

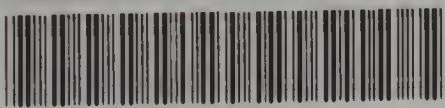
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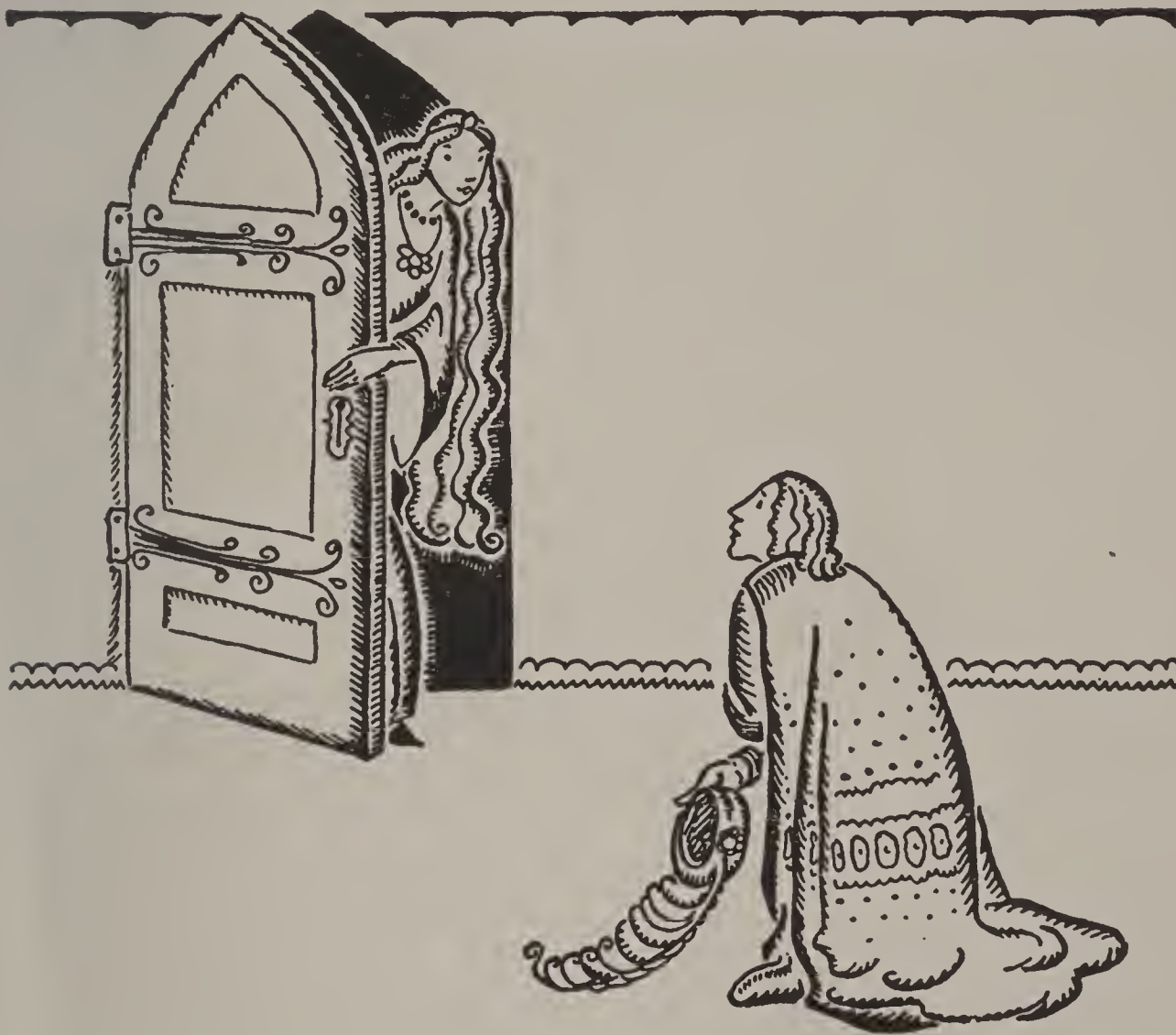




THE GOLDEN CHICK

and

The Magic Frying Pan





ELBROCK

IT WAS THE MERMAID

THE GOLDEN CHICK *and* THE MAGIC FRYING PAN

Translated from the French of

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THE FAIRY OF ANDELYSE

A PROLOGUE

I WAS TAKING A WALK one day when a little object half hidden by wild flowers attracted my attention. I stopped to pick it up and found it was a tiny slipper, so small that I could hardly put my finger tip into it.

At first I thought that a doll out walking with a little girl had lost her shoe. But the more I looked at it the more I wondered. Doll makers do not make dolls' shoes so carefully. This was made of the smoothest velvet with fine firm stitching. Who could wear such a tiny slipper? I went home, put the slipper on my table and forgot it.

In the middle of the night, I was awakened by a tap-tapping on the end of my nose. In the dim light of a stray moonbeam I saw an adorable little creature who was striking my nose with her slipper. She was doing it so skillfully that she never missed the tip. I was furious.

"Madam," I scolded, "you should not wake people in this way."

"Why did you steal my slipper?" she asked. I turned on the light and saw the most

charming little fairy imaginable. She wore a white velvet dress trimmed with fur. Her pretty little head was covered by a bonnet adorned with pearls. She held the slipper that I had picked up in one hand. She was angrily shaking a finger of the other in my face.

“Why did you steal my slipper?” she asked.

“I would like you to know, madam, that I did not steal your slipper. You lost it.”

“Oh,” she interrupted, “do you think I could not have found it? I am a fairy of Andelyse. Nothing is impossible for me.”

“I do not doubt that,” I said, “but I insist that I was not wrong in picking up your slipper. Something might have happened to it if I had left it lying there.”

The fairy of Andelyse began to smile.

“But people do not believe in fairies any more,” she went on sadly. “In days gone by they liked us and we told them wonderful stories. Today they will not listen.”

“There still are many people who believe in fairies and adore their stories. I do.”

“Really,” said she gleefully. “Then to reward you for picking up my slipper, I will tell you some stories before I go.”

The fairy of Andelyse sat on my bed.

“Listen!” she said.

The stories are told.



THE GOLDEN CHICK

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a poor peasant and his wife and they had eleven children. They were so very poor that they scarcely knew how they could feed them all.

Luckily the children were all strong and intelligent, so that as soon as each was twelve years old, Father and Mother Miquelon could send him out into the world to earn his own living. At last all the eleven children were looking after themselves and the poor peasants rejoiced that now they need not work so hard.

But just at this time a twelfth child came to them. Father and Mother Miquelon did not even try to find a patron saint to name this child for, as they had with the eleven others. They simply called him Little Miquelon.

The peasant and his wife did not complain about the arrival of Little Miquelon. But when Father Miquelon went out to work the next morning, he had a troubled look on his face. He was so absorbed in his own thoughts that he failed to see the carriage of his neighbor, the Fairy Merilda, coming toward him and was nearly run over.

“Hello, Father Miquelon,” the Fairy called. “What are you thinking of to be so careless? Is something troubling you?”

“Yes and no, Madam Fairy,” answered Father Miquelon, taking off his hat. “A twelfth child has just come to us. We are old, my wife and I. We need rest. Now we must work hard again to bring up this boy. If only we were not so poor.”

The fairy nodded.

“Do not be downhearted, Father Miquelon, I will help you. I want to be Little Miquelon’s godmother and protect him all his life. I will stop at your house before going on my journey. Good-bye.”

The carriage rolled away at full speed and

THE GOLDEN CHICK

a few seconds later the fairy hastened into the peasant's hut. She greeted Mother Miquelon who bowed low before her. She went to the baby's cradle, quickly murmured a few magic words, waved her wand, and left again in great haste.

Miquelon grew older. He was gentle, good, kind and always in a good humor, and because of his slender figure and handsome face, he truly seemed like a fairy's godson. His father and mother did not doubt for a minute that he also had a good mind and they waited patiently for the first signs of his genius.

Unfortunately these signs did not appear. Little Miquelon was a stupid boy and so dull that it was impossible to send him away to earn his living as they had sent his brothers and sisters.

Mother Miquelon tried to have him help her in the house. One day she bought some cherries to make into jam. She showed Little Miquelon how to remove the stems and then how to put the cherries into a kettle where a sugar syrup was cooking slowly. Little Miquelon did it all wrong. He tossed the stems into the kettle and threw the cherries away. His mother was astonished. At first she was angry and wanted to spank him. Then she realized that he had not

wanted to do wrong, but he was only stupid.

Father Miquelon thought that the boy might be better on the farm and took him to the fields every morning. Little Miquelon was always obedient and did his best, which was not very much. When his father thought that he had taught him enough, he gave him twenty lettuce plants to set out. Little Miquelon did not know which end to put into the ground and finally he planted them upside down. He put the leaves into the ground and left the roots waving in the air. His father was very sad when he saw what his son had done.

“What will become of you, foolish boy?” he said. “So long as your mother and I live, we will take care of you, but afterward how can you earn your living?”

Little Miquelon opened his eyes wide and did not answer.

Father Miquelon went home and told his wife just what had happened.

“You must go and see the Fairy Merilda and ask her to help him,” he said. “She is our son’s godmother. She has not bothered with him since the day of his birth and it is natural for us to ask her to do something for him now. After all, it is her fault that he is so stupid.”

The next day the good woman unfolded

her best dress, brushed it carefully, put on her best hat, borrowed a pair of gloves from a neighbor, and went to the fairy's castle.

"Oh, how do you do, Madam Miquelon," called Fairy Merilda. "What a fine idea of yours to come today! What brought you? First give me news of my godson, Little Miquelon."

"I have come to do just that, Madame Fairy," answered Mother Miquelon. "Little Miquelon is seventeen and—"

But the fairy interrupted. "Seventeen!" she exclaimed, "I thought he was still in his cradle."

Time passes that way for fairies.

"He is just seventeen," repeated Mother Miquelon, "and his father and I want him to begin to earn his own living."

"Little Miquelon has not chosen his work yet?" asked the fairy.

"Alas, no. I do not know how to tell you, Madam Fairy, but he is so stupid."

"Stupid!" cried the fairy, springing up from her throne. "I have a stupid godson!"

"That's the real truth," said Mother Miquelon sadly. She told of the foolish things Little Miquelon had done. As she finished, she began to weep. The fairy was startled.

"Can I have forgotten to give my godson intelligence?" she murmured.

“When you came the day after his birth, you were in a great hurry,” began Mother Miquelon.

“I remember now,” cried the fairy, striking her forehead. “That day I was going to China to see one of my sisters, and I was late. I thought of beauty and grace and things like that, but I forgot the gifts of the mind. That is why Little Miquelon is stupid.”

“Is there no way of giving him a little intelligence now?” asked the good woman.

“There is nothing that can be done,” answered the fairy. “There is nothing I can do to correct this wrong. Since Little Miquelon was not given intelligence at his birth, I cannot do it now. He must remain a fool through his whole life.”

Mother Miquelon wanted very much to ask whether another fairy would have more power than Merilda, but she did not dare.

“However,” the fairy went on after a moment’s silence, “stupidity does not always prevent a person’s making his way in the world. Perhaps Little Miquelon will succeed better than his brothers and sisters. Who can tell? Go home, Madame Miquelon. I will come to see you tomorrow and show my godson a way to earn an honest living.”

Madame Miquelon thanked Fairy Merilda and went home satisfied.

The next day the peasant, his wife and their son put on their best clothes and waited at the door to welcome the fairy. She came in the afternoon with a covered basket on her arm.

Father and Mother Miquelon bowed double. Little Miquelon opened his eyes wide and stared speechless before his godmother. The fairy looked at him and did not seem displeased with what she saw.

“At least, Mother Miquelon,” she said, “if I did forget to give my godson intelligence, I gave him great beauty.”

She kissed Little Miquelon and they went into the house.

“Here,” said she, “are the gifts I brought my godson.”

She opened her basket and out jumped a chick, yellow as gold. She placed it on the table. The little chick began at once to sneeze in the most graceful manner imaginable. Then it snatched a folded white handkerchief from under its wing, blew its nose, tucked the handkerchief away and bowed to the company. Father and Mother Miquelon, who had never seen such a thing before, laughed until they had to hold their sides.

Then Merilda took a frying pan from her basket. In it a piece of meat was simmering gently and giving out a delicious odor.

She touched Little Miquelon's hands with her wand and said, "I give this chick and this frying pan to my godson. By showing them in towns and villages, he will earn his living. And if he does not know how to use his money wisely, or if he does not earn enough, he can eat the meat that is in the pan. When one piece is eaten another one will always take its place. This boy will never die of hunger."

The fairy asked for a wallet and put the chick and the frying pan into it.

"Promise me never to part with these things that I am giving to you," she said to her godson. "People will offer to buy them, but whatever price they offer, *always* refuse. Whatever happens, guard them all your life."

Little Miquelon solemnly promised his godmother what she asked. Then the fairy put the wallet into his hands.

"Now say good-bye to your parents and go."

Father and Mother Miquelon kissed their son and gave him their blessing. Fairy Merilda told him once more to guard the chick and the frying pan carefully.

Little Miquelon crossed the threshold of his father's home and taking the main road set off rapidly to seek his fortune.

There was Little Miquelon hurled forth into life and adventure. For several months

THE GOLDEN CHICK

nothing exciting happened to him. He showed his fairy gifts in all the villages he came to. The curious people gathered around him, laughed at the sneezing chick and tossed over a little money.

In spite of that Little Miquelon would often have been hungry, if he had not eaten the piece of meat that was always cooking in the frying pan. He did not know how to keep the money he earned. He gave it away to children because he liked to see them smile and he gave it to poor people he met on the streets.

One day Miquelon reached the gates of a great town. Its towers and spires climbed high into the sky. It was the stronghold of the powerful King of Melilot. Little Miquelon had never been in so large a town. The streets were full of people and the stores were filled with beautiful silks and jewels.

After wandering about in the town for a long time, he came to a square on one side of which there was a huge castle with many windows and colonnades. It was the home of the king. Little Miquelon stopped, put his wallet on the ground and took out the chick and the frying pan. The people of the town gathered around Little Miquelon in a circle that grew so quickly that the crowd soon filled the whole square.

Just then the king was looking out of one of the palace windows and when he saw the crowd, he thought that his subjects must be planning a revolution. He sent an officer to find out what the matter was. The officer reported that a young stranger was showing some very unusual things, things that had never been seen before, and that was why the crowd was gathering.

