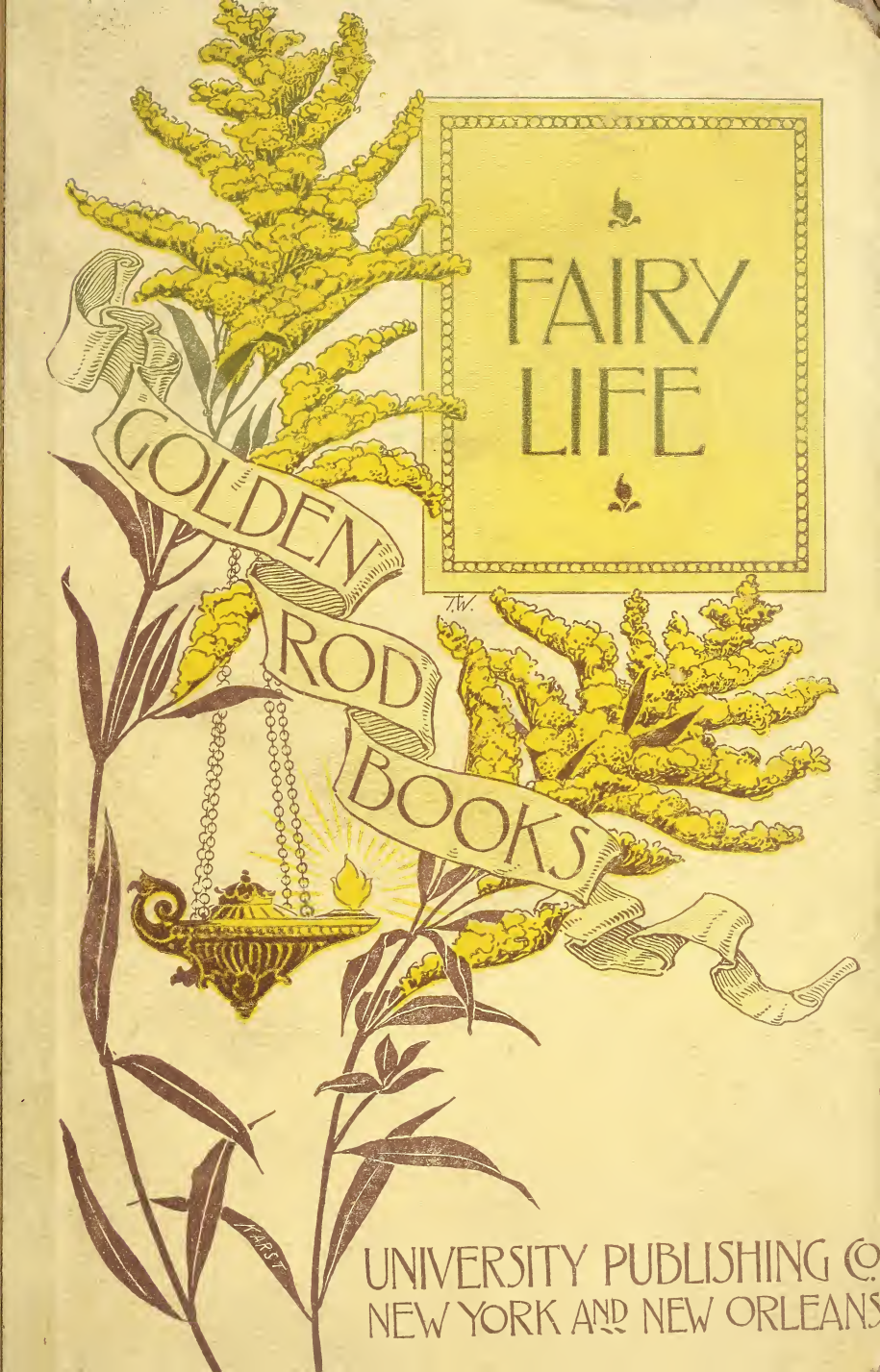
FAIRY
LIFE
GOLDEN
ROD
BOOKS
UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING CO.
NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS

GOLDEN ROD BOOKS

FAIRY LIFE

THIRD READER GRADE

COMPILED AND ADAPTED BY
JOHN H. HAAREN, A.M.

NEW YORK AND NEW ORLEANS
UNIVERSITY PUBLISHING CO.
1896

GOLDEN ROD BOOKS

GRADED READINGS FOR SCHOOL OR HOME

RHYMES AND FABLES
SONGS AND STORIES
FAIRY LIFE
BALLADS AND TALES

Press of J. J. Little & Co.
Astor Place, New York

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INTRODUCTION.

FOLK–LORE, based on fairy stories, has for years been considered a subject worthy the attention of the most gifted scholars. Apart from the value for purposes of literary or scientific study, there is a reason for the reading of fairy tales that is so well stated by Coleridge, in acknowledging what he owed to them, that we cannot omit to give it place: "Should children be permitted to read romances and relations of giants and magicians and genii? I know all that has been said against it, but I have formed my faith in the affirmative. I know no other way of giving the mind a love of the great and the whole. Those who have been led to the same truths step by step through the constant testimony of their senses, seem to me to want a sense which I possess. They contemplate nothing but *parts*, and all *parts* are necessarily little. And the universe to them is but a mass of *little things*. . . . I have known some who have been *rationally* educated, as it is styled. They were marked by a microscopic acuteness, but, when they looked at great things, all became

a blank, and they saw nothing and denied (very illogically) that anything could be seen, and uniformly put the negation of a power for the possession of a power, and called the want of imagination, Judgment, and the never being moved to rapture, Philosophy."

In this little compilation an attempt has been made to enter the life of the little people who were formerly supposed to have an influence on human affairs. Various classes of these little folks receive attention, and their characteristics are presented in the stories that have been handed down through ages. While the poems and stories have been selected chiefly to afford exercise to the imagination, the obvious moral contained in some calls to mind that churchmen in former times did not disdain to make use of the fairy tale to inculcate moral truths.

PROLOGUE.

"THE Fairy reign is past, and the elfin charm has lost its power. Together with Nymphs, Dryads, Mermaids, and many other pleasant creatures, the Fairies have vanished from the ways of men. Yet there is a sphere where their power remains as of old; in the world of song their gentle empire stands secure. There the Lorelei still displays her bewitching loveliness, and ensnares the hearts of men in her flowing tresses; Ariel still chants his sweet songs and does his spiriting gently; the merry Mab still drives her chariot o' nights; Oberon holds his stately court; fair Titania languishes for the uncouth weaver; and mad Robin plays his wanton pranks. May we not step aside into this magic world, and while away an hour among the myths of an earlier and a simpler time?"

—*Songs of Fairy Land.*

FAIRY LIFE.

THE FAIRIES.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men:
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather.

Down along the rocky shore
Some make their home;
They live on crispy pancakes
Of yellow tide-foam.
Some in the reeds
Of the black mountain lake,
With frogs for their watch-dogs,
All night awake.

High on the hill-top
The old king sits;
He is now so old and gray
He's nigh lost his wits.
With a bridge of white mist
Columbkill he crosses,
On his stately journeys
From Silverleague to Rosses,
Or going up with music
On cold, starry nights,
To sup with the queen
Of the gay Northern Lights.

They stole little Bridget
For seven years long;
When she came down again,
Her friends were all gone.

They took her lightly back,
  Between the night and morrow;
They thought that she was fast asleep,
  But she was dead with sorrow.
They have kept her ever since
  Deep within the lakes,
On a bed of flag-leaves,
  Watching till she wakes.

By the craggy hill-side,
  Through the mosses bare,
They have planted thorn-trees
  For pleasure here and there.
Is any man so daring
  To dig them up in spite—
He shall find their sharpest thorns
  In his bed all night.

Up the airy mountain,
  Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a-hunting
  For fear of little men:
Wee folk, good folk,
  Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
  And white owl's feather.

—William Allingham.

NIXES.

The nixes were water people, inhabiting lakes and rivers. The female nix was a beautiful maiden who used to spend the long sunny days on the river-banks or in the tree-boughs, combing her bright golden hair. The male nix was a peculiar little fellow, chiefly to be noted by means of his green teeth and the green cap which he wore.

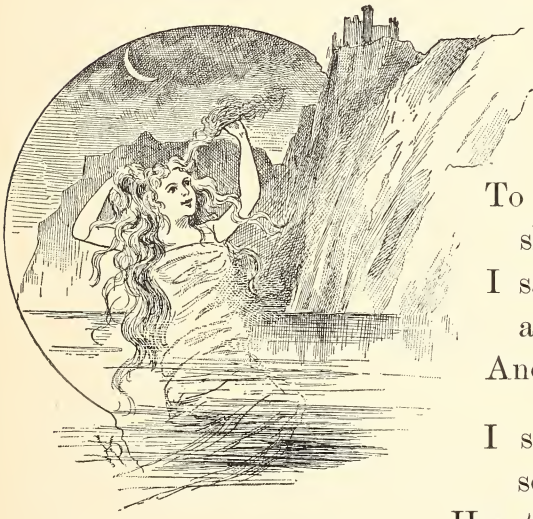
The nixes inhabited a magnificent region below the water, and usually treated well the mortals whom they managed to entice away.

A girl who had lived at service with a nix for many years, on returning to her human home declared that the only thing she had to complain of was the absence of salt. All her food was insipid in consequence.

The nixes liked very much to go to market—the men as well as the women. They were always

dressed with extreme neatness, but the women could never pass through the water which separated their home from our earth without wetting a corner of their apron.

THE WATER LADY.



Alas! the moon should ever beam
To show what man should never see!
I saw a maiden on a stream,
And fair was she.

I stayed awhile to see her throw
Her tresses back, that all beset
The fair horizon of her brow
With clouds of jet.

I stayed a little while to view
Her cheek, that wore, in place of red,
The bloom of water, tender blue
Daintily spread.

I stayed to watch, a little space,
Her parted lips, if she would sing;
The water closed above her face
With many a ring.

And still I stayed a little more:
Alas! she never comes again.
I throw my flowers from the shore,
And watch in vain.

I know my life will fade away,
I know that I must vainly pine,
For I am made of mortal clay,
But she's divine.

—Thomas Hood.

THE WATER NIX.

As a little boy and his sister were once playing near a well, they both slipped and fell in. The water nix who lived below caught them, and carried them off with her, saying: "Now I have you, you shall help me to do my work."

The girl had to spin dirty, tangled flax and to fetch water in a leaky bucket, while the boy had to hew down trees with a blunt axe.

Hard as they worked, they were poorly fed, only getting as an occasional treat doughnuts as hard as stones.

They tried in every manner possible to get away, but they always found the nix's eye on them, no matter which way they looked.

One day the nix went to visit a neighbor, after giving fresh tasks to the two children and admonishing them to finish their work before she returned. While she was absent, the children ran away.

Returning home, and not finding the children, she started after them with great strides. She soon caught sight of the runaways, but they saw her nearly as soon. Then the girl threw behind her a brush, which immediately grew to an immense hill of brushes, with thousands and thousands of bristles, over which the nix could hardly scramble. At last she got over.

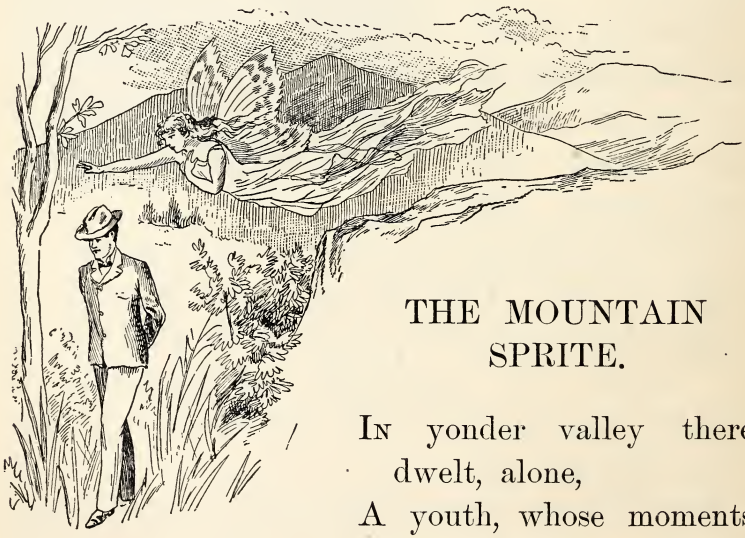
Then the boy threw behind him a comb, which immediately grew to an immense hill of combs, with thousands and thousands of teeth; but the nix after some trouble climbed over this as well.

Then the girl threw behind her a mirror, which immediately grew to an immense hill of mirrors, and was so slippery that the nix could not cross it. She said to herself:

"I will go home and get my magic axe, and cut this hill in two with one stroke."

Long before she returned, however, the children were out of sight, and the water nix could do nothing but go back to her well again.

—GRIMM.



THE MOUNTAIN SPRITE.

IN yonder valley there dwelt, alone,
A youth, whose moments had calmly flown,
Till spells came o'er him, and, day and night,
He was haunted and watched by a Mountain Sprite.

