ADVENTURES OF A BROWNIE

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THE ADVENTURES OF A BROWNIE

AS TOLD TO MY CHILD

BY

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"John Halifax, Gentleman"

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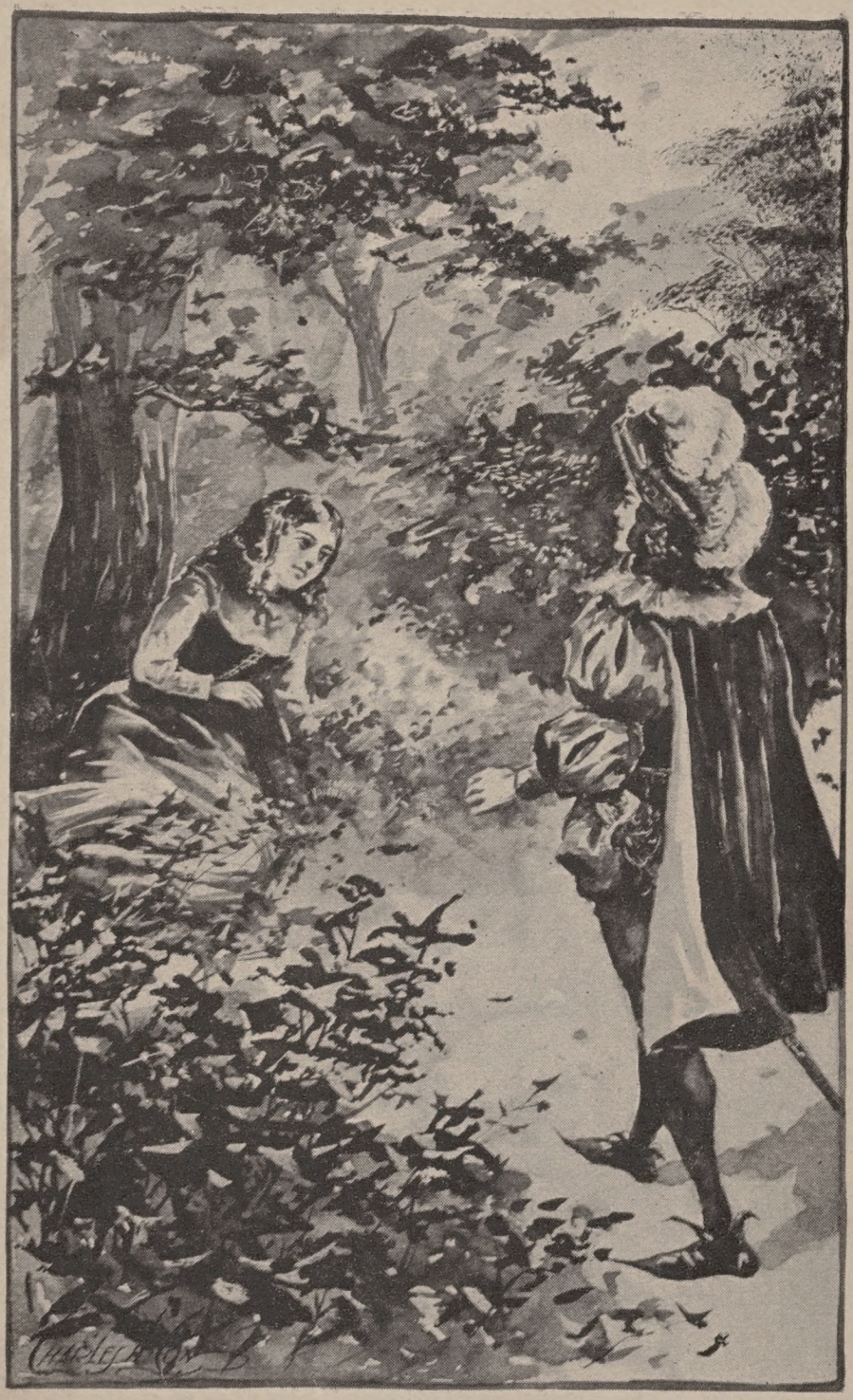


"She perceived a young gentleman."—Page 140.

Adventures of a Brownie.

THE ADVENTURES OF A BROWNIE.

ADVENTURE THE FIRST.

BROWNIE AND THE COOK.

There was once a little Brownie, who lived—where do you think he lived! in a coal-cellar.

Now a coal-cellar may seem a most curious place to choose to live in; but then a Brownie is a curious creature—a fairy, and yet not one of that sort of fairies who fly about on gossamer wings, and dance in the moonlight, and so on. He never dances; and as to wings, what use would they be to him in a coal-cellar? He is a sober, stay-at-home, household elf—nothing much to look at, even if you did see him, which you are not likely to do—only a little old man, about a foot high, all dressed in brown, with a brown face and hands, and a brown peaked cap, just the color of a brown mouse. And, like a mouse, he hides in corners—especially kitchen corners, and only comes out after dark when nobody is about, and so sometimes people call him Mr. Nobody.

I said you were not likely to see him. I never did, certainly, and never knew any body that did; but still, if you were to go into Devonshire, you would hear many funny stories about Brownies in general, and so I may as well tell you the adventures of this particular Brownie, who belonged to a family there; which family he had followed from house to house, most faithfully, for years and years.

A good many people had heard him—or supposed they had—when there were extraordinary noises about the house; noises which must have come from a mouse or a rat—or a Brownie. But nobody had ever seen him except the children—the three little boys and three little girls—who declared he often came to play with them when they were alone, and was the nicest companion in the world, though he was such an old man—hundreds of years old! He was full of fun and mischief, and up to all sorts of tricks, but he never did any body any harm unless they deserved it.

Brownie was supposed to live under one particular coal, in the darkest corner of the cellar, which was never allowed to be disturbed. Why he had chosen it nobody knew, and how he lived there, nobody knew either, nor what

he lived upon. Except that, ever since the family could remember, there had always been a bowl of milk put behind the coal-cellar door for the Brownie's supper. Perhaps he drank it—perhaps he didn't: anyhow, the bowl was always found empty next morning. The old Cook, who had lived all her life in the family, had never once forgotten to give Brownie his supper; but at last she died, and a young Cook came in her stead, who was very apt to forget everything. She was also both careless and lazy, and disliked taking the trouble to put a bowl of milk in the same place every night for Mr. Nobody. "She didn't believe in Brownies," she said; "she had never seen one, and seeing's believing." So she laughed at the other servants, who looked very grave, and put the bowl of milk in its place as often as they could, without saying much about it.

But once, when Brownie woke up, at his usual hour for rising—ten o'clock at night, and looked round in search of his supper—which was, in fact, his breakfast—he found nothing there. At first he could not imagine such neglect, and went smelling and smelling about for his bowl of milk—it was not always placed in the same corner now—but in vain.

"This will never do," said he; and, being

extremely hungry, began running about the coal-cellar to see what he could find. His eyes were as useful in the dark as in the light—like a pussy-cat's; but there was nothing to be seen—not even a potato paring, or a dry crust, or a well-gnawed bone, such as Tiny the terrier sometimes brought into the coal-cellar and left on the floor—nothing, in short, but heaps of coals and coal-dust; and even a Brownie can not eat that, you now.

"Can't stand this; quite impossible!" said the Brownie, tightening his belt to make his poor little inside feel less empty. He had been asleep so long —about a week, I believe, as was his habit when there was nothing to do —that he seemed ready to eat his own head, or his boots, or anything. "What's to be done? Since nobody brings my supper, I must go and fetch it."

He spoke quickly, for he always thought quickly, and made up his mind in a minute. To be sure, it was a very little mind, like his little body; but he did the best he could with it, and was not a bad sort of old fellow, after all. In the house he had never done any harm, and often some good, for he frightened away all the rats, mice, and black-beetles. Not the crickets—he liked them, as the old

Cook had done: she said they were such cheerful creatures, and always brought luck to the house. But the young Cook could not bear them, and used to pour boiling water down their holes, and set basins of beer for them with little wooden bridges up to the rim, that they might walk up, tumble in, and be drowned.

So there was not even a cricket singing in the silent house when Brownie put his head out of his coal-cellar door, which, to his surprise, he found open. Old Cook used to lock it every night, but the young Cook had left that key, and the kitchen and pantry keys too, all dangling in the lock, so that any thief might have got in, and wandered all over the house without being found out.

"Hurrah, here's luck!" cried Brownie, tossing his cap up in the air, and bounding right through the scullery into the kitchen. It was quite empty, but there was a good fire burning itself out—just for its own amusement, and the remains of a capital supper spread on the table—enough for half a dozen people being left still.

Would you like to know what there was? Devonshire cream, of course; and part of a large dish of junket, which is something like

curds and whey. Lots of bread-and-butter and cheese, and half an apple-pudding. Also a great jug of cider and another of milk, and several half-full glasses, and no end of dirty plates, knives, and forks. All were scattered about the table in the most untidy fashion, just as the servants had risen from their supper, without thinking to put anything away.

Brownie screwed up his little old face and turned up his button of a nose, and gave a long whistle. You might not believe it, seeing he lived in a coal-cellar; but really he liked tidiness, and always played his pranks upon disorderly or slovenly folk.

"Whew!" said he; "here's a chance. What a supper I'll get now!"

And he jumped on to a chair and thence to the table, but so quietly that the large black cat with four white paws called Muff, because she was so fat and soft and her fur so long, who sat dozing in front of the fire, just opened one eye and went to sleep again. She had tried to get her nose into the milk-jug, but it was too small; and the junket-dish was too deep for her to reach, except with one paw. She didn't care much for bread and cheese and apple-pudding, and was very well fed besides; so, after just wandering round the table, she

had jumped down from it again, and settled herself to sleep on the hearth.

But Brownie had no notion of going to sleep. He wanted his supper, and oh! what a supper he did eat! first one thing and then another, and then trying everything all over again. And oh! what a lot he drank—first milk and then cider, and then mixing the two together in a way that would have disagreed with anybody except a Brownie. As it was, he was obliged to slacken his belt several times, and at last took it off altogether. But he must have had a most extraordinary capacity for eating and drinking—since, after he had nearly cleared the table, he was just as lively as ever, and began jumping about on the table as if he had had no supper at all.

Now his jumping was a little awkward, for there happened to be a clean white table-cloth: as this was only Monday, it had had no time to get dirty—untidy as the Cook was. And you know Brownie lived in a coal-cellar, and his feet were black with running about in coal dust. So wherever he trod, he left the impression behind, until at last the whole table-cloth was covered with black marks.

Not that he minded this; in fact, he took great pains to make the cloth as dirty as pos-

sible; and then laughing loudly, "Ho, ho, ho!" leaped on to the hearth, and began teasing the cat; squeaking like a mouse, or chirping like a cricket, or buzzing like a fly; and altogether disturbing poor Pussy's mind so much, that she went and hid herself in the farthest corner, and left him the hearth all to himself, where he lay at ease till day-break.

Then, hearing a slight noise overhead, which might be the servants getting up, he jumped on to the table again—gobbled up the few remaining crumbs for his breakfast, and scampered off to his coal-cellar; where he hid himself under his big coal, and fell asleep for the day.

Well, the Cook came downstairs rather earlier than usual, for she remembered she had to clear off the remains of supper; but lo and behold, there was nothing left to clear! Every bit of food was eaten up—the cheese looked as if a dozen mice had been nibbling at it, and nibbled it down to the very rind; the milk and cider were all drunk—and mice don't care for milk and cider, you know. As for the apple-pudding, it had vanished altogether; and the dish was licked as clean as if Boxer, the yard-dog, had been at it in his hungriest mood.

"And my white table-cloth—oh, my clean

white table-cloth! What can have been done to it?" cried she, in amazement. For it was all over little black foot-marks, just the size of a baby's foot—only babies don't wear shoes with nails in them, and don't run about and climb on kitchen tables after all the family have gone to bed.

Cook was a little frightened; but her fright changed to anger when she saw the large black cat stretched comfortably on the hearth. Poor Muff had crept there for a little snooze after Brownie went away.

"You nasty cat! I see it all now; it's you that have eaten up all the supper; it's you that have been on my clean table-cloth with your dirty paws."

They were white paws, and as clean as possible; but Cook never thought of that, any more than she did of the fact that cats don't usually drink cider or eat apple-pudding.

"I'll teach you to come stealing food in this way; take that—and that—and that!"

Cook got hold of a broom and beat poor Pussy till the creature ran mewing away. She couldn't speak, you know—unfortunate cat! and tell people that it was Brownie who had done it all.

Next night Cook thought she would make all safe and sure; so, instead of letting the cat

sleep by the fire, she shut her up in the chilly coal-cellar, locked the door, put the key in her pocket, and went off to bed—leaving the supper as before.

When Brownie woke up and looked out of his hole, there was, as usual, no supper for him, and the cellar was close shut. He peered about, to try and find some cranny under the door to creep out at, but there was none. And he felt so hungry that he could almost have eaten the cat, who kept walking to and fro in a melancholy manner—only she was alive, and he couldn't well eat her alive: besides, he knew she was old, and had an idea she might be tough; so he merely said, politely, "How do you do, Mrs. Pussy?" to which she answered nothing—of course.

Something must be done, and luckily Brownies can do things which nobody else can do. So the thought he would change himself into a mouse, and gnaw a hole through the door. But then he suddenly remembered the cat, who, though he had decided not to eat her, might take this opportunity of eating him. So he thought it advisable to wait till she was fast asleep, which did not happen for a good while. At length, quite tired with walking about, Pussy turned round on her tail six times,

curled down in a corner, and fell fast asleep.

Immediately Brownie changed himself into the smallest mouse possible; and, taking care not to make the least noise, gnawed a hole in the door, and squeezed himself through, immediately turning into his proper shape again, for fear of accidents.

The kitchen fire was at its last glimmer; but it showed a better supper than even last night, for the Cook had had friends with her—a brother and two cousins—and they had been exceedingly merry. The food they had left behind was enough for three Brownies at least, but this one managed to eat it all up. Only once, in trying to cut a great slice of beef, he left the carving-knife and fork fall with such a clatter, that Tiny the terrier, who was tied up at the foot of the stairs, began to bark furiously. However, he brought her her puppy, which had been left in a basket in a corner of the kitchen, and so succeeded in quieting her.

After that he enjoyed himself amazingly, and made more marks than ever on the white table-cloth; for he began jumping about like a pea on a trencher, in order to make his particularly large supper agree with him.

Then, in the absence of the cat, he teased

the puppy for an hour or two, till, hearing the clock strike five, he thought it as well to turn into a mouse again, and creel back cautiously into his cellar. He was only just in time, for Muff opened one eye, and was just going to pounce upon him, when he changed himself back into a Brownie. She was so startled that she bounded away, her tail growing into twice its natural size, and her eyes gleaming like round green globes. But Brownie only said, "Ha, ha, ho!" and walked deliberately into his hole.

When Cook came down stairs and saw that the same thing had happened again—that the supper was all eaten, and the table-cloth blacker than ever with the extraordinary foot-marks, she was greatly puzzled. Who could have done it all? Not the cat, who came mewing out of the coal-cellar the minute she unlocked the door. Possibly a rat—but then would a rat have come within reach of Tiny?

"It must have been Tiny herself, or her puppy," which just came rolling out of its basket over Cook's feet. "You little wretch! You and your mother are the greatest nuisance imaginable. I'll punish you!"

And, quite forgetting that Tiny had been safely tied up all night, and that her poor little

puppy was so fat and helpless it could scarcely stand on its legs, to say nothing of jumping on chairs and tables, she gave them both such a thrashing that they ran howling together out of the kitchen door, where the kind little kitchen-maid took them up in her arms.

"You ought to have beaten the Brownie, if you could catch him," said she, in a whisper. "He'll do it again and again, you'll see, for he can't bear an untidy kitchen. You'd better do as poor old Cook did, and clear the supper things away, and put the odds and ends safe in the larder; also," she added, mysteriously, "if I were you, I'd put a bowl of milk behind the coal-cellar door."

"Nonsense!" answered the young Cook, and flounced away. But afterward she thought better of it, and did as she was advised, grumbling all the time, but doing it.

Next morning the milk was gone! Perhaps Brownie had drunk it up, anyhow nobody could say that he hadn't. As for the supper, Cook having safely laid it on the shelves of the larder, nobody touched it. And the table-cloth, which was wrapped up tidily and put in the dresser drawer, came out as clean as ever with

not a single black foot-mark upon it. No mischief being done, the cat and the dog both escaped beating, and Brownie played no more tricks with anybody—till the next time.

ADVENTURE THE SECOND.

BROWNIE AND THE CHERRY-TREE.

The "next time" was quick in coming, which was not wonderful, considering there was a Brownie in the house. Otherwise the house was like most other houses, and the family like most other families. The children also: they were sometimes good, sometimes naughty, like other children; but, on the whole, they deserved to have the pleasure of a Brownie to play with them, as they declared he did—many and many a time.

A favorite play-place was the orchard, where grew the biggest cherry-tree you ever saw. They called it their "castle," because it rose up ten feet from the ground in one thick stem, and then branched out into a circle of boughs, with a flat place in the middle, where two or three children could sit at once. There they often did sit, turn by turn, or one at a time—sometimes with a book, reading; and the biggest boy made a sort of rope-ladder by which they could climb up and down—which they did

all winter, and enjoyed their "castle" very much.

But one day in spring they found their ladder cut away! The Gardener had done it, saying it injured the tree, which was just coming into blossom. Now this Gardener was a rather gruff man, with a growling voice. He did not mean to be unkind, but he disliked children; he said they bothered him. But when they complained to their mother about the ladder, she agreed with Gardener that the tree must not be injured, as it bore the biggest cherries in all the neighborhood—so big that the old saying of "taking two bites at a cherry," came really true.

"Wait till the cherries are ripe," said she; and so the little people waited, and watched it through its leafing and blossoming—such sheets of blossom, white as snow!—till the fruit began to show, and grew large and red on every bough.

At last one morning the mother said, "Children, should you like to help gather the cherries to-day?"

"Hurrah!" they cried, "and not a day too soon; for we saw a flock of starlings in the next field—and if we don't clear the tree, they will."

"Very well; clear it, then. Only mind and fill my basket quite full, for preserving. What is over you may eat, if you like."

"Thank you, thank you!" and the children were eager to be off; but the mother stopped them till she could get the Gardener and his ladder.

"For it is he must climb the tree, not you; and you must do exactly as he tells you; and he will stop with you all the time and see that you don't come to harm."

This was no slight cloud on the children's happiness, and they begged hard to go alone.

"Please, might we? We will be so good!"

The mother shook her head. All the goodness in the world would not help them if they tumbled off the tree, or ate themselves sick with cherries. "You would not be safe, and I should be so unhappy!"

To make mother "unhappy" was the worst rebuke possible to these children; so they choked down their disappointment, and followed the Gardener as he walked on ahead, carrying his ladder on his shoulder. He looked very cross, and as if he did not like the children's company at all.

They were pretty good, on the whole, though they chattered a good deal; but Gardener said

not a word to them all the way to the orchard.

When they reached it, he just told them to "keep out of his way and not worrit him," which they politely promised, saying among themselves that they should not enjoy their cherry-gathering at all. But children who make the best of things, and try to be as good as they can, sometimes have fun unawares.

When the Gardener was steadying his ladder against the trunk of the cherry-tree, there was suddenly heard the barking of a dog, and a very fierce dog, too. First it seemed close beside them, then in the flower-garden, then in the fowl-yard.

Gardener dropped the ladder out of his hands. "It's that Boxer! He has got loose again! He will be running after my chickens, and dragging his broken chain all over my borders. And he is so fierce, and so delighted to get free. He'll bite anybody who ties him up, except me."

"Hadn't you better go and see after him?"

Gardener thought it was the eldest boy who spoke, and turned round angrily; but the little fellow had never opened his lips.

Here there was heard a still louder bark, and from a quite different part of the garden.

"There he is—I'm sure of it! jumping over my bedding-out plants, and breaking my cucumber frames. Abominable beast!—just let me catch him!"

Off Gardener darted in a violent passion, throwing the ladder down upon the grass, and forgetting all about the cherries and the children.

The instant he was gone, a shrill laugh, loud and merry, was heard close by, and a little brown old man's face peeped from behind the cherry-tree.

"How d'ye do?—Boxer was me. Didn't I bark well? Now I'm come to play with you."

The children clapped their hands; for they knew they were going to have some fun if Brownie was there—he was the best little playfellow in the world. And then they had him all to themselves. Nobody ever saw him except the children.

"Come on!" cried he, in his shrill voice, half like an old man's, half like a baby's. "Who'll begin to gather the cherries?"

They all looked blank; for the tree was so high to where the branches sprung, and besides, their mother had said they were not to climb. And the ladder lay flat upon the grass—far too heavy for little hands to move.

"What! you big boys don't expect a poor little fellow like me to lift the ladder all by myself? Try! I'll help you."

Whether he helped or not, no sooner had they taken hold of the ladder than it rose up, almost of its own accord, and fixed itself quite safely against the tree.

"But we must not climb—mother told us not," said the boys, ruefully. "Mother said we were to stand at the bottom and pick up the cherries."

"Very well. Obey your mother. I'll just run up the tree myself."

Before the words were out of his mouth Brownie had darted up the ladder like a monkey, and disappeared among the fruit-laden branches.

The children looked dismayed for a minute, till they saw a merry brown face peeping out from the green leaves at the very top of the tree.

"Biggest fruit always grows highest," cried the Brownie. "Stand in a row, all you children. Little boys, hold out your caps: little girls, make a bag of your pinafores. Open your mouths and shut your eyes, and see what the queen will send you."

They laughed and did as they were told;

whereupon they were drowned in a shower of cherries—cherries falling like hailstones, hitting them on their heads, their cheeks, their noses—filling their caps and pinafores, and then rolling and tumbling on to the grass, till it was strewn thick as leaves in autumn with the rosy fruit.

What a glorious scramble they had—these three little boys and three little girls! How they laughed and jumped and knocked heads together in picking up the cherries, yet never quarreled—for there were such heaps, it would have been ridiculous to squabble over them; and besides, whenever they began to quarrel, Brownie always ran away. Now he was the merriest of the lot; ran up and down the tree like a cat, helped to pick up the cherries, and was first-rate at filling the large market-basket.

"We were to eat as many as we liked, only we must first fill the basket," conscientiously said the eldest girl; upon which they all set to at once, and filled it to the brim.

"Now we'll have a dinner-party," cried the Brownie; and squatted down like a Turk, crossing his queer little legs, and sticking his elbows upon his knees, in a way that nobody but a Brownie could manage. "Sit in a ring! sit in a ring! and we'll see who can eat fastest."

The children obeyed. How many cherries they devoured, and how fast they did it, passes my capacity of telling. I only hope they were not ill next day, and that all the cherry-stones they swallowed by mistake did not disagree with them. But perhaps nothing does disagree with one when one dines with a Brownie. They ate so much, laughing in equal proportion, that they had quite forgotten the Gardener—when, all of a sudden, they heard him clicking angrily the orchard gate, and talking to himself as he walked through.

"That nasty dog! It wasn't Boxer, after all. A nice joke! to find him quietly asleep in his kennel after having hunted him, as I thought, from one end of the garden to the other! Now for the cherries and the children—bless us, where are the children? And the cherries? Why, the tree is as bare as a blackthorn in February! The starlings have been at it, after all. Oh dear! oh dear!"

"Oh dear! oh dear!" echoed a voice from behind the tree, followed by shouts of mocking laughter. Not from the children—they sat as demure as possible, all in a ring, with their hands before them, and in the center the huge basket of cherries, piled as full as it could possibly hold. But the Brownie had disappeared.

"You naughty brats, I'll have you punished!" cried the Gardener, furious at the laughter, for he never laughed himself. But as there was nothing wrong, the cherries being gathered—a very large crop—and the ladder found safe in its place—it was difficult to say what had been the harm done and who had done it.

So he went growling back to the house, carrying the cherries to the mistress, who coaxed him into good temper again, as she sometimes did; bidding also the children to behave well to him, since he was an old man, and not really bad—only cross. As for the little folks, she had not the slightest intention of punishing them; and, as for Brownie, it was impossible to catch him. So nobody was punished at all.