Princess Aneth, the king's only daughter, was seized with a great desire to see the curiosities that were causing such a stir among the inhabitants of the town. She gave orders that the stranger be brought to her. She was a very proud princess and loved to surround herself with all the pomp and luxury of her rank. So she went to the great reception hall of the palace, sat down on the throne and had all her maids of honor standing around her.

Little Miquelon was brought in.

The princess was very pretty. Her maids of honor were all charming. But none of them made the least impression on Little Miquelon, nor did he notice the splendor of the room. He came in not at all frightened and put his wallet on the floor as calmly as if he had been on the road.

The chick had never sneezed so drolly as he did that day and the bit of meat had never jumped about in a livelier way. The princess



LITTLE MIQUELON WAS BROUGHT IN

laughed as she had never laughed before. It seemed to her that she had never in her whole life seen anything so funny as that chick and that frying pan.

She asked Little Miquelon to sell them to her, but he remembered his promise to his godmother and refused to part with them. The princess doubled the price, but Little Miquelon still refused. Then she offered him gold and jewels, but he shook his head.

Princess Aneth was used to having all her whims satisfied and she was angry with this person who dared to say no to her. She stamped her foot and threatened to have him punished, but still he shook his head.

At that moment the king came into the room. His daughter threw her arms around his neck, weeping.

“Father,” she cried, “have this bad man thrown into prison. He won’t sell me his curiosities. I’ll die of grief if I don’t have that chick and that frying pan.”

The king never could refuse his daughter anything. He made a sign. The guards came up, seized upon Little Miquelon and threw him into a dungeon.

The chick and the frying pan stayed on the floor in the throne room. And as if to show their displeasure at this treatment of their master, the chick began to sneeze with-

out stopping and the frying pan hurled clouds of smoke at the throne and a dreadful smell of burning grease through the room. The princess had to hold her nose.

“Take it away!” she cried.

A servant hurried up, but he had hardly touched the handle when he dropped it. He had been badly burned. A second servant, a page, and a gentleman, each in turn tried to pick up the frying pan, only to drop it. Then they brought thick cloths and a pair of pincers to hold the handle. Everything was useless. Whatever touched the frying pan began to glow like a red fire. They could only leave the obstinate frying pan in the middle of the throne room smelling and smoking dreadfully.

The chick allowed itself to be led away. It was sneezing all the time. And probably its sneezes were contagious, for the next morning every one in the palace woke up with a cold in the head. The king, the princess, the courtiers, the lords and the ladies, the lackeys, the servants, all had colds in the head. The most famous doctors in the town were sent for. For five hours they discussed the origin of these colds and then they prescribed ointments and compresses which did not help at all.

The king was worried, for in two days,

Princess Aneth's fiancé, the King of Hilvella, would arrive.

Every one knew that the kingdoms of Melilot and Hilvella had been at war for several centuries, though no one knew why. It was an old quarrel.

One day the minister of Hilvella decided that the best way to end the war was to marry his king to Princess Aneth. Everyone thought that this was a splendid idea and wondered why no one had thought of it before.

The time had come for the marriage and the king would arrive in two days. But what could they do? They could not receive him in the throne room where there was a smoking frying pan and they could not present him the princess who was sneezing all the time.

In this grave predicament the king decided to call his council of ministers. They discussed the problem for a long time. Finally the majority concluded that Little Miquelon must be given his liberty. They took him out of prison and asked him to go away and take his troublesome belongings with him.

As soon as Little Miquelon put the frying pan into his wallet, it stopped smoking. Instead of a smell of burned grease, the delicious odor of violets filled the room.

The chick stopped sneezing as soon as it

saw its master. At the same moment all the people with colds grew well as if by magic. Just as Little Miquelon was about to go, the king ordered that he be kept a little longer. Little Miquelon agreed eagerly. He was very happy to be out of prison and in the king's favor.

The next day the King of Hilvella arrived with great pomp and pride. Magnificent preparations had been made for him, but he was very hard to please. He criticized the decorations of the streets, complained of the furnishings of the palace and found the costumes of the lords and ladies unpleasantly shabby. The princess alone seemed to please him.

In the evening there was a great fete followed by a concert. The most noted artists played to entertain the royal guest, but their efforts were in vain. The King of Hilvella was as cross as a monkey in a cage. His future father-in-law, not knowing what to do to amuse this difficult guest, sent for Little Miquelon. But Little Miquelon had scarcely taken the chick and the frying pan from his wallet when the King of Hilvella flew into a rage.

“Who is this barefoot clown with his silly toys?” he cried. “Have him sent away as quickly as possible.”

Little Miquelon was so frightened that he did not stir and this angered the king all the more. He seized his sword and gave the poor boy a blow with the flat of the blade.

Then Little Miquelon was no longer quiet. He brandished his frying pan and hit the king over the head with it. The king shrieked loudly. And as the frying pan bounced away from his head, there was his beautifully curled wig dangling from it. The king tried to catch his flying hair, but Little Miquelon was quicker than a squirrel and ran out of the room carrying the frying pan and the wig with him.

At the sight of the bald King of Hilvella the people burst out laughing. Princess Aneth told her father that she disliked bald-headed men and would never marry one who did not have plenty of hair.

The King of Hilvella turned on the King of Melilot. His face was pale with anger and he waved his sword in the air.

“You have insulted me so that I can never forgive you,” he said. “I will never marry your daughter and I declare war on you. I am leaving immediately to return to my kingdom. I will be back in your country with my army and then you will learn what it costs to arouse my anger.”

And the King of Hilvella made as dignified

an exit as he could with no wig to cover his bald head.

The King of Melilot and all his court were overwhelmed. Little Miquelon came back, now that his enemy had left, but when the king caught sight of him, he rushed over and shook him violently by the arm.

“Oh, you miserable wretch!” he cried. “Perish the day when you entered my castle. Misfortune came with you. I will have the satisfaction of seeing you killed in battle.”

Then the King of Melilot, still shaking with anger, strode off to consult with his ministers.

A few days later the army of Melilot was gathered together with the king at its head. Beside him was Little Miquelon carefully guarded so that he could not escape. After several days' march the advance guards saw the enemy's army. The news was brought to the king and he turned to Little Miquelon.

“Here,” he said, “is your chance to show your courage and skill. Go and return the wig to the King of Hilvella. We will follow at a distance.”

Poor Little Miquelon had to go ahead all alone. He was mounted on a spirited battle horse that went much too fast to please him.

The troops of the King of Hilvella watched with curiosity this rider coming toward them. When he was within range, the soldiers

aimed their guns and the archers their arrows.

At these signs of real fighting, Little Miquelon was so frightened that he tugged fiercely at his horse and did succeed in turning him half way around. He spurred him so hard that the horse leaped forward at a gallop. The whole army of Hilvella hurried in pursuit.

The horse galloped toward a wide river and swam easily across. But the enemy soldiers could not swim across so easily. Some of them were drowned and others were carried off by the current. At this moment the King of Melilot and his troops arrived. Many of the enemy were captured and those who could escape fled without attempting to fight.

The victory was complete and all the honor of it was given to Little Miquelon, who by his clever maneuver had routed the enemy. The whole army cheered him. The king went to him and kissed him.

“Your bravery and skill have saved my kingdom. I shall be eternally grateful to you. I will make you Duke of Melilot and give you my finest estates.”

This speech was received with enthusiastic applause. Miquelon and the king rode back from the battle in glory. They entered the capital side by side, crowned with laurels.

From then on Miquelon lived in the royal palace. Every one admired him and said that his tactics and strategy were remarkable. He spoke very little, because he was so stupid that he did not know what to say. This silence increased his reputation for wisdom. Every one thought that he was busy with vast plans and benevolent schemes.

Finally his fame became so great that the king thought of calling him to the council that discussed affairs of state. The king had been noticing for some time that one of his ministers was robbing him, but he had not been able to discover which one it was. He needed the advice of a wise man.

So one morning he introduced Miquelon to the council, told him about the theft and asked his help. Miquelon rose. It was difficult for him to express an idea, because he truly did not have any. He stretched out his arm and his finger happened to point straight at the minister of finance who was really the thief. The minister grew pale, ran up to the king and begged for mercy. But the king gave an order that he be seized and punished.

After this clever stroke Miquelon's glory reached its height. He passed not only for a military genius, but also for a marvel of wisdom and clear-sightedness. Owing to this general admiration, the King of Melilot

thought he could not choose any one better than Miquelon to succeed him.

He asked his daughter whether she liked this idea. Princess Aneth had been noticing for some time how good looking Miquelon was and how much hair he had. She did not have any objections to accepting him as a husband.

The wedding was celebrated in great splendor with the good wishes of all the people.

At the height of his good fortune, Miquelon did not forget his parents. He sent them rich presents and asked them to come and live near him. Father and Mother Miquelon thought the matter over carefully and decided they did not want to leave their hut. So they stayed at home and lived very comfortably because of their son's gifts.

Princess Aneth inherited the kingdom of Melilot, and Miquelon ascended the throne. He was no worse a king than many more intelligent ones and he always kept near him the golden chick and the magic frying pan given him by the Fairy Merilda.





THE LITTLE BIRD

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a poor woman who had many misfortunes. First she lost her husband, then her little boy and then her older daughter, a lovely girl who was always singing. All this unhappiness had so saddened her that she thought she could never be happy again. She expected nothing but grief in her life and spent her days seated in the chimney corner, her head in her hands, overcome by sorrow.

She hardly noticed the child that was left to her, little Muguette. It was easy to forget Muguette, she was such a quiet little girl. She was thin and frail, with a tiny face that almost disappeared under her curls of fluffy golden hair.

She loved her mother dearly and grieved to see her so sad and so indifferent to everything. If she could only find a little good luck for her, no trouble would be too great and no journey too dangerous.

One day an idea came to her. "I will find Life and ask her to comfort my mother."

Muguette had heard that Life lived in a very dense dark forest. People said the palace of Life was in the middle of the wood, but no one had ever seen it. Now and then a very bold man would try to cut a path through the tangle of the forest. But he would give it up quickly, for the heather and the gorse were hardly cut down when they grew up again stronger than ever. Muguette had not forgotten these stories, but she was not at all frightened.

One morning she told her mother that she was going to take a long walk that would last all day. The dark forest was not very far off and she hoped to return by evening.

The great trees had never had a more forbidding look than they did on that morning when she stood before them. They were like a solid black wall. Under their thick shade, it was deep night.

Muguette bent over double and slipped in under the bushes with the quickness of a cat. She was so thin and little that she could

get through, but the thorns and branches often caught at her clothes. From time to time she stopped to rest and then bravely went on.

The day drew to an end and Muguette had not yet found the palace of Life. The faint light that had helped her choose her way under the trees grew less and less. Soon the shadows were everywhere. Muguette was lost in the dark and did not know what to do. She shivered with fear at the idea of spending the night in the great forest.

“Alas!” she said. “What will become of me? Won’t some one help me?”

She had hardly finished speaking, when a feeble light shone at her feet. At the same time three other lights appeared around her. They were gleaming glass. They drew close to each other and seemed to blend into one. Then they started forward together.

Muguette followed the tiny lights through the terrible underbrush. Although their beams were tiny, they encouraged her. Gradually the thorns and twigs grew fewer and the fir trees were thinner and farther apart. Muguette pushed her way through the thick branches of a cedar and there in front of her was the edge of the forest. Muguette turned to thank the lights, but they were gone.

THE LITTLE BIRD

Soon she could see the stars overhead. She found an old tree with a twisted trunk, perched on it like a little bird and went to sleep. When Muguette awakened, she saw a pleasant country with lovely meadows and vineyards where the flowers grew with the fruits under the summer sky. She felt very gay and happy and hurried on her way.

She had walked for some time when she came to a broad avenue lined with cherry trees in blossom. A light wind blew the petals down on her hair. Muguette wondered what she would find at the end of the avenue. There was a garden full of fragrant roses that covered the statues, the trellises and the terraces.

In the distance was a fountain of water that sang a sad song as it reflected the blue sky. The marvelous odor of the flowers filled the enchanted garden. In its center was a white marble palace, exquisite and pure. The door was open and Muguette started in.

She paused on the threshold not daring to go any farther. The pavement in front of her seemed alive. Moving shadows lengthened, retreated, disappeared and ran back again and changed color.

Muguette saw a woman, sad and graceful, coming slowly from the end of the room.

Her face was covered by a veil that was draped over her head. She seemed to be calling the shadows to her with pretty gestures and her dress reflected the colors through which she passed.

“What do you want?” she asked Muguette.

“I am seeking Life. I want to ask her to give me a little good luck for my mother.”

“I am Life,” said the young woman. “Come with me.”

Muguette followed her.

“I cannot stand still,” she continued, “for if I do, Death will gain control over the world. These shadows that you see are the reflections of the days of humanity. My dress takes on their colors, gay and melancholy, but I cannot change them. I would like to grant you what you wish, but it is not in my power. Go to Good Luck. Perhaps he can give you what you wish.”

“Where does he live?” asked Muguette.

“Good Luck does not live on earth,” replied Life. “You will find him in a star. The star that rises over the hill yonder tonight. Good-by.”

Muguette went away. She spent the day seated in the shade of the pines. In the evening she climbed the hill where the star shone white and gleaming. She thought she

THE LITTLE BIRD

could touch it with her hand. Alas, it was much too high! She began to cry. She cried so hard that she waked up a clump of violets at her feet. The flowers pushed their little heads out from under the leaves.

“Why are you crying, little Muguette?” they said.

“I want to ask Good Luck to give me a little joy for my mother and I can’t reach the star where he lives.”

“Don’t cry,” said the violets. “We will help.”

They ran over to the lilies-of-the-valley and begged them to wake up the rest of the flowers in the woods and fields. The lilies-of-the-valley danced out shaking their white bells. There was soon a great gathering on the plain and in the hills. Thousands of flowers hurried together, blue hyacinths, spring beauties, jonquils, lilies with rosy edges, marigolds, myrtle and wood anemones.

As soon as each flower arrived, it threw itself closely against the one before it and built a ladder that slowly mounted to the sky. The lilies-of-the-valley climbed to the top. They shook their bells triumphantly when they reached the edge of the star.

“Climb up!” they said to Muguette.

She began to go up. She was a little frightened, but the flowers encouraged her to go on and refreshed her with their fra-

grance. She climbed steadily into the blue night up the flower ladder toward the star.

