





PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES



Perrault, Charles
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PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES

Adapted by

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PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

THERE were once a King and Queen, who were very unhappy because they had no children. In course of time, however, a little daughter was born to them.

There was a splendid christening. For godmothers the young Princess had all the fairies they could find in the country, seven in number, so that every one of them could confer a gift on her, as was the custom of fairies then. After the ceremony was over, all the company returned to the King's palace, where a great banquet had been prepared for the fairies. The table was magnificently laid for them, and each had placed for her a massive gold case containing a spoon, a fork, and a knife of fine gold, set with diamonds and rubies.

But as they were all taking their seats they saw an old fairy enter who had not been invited, for every one thought that she was either dead or enchanted, as she had not been outside the tower in which she lived for upwards of fifty years. The King ordered a cover to be laid for her but there was no possibility of giving her a massive gold case, such as the others had, because there had been only seven made expressly for the seven fairies. The old fairy thought she was slighted, and muttered threats between her teeth. One of the young fairies, who sat near her, overheard her grumblings, and was afraid she might bestow some evil gift on the young Princess. Accordingly, as soon as they rose from

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table, she went and hid behind the curtains, in order to be the last to speak, and so enable herself to repair, as far as possible, any harm the old fairy might have done. Meanwhile the fairies began bestowing their gifts on the Princess. The youngest, as her gift, promised that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next fairy, that she should have the mind of an angel; the third, that every movement of hers should be full of grace; the fourth, that she should dance to perfection; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; the sixth, that she should play on every kind of instrument in the most exquisite manner possible. It was now the turn of the old fairy, and she said while her head shook more with spite than with age, that the Princess should pierce her hand with a spindle, and die of the wound.

The whole company trembled when they heard this terrible prediction. At this very moment the young fairy advanced from behind the tapestry, and said, speaking that all might hear:

“Assure yourselves, King and Queen; your daughter shall not die of the wound. It is true that I have not sufficient power to undo entirely what my elder has done. The Princess will pierce her hand with a spindle, but, instead of dying, she will only fall into a deep sleep, which will last a hundred years, at the end of which a king's son will come and wake her.”

The King immediately sent forth a proclamation forbidding every one, on pain of death, either to spin with a spindle or to have spindles in their possession.

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Fifteen or sixteen years had passed, when, the King and Queen being absent at one of their country houses, it happened that the Princess, while running about the castle one day, and up the stairs from one room to the other, came to a little garret at the top of a turret, where an old woman sat alone spinning with distaff and spindle, for this good woman had never heard the King's proclamation forbidding the use of the spindle.

"What are you doing there?" asked the Princess.

"I am spinning, my pretty child," answered the old woman, who did not know who the Princess was.

"Oh, how pretty it is!" exclaimed the Princess. "How do you do it? Give it to me, so I may see if I can do it as well."

She had no sooner taken hold of the spindle, than, being too quick, and rather heedless, and, moreover, the fairies having ordained that it should be so, she pierced her hand with the point of it and fainted away. The poor old woman was in great distress and called for help. People came running from all quarters. They threw water in the Princess's face; they unlaced her dress; they slapped her hands; but nothing would bring her to. The King, who had run upstairs at the noise, then remembered the prediction of the fairies. He ordered the Princess to be carried into a beautiful room of the palace, and laid on a bed embroidered with silver and gold.

The King gave orders that they should let her sleep quietly till the time came for her to awake. The good fairy who had saved her life by condemning her to sleep a hundred

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years was in the kingdom of Matakín, twelve thousand leagues off, when this accident befell the Princess; but she was instantly informed of it by a little dwarf, who had seven-leagued boots, that is, boots with which he could stride over seven leagues of ground at once. The fairy started off at once, and arrived, about an hour later, in a fiery chariot drawn by dragons.

The King handed her out of the chariot, and she approved everything he had done; but as she had very great foresight, she thought that when the Princess should awake she might not know what to do with herself, if she was all alone in this old palace. This was what she did: she touched with her wand everything in the palace (except the King and Queen), — governesses, maids of honor, ladies of the bed-chamber, gentlemen, officers, stewards, cooks, undercooks, kitchen maids, guards with their porters, pages, and footmen; she likewise touched all the horses which were in the stables, the cart horses, the hunters and the saddle horses, the grooms, the great dogs in the outward court, and little Mopsey, too, the Princess's spaniel, which was lying on the bed.

As soon as she touched them they all fell asleep, not to awake again until their mistress did, that they might be ready to wait upon her when she wanted them. The very spits at the fire, as full as they could hold of partridges and pheasants, fell asleep, and the fire itself as well.

The King and Queen now kissed their dear daughter, who still slept on. Then leaving the castle, they issued a proclamation forbidding any person whomsoever to approach it. These orders were unnecessary, for in a quarter of an

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hour there grew up around the park such a number of trees, large and small, of brambles and thorns interlacing each other, that neither man nor beast could have got through them, and nothing could be now seen of the castle but the tops of the turrets, and they only from a considerable distance. Nobody doubted that this also was some of the fairy's handiwork, in order that the Princess might be protected from the curiosity of strangers during her long slumber.

When the hundred years had passed away, the King upon the throne was of another family than that of the sleeping Princess; and his son having been hunting in the neighborhood, inquired what towers they were that he saw above the trees of a very thick wood. Everyone answered as he had heard. Some said it was an old castle haunted by ghosts; others, that all the witches of the country held their midnight revels there. The more general opinion was that it was the house of an ogre, who carried thither all the children he could catch, in order to eat them at his leisure and without being pursued, for he alone had the power of making his way through the wood.

The Prince did not know what to believe of all this, until an old peasant said to him, "Prince, it is more than fifty years since I heard my father say that there was in that castle the most beautiful Princess ever seen; that she was to sleep for a hundred years, and would be awakened by a king's son."

The young Prince, at these words, felt himself all on fire. He had not a moment's doubt that he was the one

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chosen to accomplish this famous adventure, and urged to the deed by love and glory, he resolved, without delay, to see what would come of it.

Scarcely had he approached the wood, when all those great trees, all those brambles and thorns, made way for him to pass of their own accord. He walked towards the castle, which he saw at the end of a long avenue, and he was somewhat surprised to find that none of his people had been able to follow him, the trees having closed up again as soon as he had passed. Nevertheless, he continued to advance. He came to a large fore-court, where everything he saw might well have frozen his blood with terror. A frightful silence reigned around; death seemed everywhere. On every side, nothing was to be seen but the bodies of men and animals stretched out apparently lifeless.

He next passed through a large courtyard, ascended the staircase, and entered the guardroom, where the guards stood, drawn up in line and snoring their loudest. He went through several rooms with ladies and gentlemen all asleep, some standing, others seated. At last he came to one covered with gold, and there on a bed, the curtains of which were open on either side, he saw the most lovely sight he had ever looked upon — a Princess, who appeared to be about fifteen or sixteen, and whose dazzling beauty shone with a radiance which scarcely seemed to belong to this world. He approached, trembling and admiring, and knelt down beside her.

At that moment, the enchantment being ended, the Princess awoke, and gazing at him for the first time with

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unexpected tenderness, "Is it you, my Prince?" she said; "I have waited long for you to come." The Prince, charmed at these words, and still more by the tone in which they were uttered, did not know how to express his joy and gratitude. He assured her that he loved her better than himself.

In the meanwhile, all the palace had been roused at the same time as the Princess. Everybody remembered his or her duty, and, as they were not all in love, they were dying with hunger. The lady-in-waiting, as hungry as any of them, became impatient, and announced loudly to the Princess that the meat was on the table. The Prince assisted the Princess to rise. She was fully dressed, and most magnificently, but he was careful not to tell her that she was dressed like his grandmother.

They passed into a hall of mirrors, where they supped, waited upon by the officers of the Princess. The violins and hautboys played old but charming pieces of music, and after supper, without loss of time, the grand almoner married the royal lovers in the chapel of the castle.

Early next morning the Prince returned to the city, where he knew his father would be in anxiety about him. The Prince told him that he had lost his way in the forest whilst hunting, and that he had slept in the hut of a wood-cutter, who had given him black bread and cheese to eat.

The King, his father, who was a simple-minded man, believed him, but his mother was not so easily satisfied. She noticed that he went hunting nearly every day, and had always some story ready as an excuse, when he had slept two or three nights away from home, and so she felt

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quite sure that he had a lady-love. More than two years went by and the Princess had two children, the first, a girl, was named Aurora; and the second, a son, was called Day, because he was still more beautiful than his sister.

The Queen, hoping to find out the truth from her son, often said to him that he ought to form some attachment, but he never dared to trust her with his secret. Although he loved her, he feared her, for she was of the race of ogres, and the King had only married her on account of her great riches. It was even whispered about the court that she had the tastes of an ogress, and that when she saw little children passing, it was with the greatest difficulty that she restrained herself from pouncing upon them.

On the death of the King, which took place two years later, the Prince, being now his own master, made a public declaration of his marriage, and went in great state to bring the Queen, his wife, to the palace. She made a magnificent entry into the capital, with her two children, one on either side of her.

Some time afterwards the new King went to war with his neighbor, the Emperor Cantalabute. He left the Queen, his mother, Regent of the Kingdom, earnestly recommending to her care his wife and children. He was likely to be all summer in the field, and he had no sooner left than the Queen-mother sent her daughter-in-law and the children to a country house in the wood, so that she might more easily gratify her horrible longing. She followed them thither a few days after, and one evening said to her head cook, "I will eat little Aurora for dinner tomorrow."

"Ah, madam!" exclaimed the cook.

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“I will,” said the Queen, and she said it in the voice of an ogress longing to eat fresh meat; “and I will have her served with my favorite sauce.”

The poor man, seeing plainly that an ogress was not to be trifled with, took his great knife and went up to little Aurora’s room. She was then about four years old, and came jumping and laughing to throw her arms about his neck and ask him for sweets. He burst into tears and the knife fell from his hands; then he went down again and into the farmyard, and there killed a little lamb, which he served up with so delicious a sauce that his mistress assured him she had never eaten anything so excellent. In the meanwhile, he had carried off little Aurora, and given her to his wife, that she might hide her in the lodging which she occupied at the farther end of the farmyard. A week later, the wicked Queen said to her head cook, “I will eat little Day for supper.” He made no reply, having decided in his own mind to deceive her as before.

He went in search of little Day, and found him with a tiny foil in his hand, fencing with a great monkey, though he was only three years old. He carried the child to his wife, who hid him where she had hidden his sister, and then cooked a very tender little kid in the place of little Day, which the ogress thought wonderfully good. All had gone well enough so far, but one evening this wicked Queen said to the head cook, “I should like to eat the Queen with the same sauce that I had with the children.”

Then the poor cook was indeed in despair, for he did not know how he should be able to deceive her. The young

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Queen was over twenty years of age, without counting the hundred years she had slept, and no longer such tender food, although her skin was still white and beautiful, and where among all his animals should he find one old enough to take her place?

He decided at last that, to save his own life, he would kill the Queen, and he went up to her room, determined to carry out his purpose without delay. He worked himself up into a passion, and entered the young Queen's room, dagger in hand. He did not wish, however, to take her by surprise, and so he repeated to her, very respectfully, the order he had received from the Queen-mother. "Do your duty," she said, stretching out her neck to him; "obey the orders that have been given to you. I shall again see my children, my poor children, whom I loved so dearly," for she had thought them dead, ever since they had been carried away from her without a word of explanation.

"No, no, madam!" replied the poor cook, all in tears, "you shall not die, and you shall see your children again, but it will be in my own house, where I have hidden them; I will again deceive the Queen-mother by serving up to her a young deer in your stead."

He led her forthwith to his own apartments, then, leaving her to embrace her children and weep with them, he went and prepared a deer, which the Queen ate at her supper with as much appetite as if it had been the young Queen. She exulted in her cruelty, and intended to tell the King, on his return, that some ferocious wolves had devoured the Queen, his wife, and her two children.

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One evening, while she was prowling, as usual, round the courts and poultry-yards of the castle, to smell the fresh meat, she overheard little Day crying in one of the lower rooms, because the Queen, his mother, was about to whip him for being naughty, and she also heard little Aurora begging forgiveness for her brother. The ogress recognized the voices of the Queen and her children, and, furious at having been deceived, she gave orders, in a voice that made everybody tremble, that the next morning early there should be brought into the middle of the court a large copper, which she had filled with toads, vipers, adders, and serpents, in order to throw into it the Queen and her children, the head cook, his wife, and his maid-servant. She further commanded that they should be brought thither with their hands tied behind them.

There they stood, and the executioners were preparing to fling them into the copper, when the King, who was not expected back so soon, entered the courtyard on horseback. He had ridden post-haste, and in great astonishment asked what was the meaning of this horrible spectacle? No one dared tell him, when the ogress, enraged at what she saw, flung herself head foremost into the copper, where she was instantly eaten by the horrid reptiles, with which she had herself caused it to be filled. The King could not help being sorry for it; she was his mother; but he quickly consoled himself with his beautiful wife and children.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

ONCE upon a time there was a little village girl, the prettiest ever seen or known, of whom her mother was very fond. Her grandmother was even fonder of her still, and had a little red hood made for the child, which suited her so well that wherever she went she was known by the name of Little Red Riding-Hood.

One day, her mother having baked some cakes, said to her, "Go and see how your grandmother is getting on, for I have been told she is ill; take her a cake and this little jar of butter." Whereupon Little Red Riding-Hood started off without delay towards the village in which her grandmother lived. On her way she had to pass through a wood, and there she met that sly old fellow, Mr. Wolf, who felt that he should very much like to eat her up on the spot, but was afraid to do so, as there were woodcutters nearby in the forest.

He asked her which way she was going, and the poor child, not knowing how dangerous it is to stop and listen to a wolf, answered: "I am going to see my grandmother, and am taking a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent her."

"Does she live far from here?" asked the Wolf.

"Oh, yes!" replied Little Red Riding-Hood, "on the farther side of the mill that you see down there; hers is the first house in the village."



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“Well, I was thinking of going to visit her myself,” rejoined the Wolf, “so I will take this path, and you take the other, and we will see which of us gets there first.”

The Wolf then began running off as fast as he could along the shorter way, which he had chosen, while the little girl went by the longer way, and amused herself with stopping to gather nuts, or run after butterflies, and with making little nosegays of all the flowers she could find.

It did not take the Wolf long to reach the grandmother’s house. He knocked: tap, tap.

“Who is there?”

“It is your grand-daughter, Little Red Riding-Hood,” answered the Wolf, imitating the child’s voice. “I have brought a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent you.”

The good grandmother, who was ill in bed, called out, “Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up.” The Wolf pulled the bobbin, and the door opened. He leaped on to the poor old woman, and ate her up in less than no time, for he had been three days without food. He then shut the door again, and laid himself down in the grandmother’s bed, to wait for Little Red Riding-Hood. Presently she came and knocked at the door: tap, tap.

“Who is there?” Little Red Riding-Hood was frightened at first, on hearing the Wolf’s gruff voice, but thinking that her grandmother had a cold, she answered:

“It is your grand-daughter, Little Red Riding-Hood. I have brought a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent you.”

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The Wolf called out, this time in rather a softer voice, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up." Little Red Riding-Hood pulled the bobbin, and the door opened.

When the Wolf saw her come in, he hid himself under the bedclothes, and said to her, "Put the cake and the little jar of butter in the cupboard, and come into bed with me."

Little Red Riding-Hood undressed, and went to the bedside, and was very much astonished to see how different her grandmother looked to what she did when she was up and dressed.

"Grandmother," she exclaimed, "what long arms you have!"

"All the better to hug you with, my little girl."

"Grandmother, what long legs you have!"

"All the better to run with, child."

"Grandmother, what long ears you have!"

"All the better to hear with, child."

"Grandmother, what large eyes you have!"

"All the better to see with, child."

"Grandmother, what large teeth you have!"

"All the better to eat you with!" and saying these words, the wicked Wolf sprang out upon Little Red Riding-Hood and ate her up.

BLUE BEARD

ONCE upon a time there was a man who had fine houses in town and country, gold and silver plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over; but, unfortunately, this man had a blue beard, which made him look so ugly and terrible, that there was not a woman or girl who did not run away from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of rank, had two daughters, who were perfectly beautiful. He proposed to marry one of them, leaving the mother to choose which of the two she would give him. Neither of the daughters, however, would marry a man with a blue beard. A further reason which they had for disliking him was, that he had already been married several times, and nobody knew what had become of his wives. Blue Beard, in order to improve the acquaintance, took the girls with their mother, three or four of their most intimate friends, and some other young people who resided in the neighborhood to one of his country seats, where they spent an entire week. Nothing was thought of but excursions, hunting and fishing-parties, balls, entertainments, and suppers. Nobody went to bed; the whole night was passed in games and playing tricks on one another. In short, all went off so well, that the youngest daughter began to think that the beard of the master of the house was not so blue as it used to be, and that he was a very worthy man. Indeed she agreed to marry him, and imme-

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diately upon their return to town the marriage took place.

At the end of a month, Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey, which would keep him away from home for six weeks at least, as he had business of great importance to attend to. He begged her to amuse herself as well as she could during his absence, to invite her best friends, and, if she liked, take them into the country, and wherever she was, to have the best of everything for the table.

“Here,” said he to her, “are the keys of my two large storerooms. These are those of the chests in which the gold and silver plate, not in general use, is kept; these are the keys of the strong boxes in which I keep my money; these open the caskets that contain my jewels, and this is the master-key of all the rooms. As for this little key, it is that of the closet at the end of the long gallery on the ground floor. Open everything, and go everywhere except into that little closet, which I forbid you to enter, and I forbid you so strictly, that if you should venture to open the door, there is nothing that you may not have to dread from my anger!” She promised to obey his orders to the letter, and after having kissed her, he got into his coach and set out on his journey.

The friends and neighbors of the young bride did not wait for her invitation, so eager were they to see all the rich treasures in the house, and not having ventured to visit her while her husband was at home, so frightened were they at his blue beard. They were soon to be seen running through all the rooms, and into the closets and wardrobes,

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each of which was more beautiful than the last. Then they went upstairs to the storerooms, where they could not sufficiently express their admiration at the number and beauty of the hangings, the beds, the sofas, the cabinets, the elegant little stands, the tables, the mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot, framed, some with glass, some with silver, some with gilt metal, all of a richness beyond what had ever before been seen. They never ceased envying the good fortune of their friend, who, meanwhile, took no pleasure in the sight of all these treasures, so great was her longing to go and open the door of the closet on the ground floor. Her curiosity at last reached such a pitch that, without stopping to consider how rude it was to leave her guests, she ran down a little back staircase leading to the closet, and in such haste that she nearly broke her neck two or three times before she reached the bottom. At the door of the closet she paused for a moment, calling to mind her husband's command, and reflecting that trouble might fall upon her for her disobedience; but the temptation was so strong that she could not resist it. So she took the little key, and with a trembling hand opened the door of the closet.

At first she could distinguish nothing, for the windows were closed. In a few minutes, however, she began to see that the floor was covered with blood, which reflected the bodies of several dead women hanging on the walls. These were all the wives of Blue Beard, who had killed them one after another. She was ready to die with fright, and the key, which she had taken out of the lock, fell from her hand.

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After recovering her senses a little, she picked up the key, locked the door again, and went up to her room to try and compose herself; but she found it impossible to quiet her agitation.

She now saw that the key of the closet was stained with blood; she wiped it two or three times, but the blood would not come off. In vain she washed it, and even scrubbed it with sand and free-stone, the stain was still there, for the key was an enchanted one, and there were no means of cleaning it completely; when the blood was washed off one side, it came back on the other.

Blue Beard returned that very evening, and said that he had received letters on the road, telling him that the business on which he was going had been settled to his advantage.

His wife did all she could to make him believe that she was delighted at his speedy return.

The next morning he asked her for his keys again. She gave them to him; but her hand trembled so, that he had not much difficulty in guessing what had happened.

"How comes it," said he, "that the key of the closet is not with the others?"

"I must have left it," she replied, "upstairs on my table."

"Fail not," said Blue Beard, "to give it to me presently."

After several excuses, she was obliged to go and bring the key. Blue Beard having examined it, said to his wife, "Why is there blood on this key?"

"I don't know," answered the poor wife, paler than death.



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“You don’t know!” rejoined Blue Beard; “I know well enough. You must needs go into the closet. Well, madam, you shall go in again, and take your place among the ladies you saw there.”

She flung herself at her husband’s feet, weeping and begging his pardon, with all the signs of a true repentance at having disobeyed him. Her beauty and sorrow might have melted a rock, but Blue Beard had a heart harder than rock.

“You must die, madam,” said he, “and at once.”

“If I must die,” she replied, looking at him with streaming eyes, “give me a little time to say my prayers.”

“I give you half a quarter of an hour,” answered Blue Beard, “not a minute more.”

As soon as she found herself alone, she called her sister, and said to her, “Sister Anne” — for so she was named — “go up, I pray you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not in sight. They promised they would come to visit me today, and if you see them, sign to them to make haste.”

Sister Anne mounted to the top of the tower, and the poor unhappy wife called to her from time to time, “Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?” and Sister Anne answered her:

“I see nothing but the dust turning gold in the sun, and the grass growing green.”

Meanwhile, Blue Beard, with a large cutlass in his hand, called out with all his might to his wife, “Come down quickly, or I shall come up there.”

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“One minute more, if you please,” replied his wife; and then said quickly in a low voice, “Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?”

And sister Anne answered, “I see nothing but the dust turning gold in the sun, and the grass growing green.”

“Come down quickly,” roared Blue Beard, “or I shall come up there.”

“I am coming,” answered his wife; and then called “Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?”

“I see a great cloud of dust moving this way,” said Sister Anne.

“Is it my brothers?”

“Alas! no, sister, only a flock of sheep.”

“Will you not come down?” shouted Blue Beard.

“One minute more,” replied his wife; and then she cried, “Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?”

“I see two horsemen coming this way,” she replied, “but they are still a great distance off. Heaven be praised!” she exclaimed a moment afterwards, “they are my brothers! I am making all the signs I can to hasten them.”

Blue Beard began to roar so loudly that the whole house shook again. The poor wife went down and threw herself at his feet with weeping eyes and dishevelled hair. “It is of no use,” said Blue Beard; “you must die!” Then, taking her by the hair with one hand, and raising the cutlass with the other, he was about to cut off her head.

The poor wife, turning towards him her dying eyes, begged him to give her one short moment to collect herself. “No, no,” said he; “commend yourself to heaven,” and

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lifting his arm — At this moment there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Blue Beard stopped short. It was opened, and two horsemen were immediately seen to enter, who, drawing their swords, ran straight at Blue Beard. He recognized them as the brothers of his wife; one a dragoon, the other a musketeer, and he therefore fled at once, hoping to escape; but they pursued him so closely that they overtook him before he could reach the steps to his door, and, running their swords through his body, left him dead on the spot. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength to rise and embrace her brothers.

It was found that Blue Beard had left no heirs, and so his widow came into possession of all his property. She employed part of it in marrying her Sister Anne to a man who had long loved her; another part in buying captains' commissions for her two brothers; and with the remainder she married herself to a very worthy man, who made her forget the dreadful time she had passed with Blue Beard.

MASTER CAT; OR, PUSS IN BOOTS

ONCE upon a time a miller bequeathed to his three sons all he possessed of worldly goods, which consisted only of his Mill, his Ass, and his Cat. It did not take long to divide the property, and neither notary nor attorney was called in; they would soon have eaten up the poor little property. The eldest son had the Mill; the second son, the Ass; and the youngest had nothing but the Cat.

The latter was very unhappy at having such a poor share of the inheritance. "My brothers," said he, "may be able to earn an honest livelihood by entering into partnership; but, as for me, when I have eaten my Cat and made a muff of his skin, I must die of hunger."

The Cat, who had heard this speech, although he had not appeared to do so, said to him with a sedate and serious air, "Do not be troubled, master; you have only to give me a bag, and get a pair of boots made for me in which I can go among the bushes, and you will see that you are not left so badly off as you believe." Though his master did not place much reliance on the Cat's words, he had seen him play such cunning tricks in catching rats and mice, that he was not altogether without hope of being helped by him out of his distress.

As soon as the Cat had what he asked for, he boldly pulled on his boots, and, hanging his bag round his neck, took the strings of it in his forepaws, and started off for

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a warren where there were a great number of rabbits. He put some bran and sow-thistles in his bag, and then, stretching himself out as if he were dead, he waited till some young rabbit, little versed in the wiles of the world, should come and poke his way into the bag, in order to eat what was inside it.

He had hardly laid himself down before he had the pleasure of seeing a young scatterbrain of a rabbit get into the bag, whereupon Master Cat pulled the strings, caught it, and killed it without mercy. Proud of his prey, he went to the palace, and asked to speak to the King. He was ushered upstairs and into the state apartment, and, after making a low bow to the King, he said, "Sire, here is a wild rabbit, which my Lord the Marquis of Carabas" — for such was the title he had taken a fancy to give to his master — "has ordered me to present, with his duty, to your Majesty."

"Tell your master," replied the King, "that I thank him and am pleased with his gift."

Another day the Cat went and hid himself in the wheat, keeping the mouth of his bag open as before, and as soon as he saw that a brace of partridges had run inside, he pulled the strings, and so took them both. He went immediately and presented them to the King, as he had the rabbits. The King was equally grateful at receiving the brace of partridges, and ordered drink to be given him.

For the next two or three months, the Cat continued in this manner, taking presents of game at intervals to the King, as if from his master. One day, when he knew the King was going to drive on the banks of the river, with his

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daughter, the most beautiful Princess in the world, he said to his master, "If you will follow my advice, your fortune is made; you have only to go and bathe in a part of the river I will point out to you, and then leave the rest to me."

The Marquis of Carabas did as his Cat advised him, without knowing what good would come of it. While he was bathing, the King passed by, and the Cat began to call out with all his might, "Help! Help! My Lord the Marquis of Carabas is drowning!" Hearing the cry, the King looked out of the coach window, and recognizing the Cat who had so often brought him game, he ordered his guards to fly to the help of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. Whilst they were getting the poor Marquis out of the river, the Cat went up to the royal coach, and told the King that, while his master had been bathing, some robbers had come and carried off his clothes, although he had shouted, "Stop thief," as loud as he could. The rogue had hidden them himself under a large stone. The King immediately ordered the officers of his wardrobe to go and fetch one of his handsomest suits for my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. The King embraced him a thousand times, and as the fine clothes they dressed him in set off his good looks — for he was handsome and well made — the Marquis of Carabas quite took the fancy of the King's daughter, and after he had cast two or three respectful and rather tender glances towards her, she fell very much in love with him. The King insisted upon his getting into the coach, and accompanying them in their drive. The Cat, delighted to see that his plans were beginning to succeed, ran on before, and coming across

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some peasants who were mowing a meadow, he said to them, "You, good people, who are mowing here, if you do not tell the King that this meadow you are mowing belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be cut in pieces as small as minced meat." The King did not fail to ask the peasants whose meadow it was they were mowing.

"It belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas," said they all together, for the Cat's threat had frightened them.

"You have a fine property there," said the King to the Marquis of Carabas.

"As you say, sire," responded the Marquis of Carabas, "for it is a meadow which yields an abundant crop every year."

Master Cat, who still kept in advance of the party, came up to some reapers, and said to them, "You, good people, who are reaping, if you do not say that all this corn belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be cut into pieces as small as minced meat."

The King, who passed by a minute afterwards, wished to know to whom belonged all the corn-fields he saw. "To my Lord the Marquis of Carabas," repeated the reapers, and the King again congratulated the Marquis on his property.

The Cat, still continuing to run before the coach, uttered the same threat to every one he met, and the King was astonished at the great wealth of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. Master Cat at length arrived at a fine castle, the owner of which was an ogre; the richest ogre ever known, for all the lands through which the King had driven belonged

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to the Lord of this castle. The Cat took care to find out who the ogre was, and what he was able to do. Then he asked to speak with him, saying that he did not like to pass so near his castle without doing himself the honor of paying his respects to him. The ogre received him as civilly as an ogre can, and made him sit down.

“I have been told,” said the Cat, “that you have the power of changing yourself into all kinds of animals; that you could, for instance, transform yourself into a lion or an elephant.”

“’Tis true,” said the ogre, abruptly, “and to prove it to you, you shall see me become a lion.” The Cat was so frightened when he saw a lion in front of him, that he quickly scrambled up into the gutter, not without difficulty and danger, on account of his boots, which were worse than useless for walking on the tiles. Shortly afterwards, seeing that the ogre had resumed his natural form, the Cat climbed down again, and admitted that he had been terribly frightened. “I have also been assured,” said the Cat, “but I cannot believe it, that you have the power besides of taking the form of the smallest animal; for instance, that of a rat or a mouse. I confess to you I hold this to be utterly impossible.”

“Impossible!” exclaimed the ogre, “you shall see!” and he immediately changed himself into a mouse, and began running about the floor. The cat no sooner caught sight of it, than he pounced upon it and ate it.

In the meanwhile, the King, seeing the fine castle of the ogre as he was driving past, thought he should like to go inside. The Cat, who heard the noise of the coach rolling

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over the draw-bridge, ran to meet it, and said to the King, "Your Majesty is welcome to the Castle of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas!"

"How, my Lord Marquis," exclaimed the King, "this castle belongs to you? Nothing could be finer than this courtyard, and all these buildings which surround it. Let us see the inside of it, if you please."

The Marquis handed out the young Princess, and following the King, who led the way upstairs, they entered a grand hall, where they found prepared a magnificent repast, which the ogre had ordered in expectation of some friends, who were to have visited him that very day, but who did not venture to enter when they heard the King was there. The King was greatly delighted with the excellent qualities of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas, as was also his daughter, who became more than ever in love with him; and the King, seeing what great wealth he possessed, said to him, after having drunk five or six bumpers, "It depends entirely on yourself, my Lord Marquis, whether or not you become my son-in-law." The Marquis, making several profound bows, accepted the honor the King offered him, and that same day was married to the Princess.

The Cat became a great lord, and never again ran after mice, except for his amusement.

THE FAIRIES

THERE was once a widow who had two daughters. The older was so like her mother in temper and face, that to have seen the one was to have seen the other. They were both so disagreeable and proud, that it was impossible to live with them. The younger, who was the exact portrait of her father in her kindly and polite ways, was as beautiful a girl as one could see. As we are naturally fond of those who resemble us, the mother doted on her older daughter, while for the younger she had a most violent dislike, and made her take her meals in the kitchen and work hard all day. Among other things that she was obliged to do, this poor child was forced to go twice a day to bring water from a place a mile or more from the house, and carry back a large jug filled to the brim. As she was standing one day by this spring, a poor woman came up to her, and asked the girl to give her some water to drink.

“Certainly, my good woman,” she replied, and the beautiful girl at once stooped and rinsed out the jug, and then, filling it with water from the clearest part of the spring, she held it up to the woman, continuing to support the jug, that she might drink with great comfort.

Having drunk, the woman said to her, “You are so beautiful, so good and kind, that I cannot refrain from conferring a gift upon you,” for she was really a fairy, who had taken the form of a poor village woman, in order to

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see how far the girl's kind-heartedness would go. "This gift I make you," continued the fairy, "that with every word you speak, either a flower or a precious stone will fall from your mouth."

The girl had no sooner reached home than her mother began scolding her for being back so late. "I am sorry, mother," said she, "to have been out so long," and as she spoke, there fell from her mouth six roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds.

The mother gazed at her in astonishment. "What do I see!" she exclaimed. "Pearls and diamonds seem to be dropping from her mouth! How is this, my daughter?" — it was the first time she had called her *daughter*. The poor child related in all simplicity what had happened, letting fall quantities of diamonds in the course of her narrative. "I must certainly send my other daughter there," said the mother. "Look, Fanchon, see what falls from your sister's mouth when she speaks! Would you not be glad to receive a similar gift? All you have to do is to go and fetch water from the spring, and if an old woman asks you for some to drink, to give it her nicely and politely."

"I should like to see myself going to the spring," answered the rude, cross girl.

"I insist on your going," rejoined the mother, "and that at once."

The elder girl went off, still grumbling; with her she took the handsomest silver bottle she could find in the house.

She had no sooner arrived at the spring than she saw a lady magnificently dressed walking towards her from the

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wood, who approached and asked for some water to drink. It was the same fairy who had appeared to the sister, but she had now put on the airs and apparel of a princess, as she wished to see how far this girl's rudeness would go.

"Do you think I came here just to draw water for you?" answered the arrogant and unmannerly girl; "I have, of course, brought this silver bottle on purpose for you to drink from, and all I have to say is — drink from it if you like!"

"You are scarcely polite," said the fairy, without losing her temper; "however, as you are so disobliging, I confer this gift upon you, that with every word you speak a snake or a toad shall fall from your mouth."

Directly her mother caught sight of her, she called out, "Well, my daughter!"

"Well, my mother!" replied the ill-tempered girl, throwing out as she spoke two vipers and a toad.

"Alack!" cried the mother, "what do I see? This is her sister's doing, but I will pay her out for it," and, so saying, she ran towards the younger girl with intent to beat her. The unhappy girl fled from the house, and went and hid herself in a neighboring forest.

The King's son, who was returning from hunting, met her, and seeing how beautiful she was, asked her what she was doing there all alone, and why she was crying.

"Alas! sir, my mother has driven me from home."

The King's son, seeing five or six pearls and as many diamonds falling from her mouth as she spoke, asked her to explain how this was, and she told him all her tale. The

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King's son fell in love with her, and thinking that such a gift as she possessed was worth more than any ordinary dower brought by another, he carried her off to his father's palace, and there married her.

As for her sister, she made herself so hated that her own mother drove her from the house. The miserable girl, having gone about in vain trying to find some one who would take her in, crept away into the corner of a wood, and there died.

CINDERELLA; OR, THE LITTLE GLASS SLIPPER

ONCE upon a time there was a nobleman, who married for a second wife the haughtiest and proudest woman that had ever been seen. She had two daughters who were like her in everything. The husband, on his side, had a daughter of unexampled gentleness and goodness.

The wedding was hardly over before the step-mother's bad temper broke out. She could not endure the young girl, whose good qualities made her own daughters appear still more detestable. She put her to do all the meanest work in the house. It was she who washed up the plates and dishes and cleaned the stairs; who scrubbed the step-mother's room and those of her daughters. She slept in a garret at the top of the house, on a wretched straw mattress, while her sisters occupied rooms with inlaid floors, and had the latest fashioned beds, and mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot. The poor girl bore everything with patience, and did not dare complain to her father, who would only have scolded her, as he was entirely governed by his wife. When she had done her work, she was in the habit of going into the chimney-corner and sitting down amongst the cinders, which caused her to be nicknamed Cindertail by the household in general. The second daughter, however, who was not quite so rude as her sister, called her Cinderella. Nevertheless, Cinderella in her shabby clothes

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still looked a thousand times more beautiful than her sisters, magnificently dressed as they were.

It happened that the King's son gave a ball, to which he invited every one of position. Our two fine ladies were among those who received an invitation, for they made a great show in the neighborhood. They were now in great delight, and very busy choosing the most becoming gowns and head-dresses. A new mortification for poor Cinderella, for it was she who had to iron her sisters' fine linen and gaufer their ruffles. No one talked of anything but of the style in which they were to be dressed.

"I," said the eldest, "will wear my red velvet dress, and my English point-lace trimmings."

"I," said the youngest, "shall only wear my usual petticoat, but, to make up for that, I shall put on my gold-flowered cloak, and my clasp of diamonds, which are none of the least valuable." They sent for a first-rate milliner, that their caps might be made to fashion, and they bought their patches from the best maker. They called Cinderella to give them her opinion, for her taste was excellent. Cinderella gave them the best advice in the world, and even offered to dress their hair for them, which they were very willing she should do.

Whilst she was busy with the hairdressing, they said to her, "Cinderella, should you be very glad to go to the ball?"

"Alas! you only make fun of me; such a thing would not be suitable for me at all."

"You are right; they would indeed laugh to see a Cinder-tail at the ball!"

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Any other than Cinderella would have dressed their hair awry, but she had a good disposition, and arranged it for both of them to perfection. They could eat nothing for nearly two days, so transported were they with joy. More than a dozen laces were broken in making their waists as small as possible, and they were continually before their looking-glasses. At last the happy day arrived. They set off, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could. When they were out of sight she began to cry. Her godmother, who saw her all in tears, asked her what was the matter. "I should so like — I should so like —" she sobbed so violently that she could not finish the sentence.

"You would so like to go to the ball, is not that it?"

"Alas! yes," said Cinderella, sighing.

"Well, if you will be a good girl, I will undertake that you shall go." She took her into her room, and said to her, "Go into the garden and bring me a pumpkin." Cinderella went at once, gathered the finest she could find, and brought it to her godmother, wondering the while how a pumpkin could enable her to go to the ball. Her godmother scooped it out, and, having left nothing but the rind, struck it with her wand, and the pumpkin was immediately changed into a beautiful coach, gilt all over. She then went and looked into the mouse-trap, where she found six mice, all alive. She told Cinderella to lift the door of the mouse-trap a little, and to each mouse, as it ran out, she gave a tap with her wand, and the mouse was immediately changed into a fine horse, so that at last there stood ready a handsome train of six horses of a beautiful dappled mouse-grey color. Cin-

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derella then brought her the rat-trap, in which there were three large rats. The fairy chose one from the three on account of its ample beard, and having touched it, it was changed into a fat coachman, with the finest whiskers that ever were seen. She then said, "Go into the garden, and there, behind the watering-pot, you will find six lizards; bring them to me." Cinderella had no sooner brought them than the godmother changed them into six footmen, with their liveries all covered with lace, who immediately jumped up behind the coach, and hung on to it as if they had done nothing else all their lives. The fairy then said to Cinderella, "Well, there is something in which to go to the ball; are you not well pleased?"