ADVENTURE THE THIRD.

BROWNIE IN THE FARM-YARD.

Which was a place where he did not often go, for he preferred being warm and snug in the house. But when he felt himself ill-used he would wander anywhere in order to play tricks upon those whom he thought had done him harm; for, being only a Brownie, and not a man, he did not understand that the best way to revenge yourself upon your enemies is either to let them alone or to pay them back good for evil—it disappoints them so much, and makes them so exceedingly ashamed of themselves.

One day Brownie overheard the Gardener advising the Cook to put sour milk into his bowl at night, instead of sweet.

"He'd never find out the difference, no more than the pigs do. Indeed, it's my belief that a pig, or dog, or something, empties the bowl, and not a Brownie, at all. It's just clean waste —that's what I say."

"Then you'd better hold your tongue, and mind your own business," returned the Cook,

who was of a sharp temper, and would not stand being meddled with. She began to abuse the Gardener soundly; but his wife, who was standing by, took his part, as she always did when any third party scolded him. So they all squabbled together, till Brownie, hid under his coal, put his little hands over his little ears.

"Dear me, what a noise these mortals do make when they quarrel! They quite deafen me. I must teach them better manners."

But when the Cook slammed the door to, and left Gardener and his wife alone, they too began to dispute between themselves.

"You make such a fuss over your nasty pigs, and get all the scraps for them," said the wife. "It's of much more importance that I should have everything Cook can spare for my chickens. Never were such fine chickens as my last brood!"

"I thought they were ducklings."

"How you catch me up, you rude old man! They are ducklings, and beauties, too—even though they have never seen water. Where's the pond you promised to make for me, I wonder?"

"Rubbish, woman! If my cows do without a pond, your ducklings may. And why will you

be so silly as to rear ducklings at all? Fine fat chickens are a deal better. You'll find out your mistake some day."

"And so will you when that old Alderney runs dry. You'll wish you had taken my advice, and fattened and sold her."

"Alderney cows won't sell for fattening, and women's advice is never worth two-pence. Yours isn't worth even a half-penny. What are you laughing at?"

"I wasn't laughing," said the wife, angrily; and, in truth, it was not she, but little Brownie, running under the barrow which the Gardener was wheeling along, and very much amused that people should be so silly as to squabble about nothing.

It was still early morning; for, whatever this old couple's faults might be, laziness was not one of them. The wife rose with the dawn to feed her poultry and collect her eggs; the husband also got through as much work by breakfast time as many an idle man does by noon. But Brownie had been beforehand with them this day.

When all the fowls came running to be fed, the big Brahma hen who had hatched the ducklings was seen wandering forlornly about, and clucking mournfully for her young brood—she

could not find them anywhere. Had she been able to speak, she might have told how a large white Aylesbury duck had waddled into the farm-yard, and waddled out again, coaxing them after her, no doubt in search of a pond. But missing they were, most certainly.

"Cluck, cluck, cluck!" mourned the miserable hen-mother—and, "Oh, my ducklings, my ducklings!" cried the Gardener's wife—"Who can have carried off my beautiful ducklings?"

"Rats, maybe," said the Gardener, cruelly, as he walked away. And as he went he heard the squeak of a rat below his wheelbarrow. But he could not catch it, any more than his wife could catch the Aylesbury duck. Of course not. Both were—the Brownie!

Just at this moment the six little people came running into the farm-yard. When they had been particularly good, they were sometimes allowed to go with Gardener a-milking, each carrying his or her own mug for a drink of milk, warm from the cow. They scampered after him—a noisy tribe, begging to be taken down to the field, and holding out their six mugs entreatingly.

"What! six cupfuls of milk, when I haven't a drop to spare, and Cook is always wanting

more? Ridiculous nonsense! Get along with you; you may come to the field—I can't hinder that—but you'll get no milk this day. Take your mugs back again to the kitchen."

The poor little folks made the best of a bad business, and obeyed; then followed Gardener down to the field, rather dolefully. But it was such a beautiful morning that they soon recovered their spirits. The grass shone with dew, like a sheet of diamonds, the clover smelled so sweet, and two skylarks were singing at one another high up in the sky. Several rabbits darted past, to their great amusement, especially one very large rabbit—brown, not gray—which dodged them in and out, and once nearly threw Gardener down, pail and all, by running across his feet; which set them all laughing, till they came where Dolly, the cow, lay chewing the cud under a large oak-tree.

It was great fun to stir her up, as usual, and lie down, one after the other, in the place where she had lain all night long, making the grass flat, and warm, and perfumy with her sweet breath. She let them do it, and then stood meekly by; for Dolly was the gentlest cow in the world.

But this morning something strange seemed to possess her. She altogether refused to be

milked—kicked, plunged, tossed over the pail, which was luckily empty.

"Bless the cow! what's wrong with her? It's surely you children's fault. Stand off, the whole lot of you. Soh, Dolly! good Dolly!"

But Dolly was anything but good. She stood switching her tail, and looking as savage as so mild an animal possibly could look.

"It's all your doing, you naughty children! You have been playing her some trick, I know," cried the Gardener, in great wrath.

They assured him they had done nothing, and, indeed, they looked as quiet as mice and as innocent as lambs. At length the biggest boy pointed out a large wasp which had settled in Dolly's ear.

"That accounts for everything," said the Gardener.

But it did not mend everything; for when he tried to drive it away it kept coming back and back again, and buzzing round his own head and the cow's, with a voice that the children thought was less like the buzz of a wasp than the sound of a person laughing. At length it frightened Dolly to such an extent that, with one wild bound she darted right away, and galloped off to the farther end of the field.

"I'll get a rope and tie her legs together," cried the Gardener, fiercely. "She shall repent giving me all this trouble—that she shall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed somebody. The Gardener thought it was the children, and gave one of them an angry cuff as he walked away. But they knew it was somebody else, and were not at all surprised when, the minute his back was turned, Dolly came walking quietly back, led by a little wee brown man who scarcely reached up to her knees. Yet she let him guide her, which he did as gently as possible, though the string he held her by was no thicker than a spider web, floating from one of her horns.

"Soh, Dolly! good Dolly!" cried Brownie, mimicking the Gardener's voice. "Now we'll see what we can do. I want my breakfast badly—don't you, little folks?"

Of course they did, for the morning air made them very hungry.

"Very well—wait a bit, though. Old people should be served first, you know. Besides, I want to go to bed."

Go to bed in the daylight! The children all laughed, and then looked quite shy and sorry, lest they might have seemed rude to the little Brownie. But he—he liked fun; and never took offense when none was meant.

He placed himself on the milking-stool, which was so high that his little legs were dangling half-way down, and milked and milked—Dolly standing as still as possible—till he had filled the whole pail. Most astonishing cow! she gave as much as two cows; and such delicious milk as it was—all frothing and yellow—richer than even Dolly's milk had ever been before. The children's mouths watered for it, but not a word said they—even when, instead of giving it to them, Brownie put his own mouth to the pail, and drank, and drank, till it seemed as if he were never going to stop. But it was decidedly a relief to them when he popped his head up again, and lo! the pail was as full as ever!

"Now, little ones, now's your turn. Where are your mugs?"

All answered mournfully, "We've got none. Gardener made us take them back again."

"Never mind—all right. Gather me half a dozen of the biggest buttercups you can find."

"What nonsense!" thought the children; but they did it. Brownie laid the flowers in a row upon the eldest girl's lap—blew upon them one by one, and each turned into the most beautiful golden cup that ever was seen!

"Now, then, every one take his own mug, and I'll fill it."

He milked away—each child got a drink, and then the cups were filled again. And all the while Dolly stood as quiet as possible—looking benignly round, as if she would be happy to supply milk to the whole parish, if the Brownie desired it.

"Soh, Dolly! Thank you, Dolly!" said he, again, mimicking the Gardener's voice, half growling, half coaxing. And while he spoke, the real voice was heard behind the hedge. There was a sound as of a great wasp flying away, which made Dolly prick up her ears, and look as if the old savageness was coming back upon her. The children snatched up their mugs, but there was no need, they had all turned into buttercups again.

Gardener jumped over the stile, as cross as two sticks, with an old rope in his hand.

"Oh, what a bother I've had! Breakfast ready, and no milk yet—and such a row as they are making over those lost ducklings. Stand back, you children, and don't hinder me a minute. No use begging—not a drop of milk shall you get. Hillo, Dolly? Quiet, old girl!"

Quiet enough she was this time—but you might as well have milked a plaster cow in a

London milk-shop. Not one ringing drop resounded against the empty pail; for, when they peeped in, the children saw, to their amazement, that it was empty.

"The creature's bewitched!" cried the Gardener, in a great fury. "Or else somebody has milked her dry already. Have you done it? or you?" he asked each of the children.

They might have said No—which was the literal truth—but then it would not have been the whole truth, for they knew quite well that Dolly had been milked, and also who had done it. And their mother had always taught them that to make a person believe a lie is nearly as bad as telling him one. Yet still they did not like to betray the kind little Brownie. Greatly puzzled, they hung their heads and said nothing.

"Look in your pail again," cried a voice from the other side of Dolly. And there at the bottom was just the usual quantity of milk—no more and no less.

The Gardener was very much astonished. "It must be the Brownie!" muttered he, in a frightened tone; and, taking off his hat, "Thank you, sir," said he to Mr. Nobody—at which the children all burst out laughing. But

they kept their own counsel, and he was afraid to ask them any more questions.

By-and-by his fright wore off a little. "I only hope the milk is good milk, and will poison nobody," said he, sulkily. "However, that's not my affair. You children had better tell your mother all about it. I left her in the farm-yard in a pretty state of mind about her ducklings."

Perhaps Brownie heard this, and was sorry, for he liked the children's mother, who had always been kind to him. Besides, he never did anybody harm who did not deserve it; and though, being a Brownie, he could hardly be said to have a conscience, he had something which stood in the place of one—a liking to see people happy rather than miserable.

So, instead of going to bed under his big coal for the day, when, after breakfast, the children and their mother came out to look at a new brood of chickens, he crept after them and hid behind the hen-coop where the old mother-hen was put, with her young ones round her.

There had been great difficulty in getting her in there, for she was a hen who hatched her brood on independent principles. Instead of sitting upon the nice nest that the Gardener

made for her, she had twice gone into a little wood close by and made a nest for herself, which nobody could ever find; and where she hatched in secret, coming every second day to be fed, and then vanishing again, till at last she re-appeared in triumph, with her chickens running after her. The first brood there had been twelve, but of this there were fourteen—all from her own eggs, of course, and she was uncommonly proud of them. So was the Gardener, so was the mistress—who liked all young things. Such a picture as they were! fourteen soft, yellow, fluffy things, running about after their mother. It had been a most troublesome business to catch—first her, and then them, to put them under the coop. The old hen resisted, and pecked furiously at Gardener's legs, and the chickens ran about in frantic terror, chirping wildly in answer to her clucking. At last, however, the little family was safe in shelter, and the chickens counted over, to see that none had been lost in the scuffle. How funny they were! looking so innocent and yet so wise, as chickens do—peering out at the world from under their mother's wing, or hopping over her back, or snuggled all together under her breast, so that nothing

was seen of them but a mass of yellow legs, like a great centiped.

"How happy the old hen is," said the children's mother, looking on, and then looking compassionately at that other forlorn old hen, who had hatched the ducklings, and kept wandering about the farm-yard, clucking miserably, "Those poor ducklings, what can have become of them? If rats had killed them, we should have found feathers or something; and weasels would have sucked their brains and left them. They must have been stolen, or wandered away, and died of cold and hunger—my poor ducklings!"

The mistress sighed, for she could not bear any living thing to suffer. And the children nearly cried at the thought of what might be happening to their pretty ducklings. That very minute a little wee brown face peered through a hole in the hen-coop, making the old mother-hen fly furiously at it—as she did at the slightest shadow of an enemy to her little ones. However, no harm happened—only a guinea-fowl suddenly ran across the farm-yard, screaming in its usual harsh voice. But it was not the usual sort of guinea-fowl, being larger and handsomer than any of theirs.

"Oh, what a beauty of a creature! how did it ever come into our farm-yard," cried the delighted children; and started off after it, to catch it if possible.

But they ran, and they ran—through the gate and out into the lane; and the guinea-fowl still ran on before them, until, turning round a corner, they lost sight of it, and immediately saw something else, equally curious. Sitting on the top of a big thistle—so big that he must have had to climb it just like a tree—was the Brownie. His legs were crossed, and his arms, too; his little brown cap was stuck knowingly on one side, and he was laughing heartily.

"How do you do? Here I am again. I thought I wouldn't go to bed after all. Shall I help you to find the ducklings? Very well! come along."

They crossed the field, Brownie running beside them, and as fast as they could, though he looked such an old man; and sometimes turning over on legs and arms like a Catherine wheel—which they tried to imitate, but generally failed, and only bruised their fingers and noses.

He lured them on and on till they came to the wood, and to a green path in it, which,

well as they knew the neighborhood, none of the children had ever seen before. It led to a most beautiful pond, as clear as crystal and as blue as the sky. Large trees grew round it, dipping their branches in the water, as if they were looking at themselves in a glass. And all about their roots were quantities of primroses—the biggest primroses the little girls had ever seen. Down they dropped on their fat knees, squashing down more primroses than they gathered, though they tried to gather them all; and the smallest child even began to cry because her hands were so full that the flowers dropped through her fingers. But the boys, older and more practical, rather despised primroses.

"I thought we had come to look for ducklings?" said the eldest. "Mother is fretting dreadfully about her ducklings. Where can they be?"

"Shut your eyes, and you'll see," said the Brownie, at which they all laughed, but did it; and when they opened their eyes again, what should they behold but a whole fleet of ducklings sailing out from the roots of an old willow-tree, one after the other, looking as fat and content as possible, and swimming as

naturally as if they had lived on a pond—and this particular pond, all their days.

"Count them," said the Brownie, "the whole eight—quite correct. And then try and catch them—if you can."

Easier said than done. The boys set to work with great satisfaction—boys do so enjoy hunting something. They coaxed them—they shouted at them—they threw little sticks at them; but as soon as they wanted them to go one way the fleet of ducklings immediately turned round and sailed another way, doing it so deliberately and majestically, that the children could not help laughing. As for little Brownie, he sat on a branch of the willow-tree, with his legs dangling down to the surface of the pond, kicking at the water-spiders, and grinning with all his might. At length, quite tired out, in spite of their fun, the children begged for his help, and he took compassion on them.

"Turn round three times and see what you can find," shouted he.

Immediately each little boy found in his arms, and each little girl in her pinafore, a fine fat duckling. And there being eight of them, the two elder children had each a couple. They were rather cold and damp, and slightly uncom-

fortable to cuddle, ducks not being used to cuddling. Poor things! they struggled hard to get away. But the children hugged them tight, and ran as fast as their legs could carry them through the wood, forgetting, in their joy, even to say "Thank you" to the little Brownie.

When they reached their mother she was as glad as they, for she never thought to see her ducklings again; and to have them back all alive and uninjured, and watch them running to the old hen, who received them with an ecstasy of delight, was so exciting, that nobody thought of asking a single question as to where they had been found.

When the mother did ask, the children told her all about Brownie's taking them to the beautiful pond—and what a wonderful pond it was; how green the trees were round it; and how large the primroses grew. They never tired of talking about it and seeking for it. But the odd thing was that, seek as they might, they never could find it again. Many a day did the little people roam about one by one, or all together, round the wood, and across the wood, and up and down the wood, often getting themselves sadly draggled with mud and torn

with brambles—but the beautiful pond they never found again.

Nor did the ducklings, I suppose; for they wandered no more from the farm-yard, to the old mother-hen's great content. They grew up into fat and respectable ducks—five white ones and three gray ones—waddling about, very content, though they never saw water, except the tank which was placed for them to paddle in. They lived a lazy, peaceful, pleasant life for a long time, and were at last killed and eaten with green peas, one after the other, to the family's great satisfaction, if not to their own.

ADVENTURE THE FOURTH.

BROWNIE'S RIDE.

For the little Brownie, though not given to horsemanship, did once take a ride, and a very remarkable one it was. Shall I tell you all about it?

The six little children got a present of something they had longed for all their lives—a pony. Not a rocking-horse, but a real live pony—a Shetland pony, too, which had traveled all the way from the Shetland Isles to Devonshire—where everybody wondered at it, for such a creature had not been seen in the neighborhood for years and years. She was no bigger than a donkey, and her coat, instead of being smooth like a horse, was shaggy like a young bear's. She had a long tail, which had never been cut, and such a deal of hair in her mane and over her eyes that it gave her quite a fierce countenance. In fact, among the mild and tame Devonshire beasts, the little Shetland pony looked almost like a wild animal. But in reality she was the gentlest crea-

ture in the world. Before she had been many days with them, she began to know the children quite well; followed them about, ate corn out of the bowl they held out to her; nay, one day, when the eldest little girl offered her bread-and-butter, she stooped her head and took it from the child's hand, just like a young lady. Indeed, Jess—that was her name—was altogether so lady-like in her behavior, that more than once Cook allowed her to walk in at the back door, when she stood politely warming her nose at the kitchen fire for a minute or two, then turned round and as politely walked out again. But she never did any mischief; and was so quiet and gentle a creature that she bade fair soon to become as great a pet in the household as the dog, the cat, the kittens, the puppies, the fowls, the ducks, the cow, the pig, and all the other members of the family.

The only one who disliked her, and grumbled at her, was the Gardener. This was odd; because, though cross to children, the old man was kind to dumb beasts. Even his pig knew his voice and grunted, and held out his nose to be scratched; and he always gave each successive pig a name, Jack or Dick, and called them by it, and was quite affectionate to them, one after the other, until the very day that they

were killed. But they were English pigs—and the pony was Scotch—and the Devonshire Gardener hated everything Scotch, he said; besides, he was not used to groom's work, and the pony required such a deal of grooming on account of her long hair. More than once Gardener threatened to clip it short, and turn her into a regular English pony but the children were in such distress at this that the mistress and mother forbade any such spoiling of Jessie's personal appearance.

At length, to keep things smooth, and to avoid the rough words and even blows which poor Jess sometimes got, they sought in the village for a boy to look after her, and found a great rough, shock-headed lad named Bill, who, for a few shillings a week, consented to come up every morning and learn the beginning of a groom's business; hoping to end, as his mother said he should, in sitting, like the squire's fat coachman, as broad as he was long, on the top of the hammer-cloth of a grand carriage, and do nothing all day but drive a pair of horses as stout as himself a few miles along the road and back again.

Bill would have liked this very much, he thought, if he could have been a coachman all at once, for if there was one thing he disliked,

it was work. He much preferred to lie in the sun all day and do nothing; and he only agreed to come and take care of Jess because she was such a very little pony, that looking after her seemed next door to doing nothing. But when he tried it, he found his mistake. True, Jess was a very gentle beast; so quiet that the old mother-hen with fourteen chicks used, instead of roosting with the rest of the fowls, to come regularly into the portion of the cow-shed which was partitioned off for a stable, and settle under a corner of Jess' manger for the night; and in the morning the chicks would be seen running about fearlessly among her feet and under her very nose.

But, for all that, she required a little management, for she did not like her long hair to be roughly handled; it took a long time to clean her; and, though she did not scream out like some silly little children when her hair was combed, I am afraid she sometimes kicked and bounced about, giving Bill a deal of trouble —all the more trouble, the more impatient Bill was.

And then he had to keep within call, for the children wanted their pony at all hours. She was their own especial property, and they insisted upon learning to ride—even before

they got a saddle. Hard work it was to stick on Jess' bare back, but by degrees the boys did it, turn and turn about, and even gave their sisters a turn too—a very little one—just once round the field and back again, which was quite enough, they considered, for girls. But they were very kind to their little sisters, held them on so that they could not fall, and led Jess carefully and quietly; and altogether behaved as elder brothers should.

Nor did they squabble very much among themselves, though sometimes it was rather difficult to keep their turns all fair, and remember accurately which was which. But they did their best, being, on the whole, extremely good children. And they were so happy to have their pony, that they would have been ashamed to quarrel over her.

Also, one very curious thing kept them on their good behavior. Whenever they did begin to misconduct themselves—to want to ride out of their turns, or to domineer over one another, or the boys, joining together, tried to domineer over the girls, as I grieve to say boys not seldom do—they used to hear in the air, right over their heads, the crack of an unseen whip. It was none of theirs, for they had not got a whip; that was a felicity which their father

had promised when they could all ride like young gentlemen and ladies; but there was no mistaking the sound—indeed, it always startled Jess so that she set off galloping, and could not be caught again for many minutes.

This happened several times, until one of them said, "Perhaps it's the Brownie." Whether it was or not, it made them behave better for a good while; till one unfortunate day the two eldest began contending which should ride foremost and which hindmost on Jess' back, when "Crick—crack!" went the whip in the air, frightening the pony so much that she kicked up her heels, tossed both the boys over her head, and scampered off, followed by a loud "Ha, ha, ha!"

It certainly did not come from the two boys, who had fallen—quite safely, but rather unpleasantly—into a large nettle-bed; whence they crawled out, rubbing their arms and legs, and looking too much ashamed to complain. But they were rather frightened and a little cross, for Jess took a skittish fit, and refused to be caught and mounted again, till the bell rang for school—when she grew as meek as possible. Too late—for the children were obliged to run indoors, and got no more rides for the whole day.

Jess was from this incident supposed to be on the same friendly terms with Brownie as were the rest of the household. Indeed, when she came, the children had taken care to lead her up to the coal-cellar door and introduce her properly—for they knew Brownie was very jealous of strangers, and often played them tricks. But after that piece of civility he would be sure, they thought, to take her under his protection. And sometimes, when the little Shetlander was restless and pricked up her ears, looking preternaturally wise under those shaggy brows of hers, the children used to say to one another, "Perhaps she sees the Brownie."

Whether she did or not, Jess sometimes seemed to see a good deal that others did not see, and was apparently a favorite with the Brownie, for she grew and thrived so much that she soon became the pride and delight of the children and of the whole family. You would hardly have known her for the rough, shaggy, half-starved little beast that had arrived a few weeks before. Her coat was so silky, her limbs so graceful, and her head so full of intelligence, that everybody admired her. Then, even Gardener began to admire her, too.

"I think I'll get upon her back; it will save me walking down to the village," said he, one day. And she actually carried him—though, as his feet nearly touched the ground, it looked as if the man were carrying the pony, and not the pony the man. And the children laughed so immoderately, that he never tried it afterward.

Nor Bill neither, though he had once thought he should like a ride, and got astride on Jess; but she quickly ducked her head down, and he tumbled over it. Evidently she had her own tastes as to her riders, and much preferred little people to big ones.

Pretty Jess! when cantering round the paddock with the young folk, she really was quite a picture. And when at last she got a saddle —a new, beautiful saddle, with a pommel to take off and on, so as to suit both boys and girls—how proud they all were, Jess included! That day they were allowed to take her into the market-town—Gardener leading her, as Bill could not be trusted—and everybody even the blacksmith, who hoped by-and-by to have the pleasure of shoeing her, said, what a beautiful pony she was!

After this, Gardener treated Jess a great deal better, and showed Bill how to groom her, and

kept him close at it, too, which Bill did not like at all. He was a very lazy lad, and whenever he could shirk work he did it; and many a time when the children wanted Jess, either there was nobody to saddle her, or she had not been properly groomed, or Bill was away at his dinner, and they had to wait till he came back and could put her in order to be taken out for a ride like a genteel animal—which I am afraid neither pony nor children enjoyed half so much as the old ways before Bill came.

Still, they were gradually becoming excellent little horsemen and horsewomen—even the youngest, only four years old, whom all the rest were very tender over, and who was often held on Jess' back and given a ride out of her turn because she was a good little girl, and never cried for it. And seldomer and seldomer was heard the mysterious sound of the whip in the air, which warned them of quarreling—Brownie hated quarreling.

In fact, their only trouble was Bill, who never came to his work in time, and never did things when wanted, and was ill-natured, lazy, and cross to the children, so that they disliked him very much.

"I wish the Brownie would punish you," said one of the boys; "you'd behave better then."