The lilies-of-the-valley called out, "Come! Good Luck is here! Call to him before he flies away."

Muguette climbed up the last rungs of the ladder quickly and entered the star. She ran toward Good Luck, who listened carefully.

When Muguette had finished, he said, "Wait a minute."

He went away and soon came back carefully carrying something that he put into Muguette's hand. It was a tiny little bird of a delicate green color, the color of spring.

"I am giving you this," said Good Luck. "Take good care of it and carry it to your mother quickly."

The little girl looked at the bird crouched fearfully in her hand. When she lifted her head to thank Good Luck, he had already flown away. She pressed the little bird gently to her and climbed down to earth again. She was so tired when she got there, that she stretched out on the grass and fell asleep.

In the morning the bird waked her by softly pecking her hand. She opened her eyes and gave a cry of surprise, for there was her home just in front of her. How was that possible? Perhaps the kind flowers had carried her home while she was asleep.



SHE CLIMBED TOWARD THE STAR

THE LITTLE BIRD

At that moment her mother came out of the house.

Muguette ran to her, calling, "Mother, mother, I have brought you Good Luck!"

"What are you saying, my poor child? Are you crazy?"

"No," answered Muguette. "Look!"

She opened her hands and the little bird flew away.

"You see," said her mother with a sad smile. "Good Luck does not want to stay with us."

But Muguette still believed the promises of Good Luck. She could not think that he had deceived and while her mother was away she tried to find the bird. Finally she saw it perched on the roof near the chimney. It was building its nest. Happy and comforted Muguette went into the house.

In the evening while Muguette and her mother were sitting near the hearth, the bird began to sing. His song came down the chimney, but it seemed to come from heaven. He sang a song that always comforts men's hearts, the song that soothes unhappy people. The poor woman lifted her head and listened. Her sad face became happy and Muguette knew that the little bird which Good Luck had given her was Hope.



LUCIO AND THE FLIES

ONCE UPON A TIME there was a boy who was so tired of doing nothing that he yawned every five minutes. He often complained to his grandmother with whom he lived in a little house, and the good woman always answered, "Put a stone in your pocket." For she was always busy and could not understand that kind of weariness.

One day the old grandmother had gone to take her rest after lunch. Her spectacle case was lying on the table and Lucio picked it up and began to play with it. Just at that moment a fly flew in front of his nose. A wonderful idea came to him. He ran after the fly, caught it and put it into the spectacle case.

“Bou, bou, bzz, bzz!” said the poor fly, buzzing frantically.

Lucio laughed. He thought it was very funny.

After that he caught flies in the spectacle case everyday when his grandmother was resting. Some of them buzzed in a dignified way, others boisterously. Some were furious and made a terrible racket, others were gentle and resigned and murmured softly. When the unfortunate insects were worn out and dizzy and stopped buzzing, Lucio gave them their liberty.

One afternoon after much trouble, Lucio succeeded in catching a beautiful golden fly.

“He’ll surely make fine music,” he said to himself.

But to his surprise the fly did not buzz. Much disgusted, Lucio opened the case. Something flew out of it and lit on his nose, nipping it violently. Lucio was frightened and ran about the room shrieking. He did not dare to touch the strange thing hanging to his nose, nor to try to find out what it was.

“Open your eyes,” a mocking voice said to him.

He obeyed and saw a little creature swaying and teetering at the end of his nose, and laughing very hard. He was not so much afraid when he saw how small it was.

“Let me go!” he cried, “or I’ll take you and throw you in the fire.”

A burst of laughter answered him. He started to seize the impertinent creature, but his hands suddenly stopped as if they were paralyzed.

“I am the fairy, Acidine,” said the little creature, “and you can never touch me. I have come to punish you for mistreating flies. And now that I have your nose, I will never let it go.”

When Lucio heard these terrible words, he began to cry and roll on the floor. The fairy held him firmly by the nose.

“I give you your choice,” she said. “I will either stay perched on your nose, or you will let yourself be imprisoned in your grandmother’s spectacle case and I will take you away with me.”

Oh, what a sad plight for Lucio! He did not want to go away from his little house which at that moment seemed very pleasant to him. And he could not go on living with a fairy hanging to his nose. What would his grandmother and his friends say?

“I’d rather go with you,” he said in a sorrowful tone.

“Very well,” said the fairy and jumped to the floor.

At the same time she became bigger. She



SHE TOOK LUCIO BETWEEN HER THUMB AND FOREFINGER

grew into a beautiful person with an imposing air. She took Lucio between her thumb and forefinger and began to squeeze him into the spectacle case.

“I’ll never fit in there,” said Lucio to himself.

But to his great surprise he went in easily. The fairy snapped the cover shut with a dry clack. She put the case in her pocket and flew out through the ceiling. That is the usual way for fairies to go out. They scorn doors and windows, good only for mortals.

When she reached the roof, the fairy called her carriage and it drove up in front of her at once. It was a delicate silver shell drawn by gold and white dragonflies. The fairy stepped in and the carriage started away.

Lucio found it very uncomfortable in his prison. He was suffocating and he could hardly move. And he did not have the consolation of being able to buzz as the flies did. He did not dare to beg for mercy from the terrible Acidine, but he wanted very much to know where she was taking him.

“Madam Fairy!” he called to her.

“What do you want?” she said.

“Where are you taking me?”

“We are going to take a trip around the world,” said the fairy.

This answer terrified poor Lucio and he

trembled uncomfortably in the bottom of the case. A trip around the world! He was going to take a trip around the world in this box! That might take years. Fright gave him courage to question the fairy again.

“How long will the trip last?”

“That depends,” said Acidine. “If we find a little boy as naughty as you are, he shall take your place in the spectacle case and I will take you back to your grandmother.”

This promise cheered him. He did not think that he was half so bad as the Fairy Acidine made out and he was sure that they would soon meet dozens of boys much worse than he was.

“You must see for yourself how children of your age behave,” said the fairy.

She pulled the case out of her pocket and put it on her knees. The cardboard walls became transparent glass and the houses over which they passed seemed to be of glass also, so that he could see what was happening inside them.

There were many children in these houses, little boys who were conscientiously doing their duty, little girls who worked with their mothers and helped about the house, and babies who lay in their cradles without crying. Lucio had never seen so many good children. He was worried and wondered

where all the bad boys were. What had become of them?

The fairy's carriage left the land to fly over the sea. The crossing was quickly made. Acidine and Lucio reached the tropics where the poor boy was so hot that he thought the fairy was trying to get rid of him by roasting him alive. From there they went to Alaska to refresh themselves. Then the silver chariot headed straight for Australia, crossing the Pacific Ocean where a frightful tempest raged, and scared Lucio. Then they went to India and the borders of Tibet. Later they crossed Persia, Arabia, Egypt, the Soudan and the Sahara. Finally they returned to France.

And everywhere, whether in fine houses with modern conveniences or in snow huts, in the tents of Arabia or in negro hovels, they had seen only obedient, industrious children caring for their sick mothers and helping their tired fathers.

But Lucio was cramped and bruised and exhausted. It seemed to him as if for centuries he had been circling the world in a spectacle case.

"Now I am going to take you home," said the fairy.

"How long is it since we started?" asked Lucio.

“Twenty years,” answered the fairy.

“Twenty years!” cried the little boy. “But then perhaps my grandmother is dead. I won’t find my house any more and what will have become of my friends?”

“I will take you home,” said Acidine, “and when you are there, you can decide what you want to do.”

Acidine gave Lucio her hand to help him out of the spectacle case. He moved painfully, for his legs were very stiff. They both went through the ceiling into Lucio’s house.

To his great surprise he found everything as he had left it. His grandmother’s chair was near the table as usual and her glasses were on a newspaper, folded in half. In a corner where he had thrown it, lay Lucio’s grammar. He turned to the fairy. She was smiling and pointing her finger at the clock. The trip had lasted just a quarter of an hour.

The Fairy Acidine put the spectacle case on the table, made a deep curtsy to Lucio, tapped his nose once more and disappeared.

And Lucio never tormented flies again.





THE THREE QUEENS OF WINTER

THERE WAS ONCE a little girl whose name was Clochette. She was called that because her blond curls danced on her head all the time like little golden bells. Clochette means little bell. She had a clear voice like a bird's and her gaiety made every one happy.

Clochette lived with her mother in a little wooden house far from here in a country of the North, where there were great forests of dark pines and much snow in winter.

During the summer she went into the forest and listened to the gay songs the breeze whispered to the pines. And during the winter she listened to the terribly sad songs of the North Wind.

But what Clochette loved best of all was the beautiful snow, brilliantly white, that covered her in a shining blanket.

“Mother,” said Clochette, “why can’t people spin the snow? The snow on the mountains is as fine and soft as wool. Wouldn’t it be pretty made into a bonnet and trimmed with hoar frost?”

“You silly child,” the mother smiled. “Whoever heard of spinning snow! It is impossible.”

But Clochette liked her idea and she tried to make the pretty, sparkling snow bonnet that she saw in her dreams. Alas, it was impossible. Every time, when her work was nearly done, it gave way and she had to begin again.

One day when Clochette had worked unsuccessfully for hours, she felt discouraged and sighed.

“Oh, little flakes of snow,” she sighed, “how naughty you are! Why won’t you stay still?”

She was very much surprised when she heard little voices answering.

“No, no, we wish to fly around in the air always. Please let us, Clochette.”

“These flakes of snow are very naughty,” thought Clochette. “I must go to the top of the mountain and find some others.”

She looked around at the forest that covered the slopes. The wind bent the heads of the pine trees all in the same direction and

it seemed as if they were saying, "Come up, come up!"

The next day the weather was wonderfully clear and still. Clochette took advantage of it to start on her journey. Nothing delighted her more than to cross the forest in winter. She felt as if she were in an unknown country, the snow and icicles had so changed things.

She liked to think that with the first snow, the little gnomes of the mountains put the summer pines into their pockets and planted others in their places. The forest was filled with great radiant forms that hid an enchanted palace in their midst. Clochette had seen this marvelous building many times in her dreams, and she thought of it today while she was walking in the silence of the beautiful woods.

She could not hear a sound, except one from far away, a kind of quick rustling that meant that a heavy load of snow was falling from a branch. Then the branch, freed of its burden, raised itself slowly and its little green needles stretched out and rejoiced at being released.

Clochette had been walking for a long time, but the end of the forest seemed just as far away as ever. She began to grow tired. Her legs ached. So she dug a little

ditch in the snow and stretched out in it gladly. This armchair was very comfortable and Clochette was so tired that she soon fell asleep.

When she awoke, night had come. The radiance of the snow kept things from being really dark. From the mountains a soft blue light gleamed through the trees. Clochette walked in the direction of the light and was delighted when it became brighter and brighter. At last she reached the edge of the forest and stopped.

Before her a great ice castle glowed like a gem in the night. Its towers, tapering to points, gave out blinding reflections. From the high arched windows a beautiful blue light shone dazzlingly. The roof was trimmed with delicate trceries of ice and crowned by finely-carved gable ends. On the highest of all a gorgeous star twinkled so brightly that she could not look at it. The beautiful ice castle was the palace of the queens of winter.

Clochette, fascinated by so much splendor, walked nearer, went up the stone steps and into a great room that was so blue that she felt as if she were going into the sky.

In the center of the room the three queens of winter were sitting before their spinning wheels, spinning and singing in a low tone.



THE THREE QUEENS OF WINTER WERE SITTING BEFORE THEIR SPINNING WHEELS

THE THREE QUEENS OF WINTER

They wore long white dresses, bright with ice and on their heads crowns of ice gleamed very brightly. At first none of them seemed to notice Clochette. But in a minute the first one looked at her, the second one beckoned to her and the third one, pointing to a pile of light, flaky snow, made a sign to her to fill her distaff.

Clochette stayed with the three for a long time. She would watch them at their spinning and listen enchanted to their strange songs. The three queens never spoke a word, but they made Clochette a snow bonnet more beautiful than she had ever dreamed of having. It was firmly woven and very bright.

But in spite of that bonnet, Clochette was not always happy in the palace of the queens of winter. She was cold and often thought of her own gay warm hut. One day she was seated in the corner of a great blue room.

“Oh, how I would like to go home,” she sighed.

She trembled when a little voice murmured close to her ear,

“We too!” It was the flakes of snow in her bonnet.

“How can we manage it?” asked Clochette.

“If you can unravel the cloth of the bonnet and free us, we will take you away with us,” said the flakes.

Clochette tried to unravel the snow cloth, but she could not. The thread of snow was as firm as if it had been made of heavy linen. At that moment the queens of winter began to sing again. Clochette felt her determination slip away. The doors of the beautiful palace stood open before her, but the enchantment that held her was stronger than ever.

All this time Clochette's mother was in despair, because she thought her daughter was gone forever. She and her neighbors had hunted all through the forest. They had not left a single corner unexplored. But the search had been in vain and the poor discouraged woman wept without ceasing.

Now one day a little breeze that was wandering about heard her sobs. Because it was very curious, it came up to the hut to find out who was crying. It crept through a crack in the wall. Clochette's mother was sitting near the fire weeping, calling her daughter, sighing and talking to herself of the queer disappearance of her child.

The little breeze was kind-hearted and was moved by such sorrow. It knew Clochette well. It had often amused itself by playing with her curls. So it decided to go in search of the lost child at once. But before going it flew around the mother,

stroked her forehead and cheeks gently and dried her reddened eyes. Then it slipped out quietly and began its journey.

The little breeze wandered for a long time without finding anything. It went to the pines, but they were so stiff with ice and cold that they could not have told a thing if they had known it. Then it asked the gnomes who were dancing in the snow, but they were light-headed and only teased it. The little breeze was very angry, shook them roughly and sent them rolling to the bottom of the mountain.

Not discouraged by bad luck, it went on searching bravely. One evening it saw the same blue light that had attracted Clochette. It was very much interested and hurried toward the ice palace that gleamed like fairy land in the clear night. The little breeze had never seen anything like this. Trembling with curiosity it went up to a window.

The first person it saw was Clochette, gazing sadly before her. The breeze heaved a sigh of satisfaction and crept into the room. It tried to lift the little girl up, but it was not strong enough. It could only make her curls dance around her head.

“I am too weak,” said the breeze, shaking its head sadly. “I’ll have to get some one to help me.”

It thought of its cousins, the Four Winds. It had been told that the Four Winds were in Egypt, the favorite haunt of the South Wind. His three brothers had gone there to visit him.

