БРАТЬЯ ГРИММ

GRIMM'S FAIRY STORIES

Якоб и Вильгельм Гримм

Grimm's Fairy Stories

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Содержание

Jacob Grimm
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THE GOOSE-GIRL

An old queen, whose husband had been dead some years, had a beautiful daughter. When she grew up, she was betrothed to a prince who lived a great way off; and as the time drew near for her to be married, she got ready to set off on her journey to his country. Then the queen, her mother, packed up a great many costly things – jewels, and gold, and silver, trinkets, fine dresses, and in short, everything that became a royal bride; for she loved her child very dearly; and she gave her a waiting-maid to ride with her, and give her into the bridegroom's hands; and each had a horse for the journey. Now the princess' horse was called Falada, and could speak.

When the time came for them to set out, the old queen went into her bed-chamber, and took a little knife, and cut off a lock of her hair, and gave it to her daughter, saying, "Take care of it, dear child; for it is a charm that may be of use to you on the road." Then they took a sorrowful leave of each other, and the princess put the lock of her mother's hair into her bosom, got upon her horse, and set off on her journey to her bridegroom's kingdom.

One day, as they were riding along by the side of a brook, the princess began to feel very thirsty, and said to her maid, "Pray get down and fetch me some water in my golden cup out of yonder brook, for I want to drink." "Nay," said the maid, "if you are thirsty, get down yourself, and lie down by the water and drink; I shall not be your waiting-maid any longer." The princess was so thirsty that she got down, and knelt over the little brook and drank, for she was frightened, and dared not bring out her golden cup; and then she wept, and said, "Alas! what will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her, and said —

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

But the princess was very humble and meek, so she said nothing to her maid's ill behavior, but got upon her horse again.

Then all rode further on their journey, till the day grew so warm, and the sun so scorching, that the bride began to feel very thirsty again; and at last, when they came to a river, she forgot her maid's rude speech, and said, "Pray get down and fetch me some water to drink in my golden cup." But the maid answered her, and even spoke more haughtily than before, "Drink if you will, but I shall not be your waiting-maid." Then the princess was so thirsty that she got off her horse and lay down, and held her head over the running stream, and cried, and said, "What will become of me?" And the lock of hair answered her again —

"Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

And as she leaned down to drink, the lock of hair fell from her bosom and floated away with the water, without her seeing it, she was so much frightened. But her maid saw it, and was very glad, for she knew the charm, and saw that the poor bride would be in her power now that she had lost the hair. So when the bride had finished drinking, and would have got upon Falada again, the maid said, "I shall ride upon Falada, and you may have my horse instead;" so she was forced to give up her horse, and soon afterwards to take off her royal clothes, and put on her maid's shabby ones.

At last, as they drew near the end of the journey, this treacherous servant threatened to kill her mistress if she ever told anyone what had happened. But Falada saw it all, and marked it well. Then the waiting-maid got upon Falada, and the real bride was set upon the other horse, and they went on in this way till at last they came to the royal court. There was great joy at their coming, and the prince hurried to meet them, and lifted the maid from her horse, thinking she was the one who was to be his wife; and she was led upstairs to the royal chamber, but the true princess was told to stay in the court below.

However, the old king happened to be looking out of the window, and saw her in the yard below; and as she looked very pretty, and too delicate for a waiting-maid, he went into the royal chamber to ask the bride whom it was she had brought with her, that was thus left standing in the court below. "I brought her with me for the sake of her company on the road," said she. "Pray give the girl some work to do, that she may not be idle." The old king could not for some time think of any work for her, but at last he said, "I have a lad who takes care of my geese; she may go and help him." Now the name of this lad, that the real bride was to help in watching the king's geese, was Curdken.

Soon after, the false bride said to the prince, "Dear husband, pray do me one piece of kindness." "That I will," said the prince. "Then tell one of your slaughterers to cut off the head of the horse I rode upon, for it was very unruly, and plagued me sadly on the road." But the truth was, she was very much afraid lest Falada should speak, and tell all she had done to the princess. She carried her point, and the faithful Falada was killed; but when the true princess heard of it she wept, and begged the man to nail up Falada's head against a large dark gate in the city through which she had to pass every morning and evening, that there she might still see him sometimes. Then the slaughterer said he would do as she wished, so he cut off the head and nailed it fast under the dark gate.

Early the next morning, as the princess and Curdken went out through the gate, she said sorrowfully —

"Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!"

and the head answered —

"Bride, bride, there thou are ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

Then they went out of the city, driving the geese. And when they came to the meadow, the princess sat down upon a bank there and let down her waving locks of hair, which were all of pure gold; and when Curdken saw it glitter in the sun, he ran up, and would have pulled some of the locks out; but she cried —

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!

"O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the golden locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

Then there came a wind, so strong that it blew off Curdken's hat, and away it flew over the hills, and he after it; till, by the time he came back, she had done combing and curling her hair, and

put it up again safely. Then he was very angry and sulky, and would not speak to her at all; but they watched the geese until it grew dark in the evening, and then drove them homewards.

The next morning, as they were going through the dark gate, the poor girl looked up at Falada's head, and cried —

"Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!"

and it answered —

"Bride, bride, there thou are ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

Then she drove on the geese and sat down again in the meadow, and began to comb out her hair as before, and Curdken ran up to her, and wanted to take of it; but she cried out quickly —

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the golden locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

Then the wind came and blew off his hat, and off it flew a great distance over the hills and far away, so that he had to run after it: and when he came back, she had done up her hair again, and all was safe. So they watched the geese till it grew dark.

In the evening, after they came home, Curdken went to the old king, and said, "I cannot have that strange girl to help me to keep the geese any longer."

"Why?" inquired the king.

"Because she does nothing but tease me all day long."

Then the king made him tell him all that had passed.

And Curdken said, "When we go in the morning through the dark gate with our flock of geese, she weeps, and talks with the head of a horse that hangs upon the wall, and says —

"Falada, Falada, there thou art hanging!"

and the head answers —

"Bride, bride, there thou are ganging!
Alas! alas! if thy mother knew it,
Sadly, sadly her heart would rue it."

