a smile, “I will get up a little illumination in his honor;” and the Lamp’s iron hat cracked, for she thought, “Now, then, I shall have a wax candle!” But oil, not wax, was given her. She burned all the evening long, and she now felt sure that the gift the stars had given her, the best gift of all, must needs remain a hidden treasure, as far as this present life was concerned. Then she dreamt,—for a Lamp so highly gifted as she was must surely be able to dream,—she dreamt that the old people were dead, and that she herself had been carried to an iron-foundry to be melted down. Very much frightened was she, as frightened as when she was taken into the Council-room to be examined by “the six-and-thirty men;” and yet, although she knew she had the power of becoming rust and dust if she chose, she did not choose it; and so it came to pass that she was cast into the furnace, and became a most beautiful little iron candlestick, intended to hold wax tapers, and wax tapers only; it was in the form of an angel holding a bouquet of flowers, and in the centre of the bouquet the wax candle was placed, and the candlestick itself was set on a green writing-desk. And the room around it was such a pretty room; books were scattered about, and beautiful pictures hung upon the walls. It was a poet’s room, and all that he imagined and wrote about seemed whirling round,—the chamber becoming now a deep, gloomy forest; now a sun-lit plain, scattered with hamlets, the stork striding about on his long
legs; now a stately ship, tossing high on the waves of the heaving ocean!

"Oh, what rare gifts are mine!" thought the Old Lamp, when she awoke. "Almost could I long to be melted down!—but no, that must not be while the old folks live. They love me for my own sake; I am like their child to them; and they have rubbed me clean, and given me fresh oil for so many years, and I am as well off here, and as honored as 'The Congress at Vienna.' I ought certainly to be contented with my lot!"

And from henceforth she had more inward peace; and surely this respectable Old Street Lamp deserved to be at peace—don't you think she did?
IT was dreadfully cold, it was snowing fast, and almost dark; the evening—the last evening of the old year—was drawing in. But cold and dark as it was, a poor little girl, with bare head and feet, was still wandering about the streets. When she left her home she had slippers on, but they were much too large for her; indeed, properly, they belonged to her mother, and had dropped off her feet whilst she was running very fast across the road, to get out of the way of two carriages. One of the slippers was not to be found; the other had been snatched up by a little boy, who ran off with it, thinking it might serve him as a doll's cradle.

So the little girl now walked on, her bare feet quite red and blue with the cold. She carried a small bundle of matches in her hand, and a good many more in her tattered apron. No one had bought any of them the livelong day—no one had given her a single penny. Trembling with cold and hunger crept she on, the picture of sorrow—poor little child!

The snowflakes fell on her long, fair hair, which curled in such pretty ringlets over her shoulders; but she thought not of her own beauty, or of the cold. Lights were glimmering through every window, and the savor of roast goose reached her from several
houses; it was New Year's Eve, and it was of this that she thought.

In a corner formed by two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sat down, drawing her little feet close under her, but in vain — she could not warm them. She dared not go home. She had sold no matches, earned not a single penny, and perhaps her father would beat her. Besides, her home was almost as cold as the street. It was an attic; and although the larger of the many chinks in the roof were stopped up with straw and rags, the wind and snow often penetrated through. Her hands were nearly dead with cold. One little match from her bundle would warm them perhaps, if she dared light it. She drew one out, and struck it against the wall. Bravo! it was a bright, warm flame, and she held her hands over it. It was quite an illumination for that poor little girl — nay, call it rather a magic taper; for it seemed to her as if she were sitting before a large iron stove with brass ornaments, so beautifully blazed the fire within! The child stretched out her feet to warm them also. Alas! in an instant the flame had died away, the stove vanished, the little girl sat cold and comfortless, with the burnt match in her hand.

A second match was struck against the wall. It kindled and blazed, and wherever its light fell the wall became transparent as a veil — the little girl could see into the room within. She saw the table spread with a snow-white damask cloth, whereon were ranged shining china dishes. The roast goose, stuffed
with apples and dried plums, stood at one end, smoking hot, and—which was pleasantest of all to see—the goose, with knife and fork still in her breast, jumped down from the dish, and waddled along the floor right up to the poor child. The match was burnt out, and only the thick, hard wall was beside her.

She kindled a third match. Again shot up the flame. And now she was sitting under a most beautiful Christmas-tree, far larger, and far more prettily decked out, than the one she had seen last Christmas Eve through the glass doors of the rich merchant's house. Hundreds of wax tapers lighted up the green branches; and tiny painted figures, such as she had seen in the shop windows, looked down from the tree upon her. The child stretched out her hands towards them in delight, and in that moment the light of the match was quenched. Still, however, the Christmas candles burned higher and higher. She beheld them beaming like stars in heaven; one of them fell, the lights streaming behind it like a long, fiery tail.

"Now some one is dying," said the little girl softly; for she had been told by her old grandmother—the only person who had ever been kind to her, and who was now dead—that whenever a star falls an immortal spirit returns to the God who gave it.

She struck yet another match against the wall. It flamed up, and, surrounded by its light, appeared before her that same dear grandmother, gentle and loving as always, but bright and happy as she had never looked during her lifetime.
“Grandmother!” exclaimed the child, “oh, take me with you! I know thou wilt leave me as soon as the match goes out — thou wilt vanish like the warm fire in the stove, like the splendid New Year’s feast, like the beautiful large Christmas-tree!” and she hastily lighted all the remaining matches in the bundle, lest her grandmother should disappear. And the matches burned with such a blaze of splendor that noon-day could scarcely have been brighter. Never had the good old grandmother looked so tall and stately, so beautiful and kind. She took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew together. Joyfully and gloriously they flew, higher and higher, till they were in that place where neither cold, nor hunger, nor pain, is ever known — they were in Paradise.

But in the cold morning hour, crouching in the corner of the wall, the poor little girl was found — her cheeks glowing, her lips smiling — frozen to death on the last night of the Old Year. The New Year’s sun shone on the lifeless child. Motionless she sat there with the matches in her lap, one bundle of them quite burnt out.

“She has been trying to warm herself, poor thing!” the people said; but no one knew of the sweet visions she had beheld, or how gloriously she and her grandmother were celebrating their New Year’s festival.
THERE was once a Darning-needle so fine that she fancied herself a Sewing-needle.

"Now take care, and hold me fast!" said the Darning-needle to the Fingers that took her up. "Don't lose me, pray! If I were to fall down on the floor, you would never be able to fine me again; I am so fine!"

"That's more than you can tell!" said the Fingers, as they took hold of her.

"See, I come with a train!" said the Darning-needle, drawing a long thread, without a single knot in it, after her.

The Fingers guided the needle to the cook-maid's slippers; the upper leather was torn, and had to be sewn together.

"This is vulgar work!" said the Darning-needle. "I shall never get through; I break— I am breaking!" And break she did. "Did I not say so?" continued she; "I am too fine!"

"Now she is good for nothing," thought the Fingers; however, they must still keep their hold. The cook-maid dropped sealing-wax upon the Darning-needle, and then stuck her into her neckerchief.

"See, now I am a Breast-pin!" said the Darning-needle. "I knew well that I should come to honor;
when one is something, one always becomes something." And at this she laughed, only inwardly, of course, for nobody has ever seen or heard a Darning-needle laugh; there sat she now at her ease, as proud as if she were driving in her carriage, and looking about her on all sides.

"May I take the liberty of asking if you are of gold?" inquired she of the pin that was her neighbor. "You have a pleasing exterior, and a very peculiar head; it is but small, though. You must take care that it grows, for it is not every one that can have sealing-wax dropped upon her!" And the Darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell off from the neckerchief into the sink, where the cook was engaged just then in washing up.

"Now for our travels!" said the Darning-needle; "but I hope I shall not go very far." However, she did travel far, very far.

"I am too fine for this world," said she, as at last she sat still in the gutter. "However, I know who I am, and there is always some little pleasure in that." And so the Darning-needle held herself erect, and did not lose her good-humor."