Then the little breeze without delay crossed the land and the sea to Egypt. It found the Four Winds in the shade of an old ruined pyramid. The West Wind, always in a bad humor, was seated on a great stone block. The East Wind, cold and sharp, sat opposite. The North Wind, who did not like the climate, was stretched out on the golden sand. The South Wind, the youngest of all, was playing around his brothers. When he saw the little breeze, he hurried to and danced around it madly.

“Let me go! I have no time to lose,” shouted the little breeze, laughing.

Finally it succeeded in freeing itself and told its story. It finished by asking its cousins for help.

The East Wind groaned.

The West Wind said, “Don’t go, brother. This journey seems dangerous to me and you will be sorry to have undertaken it. Stay with us. Don’t go off seeking adventure.”

But the South Wind had made up his mind and he wanted to please the little breeze.

THE THREE QUEENS OF WINTER

He kissed his brothers and promised to return as soon as possible. Then he rose high in the sky, headed toward the north and disappeared. He had taken the little breeze under his arm and he went so quickly that no one could see him pass. There was just the sound of a long whistle in the air.

He dropped like a shot on the palace of the three queens of winter and slipped in at a window. At the noise of his coming the three queens stood up and threw their distaffs at him, but the South Wind seized Clochette and flew away with her.

He carried her over the forest to her own little wooden house and tapped on the door. Then rubbing his hands with satisfaction, he blew back to Egypt.

Unfortunately the South Wind took cold in the palace of the three queens of winter. He was freezing and very ill before he reached his brothers again near the crumbling pyramid.

“I told you so!” grumbled the West Wind. “What have you done to get into such a state?”

The South Wind coughed and sneezed so that he could hardly tell his adventures.

“I hope you will listen to my advice another time,” said the West Wind, severely.

The South Wind blew his nose in assent.

“Oh, my brother,” said the North Wind, opening one eye, “what a delightful breath of fresh air you have brought back with you! I feel I am alive again. I am going to profit by it and return to my own country. Good-bye.”

He spread his wings slowly and flew away. When he reached the north, he sniffed the fresh air and the odor of the pines eagerly. He wanted to sing when he saw his dear forests. But most of all he wished to see the little girl his brother had saved.

He went close to Clochette’s hut and put one eye to the hole in the wall. The little girl and her mother were sitting close together and laughing and crying and kissing each other. And Clochette was promising her mother that she would never again go out to walk alone in the forest in winter.





THE GOLDEN WOOD

THERE WAS ONCE a tall forest of tall slender beech trees. The sun danced on the leaves all day. The birds sang from morning until night. Daisies and sunflowers played with the breeze in the clearings.

When autumn came, the wood seemed to be made of gold, for the leaves turned golden and did not fall. They stayed on the trees all winter and were a beautiful honey color. That is why it was called the Golden Wood.

In one of the clearings, a marvelous spring, pure and abundant, glistened under a great rock. It led to the home of a powerful fairy. She lived at the bottom of the clear water in her gold and crystal palace. The whole forest belonged to her.

There was a story that she drove out occasionally in her carriage drawn by twelve horses as white as snow, and that any one

who heard the tinkling of the silver bells on her horses' harness must flee as fast as the wind. For, it was said that whoever looked upon the fairy fell at once into her power and was carried away by her to her home under the spring.

Two children, Andor and Anemone, lived near the forest. They often went there to pick flowers and mushrooms. They were very careful not to go too far and to fly like startled birds if they heard the least sound. Their mother had been very much afraid at first to let them go into the fairy's domain, but now she let them wander in the Golden Wood whenever they wished.

The children often thought of the fairy. They talked about her to each other. What did she look like? Was she young and pretty, or old and ugly? What was her carriage made of? Who cleaned her white horses? Oh, how they would have loved to see her, if it had not been so dangerous!

Anemone's curiosity was even stronger than her brother's. Would misfortune really come to her if she met the fairy by chance. Whenever she went into the wood, she almost wished she would hear the magic bells tinkling near her. It seemed that the fairy went out very seldom, for the children listened in vain for the bells. They heard only

the buzzing of the bees and the chirping of the birds.

One spring day Andor and Anemone were picking lilies-of-the-valley in the Golden Wood. Their baskets were full and they were about to start home when they heard in the distance the sound of faint music. It stopped and started again and as it drew nearer, mingled with it was the sound of horses' hoofs on the ground. Andor became very pale.

"It's the fairy!" he cried. "Come on, let's save ourselves!"

The children fled. They could hear behind them the lovely music of the silver bells.

Anemone had been running as fast as her brother at first. Suddenly she stopped, for the temptation was too strong. She must see the fairy. She turned her head a little, and stood petrified.

Twelve marvelously white horses came on, two by two. They drew a carriage of diamonds that sparkled so brightly she could hardly look at it. In the carriage was a young woman of entrancing beauty. The twelve horses whom no one was driving stopped before Anemone. The fairy opened the door.

"Come in, dear child," she said.

The fairy smiled and her smile was en-

chanting. Anemone was fascinated and climbed into the carriage. The door closed at once and the horses started on.

When the carriage reached the clearing, the waters of the spring separated into two transparent walls that stretched along a wide avenue. Although they were under the ground, it was full daylight. The carriage first passed through a gate of rubies and Anemone thought that she was going through flame; then through a gate of sapphires and Anemone thought that the sky was opening; and finally through a gate of diamonds and Anemone was so dazzled that she thought she was looking at the sun.

The carriage stopped and the fairy and Anemone jumped out. The fairy was still smiling her bewitching smile. She made a sign with her hand and two lovely girls carrying a jar and a fine golden cup came running to her. The fairy filled the cup and offered it to Anemone.

“Drink, my child,” she said, “the wine of welcome that I offer to all my guests. Then I will show you my palace.”

Anemone drank and suddenly all memory of her past life faded away. She forgot everything except the fairy of the golden forest and her enchanted palace.

Back in the forest Andor did not realize

that his sister was not following him, until he reached the edge of the wood. Then he began to shout loudly.

“Anemone, Anemone!” he called.

He ran back the way he had come. The only thing he found was her basket filled with lilies-of-the-valley, that she had dropped when she climbed into the carriage.

Andor threw himself on the ground and cried bitterly. Oh, why hadn't he taken his sister by the hand as they ran? Why hadn't he made her go in front of him? How his mother would scold him! However, he must go home and tell her the terrible news.

He went home sobbing. His mother saw at once that something dreadful had happened.

“My poor child!” she said and they cried together because Anemone was gone.

The next day Andor told his mother that he wanted to go to look for Anemone at the fairy's palace.

“Don't think of it,” she answered. “How could you, little and feeble, overcome the fairy? If you go, you will not come back, and I shall have lost two children instead of one.”

But Andor was determined.

“I will ask our fairy of the fountain for help. Anemone and I have always loved her.

In the summer we give her flowers and leaves. Perhaps she will help us.”

He went out to the fountain.

“Dear little fairy,” he said, “have pity on me! Will you help me to find my sister?”

The waters of the fountain parted and a thin pale girl appeared. Her hair and clothes were the color of the green things around her. Her face was at the same time sad and mischievous. Sometimes she wept, sometimes she sang.

“Andor,” she said, “if I had been able, I would already have gone to look for Anemone. The fairy of the golden forest is too strong for me, but I will help you all I can. Come to see me before you start out.”

And the fairy slipped back into the fountain.

Andor ran to tell his mother what had happened and asked her to let him go in search of Anemone. She began to weep and begged her son to give up so dangerous a journey, but finally he persuaded her to let him go.

So the next morning Andor kissed his mother and set out. He went by the way of the fountain and found the fairy sitting on the edge of the fountain waiting for him.

“My sister, the spring of the Golden Wood, has promised to help you. That is all I can

do for you and I am sorry that it is so little. But I have some advice to give you. While you are at the fairy's palace, she will offer you food and drink. Take it, but see to it that you do not swallow a crumb of food or a drop of anything to drink. If you do, you are lost."

Andor thanked her and hurried home to get some food to take with him. In a little bag that had belonged to his father he put a big piece of bread and some cheese. Then he filled a flask with water from the fountain and slipped it into his pocket. He kissed his mother again and went away, whistling to keep up his courage and to help him to think of ways to free Anemone.

Andor was so absorbed by his thoughts that he reached the middle of the forest before he knew it. He easily found the clearing where the spring was. When he reached the rim of the clear water, he hesitated a minute and then called out to the fairy.

"I am sent by the fairy of the fountain," he said.

The waters parted and as he passed between them, he heard a voice.

"Welcome, Andor," it said. "Good luck to you! I have asked the guards of the three gates to leave them open today, so that you

can easily reach the palace where your sister is a prisoner.”

“Thank you, Madam Spring,” said Andor. He went on looking at everything he passed carefully, for the least detail might be useful to him later.

A red glow in the distance grew brighter as he went on. It was the ruby gate. The doors were open and no guards were in sight. Andor walked through the gate and it closed behind him with a thunderous noise. At the same time twelve guards appeared and stood in line before it. They seemed to say, “You can get in here easily, but you can’t go out.” Poor Andor realized that he was a prisoner and he went on with lowered head.

The sapphire gate was lightly guarded. The guards were standing at each side. They looked at Andor in a somber way and let him pass without saying anything.

The diamond gate was closed. Andor knocked boldly.

“Who is there?” a rough voice asked.

“I’d like to see the fairy palace,” Andor answered. “They say there is nothing more beautiful in all the world.”

“No one can enter without our mistress’ permission,” replied the voice.

“Go and ask her then,” said Andor.

There was no answer. Andor asked himself what would happen if this last gate did not open. How could he rescue Anemone and how could he get back home? He waited for a long time. At last the gate turned slowly on its hinges and Andor hurried in.

He found himself in the gold and crystal palace. Its walls were sculptured in arabesques, bas-reliefs and garlands of fruits and flowers. He wandered about without meeting anyone. Then he heard music in the next room and opened the door.

In the middle of the room some girls were dancing gracefully, while others were playing on musical instruments. At the end of the room, seated on a sapphire throne, was the fairy dressed in light gleaming satin, luminous as a moonbeam. Pearls and diamonds were caught in her hair. Andor went toward her.

“What do you want?” asked the fairy.

“Oh, how beautiful she is,” Andor said to himself.

“What do you want?” repeated the fairy.

“To see your beautiful palace,” said Andor.

“I will show it to you myself,” said the fairy, “but first let us drink together a cup of the delicious wine I offer all my guests.”

She took two cups and held one out to

Andor. He had not forgotten the advice of the fairy of the fountain. He pretended to drink, but really let the wine run down his neck and into his clothes. While he was doing this, he was thinking. The wine must have been given to him with a purpose, but why?

Andor did not know what to do. So he decided to stay motionless. This was probably what the fairy expected, because she went away and sat down without bothering further about him. When he saw she was not watching him, he began walking up and down the room and looking at every one he saw. His heart was beating hard. What if he found his sister? But no, she was not there.

Where could she be? Andor went out to look for her in the other rooms of the palace. Finally he came to a little round one that had glass walls encrusted with gold leaves of marvelous beauty. A small girl was spinning there happily. It was Anemone! Andor threw his arms around her neck and was very much surprised when she pushed him away.

“Let me go. I don’t know you,” said Anemone.

“But I am your brother,” cried Andor. “Why don’t you know me, Anemone?”

“I have no brother and my name is not Anemone,” said the little girl.

Poor Andor thought that he was going crazy. He sat down with his head in his hands.

Then an idea came to him. The fairy of the fountain had forbidden him to eat or drink anything in the palace of the fairy of the Golden Wood. Anemone had not had such a warning. She would have taken whatever they offered and probably this forgetfulness of the past came from that. Andor lifted his head. The little girl was looking at him curiously.

“I made a mistake,” he said trying to smile. “Of course, you are not my sister.”

“How does it happen that I have never seen you before?” asked Anemone.

“I was away and have just come back,” answered Andor.

Then he thought it was a good chance to eat his lunch. He took some bread and some cheese, pulled the flask of water from his pocket and began to eat. Anemone watched him.

“What are you eating?” she said. “I have never seen anything like it? Is it good?”

“Very good,” said Andor.

“Please give me a little.”

Andor was about to refuse. He wanted to

save his food, because he did not know how long he might have to stay in the fairy's palace. But he thought that the bread and cheese that came from home, and especially the water from the good fairy of the fountain, might have a good effect on Anemone and perhaps bring back her memory. So he gave her some.

Anemone ate slowly and grew more thoughtful with every bite. Andor took a cup from his bag, poured a little water into it and gave it to her. When she had drunk the water, Anemone looked at her brother as if she saw him again after a long absence and could hardly recognize him. Finally she threw her arms around his neck.

"Andor, dear Andor," she cried, "how glad I am to see you again."

Then Andor was a happy boy! He hugged his sister and kissed her many times.

"Now that you know me," he said, "everything is easy. We must get away from here."

"Oh, yes, take me away, dear Andor. Take me home."

"We must first find a way to get out," said Andor.

He begged his sister to tell him all that had happened to her during her visit to the fairy. It took a long time and while they were talking, evening came.

“Let’s go to sleep,” said Andor, “so that if we have a chance, we can do a lot tomorrow.”

Andor waked early. He began at once to wander through the palace. He went to the stable of transparent crystal where the dazzling white horses were standing. He was surprised to find them wearing their harness trimmed with the famous silver bells. He asked them why.

“It’s because we think so much of our bells that we are afraid some one will steal them if we take them off,” said the horses.

Then Andor stretched out in a corner and pretended to be asleep. Really he was thinking. By evening his plans were made. In the middle of the night, when every one was asleep, Andor rose quietly. He went to the stable of the white horses with his knife in his hand. Going up to the first horse, he carefully cut off one of the bells from the harness. He did the same with the second and third horses, but the fourth horse moved a little. Andor was frightened and fled with only three bells in his pocket.

Then he went into the great room where the fairy’s throne was and took the golden cup and the jar of the wine of forgetfulness. After that he waited impatiently for dawn.

As soon as it began to grow light, he wakened his sister.

“Quick, Anemone, get up. We are going.”

He gave her the cup to carry, keeping the jar himself. The two children slipped out of the palace without a sound. When they reached the diamond gate, the six guards who had been sentinels all night were waking up their comrades. They were all yawning and rubbing their eyes.

“Brave guardians of the diamond gate,” said Andor, “the fairy sent me to give you some delicious wine which will help you after the fatigue of the night.”

