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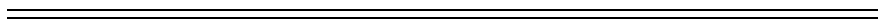
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Then the two old Eagles flew away. FRONTISPIECE.

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FAIRY TALES FROM FAR AND NEAR

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED

BY

KATHARINE PYLE



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FAIRY TALES FROM FAR AND NEAR

LITTLE SURYA BAI

A HINDOO STORY

THERE was once a poor peasant woman who sold milk. Every day she filled her cans with milk and went to a near-by town and sold it, returning with her cans empty.

One day, when she set out she took her little baby daughter with her. In each hand the mother carried a milk can, and the baby held to her skirt and walked close beside her.

Suddenly two great eagles appeared, wheeling about in the sky, and one of them dropped down and seized the child and flew away with it; the other eagle, which was its mate, followed it.

The woman cried aloud and dropped her milk cans, and ran along after the eagles, but they quickly disappeared in the distance. The woman beat upon her breast and wailed bitterly, but nothing she could say ⁽²⁾ could bring her child back to her.

The eagle flew on and on with the baby until they reached the tree where they lived. There the father eagle, who had carried her, laid her gently on the grass.

He and his mate were so delighted with the child and her pretty ways that they determined to keep her.

They built a house for her high in the top of the tree. The house was made of iron, and was very strong, and it had seven iron doors and there was a key for each one of them so it could be locked. In this house the little girl lived with a little dog and cat the eagles had brought her for company.

The eagles loved the child dearly and named her Surya Bai, which means Sun Lady. They brought her food and beautiful clothes,—clothes such as princesses wear, and magnificent jewels. Each day, after they had set forth, Surya Bai locked the doors so she would be safe. Then she played about the house with the little dog⁽³⁾ and cat and was well contented. In the evening, when the eagles came home, they would knock, and Surya Bai would unlock the seven doors, one after another, and let them in. Always they brought her some pretty present.

One day the mother eagle said, “Our Surya Bai has now everything she needs except a diamond ring to wear upon her finger. It makes me sad that she should not have a diamond ring.”

“Yes,” replied the father eagle, “she ought to have one, and I will go out and find one for her.”

“But an ordinary diamond ring will not do,” said his mate. “Once, far away, upon the borders of the Red Sea, I saw a princess walking, and on her finger she wore a ring so bright and dazzling it was like the sun in splendor. It is such a ring as that that I wish to give to our Sun Lady.”

“In that case we will fly away to the Red Sea and get one for her,” said the father eagle.

So the two birds arranged to set out the next day, and as it would take a long time to make the journey, they brought to Surya Bai enough food to last for six months. They then cautioned her not to open the door to any⁽⁴⁾ one while they were gone, and not to leave the house for any reason whatever, and to keep the fire always burning on the hearthstone. Then the two old eagles flew away, and they were sad to leave her.

Now after they had gone, Surya Bai went about the house and set it in order. Every day she cooked food for herself and the little dog and cat, and fed them, and she played with them, and they were very happy together. Then one day, when she was cooking dinner, the little cat crept close to her, and while Surya Bai was not looking stole the very choicest bits of the dinner and ate them up very quickly.

When Surya Bai turned round and saw what the cat had done, she was very angry. “Now I shall punish you because you are a thief,” she said.

She took a little switch and beat the cat with it. That made the cat very angry, and it ran over to the hearth and upset the pot of water over the fire and put it out. Then Surya Bai did not know what to do. She had now no way to cook the food for herself and the little dog and cat, and as they could not eat it raw, for three days ⁽⁵⁾ they went hungry.

At the end of that time Surya Bai made up her mind to go out and try to get some fire some place. She said to the dog and cat, "If the eagles could know how hungry we are, I am sure they would be willing for me to go."

"Yes," said the little cat, "but you must not go too far, for just beyond here is the Rakshas' country; and if you go there, some Rakshas may catch you and never let you come back."

"What is a Rakshas?" asked Surya Bai.

Now Rakshas are demons and very dangerous, but the cat would not tell Surya Bai that, because she thought if Surya Bai knew about them she would be afraid to go for the fire. So she said, "I cannot tell you what they are," and then she sat down in a corner and washed her fur and would not answer any more questions.

"At any rate, we must have the fire," said Surya Bai. So she unlocked the seven doors, one after another, and climbed down from the tree and set out on her journey.

She went on and on for a long way and then, without knowing it, she really did come into the country of ⁽⁶⁾ the Rakshas. There she saw a house, and in it was an old, old woman, bending over a fire. She was so old that her nose and chin almost met, and so crooked she was like a bent stick. Her gray hair fell over her eyes in a mat, and her teeth were long and yellow, and she was a Rakshas.

When she saw the maiden, she asked her who she was, and where she had come from, and what was her errand.

Surya Bai told her she came from a little house that had been built for her by a pair of eagles in a tree top far away. She told her the eagles were away from home, for they had gone to fetch her a diamond ring from far away and had left her with only a little dog and cat for companions. "And now the cat has put out the fire," said she, "and I have no way to cook the food. We are very hungry, so give me, I beg of you, a little of your fire to carry home with me."

Now the old woman Rakshas had a son who was very strong and terrible, but he was away from home on some business. "What a pity he is not here," thought the old woman. "This pretty little girl would make a ⁽⁷⁾ fine morsel for him. I will try to keep her until he returns, so that he may have her for his supper."

So she made her voice as soft and friendly as she could, and said, "You may have the fire and welcome, but pound this rice for me before you go, for my arms are too weak and old for pounding. After that you shall have the fire."

Surya Bai was very obliging. She pounded the rice and pounded and pounded, but still the young Rakshas did not come, and presently she had finished.

"Now give me the fire," said the maiden.

But the old woman still wished to keep her. "I have no daughter to help me," said she. "Grind this corn for me, I beg of you, and then I will give you the fire."

Surya Bai ground the corn, but still the Rakshas had not come.

"I have pounded the rice and ground the corn; now give me the fire that I may be gone," said the maiden.

But still the old woman detained her. "Why should you be in such a hurry? Just fetch me some water ⁽⁸⁾ from the well, and then you shall have the fire."

Surya Bai went to the well and fetched the old woman the water. Still the Rakshas had not returned.

"I have served you willingly," said the maiden, "and now I must be gone, and if you will not give me the fire, I must seek it elsewhere."

Then the old woman knew she could keep Surya Bai no longer. "You may have the fire," said she, "and you are more than welcome to it. I will also give you a bag of corn, and as you go you can strew it along, so as to make a little golden pathway between your house and mine."

This the old woman said because she thought if the girl left a trail behind her, the Rakshas could follow her to where she lived and catch her there.

But Surya Bai had no fear of evil, for she had always been treated kindly. She thought the old Rakshas was a very friendly old woman.

She took the fire and the corn also, and as she went home she scattered the corn along the way. {9}

When the girl reached the tree where the house was, she climbed up and went inside, shutting and locking the seven iron doors behind her, one after the other. She cooked the meal and fed the dog and fed the cat, and then as she was very tired, she lay down and fell fast asleep.

Now very soon after she left the Rakshas' house, the young Rakshas came home, and he was very fierce and terrible to look at. At once his mother began to scold at him.

"Why are you so late?" she cried. "A young maiden has been here, a fine and dainty morsel, all pink and white, and as tender as a bird, and you might have had her for your supper if only you had returned earlier, in time to catch her."

When the Rakshas heard this, his eyes grew red as fire, and he gnashed his teeth together with rage.

"Which way did she go?" he bellowed. "Which way did she go? I'll follow her and catch her however far she's gone."

"You'll have no trouble finding the way," replied his mother, "for I gave her corn to scatter as she went along, so as to make a pathway. Just follow the corn, and you'll soon find her." {10}

At once the Rakshas set off. So fast he went that the ground was burned up beneath him. It did not take him long to reach the little house in the tree top, but Surya Bai was safely inside, and all the seven iron doors were locked behind her.

The Rakshas beat on the door and called to her to come and open. "I am your father, the eagle, returned from his journey," he called to her. "Open quickly, dear child, that I may put the diamond ring upon your pretty finger."

But Surya Bai did not open the door or answer, for she was fast asleep and the little cat and dog were asleep also.

The Rakshas began to tear at the iron door, but he could not stir it, and all he did was to break off one of his long brown nails, and then off he went, howling horribly, and leaving the nail still sticking in the crack of the door.

A little while after he had gone, the cat awoke and wakened Surya Bai. "Surya Bai," mewed the cat, "I dreamed the eagles had returned and were calling at the door for you to open it. You had better go and see if they are there." {11}

Surya Bai at once arose and took the keys and opened the doors, one after another, and when she opened the seventh door, the Rakshas' nail that he had broken off ran into her hand, so that she fell down as though she were dead; for the fingernail of a Rakshas is very poisonous.

Not long after that the eagles came home, and there they saw the doors all open and little Surya Bai lying on the threshold, seemingly dead. Then they were very sorrowful. They put the diamond ring upon her finger, and after that they flew away, uttering loud cries, and were never seen again; but the cat and the dog stayed beside her and mourned over her.

Now the very next day a handsome young Rajah^[1] came by that way, hunting, and stopped under the very tree where the house was. He happened to look up, and there, high above him in the tree top, he saw something dark and large, and he could not tell what it was. So he bade one of his attendants climb up and see.

[1] King. {12}

The man climbed up as the Rajah bade him, and presently he came sliding down again, and he told his master that what he saw up there was a curious little house made of iron. The man told him the house had iron doors, but they were all open, and on the threshold of the first of the doors lay a lovely maiden. She lay there seemingly dead, but so beautiful he had never seen anything like her, and beside her sat a little cat and dog mourning for her.

When the Rajah heard this, he became very curious to see the maiden, and he bade some of his people climb up and bring her down to where he was.

This they did, and the little cat and dog came with them. No sooner had the young Rajah seen the maiden than he fell violently in love with her because of her beauty, and he felt he could not live unless he could awaken her to life and have her for a wife. She did not look to him as though she were really dead, for her cheeks and lips had kept their color, and when he lifted her hand, it was soft and warm in his fingers. Then he saw something long and dark, that looked like a thorn, sticking in her hand. This was the Rakshas' nail. {13}

The Rajah drew it out very slowly and carefully, so as not to hurt her, and no sooner had he withdrawn it than life came back to the maiden, and she opened her eyes and breathed again.

When the Rajah saw the change that had come over her he was filled with joy, and he told her who he was and what had happened, and he asked her whether she would come back to his palace with him and be his Ranee.^[2]

^[2] Queen.

To this Surya Bai willingly agreed, for he was so handsome and kind looking that she loved him the moment she saw him. So Surya Bai went home with the young Rajah, and they were married with great magnificence and rejoicing, and every one loved the young Ranee for her gentleness. Only the Rajah's mother hated her. She was very angry that her son should have married a girl who had a pair of eagles for parents, and who had lived in an iron hut in the forest. She also envied Surya Bai because the Rajah had given her all the most magnificent jewels^[14] in the palace. Nothing was too good for the little new Ranee.

"This girl has bewitched him," the mother said to herself, "but if she were only gone and out of his sight, he would soon forget her." So she was always plotting and planning to get rid of the young Ranee.

Now there was an old woman about the palace, and she was very wise. She said to Surya Bai, "Do not trust the old Ranee. She is certainly planning some evil against you. I know her. She is jealous of you and so wicked that she would stop at nothing."

But Surya Bai would not listen to her. She was so good and gentle that she could not believe evil of any one.

One day Surya Bai and the Rajah's mother were walking in the gardens, and the old woman was with them, for she was one of Surya Bai's favorite attendants.

Then the old Ranee said to the young Ranee, "Your jewels are very beautiful and fine. Even when I was a young Ranee my husband never gave me such beautiful jewels as those you have. Let me put them on just ^[15] a short time, I beg of you, that I also may know how it feels to be as magnificent as you are."

Then the old woman whispered in the girl's ear, "Do not lend her your jewels. I know she is planning some evil against you."

But Surya Bai would not listen to her. She took off her jewels, all of them, and helped the old Ranee to put them on. She put the bracelets on the old Ranee's arms, and the necklaces on her neck, and the earrings in her ears,—all her jewels she lent to the old Ranee. She hung them about her until she shone like the sun with the splendor of them all.

When this was done the Rajah's mother bade the old woman go back to the palace for a hand mirror that she might look at herself and see how fine she was now that she was dressed in all those jewels.

The old woman did not want to go, but she was obliged to.

When the old Ranee was alone with Surya Bai, she said to her, "Come, Surya Bai, let us go over to ^[16] the bathing tank while we wait for the mirror, that I may look at myself in the water."

Still thinking no evil, Surya Bai went with her.

Now the bathing tank was very deep; it was only for people to swim in. When they came near the edge, the old Ranee leaned over and Surya Bai leaned over, too, to look in the water. Then the old Ranee gave her a push so that she fell in and sank out of sight below the waters.

The wicked old Ranee waited for awhile, and then, as she saw nothing more of Surya Bai, she was satisfied that the girl was drowned, and she hurried back to her chamber and hid all the jewels.

That night the Rajah could not find Surya Bai anywhere. No one knew what had become of her. The Rajah was like one distracted. He hunted for her everywhere.

Then his mother said to him, "I saw her walking in the garden this morning with that old woman. If any harm has come to her, it is because of that wretch; I feel sure of it."

The Rajah at once sent for the old woman and questioned her, but she could tell him nothing about ^[17] the young Ranee, for she had not seen her after she left her there in the garden with the Rajah's mother. The old Ranee managed to make the Rajah feel very suspicious of the old woman, so he had her thrown into prison, and she lay there, very miserable.

But Surya Bai had not been altogether drowned when she sank down into the tank. Instead she had changed into a beautiful golden flower that rose up and up through the waters until it reached the air.

The next time the Rajah came to the gardens he saw something shining over in the bathing tank, and when he went nearer he found a beautiful golden flower growing up out of the water. Then at once he became quite happy. The flower made him think of little Surya Bai, and a load seemed lifted from his heart. Now every day he went out to the tank and spent long hours looking at the flower, and he talked to it as though it could hear him, and it never changed or withered.

But soon the old Ranee became very anxious. "This flower certainly has something to do with Surya Bai.^{18} There is some magic about it," she said to herself.

So one night she took several men with her and went secretly out to where the flower was blooming, and made the men cut it down and take it away into the jungle and burn it.

The next morning, when the Rajah went to the garden to visit the flower, he found it was gone. Then he was very unhappy, and he questioned the keepers of the garden, but they could tell him nothing about it.

But even when the flower was burned, that was not the end of the young Ranee.

The wind caught up the ashes of the flower and blew them back into the garden, and they fell close beside the wall. From these ashes grew up a mango tree. It grew and grew until its top was higher than the garden walls and could be seen from the road outside the garden. Then upon the very topmost bough there bloomed a flower. In due time the petals of the flower fell, and the mango fruit was seen. The fruit grew larger and larger. Every day it grew, and it shone with a rosy light as though there were a flame within it, and every day the Rajah came and looked at it, and when he looked he was happy, just as he had been when he looked at the golden flower.^{19}

The fruit was almost ripe, but no one was allowed to touch it, for it was to be for the Rajah alone.

Now one day the old milk woman who was Surya Bai's mother was going home with her empty milk cans, and she sat down to rest outside the wall of the Rajah's garden. She sat near where the mango tree was growing, but it was inside the garden and she was outside. Then the mango bent its top and leaned farther and farther across the wall, and, quite suddenly, the great, rosy mango fell down and into the empty milk can of Surya Bai's mother.

The old woman was terrified. She thought, "If any one should see this mango in my milk can, they would think I was a thief and had stolen it, and I would be punished." So she caught up her can and hurried home with it. Then she put it in the corner and heaped up ever so many other empty milk cans on top of it.^{20}

She said nothing about what had happened until that evening, when she and her husband and her eldest son were alone together and the other children were in bed, for she had a large family. Then she told them the whole story,—she told how she had sat down to rest in the shade of the wall, and how the mango had fallen into her milk can, and how she had brought it home and had put the can in the corner under all the other milk cans.

"And now do you go and fetch the mango," said she to her husband, "and we will cut it and have a fine feast."

The husband went out to where the milk cans had been heaped up and began lifting them down, one after another, until he had come to the last one. Then he gave a great cry.

"You told me a mango was in the milk can," he cried to his wife, "but here is something very different."

The woman came running and looked into the can, and there was a tiny lady very magnificently dressed,^{21} like a Ranee, and when she stepped out from the can she was so beautiful that the whole room shone as though there were a star in it.

The old man and woman could hardly believe their eyes. They were frightened, and yet they were delighted.

The old woman said, "Now I am happy again as I have never been happy since the eagles flew away with my little baby daughter."

When she said that, the small Ranee looked at her wonderingly, but she said nothing, for it seemed she could not speak.

After that the beautiful stranger lived there in the house with the old man and woman, and every day she grew so fast that at the end of a month she was as tall as an ordinary woman, but still she could not speak.

It was not long before people knew that a most beautiful lady dressed like a Ranee was living with the old peasants. The news came even to the palace, so the Rajah heard about it, and he began to wonder whether it were possible this beautiful lady could be his lost Ranee. One day he set out with only his faithful councilor^{22} for company, and went to the house of the old peasants and knocked on the door.

The old woman who was Surya Bai's mother looked out of the window, and when she saw the Rajah there, she was very much frightened. She took Surya Bai and hid her behind a heap of milk cans, for she feared if the Rajah saw the girl he might begin to ask questions and find how the mango had dropped into the can.

After the girl was hidden, the old woman opened the door.

"I wish to see the stranger who is living here with you, and who is so beautiful, and is dressed like a Raneé," said the Rajah.

"I do not know what you mean," cried the old woman. "No one lives here but me and my husband and children."

(This was true, only the old woman did not know it.)

The Rajah questioned her, but she would make no other answer, and when he went through the house, he could see no one except the woman's husband, who was very much frightened, and the children she had spoken of. {23}

Then the young Rajah went away, very sorrowful, but still he could not help wondering whether the peasant had deceived him. So he sent for the old woman who had been Surya Bai's companion, and who was in prison.

"I wish you to go to such and such a place," said he, "and make friends with the peasant woman who lives there. Then, after you are friends, find out, if you can, whether a stranger has been living with her, and if so, who she is."

The old attendant did as the Rajah bade her. It did not take long for her to make friends with the peasant woman, and one day the old peasant allowed her to see the strange lady who was living with her.

At once the attendant knew the stranger to be the lost Raneé, and she fell down and kissed her feet, and wept over her.

Then she told the old peasant the whole story. She told her of how Surya Bai had lived with the eagles, and how the Rajah had found her and made her his wife, and how she had then disappeared, and how the Rajah had mourned for her and sought her. {24}

When the old peasant heard this story, she was filled with wonder and with joy, for she knew then that Surya Bai was no other than the little daughter who had been carried away by the eagles.

She could now no longer refuse to let the Rajah see Surya Bai, and he was sent for. When he came and saw his dear wife as well and as beautiful as ever, he could hardly contain himself for happiness. He took her in his arms, and wept over her and kissed her, and no sooner had he kissed her than her powers of speech came back, and she was no longer dumb.

Then she told him the story of what had happened to her, and of how she had been pushed into the tank, and how she had come to be where she was.

The Rajah was very angry. He took Surya Bai back to the palace with him, and the wicked old Raneé was shut up in a tower where she was very miserable all the rest of her life, but the peasants and their children were raised to great wealth and honor, and Surya Bai and the Rajah lived happy forever after. {25}

THE PRINCES AND THE FRIENDLY ANIMALS

A LITHUANIAN STORY

THERE was once a King who had three sons, and he had also a stepdaughter. They all lived together in peace and happiness and had everything their hearts could desire. But after a time an enemy of the King came against him with a great army, and slew him, and took the kingdom and drove forth the Princes into the world, and their stepsister with them.

The three and the one journeyed on and on together until they came to a deep forest, and there they saw a mother bear, and her three cubs were with her.

The eldest Prince was about to shoot at her, but the bear cried out, "Do not shoot, Prince, and I will give you my three cubs for servants, one for you, and one for each of your brothers." {26}

To this the Prince agreed. He let the bear go away unharmed, and the three cubs followed after the three Princes, each one behind his own master.

After they had gone a bit farther into the forest, they saw a lioness, and she also had three young ones with her.

Now it was the second Prince who was about to shoot, but the lioness called to him, "Do not slay me, Prince, and I will give my three cubs to you and your brothers, one to each of you."

Thereupon the Prince allowed her to go unharmed and the three young lions followed after the Princes with the bear cubs.

Soon after that they saw a mother fox, and three little ones were with her. This time it was the youngest Prince who would have shot, but the fox called to him, imploring him to spare her life and offering instead her three young ones to the Princes.

She too was allowed to escape, and now each Prince had a young fox, a young lion and a young bear to follow him. ^{27}

After that the Princes met a hare and a boar, and these animals were also allowed to go unharmed because they each gave a young one to each one of the Princes to follow after and serve him.

And now the Princes came to a place where the road divided.

"I," said the youngest, "shall take the road toward the East, where the sun rises each morning."

"And I," said the second, "shall journey toward the West, where it is golden at sunset."

But the eldest Prince would take neither of these roads. "My way shall be neither toward the East nor toward the West," said he, "but straight ahead, and when I come to a place to dwell in, there will I stop."

The three brothers then asked their stepsister which of them she would follow, and she said she would go with the eldest Prince, for she too wished nothing better than a place to dwell in, where she could live in peace and safety.

So the three brothers parted, but first the eldest Prince cut three notches in a tree that stood at the parting^{28} of the ways. He cut one at the East, and one at the West, and one in the center between them, one for each of his brothers, and one for himself.

He told them the notch to the East was for the youngest brother, the notch to the West was for the second brother, and the one in the center belonged to himself.

"When any one of us returns to this spot," said he, "let him place his finger first upon one notch, and then upon the other. If milk flows forth from the notch, then all is well with the one to whom it belongs, but if blood flows forth, then it means death or misfortune to that one."

After that they bade each other farewell and set forth, each on his own way, and each with his animals following after him, and the stepsister went with the eldest brother, as she had chosen.

For a long time the eldest Prince and his sister journeyed on without seeing any one, but toward evening they came to a house and there was a red light shining out from the window. When they looked inside they saw^{29} a band of robbers sitting there, counting the gold they had taken from the people they had killed.

The stepsister was so frightened that her teeth chattered in her head, and she was for going farther, but the Prince said no. "Hither we have come, and here we shall stop," said he.

Then he called his animals to him and threw open the door of the house.

When the robbers saw him, they started up and seized their weapons to slay him, but they had no time, for the faithful animals flew at them and tore them almost to pieces, so that they were dead, all except one; and he lay there with the others as though he had been killed also.

Then the Prince threw them down into the cellar and locked the door, and he and his stepsister got out food and drink and feasted to their hearts' content, and the animals feasted also.

The next morning the Prince went out hunting and he told his stepsister she might go all over the house and look at everything in it; only into the cellar she must not look, for there the robbers were lying, and that door^{30} must remain fastened.

After he had gone, the girl went about through the house and looked at everything. After she had seen all there was to be seen in the house, she began to think about the cellar, and more and more she wished to open the door and look at the robbers lying there.

At last she could resist no longer. She unfastened the door and looked down into the cellar. As soon as she did so, the robber who was only wounded lifted his head and spoke to her.

The girl was terribly frightened, and was for shutting the door at once, but the robber called to her so piteously that she could but stay and listen to him.

“Do not fear me,” cried the robber. “Even if I desired it, I am too weak to harm you, but I wish you only good.”

The robber then told her that if she would do as he said, he would soon be well and strong again. Then they would rid themselves of her brother and would be married, and the house and all the wealth that had ^{31}been gathered would belong to their own two selves alone, and they would be very happy together.

The girl listened; and the longer she listened, the more the plan of the robber pleased her. She asked him what she must do to heal him.

“You must go into the kitchen and look in the cupboard,” said the robber. “There you will find three flasks. Make haste and bring them here. In the first is an ointment. Rub it upon my wounds, and at once they will heal themselves. Hold the second flask to my lips, and all pain will leave me. Give me to drink from the third, and I will be perfectly well again and stronger than ever.”

The girl did as the robber told her, and all happened as he had said. Then, after his wounds were healed and he was well again, he and the girl consulted as to how they could get rid of her brother.

“This is how it can be managed,” said the robber. “You shall ask your brother how strong he is, and then, as a test of his strength you shall say you will tie his thumbs behind him with a cord, and he shall try if he can ^{32}break it. If he cannot break it, then he will be helpless, and you must call to me, and I will come and slay him.”

This plan pleased the girl, and at once she agreed to it.

That evening, when her brother came home, they sat at the table and ate and drank together, but the animals were left outside in the courtyard with the door locked and barred against them.

After supper, the stepsister began to talk to her brother and to question him as to how strong he was.

“I am so strong,” replied the Prince, “that there are few bonds that could hold me.”

“Suppose, I were to tie your thumbs together behind your back with a silken cord, could you break it?” asked the sister.

The Prince bade her try, and he put his hands behind him, and she tied his thumbs together with a silken cord the robber had given her. But no sooner did the Prince strain with his thumbs against the cord than ^{33}it snapped in two and dropped from him.

“Sister, you must bind me with something stouter than the cord if you would hold me,” said the brother.

The next day the Prince went hunting again, and as soon as he had gone, the girl went down to the cellar to talk to the robber. “You must give me something stronger than that to bind him with,” said the stepsister. “He broke the cord as though it were no more than a spider’s web.”

The robber gave her a cord twice as strong.

“Now see if that will hold him,” said he.

When the Prince came home that evening and he and the girl sat together at supper, she again began to talk of his strength.

“Here is a cord that is twice as strong as the other. If I tied your thumbs together behind your back, could you break this also?” she asked of him.

The brother told her to try. She tied his thumbs together as before with the second cord the robber had given her, but he snapped this also in two the moment he strained against it. ^{34}

“Sister, you will need a stronger cord than that if you would hold me,” said he.

The next day, as soon as the brother had left the house, the stepsister hastened down to talk again with the robber.

“It is of no use,” said she. “He snaps the cords as easily as though there were nothing to them. To-night I will tie his thumbs together with my girdle, and if he can break that, as he did the cords, then there is nothing that will hold him.”

To this the robber agreed, so the next day, when the Prince came home, the girl asked him to let her once more tie his thumbs behind his back. “And this time,” said she, “I will tie them with my girdle.”

The lad put his hands behind him and the girl tied the thumbs together with her girdle. And now, though the Prince strained against it with all his power, he could not break it.

"Sister," said he, laughing. "You will have to untie it, for now indeed I am held prisoner." {35}

"Then it is as I would have it," cried the girl, and she threw open the cellar door and called to the robber to come forth and slay him.

No sooner did the Prince see the robber than he knew the trick that had been played against him.

"I am indeed helpless," said he, "and if I must die, I must. But one little favor I would ask of you before I perish. Give me leave to blow three blasts upon my hunting-horn, and I will ask nothing else of you."

That seemed a harmless favor for the Prince to ask, and neither the robber nor the girl refused him. Still they would not untie the girdle. The stepsister held the horn to his mouth, and the Prince blew upon it so strong and loud that the girl and the robber were like to have been deafened by it. Three times he blew. The first blast woke the animals where they lay sleeping, and they raised their heads and listened. At the second blast they aroused themselves and gathered at the door of the house; and at the third blast they threw themselves against the door, ^{36}so that locks and bars were broken, and the wood itself was splintered. Then in a moment they rushed into the room and sprang upon the robber and tore him into shreds.