And Curdken went on telling the king what had happened upon the meadow where the geese fed; and how his hat was blown away, and he was forced to run after it, and leave his flock. But the old king told him to go out again as usual the next day: and when morning came, he placed himself behind the dark gate, and heard how the princess spoke, and how Falada answered; and then he went into the field and hid himself in a bush by the meadow's side, and soon saw with his own eyes how they drove the flock of geese, and how, after a little time, she let down her hair that glittered in the sun; and then he heard her say —

"Blow, breezes, blow!
Let Curdken's hat go!
Blow breezes, blow!
Let him after it go!
O'er hills, dales, and rocks,
Away be it whirl'd,
Till the golden locks
Are all comb'd and curl'd!"

And soon came a gale of wind, and carried away Curdken's hat, while the girl went on combing and curling her hair.

All this the old king saw; so he went home without being seen; and when the goose-girl came back in the evening, he called her aside, and asked her why she did so; but she burst into tears, and said, "That I must not tell you or any man, or I shall lose my life."

But the old king begged so hard that she had no peace till she had told him all, word for word: and it was very lucky for her that she did so, for the king ordered royal clothes to be put upon her, and he gazed with wonder, she was so beautiful.

Then he called his son, and told him that he had only the false bride, for that she was merely a waiting-maid, while the true one stood by.

And the young king rejoiced when he saw her beauty, and heard how meek and patient she had been; and without saying anything, he ordered a great feast to be prepared for all his court.

The bridegroom sat at the top, with the false princess on one side, and the true one on the other; but nobody knew her, for she was quite dazzling to their eyes, and was not at all like the little goose-girl, now that she had on her brilliant dress.

When they had eaten and drunk, and were very merry, the old king told all the story, as one that he had once heard of, and asked the true waiting-maid what she thought ought to be done to anyone who would behave thus.

"Nothing better," said this false bride, "than that she should be thrown into a cask stuck around with sharp nails, and that two white horses should be put to it, and should drag it from street to street till she is dead."

"Thou art she!" said the old king; "and since thou hast judged thyself, it shall be so done to thee."

Then the young king was married to his true wife, and they reigned over the kingdom in peace and happiness all their lives.

THE LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER

There was once a little brother who took his Sister by the hand, and said, "Since our own dear mother's death we have not had one happy hour; our stepmother beats us every day, and, when we come near her, kicks us away with her foot. Come, let us wander forth into the wide world." So all day long they travelled over meadows, fields, and stony roads. By the evening they came into a large forest, and laid themselves down in a hollow tree, and went to sleep. When they awoke the next morning, the sun had already risen high in the heavens, and its beams made the tree so hot that the little boy said to his sister, "I am so very thirsty, that if I knew where there was a brook, I would go and drink. Ah! I think I hear one running;" and so saying, he got up, and taking his Sister's hand they went to look for the brook.

The wicked stepmother, however, was a witch, and had witnessed the departure of the two children: so, sneaking after them secretly, as is the habit of witches, she had enchanted all the springs in the forest.

Presently they found a brook, which ran trippingly over the pebbles, and the Brother would have drunk out of it, but the Sister heard how it said as it ran along, "Who drinks of me will become a tiger!" So the Sister exclaimed, "I pray you, Brother, drink not, or you will become a tiger, and tear me to pieces!" So the Brother did not drink, although his thirst was very great, and he said, "I will wait till the next brook." As they came to the second, the Sister heard it say, "Who drinks of me becomes a wolf!" The Sister ran up crying, "Brother, do not, pray do not drink, or you will become a wolf and eat me up!" Then the Brother did not drink, saying, "I will wait until we come to the next spring, but then I must drink, you may say what you will; my thirst is much too great." Just as they reached the third brook, the Sister heard the voice saying, "Who drinks of me will become a fawn – who drinks of me will become a fawn!" So the Sister said, "Oh, my Brother do not drink, or you will be changed into a fawn, and run away from me!" But he had already kneeled down, and he drank of the water, and, as the first drops passed his lips, his shape took that of a fawn.

At first the Sister wept over her little, changed Brother, and he wept too, and knelt by her, very sorrowful; but at last the maiden said, "Be still, dear little fawn, and I will never forsake you!" and, taking off her golden garter, she placed it around his neck, and, weaving rushes, made a girdle to lead him with. This she tied to him, and taking the other end in her hand, she led him away, and they travelled deeper and deeper into the forest. After they had gone a long distance they came to a little hut, and the maiden, peeping in, found it empty, and thought, "Here we can stay and dwell." Then she looked for leaves and moss to make a soft couch for the Fawn, and every morning she went out and collected roots and berries and nuts for herself, and tender grass for the Fawn. In the evening when the Sister was tired, and had said her prayers, she laid her head upon the back of the Fawn, which served for a pillow, on which she slept soundly. Had but the Brother regained his own proper form, their lives would have been happy indeed.

Thus they dwelt in this wilderness, and some time had elapsed when it happened that the King of the country had a great hunt in the forest; and now sounded through the trees the blowing of horns, the barking of dogs, and the lusty cry of the hunters, so that the little Fawn heard them, and wanted very much to join in. "Ah!" said he to his Sister, "let me go to the hunt, I cannot restrain myself any longer;" and he begged so hard that at last she consented. "But," she told him," "return again in the evening, for I shall shut my door against the wild huntsmen, and, that I may know you, do you knock, and say, 'Sister, dear, let me in,' and if you do not speak I shall not open the door."

As soon as she had said this, the little Fawn sprang off quite glad and merry in the fresh breeze. The King and his huntsmen perceived the beautiful animal, and pursued him; but they could not catch him, and when they thought they certainly had him, he sprang away over the bushes, and got out of sight. Just as it was getting dark, he ran up to the hut, and, knocking, said, "Sister mine, let me in."

Then she unfastened the little door, and he went in, and rested all night long upon his soft couch. The next morning the hunt was commenced again, and as soon as the little Fawn heard the horns and the tally-ho of the sportsmen he could not rest, and said, "Sister, dear, open the door; I must be off." The Sister opened it, saying, "Return at evening, mind, and say the words as before." When the King and his huntsmen saw him again, the Fawn with the golden necklace, they followed him, close, but he was too nimble and quick for them. The whole day long they kept up with him, but towards evening the huntsmen made a circle around him, and one wounded him slightly in the hinder foot, so that he could run but slowly. Then one of them slipped after him to the little hut, and heard him say, "Sister, dear, open the door," and saw that the door was opened and immediately shut behind him. The huntsman, having observed all this, went and told the King what he had seen and heard, and he said, "On the morrow I will pursue him once again."