The guards eagerly drank the wine that he gave them and promptly forgot their duties. So the children went on without any trouble.

“Now,” said Andor to his sister, “we are going to use another way.”

He put his hand in his pocket as he walked and shook the silver bells so skillfully that they sounded like the fairy’s carriage in the distance. They reached the Sapphire gate. The twelve guards were lined up in a row and looked so forbidding that Andor was tempted to run away. But he overcame his fear and went up to them with a careless air.

“The fairy, our mistress, has important business this morning,” he said. “She has asked us to order that all the gates be opened in advance, so that she will not waste time.”

The guards who could hear the sound of



HE WENT ON RUNNING AT FULL SPEED

the silver bells hastened to open the gate. The brother and sister passed through it. Suddenly the bells that Andor was shaking in his pocket stopped ringing. Andor shook them furiously, but it was no use. They were silent.

“What will become of us now!” cried Anemone. “We are lost!”

“Not yet,” said her brother. “Do everything you see me do. I have an idea.”

He went on running at full speed. When he was within hearing of the guards of the ruby gate, he called, “Help, help, come quickly! The fairy was going out on important business this morning, when a wheel of the carriage came off. They can’t fix it without your help.”

“That’s why we didn’t hear the bells any longer,” said one of the guards and they all hurried off without noticing that the children stayed behind.

Andor went quickly to the gate. Unfortunately it was closed. He began to make fun of it.

“Gate of rubies, you are not really closed,” he jeered. “Take care, a mouse could slip through or even a big rat. The fairy is coming and she will scold you.”

The gate had a bad temper. It was irritated by Andor’s teasing and opened to box

his ears. Quicker than a cat Andor pushed his sister in front of him and dashed through. The gate closed roughly. It caught the edge of Andor's jacket and held him prisoner.

"A-ha! I've got you!" cried the gate.

"Not yet," answered the boy.

He slipped his arms out of the jacket and left it hanging there. Then he took his sister by the hand and they began to run. Before long they reached the spring. The fairy had just gotten up and was standing at the entrance of her house.

"Oh, my poor children, do hurry," she said. "You will not be safe until you are out of the wood."

She watched them go, closed her door and went back to bed. She had a plan to help them.

The guards of the ruby gate were greatly astonished not to see the fairy's carriage in the road. They went through the sapphire gate taking its guards with them and reached the diamond gate. There they found the twelve guards still snoring. When they had awakened them, all the guards began to quarrel. They made so much noise that the fairy heard them. When she found out what had happened, she knew at once that Andor and Anemone had escaped.

"My carriage," she ordered.

In a second it was ready, the fairy jumped in and it rolled away at full speed through the diamond gate, the sapphire gate and up to the ruby gate. There the door of the spring was closed and it had to stop.

The fairy got out and knocked loudly. No answer. She knocked harder.

“Who is there?” asked a sleepy voice.

“Open the door,” said the fairy.

“I’m coming right away. I’m looking for my slippers,” answered the spring.

“Come without them,” called the fairy.

“Yes, and catch cold,” grumbled the spring.

“Well, why don’t you come?” shouted the fairy at the end of her patience.

“I’m putting on my dress,” answered the spring.

“Come without it,” said the fairy.

“Yes and catch more cold,” grumbled the spring.

“Will you never come?” called the fairy, shaking the door.

“I must brush my hair,” answered the spring.

“If you do not come at once, I will bewitch you,” said the furious fairy.

This time the spring was frightened and hurried to open the door.

The fairy went through like a whirlwind.

The children were still in the wood when they heard the silver bells and the galloping horses behind them.

“Oh, Andor, the fairy will catch us and take us back!” cried Anemone.

“No!” answered Andor. “Run as fast as you can and don’t turn around whatever happens.”

When the horses were very close, he threw down one of the silver bells. The first horse stopped to pick it up and the children gained a little ground. Then Andor threw down the second bell and again the horses stopped to pick it up. As he threw the third bell, he seized Anemone by the arm and dragged her as fast as he could to the edge of the forest. The children were saved!

The fairy was ashamed of her defeat and went back and locked herself up in her palace. She has driven in the forest often since then, but Anemone and her brother never go there. They seldom leave their mother and then only to play near the little fountain, where the friendly fairy sings her merriest songs to them.





PRINCESS AURORA

ONCE UPON A TIME a king and a queen had a daughter so lovely that no one could look at her without being enchanted. Her name was Aurora and a name has never been so well given, for her cheeks had the color of the early morning sky. When she was fifteen years old, her beauty was so famous that all the princes and lords of the neighborhood had asked to marry her.

Every day the princess became more beautiful and gracious. They had nicknamed her "The Marvelous One."

One evening when she came back from a ride in the forest that bordered the castle park, Princess Aurora looked at herself in a mirror. It seemed to her that her face had changed a little and that she was not as pretty as usual.

The next morning when she arose, the first thing she did was to look in her mirror. Alas, she was decidedly plain. After a few days the change in her face was so marked that everyone noticed it. Gradually her lovely face that had delighted all eyes became repulsively ugly.

The king and queen were in despair and summoned the most famous doctors of the kingdom. When the science of the doctors had failed, they called in charlatans, sorcerers and soothsayers. But their efforts too were in vain. The princess became so ugly that no one could bear to look at her.

Then the king had a notice put up everywhere promising an enormous reward to any one who could restore her beauty to the princess. All the people of the kingdom, rich and poor, began to concoct beauty waters, pastes and ointments. They searched through old books to find ancient recipes. They looked for ancient seeds in the granaries. But nothing helped to restore her loveliness. The poor princess became a monster of ugliness. She

did not want to go out any more and she cried all day.

It was not the loss of her beauty that she minded so much, as the disgust that showed on the faces of every one who looked at her. They did not dare to look at her, they could not look at her. And she suffered horribly for that reason.

She decided to go away and so she bought the clothes of a poor servant of the lower order. One evening she put them on, smeared soot on her hands and arms, so that their whiteness would not give her away, and over her head put a hood that hid her face completely.

She left the palace without any one's knowing. In her hand she carried a little package in which she had put the dress and jewels that she liked best to wear when she was beautiful. She felt that this symbol of her past good fortune would help her.

Princess Aurora went toward the forest where she intended to hide. It was night when she entered it. At first she walked very rapidly to get as far from the castle as possible. Then she walked more slowly. The forest seemed full of frightful, unknown beings that whispered and touched her and hid behind the trees like great shadows. She had a feeling that some one was behind her, ready

to seize her, and she was afraid to move. When she could not bear this agony any longer, she began to run. She felt all the time as if she were followed. She imagined that some one caught hold of her dress. Then she cried out and fell down unconscious.

When Princess Aurora came to herself, day was dawning. The calm fresh morning glided lightly through the trees, waking the birds and the little animals that ran through the grass. The princess tried to get up. Then she saw that her dress was caught by the thorns of a hawthorn tree.

She thought of her terrors of the night before and began to laugh. But all the same, she did not have the courage to stay in the forest. So she freed her dress and walked in the direction in which the trees seemed thinner.

Soon she came out of the wood into a meadow where an old woman, seated in front of her cabin, was milking her goat.

“Oh, my good mother,” said Aurora, going toward her, “would you give me a little milk? I am so hungry and thirsty.”

“Gladly, my child,” the old woman answered. “Come and sit down beside me.”

The princess wondered how the old woman had been able to guess that she was young in spite of her hood.

“What are you doing outdoors so early in the morning?” asked the owner of the goat. “Only the birds are awake at this hour.”

“I am going far from here to a farm where they have hired me as a shepherdess,” answered the princess.

And to escape more questions, she drank her milk quickly, thanked the woman and hurried away. She walked for several days until she reached the edge of her father’s kingdom. Then one evening she came upon a fine castle, surrounded by farm buildings and small houses.

They received her very hospitably in one of these buildings and asked her to stay and take care of the goats. The work was not hard. She had to go out at dawn, stay in the woods all day and gather the herd together in the evening to take them back to the farm. This life suited the princess. She could think of her misfortunes and weep all she wanted to while the goats browsed and gamboled.

One morning early, before any one was up at the farm, Aurora made use of the solitude to wash her arms and hands in the fountain. She did not like to see them so black and dirty all the time.

Now it happened that the lord of the castle was starting out on a hunt and passed by not far away. His name was Prince Gentil, be-

cause he was so kind and handsome. The princess had the loveliest hands and arms. They were as white as marble. Prince Gentil was astonished at such beauty in a goat girl. He was about to go nearer when the princess realized that some one was looking at her and disappeared into the goat stable.

The prince was bewildered during the hunt. He kept thinking of the charming hands and white arms. When he returned to the castle, he questioned his servants and found out that the person he had seen in the morning was a goat-tender, a poor creature that they had taken in through charity. He asked if she had very white hands and they answered that they were so covered with dirt that no one could tell their color.

This information did not satisfy the prince's curiosity. For a shepherdess to have the hands of a duchess was impossible. He began to believe that he had been dreaming.

Then one afternoon as he was walking in the woods, he met the herd of goats. Going ahead carefully, he separated the branches of a bush and saw the princess kneeling at the edge of a spring dabbling her hands. They were like glistening snow.

This time Prince Gentil knew he was not dreaming. He went toward her, took off his cap and bowed deeply.



THE PRINCESS WAS DABBLING HER HANDS

“Madam,” he said, “I do not know the reason you have for dressing in clothes not of your rank and I will not try to find out. It is not idle curiosity that moves me, but a great desire to be useful to you. Have you some wrong to avenge? Has some one injured you? I pledge myself and all who belong to me to your service, and beg you to use them as you wish.”

The princess was greatly astonished at this speech. She stood before the prince and could not find a word to say to him.

“You are mistaken, my lord,” she said at last. “I am what I seem to be, a poor girl earning her living by keeping goats.”

“That is impossible,” answered the prince quickly. “Your air, your manners and your language are those of a great lady.”

After a few days, the prince realized that he was thinking only of the shepherdess. He remembered her words and her questions. In short he had fallen in love with her. How could he manage to see her again?

He went to Chance, a god who always helps lovers. And so with the aid of Chance a few days later, Prince Gentil found himself face to face with Aurora who was taking her flock back to the castle.

“Oh, prince,” she cried, “you are wrong to appear. Why do you search for me again?”

“Madam, I swear I did not expect to meet you here. But since Chance has brought us together, let me stay with you for a few minutes. The solitude in which you live must seem sad to you.”

“Time does not seem long to those who can busy themselves remembering their misfortunes,” said the princess, sighing.

And the prince replied in such a charming way and with so much sympathy, that poor Aurora, happy to be comforted, did not dream of telling him not to see her again.

Of course Prince Gentil took advantage of this silent permission to see her. One day he screwed himself up to the point of asking the princess to take off the hood that hid her face. She refused. He asked her why she hid her face so obstinately. The princess did not answer.

Then the prince asked very sadly why she did not trust him. What had he done to deserve such harshness? He said he was ready to sacrifice his life to give her happiness. So much affection and kindness overcame the princess and weeping, she told him her story.

At first Gentil listened with astonishment, then with clear unbelief.

“You, ugly?” he exclaimed. “It is impossible. I would sooner believe you if you told me it is night right now. One has only to look

at your slender figure and graceful movements to be sure that your face is beautiful too.”

The princess assured him that she was telling the truth. The prince would not be convinced and continued to beg her to take off her hood. But his prayers were in vain. Then at the end of his patience, he called her a flirt and accused her of tormenting him. He strode away furiously.

“What misfortune!” thought the princess. “What have I done to deserve such things?”

After sobbing a while, she became calmer and began to plan what to do. The only thing was to leave at once. When evening came, she took her goats to the stable. Then without taking leave of any one, she set out feeling very sad and lonely.

At that moment Prince Gentil, disgusted and unhappy, was locking himself in his room and swearing that he would never pay any more attention to this girl, who made fun of him. But his resolution did not last long.

Only two or three days had gone by, when he went to the woods. What was his astonishment to see a great red-faced girl, opening startled eyes, in the place of the shepherdess who had the air of a queen. The prince hurried back to the castle to find out what had become of her. He was overcome

when he heard of the princess' departure. He ordered his horse saddled and set out at once in search of her.

It was not easy to find Aurora, for no one knew in what direction she had gone. But after much patient searching, he had word of her. One morning, the people living in a little hut told him that the person he was seeking had just gone by. Gentil got off his horse, tied it to a tree and took the path they showed him.

First it ran beside a stream whose clear water reflected the sky. Then it entered a little wood. The prince had taken only a few steps when he saw Aurora seated under a tree. Overjoyed at finding her he started to hurry to her when an idea stopped him. Smiling he thought it over for a minute, then closing his eyes, he went on feeling his way.

"Is there no one here? I am lost," he said.

The princess recognized his voice, got up quickly and started toward him.

"It seems to me I hear a voice," the prince went on. "Whoever you are, brave people, come to my aid. I cannot see. I am lost."

Aurora cried out and ran to him.

"You, blind? It's impossible!"

"Aurora," cried the prince, seizing the hand she held out to him, "it is your voice! I have found you at last."

“Come and sit down,” said the princess, guiding him to a mossy bank, “and tell me how this horrible thing happened to you.”

“Alas, my story is very simple,” sighed the prince. “After you left I spent several days in deep sorrow. Was it the tears that injured my eyes? One morning when I awoke, I was blind.”

The princess was weeping.

“Have you really a little pity for me?” asked the prince. “Are you weeping for my misfortunes?”

“Yes, certainly,” Aurora managed to say between sobs.

“How good you are. Let me feel your tears. I think they will do me good.”

As he said this, Gentil caught the princess’ head gently, pushed back her hood and kissed her on the forehead. At this instant he opened his eyes.

“I was sure you were beautiful,” he exclaimed.

Aurora hid her face in her hands.

“You have deceived me,” she said. “Don’t look at me. I am very ugly. Go away, please.”

“If you will not believe me, I hope you will have more faith in a mirror.”

He led her to the edge of the stream and she leaned over the water trembling. First she saw the prince’s smiling face and then

beside it another face that she thought had disappeared forever. She stood motionless. She did not dare move for fear the charming image would disappear. By what miracle had she become pretty again?

Gentil and Aurora sat down on the moss and told each other all their adventures. Then the prince went to find his horse. The princess mounted behind him and they went back to the castle. After they had rested, they set out in a carriage for the kingdom of the princess' parents.