As once, by moonlight, he wandered o'er
The golden sands of that island shore,
A footprint sparkled before his sight—
'Twas the fairy foot of the Mountain Sprite!

Beside a fountain, one sunny day,
As bending over the stream he lay,
There peeped down o'er him two eyes of light,
And he saw in that mirror the Mountain Sprite.

He turned, but lo! like a startled bird
That spirit fled, and the youth had heard
Sweet music, such as marks the flight
Of some birds of song, from the Mountain Sprite.

One night, still haunted by that bright look,
The boy, bewildered, his pencil took,
And guided only by memory's light,
Drew the once-seen form of the Mountain Sprite.

"Oh, thou who lovest the shadow," cried
A voice, low whispering, by his side,
"Now turn and see!"—here the youth's delight
Sealed the rosy lips of the Mountain Sprite.

"Of all the spirits of land and sea,"
Then rapt, he murmured, "there's none like thee;
And oft, oh, oft, may thy foot thus light
In this lonely bower, sweet Mountain Sprite."

—Thomas Moore.

ELVES.

There are two classes of elves—the white or good elves, and the black or evil elves. The good elves live in the air, sit on the leaves of trees and down on the green; the evil elves live under-

ground, and often injure men and bring sickness on them. There is also another class of little beings called the hill people, or trolls, who live in caves and small hills.

When elves show themselves they appear as little men, perfectly formed and handsome. The underground elves are considered to be very sportive and mischievous, and fond of imitating all the actions of men. They love cleanliness to such an extent that they reward servants who are neat and cleanly.

There was once, it is said, a servant girl who was so much favored by the elves for her cleanliness as to be invited to an elf-wedding. The ceremonies were gone through with great dignity and care, and she received a present of some chips, which she took good-humoredly and put into her pocket. When the bridal couple were coming, a straw lay in the way; the bridegroom stepped over it, but the poor bride stumbled and fell. This seemed so funny to the girl that she burst out laughing. Suddenly the whole company vanished, leaving her alone on the hill. On putting her hand into her pocket to look at the chips that had been given to her, she was much surprised to find that they were so many gold pieces.

The elves are very fond of dancing in the meadows. In the olden time, when people saw stripes

along the dewy grass in the early morning, they used to say that the elves had been dancing there. If at midnight a person should get within their circle, the elves immediately become visible.

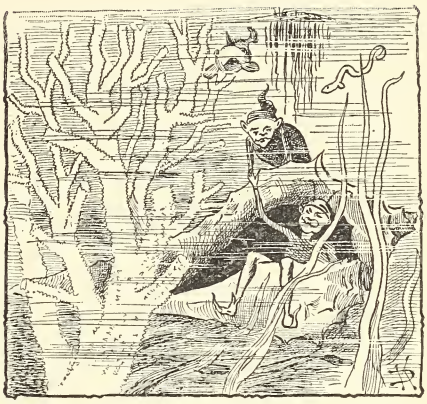
It is not every one that can see the elves at other times; for one person may see them dancing, while another can see nothing at all. Children born on Sunday are said to be able to see elves. Elves, however, can give the power of seeing them to any one else that they choose.

OH! WHERE DO THE FAIRIES HIDE THEIR HEADS?

Oh! where do fairies hide their heads
When snow lies on the hills,
When frost has spoiled their mossy beds
And crystallized their rills?
Beneath the moon they cannot trip
In circles o'er the plain;
And draughts of dew they cannot sip,
Till green leaves come again.

Perhaps in small, blue diving-bells
They plunge beneath the waves,
Inhabiting the wreathèd shells
That lie in coral caves.

Perhaps in red Vesuvius,
Carousals they maintain;
And cheer their little spirits thus,
Till green leaves come again.



When they return there will be mirth,
And music in the air,
And fairy wings upon the earth,
And mischief everywhere.
The maids, to keep the elves aloof,
Will bar the doors in vain;
No key-hole will be fairy-proof
When green leaves come again.

—Thomas Haynes Bayly.

THE FARMER AND THE TROLL.

A troll once lived in a little hill that stood in the corner of a farm. Thinking that the ground should not lie idle, the farmer came one day and began to

plough it up. He had hardly begun, when the troll appeared and asked:

"How dare you plough in the roof of my house?"

"I did not know it was the roof of your house," returned the farmer. "I thought it a pity to let such a good piece of land lie idle, and I think so still. Let me make an agreement with you."

"What is your agreement?" said the troll.

"Well, let me see. I will plough, sow, and reap the ground every year, and we will take the produce year and year about. One year you will take what grows above ground, and I will take what grows below. Then we can change around, and I will take what grows above ground, and you, what grows below. What do you say?"

"Very well," answered the troll; "that will satisfy me."

The agreement was then made; but the crafty

farmer took care to sow carrots the year the troll was to have what grew above ground, and corn the year the troll was to have what grew below. So the poor elf got only carrot tops and corn roots. However, he was content, and the farmer and he lived for years amicably under this arrangement.

THE HAUNTED SPRING.

Gayly through the mountain glen
The hunter's horn did ring,
As the milk-white doe
Escaped his bow,
Down by the haunted spring.
In vain his silver horn he wound,
'Twas echo answered back;
For neither groom nor baying hound
Was on the hunter's track.
In vain he sought the milk-white doe
That made him stray, and 'scaped his bow;
For, save himself, no living thing
Was by the silent, haunted spring.

The purple heath-bells, blooming fair,
Their fragrance round did fling,
As the hunter lay
At close of day
Down by the haunted spring.

A lady fair, in robe of white,
To greet the hunter came;
She kissed a cup with jewels bright,
And pledged him by his name.

"Oh, lady fair," the hunter cried,
"Be thou my love, my blooming bride—
A bride that well may grace a king,
Fair lady of the haunted spring."

In the fountain clear she stooped,
And forth she drew a ring;
And that loved knight
His faith did plight
Down by the haunted spring.
But since that day his chase did stray,
The hunter ne'er was seen;
And legends tell he now doth dwell
Within the hills so green;
But still the milk-white doe appears
And wakes the peasants' evening fears,
While distant bugles faintly ring
Around the lonely haunted spring.

—Samuel Lover.

THE THREE GOATS AND THE TROLL.

Under a bridge which crossed a waterfall there once lived a great ugly troll, with eyes as large as tin plates and a nose as long as a broomstick.

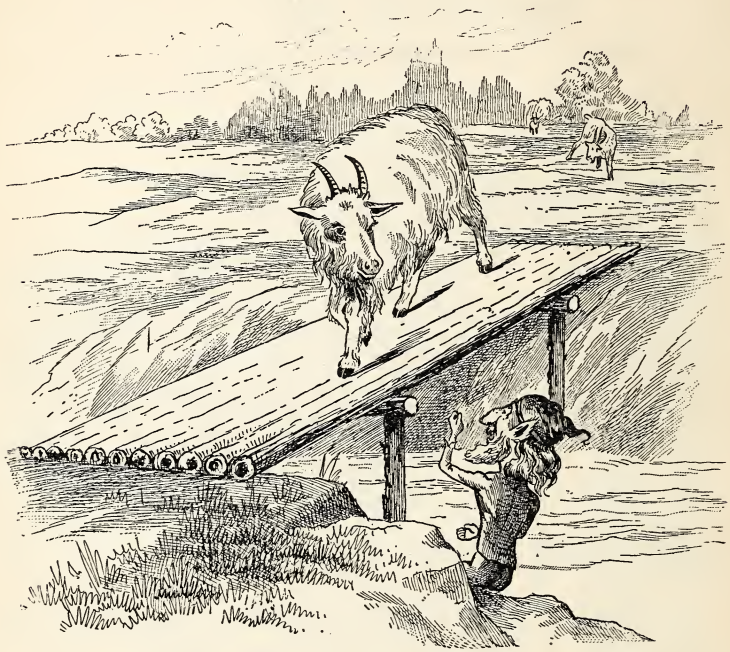
Three goats, all of them named Browse, had to pass over this bridge to get to their pasture on the mountain side.

One day, as they were going to the bridge, the youngest went ahead and stepped lightly on it.

"Trip trap," said the bridge.

"Who steps over my bridge?" cried the troll.

"Only little goat Browse, going to the mountain pasture to get fat," said the goat in a soft voice.



"I'll catch you and punish you for your rashness," said the troll.

"Oh, don't take me!" cried the goat. "I am so very little. Second goat Browse is coming this way, and he is so much bigger than I. Wait for him."

"Very well," assented the troll.

Soon the second goat came along and tripped on over the bridge.

"Trip trap, trip trap," said the bridge.

"Who trips over my bridge?" cried the troll.

"Only second goat Browse, going to the mountain pasture to get fat," said the goat in a strong voice.

"I'll catch you and punish you for your rashness," said the troll.

"Oh, don't take me!" cried the goat. "I'm not so very big. Big goat Browse is coming this way, and he is so much bigger than I. Wait for him."

"Very well," assented the troll.

Just then the big goat came along and tramped upon the bridge.

"Trip trap, trip trap, trip trap," said the bridge, for the big goat Browse was so heavy that the bridge creaked and strained under him.

"Who tramps over my bridge?" cried the troll.

"The great goat Browse!" said the goat in a very coarse voice.

"I'll catch you and punish you for your rashness," said the troll.

"Come on, then!" returned the great goat Browse; and rushing upon the troll, put out his eyes, broke his bones, and pushed him over into the waterfall.

Then Browse quietly went on to the pasture on the mountain side, and found the other two goats called Browse. There they all three ate and ate,

and grew so fat that they were not able to go home. They are still eating and growing fatter and fatter in the pasture on the mountain side.

THE ERL KING.

Oh, who rides by night through the woodland so wild?
It is the fond father embracing his child;
And close the boy nestles within his loved arm,
To hold himself fast and to keep himself warm.

"Oh, father, see yonder, see yonder!" he says.
"My boy, upon what dost thou fearfully gaze?"
"Oh, 'tis the Erl King, with his crown and his shroud."
"No, my son, it is but a dark wreath of the cloud."

(The Erl King Speaks.)

"Oh, come and go with me, thou loveliest child,
By many a gay sport shall thy time be beguiled;
My mother keeps for thee full many a fair toy,
And many a fine flower shall she pluck for my boy."

"Oh, father! my father! and did you not hear
The Erl King whisper so low in my ear?"
"Be still, my heart's darling—my child be at ease;
It was but the wild blast as it sung through the trees."

Erl King.

"Oh, wilt thou go with me, thou loveliest boy?
My daughter shall tend thee with care and with joy;
She shall bear thee so lightly through wet and through wild,
And press thee, and kiss thee, and sing to my child."

"Oh, father! my father! and saw you not plain
The Erl King's pale daughter glide past through the rain?"
"Oh, yes, my loved treasure, I knew it full soon;
It was the grey willow that danced to the moon."

Erl King.

"Oh, come and go with me, no longer delay,
Or else, silly child, I will drag thee away."

"Oh, father! Oh, father! now, now keep your hold,
The Erl King has seized me—his grasp is so cold!"

Sore trembled the father: he spurred through the wild,
Clasping close to his bosom his shuddering child.
He reaches his dwelling in doubt and in dread,
But, clasped to his bosom, the infant was *dead!*

—Goethe, Translated by Sir Walter Scott.

THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER.

There was once a poor shoemaker who worked hard and struggled against misfortune, but to no apparent purpose; for it seemed that the harder he worked the poorer he grew. At last he became so very poor that he had nothing left but a small piece of leather, just enough for one pair of shoes.

In the evening, before going to bed, he cut out

the shoes he was to make the next day, commended himself to God, and went to bed.

Next morning, as he went to begin his work, he was astonished to find it already finished. Not knowing what to say, he took up the shoes to examine them, and found them neatly stitched and complete in every particular.

He had hardly laid them down when a buyer came in, and was so much pleased with the elegant finish of the shoes that he bought them, insisting on paying more than the usual price. With the money the shoemaker was enabled to buy leather enough for two pairs of shoes.

Before going to bed he cut out his material, and laid it aside with a thankful heart.

Rising early the next morning, he was just about to enter heartily on his work, when he found that it had been done for him; for he saw two pairs of shoes, as elegantly finished as the pair on the morning before.

Before breakfast time these were sold, and at prices that enabled the shoemaker to purchase material for four pairs more.

Cutting out these in the evening, he again went to bed, and awoke the next morning to find his work again done and ready purchasers waiting.

So it went on, the prices received for his shoes

enabling him to purchase material for double the number of shoes each day; going to bed after cutting out his material, he awoke to find his work finished. At last he became a wealthy man.

One evening, after cutting out his material as usual, the shoemaker said to his wife:

"What do you say to our sitting up to-night to see our good friends that are helping us in this generous way?"

His wife was willing, and they hid themselves in a corner of the room. At midnight two little men no bigger than your hand came in, and taking the material, began to stitch and hammer with so much skill and despatch that the shoemaker and his wife could hardly believe their eyes. When the shoes were all finished, the little men quickly arranged them in order and disappeared.

The next morning the shoemaker's wife said: "I do not know of any better way of showing how grateful we are to the little men than by giving them each a new suit of clothes. They must be cold, roaming about in the cold night air with so little clothing on."