Yes, but am I to go in these dirty old clothes?" Her godmother touched her lightly with her wand, and in the same instant her dress was changed into one of gold and silver covered with precious stones. She then gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world. When she was thus attired, she got into the coach; but her godmother told her, above all things, not to stay past midnight, warning her, that if she remained at the ball a minute longer, her coach would again become a pumpkin; her horses, mice; her footmen, lizards; and her clothes turn again into her old ones. She promised her godmother that she would not fail to leave the ball before midnight, and drove off, almost out of her mind with joy.

The King's son, who was informed that a grand Princess had arrived whom nobody knew, ran to receive her. He handed her out of the coach and led her into the hall, where

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the guests were assembled. There was immediately a dead silence; the dancing stopped, and the fiddlers ceased to play, so engaged did every one become in gazing upon the wonderful beauty of the unknown lady. Nothing was heard but a general murmur of "Oh! how lovely she is!" The King himself, old as he was, could not take his eyes from her, and observed to the Queen, that it was a long time since he had seen so lovely and amiable a person. All the ladies were intently occupied in examining her head-dress and her clothes, that they might order some like them the very next day, provided that they might be able to find materials as costly and work-people sufficiently clever to make them up.

The King's son conducted her to the most honorable seat, and then led her out to dance. She danced so gracefully that everybody's admiration of her was increased. A very grand supper was served, of which the Prince ate not a morsel, so absorbed was he in the contemplation of her beauty. She seated herself beside her sisters, and showed them a thousand civilities. She shared with them the oranges and citrons which the Prince had given her, at which they were greatly surprised, for she appeared a perfect stranger to them. While they were thus talking together, Cinderella heard the clock strike the three-quarters past eleven. She at once made a profound curtsy to the company, and left as quickly as she could. As soon as she had reached home, she went to find her godmother, and after having thanked her, said she much wished to go to the ball again next day, because the King's son had invited her. She was telling her



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godmother all that had passed at the ball, when the two sisters knocked at the door. Cinderella went and opened it. "How late you are!" said she to them, yawning, rubbing her eyes, and then stretching herself as if she had but just awoken, although she had had no inclination to sleep since she parted from them.

"If you had been at the ball," said one of her sisters to her, "you would not have been weary of it. There came to it the most beautiful princess — the most beautiful that ever was seen; she paid us many attentions, and gave us oranges and citrons." Cinderella was beside herself with delight. She asked them the name of the Princess, but they replied that nobody knew her, that the King's son was much puzzled about it, and that he would give everything in the world to know who she was.

Cinderella smiled and said, "She was very lovely, then? How fortunate you are! Could not I get a sight of her? Alas! Miss Javotte, lend me the yellow gown you wear every day."

"Truly," said Miss Javotte, "I like that! Lend one's gown to a dirty Cindertail like you! I should be mad indeed!" Cinderella fully expected this refusal, and was rejoiced at it, for she would not have known what to do if her sister had lent her the gown.

The next day the sisters went again to the ball, and Cinderella also, but still more splendidly dressed than before. The King's son never left her side, or ceased saying tender things to her. Cinderella found the evening pass very pleasantly, and forgot her godmother's warning, so that she

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heard the clock begin to strike twelve while still thinking that it was not yet eleven. She rose and fled as lightly as a fawn. The Prince followed her, but could not overtake her. She dropped one of her glass slippers, which the Prince carefully picked up. Cinderella reached home almost breathless, without coach or footmen, and in her shabby clothes, with nothing remaining of her finery but one of her little slippers, the fellow of that which she had dropped.

The guards at the palace gate were asked if they had not seen a Princess pass out. They answered that they had seen no one pass but a poorly-dressed girl, who had more the appearance of a peasant than of a lady.

When the two sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had been as much entertained as before, and if the beautiful lady had been present. They said yes, but that she had fled as soon as it had struck twelve.

A few days afterwards the King's son caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet that he would marry her whose foot would exactly fit the slipper. They began by trying it on the princesses, then on the duchesses, and so on throughout the Court; but in vain. It was taken to the two sisters, who did their utmost to force one of their feet into the slipper, but they could not manage to do so. Cinderella, who was looking on, and who recognized the slipper, said laughingly, "Let me see if it will not fit me." Her sisters began to laugh and ridicule her. The gentleman of the Court who had been entrusted to try the slipper, having looked attentively at Cinderella, and seeing that she was very beautiful, said that it was only fair that her request

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should be granted, as he had received orders to try the slipper on all maidens, without exception. He made Cinderella sit down, and putting the slipper to her little foot, he saw it slip on easily and fit like wax. Great was the astonishment of the two sisters, but it was still greater when Cinderella took the other little slipper out of her pocket and put it on her other foot. At that moment the godmother appeared, and gave a tap with her wand to Cinderella's clothes, which became still more magnificent than those she had worn before.

The two sisters then recognized in her the beautiful person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet to beg for forgiveness for all the ill-treatment she had suffered from them. Cinderella raised and embraced them, said that she forgave them with all her heart, and begged them to love her dearly for the future. She was conducted, dressed as she was, to the young Prince. He found her more charming than ever, and a few days afterwards he married her. Cinderella, who was as kind as she was beautiful, gave her sisters apartments in the palace, and married them the very same day to two great lords of the Court.

RIQUET WITH THE TUFT

ONCE upon a time there was a Queen who had a son so ugly and misshapen that it was doubted for a long time whether his form was really human. A fairy, who was present at his birth, said, nevertheless, that he would be worthy to be loved, as he would have an excellent wit and, by virtue of the gift she had bestowed upon him, he would be able to impart equal intelligence to the one whom he loved best. All this was some consolation to the poor Queen, who was much distressed at having brought so ugly a little monkey into the world. It is true that the child was no sooner able to speak than he said a thousand pretty things, and that in all his ways there was a certain air of intelligence, with which every one was charmed. I had forgotten to say that he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, and so he came to be called Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

About seven or eight years later, the Queen of a neighboring kingdom had two daughters. The elder was fairer than the day, and the Queen was so delighted that it was feared some harm might come to her from her great joy. The same fairy who had assisted at the birth of little Riquet was present upon this occasion, and in order to moderate the joy of the Queen, she told her that this little Princess would have no gifts of mind at all, and that she would be as stupid as she was beautiful. The Queen was greatly

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mortified on hearing this, but shortly after she was even more annoyed when her second little daughter was born and proved to be extremely ugly. "Do not distress yourself, madam," said the fairy to her, "your daughter will find compensation, for she will have so much intelligence, that her lack of beauty will scarcely be perceived."

"Heaven send it may be so," replied the Queen; "but are there no means whereby a little more understanding might be given to the elder, who is so lovely?"

"I can do nothing for her in the way of intelligence, madam," said the fairy, "but everything in the way of beauty. As, however, there is nothing in my power I would not do to give you comfort, I will bestow on her the power of conferring beauty on any man or woman who shall please her."

As these two Princesses grew up, their endowments also became more perfect, and nothing was talked of anywhere but the beauty of the elder and the intelligence of the younger. It is true that their defects also greatly increased with their years. The younger became uglier every moment and the elder more stupid every day. She either made no answer when she was spoken to, or else said something foolish. With this she was so clumsy that she could not even place four pieces of china on a mantelshelf without breaking one of them, or drink a glass of water without spilling half of it on her dress.

Notwithstanding the attraction of beauty, the younger, in whatever society they might be, nearly always bore away the palm from her sister. At first every one went up to the

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more beautiful, to gaze at and admire her; but they soon left her for the cleverer one, to listen to her many pleasant and amusing sayings; and people were astonished to find that in less than a quarter of an hour the elder had not a soul near her, while all the company had gathered round the younger. The elder, though very stupid, noticed this, and would have given, without regret, all her beauty for half the sense of her sister. Discreet as she was, the Queen could not help often reproaching her with her stupidity, which made the poor Princess ready to die of grief.

One day, when she had gone by herself into a wood, to weep over her misfortune, she saw approaching her a little man of very ugly and unpleasant appearance, but magnificently dressed. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who, having fallen in love with her from seeing her portraits, which were sent all over the world, had left his father's kingdom that he might have the pleasure of beholding her and speaking to her. Enchanted at meeting her thus alone, he addressed her with all the respect and politeness imaginable. Having remarked, after paying her the usual compliments, that she was very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot understand, madam, how a person so beautiful as you are can be so unhappy as you appear; for, although I can boast of having seen an infinite number of beautiful people, I can say with truth that I have never seen one whose beauty could be compared with yours."

"You are pleased to say so, sir," replied the Princess, and there she stopped.

"Beauty," continued Riquet, "is so great an advantage,

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that it ought to take the place of every other, and, possessed of it, I see nothing that can have power to afflict one.”

“I would rather,” said the Princess, “be as ugly as you are and have intelligence, than possess the beauty I do and be so stupid as I am.”

“There is no greater proof of intelligence, madam, than the belief that we have it not; it is the nature of that gift, that the more we have, the more we believe ourselves to be without it.”

“I do not know how that may be,” said the Princess, “but I know well enough that I am very stupid, and that is the cause of the grief that is killing me.”

“If that is all that troubles you, madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow.”

“And how would you do that?” said the Princess.

“I have the power, madam,” said Riquet with the Tuft, “to give as much intelligence as it is possible to possess to the person whom I love best; and as you, madam, are that person, it will depend entirely upon yourself whether or not you become gifted with this amount of intelligence, provided that you are willing to marry me.”

The Princess was struck dumb with astonishment, and replied not a word.

“I see,” said Riquet with the Tuft, “that this proposal troubles you, and I am not surprised, but I will give you a full year to consider it.”

The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time was so anxious to have a great deal, that she thought the end of that year would never come; so she at once accepted

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the offer that was made her. She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him that day twelve months, than she felt herself quite another person. She found she was able to say whatever she pleased, with a readiness past belief, and of saying it in a clever, but easy and natural manner. She immediately began a sprightly and well-sustained conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, and was so brilliant in her talk that Riquet with the Tuft began to think he had given her more wit than he had reserved for himself. On her return to the palace, the whole Court was puzzled to account for a change so sudden and extraordinary. All the Court was in a state of joy not to be described. The younger sister alone was not altogether pleased, for, having lost her superiority over her sister in the way of intelligence, she now only appeared by her side as a very unpleasing-looking person.

The King began to be guided by his elder daughter's advice, and at times even held his Council in her apartments. The news of the change of affairs was spread abroad, and all the young princes of the neighboring kingdoms exerted themselves to gain her affection, and nearly all of them asked her hand in marriage. She found none of them, however, intelligent enough to please her, and she listened to all of them, without engaging herself to one.

At length arrived a Prince, so rich and powerful, so clever and so handsome, that she could not help listening willingly to his addresses. Her father, having perceived this, told her that he left her at perfect liberty to choose a husband for herself, and that she had only to make known



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her decision. As the more intelligence we possess, the more difficulty we find in making up our mind on such a matter as this, she begged her father, after having thanked him, to allow her time to think about it.

She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood in which she had met Riquet with the Tuft, in order to meditate more uninterruptedly over what she had to do. While she was walking, deep in thought, she heard a dull sound beneath her feet, as of many persons running to and fro, and busily occupied. Having listened more attentively, she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan"; another, "Give me that kettle"; another, "Put some wood on the fire." At the same moment the ground opened, and she saw beneath her what appeared to be a large kitchen, full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants necessary for the preparation of a magnificent banquet. There came forth a band of about twenty to thirty cooks, who went and established themselves in an avenue of the wood at a very long table, and who, each with the larding-pin in his hand and the tail of his fur cap over his ear, set to work, keeping time to a harmonious song.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, asked the men for whom they were working.

"Madam," replied the chief among them, "for Prince Riquet with the Tuft, whose marriage will take place tomorrow." The Princess, still more surprised than she was before, and suddenly recollecting that it was just a twelvemonth from the day on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft, was overcome with

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trouble and amazement. The reason for her not having remembered her promise was, that when she made it she had been a very foolish person, and when she became gifted with the new mind that the Prince had given her, she had forgotten all her follies.

She had not taken another thirty steps when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, gaily and splendidly attired like a Prince about to be married. "You see, madam," said he, "I keep my word punctually, and I doubt not that you have come thither to keep yours, and to make me, by the giving of your hand, the happiest of men."

"I confess to you, frankly," answered the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind on that matter, and that I do not think I shall ever be able to do so in the way you wish."

"You astonish me, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft.

"I have no doubt I do," said the Princess; "and assuredly, had I to deal with a stupid person, with a man without intelligence, I should feel greatly perplexed. 'A Princess is bound by her word,' he would say to me, 'and you must marry me, since you have promised to do so.' But as the person to whom I speak is, of all men in the world, the one of greatest sense and understanding, I am certain he will listen to reason. You know that, when I was no better than a fool, I nevertheless could not decide to marry you. How can you expect, now that I have the mind which you have given me, and which renders me much more difficult to please than before, that I should take today a resolution which I could not take then? If you seriously thought of marrying

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me, you did very wrong to take away my stupidity, and so enable me to see more clearly than I saw then.”

“If a man without intelligence,” replied Riquet with the Tuft, “who reproached you with your breach of promise, might have a right, as you have just intimated, to be treated with indulgence, why would you wish, madam, that I should receive less consideration in a matter which affects the entire happiness of my life? Is it reasonable that persons of intellect should be in a worse position than those that have none? Can you assert this — you who have so much, and who so earnestly desired to possess it? But let us come to the point, if you please. Setting aside my ugliness, is there anything in me that displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, or my manners?”

“Not in the least,” replied the Princess; “I admire in you everything you have mentioned.”

“If that is so,” rejoined Riquet with the Tuft, “I shall soon be happy, as you have it in your power to make me the most pleasing looking of men.”

“How can that be done?” asked the Princess.

“It can be done,” said Riquet with the Tuft, “if you love me sufficiently to wish that it should be. And, in order, madam, that you should have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy, who, on the day I was born, endowed me with the power to give intelligence to the person I chose, gave you also the power to render handsome the man you should love, and on whom you should wish to bestow this favor.”

“If such be the fact,” said the Princess, “I wish, with

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all my heart, that you should become the handsomest and most lovable Prince in the world, and I bestow the gift on you to the fullest extent in my power.”

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes, of all men in the world; the handsomest, the best made, and most attractive she had ever seen. There are some who assert that it was not the spell of the fairy, but love alone that caused this change. They say that the Princess, having reflected on the perseverance of her lover, on his prudence, and on all the good qualities of his heart and mind, no longer saw the deformity of his body or the ugliness of his features; that his hump appeared to her nothing more than a good-natured shrug of his shoulders, and that instead of noticing, as she had done, how badly he limped, she saw in him only a certain lounging air, which charmed her. They say also that his eyes, which squinted, only seemed to her the more brilliant for this; and that the crookedness of his glance was to her merely expressive of his great love; and, finally, that his great red nose had in it, to her mind, something martial and heroic. However this may be, the Princess promised on the spot to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King, her father. The King, having learned that his daughter entertained a great regard for Riquet with the Tuft, whom he knew also to be a very clever and wise Prince, received him with pleasure as his son-in-law. The wedding took place the next morning, as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and according to the orders which he had given a long time before.

LITTLE THUMBLING

ONCE upon a time there was a woodcutter and his wife who had seven boys. The eldest was but ten years old, and the youngest only seven. People wondered that the woodcutter had so many children so near in age, but the fact was that several of them were twins. He and his wife were very poor, and their seven children were a great burden to them, as not one of them was yet able to earn his livelihood. What troubled them still more was, that the youngest was very delicate, and seldom spoke, which they considered a proof of stupidity rather than of good sense. He was very diminutive, and, when first born, scarcely bigger than one's thumb, and so they called him Little Thumbling.

This poor child was the scapegoat of the house, and was blamed for everything that happened. Nevertheless, he was the shrewdest and most sensible of all the brothers, and if he spoke little, he listened a great deal.

There came a year of bad harvest and a famine. One evening, when they were all in bed, and the woodcutter was sitting over the fire with his wife, he said to her, with an aching heart, "You see plainly that we can no longer find food for our children. I cannot let them die of hunger before my very eyes, and I have made up my mind to take them to the wood to-morrow, and there lose them, which will be

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easily done, for whilst they are busy tying up the faggots, we have only to run away unseen by them.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the woodcutter’s wife. “Can you find the heart to lose your own children?” In vain her husband represented to her their great poverty; she would not consent to the deed. She was poor, but she was their mother. After a while, however, having thought over the misery it would be to her to see them die of hunger, she assented to her husband’s proposal, and went weeping to bed.

Little Thumbling had overheard all they said, for having found out, as he lay in his bed, that they were talking of their affairs, he got up quietly and crept under his father’s stool, so as to listen to what they were saying without being seen. He went to bed again, but did not sleep a wink the rest of the night, thinking what he should do. He got up early, and went down to the banks of the stream; there he filled his pockets with small white pebbles, and then returned home. They set out all together, and Little Thumbling said not a word to his brothers of what he had overheard. They entered a very thick forest, wherein, at ten paces distant, they could not see one another. The woodcutter began to cut wood and the children to pick up brushwood for the faggots.] The father and mother, seeing them busy at work, gradually stole farther and farther away from them, and then suddenly ran off down a little winding path.

When the children found themselves all alone, they began to scream and cry with all their might. Little Thumbling let them scream, well knowing how he could get home again,

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for on their way to the forest, he had dropped all along the road the little white pebbles he had in his pockets. He then said to them, "Have no fear, brothers; my father and mother have left us here, but I will take you safely home; only follow me"; and he led them back to the house by the same road that they had taken to the forest. They were afraid to go inside at once, but placed themselves close to the door to listen.

It chanced that just at the moment when the woodcutter and his wife reached home, the lord of the manor sent them ten crowns, which he had owed them a long time, and which they had given up all hope of receiving. This was new life to them, for the poor things were actually starving. The woodcutter immediately sent his wife to the butcher's, and, as it was many a day since they had tasted meat, she bought three times as much as was sufficient for two people's supper. When they had appeased their hunger, the woodcutter's wife said, "Alas! where now are our poor children? They would fare merrily on what we have left. But it was you, William, who would lose them. Truly did I say we should repent it. What are they now doing in the forest? Alas! Heaven help me! the wolves have, perhaps, already devoured them. Cruel man that you are!"

The woodcutter began at last to lose his temper, for she repeated over twenty times that they would repent the deed, and that she had said it would be so. He threatened to beat her if she did not hold her tongue. The wife was all in tears. "Alas! where are now my children, my poor children?"

She uttered her cry, at last, so loudly, that the children,

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who were at the door, heard her, and began to call out all together, "Here we are! here we are!"

She rushed to the door to open it, and embracing them exclaimed, "How thankful I am to see you again, my dear children; you are very tired and hungry; and you, little Peter, how dirty you are! come here and let me wash you." Peter was her eldest son, and she loved him better than all the rest. They sat down to supper and ate with an appetite that delighted their father and mother, to whom they related how frightened they had been in the forest, and they all kept on speaking at the same time.

The good people were overjoyed to see their children once more, and their joy lasted as long as the ten crowns. When the money was spent, however, they fell back into their former state of misery, and resolved to lose their children again; and to make quite sure of doing so this time, they determined to lead them much farther from home.

They could not talk of this so secretly but that they were overheard by Little Thumbling, who reckoned upon being able to get out of the difficulty by the same means as he did the first time; but though he got up very early to collect the little pebbles, he did not succeed in his object, for he found the house door double locked. He was at his wit's end what to do, when his mother, having given each of them a piece of bread for their breakfast it occurred to him that he might make the bread take the place of the pebbles, by strewing crumbs along the path as they went, and so he put his piece in his pocket. The father and mother led them into the thickest and darkest part of the forest,



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and as soon as they had done so, they turned into a bypath, and left them there. Little Thumbling did not trouble himself much, for he believed he could easily find his way back by help of the crumbs which he had scattered wherever he had passed; but he was greatly surprised to find not a single crumb left — the birds had come and picked them all up. The poor children were now, indeed, in great distress; the farther they wandered, the deeper they plunged into the forest. Night came on, and a great wind arose, which filled them with terror. They fancied they heard nothing on every side but the howling of wolves, running towards them to devour them. They scarcely dared to speak or look behind them. Then there came a heavy rain, which drenched them to the skin. They slipped at every step, tumbling into the mud. Little Thumbling climbed up a tree to try if he could see anything from the top of it. Having looked about on all sides, he saw a little light, like that of a candle, but it was a long way off, on the other side of the forest. He came down again, and when he had reached the ground he could no longer see the light. He was in despair at this, but having walked on with his brothers for some time in the direction of the light, he caught sight of it again as they emerged from the forest.

At length they reached the house where the candle was shining, not without many alarms, for often they lost sight of it altogether, and always when they went down into the hollows. They knocked loudly at the door, and a good woman came to open it. She asked them what they wanted. Little Thumbling told her they were poor children who had lost

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their way in the forest, and who begged a night's lodgings for charity's sake.

The woman, seeing they were all so pretty, began to weep, and said to them, "Alas! my poor children, to what a place have you come! Know you not that this is the house of an ogre who eats little children?"

"Alas!" replied Little Thumbling, who trembled from head to foot, as indeed did all his brothers, "what shall we do? We shall certainly all be eaten up by the wolves to-night if you do not give us shelter. Perhaps the ogre may have pity upon us, if you are kind enough to ask him."

The ogre's wife, who thought that she might be able to hide them from her husband till the next morning, let the children come in, and led them where they could warm themselves by a good fire, for there was a whole sheep on the spit roasting for the ogre's supper.

Just as they were beginning to get warm they heard two or three loud knocks at the door. It was the ogre who had come home. His wife immediately made the children hide under the bed, and went to open the door. The ogre first asked if his supper was ready, and if she had drawn the wine, and with that he sat down to his meal. The mutton was all but raw, but he liked it all the better for that. He sniffed right and left, saying that he smelt fresh meat.

"It must be the calf I have just skinned," said his wife.

"I tell you, I smell fresh meat," replied the ogre, giving an angry glance at his wife; "there is something here I do not understand." With these words, he rose from the table and went straight towards the bed. "Ah!" he exclaimed,

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“so this is the way in which you would deceive me, you wretched woman! I do not know what hinders me from eating you also! It is well for you that you are such an old creature! But here is some game, which comes in handy, and will serve to feast three of my ogre friends, who are soon coming to pay me a visit.”

He dragged the children from under the bed, one after the other. They fell upon their knees, begging for mercy, but they had to deal with the most cruel of all the ogres, and who, far from feeling pity for them, devoured them already with his eyes, and said to his wife that they would be dainty bits, when she had made a good sauce for them. He went and took up a large knife, and as he came towards the children again, he whetted it on a long stone that he held in his left hand.

He had already seized one of them, when his wife said to him, “Why are you doing that at this hour of night? Will it not be time enough to-morrow?”

“Hold your peace,” replied the ogre. “They will be the more tender.”

“But you have already too much food,” continued his wife. “Here are a calf, two sheep, and half a pig.”

“You are right,” said the ogre, “give them a good supper, that they may keep plump, and then put them to bed.”

The good woman was rejoiced, and brought them plenty of supper; but they could not eat, they were so overcome with fright. As for the ogre, he seated himself to drink again, delighted to think he had such a treat in store for his friends. He drained a dozen goblets more than usual,

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which made him feel sleepy and heavy, and obliged him to go to bed.

The ogre had seven daughters, who were still young children. These little ogresses had the most beautiful complexions, as they lived on fresh meat like their father; but they had very small round grey eyes, hooked noses, and very large mouths, with long teeth, exceedingly sharp and wide apart. They were not very wicked as yet; but they promised to become so, for they already began to bite little children, that they might suck their blood. They had been sent to bed early, and were all seven in a large bed, each wearing a crown of gold on her head. In the same room was another bed of the same size. It was in this bed that the ogre's wife put the seven little boys to sleep, after which she went to bed herself.

Little Thumbling, who had noticed that the ogre's daughters had golden crowns on their heads, and who was afraid that the ogre might repent not having killed him and his brothers that evening, got up in the middle of the night, and, taking off his own nightcap, and those of his brothers, went very softly and placed them on the heads of the ogre's daughters, first taking off their golden crowns, which he put on his brothers and himself, in order that the ogre might mistake them for his daughters, and his daughters for the boys whom he wanted to kill.

Everything turned out as Little Thumbling had expected. The ogre awoke at midnight, and regretted having put off till the morning what he might have done the evening before. He, therefore, jumped suddenly out of bed, and seizing his

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great knife, "Let us go and see," said he, "how the young rogues are getting on! I will not think twice about it this time." So he stole on tiptoes up to his daughters' bedroom, and went up to the bed in which lay the little boys, who were all asleep except Thumbling, who was dreadfully frightened when the ogre put his hand on his head to feel it, as he had in turn felt those of his brothers. The ogre, feeling the golden crowns, said, "Truly, I was about to do a pretty piece of work! It's plain I drank too much wine last night." He then went to the bed where his daughters slept, and having felt the little nightcaps that belonged to the boys, "Aha!" cried he, "here are our fine young fellows. Let us to work boldly!" So saying, he, without pause, cut the throats of his seven daughters.

Well satisfied with his deed, he returned and lay down beside his wife. As soon as Little Thumbling heard the ogre snoring, he awoke his brothers and bade them dress themselves quickly and follow him. They crept down into the garden and jumped over the wall. They ran nearly all night long, trembling the whole time, and not knowing whither they were going. The ogre, awaking in the morning, said to his wife, "Go upstairs and dress those young scamps you took in last night." The ogress was astonished at her husband's kindness, never guessing what he meant, and only fancying that he wished her to go and put on their clothes. She went upstairs, where she was horrified to find that her own children had been killed. The first thing she did was to faint. The ogre, fearing that his wife would be too long over the job he had given her to do, went upstairs

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to help her. His surprise was not less than had been his wife's, when his eyes fell on the frightful spectacle.

“Ah! what have I done?” he exclaimed. “The young wretches shall pay for it, and that at once.” He threw a jugful of water in his wife's face, and having brought her to, said, “Quick! fetch me my seven-league boots, that I may go after them and catch them.”

He set out, and after running in every direction, came at last upon the track of the poor children, who were not more than a hundred yards from their father's house. They saw the ogre striding from hill to hill, and stepping over rivers as easily as if they were the smallest brooks. Little Thumbling, who caught sight of a hollow rock close by where they were, hid his brothers in it, and crept in after them, keeping his eye on the ogre all the while. The ogre, feeling very tired with his long journey to no purpose, thought he should like to rest, and, by chance, sat down on the very rock in which the little boys had concealed themselves. As he was quite worn out, he had not rested long before he fell asleep, and began to snore so dreadfully that the poor children were not less frightened than they were when he took up the great knife to cut their throats.

Little Thumbling was not so much alarmed, and told his brothers to run quickly into the house while the ogre was sound asleep, and not to be uneasy about him. They took his advice and soon reached home.

Little Thumbling then going up to the ogre, gently pulled off his boots and put them on himself. The boots were very large and very long; but as they were enchanted boots, they

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had the power of becoming larger or smaller according to the leg of the person who wore them, so that they fitted him as if they had been made for him. He went straight to the ogre's house, where he found the wife weeping over her murdered daughters.

“Your husband,” said Little Thumbling to her, “is in great danger, for he has been seized by a band of robbers, who have sworn to kill him if he does not give them all his gold and silver. Just as they had their daggers at his throat, he saw me, and begged me to come and tell you what had happened to him, and sent word that you were to give me all his ready money, without keeping back any of it, as otherwise they will kill him without mercy. As time pressed, he insisted on my taking his seven-league boots, which you see I have on, in order that I might make haste, and also that you might be sure I was not imposing upon you!”

The good woman, very much alarmed, immediately gave him all the money she could find. Little Thumbling, thus laden with all the ogre's wealth, hastened back to his father's house, where he was received with great joy.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

BY MADAME LE PRINCE DE BEAUMONT

THERE was once a merchant, who was very rich. He had six children, three boys and three girls, and as he was a man of good sense, he spared no expense in order that they might be well educated, and gave them masters of every kind. His daughters were all beautiful, but his youngest one was especially admired, and from the time she was a small child had been only known and spoken of as "Beauty." The name remained with her as she grew older, which gave rise to a great deal of jealousy on the part of her sisters. The young girl was not only more beautiful than they were, but also kinder and more amiable. The elder daughters gave themselves great airs, for they were overweeningly proud of being so rich, and would not condescend to receive visits from the daughters of other merchants, as they only cared for the society of people in high position. Not a day passed that they did not go to a ball, or a theatre, or for a drive or walk in a fashionable part of the town, and they made fun of their sister, who spent a great part of her time in study. The girls received many offers of marriage from well-to-do merchants, but the two elder ones replied that they did not intend to marry any one, unless a duke or an earl could be found for a husband.

Beauty, the youngest, was more polite, and thanked

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those who asked for her hand, but she was, as she told them, too young as yet, and wished to remain for a few more years as a companion to her father.

Then, all at once, the merchant lost the whole of his fortune; nothing was left to him but a little house situated far away in the country. He told his children that they would be obliged to go and live there, and that even then they would have to support themselves by the work of their own hands. His two elder daughters refused to leave the town; they had many admirers, they said, who would be only too glad to marry them, although they were now without fortune. But these young ladies found themselves greatly mistaken, for their admirers did not even care to look at them, now that they were poor. They had made themselves generally disliked on account of their haughty behavior.

“They do not deserve to be pitied,” said every one; “we are very glad that their pride is humbled; let them go and play the fine lady keeping sheep.”

But people spoke differently of Beauty. “We are very sorry,” they said, “that she is in trouble; she is such a good girl! she always spoke so kindly to the poor! she was so gentle and courteous!” Several of her suitors still wished to marry her, although she had not a penny, but she told them that she could not think of leaving her father in his distress, and that she intended going with him into the country, to comfort him and help with the work.

Beauty was very unhappy at losing her fortune, but she said to herself, “It is no use to cry, tears will not give me back my riches; I must try and be happy without them.”

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As soon as they were settled in their country house, the merchant and his sons began to till the ground. Beauty rose every morning at four o'clock and made haste to clean the house and prepare the meal. She found her duties very painful and fatiguing at first, for she had not been accustomed to do the work of a servant; but in two months' time she had grown stronger, and the activity of her life gave her fresh health and color. When her day's work was over, she amused herself with reading or music; sometimes she sat down to her wheel and sang to her spinning.

Meanwhile her two sisters were wearied to death with the dullness of their life; they stayed in bed till ten o'clock, did nothing all day but saunter about, and for their only diversion talked with regret of their former fine clothes and friends. "Look at our young sister," they said to one another; "she is so low-minded and stupid, that she is quite content with her miserable condition."

The good merchant thought differently; he knew that Beauty was better fitted to shine in society than they were. He admired the good qualities of his youngest child, especially her patience, for her sisters, not content with allowing her to do all the work of the house, took every opportunity of insulting her.

The family had lived in this solitude for a year, when a letter arrived for the merchant, telling him that a vessel, on which there was merchandise belonging to him, had arrived safely in port. The two elder girls were nearly out of their minds with joy when they heard this good news, for now they hoped that they should be able to leave the country.

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They begged their father, ere he departed, to bring them back dresses and capes, head-dresses, and all sorts of odds and ends of fancy attire. Beauty asked for nothing; for, as she thought to herself, all the money that the merchandise would bring in would not be sufficient to pay for everything that her sisters wished for.

“Is there nothing you wish me to buy for you?” said her father.

“As you are so kind as to think of me,” she replied, “I pray you to bring me a rose, for we have not one here.” Now Beauty did not really care about the rose, but she had no wish to seem, by her example, to reprove her sisters, who would have said that she did not ask for anything in order to make herself appear more considerate than they were.

The father left them, but on arriving at his destination, he had to go to law about his merchandise, and after a great deal of trouble he turned back home as poor as he came. He had not many more miles to go, and was already enjoying, in anticipation, the pleasure of seeing his children again, when passing on his journey through a large wood he lost his way. It was snowing hard, the wind was violent, and as the night was closing in he was afraid that he would die of cold and hunger, or that he would be eaten by the wolves. All at once, however, he caught sight of a bright light, which appeared to be some way off, at the farther end of a long avenue of trees. He walked towards it, and soon saw that it came from a splendid castle, which was brilliantly illuminated. The merchant thanked God for the help that had been sent him, and hastened towards the castle, but was

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greatly surprised, on reaching it, to find no one in the courtyard or about the entrances. His horse, which was following him, seeing the door of a large stable standing open, went in, and finding there some hay and oats, began eating with avidity.

The merchant fastened him up in the stable, and went towards the house, but still no one was to be seen. He walked into a large dining-hall, and there he found a good fire, and a table, laid for one person, covered with provisions. Being wet to the skin with the rain and snow, he drew near the fire to dry himself, saying as he did so, "The master of this house, or his servants, will pardon me the liberty I am taking; no doubt they will soon appear." He waited for a considerable time; but when eleven o'clock had struck, and still he had seen no one, he could no longer resist the feeling of hunger, and seizing a chicken, he ate it up trembling the while. Then he took a draught or two of wine and, his courage returning, left the dining-hall and made his way through several large rooms magnificently furnished. Finally he came to a room where there was a comfortable bed, and as it was now past midnight, and he was very tired, he made up his mind to shut the door and lie down.

It was ten o'clock next morning before he awoke, when, to his great surprise, he found new clothes put in place of his own, which had been completely spoiled. "This palace must certainly belong to some good fairy," he said to himself, "who, seeing my condition, has taken pity upon me." He looked out of the window; the snow was gone, and he saw instead bowers of delicious flowers which were a delight to the eye.



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He went again into the dining-hall where he had supped the night before, and saw a little table with chocolate upon it. "I thank you, good madam fairy," he said aloud, "for your kindness in thinking of my breakfast."

The merchant having drunk his chocolate went out to find his horse. As he passed under a bower of roses, he remembered that Beauty had asked him to bring her one, and he plucked a branch on which several were growing. He had scarcely done so, when he heard a loud roar, and saw coming towards him a Beast, of such a horrible aspect that he nearly fainted.

"You are very ungrateful," said the Beast in a terrible voice; "I received you into my castle, and saved your life, and now you steal my roses, which I care for more than anything else in the world. Death alone can make amends for what you have done; I give you a quarter of an hour, no more, in which to ask forgiveness of God."

The merchant threw himself on his knees and, with clasped hands, said to the Beast, "I pray you, my lord, to forgive me. I did not think to offend you by picking a rose for one of my daughters, who asked me to take it her."

"I am not called my lord," responded the monster, "but simply the Beast. I do not care for compliments; I like people to say what they think; so do not think to mollify me with your flattery. But you tell me you have some daughters; I will pardon you on condition that one of your daughters will come of her own free will to die in your place. Do not stop to argue with me; go! and if your daughter refuses to

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die for you, swear that you will return yourself in three months' time."

The merchant had no intention of sacrificing one of his daughters to this hideous monster, but he thought, "At least I shall have the pleasure of embracing them once more." He swore therefore to return, and the Beast told him that he might go when he liked; "but," added he, "I do not wish you to go from me with empty hands. Go back to the room in which you slept, there you will find a large empty trunk; you may fill it with whatever you please, and I will have it conveyed to your house."

With these words the Beast withdrew, and the merchant said to himself, "If I must die, I shall at least have the consolation of leaving my children enough for their daily bread."

He returned to the room where he had passed the night, and finding there a great quantity of gold pieces, he filled the trunk, of which the Beast had spoken, with these, closed it, and remounting his horse, which he found still in the stable, he rode out from the castle, his sadness now as great as had been his joy on entering it. His horse carried him of its own accord along one of the roads through the forest, and in a few hours the merchant was again in his own little house.

His children gathered round him; but instead of finding pleasure in their caresses, he began to weep as he looked upon them. He held in his hand the branch of roses which he had brought for Beauty. "Take them," he said, as he gave them to her, "your unhappy father has paid dearly

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for them.” And then he told his family of the melancholy adventure that had befallen him.

The two elder girls, when they had heard his tale, cried and screamed, and began saying all sorts of cruel things to Beauty, who did not shed a tear. “See what the pride of this wretched little creature has brought us to!” said they. “Why couldn’t she ask for wearing apparel as we did? but no, she must needs show herself off as a superior person. It is she who will be the cause of our father’s death, and she does not even cry!”

“That would be of little use,” replied Beauty. “Why should I cry about my father’s death? He is not going to die. Since the monster is willing to accept one of his daughters, I will give myself up to him, that he may vent his full anger upon me; and I am happy in so doing, for by my death I shall have the joy of saving my father, and of proving my love for him.”

“No, my sister,” said the three brothers, “you shall not die; we will go and find out this monster, and we will either kill him or die beneath his blows.”