The king and queen had been very sad since the disappearance of their daughter, and had gone into mourning with the whole court. They were very happy when they beheld Aurora again more beautiful than ever. They put away their black clothes and dressed all in pink. The pages and maids of honor who had found life very dull for several months, danced day and night to make up for lost time.

The king and queen had often heard Prince Gentil spoken of. He belonged to a famous family. They received him with all honor and gladly gave him their daughter's hand.

As for Gentil and Aurora, they lived for a long time and were very happy.



THE LOVE BIRD

THERE WAS ONCE a young girl who was more beautiful than can be imagined. Her name was Roselaine, but she was always called the beautiful Roselaine. She wore a long dress of white satin and her golden hair that floated in the breeze smelled of violets.

Every one who saw her told about her beauty and before long the beautiful Roselaine was known for more than five hundred leagues around her home.

She was an orphan with great riches as well as beauty and as soon as she was old enough to marry, suitors for her hand gathered from far and near. They were of all kinds, arrogant and modest, kings, princes,

barons, peasants and laborers. Each one did his best to bring himself to her notice. Some gave serenades and concerts, others planned fetes and dances, and still others paraded under her window in gorgeous costumes. The poorest ones went every morning to pick flowers to scatter on the ground about Roselaine's home.

There was a continual noise and bustle, a coming and going and a confusion beyond the imagination. The beautiful Roselaine soon grew tired of it. Her suitors were told that she did not wish to marry and that she begged them to leave. But the suitors would not go and the clamor continued. At last it became unbearable.

So the beautiful Roselaine planned to escape. In the country she had a great wonderful garden of which she was very fond. Many rare trees grew there and bore delicious fruits. There were lovely terraces of flowers, rose arbors and pretty little streams running here and there, that watered the beautiful place.

Roselaine had a pavilion of white marble built in the middle of the garden. It was decorated with sculptures of such delicate workmanship that it looked as if it were made of lace. The walls inside were of square rose-pink tiles, decorated with flowers and ara-

THE LOVE BIRD

besques. The furniture was covered with pale blue silk embroidered in silver. In every room the carpets were as soft and thick as feathers.

Roselaine had walls as high as cathedral towers built around the garden. They were so smoothly polished that not even a squirrel could climb them. The only entrance was through a very small cedar door that had golden hinges. When everything was ready, the beautiful Roselaine went into this retreat with a few servants and companions. She did not tell her suitors.

At first they thought her disappearance was just a whim, but the days and the weeks went by and the beautiful Roselaine stayed in her garden. Then the unhappy suitors gathered around the high walls with great lamentation. Some tried to scale the walls with long ladders, but only succeeded in breaking their heads. At last they grew tired of waiting and began to go home. One day ten left, the next thirty, until they were all gone but one.

He was a young man of a neighboring kingdom. He was agreeable, handsome, courteous, and his name was Myrtil. He was so timid that, although he had arrived there several months before, he had never dared to speak to the beautiful Roselaine. After

his rivals had departed, he settled down in the wood near the great walls, with his mind made up to see the beautiful Roselaine or die.

The servants who had come with him thought that their master was going crazy. They told him that his castle had been abandoned long enough and that the wisest thing would be for him to go home. Myrtil was angry. He told his servants that they were impudent and sent them back to care for his land in which they were so interested.

Myrtil liked being alone. Now, he could dream of the beautiful Roselaine and think of ways of getting into her garden. He tried climbing to the top of the tallest trees, but nearly broke his neck twenty times for his trouble. Then he made a bow and some arrows. He wrote songs filled with his love and his unhappiness. They were pretty poems for he was a good poet. He fastened the bits of paper to an arrow and tried to shoot it over the wall. But the wall was too high. He tried fifty times with no better luck. He used countless arrows. At last he gave up that plan.

What could he do? Myrtil searched his mind day and night without finding an idea. Completely beaten, he was sitting one morning at the foot of an oak. Hours passed and he sat in the same spot, lost in thought. Then

he heard his name called. He raised his head and saw the birds of the forest in a semicircle around him. He had not noticed their coming. There were redthroats, tomtits, chaffinches and many others. They were all looking at him in a pitying way out of their bright little eyes.

“Dear birds,” said Myrtil, “since you are so sorry for me, couldn’t you fly to the beautiful Roselaine and speak to her for me?”

“We should love to,” replied the birds, “but we cannot. You must have some one stronger and more eloquent. If distant journeys do not frighten you, go to the great Arlemonde Forest and find our brother, the love bird. He can help you.”

“But how shall I know your brother, the love bird, whom I have never seen?” said Myrtil.

“He has feathers the color of good luck and his song will so delight you that you will forget everything while listening to him. Have courage, Myrtil. Follow our advice without delay and go toward the west until you reach the great forest where the love bird lives.”

Myrtil thanked the birds and set out at once. He walked for many days and passed through many dangers. Once there was a great tempestuous river that he had to cross. Another time there was a wide marsh in

which he might have been drowned. Again there was a high range of mountains where a storm overtook him and threatened to toss him against the rocks. But none of these obstacles frightened Myrtil. He always overcame the difficulties by his courage and coolness.

One day he saw a long dark line on the horizon. It was the great Arlemonde Forest. Hurry as fast as he might, he could not reach the wood before night. But the next day at noon he walked under the trees. The place seemed gay and welcoming. Birds sang, insects buzzed. Between the dark tree trunks, broad paths stretched out into the distance. There were clearings with flowers and little ponds in which the trees dipped their low branches.

Where was the love bird?

Myrtil raised his head toward the leaves and called, "Love bird, where are you?"

A beautiful song answered him. Myrtil had never heard such marvelous notes. They were so sad and moving that tears came into his eyes. He clasped his hands and stood motionless. A noise of wings wakened him from his dream. The love bird had flown away. At first Myrtil was stupefied, then realizing what had happened, he was furious with himself. The love bird had been beside him and he had

not known enough to speak to it. How stupid he was!

The young man comforted himself a little by thinking that the next day he would act differently. It was growing dark and he had hardly time to find shelter for the night between two rocks.

At dawn he was up and running through the forest telling of his love for the beautiful Roselaine and calling the love bird. But the bird did not reply. All day long Myrtil talked with so much eloquence and feeling that the little beasts and birds of the forest came to listen to him. Only the love bird refused to listen. In the evening Myrtil was tired, but not at all discouraged.

Every day he called to the love bird and told his story. Sometimes the love bird made fun of him. At other times it broke into his story at the most touching places or it would sing of dawn at twilight. Or it would remain invisible. But Myrtil was always hoping.

At length, perhaps Myrtil's speeches and prayers tired the love bird, for it disappeared altogether. He could neither see nor hear it any more. Myrtil was worried. He went to all the animals round about to find out where the love bird had gone. None of them could tell him. Weary and discouraged at last, he started to leave the forest.

Then a quick rustling made him turn. The love bird was perched on a bush beside him.

“Myrtil,” said the love bird, “you thought that I was cruel and unfeeling. I wanted only to prove your love and faithfulness. Now I am convinced that you are worthy of my help. I will go with you on one condition. It is that you gather some of the fruits that the mermaid of the Blue Lake guards. The lake is at the other end of the forest. Go there and bring back to me what I ask for. Then I will go with you.”

No one has ever changed from despair to joy so quickly as Myrtil did when he heard these words. He did not stop to think of the difficulties of the task before him. He saw only success and he set out at once. The forest was enormous. He had to walk several days to cross it. Finally he saw the lake, blue as a sapphire, surrounded by a brilliant circle of pink and white water lilies.

Where could the fruits be? How could he get them?

A squirrel came along. Myrtil questioned it and learned that the mermaid came out of the lake every night at midnight, holding in her hand a branch of the fruit that grew in the depths of the water.

“Do you ask for the fruit or must you snatch it from her?” asked Myrtil.



THE LOVE BIRD WAS PERCHED ON A BUSH BESIDE HIM

“The mermaid is powerful,” answered the squirrel. “She will defend herself. If you go into the water, the water lilies that guard her dwelling will drag you to the bottom of the lake. Take a piece of wood and throw it into the water, and you will see what happens.”

Myrtil seized a large dry branch and threw it with all his might. Immediately the water lilies pushed up above the water and pulled the branch under. Myrtil was astonished.

“Do not venture on the lake,” said the squirrel. “The same thing would happen to you and you would be sure to perish.”

“Alas!” said Myrtil, “what shall I do? I have no wings.”

“Ask the birds,” said the squirrel. “Perhaps they can help you,” and the squirrel hopped away.

Myrtil spoke to the strongest and boldest of the birds of the forest.

“It is too dangerous,” they said. “We should escape the anger of the mermaid only by a miracle. Try to find something else. We wish you luck.”

Myrtil returned to the edge of the lake, thinking of all kinds of ways of reaching the fruit, but none of them seemed possible. He decided to wait for the appearance of the mermaid at midnight, hoping that what he saw would suggest something to him.

Just at midnight there was a light bubbling in the middle of the lake. An enormous water lily whose petals were closed rose slowly from the water. It opened and from its center sprang a slender white form. It was the mermaid. Her long hair covered her silver dress. In her right hand the fruits of the lake gleamed as if made of fire.

A moonbeam wandered carelessly over the water and stopped to play around the mermaid. When she disappeared, it fled rapidly toward the forest. Myrtil hurried after it. The idea had suddenly come to him to ask the moonbeam to help him.

The moonbeam went so quickly that Myrtil soon lost sight of it. The trees were dark and he wandered along not knowing in what direction he was going. A faint light in the distance attracted him. He began to run toward it and the light increased at every step. He came to the edge of a big clearing and there was the moonbeam dancing lightly on the fresh moss. Its gentle slow measure hardly touched the ground.

“I love lovers,” it said, when Myrtil asked for help, “and I will help you. You can count on me. Tomorrow evening I will gather the fruits of the Blue Lake and give them to you. You will find me on the shore at midnight.”

The following night Myrtil was on the lake

THE LOVE BIRD

shore and the moonbeam was flying around him. When the mermaid rose from the water lily, the moonbeam darted quickly in front of her and seized the fruit from her hand. The mermaid shrieked. The whole lake turned into a whirlpool and the waters beat noisily against each other.

Not at all frightened by the trouble it had caused, the moonbeam gazed at the branch, the color of gold, on which hung little berries that glowed like rubies. It gave the branch to Myrtil.

“You have saved my life,” said Myrtil. “How can I thank you for what you have done for me?”

The moonbeam smiled and went dancing off into the forest.

Myrtil was so eager to find the love bird again that he started back, although it was the middle of the night. The forest seemed even longer than it had before. But at last he recognized the bushes and trees around the home of the love bird.

“I have brought you the fruits of the Blue Lake,” he shouted joyfully.

The love bird flew out of the leaves and perched on his shoulder.

“Thank you, dear Myrtil,” it said. “You have brought me what I want most in the world. Now I am ready to follow you into

your country and to help you as much as I can. We will leave at dawn.”

Then the love bird took the branch, gleaming with magic fruit, and flew away.

At dawn Myrtil and his little companion started out. Myrtil wanted to go straight to the country of the beautiful Roselaine, but the love bird objected.

“I will help you only if you obey me in everything,” it said. “And I insist that we go first to your own home.”

So poor Myrtil had to check his impatience and take the road to his castle. His servants and vassals shouted with joy when he came into his own lands after so many months' absence.

The love bird had told him to choose the costume that became him best, to take his most spirited horse from the stables and to set out with an escort worthy of his rank.

So Myrtil did as the love bird said. He wore a robe of green silk. His velvet cap was trimmed with a long white feather, fastened with a jeweled clasp. He mounted a fine gray horse which he sat with perfect grace. The love bird looked at him with satisfaction and perching on his shoulder gave the signal for departure.

When they arrived in the country of the beautiful Roselaine, Myrtil left his retinue

THE LOVE BIRD

in the village and went alone with the love bird to the high walls of Roselaine's garden. When he was in front of the entrance gate, he said to the love bird, "I will wait here until you come back. If you do not succeed, I shall die!"

The love bird flew away. With three beats of its wings it disappeared.

The beautiful Roselaine had not left her room that day, because it was very warm. In the evening she went out to breathe the fresh night air and she leaned from her balcony. Above her head was a white rose bush that crowned her with flowers. A delicate perfume stole up to her from the garden.

The love bird was hidden among the roses. It began to sing. Roselaine was enchanted by its voice and listened without stirring. For a long time it sang. It told Myrtil's story, his dangerous journeys, his wonderful faithfulness, and the difficulties through which he had passed that he might tell the beautiful Roselaine of his love. She was as charmed with the tale as she had been with the song. The love bird came nearer to her and alighted on her hand.

"Dear little messenger," said the beautiful Roselaine, "where is the person of whom you are speaking?"

"He is in front of your gate and he has

sworn that he will not depart until you tell him what his chances are.”

“Do you think he really loves me?”

“If I had not thought so, I would not have come with him.”

“Will he always love me?”

“His heart will not change. Farewell, beautiful Roselaine. Dawn is coming. I must go back to my own country. Let me go before the sun gilds the sky.”

The beautiful Roselaine kissed the love bird and it flew away. She went back to her room, not knowing what to do. She did not want to leave her quiet garden where she had said she would stay forever. On the other hand she wanted very much to see the person who had gone through such extraordinary adventures for love of her. Her curiosity was stronger.

With stealthy steps, for her servants were still asleep, she went to the little cedar door and opened it softly. But quiet as she was, Myrtil heard her. He took off his cap quickly and knelt on the ground. The beautiful Roselaine looked at him and she realized that here was a man she could love.

And so the next day they were married and as far back as men can remember, such a beautiful couple had never been seen.



PERLINETTE

OH, MY DAUGHTER," said Perlinette's mother, "I feel very sick. What will become of you when I am gone?"

And Perlinette, seated near the bed where her mother had lain for many days, asked herself, "What will become of me?"

Perlinette was fifteen. She had blue eyes that were always smiling, black curly hair and a little mouth as red as a strawberry.

"Kiss me," her sick mother said to her.

The girl leaned over her. Her mother hugged her tenderly, sighed and died.

There was Perlinette all alone in the world. She wept day after day. At last she realized that her food was almost gone and that she must dry her eyes and decide what to do. She sat down by the fireplace opposite her cat Croque-Souris who was washing his paws with little dabs of his pink tongue. And because there was no one else to talk to, she talked to him.

“What shall I do, Croque-Souris? Shall I stay here? Shall I go away? What can I do?”