The man was very glad that his wife had found some way of rewarding their benefactors. She worked away, and before bedtime she had two little suits of clothes made, complete in every par-

ticular, even to stockings and caps, and her husband had ready two tiny pairs of shoes, made of his finest and softest leather.

These were laid out that night instead of the leather cut out as usual, and the man and his wife hid themselves as they had done the evening before.

At midnight the little men came in, prepared to begin work. They were surprised to find, instead of work laid out for them, the two suits of clothes. Their surprise soon changed to delight, and they began to dress themselves in the clothes, singing all the time:

"Thus prettily arrayed,
'Twould be a shame to toil;
Like mortals we're afraid
Our clothes with work to soil.
Away, then, away!
Happy be and gay,
Henceforth we'll only play!"

Then they leaped and skipped, jumping over tables, chairs, and everything in the way, and at last sprang out of the window.

From that time the elves were seen no more, but everything prospered with the shoemaker and his wife.

FAIRY DAYS.

Beside the old hall-fire,
Upon my nurse's knee,
Of happy fairy days,
What tales were told to me!

I thought the world was once
All peopled with princesses,
And my heart would beat to hear
Their loves and their distresses:
And many a quiet night,
In slumber sweet and deep,
The pretty fairy people
Would visit me in sleep.

I saw them in my dreams
  Come flying east and west;
With wondrous fairy gifts
  The new-born babe they blessed;
One has brought a jewel,
  And one a crown of gold,
And one has brought a curse,
  But she is wrinkled and old.
The gentle queen turns pale
  To hear these words of sin,
But the king, he only laughs,
  And bids the dame begin.

The babe has grown to be
  The fairest of the land,
And rides the forest green,
  A hawk upon her hand,
An ambling palfrey bright,
  A golden robe and crown;
I've seen her in my dreams
  Riding up and down;
And heard the ogre[1] laugh,
  As she fell into his snare,
At the tender little creature,
  Who wept and tore her hair.

[1] A hideous monster or giant.

But ever when it seemed
Her need was at the sorest,
A prince in shining mail
Comes prancing through the forest,
A waving ostrich plume,
A buckler burnished bright;
I've seen him in my dreams,
Good sooth! a gallant knight.
His lips are coral red,
Beneath a dark mustache;
See how he waves his hand,
And how his blue eyes flash!

"Come forth, thou Paynim knight!"
He shouts in accents clear.
The giant and the maid
Both tremble his voice to hear.
Saint Mary guard him well!
He draws his falchion keen;
The giant and the knight
Are fighting on the green.
I see them in my dreams,—
His blade gives stroke on stroke,—
The giant pants and reels,
And trembles like an oak!

With what a blushing grace
He falls upon his knee
And takes the lady's hand,
And whispers, "You are free."
Ah! happy, childish tales
Of knights and faërie!
I waken from my dreams,
But there's ne'er a knight for me!
I waken from my dreams
And wish that I could be
A child by the old hall-fire
Upon my nurse's knee!

—WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

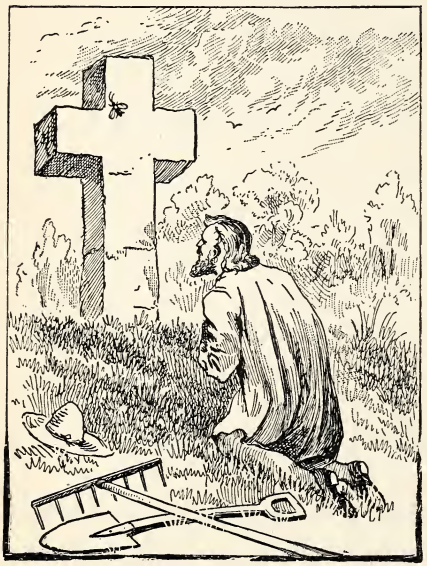
THE WONDERFUL PLOUGH.

THERE was once a farmer who became the master of one of the little black elves in a very curious way. On the road leading to the farmer's field there stood a stone cross, and every morning on his way to work he used to kneel and pray before this cross for a few minutes.

At one of these times he saw on the cross a pretty insect, so beautiful that he could not recollect having seen its like before. He did not disturb the insect, but it ran backwards and forwards as if in pain, and trying to get away.

Next morning the same insect was seen, and it seemed to be just as uneasy. The farmer now got suspicious, and said to himself:

"I wonder if this can be one of the little black enchanters. That insect is surely not all right. It acts just like a person with a bad conscience, who would like to get away but cannot."



He called to mind having heard that an elf touching anything holy cannot get away from it. But the insect might just as well be there as elsewhere, so the farmer let it stay.

Going a third and a fourth time, he found it in the same state of uneasiness. "All is not right," said the farmer, and made a grasp at the insect, but it resisted him and clung fast to the stone. He held on tight, tore it away by main force, and, lo! found that he had by the top of the head a little, ugly, black chap, about six inches long, screeching and kicking at a furious rate.

Much astonished at the change, the farmer held fast to his prize, and gave him two or three smart taps, saying:

"Be quiet, my little fellow; we'll just take you along and see what you are good for."

The elf trembled in every limb, and then began to whimper piteously and beg for freedom.

"No, my lad," said the farmer, "I'll not let you go till you tell me who you are, how you came here, and what your business is."

At this the little man grinned and shook his head, but said nothing except to beg more earnestly to be set free. Finding that coaxing would not effect anything, the farmer whipped and slashed the ugly creature till the blood flowed; but not a word of explanation could be had.

"I'll tame you," said the farmer, as he took him home, and clapped him into a dirty, greasy iron pot, securely fastening the lid and laying on top a great, heavy stone. He knew how the little people love cleanliness, and that they will agree to anything rather than be compelled to live in filth.

Twice a week the farmer went regularly and asked his little black captive whether he was ready to answer questions, but the obstinacy continued. This lasted for six weeks, until one day, as the farmer came near, the little fellow called out and said he would do what was wanted if he could be released from his filthy prison.

The farmer ordered him to tell his history.

"My friend," said the elf, "if you did not know it already you would not have me here. You see, by chance I came too near the cross and was held fast, and obliged instantly to become visible. In order, then, that I might not be known, I turned myself into an insect. But you found me out. I struggled against you, for we have a natural aversion to being taken in a man's hand."

"Ho, ho! is that your tune?" cried the farmer; "you have a natural aversion, have you? Well, my sooty friend, I have just the same for you. So that you may get away as soon as possible, let us make our bargain at once."

"What do you want?" said the little one. "You have only to ask. Gold? Silver? Precious stones? Rich furniture? All shall be yours in less than an instant."

"I want none of your fine things," said the farmer; "they have turned the heart of many a one

before now. I know that you are a handy smith and can make strange things that other smiths know nothing about. So promise to make me an iron plough, such that the smallest colt can draw it without getting tired, and then you may run off."

On the elf's promising, the farmer let him go, and he vanished as quick as lightning.

Next morning, before sunrise, there stood in the farmer's yard a new iron plough. Though it was of ordinary size, the smallest colt could with it cut the deepest furrows in the heaviest soil without in the least getting tired.

The farmer used the plough for many years, and it made him a rich man, for it did not use up his horses, and by it he led an easy and contented life.

THE FAIRIES OF THE CALDON LOW.

"And where have you been, my Mary,
And where have you been from me?"
"I've been to the top of the Caldon Low,
The midsummer night to see."

"And what did you see, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Low?"
"I saw the blithe sunshine come down,
And I saw the merry winds blow."

"And what did you hear, my Mary,
All up on the Caldon Hill?"
"I heard the drops of the water made,
And the green corn ears to fill."

"Oh, tell me all, my Mary,
All, all that ever you know;
For you must have seen the fairies,
Last night on the Caldon Low."

"Then take me on your knee, mother,
And listen, mother of mine:
A hundred fairies danced last night,
And the harpers they were nine.

"'And merry was the glee of the harp-strings,
And their dancing feet so small;
But, oh, the sound of their talking
Was merrier far than all!"

"And what were the words, my Mary,
That you did hear them say?"
"I'll tell you all, my mother,
But let me have my way!

"And some they played with the water,
And rolled it down the hill;
'And this,' they said, 'shall speedily turn
The poor old miller's mill;

"'For there has been no water
Ever since the first of May;
And a busy man shall the miller be
By the dawning of the day!

"'Oh, the miller, how he will laugh,
When he sees the mill-dam rise!
The jolly old miller, how he will laugh,
Till the tears fill both his eyes!'

"And some they seized the little winds,
That sounded over the hill,
And each put a horn into his mouth,
And blew so sharp and shrill:

"'And there,' said they, 'the merry winds go,
Away from every horn;
And those shall clear the mildew dank
From the blind old widow's corn.

"'Oh, the poor blind old widow,
Though she has been blind so long,
She'll be merry enough when the mildew's gone,
And the corn stands stiff and strong.'

"And some they brought the brown lintseed,
And flung it down from the Low—
'And this,' said they, 'by the sunrise,
By the weaver's croft[1] shall grow!

"'Oh, the poor lame weaver,
How he will laugh outright,
When he sees his dwindling flax-field
All full of flowers by night!'

"And then up spoke a brownie,
With a long beard on his chin—
'I have spun up all the tow,' said he,
'And I want some more to spin.

"'I've spun a piece of hempen cloth,
And I want to spin another—
A little sheet for Mary's bed,
And an apron for her mother!'

[1] A very small farm.

"And with that I could not help but laugh,
And I laughed out loud and free;
And then on the top of the Caldon Low
There was no one left but me.

"And all on the top of the Caldon Low
The mists were cold and gray,
And nothing I saw but the mossy stones
That round about me lay.

"But as I came down from the hill-top,
I heard, afar below,
How busy the jolly miller was,
And how merry the wheel did go.

"And I peeped into the widow's field,
And, sure enough, was seen,
The yellow ears of the mildewed corn
All standing stiff and green.

"And down by the weaver's cot I stole,
To see if the flax were high;
But I saw the weaver at his gate,
With the good news in his eye!

"Now, this is all I heard, mother,
And all that I did see;
So, prithee, make my bed, mother,
For I'm tired as I can be."

—Mary Howitt.

THE QUEEN AND THE PEASANT GIRL.

THERE was once a queen named Gisela who was not only powerful, but witty as well. Her marble palace had a roof of silver, and the ornaments and furniture were of gold incrusted with diamonds.

This queen was a fairy, and she had only to express a wish and it was immediately realized.

There was but one thing in which she was powerless. She was a hundred years old, and she could not make herself look young. In her youth she had been fairer than the dawn, but now she had become so old and ugly that even her courtiers could not bear to look at her.

She was crooked, lame, wrinkled, blear-eyed, trembling from weakness, and she coughed and spat all day long in a manner that disgusted even the least sensitive person. One eye was entirely blind, the other nearly so, and she had a beard on her chin.

Such was her appearance, that she could not look at herself, and she had caused all the mirrors in her palace to be broken. To meet with any one who was of ordinary beauty was a trial to her, so she was attended only by courtiers and servants that were hump-backed, crippled, or lame.

One day, a marvellously beautiful girl of fifteen, named Clarinda, was led into her presence.

"Take that object out of my sight!" exclaimed the queen.

But the girl's mother said:

"Your majesty, my daughter is a fairy, and she has the power to give you back your beauty."

The queen, not daring to look at the girl, snarled out:

"Well! what reward does she expect?"

"All your treasures, your crown included," answered the mother.

"I will never deprive myself of power! I will die first!" exclaimed the queen.

The girl and her mother then departed.

A few days later, the queen became sick of a disease that was so dangerous and loathsome that her servants dreaded to wait on her, and her physicians declared that her end was near. She then sent for the young girl, and begged her to accept the royal crown and jewels in exchange for her youth and beauty.

The young girl said: "If I take your crown and riches, and give you my beauty and youth, I shall become old and deformed, as you are. You would not make the exchange at first, and I do not desire it now."

The queen begged piteously, and as the girl was very ambitious, she at length yielded.

Gisela became straight, her figure noble, her complexion clear and youthful, and her eyes had a brightness that had been missing in them for many a day. She became so beautiful that everybody was charmed with her. But she had to hide her beauty in a village, and exchange her palace for a mean cottage.

Clarinda, on the contrary, lost all her charms, and became hideous. She became a queen, it is true, and lived in a palace, but she herself was shocked when she saw her reflection in a mirror. She tried to console herself with her treasures. But her gold and precious stones could not prevent the coming of all the ills of age. She wished to dance, as was her wont, when she was with her friends in flowery meadows and shady groves; but, alas! even with a cane she could scarcely sustain herself. She then attempted to give rich banquets, but the most delicate dish only filled her with loathing. She loved music, but she was too deaf to enjoy it. Then she

bewailed her lost youth and beauty, which had been foolishly bartered for a crown and riches which could not be used. Moreover, she whose only care had been her sheep, was bothered at every turn with difficult business which she knew nothing whatever about.

Gisela, on her part, being used to power and wealth, and already forgetting the annoyances of age, was discontented with her obscurity and poverty.