The Sister, however, was terribly afraid when she saw that her Fawn was wounded, and, washing off the blood, she put herbs upon the foot, and said, "Go and rest upon your bed, dear Fawn, that your wound may heal." It was so slight, that the next morning he felt nothing of it, and when he heard the hunting cries outside, he exclaimed, "I cannot stop away – I must be there, and none shall catch me so easily again!" The Sister wept very much and told him, "Soon will they kill you, and I shall be here alone in this forest, forsaken by all the world: I cannot let you go."

"I shall die here in vexation," answered the Fawn, "if you do not, for when I hear the horn, I think I shall jump out of my skin." The Sister, finding she could not prevent him, opened the door, with a heavy heart, and the Fawn jumped out, quite delighted, into the forest. As soon as the King perceived him, he said to his huntsmen, "Follow him all day long till the evening, but let no one do him any harm." Then when the sun had set, the King asked his huntsman to show him the hut; and as they came to it he knocked at the door and said, "Let me in, dear Sister." Upon this the door opened, and, stepping in, the King saw a maiden more beautiful than he had ever beheld before. She was frightened when she saw not her Fawn, but a man enter, who had a golden crown upon his head. But the King, looking at her with a kindly glance, held out to her his hand, saying, "Will you go with me to my castle, and be my dear wife?" "Oh, yes," replied the maiden; "but the Fawn must go too: him I will never forsake." The King replied, "He shall remain with you as long as you live, and shall never want."

The King took the beautiful maiden upon his horse, and rode to his castle, where the wedding was celebrated with great splendor and she became Queen, and they lived together a long time; while the Fawn was taken care of and played about the castle garden.

The wicked stepmother, however, on whose account the children had wandered forth into the world, had supposed that long ago the Sister had been torn into pieces by the wild beasts, and the little Brother in his Fawn's shape hunted to death by the hunters. As soon, therefore, as she heard how happy they had become, and how everything prospered with them, envy and jealousy were aroused in her wicked heart, and left her no peace; and she was always thinking in what way she could bring misfortune upon them.

Her own daughter, who was as ugly as night, and had but one eye, for which she was continually reproached, said, "The luck of being a Queen has never happened to me." "Be quiet, now," replied the old woman, "and make yourself contented: when the time comes I will help and assist you." As soon, then, as the time came when the Queen gave birth to a beautiful little boy, which happened when the King was out hunting, the old witch took the form of a chambermaid, and got into the room where the Queen was lying, and said to her, "The bath is ready, which will restore you and give you fresh strength; be quick before it gets cold." Her daughter being at hand, they carried the weak Queen between them into the room, and laid her in the bath, and then, shutting the door, they ran off; but first they made up an immense fire in the stove, which must soon suffocate the poor young Queen.

When this was done, the old woman took her daughter, and, putting a cap upon her head, laid her in the bed in the Queen's place. She gave her, too, the form and appearance of the real Queen,

as far as she was able; but she could not restore the lost eye, and, so that the King might not notice it, she turned her upon that side where there was no eye.

When midnight came, and every one was asleep, the nurse, who sat by herself, wide awake, near the cradle, in the nursery, saw the door open and the true Queen come in. She took the child in her arms, and rocked it a while, and then, shaking up its pillow, laid it down in its cradle, and covered it over again. She did not forget the Fawn, either, but going to the corner where he was, stroked his head, and then went silently out of the door. The nurse asked in the morning of the guards if any one had passed into the castle during the night; but they answered, "No, we have not seen anybody." For many nights afterwards she came constantly, but never spoke a word; and the nurse saw her always, but she would not trust herself to speak about it to any one.

When some time had passed away, the Queen one night began to speak, and said —

"How fares my child! how fares my fawn?
Twice more will I come, but never again."

The nurse made no reply; but, when she had disappeared, went to the King, and told him. The King exclaimed, "Oh, mercy! what does this mean? – the next night I will watch myself by the child." So in the evening he went into the nursery, and about midnight the Queen appeared, and said —

"How fares my child! how fares my fawn?
Once more will I come, but never again."

And she nursed the child, as she usually did, and then disappeared. The King dared not speak; but he watched the following night, and this time she said —

"How fares my child! how fares my fawn?
This time have I come, but never again."

At these words the King could hold back no longer, but, springing up, cried, "You can be no other than my dear wife!" Then she answered, "Yes, I am your dear wife;" and at that moment her life was restored by God's mercy, and she was again as beautiful and charming as ever. She told the King the fraud which the witch and her daughter had practised upon him, and he had them both tried, and sentence was pronounced against them. The little Fawn was disenchanted, and received once more his human form; and the Brother and Sister lived happily together to the end of their days.

HANSEL AND GRETHEL

Once upon a time there dwelt near a large wood a poor woodcutter, with his wife and two children by his former marriage, a little boy called Hansel, and a girl named Grethel. He had little enough to break or bite; and once, when there was a great famine in the land, he could not procure even his daily bread; and as he lay thinking in his bed one evening, rolling about for trouble, he sighed, and said to his wife, "What will become of us? How can we feed our children, when we have no more than we can eat ourselves?"

"Know, then, my husband," answered she, "we will lead them away, quite early in the morning, into the thickest part of the wood, and there make them a fire, and give them each a little piece of bread; then we will go to our work, and leave them alone, so they will not find the way home again, and we shall be freed from them." "No, wife," replied he, "that I can never do. How can you bring your heart to leave my children all alone in the wood, for the wild beasts will soon come and tear them to pieces?"

"Oh, you simpleton!" said she, "then we must all four die of hunger; you had better plane the coffins for us." But she left him no peace till he consented, saying, "Ah, but I shall regret the poor children."

The two children, however, had not gone to sleep for very hunger, and so they overheard what the stepmother said to their father. Grethel wept bitterly, and said to Hansel, "What will become of us?" "Be quiet, Grethel," said he; "do not cry – I will soon help you." And as soon as their parents had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his coat, and, unbarring the back door, slipped out. The moon shone brilliantly, and the white pebbles which lay before the door seemed like silver pieces, they glittered so brightly. Hansel stooped down, and put as many into his pocket as it would hold; and then going back, he said to Grethel, "Be comforted, dear sister, and sleep in peace; God will not forsake us." And so saying, he went to bed again.