The cat listened with a grave air, his eyes half closed. Then he rubbed against her, meowing as he did when he asked for something to eat. When she did not give him anything, he jumped noiselessly onto the sill of the open window and disappeared.

Perlinette did not realize at once that he had gone. But after a little while she looked around and was surprised that the cat was not in the room. She called him. She went out to hunt for him. Croque-Souris could not be found. He must have gone to look for a house where the cupboards were better filled than were those of his mistress.

At first, Perlinette was very sad because her cat had forsaken her. Then she realized that Croque-Souris had given her advice in this way and that the wisest plan would be to

follow his example and go out to seek her fortune.

She put everything in the house carefully in order. She looked with tears in her eyes at the place where her mother used to sit. Heaving a sigh, she bravely closed the door behind her.

In the yard growing against the wall were three rose bushes, one of red roses, one of pink roses and one of white roses. Perlinette had planted them when she was a little girl. She loved them very much and had taken such good care of them that they had grown tall and beautiful. Perlinette picked three flowers, one from each bush, and fastened them to her waist. That was all she carried away with her.

There were hills toward the west that she had always wanted to explore, and so she went that way. After walking for several hours, Perlinette began to feel very hungry. Unfortunately the country was deserted and there was not a dwelling in sight. She went bravely on her way.

At last in the distance she saw a cabin built under an oak tree. It was half hidden by the branches of the tree. Perlinette hurried on and knocked at the door. An old woman, bent double over her cane, opened it.

“What do you want?” she grumbled.

“Please, madam,” said Perlinette timidly, “could you give me something to eat?”

“I have nothing,” said the old woman.

“I would be very grateful for anything, however small,” said Perlinette.

“Here is all I have,” said the good woman, as she took a great fistful of nuts out of her pocket and put them in Perlinette’s hand. The nuts were very slight comfort for the girl, but Perlinette thanked her graciously and went on her way.

Perlinette looked at the nuts. There were a number of little ones and five big ones.

“The little ones shall be my dinner,” she said to herself, “and I will keep the big ones for dessert.”

She sat down under an alder bush along the roadside to eat. She cracked the small nuts between her teeth and put the empty shells in a little heap beside her. The big ones looked hard to crack, and she found two stones to crack them with. But she had hardly touched the shell of the first nut when it opened and two little slippers danced out.

They were made of transparent glass and shone with the colors of the rainbow. They seemed to be in a great hurry and after making a little turn under Perlinette’s nose, they trotted away so quickly that they were out of sight in a minute.

Perlinette was astonished and rubbed her eyes and pinched herself to see if she were dreaming. She cracked the second nut and out of it came a silver blouse embroidered in gold, the most beautiful blouse imaginable. It swayed from side to side as if it were worn by a person who was overcome with wild laughter. Then swaying all the time, it vanished into the air.

The third nut was so hard that Perlinette could hardly crack it. At last she succeeded in breaking the edge of the shell and quick as a wink something silky slipped through the opening. It was a skirt of white satin trimmed with pearls. In its joy at being free it whirled and danced madly from side to side. Then with three great bounds it too disappeared.

From the fourth nut came a chariot of glass and silver drawn by four green grasshoppers. A great majestic beetle was the coachman. On the rose satin cushions inside two crickets were stretched contentedly on their backs, waving their feet in the air. The great beetle clicked his feet, the grasshoppers spread their wings and the chariot flew off.

What would be in the fifth nut?

It lay there on the stone all ready to be cracked. Perlinette looked at it and wondered what could be in it. Suddenly it sepa-

rated itself into two equal parts and a little man no bigger than her finger jumped out quickly. He wore a suit of changeable silk, the color of a pigeon's throat. He had a little sword in a scabbard and shoes with high red heels and silk rosettes. He took his hat off gracefully and pressed it against his heart as he bowed before Perlinette. Then he came forward making one bow after another.

"I am your husband, madam," he said, "and my name is Zinzolin. If you wish to follow me, I will take you to my castle."

Perlinette was so astonished that she could not say a word.

"It is a very beautiful castle," the tiny man went on, "and you will be very happy there."

"I do not care to come with you," said the girl at last, "I am too badly dressed."

"That does not matter, madam. You will soon have clothes as elegant as any you could wish."

Zinzolin whistled. There was a noise of hurrying feet and the golden slippers came trotting along. They placed themselves on Perlinette's feet and she was surprised to find how soft and light they were. Then the silver blouse sailed swiftly from the sky and slipped easily over her head and about her shoulders. And the satin skirt embroidered in pearls rushed up in a whirlwind and



THE SATIN SKIRT DROPPED OVER HER HEAD

dropped over her head. There she was dressed like a queen.

Then the beautiful glass and silver chariot stopped before her. The two crickets who had been lying on the cushions, had become two fine black and red lackeys, standing behind the carriage. They came to open the door and Perlinette stepped into the coach.

Zinzolin followed her. He was a queer figure with the two halves of his shell fastened to his belt. The two lackeys went back to their places, the grasshoppers shook their wings and the whole equipage rolled away in the air.

Perlinette was very comfortable. She looked at the clouds. The earth was so far below that she could not see it. After several hours of travel, she could see in the distance a castle built on the top of a mountain.

“That is my castle,” said Zinzolin. “We shall soon be there. Probably you will not be sorry to arrive.”

Perlinette admitted that she really began to feel a little tired. In a few minutes the chariot stopped before the entrance door. A joyous burst of music greeted their arrival. The castle was built of delicate rose jasper. The windows and roof were festooned with flowers that made the air sweet.

The travelers left the carriage and went

into the castle. The tiny entrance doors suddenly grew larger so that she could easily pass through.

Zinzolin led her through a number of rooms. The walls were of mother-of-pearl with red and blue reflections everywhere. He stopped in a room opening into a garden filled with fragrant flowers.

“Here you are, madam,” he said. “When you want anything, you have only to clap your hands together three times, like this, and you will be served. Do you want to try?”

Perlinette, who had eaten only a dozen nuts since morning, felt very hungry. So she clapped her hands three times and asked for a meal. Immediately a table covered with fruits, meats, cakes and jellies appeared as if carried in by some invisible hands.

Meanwhile Zinzolin had taken the pieces of his nut shell from his belt and placed them on the floor.

“You will allow me to retire, madam,” he said, settling himself into one of the halves. “I am not used to journeys and they tire me a great deal. When you need something, come and find me. I am always in one of the rooms of the palace.”

Then he put the other piece of shell over his head and rolled away. Perlinette had seen so many astonishing things in a few hours

that she was not greatly surprised at this queer way of acting. She ate her dinner and went to sleep.

The next day she spent in exploring the castle and the gardens. The flowers were very abundant there. The streams of running water and the fountains murmured gaily. It was a delightful place. Perlinette spent almost all of her time in the garden, seated under a rose arbor where she could smell the orange trees that edged the white marble walks.

Several days passed very quickly this way. Perlinette was so enchanted and delighted by everything she saw that she did not have time to think. Sometimes in one of the rooms of the castle she would come upon the nut in which Zinzolin was shut up. Doubtless he was asleep or resting and Perlinette did not dare to disturb him.

She soon grew used to living in a splendid palace. She was no longer surprised at being served with such miraculous speed. But the novelty grew less and less and she began to feel very much alone. She wanted to talk with some one. She would gladly have given her glass slippers, her satin skirt and her gold-embroidered blouse for the pleasure of chatting with someone for an hour or two.

One afternoon she could not stand it any

longer and went to look for Zinzolin. When she found the shell, she tapped on it. She had knocked only two or three times when the shell opened and Zinzolin stepped out, bowing.

“Good afternoon, madam,” he said, “you look as fresh as a rose. Do you like it here?”

“Very much,” replied Perlinette, “but—”

“I see how it is,” said the little man. “You want something. Would you like to have the furniture changed in your room? Do you need some dresses?”

Perlinette did not dare to say she was lonesome. She said that she was tired of wearing the same dress all the time. She wanted to have some others.

“So be it,” said Zinzolin. “Tomorrow when you wake up, clap your hands together three times and I think you will be satisfied.”

Perlinette thanked him. She would gladly have chatted longer, but she thought that he was looking eagerly at his nut and she went away.

All the rest of the afternoon she dreamed of the dresses, wondering what style and color they would be. She went to bed early to make the time go faster.

The next morning she was awake at dawn and clapped her hands three times. The door of the room opened wide and twelve dresses

marched one after another into the room. They stopped in front of the bed. They were of silk, velvet, chiffon, gold and silver cloth. Some were thin and light, like sea foam, some like flame while others had the delicate colors of twilight.

Perlinette jumped out of bed and began to try them on. They all fitted her perfectly and were very becoming. For several days she spent her time walking about the castle, dressed in her beautiful clothes and making deep curtseys before all the mirrors she passed. That amused her for some time. Then one morning she felt like yawning when she looked at her fine dresses and she realized that she was growing tired of them. She must find Zinzolin again and this time she must tell him how lonesome she was.

The nut shell was in its usual place in the palace and Zinzolin was fast asleep. When Perlinette wakened him, he greeted her with the greatest politeness. She hesitated and stood looking down at the toes of her little glass slippers. Zinzolin misunderstood.

“How stupid I am!” he exclaimed. “You have only one pair of slippers and I had not thought of giving you any others. Forgive me! Clap your hands three times when you wake up in the morning and twelve pairs of slippers will come to you.”

Perlinette thanked him and went away, her fancy taken by the thought of new slippers.

During the night she seemed to hear a mysterious trotting. In the morning she clapped her hands three times. There were hurried little footsteps, the door opened and twelve pairs of slippers entered in a row. When they reached Perlinette, they made a flank movement and stretched out in a line.

Oh, the lovely little slippers, dainty, graceful, charming, all embroidered with pearls and precious stones! She shouted with joy. The slippers were gay and loved nothing better than dancing. They skipped all alone to Perlinette's feet and soon her feet were doing ballet steps. She began to leap and whirl about the palace. Dressed in her beautiful clothes, she looked like a sparkling butterfly flying about in the rose and blue rooms.

One fine day, weary of so much dancing, Perlinette stopped out of breath before Zinzolin's shell. Zinzolin, by chance, was not asleep. Seated on the edge of the shell, his legs stretched out, he was dining on the honey from a vervaine blossom. When he saw Perlinette, he rose and greeted her graciously.

"Are you satisfied with your slippers, madam?" he asked.

“Very much so,” said Perlinette. “They are marvelous for dancing.”

And in her turn she asked him a question.

“What do you do all day?”

Zinzolin was greatly astonished.

“I sleep,” he said, opening his big eyes.

“And when you wake up?” asked Perlinette.

“I eat and then go back to sleep,” said the little man crisply.

He noticed then that Perlinette was hesitating as if she wanted to say something and could not make up her mind to do it.

“Did you come to ask me something?” he said. “Tell me frankly what you want and I shall be only too glad to make you happy.”

Perlinette wished to tell him that what she wanted more than anything else was a little company, but she did not dare.

“You have not thought of giving me jewels,” she said with a reproachful glance.

Zinzolin looked astonished.

“How stupid of me!” he said. “Why haven’t you told me before! Tomorrow morning you will find a casket filled with jewels in your room. I hope you will like them.”

Perlinette thanked him and went away only half satisfied, with her longing for company almost unbearable.

When she wakened the next morning, she

saw on the table beside her bed a casket of hammered gold. Its panels were ornamented with bouquets of flowers and leaves, designed in precious stones. Perlinette lifted the cover and was overwhelmed. There were jewels worthy of a queen on her coronation day.

Out they came one by one. The diamonds shone like the sun and the rubies seemed made of fire. Long strings of opals made her think of imprisoned moonlight. The emeralds gleamed mysteriously like the eyes of a wicked sorceress and clusters of pearls glimmered like pale mist.

Perlinette was enchanted by Zinzolin's gift and began to try on the necklaces, the tiaras and the rings. Each time, she went to look at herself in the mirror and smiled with satisfaction at her reflection.

Then she amused herself by making color combinations with her dresses and shoes. One day she would be dressed in white with rubies, on another day in cloth of gold with diamonds. She wore a pink dress adorned with emeralds and a sky blue dress with ropes of pearls.

But Perlinette began to feel lonesome again. Something or other was missing. She decided to find Zinzolin once more and ask him to stay with her.

Zinzolin was asleep in his shell. Perlinette

knocked and knocked again. At last he appeared, his coat a little wrinkled by his long sleep.

“I have slept two days,” he declared after his first greeting.

Perlinette held up her hands in despair.

“How can you?” she cried.

“I don’t know,” replied Zinzolin. “It is natural for me to sleep and I cannot do anything else. You do not feel the same way then?” he added, looking at her with great surprise.

“Certainly not,” said Perlinette quickly. “There are many things to do that are more amusing than sleeping.”

“Then you must stay awake a long time,” remarked Zinzolin. “How curious. I sleep always.”

“It is because you are alone and have no one to talk to,” answered Perlinette. “If you will let me stay and chat with you, you will not want to sleep any more.”

“Really?” said Zinzolin, who was already rubbing his eyes. “Let’s try. Tell me what you do all day. That interests me.”

Perlinette told first of her lovely long walks in the garden. She told him that she changed her dress four times a day and she told him of all the dancing she had done in the room of the castle.

Then to show her talent, she took her skirt daintily between her thumb and forefinger and began to turn and dance very gracefully. When she stopped before Zinzolin to receive his praise, she saw that he had gone to sleep. He was even snoring!

Perlinette was overcome with anger. She picked up one of the shells and tried to throw it at the impolite sleeper, but failed to hit him. Then leaving the shell on the floor, she went out and slammed the door.

Little Perlinette, as ruffled as an angry bird, hurried to her room, muttering to herself. She did not want to stay in the castle any longer. She felt she would die of loneliness. And this Zinzolin, this little mouse who was always asleep and could not keep awake five minutes at a time, he would not notice if she did go. She decided to go back and live in her own little house.

“I will go and look for Croque-Souris,” she said to herself. “He will keep me company. He does not talk, it is true, but at least he listens to me when I tell him something.”

Perlinette took off her gold-brocaded dress and her pretty slippers embroidered with pearls and put on her old clothes that she had kept carefully. When she unfolded them, she found the three roses that she had picked the day she started on her adventure. The flow-

ers were dry, but they still smelled sweet. The delicate, faraway odor reminded her of the little house where she had lived. She saw her mother's face again and it seemed as if she could hear her voice.