All sorts of things sailed past her,—splinters of wood, straws, scraps of old newspapers. "See how they sail along!" said the Darning-needle. "They do not know what is sticking under them! It is I. I stick; I sit here. There goes a splinter. He thinks of nothing in the world but himself, splinter as he is. There floats a straw— to see how it turns round and round! Nay, think not so much of thyself, thou
mightest easily float against one of the stones. There swims a newspaper — everything in it is forgotten, yet how it spreads itself out! I sit patiently and quietly! I know what I am, and that I shall always be the same!"

One day there chanced to be close by her something that glittered so charmingly that the Darning-needle felt persuaded it must needs be a diamond. It was, in reality, only a splinter of glass; but delighted with its appearance, the Darning-needle addressed it, introducing herself as a Breast-pin. "Surely, you are a diamond?" — "Why, yes, something of the sort!" was the reply; so now each believed the other to be some very rare and costly trinket, and they both began to complain of the extraordinary haughtiness of the world.

"Yes, I have dwelt in a box belonging to a young lady," said the Darning-needle, "and this young lady was a cook-maid; she had five fingers on each hand, and anything so arrogant, so conceited, as these five fingers I have never known; and, after all, what were they good for? For nothing but to hold me, — to take me out of the box, and lay me in the box!"

"And were they at all bright? did they shine?" asked the Glass-splinter.

"Shine!" repeated the Darning-needle, "not they; but conceited enough they were, notwithstanding! They were five brothers: 'Finger' was the family name; they held themselves so erect, side by side, although they were not all of the same height. The first, Thumbkin he was called, was short and thick;
he generally stood out of the rank rather before the others; he had only one bend in his back, so that he could only bow once, but he used to say that if he were cut off from a man, that man would no longer be fit for military service. Foreman, the second, would put himself forward everywhere, meddled with sweet and with sour, pointed at sun or moon, and he it was who pressed upon the pen whenever the fingers wrote. Middleman was so tall that he could look over the others' heads; Ringman wore a gold belt round his body; and as for Littleman, he did nothing at all, and was proud of that, I suppose. Proud they were, and proud they would be, therefore I took myself off into the gutter!

"And now we sit together and shine!" quoth the Glass-splinter. Just then some more water was poured into the gutter; it overflowed its boundaries, and carried the Glass-splinter along with it.

"So now he has advanced farther," observed the Darning-needle. "I stay here—I am too fine—but such it is my pride to be; it is respectable." So still she sat there erect, enjoying her own thoughts.

"I could almost believe I was born of a sunbeam, I am so fine; and yet the sunbeams do not seem to seek me out under the water. Alas, I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. Had I still my old eye which broke, I believe I could weep—I would not, though; it is not refined to weep."

One day some boys were raking about in the gutter, hunting for old nails, pennies, and such like. This was dirty, certainly, but such was their pleasure.
“Halloo!” cried one, pricking himself with the Darning-needle; “there’s a fellow for you!”

“Do not call me a fellow; I am a young lady,” said the Darning-needle; but no one heard it. The sealing-wax had worn off, and she had become quite black; black, however, makes a person look thin, so she fancied herself finer than ever.

“There sails an egg-shell,” said the boys; and they stuck the Darning-needle into the shell.

“White walls and a lady in black!” said the Darning-needle, “that is very striking! Now every one can see me! But I hope I shall not be seasick, for then I shall break.” Her fear was needless; she was not seasick, neither did she break.

“Nothing is so good to prevent seasickness as being of steel, and then, too, never to forget that one is a little more than man. Now my trial is over; the finer one is, the more one can endure.”

“Crash!” went the egg-shell; a wagon rolled over it. “Ugh, what a pressure!” sighed the Darning-needle; “now I shall be seasick after all! I shall break! I shall break!” But she broke not, although the wheel had passed over her; long did she lie there — and there let her lie!
A **DROLL** name, to be sure, is Tuk! However, it was not the little boy's real name—his real name was Carl; but when he was so young he could hardly speak, he used to call himself Tuk. Why, it would be difficult to say, for Tuk is not at all like Carl. However, the boy was still called Little Tuk by all who knew him.

Little Tuk had to take care of his sister Gustava, who was smaller even than himself; and he had also to learn his lesson. Here were two things to be done; and the difficulty was, how to do them both at once. The poor boy sat with his little sister in his lap, singing to her all the pretty songs he knew, yet every now and then casting a sidelong glance at his geography-book, which lay open beside him. By to-morrow morning he must not only be able to repeat without book the names of all the towns in the diocese of Zealand, but to tell about them all that could be told.

At last his mother came home and took little Gustava. Tuk then ran to the window, and read and read till he had nearly read his eyes out; for it was growing darker every minute, and his mother could not afford to buy candles.

"There goes the old washerwoman home through the street," said the mother, looking out of window;
“she can hardly carry herself, poor thing! and she has the weight of that great heavy pail of water from the pump to bear besides. Jump up, like a good boy, Little Tuk; go and help the poor old creature!”

And Little Tuk immediately jumped up and ran to help her. When he came back it was quite dark. It was of no use to wish for a candle; he had to go to bed. There he lay, still thinking of his geography lesson, of the diocese of Zealand, and all that his master had told him. It should have been all read over again by rights; but that he could not do now. His geography-book he put under his pillow, for somebody had told him that would help him wonderfully to remember his lesson. However, he had never yet found that this sort of help was at all to be depended upon.

So there he lay, thinking and thinking, till all at once he felt as though some one were gently sealing his eyes and mouth with a kiss. He slept, and yet he slept not; for he seemed to see the old washerwoman’s mild eyes fixed upon him, and to hear her say,—

“It would be a sin and a shame, Little Tuk, if you were not to know your lesson. You helped me, now I will help you, and then our Lord will help us both.”

And then the leaves of the book under Little Tuk’s head began to rustle, and to turn over and over.

“Cluck, cluck, cluck!” cried a hen; she came from the town of Kiöge. “I am a Kiöge hen,” said she; and she told Little Tuk how many inhabitants the town contained, and about the battle that had once
been fought there, and how it was now a place of no consequence at all.

"Kribbley krabbley, kribbley krabbley!" and here a great wooded bird bounced down upon the bed. It was the popinjay from the shooting-ground at Prestoe. It declared that there were as many inhabitants in Prestoe as it had nails in its body. It was a proud bird.

"Thorwaldsen lived in one corner of Prestoe. Am not I a pretty bird, a merry popinjay?"

And now Little Tuk no longer lay in bed—he was on horseback—on he went, gallop, gallop! A magnificently clad knight—a knight of the olden time—wearing a bright helmet and a waving plume, held him on his own horse, and on they rode together, through the wood, to the ancient city of Vordingborg; and it was once again full of life and bustle, as in the days of yore. The high towers of the King's castle rose up against the sky, and bright lights were seen gleaming through the windows. Within were song and dance and merriment. King Waldemar was leading out the noble young ladies of his court to tread stately measures with him. Suddenly the morning dawned, the lamps grew pale, the sun rose, and the outlines of the buildings gradually faded away; one high form after another seemed blotted out of the clear morning sky, till at last one tower alone remained to mark the spot where that royal castle had stood. And the vast city had shrunk up into a poor, mean-looking little town; and the school-boys came out of school, their books under their arms, and they
said, “Two thousand inhabitants.” But that was not true—there were not near so many.

And Little Tuk lay in his bed again. He knew not whether he had been dreaming or not. Again there was somebody close by his side.

“Little Tuk! Little Tuk!” cried a voice; it was the voice of a young sailor-boy. “I come to salute you from Corsöer. Corsöer is a new town—a living town; it has steamships and stage-coaches of its own. Once people used to call it a low, vulgar place; but that is an old, worn-out prejudice. ‘I dwell by the seaside,’ says Corsöer. ‘I have broad high-roads and pleasure-gardens, and I have given birth to a poet—a very amusing one too, which is more than all poets are. I once thought of sending a ship all round the world. I did not send it, but I might just as well have done so—and I dwell so pleasantly, close by the port. The loveliest roses are blossoming round about me!’”