“Do not hope to kill him,” said their father to them; “for the Beast is so powerful, that I fear there are no means by which he could be destroyed. My Beauty’s loving heart fills mine with gladness, but she shall not be exposed to such a terrible death. I am old, I have but a little while to live; I shall lose but a few years of life, which I regret on your account, and on yours alone, my children.”

“I am determined, my father,” said Beauty, “that you shall not return to that castle without me; you cannot prevent

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my following you. Although I am young, life has no great attraction for me, and I would far rather be devoured by the monster than die of the grief which your death would cause me."

The merchant was so taken up with grief at losing his daughter, that he quite forgot about the trunk which he had filled with gold pieces, but, to his astonishment, he had no sooner shut himself into his room for the night, than he found it beside his bed. He resolved not to tell his children of his newly-obtained riches, for he knew that his daughters would then wish to return to the town, and he had made up his mind to die where he was in the country. He confided his secret, however, to Beauty, who told him that there had been visitors at the house during his absence, among them two who were in love with her sisters. She begged her father to marry them; for she was so good of heart, that she loved them and freely forgave them all the unkindness they had shown her.

The two hard-hearted girls rubbed their eyes with an onion that they might shed tears on the departure of their father and Beauty; but the brothers wept sincerely, as did also the merchant; Beauty alone would not cry, fearing that it might increase their sorrow. The horse took the road that led to the castle, which, as evening fell, came in view, illuminated as before. Again the horse was the only one in the stable, and once more the merchant entered the large dining-hall, this time with his daughter, and there they found the table magnificently laid for two.

The merchant had not the heart to eat; but Beauty,

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doing her utmost to appear cheerful, sat down to the table and served him to something. Then she said to herself, "The Beast wants to fatten me before he eats me, since he provides such good cheer."

They had finished their supper, when they heard a great noise, and the merchant, weeping, said farewell to his poor daughter, for he knew it was the Beast. Beauty could not help shuddering when she saw the dreadful shape approaching; but she did her best not to give way to her fear, and when the Beast asked her if it was of her own free will that she had come, she told him, trembling, that it was so.

"You are very good, and I am much obliged to you," said the Beast. "Good man, to-morrow morning you will leave, and do not venture ever to come here again."

"Good-bye, Beast," replied Beauty, and the Beast immediately retired.

"Alas! my daughter," said the merchant, clasping Beauty in his arms, "I am half dead with fright. Listen to me; leave me here."

"No, my father," said Beauty, without faltering. "You will depart to-morrow morning, and you will leave me under Heaven's protection, maybe I shall find pity and help."

They retired to rest, thinking that they would have no sleep that night; but no sooner were they in bed than their eyes closed. In her dreams there appeared to Beauty a lady, who said to her, "I have pleasure in the goodness of your heart, Beauty; your good action in giving your life to save that of your father will not be without its reward." Beauty told her father next morning of her dream, and although

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it afforded him some consolation, it did not prevent his loud cries of grief when at last he was forced to bid good-bye to his dear daughter.

After his departure, Beauty went back and sat down in the dining-hall, and began weeping herself. But she was of a courageous disposition, and so she commended herself to God, and resolved not to be miserable during the short time still left her to live, for she quite thought that the Beast would eat her that evening. In the meanwhile she resolved to walk about and look over the fine castle she was in. She found it impossible not to admire its beauty, but her surprise was great when she came to a door over which was written: Beauty's Room. She hastily opened the door, and was dazzled by the magnificence of the whole apartment. What most attracted her admiration was a large bookcase, a piano, and several books of music.

"He does not wish me to feel dull," she said in a low voice. Then the thought came to her, "If I was only going to live here a day, there would not have been so much provided for my amusement." This thought revived her courage.

She opened the bookcase and there saw a book on which was written in letters of gold:

"Wish what you like, Command what you will, You alone are Queen and Mistress here."

"Alas!" she murmured, sighing, "I wish for nothing but to see my dear father again, and to know what he is doing at this moment." She had only said this to herself in a low voice. What was her surprise, therefore, when turning towards a large mirror, she saw her home, and her

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father just returned, wearing a sad countenance. Her sisters went forward to meet him, and in spite of the expression of sorrow which they tried to assume, it was evident in their faces that they were delighted to have lost their sister. In another minute, the picture had disappeared, and Beauty could not help thinking that the Beast was very kind-hearted, and that she had not much to fear from him.

She found the table laid for her at noon, and during her dinner she was entertained with a delightful concert, although no creature was visible.

In the evening, as she was just sitting down to her meal, she heard the sound of the Beast's voice, and could not help shuddering. "Beauty," said the monster to her, "will you allow me to look on while you are eating your supper?"

"You are master here," replied Beauty, trembling.

"Not so," rejoined the Beast, "you alone are mistress; if I annoy you, you have only to tell me to go, and I will leave you at once. But confess now, you think me very ugly, do you not?"

"That is true," said Beauty, "for I cannot tell a lie; but I think you are very kind."

"You are right," said the monster; "but besides being ugly I am also stupid; I know well enough that I am only a Beast."

"No one is stupid, who believes himself to be wanting in intelligence; it is the fool who is not aware of being without it."

"Eat, Beauty," said the monster to her, "and try to find pleasure in your own house; for everything here belongs to you. I should be very sorry if you were unhappy."

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“You are everything that is kind,” said Beauty. “I assure you that your goodness of heart makes me happy; when I think of that, you no longer appear so ugly to me.”

“Ah, yes!” replied the Beast, “I have a kind heart, but for all that I am a monster.”

“Many men are more monsters than you,” said Beauty; “and I care more for you with your countenance than for those who with their human face hide a false, corrupt, and ungrateful heart.”

“If I had sufficient wit,” responded the Beast, “I would make you a pretty answer in return for your words; but I am too stupid for that, and all I can say is, that I am very grateful to you.”

Beauty ate her supper with a good appetite. She had lost almost all her fear of the monster, but she almost died of fright when he said, “Beauty, will you be my wife?”

She sat for a while without answering. She was alarmed at the thought of arousing the monster's anger by refusing him. Nevertheless she finally said, trembling, “No, Beast.” At this the poor monster sighed, and the hideous sound he made echoed throughout the castle; but Beauty was soon reassured, for the Beast, after sadly bidding her adieu, left the room, turning his head from time to time to look at her again.

A strong feeling of compassion for the Beast came over Beauty when she was left alone. “Alas!” she said, “it is a pity he is so ugly, for he is so good!”

Beauty spent three months in the castle, more or less happily. The Beast paid her a visit every evening, and

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conversed with her as she ate her supper, showing good sense in his talk, but not what the world deems cleverness. Every day Beauty discovered some fresh good quality in the monster. She grew accustomed to his ugliness, and far from fearing his visit, she would often look at her watch to see if it was nearly nine o'clock, for the Beast always arrived punctually at that hour. There was only one thing which caused distress to Beauty, and that was that every evening before retiring the monster asked her if she would be his wife, and always appeared overcome with sorrow at her refusal.

One day she said to him, "You grieve me, Beast. I wish it were possible for me to marry you; but I am too truthful to make you believe that such a thing could ever happen. I shall always be your friend. Try to be satisfied with that."

"I suppose I must," responded the Beast; "I know I am horrible to look upon, but I love you very much. However, I am but too happy that you consent to remain here. Promise me that you will never leave me."

The color came into Beauty's face. Her mirror had shown her that her father was ill with the grief of losing her, and she was hoping to see him again. "I would promise without hesitation never to leave you," said Beauty to him, "but I do so long to see my father again, that I shall die of sorrow if you refuse me this pleasure."

"I would rather die myself," said the monster, "than give you pain. I will send you home to your father, you will stay there, and your poor Beast will die of grief at your absence."

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“No, no,” said Beauty crying; “I care for you too much to wish to cause your death. I promise to return in a week’s time. You have let me see that my sisters are married, and that my brothers have entered the army. My father is all alone, let me remain with him a week.”

“You shall be with him to-morrow morning, but remember your promise. When you wish to return, you have only to put your ring on the table before going to bed. Farewell, Beauty.” The Beast gave his usual sigh as he said these words, and Beauty went to bed feeling troubled at the thought of the sorrow she had caused him. When she awoke the following morning, she found herself at home; and ringing a little bell that stood beside her bed, the maid-servant came in, who gave a loud cry of astonishment at seeing her there. Her father ran in on hearing the cry and almost died of joy when he found his dear daughter, and they remained clasped in each other’s arms for more than a quarter of an hour.

Beauty, after the first transports of joy were over, remembered that she had no clothes with her; but the servant told her that she had just found a trunk in the next room, in which were dresses of gold fabric, trimmed with diamonds. Beauty thanked the kind Beast for his thoughtfulness. She took out the least costly of the dresses, and told the maid to lock the others away again, as she wished to give them to her sisters; but she had no sooner uttered these words, than the trunk disappeared. Her father said to her that the Beast evidently wished for her to keep them all for herself, and the trunk and the dresses immediately reappeared.

Beauty dressed herself, and meanwhile news of her arrival

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was sent to her sisters, who came in haste with their husbands. They were both extremely unhappy. The eldest had married a young man who was as handsome as nature could make him; but he was so in love with his own face that he could think of nothing else from morning to night, and cared nothing for the beauty of his wife. The second had married a very witty and clever man; but he only made use of his ability to put everybody in a bad temper, beginning with his wife.

Her sisters nearly died of envy when they saw Beauty dressed like a princess, and beautiful as the day. In vain she showered caresses upon them; nothing could stifle their jealousy, which only increased when she told them how happy she was.

These two jealous creatures went into the garden, that they might cry more at their ease. They said to one another, "Why should this wretched little thing be happier than we are? Are we not more attractive than she is?"

"Sister," said the eldest one, "an idea has occurred to me; let us try to keep her here over the week. Her stupid old Beast will be enraged at her breaking her word, and perhaps he will devour her."

"You are right, sister," replied the other; "to carry out our plan, we must appear very loving and kind to her." And having settled this, they went back to the house and were so affectionate to her that Beauty cried for joy.

When the week drew to a close, the two sisters showed such signs of grief at her departure, and made such lamentation, that she promised to stay till the end of the second one. Beauty, however, reproached herself for the sorrow

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she would cause her poor Beast, whom she loved with all her heart; and she began to miss him very much. On the tenth night of her absence, she dreamed that she was in the garden of the castle, and that she saw the Beast lying on the grass, apparently dying, and that he reproached her with her ingratitude. Beauty awoke with a start and wept. "I am indeed wicked," she said, "to behave so ungratefully to a Beast who has been so considerate and kind to me! Is it his fault that he is ugly and that he is not clever? He is good, and that is worth everything else. Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with him than my sisters are with their husbands. It is neither beauty nor wit in a husband which makes a wife happy; it is amiability of character, uprightness, and generosity; and the Beast has all these good qualities. I do not love him, but I respect him, and I feel both affection for him and gratitude. I will not make him unhappy; should I do so, I should reproach myself for it as long as I live."

With these words Beauty rose, placed her ring on a table, and lay down again. The moment she was in bed she fell asleep, and when she awoke next morning she saw with delight that she was back in the Beast's castle. She dressed herself magnificently, in order to please him, and the hours seemed to drag as she waited for nine o'clock to strike; but the hour came, and the Beast did not appear.

Then Beauty began to fear that she had caused his death. She ran through the castle, uttering loud cries, for she was in despair. After having looked everywhere, she remembered her dream, and ran into the garden towards the water, where

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she had seen him in her sleep. She found the poor Beast stretched on the ground, and unconscious, and she thought he was dead. Forgetting her horror at his appearance, she threw herself upon him, and feeling that his heart was still beating, she fetched some water and threw it over his head. The Beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty, "You forgot your promise. In my grief at losing you I determined to let myself die of hunger; but I die happy, since I have had the joy of seeing you once again."

"No, my dear Beast, you shall not die," exclaimed Beauty. "You shall live to be my husband; I am yours from this moment, and only yours. Alas! I thought the feeling I had for you was only one of friendship; but now I know, by the grief I feel, that I cannot live without you."

Beauty had scarcely uttered these words before she saw the castle suddenly become brilliantly illuminated, whilst everything indicated the celebration of some joyful event. She did not gaze long, however, at these splendors, but quickly turned her eyes again towards her dear Beast, the thought of whose danger made her tremble with anxiety. But what was her surprise when she saw that the Beast had disappeared, and that a young and handsome Prince was lying at her feet, who thanked her for having released him from enchantment.

Although this Prince was fully worthy of her attention, Beauty, nevertheless, could not help asking what had become of the Beast.

"You see him at your feet," said the Prince to her. "A wicked fairy condemned me to remain in the form of a monster,

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until some fair damsel would consent to marry me, and she forbade me also to betray that I had intelligence. You are the only one who has been kind enough to allow the goodness of my heart to touch yours, and I cannot, even by offering you my crown, acquit myself of obligation to you."

Beauty, agreeably surprised, gave the young Prince her hand, to help him to rise. They passed, side by side, into the castle, and Beauty nearly died of joy when she found her father and all her family assembled in the dining-hall; the beautiful lady whom she had seen in her dream having transported them thither.

"Beauty," said the lady, who was a well-known fairy, "receive the recompense of your noble choice. You preferred virtue to beauty or intelligence, and you therefore deserve to find all these qualities united in one person. You are soon to become a great queen; I trust your exalted position will not destroy your good disposition. As for you," said the fairy, turning to Beauty's sisters, "I know your hearts and all the malice concealed in them. Be turned, therefore, into statues, but preserve your consciousness beneath the stone which will envelop you. You will remain at the entrance of your sister's palace, and I impose no further punishment upon you, than to be the constant witnesses of her happiness. You will not be able to resume your present forms until you have recognized and confessed your faults; but I greatly fear that you will always remain statues. Pride, anger, greediness, and laziness may be corrected; but nothing short of a miracle can convert the envious and malicious heart." The fairy then gave a tap with her wand, and all those assembled in

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the dining-hall were immediately transported into the Prince's kingdom. His subjects greeted him with joy; he married Beauty, who lived a long life with him of perfect happiness, for it was founded upon virtue.

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ONCE upon a time there was a King and a Queen who had an only daughter. Her beauty, her sweet temper, and her wit were incomparable, so she was named Gracieuse. She was the sole joy of her mother, who sent her every day a beautiful new dress, either of gold brocade, or of velvet, or of satin. She was always magnificently dressed, without being in the least proud, or vain of her fine clothes. She passed the morning in the company of learned persons, who taught her all sorts of sciences, and in the afternoon she worked beside the Queen. At luncheon time they served up to her basins full of sugar-plums, and more than twenty pots of preserves; so that she was considered the happiest princess in the world!

There was in this same Court an exceedingly rich old maid, called the Duchess Grognon, and who was horrible in every respect. Her hair was as red as fire, her face of an alarming size; she had but one blear eye left, and her mouth was so large you would have said she could eat everybody up, only, as she had no teeth, people were not afraid of it; she had a hump before and behind, and limped with both legs. Such monsters envy all handsome persons, and consequently she hated Gracieuse mortally, and retired from Court to avoid hearing her praises. She took up her abode in a neighboring château that belonged to her, and when any one who paid her a visit spoke of the perfections of the



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princess, she would scream out in a rage, "It is false! it is false! She is not charming! I have more beauty in my little finger than she has in her whole body!"

Now it happened that the Queen fell ill and died. The Princess Gracieuse felt as if she should die also of grief for the loss of so good a mother, and the King deeply regretted his excellent wife. For nearly a twelvemonth he remained shut up in his palace, till at length the physicians, alarmed about his health, insisted on his going out and amusing himself.

One day he went hunting, and the heat being very great, he entered a large château that he saw near him, for shelter and refreshment. As soon as the Duchess Grognon (for it was her château) heard of the King's arrival, she hastened to receive him, and informed him that the coolest place in the mansion was a large vaulted cellar, exceedingly clean, into which she requested he would descend. The King followed her, and entering the cellar he saw two hundred barrels placed in rows one above the other. He asked her whether it was only for herself she kept such a stock. "Yes, Sire," she replied, "for myself alone; but I shall be delighted if your majesty will do me the honor to taste my wines."

Grognon immediately took a small hammer, struck a cask two or three times, "tap," "tap," and out came a million of pistoles. "What does this mean?" she exclaimed with a smile, and passing to the next cask she hit that, "tap," "tap," and out rolled a bushel of gold pieces.

"I don't understand this at all," she said, smiling still more significantly. On she went to another barrel and rapped

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“tap,” tap,” and out ran so many pearls and diamonds that the floor of the cellar was covered with them. “Ah!” she cried, “I can’t comprehend this, Sire. Somebody must have stolen my good wine and put in its place these trifles.”

“Trifles!” echoed the King, perfectly astonished; “do you call these trifles, Madam? There is treasure enough here to buy ten kingdoms.”

“Well,” said the Duchess, “know that these barrels are all filled with gold and jewels, and I will make you master of all, provided you will marry me.”

“Oh,” said the King, who loved money beyond anything, “I desire nothing better! — I’ll marry you to-morrow if you please.”

“But,” continued she, “I must make one more condition. I must have the same power over your daughter as her mother had. She must obey my will and pleasure, and you shall leave her entirely to my management.”

“Agreed,” said the King, “there is my hand upon it.” Grognon placed her hand in his, and leaving the treasure-vault together, she presented him with the key of it.

The King immediately returned to his palace. Gracieuse, hearing her royal father’s voice, ran to meet him, embraced him, and inquired if he had had good sport. “I have taken,” said he, “a dove, alive.”

“Ah, Sir,” said the princess, “give it to me, I will feed and make a pet of it.”

“That may not be,” replied the King, “for to speak plainly, I must tell you that I have seen the Duchess Grognon, and that I am going to marry her.”

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“Oh, heavens!” exclaimed Gracieuse, “can you call her a dove? She is more like a screech-owl!”

“Hold your tongue,” said the King, becoming angry; “I command you to love and respect her as much as if she were your mother. Go and dress yourself immediately, for I intend to return this very day to meet her.”

The Princess, who was very obedient, went immediately to her dressing-room. Her nurse saw tears in her eyes — “What is the matter, my little darling?” she asked, “you are crying?”

“Alas! my dear nurse,” answered Gracieuse, “who would not weep? The King is going to give me a stepmother, and to complete my misfortune, she is my most cruel enemy — in one word, the hideous Grognon! How shall I ever bear to see her in the beautiful beds which the Queen, my dear mother, so delicately embroidered with her own hands! How can I ever caress an old ape who would have put me to death!”

“My dear child,” replied the nurse, “you must have a spirit as high and noble as your birth. Princesses like you should set the greatest examples to the world; and what finer example can there be, than that of obedience to a father and sacrificing one’s self to please him? Promise me, therefore, that you will not manifest your antipathy to Grognon.”

The poor Princess had much difficulty in promising, but the prudent nurse gave her so many excellent reasons, that at length she pledged her word to put a good face on the matter, and behave courteously to her stepmother. She then proceeded to dress herself in a gown of green and gold brocade,

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her long fair hair falling in wavy folds upon her shoulders, and fanned by the passing breezes, as was the fashion in those days, and crowned with a light wreath of roses and jasmine, the leaves of which were made of emeralds.

But to return to Grognon. The ugly creature was excessively occupied with her toilette. She had one shoe made half a cubit higher in the heel than the other, in order to appear less lame, a bodice stuffed upon one shoulder to conceal the hump on its fellow, a glass eye, the best she could procure, to replace the one she had lost. She painted her brown skin white, dyed her red hair black, and then put on an open robe of satin faced with blue, and a yellow petticoat, trimmed with violet ribbon. She determined to make her *entrée* on horseback, because she had heard it was a custom of the queens of Spain.

Whilst the King was giving his orders, and Gracieuse awaiting the moment of departure to meet Grognon, she descended alone into the palace gardens and strolled into a little gloomy grove, where she sat down upon the grass. "At length," she said, "I am at liberty, and may cry as much as I please without any one to check me!" and accordingly she sighed and wept so much that her eyes appeared like two fountains in full play. In this sad state she no longer thought of returning to the palace, when she saw a page approaching dressed in green satin, with a plume of white feathers in his cap and the handsomest countenance in the world. Bending one knee to the ground, he said, "Princess, the King awaits you." She was struck with surprise at the beauty and grace of the young page, and, as he was a stranger

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to her, she supposed he was in the service of Grognon.

“How long is it,” said she, “since the King admitted you into the number of his pages?”

“I am not the King’s page, madam,” he replied; “I am yours, and will be yours only.”

“Mine!” exclaimed Gracieuse, much astonished, “and I not know you!”

“Ah, Princess!” said he, “hitherto I have not dared to make myself known to you, but the misfortunes with which you are threatened by this marriage of the King oblige me to speak to you sooner than I should have done. I had resolved to leave time and attention to declare to you my passion.”

“How! a page!” said the Princess; “a page has the assurance to tell me he loves me! This, indeed, completes my degradation!”

“Be not alarmed, beautiful Gracieuse,” said he, with the most tender and respectful air; “I am Percinet, a prince sufficiently well known for his wealth and his science, to relieve you from all idea of inequality in birth and station. In merit and person I eagerly admit your superiority. I have loved you long; I have been often near you in these gardens without your perceiving me. The fairy power bestowed upon me at my birth has been of great service in procuring me the pleasure of beholding you. I will accompany you everywhere today in this habit, and, I trust, not altogether without being of service to you.”

The Princess gazed at him while he spoke in a state of astonishment from which she could not recover. “It is you,

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then, handsome Percinet!" said she to him. "It is you whom I have so much wished to see, and of whom such surprising things are related! How delighted I am that you desire to be my friend! I no longer fear the wicked Grognon, since you take an interest in my fortunes." A few more words passed between them, and then Gracieuse repaired to the palace, where she found a horse ready saddled and caparisoned, which Percinet had placed in the stables, and which it was supposed must be intended for her. She mounted it, and, as it was a very spirited animal, the page took the bridle and led it, turning every minute towards the Princess that he might have the pleasure of beholding her.

When the horse which had been selected for Grognon appeared beside that of Gracieuse, it looked like a draught jade, and the housings of the beautiful steed so blazed with jewels that those of the other could not be compared to them. The King, who was occupied with a thousand things, took no notice of it; but the nobles had no eyes but for the Princess, whose beauty was their admiration, and for her green-clad page, who was prettier than all the other Court pages put together.

They met Grognon on the road in an open carriage, looking more ugly and ill-shapen than an old gipsy. The King and the Princess embraced her. They led forward her horse, that she might mount, but seeing the one Gracieuse was upon she exclaimed, "How! Is this creature to have a finer horse than I? I had rather never be a queen and return to my precious castle than be treated in this manner!"

The King immediately commanded the Princess to dis-

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mount, and to beg Grognon to do her the honor to ride her horse. The Princess obeyed without a murmur. Grognon neither looked at her, nor thanked her. She was hoisted up on the beautiful horse, and looked like a bundle of dirty clothes. Eight gentlemen held her for fear she should fall off. Still she was not satisfied, but muttered threats between her teeth. They inquired what was the matter with her. "The matter is," said she, "that being the mistress, I choose that the green page shall hold the rein of my horse as he did when Gracieuse rode it." The King ordered the green page to lead the Queen's horse. Percinet looked at the Princess, and she at him without speaking a word. He obeyed, and all the Court set forward, the drums and trumpets making a desperate noise. Grognon was in raptures. Notwithstanding her flat nose and her wry mouth she would not have changed persons with Gracieuse.

But at the moment when they were least thinking of it, lo and behold, the fine horse began to bound, to rear, and at length ran away at such a pace that no one could stop him. Off he went with Grognon, who held on by the saddle and by the mane, screaming with all her might. At length she was thrown with her foot in the stirrup. She was dragged for some distance over stones and thorns into a heap of mud where she was almost smothered. As everybody had run after her as fast as they could, they soon came up to her; but her skin was scratched all over, her head cut open in four or five places, and one of her arms broken. Never was a bride in a more miserable plight.

The King seemed in despair. They picked her up in

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pieces like a broken glass. Her cap was on one side, her shoes on the other. They carried her in to the city, put her to bed, and sent for the best surgeons. Ill as she was, she never ceased storming. "Gracieuse has played me this trick," said she; "I am certain she only chose that fine but vicious horse in order to make me wish to ride it, and that it might kill me. If the King does not give me satisfaction for this injury I will return to my precious château and never see him again as long as I live!" The King was informed of the rage of Grognon. As his ruling passion was avarice, the mere idea of losing the hundreds of barrels of gold and diamonds made him shudder, and was sufficient to drive him to anything. He ran to the invalid, flung himself at her feet, and protested she had only to name the punishment Gracieuse deserved, and that he abandoned the Princess to her resentment. She professed herself satisfied, and said she would send for her.

Accordingly the Princess was told Grognon wanted her. She turned pale and trembled, being well assured it was not to caress her. She looked about everywhere for Percinet, but he did not appear, and sadly she proceeded to Grognon's apartment. Scarcely had she entered it when the doors were closed. Four women, who resembled as many furies, threw themselves on her by order of their mistress, and tore all her fine clothes from her back. When her shoulders were bare, these cruel demons could not endure their dazzling whiteness. They shut their eyes as though they had been looking for a long time on snow. "Come, come, courage!" cried the pitiless Grognon from out her bed. "Flay me that

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girl, and leave her not the least morsel of that white skin she thinks so beautiful." Gracieuse prepared herself to suffer everything like a poor innocent lamb. The four furies were each armed with an alarming handful of birch twigs, and they had besides large brooms out of which they could pull fresh ones, so that they beat her without mercy, and at every blow Grognon called out, "Harder! harder! you spare her!" There is no one who would not suppose, after that, but that the Princess was flayed alive from head to foot. They would be mistaken, however; for the gallant Percinet had bewitched the eyes of these women. They imagined they had birch-rods in their hands, but they had only bunches of feathers of all sorts of colors, and from the moment they began to flog her, Gracieuse observed the fact and ceased to be afraid, saying to herself, "Ah, Percinet, you have most generously come to my assistance! What should I have done without you?" The beaters so fatigued themselves, that they could no longer lift their arms. They huddled her into her clothes and turned her out of the room with a thousand epithets. She returned to her own chamber pretending to be very ill, went to bed, and ordered that no one should stay near her but her nurse, to whom she related her adventure. She talked herself to sleep, the nurse left her, and on awaking she saw in a corner of the room the green page, whose respect prevented him from approaching her. She assured him she should never forget, as long as she lived, her obligations to him.

Grognon was so gratified to learn that Gracieuse was in such a condition, that she got well in half the time she would otherwise have done, and the marriage was celebrated with

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great magnificence. But as the King was aware that Grognon preferred, above everything, to be extolled for her beauty, he had her portrait painted, and commanded a tournament in which six of the best knights in his Court should maintain against all comers that Queen Grognon was the loveliest princess in the world.

A great many foreign knights appeared in the lists to maintain the contrary. The baboon herself was present at all the encounters, seated in a grand balcony hung with cloth of gold, and had the pleasure of seeing the skill of her champions successful in her bad cause. Gracieuse, placed behind her, attracted every eye, and Grognon, as silly as she was vain, imagined that no one could look at anybody but her.

There was scarcely any one left to dispute the beauty of Grognon, when a young knight presented himself bearing a portrait in a diamond box. He declared that he would maintain Grognon was the ugliest of all old women and that she whose portrait was in the box was the fairest of all young maidens. So saying, he charged the six knights and unhorsed every one of them. Six others presented themselves, and so on to the number of four-and-twenty, all of whom he overthrew. Then opening his box, he told them that, by way of consolation for their defeat, he would show them the beautiful portrait. Everyone instantly recognized it to be that of the Princess Gracieuse.

The victorious knight made her a profound obeisance, and retired without making himself known, but she had not the least doubt it was Percinet. Grognon was nearly suffocated with passion; her throat swelled to such a degree that

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she could not utter a word. She made signs that it was Gracieuse she was enraged at, and as soon as she could speak she began to rave like a mad woman. "How!" she exclaimed. "Dare to dispute with me the palm of beauty! To bring such disgrace upon my knights! No, I cannot endure it; I must have vengeance or death!"

"Madam," said the Princess, "I protest that I had not the least hand in anything that has happened. I am ready to attest with my blood, if it be your pleasure, that you are the handsomest person in the world, and that I am a monster of ugliness."

"Ah, you can joke, can you, my little darling?" replied Grognon, "but I will have my turn before long." The King was informed of the rage of his wife, and that the Princess was dying with terror, and implored him to have pity on her, as should he leave her to the mercy of the Queen she would do her a thousand mischiefs. He was perfectly unmoved by the appeal, and simply answered, "I have given her to her stepmother. She may do as she pleases with her."

The wicked Grognon waited impatiently for night to arrive. As soon as it was dark she ordered the horses to be put to her travelling carriage. Gracieuse was forced into it, and under a strong escort she was conveyed to a large forest a hundred leagues distant, through which nobody dared pass, as it was full of lions, bears, tigers, and wolves. When they had reached the middle of the terrible wood they made the Princess alight, and left her there regardless of her piteous supplications. "I do not ask you to spare my life," she cried, "I only request immediate death. Kill me and spare me all

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the tortures I must suffer here!" They were deaf to her entreaties. They did not even deign to answer her, and galloping off, left the lovely and unfortunate maiden alone in the forest. She hurried on for some time without knowing whither she was going, now running against some tree, now falling, now entangled in the bushes, till at length, overwhelmed with anguish, she threw herself on the ground unable to rise again. "Percinet!" she cried twice or thrice, "Percinet! Where are you? Is it possible you can have abandoned me?" As she uttered the last words, she suddenly beheld the most surprising thing in the world. It was an illumination so magnificent that there was not a tree in the forest on which there were not several chandeliers filled with wax lights, and at the far end of an avenue she perceived a palace built entirely of crystal, which blazed like the sun. She began to imagine Percinet had some hand in this new enchantment, and felt her joy a little mingled with fear. "I am alone," she said, "the Prince is young, amiable, in love, and I owe him my life! Ah! It is too much! Let me fly from him! — Better for me to die than love him!" So saying, she managed to rise from the ground, notwithstanding her weariness and weakness, and without casting another look towards the splendid palace she hurried off in an opposite direction, so distressed and so bewildered by the various feelings which agitated her that she did not know what she was doing.

At that moment she heard a noise behind her. Fear seized her. She thought it was some wild beast that was about to devour her. She looked back, trembling, and beheld Prince Percinet. "You fly me, my Princess!" said he. "You

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fear me when I adore you! Come! come without fear, into the fairy palace. You will find there the Queen, my mother, and my sisters, who already love you tenderly from my account of you.”

Gracieuse, charmed by the humble and engaging manner in which her young lover addressed her, could not refuse to enter with him a little sledge, painted and gilt, and drawn by two stags, at a prodigiously swift pace, so that in a very short time he conducted her to a thousand points in the forest, each of which appeared to her admirable. It was throughout as light as day. There were shepherds and shepherdesses gallantly dressed who danced to the sound of flutes and bagpipes. In other spots, by the side of fountains, she saw village swains and maidens feasting and singing gaily. “I thought this forest was uninhabited,” said she to the Prince, “but it seems full of happy people.”

“From the moment you set foot in it,” replied Percinet, “this gloomy solitude became the abode of pleasure and mirth. The loves accompany you, and flowers grow beneath your feet.” Gracieuse requested him to conduct her to his mother, the Queen. He immediately ordered the stags to proceed to the fairy palace. As she approached it she heard most exquisite music, and the Queen with two of her daughters met her, embraced her, and led her into a large saloon, the walls of which were of rock-crystal. She observed, with great astonishment, that all her own history to that very day was engraved upon the walls, even the excursion she had just made with the Prince in the sledge; and the execution of the work was so fine that the masterpieces Greece

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ever could boast were not to be compared to it. "You have very diligent artists," said Gracieuse to Percinet; "every action, every gesture of mine is instantly sculptured."

"Because I would not lose the recollection of the slightest circumstance relating to you, my Princess," replied he. "Alas, in no place am I happy or contented!" She made him no answer; but thanked the Queen for the manner in which she had received her. A grand banquet was served up, to which Gracieuse did justice, for she was delighted to have found Percinet in lieu of the bears and lions she had dreaded to meet in the forest.

The two princesses, by order of the Queen, conducted Gracieuse to her apartments. Never was anything so magnificent as the furniture, or so elegant as the bed and bed-chamber appropriated to her. She was waited on by four-and-twenty maidens attired as nymphs, the eldest was but eighteen, and each a miracle of beauty. As soon as she was in bed a strain of exquisite music wooed her to sleep; but wonder prevented her closing her eyes. "All I have seen," said she to herself, "is enchantment! How greatly is so amiable and gifted a prince to be feared! I cannot fly these scenes too soon!" — and yet the idea of leaving them caused her considerable pain. To quit so magnificent a palace to place herself in the power of the barbarous Grognon! The sacrifice was great — one might at least hesitate; on the other hand, she found Percinet so engaging she feared to remain in a palace of which he was the master. As soon as she rose in the morning they brought her dresses of every color, sets of jewelry of every fashion, laces, ribbons, gloves,

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silk stockings, all in the most marvellous taste. Nothing was wanting! Her toilet was of chased gold; she had never been so perfectly dressed, and had never looked so beautiful. Percinet entered the room in a dress of green and gold (green was his color because Gracieuse was fond of it). All those we have heard boasted of as the best-formed and most amiable of men would have lost by comparison with this young Prince. Gracieuse told him she had not been able to sleep; that the recollection of her misfortunes tormented her, and that she could not help dreading the consequences. "What can alarm you, madam?" said he; "you are sovereign here — you are here adored — would you abandon me for your cruel enemy?"

"If I were my own mistress," she replied, "I would accept your proposal; but I am accountable to the King, my father, for my actions, and it is better to suffer than fail in my duty."

Percinet said everything in the world he could think of to persuade her to marry him; but she would not consent, and it was almost in spite of herself that she was induced to remain one week, during which he invented a thousand new pleasures for her entertainment. She often said to the Prince, "I should much like to know what is passing in Grognon's Court, and how she has glossed over her conduct to me."

Percinet told her he would send his squire to ascertain, who was an intelligent person. She replied that she was convinced he had no need of any one to inform him of what was going on, and that therefore he could tell her immediately if he chose. "Come then with me," said he, "into the great

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tower, and you shall see for yourself." Thereupon he led her to the top of an exceedingly high tower which was all of rock crystal, like the rest of the château. He told her to place her foot on his, and her little finger in his mouth, and then to look in the direction of the city. She immediately perceived that the wicked Grognon was with the King, and that she was saying to him, "That wretched Princess has hanged herself in the cellar; I have just seen her, she is a most horrible sight; she must be buried immediately, and you will soon get over so trifling a loss."

The King began to weep for the death of his daughter. Grognon turned her back upon him, retired to her apartments, caused a log of wood to be dressed up in a cap, and well wrapped in graveclothes, put into a coffin, and then by order of the King there was a grand funeral, which was attended by everybody, weeping and cursing the cruel stepmother, whom they accused of having caused the death of the Princess. All the people went into deep mourning, and she heard the lamentations for her loss, and that they whispered to one another, "What a pity that this lovely young princess should perish through the cruelties of such a wicked creature! She ought to be cut to pieces and made into a pie!" The King could neither eat nor drink, and cried ready to break his heart.

Gracieuse, seeing her father so afflicted, exclaimed, "Ah, Percinet, I cannot allow my father to believe any longer that I am dead. If you love me, take me back to him." All he could urge was in vain; he was compelled to obey, though with great reluctance. "My Princess," said he, "you will

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regret more than once leaving this fairy palace; for, as to myself, I dare not think you will regret me. You are more unmerciful to me than Grognon is to you." It was of no use talking; she would go. She took leave of the Prince's mother and sisters, entered the sledge with him, and the stags started off. As she left the palace she heard a great noise. She looked back; it was the entire building which had fallen and lay broken into a thousand fragments.

"What do I see?" she cried; "the palace destroyed!"

"My palace," replied Percinet, "shall be amongst the dead. You will never re-enter it till after you are buried."

"You are angry," said Gracieuse, endeavoring to appease him. "But am I not, in fact, more to be pitied than you?"

On arriving at the city, Percinet caused the Princess, himself, and the sledge to be invisible. Gracieuse ascended to the King's apartment and flung herself at his feet. When he saw her, he was frightened and would have run away, taking her for a ghost. She stopped him, and assured him she was not dead; that Grognon had caused her to be carried off into the wilderness; that she had climbed up a tree, where she had lived upon wild fruits; that they had buried a log of wood in her place, and ended, by begging him, for mercy's sake, to send her to one of his castles, where she might no longer be exposed to the fury of her stepmother.

The King, scarcely able to credit her story, had the log of wood taken up, and was astounded at the malice of Grognon. Any other monarch would have ordered Grognon to be buried alive in its place; but he was a poor weak man. He caressed his daughter a good deal, and made her sup with

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him. When Grognon's creatures ran and told her of the return of the Princess, and that she was supping with the King, she began to rave like a mad woman, and rushing to him, told him there must be no hesitation about it; he must either abandon that cheat to her, or see her, on the instant, take her departure never to return as long as she lived. That it was mere folly to believe that the girl was the Princess Gracieuse. It was true she resembled her slightly, but that Gracieuse had hanged herself; that she had seen her with her own eyes, and that if any credence was given to the story of that impostor, it would be an unpardonable want of respect to, and confidence in her. The King without another word gave up to her the unfortunate Princess, believing, or feigning to believe, that she was not his daughter.