They would have torn the stepsister to pieces, too, but this the Prince would not permit. "I will not kill you," said he to the girl, "but you shall be punished."

He then took a chain and fastened it around her waist and to a staple in the wall. He placed food and drink within reach and an empty bowl before her. "When you have filled this bowl full of tears of repentance, the chain will drop from you," he said, "and you will be free; but until that time you shall remain a prisoner."

He then went away and left her, and the animals followed at his heels.

He went on and on until he came to another country, and there he stopped at an inn for food and rest. But there was little feasting at the inn, or resting either. Every one was weeping and lamenting. The food had burned on the fire, and the malt had all run out of the barrels and was wasted. {37}

The Prince called to the landlord and asked him the cause of all this sorrow.

"A sad and grievous cause, indeed," replied the landlord. "This day the King's daughter is to be sacrificed to a mighty dragon that is to come up out of the water. She must be left on the seashore over beyond the cliffs you see yonder, for him to devour her; and unless this is done, the dragon will ravage the whole country."

"But is there no one strong enough and brave enough to destroy this dragon?" asked the Prince.

"There is no one. Many have come hither to try it, for the King has promised that if any one will do battle with the dragon and destroy him, he shall have the hand of the Princess in marriage, and she is so beautiful, that any man might well risk death to gain her. But every one who has seen the dragon as he lies out in the sea has been so filled with terror that he has fled away. Not one has stayed even to look upon him twice." {38}

When the Prince heard this he made up his mind that he would at least have a look at the dragon, so he asked the landlord how he must go to reach the place where the monster lay. As soon as he had been told, off he set in that direction, and the animals were not far behind him.

It did not take him long to reach the seashore and when he looked off across the water he could see the dragon lying there. He was so long that his back looked like an island, and from his nostrils rose up streams of smoke that were full of fiery cinders.

The Prince hid himself behind a heap of rocks and lay there watching, and presently he heard a great noise. It was made by a procession of people who were bringing the Princess down to the seashore. She was very beautiful, but so sad looking that the Prince's heart melted within him for pity of her.

They brought her to the seashore and left her there, and every one went away except two nobles of the Court. One of them was driving the coach that brought the Princess, and the other one sat beside him as footman. ^{39}They were to wait until all was over, and then they were to take the news back to the King, but they kept the coach high up on top of the cliff where they would be out of danger.

The Prince waited until all the others had left her, and then he came out from behind the rocks and went to speak to the Princess; but when she saw him she was frightened, for she did not know who he was nor whence he came.

"Do not fear me," the Prince said to her. "I mean you no harm, but instead I have come hither to do battle with the dragon, and if it may be, to save you."

When the Princess heard this, she begged and implored him to leave her. "Why should you perish also? None can ever do battle with yonder monster and come out alive."

But the Prince would not listen to her.

And now the dragon bestirred itself and turned and came slowly toward the shore, and as it came they could smell the smoke of its breathing. {40}

The Prince drew his sword and stood waiting for it. Then as it came still nearer, the fox sprang out on a rock, dipped his tail in the salty water and slashed it across the eyes of the monster so that it was almost blinded. The lion and the bear also splashed up the water; the boar ripped at the dragon with his sharp tusks; the hare sprang upon its head and struck with its paws; and the Prince drew his sword and plunged it into the monster's heart, so that the life blood ran out from it into the sea, and it was dead.

Then he went to the Princess, and they kissed each other on the lips, and she gave him the half of her handkerchief and the half of her ring to show that they were true lovers. He also took the tongue and the ears of the dragon, and then they went back to the coach where it was waiting on the cliff, and the Princess bade the nobleman drive them to the palace of the King, that she and the Prince might be married as her father had promised.

But on the way, the two noblemen talked together. {41}

"Why should we drive this stranger to the palace?" said they. "No one knows who he is or whence he comes. Let us slay him, and then we will draw lots as to which of us shall claim the Princess."

So that was what they did. They made the Prince step down from the coach and slew him, and they made the Princess swear that she would tell no one that it was not they who had killed the dragon. Then they drew lots as to which should marry her, and the lot fell to the coachman.

But after they had driven on and left the Prince lying there, the faithful animals did not desert him. They stayed beside him and mourned over him, and the lion licked his face and hands, but it could not revive him.

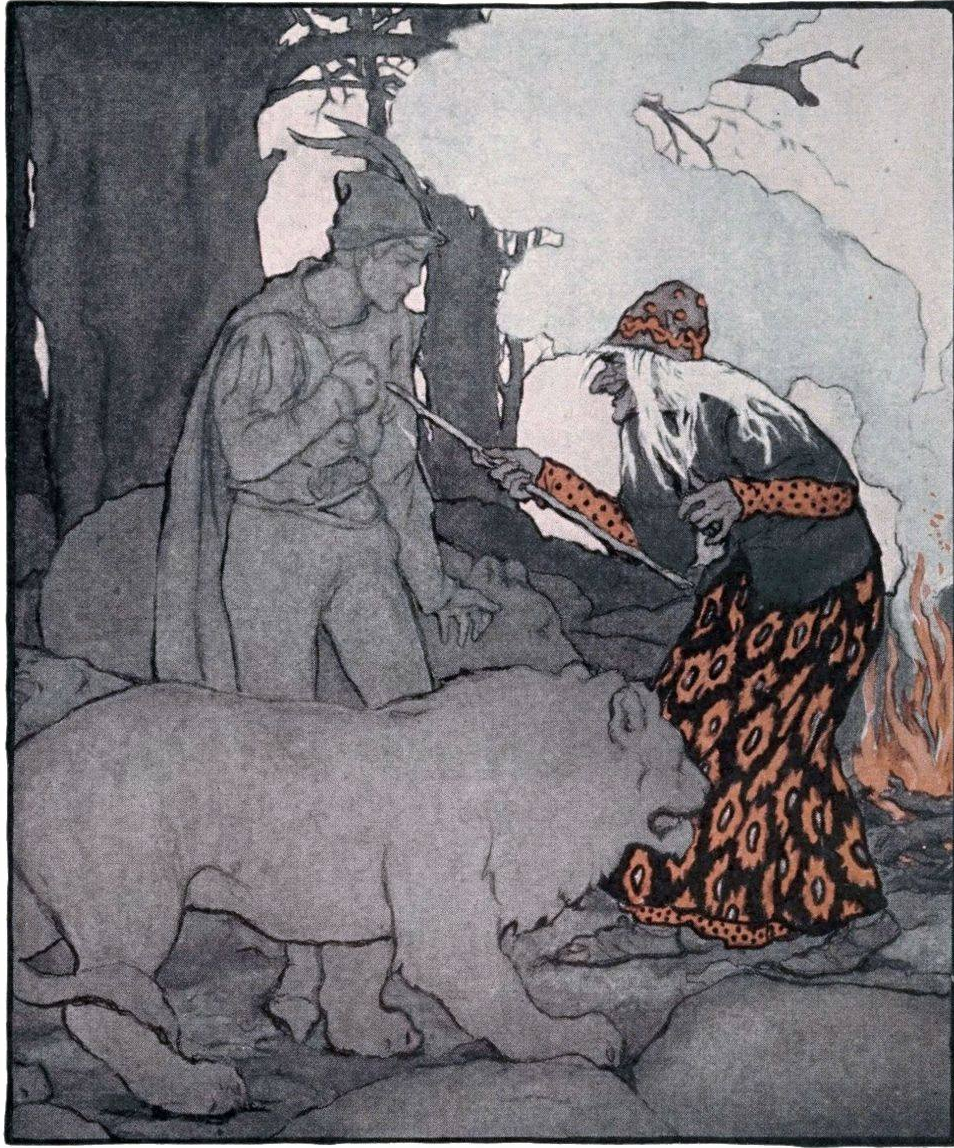
Then the fox, which was very clever, reminded the animals of the flasks of ointment and healing water in the robbers' house.

The hare, which was very swift, said it would go and fetch the flasks, and it sped away to get them.

Now the stepsister had wept the bowl full of tears of repentance and was free again; and when the hare came to the door and told her what it wanted, she gladly gave it the flasks and hung them about its neck in a little wicker basket. {42}

Then the hare fled back again to where the animals were waiting beside the Prince. With its tusks the boar broke the flask that held the ointment, and the bear rubbed it on the Prince's wounds so that they were healed. Then they poured some drops from the second bottle between his lips, and the color came back to his cheeks and the light to his eyes. When they gave him to drink from the third bottle, he became quite well again and stronger than ever.

After that he rose and set out to follow the Princess. But the way was long, and before he reached the palace, night overtook him, and he had no place to sleep. He was about to make a bed among the grasses when he saw, not far in front of him, the light of a fire. He went on toward it, and as he came nearer, he saw an old, old woman standing beside it and



As fast as she touched them each one was turned into a stone figure. [Page 43](#)

cooking her supper in a pot. She was so old that her chin and nose almost met, and so skinny she was scarcely more than bones, and the eyes under her brows were red and evil.

“Good evening, mother,” said the Prince.

“Good evening, son,” replied the woman.

“May I and my animals warm ourselves beside the fire?” asked the Prince.

“As for yourself, you’re welcome,” said the old woman; “but as for your animals, I am afraid of them. Just let me give each one of them a little blow with my staff to show them I’m mistress, and then they may rest by the fire also.”

The Prince did not say no, so the old woman took up her staff and with it she quickly touched one animal after the other, beginning with the lion and ending with the hare, and as soon as she touched them, each one was turned into a stone figure, for the old woman was a witch and as wicked as she was ugly. Then she touched the Prince with her staff, and he also became a stone image without life or motion. ^{43}

Then the old hag laughed with glee and counted them over. They were not the only ones she had either. All about were other stones that had once been living beings.

Now some time after this, the second Prince, who had traveled far and was weary of journeying, came back to the branching road where the tree stood with its notches, and he wished to see how his brothers were faring.

He touched the notch that belonged to the youngest Prince, and milk flowed out from it. So he knew all was well with his youngest brother. Then he touched the notch that belonged to the eldest Prince, and forth from that flowed blood. Then he was grieved to the heart because he knew death or disaster must have come upon his brother.

“Now will I set forth in search of him,” said he, “and never will I stop nor stay until I find what has become of him and whether I can give him succor.”

So the second Prince journeyed on and on, along the road his eldest brother had gone before him, and it was not long until he came to the place where the old woman was tending her fire. All about in the shadows stood figures of stone, some big and some little, but the Prince did not think to look at them.

He asked if he and his animals might rest a bit beside the fire and warm themselves.

“You yourself are welcome,” said the old woman, “but I fear that your animals, may tear at me or eat me.” She then asked the Prince’s permission to touch each animal with her rod, that it might know her as its mistress. “Then I will no longer fear them,” said she.

The Prince was willing, so she took the rod that leaned against a tree near by and struck the animals lightly, first one and then another, and as she touched them, they were turned to stone. Last of all she touched the Prince, and he too became a stone image.

Then the old hag laughed aloud for joy of her wickedness, and put aside her rod once more, and went on with her cooking.

Now it happened that not so very long after this the youngest Prince, who had journeyed far and wide in his wanderings, began to think of his two brothers and to wonder how it had gone with them in the world. ^{46}

So he came back to the place where the three roads parted, and the tree stood with the three notches in it.

He put his finger on the notch that was his eldest brother’s, and blood ran down from it; and his heart was heavy within him, for he knew that harm must have come to his brother. Then he put his finger upon the notch of the second brother, and from that, too, trickled down the blood. Then the young Prince cried aloud in his sorrow. “Never will I rest or stay,” cried he, “until I know what has happened to my brothers and whether or no I can do aught to aid them.”

So he set out the way the second brother had gone, and before long he, too, came to where the old woman was tending her fire.

The old hag laughed in her heart, when she saw him, for she thought, “here will be more stone images to be set round me.” She spoke to the Prince and made him welcome, and bade him sit beside the fire to rest himself. But she said she feared his animals, and she took her staff in her hand and asked the Prince’s leave to touch them each one with it. “Then,” said she, “they will know me as their mistress and will not touch or harm me.” ^{47}

But the Prince replied, “Not so! No one but I must strike my faithful servants, no matter how lightly. Give me the rod, and then if needs be I will touch them.”

So he took the rod from the old woman, though she indeed was loth to yield it, and first he touched the fox with it, for it was growling.

As soon as he did this, the fox was turned to stone, and then the Prince knew that here was evil magic. He looked about him and saw the stone images of his brothers and their animals, and many other stones as well, that had once been living, breathing people.

Then the Prince’s heart was hot within him and he demanded of the hag that she should bring these people back to life, living and breathing as they had been before, and he threatened that unless she did this, his animals should tear her limb from limb and scatter the pieces of her through the forest. ^{48}

The old woman was terrified, and she bade the Prince turn the staff that he held end for end and touch the people with it; then they would return to life.

This the Prince did, and at once, as she had promised, the cold dead stones became living flesh once more, all the people and all the animals.

Then they all rejoiced greatly, and they gathered about the Prince and thanked him, but none rejoiced more greatly than the brothers.

Then the others all went away to their own homes, and the youngest Prince broke the rod to pieces that the witch might no more use it for harm to others.

The three brothers talked together, and the eldest told them all about the Princess, and how he had saved her from the dragon. And he told them, too, how the noblemen had slain him and stolen the Princess from him, and how the faithful animals had brought him back to life. {49}

After he had made an end of the story the youngest Prince said, "Now we must set out for the palace of the King at once, for it may be it is not yet too late for you to claim the Princess." So the three brothers set forth, with all the animals following behind them.

When they reached the palace, none dared to hinder them from entering, because of the animals, and the three went on through one room after another till they came to where the King was, and his daughter and the nobleman were with him.

The nobleman was very merry, for the wedding feast was even then preparing, and that night he was to be married to the lovely Princess. The King, too, was happy, for he was pleased at the thought of having such a brave hero for a son-in-law. Only the Princess was sad and would do nothing but weep and bemoan herself, but she could not tell her father the cause of her grief because of the oath she had sworn to the nobleman.

Now when the Prince and his two brothers entered the room where the King was sitting, the Princess gave ^{50} a shriek of joy, but the nobleman turned pale and trembled, for he knew the Prince at once as the true hero who had saved the Princess from the dragon, and whom he and his companion had slain by the roadside.

Then the Prince began and told the King the whole story, and as the King listened, he wondered. When the Prince had made an end of the tale, the King turned to the nobleman. "And what answer have you to make to all this?" he asked him.

"That it is false and doubly false," cried the nobleman. " 'Tis I and I alone who saved the Princess."

Then the Prince asked him what proof he had of the truth of his story, and when the nobleman could give no proof, the lad drew out a handkerchief and opened it, and there were the ears and the tongue of the dragon. He also showed the half of the handkerchief and the half of the ring the Princess had given him, and then it was clear to every one that it was he and he alone who had slain the dragon. {51}

Then the nobleman was punished as he deserved, but the Prince was married to the Princess, and his two brothers were married to the King's two younger daughters, and they all lived together in great joy and happiness forever. {52}

GRACIOSA AND PERCINET

A FRENCH STORY

THERE was once a King who was so rich that it would have been impossible for him to spend all his money, and yet his greatest wish was still to keep adding to his treasure.

The King's wife had died and left him but one child, a daughter named Graciosa. This Princess was so beautiful, so kind and so gentle that she was beloved by all about her. The King also loved her dearly,—more dearly indeed than anything in the world except his treasure, but that was always first in his thoughts and his affections.

One day the King set out with his attendants to hunt in a forest near by.

The huntsmen soon started a deer that bounded away through the forest. The King followed it for a long distance, farther than he had ever gone before. Suddenly he came out on the other side of the forest, and there ^{53} in front of him, stood a vast castle with towers and turrets, and a moat around it.

The King called his chief huntsman to him and asked him whether he knew who lived in the castle.

The man replied that it belonged to the Duchess Grognon, and she was said to be so rich that she had never been able to count all her treasures.

As soon as the King heard this, he at once determined to stop at the castle and ask for refreshment. He was not only weary and thirsty from the chase, but he also had a great desire to see any one as rich as the Duchess, and perhaps he would be shown her treasures as well.

Grognon had already seen him from her window, and as soon as he turned toward the castle, she hastened down to meet him. She herself opened the door for him and smiling she bade him welcome.

When the King first looked at her he was amazed. Never had he seen any one so ugly. She was as dark and rough and broad as a toad. Her eyes were little and red, and her mouth was like a slit that stretched from ear to ear. But she was magnificently dressed and so covered with jewels that the King was dazzled by them and ^{54}quite forgot how hideous was the one who wore them.

The Duchess invited the King to enter and at once commanded that a repast should be brought him with all sorts of cakes and sweets and fruits, and also a pipe of wine.

The King, who was very thirsty, was pleased to hear this order, and when the pipe of wine was brought in he waited impatiently for it to be opened. But when the Duchess struck the head of the pipe, instead of wine a great heap of gold fell out upon the floor.

The Duchess pretended to be very much surprised. "This is a strange thing," said she. "I cannot imagine how they came to bring this gold instead of the wine I ordered. I pray your Majesty's pardon for the mistake, which shall be well punished, I promise you."

She then commanded that another pipe should be brought in, but when she struck this, out poured a heap of rubies.

The King was filled with wonder and admiration at the sight of all this treasure, but the Duchess pretended ^{55}to be still more angry.

"The servant who made this mistake shall be well beaten, I promise you," she cried. "Bring in another pipe, and this time be sure it is filled with good wine instead of all these stones."

But she had no more success with the third pipe than with the second, for when she struck it, out poured emeralds. The Duchess pretended to fly into a fury and scornfully pushed the jewels aside with her foot. Pipe after pipe was brought, but one was full of sapphires, one of pearls, and still another of diamonds. The whole floor was covered with her treasures.

The King was bewildered. He scarcely knew how to express his wonder.

"Sire," said the Duchess, smiling, "since you feel such an admiration for these poor trifles, perhaps you would like to see the treasure chambers from which these have been brought."

Nothing could please the King better, and after Grognon had shown him all her treasures, which indeed seemed endless, he determined, if possible, to make her his wife that all this wealth might become his. ^{56}

This plan suited the Duchess perfectly. Indeed it was for this purpose that she had shown her wealth to the King, and it was agreed between them that they should be married as soon as possible.

When the news of this intended marriage was brought to Graciosa, she was filled with grief and dismay. She had already heard of the Duchess Grognon and knew her to be not only a monster of ugliness, but of such an evil nature that nothing delighted her more than to tease and torment those around her and make their lives a misery to them. Nor could she understand how her father could make up his mind to take such a creature as his wife.

However, she hid her feelings as well as she could and determined to be obedient and patient with Grognon, hoping that in this way she might live with her at peace, and even perhaps win from her a little affection.

The day for the wedding drew near, and one morning word was brought to the King that Grognon would ^{57}that day set forth on her way to his palace.

Wishing to do all honor to his bride, the King determined to ride forth and meet her, and he gave orders that Graciosa should make herself ready and ride with him to meet the Duchess.

Poor Graciosa had withdrawn to the palace gardens to weep in secret, for she did not wish others to know of the grief she felt over her father's marriage. As she sat beside a fountain, her tears falling as clear and bright as the leaping waters, she saw a page coming toward her across the garden. He was a stranger to the Princess, and he was so tall and handsome, and his air so noble that Graciosa gazed at him with wonder.

When he reached the place where Graciosa was sitting he bent his knee before her. "Princess," said he, "the King is waiting for you. He rides forth to-day to meet the Duchess Grognon, who has already set out from her castle, and he wishes you to ride with him."

"Tell him I will come upon the moment," said Graciosa. "But stay! First tell me who you are, for your face is strange to me. Are you one of the Duchess's pages who has been sent on before her?" ^{58}

"No, Princess," replied the page. "I am indeed a stranger here, but no one has sent me hither. I have come hither because my greatest desire in life is to serve you, and, if it may be, to ease your sorrows in small measure by my love and devotion."

"How!" cried the Princess. "Do you, a page, dare to speak to me of love and devotion? You should be well punished for your insolence, and no doubt you will be when I report the matter to the King, as rest assured I shall do as soon as I find an opportunity."

"In truth, you have no cause for anger, Princess," replied the stranger. "I am not a page, but Prince Percinet, the son of a King as rich and powerful as your own father. Long ago my father died, and I live in the palace of my mother, the Fairy Finetta. Through her I am possessed of many magic powers and can render myself invisible at will. It is only because of my desire to help you that I have come here dressed as a page."^{59}

Graciosa was filled with wonder at this story. She had often heard of the fairy Prince Percinet, of his beauty and wit and power, but little had she thought to meet him. She could scarcely believe it possible that he loved her, and that it was for her sake he had come to the palace to serve as a page.

Still full of wonder, she arose and hastened away to where her father was waiting impatiently for her coming. He and his attendants were ready to set out at once, and a page was holding Graciosa's palfrey.

She was about to mount when Percinet appeared, leading a snow-white horse so graceful and so beautiful that every one who saw it marveled. This horse, he said, had just come as a gift to the Princess Graciosa from one who refused to let his name be known.

It was not difficult for Graciosa to guess that the one who had given her the horse was Prince Percinet himself, but her father could not wonder enough over both the gift and the giver.

When the Princess had mounted the horse and gathered up the reins, it at once moved forward with ^{60}such grace and lightness that all were filled with admiration. The King, at whose side she rode, kept admiring the steed and wondering as to whence it had come.

They had not traveled far when they saw Grognon and her train approaching them. The Duchess rode in a golden coach, drawn by six spotted horses, their harness glittering with gold and jewels. Grognon herself was magnificently dressed and covered with gems that fairly dazzled the eyes with their glitter, but this magnificence only made her look more hideous, like a toad peering out from a jeweled glove.

No sooner did the King come to the side of the chariot than he began to pay his compliments to Grognon, but the Duchess scarcely listened to him. Her eyes were fixed upon the horse upon which the Princess Graciosa was riding.

"That is a very beautiful horse," said she. "Indeed it is finer than any in my stables, or, I am sure, in yours, either. I should have thought it would have been kept for me instead of your allowing your daughter to ride upon such a wonder."^{61}

The King, seeing she was in a rage, tried to make excuses, but Grognon would not listen to him. Nothing would satisfy her but that Graciosa should light down from the horse and allow her to mount upon it instead, and ride beside the King as they returned to the palace.

To this Graciosa eagerly agreed. The fury shown by the Duchess terrified her, and her only wish was to turn aside Grognon's anger and perhaps win from her a kindly word.

But no sooner had Grognon mounted the horse than it began to prance and curvette and leap from side to side so roughly that the Duchess thought her teeth would be loosened in her head; then suddenly it started off at full gallop, with Grognon screaming and clutching it by the mane. So swiftly sped the horse that no one could overtake it, and when it reached the palace it stopped with such suddenness that the Duchess was thrown violently off upon the stones of the courtyard.

When the King and Graciosa, followed by the courtiers and attendants, arrived at the palace, they were horrified to find Grognon lying on the stones of the courtyard, screaming and groaning.^{62}

She was lifted up and carried into the castle, and physicians were called to attend to her bruises and scratches.

"It is all the fault of that miserable girl," Grognon screamed again and again. "It is some trick she arranged for me, and she had no other hope than that I should be killed outright. But she shall be punished for her wickedness. She shall find that she cannot treat me in such a manner without suffering for it."

She then demanded that the King should send Graciosa to her and allow her to punish the Princess as she saw fit.

The King was loth to agree to this, and yet he dared not refuse, for he feared that Grognon might fall into such a fury that she would refuse to marry him and would return to her own castle, and so he would lose her treasures. He felt himself obliged to allow Grognon to carry out her wishes.

Graciosa was sent to the Duchess's chamber and went with fear and trembling.

No sooner had she entered than the door was locked behind her. She saw, with terror, that back of Grognon's^{63} couch stood four tall and terrible-looking attendants, each armed with a heavy staff.

"Now, my beauty," cried Grognon furiously, "it is my turn. No doubt you were vastly amused by my misadventure, but now you yourself shall know how it feels to be covered with wounds and bruises."

She then bade her attendants seize Graciosa and beat her as long as their strength held out, or until their staves were broken.

Graciosa would have begged for mercy, but suddenly a whisper sounded in her ear. "Fear not, Graciosa. I, Percinet, am beside thee. The blows shall not harm thee, but when they fall, cry out as though they were beyond all bearing."

Graciosa at once recognized the voice of Percinet, and knowing he was there, all fear left her, and she could have laughed aloud for joy. However, she pretended to be almost fainting from terror.

Grognon now ordered the attendants to begin; they at once seized Graciosa and raised their staves, but^{64} she now saw that by Percinet's magic the staves had been changed into rose-colored plumes, so soft and feathery that the blows she received from them were like the tenderest of caresses. But, remembering Percinet's bidding, she cried aloud under the strokes as though she could scarcely bear the suffering.

The eyes of Grognon and her attendants were blinded so that they did not see the rods had been changed to plumes. The Duchess wondered at the strength of the Princess. She had expected to see her sink down, bruised and senseless under the rain of blows, but the harder the attendants beat her, the less did Graciosa feel the strokes.

At last the men, outwearied, dropped their rods, and Graciosa, pretending to weep, gathered her garments about her as though to hide her bruises.

"Go," said Grognon harshly, pointing to the door. "You have received no more than you deserve, but this beating is nothing to what you shall receive, if you again try your tricks upon me."^{65}

Graciosa crept away to her room and to her bed, pretending to be ill, which delighted Grognon and was as a soothing salve to her bruises.

Soon after the King and Grognon were married with great magnificence. The new Queen was dressed in cloth of gold and wore her most magnificent jewels; she received with satisfaction the compliments of the courtiers who pretended to admire her and praised her beauty and grace, while they laughed at her behind her back and wondered how the King had ever brought himself to marry such a hideous creature.

Graciosa was obliged to wear a hideous dress, and her ornaments were only common pebbles gathered from beside the road, with holes bored through them and strung together, but in spite of this her beauty shone out as the moon shines through the clouds at night time.

Soon after, a grand tournament was given in honor of the Queen. The knight who was chosen to ride for Grognon declared her to be the most beautiful creature in the world, and challenged all others to prove the contrary against him.

Many knights rode against him, but he overcame them all, for, knowing him to be the favorite of the Queen,^{66} none of them dared to try to overthrow him.

The heralds were about to proclaim him victor when a new and unknown knight rode into the field.

This knight rode a snow-white horse and was clad in silver armor. The only color he wore was a green silken scarf, that being Graciosa's color.

This silver knight declared Graciosa to be the most beautiful and perfect creature in the world, even as he held Queen Grognon to be the most hideous and detestable, and this he would prove against any who dared to ride against him.

When the Queen heard what the knight said, her face grew as red as blood, and she gave such a cry of fury that the King trembled, and Graciosa almost fainted with terror. However, the Queen had no doubt but that her chosen knight would overthrow the newcomer, as he had all others.

The two knights reined back their horses and set their lances at rest, and then at the given signal ^{67}they charged at each other. But it seemed the silver knight scarce needed to touch the other before he sent him rolling in the dust, and so sore wounded that it was difficult to revive him.