And Little Tuk could see the roses. Their soft, blushing red petals, and their fresh, green leaves, gleamed before his eyes. But in a moment the flowers had vanished, and the green leaves spread and thickened. A perfect grove had grown up above the bright waters of the fiord, and above the grove towered the two high-pointed steeples of a glorious old church. From the grass-grown side of the hill gushed forth, as in clear rainbow-hued streams of light, a fountain,—a merry, musical voice it had,—and close beside it sat a king, wearing a gold crown upon his long, dark hair. This was King Hroar sitting by the fountain,
and hard by was the town now called Roeskilde (Hroar's Fountain). And beyond the hill, on a broad highway, advanced all Denmark's kings and queens, all wearing their gold crowns. Hand in hand they passed on into the church, and the organ's deep tones mingled with the clear rippling of the fountains. And Little Tuk saw and heard it all.

All at once this scene too had vanished! What had become of it? It was just like turning over the leaves of a book. Now he saw an old woman. She was a weeder; she came from Soroe, where grass grows in the very market-place. Her gray linen apron was thrown over her head and back. The apron was wet; it must have been raining. "Yes, so it has," said she; and then she began to repeat something very funny out of Holberg's comedies; nor were they all she knew—she could recite old ballads about Waldemar and Absalon. But all of a sudden she shrunk up together, and rocked her head, just as if she were going to jump.

"Croak!" said she; "it is wet, it is wet; it is still as the grave in Soroe!" She had become a frog. "Croak!" and again she was an old woman. "One must dress to suit the weather," says she. "It is wet, it is wet; my town is like a flask,—one goes into it through the cork, and through the cork one must get out again. But I have healthy, rosy-cheeked boys at the bottom of the flask; there they learn wisdom,—Greek, Greek! Croak, croak, croak!"

Her voice was like frog-music, or like the noise one makes in walking through a marsh in great boots;
always the same tone, so monotonous, so dull, that Little Tuk fell into a sound sleep, and a very good thing it was for him.

But even in this sleep a dream visited him. His little sister Gustava, with her blue eyes and curling flaxen hair, had, it seemed, all at once grown up into a beautiful girl; and though she had no wings, she could fly, and they flew together over all Zealand — over its green woods and blue waters.

"Listen to the cock crowing, Little Tuk! Cock-a-doodle-doo! look at the hens scraping away in the town of Kiöge! There thou shalt have such a famous poultry-yard; thou shalt no longer suffer hunger and want; thou shalt shoot at the popinjay, and reach the mark; thou shalt be a rich and happy man; thy house shall rise as proudly as King Waldemar's castle at Vordingborg, and shall be decked so splendidly with marble statues, like those that Thorwaldsen sculptured at Prestoe. Thy good name shall be borne round the world like the ship which should have gone out from Corsöer, and in the town of Roeskilde thou shalt speak and give counsel, wisely and well, like King Hroar; and then at last, Little Tuk, when thou shalt lie in thy peaceful grave, thou shalt sleep as quietly" —

"As if I lay sleeping in Soroe!" said Little Tuk; and hereupon he awoke. It was bright morning, and he remembered nothing of all his dreams; they were to him as if they had never been.

He jumped out of bed, and sought for his book; he knew the names of all the towns in his lesson perfectly
well. And the old washerwoman put her head in at the door, and nodded to him, saying,—

"Thanks for yesterday's help, thou dear, sweet child! may the angels bring thy best dream to pass!"

But Little Tuk had forgotten what he had dreamt. It mattered not, though, the angels knew it.
THERE stood in a street a very, very old house. It was, indeed, almost three hundred years old, as might be known by looking at the beam, whereon the date of its building was carved out among fantastic tulips and curling hop tendrils. Whole texts, too, were cut in the time-worn wood, after the fashion of days by-gone; and over every window peered a human face — such curious, wry faces were those! The first floor of this house projected a good way beyond the ground floor, and immediately under the roof ran a leaden gutter with a dragon’s head to it. The rainwater was meant to run out from the dragon’s mouth; but there being a hole in the gutter, it generally chose in preference to pour down through this hole.

All the other houses in the street were so new and so neat and so spruce, with their large window-panes and flat, smooth walls, it was quite plain that they would have nothing to do with the Old House. You could see so well that they were saying within themselves, “How much longer is that heap of rubbish to stand here, a disgrace to the street? Why, the upper story puts itself so forward that no one from our windows can see what is being done underneath it! And just look at the steps too; they are as broad as
if they belonged to a castle, and as high — one would suppose they led up to a church-steeple. The iron balustrade looks for all the world just like the entrance to an old tomb, and it must needs have brass knobs too. So stupid, so tasteless!"

On the opposite side of the street all the houses were new, neat, and spruce; and they were all of the same way of thinking as the other houses. But at one of the windows, looking straight at the Old House, used to sit a little boy with fresh rosy cheeks and bright sparkling eyes; and he thought better of this despised old building; he loved it, both in sunshine and moonshine. And when he sat there, looking at the mouldering wall, from which all the mortar had worn away, he could fancy such strange pictures! He could image to himself how the street looked three centuries back, when all the houses had flights of steps, projecting upper stories, and pointed gable-ends; he could see soldiers walking about with halberds in their hands, and gutters running down in the shapes of dragons and griffins. Yes, that was just the house to please him! and in it, he knew, dwelt an old gentleman who wore large brass buttons on his coat, and such a wig! you could be sure it was a real wig. Every morning a serving-man as old as his master came to him, to clean up his rooms and go on errands; at other times, the old gentleman in brass buttons was quite alone in the Old House. Sometimes he came and looked out from his window, and then the little boy nodded to him, and he nodded again to the little boy, and thus they became friends
The Old House

"And the most delicious fruits and sweetmeats in his hand."
and acquaintances, although they had never yet spoken to each other. But that might come in time. The little boy heard his parents say, "The old gentleman opposite is very well off; but it is terrible to be so quite alone as he is."

So next Sunday the little boy was very busy wrapping something up in paper. He then went down to the door, and watched till the old man who went on errands came by, and said to him, "Please to take this to the old gentleman up there from me; I have two Tin Soldiers; this is one of them. I want him to have it, because I know that he is so terribly lonely."

And the old man looked quite pleased, nodded, and took the Tin Soldier into the Old House. By and by he came back to ask whether the little boy would not like to come himself and pay the old gentleman a visit. And the child got leave of his parents, and then went over the way into the Old House.

And the brass knobs on the balustrades shone much brighter than usual, he thought, as if they had been fresh rubbed in honor of his visit; and the carved Trumpeters rising out of the tulips on the door blew with all their might; their cheeks, he was sure, were much more puffed out than ever they had been before. Yes, they blew their trumpets, "Tararara! See, the little boy comes; Tararara!" and then the door opened. The whole length of the passage was hung with portraits of knights in armor and ladies in full silk robes; and the armor rattled, and the silk robes rustled so pleasantly! And then there was a
staircase; the stairs first went a good way up, and then a little way down; and next the little boy and his conductor stood in a balcony, a very decayed balcony, with many large chinks and crevices in it, grass and weeds sprouting thickly out of all these gaps, and making the place look as green as if it had been a garden instead of a balcony. Antique flower-pots, all having human faces and asses' ears, were ranged here; the plants in them grew exactly as suited their own pleasure and convenience. In one pot were seen some straggling gillyflowers; the green leaves and shoots—there were no blossoms yet—had spread out over the edges, as if in very great glee; you could see that the plant meant to say, "The breeze has fanned me, the sun has kissed me, and promised me a little flower on Sunday, a little flower on Sunday!"

And then his guide led the little boy into a chamber where the walls were covered with leather hangings with gold flowers stamped upon them.

"Gilding wears out with time and bad weather,
But leather endures; there's nothing like leather!"

sang the Walls.

And here stood such high-backed Arm-chairs, carved all over, and with arms on either side. "Sit down, sit down," cried they. "Ugh! how I am cracking inside! I have got the rheumatism in my back, like the old cabinet. Rheumatism in my back, ugh!"

At last the little boy entered the room which fronted the street, and where the old gentleman sat.
"Thanks for the Tin Soldier, my little friend," said the old gentleman. "And thanks, too, for coming over to see me."

"Thanks, thanks!" or "Crack, crack!" said all the pieces of Furniture in the room; there were so many of them, and they stood in each other’s way to see the little boy.