Grognon, transported with joy, dragged her, with the help of her women, into a dungeon, where she had her stripped. They took away her costly garments and threw over her a rag of coarse cloth, putting wooden shoes on her feet and a hood of drugget on her head. They barely gave her straw enough to lie upon, and a little black bread to eat.

In this distress, she began to weep bitterly, and to regret the fairy palace; but she dared not call on Percinet for succour, feeling that she had treated him too unkindly, and not being able to believe he loved her enough to come again to her aid. In the meanwhile, the wicked Grognon had sent for a Fairy who was little less malicious than herself. "I have here in my power," she said, "a little hussy who has offended me. I want to punish her, by giving her such difficult tasks to execute that she will not be able to perform them,



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and so that I may break her bones without giving her a right to complain. Help me to find a new torment for her every day." The Fairy told her she would think of it, and that she should see her again the next morning. She kept her word. She brought a skein of thread as big as four grown-up people, so finely spun that it would break if you breathed on it, and so tangled that it was in a bundle without beginning or end. Grognon, delighted, sent for her beautiful prisoner, and said to her — "There, my good little gossip, set your great powers at work to wind off this skein of thread; and rest assured that if you break the least bit of it, you are lost, for I will flay you alive, myself! Begin whenever you please; but it must be wound off before sunset." With that she shut her up in a room under three locks.

The Princess was no sooner left alone than, examining the enormous skein and turning it over and over, breaking a thousand threads in trying to find one to begin with, she became so confused that she ceased attempting to unravel it; and, flinging it into the middle of the room, "Go," she cried, "fatal thread, thou wilt be the cause of my death! Ah, Percinet! Percinet! if my cruelty has not completely offended you, I implore you to hasten — not to save me, but only to receive my last farewell." Thereupon she began to weep so bitterly, that even one who was not a tender lover must have been touched by it. Percinet opened the door as easily as if he had had the key in his pocket. "I am here, my Princess," said he to her, "always ready to serve you. I am not capable of deserting you, notwithstanding the poor return you make to my affection." He struck the skein three

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times with his wand; the broken threads were immediately rejoined, and two more taps unravelled it with most astonishing perfection. He inquired if there was any other service he could render her, and whether she would never call on him but when she was in trouble.

“Do not reproach me, handsome Percinet,” said she; “I am already sufficiently miserable.”

“But, my Princess, it is in your own power to liberate yourself from the tyranny of which you are the victim. Come with me. Complete our mutual happiness. What do you fear?”

“That you do not love me well enough,” replied she. “I would have time to be convinced of your affection.” Percinet, exasperated by her suspicions, bowed and disappeared.

The sun was just about to set; Grognon awaited the moment with the greatest impatience. At length she anticipated it, and came with her four furies, who accompanied her everywhere. She put the three keys into the three locks, and said as she opened the door, “I’ll wager, now, that this idle beauty hasn’t wagged one of her ten fingers. She would much rather have slept to improve her complexion.” As soon as she entered, Gracieuse presented her with the ball of thread quite perfect. She had not a word to say, except that Gracieuse had soiled it, — that she was a dirty creature; and for that gave her two such slaps on the face that the roses and lilies of her cheeks turned blue and yellow. The hapless Gracieuse bore patiently an insult she was not in a position to resent. They took her back to her dungeon, and locked her up carefully. Grognon, vexed that she had not

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succeeded with the skein of thread, sent for the Fairy, and loaded her with reproaches. "Find out something," she said, "so difficult that she cannot possibly accomplish it." The Fairy departed, and the next day returned with a great barrel full of feathers. There were some of all sorts of birds — nightingales, canaries, greenfinches, goldfinches, linnets, redwings, parrots, owls, sparrows, doves, ostriches, bustards, peacocks, larks, partridges; — I should never have finished if I attempted to name them all. These feathers were so mixed together that the birds themselves could not have recognized their own.

"Here," said the Fairy to Grognon, "is what will try the skill and patience of your prisoner. Order her to pick out these feathers, and put the peacock's, the nightingale's, and every other sort, each by themselves in separate heaps. It would be a task for a fairy." Grognon was ready to die with joy, picturing to herself the perplexity of the wretched Princess. She sent for her, threatened her as before, and shut her up with the barrel in the chamber under three locks, ordering her to finish her work by sunset.

Gracieuse took out some of the feathers; but finding it impossible to distinguish the different kinds, threw them back again into the barrel; then took them out again, and made several attempts to sort them, but perceiving the task was impossible, "Let me die," she cried, despairingly. "It is my death they seek, and death will end my misfortunes. I will not again call Percinet to my assistance. If he loved me he would have been already here."

"I am here, my Princess," exclaimed Percinet, rising out

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of the barrel in which he had concealed himself. "I am here to extricate you from the difficulty you are in. Can you doubt, after so many proofs of my affection, that I love you more than my life?" Immediately he gave the barrel three taps with his wand, and the feathers came out by millions and sorted themselves into little heaps all around the room.

"What do I not owe you, my lord!" said Gracieuse. "But for you I must have perished. Rest assured of my entire gratitude!" The Prince tried everything to persuade her to take a firm resolution in his favor. She still asked for time, and though with considerable violence to his own feelings he granted her request.

Grognon arrived, and was so thunderstruck by what she saw that she was at her wits' end how further to torment Gracieuse. She did not omit to beat her, however, saying that the feathers were ill arranged. She sent for the Fairy, and flew into a violent passion with her. The Fairy knew not how to answer her; she was perfectly confounded. At length she told Grognon that she would employ all her skill in making a box which should bring her prisoner into great trouble if she ventured to open it; and a few days afterwards she brought a box of a tolerable size.

"Here," said she to Grognon, "order your slave to carry this somewhere. Forbid her, particularly, to open it. She will not be able to resist it, and you will be satisfied." Grognon followed her instructions implicitly.

"Carry the box," said she to Gracieuse, "to my fine château, and place it on the table in my closet; but I forbid you, under pain of death, to look at what it contains."

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Gracieuse set off with her wooden shoes, her cloth dress, and her woollen hood. All who met her exclaimed, "That must be a goddess in disguise!" for nothing could conceal her marvellous beauty. She had not walked far before she felt tired. In passing through a little wood, on the skirt of a pleasant meadow, she sat down to take breath. She placed the box on her knees, and suddenly felt an inclination to open it.

"What can happen to me?" said she; "I won't take anything out of it, but only see what there is in it." She thought no more of the consequences, but opened the box, and immediately out came a quantity of little men and women, fiddlers, musical instruments, little tables, little cooks, little dishes, — in fact, the giant of the party was not bigger than one's finger. They skipped about the meadow, divided themselves into several groups, and began the prettiest ball that ever was seen. Some danced, others cooked, others feasted, the little fiddlers played admirably. Gracieuse, at first, was somewhat amused by so extraordinary a sight; but after she had rested a little, and wanted to get them back into the box, not one of them would obey her. The little gentlemen and ladies ran away. The fiddlers followed their example. The cooks, with their stewpans on their heads and their spits on their shoulders, scampered into the wood when she entered the meadow, and into the meadow again when she entered the wood.

"O curiosity!" said Gracieuse, weeping, "thou wilt be too favorable to my enemy. The only misfortune I could have avoided has been brought on me by my own folly.

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Oh, I cannot sufficiently blame myself! Percinet!" she cried, "Percinet! If it be possible you can still love such an imprudent princess, come and help me in this, the most unfortunate occurrence in my life!"

Percinet did not wait to be called thrice. She saw him appear instantly in his splendid green dress.

"If it were not for the wicked Grognon," said he, "beautiful Princess, you would never think of me."

"Oh, think better of my sentiments," she replied; "I am not so insensible to merit, nor so ungrateful for benefits conferred on me. It is true I try your constancy; but it is to reward it when I am convinced." Percinet, more happy than he had ever been before, tapped the box thrice with his wand, and immediately the little men and women, fiddlers, cooks, and roast-meat, were all packed into it as neatly as if they had never been out of it. Percinet had left his chariot in the wood. He begged the Princess to make use of it to go to the rich château. She had much need of the carriage in the state she was in, so, making her invisible, he drove her himself and enjoyed the pleasure of her company — a pleasure which my chronicle asserts she was not indifferent to at the bottom of her heart; but she carefully concealed her sentiments.

She arrived at the rich château, and when she demanded in the name of Grognon to be shown into the Queen's closet, the governor burst into a fit of laughter. "What," said he, "do you imagine that you are to leave your sheep to be admitted into so beautiful a place? Be off with you wherever you like; never did wooden shoes tread those floors." Gracieuse begged him to write a line stating his refusal. He did so, and

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quitting the rich château she found the amiable Percinet awaiting her, who drove her back to the palace. It would be difficult to write down all the tender and respectful things he said to her on the road in the hope of persuading her to put an end to his unhappiness. She promised him that if Grognon played her another wicked trick she would consent.

When her vile stepmother saw her return she flew at the Fairy, whom she had detained, and scratched, and would have strangled her, if a Fairy could have been strangled. Gracieuse presented her with the governor's letter and the box. She threw both into the fire, without deigning to open either, and if she was herself to be believed, she would have willingly flung the Princess into it also; but she did not long postpone her punishment. She had a great hole dug in the garden as deep as a well; over it they placed a large stone. She then went to walk in the garden, and said to Gracieuse and those who accompanied her, "Here is a stone under which I am informed there is a treasure, come, let us lift it quickly." Each lent a helping hand; Gracieuse amongst the rest. This was exactly what Grognon wanted. As soon as the Princess was on the brink of the pit, Grognon pushed her violently into it, and the others let the stone fall again on the top of it. This time the case was indeed a hopeless one. How was Percinet to find her in the bowels of the earth? She perfectly understood the difficulty of her position, and repented having so long delayed marrying him. "How terrible is my fate!" she cried; "I am buried alive! — the most dreadful of all deaths. You are revenged for my hesitation, Percinet; but I feared you were of the same inconstant nature as other men, who

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change as soon as they are sure they are beloved. I wished to be convinced of your constancy; my prudent suspicions are the cause of my present condition. If I could still hope you would regret my loss, my fate would be less painful." She was thus giving vent to her anguish when she saw a little door open, which had escaped her attention in the darkness, and through it perceived the light of day, and gardens filled with flowers, fruits, fountains, grottoes, statues, bowers, and summer-houses. She did not hesitate to enter it. She advanced up a grand avenue, wondering what would be the end of this adventure. Almost at the same moment she perceived the fairy palace. She had not much difficulty in recognizing it, independently of the facts that one rarely finds a building entirely of rock crystal, and that she perceived all her recent adventures were engraved in it. Percinet appeared with the Queen, his mother, and his sisters.

"Refuse no longer, lovely Princess," said the Queen to Gracieuse; "it is time to make my son happy, and to relieve you from the deplorable life you lead under the tyranny of Grognon."

The grateful Princess fell on her knees before her, and told her she placed her fate in her hands, and that she would obey her in all things. That she had not forgotten the prophecy of Percinet at the time she left the Fairy Palace, when he said to her that that very palace would be amongst the dead, and that she would never re-enter it till after she had been buried. That she had the greatest admiration for his wisdom, and no less for his worth, and that she accepted him for her husband. The Prince in his turn knelt at her feet;

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and at the same instant the palace rang with shouts and music, and the marriage was celebrated with the greatest magnificence. All the fairies for a thousand leagues round appeared with sumptuous equipages; some came in cars drawn by swans, others by dragons, others on clouds, others in globes of fire. Amongst them appeared the Fairy who had assisted Grognon to torment Gracieuse. When she recognized the Princess, never was any one so surprised. She conjured her to forget the past, and promised she would take every means of atoning for the misery she had made her suffer. Actually, she would not stay for the banquet; but, re-ascending her car drawn by two terrible serpents, she flew to the King's palace, sought out Grognon, and wrung her neck before the guards or her women could interfere to prevent her.

THE BENEVOLENT FROG

ONCE upon a time there was a King who for many years had been at war, and whose enemy at last laid siege to his capital. The King begged the Queen to retire to a fortified castle; but she endeavored to persuade him to allow her to remain beside him and to share his fate, and it was with cries of grief that she was put into her chariot by the King to be driven away. He promised to visit her, although he knew that there was little chance of it, for the castle stood a long distance off, surrounded by a thick forest, and only those who were well acquainted with the roads could possibly find their way to it.

The Queen at last reached the castle, feeling sorrowful and distressed. When she was sufficiently rested, she walked about the country, but found nothing to interest her or change her thoughts. She saw only far-spreading desert tracts on either side. Sadly she gazed around her, exclaiming at intervals, "What a contrast to the place in which I have lived all my life! If I stay here long I shall die! What have I done to the King that he should banish me to this miserable castle?"

Although the King wrote daily to her, and sent her good news of the progress of the siege, she grew more and more unhappy, and at last determined that she would return to him. She kept her plan secret, but ordered a small chariot to be built for her, in which there was only room for one, saying that she should like sometimes to accompany the

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hunt. She drove herself, and followed so closely on the hounds, that the huntsmen were left behind; by which means she had sole command of her chariot, and could get away whenever she liked. Her only difficulty was her ignorance of the roads that crossed the forest. She gave word that there was to be a great hunt, and that she herself would go in her chariot. Everything was done according to her orders.

While everybody was occupied with the pleasures of the hunt, she gave rein to her horses, encouraging them with voice and whip; and soon their quickened pace became a gallop. Then, taking the bit between their teeth, they flew along at such a speed that the chariot seemed borne by the winds. Too late the poor Queen repented of her rashness: "What could I have been thinking of?" she said. "How could I have imagined that I should be able to control such wild and fiery horses? Alas! what will become of me?" The air resounded with her piteous lamentations; she invoked Heaven; she called the fairies to her assistance; but it seemed that all the powers had abandoned her. The chariot was overthrown. She had not sufficient strength to jump quickly enough to the ground, and her foot was caught between the wheel and the axle-tree.

She remained stretched on the ground at the foot of a tree; her heart scarcely beat, she could not speak, and her face was covered with blood. When at last she opened her eyes she saw standing near her a gigantic woman clothed only in a lion's skin, with bare arms and legs; her hair tied up with the dried skin of a snake, the head of which dangled over her shoulders. In her hand was a club made of stone,

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which served her as a walking-stick, and a quiver full of arrows was fastened to her side. When the Queen caught sight of this extraordinary figure, she felt sure that she was dead, for she did not think it was possible that she could be alive after such a terrible accident, and she said in a low voice to herself, "I am not surprised that it is so difficult to resolve to die, since what is in the other world is so frightful." The giantess, who overheard her words, could not help laughing at the Queen's idea that she was dead. "Take courage," she said to her, "for you are still among the living; but your fate is none the less sad. I am the Fairy Lioness, whose dwelling is near here; you must come and live with me." The Queen looked sorrowfully at her, and said, "If you will be good enough, Madam Lioness, to take me back to my castle, and tell the King what ransom you demand, he loves me so dearly that he will not refuse you even the half of his kingdom." "No," replied the giantess, "I am rich enough, but for some time past my lonely life has seemed dull to me; you are intelligent, and will be able perhaps to amuse me." As she finished speaking, she took the form of a lioness, and placing the Queen on her back she carried her to the depths of her cave, and there rubbed her with a spirit which quickly healed the Queen's wounds. This dreadful abode was only reached by ten thousand steps, which led down to the center of the earth. There was no light but that shed by a number of tall lamps, which were reflected in a lake of quicksilver. This lake was full of monsters, filling the air with discordant sounds. In the distance could be seen a mountain whence flowed the sluggish waters of a stream composed of all the

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tears shed by unhappy lovers. The trees were bare of leaves and fruit, the ground covered with briars and nettles.

A few dried roots, some horse-chestnuts, and thorn-apples were all that was provided by the Fairy Lioness to appease the hunger of those who fell into her hands.

The fairy told the Queen she could build herself a hut, as she was going to remain with her for the rest of her life. On hearing this, the Queen could no longer restrain her tears. But the Lioness only scoffed at her, and told her that the best thing she could do was to dry her tears and try to please; for if she acted otherwise, she would be the most miserable person in the world.

“What must I do then,” replied the Queen, “to soften your heart?” “I am fond of fly-pasties,” said the Lioness. “You must find means of procuring a sufficient number of flies to make me a large and sweet-tasting one.” “But,” said the Queen, “I see no flies here, and even were there any, it is not light enough to catch them; and if I were to catch some, I have never in my life made pastry.” “No matter,” said the pitiless Lioness; “that which I wish to have, I will have.”

The Queen thought to herself that she had but one life to lose, and in the condition in which she then was, what was there to fear in death? So instead of going in search of flies, she sat herself down under a yew tree and began to weep and complain: “Ah, my dear husband, when you go to the castle to fetch me, and find I am not there, you will think that I am dead. Perhaps some one will find the remains of my chariot and all the ornaments which I took

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with me to please you; and when you see these, you will no longer doubt that death has taken me." She was interrupted by a dismal croaking above her head. She lifted her eyes, and saw a large raven with a frog in its bill, and about to swallow it. So picking up the first stick she could find, she made the raven drop its prey.

The frog fell to the ground, where it lay for a time half stunned, but finally recovering its senses, it began to speak, and said: "Beautiful Queen, you are the first benevolent person that I have seen since my curiosity brought me here."

"By what wonderful power are you enabled to speak, little Frog?" responded the Queen, "and what kind of people do you see here? for as yet I have seen none."

"All the monsters that cover the lake," replied the little Frog, "were once in the world: some on thrones, some in high positions at court. There are even here some royal ladies, who caused much strife and bloodshed."

"But you, my little Frog friend," said the Queen, "what are you doing here?"

"It was curiosity which led me here," she replied. "I am half a fairy, my powers are restricted with regard to certain things, but far-reaching in others; if the Fairy Lioness knew that I was in her dominions, she would kill me. When I have my little cap of roses on my head, I fear nothing, as in that resides most of my power. Unfortunately, I had left it in the marsh when that ugly raven pounced upon me. If it had not been for you, madam, I should be no more; and as you have saved my life, you have only to command, and I

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will do all in my power to alleviate the sorrows of your own.”

“Alas! dear Frog,” said the Queen, “the wicked fairy who holds me captive wishes me to make her a fly-pasty; but there are no flies here, and if there were any, I could not see in the dim light to catch them. I run a chance, therefore, of being killed by her blows.”

“Leave it to me,” said the Frog. “I will soon get you some.” Whereupon the Frog rubbed herself over with sugar, and more than six thousand of her frog friends did likewise. Then they went to a place where the fairy kept a large store of flies for the purpose of tormenting some of her unhappy victims. As soon as the flies' smelled the sugar they flew to it, and stuck to the frogs, and these kind helpers returned at a gallop to the Queen. There had never been such a fly-catching before, nor a better pasty than that the Queen made for the fairy. The latter was greatly surprised when the Queen handed it to her, and could not imagine how she had been clever enough to catch the flies.

The Frog, who thought of everything that was necessary for the Queen's comfort, made her a bed of wild thyme. When the wicked fairy found out that the Queen did not sleep on the ground, she sent for her: “What gods or men are they who protect you?” she asked. “This land, watered only by showers of burning sulphur, has never produced even a leaf of sage; I am told, nevertheless, that sweet-smelling herbs spring up beneath your feet!” “I cannot explain it, madam,” said the Queen, “unless the cause is due to the child I hope one day to have, who will perhaps be less unhappy than I am.”

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Meanwhile the Queen was continually thinking by what means she could escape. She confided her longing to the Frog, who said to her, "Madam, allow me first to consult my little cap." She took her cap, placed it on some straw, and then burned in front of it a few sprigs of juniper, some capers, and two green peas. She then croaked five times, and the ceremony being then completed, she put on her cap again and began speaking like an oracle. "Fate, the ruler of all things, forbids you to leave this place. You will have a little Princess, more beautiful than Venus herself. Do not trouble yourself about anything else. Time alone can comfort you." The Queen's head drooped, a few tears fell from her eyes, but she resolved to trust her friend. "At least," she said to her, "do not leave me here alone; and befriend me when my little one is born." The Frog promised to remain with her, and comforted her as best she could.

But it is now time to return to the King. While the enemy kept him shut up in his capital he could not continually send messages to the Queen; but after several sorties he obliged the besiegers to retire, and he rejoiced at his success less on his own account than on that of the Queen, whom he could now bring back in safety. He was in total ignorance of the disaster which had befallen her, for none of his officers had dared to tell him of it. They had been into the forest and found the remains of the chariot, the runaway horses, and the driving apparel which she had put on when going to find her husband. As they were fully persuaded that she was dead, and had been eaten by wild beasts, their only care was to make the King believe that she had died suddenly.

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On receiving this mournful intelligence, he thought he should die himself of grief. For some days he would see no one, nor allow himself to be seen. He then returned to his capital, and entered on a long period of mourning.

Meanwhile, a little Princess had been born to the Queen, as beautiful as the Frog had predicted, to whom they gave the name of Moufette. The Queen had great difficulty in persuading the fairy to allow her to bring up the child, for so ferocious was she, that she would have liked to eat it.

Moufette, a wonder of beauty, was now six months old; and the Queen, as she looked upon her with a tenderness mingled with pity, continually said: "Ah! if your father could see you, my poor little one, how delighted he would be! how dear you would be to him! But even already, maybe, he has begun to forget me; he believes, no doubt, that we are lost to him in death."

The Frog, seeing her cry like this, said to her: "If you would like me to do so, madam, I will go and find the King, your husband. The journey is long, and I travel but slowly; but, sooner or later, I shall arrive." The Queen clasped her hands, and made Moufette clasp hers too, in sign of the gratitude she felt towards Madam Frog. "But," she continued, "of what use will it be to him to know that I am in this melancholy abode; it will be impossible for him to deliver me from it?" "Madam," replied the Frog, "we must leave that to Heaven; we can only do that which depends on ourselves."

The Queen sent a message to the King, written with her blood on a piece of rag; for she possessed neither ink nor

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paper. She begged him to give attention to everything the good Frog told him, and to believe all she said.

The Frog was a year and four days climbing up the ten thousand steps which lead from the dark country, in which she had left the Queen, up into the world. It took her another year to prepare her equipage, for she had too much pride to allow herself to appear at the Court like a poor, common frog from the marshes. She had a little sedan-chair made, large enough to hold two eggs comfortably. It was covered on the outside with tortoise-shell, and lined with lizard-skin. Then she chose fifty maids of honor from the little green frogs which hop about the meadows. Each was mounted on a snail, furnished with a light saddle. Several water-rats, dressed as pages, ran before the snails, as her bodyguard. In short, nothing so pretty had ever been seen before, and to crown it all, her cap of crimson roses, always fresh and in full bloom, suited her in the most admirable manner.

The journey lasted seven years, during which time the poor Queen went through unspeakable pains and suffering, and if it had not been for the beautiful Moufette, who was a great comfort to her, she would have died a hundred times over. This wonderful little creature could not open her mouth or say a word without filling her mother with delight. Indeed, everybody with the exception of the Fairy Lioness was enchanted with her. At last, when the Queen had lived six years in this horrible place, the fairy said that, provided she herself received everything that was killed, the Queen might go hunting with her.

The joy of the Queen at once more seeing the sun may

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be imagined. So unaccustomed had she grown to its light, that at first she thought it would blind her. As for Moufette, she was so quick and intelligent, that even at five or six years of age she never failed to hit her mark, and so, in this way, the mother and daughter succeeded in somewhat lessening the ferocity of the fairy.

The Frog traveled over mountains and valleys, never stopping day or night. When she drew near the capital, where the King was in residence, she was surprised to see dancing and festivity in every direction. There was laughter and singing, and the nearer she got to the town, the more joyous and jubilant the people seemed. Her rural equipage caused great astonishment. Every one went after it, and so large did the crowd become that she had great difficulty in making her way to the palace. Here everything was as magnificent as possible, for the King, who had been a widower for nine years, had at last yielded to the prayers of his subjects, and was on the eve of marriage with a Princess.

The kind Frog, having descended from her sedan-chair, entered the royal presence, followed by her attendants. She had no need to ask for audience, for the King, his affianced bride, and all the princes were much too curious to know the reason of her coming to think of interrupting her. "Sire," said she, "I hardly know whether the news I bring you will give you joy or sorrow. The marriage which you are about to celebrate convinces me of your infidelity to the Queen."

"Her memory is dear to me as ever," said the King, unable to prevent the falling of a tear or two; "but you must know, kind frog, that kings are not always able to do

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what they wish. For the last nine years, my subjects have been urging me to marry. I owe them an heir to the throne, and I have therefore chosen this young Princess, who appears to me all that is charming." "I advise you not to marry her, for the Queen is not dead. I bring you a letter from her, written with her own blood. A little daughter, Moufette, has been born to you, more beautiful than the heavens themselves." The King took the rag on which the Queen had scrawled a few words. He kissed it, he bathed it in his tears, he showed it to the whole assembly, saying that he recognized his wife's handwriting. He asked the Frog a thousand questions, which she answered with vivacity and intelligence.

The betrothed Princess and the ambassadors who had come to be present at the marriage began to pull long faces. One of the most important of the guests turned to the King, and said, "Sire, can you think of breaking so solemn an engagement on the word of a toad like that? This scum of the marshes has the insolence to come and tell lies before the whole Court for the pleasure of being heard!"

"Know, your Excellency," replied the Frog, "that I am no scum of the marshes, and since I am forced to exhibit my powers: Come forth, fairies all!" And thereupon all the frogs, rats, snails, and lizards, with the frog at their head, suddenly appeared; not, however, in the usual form of these reptiles, but with tall, majestic figures, pleasing countenances, and eyes more brilliant than stars. Each wore a jewelled crown on his head, and over his shoulders a regal mantle of velvet, lined with ermine, with a long train which was borne by dwarfs. At the same time was heard the sound

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of trumpets, kettle-drums, hautboys, and drums, filling the air with melodious and warlike music, and all the fairies began to dance a ballet, their every step so light that the slightest spring lifted them to the vaulted ceiling of the room. The King and his future Queen, surprised as they were at this, were no less astonished when they saw these fairy ballet dancers suddenly change into flowers, which continued to dance as if they had legs and feet. It was like a living flower-bed, of which every movement delighted both the eye and the sense of smell. Another moment, and the flowers had disappeared. In their place several fountains threw their waters into the air and fell into an artificial lake at the foot of the castle walls. This was covered with little painted and gilded boats, so pretty and dainty that the Princess invited the ambassadors to go for a trip on the water. They were all pleased to do so, thinking it was all a merry pastime, which would end happily in the marriage festivities. But they had no sooner embarked than the boats, water, and fountains disappeared, and the frogs were frogs again. The King asked what had become of the Princess. The Frog replied, "Sire, no queen is yours but your wife. Were I less attached to her than I am I should not interfere; but she is so deserving, and your daughter Moufette is so charming that you ought not to delay a moment in going to their deliverance."

"I assure you, Madam Frog," said the King, "that if I did not believe my wife to be dead, there is nothing in the world I would not do to see her again."

"Here is a ring which will furnish you with the means

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of seeing the Queen, and of speaking with the Fairy Lioness, although she is the most terrible creature in the world."

The King departed, refusing to have anyone to accompany him. "Do not be discouraged," said the Frog to him; "you will meet with terrible difficulties, but I hope that you will succeed according to your wishes." Somewhat comforted by her words, the King started in search of his dear wife, with no other guide than his ring.

As Moufette grew older, her beauty became more perfect, and all the monsters of the quicksilver lake fell in love with her; and the dragons, with their hideous and terrifying forms, came and laid at her feet. Although Moufette had seen them ever since she was born, her beautiful eyes could not accustom themselves to the sight of these creatures, and she would run away and hide in her mother's arms. "Shall we remain here long?" she asked her; "is there to be no end to our misery?" The Queen spoke hopefully in order to cheer her child, but in her heart she had no hope; the absence of the Frog, her unbroken silence, the long time that had elapsed since she had news of the King, all these things filled her with sorrow and despair.

The Fairy Lioness had gradually made it a practice to take them with her hunting. She was fond of good things, and liked the game they killed for her, and although all they got in return was the gift of the head or the feet, it was something to be allowed to see again the light of day. The fairy took the form of a lioness, the Queen and her daughter seated themselves on her back, and thus they went hunting through the forests.

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The King happened to be resting in a forest one day, whither his ring had guided him, and saw them pass like an arrow shot from the bow. He was unseen of them and when he tried to follow them they vanished completely from his sight. He longed for her to return to him, and feeling sure that the young Princess who was with her was his dear little Moufette, he determined to face a thousand deaths rather than abandon his design of rescuing her.

By the help of his ring, he found his way into the obscure region where the Queen had been so many years, and was not a little surprised when he found himself descending to the center of the earth, but every fresh thing he saw astonished him more and more. The Fairy Lioness, who knew everything, was aware of the day and the hour when he would arrive. She would have given a great deal if the powers in league with her had ordained otherwise; but she determined at least to oppose his strength with the full might of her own.

She built a palace of crystal, which floated in the center of the lake of quicksilver, and rose and fell with its waves. In it she imprisoned the Queen and her daughter, and then harangued all the monsters who were in love with Moufette. "You will lose this beautiful Princess," she said to them, "if you do not help me to protect her from a knight who has come to carry her away." The monsters promised to leave nothing in their power undone, and they surrounded the palace of crystal; the lightest in weight taking their stations on the roof and walls, the others keeping guard at the doors, and the remainder in the lake.

The King, advised by his faithful ring, went first to the

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fairy's cave. She was awaiting him in her form of lioness. As soon as he appeared she threw herself upon him; but he handled his sword with a valor for which she was not prepared, and as she was putting out one of her paws to fell him to the earth, he cut it off at the elbow joint. She uttered a loud cry and fell. He put his foot on her throat and swore that he would kill her, and in spite of her ungovernable fury and invulnerability, she felt a little afraid. "What do you wish to do with me?" she asked. "I wish to punish you," he replied proudly, "for having carried away my wife, and you shall give her up to me or I will strangle you on the spot." "Look towards the lake," she said, "and see if I have the power to do so." The King turned in the direction towards which she pointed, and saw the Queen and her daughter in the palace of crystal, which was floating like a vessel, without oars or rudder, on the lake of quicksilver. He was ready to die with mingled joy and sorrow, and called to them with all his might. He ran round and round the lake, but whenever the palace came close enough for him to spring upon it, it suddenly floated away again with terrible swiftness, and so his hopes were continually disappointed. The Queen, fearing he would at length grow weary, called to him not to lose courage. She and Moufette then stretched out their hands towards him with imploring gestures. Seeing this, the King was filled with renewed courage. No king on earth ever spent such a wretched time before. He had only the ground, covered with briars and thorns, for his bed; his food consisted of wild fruits, more bitter than gall, and he was incessantly engaged in defending himself from the monsters of the lake.

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Three years passed in this manner, and the King could not flatter himself that he had gained the least advantage. He was running one day as usual, first to one side of the lake then to the other, when one of the most hideous of the dragons called and said to him: "If you will swear to me by your crown and sceptre, by your wife and child, to give me, whenever I shall ask for it, a certain delicate morsel to eat, for which I have a taste, I will take you on my back, and I promise you that none of the monsters of this lake, who guard the palace, shall prevent us from carrying off the Queen and Princess Moufette."

"Ah! my beloved Dragon!" cried the King, "I swear to you, and to all the family of dragons, that I will give you your fill to eat of what you like." "Do not make any promises," replied the Dragon, "if you have any thought of not fulfilling them." The King renewed his protestations; for he was dying of impatience to get possession of his dear Queen. He mounted on the Dragon's back, as if it was the finest horse in the world, but the other monsters now advanced to bar his passage. They fought together, nothing was to be heard but the sharp hissing of the serpents, nothing to be seen but fire, and sulphur, and saltpetre, falling in every direction. At last the King reached the palace, but here the entrances were defended by bats, owls, and ravens; but the Dragon, with his claws, his teeth and tail, cut to pieces even the boldest of these. The Queen, who was looking on at this fierce encounter, kicked away pieces of the wall, and armed herself with these to help her dear husband. They were at last victorious. They ran into one another's arms, and the

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work of disenchantment was completed by a thunderbolt, which fell into the lake and dried it up.

The friendly Dragon had disappeared with all the other monsters, and the King, by what means he could not guess, found himself again in his own capital, seated, with his Queen and Moufette, in a magnificent dining-hall, with a table spread with exquisite meats in front of them. Such joy and astonishment as theirs were unknown before. All their subjects ran in to see the Queen and the young Princess, who, to add to the wonder of it all, was so superbly dressed that the eye could hardly bear to look upon her dazzling jewels.

It is easy to imagine the festivities that now went on at the castle. Masquerades, running at the ring, and tournaments attracted the greatest princes in the world; but even more were they attracted by the bright eyes of Moufette. Among those who were the handsomest and most accomplished in feats of arms, Prince Moufy everywhere was the most conspicuous. He was universally admired and applauded, and Moufette, who hitherto had been only in the company of dragons and serpents, did not withhold her share of praise. No day passed but Prince Moufy showed her some fresh attention, in the hope of pleasing her, for he loved her deeply; and having offered himself as a suitor, he made known to the King and Queen that his principality was of great beauty and extent.

The King replied that Moufette was at liberty to choose a husband, and that he only wished to please her and make her happy. The Prince was delighted with this answer, and having already become aware that he was not indifferent to

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the Princess, offered her his hand. She assured him that if he was not her husband, no other man should be, and Moufy, overcome with joy, threw himself at her feet, and in affectionate terms begged her to remember the promise she had given him. The Prince and Princess were betrothed, and Prince Moufy then returned to his principality to make preparations for the marriage. Moufette shed many tears at his departure, for she was troubled with a presentiment of evil which she could not explain.

One day, when she was in the Queen's room, the King rushed in, and taking his daughter in his arms: "Alas, my child," he cried. "Alas! wretched father, unhappy King!" He could say no more, for his voice was stifled with sobs. The Queen and Princess, in great alarm, asked him what was the matter, and at last he was able to tell them that a giant of an enormous height, who gave himself out to be an ambassador from the Dragon of the lake, had just arrived; that in accordance with the promise, made by the King in return for the help he had received in fighting the monsters, the Dragon demanded him to give up the Princess, as he wished to devour her for a meal. The King added that he had bound himself by solemn oaths to give him what he asked, and in those days no one ever broke his word.

When the Queen heard this dreadful news she uttered piercing cries, and clasped her child to her breast. "My life shall be taken," she said, "before my daughter shall be delivered up to that monster; let him rather take our kingdom and all that we possess. Unnatural father! can you possibly consent to such a cruel thing? The thought of it is intolerable!"

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Send me this terrible ambassador, maybe the sight of my anguish may touch his heart.”

The King made no reply, but went in search of the giant and brought him to the Queen, who threw herself at his feet. She and her daughter implored him to have mercy upon them, and to persuade the Dragon to take everything they possessed and to spare Moufette's life; but the giant replied that the matter did not rest with him, and that the Dragon was so obstinate and so fond of good things that all the powers combined would not prevent him eating whatever he had taken into his head he would like for a meal.

No sooner was the sad news spread through the palace than the whole town knew it. Nothing was heard but weeping and wailing, for Moufette was greatly beloved. The King could not bring himself to give her up, and the giant, who had already waited some days, began to grow impatient and to utter terrible threats. He now told them that he had received a message from his master, and that if the Princess would agree to marry a nephew of his the Dragon would let her live; that the nephew was young and handsome; that, moreover, he was a prince, and that she would be able to live with him very happily. This proposal somewhat lessened their grief. The Queen spoke to the Princess, but found her still more averse to this marriage than to the thought of death. “I cannot save my life by being unfaithful,” said Moufette. “You promised me to Prince Moufy, and I will marry no one else. Let me die; my death will ensure the peace of your lives.” The King then came and endeavored with all the tenderest of expressions to persuade her; but nothing moved

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her, and finally it was decided that she should be conducted to the summit of a mountain, there to await the Dragon.

Everything was prepared for this great sacrifice, and nothing so mournful had before been seen. Four hundred maidens of the highest rank, dressed in long white robes and crowned with cypress, accompanied the Princess, who was carried in an open litter of black velvet, that all might look on her. Her hair, tied with crape, hung over her shoulders, and she wore a crown of jasmine, mingled with a few marigolds. The grief of the King and Queen, who followed, overcome by their deep sorrow, appeared the only thing that moved her. The giant, armed from head to foot, marched beside the litter, and looked with hungry eye at the Princess, as if anticipating his share of her when she came to be eaten.

“Ah! Frog, Frog,” cried the Queen, “you have indeed forsaken me! Alas! why did you give me help in that unhappy region, and now withhold it from me! Would that I had then died, I should not now be lamenting the loss of all my hopes, I should not now have the anguish of seeing my dear Moufette on the point of being devoured!” The procession at last reached the summit of the fatal mountain. Here the cries and lamentations were redoubled. The giant ordered every one to say farewell and to retire.

The King and Queen, and all the Court, now ascended another mountain, whence they could see all that happened to the Princess; and they had not to wait long before they saw a Dragon, half a league long, coming through the air. His body was so heavy that, notwithstanding his six large wings, he was hardly able to fly. He was covered with immense

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blue scales and poisonous tongues of flame. Each of his claws was the size of a windmill, and three rows of teeth, as long as those of an elephant, could be seen inside his wide-open jaw. As the Dragon slowly made his way towards the mountain, the good, faithful Frog, mounted on the back of a hawk, flew rapidly to Prince Moufy. She wore her cap of roses, and although he was locked in his private room, she entered without a key, and said, "What are you doing here, unhappy lover? You sit dreaming of Moufette, and at this very moment she is exposed to the most frightful danger. Here is a rose-leaf: by blowing upon it, I can change it into a superb horse, as you will see."