"Shall I always be in rags?" she would say. "What good does it do me to be so beautiful here in a village among such vulgar people? I am nothing more than a servant, and have to lead beasts to pasture. How unfortunate I am to have so thoughtlessly given away my crown and riches! Oh, that I had them again! True, I had not long to live, but do not all queens die?"

Clarinda felt that Gisela regretted her former station, and told her that, being a fairy, she could effect a second change.

This was acceptable, and both returned to their former state. Gisela became queen once more, with all her ugliness and age, while Clarinda went back to her poverty and beauty.

Soon, Gisela, again overtaken by sickness, blind and miserable, once more begged Clarinda to exchange places. But the wise young girl replied:

"I have tried your station, with your ills, your royalty, and your wealth; but though I have to subsist on humble fare and live in a lowly way, I prefer my youth, my gayety, and my health, with the joys of the simple life to which I am accustomed."

—FÉNÉLON.

THE FAIRIES' PASSAGE.

I.

TAPP, tapp! Rapp, rapp! "Get up, Gaffer Ferryman."
"Eh? who is there?" The clock strikes three.
"Get up, do, Gaffer! You are the very man
We have been long—long—longing to see."
The Ferryman rises, growling and grumbling,
And goes fum-fumbling, and stumbling, and tumbling,
Over the wares in his way to the door.
But he sees no more
Than he saw before,
Till a voice is heard—"Oh, Ferryman, dear!
Here we are waiting, all of us here!
We are a wee, wee colony, we;

Some two hundred in all, or three.
Ferry us over the river Lee
Ere dawn of day,
And we will pay
The most we may
In our own wee way!"

II.

"Who are you? Whence came you? What place are you going to?"
"Oh, we have dwelt over-long in this land.
The people get cross, and are growing so knowing, too;
Nothing at all but they now understand;
We are daily vanishing under the thunder
Of some engine or iron wonder;
That iron—Oh, it has entered our souls!"
"—Your souls? Oh, Goles!
You queer little drolls!
Do you mean—?" "Good Gaffer, do aid us with speed,
For our time, like our stature, is short indeed!
And a very long way we have to go,
Eight or ten thousand miles or so,
Hither and thither, and to and fro;

With our pots and pans,
And little gold cans;
But our light caravans
Run swifter than man's!"

III.

"Well, well, you may come!" said the Ferryman, affably;
"Patrick, turn out, and get ready the barge!"
Then again to the little folk—"Though you seem so laughably
Small, I don't mind if your coppers be large."
Oh, dear! what a rushing, what pushing, what crushing
(The waterman making vain efforts at hushing
The hubbub the while) then followed these words!

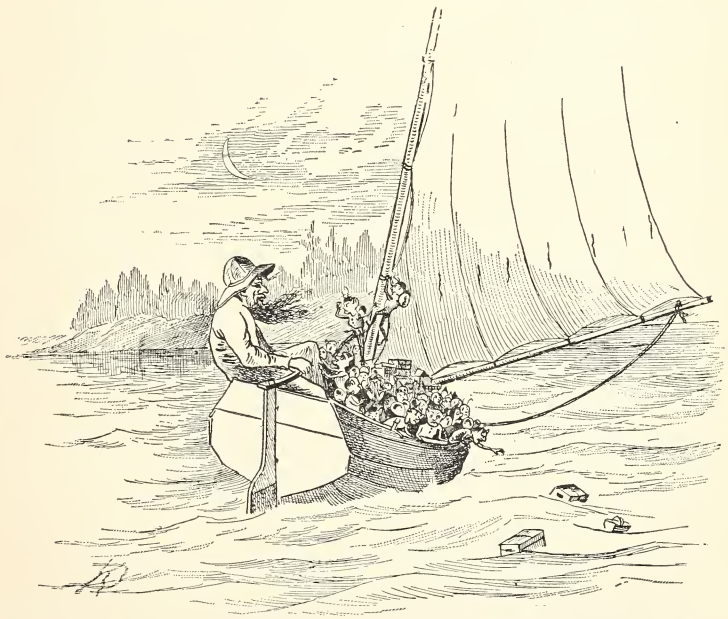
What clapping of boards!
What strapping of cords!
What stowing away of children and wives,
And platters, and mugs, and spoons, and knives!
Till all had safely got into the boat,
And the Ferryman clad in his tip-top coat,
And his wee little fairies were fairly afloat!

Then ding! ding! ding!
And kling! kling! kling!

How the coppers did ring
In the tin pitcherling!

IV.

Off, then, went the boat, at first very pleasantly,
Smoothly, and so forth; but after a while



It swayed and it swagged this way and that way,
and presently
Chest after chest, and pile after pile,

Of the little folks' goods began tossing and rolling,
And pitching like fun, beyond fairy controlling!
Oh, Mab! if the hubbub was great before,
It was now some two or three million times more;
Crash went the wee crocks, and the clocks, and the locks
Of each little wee box were stove in by hard knocks;
And then there were oaths, and prayers, and cries—
"Take care!" "See there!" "Oh, dear! my eyes!"
"I am killed!" "I am drowned!" with groans and sighs;
Till to land they drew;
"Yeo hoe! Pull to!
Tiller rope, thro' and thro'!"
And all's right anew.

V.

"Now jump upon shore, ye queer little oddities,
. . . Eh? what is this? Where are they at all?
Where are they, and where are their tiny commodities?
Well, as I live!" He looks blank as a wall,

The poor Ferryman! Round him, and round him
he gazes,
But only gets deeplier lost in the mazes
Of utter bewilderment! All, all are gone—
And he stands alone,
Like a statue of stone,
In a doldrum of wonder. He turns to steer,
And a tinkling laugh salutes his ear
With other odd sounds—"Ha! ha! ha! ha!
Tol, lol; zid, ziddle—quee, quee—bah! bah!
Fizzigigiggiddy! phse! sha! sha!"
"Oh, ye thieves, ye thieves! ye rascally thieves!"
The good man cries. He turns to his pitcher,
And there, alas! to his horror perceives
That the little folks' mode of making him richer
Had been to pay him—with withered leaves!

—James Clarence Mangan.

FAIRY GIFTS.

You can nearly always judge of the mind and disposition of a person by the way he lives, and the things with which he surrounds himself. Those who are of an amiable disposition surround themselves with simple and lovable things, while those who are showy and gay are pleased with tawdry things that

do not last. It was natural, then, that the flower fairy should have her palace in a garden blooming with delightful flowers, tastefully arranged, and

dotted here and there with fish-ponds, nestling in the cosiest nooks you could think of.

She was so kind and charming that of course everybody loved her, and the young princes and princesses who formed her court were as happy as the day is long, and only because they could be near her. They had come to her court when they were

quite small, and the only thing which troubled them was that when they were grown they would have to leave her. Their one consolation was that each could select as a remembrance one fairy gift, which could be taken away into the world.

None of the young people was as dear to the fairy queen as Sylvia. She was simple yet wise, gentle yet firm, and so lovable that in the regard of all at the fairy court she was second only to the queen.

At last the time came when she was to choose her fairy gift and depart. Before asking the choice, however, the fairy queen thought that she would like to know how her former pupils were prospering, and at the same time give Sylvia an opportunity of observing what use had been made of the fairy gifts that had already been bestowed. So one day the queen ordered her fairy chariot, with its team of butterflies, and said :

"Sylvia, I would like you to call at the court of Iris. She will receive you kindly, I know. Tell her I want to know how she is prospering. She will invite you to remain. You may stay two months and then return and tell me what you think of her."

Sylvia hated to be away from the fairy court for two months, for her time of departure for the great world was getting nearer and nearer, but she obeyed.

At the end of the two months she was glad to get back.

"Well, my dear," said the queen, "what do you think of the court of Iris?"

"Your majesty," replied Sylvia, "you bestowed on Iris, when she left you, the gift of beauty. She does not tell any one that it is your gift, although she often speaks of your great kindness to her. At first I was dazzled by her beauty, but as I grew accustomed to it, I began to think that she had lost the use of her other graces and natural gifts. While I was with her, she became very sick, and though she recovered, it was at the complete loss of her beauty. Realizing now how unattractive she is, and that she has no other graces to call to her aid, she hates the sight of herself, and is shunned by everybody whenever it is possible to shun her. She begged me most piteously to entreat you to give back her beauty again. You cannot know how unhappy she is, and how much she needs that gift, since she no longer has grace or cleverness of mind."

"Alas! I cannot help her," said the fairy; "my gifts are bestowed but once."

A few days more passed, and the queen told Sylvia that she was to pay a visit to the Princess Flora; so the chariot was called, and the butterflies flew away to the court of the princess. Before many

days a butterfly came to the fairy court and told the queen that Sylvia wanted to return as soon as possible.

As she stepped out of the chariot she exclaimed:

"Oh, your majesty! what a place you sent me to!"

"What was the matter?" said the queen. "Flora was the princess who received the gift of eloquence."

"Yes, and it becomes her very poorly indeed. The gift of fluent speech is not denied many women," said Sylvia, "but when the gift of eloquence is added, it becomes intolerable. Flora loves to hear herself speak so much that those around her can do nothing but listen. She speaks on every subject, whether she knows anything about it or not, and whether those listening to her are interested or not. She is so wrapped up in the desire to hear herself

talk that she loses sight of everything else, and she has become an intolerable nuisance to every one around her. Oh, I cannot tell you how anxious I was to get away!"

The fairy smiled, and after allowing Sylvia to enjoy the delights of the fairy court for a while, again summoned her, and sent her to the court of the Princess Rosa.

When Sylvia returned it was with the joy one feels at meeting a sincere and loving friend.

"Well, what do you think of Rosa?" the queen inquired.

"At first my stay was very pleasant," replied Sylvia; "the princess seemed to study to please me; but as time grew on, I soon found that she was not sincere. In her desire to please, she left the impression of her own vanity and selfishness. She has no true friends, for she can feel no friendship for anybody, since her gift of pleasing has lost its value from being used on everybody without distinction."

"Well, my child," said the fairy queen; "enjoy yourself a while, and then I shall ask you to take one more journey; this time to the court of Princess Witty."

Sylvia was glad to have a little time for herself; for the hour of her departure was drawing near, and she would soon have to announce her choice. She

was glad that she had been able to observe the use to which some of the fairy gifts had been put, and she resolved to carefully consider the probable results, before finally deciding on what she should ask.

She went to visit the Princess Witty, and the fairy queen anxiously awaited the result.

"I was received very kindly," said Sylvia on her return; "the princess is witty indeed, and she immediately put into play the gift which you had bestowed on her. I was very much taken with it at first, but, as it was used on all occasions, without regard to the proprieties of time or place, it began to pall on me. I learned that it is not possible to be always smart and amusing without wounding the feelings of others, and without shocking sensibilities that are not used to having sacred and solemn matters made the subject of brilliant jests or displays of wit."

The fairy agreed with Sylvia, and felt delighted at the successful education of her pupil.

It was not long before the time arrived for Sylvia to receive her fairy gift. Her companions were assembled; the fairy queen stood in the midst, with Sylvia immediately in front of her, and asked in the usual way what gift was desired to accompany the mortal about to return to the world.

After a pause, Sylvia answered, "A quiet spirit."

This lovely gift confers happiness on its possessor and those with whom she is brought in contact. Her face is beautiful with content and gentleness; and if at times she is afflicted with some chance sorrow, the harshest remark made is; "Sylvia's dear face is very pale to-day. How sorry we are for her!" But when, on the contrary, she is happy and gay, her happiness and gayety are communicated to every one that happens to be near.

THE FAIRIES' COBBLER.

I SAT at work 'neath the lintel low,
And the white-walled street was still,
Save for the sound of my neighbor's loom,
"*Plik-a-plek-pick*," through the twilight gloom,
And a curlew crying shrill.

The curlew cried, and I raised my head,
For I felt the good folk near;
Slim little shapes in the fading light,
Dusk and dim, but their eyes gleamed bright,
And they hailed me thin and clear.

In they swept with a rustling sound,
Like dead leaves blown together;

Bade me fashion their dainty shoon,
"Oh, the morrow's e'en is the Feast of the Moon,
And we'll dance on the wan-white heather."

So I took their gay stuffs, woven well,
As never a mortal weaves;
Fashioned daintily, fashioned fair,
Little red shoes that the Pixies wear,
Of the blood-red autumn leaves.

They stood at my knee, and they crowded near,
And shrilled a piping tune;
Their great eyes glowed, and they whispered
"Quick!"
And my work went merrily "*tic-tac-tic*,"
By the light of the yellow moon.

"Thanks, and thanks for thy labor done,
And aye when the summer's o'er
And reapers carry the last brown sheaf,
We'll send our sign of a yellow leaf,
A leaf blown in at the door.

"So shall ye know that the time hath come,
And merry at heart shall rise;
Rise and go where we flit and fleet,
Follow the track of our twinkling feet,
And the glow of our golden eyes."

They rolled away through the starlight air
And cried, "On our crystal shore,
Oh, friend, you shall 'scape the winter's grief;
Follow the sign of the yellow leaf,
The leaf blown in at the door."