On the middle panel of the wall hung the picture of a beautiful lady. Very young and very happy she looked, but she was clad quite after the fashion of the olden time. She had powder in her hair, and her clothes stood out stiffly round her. She said neither "thanks" nor "crack;" but she looked with her gentle eyes upon the little boy, who immediately asked the old gentleman, "Where did you get her from?"

"From the pawnbroker’s," replied the old gentleman. "There are so many pictures to be had there, nobody knows or cares anything about them; for the people they were meant for were all buried long ago. But I happened to know that lady in past times — she is dead too; dead and gone these fifty years."

And under the portrait hung a bouquet of faded flowers, carefully preserved behind glass; they must have been fifty years old too, they looked so very antique. And the pendulum of the great clock swung backwards and forwards, and the hand went round and round, and everything in the room grew older and older every moment, but they never thought of that.
"They say at home," said the little boy, "that you are so terribly lonely."

"Oh, no!" was the reply. "The old thoughts and the memories and scenes they bring with them come and visit me continually; and now you are come too! I am very happy."

And then the old gentleman took down from the bookcase a picture-book — such pictures were those! There were long, endless processions; the strangest carriages, such as are never seen nowadays; soldiers not unlike knaves of clubs, and peaceable citizens bearing the banners of different companies; the tailors' flag showed a pair of scissors held between two lions; the shoemakers' ought to have had boots for their device, but they had not — they carried an eagle with two heads; for everything belonging to shoemakers, you know, must be so that they may say, "It is a pair." Ah, a rare picture-book was that!

And presently the old gentleman went into an adjoining room to fetch out sweetmeats, nuts, and apples; the Old House was rich in stores of these, it seemed.

Then spoke the Tin Soldier, who stood on the chest of drawers, "I cannot stand this, indeed! It is so sad and lonely here, no one who has ever been used to live in a family can accustom himself to such a life as is led here. No, I cannot bear it! The day is so long and wearisome, and the evenings are still longer; it is not as over the way with you, where your father and mother used to talk so pleasantly and sensibly, while you and all the other sweet chil-
dren played at your merry games. This old gentleman is quite a hermit. Do you think there are any kind eyes watching him? Do you think he ever has kisses given him, or a pretty Christmas-tree? Nothing will ever be given to him except his funeral! No, I cannot bear it!"

"You must not take it in that way," said the little boy. "For my part, I think it is very pleasant to be here; and did you not hear him say how that all his old thoughts and memories came to visit him?"

"That may be; but I don't see them, and I know nothing about them," replied the Tin Soldier. "I tell you I cannot bear it!"

"But you must bear it," insisted the little boy.

Here the old gentleman came back, a bright smile on his face, and the most delicious fruits and sweetmeats in his hand. And the little boy quite forgot the Tin Soldier.

Happy and pleased the little boy returned home. Days and weeks passed away; often and often did the little boy stand at the window to nod at the Old House; often and often did the old gentleman nod to him in return; often and often did the little boy go to pay a visit over the way.

And every time the carved Trumpeters blew, "Tra-rarara! See, the little boy comes; Tra-ra-ra-ra!" and the Swords and the Armor in the old knightly portraits rattled, and the Ladies' Silks Robes rustled; the Leather Hangings chanted —

"Gildings wear out with time and bad weather,
But leather endures; there's nothing like leather!"
and the old Arm-chairs cracked, because of the rheumatism in their backs. It was always exactly as the first time the little boy had been there; for in the Old House every day — ever hour even — passed like the foregoing.

"I cannot bear it!" again declared the Tin Soldier; "it is so very sad, it makes me weep in tears! Rather let me go to the wars, and lose my arms and legs; that will be a change, at least. I cannot bear this life. I know now what it is to be visited by one's old thoughts and memories, for mine have been paying visits to me, and I assure you there is no pleasure in it at all; I have many a time been nearly jumping down off the chest of drawers. I saw all of you as plainly as if you had been here. It was Sunday morning again; and all you children were standing before the table and singing your hymns, as you always used to sing them. There you stood, looking so earnest, and with your hands clasped; and your father and mother were listening so gravely! And then the door opened; and your little sister Maria, who is not yet two years old, and who always begins to dance whenever she hears music or singing, of whatever kind it may be, came in. She would better have stayed away, for she immediately began to dance; but she could not make out the time at all, because the tune was so slow; and so she stood first on one foot, with her head drooping down over it, and then on the other foot, leaning her head quite on the opposite side. But still she could not hit upon the right time. You all of you stood so grave, though it was really very
difficult to be serious any longer—I could not. I laughed inwardly—and therefore I fell down from the table and lamed myself. I am lame still in consequence; it was wrong of me to laugh. And all this happens over again within me, and so does everything else that I have lived through and seen; and this is what the old gentleman means by 'his old thoughts, and the memories and scenes they bring with them.' But tell me, do you still sing on Sundays? Tell me something about little Maria, and about my comrade, the other Tin Soldier—ah, he is a lucky fellow! I cannot bear this life!"

"You are given away," said the little boy; "you must stay here. I wonder you don't see that!"

And the old gentleman brought out a drawer, wherein were kept many things wonderful to see,—money-boxes and balm-boxes and packs of old-fashioned cards. Very large gilt cards were they, such as are never met with now. And other drawers, full of old curiosities, were opened, and the harpsichord, too, was opened; there was a landscape painted on the inside of the lid, and the instrument was very hoarse when the old gentleman played upon it. He began to hum a tune.

"Ah, yes, she used to sing that!" said he; and he looked up at the portrait he had bought at the pawnbroker's. So brightly the old gentleman's eyes sparkled as he looked at it!

"I will go to the wars! I will go to the wars!" cried the Tin Soldier, as loud as ever he could; and down he fell upon the floor.
What could have become of him? The old gentleman hunted in vain, the little boy hunted in vain. "Never mind, I shall be sure to find him," said the old gentleman; however, he never could find him. The floor was full of cracks and crevices; the Tin Soldier had fallen through one of these crevices, and there he lay buried alive.

Evening came, and the little boy went home; weeks passed away — many weeks passed away. The windows were now quite frozen over; the little boy had to breathe hard upon them before he could make a tiny peep-hole through which he could look at the Old House; and then he saw that the snow had drifted into all the wooden carving-work and quaint devices, and lay quite thick upon the steps, just as if no one were at home. And no one was at home. The old gentleman was dead.

On the evening of that day a carriage drove up to the door of the Old House, and a coffin was carried down the steps; the old gentleman was to be buried far out in the country. The carriage drove away. No one followed it — all his friends were dead. The little boy kissed his hand to the coffin; then he saw it disappear.

A few days afterwards there was a sale at the Old House. The little boy looked out from his window, watching to see the different pieces of Furniture as they were carried out. The old knights and ladies, the flower-pots, with the long asses' ears, the old chairs and cabinets, all his acquaintances he saw taken away, some to one place, some to another. The
portrait bought at the pawnbroker's returned to the pawnbroker's again, and there it was left undisturbed; for no one living now knew anything of that sweet, gentle-eyed face, and no one cared about such an old, dusty, musty picture.

Next spring the House itself was pulled down, for "it was a disgrace to the street," people said. One could now look from the street right into the room where were the leathern hangings, all torn and gashed, and the green weeds of the balcony clung wildly round the falling planks. By degrees all was cleared away.

"A very good thing too!" declared the neighboring Houses.

And a pleasant new house with large windows and smooth, white walls was built in its stead, and the space in front, where the Old House had stood, was made into a little garden; vines grew clustering up over the neighbor's walls, so as to shelter it on either side, and it was shut out from the street by a large iron grating with a trellis-gate. That looked quite grand. People stood outside, and tried to peep in through the iron trellis. And the sparrows, too, clustered by dozens and dozens among the vines, chirping as loud and as fast as they could; not about the Old House, though, for that they could none of them have known. Many years had elapsed — so many that the little boy we spoke of had grown up to be a man; yes, and a good and clever man he was, and his parents took great pride and pleasure in him.
He had just married, and had removed with his fair young bride into this new house with the garden to it; and he stood by her side in the garden whilst she was planting a little field-flower that had taken her fancy. She planted it with her own pretty white hand, and smoothed down the earth round it with her fingers. "Oh, dear, what was that?" She had pricked herself. There was something sharp and pointed among the soft mould.