There immediately appeared a horse, green in color, and with twelve hoofs and three heads, of which one emitted fire, another bomb-shells, and the third cannon-balls. She gave the Prince a sword, eight yards long, and lighter than a feather. She clothed him with a single diamond, which he put on like a coat, and which, although as hard as a rock, was so pliable that he could move in it at his ease. "Go," she said, "run, fly to the rescue of her whom you love; the green horse I have given you will take you to her, and when you have delivered her, let her know the share I have had in the matter."

"Generous fairy," cried the Prince, "I cannot show you all my gratitude; but from henceforth, I am your faithful servitor."

He mounted the horse with the three heads, which instantly galloped off on its twelve hoofs, so that in a very little time the Prince reached the mountain, where he found

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his dear Princess all alone, and saw the Dragon slowly drawing near. The green horse immediately began to send forth fire, bomb-shells, and cannon-balls, which not a little astonished the monster. He received twenty balls in his throat, and his scales were somewhat damaged, and the bomb-shells put out one of his eyes. The Prince's long sword was so finely-tempered that he could use it as he liked, thrusting it in at times up to the hilt, and at others using it as a whip. The Prince, on his side, would have suffered from the Dragon's claws, had it not been for his diamond coat, which was impenetrable.

Moufette had recognized her lover, for the diamond that covered him was transparent and bright, and she was seized with mortal terror at the danger he was in. The King and Queen, however, were filled with renewed hope; for it was such an unexpected thing to see a horse with three heads and twelve hoofs, sending forth fire and flame, and a Prince in a diamond suit armed with a formidable sword, arrive at such an opportune moment, and fight with so much valor. The King put his hat on the top of his stick, and the Queen tied her handkerchief to the end of another, as signals of encouragement to the Prince; and all their Court followed suit. And what efforts did he not make! The ground was covered with stings, claws, horns, wings, and scales of the Dragon. The earth was colored blue and green with the mingled blood of the Dragon and the horse. Five times the Prince fell to the ground, but each time he rose again and leisurely mounted his horse, and then there were cannonades, and rushing of flames, and explosions, such as were never

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heard or seen before. At last the Dragon's strength gave way and he fell. The Prince gave him a final blow, and nobody could believe their eyes when from this last great wound there stepped forth a handsome and charming prince. He rushed, his arms outspread, towards Prince Moufy, and embraced him. "What do I not owe you, valiant liberator?" he cried. "You have delivered me from a worse prison than ever before enclosed a king; I have languished there for sixteen years. The Fairy Lioness condemned me to it; and such was her power that she would have forced me, against my will, to devour that adorable Princess. Lead me to her feet that I may explain to her my misfortune."

Prince Moufy, surprised and delighted at this extraordinary termination to his adventure, showered civilities on the newly-found Prince. They hastened to rejoin Moufette, who thanked Heaven a thousand times for her un hoped-for happiness. The King, the Queen, and all the Court were already with her. Everybody spoke at once. Nobody listened to anybody else, and they all shed nearly as many tears of joy as they had before of grief. Finally, that nothing might be wanting to complete their rejoicing, the good Frog appeared flying through the air on her hawk, which had little bells of gold on its feet. When the tinkle, tinkle, of these was heard, every one looked up, and saw the cap of roses shining like the sun, and the Frog as beautiful as the dawn.

The Queen ran towards her, and took her by one of her little paws, and in the same moment the wise Frog became a great Queen, with a charming countenance. "I come," she cried, "to crown the faithful Moufette, who preferred to

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risk her life rather than be untrue to Prince Moufy." She thereupon took two myrtle wreaths and placed them on the heads of the lovers.

They all wended their way back to the town, singing wedding songs, as gaily as they had before mournfully bewailed the sacrifice of the Princess. The marriage took place the following day, and the joy with which it was celebrated may be imagined.

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ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had two handsome boys; so well-fed and hearty were they that they grew like the day.

Whenever the Queen had a child, she sent for the fairies, that she might learn from them what would be its future lot. After a while she had a little daughter, who was so beautiful that no one could see her without loving her. The fairies came as usual, and the Queen having feasted them, said to them as they were going away, "Do not forget that good custom of yours, but tell me what will happen to Rosette" — for this was the name of the little Princess. The fairies answered her that they had left their divining-books at home, and that they would come again to see her. "Ah!" said the Queen, "that bodes no good, I fear; you do not wish to distress me by foretelling evil; but, I pray you, let me know the worst, and hide nothing from me." The fairies continued to make excuses, but the Queen only became more anxious to know the truth. At last the chief among them said to her, "We fear, madam, that Rosette will be the cause of a great misfortune befalling her brothers; that they may even lose their lives on her account. This is all that we can tell you of the fate of this sweet little Princess, and we are grieved to have nothing better to say about her." The Queen was so sorrowful that the King saw by her face that she was in trouble. He asked her what was the matter. She told him she had gone

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too near the fire and accidentally burnt all the flax that was on her distaff. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he went up to his storeroom and brought her down more flax than she could spin in a hundred years.

But the Queen was still very sorrowful, and the King again asked her what was the matter. She told him that she had been down to the river and had let one of her green satin slippers fall into the water. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he sent for all the shoemakers in the kingdom and made the Queen a present of ten thousand green satin slippers.

Still the Queen was no less sorrowful. The King asked her once more what was the matter. She told him that, being hungry, she had eaten hastily, and had swallowed her wedding-ring. The King knew that she was not speaking the truth, for he had himself put away the ring, and he replied, "My dear wife, you are not speaking the truth; here is your ring, which I have kept in my purse." The Queen was put out of countenance at being caught telling a lie — for there is nothing in the world so ugly — and she saw that the King was vexed, so she told him what the fairies had predicted about little Rosette, and begged him to tell her if he could think of any remedy. The King was greatly troubled, so much so, that at last he said to the Queen, "I see no way of saving our two boys, except by putting the little girl to death, while she is still in her swaddling clothes." But the Queen cried that she would rather suffer death herself, that she would never consent to so cruel a deed, and that the King must try and think of some other remedy. The King and Queen could think of nothing else, and while thus pondering over the

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matter, the Queen was told that in a large wood near the town there lived an old hermit, who made his home in the trunk of a tree, whom people went from far and near to consult.

“It is to him I must go,” said the Queen; “the fairies told me the evil, but they forgot to tell me the remedy.”

She started early in the morning, mounted on her little white mule, that was shod with gold, and accompanied by two of her maids of honor, who each rode a pretty horse. When they were near the wood they dismounted out of respect, and made their way to the tree where the hermit lived. He did not much care for the visits of women, but when he saw that it was the Queen approaching, he said, “Welcome! what would you ask of me?” She related to him what the fairies had said about Rosette, and asked him to advise her what to do. He told her that the Princess must be shut up in a tower and not be allowed to leave it as long as she lived. The Queen thanked him and returned and told everything to the King. The King immediately gave orders for a large tower to be built as quickly as possible. In it he placed his daughter, but that she might not feel lonely and depressed, he, and the Queen, and her two brothers, went to see her every day. The elder of these was called the big Prince, and the younger, the little Prince. They loved their sister passionately, for she was the most beautiful and graceful Princess ever seen. When she was fifteen years old, the big Prince said to the King, “Father, my sister is old enough to be married; shall we not soon have a wedding?” The little Prince said the same to the Queen, but their Majesties laughed

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and changed the subject, and made no answer about the marriage.

Now it happened that the King and Queen both fell very ill and died within a few days of one another. There was great mourning; every one wore black, and all the bells were tolled. Rosette was inconsolable at the loss of her good mother.

As soon as the funeral was over, the dukes and marquises of the kingdom placed the big Prince on a throne made of gold and diamonds; he wore a splendid crown on his head, and robes of violet velvet embroidered with suns and moons. Then the whole Court cried out, "Long live the King!" and now on all sides there was nothing but rejoicing.

Then the young King and his brother said one to another, "Now that we are the masters, we will release our sister from the tower, where she has been shut up for such a long and dreary time." They had only to pass through the garden to reach the tower, which stood in one corner of it, and had been built as high as was possible, for the late King and Queen had intended her to remain there always. Rosette was embroidering a beautiful dress on a frame in front of her, when she saw her brothers enter. She rose, and taking the King's hand, said, "Good-day, sire, you are now King, and I am your humble subject; I pray you to release me from this tower, where I lead a melancholy life," and with this, she burst into tears. The King embraced her, and begged her not to weep, for he was come, he said, to take her from the tower, and to conduct her to a beautiful castle. The Prince had his pockets full of sweetmeats, which he gave Rosette.

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“Come,” he said, “let us get away from this wretched place; the King will soon find you a husband; do not be unhappy any longer.”

When Rosette saw the beautiful garden, full of flowers, and fruits, and fountains, she was overcome with astonishment, for she had never seen anything of the kind before. She looked around her, she went first here, then there, she picked the fruit off the trees, and gathered flowers from the beds; while her little dog, Fretillon, who was as green as a parrot, kept on running before her, saying yap, yap, yap! and jumping and cutting a thousand capers, and everybody was amused at his ways. Presently he ran into a little wood, whither the Princess followed him, and here her wonder was even greater than before, when she saw a large peacock spreading out its tail. She thought it so beautiful that she could not take her eyes off it. The King and the Prince now joined her, and asked her what delighted her so much. She pointed to the peacock, and asked them what it was. They told her it was a bird, which was sometimes eaten. “What!” she cried, “dare to kill and eat a beautiful bird like that! I tell you, that I will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, and when I am their Queen I shall not allow anybody to eat them.”

The astonishment of the King cannot be described. “But, dear sister,” said he, “where would you have us go to find the King of the Peacocks?”

“Whither you please, sire; but him, and him alone, will I marry.”

Having come to this decision, she was now conducted by

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her brothers to their castle; the peacock had to be brought and put into her room, so fond was she of it. All the Court ladies who had not before seen Rosette now hastened to greet her and pay their respects to her. Some brought preserves with them, some sugar, and others dresses of woven gold, beautiful ribbons, dolls, embroidered shoes, pearls, and diamonds. Every one did their best to entertain her, and she was so well brought up, so courteous, kissing their hands, curtsying when anything beautiful was given to her, that there was not a lord or lady who did not leave her presence gratified and charmed.

While she was thus occupied, the King and the Prince were turning over in their minds how they should find the King of the Peacocks, if there was such a person in the world to be found. They decided that they would have Rosette's portrait painted; and when this was done it was so life-like that only speech was wanting. Then they said to her, "Since you will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, we are going together to look for him, and will traverse the whole world to try and find him for you. If we find him, we shall be very glad. Meanwhile take care of our kingdom until we return."

So the two Princes started on their long journey, and they asked every one whom they met, "Do you know the King of the Peacocks?" but the reply was always the same, "No, we do not." Each time they passed on and went farther, and in this way they travelled so very, very far, that no one had ever been so far before.

They came to the kingdom of the cock-chafers; and these

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were in such numbers, and made such a loud buzzing, that the King feared he should become deaf. He asked one of them, who appeared to him to have the most intelligence, whether he knew where the King of the Peacocks was to be found. "Sire," replied the cock-chafer, "his kingdom lies thirty thousand leagues from here; you have chosen the longest way to reach it." "And how do you know that?" asked the King. "Because," answered the cock-chafer, "we know you very well, for every year we spend two or three months in your gardens." Whereupon the King and his brother embraced the cock-chafer, and they went off arm in arm to dine together, and the two strangers admired all the curiosities of that new country, where the smallest leaf of a tree was worth a gold piece. After that, they continued their journey, and having been directed along the right way, they were not long in reaching its close. On their arrival, they found all the trees laden with peacocks, and, indeed, there were peacocks everywhere, so that they could be heard talking and screaming two leagues off.

The King said to his brother, "If the King of the Peacocks is a peacock himself, how can our sister marry him? it would be folly to consent to such a thing, and it would be a fine thing for us to have little peacocks for nephews."

The Prince was equally disturbed at the thought. "It is an unhappy fancy she has taken into her head," he said. "I cannot think what led her to imagine that there was such a person in the world as the King of the Peacocks."

When they entered the town, they saw that it was full of men and women, and that they all wore clothes made of

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peacocks' feathers, and that these were evidently considered fine things, for every place was covered with them. They met the King, who was driving in a beautiful little carriage of gold, studded with diamonds, and drawn by twelve peacocks at full gallop. This King of the Peacocks was so handsome that the King and Prince were delighted. He had long, light, curly hair, fair complexion, and wore a crown of peacocks' feathers. Directly he saw them, he guessed, seeing that they wore a different costume to the people of the country, that they were strangers, and wishing to ascertain if this was so, he ordered his carriage to stop, and sent for them.

The King and the Prince advanced, bowing low, and said, "Sire, we have come from afar, to show you a portrait." They drew forth Rosette's portrait and showed it to him. After gazing at it a while, the King of the Peacocks said, "I can scarcely believe that there is so beautiful a maiden in the whole world." "She is a thousand times more beautiful," said the King. "You are jesting," replied the King of the Peacocks. "Sire," rejoined the Prince, "here is my brother, who is a King, like yourself. He is called King, and I am a Prince; our sister, of whom this is the portrait, is the Princess Rosette. We have come to ask if you will marry her. She is good and beautiful, and we will give her, as dower, a bushel of golden crowns." "It is well," said the King. "I will gladly marry her; she shall want for nothing, and I shall love her greatly; but I require that she shall be as beautiful as her portrait, and if she is in the smallest degree less so, I shall make you pay for it with your lives." "We consent willingly," said both Rosette's brothers. "You

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consent?" added the King. "You will go to prison then, and remain there until the Princess arrives." The Princes made no difficulty about this, for they knew well that Rosette was more beautiful than her portrait. They were well looked after while in prison, and were well served with all they required, and the King often went to see them. He kept Rosette's portrait in his room, and could scarcely rest day or night for looking at it. As the King and his brother could not go to her themselves, they wrote to Rosette, telling her to pack up as quickly as possible, and to start without delay, as the King of the Peacocks was awaiting her. They did not tell her that they were prisoners, for fear of causing her uneasiness.

The Princess scarcely knew how to contain herself with joy when she received this message. She told everybody that the King of the Peacocks had been found, and that he wanted to marry her. Bonfires were lit and guns fired. After having dispensed hospitality to her visitors, she presented her beautiful dolls to her best friends, and handed over the government to the wisest elders of the town. She prayed them to take care of her peacock, for with her she only took her nurse, her foster sister, and her little green dog, Fretillon. They set out in a boat on the sea, carrying with them the bushel of golden crowns and sufficient clothes for two changes a day for ten years. They made merry on their voyage, laughing and singing, and the nurse kept on asking the boatman if they were nearing the Kingdom of the Peacocks; for a long time, all he said was, "No, no, not yet." Then at last, when she asked again, "Are we anywhere near it now?" he

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answered, "We shall soon be there, very soon." Once more she said, "Are we near, are we anywhere near it now?" and he said, "Yes, we are now within reach of shore."

On hearing this the nurse went to the end of the boat, and sitting down beside the boatman, said to him, "If you like, you can be rich for the remainder of your life." He replied, "I should like nothing better." She continued, "If you like, you can earn good money." "That would suit me very well," he answered. "Well," she went on, "then tonight, when the Princess is asleep, you must help me throw her into the sea. After she is drowned, I will dress my daughter in her fine clothes, and we will take her to the King of the Peacocks, who will only be too pleased to marry her; and as a reward to you, we will give you as many diamonds as you care to possess." The boatman was very much astonished at this proposal. He told the nurse that it was a pity to drown such a pretty Princess, and that he felt compassion for her; but the nurse fetched a bottle of wine and made him drink so much that he had no longer any power to refuse.

Night having come, the Princess went to bed as usual, her little Fretillon lying at her feet, not even stirring one of his paws. Rosette slept soundly, but the wicked nurse kept awake, and went presently to fetch the boatman. She took him into the Princess's room, and together they lifted her up, feather bed, mattress, sheets, coverlets, and all, and threw them into the sea; the Princess all the while so fast asleep that she never woke. But fortunately her bed was made of Phoenix-feathers, which are extremely rare and have the property of always floating on water, so that she was

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carried along in her bed as in a boat. The water began gradually first to wet her feather bed, then her mattress, and Rosette began to feel uncomfortable, and turned from side to side, and then Fretillon woke up. He had a capital nose, and when he smelled the soles and codfish so near, he started barking at them, and this awoke all the other fish, who began swimming about. The bigger ones ran against the Princess's bed, which, not being attached to anything, span round and round like a whirligig. Rosette could not make out what was happening. "Is our boat having a dance on the water?" she said. "I am not accustomed to feeling so uneasy as I am to-night," and all the while Fretillon continued barking, and going on as if he was out of his mind. The wicked nurse and the boatman heard him from afar, and said: "There's that funny little beast drinking our healths with his mistress. Let us make haste to land," for they were now just opposite the town of the King of the Peacocks.

He had sent down to the landing-place a hundred chariots drawn by all kinds of rare animals, the chariot which was intended for the Princess being harnessed with six blue monkeys. They had beautiful trappings of crimson velvet, overlaid with plates of gold. Sixty young maids of honor were also in attendance, who had been chosen by the King for the amusement of the Princess.

The nurse had taken great pains to dress her daughter finely. She had put on her Rosette's best robe, and decked her all over from head to foot with the Princess's diamonds; but with all this, she was still as ugly as an ape, with greasy black hair, crooked eyes, bowed legs, and a hump on her

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back; and, added to these deformities, she was besides of a disagreeable and sulky temper, and was always grumbling.

When people saw her get out of the boat, they were so taken aback by her appearance that they could not utter a sound. "What is the meaning of this?" she said. "Are you all asleep? Be off, and bring me something to eat! A nice set of beggars you are! I will have you all hanged." When they heard this, they murmured, "What an ugly creature! and she is as wicked as she is ugly! A nice wife for our King; well, we are not surprised! but it was scarcely worth the trouble to bring her from the other side of the world." Meanwhile she still behaved as if she were already mistress of all and everything, and for no reason at all boxed their ears or gave a blow with her fist to everybody in turn.

As her escort was a very large one, the procession moved slowly, and she sat up in her chariot like a queen; but all the peacocks, who had stationed themselves on the trees, so as to salute her as she passed, and who had been prepared to shout, "Long live the beautiful Queen Rosette!" could only call out, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" as soon as they caught sight of her. She was so enraged at this that she called to her guards, "Kill those rascally peacocks who are insulting me." But the peacocks quickly flew away and only laughed at her.

The treacherous boatman, seeing and hearing all this, said in a low voice to the nurse, "There is something wrong, good mother; your daughter should have been better looking." She answered, "Hold your tongue, stupid, or you will bring us into trouble."

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The King had word brought him that the Princess was approaching. "Well," he said, "have her brothers, I wonder, told me the truth? Is she more beautiful than her portrait?" "Sire," said those near him, "there will be nothing to wish for if she is as beautiful." "You are right," replied the King, "I shall be well content with that. Come, let us go and see her," for he knew by the hubbub in the courtyard that she had arrived. He could not distinguish anything that was said, except, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" and he imagined that the people were calling out about some little dwarf or animal that she had brought with her, for it never entered his head that the words were applied to the Princess herself.

Rosette's portrait was carried uncovered at the top of a long pole, and the King walked after it in solemn state, with all his nobles and his peacocks, followed by ambassadors from various kingdoms. The King of the Peacocks was very impatient to see his dear Rosette; but when he did see her he very nearly died on the spot. He flew into a violent rage, he tore his clothes, he would not go near her, he felt quite afraid of her. "What!" he cried, "have those two villains I have in prison had the boldness and impudence to make a laughing-stock of me, and to propose my marrying such a fright as that? They shall both be killed; and let that insolent woman, and the nurse, and the man who is with them, be immediately carried to the dungeon of my great tower and there kept."

While this was going on, the King and his brother, who knew that their sister was expected, had put on their bravest apparel ready to receive her; but instead of seeing their prison

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door open and being set at liberty, as they had hoped, the gaoler came with a body of soldiers and made them go down into a dark cellar, full of horrible reptiles, and where the water was up to their necks; no one was ever more surprised or distressed than they were. "Alas!" they said to one another, "this is indeed a melancholy marriage feast for us! What can have happened that we should be so ill-treated?" Three days passed, and no news reached them of any kind. At the end of that time, the King of the Peacocks came, and began calling out insulting things to them through a hole in the wall. "You called yourselves King and Prince, that I might fall into your trap and engage myself to marry your sister; but you are nothing better than two beggars, who are not worth the water you drink. I am going to bring you before the judges, who will soon pass their verdict upon you; the rope to hang you with is already being made." "King of the Peacocks," replied the King, angrily, "do not act too rashly in this matter, or you may repent it. I am a king as well as you, and I have a fine kingdom, and rich clothing, and crowns, to say nothing of good gold pieces. You must be joking to talk like this of hanging us; have we stolen anything from you?"

When the King heard him speak so boldly, he did not know what to think, and he felt half inclined to let them and their sister go without putting them to death; but his chief adviser, who was an arrant flatterer, dissuaded him from this, telling him that if he did not revenge the insult that had been put upon him, all the world would make fun of him, and look upon him as nothing better than a miserable little

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king worth a few coppers a day. The King thereupon swore that he would never forgive them, and ordered them to be brought to trial at once. This did not take long; the judges had only to look at the real Rosette's portrait and then at the Princess who had arrived, and, without hesitation, they ordered the prisoners' heads to be cut off as a punishment for having lied to the King, since they had promised him a beautiful Princess and had only given him an ugly peasant girl. They repaired with great ceremony to the prison to read this sentence to them. But the prisoners declared that they had not lied, that their sister was a Princess, and more beautiful than the day; that there must be something under this which they did not understand, and they asked for a respite of seven days, as before that time had expired their innocence might have been established. The King of the Peacocks, who had worked himself up to a high pitch of anger, could with great difficulty be induced to accord them this grace, but at last he consented.

While these things were going on at the Court, we must say something about poor Rosette. Both she and Fretillon were very much astonished, when daylight came, to find themselves in the middle of the sea, without a boat, and far from all help. She began to cry, and cried so piteously that even the fishes had compassion on her; she did not know what to do, nor what would become of her. "There is no doubt," she said, "that the King of the Peacocks ordered me to be thrown into the sea, having repented his promise of marrying me, and to get rid of me quietly he has had me drowned. What a strange man!" she continued, "for I should

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have loved him so much! We should have been so happy together,” and with that she burst out crying afresh, for she could not help still loving him. She remained floating about on the sea for two days, wet to the skin, and almost dead with cold. She was so benumbed by it that if it had not been for little Fretillon, who lay beside her and kept a little warmth in her, she could not have survived. She was famished with hunger, and seeing the oysters in their shells, she took as many of these as she wanted and ate them. Fretillon did the same, to keep himself alive, although he did not like such food. Rosette became still more alarmed when the night set in. “Fretillon,” she said, “keep on barking to frighten away the soles, for fear they should eat us.” So Fretillon barked all night, and when the morning came the Princess was floating near the shore. Close to the sea at this spot there lived a good old man. He was poor and did not care for the things of the world, and no one ever visited him in his little hut. He was very much surprised when he heard Fretillon barking, for no dogs ever came in that direction. He thought some travellers must have lost their way, and went out with the kind intention of putting them on the right road again. All at once he caught sight of the Princess and Fretillon floating on the sea, and the Princess, seeing him, stretched out her arms to him, crying out, “Good man, save me, or I shall perish; I have been in the water like this for two days.” When he heard her speak so sorrowfully, he had great pity on her, and went back into his hut to fetch a long hook. He waded into the water up to his neck, and once or twice narrowly escaped drowning. At last, however, he

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succeeded in dragging the bed on to the shore. Rosette and Fretillon were overjoyed to find themselves again on dry ground; and were full of gratitude to the kind old man. Rosette wrapped herself in her coverlet and walked barefooted into the hut, where the old man lit a little fire of dry straw, and took one of his dead wife's best dresses out of a trunk, with some stockings and shoes, and gave them to the Princess. Dressed in her peasant's attire, she looked as beautiful as the day, and Fretillon capered round her and made her laugh. The old man guessed that Rosette was some great lady, for her bed was embroidered with gold and silver and her mattress was of satin. He begged her to tell him her story, promising not to repeat what she told him if she so wished. So she related to him all that had befallen her, crying bitterly the while, for she still thought that it was the King of the Peacocks who had ordered her to be drowned.

"What shall we do, my daughter?" said the old man. "You are a Princess and accustomed to the best of everything, and I have but poor fare to offer, black bread and radishes; but if you will let me, I will go and tell the King of the Peacocks that you are here; if he had once seen you, he would assuredly marry you." "Alas! he is a wicked man," said Rosette; "he would only put me to death; but if you can lend me a little basket, I will tie it round Fretillon's neck, and he will have very bad luck if he does not manage to bring back some food."

The old man gave her a basket, which she fastened to Fretillon's neck, and then said, "Go to the best kitchen in the town, and bring me back what you find in the saucepan."

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Fretillon ran off to the town, and as there was no better kitchen than that of the King, he went in, uncovered the saucepan, and cleverly carried off all that was in it; then he returned to the hut. Rosette said to him, "Go back and take whatever you can find of the best in the larder." Fretillon went back to the King's larder, and took white bread, wine, and all sorts of fruits and sweetmeats. He was so laden that he could only just manage to carry the things home.

When the King of the Peacocks' dinner hour arrived, there was nothing for him either in the saucepan or in the larder. His attendants looked askance at one another, and the King was in a terrible rage. "It seems, then, that I am to have no dinner; but see that the spit is put before the fire, and let me have some good roast meat this evening." The evening came, and the Princess said to Fretillon, "Go to the best kitchen in the town and bring me a joint of good roast meat." Fretillon obeyed, and knowing no better kitchen than that of the King, he went softly in, while the cooks' backs were turned, took the meat, which was of the best kind, from the spit, and carried it back in his basket to the Princess. She sent him back without delay to the larder, and he carried off all the preserves and sweetmeats that had been prepared for the King.

The King, having had no dinner, was very hungry, and ordered supper to be served early, but no supper was forthcoming; enraged beyond words, he was forced to go supperless to bed.

The same thing happened the following day, both as to dinner and supper; so that the King, for three days, was

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without meat or drink, for every time he sat down to table, it was found that the meal that had been prepared had been stolen. His chief adviser, fearing for the life of the King, hid himself in the corner of the kitchen to watch. He kept his eyes on the saucepan, that was boiling over the fire, and what was his surprise to see enter a little green dog, that uncovered the pot and put the meat in its basket. He followed it to see where it would go; he saw it leave the town, and still following, came to the old man's hut. Then he went and told the King that it was to a poor peasant's home that the food was carried morning and evening. The King was greatly astonished, and ordered more inquiries to be made. His chief adviser, anxious for favor, decided to go himself, taking with him a body of archers. They found the old man and Rosette at dinner, eating the meat that had been stolen from the King's kitchen, and they seized them, and bound them with cords, taking Fretillon prisoner at the same time.

They brought word to the King that the thieves had been captured, and he replied, "Tomorrow the last day of reprieve for my two insolent prisoners will expire; they and these shall die together." He then went into his court of justice. The old man threw himself on his knees before him, and begged to be allowed to tell him everything. As he was speaking, the King looked towards the beautiful Princess, and his heart was touched when he saw her crying. When, therefore, the old man said that she was the Princess Rosette who had been thrown into the water, he gave three bounds of joy, ran and embraced her, and untied her cords, declaring the while that he loved her with all his heart.

PRINCESS ROSETTE

They at once went to find the Princes, who thought they were going to be put to death, and came forward in great dejection and hanging their heads; the nurse and her daughter being brought in at the same time. The brothers and sister recognized one another as soon as they were brought face to face, and Rosette threw herself on her brothers' necks. The nurse and her daughter, and the boatman, begged on their knees for mercy, and the universal rejoicing and their own joy were so great that the King and the Princess pardoned them, and gave the good old man a handsome reward, and from that time he continued to live in the palace.

Finally, the King of the Peacocks did all in his power to atone for his conduct to the King and his brother, expressing the deepest regret at having treated them so badly. The nurse restored to Rosette all her beautiful clothes and the bushel of golden crowns; and the wedding festivities lasted a fortnight. Every one was happy, down to Fretillon, who ate nothing but partridge wings for the rest of his life.

THE FAIR WITH GOLDEN HAIR

ONCE upon a time there was a king's daughter who was so handsome there was nothing in the world to be compared with her for beauty, and she was called the Fair with Golden Hair, because her locks were like the finest gold, marvellously bright, and falling all in ringlets to her feet. She always appeared with her hair flowing in curls about her, crowned with flowers, and her dresses embroidered with diamonds and pearls. However it might be, it was impossible to see her without loving her. There was a young king amongst her neighbors, who was unmarried, very handsome, and very rich. When he heard all that was said about the Fair with Golden Hair, although he had never seen her, he fell so deeply in love with her that he could neither eat nor drink, and therefore resolved to send an ambassador to ask her hand in marriage. He had a magnificent coach made for this ambassador, gave him upwards of a hundred horses and as many servants, and charged him particularly not to return without the princess. From the moment that the envoy had taken leave of the king, the whole court talked of nothing else; and the king, who never doubted that the Fair with Golden Hair would consent to his proposal, ordered immediately fine dresses and splendid furniture to be prepared for her. While the workmen were hard at work, the ambassador arrived at the fair one's court and delivered his little message; but whether she was that day out of temper, or that

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the compliment was not agreeable to her, she answered the ambassador, that she thanked the king, but had no inclination to marry. The ambassador quitted the court of the princess very low-spirited at not being able to bring her with him. He carried back all the presents he had been the bearer of from the king, for the princess was very prudent, and was perfectly aware that young ladies should never receive gifts from bachelors; so she declined accepting the beautiful diamonds and the other valuable articles, and only retained, in order not to affront the king, a quarter of a pound of English pins.

When the ambassador reached the capital city of the king, where he was so impatiently awaited, everybody was afflicted that he did not bring back with him the Fair with Golden Hair, and the king began to cry like a child. They endeavored to console him, but without the least success.

There was a youth at court who was as beautiful as the sun, and had the finest figure in the kingdom. On account of his graceful manners and his intelligence he was called Avenant. Everybody loved him, except the envious, who were vexed that the king conferred favors upon him, and daily confided to him his affairs.

Avenant was in company with some persons who were talking of the return of the ambassador, and saying he had done no good. "If the king had sent me to the Fair with Golden Hair," said he to them carelessly, "I am certain she would have returned with me." These mischief-makers went immediately to the king, and said, "Sire, you know not what Avenant asserts — that if you had sent him to the Fair with Golden Hair he would have brought her back with him.

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Observe his malice! He pretends that he is handsomer than you, and that she would have been so fond of him that she would have followed him anywhere."

At this the king flew into a rage — a rage so terrible, that he was quite beside himself. "Ha, ha!" he cried, "this petty minion laughs at my misfortune, and values himself above me! Go! Fling him into the great tower, and let him starve to death!"

The royal guards hastened in search of Avenant, who had quite forgotten what he had said. They dragged him to prison, inflicting a thousand injuries upon him. The poor youth had only a little straw to lie upon, and would soon have perished but for a tiny spring that trickled through the foundations of the tower, and of which he drank a few drops to refresh himself, his mouth being parched with thirst. One day, when he was quite exhausted, he exclaimed, with a heavy sigh: "What does the king complain of? He has not a subject more loyal than I am; I have never done anything to offend him!" The king by chance passed close by the tower, and hearing the voice of one he had loved so dearly, he stopped to listen, notwithstanding those who were with him, who hated Avenant, and said to the king, "What interests you, sire? Do you not know he is a rogue?" The king replied: "Leave me alone; I would hear what he has to say." Having listened to his complaints, the tears stood in his eyes: he opened the door of the tower and called to the prisoner. Avenant came, and knelt before him in deep sorrow, and kissed his feet. "What have I done, sire, that I am thus severely treated?" "Thou hast made game of me, and of my ambassa-

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dor," answered the king. "Thou hast boasted that if I had sent thee to the Fair with Golden Hair thou wouldst certainly have brought her back with thee."

"It is true, sire," rejoined Avenant, "that I should have so impressed her with the sense of your majesty's high qualities that I feel persuaded she could not have refused you; and in saying that, sire, I uttered nothing that could be disagreeable to you." The king saw clearly that Avenant was innocent. He cast an angry look upon the traducers of his favourite, and brought him away with him, sincerely repenting the wrong he had done to him. After giving him an excellent supper he called him into his cabinet and said to him: "Avenant, I still love the Fair with Golden Hair; her refusal has not discouraged me: but I know not what course to take to induce her to marry me. I am tempted to send thee to her to see if thou couldst succeed." Avenant replied that he was ready to obey him in everything, and that he would set out the next day. "Hold," said the king; "I would give thee a splendid equipage." "It is unnecessary," answered Avenant; "I need only a good horse, and letters of credence from your majesty." The king embraced him, for he was delighted to find him prepared to start so quickly.

It was on a Monday morning that he took leave of the king and of his friends to proceed on his embassy, quite alone and without pomp or noise. His mind was occupied solely with schemes to induce the Fair with Golden Hair to marry the king. He had a writing-case in his pocket, and when a happy idea occurred to him for his introductory address, he alighted from his steed and seated himself under the trees to

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commit it to paper, so that he might not forget anything. One morning that he had set out at the first peep of day, in passing through a large meadow, a charming idea came into his head: he dismounted, and seated himself beside some willows and poplars which were planted along the bank of a little river that ran by the edge of the meadow. After he had made his note, he looked about him, delighted to find himself in so beautiful a spot. He perceived on the grass a large gilded carp gasping and nearly exhausted, for in trying to catch some little flies it had leaped so far out of the water that it had fallen on the grass, and was all but dead. Avenant took pity upon it, and, although it was a fast-day, and he might have carried it off for his dinner, he picked it up and put it gently back into the river. As soon as my friend the carp felt the freshness of the water, she began to recover herself, and glided down to the very bottom, then rising again joyously to the bank of the stream. "Avenant," said she, "I thank you for the kindness you have done me; but for you I should have died. You have saved me; I will do as much for you." After this little compliment she darted down again into the water, leaving Avenant much surprised at her intelligence and great civility.

Another day, as he continued his journey, he saw a crow in great distress. The poor bird was pursued by a large eagle (a great devourer of crows), which had nearly caught it, and would have swallowed it like a lentil if Avenant had not felt compassion for its misfortune. "Thus," he cried, "do the strong oppress the weak. What right has the eagle to eat the crow?" He seized his bow and arrow, which he always

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carried with him, and taking a good aim at the eagle, whizz! he sent the shaft right through its body; it fell dead, and the crow, enraptured, came and perched on a tree. "Avenant," it cried to him, "it was very generous of you thus to succor me, I who am only a poor crow; but I will not be ungrateful, I will do as much for you."

Avenant admired the good sense of the crow, and resumed his journey. Entering a great wood so early in the morning that there was scarcely light enough for him to see his road, he heard an owl screeching like an owl in despair. "Hey-day!" said he, "here's an owl in great affliction. It has been caught, perhaps, in some net." He searched on all sides, and at last discovered some large nets, which had been spread by fowlers during the night to catch small birds. "What a pity," said he, "that men are only made to torment each other, or to persecute poor animals which do them no wrong or mischief." He drew his knife and cut the cords. The owl took flight: but returning swiftly on the wing, "Avenant," it cried, "it is needless for me to make a long speech to enable you to comprehend the obligation I am under to you: it speaks plainly enough for itself. The hunters would soon have been here. I had been taken, I had been dead, but for your assistance. I have a grateful heart; I will do as much for you."

These were the three most important adventures which befell Avenant on his journey. He was so eager to reach the end of it that he lost no time in repairing to the palace of the Fair with Golden Hair. Everything about it was admirable. There were diamonds to be seen in heaps, as though they

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were pebbles. Fine clothes, sweetmeats, money — the most wonderful sight that ever was seen; and Avenant thought in his heart, if he could persuade the princess to leave all this to go to the king his master, he should be very lucky indeed. He dressed himself in a suit of brocade, with a plume of carnation and white feathers; combed and powdered himself, washed his face, put a richly embroidered scarf round his neck, with a little basket, and in it a beautiful little dog which he had bought as he came through Bologna. Avenant was so handsome, so amiable, and did everything with so much grace, that when he presented himself at the palace gate, the guards saluted him most respectfully, and they ran to inform the Fair with Golden Hair that Avenant, ambassador from the king, her nearest neighbor, requested to be presented to her.

At the name of Avenant, the princess said, "That betokens something agreeable to me. I would wager he is a pretty fellow, and pleases everybody." "Yes, in sooth, madam," exclaimed all her maids of honor; "we saw him from the loft in which we were dressing your flax, and as long as he remained under the windows we could do no work." "Very pretty," replied the Fair with Golden Hair; "amusing yourselves with looking at young men! Here, give me my grand gown of blue embroidered satin, and arrange my fair hair very tastefully; get me some garlands of fresh flowers, my high-heeled shoes, and my fan. Let them sweep my presence chamber, and dust my throne; for I would have him declare everywhere that I am truly the Fair with Golden Hair."