At once the silver knight disappeared, and no one was able to guess who he was or whence he had come, nor could they tell whither he had gone. Graciosa alone guessed, even when he first appeared, that the silver knight was no other than her fairy lover Percinet.

Grognon was in such a rage that she was like to lose her senses. She declared that Graciosa had arranged the whole plan so as to disgrace her before the court and demanded that the Princess should be left to her to punish as she pleased.

The King was afraid to refuse, for Grognon threatened that if he did she would take all her treasure and depart at once, and not one single jewel of it should he ever see again. With an anxious heart he at last agreed to her wishes, and Grognon, filled with triumph, determined to rid herself once and for all of the Princess.

That night, soon after the Princess had gone to her chamber, a number of armed men entered it and ^{68}forced her to come away with them. They brought her to a closed carriage which was in waiting, and into this she was obliged to enter. After that she was driven on and on for a long distance.

At last the coach stopped, the door was opened, and Graciosa was forced to descend. She found the men had brought her into the midst of a deep and gloomy forest, and that here they meant to leave her.

Graciosa was filled with terror. She knew the forest to be full of lions, bears, and other savage creatures, and she could not forbear from weeping and complaining of the cruelty that could leave her there to be torn to pieces by the fangs of wild beasts. She even pleaded with the men to kill her at once, that her sufferings might the sooner be ended.

The attendants, however, paid little heed to her prayers and tears except to tell her they were acting under the Queen's command, and soon the poor child found herself alone and helpless. Kneeling down, she said her prayers, and then meekly laid herself down to await whatever fate might befall her. ^{69}

Suddenly the forest all around her was lighted up as though by the glow of thousands upon thousands of candles, and she saw before her a broad avenue, paved with stones of changing colors and leading up to a shining palace.

Graciosa gazed with wonder upon the sight, scarcely able to believe her eyes. "It must be the work of Prince Percinet," she murmured. "He is guarding me from the savage beasts, even as he guarded me before from the fury of the cruel Grognon."

A sound from behind startled her, and she turned with a cry, fearing one of the beasts might have stolen up to her unheard.

Instead there stood Prince Percinet himself, looking upon her with tenderness and admiration. Graciosa had never seen him appear so handsome. He was dressed in white satin, richly embroidered with silver, and around his neck hung a broad collar of emeralds.

"Do not be afraid, beautiful Graciosa," said he. "I have come to lead you to the palace of my mother, the Fairy Finetta. She is waiting impatiently to welcome you, and be sure that in her palace you will be treated ^{70}with only the greatest care and tenderness."

At these words all fear left Graciosa. Blushing, she allowed Percinet to take her hand and to lead her up the avenue to the palace.

No sooner did they arrive at the foot of the steps than the golden doors swung open, and a tall and beautiful lady dressed in a shimmering green robe bordered with emeralds appeared, and after making herself known as the Fairy Finetta, she welcomed Graciosa with the greatest grace and dignity.

Graciosa was led into the palace, and everything she saw about her was so beautiful and wonderful that she hardly knew how to express her admiration. Wherever they went they were accompanied by soft music; doors opened before them as they approached, and in one apartment a feast was set forth for them with every sort of delicious food that can be imagined. It was served to them without hands, and nowhere did Graciosa see any one but themselves. This gave the Princess some anxiety.

"After all," thought she to herself, "all this is magic and may at any moment vanish suddenly, even ^{71}as it appeared, and I may find myself again in the forest, helpless and alone." She therefore, as soon as she found an opportunity, asked the Fairy Finetta whether it would not be possible to send her back to her father's palace again.

The fairy seemed both surprised and displeased at this question. "Nothing would be easier," she replied, "but have you so soon wearied of our company that you should wish to leave us? You know how Percinet adores you. He will be miserable if he finds he is unable to make you happy even for a few short hours."

Graciosa murmured something about her father.

"Your father is well and in good spirits," replied the fairy; "he has not even missed you."

The Princess could now no longer urge to be sent home. She agreed to remain in the castle for a while, at least. Percinet showed the greatest joy when he heard this. "Ah, Graciosa," said he, "you cannot but know that I am miserable without you, and if you would accept my love and devotion, I would be the happiest creature ^{72}in the world."

The Princess blushed, but made no answer and Percinet dared not press her further.

The next few days passed like a dream for Graciosa. Every day she found herself provided with clothes and jewels more beautiful than any she had ever imagined. Every day invisible hands served her with food that was strange to her, yet very delicious. Often she walked in the gardens or amused herself by feeding the fish in the fountains. Percinet was almost constantly with her and found a thousand ways in which to please her and show his devotion, and the Fairy Finetta was always gracious and charming. But one day, when Percinet had left her for a short time, Graciosa began to think of her father, and she was seized with such a great desire to see him that she grew very sad, and could not forbear from weeping.

When Percinet returned and saw her tears, he at once asked her, with the greatest concern, what was troubling her.

"I am sad because I am thinking of my father," replied Graciosa. "Oh, Percinet! Is it not possible for me ^{73}to see him? I have been parted from him for so long."

Percinet became very thoughtful, but presently he said, "It is indeed quite possible for you to see him and that without even leaving the palace, but I fear harm may come of it. However, as you know, I can refuse you nothing, so come with me."

Percinet then led Graciosa to a high tower from which they could see a great stretch of country in every direction. He bade her place her right foot on his left foot, and her little finger on his thumb, and look in the direction he pointed out to her.

As soon as Graciosa had done this, she no longer saw Percinet or the tower, or anything around her. It seemed to her that she was back again in her father's palace, in the chamber where the King sometimes went to be alone. She saw him there and in his hand he held a little picture of herself painted when she was a child and he was weeping and grieving over it so bitterly that Graciosa's heart was wrung with pity for him. She wished ^{74}to speak to him and throw her arms about his neck, but no sooner did she step forward toward him than she found herself back again on the tower with Percinet, and the vision of her father was gone.

Graciosa turned to the Prince, her face bathed with tears. "Dearest Percinet, if you love me, let me return to my father," she cried. "He is grieving for me, and I cannot bear the thought of his sorrow."

Percinet looked at her reproachfully. "And is my sorrow nothing to you?" he asked her. "You know how it would grieve me to the heart to lose you. The King was willing to leave you to the cruelty of Grognon, and I have treated you always with the tenderest respect, and yet you would gladly leave me to return to him."

Graciosa could make no answer to this, and after a moment Percinet added with a sigh, "So be it."

He then led her to the fairy and told her of Graciosa's wish to leave them.

Finetta looked at her with a severe expression. "I fear Graciosa, that you are very ungrateful," said she. ^{75}But if you wish to leave us, we will not keep you. Only, when you find yourself again in the power of the Queen, remember that it is of your own choice you are there."

So saying, the fairy waved her hand, and at once the castle and all in it vanished away like mist. Graciosa found herself again in her father's palace. With eager steps she hastened to the chamber where she had seen him sitting. He was still there, and weeping. She ran to him and threw her arms about him.

"Dearest father, do not grieve any longer," she cried. "Your Graciosa has returned to you, loving you better than ever."

The King was filled with joy at the sight of his daughter and embraced her and caressed her with so much tenderness that Graciosa hoped her sorrows were now ended, and that nothing but happiness lay before her.

But she had forgotten Grognon. The stepmother was furious when she heard that the Princess had returned to the castle. "Will I never be able to rid myself of this wretched girl!" she cried. "But wait a bit! I will make^{76} her so miserable that she will be glad enough to leave the palace herself, of her own will and desire."

She then hastened away to the King, who was again alone, as Graciosa had gone to her chamber.

"I hear that Graciosa has returned!" cried Grognon. "The girl thinks she can come and go at pleasure and cares nothing for any anxiety or sorrow she may cause us. But leave her to me, and I will teach her a lesson in obedience that may save us much trouble in the future."

The King was troubled at hearing this. He could not bear the thought of again putting the Princess in the power of her stepmother, and yet he knew Grognon's furious temper and was afraid of awakening it. In the end, however, he agreed to what the Queen asked and promised that she should do as she wished with Graciosa.

Grognon had learned a lesson from the return of the Princess, and she now determined to call to her aid a fairy who was a friend of hers and was as wicked as herself. "This girl," thought she, "is surely protected by some magic, and if I would succeed against her, I must call upon some power that is greater than my own."^{77}

The fairy came in haste at the Queen's summons, and when she found what was required of her, her little eyes sparkled with malice.

"This is indeed a matter to my own taste," said she. "I will tell you how to set a task for the Princess that she cannot possibly accomplish. Then, when she fails, you can say she is disobedient and obstinate, and this will give you an excuse for breaking every bone in her body."

The advice delighted Grognon. "Quick!" said she. "Tell me what I am to do, for I can hardly wait to rid myself of this creature."

The fairy then drew from an enormous pocket in her gown a great mass of tangled threads of silk. They were of all colors of the rainbow, and each thread was so twisted in with the others that there seemed neither beginning nor end to it and yet was so fine that one could scarcely breathe upon it without breaking it.

"Take this silk to Graciosa," said the fairy, "and tell her that before to-morrow she must separate^{78} the different colors from each other and wind them into skeins, each color to itself, and that not a single thread of them must be broken. This she will find it impossible to do, and when you visit her to-morrow and find that she has failed, it will give you an excuse to punish her as you see fit."

This advice delighted the Queen. She took the skeins and hastened away to the place where she had had Graciosa imprisoned. The Princess was weeping and looked so beautiful in her tears that any heart less hard than Grognon's would have pitied her. But her beauty only increased the Queen's fury against her.

"Come, lazybones!" cried the Queen. "Here is something to give work to your idle fingers. Take these silks and separate them from each other, winding each color into a skein by itself. See that not a thread of it is broken, and do you have the task done before to-morrow, or else you shall suffer for it."

"Alas, Madam!" cried the poor Princess. "You know that this is an impossible thing to do."^{79}

"That is your concern," cried Grognon harshly. "But this I will tell you; if you are too lazy and obstinate to do as I bid you, it is only right and proper that you should be punished."

So saying, she gave Graciosa a push so violent that it almost threw her upon the floor and went on out, locking the door behind her.

Left alone, Graciosa took up the mass of silk and with careful fingers began to try to separate the strands, but hardly could she touch them before they broke, and she soon found the task was indeed impossible.

In despair she threw aside the silks and burst into tears.

"Alas! Alas! My sorrows are well deserved," wept the poor Princess. "Had I but listened to Percinet and to the fairy's warnings, I might even now be safe and happy in her palace with Percinet for my companion."

Hardly had she spoken thus when the Prince himself stood before her.

"Ah, Graciosa," said he, "are you perhaps beginning to learn at last the worth of my affection? You have indeed brought this sorrow on yourself, but I love you too dearly to be willing to see you suffer."^{80}

He then struck the silk three times with a silver wand he carried. Immediately the tangles and knots were smoothed away, the different colors separated themselves one from another, and broken ends rejoined. In less time than it takes to tell, the task was done, and the different silks lay smoothly wound and side by side upon the table.

Graciosa hardly knew how to thank Percinet.

“Do not thank me,” said the Prince gravely. “I wish no thanks from you. You know how dearly I love you, and I, on my part, am sure that now you also love me. Come away with me from all these fears and sufferings and live with me in the palace my mother is eager to provide for us.”

But Graciosa could not yet make up her mind to marry one who was half a fairy.

“Ah, Percinet, forgive me!” she cried. “I know that you love me, but you are a fairy and I am a mortal, and I fear your love for me may not be lasting. Let us wait and see whether the Queen’s heart may not soften toward me. Perhaps she has only set me this task as a trial of my patience and does not really intend evil to me.”^{81}

“In other words, you trust to her cruelty rather than to my tenderness,” cried the Prince with some anger. “So be it. But at least I have saved you from a beating.”

Thus saying, he disappeared, and the Princess was left alone.

Early the next morning Grognon hastened to Graciosa’s prison. Already she was planning what was the most cruel punishment she could give the Princess, for she had no other thought but that Graciosa would have found the task impossible.

What was her amazement to see, when she opened the door, that all the silks had been separated and wound into skeins, and that they lay upon the table so beautifully arranged that to see them was like looking upon a rainbow.

Graciosa met her with a smile. “Madam, I have done your bidding,” said she, “and the silks are ready for you, as you can see.”

Grognon could think of no reply to make. She snatched up the silks and left the room, casting upon Graciosa a look so furious and so malignant that the poor girl trembled.

No sooner had Grognon reached her own chamber than she sent for the wicked fairy and at once began to reproach her for setting such an easy task for the Princess.

The fairy frowned and shook her head. “I do not understand it,” she said. “Some magic power must be helping Graciosa, for never could mortal fingers have separated the skeins after I had tangled them. However, I will set her another task even harder than the first, and which I am very sure will put her in your power.”

The fairy then caused a great tub to appear, and it was full of the feathers of hundreds and hundreds of different birds.

“Give her these feathers to separate,” said the fairy. “Tell her that the feathers of each kind of bird must be put by themselves, and all must be separated by the earliest break of day to-morrow. She will certainly find it impossible to do this task, and you will then have her in your power.”^{83}

At this advice all of Grognon’s anger disappeared and she thanked the fairy smilingly. She called for two of her attendants and bade them carry the feathers to the room where Graciosa was kept prisoner, and she herself also went there.

The poor Princess was terrified when she saw Grognon appear once more, for she knew it could only mean some new trouble for her.

The tub was set upon the floor, and Grognon motioned Graciosa to it. “Idle one,” she cried, “here is something that will keep you busy for a few hours at least. Your task is to separate these feathers, putting the ones that belong to each kind of bird by themselves, and see that they are all separated by morning, or woe betide you.”

She then left the room, taking the attendants with her and locking and double-locking the door behind her.

As soon as Graciosa examined the tub of feathers, she knew the task to be hopeless, but nevertheless she sat down and made some attempt to separate the feathers; but she did not even know which ones belonged together,^{84} and there were, besides, thousands and thousands of them.

In despair she threw them back again into the tub, and burst into tears. “What will become of me?” she sobbed. “Percinet I have offended so deeply that I dare not call upon him for help, and he is the only one who

can aid me. Ah, how ungrateful I have been! I would that that noble Prince were here that I might ask for his pardon before the Queen destroys me.”

“I *am* here, beautiful Graciosa! And not only ready but eager to help you. Do not fear. This task the Queen has set you is not as impossible as you seem to think it.”

It was Percinet who spoke. He had appeared before her, handsome and graceful as ever. He now approached the tub of feathers and touched it with the silver wand which he carried.

No sooner had he done this than the feathers arose in a many-colored cloud, and each kind, separating itself from the others, gathered in a little heap by itself.

Graciosa hardly knew how to thank the Prince.

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“I desire no gratitude, but love only,” exclaimed Percinet. “Has not this taught you that as long as you are in the Queen’s power there is no safety for you? Oh, Graciosa, delay no longer. Come with me to my mother, and let us tell her you have consented to our marriage.”

But Graciosa could not yet make up her mind to trust him. “Dear Percinet,” she said, weeping, “do not think me ungrateful, but how can I, a mortal maiden, ever mate with one who is half a fairy? No, no. We could never be happy. Be to me a friend, as I will be to you, but do not ask me to marry you.”

Percinet was deeply offended; he could not help showing his resentment.

“Farewell, proud Princess,” he said to her. “You say you are not ungrateful, and yet with every word you show your lack of trust in me. Heaven send that you may not suffer for the scorn you show me.”

So saying, Percinet again disappeared, leaving the Princess alone and weeping.

The next day, at earliest dawn, Grognon hastened to Graciosa’s prison, and nothing could be greater ^{86} than was her wonder and fury when she found the feathers separated and each kind lying neatly by itself.

Her rage was so great that she could not forbear from shaking Graciosa till the poor Princess’s teeth rattled in her head, giving, as an excuse, that the feathers were not laid evenly.

She then went away in a rage to her own room, and calling the fairy to her, she scolded her at such a rate that her voice could be heard all over the castle.

The fairy was confounded when she found this second task had also been accomplished, and, it seemed, as easily and quickly as the first.

“It is some magic,” she repeated. “Some one is helping her who is as powerful as I—perhaps even more so. But this is not the end of the matter. You shall still have a chance to punish the Princess at your pleasure. I have here a box. Give it to Graciosa, and bid her carry it to your castle, and leave it in a certain cabinet in the hall, but not by any means to open it on the way. Her curiosity will prove too much for her, she will think it no harm ^{87} to peep into the box after she is out of sight and if she once opens it, she will find it impossible to close the lid on its contents and you can then punish her for her disobedience.”

The fairy at once disappeared, and Grognon sent for the Princess to come before her.

Graciosa obeyed the summons, wondering what new sorrow was to come upon her, but to her surprise the Queen met her with a smiling face. “My dear Graciosa,” said she, “I have here a box which I wish to send to my palace, and what is within it is so precious and wonderful that I do not dare to trust it to any one but you. It is not locked, and there is no key to it, but do not open it on your way, whatever you do. Place it upon the central cabinet in the main hall, and then return to me in haste, that you may assure me that you have carried it there in safety.”

Graciosa at once hastened to her room for a cloak, which she threw about her. She took the box that the Queen handed to her, and holding it in such a way that the folds of the cloak hid it, she set out upon her journey ^{88}.

The Queen looked after her with an evil smile.

“This time she shall not escape me,” she muttered. “Never will she be able to withstand her wish to see what it is that the box holds.”

Graciosa, indeed, was very curious. As she hastened along, clasping the box to her, she wondered more and more what could possibly be in it that was so precious that the Queen dared not trust it to any one but herself. The way was long, and the Princess was unused to walking, and so at last when she came to a green meadow with a brook flowing through it, she sat down to rest. As she sat there, she became so tormented by curiosity as

to what was in the box, that at last she determined to raise the lid very carefully just a hair's breadth, and take one look within.

But scarcely had her fingers touched the lid when it flew open in her hands, and out from the box there streamed a host of little people. There were lords and ladies in fine clothes, and workmen, who at once set about putting up silken tents as a shelter from the sun. There were tiny coaches of gold, drawn by horses even smaller,^{89} and driven by coachmen with powdered wigs, and there were little footmen sitting beside them. There were cooks, who directed tiny scullions to build up fires and at once set about preparing a grand feast. Tables were spread, and small musicians began to play gay music to which the fine folk danced.

It was all so wonderful and pretty that Graciosa watched them, smiling, and with the greatest delight, quite forgetting that she had disobeyed the strict orders of the Queen, and that she would suffer for it.

Suddenly a cloud came over the sun, and a few drops of rain fell.

This brought Graciosa to herself. Laying down the box, she ran over to the tent where the little lords and ladies had taken shelter, and tried to gather them up so as to return them to the box again. But this they would not have. As soon as they found she intended to catch them, they ran away and hid themselves among the tufts of grasses and back of stones. Soon they had all disappeared. Not one of them was to be seen, though Graciosa looked for them all about.^{90}

She was now so frightened that she was like one distracted. She ran about the meadow, calling to the little people to return, and at last, quite worn out with her exertions, she fell upon the ground and burst into tears.

"Ah, Percinet, you will be well revenged," she sobbed. "Whatever will become of the poor Graciosa, and how shall I ever withstand the rage of the cruel Grognon?"

Suddenly she heard a deep sigh, and looking up, she saw that Percinet was standing beside her. Seeing him there, she could not restrain a cry of joy, but the Prince gazed upon her with a sad and sorrowful look.

"Ah, Graciosa, would you ever remember me," he asked, "if it were not for the cruel Grognon?"

Graciosa, ashamed, did not dare to raise her eyes to his.

"Cruelly as you have treated me," said Percinet, "I cannot leave you to suffer."

With these words he struck three times upon the lid of the box. At once, as though this were a signal, the little people came running out from their hiding places, and, as though each one wished to be the first,^{91} they hastened back into the box, pushing and hustling each other in their hurry. The workmen hastily folded the tents, the cook and his scullions gathered up their cooking utensils, the coachmen cracked their whips and shouted to their horses. Back into the box they crowded, the box closed of itself, and the meadow lay green and deserted in the sunlight.

Graciosa would have thanked Percinet, but when she turned to speak to him, he was gone.

"Alas, he is so angry I fear he no longer loves me," sighed Graciosa, "while I have at last learned both to love and trust him. If he had but asked me again to return with him to the fairy palace, how gladly I would have agreed!"

Sadly the Princess again set out for Grognon's castle, and in due time arrived there without having had any more adventures, and placed the box in the cabinet in the main hall as the Queen had directed.

When Grognon found that again Graciosa had accomplished her task, and so escaped punishment, her ^{92}rage was so great that she was like one who has suddenly gone crazy. She sent for the fairy, and as soon as she appeared, the Queen flew at her with teeth and nails.

"Miserable creature!" she shrieked. "You have deceived me. Three times you have promised to put Graciosa in my power. And what has happened? Every time she has accomplished the tasks and met me smiling. Begone, or I will tear you limb from limb."

Powerful as the fairy was, she was frightened by the fierceness of Grognon. She made haste to take herself out of the way and fled back to her castle, glad to have escaped with her life.

Grognon now made up her mind to take matters again into her own hands. She caused a deep pit to be dug in the garden, too deep for any one who fell into it to have any chance of escaping. Over this a great stone was rolled, so that the mouth of the pit was hidden.

The Queen then sent for Graciosa to come and walk with her in the garden. She also took several attendants with her.

Though Grognon met Graciosa with a smile and seemed to have forgotten all her rage against her,^{93} the Princess was very uneasy. She feared the Queen's plots and felt sure that some new evil was being planned against her, but she did not know from what direction the danger would come.

As they walked along, the Queen so arranged it that presently they came to the place where the great stone was lying. Grognon pointed it out to Graciosa. "I am told," said she, "that a great treasure lies hidden under that stone. We will roll it away and see whether those who told me of it have spoken the truth."

She then bade her attendants push the stone aside, and Graciosa, who was very good-natured, put her hands against the stone, and pushed, also.

This was exactly what Grognon wished. She crept up back of Graciosa, and as soon as the pit was uncovered, she pushed the Princess so that she fell down into it, and the stone was then allowed to fall back into its place.

At last the Queen was satisfied. She felt very sure that Graciosa could not escape from the pit, herself,^{94} and Grognon would see to it that no one went there to help her. She returned to the palace well pleased with her morning's work.

As for Graciosa, she was in despair. "Alas, Percinet! Why did I not listen to you?" she wept. "Would that I might see you but once more before I perish, that I might tell you that at last I know the worth of all your love and devotion."

Suddenly, as she thus bemoaned herself, Graciosa saw, in the side of the pit a little door which she had not noticed before. She opened it, and to her joy and amazement saw before her the same avenue of many-colored stones which she had followed when she was lost in the forest, and there, at the end of the avenue, was the shining castle that she knew as the one belonging to Finetta.

With a beating heart, Graciosa hurried along the avenue, and as she drew near the castle, the doors opened to her of their own accord, and standing within she saw the Fairy Finetta and Percinet.

They looked upon her smiling, and Finetta said, "So you have at last returned to us, Graciosa, and I ^{95}hope with wisdom enough to value the love that Percinet still feels for you."

"Indeed, Madam," said the Princess, blushing, "my love is as great as that of Percinet himself, and my trust in him is as unbounded."

With a cry of joy Percinet clasped her in his arms, while the fairy stood and smiled upon them.

There was no reason now why they should not be married at once, and fairies were bidden from far and near to come to the ceremony, which was celebrated with the greatest magnificence.

Among those who came was the fairy who had helped Grognon in her schemes against Graciosa. When she heard the story of the Princess and knew that she had all this time been under the protection of Prince Percinet, she became furious against Grognon. At once she mounted her chariot drawn by dragons, and flew to the palace of the King. Seeking Grognon out, she strangled her with a strand of the very silk that had been given to Graciosa, and so quick the fairy was about it that none of the courtiers had time to interfere.^{96}

As for the Princess and Percinet, they lived happy forever after, in a magnificent palace of their own which Finetta provided for them, but she would never allow Graciosa to return even for a visit to the King who had treated her so cruelly.^{97}

THE GIANT'S CLIFF

AN IRISH STORY

THERE was once a giant in Ireland, and his name was Mahon McMahon and he lived inside the cliffs that rose up straight from the sea. No one had ever seen door or window in the cliffs, and no one knew how the giant got in or out, but still it was said that he lived there, and there were those who told of how they had heard a strange sound of beating and the ringing of metal sounding from within, and had seen smoke rising up from the crevices.

Back from the sea, but yet not so very far from the cliffs, there was a fine big house, and a man by the name of Thomas Renardy lived in it. He was a married man, and he and his wife had one son, a pretty little boy named

Philip, and he was the joy of their life and the light of their eyes.

With every year the boy grew handsomer and finer, till he was the admiration of all who saw him. All day he played about in the sun and the wind, and when his mother called him in to meals he came, and as soon ^{98} as he had finished he was out again.

So he grew till he was seven years old, and then one day his mother called him, but he did not come. She hunted him high, and she hunted him low, but nowhere could she find him. Then the neighbors joined in the search. They were out hallooing over the hills and through the forest, and over by the cliffs where the sea beats high, but there was no answer to their calling, nor did they see aught of him, and his mother was left sorrowing.

A sad and smileless woman was she after that, and months rolled up into years, until the years were seven; and at the end of that time her grief for him was as green as at the beginning.

Now there was a blacksmith in that country who was a great reader of dreams. People came from far and near to tell him their dreams and to ask the meaning of them.

The name of the blacksmith was Robert Kelly, and he was a great hand at the forge.

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One night the blacksmith had a dream of his own, and a curious dream it was.

He dreamed a little lad came riding up on a great white horse. He was a handsome little fellow, with yellow hair and blue eyes, and Robert took him, from his size and looks, to be about seven years old, but at the same time there was something curious about him that made the blacksmith think he might be older.

“Robert Kelly, do you remember me?” asked the lad.

“I can’t say that I do,” answered the blacksmith, “and yet there’s something about you that makes me feel I may have seen you before.”

“Then have you forgotten Phil Renardy that was lost away seven long years ago?”

Now the blacksmith knew of whom the boy had reminded him. It was of that little lost lad of the Renardys.

“But that was seven long years ago, as you said,” replied the blacksmith, “and by this time Phil would be about fourteen years old. You will never be him.”

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“Nevertheless I am,” said the boy. “It was the giant Mahon McMahon that stole me away seven years ago when I was playing near the cliffs, and I have been living with him and serving him ever since, and in the halls of the giant we who serve him never grow old, but stay as we were when he first brought us there.”

Now all the while the blacksmith knew he was asleep, and he thought this dream of his was the strangest dream he had ever heard of.

“Now I will tell you why I have come here,” the boy went on; and he told Kelly how the very next night the seven years of his service were up. “Every seven years,” said he, “the giant’s door stands open from the stroke of midnight till cock’s crow the next morning. There is only one way to get to his door, and that is by way of the sea.”

The lad then begged and implored the blacksmith to get a boat and row out to the cliff the next night, and to wait there until midnight, when the house opened. The blacksmith was then to seek through it until he found ^{101} the lad and then he was to bring him away with him.

“And to-morrow, when my first seven years of service is up, is the only time you can do it,” said he. “If you will not, then I can never escape, but must stay there in service to the giant for always.”

Then Kelly, who still knew he was asleep, said, “But after all, this is all in a dream, and when I waken I’ll think there’s no meaning to it.”

“Then I’ll give you a token to prove to you that this is no common dreaming,” said Philip.