"The Brownie!" cried Bill, contemptuously; "if I caught him, I'd kick him up in the air like this!"

And he kicked up his cap—his only cap, it was—which, strange to relate, flew right up, ever so high, and lodged at the very top of a tree which overhung the stable, where it dangled for weeks and weeks, during which time poor Bill had to go bareheaded.

He was very much vexed, and revenged himself by vexing the children in all sorts of ways. They would have told their mother, and asked her to send Bill away, only she had a great many anxieties just then, for their dear old grandmother was very ill, and they did not like to make a fuss about anything that would trouble her.

So Bill staid on, and nobody found out what a bad, ill-natured, lazy boy he was.

But one day the mother was sent for suddenly, not knowing when she should be able to come home again. She was very sad, and so were the children, for they loved their grandmother—and as the carriage drove off they all stood crying round the front-door for ever so long.

The servants even cried too—all but Bill.

"It's an ill wind that blows nobody good,"

said he. "What a jolly time I shall have! I'll do nothing all day long. Those troublesome children shan't have Jess to ride; I'll keep her in the stable, and then she won't get dirty, and I shall have no trouble in cleaning her. Hurrah! what fun!"

He put his hands in his pockets, and sat whistling the best part of the afternoon.

The children had been so unhappy, that for that day they quite forgot Jess; but next morning, after lessons were over, they came begging for a ride.

"You can't get one. The stable-door's locked, and I've lost the key." (He had it in his pocket all the time.)

"How is poor Jess to get her dinner?" cried a thoughtful little girl. "Oh, how hungry she will be!"

And the child was quite in distress, as were the two other girls. But the boys were more angry than sorry.

"It was very stupid of you, Bill, to lose the key. Look about and find it, or else break open the door."

"I won't," said Bill; "I dare say the key will turn up before night, and if it doesn't, who cares? You get riding enough and too

much. I'll not bother myself about it, or Jess either."

And Bill sauntered away. He was a big fellow, and the little lads were rather afraid of him. But as he walked, he could not keep his hand out of his trousers-pocket, where the key felt growing heavier and heavier, till he expected it every minute to tumble through and come out at his boots—convicting him before all the children of having told a lie.

Nobody was in the habit of telling lies to them, so they never suspected him, but went innocently searching about for the key—Bill all the while clutching it fast. But every time he touched it, he felt his fingers pinched, as if there was a cockroach in his pocket—or a little lobster — or something, anyhow, that had claws. At last, fairly frightened, he made an excuse to go into the cow-shed, took the key out of his pocket and looked at it, and finally hid it in a corner of the manger, among the hay.

As he did so, he heard a most extraordinary laugh, which was certainly not from Dolly the cow, and, as he went out of the shed, he felt the same sort of pinch at his ankles, which made him so angry that he kept striking with

his whip in all directions, but hit nobody, for nobody was there.

But Jess—who, as soon as she heard the children's voices, had set up a most melancholy whinnying behind the locked stable-door—began to neigh energetically. And Boxer barked, and the hens cackled, and the guinea-fowls cried "Come back, come back!" in their usual insane fashion—indeed, the whole farmyard seemed in such an excited state, that the children got frightened lest Gardener should scold them, and ran away, leaving Bill master of the field.

What an idle day he had! How he sat on the wall with his hands in his pockets, and lounged upon the fence, and sauntered round the garden! At length, absolutely tired of doing nothing, he went and talked with the Gardener's wife while she was hanging out her clothes. Gardener had gone down to the lower field, with all the little folks after him, so that he knew nothing of Bill's idling, or it might have come to an end.

By-and-by Bill thought it was time to go home to his supper. "But first I'll give Jess her corn," said he, "double quantity, and then I need not come back to give her her breakfast so early in the morning. Soh! you greedy

beast! I'll be at you presently, if you don't stop that noise."

For Jess, at the sound of his footsteps, was heard to whinny in the most imploring manner, enough to have melted a heart of stone.

"The key—where on earth did I put the key?" cried Bill, whose constant habit it was to lay things out of his hand and then forget where he had put them, causing himself endless loss of time in searching for them—as now. At last he suddenly remembered the corner of the cow's manger, where he felt sure he had left it. But the key was not there.

"You can't have eaten it, you silly old cow," said he, striking Dolly on the nose as she rubbed herself against him—she was an affectionate beast. "Nor you, you stupid old hen!" kicking the mother of the brood, who, with her fourteen chicks, being shut out of their usual roosting-place — Jess' stable — kept pecking about under Dolly's legs. "It can't have gone without hands—of course it can't." But most certainly the key was gone.

What in the world should Bill do? Jess kept on making a pitiful complaining. No wonder, as she had not tasted food since morning. It would have made any kind-hearted person

quite sad to hear her, thinking how exceedingly hungry the poor pony must be.

Little did Bill care for that, or for anything, except that he should be sure to get into trouble as soon as he was found out. When he heard Gardener coming into the farm-yard, with the children after him, Bill bolted over the wall like a flash of lightning, and ran away home, leaving poor Jess to her fate.

All the way he seemed to hear at his heels a little dog yelping, and then a swarm of gnats buzzing round his head, and altogether was so perplexed and bewildered, that when he got into his mother's cottage he escaped into bed, and pulled the blanket over his ears to shut out the noise of the dog and the gnats, which at last turned into a sound like somebody laughing. It was not his mother, she didn't often laugh, poor soul!—Bill bothered her quite too much for that, and he knew it. Dreadfully frightened, he hid his head under the bedclothes, determined to go to sleep and think about nothing till next day.

Meantime Gardener returned, with all the little people trooping after him. He had been rather kinder to them than usual this day, because he knew their mother had gone away in trouble, and now he let them help him to

roll the gravel, and fetch up Dolly to be milked, and watch him milk her in the cow shed — where, it being nearly winter, she always spent the night now. They were so well amused that they forgot all about their disappointment as to the ride, and Jess did not remind them of it by her whinnying. For as soon as Bill was gone she grew quite silent.

At last one little girl, the one who had cried over Jess' being left hungry, remembered the poor pony, and, peeping through a crevice in the cow-shed, saw her stand contentedly munching at a large bowlful of corn.

"So Bill did find the key. I'm very glad," thought the kind little maiden, and to make sure looked again, when—what do you think she beheld squatting on the manger? Something brown—either a large brown rat, or a small brown man. But she held her tongue, since, being a very little girl, people sometimes laughed at her for the strange things she saw. She was quite certain she did see them, for all that.

So she and the rest of the children went indoors and to bed. When they were fast asleep, something happened. Something so curious, that the youngest boy, who, thinking he heard Jess neighing, got up to look out,

was afraid to tell, lest he, too, should be laughed at, and went back to bed immediately.

In the middle of the night, a little old brown man carrying a lantern, or at least having a light in his hand that looked like a lantern—went and unlocked Jess' stable, and patted her pretty head. At first she started, but soon she grew quiet and pleased, and let him do what he chose with her. He began rubbing her down, making the same funny hissing with his mouth that Bill did, and all grooms do—I never could find out why. But Jess evidently liked it, and stood as good as possible.

"Isn't it nice to be clean?" said the wee man, talking to her as if she were a human being, or a Brownie. "And I dare say your poor little legs ache with standing still so long. Shall we have a run together? The moon shines bright in the clear, cold night. Dear me! I'm talking poetry."

But Brownies are not poetical fairies, quite commonplace, and up to all sorts of work. So while he talked, he was saddling and bridling Jess, she not objecting in the least. Finally, he jumped on her back.

"'Off, said the stranger — off, off, and away!'" sang Brownie, mimicking a song of

the Cook's. People in that house often heard their songs repeated in the oddest way, from room to room, everybody fancying it was somebody else that did it. But it was only the Brownie. "Now, 'A southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaim it a hunting morning!' "

Or night—for it was the middle of the night, though bright as day—and Jess galloped and the Brownie sat on her back as merrily as if they had gone hunting together all their days.

Such a steeple-chase it was! They cleared the farm-yard at a single bound, and went flying down the road, and across the ploughed field, and into the wood. Then out into the open country, and by-and-by into a dark, muddy lane—and oh! how muddy Devonshire lanes can be sometimes!

"Let's go into the water to wash ourselves," said Brownie, and coaxed Jess into a deep stream, which she swam as bravely as possible —she had not had such a frolic since she left her native Shetland Isles. Up the bank she scrambled, her long hair dripping as if she had been a water-dog instead of a pony. Brownie, too, shook himself like a rat or a beaver, throwing a shower round him in all directions.

"Never mind; at it again, my lass!" and he

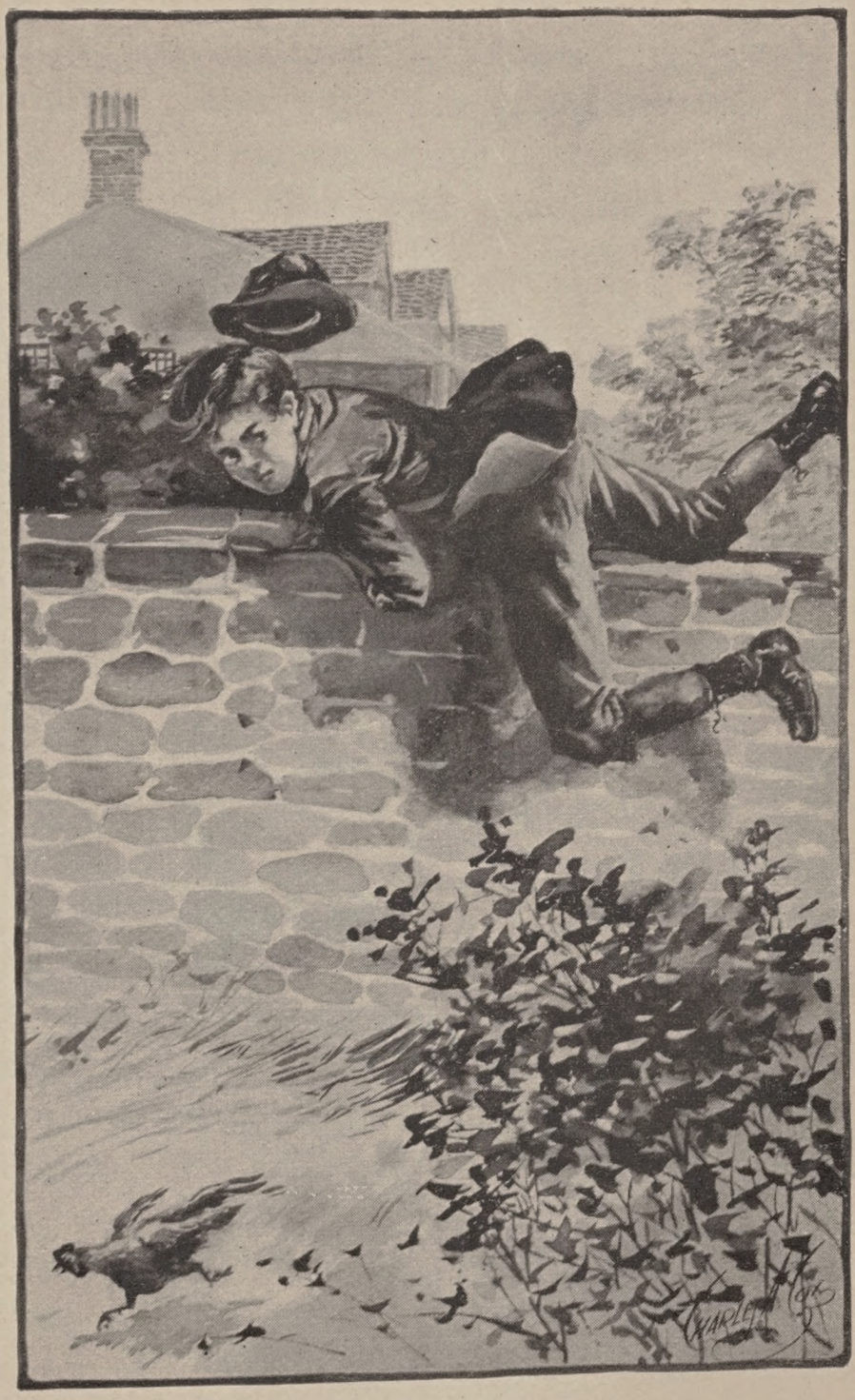
urged Jess into the water once more. Out she came, wetter and brisker than ever, and went back home through the lane, and the wood, and the ploughed field, galloping like the wind, and tossing back her ears and mane and tail, perfectly frantic with enjoyment.

But when she reached her stable, the plight she was in would have driven any respectable groom frantic, too. Her sides were white with foam, and the mud was sticking all over her like a plaster. As for her beautiful long hair, it was all caked together in a tangle, as if all the combs in the world would never make it smooth again. Her mane especially was plaited into knots, which people in Devonshire call elf-locks, and say, when they find them on their horses, that it is because the fairies have been riding them.

Certainly, poor Jess had been pretty well ridden that night! When, just as the dawn began to break, Gardener got up and looked into the farm-yard, his sharp eye caught sight of the stable-door, wide open.

"Well done, Bill," shouted he, "up early at last. One hour before breakfast is worth three after."

But no Bill was there; only Jess, trembling and shaking, all in a foam, and muddy from



"Bill bolted over the wall like lightning."—Page 60.

Adventures of a Brownie.

head to foot, but looking perfectly cheerful in her mind. And out from under her fore legs ran a small creature, which Gardener mistook for Tiny, only Tiny was gray, and this dog was brown, of course!

I should not like to tell you all that was said to Bill when, an hour after breakfast-time, he came skulking up to the farm. In fact, words failing, Gardener took a good stick and laid it about Bill's shoulders, saying he would either do this, or tell the mistress of him, and how he had left the stable-door open all night, and some bad fellow had stolen Jess, and galloped her all across the country, till, if she hadn't been the cleverest pony in the world, she never could have got back again.

Bill durst not contradict this explanation of the story, especially as the key was found hanging up in its proper place by the kitchen door. And when he went to fetch it, he heard the most extraordinary sound in the coal-cellar close by —like somebody snoring or laughing. Bill took to his heels, and did not come back for a whole hour.

But when he did come back, he made himself as busy as possible. He cleaned Jess, which was half a day's work at least. Then he took the little people a ride, and afterward

put his stable in the most beautiful order, and altogether was such a changed Bill, that Gardener told him he must have left himself at home and brought back somebody else: whether or not, the boy certainly improved, so that there was less occasion to find fault with him afterward.

Jess lived to be quite an old pony, and carried a great many people — little people always, for she herself never grew any bigger. But I don't think she ever carried a Brownie again.

ADVENTURE THE FIFTH.

BROWNIE ON THE ICE.

Winter was a grand time with the six little children, especially when they had frost and snow. This happened seldom enough for it to be the greatest possible treat when it did happen; and it never lasted very long, for the winters are warm in Devonshire.

There was a little lake three fields off, which made the most splendid sliding-place imaginable. No skaters went near it—it was not large enough; and besides, there was nobody to skate, the neighborhood being lonely. The lake itself looked the loneliest place imaginable. It was not very deep—not deep enough to drown a man—but it had a gravelly bottom, and was always very clear. Also, the trees round it grew so thick that they sheltered it completely from the wind; so, when it did freeze, it generally froze as smooth as a sheet of glass.

"The lake bears!" was such a grand event, and so rare, that when it did occur, the news

came at once to the farm, and the children carried it as quickly to their mother. For she had promised them that, if such a thing did happen this year—it did not happen every year—lessons should be stopped entirely, and they should all go down to the lake and slide, if they liked, all day long.

So one morning, just before Christmas, the eldest boy ran in with a countenance of great delight.

"Mother, mother, the lake bears!" (It was rather a compliment to call it a lake, it being only about twenty yards across and forty long.)

"The lake really bears!"

"Who says so?"

"Bill. Bill has been on it for an hour this morning, and has made us two such beautiful slides, he says—an up-slide and a down-slide. May we go to them directly?"

The mother hesitated.

"You promised, you know," pleaded the children.

"Very well, then; only be careful."

"And may we slide all day long, and never come home for dinner or anything?"

"Yes, if you like. Only Gardener must go with you, and stay all day."

This they did not like at all; nor, when Gardener was spoken to, did he.

"You bothering children! I wish you may all get a good ducking in the lake! Serve you right for making me lose a day's work, just to look after you little monkeys. I've a great mind to tell your mother I won't do it."

But he did not, being fond of his mistress. He was also fond of his work, but he had no notion of play. I think the saying of "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," must have been applied to him, for Gardener, whatever he had been as a boy, was certainly a dull and melancholy man. The children used to say that if he and idle Bill could have been kneaded into one, and baked in the oven—a very warm oven—they would have come out rather a pleasant person.

As it was, Gardener was anything but a pleasant person; above all, to spend a long day with, and on the ice, where one needs all one's cheerfulness and good-humor to bear pinched fingers and numbed toes and trips and tumbles, and various uncomfortablenesses.

"He'll growl at us all day long—he'll be a regular spoil-sport!" lamented the children. "Oh! mother, mightn't we go alone?"

"No!" said the mother; and her "No"

meant no, though she was always very kind. They argued the point no more, but started off, rather downhearted. But soon they regained their spirits, for it was a bright, clear, frosty day—the sun shining, though not enough to melt the ice, and just sufficient to lie like a thin sprinkling over the grass, and turn the brown branches into white ones. The little people danced along to keep themselves warm, carrying between them a basket which held their lunch. A very harmless lunch it was—just a large brown loaf and a lump of cheese, and a knife to cut it with. Tossing the basket about in their fun, they managed to tumble the knife out, and were having a search for it in the long grass, when Gardener came up, grumpily enough.

"To think of trusting you children with one of the table-knives and a basket! what a fool Cook must be! I'll tell her so; and if they're lost she'll blame me; give me the things."

He put the knife angrily in one pocket. "Perhaps it will cut a hole in it," said one of the children, in rather a pleased tone than otherwise; then he turned the lunch all out on the grass and crammed it in the other pocket, hiding the basket behind a hedge.

"I'm sure I'll not be at the trouble of carry-

ing it," said he, when the children cried out at this; "and you sha'n't carry it either, for you'll knock it about and spoil it. And as for your lunch getting warm in my pocket, why, so much the better this cold day."

It was not a lively joke, and they knew his pocket was very dirty; indeed, the little girls had seen him stuff a dead rat into it only the day before. They looked ready to cry; but there was no help for them, except going back and complaining to their mother, and they did not like to do that. Besides, they knew that, though Gardener was cross, he was trustworthy, and she would never let them go down to the lake without him.

So they followed him, trying to be as good as they could—though it was difficult work. One of them proposed pelting him with snowballs, as they pelted each other. But at the first—which fell in his neck—he turned round so furiously, that they never sent a second, but walked behind him as meek as mice.

As they went, they heard little steps pattering after them.

"Perhaps it is the Brownie coming to play with us—I wish he would," whispered the youngest girl to the eldest boy, whose hand she generally held; and then the little patter-

ing steps sounded again, traveling through the snow, but they saw nobody—so they said nothing.

The children would have liked to go straight to the ice; but Gardener insisted on taking them a mile round, to look at an extraordinary animal which a farmer there had just got—sent by his brother in Australia. The two old men stood gossiping so long that the children wearied extremely. Every minute seemed an hour till they got on the ice.

At last one of them pulled Gardener's coat-tails, and whispered that they were quite ready to go.

"Then I'm not," and he waited ever so much longer, and got a drink of hot cider, which made him quite lively for a little while.

But by the time they reached the lake, he was as cross as ever. He struck the ice with his stick, but made no attempt to see if it really did bear—though he would not allow the children to go one step upon it till he had tried.

"I know it doesn't bear, and you'll just have to go home again—a good thing, too—saves me from losing a day's work."

"Try, only try; Bill said it bore," implored the boys, and looked wistfully at the two beau-

tiful slides—just as Bill said, one up and one down—stretching all across the lake; "of course, it bears, or Bill could not have made these slides."

"Bill's an ass!" said the Gardener, and put his heavy foot cautiously on the ice. Just then there was seen jumping across it a creature which certainly had never been seen on ice before. It made the most extraordinary bounds on its long hind legs, with its little fore legs tucked up in front of it as if it wanted to carry a muff; and its long, stiff tail sticking out straight behind, to balance itself with, apparently. The children at first started with surprise, and then burst out laughing, for it was the funniest creature, and had the funniest way of getting along, that they had ever seen in their lives.

"It's the kangaroo!" cried Gardener, in great excitement. "It has got loose—and it's sure to be lost—and what a way Mr. Giles will be in! I must go and tell him. Or stop, I'll try and catch it."

But in vain—it darted once or twice across the ice, dodging him, as it were; and once coming so close that he nearly caught it by the tail—to the children's great delight—then it vanished entirely.

"I must go and tell Mr. Giles directly," said Gardener, and then stopped. For he had promised not to leave the children; and it was such a wild-goose chase, after an escaped kangaroo. But he might get half a crown as a reward, and he was sure of another glass of cider.

"You just stop quiet here, and I'll be back in five minutes," said he to the children. "You may go a little way on the ice—I think it's sound enough; only mind you don't tumble in, for there'll be nobody to pull you out."

"Oh, no," said the children, clapping their hands. They did not care for tumbling in, and were quite glad there was nobody there to pull them out. They hoped Gardener would stop a very long time away—only, as some one suggested when he was seen hurrying across the snowy field, he had taken away their lunch in his pocket, too.

"Never mind—we're not hungry yet. Now for a slide."

Off they darted, the three elder boys, with a good run; the biggest of the girls followed after them; and soon the whole four were skimming one after the other, as fast as a railway train, across the slippery ice. And, like a railway train, they had a collision, and all

came tumbling one over the other, with great screaming and laughter, to the high bank on the other side. The two younger ones stood mournfully watching the others from the opposite bank—when there stood beside them a small brown man.

"Ho-ho! little people," said he, coming between them and taking hold of a hand of each. His was so warm and theirs so cold, that it was quite comfortable. And then, somehow, they found in their open mouths a nice lozenge —I think it was peppermint, but am not sure; which comforted them still more.

"Did you want me to play with you?" cried the Brownie; "then here I am! What shall we do? Have a turn on the ice together?"

No sooner said than done. The two little children felt themselves floating along—it was more like floating than running—with Brownie between them; up the lake, and down the lake, and across the lake, not at all interfering with the sliders—indeed, it was a great deal better than sliding. Rosy and breathless, their toes so nice and warm, and their hands feeling like mince-pies just taken out of the oven—the little ones came to a stand-still.

The elder ones stopped their sliding, and looked toward Brownie with entreating eyes.

He swung himself up to a willow bough, and then turned head over heels on to the ice.

"Halloo! you don't mean to say you big ones want a race, too! Well, come along—if the two eldest will give a slide to the little ones."

He watched them take a tiny sister between them, and slide her up one slide and down another, screaming with delight. Then he took the two middle children in either hand.

"One, two, three, and away!" Off they started—scudding along as light as feathers and as fast as steam-engines, over the smooth, black ice, so clear that they could see the bits of stick and water-grasses frozen in it, and even the little fishes swimming far down below—if they had only looked long enough.

When all had had their fair turns, they began to be frightfully hungry.

"Catch a fish for dinner, and I'll lend you a hook," said Brownie. At which they all laughed, and then looked rather grave. Pulling a cold, raw, live fish from under the ice and eating it was not a pleasant idea of dinner. "Well, what would you like to have? Let the littl ne choose."

She said, after thinking a minute, that she should like a currant-cake.

"And I'd give you all a bit of it—a very

large bit—I would indeed!" added she, almost with the tears in her eyes—she was so very hungry.

"Do it, then!" said the Brownie, in his little squeaking voice.

Immediately the stone that the little girl was sitting on—a round, hard stone, and so cold!—turned into a nice hot cake—so hot that she jumped up directly. As soon as she saw what it was, she clapped her hands for joy.

"Oh, what a beautiful, beautiful cake! only we haven't got a knife to cut it."

The boys felt in all their pockets, but somehow their knives never were there when they were wanted.

"Look! you've got one in your hand!" said Brownie to the little one; and that minute a bit of stick she held turned into a bread-knife —silver, with an ivory handle—big enough and sharp enough, without being too sharp. For the youngest girl was not allowed to use sharp knives, though she liked cutting things excessively, especially cakes.