So shall I know when the time hath come,
And merry at heart shall rise;
Rise and go where they flit and fleet,
The little red shoon on the twinkling feet,
And the glow of the golden eyes.

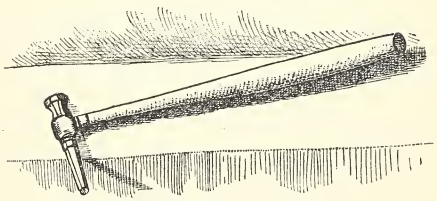
Winter will come with snow-stilled skies,
And the neighbor's hearths aglow,
But the owls will drowse on my old hearthstone,
For I shall be gone where the birds are flown
And the great moon-daisies blow.

I sit at work 'neath the lintel low,
And the white-walled street is still;
The twilight deepens dim and gray,
To-morrow it may be—not to-day—
And I wait the Pixies' will.

—Graham R. Thomson.

THE TROLL'S HAMMER.

When a great famine prevails in a country even the rich suffer. Hard, indeed, must the lot of the poor peasant be at such a time.



During a famine a poor peasant, unable to support all his family, told his eldest son, Niels, that he would have to go out in the world and provide for himself.

Niels left home and went out to seek his fortune. As the evening of the first day drew on, he found

himself in a dense forest, and fearing lest the wild beasts might do him harm during the night, he climbed into a tree. Hardly had he reached his perch, when he saw a little man running towards the tree. He was hunch-backed, and had crooked legs, a long beard, and wore on his head a red cap. He was pursued by a wolf, which attacked him just under the tree in which Niels was sitting. The little man began to scream: he bit and scratched, and defended himself as well as he could. But the wolf was the stronger, and would have torn the little fellow to pieces if Niels had not sprung down from the tree. As soon as the wolf saw that he had two to contend with, he fled back into the forest.

The troll then said to Niels:

"Thou hast preserved my life, and done me a good service; in return I will also give thee some-

thing that will be of use. See ! here is a hammer with which thou shalt be able to do smith's work that no one shall be able to equal." When the troll had spoken these words, he sank into the ground and disappeared.

The next day the boy wandered on until he came to the neighborhood of the royal palace, and here he engaged himself to a smith.

Now it just happened that a few days before a thief had broken into the king's treasury and stolen a large bag of money. All the smiths in the city were, therefore, sent for to the palace, and the king promised that he who could make the best lock should be appointed court locksmith, and have a handsome reward into the bargain. The lock had to be finished in eight days, and so constructed that it could not be picked by any one.

When the smith, with whom Niels lived, returned home and related this, the boy thought he should like to try whether his hammer really possessed those qualities which the troll had said. He, therefore, begged his master to allow him to make a lock, and promised that it should be finished by the appointed time. Although the smith had no great opinion of the boy's abilities, he permitted the trial.

Niels then requested a separate workshop, locked

himself in, and began hammering the iron. One day went, and then another, and the master began to be curious; but Niels let no one come into his shop, and the smith was obliged to remain outside, and peep through the keyhole. The work, however, succeeded far better than the boy himself had expected; and, without his really knowing how it came to pass, the lock was finished on the evening of the third day.

The following morning he went down to his master and asked for some money. "Yesterday I worked hard," said Niels, "and to-day I will enjoy myself."

He went out of the city, and did not return to the workshop till late in the evening. The next day and the next he did the same, and so through the rest of the week.

His master was very angry at this, and threatened to turn him away, unless he finished his work at the appointed time. But Niels told him to rest easy, and engaged that his lock should be the best.

When the day arrived, Niels brought his work forth, and carried it up to the palace. His lock was so ingenious and so delicately made, that it far excelled all the others. Niels' master was acknowledged as the most skilful, and he received the promised office and reward.

The smith was delighted, but he took good care not to confess to any one who it was that had made

the curious lock. He received one job after another from the king, and let Niels do them all.

In the meantime, the report spread from place to place of the wonderful lock the king had got for his treasury. Travellers came from a distance to see it, and a foreign king came among them. When he had examined the work a long time, he said that the man who had made such a lock deserved to be honored and respected.

"But however good a smith he may be," added the king, "I have his master at home."

He continued boasting in this manner, till at length the two kings made a wager as to which smith could execute the most skilful piece of workmanship. The smiths were sent for, and the two kings determined that each smith should make a knife.

The smith related to Niels what had passed, and desired him to try whether he could make as good a knife as the lock he had made. Niels promised to do so, although his last work had not brought him much. The smith was in truth a mean man, and treated Niels so niggardly, that sometimes he had not enough to eat and drink.

One day, as he was out buying steel to make the knife, he met a man from his own village, and, in the course of conversation, Niels learnt that his father was in great want and misery. Then he

asked his master for some money, but this was the answer: "You shall not have a shilling until you have made the knife."

Hereupon Niels shut himself up in the workshop for a whole day, and, as on the former occasion, the knife was made without his knowing how it had happened.

When the day arrived on which the work was to be exhibited, Niels dressed himself in his best clothes, and went with his master up to the palace, where the two kings were expecting them.

The strange smith first showed his knife. It was so beautiful, and so curiously wrought, that it was a pleasure to look at; it was, moreover, so sharp and well tempered, that it would cut through a millstone as easily as through a cheese. Niels' knife, on the contrary, looked very poor and common.

The king already began to think he had lost his wager, and spoke harshly to the master-smith, when his boy begged leave to examine the stranger's knife a little more closely.

After having looked at it for some time, he said: "This is a beautiful piece of workmanship which you have made, and shame on those who would say otherwise; but my master is, nevertheless, your superior, as you shall soon experience."

Saying this, he took the stranger's knife and split

it lengthwise from point to handle with his own knife, as easily as one splits a twig of willow. The kings could scarcely believe their eyes ; and the consequence was that Niels' master was declared the victor.

When Niels asked for payment, the master refused to give him anything, although knowing full well that the poor boy only wanted the money to help his father. Upon this Niels grew angry, went to the king, and told who it was that had made both the lock and the knife. The master was then called, but he denied everything, and accused Niels of being an idle boy, whom he had taken into service out of charity and compassion.

"We shall soon find out the truth of this story," said the king, who sided with the master. "Since thou sayest it is thou who hast made this wonderful knife, and thy master says it is he who has done it, I will adjudge each of you to make a sword for me within eight days. He who can make the most perfect one shall be my master-smith; but he who loses shall forfeit his life."

Niels was well satisfied with this agreement. He went home, packed up all his things, and bade his master farewell. The smith would gladly have made all good again ; but Niels appeared not to understand him, and went his way. He engaged with another master, and began cheerfully to work on the sword.

When the appointed day arrived, both Niels and his former master met at the palace, and the master produced a sword of the most beautiful workmanship that any one could wish to see. It was inlaid with gold, and set with precious stones. The king was greatly delighted with it.

"Now, little Niels," said he, "what dost thou say to this sword?"

"It is not so badly made as one might expect from such a bungler," said the boy.

"Canst thou show anything like it?" asked the king.

"I believe I can," answered Niels.

"Well, where is thy sword?" said the king.

"In my waistcoat pocket," replied Niels.

Hereupon there was a general laugh, which was increased when they saw the boy take a little packet out of his waistcoat pocket. Niels opened the paper in which

the blade was rolled up like a watch-spring. "Here is my work," said he. "Will you just cut the thread, master?"

The smith did it willingly, and in a moment the blade straightened out and struck him in the face.

Niels took out of his other pocket a hilt of gold and screwed it fast to the blade; then he presented the sword to the king; and all present were obliged to confess that they never before had seen such matchless workmanship.

Niels was declared the victor, and the master was obliged to acknowledge that the boy had made both the lock and the knife.

The king in his indignation would have had the master put to death, if the boy had not begged for mercy on the culprit.

Niels received a handsome reward from the king, and from that day all the work from the palace was intrusted to him. He took his old father to reside with him, and lived in comfort and happiness till his death.

FLOWER FAIRIES.

Flower fairies! have you found them,
When the summer dusk is falling,
With the glow-worms all around them,
Have you heard them softly calling?

Calling through your garden spaces
Notes like fairy bells set ringing,
Heard from out enchanted places
Whence the fairy bees come winging?

Silent stand they through the moonlight
In their flower shapes fair and quiet,
But they quit them in the moonlight,
In its beams to sing and riot.

I have heard them, *I* have seen them,
From their petals like-light raying,
And the trees would fain have been them,
The great trees too old for playing.

Hundreds of them altogether,
Flashing flocks of flying fairies,
Crowding through the summer weather,
Seeking where the coolest air is.

And they tell the trees that know them,
As upon their boughs they hover,
Of the things that chance below them,
How the rose has a new lover.

And the roses laugh, protesting
That the lilies are as fickle;
Then they look when birds are nesting,
And their feathers softly tickle.

Then away they all go sweeping,
Having had their fill of gladness,
But the trees, their night-watch keeping,
Feel a tender, loving sadness.

For they know of bleak December,
When each bough to pain left bare is,
When they only shall remember
Those bright visitings of fairies.

When the roses and the lilies
Shall be gone to come back never,
To a land where all so still is
That they sleep and sleep forever.

—Philip Bourke Marston.

ELFIN-MOUNT.

Several large lizards were running in and out among the clefts of an old tree, when one remarked to the others:

"Do you hear the rumbling and grumbling that is going on in the old Elfin-Mount over there? It has annoyed me for the past two nights. I might as well have had the toothache, for all the sleep I've had!"

"Something is certainly going on," said another lizard; "such cleaning and dusting as there is! And the elfin-maidens are taking dancing lessons, too!"

"That's so," said a third lizard; "my friend, the earth-worm, has just come from there, and, though he can't see, yet he overheard a great deal, in the three days' grubbing that he put in. They're expecting company at Elfin-Mount, but the earth-worm would not tell me who they are. The reception will be a great one, however. The wills-o'-the-wisp are to furnish a torchlight procession, and all the silver and gold is being polished, and set out to shine in the moonlight."

"Listen!" cried all the lizards.

The Elfin-Mount parted, and an elderly elf came tripping out. She was the Elfin-King's housekeeper, as well as his relative, and though she was plainly dressed, she wore on her forehead a heart of amber, as a sign of her noble birth. Like all other elves, she was hollow in the back. She tripped lightly along till she came to the marsh, and called to the raven.

"You are invited to Elfin-Mount this evening," said she; "and we shall be obliged to you if you will deliver the other invitations. As you do not keep house yourself, you can readily do us this favor. We are expecting some very distinguished company, trolls, in fact; and his Elfin Majesty must be on hand himself to welcome them."

"Who are to be invited?" inquired the raven.

"Every one may come to the grand ball, not even excepting men. But none except guests of the highest rank must be present at the first banquet; that has to be select, you know. The king and I have had a little quarrel over this matter, for I insist that not even ghosts shall be admitted to-night. The Mer-King and his daughters must be invited first. They don't like to come on land, but I'll see that damp seats are provided for them. We must have all the old trolls of the first rank, as well as the river-spirit and the nisses. Then, I don't see how we can overlook the Death-Horse and the Kirkegrim. They are not in our set, of course, but as they are related to the family, they must have some attention."

"Caw!" said the raven, and he flew away to deliver the invitations.

The elfin-maidens were practising their dances, and they looked pretty, indeed, with their long scarfs of woven mist and moonlight. The state-room of the mount showed the great care that had been spent on it; the floor, washed with moonshine, and the walls, rubbed with witches' fat, till they shone like tulips, were a sight to behold. In the kitchen, preparations were just as well advanced; frogs were roasting on the spit, and the mushroom-seed salad and the hemlock soup were nearly ready.

These dainties were for the first courses; rusty nails, bits of colored glass, candied pebbles, bark pies, quartz puddings, and other elfin dainties were to be brought in for dessert; there was also the bright saltpetre wine, and the ale brewed by the Wise Witch of the Moor.

"Dear papa," said the youngest of the daughters, "won't you tell me who these grand visitors are?"

"Well," replied his Majesty, "I suppose there's no use keeping the secret any longer. Let two of my daughters get ready for their wedding-day, that's all! The chief of the trolls is coming here with his two boys, who are both to choose a bride. This chief is an old comrade of mine, a merry and jovial soul, as honest and straightforward as he can be. He came down here years ago to get a wife. They say his sons are rough, unmannerly cubs, but perhaps report does not do them justice. In any case, you can polish them up a little."

Just then two wills'-o-the-wisp were seen dancing up in a hurry, each trying to be the first to bring the news that the guests had arrived.

"Give me my crown, and let me stand in the moonlight," said the Elfin-King, while his seven daughters lifted their long scarfs and bowed low.

There stood the renowned troll chief, with his two sons, whom he was trying to induce to pay

their respects to their hosts in a polite and dignified manner.

"Is that a mount?" asked the younger son. "Why, up in Norway we should call it a cave."

"You foolish boy!" replied his father; "you go into a cave, but you go up a mount. Where are your eyes, not to see the difference? Behave yourselves, now, and don't let our host fancy that you've never before been in decent company."