All her women hastened to attire her like a queen. They

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were in such a hurry that they ran against each other, and made scarcely any progress. At length, however, the princess passed into the great gallery of mirrors, to see if anything was wanting, and then ascended her throne of gold, ivory, and ebony, which emitted a perfume like balsam, and commanded her maids of honor to take their instruments, and sing very softly so as not to confuse any one.

Avenant was ushered into the hall of audience. He was so struck with admiration, that he has since declared frequently that he could scarcely speak; nevertheless, he took courage, and delivered his oration to perfection. He beseeched the princess that he might not have the mortification of returning without her. "Gentle Avenant," she replied, "the arguments you have adduced are all of them exceedingly good, and I assure you I should be very happy to favor you more than another, but you must know that about a month ago I was walking by the river side, with all my ladies in waiting, and in pulling off my glove in order to take some refreshment that was served me, I drew from my finger a ring, which unfortunately fell into the stream. I valued it more than my kingdom. I leave you to imagine the grief its loss occasioned me. I have made a vow never to listen to any offers of marriage, if the ambassador, who proposes the husband, does not restore to me my ring. You now see, therefore, what you have to do in this matter, for though you should talk to me for a fortnight, night and day, you would never persuade me to change my mind."

Avenant was much surprised at this answer: he made the princess a low bow, and begged her to accept the little dog,

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the basket, and the scarf; but she replied that she would receive no presents, and bade him go and reflect on what she had said to him. When he returned to his lodgings, he went to bed without eating any supper, and his little dog, whose name was Cabriolle, would take none himself, and went and lay down beside his master. All night long Avenant never ceased sighing. "Where can I hope to find a ring that fell a month ago into a great river?" said he; "it would be folly to attempt looking for it. The princess only named this condition to me because she knew it was impossible for me to fulfil it." And then he sighed again, and was very sorrowful. Cabriolle, who heard him, said, "My dear master, I entreat you not to despair of your good fortune; you are too amiable not to be happy. Let us go to the river side as soon as it is daylight." Avenant gave him two little pats, without saying a word, and, worn out with grieving, fell asleep.

Cabriolle, as soon as he saw daybreak, frisked about so that he waked Avenant, and said to him, "Dress yourself, master, and let us go out." Avenant was quite willing; he arose, dressed, and descended into the garden, and from the garden strayed mechanically towards the river, on the banks of which he strolled with his hat pulled over his eyes, and his arms folded, thinking only of taking his departure, when suddenly he heard himself called by his name, "Avenant! Avenant!" He looked all around him, and could see nobody: he thought he was dreaming. He resumed his walk, when again the voice called, "Avenant! Avenant!" "Who calls me?" he asked. Cabriolle, who was very little and was looking close down into the water, replied, "Never trust me if

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it be not a golden carp that I see here.” Immediately the carp appeared on the surface, and said to Avenant, “You saved my life in the nettle-tree meadow, where I must have perished but for your assistance. I promised to do as much for you. Here, dear Avenant, is the ring of the Fair with Golden Hair.” Avenant stooped and took the ring out of his friend the carp’s mouth, whom he thanked a thousand times. Instead of returning to his lodgings he went directly to the palace, followed by little Cabriolle, who was very glad he had induced his master to take a walk by the river side. The princess was informed that Avenant requested to see her. “Alas! poor youth,” said she, “he is come to take leave of me. He is convinced that I required an impossibility, and he is about to return with these tidings to his master.” Avenant was introduced, and presented her with the ring, saying, “Madam, I have obeyed your commands. Will it please you to accept the king my master for your husband?” When she saw her ring quite perfect she was so astonished that she thought she was dreaming. “Really,” said she, “courteous Avenant, you must be favored by a fairy, for by natural means this is impossible.” “Madam,” he answered, “I am not acquainted with any fairy, but I was very anxious to obey you.” “As you are so obliging,” continued she, “you must do me another service, without which I never will be married. There is a prince not far from here, named Galifron, who has taken it into his head he will make me his wife. He declared to me his determination, accompanying it by the most terrible threats, that if I refused him he would lay waste my kingdom; but judge if I could

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accept him. He is a giant taller than a high tower; he eats a man as a monkey eats a chestnut; when he goes into the country he carries in his pockets small cannons which he uses for pistols, and when he speaks very loud those who are near him become deaf. I sent word to him that I did not wish to marry, and that he must excuse me, but he never ceased to persecute me. He kills all my subjects, and before anything can be done you must fight him and bring me his head."

Avenant was a little astounded at this proposition; he mused for a few minutes upon it, and then answered, "Well, madam, I will fight Galifron; I believe I shall be conquered, but I will die as becomes a brave man." The princess was much surprised at his determination; she said a thousand things to prevent his undertaking the adventure. It was of no use. He withdrew to seek for weapons and everything else he might require. When he had made his preparations, he replaced little Cabriolle in his basket, mounted a fine horse, and rode into the dominions of Galifron. He inquired about him of all he met, and every one told him he was a very demon whom nobody dared approach. The more he heard of him the more his alarm increased. Cabriolle encouraged him, and said, "My dear master, while you fight him I will bite his legs; he will stoop to rid himself of me, and then you can kill him easily." Avenant admired the wit of the little dog, but he knew well enough that his help could be of little avail. At length he arrived in the neighborhood of Galifron's castle. All the roads to it were strewed with the bones and bodies of men whom he had eaten or torn to pieces. He did not wait long before he saw the monster coming

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through a wood; his head was visible above the highest trees, and he sang in a terrible voice:

“Bring me babies, fat or lean,
That I may crunch my teeth between!
I could eat so many! so many! so many!
That in the wide world there would not be left any!”

Upon which Avenant immediately sang to the same tune:

“Here is Avenant to be seen,
Who comes to draw your teeth so keen;
He’s not the greatest man to view,
But he’s big enough to conquer you.”

The rhymes were not adapted to the music, but he made them in a great hurry; and it is really a miracle they were not much worse, for he was in a desperate fright. When Galifron heard these words, he looked about him in every direction, and caught sight of Avenant who, sword in hand, uttered several taunts to provoke him. They were needless however. He was in a dreadful rage, and snatching up an iron mace, he would have crushed the gentle Avenant at one blow, had not a crow lighted at that instant on his head, and with its beak most adroitly picked out both his eyes. The blood ran down his face, and he laid about him on all sides like a madman. Avenant avoided his blows, and gave him such thrusts with his sword, running it up to the hilt in his body, that at last he fell bleeding from a thousand wounds. Avenant quickly cut off his head, quite transported with joy at his good fortune; and the crow, who had perched itself on the nearest tree, said to him, “I have not forgotten the service you rendered me in killing the eagle which pursued me. I promised

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you I would return the obligation. I trust I have done so today." "I owe all to you, Monsieur Crow," replied Avenant, "and remain your obliged servant"; and forthwith mounted his horse, laden with the horrible head of Galifron. When he reached the city, all the people followed him, crying, "Behold the brave Avenant, who has slain the monster!" So that the princess, who heard a great uproar, and who trembled lest they should come and announce to her the death of Avenant, dared not inquire what had happened. But the next moment she saw Avenant enter bearing the giant's head, which still impressed her with terror, although there was no longer any occasion for alarm. "Madam," said Avenant to the princess, "your enemy is dead: I trust you will no longer refuse the king my master." "Ah! pardon me," said the Fair with Golden Hair; "but, indeed, I must refuse him, unless you can find means, before my departure, to bring me some water from the Gloomy Grotto. Hard by there is a deep cavern, full six leagues in extent. At the mouth of it are two dragons, who prevent any one from entering: flames issue from their jaws and eyes. Inside the cavern is a deep pit, into which you must descend: it is full of toads, adders, and serpents. At the bottom of this pit there is a small cavity, through which flows the fountain of Health and Beauty. Some of that water I must absolutely obtain. Whatever is washed with it becomes something marvellous. If persons are handsome, they remain so for ever; if ugly, they become beautiful; if young, they remain always young; if old, they become young again. You may well imagine, Avenant, that I would not quit my kingdom without some of this wonderful water." "Madam,"

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he replied, "you are so beautiful already, that this water will be quite useless to you; but I am an unfortunate ambassador, whose death you desire. I go in search of that which you covet, with the certainty that I shall never return." The Fair with Golden Hair was immovable, and Avenant set out with the little dog Cabriolle to seek in the Gloomy Grotto the water of beauty. Everybody who met him on the road exclaimed, "'Tis a pity to see so amiable a youth wantonly court destruction. He goes alone to the grotto, when even if he had a hundred men to back him he could not accomplish his object. Why will the princess only demand impossibilities?" Avenant passed on without saying a word, but he was in very low spirits.

Having nearly got to the top of a mountain, he sat down to rest a little, allowing his horse to graze and Cabriolle to run after the flies. He knew that the Gloomy Grotto was not far from that spot, and looked about to see if he could discover it. He perceived a horrible rock, as black as ink, out of which issued a thick smoke; and the next minute one of the dragons, casting out fire from his mouth and eyes. It had a green and yellow body, great claws, and a long tail, coiled round in more than a hundred folds. Cabriolle saw all this, and was so frightened he did not know where to hide himself. Avenant, perfectly prepared to die, drew his sword, and descended towards the cavern, with a phial which the Fair with Golden Hair had given him to fill with the water of beauty. He said to his little dog Cabriolle, "It is all over with me; I shall never be able to obtain the water which is guarded by those dragons. When I am dead, fill the phial

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with my blood, and carry it to the princess, that she may see what she has cost me. Then go to the king my master, and tell him my sad story." As he uttered these words, he heard a voice calling, "Avenant! Avenant!" "Who calls me?" he asked; and he saw an owl in the hollow of an old tree, who said to him: "You let me out of the fowler's net in which I was caught, and saved my life. I promised I would do you as good a turn, and now is the time. Give me your phial. I am familiar with all the windings in the Gloomy Grotto. I will fetch you some of the water of beauty." Oh, I leave you to imagine who was delighted! Avenant quickly handed the phial to the owl, and saw it enter the grotto without the least difficulty. In less than a quarter of an hour the bird returned with the phial full of water, and tightly stoppered. Avenant was in ecstasies! He thanked the owl heartily, and, re-ascending the mountain, joyfully took his way back to the city.

He went straight to the palace and presented the phial to the Fair with Golden Hair, who had no longer an excuse to make. She thanked Avenant, gave orders for everything to be got ready for her departure, and finally set out with him on their journey. She found him an exceedingly agreeable companion, and said to him more than once, "If you had wished it, I would have made you king, and there would have been no occasion for us to quit my dominions." But his answer was always, "I would not be guilty of such treachery to my master for all the kingdoms on the face of the earth, although you are to me more beautiful than the sun!"

At length they arrived at the king's capital city, and his

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majesty, hearing the Fair with Golden Hair was approaching, went to meet her, and made her the most superb presents in the world! The marriage was celebrated with such great rejoicings, that folks could talk of nothing else. But the Fair with Golden Hair, who secretly loved Avenant, was never happy when he was out of her sight, and was always praising him. "But for Avenant," she would say to the king, "I should never have been here. For my sake he has done impossibilities. You should feel deeply indebted to him. He obtained for me the water of beauty. I shall never grow old, and I shall always remain handsome." The envious courtiers who heard the queen express herself thus, said to the king, "You are not jealous, and yet you have good cause to be so. The queen is so deeply in love with Avenant that she can neither eat nor drink. She can talk of nothing but him, and of the obligations you are under to him. As if any one else it had pleased you to send to her would not have done as much!" "That's quite true," said the king, "now I think of it. Let him be put in the tower, with irons on his hands and feet." Avenant was accordingly seized, and in return for his faithful service to the king, fettered hand and foot in a dungeon. He was allowed to see no one but the gaoler, who threw him a morsel of black bread through a hole, and gave him some water in an earthen pan. His little dog Cabriolle, however, did not desert him; but came daily to console him and tell him all the news. When the Fair with Golden Hair heard of Avenant's disgrace, she flung herself at the king's feet, and, bathed in tears, implored him to release Avenant from prison. But the more she entreated, the more angry

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the king became, for he thought to himself, "It is because she loves him"; so he refused to stir in the matter. The queen ceased to urge him, and fell into a deep melancholy.

The king took it into his head that perhaps she did not think him handsome enough. He longed to wash his face with the water of beauty, in hopes that the queen would then feel more affection for him. The phial full of this water stood on the chimney-piece in the queen's chamber: she had placed it there for the pleasure of looking at it more frequently; but one of her chamber maids, trying to kill a spider with a broom, unfortunately threw down the phial, which broke in the fall, and all the water was lost. She swept the fragments of glass away quickly, and, not knowing what to do, it suddenly occurred to her that she had seen in the king's cabinet a phial precisely similar, full of water, as clear as the water of beauty; so, without a word to any one, she adroitly managed to get possession of it, and placed it on the queen's chimney-piece.

The water which was in the king's cabinet was used for the execution of princes and great noblemen who were condemned to die for any crime. Instead of beheading or hanging them, their faces were rubbed with this water, which had the fatal property of throwing them into a deep sleep, from which they never awakened. So it happened one evening that the king took down the phial which he fancied contained the water of beauty, and rubbing the contents well over his face, he fell into a profound slumber and expired. The little dog, Cabriolle, was the first to hear the news of the king's death, and ran with it to Avenant, who begged him to go and find

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the Fair with Golden Hair, and remind her of the poor prisoner.

Cabriolle slipped quietly through the crowd, for there was great confusion at court, in consequence of the king's death, and said to the queen, "Madam, do not forget poor Avenant." She immediately recalled to her mind all that he had suffered on her account, and his extreme fidelity. She left the palace without speaking to any one, and went directly to the tower, where with her own hands she took the irons off the hands and feet of Avenant, and putting a crown of gold upon his head, and a royal mantle over his shoulders, she said, "Come, charming Avenant, I make you king, and take you for my husband." He threw himself at her feet in joy and gratitude. Everybody was delighted to have him for their master. His nuptials were the most splendid that ever were seen in the world, and the Fair with Golden Hair reigned long and happily with the handsome Avenant.

THE BLUE BIRD

ONCE upon a time there was a king who was exceedingly rich both in lands and money. His wife died, and he was inconsolable. He shut himself up for a week in a little room, where he beat his head against the walls in the extremity of his affliction. Fearing he would kill himself, they put some mattresses between the tapestry and the wall, so that knock himself about as much as he pleased he could not do himself any mischief. All his subjects agreed amongst themselves that they would go to him and exert their utmost eloquence to moderate his grief. Some prepared grave and serious orations; others, agreeable, and even lively addresses; but none made the least impression upon his mind, for he scarcely heard a word they said to him. At last a female presented herself before him, so muffled up in black crape, veils, mantles and other long mourning garments, and who wept and sobbed so much and so loudly, that he was perfectly astonished. She told him she would not attempt, as others had done, to mitigate his sorrow; she came to augment it, as nothing could be more just than to lament the loss of a good wife; that for her own part, having lost the best of husbands, she had made up her mind to weep as long as she had eyes in her head; and thereupon she redoubled her groans, and the king, following her example, began to howl outright. He received this visitor with more attention than the others. He talked to her of the excellent qualities of his

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dear departed, and she recapitulated all those of her beloved defunct. They talked so much of their sorrow, that at last they were puzzled to know what more to say about it. When the cunning widow saw the subject was nearly exhausted, she raised her veil a little and the afflicted king refreshed his sight with the contemplation of this poor mourner, who rolled about her large blue eyes fringed with long black lashes in the most effective manner. Her complexion was still blooming. The king examined her with a great deal of attention. By degrees he spoke less and less of his wife: at last he ceased to speak of her altogether. The widow declared that she should never leave off mourning for her husband. The king implored her not to make sorrow eternal. In fine, to the astonishment of everybody, he married her, and the sables were changed into green and rose color. It is often only requisite to ascertain the particular foibles of persons to enable you to creep into their confidence, and do just as you please with them.

The king had only had a daughter by his first wife, who was considered the eighth wonder of the world. She was named Florine because she was so sweet, young, and beautiful. She was seldom seen in splendid attire; she preferred light morning dresses of taffety, fastened with a few jewels, and quantities of the finest flowers, which produced an admirable effect when twined with her beautiful hair. She was only fifteen when the king was re-married.

The new queen sent for her own daughter, who had been brought up by her godmother, the Fairy Soussio, but she was not more graceful or beautiful in consequence. Soussio had labored hard to make something of her, but had labored in

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vain. She loved her dearly, though, notwithstanding. Her name was Truitonne, her face being covered with reddish spots like those on the back of a trout. Her black hair was so greasy and dirty that no one would venture to touch it, and oil oozed out of her yellow skin. The queen, her mother, doted on her; she talked of nothing but the charming Truitonne and as Florine possessed so many advantages over her daughter, it exasperated her, and she sought, by every possible means, to injure the poor princess in the eyes of her father. Not a day passed that the queen and Truitonne did not play Florine some mischievous trick. The princess, who was mild as she was sensible, only endeavored to keep herself out of the reach of their malice.

The king observed one day to the queen, that Florine and Truitonne were of an age to be married, and that they should bestow the hand of one of them on the first prince who visited their court. "I wish," said the queen, "that my daughter should be married first; she is older than yours, and as she is a thousand times more amiable there can be no hesitation about the matter." The king, who disliked argument, answered that he was quite willing it should be so, and that he left her to take any measures she pleased.

A short time after this, it was announced that a visit from King Charmant might be expected. Never was any prince more celebrated for gallantry and magnificence. In mind and person he was charming, as his name implied. When the queen heard this news, she employed all the embroiderers, all the tailors, all the work-people of every kind, to make dresses for Truitonne, and requested the king to give nothing

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new to Florine. She then bribed the waiting women to steal all the princess's clothes, head-dresses, and jewels, the very day King Charmant arrived, so that when Florine went to dress she could not find even a ribbon. She knew well enough who had done her this good turn. She sent to purchase materials for a new dress, but all the tradesmen returned for answer, that they had been forbidden by the queen to furnish her with anything. She was left, therefore, with only the gown she had on her back, and which was very much soiled, and she was so ashamed of her appearance that, when King Charmant arrived, she hid herself in a corner of the hall.

The queen received her royal visitor with great pomp, and presented her daughter to him, a complete blaze of magnificence, which only made her look more ugly than usual. King Charmant turned his eyes from her as soon as possible. The queen endeavored to persuade herself that he was too much struck with her, and was afraid of committing himself. In this belief, she continually placed Truitonne before him. He inquired if there was not another princess named Florine. "Yes," said Truitonne, pointing to her with her finger; "there she is, hiding herself, because she is not finely dressed." Florine blushed, and looked so beautiful, so exceedingly beautiful in her confusion, that King Charmant was perfectly dazzled. He rose immediately and bowed profoundly to the princess. "Madam," said he, "your incomparable beauty renders the foreign aid of ornament quite unnecessary." "Sir," replied she, "I own I am little accustomed to wear so disgraceful a dress as this, and I should have been better pleased to have escaped your notice." "It would have

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been impossible," exclaimed Charmant, "for a princess so marvellously beautiful to be anywhere without attracting all eyes from the contemplation of any other object." "Ah," said the queen, greatly irritated, "it is pretty pastime to hear you pay these compliments! Believe me, sir, Florine is already vain enough; she stands in no need of such excessive flattery." King Charmant quickly perceived the queen's motives for thus speaking, but as he was not at all accustomed to constrain his inclinations, he continued openly to manifest his admiration of Florine, and conversed with her for three whole hours.

The queen in despair, and Truitonne inconsolable that the princess should be thus preferred to her, complained bitterly to the king, and compelled him to consent that, during the residence of King Charmant, Florine should be shut up in a tower, where they could not see each other; and, accordingly, no sooner had she retired to her apartments than four men in masks seized and carried her to a room at the top of the tower, where they left her in the greatest distress, for she saw clearly that she was thus treated in order to prevent her securing the affections of her royal admirer, with whom already she was much delighted, and would willingly have accepted him for her husband.

As he was not in the least aware of the violence that had been used towards the princess, he awaited with the greatest impatience the hour when he hoped to meet her again. He talked of her to the gentlemen whom the king had placed about his person to do him honor, but, as they had been ordered by the queen, they said all the ill of her they could

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imagine: that she was coquettish, inconstant, ill-tempered; that she tormented her friends and her servants; that it was impossible for any one to be more slovenly; and that she was so avaricious, that she would much rather be dressed like a poor shepherdess than spend the money allowed her by the king her father in the purchase of rich apparel befitting her rank. During all these details Charmant was suffering tortures, and could scarcely restrain his anger. "No," he argued to himself: "it is impossible that Heaven would permit so worthless a soul to inhabit this masterpiece of nature! I admit she was badly dressed when I first saw her, but the shame she evinced proves that she was not accustomed to be so. What! Can she be ill-tempered and coquettish with such an enchanting air of mildness and modesty! It is not reconcilable with common sense! I can much more easily imagine that the queen has caused her to be so slandered. She is only her stepmother, and the Princess Truitonne, her own daughter, is such an ugly creature that it would not be extraordinary if she were envious of the most perfect of human beings."

Whilst he thus reasoned with himself the courtiers about him readily imagined, from his manner, that he was not best pleased by their abuse of Florine. One, who was more astute than the rest, in order to discover the real sentiments of the prince, changed his tone and language, and began to extol the princess wonderfully. At the first words, Charmant woke up as from a deep sleep. He entered eagerly into the conversation. His features all lighted up with joy. O love! love! how hard thou art to hide! thou art visible everywhere — on a lover's lips, in his eyes, in the tone of his voice; when we truly

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love, silence, conversation, happiness, or misery, are equally demonstrative of the passion which absorbs us.

The queen, impatient to learn if King Charmant was much smitten, sent for those whom she had placed in positions to acquire his confidence, and passed the rest of the night in their interrogation. Everything they reported only served to confirm the opinion she had formed that the king was in love with Florine. But how shall I describe to you the melancholy state of that poor princess? She lay stretched on the floor in the keep of that terrible tower to which the masked ruffians had carried her. "I should be less to be pitied," said she, "if I had been immured here before I had seen that amiable monarch. The recollection of him I cherish only serves to increase my distress. I cannot doubt but that it is to prevent my seeing him again that the queen has treated me thus cruelly. Alas, how fatal to my peace has been the little beauty it has pleased Heaven to bestow on me!" She then began to weep bitterly, so bitterly that her worst enemy would have pitied her if a witness of her affliction. Thus passed the night.

The queen, who was anxious to win over King Charmant by every attention it was in her power to pay him, sent him presents of the most costly and magnificent dresses, made in the newest fashion of that country, and the Order of the Knights of Cupid, which she had compelled the king her husband to institute the day they were married, in honor of their nuptials. The badge of it was a golden heart, enamelled flame-colored, surrounded by several arrows, and pierced with one, with the words, "One alone wounds me." The queen

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had, however, for Charmant a heart cut out of a ruby, as large as an ostrich's egg; each arrow was made of a single diamond about the length of a finger, and the chain to which the badge was appended was composed of pearls, the smallest of which weighed a full pound. In short, ever since the world has been a world, there was never anything like it. Charmant, at the sight of it, was so astonished that it was some time before he spoke a word. In the meanwhile they presented to him a book, the leaves of which were of the finest vellum, beautifully illuminated, and the binding covered with gold and jewels. In it the statutes of the Order of the Knights of Cupid were written in a gallant and tender style. They told him that the princess he had seen prayed him to be her knight, and had sent him this present. At these words he flattered himself that it came from her he loved. "How! does the lovely Princess Florine," cried he, "honor me by this splendid and flattering mark of her consideration?" "Sire," they replied, "you mistake the name; we come from the amiable Truitonne." "Truitonne! is it she who would have me be her champion?" said the king with a cold and serious air; "I regret that I cannot accept the honor; but a sovereign is not sufficiently his own master to enter into any engagements he pleases. I know the duties of a knight, and would fain fulfil them all. I would, therefore, prefer foregoing the favor she designs me, proving myself unworthy of it." At the same time he replaced in the same corbeille, the heart, the chain, and the book, and sent them all back to the queen, who, with her daughter, was ready to choke with rage at the contemptuous manner in which the illustrious foreigner had declined so especial a

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favor. King Charmant visited the king and queen as often as he was permitted the opportunity, in hopes of meeting Florine in the royal apartments. His eyes were everywhere in search of her. The moment he heard any one enter the room he turned sharply round towards the door, and seemed always restless and unhappy. The malicious queen easily guessed what was passing in his mind; but she appeared to take no notice of it. She talked to him only about parties of pleasure; and he returned her the most incongruous answers. At last he asked her plainly, "Where is the Princess Florine?" "Sir," replied the queen haughtily, "the king her father has forbidden her to quit her own apartments until my daughter is married." "And what motive," inquired King Charmant, "can there be for making such a prisoner of that beautiful princess?" "I know not," said the queen; "and if I did, I should not consider myself bound to inform you."

Charmant felt his anger rising fearfully; he cast an angry glance upon Truitonne, assuring himself in his own mind that that little monster was the cause of his being deprived of the pleasure of beholding Florine, and abruptly quitted the queen's presence, which gave him too much pain.

On his return to his own apartments he requested a young prince who had accompanied him, and to whom he was much attached, to gain over, at any cost, one of the princess's attendants, in order that he might speak to Florine for one moment. The prince soon found some of the ladies of the palace whom he could venture to admit into his confidence, and one of them promised him that Florine should that very evening be at a little lower window, which looked upon the

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garden, and from whence she could converse with Charmant provided he was exceedingly careful that no one should be aware of it; "for," added she, "the king and queen are so severe that they will take my life if they discover I have favored the passion of Charmant." The prince, delighted that he had so far succeeded in his mission, promised her anything she could desire, and ran to pay his court to his royal master, by announcing to him the hour of assignation; but the false confidant in the meantime went and told the queen what had occurred, and requested to know her commands. She immediately decided to place her daughter at the little window. She gave her particular instructions, and Truitonne attended to them all, notwithstanding her natural stupidity.

The night was so dark it was impossible for King Charmant to discover the imposition, even had he been less confident, so that when he drew near to the window indescribably transported with joy, he poured forth to Truitonne all the tender things he would have said to Florine, to convince her of his affection. Truitonne, profiting by the occasion, told him that she felt she was the most unfortunate person in the world, in having so cruel a stepmother; and that she should never cease to suffer all sorts of annoyances till the queen's daughter was married. Charmant assured her, that if she would accept him for her husband, he should be enchanted to share with her his heart and crown; and thereupon he drew his ring from his finger, and placing it on one of Truitonne's, he begged her to receive it as a token of eternal fidelity, and added that she had only to fix the hour for their flight. Truitonne made the

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best answers she could to his urgent persuasions. He noticed they were not very sensible, and the circumstance would have given him some uneasiness but that he thought it arose from the terror she was in of being surprised by the queen. He left her only on condition that she would meet him again the next night at the same hour, which she promised faithfully to do.

The queen, having heard of the happy success of this interview, felt satisfied she should obtain her ends completely. Accordingly, the day being fixed for the elopement, King Charmant prepared to carry off his beloved in a flying chariot, drawn by winged frogs, a present which had been made to him by a friend who was an enchanter. The night was excessively dark, Truitonne stole out mysteriously by a little door, and the king, who was waiting for her, received her in his arms with a hundred vows of everlasting affection. But as he was not anxious to be sailing about in his flying chariot for any long time before he married his beloved princess, he desired her to say where she would prefer their nuptials to be solemnised. She answered that she had a godmother, named Soussio, who was a very celebrated fairy, and she was of opinion they should go at once to her castle. Although the king was quite ignorant of the road, he had only to mention to his great frogs whither he wished to go. They were perfectly acquainted with the whole map of the world, and in a very short time they wafted Charmant and Truitonne to the abode of Soussio.

The castle was so brilliantly illuminated that the king would have discovered his mistake the moment he entered if

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the princess had not carefully enveloped herself in her veil. She inquired for her godmother, contrived to see her alone, told her how she had entrapped Charmant, and intreated her to pacify him. "Ah! my child," said the fairy; "the task will not be an easy one: he is too fond of Florine: I feel certain he will give us a great deal of trouble." In the meanwhile the king was awaiting them in a saloon, the walls of which were of diamonds so pure and transparent that through them he could see Soussio and Truitonne in conversation together. He thought he must be dreaming. "How," said he, "have I been betrayed? Have some demons brought hither this enemy of our peace? Comes she to disturb our nuptials? My dear Florine does not appear! Her father has perhaps pursued her!" He began to be the prey of a thousand distracting conjectures. But matters looked still worse, when entering the saloon, Soussio, addressing him in an authoritative tone, said, "King Charmant, here is the Princess Truitonne, to whom you have plighted your troth; she is my goddaughter, and I desire you will marry her immediately." "I!" exclaimed he; "I marry that little monster! You must think me a vastly tractable person to make such a proposition to me. I have made no promise to her whatever, and if she has told you otherwise, she has —" "Hold," interrupted Soussio, "and be not rash enough to fail in respect towards me!" "I agree," replied the king, "to respect you as much as a fairy can be respected, provided you restore to me my princess." "Am not I your princess, faithless one?" said Truitonne, showing him his ring. "To whom didst thou give this ring as a pledge of thy truth! With whom didst thou converse at the

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little window if not with me?" "How then!" he cried, "have I been deceived and imposed upon?" "But no, no, I will not be your dupe! What ho! What ho! my frogs! my frogs! I would away instantly!" "Oho, it is not in your power without my consent," exclaimed Soussio. She touched him, and his feet were fastened to the floor as if they had been nailed to it. "You may stone me to death, you may flay me alive," cried the king, "but I will marry no one but Florine. I am resolved. You may therefore exercise your power upon me as you please!" Soussio tried in turn mildness, menaces, promises, prayers. Tritonne wept, shrieked, groaned, stormed, and became calm again. The king uttered not another word, looking on them both with an air of the greatest indignation; he made not the slightest answer to anything they said to him.

Twenty days and twenty nights passed without their ceasing to talk; without eating, sleeping, or sitting down. At length Soussio, quite tired and out of patience, said to the king, "Well, since you are so obstinate that you will not listen to reason, choose at once whether you will marry my god-daughter, or do penance for seven years as a punishment for breaking your word." The king, who up to this time had been perfectly silent, suddenly exclaimed, "Do what you will with me, provided I am freed from this wretch." "You are a wretch yourself," said Tritonne, in a passion. "A petty king like you, with your marsh-bred postures, to come into my country to break your word to me and insult me! Had you a goat's worth of honor in you, could you behave in this manner?" "What affecting reproaches!" said the king in an ironical tone; "Behold what a mistake it is not to take so

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lovely a person for one's wife!" "No, no, she shall not be your wife," screamed Soussio passionately; "you may fly out of that window if you like, for you shall be a blue bird for the next seven years!" At the same moment the king's person undergoes a total change; his arms are covered with feathers and form wings; his legs and feet become black and diminutive, and furnished with crooked talons; his body shrinks — it is all garnished with long, fine, thin feathers of celestial blue; his eyes become rounder, and bright as two stars; his nose is but an ivory beak; a white crest rises on his head in the form of a crown; he sings and talks to perfection. In this state, uttering a cry of anguish at beholding himself so metamorphosed, he flies from the fatal palace of Soussio as fast as his wings can carry him.

Overwhelmed with grief, he roams from branch to branch, selecting only the trees consecrated to love or sorrow. Now upon myrtles, now upon cypresses, he sings the most plaintive airs, in which he deplores his sad fate and that of Florine. "Where have her enemies hidden her?" said he. "What has become of that beautiful victim? Has the queen's barbarity permitted her still to breathe? Where shall I seek her? Am I condemned to pass seven years without her? Perhaps during that period they will compel her to marry, and I shall lose for ever the hope on which alone I live." These various reflections afflicted the blue bird to such a degree that he would have welcomed death.

On the other hand, the fairy Soussio sent Truitonne back to the queen, who was anxiously waiting to know how the nuptials had gone off. When she saw her daughter, and heard

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from her lips all that had happened, she put herself in a terrible passion, which recoiled upon the poor Florine. "She shall repent more than once," said the queen, "her fascination of Charmant!" She ascended the tower, with Truitonne, whom she had dressed in her richest clothes, with a crown of diamonds on her head, a royal mantle, the train of which was borne by three daughters of the richest barons in the realm, and on her thumb King Charmant's ring, which Florine had noticed the day they conversed together. Florine was greatly surprised to see Truitonne in such pompous apparel. "My daughter has come to bring you a wedding present," said the queen. "King Charmant has espoused her; he loves her to distraction; never has there been such a happy couple." Thereupon they displayed to the princess heaps of gold and silver tissues, jewels, lace and ribbons, contained in large baskets of gold filigree work. In presenting these objects, Truitonne took care Florine should see King Charmant's brilliant ring, so that not being able to doubt her misfortune, she told them, with an air of desperation, to take from her sight such fatal gifts, that she would wear nothing but black, and, indeed, that she should soon be dead. So saying, she fainted, and the cruel queen, delighted to have succeeded so well, would not permit any one to assist her, but left her alone in the most wretched state imaginable, and went and maliciously reported to the king that his daughter was so madly in love, that nothing could equal the extravagances she committed, and that great care should be taken to prevent her quitting the tower. The king told her to manage the matter exactly as she pleased, and that he should be perfectly satisfied.

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When the princess recovered from her swoon, and began to reflect on the conduct they had pursued towards her, on the ill-treatment of her wicked stepmother, and the utter extinction of her hope one day to become the wife of King Charmant, her anguish became so keen that she wept the whole night long. In this wretched condition she sat at an open window uttering the most tender and touching lamentations. When day began to break she shut the window, but continued to weep. The following night she again opened the window, sobbing and sighing profoundly, and shedding a torrent of tears. Morning dawned, and she hid herself in the recesses of her chamber. In the meanwhile King Charmant, or, to speak more correctly, the beautiful blue bird, never ceased flying round the palace. He believed his dear princess was confined in it, and if her lamentations were distressing, his were no less so. He approached the windows as near as he could in order to look into the apartments; but the dread of being perceived and recognised by Tritonne prevented his doing exactly as he wished. "It would cost me my life," said he to himself. "Should these wicked princesses discover where I am they would be revenged upon me; I must keep aloof, or be exposed to the utmost peril." For these reasons he took the greatest precautions, and rarely sang except during the night. There happened to be an excessively lofty cypress immediately in front of the window at which Florine usually sat. The blue bird perched upon it, and had scarcely done so when he heard some one complaining. "How much longer shall I suffer?" said the mourner; "will not death kindly come to my aid? Those who fear him see him too

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soon — I long for his coming, and he cruelly flies me. Oh, barbarous queen! what have I done to thee that thou shouldst detain me in this horrible captivity? Hast thou not ways enough to torment me? Thou hast only to make me witness of the happiness thy unworthy daughter enjoys in the society of King Charmant!” The blue bird had not lost one syllable of this complaint. He was so surprised that he awaited daylight with the greatest impatience in order to behold the afflicted lady, but before the morning dawned she had closed her window and retired. The bird, whose curiosity was awakened, failed not to return the following night. It was moonlight, and he saw a girl at a window of the tower, who commenced her lamentations. “Oh, fortune!” she exclaimed; “thou who flatteredst me with the prospect of reigning; thou who hadst restored to me a father’s love; what have I done to deserve being plunged thus suddenly into the bitterest grief? Is it at so early an age as mine that mortals begin to experience thy inconstancy? Return, thou cruel one; return, if possible. The only favor I implore of thee is to end my unhappy fate!” The blue bird listened attentively, and the more he did so, the more convinced he became that it was his amiable princess who was thus bewailing. “Adorable Florine,” he cried, “wonder of our days, why do you desire so speedily to terminate your own? Your misfortunes are not without remedy!” “Ah! who speaks to me,” cried she, “in such consoling language?” “An unfortunate king,” replied the bird, “who loves you, and will never love any other than you.” “A king who loves me!” rejoined Florine; “is this a snare set for me by my enemy? But after all, what would she gain by

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it? If she seeks to discover my sentiments, I am ready to own them to her frankly!" "No, my princess," replied the bird; "the lover who addresses you is incapable of betraying you"—and as he uttered these words he flew to the window. Florine was at first much alarmed at the appearance of so extraordinary a bird, who spoke with as much sense as if he had been a man, and yet in the small sweet voice of a nightingale. The beauty of his plumage, however, and the words he uttered, soon reassured her. "Am I then permitted once more to behold you, my princess!" he exclaimed. "Can I taste of such perfect happiness and not die with joy! But, alas! how much is that happiness troubled by your captivity, and the condition to which the wicked Soussio has reduced me for seven years!" "And who are you, charming bird," inquired the princess caressing him. "You have pronounced my name," said the king, "and you pretend you do not know me?" "How! the greatest monarch in the world, King Charmant!" cried the princess; "can the little bird I hold in my hand be he?" "Alas, beautiful Florine, it is but too true!" replied the bird; "and if anything can console me, it is the feeling that I preferred this pain to that of renouncing my love for you." "For me!" said Florine; "ah, do not attempt to deceive me. I know, I know that you have married Truitonne. I recognised your ring upon her hand. I saw her blazing with the diamonds you had given to her. She came to insult me in my sad prison, wearing the rich crown and royal mantle she had received from your hands, while I was laden with chains and fetters." "You have seen Truitonne so arrayed?" interrupted the king. "She and her mother have

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dared to tell you those jewels came from me? Oh, Heaven! is it possible that I hear such awful falsehoods, and that I cannot instantly avenge myself on the utterers! Know that they tried to deceive me, that by a base use of your name they succeeded in causing me to carry off the ugly Tritonne; but the instant I discovered my error I endeavored to fly from her, and eventually preferred being a blue bird for seven long years to failing in the troth I had plighted to you.”