"That will do. Sit you down and carve the dinner. Fair shares, and don't let anybody eat too much. Now begin, ma'am," said the Brownie, quite politely, as if he had been ever so old.

Oh, how proud the little girl was! How bravely she set to work, and cut five of the biggest slices you ever saw, and gave them to her brothers and sisters, and was just going to take the sixth slice for herself, when she remembered the Brownie.

"I beg your pardon," said she, as politely as he, though she was such a very little girl, and turned round to the wee brown man. But he was nowhere to be seen. The slices of cake in the children's hands remained cake, and uncommonly good it was, and such substantial eating that it did nearly the same as dinner; but the cake itself turned suddenly to a stone again, and the knife into a bit of stick.

For there was the Gardener coming clumping along by the bank of the lake, and growling as he went.

"Have you got the kangaroo?" shouted the children, determined to be civil, if possible.

"This place is bewitched, I think," said he. "The kangaroo was fast asleep in the cow-shed. What! how dare you laugh at me?"

But they hadn't laughed at all. And they found it no laughing matter, poor children, when Gardener came on the ice, and began to scold them and order them about. He was

perfectly savage with crossness; for the people at Giles' Farm had laughed at him very much, and he did not like to be laughed at—and at the top of the field he had by chance met his mistress, and she had asked him severely how he could think of leaving the children alone.

Altogether, his conscience pricked him a good deal; and when people's consciences prick them, sometimes they get angry with other people, which is very silly, and only makes matters worse.

'What have you been doing all this time?" said he.

"All this five minutes?" said the eldest boy, mischievously; for Gardener was only to be away five minutes, and he had staid a full hour.

Also, when he fumbled in his pocket for the children's lunch—to stop their tongues, perhaps—he found it was not there.

They set up a great outcry; for, in spite of the cake, they could have eaten a little more. Indeed, the frost had such an effect upon all their appetites, that they felt not unlike that celebrated gentleman of whom it is told that

"He ate a cow, and ate a calf,
He ate an ox, and ate a half;
He ate a church, he ate the steeple,
He ate the priest, and all the people,
And said he hadn't had enough then."

"We're so hungry, so very hungry! Couldn't you go back again and fetch us some dinner?" cried they, entreatingly.

"Not I, indeed. You may go back to dinner yourselves. You shall, indeed, for I want my dinner, too. Two hours is plenty long enough to stop on the ice."

"It isn't two hours—it's only one."

"Well, one will do better than more. You're all right now—and you might soon tumble in, or break your legs on the slide. So come away home."

It wasn't kind of Gardeaer, and I don't wonder the children felt it hard; indeed, the eldest boy resisted stoutly.

"Mother said we might stop all day, and we will stop all day. You may go home if you like."

"I won't, and you shall!" said Gardener, smacking a whip that he carried in his hand. "Stop till I catch you, and I'll give you this about your back, my fine gentleman."

And he tried to follow, but the little fellow darted across the ice, objecting to be either caught or whipped. It may have been rather naughty, but I am afraid it was great fun dodging the Gardener up and down; he being too timid to go on the slippery ice, and some-

times getting so close that the whip nearly touched the lad.

"Bless us! there's the kangaroo again!" said he, starting. Just as he had caught the boy, and lifted the whip, the creature was seen hop-hopping from bank to bank. "I can't surely be mistaken this time; I must catch it."

Which seemed quite easy, for it limped as if it was lame, or as if the frost had bitten its toes, poor beast! Gardener went after it, walking cautiously on the slippery, crackling ice, and never minding whether or not he walked on the slides, though they called out to him that his nailed boots would spoil them.

But whether it was that ice which bears a boy will not bear a man, or whether at each lame step of the kangaroo there came a great crack, is more than I can tell. However, just as Gardener reached the middle of the lake, the ice suddenly broke, and in he popped. — The kangaroo too, apparently, for it was not seen afterward.

What a hullaballoo the poor man made! Not that he was drowning—the lake was too shallow to drown anybody; but he got terribly wet, and the water was very cold. He soon scrambled out, the boys helping him; and then he hobbled home as fast as he could, not even

saying thank you, or taking the least notice of them.

Indeed, nobody took any notice of them—nobody came to fetch them, and they might have staid sliding the whole afternoon. Only somehow they did not feel quite easy in their minds. And though the hole in the ice closed up immediately, and it seemed as firm as ever, still they did not like to slide upon it again.

"I think we had better go home and tell mother everything," said one of them. "Besides, we ought to see what has become of poor Gardener He was very wet."

"Yes; but oh, how funny he looked!" And they all burst out laughing at the recollection of the figure he cut, scrambling out through the ice with his trousers dripping up to the knees, and the water running out of his boots, making a little pool wherever he stepped.

"And it freezes so hard, that by the time he gets home his clothes will be as stiff as a board. His wife will have to put him to the fire to thaw before he can get out of them."

Again the little people burst into shouts of laughter. Although they laughed, they were a little sorry for poor old Gardener, and hoped no great harm had come to him, but that he had

got safe home and been dried by his own warm fire.

The frosty mist was beginning already to rise, and the sun, though still high up in the sky, looked like a ball of red-hot iron as the six children went homeward across the fields — merry enough still, but not quite so merry as they had been a few hours before.

"Let's hope mother won't be vexed with us," said they, "but will let us come back again to-morrow. It wasn't our fault that Gardener tumbled in."

As somebody said this, they all heard quite distinctly, "Ha, ha, ha!" and "Ho, ho, ho!" and a sound of little steps pattering behind.

But whatever they thought, nobody ventured to say that it was the fault of the Brownie.

ADVENTURE THE SIXTH AND LAST.

BROWNIE AND THE CLOTHES.

Till the next time; but when there is a Brownie in the house, no one can say that any of his tricks will be the last. For there's no stopping a Brownie, and no getting rid of him either. This one had followed the family from house to house, generation after generation—never any older, and sometimes seeming even to grow younger, by the tricks he played. In fact, though he looked like an old man, he was a perpetual child.

To the children he never did any harm, quite the contrary. And his chief misdoings were against those who vexed the children. But he gradually made friends with several of his grown-up enemies. Cook, for instance, who had ceased to be lazy at night and late in the morning, found no more black foot-marks on her white table-cloth. And Brownie found his basin of milk waiting for him, night after night, behind the coal-cellar door.

Biil, too, got on well enough with his pony,

and Jess was taken no more night-rides. No ducks were lost; and Dolly gave her milk quite comfortably to whoever milked her. Alas! this was either Bill or the Gardener's wife now. After that adventure on the ice, poor Gardener very seldom appeared; when he did, it was on two crutches, for he had had rheumatism in his feet, and could not stir outside his cottage door. Bill, therefore, had double work; which was probably all the better for Bill.

The garden had to take care of itself; but this being winter-time, it did not much signify. Besides, Brownie seldom went into the garden, except in summer; during the hard weather he preferred to stop in his coal-cellar. It might not have been a lively place, but it was warm, and he liked it.

He had company there, too; for when the cat had more kittens—the kitten he used to tease being grown up now—they were all put in a hamper in the coal-cellar; and of cold nights Brownie used to jump in beside them, and be as warm and as cozy as a kitten himself. The little things never were heard to mew; so it may be supposed they liked his society. And the old mother-cat evidently bore him no malice for the whipping she had got by mistake; so Brownie must have found means of

coaxing her over. One thing you may be sure of—all the while she and her kittens were in his coal-cellar, he took care never to turn himself into a mouse.

He was spending the winter, on the whole, very comfortably, without much trouble either to himself or his neighbors, when one day, the coal-cellar being nearly empty, two men, and a great wagon-load of coals behind them, came to the door, Gardener's wife following.

"My man says you're to give the cellar a good cleaning out before you put any more in," said she, in her sharp voice; "and don't be lazy about it. It'll not take you ten minutes, for it's nearly all coal-dust, except that one big lump in the corner—you might clear that out, too."

"Stop, it's the Brownie's lump! better not meddle with it," whispered the little scullery-maid.

"Don't you meddle with matters that can't concern you," said the Gardener's wife, who had been thinking what a nice help it would be to her fire. To be sure, it was not her lump of coal, but she thought she might take it; the mistress would never miss it or the Brownie either. He must be a very silly old Brownie to live under a lump of coal.

So she argued with herself, and made the men lift it. "You must lift it, you see, if you are to sweep the coal-cellar out clean. And you may as well put it on the barrow, and I'll wheel it out of your way."

This she said in quite a civil voice, lest they should tell of her, and stood by while it was being done. It was done without anything happening, except that a large rat ran out of the coal-cellar door, bouncing against her feet, and frightening her so much that she nearly tumbled down.

"See what nonsense it is to talk of Brownies living in a coal-cellar. Nothing lives there but rats, and I'll have them poisoned pretty soon, and get rid of them."

But she was rather frightened all the same, for the rat had been such a very big rat, and had looked at her, as it darted past, with such wild, bright, mischievous eyes—brown eyes, of course—that she all but jumped with surprise.

However, she had got her lump of coal, and was wheeling it quietly away, nobody seeing, to her cottage at the bottom of the garden. She was a hard-worked woman, and her husband's illness made things harder for her.

Still, she was not quite easy at taking what did not belong to her.

"I don't suppose anybody will miss the coal," she repeated. "I dare say the mistress would have given it to me if I had asked her; and as for its being the Brownie's lump — fudge! Bless us! what's that?"

For the barrow began to creak dreadfully, and every creak sounded like the cry of a child, just as if the wheel were going over its leg and crushing its poor little bones.

"What a horrid noise! I must grease the barrow. If only I knew where they keep the grease-box. All goes wrong, now my old man's laid up. Oh, dear! oh, dear!"

For suddenly the barrow had tilted over, though there was not a single stone near, and the big coal was tumbled on to the ground, where it broke into a thousand pieces. Gathering it up again was hopeless, and it made such a mess on the gravel-walk, that the old woman was thankful her misfortune happened behind the privet hedge, where nobody was likely to come.

"I'll take a broom and sweep it up to-morrow. Nobody goes near the orchard now, except me when I hang out the clothes; so I need say nothing about it to the old man or

anybody. But, ah! deary me, what a beautiful lot of coal I've lost!"

She stood and looked at it mournfully, and then went into her cottage, where she found two or three of the little children keeping Gardener company. They did not dislike to do this now; but he was so much kinder than he used to be—so quiet and patient, though he suffered very much. And he had never once reproached them for what they always remembered—how it was ever since he was on the ice with them that he had got the rheumatism.

So, one or other of them made a point of going to see him every day, and telling him all the funny things they could think of—indeed, it was a contest among them who should first make Gardener laugh. They did not succeed in doing that exactly; but they managed to make him smile; and he was always gentle and grateful to them; so that they sometimes thought it was rather nice his being ill.

But his wife was not pleasant; she grumbled all day long, and snapped at him and his visitors; being especially snappish this day, because she had lost her big coal.

"I can't have you children come bothering here," said she, crossly. "I want to wring out

my clothes, and hang them to dry. Be off with you!"

"Let us stop a little—just to tell Gardener this one curious thing about Dolly and the pig—and then we'll help you to take your clothes to the orchard; we can carry your basket between us—we can, indeed."

That was the last thing the woman wished; for she knew that the children would be sure to see the mess on the gravel-walk—and they were such inquisitive children—they noticed everything. They would want to know all about it, and how the bits of coal came there. It was a very awkward position. But people who take other people's property often do find themselves in awkward positions.

"Thank you, young gentlemen," said she, quite politely; "but, indeed, the basket is too heavy for you. However, you may stop and gossip a little longer with my old man. He likes it."

And, while they were shut up with Gardener in his bedroom, off she went, carrying the basket on her head, and hung her clothes carefully out—the big things on lines between the fruit trees, and the little things, such as stockings and pocket-handkerchiefs, stuck on the

gooseberry-bushes, or spread upon the clean green grass.

"Such a fine day as it is! they'll dry directly," said she, cheerfully, to herself. "Plenty of sun, and not a breath of wind to blow them about. I'll leave them for an hour or two, and come and fetch them in before it grows dark. Then I shall get all my folding done by bed-time, and have a clear day for ironing to-morrow."

But when she did fetch them in, having bundled them all together in the dusk of the evening, never was such a sight as those clothes! They were all twisted in the oddest way—the stockings furned inside out, with the heels and toes tucked into the legs; the sleeves of the shirts tied together in double knots, the pocket-handkerchiefs made into round balls, so tight that if you had pelted a person with them they would have given very hard blows indeed. And the whole looked as if, instead of lying quietly on the grass and bushes, they had been dragged through heaps of mud and then stamped upon, so that there was not a clean inch upon them from end to end.

"What a horrid mess!" cried the Gardener's wife, who had been at first very angry, and then very frightened. "But I know what it is;

that nasty Boxer has got loose again. It's he that has done it."

"Boxer wouldn't tie shirt-sleeves in double knots, or make balls of pocket-handkerchiefs," Gardener was heard to answer, solemnly.

"Then it's those horrid children; they are always up to some mischief or other—just let me catch them!"

"You'd better not," said somebody in a voice exactly like Gardener's, though he himself declared he had not spoken a word. Indeed, he was fast asleep.

"Well, it's the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of," the Gardener's wife said, supposing she was talking to her husband all the time; but soon she held her tongue, for she found here and there among the clothes all sorts of queer marks—marks of fingers, and toes, and heels, not in mud at all, but in coal-dust, as black as black could be.

Now, as the place where the big coal had tumbled out of the barrow was fully fifty yards from the orchard, and, as the coal could not come to the clothes, and the clothes could not go without hands, the only conclusion she could arrive at was—well, no particular conclusion at all!

It was too late that night to begin washing

again; besides, she was extremely tired, and her husband woke up rather worse than usual, so she just bundled the clothes up anyhow in a corner, put the kitchen to rights, and went mournfully to bed.

Next morning she got up long before it was light, washed her clothes through all over again, and, it being impossible to dry them by the fire, went out with them once more, and began spreading them out in their usual corner, in a hopeless and melancholy manner. While she was at it, the little folks came trooping around her. She didn't scold them this time, she was too low-spirited.

"No! my old man isn't any better, and I don't fancy he ever will be," said she, in answer to their questions. "And everything's going wrong with us—just listen!" And she told the trick which had been played her about the clothes.

The little people tried not to laugh, but it was so funny; and even now, the minute she had done hanging them out, there was something so droll in the way the clothes blew about, without any wind; the shirts hanging with their necks downward, as if there was a man inside them; and the drawers standing stiffly astride on the gooseberry-bushes, for all

the world as if they held a pair of legs still. As for Gardener's night-caps—long, white cotton, with a tassel at the top—they were alarming to look at; just like a head stuck on the top of a pole.

The whole thing was so peculiar, and the old woman so comical in her despair, that the children, after trying hard to keep it in, at last broke into shouts of laughter. She turned furiously upon them.

"It was you who did it!"

"No, indeed, it wasn't!" said they, jumping farther to escape her blows. For she had got one of her clothes-props, and was laying about her in the most reckless manner. However, she hurt nobody, and then she suddenly burst out, not laughing, but crying.

"It's a cruel thing, whoever has done it, to play such tricks on a poor old body like me, with a sick husband that she works hard for, and not a child to help her. But I don't care. I'll wash my clothes again, if it's twenty times over, and I'll hang them out again in the very place, just to make you all ashamed of yourselves."

Perhaps the little people were ashamed of themselves, though they really had not done the mischief. But they knew quite well who

had done it, and more than once they were about to tell; only they were afraid, if they did so, they should vex the Brownie so much that he would never come and play with them any more.

So they looked at one another without speaking, and when the Gardener's wife had emptied her basket and dried her eyes, they said to her, very kindly:

"Perhaps no harm may come to your clothes this time. We'll sit and watch them till they are dry."

"Just as you like; I don't care. Them that hides can find, and them that plays tricks knows how to stop 'em."

It was not a civil speech, but then things were hard for the poor old woman. She had been awake nearly all night, and up washing at daybreak; her eyes were red with crying, and her steps weary and slow. The little children felt quite sorry for her, and, instead of going to play, sat watching the clothes as patiently as possible.

Nothing came near them. Sometimes, as before, the things seemed to dance about without hands, and turn into odd shapes, as if there were people inside them; but not a creature was seen, and not a sound was heard. And

though there was neither wind nor sun, very soon all the linen was perfectly dry.

"Fetch one of mother's baskets, and we'll fold it up as tidily as possible—that is, the girls can do it, it's their business—and we boys will carry it safe to Gardener's cottage."

So said they, not liking to say that they could not trust it out of their sight for fear of Brownie, whom, indeed they were expecting to see peer round from every bush. They began to have a secret fear that he was rather a naughty Brownie; but then, as the eldest little girl whispered, "He was only a Brownie, and knew no better." Now they were growing quite big children, who would be men and women some time; when they hoped they would never do anything wrong. (Their parents hoped the same, but doubted it.)

In a serious and careful manner they folded up the clothes, and laid them one by one in the basket without any mischief, until, just as the two biggest boys were lifting their burden to carry it away, they felt something tugging at it from underneath.

"Halloo! Where are you taking all this rubbish? Better give it to me."

"No, if you please," said they, very civilly, not to offend the little brown man. "We'll

not trouble you, thanks! We'd rather do it ourselves; for poor old Gardener is very ill, and his wife is very miserable, and we are extremely sorry for them both."

"Extremely sorry!" cried Brownie, throwing up his cap in the air, and tumbling head over heels in an excited manner. "What in the world does extremely sorry mean?"

The children could not explain, especially to a Brownie; but they thought they understood —anyhow, they felt it. And they looked so sorrowful that the Brownie could not tell what to make of it.

He could not be said to be sorry, since, being a Brownie, and not a human being, knowing right from wrong, he never tried particularly to do right, and had no idea when he was doing wrong. But he seemed to have an idea that he was troubling the children, and he never liked to see them look unhappy.

So he turned head over heels six times running, and then came back again.

"The silly old woman! I washed her clothes for her last night in a way she didn't expect. I hadn't any soap, so I used a little mud and coal-dust, and very pretty they looked. Ha, ha, ha! Shall I wash them over again to-night?"

"Oh, no, please don't!" implored the children.

"Shall I starch and iron them? I'll do it beautifully. One — two — three, five— six — seven, Abracadabra, tum—tum—ti!" shouted he, jabbering all sorts of nonsense, as it seemed to the children, and playing such antics that they stood and stared in the utmost amazement, and quite forgot the clothes. When they looked round again, the basket was gone.

"Seek till you find, seek till you find,
Under the biggest gooseberry-bush, exactly to your mind."

They heard him singing this remarkable rhyme, long after they had lost sight of him. And then they all set about searching; but it was a long while before they found, and still longer before they could decide, which was the biggest gooseberry-bush, each child having his or her opinion—sometimes a very strong one — on the matter. At last they agreed to settle it by pulling half a dozen little sticks, to see which stick was the longest, and the child that held it was to decide the gooseberry-bush.

This done, underneath the branches what should they find but the identical basket of

clothes! only, instead of being roughly dried, they were all starched and ironed in the most beautiful manner. As for the shirts, they really were a picture to behold, and the stockings were all folded up, and even darned in one or two places, as neatly as possible. And strange to tell, there was not a single black mark of feet or fingers on any one of them.

"Kind little Brownie! clever little Brownie!" cried the children in chorus, and thought this was the most astonishing trick he had ever played.

What the Gardener's wife said about it, whether they told her anything, or allowed her to suppose that the clothes had been done in their own laundry instead of the Brownie's (wherever that establishment might be), is more than I can tell. Of one thing only I am certain—that the little people said nothing but what was true. Also, that the very minute they got home they told their mother everything.

But for a long time after that they were a good deal troubled. Gardener got better, and went hobbling about the place again, to his own and everybody's great content, and his wife was less sharp-tongued and complaining than usual—indeed, she had nothing to com-

plain of. All the family were very flourishing, except the little Brownie.

Often there was heard a curious sound all over the house; it might have been rats squeaking behind the wainscot—the elders said it was—but the children were sure it was a sort of weeping and wailing.

"They've stolen my coal,
And I haven't a hole
To hide in;
Not even a house
One could ask a mouse
To bide in."

A most forlorn tune it was, ending in a dreay minor key, and it lasted for months and months—at least the children said it did. And they were growing quite dull for want of a playfellow, when, by the greatest good luck in the world, there came to the house not only a new lot of kittens, but a new baby. And the new baby was everybody's pet, including the Brownie's.

From that time, though he was not often seen, he was continually heard up and down the staircase, where he was frequently mistaken for Tiny or the cat, and sent sharply down again, which was wasting a great deal of wholesome anger upon Mr. Nobody. Or

he lurked in odd corners of the nursery, whither the baby was seen crawling eagerly after nothing in particular, or sitting laughing with all her might at something—probably her own toes.

But, as Brownie was never seen, he was never suspected. And since he did no mischief—neither pinched the baby nor broke the toys, left no soap in the bath and no footmarks about the room—but was always a well-conducted Brownie in every way, he was allowed to inhabit the nursery (or supposed to do so, since, as nobody saw him, nobody could prevent him), until the children were grown up into men and women.

After that he retired into his coal-cellar, and, for all I know, he may live there still, and have gone through hundreds of adventures since; but as I never heard them, I can't tell them. Only I think, if I could be a little child again, I should exceedingly like a Brownie to play with me. Should not you?

THE FAIR ONE WITH GOLDEN LOCKS.

There was cnce a king's daughter so beautiful that they named her the Fair One with Golden Locks. These golden locks were the most remarkable in the world, soft and fine and falling in long waves down to her very feet. She wore them always thus, loose and flowing, surmounted with a wreath of flowers; and though such long hair was sometimes rather inconvenient, it was so exceedingly beautiful, shining in the sun like ripples of molten gold, that everybody agreed she fully deserved her name.

Now, there was a young king of a neighboring country, very handsome, very rich, and wanting nothing but a wife to make him happy. He heard so much of the various perfections of the Fair One with Golden Locks, that, at last, without even seeing her, he fell in love with her so desperately that he could neither eat nor drink, and resolved to send an ambassador at once to demand her in marriage. So he or-

dered a magnificent equipage—more than a hundred horses and a hundred footmen—in order to bring back to him the Fair One with Golden Locks, who, he never doubted, would be only too happy to become his queen. Indeed, he felt so sure of her that he refurnished the whole palace, and had made, by all the dressmakers of the city, dresses enough to last a lady for a lifetime. But, alas! when the ambassador arrived and delivered his message, either the princess was in a bad humor or the offer did not appear to be to her taste; for she returned her best thanks to his majesty, but said she had not the slightest wish or intention to be married. She also, being a prudent damsel, declined receiving any of the presents which the king had sent her; except that, not quite to offend his majesty, she retained a box of English pins, which were in that country of considerable value.

When the ambassador returned, alone and unsuccessful, all the court was very much affected and the king himself began to weep with all his might. Now, there was in the palace household a young gentleman named Avenant, beautiful as the sun, besides being at once so amiable and so wise that the king confided to him all his affairs; and every one

loved him, except those people—to be found in all courts—who were envious of his good fortune. These malicious folk hearing him say gayly, "If the king had sent me to fetch the Fair One with Golden Locks, I know she would have come back with me," repeated the saying in such a manner that it appeared as if Avenant thought so much of himself and his beauty, and felt sure the princess would have followed him all over the world; which when it came to the ears of the king, as it was meant to do, irritated him so much that he commanded Avenant to be imprisoned in a high tower, and left to die there of hunger. The guards accordingly carried off the young man, who had quite forgotten his idle speech, and had not the least idea what fault he had committed. They ill-treated him very much, and then left him, with nothing to eat and only water to drink. This, however, kept him alive for a few days, during which he did not cease to complain aloud, and to call upon the king, saying, "O king, what harm have I done? You have no subject more faithful than I. Never have I had a thought which could offend you."

And it so befell that the king, coming by chance, or else with a sort of remorse, past

the tower, was touched by the voice of young Avenant, whom he had once so much regarded. In spite of all the courtiers could do to prevent him, he stopped to listen, and overheard these words. The tears rushed into his eyes; he opened the door of the tower and called, "Avenant!" Avenant came, creeping feebly along, fell at the king's knees, and kissed his feet.