It was—only think!—it was the Tin Soldier, the very same one which the old gentleman had lost, and which, after being tumbled and tossed about hither and thither, had now lain for many years quietly in the earth.

And the young bride wiped the Tin Soldier dry, first with a green leaf, and then with her own pocket-handkerchief—it was perfumed so deliciously! and the Tin Soldier felt as if he were awakening from a trance.

"Let me look at him," said the young man; and he smiled and shook his head. "No, it cannot possibly be the very same Tin Soldier, but it reminds me so of one that I had when I was a little boy." And then he told his wife about the Old House, and the old gentleman, and the Tin Soldier that he had given him because he was so terribly lonely. He told it exactly as it had been, and tears came into his young wife's eyes at thinking of the solitary life the old gentleman must have lived.

"I don't see why this should not be the very same Tin Soldier," said she; "I will keep it just to put me
in mind of all you have told me. And you must show me the old gentleman's grave."

"I wish I knew it," was the reply. "I believe nobody knows it. All his friends were dead, nobody cared about the matter, and I was such a little boy then!"

"He must have been terribly lonely, poor old gentleman!" remarked she.

"Yes, terribly lonely!" said the Tin Soldier; "but it is charming to find that one is not forgotten!"

"Charming, indeed!" cried something close by. No one but the Tin Soldier recognized the thing that spoke; it was a Shred from the old leather hangings. The gilding was all worn off, and it looked like a clod of moist earth; still, it held by its former good opinion of itself, and asserted it too:—

"Gilding wears out with time and bad weather,
But leather endures; there's nothing like leather!"

However, the Tin Soldier believed nothing of such vain boasting.
THE FLAX.

The flax was in full bloom. Its pretty blue blossoms were as soft as the wings of a moth, and still more delicate. And the sun shone on the flax-field, and the rain watered it; and that was as good for the flax-flowers as it is for little children to be washed and kissed by their mother,—they look so much fresher and prettier afterwards. Thus it was with the flax-flowers.

"People say I am so fine and flourishing," observed the flax, "and that I am growing so charmingly tall, a splendid piece of linen will be got from me. Oh, how happy I am! how can any one be happier? Everything around me is so pleasant, and I shall be of use for something or other. How the sun cheers one up, and how fresh and sweet the rain tastes! I am incomparably happy; I am the happiest vegetable in the world!"

"Ah, ah, ah!" jeered the stakes in the hedge; "you don't know the world, not you; but we know it, there are knots in us!" and then they cracked so dolefully:

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilurre,
And so the song is en-ded-ded-ded."

"No, it is not ended," replied the flax; "the sun
shines every morning, the rain does me so much good, I can see myself grow; I can feel that I am in blossom — who so happy as I?"

However, one day people came, took hold of the Flax, and pulled it up, root and all; that was exceedingly uncomfortable; and then it was thrown into water, as if intended to be drowned, and, after that, put before the fire, as if to be roasted. This was most cruel!

"One cannot always have what one wishes!" sighed the Flax; "it is well to suffer sometimes, it gives one experience."

But matters seemed to get worse and worse. The Flax was bruised and broken, hacked and hackled, and at last put on the wheel — snurre rur! snurre rur! — it was not possible to keep one's thoughts collected in such a situation as this.

"I have been exceedingly fortunate," thought the Flax amid all these tortures. "One ought to be thankful for the happiness one has enjoyed in times past. Thankful, thankful, oh yes!" and still the Flax said the same when taken to the loom. And here it was made into a large, handsome piece of Linen; all the Flax of that one field was made into a single piece.

"Well, but this is charming! Never should I have expected it. What unexampled good fortune I have carried through the world with me! What arrant nonsense the Stakes in the hedge used to talk with their —

'Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilurre.'
The song is not ended at all! Life is but just beginning. It is a very pleasant thing, too, is life. To be sure I have suffered; but that is past now, and I have become something through suffering. I am so strong, and yet so soft! so white, and so long! This is far better than being a vegetable; even during blossom-time nobody attends to one, and one only gets water when it is raining. Now I am well taken care of. The girl turns me over every morning, and I have a shower-bath from the water-tub every evening; nay, the parson's wife herself came and looked at me, and said I was the finest piece of Linen in the parish. No one can possibly be happier than I am!"

The Linen was taken into the house, and cut up with scissors. Oh, how it was cut and clipped, how it was pierced and stuck through with needles! that was certainly no pleasure at all. It was at last made up into twelve articles of attire, such articles as are not often mentioned, but which people can hardly do without; there were just twelve of them.

"So this, then, was my destiny. Well, it is very delightful. Now I shall be of use in the world, and there is really no pleasure like that of being useful. We are now twelve pieces, but we are still one and the same—we are a dozen! Certainly this is being extremely fortunate!"

Years passed away; at last the Linen could endure no longer.

"All things must pass away some time or other," remarked each piece. "I should like very much to last a little while longer, but one ought not to wish
for impossibilities." And so the Linen was rent into shreds and remnants numberless. They believed all was over with them; for they were hacked and mashed and boiled, and they knew not what else; and thus they became beautiful, fine, white paper.

"Now, upon my word, this is a surprise! and a most delightful surprise too!" declared the Paper. "Why, now I am finer than ever, and I shall be written upon! I wonder what will be written upon me. Was there ever such famous good fortune as mine!" And the Paper was written upon. The most charming stories in the world were written on it, and they were read aloud! and people declared that these stories were very beautiful and very instructive; that to read them would make mankind both wiser and better. Truly, a great blessing was given to the world in the words written upon that same paper.

"Certainly this is more than I could ever have dreamt of when I was a wee little blue flower of the field! How could I then have looked forward to becoming a messenger destined to bring knowledge and pleasure among men? I can hardly understand it even now. Yet so it is, actually. And, for my own part, I have never done anything, beyond the little that in me lay, to strive to exist, and yet I am carried on from one state of honor and happiness to another; and every time that I think within myself, 'Now, surely, the song is en-ded-ded-ded,' I am converted into something new, something far higher and better. Now I suppose I shall be sent on my travels — shall be sent round the wide world, so that all men
may read me. I should think that would be the wisest plan. Formerly I had blue blossoms; now, for every single blossom, I have some beautiful thought or pleasant fancy — who so happy as I?"

But the paper was not sent on its travels; it went to the printer's instead, and there all that was written upon it was printed in a book; nay, in many hundred books. And in this way an infinitely greater number of people received pleasure and profit therefrom than if the written Paper itself had been sent round the world, and perhaps got torn and worn to pieces before it had gone half way.

"Yes; to be sure, this is much more sensible," thought the Paper. "It never occurred to me, though. I am to stay at home, and be held in as great honor as if I were an old grandfather. The book was written on me first, the ink flowed in upon me from the pen, and formed the words. I shall stay at home, while the books go about the world, to and fro — that is much better. How glad I am! how fortunate I am!"

So the Paper was rolled up and laid on one side. "It is good to repose after labor," said the Paper; "it is quite right to collect one's self, and quietly think over all that dwelleth within one. Now, first, do I rightly know myself. And to know one's self, I have heard, is the best knowledge, the truest progress. And come what will, this I am sure of, all will end in progress — always is there progress!"

One day the roll of Paper was thrown upon the stove to be burnt; it must not be sold to the grocer
to wrap round pounds of butter and sugar. And all the children in the house flocked round; they wanted to see the blaze; they wanted to count the multitude of tiny red sparks which seem to dart to and fro among the ashes, dying out, one after another, so quickly, they call them "the children going out of school;" and the last spark of all is the schoolmaster. They often fancy he is gone out; but another and another spark flies up unexpectedly, and the schoolmaster always tarry a little behind the rest.

And now all the Paper lay heaped up on the stove. "Ugh!" it cried; and all at once it burst into a flame. So high did it rise into the air, never had the Flax been able to rear its tiny blue blossoms so high, and it shone as never the white Linen had shone; all the letters written on it became fiery red in an instant, and all the words and thoughts of the writer were surrounded with a glory.