Florine felt such lively pleasure in listening to the explanation of her amiable lover, that she no longer remembered the misery of her prison. What did she not say to him to console him under his sad circumstances, and to assure him that she would do no less for him than he had done for her! Day dawned, and the majority of the officers of the royal household had risen before the blue bird and the princess had ceased conversing. It cost them a thousand pangs to part, after agreeing that they would meet every night in the same manner.

Their delight at having found each other was so great that there are no terms in which it can be expressed. Each, on their own part, offered up their thanks to love and fortune; but Florine's happiness was alloyed by her anxiety respecting the blue bird. “Who will preserve him from the sportsman?” she asked, “or from the sharp talons of some eagle or hungry vulture, who will eat him with as much relish as if he were not a great king? Oh, Heaven! what would become of me if some of his light and delicate feathers, borne on the breeze to my window, announced to me the dreaded disaster!” This idea prevented the poor princess closing her eyes, for when one loves, fancies appear like facts, and what one would at

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another time think impossible, seems certain to happen; so she passed the day in tears till the hour arrived for her to return to the window.

The charming bird, hidden in a hollow tree, had been all day occupied by the thought of his beautiful princess. "How happy I am," said he, "to have found her! How fascinating she is! How deeply I appreciate the favor she shows me!" The tender lover counted every moment of the time he was condemned to pass in the shape which prevented his marrying her, and never was the termination of a period desired more ardently. As he was anxious to pay Florine every attention in his power, he flew to the capital city of his own kingdom, alighted on his palace, entered his cabinet through a broken pane of glass in one of the windows, pounced on a pair of diamond earrings, so perfect and beautiful that none in the world could be compared to them, took them that evening to Florine, and begged her to wear them. "I would do so," she said, "if you visited me by daylight; but as I only see you at night, you must excuse me." The bird promised he would contrive to come to the tower whenever she wished; upon which she put the earrings in her ears, and the night passed in tender conversation, as the preceding had done.

The next day the blue bird returned to his kingdom, went to his palace, entered his cabinet by the broken window, and brought away the richest bracelets that had ever been seen. Each was made of a single emerald cut facet-wise, and hollowed in the middle so as to enable the wearer to pass her hands and arms through them. "Do you imagine," said the princess to him, "that my affection for you can be measured

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by presents? Ah, how you misjudge me!" "No, madam," replied he; "I do not believe that the trifles I offer you are necessary for the preservation of your love, but mine will not permit me to neglect the least opportunity of evincing my respect for you, and when I am absent these little trinkets will recall me to your mind." Florine said a thousand kind things to him on the subject, to which he replied by as many no less tender.

The following night the fond bird brought to his fair one a moderate sized watch, which was encased in a single pearl, the workmanship of which surpassed even the material. "It is useless to present me with a watch," said the princess sweetly. "When you are absent the hours seem endless to me, and when you are with me they pass like a dream, so that I cannot exactly measure them." "Alas, my princess," exclaimed the blue bird, "I am exactly of your mind, and am certain that I feel the pain of absence and the pleasure of return even more deeply than you do!" "After what you have suffered to keep faith with me," replied the princess, "I am bound to believe that your affection and respect cannot be carried further."

As soon as morning appeared, the bird flew back to his hollow tree, where he lived upon wild fruits. Sometimes he sang the finest airs, to the great delight of all who passed that way. They could see no one, so they fancied it must be the voice of a spirit. This opinion became so prevalent, that at last nobody dared enter the wood. A thousand fabulous adventures were related of those who had done so, and the general alarm insured the safety of the blue bird. Not a day passed

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without his making Florine some present, either a pearl necklace, or the most brilliant and curiously wrought rings, diamond loops, bodkins, and bouquets of jewels in imitation of natural flowers, entertaining books, interesting medals, till at last she possessed a heap of marvellous valuables. She wore her jewels only by night to please the king, and in the daytime, having no other place to put them in, she hid them carefully in the straw of her mattress.

Two years thus passed away without Florine once complaining of her captivity. How could she? She had the gratification of conversing all night with him she loved. Never were there made so many pretty speeches. Though the bird never saw any one, and passed the whole day in a hollow tree, they had a thousand new things to tell one another. The matter was inexhaustible. Their love and their wit furnished them with abundant subjects of conversation.

In the meanwhile the malicious queen, who detained her so cruelly in prison, vainly endeavored to marry off Truitonne. She sent ambassadors with proposals to all the princes she knew the names of; but they were bowed out almost as soon as they arrived. "If your mission was respecting the Princess Florine, you would be received with joy," was the answer; "but as for Truitonne, she may remain a vestal without any one objecting."

These tidings infuriated both mother and daughter against the innocent princess whom they persecuted. "How! does this arrogant creature continue to thwart us notwithstanding her captivity?" cried they. "Never can we forgive the injuries she has done us! She must have private correspondence with

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foreign governments; she is therefore guilty, at the least, of high treason. Let us act on this suspicion, and use every possible means to convict her.”

They sat so late in council together on this point that it was past midnight when they determined to ascend the tower to interrogate Florine. She was at the window with the blue bird, arrayed in all her jewels, and her beautiful hair dressed with a nicety not usual in afflicted persons. Her apartment and her bed were strewn with flowers, and some Spanish pastilles she had been burning diffused an exquisite perfume. The queen listened at the door. She fancied she heard an air sung by two persons (Florine had an almost heavenly voice), and the following words appeared to be given with great expression:

“Oh, how wretched is our lot,
And what pangs endure we not,
Loving thus — thus forced to sever!
But, though deep indeed our woes,
In despite of cruel foes,
Our fond hearts are join'd for ever.”

A few deep sighs were heard at the termination of this little concert.

“Ah, my Truitonne! we are betrayed,” exclaimed the queen, suddenly opening the door and rushing into the room. Fancy the alarm of Florine at this sight! She promptly pushed open the casement, in order to give the royal bird an opportunity to fly off unperceived. She was much more anxious about his preservation than her own; but he felt he had not the power to fly. His piercing eyes had discovered the

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peril to which the princess was exposed. He had caught sight of the queen and Truitonne. How great his misery to know he was not in a state to defend her! They approached her like furies bent on devouring her. "Your intrigues against the state are detected," cried the queen. "Do not imagine your rank can save you from the punishment you deserve." "Intrigues with whom, madam?" inquired the princess. "Have you not been my jailor these two years? Have I seen any other persons than those you have sent to me?" Whilst she spoke, the queen and her daughter examined her with unparalleled surprise. Her admirable beauty, and the extraordinary splendor of her attire, completely dazzled them. "And whence have you obtained, madam," said the queen, "these jewels that outshine the sun? Would you have us believe there are mines in this tower?" "I have found them," answered Florine; "that is all I know about it." The queen fixed her eyes upon Florine, with a penetrating look, endeavoring to see what was passing in the very core of her heart. "We are not your dupes," she cried; "you think you can deceive us: but, princess, we are aware of what you do from morning till night. These jewels have been given to you with the sole object of inducing you to sell your father's kingdom." "I am in a good position to deliver it up," replied Florine, with a disdainful smile; "an unfortunate princess, who has so long languished in captivity, can be of great service, certainly, in a conspiracy of such a nature." "And for whom, then," added the queen, "are your tresses so coquettishly dressed? Your apartment is so redolent of perfumes, and your attire so magnificent, that you could not be grander

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were you going to court." "I have plenty of time on my hands," said the princess; "it is not extraordinary I should strive to while away a few moments of it in the cares of my toilet. I pass so many in weeping over my misfortunes that the innocent occupation of the others cannot surely be a subject of reproach." "Ay, ay, indeed! let us see," said the queen, "if this innocent person is not in treaty with our enemies." She began to hunt everywhere, and coming to the mattress she emptied it, and found such an immense quantity of diamonds, pearls, rubies, emeralds and topazes, that she could not imagine where they all came from. She had intended to hide in some place documents, the discovery of which would inculcate the princess. So when she thought nobody saw her, she was about to thrust them into the chimney, but by good luck the blue bird was perched upon it, who had eyes as sharp as a lynx, and who heard everything. "Beware, Florine!" he cried; "thy enemy is committing some treason against thee." This voice so unexpected, frightened the queen so much that she dared not secrete the papers. "Madam," said the princess, "you see that the spirits of the air are my friends." "I believe," exclaimed the queen, in a paroxysm of rage, "that you are leagued with demons; but, in spite of them, your father will do himself justice." "Would to heaven," cried Florine, "I had only to fear the fury of my father! but yours, madam, is much more terrible."

The queen left her, greatly disturbed by all she had seen and heard. She consulted with her friends as to what should be done to the princess. They observed that, if she were protected by some fairy or enchanter, any further persecution

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of her would only irritate her powerful friend, and that it would be better first to endeavor to discover the mystery. The queen approved of this idea. She sent a young girl, who affected extreme simplicity, to sleep in Florine's apartment, under the pretence that she was placed there to wait upon her. But it was not likely Florine would fall into so evident a trap. The princess looked on her, of course, as a spy, and it was impossible for her to feel more poignant affliction. "What, then! shall I never be able to converse again with the bird that is so dear to me?" said she. "He assisted me to support my misfortunes. I consoled him under his. Our affection was everything to us! What will become of him? What will become of me?" Thinking of all these things, she shed rivers of tears. She no longer dared go to the little window, though she heard the bird fluttering around it. She was dying to open it; but she feared exposing the life of her dear lover. She passed a whole month without appearing at the casement. The blue bird was in despair. What complaints did he not utter! How could he live without seeing his princess! He had never so keenly felt the pangs of absence and the misery of his metamorphosis. Vainly did he endeavor to seek out a remedy for either. After racking his brains, he could find no consolation anywhere, or in anything.

The spy, who had watched day and night for a whole month, felt quite overpowered with drowsiness, and at last sunk into a sound slumber. Florine observed it. She opened her little window and said:

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

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We give her own words, without the slightest alteration. The bird heard them so distinctly that he was at the window in an instant. What delight once more to behold each other! What a quantity of things they had to say to each other! They renewed their vows of love and fidelity a thousand and a thousand times. The princess being unable to restrain her tears, her lover was much affected, and did his best to console her. At last the hour of parting arrived, without the spy awaking, and they bade each other farewell in the most touching manner.

The next day the spy again fell asleep. The princess lost no time in placing herself at the window, and calling as before:

“Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!”

The bird immediately arrived, and the night passed, like the preceding one, without noise or discovery, at which the lovers were delighted. They flattered themselves that the spy found so much pleasure in sleeping that she would do so every night, and, in fact, the third passed as fortunately: but on the one following the sleeper, being disturbed by some noise, listened, without appearing to be awake, and peeping as well as she could, saw, by the light of the moon, the most beautiful bird in the world, who talked to the princess, caressed her with his claw, and pecked her gently with his bill. She overheard part of their conversation, and was exceedingly surprised; for the bird spoke like a lover, and the beautiful Florine answered him most tenderly. Day broke. They bade each other adieu; and, as if they had a presentiment of their coming misfortune,

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they parted with extreme sorrow. The princess threw herself on her bed, bathed in tears, and the king returned to his hollow tree. The spy ran to the queen, and told her all she had seen and heard. The queen sent for Truitonne and her confidants. They talked the matter over for a long time, and arrived at the conclusion that the blue bird was King Charmant. "What an affront!" cried the queen. "What an affront, my Truitonne! This insolent princess, whom I fancied was so wretched, was quietly enjoying the most agreeable conversation with that ungrateful prince! Oh, I will have such a terrible revenge that it shall be the talk of the whole world!" Truitonne begged her not to lose a moment, and, as she considered herself more interested in the matter than the queen, she was ready to die with joy at the thought of all that would be done to destroy the happiness of the lover and his mistress.

The queen sent the spy back to the tower, ordering her not to evince any suspicion or curiosity, but to appear more sleepy than ever. She went to bed early and snored as loudly as she could. The poor, deceived princess, opening the little window, called:

"Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!"

but in vain she called him the whole night long. He came not; for the wicked queen had caused swords, knives, razors and daggers to be attached to the cypress-tree, so that when he flew rapidly into it, these murderous weapons cut off his feet; and he fell upon others which lacerated his wings, and wounded

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him so that with great difficulty he reached his own tree, leaving behind him a long track of blood. Why were you not there, lovely princess, to comfort that royal bird? And yet it would have been the death of her to have seen him in so deplorable a condition. He took no care to save his life, persuaded that it was Florine who had been guilty of this cruel treachery. "Oh, barbarous princess!" he exclaimed mournfully, "is it thus thou repayest the most pure and tender passion that ever was or will be! If thou wouldst that I should die, wherefore didst thou not thyself perform the deed! Death had been sweet from thy hand! I sought thee with so much love and confidence — I suffered for thee, and suffered without complaining; and thou hast sacrificed me to the most cruel of women, our common enemy! Thou hast made thy peace with her at the price of my life! It is thou, Florine — thou who hast stabbed me! Thou hast borrowed the hand of Truitonne, and guided it to my bosom!" This fatal idea overwhelmed him, and he resolved to die.

But his friend the enchanter, who had seen the flying frogs return with the car, but without the king, was so troubled to think what had become of him, that he went eight times round the world in search of him. He was on a ninth journey for the same purpose, when, in passing through the wood in which the poor king was lying, he, according to his usual custom, blew a long blast on his horn, and then cried five times, in a loud voice, "King Charmant! — King Charmant! where art thou?" The king recognised the voice of his best friend. "Approach," he cried, "this tree, and behold the wretched king you love, bathed in his blood!" The enchanter,

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much surprised, looked about him everywhere, without seeing any one. "I am a blue bird," exclaimed the king, in a feeble and plaintive voice. At these words the enchanter found him, without more trouble, in his little nest. Another person might have been more astonished, but he was versed in every portion of the necromantic art. It cost him but a few words to staunch the blood which was fast flowing; and with some herbs he found in the wood, and over which he muttered a short spell, he cured the king as perfectly as if he had never been wounded.

He then begged he would inform him through what adventure he had become a bird, and who had wounded him so cruelly. The king satisfied his curiosity, and told him that it must have been Florine who had revealed the amorous mystery of the secret visits he paid her, and who, to make her peace with the queen, had consented to have the cypress-tree filled with the daggers and razors which had hacked him almost to pieces.

He exclaimed a thousand times against the treachery of the princess, and said he should have been happy if he had died before he had known the wickedness of her heart. The magician inveighed against her, and against all the sex: he advised the king to forget her. "What a misfortune it would be," said he, "if you could continue to love the ungrateful girl! After what she has been guilty of towards you, one has everything to fear from her." The blue bird could not remain long of that opinion; he still loved Florine too dearly: and the enchanter, who knew his real sentiments, notwithstanding the pains he took to conceal them, said to him gaily:

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“Crush'd by Fortune's cruel blow,
Vainly Reason's voice is heard;
We but listen to our woe,
Death to sage or soothing word.
Leave old Time his work to do;
All things have their sunny side;
But till he turns it to our view,
Nought but darkness is descried.”

The royal bird admitted the truth of the remark, and begged his friend to take him home and to put him in a cage, where he would be safe from a cat's paw, or any murderous weapon. “But,” said the enchanter, “will you still remain five years in a condition so deplorable, and so little suited to your duties and your dignity? For, remember, you have enemies who assert that you are dead. They would seize your kingdom. I much fear you will lose it before you regain your proper form.” “Can I not,” asked the king, “enter my palace, and govern as I used to do?” “Oh,” exclaimed his friend, “the case is altered! Those who would obey a man, will not bow to a parrot: those who feared you while a king, surrounded by grandeur and pomp, would be the first to pluck out all your feathers, now you are a little bird.” “Alas, for human weakness!” cried the king. “Although a brilliant exterior is as nothing compared to merit and virtue, it still possesses a power over the minds of men which it is difficult to combat. Well,” continued he, “let us be philosophers, and despise that which we cannot obtain: our lot will be none the worse for it.” “I do not give up a point so easily,” said the magician; “I still hope to hit upon some means for your restoration.”

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Florine — the wretched Florine — in despair at no longer seeing the king, passed her days and nights at the window, repeating unceasingly:

“Bird as blue as cloudless sky,
Hither, hither quickly fly!”

The presence of her watchful attendant did not prevent her; her despair was so great that she was careless of consequences. “What has become of you, King Charmant?” she cried. “Have our mutual enemies caused you to feel the cruel effects of their rage? Have you fallen a sacrifice to their fury? Alas, alas! are you no more? Shall I never again behold you? or, weary of my woes, have you abandoned me to my hard fate?” What tears, what sobs followed these tender complaints! How did the absence of so dear and so amiable a lover lengthen the dreary hours of her captivity! The princess, oppressed, ill, thin, and sadly altered, could scarcely sustain herself; she felt convinced that everything most fatal had occurred to the king.

The queen and Tritonne triumphed. Their revenge gave them more pleasure than the offence had caused them annoyance. And what was this offence, after all? King Charmant had refused to marry a little monster he had a thousand reasons to hate. In the meantime Florine’s father, who had reached a considerable age, fell ill and died. The fortunes of the wicked queen and her daughter assumed a new aspect. They were looked upon as favorites, who had abused their influence. The people rose, and ran in a body to the palace, demanding the Princess Florine, whom alone they would recognise as their sovereign. The enraged queen endeavored

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to carry matters with a high hand; she appeared in a balcony, and threatened the insurgents. The revolt became general; they broke into her apartments, pillaged them, and stoned her to death! Truitonne fled for protection to her godmother, the fairy Soussio, or she would have shared the fate of her mother. The grandees of the kingdom met immediately, and ascended the tower, where the princess was lying very ill. She knew neither of the death of her father, nor of the punishment of her enemy. When she heard the noise of persons approaching, she had no doubt but that they were coming to lead her to death. She was not in the least alarmed, for life had become hateful to her since she had lost the blue bird. Her subjects, flinging themselves at her feet, informed her of the happy change in her fortunes. She was quite indifferent to it. They carried her to the palace and crowned her. The great care that was taken of her health, and her own desire to seek out the blue bird, combined to restore her, and she was soon enabled to nominate a council to govern the kingdom during her absence. She then provided herself with jewels to the value of a thousand millions of francs, and set out on her journey one night quite alone, without any one's knowing whither she was gone. The enchanter, who managed the affairs of King Charmant, not having sufficient power to undo what Soussio had done, decided upon seeking her and proposing some arrangement, under favor of which she would restore the king to his natural form. He ordered out his frogs and flew to the fairy, who was at that moment in conversation with Truitonne. Enchanters and fairies are on an equal footing. These two had known each other for five or six

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hundred years, and during that time had quarrelled and made it up again a thousand times at least. She received him very politely. "What would my gossip?" said she (it is thus they all address one another). "Is there anything in my power that I can do for him?" "Yes, gossip," answered the magician, "you can do everything I desire: it concerns one of my best friends, a king whom you have made very unhappy." "Aha! I understand you, gossip!" cried Soussio. "I'm very sorry, but he has no mercy to hope for, unless he consent to marry my goddaughter. There she is in all her beauty, as you may see. Let him consider of it."

The enchanter was almost struck dumb at the sight of her, so hideous did she appear to him; nevertheless he could not resolve to leave without coming to something like an agreement with Soussio, for the king had run a thousand risks since he had lived in a cage. The nail on which the cage had been suspended had broken, and the cage, of course, had fallen to the ground with a severe shock to his feathered majesty. Minet, the cat, who happened to be in the room when this accident happened, gave the poor king a scratch on the eye, which nearly deprived him of the sight of it. On another occasion, they had neglected to give him any fresh water, and he barely escaped having the pip. A little rogue of a monkey, who had got loose, caught hold of some of his feathers through the bars of the cage, and spared him as little as he would have done a jay or a blackbird. But the worst of all was, that he was on the point of losing his kingdom. His heirs were daily trumping up some stories to prove he was dead. So, finally, the enchanter came to an understanding

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with his gossip Soussio, that she should bring Truitonne to King Charmant's palace, where she should reside for some months, which time the king should be allowed to make up his mind to marry her, and that during that period Soussio would permit him to resume his original form, with the proviso that he should become a bird again if he ultimately refused to espouse her goddaughter.

The fairy presented Truitonne with some magnificent dresses, all of gold and silver, then seated her on a pillion behind herself on a dragon, and proceeded directly to the kingdom of Charmant, whom they found there with his faithful friend the enchanter. Three taps of Soussio's wand and King Charmant was again the handsome, amiable, intelligent, and munificent sovereign he had been before his transformation; but dearly bought was the reprieve accorded to him. The mere thought of marrying Truitonne made him shudder. The enchanter reasoned with him as well as he was able, but made little impression on his mind. The king was less occupied with the government of his dominions, than with devising means to prolong the period Soussio had allowed should elapse previous to his marriage with Truitonne.

In the meanwhile Queen Florine, disguised as a peasant, with her hair all dishevelled and hanging about her ears to conceal her features, a straw hat on her head, and a sack upon her shoulder, proceeded on her journey, sometimes walking, sometimes riding, now by sea, now by land, making all possible haste; but not being certain of her road, fearing every turn she took might be in the wrong direction, and lead her from her amiable monarch instead of towards him. One day

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that she had stopped to rest herself beside a fountain, whose silvery waters flowed leaping over the little pebbles, she thought she would take that opportunity of washing her feet. She accordingly sat down upon the grassy bank, tied up her fair locks with a ribbon, and put her feet into the little stream. She looked like Diana bathing on her return from the chase. A little old woman, who, bent almost double and leaning on a stout stick, was passing that way, stopped, and said to her, "What are you doing there, my pretty girl, all alone by yourself?" "My good mother," answered the queen, "I have plenty of company, for I am beset by sorrows, anxieties, and misfortunes!" and at these words her eyes filled with tears. "How! so young and weeping?" said the good woman. "Ah my child, do not give way to sorrow; tell me truly what is the matter, and I hope I may be able to comfort you." The queen willingly told her all her misfortunes, the conduct of the fairy Soussio, and how she was at present in quest of the blue bird.

The little old woman drew herself up as straight as possible, changed suddenly her whole appearance, became lovely, young, and superbly attired, and smiling graciously on the queen, said, "Incomparable Florine, the king you seek is no longer a bird; my sister Soussio has restored him to his former shape. He is in his own kingdom. Do not afflict yourself; you will reach it, and succeed in your design. Here are four eggs; break one of them whenever you are most in need of assistance, and you will find in it what will be useful." As she ended these words she disappeared. Florine felt much consoled by what she had heard; she put the eggs in her sack,

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and resumed her journey towards the kingdom of Charmant.

After walking eight days and nights without stopping, she arrived at the foot of a mountain, prodigiously high, all of ivory, and so steep that one could not keep one's footing upon it. She made a thousand vain attempts, slipping down every time, till, tired out, and in despair at meeting with so insurmountable an obstacle, she laid herself down at the bottom of the mountain, determined to die there, when she recollected the eggs the fairy had given her.

She took one out of her sack. "Let us see," she said, "if the giver was not making game of me when she promised that I should find help in them in my need!" She broke it, and found inside some little golden cramps, which she fastened on her hands and feet. By the aid of them she climbed up the ivory mountain without the least trouble, for the points of the cramps entered the ivory, and prevented her slipping. When she had reached the top, she found herself in equal difficulty respecting the descent. All the valley was one sheet of looking-glass, around which upwards of sixty thousand women were standing and admiring themselves in it extremely, for this looking-glass was full two leagues in breadth, and six in height. Every one appeared in it exactly as they wished to be. The carrot-haired seemed to have locks of gold; a bad, coarse brown appeared a glossy raven black. The old looked young — the young never looked older; in fine, no fault could be seen in this wonderful mirror, and consequently it was resorted to by the fair sex from all parts of the world. It was enough to make you die of laughing to see the airs and graces the majority of these coquettes gave themselves. Nor

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were the men less eager to consult this magical mirror, which was equally pleasing to them. To some it seemed to give fine curly hair, to others taller stature or better shape, a more martial mien or a nobler deportment; the ladies they laughed at laughed at them no less in return; so that the mountain was called by a thousand different names. No one had ever been able to get to the top of it, and therefore when Florine appeared on the summit, the ladies uttered shrieks of despair. "Where is that mad creature going?" they cried. "No doubt she knows how to walk upon glass, or the first step she takes she will break our mirror to pieces!" Upon which arose a terrible hubbub. The queen knew not what to do, for she saw the imminent danger of descending by that road. She broke another egg, out of which issued two pigeons attached to a car, which at the same time became sufficiently large for her to seat herself in it comfortably. The pigeons then gently descended with the queen, and alighted at the bottom without the least accident. "My little friends," said she to them, "if you will convey me to the spot where King Charmant holds his court, you will not oblige an ungrateful person." The civil and obedient pigeons rested neither day nor night till they arrived at the gates of the city. Florine alighted, and gave each of them a sweet kiss, worth more than a royal diadem.

Oh, how her heart beat as she entered the city! She stained her face that she might not be recognised. She inquired of some passengers where she could see the king. Some of them began to laugh at her. "See the king!" said they; "ho! what dost thou want with him, my young slut? Go, go, and clean

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yourself! your eyes are not worthy the sight of such a monarch." The queen made no reply, but passed on quietly, and asked the next persons she met the same question — Where should she place herself in order to see the king? "He is to go to the temple tomorrow with the Princess Truitonne, for he has at last consented to espouse her," was the answer.

Heavens! what tidings! Truitonne, the worthless Truitonne, on the eve of marriage with the king! Florine felt dying! she had no longer power to speak or move. She sank down on a heap of stones under a gateway, her face covered by her dishevelled hair and her large straw hat. "Unfortunate creature that I am!" cried she; "I have come hither but to swell the triumph of my rival, and witness her delight! It was for her, then, the blue bird deserted me! It was for this little monster that he was guilty of the most cruel inconstancy! While, plunged in grief, I trembled for his life, the traitor had already changed, and thinking no more of me than if he had never seen me, left me to lament his absence without a sigh!" When people are very miserable, they rarely have much appetite, so the poor queen sought out a lodging for the night, and went to bed without any supper. She rose with the sun, and hastened to the temple. After repeated rebuffs from the soldiers and attendants, she succeeded in obtaining admission. There she saw the king's throne and that of Truitonne, whom the people already looked upon as queen. What affliction for so fond, so sensitive a creature as Florine! She approached the throne of her rival, and stood there leaning against a marble pillar. The king arrived first, looking more handsome and more fascinating than ever. Truitonne followed him,

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richly attired, and ugly enough to frighten everybody. She frowned on perceiving the queen. "Who art thou," said she, "to dare thus approach our august person and our golden throne?" "I am called Mie Souillon," replied Florine; "I come from a great distance to sell you some curiosities!" and so saying, she took out of her sack the emerald bracelets which King Charmant had given to her. "Aha!" said Truitonne, "these are pretty glass ornaments. Will you take a five-sous piece for them?" "Show them, madam, to some connoisseur," said the queen, "and then we will make our bargain." Truitonne, who was as fond of the king as such a creature could be, and delighted to have a reason for addressing him, approached his throne, and showed him the bracelets, requesting his opinion of their value. The sight of them immediately recalled to him those he had given to Florine. He turned pale, sighed, and remained for some time without speaking; at length, fearing the observations that might be made upon the agitation his conflicting emotions had occasioned, he made an effort to compose himself, and answered, "I believe these bracelets to be worth almost as much as my kingdom. I imagined there was but one such pair in the world; but here is certainly another very like it." Truitonne returned to her throne, seated on which she looked less noble than an oyster in its shell. She asked the queen what was the least price she set upon the bracelets. "You would find it difficult to pay, madam," she answered; "I had better propose to you another sort of bargain. If you will obtain permission for me to sleep one night in the cabinet of echoes, which is in the king's palace,

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I will make you a present of my emeralds." "Willingly, Mie Souillon!" said Truitonne, laughing like an idiot, and showing teeth longer than the tusks of a wild boar.

The king made no inquiry as to whence the bracelets came, less from indifference to the person by whom they were presented (indeed, her appearance was not such as to inspire much curiosity), than from the invincible repugnance he felt to Truitonne. Now, it is fit you should know that while he was a blue bird, he had told the Princess Florine that beneath his apartments there was a cabinet, which was called the cabinet of echoes, so ingeniously constructed that the slightest whispers uttered therein could be heard by the king when reposing in his bedchamber; and as Florine's intention was to reproach him for his inconstancy, she could not have imagined a better method.

She was conducted to the cabinet by order of Truitonne, and immediately began her complaints and lamentations.

"The misfortune I would fain have doubted is but too certain, cruel blue bird!" she cried. "Thou hast forgotten me! Thou lovest my unworthy rival. The bracelets which I received from thy disloyal hand could awake no remembrance of me, so entirely hast thou banished me from thy recollection!" Her sobs here choked her utterance, and when she was again able to speak, she resumed her lamentations, and continued them till daybreak. The king's valets-de-chambre, who had heard her moan and sigh all night long, told Truitonne, who inquired why she had made such a disturbance. The queen answered that when she slept soundly she was in the habit of dreaming, and often talked aloud in

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her sleep. As to the king, by a strange fatality he had not heard her. Since he had been so deeply in love with Florine, he never could sleep, so that when he went to bed they gave him a dose of opium, in order to obtain for him some repose.

The queen passed a part of the day in great anxiety. "If he heard me," thought she, "there never yet was such cruel indifference. If he did not hear me, how shall I manage to make him do so?" She possessed no more extraordinary curiosities; she had plenty of beautiful jewels; but it was necessary to find something which should particularly take the fancy of Truitonne. She therefore had recourse to her eggs. She broke one, and out of it came immediately a coach of polished steel, inlaid with gold, drawn by six green mice, driven by a rose-colored rat, and the postillion, who was also one of the rat tribe, was of a greyish violet color. In the coach sat four puppets, more lively and sprightly than any that were ever seen at the fairs of St. Germain or St. Laurent. They could do all sorts of wonderful things, particularly two little gipsies, who, for dancing a saraband or a jig, would not have yielded the palm to Leance.

The queen stood enraptured at the sight of this new masterpiece of necromantic art. She remained perfectly quiet till the evening, which was the time Truitonne usually took an airing. She posted herself in one of the walks, and set the mice galloping with the coach, rats, and puppets. This novelty so astonished Truitonne that she called out two or three times — "Mie Souillon! Mie Souillon! will you take five sous for your coach and set of mice?" "Ask the men of letters and learned doctors of this kingdom," said Florine,

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“what such a wonder is worth, and I will abide by the valuation of the best judge.” Truitonne, who was imperative about everything, replied, “Without offending me longer by thy filthy presence, tell me the price.” “All I ask,” said Florine, “is to sleep again in the cabinet of echoes.” “Go, poor idiot,” answered Truitonne, “thou shalt have thy wish”; and, turning to her ladies-in-waiting, “There’s a stupid creature,” said she, “to reap no greater advantage from such curiosities!”

Night came. Florine uttered all the most touching reproaches she could think of; but as vainly as before, for the king never omitted taking his opium. The valets-de-chambre said to one another: “That country wench must surely be mad! What is she muttering about all night?” “Notwithstanding,” observed some, “there is both reason and feeling in what she says.” She waited impatiently for morning, to ascertain what effect her words had produced. “What,” she cried, “has this barbarous man become deaf to my voice? Will he no longer listen to his dear Florine? Oh, how weak am I to love him still! How well do I deserve the scorn with which he treats me!” But in vain did she so reason; she could not divest herself of her affection for him.

There was but one more egg left in her sack, to afford her further assistance. She broke it, and out came a pie composed of six birds, which were larded, dressed, and quite ready for eating; yet, nevertheless, sang admirably, told fortunes, and knew more about medicine than Æsculapius himself. The queen was enchanted at the sight of such a wonderful affair, and carried her talking-pie into Truitonne’s antechamber.

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While waiting for her to pass, one of the king's valets-de-chambre came up to her and said, "My friend, Mie Souillon, are you aware that if the king did not take opium to make him sleep you would disturb him dreadfully? for you chatter all night long in the most extraordinary manner."

Florine was no longer surprised that the king had not heard her: she took a handful of jewels out of her sack, and said, "I fear so little interrupting the king's repose that if you will prevent his taking opium tonight, presuming that I sleep in the cabinet of echoes, all these pearls and diamonds shall be yours." The valet-de-chambre consented, and gave her his word on the matter.

A few minutes afterwards, Truitonne arrived. She perceived the queen, with her pie, which she pretended to be eating. "What dost thou there, Mie Souillon?" said Truitonne to her. "Madam," replied Florine, "I am eating astrologers, musicians, and physicians." At the same moment all the birds began to sing more melodiously than sirens, and then to cry, "Give us a piece of silver, and we'll tell you your fortune." A duck that was particularly prominent, called out, in a voice louder than any of the others, "Quack! quack! quack! quack! I am a physician; I cure all disorders and every sort of madness, except that of love." Truitonne, more surprised at so many wonders than ever she had been in her life, vowed it was an excellent pie, and that she would have it. "Come, come, Mie Souillon, what shall I give thee for it?" "The usual price," answered Florine; "permission to sleep in the cabinet of echoes — nothing more." "Hold!" said Truitonne generously (for she was in a capital humor, in

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consequence of her acquisition of such a pie), "thou shalt have a pistole into the bargain." Florine, happier than she had yet been, in the hope that the king would at length hear her, took her leave of Truitonne with many thanks.

As soon as night came she requested to be conducted to the cabinet, ardently hoping that the valet-de-chambre would keep his word, and that, instead of giving the king his opium draught, he would substitute for it something that would keep his majesty awake. When she thought everybody else was asleep, she began her usual lamentations. "To how many perils have I exposed myself," she said, "in search of thee; whilst thou hast fled from me, and wouldst marry Truitonne! What have I done to thee, thou cruel one, that thou shouldst thus forget thy vows? Remember thy metamorphosis, my favors, and our tender conversations!" She repeated them nearly all, her memory sufficiently proving that nothing was dearer to her than such recollections.

The king was not asleep, and so distinctly heard the voice of Florine, and every word she uttered, that he could not imagine whence they proceeded; but his heart, penetrated with tenderness, recalled to him so vividly the person of his incomparable princess, that he felt his separation from her as keenly as he did at the moment the knives had wounded him in the cypress-tree. He began to speak aloud on his part, as the queen had done on hers. "Ah, princess," said he, "too cruel to a lover who adored you! Is it possible that you can have sacrificed me to our mutual enemies?" Florine heard what he said, and failed not to answer him, and to inform him that, if he would grant Mie Souillon an audience, he would

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be enlightened respecting all the mysteries which hitherto he had been unable to penetrate. At these words, the impatient king called one of his valets-de-chambre, and asked him if he could find Mie Souillon, and bring her to him. The valet-de-chambre replied that nothing could be more easy, as she was sleeping in the cabinet of echoes.

The king knew not what to think. How could he believe so great a queen as Florine was disguised as a scullion? And yet, how could he imagine that Mie Souillon had the voice of the queen, and was in possession of such particular secrets, if she were not Florine herself? In this uncertainty he arose and dressed himself in the greatest hurry, and descended by a back staircase to the door of the cabinet of echoes, out of which the queen had taken the key: but the king had a master-key which unlocked every door throughout the palace.

He found her arrayed in a light robe of white taffety, which she wore beneath her coarse disguise, her beautiful hair falling about her shoulders. She was lying on a couch, and a lamp at some distance shed on the scene but a feeble light. The king entered suddenly, and his love getting the better of his anger, the moment he recognised her he flung himself at her feet, bathed her hands with his tears, and felt ready to die with joy, grief, and the thousand different thoughts that rushed at once into his mind.

The queen was not less moved. Her heart seemed to stop beating; she could scarcely breathe. She looked earnestly at the king without saying a word, and when she found strength to speak to him, she had no power to reproach him, the joy of beholding him again made her forget, for the time, the

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cause of complaint she imagined she had against him. At length, they mutually explained, and justified themselves. Their affection revived stronger than ever, and all that embarrassed them was the fairy Soussio. But at this moment the enchanter, who was so fond of the king, arrived with a famous fairy, no other than she who gave the four eggs to Florine. After the first compliments had passed between them, the enchanter and the fairy declared that their power being united in favor of the king and queen, Soussio could do nothing against them, and that consequently their marriage would take place without delay.

We may readily imagine the delight of these two young lovers. As soon as it was day the news was spread throughout the palace, and everybody was enchanted to see Florine. The tidings reached Truitonne. She ran to the king's apartments. What was her surprise to find there her beautiful rival! The moment she attempted to open her mouth to abuse her, the enchanter and the fairy appeared, and changed her into a sow, which being called *Truie* in French, she still retained part of her name, and her natural disposition to grumble. She ran out of the room grunting, and thence into the kitchen courtyard, where the long peals of laughter with which she was received completed her despair.

King Charmant and Queen Florine, delivered from so odious a person, now thought only of the nuptial fête, the taste and magnificence of which were equally conspicuous.