"O sire, what have I done that you should treat me so cruelly?"

"You have mocked me and my ambassador, for you said if I had sent you to fetch the Fair One with Golden Locks, you would have been successful and brought her back."

"I did say it, and it was true," replied Avenant fearlessly; "for I should have told her so much about your majesty and your various high qualities, which no one knows so well as myself, that I am persuaded she would have returned with me."

"I believe it," said the king, with an angry look at those who had spoken ill of his favorite; he then gave Avenant a free pardon, and took him back with him to the court.

After having supplied the famished youth with as much supper as he could eat, the king admitted him to a private audience, and said:

"I am as much in love as ever with the Fair One with Golden Locks, so I will take thee at thy word and send thee to try and win her for me."

"Very well, please your majesty," replied Avenant cheerfully; "I will depart to-morrow."

The king, overjoyed with his willingness and hopefulness, would have furnished him with a still more magnificent equipage and suit than the first ambassador; but Avenant refused to take anything except a good horse to ride and letters of introduction to the princess' father. The king embraced him and eagerly saw him depart.

It was on a Monday morning when, without any pomp or show, Avenant thus started on his mission. He rode slowly and meditatively, pondering over every possible means of persuading the Fair One with Golden Locks to marry the king; but, even after several days' journey toward her country, no clear project had entered into his mind. One morning, when he had started at break of day, he came to a great meadow with a stream running through it, along which were planted willows and poplars. It was such a pleasant, rippling stream that he dismounted and sat down on its banks. There

he perceived, gasping on the grass, a large golden carp, which, in leaping too far after gnats, had thrown itself quite out of the water, and now lay dying on the greensward. Avenant took pity on it, and though he was very hungry and the fish was very fat, and he would well enough have liked it for his breakfast, still he lifted it gently and put it back into the stream. No sooner had the carp touched the fresh cool water than it revived and swam away; but shortly returning, it spoke to him from the water in this wise:

"Avenant, I thank you for your good deed. I was dying, and you have saved me: I will recompense you for this one day."

After this pretty little speech, the fish popped down to the bottom of the stream, according to the habit of carp, leaving Avenant very much astonished, as was natural.

Another day he met with a raven that was in great distress, being pursued by an eagle, which would have swallowed him up in no time. "See," thought Avenant, "how the stronger oppress the weaker! What right has an eagle to eat up a raven?" So taking his bow and arrow, which he always carried, he shot the eagle dead, and the raven, delighted, perched in safety on an opposite tree.

"Avenant," screeched he, though not in the sweetest voice in the world, "you have generously succored me, a poor miserable raven. I am not ungrateful, and I will recompense you one day."

"Thank you," said Avenant, and continued his road.

Entering in a thick wood, so dark with the shadows of early morning that he could scarcely find his way, he heard an owl hooting, like an owl in great tribulation. She had been caught by the nets spread by bird-catchers to entrap finches, larks, and other small birds. "What a pity," thought Avenant, "that men must always torment poor birds and beasts who have done them no harm." So he took out his knife, cut the net and let the owl go free. She went sailing up into the air, but immediately returned, hovering over his head on her brown wings.

"Avenant," said she, "at daylight the bird-catchers would have been here, and I should have been caught and killed. I have a grateful heart; I will recompense you one day."

These were the three principal adventures that befell Avenant on his way to the kingdom of the Fair One with Golden Locks. Arrived there, he dressed himself with the greatest

care, in a habit of silver brocade and a hat adorned with plumes of scarlet and white. He threw over all a rich mantle, and carried a little basket, in which was a lovely little dog, an offering of respect to the princess. With this he presented himself at the palace gates, where, even though he came alone, his mien was so dignified and graceful, so altogether charming, that every one did him reverence, and was eager to run and tell the Fair One with Golden Locks that Avenant, another ambassador from the king her suitor, awaited an audience.

"Avenant!" repeated the princess. "That is a pretty name; perhaps the youth is pretty, too."

"So beautiful," said the ladies of honor, "that while he stood under the palace window we could do nothing but look at him."

"How silly of you!" sharply said the princess. But she desired them to bring her robe of blue satin, to comb out her long hair and adorn it with the freshest garland of flowers; to give her her high-heeled shoes and her fan. "Also," added she, "take care that my audience-chamber is well swept and my throne well dusted. I wish in everything to appear as becomes the Fair One with Golden Locks."

This done, she seated herself on her throne of ivory and ebony, and gave orders for her musicians to play, but softly, so as not to disturb conversation. Thus, shining in all her beauty, she admitted Avenant to her presence.

He was so dazzled that at first he could not speak: then he began and delivered his harangue to perfection.

"Gentle Avenant," returned the princess, after listening to all his reasons for her returning with him, "your arguments are very strong, and I am inclined to listen to them; but you must first find for me a ring which I dropped into the river about a month ago. Until I recover it, I can listen to no propositions of marriage."

Avenant, surprised and disturbed, made her a profound reverence and retired, taking with him the basket and the little dog Cabriole, which she refused to accept. All night long he sat sighing to himself, "How can I ever find a ring which she dropped into the river a month ago? She has set me an utter impossibility."

"My dear master," said Cabriole, "nothing is an impossibility to one so young and charming as you are: let us go at daybreak to the river side."

Avenant patted him, but replied nothing: until, worn out with grief, he slept. Before dawn Cabriole wakened him, saying, "Master, dress yourself and let us go to the river."

There Avenant walked up and down, with his arms folded and his head bent, but saw nothing. At last he heard a voice, calling from a distance, "Avenant! Avenant!"

The little dog ran to the water-side—"Never believe me again, master, if it is not a golden carp with a ring in its mouth!"

"Yes, Avenant," said the carp, "this is the ring which the princess has lost. You saved my life in the willow meadow, and I have recompensed you. Farewell!"

Avenant took the ring gratefully and returned to the palace with Cabriole, who scampered about in great glee. Craving an audience, he presented the princess with her ring, and begged her to accompany him to his master's kingdom. She took the ring, looked at it, and thought she was surely dreaming.

"Some fairy must have assisted you, fortunate Avenant," said she.

"Madam, I am only fortunate in my desire to obey your wishes."

"Obey me still," she said graciously. "There is a prince named Galifron, whose suit I have

refused. He is a giant at tall as a tower, who eats a man as a monkey eats a nut: he puts cannons into his pockets instead of pistols; and when he speaks, his voice is so loud that every one near him becomes deaf. Go and fight him, and bring me his head."

Avenant was thunderstruck; but after a time he recovered himself—"Very well, madam. I shall certainly perish, but I will perish like a brave man. I will depart at once to fight the giant Galifron."

The princess, now in her turn surprised and alarmed, tried every persuasion to induce him not to go, but in vain. Avenant armed himself and started off, carrying his little dog in its basket. Cabriole was the only creature that gave him consolation: "Courage, master! While you attack the giant, I will bite his legs: he will stoop down to strike me, and then you can knock him on the head." Avenant smiled at the little dog's spirit, but he knew it was useless.

Arrived at the castle of Galifron, he found the road all strewn with bones and carcasses of men. Soon he saw the giant walking. His head was level with the highest trees, and he sang in a terrific voice:

"His head was level with the highest trees."—Page 112.

"Bring me babies to devour;
More—more—more—more—
Men and women, tender and tough;
All the world holds not enough."

To which Avenant replied, imitating the tune:

"Avenant you here may see;
He is come to punish thee.
Be he tender, be he tough,
To kill thee, giant, he is enough."

Hearing these words, the giant took up his massive club, looked around for the singer, and, perceiving him, would have slain him on the spot, had not a raven, sitting on a tree close by, suddenly flown out upon him and picked out both his eyes. Then Avenant easily killed him and cut off his head, while the raven, watching him, said:

"You shot the eagle who was pursuing me. I promised to recompense you and to-day I have done it. We are quits."

"No, it is I who am your debtor, Sir Raven," replied Avenant, as, hanging the frightful head to his saddle-bow, he mounted his horse and rode back to the city of the Fair One with Golden Locks.

There everybody followed him, shouting, "Here is brave Avenant, who has killed the

giant," until the princess, hearing the noise, and fearing it was Avenant himself who was killed, appeared, all trembling, and even when he appeared with Galifron's head, she trembled still, although she had nothing to fear.

"Madam," said Avenant, "your enemy is dead: so I trust you will accept the hand of the king my master."

"I cannot," replied she thoughtfully, "unless you first bring me a vial of the water in the Grotto of Darkness. It is six leagues in length, and guarded at the entrance by two fiery dragons. Within it is a pit, full of scorpions, lizards, and serpents, and at the bottom of this place flows the Fountain of Beauty and Health. All who wash in it become, if ugly, beautiful, and if beautiful, beautiful forever; if old, young; and if young, young forever. Judge then, Avenant, if I can quit my kingdom without carrying with me some of this miraculous water."

"Madam," replied Avenant, "you are already so beautiful that you require it not; but I am an unfortunate ambassador whose death you desire. I will obey you, though I know I shall never return."

So he departed with his only friends—his

horse and his faithful dog Cabriole; while all who met him looked at him compassionately, pitying so pretty a youth bound on such a hopeless errand. But however kindly they addressed him, Avenant rode on and answered nothing, for he was too sad at heart.

He reached a mountain side, where he sat down to rest, leaving his horse to graze and Cabriole to run after the flies. He knew that the Grotto of Darkness was not far off, yet he looked about him like one who sees nothing. At last he perceived a rock, as black as ink, whence came a thick smoke; and in a moment appeared one of the two dragons, breathing out flames. It had a yellow and green body, claws, and a long tail. When Cabriole saw the monster, the poor little dog hid himself in terrible fright. But Avenant resolved to die bravely; so, taking a vial which the princess had given him, he prepared to descend into the cave.

"Cabriole," said he, "I shall soon be dead: then fill this vial with my blood and carry it to the Fair One with Golden Locks, and afterward to the king my master, to show him I have been faithful to the last."

While he was thus speaking, a voice called, "Avenant! Avenant!"—and he saw an owl

sitting on a hollow tree. Said the owl: "You cut the net in which I was caught, and I vowed to recompense you. Now is the time. Give me the vial; I know every corner of the Grotto of Darkness—I will fetch you the water of beauty."

Delighted beyond words, Avenant delivered up his vial: the owl flew with it into the grotto and in less than half an hour reappeared, bringing it quite full and well corked. Avenant thanked her with all his heart, and joyfully took once more the road to the city.

The Fair One with Golden Locks had no more to say. She consented to accompany him back, with all her suit, to his master's court. On the way thither, she saw so much of him, and found him so charming, that Avenant might have married her himself had he chosen; but he would not have been false to his master for all the beauties under the sun. At length they arrived at the king's city, and the Fair One with Golden Locks became his spouse and queen. But she still loved Avenant in her heart, and often said to the king her lord: "But for Avenant I should not be here: he has done all sorts of impossible deeds for my sake; he has fetched me the water of beauty, and I

shall never grow old — in short, I owe him everything."

And she praised him in this sort so much that at length the king became jealous; and though Avenant gave him not the slightest cause of offense, he shut him up in the same high tower once more—but with irons on his hands and feet, and a cruel jailer besides, who fed him with bread and water only. His sole companion was his little dog Cabriole.

When the Fair One with Golden Locks heard of this she reproached her husband for his ingratitude, and then, throwing herself at his knees, implored that Avenant might be set free. But the king only said, "She loves him!" and refused her prayer. The queen entreated no more, but fell into a deep melancholy.

When the king saw it, he thought she did not care for him because he was not handsome enough; and that if he could wash his face with her water of beauty, it would make her love him more. He knew that she kept it in a cabinet in her chamber, where she could find it always.

Now, it happened that a waiting-maid in cleaning out this cabinet had the very day before knocked down the vial, which was

broken in a thousand pieces, and all the contents were lost. Very much alarmed, she then remembered seeing, in a cabinet belonging to the king, a similar vial. This she fetched and put in the place of the other one, in which was the water of beauty. But the king's vial contained the water of death. It was a poison, used to destroy great criminals—that is, noblemen, gentlemen, and such like. Instead of hanging them or cutting their heads off, like common people, they were compelled to wash their faces with this water; upon which they fell asleep and woke no more. So it happened that the king taking up this vial, believing it to be the water of beauty, washed his face with it, fell asleep, and—died.

Cabriole heard the news, and gliding in and out among the crowd which clustered round the young and lovely widow, whispered softly to her: "Madam, do not forget poor Avenant." If she had been disposed to do so, the sight of his little dog would have been enough to remind her of him—his many sufferings and his great fidelity. She rose up, without speaking to anybody, and went straight to the tower where Avenant was confined. There, with her own hands, she struck off his chains, and putting a crown of gold on his head and a

purple mantle on his shoulders, said to him, "Be king—and my husband."

Avenant could not refuse; for in his heart he had loved her all the time. He threw himself at her feet, and then took the crown and scepter, and ruled her kingdom like a king. All the people were delighted to have him as their sovereign. The marriage was celebrated in all imaginable pomp, and Avenant and the Fair One with Golden Locks lived and reigned happily together all their days.

THE WOODCUTTER'S DAUGHTER.

There was once a poor woodcutter, very miserable, though prudent and industrious; he had a wife and three grown-up sons, yet their united labors scarcely sufficed for bread. No hope appeared of improving his lot, when he was one day fortunate enough to save the life of his master when attacked by robbers in the forest.

This master was not ungrateful; he desired the woodcutter to repair to him on the following day in order to receive a reward. The poor man did not fail, hoping to gain two or three crowns; for it appeared so natural to defend an unarmed man that he attached little value to his services, considering his own danger not worth a thought. He put on his best array, shaved, and made many reverences to the porter and the numerous lackeys previous to an introduction to the master, who was much more polite than the valets.

"Well, Thomas," said he, "how can I recom-

pense what you have done for me? Without your assistance I should have perished; and as my life is a very happy one, I value it accordingly."

Poor Thomas was at a loss how to reply; he stammered out, "My lord—your grace," but could get no further.

The master, in order to relieve the poor man, interrupted him thus: "I understand better than yourself, perhaps, what would suit you; I would not wish to draw you from your native condition, for I believe that none is more truly happy; but I present to you and your children's children, in perpetuity, the cottage which you inhabit in the forest. You and they shall have the power of cutting as much wood every year as you can use; you shall work for yourself; and if your sons like to hunt, all the game which they kill shall be for their own use. I only exact that you sell nothing, and that while possessing every comfort, you seek not to quit your peaceful obscurity."

Thomas was so astonished that he could find no words to express his gratitude. He came home to his wife, who heartily shared his joy. The sons immediately set off for a large supply of fagots, and made a great fire; but when they had been thoroughly warmed, Mother

Thomas began to say what a pity it was they could make no use of all the wood which was not burned.

"An idea has just struck me," replied the husband. "Our master gives us all we can use; these are his own words—very well; I shall be able to use enough to bring us in a pretty little income!"

"How?" said his wife.

"When I was a boy," rejoined the woodcutter, "my father taught me to make wooden shoes and I made them so light and so neat that they were everywhere sought for. What need now prevent me from exercising this trade? James shall cut wood in the forest, Peter shall kill game for dinner, and Paul, who has not the least brains of the three, shall go to sell my merchandise at the neighboring town. This will be a public benefit, by enabling the poor about us to dress with more decency and comfort, and it will also serve to furnish our own cottage, of which we shall make a little palace."

The boys, who were present, highly relished this idea. Mother Thomas, who was rather inclined to gluttony, made the most of the game which Peter provided. A little labor, good cheer, and blazing fire, a perfect family

concord, rendered this family the happiest in the world. The master came to the cottage, and seeing them so united and industrious, encouraged the trade of the wooden shoes, which increased their comforts without exposing them to the vices attendant on avarice and luxury.

But happiness as this seldom remains permanent. A flock of furious wolves appeared in the forest; every day they devoured either helpless children or travelers; they tore up the roots of the trees, attacking even each other, while their wild howlings were heard night and day in the cottage of the woodcutter.

Mother Thomas would no longer suffer her boys to leave home; and when they did go in spite of her, she remained watching at the door, refusing either to eat or drink until they returned.

Such a situation was deplorable; when at length the young men, who were very brave, resolved to deliver themselves and their master. Taking arms, in case they should be attacked, they went into the forest and dug deep pits, covering them with a little earth, laid over some branches of trees; and during this heavy labor, which lasted several days,

they lighted great fires around them, in order to hinder the wolves from approaching.

Success crowned their enterprise, for in returning to the spot at sunrise, they perceived that one of the pits had been broken into during the night, and that it was now quite uncovered. They charged their muskets, and each were disputing the honor of first firing, when they heard issue from the depths below a mild and supplicating voice imploring assistance.

"What shall we do?" said Peter; "assuredly that is not the roaring of a wolf; it is, perhaps, some unfortunate little wandering child. How lucky that we did not draw the trigger!"

They approached and distinguished a beautiful lady richly dressed, wearing on her head a cluster of diamonds, which shone like a star. She appeared very young, and was trembling with cold. Much rain had fallen during the night, and her robe of silver gauze was dabbled in mud and water; her fair and tender hands were all dirty, which seemed to vex her even more than the dangers she had experienced. She continued, however, to struggle and to make signs for relief, when three enormous wolves appeared at a distance. The brothers looked at each other expressively, like people

who feel that all is lost, but who resolve to do their duty. They had a cord about them, which Peter fastened round his body, and let himself down into the pit. He took the beautiful lady on his shoulders, while his brothers assisted in drawing them up. They then stretched her on the grass, for she had fainted; and now the wolves had just reached them—when, lo! these beasts of prey were instantly turned into three little lambs, and licked the feet of the lady, who slowly returned to life.

"My good lads!" said she to the woodcutters, "fear nothing. From henceforth no more dangerous animals than these shall trouble you. But I owe you a still greater recompense; lead me to your father; I wish to felicitate him on the generosity and bravery of his sons."

The poor youths were so astonished by this adventure that they felt unable to reply; but they respectfully lifted her long train from the ground, it having now recovered all its splendor.

The three lambs followed, skipping and frolicking before them—they seemed to know the way; and Mother Thomas, who sat at the door looking out for her children, was not a little surprised to behold their companion.

She had, however, presence of mind to invite

her noble guest to enter and rest; much ashamed of having nothing better to offer than a straw chair, and some spring water, which was in a very clean pitcher on the dresser.

"I shall willingly rest an hour with you," said the lady. "Although you now see me for the first time, I am one of your best friends, of which I shall give you a proof. I accept a glass of water, on condition that your husband and children will also pledge me."

A glance of Mother Thomas' eye directed her family; they each sought their ordinary drinking-cup, which was of wood, and then bent the neck of the pitcher; but what was their astonishment to perceive the vessel turn into wrought-silver in their hands, and to taste, instead of water, a liquor so delicious that when the woodcutter and his wife had drunk, they felt themselves ten years younger than before!

They threw themselves at the feet of the beautiful lady in terror; for a natural instinct made them feel that great power is always more or less to be dreaded, even when employed in acts of beneficence. The lady meanwhile kindly raised them, and having spoken of the courage and generosity of their sons, who

exposed themselves to the fury of wolves rather than take flight and abandon her, she said that her name was the fairy Coquette, and that she would willingly relate her history.

"Previously, madam," said the woodcutter, "will you have the goodness to tell me what is a fairy? During thirty years that I have inhabited this forest, I have heard of the devil, of the were wolf, of the monster of Gevaudan, but never have I heard of fairies."

"We exist, notwithstanding," replied Coquette, "but not in all ages nor in all countries. We are supernatural beings, to whom has been imparted a portion of supernatural power, which we make use of for good or evil, according to our natural disposition; in that alone consists our resemblance to men."

The woodcutter, who was very simple, understood little of this explanation; but, like many others, had a profound respect for what he could not comprehend. He bowed down to the ground, and only requested the fairy to inform him why a supernatural being so highly gifted could have fallen into a pit prepared for wolves.

"It is," replied Coquette, "because I have an enemy still more powerful than myself, the enchanter Barabapatapouf, the most wicked

ogre in the world; he has but three teeth, three hairs, one eye, and is fifteen feet high. With all these charms he happened to fall in love with me, and merely for mischief I affected to accept him. He then invited his friends to the nuptials; when, to his great mortification, I took them to witness that I would never be the wife of such a monster. Barabapatapouf was deeply incensed, swore to be revenged, and has never lost an opportunity of keeping his word. I should have remained three days in that horrible pit but for the generosity of your children."

"They have done nothing more than their duty," replied the woodcutter.

"I must also do mine," said Coquette, "but my power is limited. I can satisfy but two wishes, and it is necessary that each of you should choose freely, unbiased by the other. You must separate accordingly, and to-morrow, at early dawn, come to inform me what you have all resolved on during the night."

Mother Thomas was very uneasy in thinking how she could accommodate the fairy, for neither her children's beds nor her own were worthy of offering to such a grand lady; but Coquette desired her to feel at ease, as she would provide everything needful. She then

drew forth some grains of sand, which she scattered on the floor. Instantly there arose on the spot a bed of rose-leaves three feet high; the bolster was of violets, heartsease, and orange flowers, all breathing delicious perfumes; and the counterpane, entirely composed of butter-flies' wings, exhibited colors so brilliant and varied that one could never be weary of examining it. The three lambs which had followed the fairy lay down at her feet, and as the room was rather damp, they gently warmed it with their breath, with a care and intelligence almost human. The woodcutter and his sons felt so surprised at all these wonders that they imagined themselves dreaming. Coquette warned Mother Thomas that if she should speak once to her husband before she again saw her, the wishes could not be realized. The strictest injunctions were indeed necessary to prevent their communicating on a subject which interested both so deeply. When day appeared, Coquette summoned them to her presence.

The woodcutter first came, and said, with his usual simplicity, that he never could have believed it so difficult to form a wish. Till that moment he had considered himself happy, but now finding it possible to obtain one thing,

he desired a thousand. Wearied with the fatigue of thought, he had fallen asleep without coming to a determination; but seeing in his dreams five purses filled with gold, it seemed as if one were for him, one for his wife, and one for each of his children.

"Well," said Coquette, "these purses are apparently your desire; go then to the bin where you deposit your bread and you will find them. Only say how many pounds you wish them to contain."

"Oh, if there were but a hundred pounds in each," replied Thomas, "that would be sufficient to extend our little commerce, and send our wooden shoes to China itself."

"Your wish is accomplished," said the fairy; "go away, and permit your wife to come in her turn."

The good dame had also passed a sleepless night, and had never before been so much agitated or so unhappy; sometimes she wished for riches, and then thought riches would not prevent her from dying—so she had better wish that she might live a hundred years. Now one idea filled her mind, now another; it seemed as if the fairy should have given her at least a month to deliberate. At last she suddenly said: "Madam fairy, I am very old,

and what I desire most is a daughter to assist me in household management and to keep me company; my husband almost lives in the woods and leaves me at break of day; my sons also go about their business; we are without neighbors, and I have nobody to speak to."

"Be it so," said the fairy; "you shall have the prettiest daughter imaginable, and she shall speak from her birth, in order that no time may be lost. Call your husband and sons; I hope to find all parties content."

The little family assembled, but harmony was not the result of their communications. The young men thought their father's wish quite pitiful, and the woodcutter by no means relished the idea of another child. The fairy, however, provided an excellent breakfast, and the wine reanimated his spirits.

"Now I promise," said Coquette, "that you shall have a daughter, who at the moment of her birth will be endowed with the figure and the intelligence of twelve years old. Call her Rose, for her complexion shall shame the flower which bears that name."

"And I pronounce that she shall also be as black as ebony, and become, before the age of fifteen, the wife of a great king," said a very strong voice in clear and distinct accents, ac-

companied by shouts of laughter, which evidently proceeded from a great pitcher placed at the corner of the chimney.

The fairy Coquette turned pale, and consternation was general; but the woodcutter, now merry with wine, joined in the laugh. "Ah! how droll," said he; "red and black roses! A likely story, indeed, that a great king would come a-wooing to a woodcutter's daughter. Only a pitcher could invent such nonsense, and I shall teach it to utter no more."