"Now, then, I go straight up into the sun!" said something within the flames. It was as if a thousand voices at once had spoken thus. And the Flame burst through the chimney, and rose high above it; and brighter than the Flame, yet invisible to mortal eyes, hovered little tiny beings, as many as there had been blossoms on the Flax. They were lighter and of more subtle essence than even the Flame that bore them; and when that Flame had quite died away, and nothing remained of the Paper but the black ashes, they once again danced over them, and wherever their feet touched the ashes, their footprints, the fiery red sparks, were seen.
Thus "the children went out of school, and the schoolmaster came last." It was a pleasure to see the pretty sight; and the children of the house stood looking at the black ashes, and singing,—

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Bassilure,
And now the song is en-ded-ded-ded."

But the tiny invisible beings replied every one, "The song is never ended; that is the best of it! We know that, and therefore none are so happy as we are!"

However, the children could neither hear nor understand the reply; nor would it be well that they should, for children must not know everything.
SURELY you know what a microscope is,—that wonderful glass which makes everything appear a hundred times larger than it really is. If you look through a microscope at a single drop of ditch-water, you will perceive more than a thousand strange-shaped creatures, such as you never could imagine dwelling in the water. It looks not unlike a plateful of shrimps, all jumping and crowding upon each other; and so ferocious are these little creatures that they will tear off each other’s arms and legs without mercy; and yet they are happy and merry after their fashion.

Now, there was once an old man whom all his neighbors called Cribbley Crabbley,—a curious name to be sure! He always liked to make the best of everything; and when he could not manage it otherwise, he tried magic.

So one day he sat with his microscope held up to his eye, looking at a drop of ditch-water. Oh, what a strange sight was that! All the thousand little imps in the water were jumping and springing about, devouring each other, or pulling each other to pieces.

"Upon my word, this is too horrible!" quoth old Cribbley Crabbley; "there must surely be some means of making them live in peace and quiet." And he thought and thought, but still could not hit on the
right expedient. "I must give them a color," he said at last, "then I shall be able to see them more distinctly;" and accordingly he let fall into the water a tiny drop of something that looked like red wine, but in reality it was witches' blood; whereupon all the strange little creatures immediately became red all over, not unlike the Red Indians. The drop of water now seemed a whole townful of naked wild men.

"What have you there?" inquired another old magician, who had no name at all, which made him more remarkable even than Cribbley Crabbley.

"Well, if you can guess what it is," replied Cribbley, "I will give it you; but I warn you, you'll not find it out so easily."

And the magician without a name looked through the microscope. The scene now revealed to his eyes actually resembled a town where all the inhabitants were running about without clothing; it was a horrible sight! But still more horrible was it to see how they kicked and cuffed, struggled and fought, pulled and bit each other. All those that were lowest must needs strive to get uppermost, and all those that were highest must be thrust down. "Look, look!" they seemed to be crying out, "his leg is longer than mine; pah! off with it! And there is one who has a little lump behind his ear,—an innocent little lump enough, but it pains him, and it shall pain him more. And they hacked at it, and seized hold of him and devoured him, merely because of this little lump. Only one of the creatures was quiet, very quiet, and still;
it sat by itself, like a little modest damsel, wishing for nothing but peace and rest. But the others would not have it so; they pulled the little damsel forward, cuffed her, cut at her, and ate her.

"This is most uncommonly amusing," remarked the nameless magician.

"Do you think so? Well, but what is it?" asked Cribbley Crabbley. "Can you guess, or can you not? — that's the question."

"To be sure I can guess," was the reply of the nameless magician, "easy enough. It is either Copenhagen or some other large city; I don't know which, for they are all alike. It is some large city."

"It is a drop of ditch-water!" said Cribbley Crabbley.
THE HAPPY FAMILY.

The largest green leaves that you can find in the country are the burdock-leaves. If a little girl take one of them, and hold it in front of the skirt of her frock, it serves her as an apron; and if she place it on her head, it is almost as good a shelter against the rain as an umbrella—so very, very large are these leaves. Never is one burdock-leaf found growing alone—wherever one grows, a whole colony of them grow also; they are sociable leaves, and beautiful too, but all their beauty is food for the Snails. Those large white Snails, of which the grand folks used, in olden time, to make fricassees, dine off the burdock-leaves; and greedily they eat of them, saying all the while, "Hum, how nice! how exquisite!" for they think the food quite delicious; they live upon burdock-leaves, and they imagine that the burdock-leaves have been sown for their sakes.

Now, there was an old-fashioned Manor-house; Snails were no longer cooked and eaten there; for not only had the custom died away, but the last owners of the house had also died, and no one lived in it at all. But burdock-leaves grew near this house, and they had not died away; they still grew and thrived and multiplied; and as there was no one to weed them up, they spread over all the paths and all the beds, till the gar-
den at last became a perfect wilderness of burdock-leaves. Here and there, indeed, might still be seen a solitary apple- or plum-tree, otherwise no one could possibly have guessed that this place had ever been a garden; on all sides you saw burdock-leaves, nothing but burdock-leaves. And among them dwelt two old Snails, the last of their race.

Even they themselves could not tell how old they were; but they could remember perfectly that their family had once been very numerous; that they belonged to a colony from a foreign land; and that for them and theirs the whole grove had been planted. Beyond the burdock-grove they had never been; but they knew that there was another place in the world called the Manor-house, and that there Snails were cooked, and then became black, and were laid upon silver dishes; but what happened afterwards they could not divine. Nor could they at all imagine how they would feel when cooked and laid on silver dishes; but that it was very delightful, and a very great honor and distinction — of that they were certain. Neither the Cockchafer, the Toad, nor the Earthworm, all of whom they had questioned on the subject, could give them any correct information; for not one of these had ever been cooked, or laid in a silver dish.

No creatures in the world were held in such high honor as these old white Snails; they were quite sure of that: the burdock-wood had grown up solely on their account, and the Manor-house stood beyond merely that they might some day be taken there, cooked, and laid in silver dishes.
They now lived a very lonely, and yet a very happy life; and as they had no children of their own, they had taken a liking to a little common Snail, and brought it up as their own child. Unfortunately this little Snail, being of a different species, could not grow larger, so as to become like its foster-parents; however, old Mother Snail insisted that she could perceive he was growing fast, and she begged Father Snail, since he could not see it as she did, to touch the little Snail’s house and feel it. And old Father Snail felt the house, and acknowledged that the mother was in the right.

One day there came a heavy shower of rain. “Only listen, what a drum-drum-drumming there is on the burdock-leaves!” remarked Father Snail.

“It is the drops that make that drumming,” rejoined Mother Snail. “Look, now they are running straight down the stalk; you will see it quite wet presently. I am glad we have our own good house; and the little one, too, he is safe in his. Certainly, it cannot be denied, that more is done for us than for all other creatures put together; it is easily seen that we are of the first importance in the world. We have houses provided for us from our birth, and the burdock-wood is planted for our sakes! I should rather like to know, though, how far it extends, and what is beyond it.”

“There is nothing beyond it!” quoth Father Snail. “And if there were any other places, what would it signify? No place can be better than this; we have nothing to wish for.”
"I cannot say that, for my part," replied Mother Snail. "I own I should like to go up to the Manor-house, and there be cooked, and laid in a silver dish. All our forefathers went there, and only think what an honor it must be!"

"Most probably the Manor-house has fallen to pieces," said Father Snail; "or else the burdock-grove has grown over it, so that the human beings cannot now get out to fetch us. However, there is no need to be in such haste— but you are always in such a violent hurry about everything; and the little one, too, he begins to take after you. Why, he has crept all up the stalk in less than three days; it makes my head turn quite dizzy to look at him!"

"Don't scold him," said Mother Snail; "he crawls so cleverly! we shall have great pride and pleasure in him, and what else have we old folks got to live for? But there is one thing we ought to think of now,—how are we to get him a wife? Don't you think that far out in the burdock-grove there may perhaps be a few more of our family left?"

"Black Snails, no doubt, there are in plenty," replied the other; "Black Snails without houses; but they are so low, so vulgar! I'll tell you what we can do; we can commission the Ants to look about for us; they are always running backwards and forwards, as if all the business in the world had to be done by them; they must certainly be able to find a wife for our little Snail."

"To be sure, we know where is the loveliest little creature imaginable!" exclaimed five or six Ants,
who were passing by just then. “But perhaps she may not choose to listen to the proposal, for she is a Queen.”