The next morning, before the sun arose, the wife went and awoke the two children. "Get up, you lazy things; we are going into the forest to chop wood." Then she gave them each a piece of bread, saying, "There is something for your dinner; do not eat it before the time, for you will get nothing else." Grethel took the bread in her apron, for Hansel's pocket was full of pebbles; and so they all set out upon their way. When they had gone a little distance, Hansel stood still, and peeped back at the house; and this he repeated several times, till his father said, "Hansel, what are you peeping at, and why do you lag behind? Take care, and remember your legs."

"Ah, father," said Hansel, "I am looking at my white cat sitting upon the roof of the house, and trying to say good-bye." "You simpleton!" said the wife, "that is not a cat; it is only the sun shining on the white chimney." But in reality Hansel was not looking at a cat; but every time he stopped, he dropped a pebble out of his pocket upon the path.

When they came to the middle of the forest, the father told the children to collect wood, and he would make them a fire, so that they should not be cold. So Hansel and Grethel gathered together quite a little mountain of twigs. Then they set fire to them; and as the flame burnt up high, the wife said, "Now, you children, lie down near the fire, and rest yourselves, while we go into the forest and chop wood; when we are ready, I will come and call you."

Hansel and Grethel sat down by the fire, and when it was noon, each ate the piece of bread; and because they could hear the blows of an axe, they thought their father was near: but it was not an axe, but a branch which he had bound to a withered tree, so as to be blown to and fro by the wind. They waited so long that at last their eyes closed from weariness, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke, it was quite dark, and Grethel began to cry, "How shall we get out of the wood?" But Hansel tried to comfort her by saying, "Wait a little while till the moon rises, and then we will quickly find the way." The moon soon shone forth, and Hansel, taking his sister's hand, followed the pebbles,

which glittered like new-coined silver pieces, and showed them the path. All night long they walked on, and as day broke they came to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the wife opened it, and saw Hansel and Grethel, she exclaimed, "You wicked children! why did you sleep so long in the wood? We thought you were never coming home again." But their father was very glad, for it had grieved his heart to leave them all alone.

Not long afterward there was again great scarcity in every corner of the land; and one night the children overheard their stepmother saying to their father, "Everything is again consumed; we have only half a loaf left, and then the song is ended: the children must be sent away. We will take them deeper into the wood, so that they may not find the way out again; it is the only means of escape for us."

But her husband felt heavy at heart, and thought, "It were better to share the last crust with the children." His wife, however, would listen to nothing that he said, and scolded and reproached him without end.

He who says A must say B too; and he who consents the first time must also the second.

The children, however, had heard the conversation as they lay awake, and as soon as the old people went to sleep Hansel got up, intending to pick up some pebbles as before; but the wife had locked the door, so that he could not get out. Nevertheless, he comforted Grethel, saying, "Do not cry; sleep in quiet; the good God will not forsake us."

Early in the morning the stepmother came and pulled them out of bed, and gave them each a slice of bread, which was still smaller than the former piece. On the way, Hansel broke his in his pocket, and, stooping every now and then, dropped a crumb upon the path. "Hansel, why do you stop and look about?" said the father; "keep in the path." "I am looking at my little dove," answered Hansel, "nodding a good-bye to me." "Simpleton!" said the wife, "that is no dove, but only the sun shining on the chimney." But Hansel still kept dropping crumbs as he went along.

The mother led the children deep into the wood, where they had never been before, and there making an immense fire, she said to them, "Sit down here and rest, and when you feel tired you can sleep for a little while. We are going into the forest to hew wood, and in the evening, when we are ready, we will come and fetch you."

When noon came Grethel shared her bread with Hansel, who had strewn his on the path. Then they went to sleep; but the evening arrived and no one came to visit the poor children, and in the dark night they awoke, and Hansel comforted his sister by saying, "Only wait, Grethel, till the moon comes out, then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have dropped, and they will show us the way home." The moon shone and they got up, but they could not see any crumbs, for the thousands of birds which had been flying about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel kept saying to Grethel, "We will soon find the way"; but they did not, and they walked the whole night long and the next day, but still they did not come out of the wood; and they got so hungry, for they had nothing to eat but the berries which they found upon the bushes. Soon they got so tired that they could not drag themselves along, so they lay down under a tree and went to sleep.

It was now the third morning since they had left their father's house, and they still walked on; but they only got deeper and deeper into the wood, and Hansel saw that if help did not come very soon they would die of hunger. At about noonday they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting upon a bough, which sang so sweetly that they stood still and listened to it. It soon ceased, and spreading its wings flew off; and they followed it until it arrived at a cottage, upon the roof of which it perched; and when they went close up to it they saw that the cottage was made of bread and cakes, and the window-panes were of clear sugar.

"We will go in there," said Hansel, "and have a glorious feast. I will eat a piece of the roof, and you can eat the window. Will they not be sweet?" So Hansel reached up and broke a piece off the roof, in order to see how it tasted, while Grethel stepped up to the window and began to bite it. Then a sweet voice called out in the room, "Tip-tap, tip-tap, who raps at my door?" and the children answered, "the

wind, the wind, the child of heaven"; and they went on eating without interruption. Hansel thought the roof tasted very nice, so he tore off a great piece; while Grethel broke a large round pane out of the window, and sat down quite contentedly. Just then the door opened, and a very old woman, walking upon crutches, came out. Hansel and Grethel were so frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands; but the old woman, nodding her head, said, "Ah, you dear children, what has brought you here? Come in and stop with me, and no harm shall befall you"; and so saying she took them both by the hand, and led them into her cottage. A good meal of milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts, was spread on the table, and in the back room were two nice little beds, covered with white, where Hansel and Grethel laid themselves down, and thought themselves in heaven. The old woman behaved very kindly to them, but in reality she was a wicked witch who waylaid children, and built the bread-house in order to entice them in, but as soon as they were in her power she killed them, cooked and ate them, and made a great festival of the day. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see very far; but they have a fine sense of smelling, like wild beasts, so that they know when children approach them. When Hansel and Grethel came near the witch's house she laughed wickedly, saying, "Here come two who shall not escape me." And early in the morning, before they awoke, she went up to them, and saw how lovingly they lay sleeping, with their chubby red cheeks, and she mumbled to herself, "That will be a good bite." Then she took up Hansel with her rough hands, and shut him up in a little cage with a lattice-door; and although he screamed loudly it was of no use. Grethel came next, and, shaking her till she awoke, the witch said, "Get up, you lazy thing, and fetch some water to cook something good for your brother, who must remain in that stall and get fat; when he is fat enough I shall eat him." Grethel began to cry, but it was all useless, for the old witch made her do as she wished. So a nice meal was cooked for Hansel, but Grethel got nothing but a crab's claw.