Thus saying, he gave the pitcher a great kick and broke it in pieces, when there issued from it a smoke thick and black, and so stifling that Coquette was obliged to use two bottles of essence to dissipate its noxious effects.

"Ah, cruel Barabapatapouf!" cried she, "must your malignity then extend even to those whom I wish to benefit? I indeed recognize my enemy," said she to the woodcutter; "beware of him, and believe that it is with no good intention he destines your daughter for the bride of a king. Some mystery is here concealed, foreboding evil."

Every one was rendered quite melancholy by this adventure, and Coquette, beginning to

weary of these poor foresters, opened the window and disappeared.

A great quarrel then arose between the woodcutter and his sons, who, forgetting that respect in which they had never before failed, reproached him for losing an opportunity of rendering them all happy. "We might," said they, "have purchased estates, finery of all kinds, and been as rich and noble as many who now despise us. One or two millions would have been as easy said as five hundred pounds; that sum would obtain a marquisate for my father, and baronies for each of us. What extraordinary stupidity our parents have shown!"

"My children," said the woodcutter, "are these things, then, necessary for happiness? It appeared to me that you were well satisfied when our master only made our poverty a little less oppressive; and now, while you have more gold than you ever saw in your lives, one would suppose that you had been deeply injured, and could never know contentment more."

As for Mother Thomas, she was wiser, and so well pleased with the idea of her daughter that her imagination roamed no further. In course of time she gave birth to an infant; but

scarcely had it seen the light than it glided from her arms, and started up to the stature of a well-formed girl of twelve or thirteen years old, who made a low courtesy to the woodcutter, kissed the hand of her mother, and offered her brothers a cordial embrace. But these lads ill-naturedly repulsed the young stranger; they felt jealous, fearing that she would now be preferred to them.

Rose, one might say, was born dressed, for flowing ringlets fell around her shoulders, forming a complete covering; and with her increase of size appeared a little smart petticoat and brown bodice in peasant fashion. Her delicate feet were clad in wooden shoes, but both the foot and the shoe were so shapely that any lady in the land might have been proud to exhibit them. Her little plump hand was so white that it hardly appeared formed for rustic labors, yet she immediately prepared to assist in household matters, and the poor old dame was never weary of caressing such a charming child.

A bed was prepared for Rose beside her mother. This good girl arose at dawn to prepare the young men's breakfast; for she had an excellent natural disposition, and so much intelligence that she seemed to know by

instinct that her birth was displeasing to them, and sought to gain their regard by good-natured attentions.

Mother Thomas soon rose likewise, and returned to the kitchen. But what was her horror on beholding her daughter's face black as ebony, her hair woolly and crisped like a negro's! As there was no mirror in the cottage, Rose could not understand what had so alarmed her mother; she asked if she had involuntarily had the misfortune to give offense.

"No, no," said the old dame, weeping; "shouldst thou remain all thy life as black as ink, I shall not love thee less; but I cannot without pain recall thy beauties of yesterday. Thou wilt be laughed at; and us too. Still, we will keep thee—thou must never leave us."

Rose readily promised she never would. But when her brothers returned, they considered the change in her quite as a matter of course. The recollected the prediction of the pitcher, and seemed quite delighted to think that, since it was fulfilled in the first instance, they might yet become the brothers of a queen.

Meanwhile they lived on better terms with Rose, hoping that one day she might be of service to them. Far from listening to the coun-

sels of their father, they endeavored to awaken in her mind the seeds of ambition; and in order to further views interested and selfish, flattered her beauty, her talents, and her sense, rendering the future queen the most respectful homage, which diverted her exceedingly.

But, strange to say, Rose was not always black; every second day she recovered her natural beauty, from whence it might be concluded that the influence of the fairy and the enchanter Barabapatapouf operated alternately. The woodcutter's family grew gradually accustomed to these successions; and as habit reconciles people to all things, each color became indifferent to them.

Thomas was too old to change his mode of life; he would not hear of going to live in town, although they had money sufficient for that purpose; he also still continued the making of wooden shoes. Those which Rose wore in winter were trimmed with lamb's-wool, which she wrought very dexterously; she was clever and ingenious, but, it must be confessed, a little imperious; and was sometimes surprised sighing like a person indulging in visionary wishes and languishing under some secret chagrin.

A year passed: Rose grew tall, and her

brothers, weary of waiting for an event so uncertain as her marriage with a king, executed a crime which they had long meditated. Seeing that their father had touched but one of the purses, they easily obtained possession of the rest, and rising with the dawn, all three departed, saying, to satisfy their consciences, that these purses must be finally theirs, and that they would, meanwhile, turn them to advantage. When they should become very rich, they would come back to their parents and take care of their latter days. Each of them made a belt, in which he concealed his gold; and with perfect concord, more frequently found among knaves than honest men, they traveled a hundred leagues in eight days.

The woodcutter and his wife did not at first comprehend the extent of their misfortune. They thought their children must have gone astray in the forest, and the old man wandered everywhere in search of them. But when he observed the loss of the purses, the truth was revealed, and he felt ready to die with grief. "Cursed gold!" cried he, "thou hast corrupted my brave and honest boys; they were poor, but virtuous; they are now become villains, and will meet punishment from either man or God!"

Thus saying, he took the remaining purse and flung it into the bottom of a well. Mother Thomas was vexed, but dared not speak, for the unfortunate man was so much irritated and troubled that he would have beaten her.

When his reason cleared a little, however, he felt that he had committed an error in parting with his money, they being both old and unable to work as formerly.

The dame sold some articles which had been purchased during their prosperity. But poverty was nothing; it was the conduct of their sons which inflicted the bitter sting.

How was this then augmented, when some officers of justice arrived and announced that James, Peter, and Paul had been arrested. It seemed that while drinking together in a public-house, they had spread on a table all their gold. The host surprised them, and not believing that young peasants, so coarsely clothed and wearing wooden shoes, could lawfully be in possession of such a sum, he had given them in charge. The poor boys, quite terrified, related the story of the fairy Coquette; but as the magistrate had never seen a fairy, he did not believe one word of the matter.

Having then no hope but in the kindness of their father, they sent to summon the wood-

cutter and his wife, who confirmed all their assertions. But as no money was found in the cottage, whose inhabitants appeared to subsist on their labor, the officers knew not what to think.

Meantime they arrested the woodcutter for the purpose of identifying his children. Pale, and trembling like criminals, the old couple followed the guards. Mother Thomas was ready to faint, and doubly grieved for leaving poor Rose all alone, especially as this was her day for being white and beautiful. She begged her not to leave the house, but to live on the milk of her sheep, and to bake cakes of some meal which was in the bin. Their adieus were heart-rendering; although the soldiers declared that in three days the forester should be at liberty to return, provided the innocence of his family was established. Rose believed them, and endeavored to take courage. But more than a month passed, and no tidings of her parents. She could not then prevent herself from wandering a little on the highway; and having walked till sunset, wept so bitterly that her beauty indeed must have been a fairy-gift to remained uninjured.

One evening, being more worn out than usual, she seated herself at the foot of a tree

and fell asleep. A slight noise awoke her, and on looking up, she perceived a young gentleman richly dressed, who was contemplating her with evident astonishment. "Art thou a goddess, or a simple mortal?" cried he.

"Sir," replied Rose, "I am the daughter of a poor woodcutter, who lives in the forest; it is late, and I beg you will not detain me."

"You are a wayward beauty, indeed!" replied the prince, for so he was; "but as my way lies in that direction, I hope you will permit me to see you home."

"It is not in my power to prevent you," said Rose, without raising her eyes.

The prince at this moment remarked that she had been weeping, and delighted to have an opportunity of offering sympathy and consolation, entreated her to impart her grief to him. "I am not actuated by mere curiosity," added he; "I never can behold a woman in tears without feeling moved to the bottom of my soul! Tell me your distress, and I will neither sleep nor eat till I have aided you." Rose timidly raised her lovely blue eyes, to see whether the countenance of the prince harmonized with his discourse; but although he was not actually ugly, his features wore an expression too stern and hypocritical to invite

her confidence. She therefore walked silently forward, and when near the cottage felt so uneasy that for the first time she invented a lie in order to get rid of him. "You seem to compassionate my sorrows," said she; "meanwhile you only increase them. When my mother sees me accompanied by a great gentleman like you, she will beat me, and not believe that you have followed me against my will."

This reasoning appeared so just to the prince, who felt himself affected by a passion such as he had never before experienced, that he consented to retire, entreating Rose to meet him the next evening at the same hour. She refused to give a decisive answer and returned home much dejected, recalling all the words of the stranger, and almost reproaching herself for having behaved so harshly to him.

The following day Rose took mechanically the same route, going always in the path by which her parents might be expected. Her provisions being nearly exhausted she feared to die of hunger, and began to think that this gentleman, who had been repulsed so rudely, could, perhaps, obtain news of her family. Suddenly beholding him leaning against a tree, looking very melancholy and dejected, she

threw herself at his feet, bathed in tears, and said:

"Sir, a wretch who has lost everything dear supplicates your compassion. You are so kind —so tender-hearted——"

"What does the vile creature want?" exclaimed the prince, with a savage expression. "How dare you have the impertinence to address me? I wonder what prevents me from shooting you. I lost my sport all yesterday in following a pretty girl; here is game of a new description."

Rose started up, overwhelmed with terror, while the prince laughed most brutally. It was not till that moment she recollected that this was her black day, which accounted for his not recognizing her. "Ah!" thought she, "this is the humane man who could not behold a woman weep; because my color displeases him, he is ready to take my life. No hope now remains for me—my misfortunes are at their height!"

Rose wept all night; yet she could not prevent herself from returning to the same spot on the following day; she felt irresistibly led thither, dreading, and yet wishing to meet the prince.

He had been already waiting above an hour,

and accosted her with a degree of respect quite unusual for him; but he was in love, and love makes the worst of people better for the time.

"Cruel beauty!" said he, in a courtier-like style, to which Rose was little accustomed, "what have I not suffered during your absence! I even remained all night in the wood, in expectation of you, and the queen my mother dispatched messengers everywhere, fearing some accident had befallen me."

"The queen, your mother!" exclaimed Rose. "Are you then the son of a queen?"

"I have betrayed myself!" said the prince, striking his forehead in a theatrical manner. "Yes, it is true, I have that misfortune. You will now fear me; and what we fear, we never love."

"The wicked alone are to be feared," answered Rose. "I am very glad to hear that you are a king, for I know that you will be my husband."

The prince, who little guessed the enchanter's communication, was confounded by the unembarrassed freedom of her manner; but it was far from displeasing to him. "You are ambitious," said he, smiling; "but there is nothing to which beauty may not pretend. Tell me only how I can have the happiness of

serving you, and you shall see that everything is possible to love."

Rose sat down on the grass and related in very simple terms the story of the purse; confessed that she had deceived him, and that, so far from being severely treated at home, she was now weeping her mother's loss; that the king must take measures for the discovery and liberation of her family, before he could hope to win her affections or pretend to her hand.

The enamored monarch vowed he would not lose a moment; and although she behaved with much dignity, her every word and look was adorable in his eyes. Rose thought all night of the fine fortune of being a quen; she would then no longer wear wooden shoes; and, above all, might have an opportunity of being useful to her dear parents.

These meetings continued every alternate day during a week; and the queen dowager was informed that her son neglected all business, and thought of nothing but making love. She was in despair. The prince was surnamed the Terrible, by reason of his ferocity to women; till that moment he had never loved, but he had frequently made pretense of it, and when successful, it was not unusual with him to cut out the poor ladies' tongues, put

out their eyes, or even throw them into the sea. The least pretext sufficed for this; and the queen, who was of a kind disposition, lamented that yet another victim was preparing. The courtiers begged her to be tranquil; said it was nothing more than the daughter of a poor woodcutter whom his majesty now admired, and that if he did kill her, it would be of little consequence.

But the courtiers, and the queen dowager herself, were altogether bewildered when the king, having liberated the woodcutter and his family, brought Rose to the palace as his wife. She was not at all abashed or out of countenance; she behaved with the utmost respect to the queen, and with affability to all. It was universally remarked: "The king has committed a folly, but that charming girl is his excuse, and no man would have been wiser under similar circumstances."

A grand ball was given in the evening. Rose danced well enough for a queen; and she yielded herself up entirely to the enchantment of such a happy day. The prince, ever eager to be near her, was figuring away in a quadrille, when twelve o'clock struck: great, then, was his astonishment, while gazing passionately on his partner, he beheld—a negress!

"What metamorphosis is this?" cried he, rudely seizing her arm; "where is the princess I married to-day?"

Rose bent her head in confusion; it still bore her diamonds and her crown—no doubt could exist of her identity.

"Wretched, hideous black, thou shalt surely die!" cried the king; "none shall deceive me with impunity." He then drew a poniard and was preparing to take instant vengeance, when, recollecting himself—"I do thee too much honor," said he; "rather let my cooks cut thee in pieces to make a hash for my hounds."

The old queen, as humane as her son was cruel, knew there was but one means of saving the unfortunate victim; this was to appear still more enraged than the king.

"I truly feel this injury," said she; "sometimes you have reproached my weakness, but now behold a proof that I also can avenge. Your orders must be strictly fulfilled—I myself shall witness the execution." She then signed to the guards to lay hold of the unfortunate Rose, who was dragged away by an iron chain fastened round her neck. She gave herself up for lost, and uttering the most heart-rendering cries, was led away to a pigeon-house at the end of the palace, furnished with

some clean straw; here, however, the queen promised to come on the following day.

Her majesty kept her word. Much affected by the sweetness of the hapless bride, she promised to mitigate, as far as possible, her melancholy situation.

Rose, very greatful, supplicated her benefactress to inform the woodcutter's family that she was still alive, knowing what they would suffer should the story reach them of the black Rose have breakfasted the king's hounds. The queen promised to employ a confidential domestic; and Rose, who had still preserved her wooden shoes, sent one, that her father might recognize his handiwork.

A few days afterward a young peasant arrived from the cottage; he brought some cakes and cheese, made by Mother Thomas, which Rose preferred to all the delicacies of the palace.

This young peasant, who was named Mirto, related to Rose everything concerning her dear parents, and took back very loving messages from her to them.

Mirto found so much pleasure in conversing with the fair prisoner, and had so often cakes to carry, that they were seldom asunder. He said he was an orphan, and having some work

to do in the prison where Thomas had been confined, there formed a friendship with the family. In return for some little services then rendered them, he desired to learn the trade of the wooden shoes; being very ingenious, he became a valuable acquisition. He never had felt so happy before. In truth, he was not aware that this happiness received its date from the hour in which he first saw Rose.

Alas! poor Rose was only too sensible of his affection, and feeling the duty of struggling against it, found herself still more miserable than before.

"Whatever may be the conduct of Prince Terrible," said she to herself, "I have married him. It is certainly very hard to love a husband who wished to kill me, but still I should not permit myself to love another."

For a whole month following she had sufficent resolution to see Mirto no more, and was becoming sick with chagrin and weariness. The queen visited her frequently, bringing all sorts of sweetmeats, and a singing-bird, to divert her captivity. She brought no finery; indeed, that would have been quite thrown away on the pigeons.

At length, one day Rose heard a great noise in the palace. People kept running to and fro

—all the bells were rung and all the cannons fired. The poor prisoner mounted up to one of the pigeon-holes, and peeping through, perceived the palace hung with black. She knew not what to think. But some one of the queen's officers appeared, and conducted her in due form to the court. Rose, all trembling, inquired what had happened.

"Your majesty is a widow," replied the officer; "the king has been killed in hunting; here are your weeds, of which the queen begs your acceptance."

Rose was much agitated, but she followed the officer in silence, with a sad and serious aspect, as a dignified personage should do when informed of the death of a husband.

The queen was a tender mother, and although fully conscious of the ferocious disposition of her son, she deeply lamented him, and wept bitterly on embracing her daughter-in-law. "Your husband is no more," said she; "forget his errors, my dear child; the remainder of my life shall be devoted to making atonement for them."

The princess threw herself at her benefactress' feet, and declared all was forgotten. "If your majesty deigns to permit me to speak candidly," added she, "and will bestow a

moment's attention, I shall confess the dearest wishes of my heart!"

"Speak," said the queen; "nothing now can assuage my grief save an opportunity of proving to you my friendship."

"I was not born for a queen," continued Rose. "My mother is a poor forester, but she has been a tender parent, and weeps incessantly for my absence."

"Let her be conducted hither," replied the queen.

"This is not all, madam," continued Rose. "I confess that I love a young peasant, who has assisted my father to make wooden shoes. If I were the wife of Mirto, and your majesty would have the goodness to give some assistance to my family, my old father might be freed from labor, and I the happiest woman in the world."

The queen embraced Rose, and promised all she wished. She then conducted her to the forest; and just as they had reached its boundary, they perceived in the air a mahogany car, mounted on wheels of mother-o'-pearl; two pretty white lambs were yoked to it, which Rose immediately recognized as those of the fairy Coquette.

The car descended, and the fairy, alighting,

thus addressed the queen: "Madam, I come to seek my child, and am delighted to find you willing to part with her, for she has a lover whom I approve; who loves her faithfully, though hopelessly, which is a thing more rare than all the treasures of your majesty's crown."

The fairy then addressing herself to Rose related that her enemy, the enchanter Barabapatapouf, had just been killed in combat with another giant. "Now," added Coquette, "I have full power to render you happy;" and passing her fair hand over Rose's face, the negro color and features vanished—to reappear no more.

The queen, convinced that her daughter-in-law required nothing further, offered only her portrait as a token of esteem and friendship. Rose received it with grateful respect, then ascended the fairy's car, and was in a few minutes surrounded by the foresters, who never wearied of caressing her. Poor Mirto drew back, trembling, not knowing whether to hope or fear; but Coquette, perceiving their mutual embarrassment, declared that she had ordained this marriage from the very beginning. She blessed them, gave them a flock of beautiful white sheep, a cottage covered with

honey-suckles and roses, a lovely garden abounding with fruits and flowers, and a moderate sum of money; endowing them also with life for a hundred years, uninterrupted health, and constant love.

THE BLUEBIRD.

A powerful and wealthy king, having lost his wife, was so inconsolable that he shut himself up for eight entire days in a little cabinet, where he spent his time in knocking his head against the wall, until the courtiers were afraid he would kill himself! They accordingly placed stuffed mattresses over every wall, and allowed all his subjects who desired to pay him a visit, trusting that something would be said to alleviate his grief. But neither grave nor lively discourse made any impression upon him; he scarcely heard what was spoken. At last there presented herself before him a lady, covered from head to foot in a long crape veil, who wept and sobbed so much that the king noticed her. She told him that she did not come, like the rest, to console him, but rather to encourage his grief. She herself had lost the best of husbands, and here she began to weep so profusely that it was a wonder her eyes were not melted out of her head. The king began to weep in company, and to talk to her of his

dear wife—she did the same of her dear husband: in fact, they talked so much that they talked their sorrow quite away. Then, lifting up her veil, she showed lovely blue eyes and dark eyelashes. The king noticed her more and more—he spoke less and less of the departed queen; by and by he ceased to speak of her at all. The end was that he courted the inconsolable lady in the black veil and married her.

By his first marriage he had one daughter, called Florina, or the little Flora, because she was so fresh and lovely; at the time of his second marriage she was quite fifteen years old. The new queen also had a daughter, who was being brought up by her godmother, the fairy Soussio—her name was Troutina, because her complexion was all slotted like a trout's back. Indeed, she was altogether ugly and disagreeable; and when contrasted with Florina, the difference between the two made the mother so envious that she and Troutina spared no pains to make the princess' life unhappy, and to speak ill of her to her father.

One day the king observed that both girls were now old enough to be married, and that he intended to choose for one of them the first prince who visited his court.

"Be it so," said the queen; "and as my daughter is older, handsomer, and more amiable thany ours, she shall have the first choice." The king disputed nothing; indeed, he never did—the queen ruled him in all things.

Some time after, news came that King Charming would shortly arrive, and that he was as charming as his name. When the queen heard this news, she sent for milliners, dress-makers, jewelers, and decked Troutina from head to foot; but to Florina she allowed not a single new frock. The poor princess had to put on her old one, which was very old and shabby indeed; she was so much ashamed of it that she hid herself in a corner of the salon, lest King Charming should see her. But he did not, being overwhelmed with the ceremonious reception given him by the queen, who presented to him Troutina, all blazing with jewels, yet so ugly that King Charming involuntarily turned away his eyes.

"But, madam, is there not another princess, called Florina?"

They pointed to the corner where Florina was hidden, and she came out, blushing so much that the young king was dazzled with her beauty, in spite of her shabby gown. He rose and made her a profound reverence, pay-

ing her besides so many elegant compliments that the queen became very much displeased. King Charming took no heed, but conversed with Florina for three hours without stopping. Indeed, his admiration of her was so plain, that the queen and Troutina begged of the king that she might be shut up in a tower during the whole time of his visit; so, as soon as she had returned to her apartment, four men in masks entered and carried her off, leaving her in a dark cell, and in the utmost desolation.

Meantime King Charming eagerly awaited her reappearance, but he saw her no more; and by the queen's orders, every one about him spoke all the evil they could of poor Florina, but he refused to believe one word. "No," said he, "nature could not have united a base nature to such a sweet, innocent face. I will rather suppose that she is maligned by her stepmother and by Troutina, who is so ugly herself that no wonder she bears envy toward the fairest woman in the world."

Meanwhile Florina, shut up in her tower, lamented bitterly. "Ah, would I had been sent here before I saw this amiable prince, who was so kind to me! It is to prevent my meeting him again that the queen treats me so

cruelly. Alas! the little beauty have has cost me sore!"

The queen, to win King Charming for her daughter, made him many presents; among the rest an order of knighthood, a golden heart, enameled in flame-color, surrounded with many arrows, but pierced by one only, the motto being, "She alone." The heart was made of a single ruby as big as an ostrich's egg. Each arrow was a diamond, a finger's length, and the chain was of pearls, each weighing a pound. When the young king received this very handsome present, he was much perplexed, until they told him it came from the princess whom he had lately seen, and who requested him to be her knight.

"Florina!" cried he, enchanted.

"No, Troutina."

"Then I am sorry I cannot accept the honor," replied King Charming. "A monarch is surely at liberty to form his own engagements. I know what is a knight's duty to his lady, and should wish to fulfill it; as I cannot fulfill it to Troutina, I would rather decline the favor she offers me than become unworthy of it."

Civil as this answer was, it irritated the queen and her daughter exceedingly; and

when, since in all his audiences with their majesties he never saw Florina, he at last inquired where the younger princess was, the queen answered fiercely that she was shut up in prison, and would remain there till Troutina was married.

"And for what reason?" asked King Charming.

"I do not know; and if I did, I would not tell you," replied the queen more angrily than ever; so that King Charming quitted her presence as soon as ever he could.

When he was alone, he sent for one of his attendants, whom he trusted very much, and begged him to gain information from some court lady about the Princess Florina. This scheme succeeded so well that Florina was persuaded to promise she would speak to him for a few moments next night, from a small window at the bottom of the tower. But the faithless lady-in-waiting betrayed her to the queen, who locked her up in her chamber, and determined to send her own daughter to the window instead. The night was so dark that King Charming never found out the difference, but made to Troutina all the tender speeches that he meant for Florina, offering her his crown and his heart, and ending by placing his own ring

on her finger, as a pledge of eternal fidelity. He also made her agree to fly with him next night, in a chariot drawn by winged frogs, of which a great magician, one of his friends, had made him a present. He thought she talked very little, and that little not in quite so pleasant a voice as formerly; still, he was too much in love to notice much, and departed very joyful in having obtained her promise.

Next night Troutina, thickly veiled, quitted the palace by a secret door. King Charming met her, received her in his arms, and vowed to love her forever. Then he lifted her into the fairy chariot, and they sailed about in the air for some hours. But as he was not likely to wish to sail about forever, he at last proposed that they should descend to earth and be married. Troutina agreed with all her heart, but wished that the ceremony should be performed at her godmother's, the fairy Soussio. So they entered together into the fairy palace, and she told her godmother privately how all had happened, and how she had won King Charming, begging the fairy to pacify him when he found out his mistake.

"My child," replied the godmother, "that is more easily said than done; he is too deeply in love with Florina."