With that he turned his horse about, and the horse lashed out at the blacksmith with his hind leg, and the hoof struck him on the forehead with such force that it seemed as though his head would be crushed in.

The blacksmith cried out with the blow and woke to find the blood streaming down his face, and when he had wiped it away and was able to examine his forehead, there was the mark of a horseshoe on it.

Robert said nothing to any one about his dream, not even when they saw the mark on his forehead ^{102} and wondered about it, so they thought that in some way when he was shoeing a horse it must have managed to kick him. But that night he went secretly to a friend of his who had a boat and asked him whether he would row him out in front of the cliffs just before midnight.

The friend was loth to do it, for he had small liking for going out at night on the sea and to a place that was but ill thought of; for there were all these tales about sounds that had been heard from inside the cliff and that they might be made by Mahon McMahon.

However, in the end Robert persuaded him, and a little before midnight they set out. There was enough moonlight for them to see the way to go, and as they rowed toward the cliffs, Robert told his friend, for the first time, why he was coming there and what he hoped to do.

“And whether it was a dream or no I can’t tell you,” said he, “for I was sleeping, and yet here, all the same, is the mark of the horse’s hoof on my forehead.”^{103}

Well, the friend thought it a strange tale. “And it’s hard to believe there’s any truth in it,” said he; “but here we are in front of the cliffs, and this night will prove the worth of your dreaming.”

He held the boat there in front of the rocks with his oars, and the minutes slipped by, and neither of the men spoke, and everything was silent. Then from far away, and faintly, they heard the village clock strike twelve.

Again they waited, and then suddenly and without a sound the front of the cliff opened, and they saw a portico down almost on a level with the water, and a great door opening out upon it. Inside the door were steps cut in the rock and leading up and out of sight. A light shone out through the door and across the water, but it was not very bright.

“Here is where I chance it,” said the blacksmith. “Row me up close so that I may step out on the portico, for according to my dream, it’s in there I must go if I am to find little Philip Renardy.”

The whole matter was so strange that his friend tried to dissuade him from going, but the blacksmith would not listen to him.^{104}

“I’ve a sign from him on my forehead,” he said, “and go I must and will. Do you wait here for me till cock’s crow, and if I haven’t come by then, there’s no use in your waiting longer.”

His friend rowed him up close to the edge of the portico, and the blacksmith climbed out on it, and watchfully he crept over to the door and peered in. Everything was still, and he saw nothing but the steps leading upward, and they were so high, each one of them, that it was as much as he could do to climb them.

He carried a plowshare that he had brought with him from his smithy, for somehow he thought a plowshare might be a good weapon if he needed one. And anyhow, it gave him some sort of a feeling of courage to have hold of it.

He climbed the steps, one after another, and that took him some time, and then he came into a great hall, and in the center of it was a table hewn out of rock.^{105}

Around this table sat seven giants. They sat there bending forward as though they were consulting with each other, but none of them moved or spoke, or even so much as winked an eyelid. They might have been carven figures, for all the signs of life they gave.

At the head of the table sat a giant with a long beard, and he had been sitting there so long that his beard had grown into the slab of rock that was the top of the table.

Robert Kelly stood there looking at them for a while, and then, as none of them took any notice of him, he called in a loud voice, “Is any one among you named Mahon McMahon?”

At that the giant at the head of the table started up so suddenly that the pulling out of his beard split the rock of the table into pieces, but none of the others stirred nor looked at him.

“I am Mahon McMahon,” cried the giant. “And what do you come seeking me for?”

“I have come here in search of little Phil Renardy,” cried the blacksmith boldly, “and I have been told^{106} that you are the one who can tell me where to find him.”

The giant looked at him in silence for a bit, and then he said, “Yes, I can tell you where to find him, and better than that, I can even show you where he is.”

He then led the way into a great stone chamber on beyond the hall, and it was glowing with fires, and there in it were a great number of young lads. It seemed to the blacksmith that there were hundreds of them, and they were all busy at some kind or other of metal work.

When Mahon McMahon came in, they stopped their work and stood back against the wall, and the blacksmith saw that not one among them looked to be more than seven years old, and they were all so much alike that they might have been brothers.

"If you are a friend of Phil Renardy, no doubt you can choose him from all others," said the giant. "And now look about you, and if you can tell me at the first telling which is he, then you may take him away with you, and no harm to any one. But if you cannot tell me, then it was an ill hour for you when you entered my house,^{107} for you'll never go out again."

This frightened the blacksmith, but still he kept his wits about him and looked carefully from one lad to the other, but for the life of him he could not tell of a surety which was Phil Renardy, for he had no clear remembrance of him.

In order to gain time he said to the giant, "And are all these fine lads servants of yours?"

"They are," replied Mahon McMahon, "and it has taken me a long time to gather them together."

"You must be a good master," went on Robert Kelly, "for they all look rosy and in good condition, and I'm sure you treat them well, and they must be fond of you." He thought by talking in this way he might flatter the giant and put him in a good humor.

"That is a true word you have spoken," said the giant, "and I'm sure you must be an honest man, so let us shake hands upon it."

He held out his hand to the blacksmith, but when Bob Kelly looked at it, it was so thick and broad and ^{108}crude looking that he was afraid to trust his own hand to it. "For if he were to take the fancy," thought Bob, "he could crush it as easily as I could crush a rotten potato." So, instead of putting his hand into the giant's, he put the plowshare in it, and the giant shut his fingers tight on it, so that it crumpled up as though the iron had no more strength in it than a piece of paper.

"Praises be it was not my hand he was squeezing," thought Robert Kelly.

"You have a strong hand," said the giant, "but you need a stronger than that if you're to shake hands with Mahon McMahon."

Then all the little lads burst into laughter, but through their laughter he thought he heard some one sighing, "Robert Kelly! Robert Kelly! I am here behind you."

He turned about quickly, and there behind him was one lad among them who was not laughing. And like a flash the blacksmith seized hold of him and cried out, "This is Phil Renardy, and the one I would take with me."^{109}

"Bad cess to you!" cried the giant, "but you've chosen rightly."

Then all grew dark, but Robert Kelly kept tight hold of the boy he had chosen, and he could hear many voices about him, crying, "Happy Philip Renardy! Happy Philip Renardy!"

The next he knew the sun was shining, and he was lying on the grass at the top of the cliff, and the little lad was watching beside him.

"And are you of a truth the little Philip Renardy that's been lost for so long?" asked Kelly.

"I am that one," replied the lad, "and it is you that have saved me; and now let us be up and off, for my heart is aching within me for a sight of my mother."

So the blacksmith rose up, and took the little lad's hand and led him to the big house of the Renardys, and the lad seemed to know the way better than he did. And no sooner did Mrs. Renardy see him than she knew the lad as her son and was like to have gone distracted with the joy of it. That was a comfort to Bob Kelly, too,^{110} for all the time he had kept wondering whether by chance he might not have brought back the wrong boy with him.

When he at last left them and went back to his smithy, he found quite a crowd gathered there, talking about him, for when he hadn't come back to the boat his friend had made sure the cliff had closed on him, and that mortal eye would never again behold him.

But when the people who had gathered heard his tale, there was great rejoicing, and all the bells of the village were rung, and a great crowd hurried away to the Renardy's house, to get a glimpse of the boy who had been stolen by the giant.

Soon after his return, the boy began to grow again, but he never became very big, and there was always something a bit strange about him, though after a while he married and had children of his own who were fine stout fellows, and all of them were wonderful workers in metals.

As for Robert Kelly, his adventures were the making of him, for people came from everywhere to have^{111} him do their work for them, so as to have a chance to hear him tell his story. Moreover, Philip taught him some of the secrets of working with metal that he had learned in the giant's house, so that he became quite famous.

But the giant was never heard of again, and no more sounds came from within the cliff house, so it was supposed that he had left that part of the country and chosen some other place as his dwelling. {112}

THE STORY OF CONN-EDA

AN IRISH TALE

KING CONN of Ireland had one noble son named Conn-eda, and he was as dear to his father as the apple of his eye,—none dearer.

His mother had died while he was still a child, and after a while the King, his father, married again. He married the young daughter of his chief priest, but he did not marry her because he loved her, and that is the truth. He married her because his councilors told him that it was a wise thing for him to do, for this chief priest was very powerful.

The new Queen was a cruel woman, and her hatred of Conn-eda was bitter and deep. She hated him because he was so handsome and free-hearted, and she hated him because he was so dear to his father, but most of all she hated him because every one looked to him as the one who would sometime be their king, and there was no knowing how soon that would be, for already his father was old and feeble. {113}

After a while the young Queen had a child of her own, and then she hated Conn-eda worse than ever and was always plotting how she could get rid of him, for she wanted the kingdom to come to her own son.

Now there was a woman who lived down back of the castle in a poor tumble-down hut, and it was said that she knew more than a little about magic, and every one was afraid of her. She was the hen-wife, and had charge of all the chickens that belonged to the castle. She was a handsome woman and a strange one, and no one could tell whether she were young or old, and she might have been either.

One day the Queen went by herself down to the hut to visit the hen-wife, for she wished to ask her advice. She was not ashamed to go, either, because of the woman being an enchantress.

“Queen Durfulla,” said the hen-wife, “I know why you have come to me, and what you are after wanting.”

That surprised the Queen, and she said, “What is it I am wanting, then?”

“You are wanting to rid yourself of young Conn-eda, and it is for my advice you have come hither. But I am not one to give something for nothing. What reward will I have if I give you my advice?” {114}

“What reward will you be wanting?” asked the Queen.

“It’s none so much and none so little. Give me enough wool to fill the hole between my arm and body when I set my hand on my hip with my elbow out, and give me enough red wheat to fill the hole I shall bore with my distaff, and my advice is yours for the asking.”

Well, the Queen could not help smiling at that, for it seemed but a small reward for any one to ask, and she gladly agreed to give it.

“Then have the wool and the wheat brought here to-morrow,” said the hen-wife. “Twenty cartloads of wool, and twenty cartloads of wheat will be none too much to fill the hollow between my arm and body and the hole I’ll make.”

The Queen thought that was a strange thing to say, and that the hen-wife must be dreaming, but all the same she was back at the hen-wife’s door the next day, and close after her came twenty cartloads of wool and twenty {115} cartloads of wheat, with the horses pulling and the carters cracking their whips.

The hen-wife stood in the doorway with her hand on her hip and her elbow out, and the men took an armful of wool and put it in the hollow of her arm, but it fell through the hollow and inside the house. They stuffed another armful in between her arm and body, and the same thing happened to it. Not until the house was so full of wool that it could hold no more were they able to fill the hollow of the hen-wife’s arm as she stood in the doorway.

“And now for the wheat,” said the hen-wife.

Then she led them to her brother’s house which was close by, and climbed up on the roof. The roof was of peat, and she bored a hole down through the peat with her distaff, so that as fast as they poured the wheat into

the hole, it ran down into the house, and not until the house was so full that it could hold no more could they fill the hole, too.

“Now I am satisfied,” said the hen-wife, but that was more than the Queen could say, for she was a ^{116}rich woman. However, if the hen-wife could tell her how to rid herself of Prince Conn-eda, it was more to her than all the wheat and wool that ever were grown.

“Now listen well to what I tell you,” said the hen-wife. “You have paid me faithfully and fully, and I am ready to keep my part of the bargain, too. Far and far enough from here, there lies a great dark lake, and the name of it is Lough Erne. Under its waters lives the King of the Fiborg race, a race that lives in the water most happily. There, in the King’s garden, grow three golden apples. In his stable stands a grand black steed. In his castle lies the puppy-hound Samur, and great are the magic powers of that hound. You must send Conn-eda to get these things for you, and to fetch them back within a year and a day and it’s not a living being who can seek those things and not lose his life in the seeking, unless he has magic to help him.”

“But how can I send Conn-eda?” asked the Queen, “for he is not a child that he must do my bidding.” ^{117}

“That also I will tell you,” replied the hen-wife.

She then brought out a chessboard and chessmen and gave them to the Queen. “Do you take these home with you,” she said, “and call Conn-eda to come and play a game of chess with you. I have set a charm on the men, and I have set a charm on the board, so that you will be sure to win; but before you play you must make a bargain with the Prince that whichever loses shall pay a forfeit to the winner, and the forfeit you shall ask of him is that he fetch to you the three things I have told you of. But be sure that you play only the one game, for after that is played the charm will lose its power.”

The Queen was pleased with the advice the hen-wife gave her, and she took the chessboard and the chessmen and promised to do in all things as she had been told. Then she hastened back to the castle.

No sooner was she there than she sent for Conn-eda to come and have a game of chess, and he came at her command and sat down at the board with her.

“It is not for nothing we will play together this day,” said the Queen, “but whichever loses shall pay a forfeit ^{118}to the other, and the forfeit shall be whatever the winner chooses to demand.”

To this Conn-eda agreed. He had it in his head that the Queen was planning some trick against him, but he did not fear her, for he made sure he could beat her at the game.

So they sat down to play, and Conn-eda was a good player, and the Queen was a poor one, but it seemed as though there were a mist before the Prince’s eyes, and when he thought he had made one play he found he had made another, and presently he saw he had lost the game, and the Queen was the winner.

Then she laughed aloud and pushed the board from her. “The game is mine, Conn-eda,” she cried, “and it is for you to pay the forfeit. Whatever I ask for, that shall you pay, no matter what be the cost.”

When the Prince heard that, his heart was troubled within him, and he said to her, “What is that forfeit that you will demand of me?”

“This is the forfeit,” the Queen replied. “Within a year and a day you shall bring to me three golden apples, ^{119}and a grand black steed, and the magic puppy-hound Samur and they all belong to the King of the Fiborg people. He lives at the bottom of Lough Erne, but where that is I know not, and you must find it for yourself.”

When the Prince Conn-eda heard that, he knew the Queen had indeed tricked him, and the forfeit he was like to pay was that of his life. But he dissembled and hid his fear, and said, “The forfeit I will pay, if it be in mortal power to do so. And now we will play another game, and again it shall be for a forfeit, with the loser to pay it.”

The Queen was so full of triumph that she forgot the warning of the hen-wife and willingly agreed to play once more with Conn-eda.

But now the magic had gone out of the board, and this time the Prince was the winner.

When the Queen found she had lost, her face grew pale, and her heart sank down within her.

“You have won, Conn-eda,” said she. “And what is the forfeit I must pay to you?” ^{120}

“The forfeit is this,” said Conn-eda. “For the year and the day that I am away, you must sit at the top of the highest tower of the castle and eat nothing but as much red wheat as you can pick up with the point of your bodkin.”

That was a hard fate for the Queen, but after all, it would be only for a year and a day, and at the end of that time she would be free again and rid of Prince Conn-eda forever, so the bargain was not so hard as it seemed at first hearing. So the Queen went up and took her place in the high tower, and the Prince mounted his horse and rode out into the world in search of the golden apples, the grand black steed, and the magic puppy-hound Samur.

But first Conn-eda went to a Wise Man he knew, who was a friend of his. Many and many a favor the Prince had done for him, and now it was time to ask one in return.

The Wise Man heard Conn-eda galloping up and came out of the house to meet him, and the Prince lighted down from his horse and greeted him respectfully.

"I am in great trouble," Conn-eda began, "and I have come to you to see if you can help me."

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"That I guessed at once from your face," replied the Wise Man, "and you had best begin at the beginning and tell me the whole story, for it's only after I've heard the whole of it that I'll best know how to help you."

So the Prince began and told the Wise Man the whole matter from beginning to end. He told of the Queen's hatred toward him and of the ways she had tried to injure him; he told of how she had bidden him to play a game of chess with her, and of how he had feared her and yet made no doubt of winning the game; and he told of how in some strange way he had become the loser, and how the Queen had claimed a forfeit from him, and what it was she had claimed.

"And we played still again, and that time it was for her to pay the forfeit"; and he told what the forfeit was that he had demanded of her.

"And it was no more than her just dues," said the Wise Man. "I make no doubt but that the Queen has sought to make you lose your life in this business, and it was a clever brain that thought out this trick. There is some one back of it other than the Queen."

He thought for a while, and then he spoke again. "There is but one person who would have known of the golden apples, the grand black steed, and the magic hound Samur, and that one is the Wise Woman who lives in the hut down back of the palace. She calls herself a hen-wife, but of a truth she is Carlleach of Lough Corib, and the sister of the Water King himself. There are four of the water people, three brothers and one sister. The first is King of the Fiborgs, and the second is under some enchantment. The third lives in a house next to that of the hen-wife, and the fourth is Carlleach herself. And now, my son, I will do what I can to help you. Where Lough Corib is I know not, but out in my stable is a little shaggy black horse. He is not much to look at, but he is great in power. Take him and ride whithersoever he carries you, and leave the rein loose on his neck that he may choose his own way. He will take you to the crag where the Bird of Wisdom sits. Three days in every three years the bird sits there, and it's little that goes on in the world that he does not know about. This is the time for him to be sitting on the crag, and if he will but speak, he can tell you how to set about finding the lake and the Water King's treasures."

The Wise Man then took out a very beautiful and very precious jewel from a box that stood on a shelf behind the door and gave it to Conn-eda.

"If the Bird of Wisdom will not speak," said he, "give him this jewel in his claw, and then it may be that he will answer you."

Conn-eda took the jewel and thanked the Wise Man kindly, and then he went out to the stable and led forth the shaggy little black horse and mounted himself on him, instead of his own fine steed, and indeed the little horse was not much to look at. But no sooner was Conn-eda on his back than he found what a worth-while horse he was, for away he went lighter than a bird and swifter than the wind, and it was like no other riding that Conn-eda had ever done.

A long way and a short way went the shaggy black horse, and all the while Conn-eda let the rein lie loose, so that the horse was free to choose his own way, and then they came within sight of a cliff, and on the cliff sat a great gray bird. It sat so still it might have been a part of the rocks for any motion that it had, and the eyes in its head were as dull as cold, dead stones.

The horse halted before the cliff and bade the Prince speak to the bird. "For it is the Bird of Wisdom of which the Wise Man spoke," said he, "and unless it can tell us what to do next we might as well turn back the way we came for we'll never win to the lake where the King of the Fiborgs lives."

Then Conn-eda lifted up his voice and called to the bird. Three times he called to it, but the bird never stirred even a feather, but sat there still as though it were carved from the rocks.

Then the shaggy steed said, "Give it the jewel, Conn-eda, and perchance it will speak."

The Prince took the jewel from his bosom where he carried it and held it up so that it sparkled in the sunlight, and again he called to the bird; and this time it turned its head and looked at him, and its eyes grew bright as though a fire were lighted within it. Then it flew down and caught the jewel in its claw and flew ^{125} Jack with it to the cliff.

There it sat, and opened its beak, and cried in a harsh voice, "Conn-eda! Conn-eda! Son of the King of Cruachan, I know why you have come and what you would have of me. Light down and lift the stone that is close to the right forefoot of your steed. Under it you will find a ball and a cup. Take them up, for you will have need of both of them. The ball you must roll before you and follow wherever it leads you. It will bring you to the place whither you would go. The cup you will need later."

Then the Bird of Wisdom closed its beak, and the light died out of its eyes, and again it sat as still and gray as though there were no breath of life in it.

Conn-eda lighted down and looked for the stone the bird had told him of, and he could not miss it for the horse's right fore hoof was against it. He lifted it up and there he found a cup and ball. The cup he placed in the bosom of his shirt, but the ball he threw before him, according to the bird's bidding, and on and on it rolled, ^{126} up hill and down dale, over bog and through briars, with Conn-eda on the shaggy steed following hard after it.

After a while it led them to the edge of a lake so dark and deep you might have thought there was no bottom to it, and into this lake the ball bounded and so was lost to sight.

The Prince was in despair. "Now what are we to do?" cried he. "If we follow the ball, we are like to be drowned in the deep waters of the lough, and if we do not follow it, we will never win to the palace of the Water King."

But the shaggy steed bade him take heart. "We must indeed still follow the ball," said he, "but even so it is possible no harm may come to us. And now sit tight, my master." With that the horse plunged into the lough, and down and down through the still cold waters.

Conn-eda sat close, as the steed bade him, and presently they came through the water and out into a land of pleasant meadows and flowing streams. The lake was above them like a sky, with the sun shining down through it, and not a hair of either of them was wet, and the ball was lying there at their feet. ^{127}

"Now Conn-eda, light down," said the steed "and reach your hand first into one of my ears and then into the other. In the one you will find a small wicker basket, and in the other a flask of heal-all water. We will need them both, for now we are drawing near to the dangerous part of the adventure."

The Prince did as he was told and put his hand into the horse's ears, first into one and then into the other. In the one he found the wicker basket and in the other the flask of water. Then he mounted again and off he rode, and the ball that had been lying still all this time rolled before them to show the way, and they followed close after it.

After a bit they came to the end of the meadow and there was a great stretch of water with a causeway leading across it, and along the causeway rolled the ball. But Conn-eda drew rein, and no wonder, for the causeway was guarded by three great fiery serpents. They lay there stretched across and across it, and the smoke ^{128} rose up from their breathing in three great columns, and as the Prince looked at them, his heart melted within him like wax, for they were a fearful sight.

But the shaggy steed bade him take heart. "It's the truth, Conn-eda, that we must pass those fiery serpents," he said. "Backward we cannot go, so forward we must. Now open the basket, and you will find in it three pieces of meat. As I leap over the serpents you must throw one piece into the mouth of each of them. If you do this, we may pass safely over them, and pray that your aim be good, for if you miss the mouth of any of them, it will be death both for you and me."

So Conn-eda opened the lid of the basket and found the pieces of meat and took them out, and the steed set out along the causeway, straight toward where the monsters lay.

As horse and rider came near them, the serpents reared up and opened their fiery jaws, and made at Conn-eda and his steed as though to devour them; but the Prince was ready, and as the steed leaped over them Conn-eda threw a



The serpents reared up and opened their fiery jaws. [Page 128](#)

piece of meat into each of the flaming mouths; not one of them did he miss.

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At once the serpents were satisfied, and their heads sank down, and they lay as though asleep.

But the steed alighted on the causeway far beyond them, and Conn-eda's hands held lightly to the reins.

"Conn-eda, are you still astride of me?"

"I am," answered the Prince, "and none the worse for the danger we passed over."

"Now it comes to me that you are a noble and heroic Prince," said the steed, "and I have high hopes that we may win through all our adventures with great reward to both of us at the end of them."

Then on they went, and on they went until they came to a flaming mountain, and the heat of it was very great.

"Are you sitting firm on my back?" asked the shaggy black horse.

"I am sitting firm," replied the Prince.

"Then stir not. Look neither to the right nor left, nor up nor down, for I am going to leap over the mountain, and if my leap is broken by so much as a hairbreadth, we will both fall into the flames, and that will be the ^{130}end of us."

When Conn-eda heard this, fear seemed to clutch at the very heart of him, but he settled himself in the saddle, and when the horse leaped, he kept in mind what had been said to him, and looked neither to the right

hand nor the left, nor up nor down, nor stirred so much as a hairbreadth in his seat.

The good steed carried him over, but they were not so high above the mountain but what the flames came up and licked Conn-eda's feet and his clothing.

"Are you still alive, Conn-eda?" asked the steed, when they alighted upon the other side of it.

"I am just alive, and no more," replied Conn-eda, "for I am greatly scorched."

"That is both well and ill," said the horse. "Well that you are still alive, and ill that you are so sore burned. Take the flask and rub some of the heal-all that is in it on your burns, and they will pass away."

This Conn-eda did, and at once his burns disappeared as though they had never been there, and his flesh^{131} and skin were all well and sound again.

"The worst of our dangers are over now," said the shaggy black horse, "but other things are still to be done that you may find hard in the doing. Now mount and ride again, and I can tell you we are not far from the palace of the Water King, whither we would be going."

Conn-eda mounted again, and on they rode and fast they went, and then they came within sight of a castle, with shining domes and turrets, and great golden gateways.

Here the shaggy steed bade the Prince again light down.

"Now, Conn-eda, listen well and answer truly," said the steed, "for on what happens next hangs both your fate and my own. So now tell me of a truth, have I served you well?"

"None could have served better," replied the Prince.

"Have I saved your life, or have I risked it?"

"You have saved it, and except for you I would have lost it far back on the road."

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"And now the time has come to prove whether or no you are grateful. Put your hand in my ear and take out the dagger you will find there. Fear not and shrink not, but drive it into my heart, for thus and thus only can you reward me for what I have done for you."

When the Prince heard these words from the steed, he was filled with horror. "Never, never will I do such a cruel and wicked thing," he cried. "Rather would I drive the dagger into my own heart than into yours."

"If you will not, you will not," said the shaggy black horse, "but this I tell you plainly; except you do this thing, both you and I must perish."

Well, the steed talked on and on, and at last Conn-eda consented to do as he was asked, though it seemed to him his hand must wither in the doing.

"That is well," cried the steed, as soon as he had consented. "And now I will tell you what further you must do. As soon as you have driven the dagger into me, strip off my hide, and get into it yourself. You will then be free to go in and out of the castle as you please, though otherwise you would be slain by the people there^{133} the moment you entered. Go through the golden gateway in the center, and the first thing you will see is a leaping silver fountain. Fill the cup you found beneath the stone with this water and bring it back and sprinkle the water over me. Then all will be well. But oh, Conn-eda, haste in your going and coming, for as soon as you have left me, the birds of prey will gather about me, and if they tear me to pieces, there will be no further help for me."

Conn-eda promised to do in all things as the steed bade him, and he then put his hand in its ear and found the dagger it had told him about. But he trembled so that he had scarce strength to even so much as point the dagger at the steed, let alone strike him. But this was all that was needed, for as soon as the dagger was turned toward him, it flew forward, carrying Conn-eda's hand with it, and buried itself to the hilt in the steed's heart, so that he fell dead.

Then the Prince wept bitter tears over his dead companion. After awhile he arose and took the dagger to strip off the hide as he had promised; but there was no need of cutting, for no sooner did he catch hold of the hide than it came off like a loose glove from the hand within it, and the hide was as soft and fine as though it had been tanned by the king of tanners.

Conn-eda got into the hide, and then he did not stay nor tarry but hastened away to the castle, as the steed had bidden him, and in through the golden gateway.

There within was a great hall with many people moving about in it, and warders at the door, but no one spoke to him nor stayed him. In the center of the hall was the leaping silver fountain of which the steed had told

him, and to this the Prince hastened and he filled his cup with its water, and then back he ran the way he had come, to where the steed was lying.

But swift as had been his going and coming, he was only just in time, for already the birds of prey were gathering, and he had to fight them with his sword before he could drive them away.

Then he sprinkled the water from the cup upon the body of the steed, and no sooner had he done this than a strange thing happened, for at once the steed was gone, and there in its place stood a young and handsome^{135} prince, and he was so tall and so noble in his air that Conn-eda had never seen the like of him.

The young man came over to Conn-eda and took him in his arms, and his face was streaming with tears, but they were tears of joy.

“Conn-eda,” said he, “you have saved me from a hard and cruel fate, and little did I think I would ever come back into my own shape again and live as other men do. I am own brother to the Water King, and it was because of a cruel enchantment that I was obliged to go about in the shape of a shaggy little black horse.

“The enchantment held me fast, and only if one would ride me back to the castle and through true love would slay me and sprinkle me with water from the fountain, could the spell be broken.