Every morning the old witch came to the cage and said, "Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel whether you are getting fat." But Hansel used to stretch out a bone, and the old woman, having very bad sight, thought it was his finger, and wondered very much that he did not get fatter. When four weeks had passed, and Hansel still kept quite lean, she lost all her patience, and would not wait any longer. "Grethel," she called out in a passion, "get some water quickly; be Hansel fat or lean, this morning I will kill and cook him." Oh, how the poor little sister grieved, as she was forced to fetch the water, and fast the tears ran down her cheeks! "Dear good God, help us now!" she exclaimed. "Had we only been eaten by the wild beasts in the wood, then we should have died together." But the old witch called out, "Leave off that noise; it will not help you a bit."

So early in the morning Grethel was forced to go out and fill the kettle, and make a fire. "First, we will bake, however," said the old woman; "I have already heated the oven and kneaded the dough"; and so saying, she pushed poor Grethel up to the oven, out of which the flames were burning fiercely. "Creep in," said the witch, "and see if it is hot enough, and then we will put in the bread"; but she intended when Grethel got in to shut up the oven and let her bake, so that she might eat her as well as Hansel. Grethel perceived what her thoughts were, and said, "I do not know how to do it; how shall I get in?" "You stupid goose," said she, "the opening is big enough. See, I could even get in myself!" and she got up, and put her head into the oven. Then Grethel gave her a push, so that she fell right in, and then shutting the iron door she bolted it! Oh! how horribly she howled; but Grethel ran away, and left the ungodly witch to burn to ashes.

Now she ran to Hansel, and, opening his door, called out, "Hansel, we are saved; the old witch is dead!" So he sprang out, like a bird out of his cage when the door is opened; and they were so glad that they fell upon each other's neck, and kissed each other over and over again. And now, as there was nothing to fear, they went into the witch's house, where in every corner were caskets full of pearls and precious stones. "These are better than pebbles," said Hansel, putting as many into his pocket as it would hold; while Grethel thought, "I will take some too," and filled her apron full. "We must be off now," said Hansel, "and get out of this enchanted forest." But when they had walked for two hours they came to a large piece of water. "We cannot get over," said Hansel; "I can see no

bridge at all." "And there is no boat, either," said Grethel; "but there swims a white duck, and I will ask her to help us over." And she sang:

"Little Duck, good little Duck,
Grethel and Hansel, here we stand;
There is neither stile nor bridge,
Take us on your back to land."

So the duck came to them, and Hansel sat himself on, and bade his sister sit behind him. "No," answered Grethel, "that will be too much for the duck; she shall take us over one at a time." This the good little bird did, and when both were happily arrived on the other side, and had gone a little way, they came to a well-known wood, which they knew the better every step they went, and at last they perceived their father's house. Then they began to run, and, bursting into the house, they fell into their father's arms. He had not had one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; and his wife was dead. Grethel shook her apron, and the pearls and precious stones rolled out upon the floor, and Hansel threw down one handful after the other out of his pocket. Then all their sorrows were ended, and they lived together in great happiness.

My tale is done. There runs a mouse; whoever catches her may make a great, great cap out of her fur.

OH, IF I COULD BUT SHIVER!

A father had two sons, the elder of whom was forward and clever enough to do almost anything; but the younger was so stupid that he could learn nothing, and when the people saw him they said, "Will thy father still keep thee as a burden to him?" So, if anything was to be done, the elder had at all times to do it; but sometimes the father would call him to fetch something in the dead of night, and perhaps the way led through the churchyard or by a dismal place, and then he used to answer, "No, father, I cannot go there, I am afraid," for he was a coward. Or sometimes of an evening, tales were told by the fireside which made one shudder, and the listeners exclaimed, "Oh, it makes us shiver!" In a corner, meanwhile, sat the younger son, listening, but he could not comprehend what was said, and he thought, "They say continually, 'Oh, it makes us shiver, it makes us shiver!' but perhaps shivering is an art which I cannot understand." One day, however, his father said to him, "Do you hear, you there in the corner? You are growing stout and big; you must learn some trade to get your living by. Do you see how your brother works? But as for you, you are not worth malt and hops."

"Ah, father," answered he, "I would willingly learn something. When shall I begin? I want to know what shivering means, for of that I can understand nothing."

The elder brother laughed when he heard this speech, and thought to himself, "Ah! my brother is such a simpleton that he cannot earn his own living. He who would make a good hedge must learn betimes to bend." But the father sighed and said, "What shivering means you may learn soon enough, but you will never get your bread by that."

Soon after the parish sexton came in for a gossip, so the father told him his troubles, and how that his younger son was such a simpleton that he knew nothing and could learn nothing. "Just fancy, when I asked him how he intended to earn his bread, he desired to learn what shivering meant!" "Oh, if that be all," answered the sexton, "he can learn that soon enough with me; just send him to my place, and I will soon teach him." The father was very glad, because he thought that it would do the boy good; so the sexton took him home to ring the bells. About two days afterward he called him up at midnight to go into the church-tower to toll the bell. "You shall soon learn what shivering means," thought the sexton, and getting up he went out too. As soon as the boy reached the belfry, and turned himself round to seize the rope, he saw upon the stairs, near the sounding-hole, a white figure. "Who's there?" he called out; but the figure gave no answer, and neither stirred nor spoke. "Answer," said the boy, "or make haste off; you have no business here to-night." But the sexton did not stir, so that the boy might think it was a ghost.

The boy called out a second time, "What are you doing here? Speak, if you are an honest fellow, or else I will throw you downstairs."

The sexton said to himself, "That is not a bad thought"; but he remained quiet as if he were a stone. Then the boy called out for the third time, but it produced no effect; so, making a spring, he threw the ghost down the stairs, so that it rolled ten steps, and then lay motionless in a corner. Thereupon he rang the bell, and then going home, he went to bed without saying a word, and fell fast asleep. The sexton's wife waited some time for her husband, but he did not come; so at last she became anxious, woke the boy, and asked him if he knew where her husband was, who had gone before him to the belfry.

"No," answered the boy; "but there was someone standing on the steps who would not give any answer, nor go away, so I took him for a thief and threw him downstairs. Go now and see where he is; perhaps it may be he, but I should be sorry for it." The wife ran off and found her husband lying in a corner, groaning, with one of his ribs broken.