Meantime the king was left waiting in a chamber with diamond walls, so thin and transparent that through them he saw Troutina and Soussio conversing together. He stood like a man in a dream: "What! am I betrayed? Has this enemy to my peace carried away my dear Florina?"

How great was his despair when Soussio said to him in a commanding voice, "King Charming, behold the Princess Troutina, to whom you have promised your faith: marry her immediately!"

"Do you think me a fool?" cried the king. "I have promised her nothing. She is——"

"Stop—if you show me any disrespect——"

"I will respect you as much as a fairy deserves to be respected, if you will only give me back my princess." "Am not I she?" said Troutina. "It was to me you gave this ring; to me you spoke at the window."

"I have been wickedly deceived!" cried the king; "come, my winged frogs, we will depart immediately."

"You cannot," said Soussio; and, touching him, he found himself fixed as if his feet were glued to the pavement.

"You may turn me into stone!" exclaimed he; "but I will love no one except Florina."

Soussio employed persuasions, threats, promises, entreaties. Troutina wept, groaned, shrieked, and then tried quiet sulkiness; but the king uttered not a word. For twenty days and twenty nights he stood there, without sleeping, or eating, or once sitting down—they talking all the while.

At length Soussio, quite worn out, said: "Choose seven years of penitence and punishment, or marry my goddaughter."

"I choose," answered the king; "and I will not marry your goddaughter."

"Then fly out of this window in the shape of a bluebird."

Immediately the king's figure changed. His arms formed themselves into wings; his legs and feet turned black and thin, and claws grew upon them; his body wasted into the slender shape of a bird, and was covered with bright blue feathers; his eyes became round and beady; his nose an ivory beak; and his crown was a white plume on the top of his head. He began to speak in a singing voice, and then, uttering a doleful cry, fled away as far as possible from the fatal palace of Soussio.

But though he looked only a bluebird, the king was his own natural self still, and remembered all his misfortunes, and did not cease to

lament for his beautiful Florina. Flying from tree to tree, he sang melancholy songs about her and himself, and wished he were dead many a time.

The fairy Soussio sent back Troutina to her mother, who was furious. "Florina shall repent having pleased King Charming!" cried she; and dressing her own daughter in rich garments, with a gold crown on her head, and King Charming's ring on her finger, she took her to the tower. "Florina, your sister is come to see and bring you marriage presents, for she is now the wife of King Charming.'

Florina, doubting no more her lover's loss, fell down in a swoon, and the queen immediately went to tell her father that she was mad for love, and must be watched closely lest she should in some way disgrace herself. The king said her stepmother might do with her exactly what she pleased.

When the princess recovered from her swoon, she began to weep, and wept all night long, sitting at the open window of her tower. The bluebird, who kept continually flying about the palace, but only at night time, lest any one should see him, happened to come and perch upon a tall cypress opposite the window, and heard her, but it was too dark to see who

she was, and at daylight she shut the window.

Next night, it was broad moonlight, and then he saw clearly the figure of a young girl, weeping sore, and knew that it was his beloved Florina.

When she paused in her lamentations, "Adorable princess," said he, "why do you mourn? Your troubles are not without remedy."

"Who speaks to me so gently?" asked she.

"A king, who loves you, and will never love any other."

So saying he flew up to the window, and at first frightened the princess very much, for she could not understand such an extraordinary thing as a bird who talked in words like a man, yet kept still the piping voice of a nightingale. But soon she began stroking his beautiful plumage and caressing him.

"Who are you, charming bird?"

"You have spoke my name. I am King Charming, condemned to be a bird for seven years, because I will not renounce you."

"Ah! do not deceive me. I know you have married Troutina. She came to visit me with your diamonds on her neck, and your ring on her finger, wearing the golden crown and royal

mantel which you had given her, while I was laden with iron chains."

"It is all false," sang the bluebird, and told her his whole story, which comforted her so much that she thought no more of her misfortunes. They conversed till daybreak, and promised faithfully every night to meet again thus.

Meantime the princess could not sleep for thinking of her blue bird. "Suppose sportsmen should shoot him, or eagles and kites attack him, and vultures devour him just as if he were a mere bird and not a great king? What should I do if I saw his poor feathers scattered on the ground, and knew that he was no more?" So she grieved all day long.

The beautiful blue bird, hid in a hollow tree, spent the hours in thinking of his princess. "How happy I am to have found her again, and found her so engaging and so sweet." And as he wished to pay her all the attentions that a lover delights in, he flew to his own kingdom, entered his palace by an open window, and sought for some diamond ear-rings, which he brought back in his beak, and when night came, offered them to Florina. So night after night he brought her something beautiful, and they talked together till day, when he flew back

to the hollow tree, where he sang her praises in a voice so sweet that passers-by thought it was not a bird but a spirit. Rumors went about that the place was haunted, and no one would go near the spot. Thus for two years Florina spent her time, and never once regretted her captivity. Her blue bird visited her every night, and they loved one another dearly. And though she saw nobody and he lived in the hollow of a tree, they always found plenty to say to one another.

The malicious queen tried with all her might to get Troutina married, but in vain. Nobody would have her. "If it were Florina, now," said the kings, or the kings' ambassadors, "we should be most happy to sign the contract."

"That girl thwarts us still," said the queen. "She must have some secret correspondence with foreign suitors. But we will find her out and punish her."

The mother and daughter finished talking so late that it was midnight before they reached Florina's apartment. She had dressed herself as usual, with the utmost care, to please her bluebird, who liked to see her lovely; and she had adorned herself with all the pretty things he had given her. He perched on the window-sill, and she sat at the window, and they were

singing together a duet, which the queen heard outside. She burst the door open, and rushed into the chamber.

The first thing Florina did was to open her little window that the blue bird might fly away. But he would not. He had seen the queen and Troutina, and though he could not defend his princess, he refused to leave her. The two rushed upon her like furies. Her wonderful beauty and her splendid jewels startled them. "Whence came all these ornaments?" cried they.

"I found them," replied Florina, and refused to answer more.

"Some one has given them to you that you might join in treason against your father and the kingdom."

"Am I likely to do this? I, a poor princess, kept in captivity for two years, with you as my jailer?"

"In captivity," repeated the queen. "Why, then, do you dress yourself so fine and adorn your chamber with flowers?"

"I have leisure enough: I may just as well spend some of it in adorning myself, instead of bemoaning my misfortune—innocent as I am."

"Innocent, indeed!" cried the queen, and began to search the room. In it she found all

King Charming's presents—diamonds, rubies, emeralds, amethysts—in short, jewels without end. Meantime, from the window the blue bird, who had the eye of a lynx, sang aloud, "Beware, Florina!"

"You see madam," said Florina, "even the spirits of the air take pity upon me."

"I see that you are in league with demons; but your father shall judge you;" and very much frightened, the queen left her and went to hold counsel with Troutina as to what was to be done. They agreed to put in Florina's chamber a waiting-maid, who should watch her from morning till night. When the princess learned this she was in great grief.

"Alas!" cried she, "I can no longer talk with my bird who loved me so; and our love was consolation for all our misfortunes. What will he do? What shall I do?" And she melted into floods of tears.

She dared not open the window, though she heard continually his wings fluttering round it. For more than a month she waited; but the serving maid watched her night and day. At last, overcome with weariness, the girl fell asleep, and then Florina opened her little window, and sang in low a voice:

"Blue bird, blue bird,
Come to my side."

The blue bird flew to the window-sill, and they lavished on one another a hundred caresses, and talked together till dawn. Next night it happened the same, till they began to hope that the waiting-maid, who seemed to enjoy her sleep so much, would sleep every night to come. But on the third night, hearing a noise, she wakened, and saw by the light of the moon the Princess Florina sitting at the window with a beautiful blue bird, who warbled in her ear and touched her gently with his beak. The spy listened and heard all their conversation, very much astonished that a princess could be so fond of a mere bird. When day came she related all to the queen and Troutina, who concluded that the bird could be no other than King Charming. They sent the girl back, told her to express no curiosity, but to feign sleep, and to go to bed earlier than usual. Then the poor deceived princess opened her little window, and sang her usual song:

"Blue bird, blue bird,
Come to my side."

But no blue bird appeared. The queen had caused sharp knives to be hung outside the

hollow of the tree: he flew against them and cut his feet and wings, till he dropped down, covered with blood.

"Oh, Florina, come to my help!" sighed he. "But she is dead, I know, and I will die also."

At that moment, his friend, the magician, who since he had seen the chariot with flying frogs return without King Charming, had gone eight times round the world in search of him, made his ninth journey, and came to the tree where the poor blue bird lay, calling out, "King Charming, King Charming!"

The king recognized the voice of his best friend: whereupon the magician took him out of the hollow tree, healed his wounds, and heard all his history. He persuaded King Charming that, overcome with fear and cruel treatment, Florina must have betwayed him. "Then do as you will with me!" cried the king. "Put me into a cage and take me back with you. I shall at least be safe there for the five years that are to be endured."

"But," said the enchanter, "can you remain five years in so undignified a position? And you have enemies who will assuredly seize on your kingdom."

"Why can I not return and govern it as before?"

"I fear," replied his friend, "that the thing is difficult. Who would obey a blue bird?"

"Ah, that is too true!" cried the king sadly. "People only judge by the outside."

Meantime Florina, overcome with grief, fell dangerously sick, and in her sickness she kept singing, day and night, her little song:

"Blue bird, blue bird,
Come to my side."

But no one regarded her.

At last a sudden change took place in her fortunes. The king, her father, died and the people, who knew she was his heir, began to inquire, with one accord, where was the Princess Florina? They assailed the palace in crowds, demanding her for their sovereign. The riot became so dangerous that Troutina and her mother fled away to the fairy Soussio. Then the populace stormed the tower, rescued the sick and almost dying princess, and crowned her as their queen.

The exceeding care that was taken of her, and her longing to live in order to see again her blue bird, restored Florina's health and gave her strength to call a council and arrange all the affairs of her kingdom. Then she departed by night, and alone, to go over the world in search of her blue bird.

The magician, who was King Charming's friend, went to the fairy Soussio, whom he knew, for they had quarreled and made it up again, as fairies and magicians do, many times within the last five or six hundred years. She received him civilly and asked him what he wanted. He tried to make a bargain with her, but could effect nothing, unless King Charming would consent to marry Troutina. The enchanter found this bride so ugly that he could not advise. Still, the blue bird had run so many risks in his cage: the nail it was hung upon had broken, and the king suffered much in the fall; Minette, the cat, had glowered at him with her green eyes; the attendants had forgotten his hemp-seed and his water-glass, so that he was half-dying of hunger and thirst; and a monkey had plucked at his feathers through the wires as disrespectfully as if, instead of a king, he had been a linnet or a jay. Worse than all, his next heir spread reports of his death, and threatened to seize on his throne.

Under these circumstances the magician thought it best to agree with Soussio that King Charming should be restored to his kingdom and his natural shape for six months, on condition that Troutina should remain in his palace, and that he should try to like her and

marry her. If not, he was to become again a blue bird. So he found himself once more King Charming, and as charming as ever; but would rather have been a bird and near his beloved, than a king in the society of Troutina. The enchanter gave him the best reasons for what had been done, and advised him to occupy himself with the affairs of his kingdom and people; but he thought less of these things than how to escape from the horror of marrying Troutina.

Meanwhile the Queen Florina, in a peasant's dress, with a straw hat on her head, and a canvas sack on her shoulder, began her journey; sometimes on horseback, sometimes on foot, sometimes by sea, sometimes by land, wandering evermore after her beloved King Charming. One day, stopping beside a fountain, she let her hair fall loose, and dipped her weary feet in the cool water, when an old woman, bent, and leaning on a stick, came by.

"My pretty maiden, what are you doing here all alone?"

"Good mother," replied the queen, "I have too many troubles to be pleasant company for anybody."

"Tell me your troubles, and I may be able to soften them."

Florina obeyed and told her whole history, and how she was traveling over the world in search of the blue bird. The little woman listened attentively, and then, in the twinkling of an eye, became, instead of an old woman, a beautiful fairy.

"Incomparable Florina, the king you seek is no longer a bird; my sister Soussio has restored him to his proper shape, and he reigns in his own kingdom. Do not afflict yourself; happiness will yet be yours. Take these four eggs, and whenever you are in trouble, break them, and see what ensues." So saying the fairy vanished.

Florina, greatly comforted, put the eggs in her sack and turned her steps toward the country of King Charming. She walked eight days and nights without stopping, and then came to a mountain made entirely of ivory, and nearly perpendicular. Despairing of ever climbing it, she sank down at the foot, prepared to die there, when she bethought herself of the eggs. "Let me see," said she, "if the fairy has deceived me or not." So she broke one, and inside it were little hooks of gold, which she fitted on her feet, and hands, and by means of which she climbed the mountain with ease. Arrived at the summit she found new diffi-

culties; for the valley below was one large smooth mirror, in which sixty thousand women stood admiring themselves. They had need, for the charm of the mirror was that each saw herself therein, not as she was, but as she wished to be; and the grimaces they made were enough to cause a person to die of laughter. Not one of them had ever gained the top of the mountain; and when they saw Florina there, they all burst into angry outcries, "How has this woman got up the hill? If she descends upon our mirror, her first footstep will crack it into a thousand pieces."

The queen, uncertain what to do, broke the second egg, and there flew out two pigeons harnessed to a fine chariot, in which Florina mounted, and descended lightly over the mirror to the valley's foot. "Now, my pretty pigeons," said she, "will you convey me to the palace of King Charming?" The obedient pigeons did so, flying day and night till they reached the city gates; when the queen dismissed them with a sweet kiss, which was worth more than her crown.

How her heart beat as she entered and begged to see the king! "You!" cried the servants mocking. "Little peasant-girl, your eyes are not half good enough to see the king.

Besides, he is going to-morrow to the temple with the Princess Troutina, whom he has at last agreed to marry."

Florina sat down on a doorstep and hid here face under her straw hat and her drooping hair. "Alas!" she cried, "my blue bird has forsaken me."

She neither ate nor slept, but rose with the dawn and pushed her way through the guards to the temple, where she saw two thrones, one for King Charming, and the other for Troutina. They arrived shortly; he more charming and she more repulsive than ever. Knitting her brows, Troutina exclaimed, "What creature is that who dares approach so near my golden throne?"

"I am a poor peasant-girl," said Florina. "I come from afar to sell you curiosities." And she took out of her sack the emerald bracelet which the blue bird had given her.

"These are pretty trinkets," said Troutina; and going up to the king she asked him what he thought of them. At sight of the ornaments he turned pale, remembering those he had given to Florina.

"These bracelets are worth half my kingdom; I did not think there had been more than one pair in the world."

"Then I will buy these," said Troutina; but Florina refused to sell them for money: the price she asked was permission to sleep a night in the chamber of echoes.

"As you will; your bargains are cheap enough," replied Troutina, laughing: and when she laughed she showed teeth like the tusks of a wild boar.

Now the king, when he was a blue bird, had informed Florina about this chamber of echoes, where every word spoken could be heard in his own chamber; she could not have chosen a better way of reproaching him for his infidelity. But vain were her sobs and complainings; the king had taken opium to lull his grief; he slept soundly all night long. Next day, Florina was in great disquietude. Could he have really heard her, and been indifferent to her sorrows; or had he not heard her at all? She determined to buy another night in the chamber of echoes; but she had no more jewels to tempt Troutina; so she broke the third egg. Out of it came a chariot of polished steel, inlaid with gold, drawn by six green mice, the coachman being a rose-colored rat, and the postilion a gray one. Inside the carriage sat litle puppets, who behaved themselves just like live ladies and gentlemen.

When Troutina went to walk in the palace garden, Florina awaited her in a green valley, and made the mice gallop, and the ladies and gentlemen bow, till the princess was delighted, and ready to buy the curiosity at any price. Again Florina exacted permission to pass the night in the chamber of echoes; and again the king, undisturbed by her lamentations, slept without waking till dawn.

The third day, one of the palace valets, passing her by, said, "You stupid peasant-girl, it is well the king takes opium every night, or you would disturb him by that terrible sobbing of yours."

"Does he so?" said the queen, now comprehending all. "Then if you will promise to-night to keep the opium cup out of his way, these pearls and diamonds," and she took a handful of them from her sack, "shall assuredly be yours."

The valet promised; and then Florina broke her fourth egg, out of which came a pie composed of birds, which, though they had been plucked, baked, and made ready for the table, sang as beautifully as birds that are alive. Troutina, charmed with this marvelous novelty, bought it at the same price as the rest, adding generously a small piece of gold.

When all the palace were asleep, Florina for the last time, hoping King Charming would hear her, called upon him with all sorts of tender expressions, reminding him of their former vows, and their two years of happiness. "What have I done to thee, that thou shouldst forge me and marry Troutina?" sobbed she; and the king, who this time was wide awake, heard her. He could not make out whose voice it was, or whence it came, but it somehow reminded him of his dearest Florina, whom he had never ceased to love. He called his valet, inquired who was sleeping in the chamber of echoes, and heard that it was the little peasant-girl who had sold to Troutina the emerald bracelet. Then he rose up, dressed himself hastily, and went in search of her. She was sitting mournfully on the floor, with her hair hiding her face, and her eyes swollen with tears; but he knew at once his faithful Florina. He fell on his knees before her, covered her hands with kisses, and they embraced and wept together. For what was the good of all their love when they were still in the power of the fairy Soussio?

But at this moment appeared the friendly enchanter, with a fairy still greater than Soussio, the one who had given Florina the four

eggs. They declared that their united power was stronger than Soussio's, and that the lovers should be married without further delay.

When this news reached Troutina, she ran to the chamber of echoes, and there beheld her beautiful rival, whom she had so cruelly afflicted. But the moment she opened her mouth to speak, her wicked tongue was silenced forever; for the magician turned her into a trout, which he flung out of the window into the stream that flowed through the castle garden.

As for King Charming and Queen Florina, delivered out of all their sorrows, and given to one another, their joy was quite inexpressible, and it lasted to the end of their lives.

THE JUNIPER-TREE.

One or two thousand years ago, there was a rich man, who had a beautiful and pious wife; they loved one another dearly, but they had no children. They wished and prayed for some night and day, but still they had none. In front of their house was a yard, where stood a juniper-tree, and under it the wife stood once in winter, and peeled an apple, and as she peeled the apple she cut her finger, and the blood fell on the snow.

"Oh," said she, sighing deeply and looking sorrowfully at the blood, "if I only had a child as red as blood and as white as snow!"

While she spoke, she became quite happy; it seemed to her as if her wish would surely come to pass. Then she went into the house; and a month passed, and the snow melted; and two months, and the ground was green; and three months, and the flowers came up out of the earth; and four months, and all the trees in the wood burst forth; and the green twigs all grew thickly together; the little birds sang so that

the whole wood rang, and the blossoms fell from the trees. The fifth month passed, and she stood under the juniper-tree, and it smelled so beautiful, and her heart leaped with joy. She fell upon her knees, but could not speak. When the sixth month was gone, the fruit was large and ripe, and she was very quiet; the seventh month, she took the juniper-berries, ate them eagerly, and was sick and sorrowful; and the eighth month went by, and she called to her husband, and cried and said, "If I die, bury me under the juniper-tree."

After this she was quite comforted and happy, till the next month was passed, and then she had a child as white as snow and as red as blood. When she beheld it, she was so glad that she died.

Her husband buried her under the juniper-tree, and began to mourn very much; but after a little time he became calmer, and when he had wept a little more, he left off weeping entirely, and soon afterward he took another wife.

The second wife brought him a daughter, but the child of the first wife was a little son, and was as red as blood and as white as snow. When the wife looked at her daughter, she loved her; but when she looked at the little

boy, she hated him, and it seemed as if he were always in her way, and she was always thinking how she could get all the property for her daughter. The Evil One possessed her so that she was quite angry with the little boy, and pushed him about from one corner to another, and cuffed him here and pinched him there, until the poor child was always in fear. When he came home from school, he could not find a quiet place to creep into.

Once, when the woman went up to her room, her little daughter came up too, and said, "Mother give me an apple."

"Yes, my child," said the woman, and gave her a beautiful apple out of the chest; and the chest had a great heavy lid, with a great sharp iron lock.

"Mother," said the little daughter, "shall not brother have one too?"

That vexed the woman, but she said, "Yes, when he comes from school."

And when she saw from the window that he was coming, it was just as if the Evil One came into her, and she snatched away the apple from her daughter, and said, "You shall not have one before your brother."

Then she threw the apple into the chest and shut the lid close down. When the little boy

came in at the door, the Evil One made her say kindly, "My son, will you have an apple?"

Yet she looked so angry all the time, that the little boy said, "Mother, how dreadful you look! Yes, give me an apple."

Then she felt that she must speak to him. "Come with me," said she, and opened the lid; "pick out an apple for yourself."

And as the little boy stooped over the Evil One prompted her, and smash! she banged the lid down, so that his head flew off and fell among the red apples. Then she was seized with terror, and thought, "Can I get rid of the blame of this?" So she went up to her room to her chest of drawers, and took out of the top drawer a white cloth, and placed the head on the neck again, and tied the handkerchief round it, so that one could see nothing, and set him before the door on a chair, and gave him the apple in his hand.

Soon after, little Margery came to her mother, who stood by the kitchen fire, and had a pot of hot water before her, which she kept stirring round.

"Mother," said little Margery, "brother sits before the door and looks quite white, and has an apple in his hand; I asked him to give me

the apple, but he did not answer me, and I was frightened."

"Go to him again," said her mother, "and if he will not answer you give him a box on the ear."

Then Margery went and said, "Brother, give me the apple."

But he was silent, so she gave him a box on the ear, and the head fell down.

She was frightened, and began to cry and sob, and ran to her mother, and said, "Oh, mother, I have knocked my brother's head off!" and cried and cried, and would not be comforted.

"Margery," said her mother, "what have you done!—but now be quiet, and no one will notice; it cannot be helped now—we will cook him in vinegar."

Then the mother took the little boy and chopped him in pieces, put him into the pot, and cooked him in vinegar. But Margery stood by, and cried and cried, and all her tears fell into the pot, so that the cookery did not want any salt.

When the father came home and sat down to dinner, he said, "Where is my son?"

The mother brought a great big dish of black soup, and Margery cried and cried without

ceasing. Then the father said again, "Where is my son?"

"Oh," said the mother, "he is gone into the country to see his uncle, where he is going to stay awhile."

"What does he want there? And he has not even said good-by to me!"

"Oh, he wished very much to go, and asked if he might remain away six weeks; he is well taken care of there, you know."

"Well," said the father, "I am sorry; for he ought to have bade me good-by."

After that he began to eat, and said, "Margery, what are you crying for? Brother will be sure to come back. Oh, wife," continued he, "how delicious this food tastes; give me some more." And the more he ate, the more he wanted; and he said, "Give me more, you shall not have any of it; I feel as if it were all mine." And he ate and ate, throwing the bones under the table, till he had finished it all.

But Margery went to her drawers, and took out of the bottom drawer her best silk handkerchief, and fetched out all the bones from under the table; she tied them up in the silk handkerchief, and took them out of doors, and shed bitter tears over them. Then she laid

them under the juniper-tree in the green grass; and when she had put them there, she felt all at once quite happy, and did not cry any more.

Soon the juniper began to move, and the twigs kept dividing and then closing, just as if the tree were clapping its hands for joy. After that there went up from it a sort of mist, and right in the center of the mist burned a fire, and out of the fire flew a beautiful bird, who, singing deliciously, rose up high in the air. When he was out of sight, the juniper-tree was just as it had been before, only the handkerchief with the bones was gone. But Margery felt quite pleased and happy, just as if her brother were still alive. And she went back merrily into the house to dinner.

The bird flew away, sat himself on a goldsmith's house, and began to sing:

"My mother, she killed me
My father, he ate me;
My sister, little Margery,
Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I!"

The goldsmith sat in his workshop, making a gold chain, but he heard the bird, which sat

on his roof and sang, and he thought it very beautiful. He stood up, and as he went over the doorstep he lost one slipper. But he went right into the middle of the street, with one slipper and one sock on; he had on his leather apron; in one hand he carried the gold chain, and in the other the pinchers, while the sun shone brightly up the street. There he stood, and looked at the bird.