“This you have done for me, Conn-eda, and never will I forget what I owe you. And now come with me back to the castle of my brother, that he may make you welcome.”

So Conn-eda and his companion went back to the castle, and there the joy was so great that it was beyond^{136} all telling, because the enchantment had been broken, and the young Prince had come back to his own again.

The Water King made Conn-eda welcome and gladly promised him the golden apples, the grand black steed and the magic hound Samur. Nothing would he have refused Conn-eda because he had saved his brother from his enchantment.

A great feast was prepared, and there was shouting and rejoicing, and the Water King begged of Conn-eda that he would stay there till the time given him for his searching was near an end.

To this the Prince gladly agreed, and he lingered there with the Water King and his brother until a year and a day had almost passed, and then he set off for his father’s kingdom. He rode the grand black steed, and in his bosom he bore the golden apples, and the magic hound Samur ran beside him. So he rode; and now the way was clear with nothing to stop nor stay him. Thus he came again to his home, and there, on the high tower, the wicked queen was still sitting, feeding on red wheat, that she took up on the point of her bodkin.^{137}

But though the living was lean, her heart rejoiced within her, for she made no doubt but what the Prince Conn-eda was dead, and her own son would reign in the kingdom. And then, on the last day of her forfeit, she looked out from the tower where she was sitting, and there came Conn-eda riding the black steed, and with the hound beside him, and she guessed well that he had also the apples with him.

Then her rage and fear were so great that she threw herself down from the tower and so perished miserably.

But Conn-eda sent for the hen-wife, who was a Princess, and when he saw her she was so handsome and so stately, and withal so tender, that his heart went out to her, and he wished for nothing so much as to have her for a wife.

To this she consented, and they were married with great magnificence. The Water King and his brother came to the wedding, and the third Prince, who had been living near her, was given a high position in the court, and so they all lived in great love and happiness forever.^{138}

THE BLUE BELT

A NORSE TALE

A BEGGAR woman and her son were walking along through the country, and they came to a crossroad, and there, right in the dust of the road, lay a handsome belt of blue leather.

The lad asked his mother’s leave to pick it up and wear it.

“Let it alone,” said the woman crossly. “For all we know, there may be some magic about it. Indeed, I am almost sure there is, for I don’t like the looks of it.”

The lad begged and pleaded to be allowed to pick it up, but the old woman would not hear to it, and so in the end he was obliged to go on without it. But all the same, as they trudged along, he kept thinking and thinking about the belt, and the farther they went the more he wished he had it.

After a while they came to where the road led through a forest, and the lad made some excuse to step ^{139}aside for a moment. He slipped along from one tree to another until he was out of his mother's sight; and then he ran back to where the blue belt was lying. He picked it up and buckled it around him under his shirt where it could not be seen.

No sooner had he done this, than he felt as though the strength of ten men had passed into him. It seemed to him as though he could tear up trees by the roots if he chose, or carry a mountain on his shoulders and think nothing of it.

When he came back, his mother was in a fine rage. "I ought to beat you for keeping me waiting all this time," she cried, "and I would do it, too, if I were not so tired. Wherever we're to sleep I'm sure I don't know, for it's too late now to get on to the next village."

The boy answered nothing, but he trudged along at his mother's side, and all the while he was feeling stronger and stronger.

After a while the old woman said she was tired, and she would have to sit down and rest a bit.

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The lad asked leave to go to the top of a cliff close by, so as to look about and see whether he could not see a house somewhere near.

"Go if you choose," said his mother, "but if you stay away as you did before, I'll give you a good beating when you get back, however tired I am."

The lad ran quickly to the top of the cliff and looked about him, and there, sure enough, off toward the North, he saw the light of a house, and it was not so very far away, either.

He ran down and told his mother what he had seen. "Mother, let us go there and ask for a bite to eat, for if we don't, we'll have to go hungry till to-morrow," he cried. "And maybe the people who live there will let us spend the night there, too."

The mother began to groan and lament. "Never in the world could I climb up that cliff and over," said she. "I'm so tired I can scarce put one foot before the other, and that's the truth of the matter."

"Never bemoan yourself about that," cried the lad, "for I'll carry you over"; and so saying, he caught her ^{141}up as though she weighed no more than a feather, and ran up the cliff and over, and down on the other side with her; and when he put her down he was not even breathing fast from carrying her.

"You've grown to be a strong, stout lad, and there's no doubt about that," said his mother.

After that they went along again until they came to the house with the light in it, and when they got up close to it, the mother began to shake and tremble.

"Come away! Come away!" said she. "This is a Troll's house, and it would be a bad thing for us if he were to get hold of us."

But the lad was not one whit afraid. He knocked at the door, and then, before any one could answer the knock, he opened the door and stepped inside, dragging his mother with him.

There, on a great settle by the fire, sat a man at least twenty feet high, and it was easy enough to tell by the look of him that he was a Troll.

The mother almost fainted with terror, but the lad spoke up as bold as bold could be, for he felt the strength ^{142}inside of him and feared nobody. He told the Troll that he and his mother were footsore and weary, and he asked whether they might come in and rest a bit.

The Troll told him he and his mother were welcome, and then he made the lad sit down and they talked of one thing and another, but the woman was so frightened she just crept into a corner and groaned every time the Troll looked at her.

After a while the lad asked the Troll whether he could not give him and his mother a bite of supper, for they were hungry as well as weary.

Yes, the Troll could do that, too.

He went outside and came back with a whole load of wood in his arms, as much as two horses could haul. This he threw upon the fire and stirred it up into a blaze.

And now the woman began to shake and shiver as though she would fall to pieces, for she thought for sure the Troll was making ready to cook her and her son for supper; but instead he brought in a whole ox and put^[143] it over the fire to roast. When it was done, he took out a great silver platter from the cupboard, and the platter was so large that when he put the ox on it, not any part of the ox hung over the edge. He also set out on the table knives and forks, each six feet long, and a great hogshead for a drinking cup.

When all this was done, he said to the lad, "Draw up and eat and drink as you are able."

The lad bade his mother come, too, but she would not, so he took up the knife and fork with no trouble at all to himself and cut a slice from the ox and carried it to her. After she had eaten, he lifted the hogshead down from the table, and then he carried her over to it and lowered her down into it so she could drink.

He himself, after he had eaten, climbed to the edge of the hogshead and hung himself over into it head downward, and drank till he was satisfied. After a while the Troll said he might as well have a bite of supper himself. So he went to the table and ate all that was left of the ox—the meat and the bones and the horns^[144] and hoofs of it—and drained off all that was in the hogshead at one draught.

Not long afterward it was time to go to bed, and the Troll did not know how to manage that.

"There's only the bed I sleep in, and a cradle," said the Troll.

But when the lad came to look at the cradle, it was as long and wide as any bed he had ever seen.

"This will do for me," said he.

So it was settled that he should sleep in the cradle and his mother in the bed, though it was so enormous that she shook and shivered at the very thought of getting into it, and if she had had her choice, she would have stayed all night in the corner.

After they were all settled, the lad thought to himself, "I'd best stay awake and listen how things go on through the night, for there's no knowing what this Troll may intend to do to us before morning." But he lay there very quiet and kept his eyes shut, and now and then he snored a bit, so the Troll thought he was asleep.^[145]

Presently the Troll began to talk to the woman. "Do you think that lad of yours is asleep?" he asked of her.

"He must be from the way he's snoring," she answered.

"Then, listen," said the Troll. "It has come into my head that you and I could live here very happily together if we could only get rid of him, for to tell you the truth I have no liking for the way he goes about things."

"I'm sure I don't know how you can do anything with him," said the woman, "for he seems to have grown very strong all of a sudden."

Oh, the Troll had a plan that would do for the lad. The next morning he would ask the woman and her son to stay there with him for a day or so, and she was to agree. Then sometime in the morning he would take the lad out to the quarry with him to get out some cornerstones, and once there, it would be easy enough in one way or another to send him down to the bottom of the quarry, and then roll a rock down on him and crush him.^[146]

To this plan the woman consented, and all the while they talked the boy lay there and listened, though he breathed with his mouth open as though he were still sleeping.

The next day the woman got up early and cooked breakfast for them, and after they had all eaten, the Troll said, wouldn't she stay there and keep house for him for a day or so.

"There's nothing to take me elsewhere," answered the woman.

Not long after, the Troll took up a crowbar that he kept over in a corner.

"I'll just go over to the quarry and get out a few cornerstones while you are cooking the dinner," said he. He then asked the lad whether he would go along with him.

"Yes, and gladly," answered the lad; so the two set out together.

They worked for awhile at the top of the quarry, and then the Troll told the lad to go down to the bottom of it and see whether there were any loose stones lying around down there.

The lad was willing to do that, too. He went on down toward the bottom of the quarry. No sooner was he gone than the Troll set to work with his crowbar. He worked so hard that he groaned and sweated, and presently he loosened a whole crag and sent it rolling down on the boy.^[147]

But the lad saw it coming and was ready for it. He put out his hands and stopped it until he could get out of the way, and then he let it roll on to the bottom. After that he went back to where the Troll was.

"I couldn't find any loose rocks down there so now do you go down and look for some," he said.

The Troll was frightened when he saw the lad had come back to the top of the quarry unharmed. He thought he would certainly have been crushed under the crag that had rolled down on him. Neither did the Troll want to go down there below, but he had to.

Then the lad took up the crowbar and pried out another crag, and it rolled down on the Troll and hurt him so that he could not move, but lay where he was groaning. The boy had to go down and roll the crag off him^{148} and pick him up and carry him back to the house, and all the while the Troll kept on groaning most terribly. When they got home, the lad put the Troll to bed and he was hurt so badly he had to lie there.

That night the lad stayed awake again and listened, and presently the Troll and the woman began to talk things over again.

"I tell you he's a dangerous one," said the woman, "and I'm sure I don't see how you're ever to get rid of him."

"I have a brother," said the Troll, "and he has a walled-in garden, and in the garden are twelve fierce lions. If we could find some excuse for getting the lad there, they would very quickly tear him to pieces."

"Then I will find the excuse," said the woman. "To-morrow I will say that I am very poorly, and that nothing in the world will cure me except a few drops of lions' milk. Then you must tell about the lions in your brother's garden, and I'll beg and entreat him until he'll agree to go off there to get some for me."^{149}

This plan pleased the Troll, and it was settled between them that as she said so they would do.

The next morning the woman did not get up to cook the breakfast, but lay in bed, moaning.

"What ails you, mother?" asked the lad.

"Oh I'm ill. I'm very ill," replied the woman.

"I'm sorry for that," said her son, "but I'm sure I don't know what would make you better."

"If I had but a few drops of lions' milk, that would cure me," groaned the woman.

"That's a hard thing to get," replied the lad; "and if that's the only thing to cure you, I fear you'll be ailing a long time."

Then the Troll spoke up and said he knew where such milk was to be had. "But it takes a brave heart and a strong arm to get it, and that's the truth," said the Troll. He then told about his brother's walled-in garden and the lions that were in it, and he said that if any one had the courage to go for it, 'twas there the milk was to be had.^{150}

The woman at once began to beg and entreat the lad to go and get it for her. He did not say no. "Though," said he, "I think it is but little good the milk will do you, and that's the truth."

The Troll told him exactly where the garden was, and he gave him a key to the gate of it, so he would have no trouble in getting in. The lad took the key and a milking pail, and off he set. The Troll and the woman had no other thought than that was the end of him.

On and on he went, one foot before the other, and after a while he came to the garden, and then he took out the key and unlocked the door and stepped inside.

No sooner had he done this than he saw twelve great lions, each one fiercer and larger than the other, and they came at him ramping and roaring so that he was almost deafened by the noise of it, and their teeth were terrible to see.

But the lad was no whit frightened. He caught hold of the foremost lion, and tore it in two, and scattered it in pieces all about him.^{151}

When the other lions saw that, all the fierceness went out of them, and they crawled to his feet, and fawned on him, and became as tame as dogs.

The lad patted them, and then he milked a few drops into the milk pail and started for home with it, but the lions would not be left behind. They followed after him close at his heels, as dogs follow their master.

After a while he came within sight of the Troll's house, and at that very moment the woman happened to be looking out of the window, and there she saw him coming along, with the eleven lions following after him. Then she was terribly frightened, and she called to the Troll, and together they barred all the doors and windows, so the lions could not get in at them.

The lad came to the door and tried to open it, and when he found it was fastened, he called to them to let him in, but they would not until he made the lions lie down outside, and promised they should stay there.

When he went in, there stood his mother shaking and trembling.^{152}

“Well, mother, here is the lions’ milk,” he said, “and I’m sure I hope it may make you well again.”

The woman was obliged to drink the milk, though she did not want it.

That night the Troll and she began talking together after they thought the lad was sleeping. But he was wide awake and heard all they said between them, though they spoke in whispers.

“This son of yours is so strong I don’t see how we’re ever to get rid of him,” said the Troll.

“Well, if you don’t know, I’m sure I don’t,” replied the woman.

“There’s one other plan we might try,” said the Troll. “I have two more brothers who live not so very far away from here in a castle, and they are very strong and terrible. Round about the castle is an orchard that bears apples all the year round, and any one who so much as tastes of those apples at once falls into a deep sleep, and nothing can waken him till he has had his sleep out, and the sleep lasts for three days and three nights. If we could but send the lad there after the apples, he would be sure to eat of them, and fall asleep, and then ^{153} his brothers would find him there and tear him to pieces for they come out every day to walk in the garden and so would be sure to find him.”

“If that is the way of it, we’ve no need to worry,” said the woman, “for I’ll find a way to send him there.”

The next day the woman said she still was not able to get up. She lay there in the bed, moaning and groaning.

“I’m sorry to see you so ailing, mother, but I’m sure I don’t know what to do about it.”

“If I but had some apples from the orchard that belongs to the Troll’s brothers, I’d be well enough,” said the woman, “and if you were but the good son you pretend to be, I know you’d fetch them for me.”

“I’ll fetch you the apples soon enough,” replied her son. “No trouble about that. Though to tell you the truth, I doubt whether they’ll cure you.”

The lad made no more ado about it, but off he set for the orchard, and the eleven lions followed close at ^{154} his heels.

When he came to where the apple trees were, he climbed up into the one that bore the finest fruit, and ate and ate until he could eat no more. Then he came down and stretched himself out on the soft grass and fell into a deep sleep.

The eleven lions gathered about him and guarded him while he slept.

Now not long after this, the Troll’s two brothers came out into the orchard for a stroll, and there, the first thing they saw, was the lad lying under the finest of the apple trees fast asleep, with the apples lying all about him and one in his hand.

At that sight they flew into a fine rage, and they turned themselves into fierce man-eating steeds, and rushed at him to destroy him.

But before they had a chance even so much as to touch him, the eleven lions rose up and rushed at the two steeds and fought them, and tore them into small pieces and scattered them around like dung. ^{155}

At the end of three days and three nights, the lad awoke and looked about him, and there were the lions still guarding him, but the ground was all dug up as though a battle had been fought there, and there were deep hoof marks, and pieces of the steeds were scattered all about the orchard. The lad looked and wondered, and he could not think what had been happening, but he was not a bit afraid, and he thought as long as he was there, he might as well go and have a look at the castle.

When he drew near to it, he saw a most beautiful maiden looking out from one of the windows, and at sight of her the lad’s heart melted within him for love of her, she was so beautiful.

“It is lucky for you that you had your lions with you just now,” said the maiden.

“Why is that?” asked the lad.

Then the maiden told him how the Trolls had gone out into the orchard a bit ago, when he was asleep under the apple tree, and how they had changed themselves into man-eating steeds and come at him to destroy him, and how the lions had then risen up and torn the Trolls to pieces. ^{156}

The lad listened to her until she had made an end of the story, and then he said, “That is as it should be, and it was to guard me that I brought them hither.” Then he asked the maiden whether he might come in, and at first she would not let him, because she was afraid of the lions, but when he promised they should not harm her, but would lie down at the threshold as quiet as house cats, she opened the door to him.

The lad looked about him, and it seemed to him the castle was but a rough place for such a beauty to live in.

"I wonder," said he, "that such a one as you should be living here with no better company than those two Trolls were."

"It is not of my own will I am living here," replied the maiden. Then she told him she was the daughter of the King of Arabia, and that she had been walking in her father's garden one day, and the Trolls had appeared out of a forest near by, and carried her away with them, and she had been well-nigh scared out of her wits by it.^[157] But they had done her no harm, though they had kept her a prisoner here, and they intended that after a while one or other of them should take her as a wife. Then she asked the lad who he was, and where he had come from, and he told her all about it.

"You may be the son of a beggar, but all the same it seems to me you are something of a hero," said the Princess, "and now we will see whether I am right about it."

Then she led him into another room and showed him where two great swords were hanging on the wall.

"Those are the Trolls' swords," said the Princess, "and they are very heavy to handle. Now try whether you can lift one of them down from the wall, though I doubt whether you are strong enough."

"That is an easy task you are setting me," said the lad. He took a chair and set it on a table, and another chair on top of that; and then he climbed up on them, for the swords were so high on the wall that only in that way^[158] could he reach the place where they were hanging. Then he reached out and set one finger under the point of one of the swords, and tossed it up in the air and caught it, and he leaped down and flourished the sword about him, so that it whistled.

"Yes, I can see that you are indeed a hero," said the Princess; "so now tell me: shall I go home to my father, the King of Arabia, or shall I stay here and be your wife?"

It did not take the lad long to make his choice in that matter.

"You shall stay here and be my wife," said he, "for indeed I love you so dearly that if I cannot marry you, then I shall never marry any one."

So the Princess stayed on in the castle, and she and the lad were very happy together.

But after some time had passed, the Princess said she ought to go back and see her father, for he did not know what had become of her, and no doubt he had grieved bitterly, thinking she was dead.

This reminded the lad that he had promised to take back the apples to his mother, and it was agreed between^[159] them that she should go back to Arabia, and that he should take the apples to his mother, and that then he should come after her to her father's kingdom and claim her.

So the next day they set out, and the Princess went to the nearest seaport, and hired a vessel with some of the jewels she wore, and sailed back to Arabia. But the lad set out for the Troll's house with the bosom of his shirt full of apples, and the lions following close at his heels.

When he came near the Troll's house, his mother was looking out of the window, and no sooner did she see him than she began to shake and shiver.

"There is my son back again," said she, "and indeed I feel terribly frightened."

"He's a strong one, and that's the truth," said the Troll, "and I wish we could find out what makes him so, for it's not in nature for any one to be as strong as he is."

"Perhaps there is indeed some secret about it," said the woman, "and if there is, I may be able in some way^[160] to wheedle it out of him. At least I can do no better than try."

So she made haste to open the door and welcome the lad back to his home again, but the lions had to stay outside, because both she and the Troll were afraid of them.

"And did you get the apples?" she asked of him.

Yes, he had the apples. "And I hope they'll cure you, mother," said he, "though I think you have little need of them, for I never saw you looking better."

"Oh I'm still very ailing," said she, "and I'll eat the apples after a bit; but first do you sit down and have a bite of the good supper I've cooked for you."

So the lad sat down, and the mother gave him his supper, and while he ate it, she sat beside him and talked to him.

"You're a strong one," said she, "and there's no doubt about that."

“Strong enough,” replied her son, still eating.

“And how did it all come about?” asked the woman. “For only a while ago you were a weakling, and it^{161} was I who had to help you over the rough places.”

“Now I’ll tell you,” said the lad, for he was sleepy from eating so much supper and scarce knew what he was saying. “It’s all because of that blue belt that we saw at the crossroads and that I wanted to pick up, and you forbade me.”

Then he told his mother the whole story, and the woman sat and listened, and the Troll listened, too, only he was hidden behind a door and the lad did not see him.

“And that’s the way the strength came to me,” said the lad, when he had made an end of the telling.

“And have you the belt on you now?” asked the woman.

“Yes, I have,” said the lad, and he opened his shirt and showed it to her.

Then, before he could stop her, the woman caught hold of the belt and tore it from him, and at once all his strength went out of him, so that he was helpless before her. {162}

Then the Troll came from behind the door, and he and the woman made merry together because the lad was so helpless, and they talked together about what they should do with the lad to get rid of him. The woman was for taking him out to a high cliff and throwing him over, but the Troll said no, that was not bad enough for him. In the end the Troll put out the lad’s eyes, and set him adrift in a boat on the sea, and he and the woman thought that was the end of him.

But it was not, for the lions were faithful, and they had followed after, and when they saw the boat drifting away, they swam after it and caught the edge of the boat with their teeth, and brought it ashore on an island.

There they and the lad lived, and the lions took care of him, for the lad was helpless because he was blind. The lions found a cave for him to live in and caught birds and wild animals for him to eat, and the lad picked the feathers off the birds, and took the skins of the animals, and made a soft bed for himself, and always, while some of the lions were out hunting, others stayed with him to guard him and see that no harm came to him. {163}

One day the oldest lion went out hunting, and he went a long way before he found anything. Then, after a while, he started up a hare, and it was blind. The lion chased the hare, and it went leaping along, and presently, because it was blind, it fell into a pool of water. As soon as the water touched its eyes, it could see again, and it scrambled out from the pool and escaped the lion.

The lion went back to where the lad was sitting in his cave, and took hold of his clothes, and began to pull at them. The lad did not know what the lion wanted of him, but he got up and allowed the lion to lead him. It led him on and on, until they came to the edge of the pool, and then the lion loosed his clothing and gave the lad such a push that he fell head over heels into the water. No sooner did the water touch his eyes than the blindness was all gone, and he could see again even better than before.

Then the lad rejoiced greatly, and he got into the boat and went back to the place where the Troll lived,^{164} and the lions swam after.

After he landed, he crept up toward the house very carefully, so that no one saw him, and peeped in at the door. The woman was busy at the dough-trough making up bread, and her back was toward him, and there was the blue belt hanging from a nail in the wall.

The lad crept in and seized it and put it around him, and then he began to shout and stamp about, and call to the woman and the Troll to come and catch hold of him.

The woman turned about, and when she saw the lad was there and the belt gone from the wall, she knew what had happened. She was terribly frightened, and began to coax and cajole him, and beg him to let her have the belt again.

But the lad would not listen to her. He threw open the door and called in the lions, and they soon made an end of her. Then they ran out and found the Troll, too, and tore him to pieces in spite of all his cries and prayers for mercy. {165}

That was the end of them, and after that the lad was ready to set out for Arabia to claim the Princess as his wife, but he would not let the lions go with him for there was no need for them in that business.

The lad journeyed on and on, and after a while he came to Arabia, and there he heard a story of how the daughter of the King of that country had been stolen away by Trolls, and kept a prisoner for a long time but now she was home, and the King was so glad to have her back he said he would never let her leave him again. He had

hidden her away, no one knew where, and when any one came to ask her hand in marriage the King said no one might have her but he who could find her, and if any one tried to find her and failed, he should have his head cut off.

Many kings and princes had lost their lives in this manner.

The lad listened and listened to everything that was said, and he thought to himself that he would be the next to have a try at finding the Princess, but he said nothing about it to any one. ^{166}

One day the lad met a man who was selling white bearskins, and the lad stopped him and began talking to him. "I will tell you what we will do," said he. "I will put on one of those bearskins, and then do you fasten a collar around my neck and lead me through the town by a chain, and I will dance and perform tricks."

This plan pleased the man, and he readily agreed to it; so the lad put on the bearskin, and the man led him about by a chain, and everywhere the lad danced and performed in such a wonderful way that the people were amazed.

After a while it came to the King's ears that such a beast was in the town, and that not only could it dance and perform tricks, but it could understand everything that was said to it.

The King became very curious to see the animal, and he sent word for the man to come to the palace and bring the bear with him.

The man at once set out for the palace, and on the way he said to the lad, "Now you must do your best, for if you can succeed in pleasing the King, he will be sure to pay us well." ^{167}

"Yes," said the lad, "but when we come to the palace, you must warn everybody that they are not to laugh at me, for if the people there laugh at me, I may become so enraged that I will tear them to pieces before I know what I am doing."

So as soon as the man came to the palace, he said that no one was to laugh at the bear, whatever happened, and the King promised that no one should.

Then the lad began to perform his tricks, but in the very midst of things one of the maids began to laugh, and at once the pretended bear flew at her and tore her to pieces before any one could stop him.

The man was terrified, but the King said, "It does not matter; she was only a maid, after all."

After that the King said the man and the bear must spend the night at the castle. The man might sleep in the kitchen, but the bear should stay in the little room that opened out from the King's own chamber. The man had nothing to sleep on but hard boards, but the bear was given a bed made of feathers and soft cushions to lay ^{168}his head on.

That night, when all the palace was still, and no one awake to see him, the King came to the room where the pretended bear was lying, and roused him and bade him come with him, for the King had a mind to show the bear to his daughter, and have her see the tricks and the dancing.

The King led the pretended bear upstairs and downstairs, and through cellars and long galleries and around corners, and all the while the lad kept his eyes open, and watched carefully just where they were going, so that he might know how to come the next time.

After a while, the King still leading him, they came out on a long pier with the water washing about it. Here the King pulled and pushed at different posts and wooden pegs, and all the while the lad watched him carefully. Presently a little house came floating, floating across the water until it lay close up against the pier, and then the King took out a bunch of keys and unlocked the door and



When she saw the bear she cried aloud with terror. [Page 169](#)

led the bear inside, and there, in a little golden room, sat the beautiful Princess. {169}

The Princess started up when the King entered, and when she saw the bear she cried aloud with terror. But the King bade her not to fear it, for it was a trained bear, and there was no danger from it unless some one laughed at it.

The Princess promised she would not laugh, and then the King bade the bear perform its tricks. All went well until the Princess' waiting-maid quite forgot the warning the King had given, and began to laugh. At once the pretended bear flew at her and tore her in pieces.

The Princess screamed, but the King said, "Why should you be troubled? It was her own fault, for I warned her. Besides, she was nothing but a waiting-maid."

Then he said he would leave the bear there until morning, for he had no mind to lead it back through all those galleries and cellars and windings at that time of night.

The Princess was very unwilling to have the beast left there, and so she told the King, but while she and ^{170}her father were talking, the bear curled down in the corner and pretended to go to sleep. So then the Princess agreed that it might stay there, but she made the King promise to come back and get it the first thing in the morning.

Then the King went away, locking the door behind him, and as soon as he had gone, the bear rose up and came over to the Princess, and begged her to undo his collar. The Princess was like to die of terror at this, but the

bear spoke so gently and pleaded with her so piteously that at last she took courage and felt in among his fur and unfastened the collar.

At once the lad threw off the bear skin, and there the Princess saw her own dear husband standing before her. Then there was great joy between them, and the lad told the Princess all that had happened to him since they had parted, and they spent the night together very happily.

But at earliest dawn the lad put on the bearskin again, and made the Princess fasten the collar, for s^{171}he would have it, and when the King came again, there was the bear still slumbering in his corner, and the Princess asleep among her pillows.

The King took hold of the chain that was fastened to the bear's collar, and made it get up and follow, and he led it out of the house to the pier. Then he pulled and pushed at the posts and pivots, and the little house floated away across the water, to some place where no one could see it. After that the King led the bear back to its master, and gave the man a handful of gold as a reward, and bade him be off with it.