As they entered the Elfin-Mount they found a very select party assembled in the stateroom,

though so short was the notice, that it seemed as if some fortunate wind had blown them together. Everything possible had been done for the comfort of the guests, even to the providing of large tubs of water for the Mer-King's family, so that they felt quite at home.

All behaved with the greatest propriety, except the two young northern trolls, who, in the end, so far forgot themselves as to put their feet on the table.

"Take your feet off the table!" said the chief, and the young trolls slowly obeyed. Soon they took some pine cones from their pocket, and began to pelt the lady who sat between them. Then becoming uncomfortable, they took off their boots, asking the lady to hold them.

But the father's conduct went far to atone for the rudeness of his sons; he talked so delightfully about the proud Norse mountains, and the torrents, white with spray, that dashed down their rocky steeps with a noise that, while it was almost overpowering, was still as musical as the full burst of an organ touched by the hand of a master; he told of the salmon leaping up from the wild waters; of the long starlit winter nights, when the sleigh-bells tinkled merrily, and of the happy skaters who skimmed over the icy crust, which was

so transparent that the fishes could be seen darting hither and thither to escape dangers that seemed to threaten; he spoke so charmingly of the songs and dances of the northern youths and maidens, that you fancied you could hear and see it all.

The elf-maidens were now called upon to dance. Beginning with simple dances, they followed with stamping dances, and ended with such a whirling, and whirring, and whizzing, that the Death-Horse became quite dizzy and was obliged to leave the table.

"Hurrah!" cried the old chief. "But can they do nothing but dance?"

"You shall judge for yourself," replied the Elfin-King, as he called his eldest daughter. She was as fair as moonlight, in fact, the most delicate of the sisters. She put a white wand to her lips and vanished. That was her accomplishment.

But the chief was not impressed with this.

The second daughter could walk by her own side, just as though she had a shadow, which, you know, elves and trolls never have.

The third had quite a different accomplishment: the Wise Witch of the Moor had taught her to brew good ale; and she had learned how to lard alder-wood with glow-worms.

"That one will make a good housewife," remarked the troll chief.

The fourth damsel now came forward with a large gold harp. When she struck the first chord, all the company lifted their left foot, for elves are left-sided; when she struck the second chord, every one was compelled to do whatever she wished.

"A dangerous lady, indeed!" said the old chief. The sons, weary of the young ladies' accomplishments, got up and strode out of the mount.

"And what can the next daughter do?" asked the chief.

"I have learned to love the north," replied she; "and I have resolved never to marry unless I can go to Norway."

"That is," said the youngest, "because she knows the Norse rhyme which says that the Norwegian rocks shall stand firm among the ruins when the end of the world comes."

"What can the seventh and last do?" cried the mountain chief.

"The sixth comes before the seventh," said the Elfin-King. But the sixth daughter seemed in no hurry to come forward.

"I can only tell people the truth," said she. "Let no one trouble himself about me; I have work enough to occupy me in sewing my shroud."

The seventh and last now came gayly forward.

"What can I do? Why, I can tell fairy tales—as many as you wish to hear."

"Here are my five fingers," said the mountain chief; "tell me a story for each finger."

Then she took hold of his wrist, and told stories that made him laugh till he felt sore. When she came to the ring finger, the chief suddenly exclaimed, "Hold fast to that—the hand is yours! I will marry you myself!"

But the elfin-maiden said that there were two more stories to be told, one for the ring finger, and one for the little finger.

"Keep them for the winter; then we'll hear them," replied the chief. "We all love fairy legends in Norway, and none can tell them as charmingly as yourself. We will sit in our rocky halls, and listen to your sweet voice, while we drink our mead out of the golden horns of the Norse kings, and watch the fir-logs blazing and crackling on the hearth. I will then sing some of our rare old ditties, and we will have sung the sweet songs the mountain maidens

sang in days of yore. Oh, what a happy and glorious life we lead in dear old Norway! But where are the boys?"

They were running about in the fields, blowing out the wills-o'-the-wisp, that were arranging themselves in order for their torchlight procession.

"What do you mean by all this riot?" inquired the mountain chief. "I have been choosing a mother for you, and you should be choosing wives for yourselves from among your aunts."

But the sons said that they would rather make speeches and drink toasts. So they made speeches, tossed off their glasses, and turned them topsy-turvy on the table.

So the company feasted and enjoyed themselves, till the housekeeper suddenly cried, "The cock is crowing! We must hurry and close the window-shutters, or the sun will spoil our complexions."

Then the Elfin-Mount closed.

—Hans Christian Andersen.

FAIRIES ON THE SEA-SHORE.

First Fairy.

My home and haunt are in every leaf
Whose life is a summer day bright and brief.

I live in the depths of the tulip's bower,
I wear a wreath of the cistus flower,
I drink the dew of the blue harebell,
I know the breath of the violet well,
The white and the azure violet—
But I know not which is the sweetest yet.
I have kissed the cheek of the rose,
I have watched the lily unclose;
My silver mine is the almond tree.
Who will come dwell with flower and me?

Chorus of Fairies.

Dance we our round, 'tis a summer night,
And our steps are led by the glow-worm's light.

Second Fairy.

My dwelling is in the serpentine
Of the rainbow's colored line.
See how its rose and amber clings
To the many hues of my radiant wings.
Mine is the step that bids the earth
Give to the iris flower its birth,
And mine the golden cup to hide,
When the last faint hue of the rainbow died.

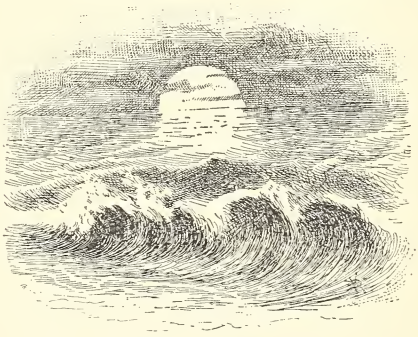
Search the depths of an Indian mine,
Where are the colors to match with mine?

Chorus of Fairies.

Dance we round, for the gale is bringing
Songs the summer rose is singing.

Third Fairy.

I float on the breath of a minstrel's lute,
Or the wandering sounds of a distant flute;
Linger I over the tones that swell
From the pink-veined chords of an ocean-shell;
I love the sky-lark's morning hymn,
Or the nightingale heard at the twilight dim,
The echo, the fountain's melody,—
These, oh! these are the spells for me!



Chorus of Fairies.

Hail to the summer night of June!
See, yonder has risen the lady moon!

Fourth Fairy.

My palace is in the coral cave
Set with spars by the ocean wave;
Would ye have gems, then seek them there,—
There found I the pearls that bind my hair.
I and the wind together can roam
Over the green waves and their white foam.
See, I have got this silver shell,
Mark how my breath will its smallness swell;
For the Nautilus * is my boat
In which I over the waters float.
The moon is shining over the sea,—
Who is there will come sail with me?

Chorus of Fairies.

Our noontide sleep is on leaf and flower,
Our revels are held in a moonlit hour.
What is there sweet, what is there fair,
And we are not the dwellers there?
Dance we round, for the morning light
Will put us and our glow-worm lamps to flight!

—Letitia Elizabeth Landon.

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* The Nautilus is a kind of shellfish, which was supposed to be able to sail by expanding one of its tentacles, or arms.

MOTHER HOLLE.

A WIDOW had two daughters; one of them was very pretty and thrifty, but the other was ugly and idle.

Odd as you may think it, she dearly loved the ugly and idle girl, and the pretty one had to do all the work. In short, she was the drudge of the whole house. Every day she was obliged to sit on a bench by the well, and spin until her fingers bled.

Now it happened that once when the blood from her fingers had soiled the spindle, she dipped it into the well to wash it; but it dropped from her hand and fell in. Then she ran crying to her mother, and told what had happened. This was the reply: "If you have been so silly as to let the spindle fall in, you must get it out again as well as you can."

So the poor little girl went back to the well; but she knew not how to get her spindle, and in her sorrow threw herself into the water and sank senseless to the bottom.

In a short time, she came to herself again; but seemed to wake as from a trance. When she looked around, she saw the sun shining brightly,

the birds singing sweetly on the boughs, and thousands of flowers springing beneath her feet.

Rising, she walked along, and came to a pretty cottage by the side of a wood. She went in and saw an oven full of new bread baking. The bread said, "Pull me out! pull me out! or I shall be burnt, for I am done quite enough." So she stepped up quickly and took it all out.

She went on further, and came to a tree that was full of fine, rosy-cheeked apples, and it said to her, "Shake me! shake me! we are all quite ripe!" So she shook the tree, and the apples fell down like a shower, until there were no more upon the tree.

Then she went on again, and came to a small cottage at the door of which an old woman was sitting. The little girl would have run away, but the old woman called out after her, "Don't be frightened, my dear child, stay with me; I should like to have you for my little maid, and if you do all the work in the house neatly, you shall fare well. But take care to make my bed nicely, and shake it out every morning at the door, so the feathers may fly, for then the good people below say that it snows.—I am Mother Holle."

As the old woman spoke so kindly to her, the girl was willing to do as was said; so she went

into the old woman's employ, and took care to do everything to please her. The girl always shook the bed well; so that she led a very quiet life, and

every day had boiled and roast meat for her dinner.

Although she was much better off here than at home, after some time she became homesick, and said to her mistress, "I used to grieve over my troubles at home, but I long so much to be there that I cannot stay here any longer."

"You shall do as you like," said her mistress; "you have worked for me faithfully, and I myself will show you the way home."

As she said this, she took the girl by the hand, led her behind the cottage, and opened a door. Then there fell a heavy shower of gold, so that the little girl had only to hold out her apron to catch a great deal of it. The fairy gave her, moreover, a shining golden dress, and said, "All this you shall have because you have behaved so well."

After giving back the spindle which had fallen into the well, the fairy led the girl out by another door. When it shut behind her, she found herself not far from her mother's house; and as she went into the court-yard the cock sat at the head of the well and, clapping his wings, cried out:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Our golden lady's come home again!"

Then she went into the house, and you may be sure she was welcomed home. When her mother heard the story, she wanted to have the same luck befall her ugly and idle daughter; so she, too, was told to sit by the well and spin. That her spindle might be bloody, she pricked her fingers with it, and when that would not do she scratched her hand on a thorn-bush. Then she threw the spindle into the well and sprang in after it.

Like her sister, she came to a beautiful meadow,

and followed the same path. When she came to the oven in the cottage, the bread called out as before, "Take me out! take me out! or I shall burn. I am done quite enough."

But the lazy girl said, "Burn away! just as if I should dirty myself for you!" and went on.

She soon came to the apple-tree that cried "Shake me! shake me! for my apples are quite ripe!" But she answered, "I will take care not to do that, for one of you might fall upon my head." So she kept on.

At length she came to Mother Holle's house, and readily agreed to be her maid. The first day the girl behaved herself very well, and did what she was told, for she thought of the gold she would receive. But the second day her laziness appeared, and the third day it increased. She would not get up early in the morning, and when she made the bed she did it very badly, not shaking it so that the feathers would fly out.

Mother Holle soon tired of her maid, and turned her off; but the lazy girl was quite pleased at this, and thought to herself, "Now the golden rain will come."

Then the fairy took her to the same door; but, instead of gold, a great kettle full of dirty pitch came showering down.

"There is your wages," said Mother Holle, as she shut the door. So the girl went home quite black with the pitch; and as she came near her mother's house the cock sat upon the well and, clapping his wings, cried out:

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Our dirty girl's come home again!"

—GRIMM.

THE FAIRY.

SAID Ann to Matilda, "I wish that we knew
If what we've been reading of fairies be true.
Do you think that the poet himself had a sight of
The fairies he here does so prettily write of?
O, what a sweet sight if he really had seen
The graceful Titania, the Fairy-land queen!

If I had such dreams, I would sleep a whole year;
I would not wish to wake while a fairy was near.
Now I'll fancy that I in my sleep have been seeing
A fine little, delicate, lady-like being,
Whose steps and whose motions so light were and airy
I knew at one glance that she must be a fairy.
Her eyes, they were blue, and her fine curling hair
Of the lightest of browns, her complexion more fair
Than I e'er saw a woman's; and then for her height
I verily think that she measured not quite
Two feet, yet so justly proportioned withal,
I was almost persuaded to think she was tall.
Her voice was the little thin note of a sprite—
There—d'ye think I have made out a fairy aright?
You'll confess, I believe, I've not done it amiss."
"Pardon me," said Matilda, "I find in all this
Fine description you've only your young sister Mary
Been taking a copy of here for a fairy."

—Lamb.

THUMBLINA.

I.

Once upon a time there lived a young wife who longed to possess a little child of her own, so she went to an old witch-woman and said: "I wish so much to have a child—a little, tiny child—won't you give me one, old mother?"

"Oh, with all my heart!" replied the witch. "Here is a barley-corn for you; it is not exactly of the sort that grows on the farmer's fields, or that is given to the fowls in the poultry yard; but sow it in a flower-pot, and then you shall see what you shall see!"