It is easy to conceive how great was their happiness after passing through such prolonged misfortunes.

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ONCE upon a time there was a king and a queen who had several children, but they all died; and the king and queen were so very, very much afflicted that it was impossible to be more so, for they possessed considerable property, and only wanted children to inherit it. Five years had elapsed since the queen had given birth to her last infant. Everybody believed she could have no more, because she fretted so excessively when she thought of all the pretty little princes she had lost.

At length, however, the queen found she was likely to have another. Day and night she passed in thinking how she could best preserve the little creature she was about to bring into the world, what name it should bear, what dresses, what dolls, what toys she should give to it.

It had been proclaimed by sound of trumpet, and bills had been posted up in all the highways, stating that all the best nurses should present themselves before the queen, that she might choose one for her child. Accordingly, behold them arrive from the four quarters of the world; nothing was to be seen but nurses with their babies. One day as the queen was taking the air in a great forest, she sat down, and said to the king, "Let us send for all the nurses hither, and choose one, for our cows have not milk enough to supply food for all these little children." "Most willingly, my dear," said the king: "come, let the nurses be summoned!" Lo! where they

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all appear, one after the other, making a fine courtesy to the king and the queen; after which they placed themselves in a row, each standing under a tree. When they were all arranged, and their majesties had admired their fresh complexions, white teeth, and fine persons, they beheld, advancing in a wheelbarrow, propelled by two filthy little dwarfs, an ugly little woman, whose feet turned in, whose knees touched her chin, who had a great hump on her back, squinting eyes, and a skin blacker than ink. She held in her arms a little monkey, which she suckled, and spoke a jargon nobody could understand. She approached to offer herself in her turn; but the queen, repelling her, cried, "Hence, you great fright! You are an ignorant creature to come before me dressed as you are! If you do not immediately retire, I will have you removed by force." The nasty old woman passed on grumbling excessively, and, dragged by her frightful little dwarfs, went and placed herself in the hollow of a large tree, from whence she could see everything that occurred.

The queen, who had ceased to think about her, chose a handsome nurse; but the instant she was appointed, a horrible serpent, which was concealed beneath some grass, bit her foot, and she fell down as if dead. The queen, much grieved at this accident, cast her eyes on another. Immediately an eagle came flying with a tortoise in its talons, and dropped it on the head of the poor nurse, which was shivered to pieces like a glass. The queen, still more afflicted, called forward a third nurse, who, in her hurry to advance, stumbled against a thicket, full of long thorns, and knocked out one of her eyes. "Ah!" cried the queen, "I am most unfortunate today. It is

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impossible for me to choose a nurse without causing her some mischief. I must leave the affair to my physician." As she arose to return to the palace, she heard peals of laughter. She looked and saw behind her the wicked old humpbacked woman, who sat like an ape with her swaddled monkey in the wheelbarrow, mocking the whole company, and particularly the queen. Her majesty was so enraged that she would have flown at and beaten her, feeling assured that she was the cause of all this mischief to the nurses; but the humpback, with three taps of her wand, changed the dwarfs into winged griffins, the wheelbarrow into a chariot of fire, and rose with it into the air, uttering loud threats and horrible shrieks.

"Alas, my darling, we are lost," said the king; "it is the fairy Carabossa! The wicked creature has hated me ever since I was a little boy, on account of a trick I played her, putting some brimstone into her broth. From that moment she has always sought an opportunity to be revenged." The queen began to weep. "If I could have guessed who she was," said she, "I would have tried to make a friend of her. I'm sure I wish I were dead!" When the king saw her so deeply afflicted he said to her, "My love, let us go and consult on what step we should take"; and led her away, supporting her by the arm, for she was still trembling from the fright into which Carabossa had thrown her.

When the king and queen reached their apartments they summoned their counsellors, caused all the doors and windows to be carefully closed, that nobody might hear a word that was uttered, and came to the resolution to invite all the fairies for a thousand leagues round to be present at the birth of

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the child. Couriers were despatched immediately with very polite letters to the fairies, requesting them to take the trouble to attend the queen's confinement, and to keep the matter a great secret, for they trembled at the idea of Carabossa's hearing of it, and coming to make some disturbance. As a reward for their trouble, they were each promised a hongreline of blue velvet, a petticoat of amaranth velvet, a pair of slippers of crimson satin, slashed, a small pair of gilt scissors, and a case full of fine needles.

As soon as the couriers had departed, the queen set to work with all her maids and servants to prepare the presents she had promised the fairies. She knew a great many, but only five answered their invitation. They arrived at the very moment the queen gave birth to a little princess. Behold them quickly closeted to endow her with precious gifts. The first endowed her with perfect beauty, the second bestowed on her infinite wit, the third the faculty of singing admirably, the fourth the talent of composition both in prose and verse. As the fifth was about to speak, a noise was heard in the chimney, like that of the falling of a huge stone from the top of a steeple, and Carabossa appeared all begrimed with soot, and shouting as loud as she could, "I endow this little creature

“With ill-luck in plenty, until she be twenty!”

At these words the queen, who was in bed, began to cry, and beg Carabossa would have pity on the little princess. All the fairies said to her, "Alas, my sister! take off your spell again; what has this infant done to you?" But that ugly fairy kept grumbling to herself without making any reply, so that

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the fifth, who had not yet spoken, tried to mend the matter, and endowed the princess with a long life of happiness after the period of the evil spell had expired. Carabossa only laughed at this, and sang twenty satirical songs, as she climbed up the chimney again. All the fairies remained in great consternation, but particularly the poor queen. She did not, however, neglect to give them the presents she had promised; she even added to them some ribbons, of which they are very fond. They were magnificently feasted; and at their departure the eldest advised that the princess should be lodged, till she completed her twentieth year, in some place where she could see no one but her own female attendants, and confined strictly to that spot.

Thereupon the king had a tower built without a window, so that you could only see by candlelight. It was entered by a vault that ran a league underground. Through this subterranean passage everything was carried that was required for the nurses and the governesses. Every twenty paces there were massive gates that were kept closely shut, and sentinels were posted in every direction.

The princess had been called Printaniere, because she had a complexion of lilies and roses, fresher and more blooming than the spring. Everything she said or did was admirable. She acquired a knowledge of the most difficult sciences with the greatest ease, and grew so tall and handsome that the king and queen never saw her without crying for joy. She sometimes begged they would stay with her, or take her with them, for she found herself dull, without well knowing why; but her parents always put her off with some excuse. Her

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nurse, who had never quitted her, and who did not lack sense, described to her occasionally the appearance of the world, and she comprehended her instantly as well as if she had seen it. The king frequently said to the queen, "My darling, Carabossa will be outwitted; we are more cunning than she is. Our Printaniere will be happy in despite of her predictions"; and the queen laughed till she cried at thinking on the vexation of the wicked fairy. They had had Printaniere's portrait painted, and copies of it sent all over the world, for the time was approaching for her to leave the tower, and they were desirous that she should be married. She only wanted four days of being twenty. The court and the city were in great delight at the prospect of the speedy liberation of the princess, and their joy was increased by the news that King Merlin wished her to be the wife of his son, and that he had sent his ambassador, Fanfarinet, to propose for her in due form.

The nurse, who told the princess all the news, informed her of this, and assured her that nothing in the world could be a finer sight than the entry of Fanfarinet. "Ah! how unfortunate am I!" exclaimed the princess. "They coop me up here in a dark tower as if I had committed some great crime. I have never seen the sky, the sun, and the stars, of which they tell so many wonders. I have never seen a horse, a monkey, or a lion, except in a picture. The king and queen say that they will take me out of this place when I am twenty; but they only say so to make me patient, and I am certain they will let me die here, without my having done anything to offend them." Thereupon she began to cry, so much — so much that her eyes swelled as big as one's fist, and the wet-

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nurse, and the foster sister, and the cradle-rocker, and the dresser, and the nursery-maid, who all loved her passionately, began also to cry, so much — so much that nothing was to be heard but sobs and sighs. It was a scene of utter despair. When the princess saw them worked up to such a pitch of grief she seized a knife and exclaimed, “There! there! I am determined to kill myself instantly if you do not find means to let me behold the grand entry of Fanfarinet! The king and queen will never know anything about it. Decide amongst yourselves whether you had rather I should cut my throat on the spot than that you should procure me this gratification!” At these words the nurse and all the others recommenced crying still more bitterly, and resolved unanimously that they would enable her to see Fanfarinet, or die themselves in the attempt. They passed the rest of the night in proposing various schemes, without finding any that were feasible, and Printaniere, who was almost out of her wits, continually exclaimed, “Never again try to make me believe that you love me! You would find plenty of ways if you did. I feel convinced that love and friendship could overcome every obstacle!”

At last they decided they would make a hole in the tower on the side towards that part of the city by which Fanfarinet would arrive. They moved the bed of the princess from the wall, and immediately set to work all together, and without ceasing day or night. By dint of scraping they removed the plaster, and then the smaller stones. They got out so many that at last they effected an opening, through which, with considerable trouble, you might have passed a small needle.

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It was through this aperture that Printaniere saw the daylight for the first time! She was perfectly dazzled by it, and as she continued to peep through this little hole she saw Fanfarinet appear at the head of all his retinue. He was mounted on a white horse that pranced to the sound of the trumpets, and curveted admirably. Six flute-players preceded him: they played the finest opera airs, and six hautboys echoed them; after them came the trumpets and kettle-drums, making a great noise. Fanfarinet wore a dress embroidered all over with pearls, boots made of cloth of gold, a plume of scarlet feathers, ribbons in profusion, and so many diamonds (for King Merlin had rooms full) that the sun was not to be compared to him for brilliancy. Printaniere at the sight felt so completely beside herself that she could not move; and after pondering upon it for a short time vowed that she would never have any other husband than the handsome Fanfarinet, that there was no probability of his master being so agreeable, that she had no ambition, that as she had managed to exist in a tower, she could live very happily with him, if it were necessary, in some country château, that she would prefer bread and water with Fanfarinet to chickens and sweetmeats with another. In short, she was so eloquent on the subject that her women were puzzled to imagine where she had acquired one quarter of the knowledge she displayed, and when they attempted to impress upon her a sense of her own dignity, and of the wrong she would be guilty of to herself as well as to others, she ordered them to be silent, without deigning to listen to them. As soon as Fanfarinet had arrived in the king's dominions the queen came to fetch her daughter.

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All the houses were hung with tapestry, and the windows filled with ladies; some had baskets of flowers, others of pearls, or of what was better, excellent sugar-plums, to shower upon the princess as she passed.

They had commenced attiring her, when a dwarf arrived at the tower mounted on an elephant. He came from the five good fairies, who had endowed her on the day she was born. They sent her a crown, a sceptre, a robe of gold brocade, a petticoat of butterflies' wings of the most wonderful workmanship, with a casket still more marvellous; so stuck full was it with jewels it was accounted priceless; and such a mass of riches had never been seen before. The queen was ready to faint with admiration; as to the princess, she looked upon it all with indifference, for she could think only of Fanfarinet. The dwarf was thanked, and had a pistole given him for drink, and upwards of a thousand ells of nonpareil of all sorts of colors, with which he made himself very handsome garters, a bow for his cravat, and another for his hat. This dwarf was so very diminutive that when he had all this ribbon on you could not see him at all. The queen told him she would find something very beautiful to present in return to the fairies; and the princess, who was very generous, sent them several German spinning-wheels, with spindles made of cedar.

They dressed the princess in all the greatest rarities that had been brought by the dwarf, and she appeared so extremely beautiful that the sun hid himself for shame, and the moon, who is not over-bashful, did not dare peep out while the princess was abroad. She proceeded through the streets on foot, over rich carpets, the people crowding round her, and

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exclaiming, "Oh, how handsome she is! Oh, how handsome she is!"

As she passed along in this pompous array, with the queen and four or five dozen princesses of the blood-royal, not to mention upwards of ten dozen who had arrived from various neighboring states to assist at this fête, the sky began to cloud over, the thunder growled, and rain and hail fell in torrents. The queen drew her royal mantle over her head, all the ladies did the same with their upper petticoats, and Printaniere was about to follow their example, when a noise was heard in the air of more than a thousand ravens, screech owls, crows, and other ill-omened birds, who by their croaking and hooting boded nothing good. At the same moment a horrible owl of prodigious size came flying at full speed, holding in his beak a scarf of spiders' webs, embroidered with bats' wings, and let it fall upon the shoulders of Printaniere, amid long and loud shrieks of laughter, which proved too surely that it was a wicked trick of the fairy Carabossa.

At this melancholy sight everybody began to weep, and the queen, more afflicted than any one, tried to pull off the black scarf; but it seemed nailed to her daughter's shoulders. "Ah!" cried she, "this is our enemy's doing! Nothing can appease her! In vain have I sent her fifty pounds of sweetmeats, as much double-refined sugar, and two Mayence hams; they have gone for nothing with her!"

Whilst thus the queen gave vent to her sorrow, the whole company got wet through to their skins. Printaniere, thinking of nothing but the ambassador, hastened on without saying a single word. Provided she could but charm him,

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she cared neither for Carabossa nor her unlucky scarf. She wondered to herself that he did not come to meet her, when suddenly she saw him advancing in company with the king. Immediately the trumpets, drums, and violins executed a lively flourish. The shouts of the crowd were redoubled, and the general manifestations of joy were extraordinary.

Fanfarinet had considerable sense; but when he saw the beautiful Printaniere in all her grace and majesty, he was so enchanted that, instead of speaking, he could do nothing but stutter; one would have thought he was tipsy, although he certainly had taken nothing but a cup of chocolate. He was in despair at finding that he had forgotten, in the twinkling of an eye, an oration he had studied every day for many months, and that he was so perfect in he could have spoken it in his sleep.

While torturing his memory to recover it, he kept bowing profoundly to the princess, who, in return, made him half a dozen courtesies without any remark. At length she commenced the conversation; and to relieve him from the embarrassment in which she perceived him to be thrown, she said, "My Lord Fanfarinet, I can easily imagine that all your ideas are of the most charming description. I give you credit for the possession of infinite wit. But let us hasten to the palace. It pours in torrents; it is the wicked Carabossa who is drenching us in this way. When we are once under shelter, we may laugh at her malice." He replied, with much gallantry, "That the fairy had wisely foreseen the conflagration that such bright eyes were certain to cause, and had sent a deluge of water to keep it under." With these words he

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offered his hand to lead her to the palace. She said to him, in a whisper, "I entertain sentiments for you which you would never imagine if I did not express them to you myself. It is not without some pain that I do so: but '*Honi soit qui mal y pense.*' Know therefore, my lord ambassador, that it was with admiration I saw you mounted on your beautiful prancing horse; that I regretted you came hither on any person's account but your own. If you have as much courage as I have, we will not fail to find a remedy for this evil. Instead of marrying you in the name of your master, I will marry you in your own. I know that you are not a prince; but you please me as much as if you were one. We will fly together to some safe retreat. It will make a great talk for a time, and then someone will do the same thing, or worse, and the world will leave me alone to talk about her, and I shall have the gratification of being your wife."

Fanfarinet thought he was dreaming, for Printaniere was a princess of such marvellous beauty and accomplishments, that but for this extraordinary fancy he never could have hoped for such an honor. He was unable even to answer her. Had they been alone he would have flung himself at her feet; he took, however, the liberty of squeezing her hand so hard that he hurt her little finger desperately; but she did not cry out, she was so exceedingly fond of him.

As she entered the palace it resounded with the music of a thousand different instruments, with the strains of which voices, almost celestial, blended in such exquisite harmony that the listeners dared scarcely breathe for fear of making so much noise as would drown the softest note of it.

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After the king had kissed his daughter on the forehead and on both cheeks, he said to her, "My pretty little lamb (for he called her by all sorts of endearing names), will you not be glad to marry the son of the great King Merlin? Here is Lord Fanfarinet, who will be proxy for him, and conduct you to the finest kingdom in the world." "Certainly, father," said she, making him a low courtesy, "I will do whatever you please, provided my good mother consents." "I consent, my darling," said the queen, embracing her. "So, quick! let them serve up the dinner"; which they did directly. There were a hundred tables set out in a great gallery, and in the memory of man never did people eat so much — with the exception of Printaniere and Fanfarinet, who cared only to look at each other, and were so lost in their own thoughts that they forgot everything around them.

After the banquet there was a ball, a ballet, and a play; but it was already so late, and they had eaten so much, that, notwithstanding all this, the company slept as they stood. The king and queen, overpowered with sleep, flung themselves on a couch, the majority of the ladies and gentlemen snored, the musicians played out of tune, and the actors did not know what they were saying. Our lovers only were as lively as mice, and made a hundred little signs to each other. The princess, seeing there was nothing to fear, and that the guards, stretched on their straw beds, were as fast asleep as the rest, said to Fanfarinet, "Take my advice, let us profit by so favorable an opportunity, for if I wait for the marriage ceremony, the king will place ladies-in-waiting about me, and appoint a prince to accompany me to the court of your

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King Merlin. We had better therefore be off at once as quick as we can."

She rose and took the king's dagger, the hilt of which was incrustated with diamonds, and the queen's headdress, which her majesty had taken off in order to sleep more comfortably. She gave her white hand to Fanfarinet for him to lead her forth; he took it, and putting one knee to the ground, "I swear," said he, "eternal fidelity and obedience to your highness. Great princess, you sacrifice everything for me, what would I not do for you!" They quitted the palace; the ambassador carried a dark lantern, and through very muddy lanes they made their way to the port. They got into a little boat in which a poor old boatman lay fast asleep. They awoke him, and when he saw the princess so beautiful and finely dressed, with so many diamonds, and her scarf of spiders' web, he took her for the goddess of the night, and fell on his knees before her; but as they had no time for trifling, she ordered him to put off immediately. It was at great risk, for there was neither moon nor stars to be seen; the sky was still cloudy with the remains of the storm Carabossa had raised. It is true there was a carbuncle in the queen's headdress, which gave more light than fifty flambeaux, and Fanfarinet (according to report) might have dispensed with his dark lantern. There was also in the headdress a precious stone which could render the wearer invisible.

Fanfarinet asked the princess whither she wished to go. "Alas!" she replied, "I would go with you; I have no other desire in the world." "But, madam," rejoined he, "I dare not conduct you to the dominions of King Merlin. Hanging

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would be too good for me there.” “Well,” said she, “let us go to the Island of Squirrels; it is sufficiently distant to prevent your being followed.” She ordered the boatman to make for it, and, although his boat was a very little one, he obeyed.

As day began to dawn, the king, the queen, and all the court, having shaken their ears and rubbed their eyes a little, thought of nothing but proceeding to the marriage of the princess. The queen, in a great bustle, asked for the rich headdress she wanted to put on again. They looked for it in all the cupboards, and hunted for it even in the saucepans; but no headdress was to be found. The queen, very uneasy about it, ran up stairs and down stairs, into the cellar and into the garret. It was not to be found.

The king, in his turn, wished to wear his brilliant dagger. With the same diligence they rummaged for it in every corner, and broke open quantities of chests and caskets, the keys of which had been lost for upwards of a century. They found a thousand curiosities in them: dolls that shook their heads and moved their eyes, golden sheep with their little lambs, candied lemon-peel and sugared almonds: but all this could not console the king. His despair was so great that he tore his beard, and the queen, out of sympathy, tore her hair, for, truth to say, the headdress and the dagger were worth more than ten cities as big as Madrid.

When the king saw there was no hope of finding either again, he said to the queen, “My love, let us take courage and hasten to finish the ceremony which has already cost us so dear.” He inquired for the princess. Her nurse advanced

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and said, "My liege, I assure you that I have been seeking her these two hours in vain." These words crowned the grief of the king and queen. The latter began to scream like an eagle that has lost its young, and fell down in a swoon. Never was anything seen so distressing. They flung more than two pailsful of Queen-of-Hungary water in her majesty's face without bringing her to herself. The ladies and maids of honor wept, and all the valets exclaimed, "What, is the king's daughter, then, lost?" The king, finding that the princess did not appear, said to his state page, "Go, seek Fanfarinet, who is asleep in some corner, that he may come and mourn with us." The pages sought everywhere, everywhere, and found him no more than they found Printaniere, the headdress, or the dagger. Here was an additional affliction which completed their majesties' despair.

The king summoned all his counsellors and officers; he entered, with the queen, a great hall, which had been hastily hung with black. They had put off their grand robes, and were each clad in a long mourning gown, girt with a cord. When they appeared in this attire, there was not a heart so hard that it was not ready to break. The hall resounded with sobs and sighs, and rivulets of tears ran down the floor. As the king had not had time to prepare a speech, he sat for three hours without uttering a word; at last he began thus:

"Oyez! great folks and little! I have lost my beloved daughter Printaniere; I cannot tell whether she has melted away or been stolen from me. The queen's headgear and my poignard, which are worth their weight in gold, have disappeared with the princess; and what is still worse, the

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ambassador Fanfarinet is gone too. I much fear that the king his master, not hearing any tidings of him, will come hither to seek for him, and will accuse us of having made him into mincemeat. Notwithstanding all this, I might have endured my misfortunes with resignation, if I had had any money; but I confess to you frankly that the expenses of this wedding have ruined me. Consider, therefore, my dear subjects, what I can do to recover my daughter, Fanfarinet, et cætera.”

Everybody admired the king's fine oration. Never before had he displayed so much eloquence. Lord Gambille, the chancellor of the kingdom, arose and spoke as follows:

“Sire, we are exceedingly vexed at your vexation, and would willingly have sacrificed even our wives and our little children to have saved you from so much annoyance; but apparently this is a trick of the fairy Carabossa. The princess had not completed her twentieth year; and as the whole truth should be told, I observed that she was constantly looking at Fanfarinet, and he at her. Perhaps love has played one of his usual pranks on this occasion.”

At these words, the queen, who was very hasty, interrupted him: “Take care what you are saying, my Lord Gambille,” said she; “know that the princess is not the sort of person to fall in love with Fanfarinet; she has been too well brought up.” Upon this, the nurse, who had overheard everything, entered, and flung herself on her knees before the king and queen. “I come,” said she, “to confess the whole affair to you. The princess resolved to see Fanfarinet or die. We made a small aperture, through which she saw him enter

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the city, and she vowed upon the spot that she would never marry any one else."

At these tidings, everybody grieved deeply, and acknowledged that the Lord Chancellor Gambille was a person of great penetration. The queen, exceedingly annoyed, rated the nurse, the foster-sister, the dresser, the cradle-rocker, and the nursery maid so soundly that another word would have killed them.

Admiral Chapeau-Pointu, interrupting the queen, exclaimed, "Come, let us pursue Fanfarinet. There can be no doubt that that jackanapes has carried off our princess." Everybody clapped their hands and cried, "Let us go!" Off went some to sea; others travelled from kingdom to kingdom, calling the people together by sound of drums and trumpets; and when a crowd had assembled, saying, "Whoever would obtain a beautiful doll, dry and wet sweetmeats, little scissors, a robe of gold stuff, and a handsome satin cap, has only to inform us whither the Princess Printaniere has fled with Fanfarinet." The answer was always, "Pass on; we have not seen them."

Those who sought the princess at sea were more fortunate; for after a considerably long cruise they perceived one night something blazing in the distance like a great fire. They were afraid to approach it, not knowing what it could be; but all of a sudden this light appeared to stop at the Island of Squirrels; for, in fact, it was the princess and her lover with the great carbuncle which shed this wonderful lustre. They disembarked, and having given the good man who had rowed them a hundred golden crowns, bade him adieu, warning him,

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as he valued the eyes in his head, not to say a word about them to any one.

The first thing he met with was the king's fleet, which he no sooner caught sight of than he tried to avoid it; but the admiral, having espied him, sent a boat after him, and the good man was so old and feeble that he could not pull fast enough to escape. They soon came up with him, and brought him back to the admiral, who had him searched. They found on him a hundred gold crowns, brand new from the mint; for they had issued a new coinage in honor of the marriage of the princess. The admiral interrogated him, and to avoid answering, he pretended to be deaf and dumb. "Aha!" said the admiral, "tie me up this mute to the mainmast, and give him a sound lashing. It's the best cure in the world for dumbness."

When the old man found they were in earnest, he gave in, and confessed that a girl, more like a celestial than a human being, accompanied by a gentle cavalier, had commanded him to row them to the uninhabited Island of Squirrels. The admiral, on hearing these words, concluded immediately that it was the princess, and ordered the fleet to make sail for and surround the island.

In the meanwhile, Printaniere, weary after her voyage, finding a spot of green turf under some spreading trees, laid herself down, and fell into a sweet sleep; but Fanfarinet, whose hunger far exceeded his love, did not allow her much time for repose. "Do you imagine, madam," said he, waking her, "that I can remain long here? I can find nothing to eat. Though you were fairer than day, I can't live upon love; I

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must have some more substantial food. I have good sharp teeth and a very empty stomach!" "How! Fanfarinet," replied she, "is it possible that this proof of my affection for you has so little effect? Is it possible that you can think of anything but your good fortune?" "I think much more of my misfortune," exclaimed the ambassador. "Would to heaven you were in your dark tower again!" "Fair sir," said the princess kindly, "be not angry, I pray you; I will go and hunt about everywhere, and perhaps I shall find some fruit." "I hope you will find a wolf that will eat you up," said Fanfarinet. The princess, much grieved, ran into the wood, tearing her fine clothes with the brambles, and her white skin with the thorns. She was scratched as if she had been playing with cats. (This is what comes of loving young men; it brings nothing but trouble!) After having searched everywhere, she returned, very sad, to Fanfarinet, and told him she had found nothing. He turned his back on her, and left her, muttering between his teeth.

The next morning they made another fruitless search; in short, they passed three days without eating anything but some leaves and a few cockchafers. The princess did not complain, though she was by far the most delicate. "I should be content," said she, "if I were the only sufferer, and should not mind being starved provided you had enough to eat." "You might die for what I care," replied he, "if I had but as much as I wanted." "Is it possible," rejoined the princess, "that you would be so little affected by my death? Is this the end of all the vows you have made me?" "There is a vast difference," said he, "between a man perfectly at his

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ease, who is neither hungry nor thirsty, and an unhappy wretch at the point of death in a desert island." "I am in the same danger," continued she, "and yet I do not murmur." "You would do so with a good grace, truly," answered he bluntly: "you chose to quit your father and mother to come rambling about here! Mighty comfortable we are!" "But it was for love of you, Fanfarinet!" said she, holding out her hand to him. "I could willingly have spared you the trouble," said he; and thereupon he turned away from her.

The princess, pained to the heart, began to weep so bitterly that it would have melted a stone. She sat herself down beneath a bush covered with white and red roses. After having contemplated them for some time, she said to them: "How happy you are, young flowers! The zephyrs caress you, the dew bathes you, the sun embellishes you, the bees love you, the thorns defend you. Everybody admires you! Alas! must you enjoy more tranquillity than I!" This reflection caused her tears to flow so plenteously that the roots of the rose-tree were quite soaked with them: she then perceived, to her great astonishment, that the bush became agitated, the roses expanded into fuller bloom, and the most beautiful one said to her: "If thou hadst not loved, thy lot would have been as enviable as mine. Who loves incurs the greatest of misfortunes! Poor princess, thou wilt find in the hollow of that tree a honeycomb; take it: but do not be simple enough to give any to Fanfarinet." The princess ran to the tree, scarcely knowing whether she was in a dream or wide awake. She found the honey, and the moment she had it she took it to her ungrateful lover. "Here," said she, "is a

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honeycomb; I could have eaten it all by myself, but I preferred sharing it with you." Without thanking, or even looking at her, he snatched it from her and ate it all up, refusing to give her the least morsel of it. He added sarcasm even to his brutality, saying that it was too sweet, and would spoil her teeth, and a hundred similar impertinences. Prin-taniere, more than ever afflicted, sat down under an oak, and addressed it in much the same strain as she had the rose-bush. The oak, touched with compassion, bent down to her some of its branches, and said: "'Twere pity thou shouldst perish, lovely princess; take that pitcher of milk, and drink it without giving one drop to thy ungrateful lover." The princess, perfectly astonished, looked behind her, and immediately perceived a large pitcher full of milk. She could think of nothing from that moment but the thirst which Fanfarinet might be enduring after eating more than fifteen pounds of honey. She ran to him with the pitcher. "Quench your thirst, handsome Fanfarinet," said she; "but don't forget to leave me a little, for I am parched and famishing!" He took the pitcher rudely from her, made but one draught of its contents, and then, flinging it on some stones, broke it in pieces, saying, with a malicious smile, "When one hasn't eaten one isn't thirsty."

The princess clasped her hands, and raising her beautiful eyes to heaven, exclaimed, "Ah, I have well deserved this! I am justly punished for having left the king and queen — for having so thoughtlessly loved a man of whom I knew nothing — for having fled with him without considering my rank, or reflecting on the misfortunes with which I was threatened by

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Carabossa!" She then began to weep more bitterly than she had ever done in her life, and plunging into the thickest part of the wood, she sank exhausted at the foot of an elm, on a branch of which sat a nightingale that sang marvellously the following words, flapping his wings, as if he sang them only for Printaniere. He had learned them expressly from Ovid:

"Love is a wicked god. The little knave
Ne'er grants a boon but to secure a slave;
Beneath the cover of deceitful joys,
His poison'd shaft the heart's repose destroys."

"Who can know it better than I!" exclaimed she, interrupting the bird. "Alas! I am too well acquainted with the cruelty of his shafts and that of my fate!" "Take courage," said the amorous nightingale, "and look in this thicket: thou wilt find therein sweetmeats and tartlets from Le Coq's; but do not again commit the imprudence of giving any to Fanfarinet." The princess needed not this prohibition to prevent her doing so. She had not yet forgotten the last two tricks he had played her; and besides, she was so very hungry that she began at once to eat the almonds and the tartlets. The greedy Fanfarinet, having perceived her eating by herself, flew into such a passion that he ran to her, his eyes flashing with fury, and his drawn sword in his hand, to kill her. She instantly uncovered the jewel of the headdress which rendered the possessor invisible, and, keeping out of his reach, reproached him with his ingratitude in terms which sufficiently proved that she could not yet positively hate him.

In the meanwhile, Admiral Chapeau-Pointu had despatched Jean Caquet, with his straw boots, cabinet-courier in ordinary,

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to tell the king that the princess and Fanfarinet had landed on the Island of Squirrels; but that, being unacquainted with the country, he was afraid of ambuscades.

At these tidings, which gave their majesties much joy, the king sent for a great book, each leaf of which was eight ells long. It was the masterpiece of a learned fairy, and contained a description of the whole earth. The king learned thereby that the Island of Squirrels was uninhabited. "Go," said he to Jean Caquet, "and order the admiral in my name to land instantly. It was very wrong of him, and of me, to leave my daughter so long with Fanfarinet."

As soon as Jean Caquet had returned to the fleet, the admiral ordered a grand flourish of drums, kettle-drums, trumpets, hautboys, flutes, violins, hurdy-gurdys, organs, and guitars. There was the most desperate uproar, for all these musical instruments of war and peace were to be heard incessantly throughout the island. Alarmed by the noise, the princess flew to her lover to offer him her assistance. He was by no means brave, and their mutual danger quickly reconciled them. "Keep behind me," said she to him, "I will go first; I will uncover the jewel that renders the bearer invisible, and with my father's dagger I will kill all I can of the enemy, while you kill the rest with your sword."

The invisible princess advanced to meet the soldiers. She and Fanfarinet killed numbers without being seen. Nothing was heard but cries of "I am slain!" "I am dying!" The troops fired in vain; they hit nothing, for the princess and her lover dived like ducks, and the balls passed over their heads. At length, the admiral, concerned at losing so many men in

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so extraordinary a manner, without knowing who attacked him, or how to defend himself, ordered a retreat to be sounded, and returned to his ships to hold a council of war.

Night was already far advanced. The princess and Fanfarinet took refuge in the thickest part of the wood. Printaniere was so tired that she lay down on the grass, and was just dropping off to sleep, when she heard a sweet little voice whisper in her ear, "Save thyself, Printaniere, for Fanfarinet would murder and devour you!" Quickly opening her eyes, she saw, by the light of the carbuncle, the wicked Fanfarinet, with his arm already raised to pierce her bosom with his sword; for, being very hungry, her whiteness and plumpness had tempted him to kill and eat her. She no longer hesitated about what she should do. She drew the dagger she had kept about her since the battle, and struck him with it such a blow in the eye, that he fell dead on the spot. "Ungrateful wretch!" she cried; "take that as the reward thou hast most deserved. Be thou an example for the future to all perfidious lovers; and may thy treacherous spirit never rest in peace!" When the first transports of her fury had subsided, and she thought of the situation she was in, she became almost as lifeless as him she had just slain. "What will become of me?" she exclaimed, weeping: "I am all alone in this island! Wild bears will devour me, or I shall be starved to death." She almost regretted she had not let herself be eaten by Fanfarinet. She sat herself down trembling, waiting for daylight, which she was most anxious to behold, for she was afraid of ghosts, and particularly of the nightmare.

As she leaned her head against a tree, and looked up to

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the sky, she observed, on one side, a beautiful golden chariot drawn by six great tufted hens, with a cock for coachman, and a fat chicken for postillion. In the chariot was a lady, so handsome — so handsome that she resembled the sun. Her dress was embroidered all over with gold spangles and bars of silver. She saw also another chariot to which were harnessed six bats. A crow was the coachman, and a beetle the postillion. In it was a frightful little monkey-faced woman, whose dress was made of a serpent's skin, and upon her head a large toad by way of a fontange.

Never — no, never in the world was any one so astonished as the young princess. As she contemplated these wonders, she suddenly perceived the chariots advance to meet each other; and the lovely lady wielding a golden lance, whilst the ugly one grasped a rusty pike, they commenced a furious combat, which lasted more than a quarter of an hour. At length, the beauty was victorious, and the fright flew away with her bats. The former immediately descended, and addressing Printaniere, said to her: "Fear nothing, amiable princess, I came hither only to serve you. The combat I have fought with Carabossa was only for the love of you. She claimed the right to whip you for having left the tower four days before you were twenty, but you perceive that I took your part and have put her to flight. Enjoy the happiness I have won for you." The grateful princess flung herself at the lady's feet. "Great queen of the fairies," said she to her, "your generosity transports me! I know not how to thank you; but I feel that there is not a drop of this blood you have saved which I would not shed to serve you." The fairy

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embraced her three times, and made her more beautiful than she was before — supposing such a thing to be possible.

The fairy ordered the cock to proceed to the royal fleet, and tell the admiral to approach without fear, and sent the fat chicken to her palace to fetch the most beautiful dresses in the world for Printaniere. The admiral was so overjoyed at the tidings brought him by the cock that he narrowly escaped a fit of illness. He came ashore instantly with all his men, including Jean Caquet, who, observing the hurry in which everybody left the ships, made as much haste himself, and threw upon his shoulder a spit, well loaded with game.

Admiral Chapeau-Pointu had scarcely proceeded a league when he perceived in one of the great avenues of the forest the chariot drawn by hens in which the two ladies were riding. He recognised the princess, and was about to kneel, but she told him that all the honors were due to the generous fairy, who had saved her from the clutches of Carabossa; on which he kissed the hem of the fairy's robe, and paid her the finest compliment that was ever uttered upon such an occasion. Before he could finish, the fairy interrupted him, exclaiming, "I vow I smell roast meat!" "Yes, madam," said Jean Caquet, displaying the spit loaded with excellent birds; "it is only for your highness to desire to taste." "Most willingly," she replied; "less for my own sake than for that of the princess, who has need to make a good meal." They immediately sent to the fleet for everything that was necessary, and the delight of having found the princess, joined to the good cheer, left nothing to be wished for.

The repast being finished, and the fat chicken having

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returned, the fairy dressed Printaniere in a robe of gold and green brocade, powdered with rubies and pearls. She tied up her beautiful hair with strings of diamonds and emeralds, crowned her with flowers, and placing her in the chariot, all the stars that saw her pass thought it was Aurora who had not yet made her appearance, and said as she went by, "Good morning, Aurora."

After much leave-taking between the fairy and the princess, the latter said, "Shall I not, madam, have the pleasure of informing the queen, my mother, who it is that has done me such service?" "Beautiful princess," replied she, "embrace her for me, and say that I am the fifth fairy who endowed you at your birth."

The princess having gone on board the admiral's ship, they fired all the guns and more than a thousand rockets. She arrived safely in port, and found the king and the queen awaiting her, who received her with such caresses that she had no time to ask pardon for her past follies, though she had flung herself at their feet the moment she saw them. Paternal tenderness excused her completely, and all the fault was laid upon old Carabossa. At the same moment the son of the great King Merlin arrived, exceedingly anxious at not having heard any news of his ambassador. He came with a thousand horses and thirty servants, splendidly dressed in scarlet richly laced with gold. He was a hundred times more amiable than the ungrateful Fanfarinet. They took good care not to say anything to him about the little adventure of the elopement. It might perhaps have awakened a few suspicions. They told him the very plausible story that his ambassador being

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thirsty, and endeavoring to draw some water to drink, had fallen into the well and been drowned. He believed it implicitly, and the nuptials were celebrated amidst so much joy that all past sorrow was entirely forgotten.

THE END







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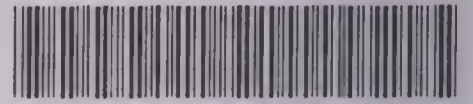


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