She took him up and ran with loud outcries to the boy's father, and said to him, "Your son has brought a great misfortune on us; he has thrown my husband down and broken his bones. Take the good-for-nothing fellow from our house."

The terrified father came in haste and scolded the boy. "What do these wicked tricks mean? They will only bring misfortune upon you."

"Father," answered the lad, "hear me! I am quite innocent. He stood there at midnight like one who had done some evil; I did not know who it was, and cried three times, 'Speak, or be off!'"

"Ah!" said the father, "everything goes badly with you. Get out of my sight; I do not wish to see you again!"

"Yes, father, willingly; wait but one day, then I will go out and learn what shivering means, that I may at least understand one business which will support me."

"Learn what you will," replied the father, "all is the same to me. Here are fifty dollars; go forth with them into the world, and tell no man whence you came, or who your father is, for I am ashamed of you."

"Yes, father, as you wish; but if you desire nothing else, I shall esteem that very lightly."

As soon as day broke the youth put his fifty dollars into a knapsack and went out upon the high road, saying continually, "Oh, if I could but shiver!"

Presently a man came up, who heard the boy talking to himself; and, as they we're just passing the place where the gallows stood, the man said, "Do you see? There is the tree where seven fellows have married the hempen maid, and now swing to and fro. Sit yourself down there and wait till midnight, and then you will know what it is to shiver!"

"Oh, if that be all," answered the boy, "I can very easily do that! But if I learn so speedily what shivering is, then you shall have my fifty dollars if you come again in the morning."

Then the boy went to the gallows, sat down, and waited for evening, and as he felt cold he made a fire. But about midnight the wind blew so sharp, that in spite of the fire he could not keep himself warm. The wind blew the bodies against one another, so that they swung backward and forward, and he thought, "If I am cold here below by the fire, how must they freeze above!" So his compassion was excited, and, contriving a ladder, he mounted, and, unloosening them one after another, he brought down all seven. Then he poked and blew the fire, and set them round that they might warm themselves; but as they sat still without moving their clothing caught fire. So he said, "Take care of yourselves, or I will hang all of you up again." The dead heard not, and silently allowed their rags to burn. This made him so angry that he said, "If you will not hear I cannot help you; but I will not burn with you." So he hung them up again in a row, and sitting down by the fire he soon went to sleep. The next morning the man came, expecting to receive his fifty dollars, and asked, "Now do you know what shivering means?" "No," he answered; "how should I know? Those fellows up there have not opened their mouths, and were so stupid that they let the old rags on their bodies be burnt." Then the man saw that he should not carry away the fifty dollars that day, so he went away saying, "I never met with such a one before."

The boy also went on his way and began again to say, "Ah, if only I could but shiver – if I could but shiver!" A wagoner walking behind overheard him, and asked, "Who are you?"

"I do not know," answered the boy.

The wagoner asked again, "What do you here?"

"I know not."

"Who is your father?"

"I dare not say."

"What is it you are continually grumbling about?"

"Oh," replied the youth, "I wish to learn what shivering is, but nobody can teach me."

"Cease your silly talk," said the wagoner. "Come with me, and I will see what I can do for you." So the boy went with the wagoner, and about evening time they arrived at an inn where they put up for the night, and while they were going into the parlor he said, quite aloud, "Oh, if I could but shiver – if I could but shiver!" The host overheard him and said, laughingly, "Oh, if that is all you wish, you shall soon have the opportunity." "Hold your tongue," said his wife; "so many imprudent

people have already lost their lives, it were a shame and sin to such beautiful eyes that they should not see the light again." But the youth said, "If it were ever so difficult I would at once learn it; for that reason I left home"; and he never let the host have any peace till he told him that not far off stood an enchanted castle, where any one might soon learn to shiver if he would watch there three nights. The King had promised his daughter in marriage to whoever would venture, and she was the most beautiful young lady that the sun ever shone upon. And he further told him that inside the castle there was an immense amount of treasure guarded by evil spirits; enough to make any one free, and turn a poor man into a very rich one. Many, he added, had already ventured into this castle, but no one had ever come out again.

The next morning this youth went to the King, and said, "If you will allow me, I wish to watch three nights in the enchanted castle." The King looked at him, and because his appearance pleased him, he said, "You may make three requests, but they must be inanimate things you ask for, and such as you can take with you into the castle." So the youth asked for a fire, a lathe, and a cutting-board.

The King let him take these things by day into the castle, and when it was evening the youth went in and made himself a bright fire in one of the rooms, and, placing his cutting-board and knife near it, he sat down upon his lathe. "Ah, if I could but shiver!" said he. "But even here I shall never learn." At midnight he got up to stir the fire, and, as he poked it, there shrieked suddenly in one corner, "Miau, miau! how cold I am!" "You simpleton!" he exclaimed, "what are you shrieking for? If you are so cold come and sit down by the fire and warm yourself!" As he was speaking, two great black cats sprang up to him with an immense jump and sat down one on each side, looking at him quite wildly with their fiery eyes. When they had warmed themselves for a little while they said, "Comrade, shall we have a game of cards?" "Certainly," he replied; "but let me see your paws first." So they stretched out their claws, and he said, "Ah, what long nails you have got; wait a bit, I must cut them off first"; and so saying he caught them up by the necks, and put them on his board and screwed their feet down. "Since I have seen what you are about I have lost my relish for a game at cards," said he; and, instantly killing them, threw them away into the water. But no sooner had he quieted these two and thought of sitting down again by his fire, than there came out of every hole and corner black cats and black dogs with glowing chains, continually more and more, so that he could not hide himself. They howled fearfully, and jumped upon his fire, and scattered it about as if they would extinguish it. He looked on quietly for some time, but at last, getting angry, he took up his knife and called out, "Away with you, you vagabonds!" and chased them about until a part ran off, and the rest he killed and threw into the pond. As soon as he returned he blew up the sparks of his fire again and warmed himself, and while he sat his eyes began to feel very heavy and he wished to go to sleep. So looking around he saw a great bed in one corner, in which he lay down; but no sooner had he closed his eyes, than the bed began to move of itself and travelled all round the castle. "Just so," said he, "only better still"; whereupon the bed galloped away as if six horses pulled it up and down steps and stairs, until at last, all at once, it overset, bottom upward, and lay upon him like a mountain; but up he got, threw pillows and mattresses into the air, and saying, "Now he who wishes may travel," laid himself down by the fire and slept till day broke. In the morning the King came, and, seeing the youth lying on the ground, he thought that the spectres had killed him, and that he was dead; so he said, "It is a great misfortune that the finest men are thus killed"; but the youth, hearing this, sprang up, saying, "It is not come to that with me yet!" The King was much astonished, but very glad, and asked him how he had fared. "Very well," replied he; "as one night has passed, so also may the other two." Soon after he met his landlord, who opened his eyes when he saw him. "I never thought to see you alive again," said he; "have you learnt now what shivering means?" "No," said he; "it is all of no use. Oh, if any one would but tell me!"