As soon as the man and the lad were back where they lived, the lad made him undo the collar, and he took off the bearskin. Then it was not long before he was back at the palace and asking to see the King, for he said he had come there to have a hunt for the Princess.

When the King saw the lad he had pity on him because he was so young and handsome.

"This is a very foolish thing that you would do," said he. "Do you not know how many kings and nob^{172}les have lost their lives in searching for the Princess? Why should you wish to perish also?"

But the lad would not listen to him. Hunt for the Princess he must and would.

"Very well", said the King at last. "Since your heart is set on it, you must go your own way, but remember you will be allowed only twenty-four hours in which to find her."

Very well! That suited the lad well enough.

Now there were many pretty girls in the palace, and music and dancing, and the lad joined in and danced and laughed with the best of them. He amused himself all day, and at last only one hour was left of all the twenty-four in which he was to search for the Princess.

"There!" said the King. "Now you have danced your life away, and it is time for the headsman."

"Not so," said the lad, "for I have still one hour left, and now I will go and look for the Princess." ^{173}

With that he set out, and the King and the court were obliged to follow. The lad went upstairs and downstairs, through cellars and along galleries, along the way the King had led him the night before, and all the while the King kept saying, "This is not the way to go. You are all wrong, and you will never find her this way."

When they came out on the pier, the lad began pulling and pushing at posts and pivots, and the King did not dare to stop him.

Presently the little house came floating up to the pier, and there were only two minutes left of all the twenty-four hours.

"And now unlock the door," cried the lad, "for within here sits the Princess."

The King took out his keys, and he fumbled and fumbled, and then he said he had no key there to unlock it.

"Then if you have not, I have," said the lad, and he raised his fist and with one blow the door was shattered and burst open, and he stepped inside,—and there was the Princess.

Then she rose up and threw her arms about him and kissed him, and she told her father the lad was her ^{174}own true love who had saved her from the Trolls and had come all this way to find her, and how if she might not have him for her husband, she would pine away with grief and longing.

When the King heard this, he could no longer refuse to let her marry the lad, and indeed he was well enough pleased to have such a clever fellow for a son-in-law, for the lad soon told him of the trick he had played upon him.

So he and the Princess were married and with much rejoicing, and the lad sent back to the Troll's house for the lions that had been waiting for him there all this time. And when they came, they were given a whole park to roam about in, and the lad and the Princess lived happy forever after, with no misfortunes to trouble them. ^{175}

THE DUTIFUL DAUGHTER

A KOREAN STORY

THERE once lived in Korea a rich merchant and his wife who had no children, though they greatly desired them and prayed every day that a child might be granted them.

They had been married sixteen years and were no longer young, when the wife had a wonderful dream.

In her dream she walked in a garden full of beauteous fruits and flowers and singing birds, and as she walked, suddenly a star fell from heaven into her bosom.

As soon as the wife awoke, she told this dream to her husband. "I feel assured," said she, "that this dream can mean only one thing, and that is that heaven is about to send us a child, and that this child will be as a star for beauty and wonder and grace."

The merchant could hardly believe that this good fortune was really to be theirs; but it was indeed as ^{176}the wife had said, and in due time a daughter was born to the couple, and this child was so beautiful that she was the wonder of all who saw her.

The husband and wife, who had hoped for a son, were greatly disappointed that the long-wished-for child was only a daughter, but their disappointment was soon forgotten in the joy and pride they felt in her beauty and wit and goodness.

Unhappily, while Sim Ching (for so the girl was named) was still a child, her mother died, and her father's grief over the loss of his wife was so great that he became completely blind. He was now obliged to leave the most of his business affairs in the hands of his servants, and these servants were so dishonest and so idle that they either wasted or stole all his money. At last he became so poor that he could scarcely provide enough food to keep himself and his daughter alive.

One day the merchant in his unhappiness wandered away from home, and being blind and so unable to tell where he was going, he fell into a deep pit out of which he was unable to climb. {177}

He feared he would die there, but presently, hearing footsteps on the road above, he called out loudly for help.

The footsteps he heard were those of a greedy and dishonest priest who lived near by. Every day he passed by this way on his walks to and from the temple.

Hearing the voice from the pit, the priest went to the edge of it and looking down into it, saw the blind man there below.

"Who are you?" asked the priest, "and how have you fallen into this pit?"

"I am a poor blind man, who was once a rich merchant," replied the man in the pit. "I lost at once both my sight and my wealth, and because I cannot see I fell into this pit from which I am not able to climb. For the sake of mercy reach down your hand and draw me out."

"Not so," replied the priest. "That would be a foolish thing for me to do. Instead of drawing you out, I might myself be pulled in. But if you will promise to give me a hundred and fifty bags of rice that I may offer them ^{178}up in the temple, I will go and get a rope, and throw the end of it down to you, and by that means I may be able to pull you out without danger to either of us."

The priest asked for the rice for the temple not because he really wished to make an offering of it, for indeed he meant to keep it for himself, but he thought, "If this man was once rich, no doubt he must still know some wealthy people, and if he goes to them and asks for rice to offer up in the temple they will be more likely to give it to him than if he told them it was for me."

When the poor man heard that the priest demanded his promise of a hundred and fifty bags of rice before he would help him, he cried aloud with grief and wonder.

"How is it possible I should promise you such a thing as that?" he cried. "None but a very rich man could make such a gift to the temple, and I am so poor that I cannot even provide food enough for myself and my daughter."

"Your daughter!" cried the priest. "You have then a daughter?" {179}

“Yes; and she is so beautiful that no one in the whole land can compare with her for fairness, and she is as good as she is beautiful, and as witty as she is good.”

“Now listen!” said the priest. “If you will swear to give me the bags of rice, not only will I pull you out of the pit, but I foresee that because of this gift your daughter will be raised to the highest place in the land, and you yourself will receive great wealth and honor, and your sight will return to you.”

This the priest said, not because he really foresaw anything of the kind, but because he wished to tempt the blind man into making him the promise of the rice.

The poor man still declared that he had no means of making such an offering, but the priest urged and begged and threatened, until at last the blind man gave his promise.

The priest then ran and got a rope, and soon pulled the blind merchant out of the pit.

“Now remember!” said he. “Exactly a month from now I will send my servants for the rice, and you must in some way have it ready, whether you beg or borrow or steal it, and if you do not, you shall receive a ⁽¹⁸⁰⁾good beating for breaking your bargain with me, and be thrown into a prison that is worse than any pit.”

The priest then went on to the temple, while the blind man returned home, very sad and sorrowful.

As soon as he entered the door, his daughter saw by his look that something unfortunate had happened and begged him to tell her what it was.

At first he would not say because he feared to frighten her, but she asked him so many questions that at last he was obliged to tell her the whole story.

Sim Ching was indeed terrified when she heard what her father had promised the priest.

“Alas! Alas!” she cried. “How can we possibly get the rice ready for him? You know it is only by the kindness of the neighbors that we have the handful that I have cooked for our dinner to-day.”

The poor man began to weep. “What you say is true,” he cried. “Better that I should have died in the pit ⁽¹⁸¹⁾than be thrown into prison as will surely happen to me if I cannot give the priest the hundred and fifty bags that I promised him.”

The blind man now set out to beg, telling every one his sad story and asking them to help him to collect the rice, but the people of the village were themselves poor and had no more than enough food for their own families.

Time slipped by, until at last the day arrived when the priest’s servants were to come to demand the rice, and the blind man had not yet been able to get together even one bagful of rice, let alone a hundred and fifty.

He and his daughter sat together very sorrowful, and now and then the blind man bemoaned himself as he thought of how he was to be beaten and thrown into prison, for he had now learned enough about the priest to know that he could expect no mercy from one as cruel and greedy as he.

Now there lived in another city, not far away, a very rich merchant who owned many ships that traded in foreign lands. This merchant had become so proud of his wealth and his power that he called himself the ⁽¹⁸²⁾Prince of the Sea, and so it was that he obliged others to address him. This greatly offended a powerful Water Spirit who lived under the sea over which the ships of the merchant sailed. And now, in order to punish the merchant, the Water Spirit sent storms down upon the ships. Many were destroyed, and others were driven on to reefs, or back to the ports they sailed from. So many misfortunes overtook the vessels that sailors became afraid to sail on them, and the merchant began to fear he would be ruined.

In his trouble he sent for a number of wise men and magicians and asked them why he was now so unlucky, and what he could do to bring back good fortune.

The wise men and magicians studied their books and consulted together for a long time, and then they came to the merchant and said, “We have found why you are so unlucky. Your pride has offended a powerful Water Spirit, and it is he who is wrecking your ships or driving them back into port. There is only one way in which ⁽¹⁸³⁾to turn aside his anger. If a young and beautiful maiden can be found who will willingly offer herself as a sacrifice to him, then he will be satisfied and will punish you no further. Otherwise he will certainly destroy every vessel you send out, and so in the end you will be ruined.”

When the merchant heard this, he was in despair. “Now indeed there is no hope for me,” he cried, “for I am very sure there is not, in the whole of Korea, a maiden who would be willing to be sacrificed to this Water Spirit, however great the reward I might offer. For indeed of what use would any reward be to her, if in order to gain it she must be drowned in the sea.”

However, his head steward, who had charge of his affairs, begged him at least to send out a proclamation and to offer a reward to the family of any maiden who would consent to the sacrifice. "It may be that such a one will be found," said he;—"some one who values the fortunes of her parents even above her own life."

The merchant finally agreed to the wishes of his steward, and messengers were sent forth to read ^{184}the proclamation aloud in every city, town and village in the country. They went this way and that, East, West, North and South, and finally one of them came to the place where the blind man and his daughter lived. The day the messenger came to the village was the very day when the servants of the wicked priest were to come and demand the hundred and fifty bags of rice from the blind man.

The merchant's messenger took his stand not far from the blind man's house, and from there he read aloud the proclamation as to the sacrifice and the reward that would be paid to the parents of any maiden who would be willing to be thrown to the Water Spirit.

The people of the village gathered about him in a great crowd to listen, but after they had heard what he said, they began to make a great noise, with cries and laughter.

"Some parents there may be," they cried, "who would be wicked enough to sacrifice their daughters for the sake of the reward, but what girl would ever go willingly to such a fate; and the messenger himself tells us that unless the maiden went willingly, the sacrifice would be useless." ^{185}

Sim Ching heard the noise outside, the voice of the messenger, and the laughter of the crowd, and as she was of a very curious nature, she went to the door to hear what was going on.

The man was already turning away, and Sim Ching asked a woman who was standing near what the man had been saying. The woman told her, laughing as she spoke. "How could any one suppose that any maiden would consent to be thrown to this monster in order that her family might have the reward!" cried the woman.

But Sim Ching ran after the man and caught him by the sleeve.

"Wait!" cried she. "Do not go until you have told me something. You say your master will richly reward the family of any maiden who will willingly give herself to this Water Spirit. Would he give as much as a hundred and fifty bags of rice to such a family?"

"That and more," replied the messenger. "My master is very rich, and the reward will be generous." ^{186}

"Then I will go with you and be the sacrifice," said Sim Ching. "Permit me only to go and bid farewell to my father, and then I will be ready."

The messenger was rejoiced that he had been able to secure the maiden for his master and gladly consented to wait until she had spoken with her father.

But when Sim Ching went back into the house and told her father what she intended to do he was in despair. He wept aloud and rent his clothes. "Never, never will I consent to such a sacrifice," cried he.

But his daughter comforted him. "Do you forget," said she, "what the priest promised you? Did he not tell you that if you offered up this rice to the temple, all would be well with us, and that I would be raised to the highest place in the kingdom? Let us have faith and believe that the gods of the temple can save me at the last even though I be thrown into the sea."

As her father listened to her, he grew quieter, and at last gave his consent for her to go. ^{187}

The neighbors who had heard what she meant to do gathered about to bid her farewell and could not but weep for pity, even while they praised her for her dutifulness toward her father.

Sim Ching at once set out with the messenger, who was in haste to bring her before his master. Indeed he feared that if she thought too long of what she had consented to do, she might repent of her bargain.

When he reached the merchant's house and told him he had found a maiden for the sacrifice, his master could scarcely believe him. "Does she understand what is required of her, and is she willing?" he asked.

The messenger assured him that she understood perfectly and was rejoiced at the thought of securing the reward for her father.

Sim Ching was now brought before the merchant, and when he saw her beauty and youth, and her modest, gentle air, he was filled with pity for her. He would even have commanded that she should be taken back again to her father, but to this Sim Ching would not consent.

"No," said she. "I have come here to do a certain thing. I have promised, and I do not wish to break ^{188}my word. All I ask is to be assured that the bags of rice will certainly be sent to my father, and that at once."

“Let it then be as you desire,” said the merchant. “And be assured that my part of the bargain shall be kept as faithfully as yours.” He then ordered that one hundred and fifty bags of rice should be loaded on as many mules and sent to the blind man at once, that Sim Ching might herself have the comfort of seeing them set forth.

This was done, and after the train of mules had departed, Sim Ching was taken to a chamber where magnificent robes and veils and jewels had been laid ready for her. Her attendants dressed her and hung the jewels on her neck and arms, and when all was done, she was so beautiful that even the attendants wept to think she must be sacrificed.

A barge had been made ready and hung about with garlands, and in it sat musicians to make sweet music while the rowers rowed to where the sacrifice was to be made.

And now Sim Ching would have been afraid, but she fixed her thoughts upon her father and on how^{189} she would now be saved from the cruelty of the priest, and then she became quite happy and was no longer frightened.

When the barge came to the place under which the Water Spirit lived, Sim Ching leaned over the side of the boat and looked down into the water. It was very deep and green, and it seemed to her that beneath she could see shining walls and towers, as though of some great castle, and that the spirits of the water were beckoning to her to come. Lower and lower she leaned, until, as though drawn by some power beneath, she sank over the side of the vessel and down and down through the water until she was lost to the sight of those above her.

Then the rowers took the barge back to the shore and told the merchant the sacrifice had been accepted.

The merchant was glad that now again his ships might sail in safety; but at the same time he felt pity for Sim Ching, believing she had been drowned.

But such was not the case. After she had sunk down and down through the waters for what seemed to her^{190} a long distance, she came to the land where the Water Spirit is king. All about her were things strange and beautiful. There were water weeds so tall they were like trees waving high above her, and through them, like birds, darted the shining fishes. There were water flowers of colors she had never seen before, and shining shells, and before her rose a castle made of mother of pearl and studded with precious stones that shone and glittered like stars in the light that came down through the water.

While she was looking at it, the doors of the castle swung open, and a train of attendants came out to meet her. These attendants were all dressed in green, and many of them would have been very handsome except that they themselves were green. Their faces, their hands, their hair, and eyes,—everything about them was green.

They spoke to Sim Ching in a strange language, but soon she understood them and knew they had come to bring her before their King who was waiting for her.^{191}

Sim Ching felt no doubt but that this King was the Water Spirit himself, and she was very much frightened, but still she did not hesitate, but went with them willingly, for it was for this purpose she had come hither.

The attendants led her through one room after another, until they came to the place where the Water Spirit sat upon a crystal throne, and he, too, was green, but his crown was of gold, and his garments were set all over with pearls and precious stones.

The King looked at Sim Ching kindly and bade her have no fear. “I intend you no harm,” said he, “and indeed I wished for no sacrifice. My only wish was to punish the rich merchant for his pride, and so it was that I set him a task that I thought impossible for him to perform. But because of your dutifulness and your love for your father, he has been able to make the sacrifice. Now you must stay here patiently for a year and teach the sea-maidens the ways of the world above, and at the end of that time you shall return to the earth, and receive the happiness you deserve.”^{192}

Sim Ching listened to him wondering, and when he had made an end of speaking, she gladly agreed to serve for a time in the palace and to teach the sea-people all she knew. So for a twelvemonth Sim Ching stayed there and was very happy, for though the ways and manners of the sea-people were strange to her, they themselves were kind and gentle, so that she soon lost all fear of them.

At the end of the twelve months, the King sent for Sim Ching, and when she had come before him, he said, “Sim Ching, for a year you have served us both faithfully and well, and now the time has come for you to return to the upper world. But in that world there are many dangers, and you have no one to protect you. I have, therefore, caused a great flower to be prepared for you. When you enter into this flower, the leaves will fold about you and hide you, so that none may suspect you are within it. The leaves will afford you food and drink as

well as shelter. In this way you can live protected and in safety until fate sends you a husband to love and guard you.”



The King bade her step into the flower. She did so, and at once the leaves closed about her. [Page 193](#)

After speaking thus, the Water Spirit led Sim Ching into another room and there showed her the flower^[193] that he had caused to be prepared for her. This flower was very large and of a beautiful rose color, and the leaves were of some rich, thick substance that had a most delicious smell and was good to eat. The juice of the leaves also afforded a delicious drink. Sim Ching, as she examined it, knew not how to express her wonder and admiration.

The King bade her step into the flower. She did so, and at once the leaves closed about her, so that she was completely hidden, and at the same time the most delightful music breathed softly from the flower. It now floated softly up and up, through the roof of the palace, and through the waters above, until it reached the surface of the sea. There it rested, rocking gently with the motion of the waves.

Now it so happened that the place where the flower floated on the sea was not far from the palace of the young King of that country. The morning it arose through the waters, the King was looking from a window across the sea toward a pleasure island where he sometimes went. Suddenly, between himself and the island,^[194] he saw something glittering in the sunlight out upon the waters.

He could not make out what the object was, and he ordered that some of the castle servants should row out to it, see what it was, and if possible bring it back with them. This was done and when the rowers returned, they brought the flower with them and carried it in to where the young King was awaiting them.

When the King saw the flower, he was filled with wonder and admiration. Never before had he seen such a blossom. He examined it on all sides and exclaimed over its size and beauty.

"It must be some magic," said he, "that has created such a flower. A room shall be built for it, and there I will keep it, and if indeed, it has been made by magic, as I suspect, it may be that in time some fruit will come from it that will be even more beautiful than the flower itself."

The room that was now prepared for the flower was so magnificent that no other apartment in the palace^{195} could compare with it. The walls were of gold, overlaid with paintings and hung with silken embroidered hangings. The floors were set with precious stones. There were fountains, and couches heaped with soft cushions, and from the ceiling hung seven alabaster lamps that were kept burning both night and day.

When the room was finished, the King caused the flower to be carefully carried into it and placed in the center upon a raised dais covered with embroidered velvet. After this no one was allowed to enter the room except himself, and he carried the key of it hung on a jeweled chain about his neck. Every day he spent long hours with the flower admiring its beauty, enjoying its delicious perfume, and listening to the delicate music that sometimes breathed out from among its leaves.

All the while Sim Ching lay hidden in the center of the flower without the King's once suspecting it. All day the leaves were closed about her, and only at night did they open to allow her to come forth.^{196}

The first time they unfolded, she was very much surprised to find herself in a room of a palace, instead of out upon the sea as she had supposed. Wondering, she looked about her, and then she stepped from the flower and began, timidly, to examine the apartment to which she had been brought. The beauty of it delighted her. She rested among the soft cushions, and bathed in the fountains, and dressed her hair. But toward morning she reentered the flower, and the leaves closed about her so that she was again hidden from view.

For some time life went on in this manner. All day Sim Ching slept in the flower, and only at night did she come forth, and as the King only visited the room in the daytime he never saw her, nor even guessed that a living maiden was inclosed by the leaves of the flower he admired so greatly.

But it so happened that one night the King could not sleep, and he took a fancy to visit the flower and see it by the light of the lamps. He therefore made his way along the corridors, and fitting the key into the lock,^{197} he turned it without having made a sound.

What was his surprise, when he opened the door, to see a maiden of surpassing beauty sitting beside a fountain and amusing herself by catching the water in her hands.

When Sim Ching saw the King, she gave a cry, and would have run back into the flower to hide, but the King called to her gently, bidding her stay.

"I will not harm you," said he. "Do but tell me who you are and how you have come here. It must be you are some spirit or fairy, for no human being could be as beautiful as you."

"I am no spirit, nor am I a fairy," answered Sim Ching, "but only the daughter of a poor blind beggar, and as to how I came here I know not. I was placed inside that flower by a Water Spirit, but who has brought the flower here, or why, I cannot tell."

The King then told her of how he had seen the flower floating on the sea, and how he had had it brought to the palace, and had ordered this room to be built for it, and after he had made an end of speaking, Sim Ching^{198} told him her history from the time her father had become blind and fallen into the pit, to the hour when the Water Spirit had bade her enter the flower and the leaves had closed about her.

The young King listened and wondered. "Yours is indeed a strange story," said he, "and this mischievous priest shall be sought out and punished as he deserves. And yet it may be his promises shall all come true, and you shall indeed be exalted to the highest place in the kingdom."

He then told Sim Ching he loved her and desired nothing in the world so much as to make her his wife.

To this Sim Ching joyfully consented for the young King was so handsome and gracious, and spoke so well and wisely, that she could not but love him with all her heart, even as he loved her.

All night they sat and talked together, and in the morning he opened the door of the chamber and led her forth, and called the courtiers and nobles together, and told them she was to be his bride.^{199}

Then there was great rejoicing, and every one who saw Sim Ching wondered at her beauty and loved her for her gentle and gracious manner.

Soon after she and the King were married, and they loved each other so dearly that Sim Ching would have been perfectly happy except for the thought of her old father and his griefs and sorrows.

Immediately after she was married, she sent messengers to the village where she had lived, bidding them find her father and bring him to her, but the old man had disappeared, and no one knew what had become of him.

Then the Queen had a great feast prepared and sent word throughout the length and breadth of the Kingdom that all who were both poor and blind were bidden to the palace to eat of it. All would be welcome, and none should be turned away.

Then from far and near the blind and poor came flocking to the palace, scores and hundreds of them.^{200} The tables for the feast were laid in a great hall, and the young King and Queen sat on raised thrones at one end of it. All who came to the feast were obliged to pass before this throne before they might take their places at the table, and as each one passed, the Queen looked at him eagerly, hoping to recognize her father, but none of all the multitude was the one she sought. At last every one was seated; the attendants were about to close the doors, when another beggar, the last of all, came stumbling into the hall. He was so feeble and so old that he could scarcely make his way to the throne, but no sooner did the Queen see him than she knew him as her father.

Then she gave a great cry, and came down from the throne, and threw her arms about him, and wept over him.

“It is I, oh, my father! It is thy daughter, Sim Ching,” she wept.

Then her father knew her voice and cried aloud with joy. “Oh, my daughter, I had thought thee dead,” he cried, “and now thou art alive and I can feel thy arms about me.”^{201}

As he spoke the tears of joy ran down his cheeks, and these tears washed away the mists of sorrow that had clouded his eyes and he found he could see again.

Then there was great rejoicing, and the King called the old man father and made him welcome, and in due time he who had been blind and now could see was raised to great wealth and honor, and so the words of the priest, that he had spoken without believing, came true.

But as for the priest himself, the King had him sought for, and when he was found, he was thrown into prison and punished as he deserved for his greed and cruelty.^{202}

THE OAT CAKE

A SCOTCH STORY

ONE time the farmer’s wife made two oat cakes. She shaped them, and patted them and put them down in front of the fire to bake. “They will do for the good man’s dinner,” said she.

Then said one cake to the other cake, “It is all very well for the woman to say that, but I have no wish to be eaten. I will wait until I am baked hard, and then I shall set out to see the world.”

“That is a poor way to talk, brother,” replied the other. “Oat cakes were made to be eaten, and you should be proud to think the master himself is to have you for dinner.”

“Master or no master, I have no wish to be eaten,” repeated the first oat cake.

Not long after that, the farmer came home, and he was very hungry. First he ate the oat cake that wished to be eaten, and after he had finished it, he stretched out his hand for the other, but it slipped through his fingers^{203} and away it rolled, out of the door and on down the road.

It rolled along and rolled along until it came to a neat, tidy house with a thatched roof.

“This looks like a good and proper place for me to stop,” said the oat cake, so it rolled on in through the doorway.

There inside were a tailor and his two apprentices, all of them sitting cross-legged and sewing away; and the tailor’s wife stood by the fire, stirring the porridge.

When the tailor and the boys saw the oat cake come rolling in across the floor so boldly, they were frightened, and jumped up and hid behind the woman.

“Now out upon you! To be frightened by an oat cake!” cried the good wife. “Quick! Catch hold of it and divide it among you, and I’ll give you some milk to drink with it.”

When the tailor and his apprentices heard this, they took courage and ran out and tried to catch the oat cake; but it dodged them and rolled under the table and under the chairs, and while they were chasing it and ^{204}the woman watching them, the porridge boiled over into the fire and was burned.

But the oat cake escaped them, and rolled out through the door, and on down the road again. “I’d better go a bit farther before I settle down for the night,” it thought to itself.

Presently it came to a little small house. “I’ll try how it is in here,” said the oat cake, and in it rolled.

There sat a weaver at his loom, and his wife was winding some yarn.

“What’s that that just came in at the door?” asked the weaver, for his eyesight was not very good.

“It’s an oat cake!” said his wife staring.

“Catch it woman! Catch it, before it rolls away again!” cried the weaver.

The woman chased the oat cake up and down and round about, and the weaver left his work and joined in the chase, but the oat cake was too lively for them. Every time they thought they had it, it slipped through ^{205}their fingers as though it were buttered.

“Throw your yarn over it and snare it,” cried the weaver.

The woman threw her yarn over the oat cake, but the cake tangled up the yarn so that later on it took the woman a good two days to straighten it out again. But the oat cake escaped and rolled out and down the road.

“That’s too lively a place for me to stay,” said the oat cake to itself.

At the next place where the oat cake stopped, a woman was churning.

“Oh, the dear little, pretty little oat cake!” cried she. “I have good thick cream to-day, and plenty of it, and the oat cake will taste good with it.”

“But first you must catch me,” said the oat cake.

It rolled round and round the churn, and the woman ran after it, and in the end she fell against the churn and upset it.

While she was cleaning up the mess, the oat cake set out on further adventures. ^{206}

“So far I’ve found no place in the world where an oat cake can rest in peace and quiet,” said the cake. “But, there must be such a place somewhere, and if there is, I mean to find it.”

Soon it came to a bit of a stream, with a mill beside it.

The oat cake rolled into the mill, and there stood a miller at work, and he was all white with flour. “Oat cake and a bit of cheese taste well together,” said the miller. “The cheese I already have. Come in, come in and make the other half of the feast.”

But the oat cake was frightened and rolled on out, and the miller never bothered his head further about it.

The next place the oat cake stopped was at a smithy. The smith was busy beating out a horseshoe, but when he saw the oat cake he laid aside the shoe.

“Welcome! Welcome! I like an oat cake and a drink of ale as well as the next man. Come in and let us feast together.”

“Not I,” cried the oat cake, and away it rolled in haste, and as the road was downhill now, it made ^{207}good time.

The smith ran after it, and when he found the cake was going too fast for him, he threw his hammer after it, and the hammer fell into a thicket, and the smith had a great time finding it.

But the oat cake hid in a crack between two rocks, and lay there quiet until the smith had found his hammer and gone back to his smithy again grumbling. Then out it came and away it rolled, but it was getting tired now.

“Maybe it would have been better if I had gone to rest in the good man’s stomach,” said the oat cake, “but here we go, and I have no mind to be eaten by the first stranger who takes a fancy to me,—no, nor by the second either.”