"Thank you, thank you!" cried the woman, and gave the witch a silver sixpence. Having returned home, she sowed the barley-corn as she had been directed, whereupon a large and beautiful flower immediately shot forth. It looked like a tulip, but the petals were tightly folded up—it was still in bud.

"What a lovely flower!" exclaimed the peasant woman as she kissed the pretty red and yellow leaves. Then the flower gave a loud report and opened. It was indeed a tulip, but on the small

green pointal in the centre of the flower there sat a tiny girl, pretty and delicate, but scarcely bigger than the young peasant's thumb. So she called her Thumblina.

A pretty varnished walnut-shell was given her for a cradle, blue violet leaves served as her mattress, and a rose leaf was her coverlet. Here she slept at night, but in the daytime she played on the table. The peasant-wife had filled a plate with water, and laid flowers in it, their blossoms bordering the edge of the plate, while the stalks lay in the water; on the surface floated a large tulip leaf, and on it Thumblina might sit and sail from one side of the plate to the other. That was charming! Thumblina could sing, too, and in low, sweet tones the like of which was never heard before.

One night, while she was lying in her pretty bed, a great ugly toad came hopping in through the broken window-pane. The toad was a great creature, old, withered-looking, and wet; she hopped at once down upon the table where Thumblina lay sleeping under the red rose-petal.

"There is just the wife for my son," said the toad; and she seized hold of the walnut-shell, with Thumblina in it, and hopped away with her through the broken pane down into the garden.

Here flowed a broad stream, and it was in the

mud of its banks that the old toad and her son dwelt.

Ugh, how ugly he was! just like his mother. "Co-ax, co-ax, brek-ke-ke-kex!" was all he could find to say on seeing the pretty little maiden in the walnut-shell.

"Don't make such a riot, or you'll wake her," said old Mother Toad. "Then she will run away from us, for she is as light as a feather. I'll tell you what we'll do: we'll take her out into the brook and set her down on one of the large water-lily leaves. It will be an island to her, she is so light and small. Then she cannot run away from us."

Out in the brook there grew many water-lilies, with broad green leaves, each of which seemed to be floating over the water. The leaf which was farthest from the shore was also the largest; old Mother Toad swam to it, and there she set the walnut-shell, with Thumblina in it.

The poor little creature awoke quite early next morning. When she saw where she was, she began to weep bitterly, for there was nothing but water on all sides of the large green leaf.

Old Mother Toad was down in the mud, decorating her home with bulrushes and yellow buttercups. This finished, she and her son swam together

to the leaf, where Thumblina had been left. Old Mother Toad bowed low in the water, and said to her, "Here is my son; he is to be your husband; and you will dwell together so happily down in the mud!"

"Co-ax, co-ax, brek-ke-ke-kex!" was all that the son could say.

Then they took the walnut-shell and swam away with it, whilst Thumblina sat alone on the green leaf, weeping, for she did not like the thought of living with the withered old toad, and having her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes that were swimming to and fro in the water beneath had heard what Mother Toad said; and they now put up their heads, for they wanted to see the little maid. When they saw her, they were charmed with her delicate beauty, and it vexed them very much that the hideous old toad should carry her off. No, that should never be! They gnawed asunder the green stalk of the water-lily leaf, and it floated down the brook, with Thumblina on it—away, far away, where the old toad could not follow.

As Thumblina sailed past, the wild birds among the bushes saw her and sang, "Oh, what a sweet little maiden!" On and on, farther and farther, floated the leaf. Thumblina was on her travels.

II.

A pretty little white butterfly kept fluttering round and round, and at last settled down on the leaf, for he loved Thumblina very much, and she was pleased to see him. She had no fear of the old toad pursuing her; and wherever she sailed everything was so beautiful, for the sun shone down on the water, making it bright as liquid gold. She took off her sash, and tied one end of it round the butterfly, fixing the other end firmly into the leaf. On floated the leaf, faster and faster, with Thumblina on it.

Presently a great May-bug came buzzing past; he caught sight of her, and immediately fastening his claw round her slender waist, flew up into a tree with her. But the green leaf still floated down

the brook, and the butterfly with it; he was bound to the leaf, and could not get loose.

Oh, how terrified poor Thumblina was when the May-bug carried her up into the tree! How sorry she felt, too, for the darling white butterfly she had left tied to the leaf! She feared that, if he could not get away, he would die of hunger. But the May-bug cared nothing for that. He settled with her upon the largest leaf in the tree, gave her some honey from the flowers, and hummed her praises, telling her she was very pretty, although she was not at all like a May-bug.

By and by all the May-bugs that lived in the tree came to pay her a visit; they looked at Thumblina, and made remarks about her appearance.

"She has only two legs; how miserable she looks!"

"She has no feelers!"

"And see how thin and lean her waist is; why, she is just like a human being!"

"How very, very ugly she is!" at last cried all the May-bugs in chorus.

The one that had carried off Thumblina still could not persuade himself that she was otherwise than pretty; but, as the rest kept repeating and insisting that she was ugly, he at last began to think they must be right; she might go wherever she would for aught he cared, he said.

And so the whole swarm flew down from the tree with her, and set her on a daisy; then she wept because she was so ugly that the May-bugs would not keep company with her; and yet she was the prettiest little creature that could be imagined—soft, and delicate, and transparent as the loveliest rose-leaf.

III.

All the summer long poor Thumblina lived alone in the wide wood. She wove herself a bed of grass-straw, and hung it under a large burdock-leaf, which sheltered her from the rain; she dined off the honey from the flowers, and drank from the dew that every morning spangled the leaves and herbs around her.

Thus passed the summer and autumn; but then came winter—the cold, long winter. All the birds that had sung so sweetly to her flew away, the trees and flowers withered, the large burdock-leaf, under which she had lived, rolled itself up and became a dry, yellow stalk.

Thumblina was fearfully cold, for her clothes were wearing out, and she herself was so slight and frail; poor little thing! she was nearly frozen to death. It began to snow, and every light flake that

fell upon her made her feel as we should if a whole shovelful of snow were thrown upon us; for we are giants in comparison with a little creature only an inch long. She wrapped herself up in a withered leaf, but it gave her no warmth.

Close outside the wood, on the skirt of which Thumblina had been living, lay a large corn-field; but the corn had been carried away long ago, leaving only the dry, naked stubble standing up from the hard-frozen earth. It was like another wood to Thumblina, and oh, how she shivered with cold as she made her way through it! At last she came past the field-mouse's door; for the field-mouse had made herself a little hole under the stubble, and dwelt snugly and comfortably, having a room full of corn, and a neat kitchen and storeroom besides.

Poor Thumblina must now play the beggar-girl; she stood at the door and begged a little piece of

barley-corn, for she had had nothing to eat during two whole days.

"Poor little thing!" said the field-mouse, who was a good-natured old creature; "come into my warm room and dine with me."

She soon took a great liking to Thumblina, and invited her to stay. "You may dwell with me all the winter if you will; but keep my room clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I love stories dearly." Thumblina did all that the kind old field-mouse required of her, and was made very comfortable in her new abode.

"We shall soon have a visitor," observed the field-mouse; "my next-door neighbor comes to see me once every week. He is better off than I am, for he has large rooms in his house, and wears a coat of such beautiful black velvet. It would be a capital thing for you if you could secure him for a husband; but he is blind, and cannot see you. You must tell him the prettiest stories you know."

But Thumblina did not care at all about pleasing their neighbor, Mr. Mole, nor did she wish to marry him. He came and paid a visit in his black-velvet suit; he looked so rich and learned! Thumblina was called upon to sing, and by the time she had sung "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home!" the

mole had fallen in love with her through the charm of her sweet voice; but he said nothing, he was such a prudent, cautious animal.

He had been digging a long passage through the earth from their house to his, and he now gave the field-mouse and Thumblina permission to walk in it as often as they liked; however, he bade them not be afraid of the dead bird that lay in the passage. It was a whole bird, with beak and feathers entire, and he supposed it must have died quite lately, and been buried just in the place where he had dug his passage.

The mole took a piece of tinder, which shines like fire in the dark, and went on first to light his friends through the long, dark passage. When they came to the place where the dead bird lay, he thrust his broad nose up against the ceiling and pushed up the earth, so as to make a great hole for the light to come through. There lay a swallow, his wings clinging firmly to his sides, his head and legs drawn under the feathers; the poor bird had evidently died of cold.

Thumblina felt very sorry, for she loved all the little birds that had sung and chirped so merrily to her the whole summer long; but the mole gave the poor bird a kick, saying, "Here's a fine end to all its whistling! A miserable thing it must be to be

born a bird! None of my children will be birds; that's a comfort! Such creatures have nothing but their music, and they must starve to death in winter."

"Yes, indeed, a sensible animal like you may well say so," returned the field-mouse; "what has the bird got by all his chirping and chirruping? When winter comes he must starve and freeze; and such a great creature, too!"

Thumblina said nothing; but when the two others had turned their backs upon the bird, she bent down, smoothed the feathers that covered his head, and kissed the closed eyes. "Perhaps this is the bird that sang so delightfully to me in the summer time," thought she; "how much pleasure he has given me, the dear, dear bird!"

The mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight had pierced, and then followed the ladies home.

But Thumblina could not sleep that night, so she got out of her bed, wove a carpet out of hay, and then went out and spread it round the dead bird; she also brought some soft cotton from the field-mouse's room, and she laid it over the bird.

"Farewell, dear bird!" said she, "farewell! and thanks for thy beautiful song in the summer time, when all the trees were green and the sun shone so warmly upon us!"

She pressed her head against the bird's breast, and was terrified to feel something beating within it. It was the bird's heart—the bird was not dead, but in a swoon, and now that it was warmer, life returned.

IV.

Every autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries; but if one of them linger behind, it freezes and falls down as though dead, and the cold snow covers it.

Thumblina trembled with fright, for the bird was very large compared with her, who was only an inch in length. However, she took courage, laid the cotton more closely round the poor swallow, and bringing a leaf which had served herself as a coverlet, spread it over the bird's head.

The next night she stole out again, and found that the bird's life had quite returned. He was so feeble, however, that only for one short moment could he open his eyes to look at Thumblina, who stood by with a piece of tinder in her hand—she had no other lantern.

"Thanks, sweet little child!" said the sick

swallow. "I feel quite warm now; soon I shall recover my strength, and be able to fly again, out in the warm sunshine."

"Oh, no!" she replied, "it is too cold outside; it is snowing and freezing! stay in this warm bed; I will take care of you."

She brought the swallow water in a flower-petal; and when he drank, he told her how he had torn one of his wings in a thorn-bush, and could not fly fast enough to keep up with the other swallows, that were going to the warm countries. He had at last fallen to the earth. He could remember nothing further, and he did not know how he had got underground.

However, he remained underground all the winter long, and Thumblina was kind to him, and loved him dearly; but she never said a word about him either to the mole or the field-mouse, for she knew they could not endure the poor swallow.

As soon as the spring came, and the sun warmed the earth, the swallow said farewell to Thumblina and she opened for him the covering of earth which the mole had thrown back before. The sun shone in upon them, and the swallow asked whether she would not go with him; she might sit upon his back; and then they would fly together far out into

the greenwood. But Thumblina knew it would vex the old field-mouse to leave her.

"No, I cannot; I must not go," said Thumblina.

"Farewell, then, good and pretty maiden!" said the swallow, and away he flew into the sunshine. Thumblina looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she loved the poor swallow so much.

"Quivit, quivit," sang the bird, as he flew into the greenwood.

V.

Thumblina was now sad indeed. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine; the wheat that had been sown in the field above the field-mouse's house, grew up so high that it seemed

a perfect forest to the poor little damsel, who was only an inch in stature.

"This summer you must work at your wedding-clothes," said the field-mouse; for their neighbor, the blind, dull mole, in the black-velvet suit, had now made his proposals in form to Thumblina. "You shall have worsted and linen in plenty, and you shall be well provided with all manner of clothes and furniture, before you become the mole's wife."

So Thumblina was obliged to work hard at the distaff, and the field-mouse hired four spiders to spin and weave night and day. Every evening the mole came and began to talk about the summer soon coming to an end, and that then—when the sun would no longer shine so strongly, scorching the earth till it was as dry as a stone—Thumblina and he should be married.

But this sort of talk did not please her at all, and she was thoroughly wearied of his dulness and his prating. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it set, she used to steal out at the door; and as the wind blew the tops of the corn aside, so that she could see the blue sky through the opening, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out there, and wished most fervently to see the dear swallow once more; but he must have been flying far away in the beautiful greenwood.

Autumn arrived, and Thumblina's wedding-clothes were ready.

"Four weeks more, and you shall be married!" said the field-mouse. But Thumblina wept, and said she would not marry the dull mole.

"Fiddlestick!" exclaimed the field-mouse, "don't be obstinate, child! Is he not handsome? Why, the Queen has not such a black-velvet dress as he wears! And isn't he rich—rich both in kitchens and cellars? Be thankful to get such a husband!"

So Thumblina must be married. The day fixed had arrived and the mole had already come for his bride. The poor child was in despair, and she walked a little way beyond the field-mouse's door; the corn was already reaped, and only the dry stubble surrounded her.