The second night he went up again into the castle, and sitting down by the fire, began his old song, "If I could but shiver!" When midnight came, a ringing and a rattling noise was heard, gentle at first and louder and louder by degrees; then there was a pause, and presently with a loud outcry half

a man's body came down the chimney and fell at his feet. "Holloa," he exclaimed; "only half a man answered that ringing; that is too little." Then the ringing began afresh, and a roaring and howling was heard, and the other half fell down. "Wait a bit," said he; "I will poke up the fire first." When he had done so and looked round again, the two pieces had joined themselves together, and an ugly man was sitting in his place. "I did not bargain for that," said the youth; "the bench is mine." The man tried to push him away, but the youth would not let him, and giving him a violent push sat himself down in his old place. Presently more men fell down the chimney, one after the other, who brought nine thigh-bones and two skulls, which they set up, and then they began to play at ninepins. At this the youth wished also to play, so he asked whether he might join them. "Yes, if you have money!" "Money enough," he replied, "but your balls are not quite round"; so saying he took up the skulls, and, placing them on his lathe, turned them round. "Ah, now you will roll well," said he. "Holloa! now we will go at it merrily." So he played with them and lost some of his money, but as it struck twelve everything disappeared. Then he lay down and went to sleep quietly. On the morrow the King came for news, and asked him how he had fared this time. "I have been playing ninepins," he replied, "and lost a couple of dollars." "Have you not shivered?" "No! I have enjoyed myself very much; but I wish some one would teach me that!"

On the third night he sat down again on his bench, saying in great vexation, "Oh, if I could only shiver!" When it grew late, six tall men came in bearing a coffin between them. "Ah, ah," said he, "that is surely my little cousin, who died two days ago"; and beckoning with his finger he called, "Come, little cousin, come!" The men set down the coffin upon the ground, and he went up and took off the lid, and there lay a dead man within, and as he felt the face it was as cold as ice. "Stop a moment," he cried; "I will warm it in a trice"; and stepping up to the fire he warmed his hands, and then laid them upon the face, but it remained cold. So he took up the body, and sitting down by the fire, he laid it on his lap and rubbed the arms that the blood might circulate again. But all this was of no avail, and he thought to himself if two lie in a bed together they warm each other; so he put the body in the bed, and covering it up laid himself down by its side. After a little while the body became warm and began to move about. "See, my cousin," he exclaimed, "have I not warmed you?" But the body got up and exclaimed, "Now I will strangle you." "Is that your gratitude?" cried the youth. "Then you shall get into your coffin again"; and taking it up, he threw the body in, and made the lid fast. Then the six men came in again and bore it away. "Oh, deary me," said he, "I shall never be able to shiver if I stop here all my lifetime!" At these words in came a man who was taller than all the others, and looked more horrible; but he was very old and had a long white beard. "Oh, you wretch," he exclaimed, "now thou shalt learn what shivering means, for thou shalt die!"

"Not so quick," answered the youth; "if I die I must be brought to it first."

"I will quickly seize you," replied the ugly one.

"Softly, softly; be not too sure. I am as strong as you, and perhaps stronger."

"That we will see," said the ugly man. "If you are stronger than I, I will let you go; come, let us try"; and he led him away through a dark passage to a smith's forge. Then taking up an axe he cut through the anvil at one blow down to the ground. "I can do that still better," said the youth, and went to another anvil, while the old man followed him and watched him, with his long beard hanging down. Then the youth took up an axe, and, splitting the anvil at one blow, wedged the old man's beard in it. "Now I have you; now death comes upon you!" and taking up an iron bar he beat the old man until he groaned, and begged him to stop, and he would give him great riches. So the youth drew out the axe, and let him loose. Then the old man, leading him back into the castle, showed him three chests full of gold in a cellar. "One share of this," said he, "belongs to the poor, another to the King, and a third to yourself." And just then it struck twelve and the old man vanished, leaving the youth in the dark. "I must help myself out here," said he, and groping round he found his way back to his room and went to sleep by the fire.

The next morning the King came and inquired, "Now have you learnt to shiver?" "No," replied the youth; "what is it? My dead cousin came here, and a bearded man, who showed me a lot of gold down below; but what shivering means, no one has showed me!" Then the King said, "You have won the castle, and shall marry my daughter."

"That is all very fine," replied the youth, "but still I don't know what shivering means."

So the gold was fetched, and the wedding was celebrated, but the young Prince (for the youth was a Prince now), notwithstanding his love for his bride, and his great contentment, was still continually crying, "If I could but shiver! if I could but shiver!" At last it fell out in this wise: one of the chambermaids said to the Princess, "Let me bring in my aid to teach him what shivering is." So she went to the brook which flowed through the garden, and drew up a pail of water full of little fish; and, at night, when the young Prince was asleep, his bride drew away the covering and poured the pail of cold water and the little fishes over him, so that they slipped all about him. Then the Prince woke up directly, calling out, "Oh! that makes me shiver! dear wife, that makes me shiver! Yes, now I know what shivering means!"

DUMMLING AND THE THREE FEATHERS

Once upon a time there lived a King who had three sons; the two elder were learned and bright, but the youngest said very little and appeared somewhat foolish, so he was always known as Dummling.

When the King grew old and feeble, feeling that he was nearing his end, he wished to leave the crown to one of his three sons, but could not decide to which. He thereupon settled that they should travel, and that the one who could obtain the most splendid carpet should ascend the throne when he died.

So that there could be no disagreement as to the way each one should go, the King conducted them to the courtyard of the Palace, and there blew three feathers, by turn, into the air, telling his sons to follow the course that the three feathers took.