“What does that matter?” returned the two old Snails. “Has she a house? That is much more to the purpose!”

“A house!” repeated the Ants; “she has a palace! the most magnificent ant-palace, with seven hundred passages!”

“Oh, thank you!” said Mother Snail; “if you fancy our son is going to live in an ant-hill, you are very much mistaken, that’s all. If you have no better proposal to make than that, we can give the commission to the white Gnats; they flutter about in rain and in sunshine; they know every corner of the burdock-grove quite intimately.”

“Ah, yes, we know the wife for him!” declared the Gnats, on being appealed to. “A hundred human paces off there sits, on a gooseberry-bush, a little Snail with a house; she lives so solitary, poor thing! like a hermitess, and she is quite old enough to marry. It is only the distance of a hundred human paces.”

“Well, then, let her come to him,” said the old Snails; “that will be most fitting; he has a burdock-grove; she has only a gooseberry-bush.”

And so the Gnats fluttered away to make the offer to little Miss Snail. Eight days passed before she made her appearance; so much the better, that showed she came of the right breed.

And now the bridal solemnities were held. Six Glowworms shone as brightly as they could; other-
wise, the whole affair passed off very quietly, for neither of the two old Snails could endure merriment and rioting. Indeed, Father Snail was too much moved to be able to say a word; but Mother Snail made a most beautiful and affecting speech, giving to the two young people the whole burdock-grove for their inheritance, and declaring, as she always had declared, that it was the best, if not the only place in the world. Moreover, she promised that if they lived together peaceably and honestly, and multiplied in the grove, they and their children should at last be taken to the Manor-house, there to be cooked till they were black, and then be laid on silver dishes.

And after this speech was ended, the two old Snails crept back into their houses, and never came out again; there they slept. And the young Snails reigned in the burdock-wood in their stead, and had a numerous posterity. But they never had the good fortune to be cooked, or to be put in silver dishes; and so they decided that the Manor-house must have fallen to pieces, and that all the human beings in the world must be dead; no one ever contradicted them in this opinion, and therefore it must needs be true. And for their sakes the rain-drops beat upon the burdock-leaves, and made drum music, and for their sakes the sun shone on the burdock-leaves, giving them a bright green color; and they were very happy, and the whole Snail family were very happy.
"EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE!"

'IS more than a hundred years since.

Near the large lake behind the wood stood an old baronial Hall, deep moats, half choked up with reeds and rushes, surrounding it. Close by the bridge leading over the moat to the carriage-entry stood a venerable willow-tree, bending protectingly over the reeds.

The merry noise of horns and hoof-tramps came nearer and nearer from the high-road beyond, and the little goose-girl hurried her geese on one side to make room for the hunting-party; on they galloped, and the girl had to jump up on one of the high stones of the bridge, to escape being run over. She was scarcely more than a child, slight and delicate as a fairy, with the sweetest expression in her face, and such sparkling hazel eyes! But the hunters took no note either of her graceful form or her bright eyes; on they galloped, and one of them, the Lord of the Hall, as he passed, in pure wantonness striking her on the breast with the handle of his whip, pushed her over the bridge.

"Everything in its place!" cried he; "so down with thee into the mud!" and he laughed at his own stupid jest, and his comrades all laughed in chorus. And with their loud laugh, and the yet louder bark of the hounds, the whole party swept past.
The poor little goose-girl, as she fell, had seized hold of one of the overhanging willow-boughs. Clinging by it she held herself above the slough of the moat; and as soon as hunters, horses, hounds, and horns were safe within the Hall gates, she labored to clamber up on the bridge again. But the willow-bough she held broke off from the trunk, and she was on the point of falling heavily among reeds, when a strong hand from above seized and saved her. A wandering hosier had been witness to the little scene, and hurried up to help the poor girl.

"Everything in its place!" repeated he, laughing, as he lifted her up and set her upon terra firma; and he tried to set the cracked willow-bough straight again, but he could not succeed. It stubbornly refused to return to "its right place," so he stuck it into the soft earth, saying, "Grow there if thou canst, and supply the folks at the hall with a flute, if they mend their manners; with a cane, if they don't!" And, gathering up his chattels, the peddler passed on through the gates, to display them in the servants' hall. Meanwhile, uproarious tumult reigned in the banqueting-room, unseemly songs, coarse jests, and rude laughter mingling with the many-toned bark of dogs; for the hounds had been called in to share the day's sport to the end. Wine and ale foamed in pitcher and glass, and the dogs were made to drink with their masters. The peddler was soon summoned to bring in his pack, but only as a jest; the wine was in and the sense was out; ale was poured into a stocking, and he was bidden to swallow it down quickly. But in another mo-
ment the humor of the party took another turn; whole herds of cattle, broad lands, and peasants' cottages, were set upon one card, were lost and won.

"Everything in its place!" repeated the peddler, when he was safe out of Sodom and Gomorrah, as he called the banquet-room. "The open road, the King's highway, that is my proper place. In that Hall I am quite out of my element." And the little goose-girl, standing behind a stile, nodded to him a grateful farewell.

Days and weeks passed away, and the broken willow-bough that the peddler had stuck into the soft mould of the moat was still fresh and green, and even thrust out new shoots; the little goose-girl saw that it must have taken root, and she quite rejoiced over it; it was her tree, she thought. But while the willow-sprig thrrove so well, at the Hall everything thrrove ill. Drinking and gambling, these were the two notes on which the Lord of the Hall rang the changes, and six years had not fully passed away when he wandered with scrip and staff, a ruined man, banished the home of his fathers; and that home was purchased by a hosier, the very same who had been made a laughing-stock in his banquet-room, and made to drink ale out of a stocking. Thrift and honesty, that had been his rule of life; and now the peddler was Lord of the Hall, and from that hour a card was never seen in it. "Paper was meant for something better," he was wont to say; "but when the Evil One first saw God's Book, he determined he would have his Bible too, and so he invented cards."
The new Lord of the Hall hastened to take to himself a wife, and who should she be but the little goose-girl, then grown up into a good, pious, and modest maiden! Her gentle nature stood her in stead of gentle blood; and in her new attire she moved as refined, courteous, and noble as any high-born lady in the land. And now came happy and peaceful times for the Old Hall, the lady ruling all within, and her husband all without, and blessing seemed to rest on all their labors. The moats were drained, and fruit-trees planted in their place; the rooms were all kept clean, the floors bright as a mirror, and in the state saloon sate Madam, with her daughters and her maidens, the long winter evenings through, spinning wool and flax. And every Sunday evening the Bible was read aloud to the whole assembled household, read by the Councillor himself, for a Councillor was the peddler in his old age. And children grew up around him, and children’s children, and all were well brought up, though not all were gifted with an equal portion of sense — that could not be expected in any family.

And all this time the willow-bough without had grown and spread and flourished, a large, magnificent tree. “It is our genealogical tree,” the old folks were wont to say; and they bade their children hold it in all honor, and especially they impressed this upon those among them who, as aforesaid, were not over-burdened with brains.

And now the hundred years are gone and past, our own generation has succeeded. The lake has become
a marsh, an oblong strip of water encased in stone is all that remains of the moat, and over it a splendid old tree droops its branches,—a willow-tree; it stands there as if to prove how beautiful a willow-tree may be, if it is but left alone, and suffered to grow in its own way. Storms have at times handled it roughly; the trunk is cleft asunder from the crown almost to the root, and grass and flowers grow in all the crevices, especially near the crown, where the great boughs are parted; wind and weather have conveyed mould enough to supply a perfect little hanging garden, chickweed, raspberries, nay, even a tiny little service-shrub has taken root there, and, slender and delicate, grows embedded in the old willow-tree, reflecting itself in the black water whenever the wind drives the duckweed aside into a corner of the stream. A little foot-path leads past the tree over the fields.

And high on the bank near the wood, commanding a charming prospect, stands the New Hall; the old one has been razed to the ground, wiped out of the landscape, as it were. The New Hall is large and splendid; the broad steps leading up to the door look like a bower of roses and large-leaved plants; the window-panes are marvellously bright; and the lawn on which they open is as smoothly green as though it were swept morning and evening. The saloons within are rich with costly paintings, and with chairs and couches of splendid velvet and silk, and so cleverly constructed that they can almost walk on their own legs; there are tables with marble slabs, books bound in morocco with gilt edges. For rich people dwell
here now, and grand people too, with the title of Baron!