In the next house the oat cake entered, the good wife was cooking supper, and her husband sat plaiting straw rope.

“Look at that!” cried the woman. “You’re always asking me for oat cake, and there is one ready to your hand. Quick! Quick! Shut the door and catch it.” ^{208}

The man jumped up to shut the door, but he caught his foot in the rope he was plaiting and fell flat on the floor. The woman threw her porridge stick at the cake, but away it went and off down the road.

“Now I’ll have to find some place to sleep,” said it to itself. “No knowing what will happen if I lay me down by the roadside.”

It saw an open door, and in it rolled. The good man of the house had just taken off his breeches, and the woman was tucking the children into bed.

“Look! Look!” cried the woman. “There is an oat cake rolling in at the door, and no one coming after to claim it. Catch it before it can get away again.”

The good man jumped up and threw his breeches at it. They fell on the oat cake and almost smothered it, but it managed to roll out from under them and away it went, with the man and his wife in full chase after it, and the children crying after them.

But the oat cake was too quick, even for the two of them. It outran them both, and



As soon as he saw the oat cake he was wide awake again in a moment. [Page 209](#)

the man and his wife had to go back home without it, the man with his bare legs, and the neighbors peeking^{209} out at him from behind their window curtains.

By this time it was dark. "I'll have to hurry if I want to find a place to-night where I can sleep in quiet," said the oat cake.

So now it rolled along more briskly, and presently it came to a pasture, and it leaped and bounded across it at a great rate, for it was all downhill, and then suddenly—plunk!—it fell down into a fox's hole.

The fox was at home and half asleep, but as soon as he saw the oat cake, he was wide awake again in a moment. The fox had had nothing to eat all day, and he did not stop to look twice at the oat cake, but bit it in half and swallowed it down in a trice and with no words about it.

So the oat cake slept quiet after all its wanderings, but it might as well have been eaten by the farmer in the first place.^{210}

THE DREAMER

AN ENGLISH STORY

THERE once lived a man and his wife, named Peter and Kate, and they were so poor that they had scarcely enough bread to put in their mouths. They lived in a wretched, miserable hut, and in front of the hut was a river, and back of it a patch of ground and a gnarled old apple tree.

One night when Peter was sleeping he dreamed a dream, and in this dream a tall old man dressed in gray, and with a long gray beard came to him and said, "Peter, I know that you have had a hard life, and have neither grumbled nor complained, and now I have a mind to help you. Follow down the river until you come to a bridge. On the other side of the river you will see a town. Take up your stand on the bridge and wait there patiently. It may be that nothing will happen the first day, and it may be that nothing will happen the second day either, but^{211} if you do not lose courage, but still wait patiently, some time during the third day some one will come to you, and tell you something that will make your fortune for you."

In the morning, when Peter awoke, he told his dream to Kate, his wife. "It would be a curious thing if I should do as the old man told me and really become rich," said he.

"Nonsense!" answered his wife. "Dreams are nothing but foolishness. Do you go over to Neighbor Goodkin and see whether he has not some wood to be cut, so you can earn a few pence to buy meal for to-morrow."

So Peter did as his wife told him, and went over to his neighbor's and worked there all day, and by evening he had almost forgotten his dream.

But that night, as soon as he fell asleep, the old man appeared before him again. "Why have you not done as I told you, Peter?" said he. "Remember, good luck will not wait forever. To-morrow do you set out for the bridge and town I told you of, and believe, for it is the truth; if you wait there for three days and make the best of ~~what~~^{212} will then be told you you will become a rich man."

When Peter awoke the next morning, his first thought was to set out in search of the bridge and town of which the old man had told him, but still his wife dissuaded him.

"Do not be so foolish," said she. "Sit down and eat your breakfast and be thankful that you have it. You earned a few pence yesterday, and who knows but what you may be lucky enough to earn even more to-day."

So Peter did not set out on his journey in search of fortune that day either.

But the next night for the third time the old man appeared before him, and now his look was stern and forbidding. "Thou fool!" said he. "Three times have I come to thee, and now I will come no more. Go to the bridge of which I have spoken and listen well to what is there said to thee. Otherwise want and poverty will still be thy portion, even as they have been heretofore."

With this the old man disappeared, and Peter awoke. And now it was of no use for his wife to scold^{213} and argue. As the old man had commanded so Peter would do. He only stopped to put some food in his stomach and more in his pockets, and off he set, one foot before another.

For a long time Peter journeyed on down the river till he was both footsore and weary, and then he came to a bridge that crossed the stream, and on the other side was a town, and Peter felt almost sure this was the place to which the old man of his dreams had told him to come.

So he took his stand on the fridge and stayed there all day. The passers-by stared at him, and some of them spoke to him, but none of them said to him anything that might, by any chance, lead him on to fortune. All that day he waited on the bridge, and all of the day after, and by the time the third day came, he had eaten all the food he had brought with him except one hard, dry crust of bread. Then he began to wonder whether he were not a simpleton to be loitering there day after day, all because of a dream, when he might, perhaps, be earning a ^{214}few pennies at home in one way or another.

Now just beyond this bridge there was a tailor's shop, and the tailor who lived there was a very curious man. Ever since Peter had taken his stand on the bridge the tailor had been peeping out at him, and wondering why he was standing there, and what his business might be; and the longer Peter stayed the more curious the tailor became. He fussed and he fidgeted, and along toward the afternoon of the third day he could bear it no longer, and he put aside his work and went out to the bridge to find out what he could about Peter and what he was doing there.

When he came where Peter was he bade him good-day.

"Good-day," answered Peter.

"Are you waiting here on the bridge for some one?" asked the tailor.

"I am and I am not," replied Peter.

"Now what may be the meaning of that?" asked the tailor. "How can you be waiting and still not be waiting all at one and the same time?" ^{215}

"I am waiting for some one—that is true"; said Peter, "but I know not who he is nor whence he will come, nor, for the matter of that, whether any one will come at all." And then he related to the tailor his dream, and how he had been told that if he waited on the bridge for three days some one would come along and tell him something that would make him rich for life.

"Why, what a silly fellow you are," said the tailor. "I, too, have dreamed dreams, but I have too much sense to pay any attention to them. Only last week I dreamed three times that an old man came to me and told me to follow up along the bank of the river until I came to a hut where a man and his wife lived,—the man's name was Peter, and his wife's name was Kate. I was to go and dig among the roots of an apple tree back of this house, and there, buried among the roots of the tree, I would find a chest of golden money. That was what I dreamed. But did I go wandering off in search of such a place? No, indeed, I am not such a simpleton. I stick to my work, ^{216}and I can manage to keep a warm roof over my head, and have plenty of food to eat, and when I am dressed in my best there is not one of the neighbors that looks half as fine as I do. No, no; go back to where you belong and set to work, my man, and maybe you can earn something better than those miserable rags you are wearing now."

So said the tailor, and then he went back to his tailor's bench and his sewing.

But Peter stood and scratched his head. "A man named Peter, and his wife named Kate! And an apple tree behind the house!" said he. "Now it's a strange thing if a fortune's been lying there under the roots of the apple tree all this while, and I had to come to this town and this bridge to hear about it!"

So said Peter as he stood there on the bridge. But then, after he had scratched his head and thought a bit longer, he pulled his hat down over his ears and off he set for home. The farther he went, the more of a hurry he was in, and at last, when he came within sight of his house again, he was all out of breath with the haste he ^{217}had made.

He did not wait to go inside, but he bawled to his wife to fetch him a pick and shovel, and ran around the house to where the apple tree stood.

His wife did not know what had happened to him. She thought he must have lost his wits, but she brought him the pick and shovel, and he began digging around about the roots of the apple tree.

He had not dug for so very long when his pick struck something hard. He flung the pick aside and seized his spade, and presently he uncovered a great chest made of stout oak wood and bound about with iron.

The chest was so heavy that he could not lift it out of the hole himself, and his wife had to help him. The chest was locked, but that mattered little to Peter. He took his pick, and with a few blows he broke the hinges and fastenings, and lifted the lid from its place. At once he gave a loud cry, and fell on his knees beside the chest. He

and his wife could scarce believe in their good fortune. It was brimming over with golden money, enough^{218} to make them rich for life.

They carried the chest into the house, and barred the door, and set about counting the money, and there was so much of it, they were all evening and part of the night counting it.

That was the way good fortune came to Peter, and all by way of a dream.

Now he and his wife built themselves a great house, and had fine food, and coaches, and horses, and handsome clothes, and they feasted the neighbors, and never a poor man came to the door but what they gave him as much food as he could eat and a piece of silver to put in his pocket.

One day Peter put on his finest clothes and made his wife dress herself in her best, and then they stepped into one of their coaches, and Peter bade the coachman drive to the town where he had stood on the bridge and listened to the tailor tell his dream of the chest of money buried under the apple tree.

Peter made the coachman drive up in front of the tailor's shop, and when the tailor saw the coach stopping^{219} at his door, and the fine people sitting in it, he thought it was some great nobleman and his wife, come perhaps to order a suit of clothes of him.

He came out, bowing and smiling and smirking, and Peter said to him, "Do you remember me?"

"No, your lordship," answered the tailor, still bowing and smiling, "I have not that honor, your lordship."

Then Peter told him he was the ragged fellow who had stood out there on the bridge waiting for good luck to come to him; and sure enough it had, for if it had not been for the dream the tailor told him, he would have known nothing about the gold buried under the apple tree and would never have become the rich man he was now.

When the tailor heard this tale, he was ready to tear his hair out, for if he had believed his dream he might have found the gold himself and have kept a share of it.

However, Peter gave him a hundred gold pieces to comfort him and ordered a fine suit. He also promised^{220} that after that he would buy all his clothes from the tailor and pay him a good price for them, so the tailor, too, got some good from all the dreaming.^{221}

THE STORY OF HARKA

AN AMERICAN INDIAN TALE

It was evening, and the Indians had gathered around their camp fires. Among the youths sat Harka, the tallest and handsomest of them all.

From the lodge his mother called to him, "Harka, go down to the spring in the forest and bring me some water."

Without moving, Harka answered, "It is dark down in the forest, and I am afraid to go where it is dark."

Then from all the Indians around there rose a shout of laughter and of jeering. "He is afraid of the dark!" they shouted. "He has said it!" And even the children laughed and jeered at him.

Then Harka arose and cried, "You think I am a coward, but I will prove to you before long that I am as brave as any man in the tribe, either youth or warrior."^{222}

"How will you prove it, Harka?" they mocked at him; and one cried, "Bring us the head of Pahundootah! Then we will believe you."

Now Pahundootah was a sorcerer, so powerful and wicked that he was the terror of all the villages. Even the warriors feared him, and women and children shuddered at his name.

But in his anger Harka answered rashly, "I will bring you the head of Pahundootah."

Then again the shouts arose, mocking and jeering at him. None believed him, but they thought him an idle boaster.

But Harka wrapped his blanket about him and went back in silence to his lodge, and the sound of laughter followed him, and his heart was troubled within him. He had said that he would bring them the head of the

sorcerer, and now unless he kept his promise he would be ashamed to face again his people and have them taunt him for his boasting.

Early the next morning Harka arose, and without saying anything to any one, he took from a bag that hung in the lodge three magic arrows belonging to his father, and set out upon a journey. He had determined to ^{223}seek out Pahundootah and either slay him or be slain.

All the morning he traveled on without stopping, and at noon he shot one of the magic arrows high into the air. He carefully noted the direction in which it went and then followed, running swiftly and lightly.

Toward evening he came to where a deer lay dead, with the arrow sticking in it.

Without troubling to withdraw the arrow, Harka cut some slices of venison and cooked and ate.

All night he tended the fire that it might not die down and leave him in darkness, and in the early morning he again set out upon his journey.

At noon he shot his second arrow into the air, and toward evening he found it buried in the heart of an elk. That night he had elk meat for supper, and the next day he went on his way, traveling swiftly, but he forgot the arrow. ^{224}

He waited till noonday and then shot from his bow his third and last arrow. That evening he came to where a buffalo lay dead, slain by the arrow. Once more he ate and rested by the fire, and at dawning he set out again upon his journey.

When noon came he had no arrow to shoot, for he had left them all behind him.

By evening Harka was very hungry, but there was nothing for him to eat.

Suddenly he saw the light of a fire just ahead of him. He advanced toward it, slowly and cautiously, fearing it might be the encampment of some enemy, but he saw no one except an old woman who was stirring something in a pot that hung over the fire. Never was seen an old woman half so horrible and terrifying as she. Her face was more like that of a skull than of a human being. Her gray hair hung down about her like a mat; her eyes were as red as fire, and her nails so long that she could hardly close her hands. About her neck was a necklace of bones, and about her waist a girdle of scalps. ^{225}

After looking at her for awhile, Harka was about to steal quietly away when, without looking up, the old woman called to him, "Come nearer to the fire, Harka. Supper is almost ready."

Harka came forward into the firelight, and the old witch, still without looking up, bade him be seated.

Suddenly the scalps about her waist burst into a shout of laughter, and the hag joined in with them, laughing loudly. Then they fell silent, and the old woman too became quiet, scowling and muttering to herself as she bent over the pot.

Presently she filled a dish with food and brought it to Harka. The youth was hungry, and in spite of the strange look of the old woman, he ate heartily.

When he had finished, she took away the bowl. Again the scalps burst into wild laughter, and the hag laughed with them.

After they were silent, she came over and sat down beside Harka and began talking.

"I know why you have come here, Harka," she said. "You are in search of Pahundootah. I am the ^{226}Witch Wokonkatonzooeyepekahaichu and Pahundootah is my bitterest enemy. I myself cannot destroy him, but you may be able to do it with my help. It will be a very dangerous business, and you will have to be careful. Now sleep, and to-morrow I will tell you what you must do in order to destroy the sorcerer."

Harka lay down beside the fire and slept soundly.

The next morning, when he awoke, the breakfast was ready, and after he had eaten, the old woman went into the lodge and brought out a magic pouch. From this she drew a leaden comb, a golden cup, and a blade of sword grass. She also took from the bag a woman's dress most beautifully shaped and colored.

"Now listen carefully," said the witch. "Only as a maiden can you come near Pahundootah. Put on the dress, and then I will comb your hair for you."

Harka did as the old witch bade him. He dressed himself in the beautiful garments, and then the old ^{227}witch took the leaden comb and combed his hair; and as she combed, his hair grew longer and longer until it hung down below his knees in beautiful shining tresses. His eyes also looked larger, and his face finer, so that any one who saw him would have thought him a surpassingly beautiful young maiden.

The old witch looked at him and burst into laughter, and all the scalps laughed with her.

Then she gave Harka the golden goblet and the blade of sword grass. "Put the grass in your girdle," said she. "With that and that alone can Pahundootah's head be severed from his shoulders. Now walk forward until you come to a lake with an island in the middle of it. Upon that island live the sorcerer and his people. As soon as you reach the lake you must begin to dip up the water in the golden cup. The sorcerer will see the gleam of it and come in his canoe to capture you. This you must allow him to do, though you must seem frightened and reluctant, as would a timid maiden. He will take you back to the island with him, and then you must find ⁽²²⁸⁾some way to draw him apart from the others and lull him to sleep. Then you can cut off his head with the blade of grass I have given you and escape before the others find what you have done."

Harka took the cup and the blade of grass she offered him and strode off through the forest in the direction the witch pointed out to him. Soon he came out from the forest and found himself upon the borders of a wide lake, in the midst of which lay an island.

Harka now walked more slowly and delicately, trying to move with the soft grace of a young and timid maiden.

At the edge of the lake he stooped and dipped the cup into the water. The sunlight striking on the gold was reflected with a dazzling brightness that could be seen even as far as the island.

Scarcely had he lifted the dripping cup from the water when he saw a canoe shoot out from among the reeds of the island and come swiftly toward the spot where he was standing. In it sat the sorcerer Pahundootah, ⁽²²⁹⁾driving it forward with strong strokes.

As Harka looked at him, his heart beat heavy within him, for the sorcerer was terrible to see, so hideous and cruel and treacherous was his appearance.

But the youth managed to hide his feelings and turned aside with the shy and downcast air of a timid maiden, and moved slowly toward the forest. Charmed by his grace and beauty, Pahundootah followed him. He praised the pretended maiden's eyes, her lips, her hair, the grace with which she moved, and poured words of love into Harka's ears, begging him to return with him to his island home and share his lodge, his food, and fire.

Harka pretended to hesitate, but finally he allowed himself to be persuaded, and entering the canoe, he sat down opposite the sorcerer, giving him shy glances and trailing his hand through the water.

Pahundootah was as one bewitched. Hardly could he take his eyes from Harka's beauty. With strong ⁽²³⁰⁾strokes he drove the canoe through the water and over to the island. Then he took Harka's hand and led him to where a fire was burning and an old hag was cooking supper. He spread a robe for his love to sit on and threw himself at her feet. The hag who was his mother watched them, muttering. Again and again she looked suspiciously at Harka. At last the supper was cooked. She called Harka to come and carry a bowl of it to the sorcerer. Harka moved toward her softly, trying still to bear himself as a maiden, but the old woman watched him suspiciously, and as he drew nearer she looked deep into his eyes.

"Pahundootah," she cried, "what magic has bewitched you? Can you not see that this is no maiden, but a brave and daring warrior who has put on this appearance in order to deceive you?"

Pahundootah sprang to his feet and looked at Harka with anger and suspicion, but Harka turned away his head with an offended air. "Your mother has insulted me," he said. "She is angry because you have brought me here and because you have spoken to me of love. Now I will go away back to my own tribe where I will be ⁽²³¹⁾free from insults."

Slowly he walked away from the fire and down toward the reedy shore of the island.

As Pahundootah watched the grace with which he walked and noted again his long and glossy hair, he could not doubt but that his mother was mistaken, and that this was really a maiden. He followed, begging Harka to turn and smile upon him and return with him to the fire.

"No," repeated Harka, "your mother has insulted me. It is better I should return to my own people."

By the side of the lake Harka sat down, and the sorcerer threw himself down beside him, and laid his head in Harka's lap.

Softly Harka passed his fingers through Pahundootah's hair. Lulled by his love and the touch of Harka's fingers, the sorcerer's eyelids closed, and he sank into slumber. Then softly the lad drew from his girdle the blade of grass the witch had given him and with one stroke severed the head of Pahundootah from the ⁽²³²⁾body.

Swiftly wrapping it in a cloth he had brought for that purpose, he sped to where the canoe lay among the rushes, and stepping into it, he drove it off across the water with silent, powerful strokes.

When he reached the farther shore, he turned and looked back. Already lights were moving about on the island. The old mother, grown suspicious, was hunting for the sorcerer. Then suddenly across the water sounded loud fierce wails and cries. By that, Harka knew they had discovered Pahundootah's body.

Without waiting longer, he sped back to the camp of the old witch. As she saw him coming, she began to clap her hands, shouting, "You have slain him! You have slain him! Harka has slain the enemy of Wokonkatonzooyeppekahaichu!" and all the scalps that hung about her shouted with her. "Now," she cried, "you are a great warrior! Now no one can laugh at you or scorn you."

All that night as Harka lay beside the witch's fire, he could hear, now louder now fainter, the cries of Pahundootah's people, and always,



When he reached the farther shore, he turned and looked back. [Page 232](#)

as they sounded louder, the old witch laughed with joy, and the scalps laughed with her.

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Early in the morning Harka set out to journey back to his tribe. For three days he journeyed, and then he came within sight of the village. It was toward dusk, and the Indians were gathered once more about their fires. It was the children who saw him first, and they shouted, laughing, "Here comes Harka! Here comes Harka."

Hasten, Harka, or the dark may catch you.” And the youths joined them in their laughter. “Have you slain the sorcerer, Harka? Have you his head to show us?”

Then Harka answered proudly, “Look!” and uncovering the head, he held it up before them.

For a moment all were silent, gazing awe-struck. Then a great shout arose, “He has slain him! Harka has slain Pahundootah! He has brought his head to show us!”

Then all gathered around him, youths and warriors, and the women and the children also, and all wondered and hailed him as a hero. And from that time Harka sat no more with those of his own age, but with the ^{234}wise ones and the warriors, and joined in their councils, and when the old chief died, Harka was chosen chief and ruled his tribe and reared up children and killed many enemies. And always he was known as Harka, the slayer of Pahundootah. ^{235}

SCHIPPEITARO

A JAPANESE STORY

THERE was once a brave Japanese lad who wished to go out into the world and prove his courage in some great adventure. His father and mother did not say no to this. Instead they gave him their blessing, and allowed him to set forth.

For a long time he traveled along, crossing streams and passing through villages, but nowhere did he meet with any adventures.

One evening, as dusk drew on, he found himself in a dark forest, and he did not know which way to turn in order to get out of it. He wandered this way and that, and always the night grew darker and the way rougher, and then suddenly, between the tree trunks, he saw a red light shine out; sometimes it shone brighter and sometimes dimmer, but never with a steady shining.

He went toward the light, and before long he found himself near an old ruined temple. Within a fire ^{236}was burning, and the temple was full of demon cats. They were leaping and whirling and dancing around the fire, and as they danced they sang. The song had words and they sang them over and over again, always the same thing.

At first the lad could not make out what the words were, but after he had listened carefully for a while he understood; and this was what they sang:

“To-night we dance, to-night we sing;
To-morrow the maiden they will bring.”

They would sing this over and over and over, and then suddenly they would cease their bounding and whirling, and would stand still and all cry together,—

“But Schippeitaro must not know!
But Schippeitaro must not know!”

The lad stayed there for a long time watching them, and the longer he watched, the more he wondered.

After a while the fire burned low, they bounded less wildly, and their songs were still. Then the fire died ^{237}out, and soon afterward the lad fell into a deep sleep.

When he awoke the next morning, he was both cold and stiff, and as he rubbed his eyes and looked about him, he thought that all he had seen the night before must have been only a dream, for the temple lay silent and deserted, and there were no signs of the demon cats or their revels, except a heap of burned-out ashes on the temple floor.

The lad arose from where he lay and went on his way wondering. Not long after he came to the edge of the forest and saw before him a village. He entered the village and looked about him, and everything was in mourning and all the people seemed very sad. In front of one of the principal houses a great crowd had gathered, and from within came a sound of weeping and lamenting.

The lad joined the crowd, and looked in through the door of the house. There he saw a maiden dressed as though for a festival, but she was very pale, and tears were running down her face; an old man and an old woman, who seemed to be her father and mother, sat one each side of her, holding her hands, and they also ^{238}were weeping, with the tears running down their wrinkled faces. Two men were busy over a great chest bound around with iron, and with iron hasps, and every time the old man and woman looked at the chest, they shuddered and wept more bitterly than ever.

This sight made the youth very curious, and he turned to a man beside him and asked why the village was all in mourning, and why the beautiful young girl and her parents were weeping so bitterly.

“Are you a stranger in these parts that you ask such questions?” inquired the man.

“I come from beyond the other side of the forest, from far away,” replied the youth, “and I know nothing of this village or what has happened here.”

“Then I will tell you,” said the man. “Over in the forest yonder there dwells a terrible demon. Every year he requires that a maiden shall be offered up to him as a sacrifice. Many of our most beautiful maidens have already ^{239}been sacrificed to him, and to-day it is the turn of the one you see within there, and she is the fairest of them all.”

“But why do not your men go into the forest and try to destroy this demon?” asked the youth.

“It would be useless, for we have been told and know that no mortal arm can prevail against him. He comes, as a cat, to the ruined temple over yonder in the forest, and with him comes a great company of seeming cats—but they also are demons and are his servants.”

When the youth heard this, he remembered the cats he had seen dancing in the temple the night before and the song they had sung; and presently he asked, “Who is Schippeitaro?”

When he asked this, those around who heard him began to laugh. “You speak as though Schippeitaro were a man,” said they. “Schippeitaro is a great dog that belongs to the Prince of this country. The Prince values him highly, for he is as big as a lion and twice as fierce. Never before was his like seen for strength and bigness, ^{240}nor ever will be again.”

The youth asked where the Prince kept the hound, and as soon as he had learned this, he set off walking very rapidly in the direction the man pointed out to him.

After a while he came to a house with a walled garden back of it. In this house lived the man who had charge of Schippeitaro, and the walled garden was for the dog to roam about in.

The youth knocked at the door, and presently the keeper of the dog opened it and asked him what he wanted.

“I want to borrow your great hound, Schippeitaro, for the night, and I will pay you well for lending him to me,” said the lad.

“That you will not do,” replied the keeper, “for I will not lend him to you. He is the favorite dog of the Prince of this country, and it would be as much as my life is worth to lend him to any one.”

Then the lad began to bargain with him. First he offered the man a third of all his money if he might ^{241}have the dog just until morning; then he offered him the half of all his money, and then he offered him all of it.

That was more than the man could withstand. “Very well”, said he, “you may take the dog; but remember it is only for this one night, and you must bring him back the first thing in the morning, and you need never ask to borrow him again for I shall not lend him to you.”

A collar was then put around Schippeitaro’s neck, and a chain fastened to it, and the lad took the chain in his hand and led the great dog back to the village he had just come from.

When he came to the house where he had seen the maiden, they were just about to put her in the chest, for that was always the way the maidens who were to be sacrificed were carried to the temple.

But the youth bade them stay their hands. “Listen to me,” said he, “for I know whereof I speak. I have seen these demons, and I have a plan by which you may rid yourselves of them forever. Instead of the maiden, do you put Schippeitaro into the chest, carry him to the temple and leave him there. I myself will accompany you, ^{242}and after you have gone, I will stay there and watch. Believe me, no harm shall come from this, but instead it will put an end to your having to offer up sacrifices to the demon.”

At first the people would not listen to him, but afterward they agreed to do as he wished, though they were very much frightened. The great hound was put into the chest, the lid was fastened, and he was carried away and

placed in the temple instead of the maiden. After that the men hastened back to the village, but the lad hid himself near by to wait and watch for the demons as he had promised.

After a while it grew dark, and then, toward midnight, a dull red fire shone in the temple, and the lad saw that it was full of demon cats whirling and bounding and singing as they had before, but this time there was with them a great fierce black cat, larger than any of them, and he was the king of them all, and he leaped higher and sang louder than any of them. This time their song was of how a maiden had been brought to them as a sacrifice,^{243} and of what a tender morsel she would be. Then they all shouted together:

“And Schippeitaro does not know!
And Schippeitaro does not know!”

Nearer and nearer they came to the chest. Almost they brushed against it as they whirled about it. Then, with a cry, they bounded at it, and tore it open.

At once, out from the box leaped Schippeitaro. The demons shrieked at the sight of him and the great hound rushed at them and tore them. He seized the King Demon by the throat and shook him till the life was quite shaken out of him. Then he flew at the other cats, and when they tried to escape out through the doors or windows, the youth stood there with his sword and drove them back.

Many of the demons did Schippeitaro destroy that night; many of them he scattered over the floor in pieces, and those who escaped fled so far away that they were never seen in that neighborhood again.

But the youth returned to the house of the parents of the maiden and asked them for her hand in marriage,^{244} for he had loved her from the first moment he had seen her, because of her beauty, and her gentle air. Gladly her parents agreed to give her to him, and the Prince himself came to the marriage, bringing with him gifts both rich and rare, for he had heard of the bravery and wit the youth had shown in ridding his people of the demons who had distressed them, and he brought Schippeitaro with him as a welcome guest.

