

DEULIN CHARLES

JOHNNY NUT
AND THE
GOLDEN GOOSE

Charles Deulin

Johnny Nut and the Golden Goose

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Johnny Nut and the Golden Goose:

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Charles Deulin, Andrew Lang Johnny Nut and the Golden Goose

PREFACE

This Tale is rendered, a little freely, from *Trente-six Rencontres de Jean du Gogué*, in *Contes d'un Buveur de Bière*, par Charles Deulin. (Sixième Edition. Paris: Dentu. 1873.)

The late M. Deulin told with much humour, and probably with but little alteration from oral tradition, the popular tales of his native province. The narrative here translated has points in common with a Tongan legend, with several ancient French *fabliaux*, with a Zulu story in Bishop Callaway's collection, and with Grimm's *Golden Goose*.

TO MISTRESS DOROTHEA THORPE

LIKE the Sultan in the *Arabian Nights*— and, sure, you are no less despotic — you have sometimes commanded me to 'tell you a story.' It has been my privilege to obey; but, alas! when my toil was ended, with a stretch of absolute authority you have bidden me 'tell you another.' Truly, Madam, the *Ocean of the Streams of*

Story, whereof the Hindoos speak, will speedily be drained dry by your Slave, who now presents you with this little Tale, which he has conveyed from French Flanders. If it amuses your leisure as much to read, as it has diverted mine to translate it, I shall have that enjoyment which attends successful enterprise, and I remain,

Madam,

Yours very humbly to command

A. Z

CHAPTER I

FLONG TIME AGO there lived in French Flanders, at a village called Saint Saulve, Valenciennes way, a little cow-boy named Johnny Nut He had no father and no mother, and they called him Johnny Nut because he was found one fine morning under a walnut-tree. Silly Billy was another name he had, for he was just as great an innocent as a calf before it is weaned.

Now, never in his living days had Johnny Nut dined on anything better than potatoes, and the one thing he wanted in the world was to taste roast goose.

Now, about a dozen miles off, Condé way, there is a village where the geese are so grand that all the world talks of nothing but the Hergnies geese.

'When I grow up,' said Johnny, 'I'll go to Hergnies and eat goose.'

So, at long and at last, one autumn evening he left the cows in the lurch, and off he went, without beat of drum.

Now, whether he came back as poor as he started, and what a great love of roast goose brought Silly Billy to, that's what we are going to tell you!

So Johnny Nut followed his nose, and asked his way, and at nightfall he reached the village of Escau-bridge.

'You can't show me the way to Hergnies, mother?' cried Johnny to the farmer's wife, who was just sitting down to supper.

'That I can, my son, but you are out late.

'Are you in such a hurry?'

'Oh, mother, who is in a hurry if not me? These ten years I've been dying to taste roast goose, so don't you see there's no time to waste.'

The farmer's wife stared at him with all her eyes.

'What do they call you?' says she.

'Silly Billy,' says he.

'Oh, *don't I see*. Yes, I see,' said the woman, laughing to his very face. 'Listen, my lad! You are big, and strong, and you seem honest. Now Jim, our man, is off on the King's wars. Will you take his place?'

'Will you let me taste roast goose?'

'On Sunday, as sure as sure, you shall have your fill of goose; I have to send some one to Hergnies, to my cousin's, to-morrow. You shall start, at peep of day, and bring me a good fat goose. We'll dine off him when we come back from the fair at the next town. Does that suit you, my son?'

'Mother, it's just the thing for me.'

'Then come to supper.'

And to supper went Johnny Nut, with such an appetite that he scarcely had time to say grace.

CHAPTER II

NEXT day was a Saturday, and the farmer's wife went to waken Johnny in the stable-loft.

'Come, come, up with you!' says she, shaking him. 'Don't you hear the cock crowing?' So she gave him a big bowl of coffee, and *such* a chunk of bread; and showed him the way, and sent him off, saying, 'Mind you ask for my cousin's mill, and bring me the goose, and seven bushels of flour, and a pint of seed corn.'

'Seven bushels, and one pint,' 'Seven bushels, and one pint' – for, not being very clever, he was afraid he might forget.

As he went on saying this, he met a farmer, who was counting up how much his field should bring him in.

'*Seven* bushels, indeed!' said the farmer. 'Let a hundred come!'

Now this puzzled Johnny Silly Billy, for he had never room in his head for more than one idea at a time; so he went on his way, repeating,

'Let a hundred come! let a hundred come!'

Well, as Johnny crossed a wood, there sat a shepherd, as red as scarlet, and as proud as a peacock that has laid an egg; and all because his dog had just killed a wolf that was after the lambs.

'Let a hundred of them come! let a hundred of them come!' sang out Johnny Nut.

'What do you mean, you fool?' says the shepherd, 'with your *Let a hundred them come!* A hundred, indeed! Rather say, *There's*

another caught and done for!

'*There's another caught and done for!*' said Johnny Nut, as he went on his way.

CHAPTER III

NOW, as Johnny strutted along, he heard jolly music and wedding bells, and saw a multitude of people.

It was a wedding party, outside a tavern; and the fiddlers were fiddling, and everybody dancing.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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