She crossed the room and went toward the great entrance hall. The doors did not open at first. Then, when they realized that she was leaving, they began to creak unhappily in a tone that seemed to say, "Don't go, don't go!" But Perlinette was hurrying too fast to pay any heed to them.

Zinzolin's castle was built on the top of a white marble mountain, so well polished and so brilliant that it looked as if it were made of sugar. There was no road to go down. There were no projections to cling to and the slope was very steep. Perlinette wondered at first how she could get down. Then she chose a place where the hill was less steep, sat down on the marble and slid to the bottom.

She arrived there a little out of breath. She was dazed for a moment, for the descent had been more rapid than she expected. Then she got up and shook out her clothes.

Which way should she go? Perlinette had come in a carriage that rolled through the clouds, and she had not seen what countries she was crossing. She did not know which

way to go. Then she thought of the three roses and took them from her waist. She threw them in the air with all her strength.

“I will go in the direction that they show me,” she said to herself.

The roses were caught by the breeze and turned slowly. Two of them flew away and one fell to the ground. That was the white rose. It had hardly touched the earth when it stirred strangely. Perlinette bent over and picked it up. Two butterflies came flying out of it. They fluttered around her cheeks and hair, then flew away. In a second they came back again. They did this several times, as if to say, “Come with us.”

Perlinette followed them, as they flew steadily in front of her. They led her to the bank of a stream that ran slowly between fresh meadows and rows of poplar trees. A little boat danced on the water and the butterflies rested on it.

Perlinette jumped into the boat and with the help of a stick that she found on the bank, she pushed it into midstream. The boat moved slowly over the water and she thought this way of traveling was delightful. She sailed all night and all the next day.

In the morning of the third day a chain of high mountains appeared on the horizon. They looked familiar but she could not re-

member where she had seen them. The river made a sharp turn at the foot of a mountain and when the boat was near the bank the butterflies flew over to it. Perlinette did not hesitate to follow them. The butterflies flew far ahead of her. She ran after them, but when she reached the top of the mountain, they had disappeared.

Before her she saw a great green land. It was the country where she had been born. The little valley where her house stood stretched out before her at the bottom of the hill.

Very much excited, she hurried on. How long the road seemed to her! She passed the hedge where she had cracked her nuts. Then she saw the great oak that had sheltered the old fairy's hut, but the fairy house had vanished. Perlinette was disappointed, but she hurried on.

Now and then she walked on tiptoe to try to see the roof of her house. She could see nothing but a tangle of pink, red, and white roses. She could not remember anything like that near her house. Finally she stopped amazed before the mass of flowers. The three rose bushes that she had planted now surrounded the whole house. They formed a sort of cage about it and were guarding her home carefully. They were guarding it only

too well, for she could not find a way to enter. She picked up a knife that was lying on the ground and was about to cut off a branch. But she could not cut those beautiful roses.

Perlinette wanted to get into her house and she began to cry. Then the roses felt sorry for her. They drew in their thorns. The branches parted and Perlinette saw a free path before her. She hurried up to the door and went in.

Everything was neat and arranged just as she had left it. A bit of fire quietly burned in the great fireplace, and what did she see stretched in front of the hearth but Croque-Souris! She rushed to him and took him in her arms.

“Oh, dear Croque-Souris, what has happened to you this long time? Who has fed you? Where have you been?” she asked him.

The cat did not reply. He simply closed his eyes and let her pet him.

She went around the room touching all the furniture and opening all the cupboards. When she was sure that nothing had changed during her absence, she suddenly felt hungry. She clapped her hands three times without thinking. Immediately the table was covered with a delicious meal. Perlinette opened her eyes very wide when she saw it. Was Zinzolin still thinking of her? Hadn't

he been angry at her leaving him? She was wondering so hard about it that she forgot to sit down at the table.

But Croque-Souris wakened and began to meow so loudly that she put some nice tidbits on a plate for him. Then she began to eat. She was thinking of Zinzolin, how good he had been to her, how hard he had tried to please her and how she had left him without even thanking him. She felt very much ashamed. When she had finished her dinner, she clapped three times and the plates flew away. Then she went to bed.

In the night she had a dream. She thought that she was in the rose jasper castle again and that she was running through all the rooms looking for Zinzolin. Finally she went into the rose garden and there under a bush where she had loved to sit, Zinzolin lay in one of his shells crying. Just as she opened her mouth to speak to him, she wakened.

It was beginning to grow light. A sunbeam that had found a way of slipping through a crack in the window danced over the end of Perlinette's nose. She rose. She had made up her mind to go back to Zinzolin to thank him and beg his pardon. As she dressed, she thought of the difficulties she would meet. How could she climb the marble mountain?

“Bah!” she said to herself. “I’ll do it some way.”

She was just putting on her skirt when she heard the sound of little bells in front of the house. She opened the door quickly and there was the chariot that had come out of the nut, just as gay as before with its rose cushions, its shining glass and its panels of hammered silver. Perlinette was delighted. She did not have to worry about her journey any more and it must be that Zinzolin wanted to say he forgave her by sending the coach. She took up Croque-Souris and climbed in.

The carriage moved off at a giddy speed. In the wink of an eye they had arrived. Nothing had changed at the castle. The doors grew larger and opened wide. Perlinette hurried in.

She was eager to see Zinzolin, but she could not find him in any of the rooms of the palace. Then she remembered her dream and went into the garden. She ran to the rose bush, but he was not there. What could have become of him? Perlinette went on looking. She would call and stop to listen for an answer. As she was passing a grotto surrounded by little waterfalls, she heard a voice and went in. In a dark corner, seated under a fig tree, Zinzolin was weeping. Perlinette ran over to him.

“Dear Zinzolin, why are you crying? I have come back.”

“How cruel you have been to me!” sighed the little man.

“Why did you go to sleep while I was talking to you?” cried Perlinette.

Zinzolin could not reply. He and Perlinette with their mouths and eyes open wide were staring at what had happened.

Croque-Souris had vanished and in his place a beautiful young woman stood smiling at them. Her hair was wound with garlands of roses and in her hand she held a little wand of transparent crystal.

“I am the fairy of the roses,” she said, “and I protect Zinzolin and you too, Perlinette, because you love flowers. I gave you the nuts and brought you here. One of my sisters, a wicked fairy, placed an evil spell on Zinzolin, but today the enchantment is ended and he is going to resume his former shape.”

The fairy waved her wand as she said these words and Zinzolin began to grow larger and larger. He did not stop until he was a head taller than Perlinette. He was a charming cavalier and he bowed gracefully before her and kissed her hand.

A few days later Perlinette and Zinzolin were married and lived a long time in the rose jasper castle.



THE PRINCESS AND THE GREEDY ONE

THERE WERE ONCE two sisters who lived in China because they were Chinese. They lived in a busy town on the edge of a yellow river and their little house looked like one on the stage.

One sister was named Peach Flower and the other Cherry Blossom. But for a long time their neighbors had not used these poetic names in speaking of them. They had nicknamed them the Princess and the Greedy One, because Peach Flower was lazy and never dreamed of doing anything at all and Cherry Blossom thought only of eating.

Unfortunately the Princess and the Greedy One were not rich, so that the Princess had

to do some work to keep the house in order and the Greedy One could not eat as much as she wished. So they were unhappy and quarrelsome. Everything that happened made them show their bad tempers.

The Greedy One scolded her sister for her laziness.

“If you’d only work your ten fingers, we could live more comfortably.”

The Princess answered by accusing the Greedy One of spending all their money on food and of making her work hard and depriving her of even the simplest ornaments that every one else in town had.

The Princess loved to have a pyramid of apples on a big plate in the room where she was, to perfume the air in the Chinese way. But she had to give that up, because her sister ate all the apples in a second and it was too expensive to buy such a quantity of fresh fruit every day.

One morning the Greedy One came back from market with three melons in addition to other food she had bought. She adored melons and she began to eat them at once.

“Give me a taste,” said the Princess who was lying on her couch.

“Come and get it,” answered the Greedy One, finishing the first melon.

“Really, Cherry Blossom, you aren’t polite

or you would be glad to bring it to me," the Princess answered.

"I don't care to have you make my share smaller," said the Greedy One, hastening to gobble down the second great melon.

At this point the Princess lost her temper and called her sister names in Chinese.

But the Greedy One calmly began on the third melon. She had eaten half of it, when the other half suddenly opened and an extraordinarily active, energetic, little being sprang out. He began to jump and to whirl about so rapidly that the sisters were breathless watching him. The Princess lay on her couch too astonished to move. The Greedy One sat motionless, knife in hand.

"Allow me, my good ladies," he said in a shrill little voice, "I am the elf, Tsineli, a wandering spirit who, when he passes over the roofs of houses, loves to listen to what people are saying inside. I have noticed that from this house I have never heard anything except sharp words and threats. So I decided that you must be very unhappy and that it was my duty to come to your aid. What is the trouble? What can I do to help you?"

The Princess and the Greedy One had risen quickly and stretched their hands toward the elf beseechingly. They both spoke at once with a deafening clamor.



"SPEAK ONE AT A TIME," HE ORDERED

“Speak one at a time,” he ordered.

“My lord,” said the Princess who was the elder, “we are poor. Our parents left us orphans when we were little. Since then we have been obliged to work from morning until night and often from night until morning. So we are at the end of our strength and I for my part feel that I cannot go on much longer without help.”

The Princess was so moved at the thought of such a speedy end that she pulled out her handkerchief to dry her eyes. The Greedy One took advantage of the pause to speak.

“My sister has told you the truth, noble lord, we have hardly enough to eat. Often we go without our dinners and I feel faint for lack of food. My greatest wish would be to be sure of a good meal every day.”

The elf listened gravely to the two sisters.

“I see,” he said, turning to the Princess, “that one of you would like to work less, and the other,” turning to the Greedy One, “would like to eat more.”

“That’s it exactly!” Peach Flower and Cherry Blossom cried in chorus.

“These wishes seem reasonable to me,” said the elf, “and I will grant them.”

He jumped lightly onto the Princess’ head and traced twelve strange figures on it with his finger.

“When you need help in your daily work,” he said to her, “blow twice straight ahead. Soon the work that tires you will be done.”

Then with a leap he went to the Greedy One’s head and did the same thing there.

“Every time you want anything to eat, blow once straight before you and it will appear on the table.”

The two sisters were dumb with astonishment and joy. Tsineli jumped to the table and went back into the melon that lay open on the plate. It closed tightly over him and disappeared up the chimney.

The flight of the dainty that the Greedy One liked so much made her cry out, “Help! Stop it!”

“Really you have no sense,” said her sister scornfully. “Now that you can have as many melons as you please, what does it matter if a part of one has flown away?”

“You are right,” said the Greedy One. “I want six watermelons,” she said.

She blew once and immediately six watermelons were in the room. Cherry Blossom hurried to eat them. The Princess was no less eager than her sister to try her power. She blew twice.

“I want a slice of the best watermelon put into my hand,” she said.

She had not finished her sentence when a

juicy bit of the best melon was placed gently on her knees.

The two sisters were enchanted. A delightful life began for them. The Greedy One feasted from morning until night. The rarest and most delicious foods were on her table at all times. As for the Princess, she spent her days stretched out in an armchair or on her couch. She did not stir a finger. Her only occupation was to blow so that she could be served in a thousand different ways.

With all this eating and resting, Cherry Blossom and Peach Flower changed rapidly. Peach Flower became so fat that she could hardly move and Cherry Blossom grew so fat that her legs would hardly hold her up. They were annoyed by their fatness and complained of it bitterly.

“You should move about more,” said the Greedy One to her sister.

“You should eat less,” said the Princess.

But the Princess had grown so used to having things done for her that she did not have the courage to do the least thing for herself. And the Greedy One could not keep from tasting and nibbling.

The two sisters had everything they wanted right at home and did not go out any more. Their neighbors began to wonder. One of them, Tchi Tchen, was a very curious

man. He went to call on them one day to find out why they stayed at home all the time.

“I pray that my honored neighbors will accept my thousand greetings,” he said as he entered. His little ferret eyes darted here and there about the room.

The sisters replied politely to his greeting and in order not to be outdone, the Princess asked, “How are your noble relatives?”

Tchi Tchen assumed an extremely humble air according to the rule of Chinese politeness and said modestly, “My three little dogs are not bad.”

At this moment the Greedy One, who had been staring at him, thought that he looked exactly like a roast chicken. Unable to control her longing, she blew lightly on Tchi Tchen and he was at once transformed into a roast chicken done to a turn.

“What have you done?” cried the Princess in terror.

The Greedy One was overwhelmed.

“We can’t eat Tchi Tchen nor take him back to his family this way,” groaned the Princess, wringing her hands in despair.

“Let’s blow,” said Cherry Blossom.

The two sisters blew until their breath was gone, but in vain. They could not turn their neighbor back into his original shape.

“What shall we do?” cried the Greedy One.

“Go to the market and buy three melons. Maybe the elf will be in one of them,” said the Princess.

It was a slight chance, but the Greedy One dared not miss it. She went as quickly as she could to the market and came back with three melons clasped to her heart. She was about to cut into one of them when it opened itself and Tsineli jumped out, more active and alert than ever.

“What do you want, my good ladies?” said he.

“My lord,” said the Greedy One, weeping, “give Tchi Tchen, whom you see there on the table, his original shape.”

“What!” said the elf. “This roast chicken which I see is your worthy neighbor?”

“Alas, I blew on him without thinking. I wanted roast chicken and I could not control my hunger. Oh, my lord, take back these dangerous gifts and give Tchi Tchen his own form again.”

“I’ll do what I can,” said the elf.

He lifted the roast chicken that was ten times heavier than he, as easily as if it had been a feather, and carried it into the garden. He made some magic motions and it vanished into the air. In its place Tchi Tchen appeared and walked quietly toward home, not seeming to remember anything.

The elf went back into the house. Peach Flower and Cherry Blossom thanked him happily.

“Did I hear you say,” he asked, “that you want me to take back the gifts I gave you?”

“Yes!” cried the two sisters.

“Why, don’t you like them any more?”

“We do not know how to make good use of them,” answered the Princess.

“It shall be as you wish,” said the elf gravely.

He jumped onto the head of the Princess and turned twice. Then he went to the Greedy One and turned twice. Then he settled himself in the watermelon which immediately disappeared through the window like a great balloon.

The two sisters were alone. The Princess took a broom and began to clean the room. The Greedy One went to the kitchen and began to prepare a simple meal for the evening. One had learned the value of work and the other of moderate eating, and since then they have lived happily.







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