After that the youth and his young wife returned to his own home, and there they lived happy forever after,^{245} honored and admired by all who knew them.

EROS AND PSYCHE

A GREEK TALE

THERE was once a Princess named Psyche who was so beautiful that no one on earth could compare with her in fairness. When she went abroad the people gathered in crowds to gaze upon her, and children strewed flowers before her and offered her garlands, as though she were a goddess.

Now when Aphrodite, herself the Goddess of Beauty, heard of this, she became very jealous of Psyche, and she called to her Eros, her son who was the God of Love, and bade him cause Psyche to fall in love with the ugliest and wickedest man in all the world.

“In this way she shall be punished for her pride and for her beauty,” said Aphrodite, who was herself most proud and beautiful.

Now Eros was very curious to see this beauty of beauties, and so, in invisible form, he visited the palace of Psyche’s father and went from room to room until he came to where she sat with her two sisters. They were^{246} all beautiful, but Psyche so far outshone the others that they seemed pale beside her.

No sooner had Eros looked upon her, than he fell deeply in love with her and determined to make her his bride. He therefore put it into her father’s mind to consult an oracle as to what should be done with Psyche, for already the King was fearful, lest her beauty bring down upon him the anger of the gods.

So the King traveled secretly to the temple of Phoebus at Miletus, and there he consulted the oracle; the oracle told him that Psyche must be taken to the top of a high mountain and there left to be devoured by a monster that the gods would send, and that in this way, and this way alone, could the whole kingdom be saved from destruction.

When the King heard this, his heart was heavy within him, for of all his daughters Psyche was the dearest to him, so he returned home very sorrowful. The two older sisters cared little for his sadness, but Psyche, ^{247}who loved him tenderly, was grieved, and she went to him and said, "My father, why are you so sorrowful and downcast?"

For a long time the King would not tell her what it was that troubled him, but she was so urgent in her questions that at last he could keep silence no longer, and he said, "My daughter, thy beauty is so great that it has drawn upon us the anger of the gods, and even Aphrodite herself is jealous of thee. The oracle at Miletus has spoken and has told me that I and thou and thy sisters and all the city with us will be destroyed, unless a certain sacrifice is made."

Then Psyche asked him what was the sacrifice the gods demanded, and her father answered, "Thou thyself, Psyche, art the sacrifice."

When Psyche heard that, she cried aloud with terror, but presently she asked her father how she was to be sacrificed, and he told her what else the oracle had said, that she was to be taken out to a high mountain and left there to be devoured by a monster the gods would send. ^{248}

Then Psyche wept bitterly, but at last she said, "It is better that one should perish than that all should be destroyed together. So let the sacrifice be made, even as the oracle has directed."

Then, soon afterward, Psyche was made ready; she was dressed as a bride, in shining garments, and hung about with jewels, and at the time set by the oracle, she was taken out and left alone upon the mountain. None might stay to comfort her or to watch with her for the coming of the monster.

But no sooner was she alone than Eros caused her to fall into a deep sleep, and while she slept he carried her away to a secret palace he had prepared for her. All about the palace were gardens, with shining temples and fountains and winding paths and trees that bore all sorts of strange and delicious fruits. The palace itself was very beautiful. The walls were of ivory and cedar, and the roof was of gold. The ceilings were of shining blue, set with precious stones like stars, and the pillars that supported it were also of gold, wrought with shapes ^{249}of flowers and leaves and birds; and the floor was of stones of beautiful colors set in strange patterns.

It was in this palace that Psyche awakened and, wondering, looked about her.

Suddenly the voices of unseen maidens spoke to her sweetly, bidding her have no fear. "We are your servants, Psyche," they told her. "This palace, these gardens, and we who are to serve you are the gift of one who loves you. He desires only your happiness, and for you to be his bride."

Then all fear left Psyche, and she rose up and wandered through the gardens, and from room to room of the palace, and everywhere she saw new beauties. Soft music followed her, and in one place a feast of strange and delicious foods and drinks was served to her, but she saw no one. Everything was done for her by invisible hands.

All day Psyche amused herself by examining the beautiful things about the palace and garden, and then, as night drew on, and she became weary, she laid herself down upon a magnificent couch that had been prepared for her. ^{250}

Then suddenly, in the darkness, Psyche heard footsteps coming nearer and nearer. Filled with terror, she listened. She feared it was the monster that the gods were to send, and that it was coming now to destroy her. But a voice, softer and sweeter than any she had ever heard, spoke to her out of the darkness, bidding her have no fear.

"I am thy own true lover, Psyche," said the voice. "It is for thee I prepared this palace and these gardens. Only love me in return, and our happiness will be so great that even the gods themselves can know no greater."

Then Psyche was filled with joy and with love for the one who spoke to her so tenderly, and who had prepared all this happiness for her.

All night he stayed with her, and they held sweet talk together, but in the early morning, before it was light, he left her, and she knew nothing of how this unknown lover looked, but only that he was wise and kind and tender.

Now every day Psyche wandered through the gardens or amused herself in the palace, and feasted and ^{251}heard sweet music, and was served in every thing by unseen hands, and every night her unknown lover came to her, but always he left before the morning and so she never saw him.

For a long time Psyche was very happy, but after a while she began to think of her father and her sisters, and her heart yearned for them so that she became sad and lonely.

One night she said to her lover, "Am I never again to see my father, nor the sisters who are so dear to me?"

Then the unknown one asked her, "Are you so soon weary of me, Psyche?"

"I am not weary of you," answered the Princess, "but I long with all my heart to see my sisters that I may know that it is well with them, and that they may know that it is well with me also. If I could see them but once only, then I would be contented."

Her unknown lover was silent for a while, and then he said. "I love you so dearly that I can refuse you nothing, Psyche. I will bring your sisters here to visit you, but they may stay with you only for three days,^{252} and you must tell them nothing of me, however they may question you, and if they offer you advice, you must not take it. Do not even listen to it. Remember, if you disobey me, great sorrow will come upon you and upon me also."

Psyche was filled with joy at the thought that she was once more to see her sisters, and eagerly she promised to heed the warnings of her lover and to obey him in all things. But all night Eros (for it was he who was her lover) was very sad and silent, for he feared that this wish of Psyche's would bring some misfortune on them.

The next night Eros caused Psyche's sisters to fall into a deep sleep, and while they were sleeping Zephyrus, who governs the winds, lifted them up and carried them to a room in Psyche's palace and left them there.

In the morning, when the sisters awoke, they were amazed to find themselves in an unknown palace, and their wonder was even greater when Psyche came hastening to greet them, and when they found the palace^{253} and all that was in it and the gardens round about it were hers, and were all the gift of a lover, who had brought her there the day she was left upon the mountain.

Psyche questioned them about their father and all that had happened since she had left them, and after she had heard all there was to tell, she took them through the palace and showed them the treasures, and led them through the gardens, and they heard the music, and were served by unseen hands. The more they saw, the more they wondered, and they became very envious of Psyche. They asked her about the one who had given her all these things, but Psyche turned these questions aside and would not talk with them of her lover.

At the end of three days, when the time came for her sisters to leave her, Psyche bade them choose what they would have of all they had seen in the palace. She loaded them with jewels and treasures, and nothing they asked for was refused them. Then they fell asleep, and in their sleep Zephyrus carried them back again to ^{254}their father's castle, to the place whence he had brought them, and the gifts that Psyche had given them he left beside them.

After this Psyche was contented for a time and then once more she began to long to see her sisters, and she begged Eros to bring them to visit her as before.

"Psyche, do not ask me," said Eros. "I feel that if they come again, some misfortune will surely fall upon us."

But still Psyche begged and entreated him to bring them to her, until he could refuse no longer. Again he caused the sisters to fall into a deep sleep, and again Zephyrus bore them to the palace where Psyche awaited them.

But this time the sisters brought but little joy with them. All the while they had been away they had been growing more and more envious of Psyche, so that now they could scarcely hide from her their jealousy of her good fortune.

"Why should Psyche have all these things," said they to each other, "and we have nothing except such gifts as she is pleased to make to us?"^{255}

Then they began to talk to her about her husband. "He must be some horrible monster," said they. "Otherwise why should he only come in darkness and never let you see him? No doubt he is the very monster for whom you were left upon the mountain. Oh, Psyche! Your fate is surely most unhappy in that you are married to such a creature."

At first Psyche tried not to listen to them, but still they talked and whispered until at last she became frightened, and each night she dreaded the coming of her husband, fearing he was indeed some monster, and that, in the end, he would devour her.

Then came the last night that her sisters were to be with her, and just before they went to rest they called Psyche to their chamber and gave her a lamp and a dagger.

“Dearest sister, we wish, if possible to save you,” said they. “Here are a lamp and a dagger. To-night, when your husband is sleeping, you must rise quietly from his side and take the lamp and look at him. Then if, as we believe, you find he is a monster, drive this dagger into his heart. So you will rid the world of him and ^{256}save yourself alive, for unless you do this, he will certainly sometime destroy you.”

Trembling Psyche took the lamp and the dagger and promised to hide them in the little room that was beyond her sleeping chamber and to use the dagger as they directed if she found that what they feared were so. Then she kissed her sisters farewell, for she knew the time had come for them to leave her.

That night Eros came to Psyche as usual, and she let him know nothing of what she and her sisters had planned against him. He was so gentle toward her, and so tender that she could not but love him, and then she remembered her sisters’ warnings and hardened her heart against him.

She waited until he was sleeping, and then she slipped away and took up the lamp in one hand and the dagger in the other. Returning, she held the lamp above him and looked down at him.

What were her joy and awe and wonder to find it was no monster, but Eros, the God of Love himself ^{257}who was her husband.

As she still bent above him, entranced by his beauty, one drop of hot oil from the lamp fell upon his shoulder.

Then Eros sprang up from his slumbers and looked at her with grief and indignation.

“What have you done!” he cried. “Oh, unhappy one! Why did you not obey my warnings? Now I must leave you, and grief and sorrow must be your portion. Farewell, unhappy Psyche.”

With these words he vanished from before her, and at the same time the palace and the gardens and all that were in them faded away like the mist of the morning.

Psyche was alone upon a wide and desolate plain. Dawn was breaking, and a cold wind blew about her.

“Eros! Eros!” cried Psyche; but no one answered.

Then Psyche wept aloud in bitter despair; and she rose and wrapped her garments about her against the wind and set off across the plain. ^{258}

For a long time she journeyed on, but whither she knew not, until at last she came to a wood and heard a sound of piping. She followed the sound and presently came to a place where the god Pan sat, playing upon his pipes, and all about him creatures of the wood, both large and small, had gathered to listen to his music.

Then Psyche cried to him in her grief. “Oh, Pan, you who wander far and near, tell me where is Eros, that I may follow him and find him.”

But Pan answered, “I know not, Psyche. Ask Demeter, the Earth-mother. She is very wise, and if he is on this earth, she is the one who can tell you where to find him.”

So Psyche went on farther and came to where Demeter, the kind Earth-mother, was watching the fields and meadows and the harvesters at their work.

Then Psyche said to her, “Oh, Demeter, you who know all things, tell me where my husband Eros has fled to that I may follow and find him.”

The Earth-mother answered, “He is not on earth, Psyche. When the hot oil fell upon him and burned him, ^{259}he fled back to Olympus, the home of the gods, for it is there his mother Aphrodite dwells. Now he is with her, for she and she alone can heal the wound that you have caused him.”

Then Psyche wept even more bitterly still, and she said, “I will go to Aphrodite and tell her of my grief and sorrow, and then it may be that she will let me speak with Eros, and that he will forgive me.”

But Demeter replied, “Be careful, Psyche, for Aphrodite hates you with a bitter hatred, and if she could she would gladly destroy you. Eros, too, is angry with you, and you can hardly hope he will forgive you, for you have caused him great sorrow and suffering.”

“Nevertheless,” said Psyche, “I will go to Aphrodite, for unless Eros will forgive me and take me back into his love, I do not care to live.”

So Psyche journeyed on and on until at last she came to Olympus and to the place where Aphrodite had her dwelling. When the goddess saw Psyche she was glad at heart, for she thought, “Now Psyche has come to me ^{260}it

will be a strange thing if I cannot get her entirely into my power and punish her as she deserves.” But even as she thought thus, she wondered at Psyche’s beauty, for it was very great.

Then Psyche asked if she might speak with Eros, but the goddess answered harshly, “Eros has no wish to see you. You deceived and wounded him so that he fled to me for comfort. But I will set you a task to prove you, and if you can perform it, then perhaps I will speak of you to Eros and plead with him to forgive you; but if you fail, then you shall give yourself over to me, for me to do with you as I please.”

And Psyche answered, “No task is too hard for me if only Eros will forgive me.”

So Aphrodite took her into a room where there was a great heap of every kind of grain, barley and millet and wheat and poppy and beans and many others, and they were all mixed together so that it was difficult to tell one from another. {261}

Then Aphrodite said, “Your task is to separate these seeds one from another. Each kind must be put by itself in a separate heap, and all this must be done before evening.” So saying, Aphrodite turned away and left her.

As Psyche looked at the heap of grain, she knew the task that Aphrodite had set her was one that it was impossible to perform, and she was frightened at the thought of what Aphrodite might do to her if she failed.

Now though Eros was still angry with Psyche, he had no wish to leave her entirely to the cruelty of his mother, so he sent an army of ants to help her. Thousands upon thousands he sent, and the ants seized the grains and dragged them apart, each kind to itself, while Psyche watched and wondered. As if by magic the heap was separated, and each kind of grain was gathered off by itself, and when the task was finished the ants disappeared again; not one of them was left.

Toward evening Aphrodite came to the room where she had left Psyche, and her heart was filled ^{262}with triumph, for she had no doubt but that she would find the task unfinished and would then have the Princess in her power.

But what was her rage and wonder to find the grains separated and lying in different heaps about the room, each kind by itself as she had commanded.

“And now will you ask Eros to forgive me?” asked Psyche timidly.

But Aphrodite answered, “Wait until to-morrow. Then we will talk of it.”

But the next day the goddess set another task for Psyche. She bade her go out to where her sheep were pastured, and fetch her back a bagful of their golden wool.

Now the sheep of Aphrodite were very fierce and terrible, so that no one might approach them without being torn to pieces. This Psyche knew, but she thought, “Better to perish at once than suffer from the wrath of Aphrodite.”

So she took the bag the goddess gave her and set out for the pasture. But on the way she met Pan, and he had pity on her because of her beauty and her sorrow. {263}

“Psyche, do not venture near the pasture,” he warned her. “Wait until evening when the sheep are resting and then turn aside into yonder wood, and gather the wool you will find there in the thickets; for in the heat of the day the sheep take shelter there, and their wool catches on the thorns and briers and is torn from them.”

Gratefully Psyche thanked him for his advice, and she waited until on toward evening, and then stole into the wood and there about her, on thorny branches, glittered the tufts of golden wool the sheep had left behind them. Psyche gathered them, handful after handful, until her bag was full, and then she hastened back with it to Aphrodite.

When the goddess saw that again Psyche had succeeded, her heart was hot within her. But when the Princess asked her, “Will you not yet plead for me with Eros?” the goddess answered, “Wait until to-morrow. It may be that he himself may wish to see you.”

But on the morrow it was a new task that she set for Psyche. She gave her a crystal urn, and bade her take it to the fountain of Oblivion, and there fill it with water, and fetch it back with her. {264}

Now the fountain of Oblivion flows forth black and cold as ice from a deep crevice in a rock at the top of a high mountain, and the rock is so steep that it is impossible for any human being to climb it. Thence the waters pour down through a deep channel, and this channel is guarded on either side by dragons that never sleep.

Psyche took the urn and set forth upon her journey, and as she journeyed on her way she wept, for she knew that no one could go near the stream of Oblivion and live, because of the dragons that guarded it.

But once more Eros had pity on her, and he asked of Zeus, the All-Father, that he would lend him his eagle, that it might take the urn and carry it to the fountain and fill it, and return with it to Psyche.

Zeus, the All-Father did not refuse, and so as Psyche sat resting by the wayside, the eagle swept down upon her, and caught the urn from her hand, and flew away with it. ^{265}

And now Psyche believed she was indeed lost, for how could she return to Aphrodite and tell her that not only had she failed to fetch the water, but that the crystal urn had been stolen from her also.

But while she stood there, afraid either to return or to go forward, she heard again a great beating of wings, and the eagle returned to her. She saw that he still had the urn, but now it was full of the dark and icy water for which she had been sent.

Then Psyche rejoiced and took the urn from the eagle and hastened back to Aphrodite. When the goddess saw that once more Psyche had fulfilled her bidding, her brow grew black with fury.

“One more task, and one more only will I set you,” said the goddess. “Take this box and journey to the lower regions where Persephone is Queen; beg from her a bit of her beauty and bring it back to me in this box, for the Feast of the Gods is soon to be given, and I wish to adorn myself with it.”

And now Psyche indeed believed herself lost, for never had human being journeyed to those lower regions ^{266} where Persephone was Queen and returned again to the green earth above. In her despair she thought, “Better that I should perish at once than suffer longer from the anger of Aphrodite,” and she went up to the top of a high tower, intending to throw herself from it and so put an end to her sorrows.

But this tower was an enchanted place, and when she had climbed to the top of it, a voice spoke to her and bade her take courage.

“It is possible to do as Aphrodite has commanded and still live,” said the voice. “Only listen carefully and do in all things as thou shalt now be directed, and thou mayest win for her the beauty she asks.”

The voice then told her she must go to the city of Achaia. Near to it was a mountain; in this mountain was a gap, narrow and dark, and from this gap a pathway led down to the lower regions where Persephone was Queen. It was this path that Psyche must follow.

“But take with thee in thy mouth two pieces of silver money,” said the voice, “and in each hand a piece ^{267} of barley bread soaked in honey, for these thou wilt need if thou wouldst reach the palace of Persephone in safety.” The voice also told her that after she had followed the path for a short distance, she would meet an old man driving a lame ass loaded with wood. This old man would beg and beseech her to help him, but she must pay no heed, but pass on in silence, for it was Aphrodite who would send him there to tempt her to give up either the bread or money.

Soon after she would come to the great black river Styx, and there she would find the boatman Charon waiting. He it is who ferries the souls of the dead across the water. After she had entered the boat she was to allow Charon to take from her lips one of the two pieces of money in payment for ferrying her over. As she crossed a face would rise above the water and beg her for the other piece of money, but still she must keep silence and pay no heed to any entreaties, for this face also was a snare set for her by Aphrodite, to make her give up the other piece of money. ^{268}

After she had crossed the river, she would see before her the palace of Persephone, and at the gate the fierce three-headed dog Cerberus, who stands ever guarding it against those who would enter. To him she must give a piece of the bread, still without speaking, and then he would allow her to pass by him.

She would then be brought before Persephone, but here, also, would danger await her. A feast would be set before her, and she would be urged to eat, but no crumb or drop must pass her lips, for whosoever eats or drinks with Persephone may never again return from her palace to the green world of sunshine above. But if she were steadfast and neither ate nor drank, nor spoke one word, Persephone would give her in the box the beauty that Aphrodite desired. Then on her return she must give the second piece of bread to Cerberus, that he might let her pass, and to Charon the other piece of money, that he might ferry her over in safety.

“But oh, Psyche, open not the box, nor look within it,” counseled the voice, “for if thou shouldst raise ^{269} the lid, then all thy labors will have been in vain, and the wrath of Aphrodite will surely overtake thee.”

Until the voice was silent, Psyche stood and listened, and all that was said she stored away in her heart and remembered; and when it was still she came down at once from the tower and set out for the city of Achaia.

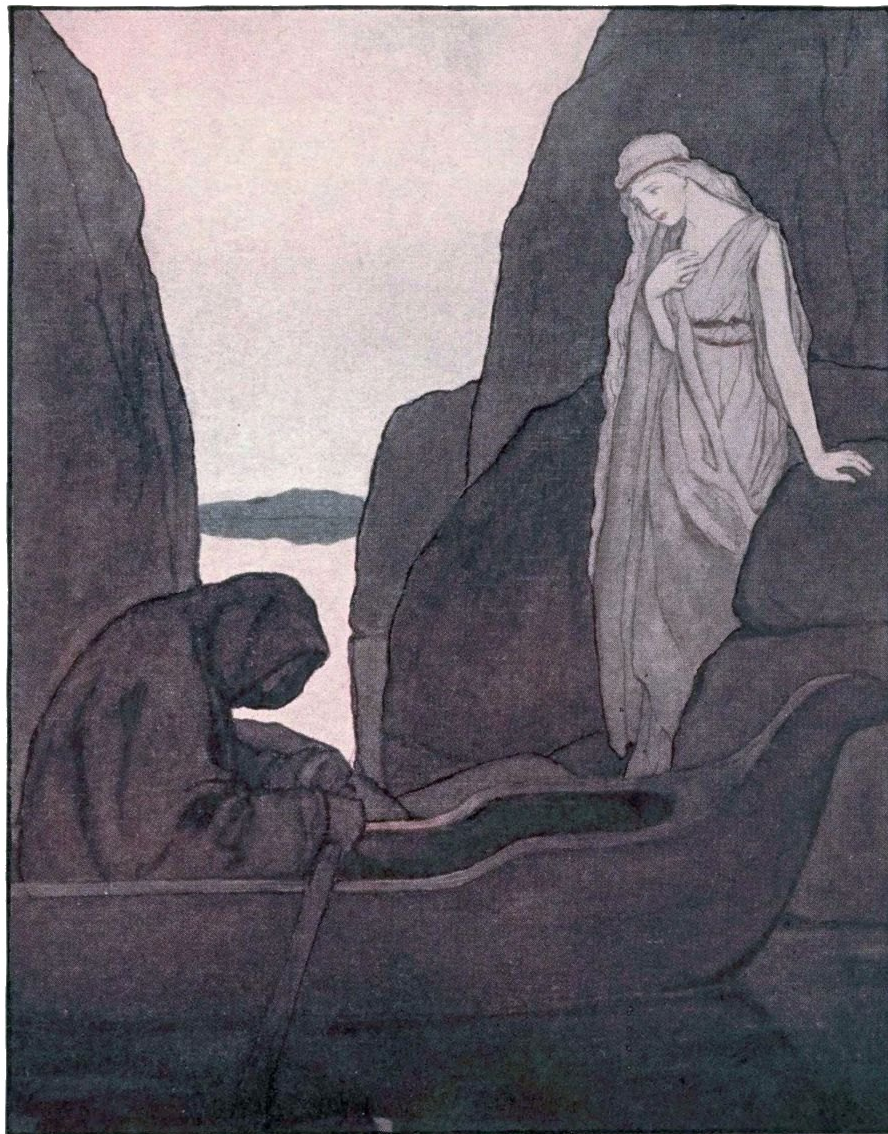
Long and rough was the journey, but at last she came to the city, and there she procured for herself the two pieces of silver money and the barley bread soaked with honey. With these she set out for the mountain that lay over beyond the city. There she found the gap of which the voice had told her, and she followed the path that led down from it, and always away from the green and sunlit world above her and toward the darker world of the lower regions where Persephone reigns.

Before she had gone far, she met the old man driving the ass, even as the voice had warned her, and he looked so poor and miserable, and begged so piteously for help, that Psyche's heart melted within her, and she longed to give him either bread or money, but she remembered the voice and its warnings and passed by ⁽²⁷⁰⁾ without speaking.

Soon she came to the river, and saw the boat lying there, and the dark boatman Charon. She stepped into the boat, and he took from her lips one of the pieces of silver. In silence he rowed her out upon the river.

Then up through the water rose a face, and two hands were stretched out to her; and it seemed to Psyche the face was the face of her father. He begged and pleaded with her to give him the other piece of money, that Charon might row him also across the water.

Then it seemed to Psyche that it would break her heart to refuse him, but again she remembered the voice that had warned her, and she knew that the face and the hands were only an appearance caused by Aphrodite, and that it was sent there to tempt her so that she would give up her money and never be able to return from those lower regions. So she kept silence, and the face and hands sank back under the water out of her sight.



Soon she came to the river, and saw the boat lying there. [Page 270](#)

Soon after she came to the other side of the river and stepped out from the boat; there she saw before her^[271] a palace more beautiful than any she had ever beheld except the one where she had lived in joy with Eros. But before the gateway stood the three-headed dog Cerberus, and his appearance was very terrible, and his barkings so loud and fierce that Psyche trembled.

Then she threw to him one of the pieces of bread soaked in honey, and at once he was silent and allowed her to pass by him and enter the palace.

There within the palace everything was very beautiful, but the most beautiful thing in it was Persephone. She made Psyche welcome, and soft cushions were given her to rest on, and a magnificent feast was set before her. Psyche looked at it with longing.

“Eat, my child,” said Persephone, “for your journey has been long, and this food and drink will refresh you.” But Psyche refused.

Then at last Persephone said, “I know why you have come,—that it is to carry back with you a portion^[272] of my beauty. Give me the box you brought with you.”

Half doubting her, Psyche gave her the box and Persephone took it and went away; but soon she returned again and gave the box back into Psyche’s hands.

“Take it,” said Persephone. “Well and wisely hast thou performed thy task. Now return to Aphrodite and give her the box, for in it is the beauty for which she sent thee.”

Then Psyche, still in silence, took the box, and hastened away from the castle and returned the way she had come. When Cerberus raised his dreadful barking, she threw him the other piece of bread, and he was silent and allowed her once more to pass in safety.

Soon she came again to the river, and found the dark boatman waiting, and she entered his boat, and he took from her the second piece of money and rowed her back to the other side.

There Psyche left him and followed in haste along the path that led to the upper world and sunlight, but on the way she was weary and sat down to rest. Then she looked at the box she carried, and more and more^[273] she longed to see the gift of beauty that Persephone had sent to Aphrodite. At last her curiosity grew so great that it was like a fire burning her, and she could bear it no longer, but opened the box and looked inside.

Then at once the beauty that was in it rose like a pale mist and hovered over Psyche’s head, and she fell into a deep slumber.

Now indeed the wrath of Aphrodite would have destroyed her as she lay there helpless, had not Eros come to her to protect and save her. For he was now cured of his wound, and his love for Psyche had returned, and his pain and the anger he had felt toward her were forgotten. So he came to where she lay, and caught her up, and carried her to Zeus, who reigns high on Olympus. And Eros entreated Zeus to protect Psyche from the anger of his mother and to make her also a goddess, so that she need no longer fear Aphrodite.

To this Zeus consented, and he touched Psyche, and woke her from her sleep, and made of her a goddess.^[274]

Then she was made welcome by all the other gods and goddesses, and Aphrodite was obliged to give up her anger, for it is the will of Zeus that there shall be peace among all those who dwell on high Olympus.

After that a great marriage feast was prepared in honor of Eros and Psyche, and to it came all the gods and goddesses, and drank and feasted. Then Eros took his bride away to a palace that Zeus had given them, and which was even more magnificent than the one where Eros had first carried Psyche; and there they lived together in great joy and happiness.

But Psyche’s two sisters were punished as they deserved, for Eros appeared to each one of them in a dream and promised that if she would go to the top of a high cliff and throw herself over, then he would take her as a wife in place of Psyche. Each of them believed her dream, and each secretly, and unknown to the other, went to the cliff and threw herself over, and so perished miserably.

But Psyche lived happy forever after in the palace in high Olympus with her husband Eros.

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