"Everything in its place!" is still the family motto, and accordingly the pictures that had once hung in all glory and honor on the walls of the Old Hall have been banished to the gallery leading to the servants' room. Among the "old rubbish," as they were called, were two quaint old portraits; one of a grave-looking man wearing a wig and a crimson coat, the other of a lady fair, her hair powdered and combed back after the antique fashion, and holding a red rose in her hand. Both pictures were encircled with a wreath of willow-boughs; they are portraits of the old Councillor and his wife, from whom the present occupants of the Hall claim descent. The pictures are in tolerable preservation, except that they are pierced with small round holes innumerable, the juvenile Barons having used them as targets when they were trying their skill with the cross-bow.

"But they are not really of our family," remarked one of the young Barons. "He was a peddler, and she was a goose-girl. They were not like our papa and mamma."

"Mere rubbish" were these old pictures! "Everything in its place!" so the great-grandparents were sent to the servants' gallery.

The little Barons have a tutor; he is a clergyman's son, and lives at the Hall. One day the tutor, his pupils, and their eldest sister, who had lately been confirmed, went out for a walk. They took the path leading past the old willow-tree, and as they went the
young girl made herself a bouquet of wild-flowers and green sprays. "Everything in its place!" and out among the green fields, in the fresh morning air, these children of Danish soil looked as fair as any bouquet of rich-hued exotics. But while her fingers were busy, her ears were open to hear every word the tutor was saying; it pleased her right well to hear him speak of the beauty of Nature, and of that beauty more excellent than Nature's, — moral beauty; to hear him tell of the gallant deeds and heroic lives of the great men and noble women of history. For hers was a thoroughly happy and healthful mind; noble and elevated thoughts were natural to her, and she had a heart large enough to embrace and love all that God has created.

The party stopped at the old willow-tree; the youngest of the young Barons wanted to have a flute cut for him out of it; his tutor broke off a bough for the purpose.

"Oh, don't do it, pray!" cried the young Baroness; but her protest came too late — it was done. "Oh, you should not touch our famous old tree, I love it so much! They all laugh at me at home about it, but I don't care for that. There is a legend about this tree" —

And she went on to relate what we have heard already about the Old Hall, the goose-girl, and the peddler who met there for the first time — the ancestors of the family at the New Hall, and of the young Baroness herself.

"They would not be ennobled, those good, honest
old folks," added she. "They were fond of the proverb, 'Everything in its place;' and they never would buy themselves a title to higher rank than they could claim by birth. It was their son, my grandfather, who was made a Baron; he was a very learned man, was much respected and beloved by princes and princesses, and used to go to all their grand festivities. He was his parents' favorite too; I don't know why, but I do love those old folks so much; I always think there must have been something so homelike, so patriarchal, about that Old Hall, with the mistress of the house sitting spinning among her maidens, and the old Councillor reading the Bible aloud."

"Yes, they were excellent people, right-minded people," replied the tutor; and he forthwith fell into a discourse upon the difference between the aristocracy and the burgher-families; no one who heard his enthusiasm for the old nobility could have imagined that he himself was plebeian born.

"It is glorious to belong to a race that has made itself illustrious! glorious to know that the blood that flows in one's own veins is the same that has glowed like living fire in the good cause of old! glorious to claim as one's own rightful heritage a name that is, as it were, a passport everywhere. So long as the nobles are noble, who shall deny them honor and precedence? I know that the fashion of the time is to decry respect for our old nobility as a stupid, worn-out prejudice, and to assume that the lower we descend into the mud of poverty and obscurity, the brighter will be the gems of true goodness
to be found glistening among the rubbish. But that is not my way of thinking, for it is perfectly mad, utterly false. Many examples of true nobility of soul may be found among the nobly born; I could cite several, but I will instance only one, which I learnt from my mother. She was staying at a great house, my grandmother had been nurse, or some such thing, to its mistress; my mother was in the parlor with the old lord when he noticed a poor old woman hobbling upon crutches into the court-yard; she used to come once every week for a small pension. 'Poor thing!' said he, 'it is too bad for her to have to walk up here;' and almost as he spoke he was out of the door and down the steps—he, the old lord, nearly eighty years of age, himself hurried down to the poor woman, to spare her the labor of walking upstairs to fetch her money. This may seem a trivial anecdote enough; but, trivial as it is, it reveals a truly kindly and noble character. Honor to all such! honor to the courtesy and gentleness that smooth down the harsh barriers between rank and rank, that acknowledge the same human nature everywhere, whether it be clothed in woollen, or in purple and fine linen! But as for those gentry who prate of their 'blood,' and pride themselves on their pedigrees, with less of right and of reason than high-mettled Arab steeds, and who arch their necks and eyebrows in scorn at the rest of the world—such as these disgrace the nobility they are too often supposed to represent; they have, of their own accord, put on the ridiculous mask given them by Thespis, and are rightly handed over to the satirist.
Such was the tutor's oration; it was rather too long for the occasion, but then he was busy making the flute the while.

There was a large party at the Hall that evening; the grand saloon was crowded with guests, some from the neighborhood, some from the capital, a bevy of ladies richly dressed, with and without taste, a group of the clergy from the adjoining parishes standing in a corner together, as grave as if they were met for a funeral. A funeral party it certainly was not; it was meant for a party of pleasure, but the pleasure was yet to come. Music and song went on, first one of the party volunteering, then another; but it was mostly music of that sort which is more delightful to the performer than to the audience. The little Baron brought out his flute, but neither he nor his papa, who tried it after him, could make anything of it; it was pronounced a perfect failure.

"But you are a performer too, surely," quoth a witty, fine gentleman, addressing the tutor; "you are, of course, a flute-player, as well as a flute-maker. You are a universal genius, I hear; and genius is quite the rage nowadays—nothing like genius. Come, now, I am sure you will be so good as to entrance us by playing on this little instrument." And he handed it over, announcing in a loud voice that the tutor was going to favor the company with a solo on the flute.

It was easy to see that these people wanted to make game of him, and he refused to play; but they pressed him so long and so urgently that at last, in
very weariness, he took the flute and raised it to his lips.

It was a strange flute! A sound issued from it, loud, shrill, and vibrating as that sent forth by a steam-engine, nay, louder far; it thrilled right through the house, through garden and woodland, miles out into the country; and with the sound came also a strong, rushing wind, its stormy breath clearly uttering the words, "Everything in its place!"

Forthwith the Baron, the master of the Hall, caught up by the storm-wind, flew out at the window, and was shut up in the porter's lodge in a trice; and the porter himself was borne up, not into the drawing-room, no, for that he was not fit, but into the servants' hall, where the proud, finical flunkeys, in their silk stockings, shook with horror to see such a low person sit down at table with them.

But, in the grand saloon, the young Baroness was wafted up to the seat of honor, where she was right worthy to sit, and the tutor's place was beside her. There they sat together, for all the world like bride and bridegroom. An old count, descended from one of the noblest houses in the land, retained his seat, not so much as a breath of air disturbing him. For the flute was strictly just. And the witty young gentleman who had been the occasion of all this tumult was whirled out headforemost to join geese and gander in the poultry-yard.

Half a mile out in the country the flute wrought wonders. The family of a rich merchant, who drove with four horses, were all precipitated from the car-
riage-window, and two farmers, who had of late grown too wealthy to know their nearest relations, were puffed into a ditch. It was a dangerous flute. Lucky that at the first sound it uttered it cracked in twain, and was then put safely by in the tutor's pocket.

"Everything in its place."

Next day no more was said about the adventure than if it had never happened. The affair was hushed up, and all things were in the same order as before, save that the two old portraits of the peddler and the goose-girl continued to hang on the walls of the saloon, whither the storm-wind had blown them. Here some connoisseur chanced to see them, and, as he pronounced them to be painted by a master-hand, they were cleaned and restored, and ever after held in honor. Their value had not been known before.

"Everything in its place!" so shall it be all in good time, never fear! — not in this world, though; that would be expecting rather too much.