Then one of the feathers flew eastwards, another westwards, but the third went straight up towards the sky, though it only sped a short distance before falling to earth.

Therefore one son travelled towards the east, and the second went to the west, both making fun of poor Dummling, who was obliged to stay where his feather had fallen. Then Dummling, sitting down and feeling rather miserable after his brothers had gone, looked about him, and noticed that near to where his feather lay was a trap-door. On lifting this up he perceived a flight of steps, down which he went. At the bottom was another door, so he knocked upon it, and then heard a voice calling —

"Maiden, fairest, come to me,
Make haste to ope the door,
A mortal surely you will see,
From the world above is he,
We'll help him from our store."

And then the door was flung open, and the young man found himself facing a big toad sitting in the centre of a number of young toads. The big toad addressed him, asking him what he wanted.

Dummling, though rather surprised when he saw the toads, and heard them question him, being good-hearted replied politely —

"I am desirous to obtain the most splendid carpet in the world; just now it would be extremely useful to me."

The toad who had just spoken, called to a young toad, saying —

"Maiden, fairest, come to me,
'Tis a mortal here you see;
Let us speed all his desires,
Giving him what he requires."

Immediately the young toad fetched a large box. This the old one opened, and took out an exquisite carpet, of so beautiful a design, that it certainly could have been manufactured nowhere upon the earth.

Taking it with grateful thanks, Dummling went up the flight of steps, and was once more in the Palace courtyard.

The two elder brothers, being of the opinion that the youngest was so foolish that he was of no account whatever in trying to obtain the throne, for they did not think he would find anything at all, had said to each other:

"It is not necessary for us to trouble much in looking for the carpet!" so they took from the shoulders of the first peasant they came across a coarse shawl, and this they carried to their father.

At the same time Dummling appeared with his beautiful carpet, which he presented to the King, who was very much surprised, and said —

"By rights the throne should be for my youngest son."

But when the two brothers heard this, they gave the old King no rest, saying —

"How is it possible that Dummling, who is not at all wise, could control the affairs of an important kingdom? Make some other condition, we beg of you!"

"Well," agreed the father, "the one who brings me the most magnificent ring shall succeed to my throne," and once more he took his sons outside the Palace. Then, again, he blew three feathers into the air to show the direction each one should go; whereupon the two elder sons went east and west, but Dummling's flew straight up, and fell close by the trap-door. Then the youngest son descended the steps as before, and upon seeing the large toad he talked with her, and told her what he desired. So the big box was brought, and out of it the toad handed him a ring which was of so exquisite a workmanship that no goldsmith's could equal it.

Meanwhile the two elder brothers made fun of the idea of Dummling searching for a ring, and they decided to take no needless trouble themselves.

Therefore, finding an old iron ring belonging to some harness, they took that to the King. Dummling was there before them with his valuable ring, and immediately upon his showing it, the father declared that in justice the kingdom should be his.

In spite of this, however, the two elder sons worried the poor King into appointing one test further, before bestowing his kingdom, and the King, giving way, announced that the one who brought home the most beautiful woman should inherit the crown.

Then Dummling again descended to the large toad and made known to her that he wished to find the most beautiful woman alive.

"The most beautiful woman is not always at hand," said the toad, "however, you shall have her."

Then she gave to him a scooped-out turnip to which half a dozen little mice were attached. The young man regarded this a trifle despondently, for it had no great resemblance to what he was seeking.

"What can I make of this?" he asked.

"Only place in it one of my young toads," replied the large toad, "and then you can decide how to use it."

From the young toads around the old toad, the young man seized one at hazard, and placed it in the scooped-out turnip, but hardly was it there when the most astounding change occurred, for the toad was transformed into a wondrously lovely maiden, the turnip became an elegant carriage, and the six mice were turned into handsome horses. The young man kissed the maiden and drove off to bring her to the King.

Not long afterwards the two brothers arrived.

In the same way, as the twice before, they had taken no trouble about the matter, but had picked up the first passable looking peasant woman whom they had happened to meet.

After glancing at the three, the King said: "Without doubt, at my death the kingdom will be Dummling's."

Once more the brothers loudly expressed their discontent, and gave the King no peace, declaring —

"It is impossible for us to agree to Dummling becoming ruler of the kingdom," and they insisted that the women should be required to spring through a hoop which was suspended from the ceiling in the centre of the hall, thinking to themselves "Now, certainly our peasants will get the best of it, they are active and sturdy, but that fragile lady will kill herself if she jumps."

To this, again, the King consented, and the peasants were first given trial.

They sprang through the hoop, indeed, but so clumsily that they fell, breaking their arms and legs.

Upon which the lovely lady whom Dummling had brought home, leapt through as lightly as a fawn, and this put an end to all contention.

So the crown came to Dummling, who lived long, and ruled his people temperately and justly.

LITTLE SNOW WHITE

It was in the middle of winter, when the broad flakes of snow were falling around, that a certain queen sat working at her window, the frame of which was made of fine black ebony; and, as she was looking out upon the snow, she pricked her finger, and three drops of blood fell upon it. Then she gazed thoughtfully down on the red drops which sprinkled the white snow and said, "Would that my little daughter may be as white as that snow, as red as the blood, and as black as the ebony window-frame!" And so the little girl grew up; her skin was a white as snow, her cheeks as rosy as blood, and her hair as black as ebony; and she was called Snow-White.

But this queen died; and the king soon married another wife, who was very beautiful, but so proud that she could not bear to think that any one could surpass her. She had a magical looking-glass, to which she used to go and gaze upon herself in it, and say —

"Tell me, glass, tell me true!
Of all the ladies in the land,
Who is fairest? tell me who?"

And the glass answered, "Thou, Queen, art fairest in the land"

But Snow-White grew more and more beautiful; and when she was seven years old, she was as bright as the day, and fairer than the queen herself. Then the glass one day answered queen, when she went to consult it as usual —

"Thou, Queen, may'st fair and beauteous be,
But Snow-White is lovelier far than thee?"

When the queen heard this she turned pale with rage and envy; and calling to one of her servants said, "Take Snow-White away into the wide wood, that I may never see her more." Then the servant led the little girl away; but his heart melted when she begged him to spare her life, and he said, "I will not hurt thee, thou pretty child." So he left her there alone; and though he thought it most likely that the wild beasts would tear her to pieces, he felt as if a great weight were taken off his heart when he had made up his mind not to kill her, but leave her to her fate.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.