"Farewell, farewell!" repeated she, as she clasped her tiny arms round a little red flower that grew there. "Greet the dear swallow from me, if thou shouldst see him."

"Quivit! quivit!" there was a fluttering of wings just over her head; she looked up, and behold! the little swallow was flying past. How pleased he was to see Thumblina! She told him that she had been obliged to accept the disagreeable mole as a husband, and that she would have to dwell deep underground, where the sun

never pierced. She could not help weeping as she spoke.

"The cold winter will soon be here," said the swallow, "and then I shall fly far away to the warm countries. Will you go with me? You can sit on my back, and tie yourself firmly to me with your sash, and thus we shall fly away from the stupid mole and his dark room—far away over the mountains, to those countries where the sun shines so brightly, where it is always summer, and flowers blossom all the year round. Come and fly with me, sweet little Thumblina."

"Yes, I will go with you!" said Thumblina. She seated herself on the bird's back, her feet resting on the outspread wings, and tied her girdle firmly round one of the strongest feathers; then the swallow soared high into the air, and flew away over forest and over lake—over mountains whose crests are covered with snow all the year

round. How Thumblina shivered as she breathed the keen, frosty air! But she crept down under the bird's warm feathers, her head peering forth, eager to behold all the glory and beauty beneath her.

At last they reached the warm countries. There the sun shone far more brightly than in her native clime. The heavens seemed twice as high and twice as blue; and ranged along the sloping hills grew the loveliest green and purple grapes. Citrons and melons were seen in the groves, the fragrance of myrtles and balsams filled the air; and by the wayside gambolled groups of merry children chasing large, bright-winged butterflies.

But the swallow did not rest here; he flew on, and the scene seemed to grow more and more beautiful. Near a calm blue lake, overhung by lofty trees, stood a half-ruined palace of white marble, built in times long past; vine-wreaths trailed up the long, slender pillars, and on the capitals, among the green leaves and waving tendrils, many a swallow had built his nest, and one of these nests belonged to the swallow on whose back Thumblina was riding.

"This is my house," said the swallow, "but if you would rather choose one of the splendid flowers growing beneath us, I will take you there, and you

shall make your home in the loveliest of them all."

"That will be charming!" exclaimed she, clapping her tiny hands.

On the green turf beneath, lay the fragments of a white marble column which had fallen to the ground, and around these fragments twined some beautiful large white flowers. The swallow flew down with Thumblina, and set her on one of the broad petals. But what was her surprise when she saw sitting in the very heart of the flower a little manikin! He was as fair and transparent as though he were made of glass, and wore the prettiest gold crown on his head, and the brightest, most delicate wings on his shoulders, although he was scarcely one whit larger than Thumblina herself. He was the spirit of the flower. In every blossom there dwelt one such fairy youth or maiden, but this one was the king of all these flower-spirits.

"Oh, how handsome this king is!" whispered Thumblina to the swallow. The fairy prince was quite startled at the sudden descent of the swallow, who was a sort of giant compared with him; but when he saw Thumblina he was delighted, for she was the loveliest maiden he had ever seen. So he took his gold crown off his head and set it upon hers, asked her name, and whether she would be

his bride and reign as queen over all the flower-spirits.

This, you see, was quite a different bridegroom from the son of the ugly old toad, or the blind mole with his black-velvet coat. So Thumblina replied "Yes" to the beautiful prince; and then the lady and gentleman fairies came out, each from a separate flower, to pay their homage to Thumblina. So gracefully and courteously they paid their homage! and every one of them brought her a present. But the best of all the presents was a pair of transparent wings, and these were fastened on Thumblina's shoulders to enable her to fly from flower to flower. The little swallow sat in his nest above and sang his sweetest song; in his heart, however, he was very sad, for he loved Thumblina, and wished never to part from her.

FAIRY SONG.

Have ye left the greenwood lone?
Are your steps forever gone?
Fairy King and Elfin Queen,
Come ye to the sylvan scene,
From your dim and distant shore,
Never more?

Shall the pilgrim never hear
With a thrill of joy and fear,
In the hush of moonlight hours,
Voices from the folded flowers,
Faint sweet flutter-notes as of yore,
Never more?

"Mortal! ne'er shall bowers of earth
Hear again our midnight mirth:
By our brooks and dingles green
Since unhallowed steps have been,
Ours shall thread the forests hoar
Never more.

"Ne'er on earth-born lily's stem
Will we hang the dewdrop's gem;
Ne'er shall reed or cowslip's head
Quiver to our dancing tread,
By sweet fount or murmuring shore,
Never more!"

—Felicia Hemans.

THE FAIRY-TALE TELLER.

Once upon a time there was a poor fellow who had tried his hand at every trade without success.

One day the idea struck him to go about telling fairy-tales to the children. So he began to go about the streets, crying: "Fairy-tales, children! Fairy-tales! Who wants to hear my fairy-tales?"

And the children came round him from every direction, quarrelling, too, as to who should have the best place. So he began:

"Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had no children, and——"

"We know that story by heart!" cried the children. "It's the story of the Sleeping Beauty. Another! another!"

"Well, I'll tell you another." So he began again:

"Once upon a time there was a little girl who had a little hood of scarlet cloth——"

"We know that by heart, too! It's Little Red Riding-Hood! Another! another!"

The poor man felt rather annoyed, but he began again:

"Once upon a time there was a gentleman who had an only daughter. His wife had died, and he had married a second time, taking a widow who had two daughters——"

"That's the story of Cinderella!"

Seeing that he had nothing but old fairy-stories to tell, the children turned their backs on him, and left him standing there like Wednesday in the middle of the week!

He felt very silly, and going to another city, he began crying out along the streets:

"Fairy-tales, children! Fairy-tales! Who wants to hear my fairy-tales?"

The children came trooping round him on all sides, but no sooner did he begin a story than they at once screamed out:

"Not that one! not that one! We know it!"

When they saw he could only tell old fairy-tales, they turned away and left him standing there like a goose.

After that he tried several other places, but

always with the same bad luck. He grew quite discouraged, and not knowing what to turn to, he set out walking straight before him, without heeding where his feet might carry him, till he found himself in the midst of a thick wood.

Night came on, and he stretched himself at the foot of a tree, and tried to go to sleep. He could not shut an eye, for he felt afraid, and he thought that morning would never come.

But just at midnight a great light began to glow all through the wood, and from every plant and tree there came forth crowds of people, laughing, dancing, and singing. At the same time beautiful tents sprang up on every side, with tables all glistening with gold, and loaded with dainties such as he had never seen nor dreamt of. He saw that he was in the midst of an elfin fair; so he took courage and got up. He thought to himself:

"The little people will surely have some brand-new fairy-tales to sell. I must see if I can't manage to get some."

Going to a rich tent near where he had been lying, he asked the fairy in charge:

"Have you any new fairy-tales to sell?"

"There are no new fairy-tales; the seed of that plant has been lost."

Not much convinced by this answer, he went on

to another fairy, on whose table stood a great display of beautiful things in crystal jars; the first fairy had nothing half so fine. He again asked:

"Have you any new fairy-tales to sell?"

"There are no new fairy-tales," was the reply; "the seed has been all lost."

That made two failures.

He went about for a long time, and at last perceiving a tent far richer than all the rest, he went to it timidly, and asked of the fairy who stood there:

"Have you any new fairy-tales to sell?"

"But there are no new fairy-tales!" she cried; "the seed was lost long ago!"

That was the third failure.

The kind fairy, seeing that he looked disappointed, said to him:

"My good man, do you know what you must do? You must go to the magician Ho-Ko, who has whole rooms full of them."

"And where am I to find this magician Ho-Ko?"

"Far, far away, among his perfumed orange groves," was the fairy's answer.

The fair came to a close just before dawn. Fairies, tents, and everything disappeared; and our poor fellow remained there all alone in the midst of the wood, scarcely knowing whether he had been awake or only dreaming.

He walked and walked until he met a wayfarer.

"Good sir, can you tell me where lie the orange groves of the magician Ho-Ko?"

"Go on and on, always straight ahead."

That was not much help to him, but he walked on and on till he met an old woman.

"Kind dame, can you tell me where stand the orange groves of the magician Ho-Ko?"

"Go on and on, always straight before you."

But walk as he would, he never seemed to get there.

At last the orange groves rose before him. But they were surrounded by high walls, and the gate was guarded by a mastiff.

"Whom are you seeking in these parts?" growled the mastiff.

"I want to see the magician Ho-Ko."

"He is out; you must wait till he comes back."

Late in the evening came the magician Ho-Ko, black as a pepper-corn, with a great black beard, and big black eyes that darted fire.

"Oh, my good magician!" said the poor fellow, "will you please do me a favor?"

"What do you want?"

"I should like to have some new fairy-tales. You who have whole stores full of them might give me a few."

"There are no new fairy-tales," said the magician, "and the seed has been lost. You would not know what to do with those I have; besides, they are of use to me. I preserve them embalmed. Perhaps you would like to see them."

He then led the man into his store-rooms. There were all the fairy-tales in the world, neatly done up in caskets made on purpose for them, all classed and numbered. All the time the magician kept looking at the man for fear he should carry any of them away with him.

"But is there really no way of finding any new fairy-tales?"

"New fairy-tales!" said the magician; "there is an old fairy who perhaps may know some. Fairy Fancy her name is, but she never wants to tell them to any one. She lives all alone in a cave, and you must go there together with the Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding-Hood, Cinderella, Hop-o'-my-Thumb, and such folk. You can try; however, I warn you that it will be labor lost."

"I don't care," the poor fellow said; "I shall try."

So he turned back and went to the Sleeping Beauty in the wood.

"Dear Sleeping Beauty, I beg of you come with me."

"Most willingly," she answered, with a gentle yawn.

"My good Little Red Riding-Hood, pray do come with me."

"With all my heart," replied the smiling child.

"Oh, my pretty Cinderella, will you please come with me, too?"

Cinderella pulled up the heels of her shoes and said:

"Here I am."

To cut it short, he assembled them all together, and they set out on their journey.

Sleeping Beauty and her companions knew the cave in which the old fairy lived, and they had no difficulty in conducting him there. They knocked at the door.

"Who are you?"

"It's we!"

Fairy Fancy recognized them, and came to the door. When she saw the man she exclaimed:

"What do you want? How dare you come to trouble me, you rash creature?"

She would have driven him away, but the others pacified her, and said:

"Good fairy, this poor fellow has tried every trade, and has succeeded in none. He had begun telling fairy-tales, but the children, who already

know our stories by heart, want to hear new ones, and would not listen to him. Fairy Fancy, do please help him."

But she answered like the rest:

"There are no new fairy-tales; the seed is lost."

"Beautiful Fairy Fancy, please do help him."

And hearing them entreat her with tears in their eyes, the fairy's heart was touched.

"Let me go for a moment," she said; "I shall come back."

She returned into her cave, and after a short time reappeared with her apron full of things.

"Here, my good fellow," she said to the poor man; "perhaps you may succeed better with these."

And she gave him a number of packages neatly tied and labeled.

He thanked her heartily, and, quite content, went and accompanied all his kind little friends to their homes. Then, in the first city he came to, he began crying out in the streets:

"Fairy-tales, children! Fairy-tales! Who wants to hear my fairy-tales?"

The children came flocking round him on all sides, disputing for the best places.

He opened one of the packages, and began:

"Once upon a time . . ."

He did not know one word of what he was going

to relate, but when he opened his mouth the fairy-tale came out quite pat, as though he had learnt it by heart.

The children liked it, and cried out:

"Another! another!"

Then he took out at random another of the fairy's presents, which he carried all together in a bag. He began:

"Once upon a time . . ."

And though he did not know a single word of what he was going to say, no sooner did he open his mouth than the fairy-tale came out quite pat, as if he had known it by heart ever so long.

The children were pleased with it, and asked for another.

He told a dozen tales, and was even more amused than the children.

After that he went to another city.

"Fairy-tales! Who wants my fairy-tales?"

And he began them all over again. The children were delighted.

But, after all, they were always the same stories; so at last the children got tired of hearing them, and as soon as he began, "Once upon a time," they would interrupt him with:

"Oh, we know that one; we know it by heart now."

What was he to do with all those fairy-tales, now that the children would have none of them, because they knew them all by heart?

He thought he would go and make a present of them to the magician Ho-Ko, who could put them in his caskets with the other embalmed stories. So he went to pay him a visit.

At the gate stood the same burly mastiff.

"Whom are you seeking?"

"I want the magician Ho-Ko."

"He is out; you must wait his return."

Towards evening, against the red sunset, behold, the magician Ho-Ko was coming over the hill; black as a pepper-corn, with his great black beard, and his black eyes that darted fire.

"So here you are back again, my fine fellow! Well, what do you want now?"

"Nothing, my good magician. Indeed, I have come to make you a little present. These fairy-tales are all quite new, and you have not any of them in your collection. Now that the children know them all by heart, I have thought of making you a present of them; you might perhaps like to put them with the others you have embalmed."

"Ah, my poor fellow!" said the magician, "these are new to you only because they are so old that no one tells them nowadays."

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