"Bird," said he, "how beautiful you can sing! Sing me that song again."

"No," said the bird, "I do not sing twice for nothing. Give me that gold chain, and I will sing it again."

"There," said the goldsmith; "you shall have the gold chain—now sing me that song once more."

Then the bird came and took the gold chain in his right claw, and went and sat before the goldsmith, and sang:

"My mother, she killed me;
My father, he ate me,
My sister, little Margery,
Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I!"

Afterward he flew away to a shoemaker's, and set himself on his roof, and sang:

'My mother, she killed me;
My father, he ate me;
My sister, little Margery,
Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I!"

When the shoemaker heard it, he ran out of his door in his shirt-sleeves, looked toward his roof, and had to hold his hand over his eyes, so that the sun should not dazzle him.

"Bird," said he, "how beautifully you can sing!" And he called in at his door, "Wife, just come out; there is a bird here which can sing so beautifully." Then he called his daughter and his workpeople, both boys and girls; they all came into the street, looked at the bird, and saw how handsome he was; for he had bright red and green feathers, and his neck shone like real gold, and his eyes twinkled in his head like stars.

"Bird," said the shoemaker, "now sing me that song again."

"No," replied the bird, "I do not sing twice for nothing; you must give me something."

"Wife," said the man, "go to the garret: on the highest shelf there stands a pair of red shoes—bring them here."

The wife went and fetched the shoes.

"There," said the man, "now sing me that song again."

Then the bird came and took the shoes in his left claw and flew back on the roof, and sang:

"My mother, she killed me;
My father, he ate me;
My sister, little Margery,
Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid tnem under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I."

And when he had finished he flew away, with the chain in his right claw and the shoes in his left. He flew far away to a mill, and the mill went "Clipper, clapper, clipper, clapper, clipper, clapper." And in the mill there sat twenty millers, who chopped a stone, and chopped, "Hick, hack, hick, hack, hick, hack;" and the mill went "Clipper, clapper, clipper, clapper, clipper, clapper."

The bird flew up, and sat in a lime-tree that grew before the mill, and sang:

"My mother, she killed me;"

then one man stopped;

"My father, he ate me;"

then two more stopped and listened;

"My sister, little Margery,"

then four more stopped;

"Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,"

now only eight more were chopping;

"And laid them under"

now only five;

"the juniper-tree:"

now only one.

"Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I!"

Then the last man stopped too, and heard the last word.

"Bird," said he, "how beautifully you sing! Please to sing me that song once more."

"No," answered the bird, "I do not sing twice for nothing; give me the millstone, and I will sing it again."

"Yes," said he, "if it belonged to me only, you should have it."

"Yes," cried all the others, "if he sings it again, he shall have it."

Then the bird came down, and all the twenty millers took poles, and lifted the stone up. The bird stuck his neck through the hole in the millstone, and put it on like a collar, and flew back to the tree, and sang:

"My mother, she killed me;
My father, he ate me;
My sister, little Margery,
Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I."

And when he had done singing, he opened his wings, and though he had in his right claw the chain, in his left the shoes, and round his neck the millstone, he flew far away to his father's house.

In the room sat the father, the mother, and little Margery at dinner; and the father said, "Oh, how happy I am! altogether joyful."

"For me," said the mother, "I feel quite frightened, as if a dreadful storm was coming."

But Margery sat, and cried and cried.

Then there came the bird flying, and as he perched himself on the roof, "Oh," said the father, "I feel so happy, and the sun shines out of doors so beautifully! It is just as if I were going to see an old friend."

"No," said the wife; "I am so frightened, my teeth chatter, and it feels as if there was a fire in my veins;" and she tore open her dress. But Margery sat in a corner, and cried, holding her apron before her eyes, till the apron was quite wet through.

The bird perched upon the juniper-tree, and sang:

"My mother, she killed me;

Then the mother stopped up her ears, and shut her eyes tight, and did not want to see or hear; but there was a roaring in her ears like the loudest thunder, and her eyes burned and flashed like lightning.

My father, he ate me;

"Oh, wife," said the man, "look at that beautiful bird! he sings so splendidly. And the sun shines so warm, and there is a smell like real cinnamon!"

'My sister, little Margery,"

Then Margery laid her head on her knee, and sobbed out loud; but the man said, "I shall go out—I must look at the bird quite close."

"Oh, do not go," said the wife; "it seems to me as if the whole house shook, and was in flames."

But the man went out and watched the bird, which still went on singing:

"Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,
And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywitt! what a beautiful bird am I!"

After that the bird let the gold chain fall, and it fell right on to the man's neck, fitting exactly round it. He went in and said, "See what a beautiful bird that is—it has given me such a splendid gold chain!"

But the wife was frightened, and fell flat down on the floor, and her cap dropped off her head.

Then the bird sang again:

"My mother, she killed me;"

"Oh, that I were a thousand feet under the earth, so that I might not hear!"

"My father, he ate me;"

Then she fell down, as if she was dead.

"My sister little Margery,"

"Oh!" said Margery, "I will go out too, and see if the bird will give me anything."

"Gathered up all my bones,
Tied them in a silk handkerchief,"

And the shoes were thrown down.

"And laid them under the juniper-tree:
Kywitt! kywit! what a beautiful bird am I!"

Then Margery was very joyful; she put on the new red shoes, and danced and jumped about. "Oh," said she, "I was so unhappy when I came out and now I am so happy! That is a wonderful bird; he has given me a pair of red shoes."

"For me," cried the wife, and she jumped up, and her hair stood on end like flames of fire," "I feel as if the world were come to an end; I will go out—perhaps I shall feel easier."

But as she went out of the door—smash!—the bird threw the millstone on her head, and she was crushed to pieces.

The father and Margery heard it and rushed out to see what had happened: there was a great flame and smoke rising up from the place, and when that was gone, there stood the little

brother all alive again—as if he had never died. He took his father and Margery by the hand, and they were all three quite happy, and went into the house to dinner.

THE YELLOW DWARF.

There was once a queen, who had been the mother of several children, but all were dead except one daughter, of whom she was excessively fond, humoring and indulging her in all her ways and wishes. This princess was so extremely beautiful that she was called All-Fair, and twenty kings were, at one time, paying their addresses to her. She had so many lovers, indeed, that she did not know which to choose, and refused them all. Her mother, being advanced in years, was anxious to see her married and settled before she died; but as no entreaties could prevail, she determined to go to the desert fairy to ask advice concerning her stubborn daughter.

Now, this fairy being guarded by two fierce lions, the queen made a cake of millet, sugar-candy, and crocodiles' eggs, in order to appease their fury and pass by them; and having thus provided herself, she set out. After traveling some time she found herself weary, and lying down under a tree fell asleep. When she

awoke, she heard the roaring of the lions which guarded the fairy, and on looking for her cake she found it was gone. This threw her into the utmost agony, as she felt sure she should be devoured; when, hearing somebody approach, she raised her eyes, and saw in a tree a little yellow man half a yard high, picking and eating oranges.

"Ah! queen," said the yellow dwarf, for so he was called on account of his complexion, and the orange-tree in which he lived, "how will you escape the lions? There is but one way; I know what business brought you here; promise me your daughter in marriage and I will save you."

The queen, though she could not look without horror upon so frightful a figure, was forced to consent; and having agreed to the terms proposed, she instantly found herself in her own palace, and all that had passed seemed much like a dream: nevertheless, she was so thoroughly persuaded of the reality of it that she became melancholy.

The young princess being unable to learn the cause of her mother's dejection, resolved in her turn to go and inquire of the desert fairy; and, accordingly, having prepared a cake for the lions, she also set off on the same journey.

It happened that All-Fair took exactly the route her mother had done before her; and coming to the fatal tree which was loaded with oranges, she felt inclined to pick some; therefore, laying down her basket, in which she carried the cake, she plentifully indulged herself with the delicious fruit.

The lions now began to roar; All-Fair, looking for her cake, was thrown into the utmost despair to find it gone; and as she was lamenting her deplorable situation, the yellow dwarf presented himself to her with these words: "Lovely princess, dry your tears, and hear what I am going to say. You need not proceed to the desert fairy to know the reason of your mother's indisposition—it is this: she is ungenerous enough to repent having promised you, her only daughter, to me in marriage——"

"How!" interrupted the princess; "my mother promised me to you in marriage; you —such a fright as you!"

"None of your scoffs," returned the yellow dwarf; "I warn you not to rouse my anger. If you will promise to marry me, I will be the tenderest and most loving husband in the world; if not, save yourself from the lions if you can." The princess, overcome with terror, gave the promise; but such was the agony

of her mind that she fell into a swoon, and when she recovered, she found herself in her own bed, finely adorned with ribbons, with a ring of a single red hair so fastened round her finger that it could not be got off.

This adventure had the same effect upon All-Fair as the former one had had upon her mother. She grew melancholy, which was remarked and wondered at by the whole court. The best way to divert her, they thought would be to urge her to marry; which the princess, who was now become less obstinate on that point than formerly, consented to. Trusting that such a pygmy as the yellow dwarf would not dare to contend with so gallant a person as the king of the golden mines, she fixed upon that prince for her husband. He was exceedingly rich and powerful, and loved her to distraction. The most superb preparations were made for the nuptials, and the happy day was fixed when, as they were proceeding to the ceremony, they saw moving toward them a box, upon which sat an old woman remarkable for her ugliness.

"Hold, queen and princess!" cried she, knitting her brows; "remember the promises you have both made to my friend the yellow dwarf. I am the desert fairy; and unless All-

Fair consent to marry him, I solemnly swear to burn my crutch."

The queen and princess were struck almost motionless by this unexpected address of the fairy; but the prince of the golden mines was exceeding angry, and holding his sword to her throat, he said, "Fly, wretch! or thy malice shall cost thee thy life."

No sooner had he uttered these words than the top of the box flying off, out came the yellow dwarf, mounted upon a large Spanish cat. Placing himself between the king and the fairy, he exclaimed, "Rash youth! thy rage shall be leveled at me, not at the desert fairy. I am thy rival, and claim thy princess, who is fast bound to me by her own promise, her mother's and the single red hair that you see round her finger."

This so enraged the king that he cried out, "Contemptible creature! wert thou worthy of notice, I would sacrifice thee for thy presumption."

The yellow dwarf, clapping spurs to his cat and drawing a cutlass, now defied the king to combat; and down they went into the courtyard. The sun was immediately turned as red as blood, the air became dark, it thundered heavily, and the flashes of lightning discovered

two giants vomiting fire on each side of the yellow dwarf. The king behaved with such undaunted courage as to give the dwarf great trouble; but he was dismayed when he saw the desert fairy, mounted on a winged griffin and with her head covered with snakes, strike the princess so hard with a lance that she fell into the queen's arms, covered with blood. He immediately left the combat, to go to the relief of his beloved, but the dwarf was too quick for him; and flying on his Spanish cat to the balcony where she was, he took her from her mother's arms, leaped with her upon the top of the palace, and immediately disappeared.

As the king stood confused and astonished at this strange adventure, he suddenly found a mist before his eyes and felt himself lifted up in the air by some extraordinary power; for the desert fairy had fallen in love with him. To secure him for herself, therefore, she carried him to a frightful cavern, hoping he would there forget All-Fair. But finding this scheme ineffectual, she resolved to carry him to a place altogether as pleasant as the other was terrible; and accordingly placed him in a chariot drawn by swans. In passing through the air, he was unspeakably surprised to see his beloved princess in a castle of polished steel, leaning her

head on one hand, and wiping away her tears with the other. She happened to look up, and had the mortification to see the king sitting by the fairy, who then, by her art, made herself appear extremely beautiful. Had not the king been sensible of the fairy's power, he would certainly have tried to free himself from her by some means or other; but he knew it would be in vain, and therefore made believe to have a liking for her. At last they came to a stately palace, fenced on one side by walls of emeralds, and on the other by a boisterous sea. The king, by pretending an attachment to the fairy, obtained the liberty to walk by himself on the shore. There, one day, he heard a voice, and presently after was surprised by the appearance of a mermaid, who, swimming up to him with a pleasing smile, spoke to this effect: "Oh, king of the golden mines, I well know all that has befallen you and the Princess All-Fair. Do not suspect this to be a contrivance of the fairy to try you, for I am an inveterate enemy both to her and the yellow dwarf; therefore, if you will place confidence in me, I will lend you my assistance to procure the release, not only of yourself, but of All-Fair also."

The overjoyed king promised to do whatever

the mermaid should direct, and seating himself by her desire upon her fish's tail, they sailed away together over the rolling sea.

When they had sailed some time, "Now," said the mermaid to the king, "we are approaching the place where your princess is kept prisoner by the yellow dwarf. You will have many enemies to fight before you can come to her; take, therefore, this sword, with which you may overcome everything, provided you never let it go out of your hand."

The king returned her all the thanks that the most grateful heart could suggest; and the mermaid landed and took leave of him, promising him further assistance when necessary. The king boldly advanced, and meeting with two terrible sphinxes, laid them dead at his feet with the sword. Next he attacked six dragons that opposed him, and dispatched them also. Then he met twenty-four nymphs, crowned with garlands of flowers, at the sight of whom he stopped, being unwilling to destroy so much beauty; when he heard a voice say, "Strike! strike! or you lose you princess forever!" So he threw himself into the midst of the nymphs and soon dispersed them.

Presently he came to the castle, where was imprisoned the Princess All-Fair. "Oh, my

princess," exclaimed he, "behold your faithful lover!"

"Faithful lover!" she replied, drawing herself back. "Did I not see you passing through the air with a beautiful nymph? were you faithful then?"

"Yes," replied the king, "I was. That was the detested desert fairy, who was carrying me to a place where I must have languished out all my days, had it not been for a kind mermaid, by whose assistance it is that I am now come to release you." Having uttered these words, he threw himself at her feet; but catching hold of her gown he unfortunately let go the magic sword, which the yellow dwarf no sooner discovered than, leaping from behind a shrub, where he had been concealed, he ran and seized it. By two cabalistical words he then conjured up a couple of giants, who laid the king in irons.

"Now," said the dwarf, "my rival's fate is in my own hands; however, if he will consent to my marriage with the Princess All-Fair, he shall have his life and liberty."

"No," said the king, "I scorn thy favor on such terms."

The dwarf was so exasperated by this reply that he instantly stabbed the king to the heart,

The disconsolate princess stood a moment petrified, and then exclaimed, "Thou hideous creature! since entreaties could not avail thee, perhaps thou now reliest upon force; but thou shalt be disappointed. I will die for the love I have for the king of the golden mines!" and so saying she sank down upon his body and expired without a sigh.

Thus ended the fate of these two faithful lovers, whom the mermaid very much regretted; but as all her power lay in the sword, she could only change them into two palm trees, which, preserving a constant and mutual affection, still fondly unite their branches together.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

A brother took his sister by the hand and said, "Since our mother is dead we have no more happy hours: our stepmother beats us every day, and whenever we come near her she kicks us away. She gives us hard crusts and nasty scraps to eat, and the dog under the table fares better than we do, for he does sometimes get a nice bit thrown to him. It would break our mother's heart if she knew it! Come, we will go out into the wide world together."

They went along the whole day through meadows, over rocks and stones, and when it rained the little sister said, "Heaven and our hearts are crying together." In the evening they came to a great wood, and were so worn out with grief, hunger, and weariness that they sat down in a hollow tree and went to sleep.

The next morning, when they awoke, the sun was already high in the heavens, and shone down very hot on the tree. Upon which said

the brother, "Sister, I am thirsty; I would go and have a drink if I knew where there was a spring: I think I can hear one trickling." He got up, took his sister by the hand, and they went to look for the spring.

The wicked stepmother, however, who was a witch and well knew how the children had run away, had crept after them secretly, in the way witches do, and had bewitched all the springs in the wood. When they had found a spring that was dancing brightly over the stones, the brother stooped down to drink; but his sister heard a voice in its murmur, which said, "Whoever drinks of me will become a tiger." Eagerly the little sister cried, "I pray thee, brother, do not drink, lest thou become a wild beast and tear me to pieces."

The brother did not drink, although he was so thirsty, but said, "I will wait for the next spring." When they came to the next, the little sister heard it say, "Who drinks of me will become a wolf; who drinks of me will become a wolf!" and cried out, "Oh, brother, I pray thee do not drink, lest thou become a wolf and eat me up."

The brother did not drink, but said, "I will wait till I come to the next spring, but then I

must drink, say what you will, for my thirst is getting unbearable."

And when they came to the third spring, the little sister heard a voice in its murmur, saying, "Whoever drinks of me will become a roe," and she cried, "Oh, brother, do not drink, I pray thee, lest thou become a roe and run away from me." But the brother had already knelt down by the stream, stooped down, and drank of the water: and as soon as the first drop touched his lips, there he lay—a white roe.

The little sister cried over her poor bewitched brother, and the roe cried also as he rested mournfully beside her. At last the maiden said, "Never mind, dear roe, I will never forsake you." So she took off her golden garter and put it round the roe's neck, then pulled some rushes and wove them into a cord. To this she tied the little animal and led him on, and they both went still deeper into the wood. When they had gone a long, long way, they came at last to a little house, into which the maiden peeped; and as it was empty, she thought, "Here we may stay and live." So she made a pretty bed of leaves and moss for the roe; and every morning she went out and gathered roots, berries, and nuts for herself;

and for the roe she brought tender grass, which he ate out of her hand, and played about and was very happy. In the evening, when the little sister was tired and had said her prayers, she laid her head upon the roe, who was her pillow, and went sweetly to sleep; and if her brother had only kept his proper shape, they would have led a very happy life.

They had lived alone in this way during a long time, when it happened that the king of the country held a great hunt in the forest. Through the trees might be heard the blowing of horns, the barking of dogs, and the joyous cries of the hunters, which when the little roe heard he was almost beside himself with delight. "Oh," said he to his sister, "let me go and see the hunt; I can no longer refrain;" and he begged hard till she consented.

"But," said she, "when you return at evening I shall have shut my door against the wild hunstmen, and in order that I may know you, knock and say, 'My little sister, let me in;' but if you do not say so, I shall not open the door."

Now off sprang the roe, and was so happy to find himself in the open air. The king and his huntsmen saw the beautiful beast and set off after him, but they could not catch him; for when they thought they had certainly got him,

he sprang over a bush and disappeared. When it was dark he galloped up to the little house, knocked, and cried, "My little sister, let me in." And when the door was opened he sprang in, and rested all night on his pretty little bed. Next morning the hunt began again, and when the roe heard the blast of the horns and the "Ho! ho!" of the hunters, he could not rest, and cried, "Sister, open the door; I must go."

His sister opened the door and said, "But mind you must be back in the evening and make your little speech, that I may let you in."

When the king and his huntsmen saw the white roe with the gold band once more, they all rode after him, but he was too quick and agile for them. This chase lasted the whole day; at last, toward evening, the hunters surrounded him, and wounded him with an arrow in the foot, so that he was forced to limp and go slowly. One of the hunters, creeping softly after him to the little house, heard him say, "My sister, let me in," and saw that the door was opened, and immediately shut to again; so he went back to the king, and told him all he had seen and heard.

"We will have another hunt to-morrow," said the king.

The little sister was greatly alarmed when she saw her white roe was wounded; she washed off the blood, laid herbs upon the place, and said, "Go now to thy bed, dear roe, and get well."

The wound, however, was so slight that the next morning he felt nothing of it, and when he heard the noise of the hunt he said, "I cannot keep away; I must go, and nothing shall keep me."

His sister cried and said, "Now you will go and be killed, and leave me here alone in the forest, forsaken by all the world; I will not let you go out."

"Then I shall die here of grief," answered the roe: "for when I hear the sound of the horn I do feel as if I could jump out of my shoes." So his sister could not do less than open the door with a heavy heart, and the roe sprang out joyfully into the forest.

As soon as the king saw him, he said to his huntsmen, "Now hunt him all day till evening, but don't do anything to hurt him."

When the sun was set the king said to his huntsman, "Now come and show me the little house you saw in the wood." And when he was before the door he knocked and cried, "Dear little sister, let me in." Immediately

the door opened, the king entered, and there stood a maiden more beautiful than any one he had ever seen. The damsel was frightened when she found there had come in, not her roe, but a man who wore a golden crown on his head. But the king looked kindly at her, took her hand, and said, "Wilt thou go with me to my castle, and be my dear wife?"

"Oh, yes," answered the maiden, "but the roe must come with me, for I cannot forsake him."

The king replied, "He shall remain with you as long as you live, and shall want for nothing."

At this moment he came springing in, his sister tied the cord of rushes round his neck, led him with her own hand, and they all left the little house together.

The king took the beautiful maiden on his own horse and conducted her to his castle, where the marriage was celebrated with great pomp. She was now queen, and they lived a long time very happily together; while the roe was petted and taken care of, and played all day about the palace garden.

But the wicked stempmother, on whose account these children had been driven into the wide world, thought nothing less than that

the little sister had been torn to pieces by wild beasts in the forest, and that the brother, in the shape of a roe, had been killed by the hunters. When she now heard they were so happy, and that everything went well with them, envy and spite raged in her heart and gave her no rest, and her only thought was how she could do some mischief to them both. Her own daughter, who was as ugly as the night and had only one eye, was continually reproaching her, and saying, "It is I who ought to have been made queen."

"Never mind," said the old witch to console her; "when the time comes I will manage it."

By and by the queen gave birth to a beautiful little boy; and the king being away at the hunt, the old witch took upon herself the form of the lady-in-waiting, entered the room where the queen lay, and said to her, "Come, the bath is ready, which will do you good and give you new strength; make haste before it gets cold." Her daughter was also at hand, and they carried the poor weak queen between them into the bath-room and laid her in the bath: then they shut the door and ran away. But under the bath they had first lighted a great furnace fire, so that the beautiful young queen could not save herself from being scorched alive.

When that was done the old witch took her own daughter, put a cap on her, and laid her on the bed in the queen's room. She changed her also into the shape of the young queen, all except her one eye, and she could not give her another. But in order that the king might not observe it, she was obliged to lie on that side where there was no eye. In the evening, when he was come home, and heard that he had a little son, he was very much delighted, and wished to visit his dear wife and see how she was getting on; on which the old woman cried out in a great hurry, "As you value your life, don't touch the curtain; the queen must not see the light, and must be left quite quiet." So the king went away, and never found out that it was a false queen in the bed.

But when it was midnight, and all the world was asleep, the nurse who was sitting beside the cradle, and who was the only person awake, saw the door open and the true queen come in. She took the baby out of the cradle, laid it in her arms, and nursed it tenderly. She then shook up the pillows, laid it down again, and covered it with the counterpane. She did not forget the roe either, but went into the corner where it lay, and stroked it gently. After

this she passed out, quite silently, through the door; and the nurse inquired next morning of the sentinels whether any one had gained entrance into the palace during the night, but they answered, "No—we have seen nobody." She continued to come in the same way for several nights, though she spoke never a word: the nurse always saw her, but never dared to mention it.

When some time had passed, the queen at last began to speak, and said:

"How is my baby? How is my roe?
I can come again twice, then forever must go."

The nurse could not answer her; but when she had disappeared she went to the king, and told him all about it, upon which he cried, "What does it mean? I will myself watch by the child to-night."

In the evening he came to the nursery, and there at midnight the dead queen appeared, and said,

"How is my baby? How is my roe?
I can come but once more, then forever must go,"

and nursed and fondled the baby as before, then vanished. The king did not dare to

address her, but watched again the following night. This time she said:

"How is my baby? How is my roe?
I can come but this once, then forever must go."

upon which the king could no longer contain himself, but sprang forward and cried, "Thou canst surely be no one but my own dear wife!"

She replied, "Yes, I am thy dear wife;" and as soon as she had spoken these words she was restored to life, and became once more fresh and blooming.

Then she related to the king the crime committed on her by the old witch and her ugly daughter, whom he at once commanded to be brought to judgment, and had sentence passed upon them. The daughter was taken forth into the woods, where the wild beasts tore her in pieces, and the witch was burned. And behold! as soon as there was nothing left of her but ashes, the white roe became changed again and resumed his human form; so they all lived happily together till the end of their lives.

THE END.