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THE PINK
FAIRY BOOK

Andrew Lang
The Pink Fairy Book

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The Pink Fairy Book:

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The Pink Fairy Book

Preface

All people in the world tell nursery tales to their children. The Japanese tell them, the Chinese, the Red Indians by their camp fires, the Eskimo in their dark dirty winter huts. The Kaffirs of South Africa tell them, and the modern Greeks, just as the old Egyptians did, when Moses had not been many years rescued out of the bulrushes. The Germans, French, Spanish, Italians, Danes. Highlanders tell them also, and the stories are apt to be like each other everywhere. A child who has read the Blue and Red and Yellow Fairy Books will find some old friends with new faces in the Pink Fairy Book, if he examines and compares. But the Japanese tales will probably be new to the young student; the Tanuki is a creature whose acquaintance he may not have made before. He may remark that Andersen wants to 'point a moral,' as well as to 'adorn a tale;' that he is trying to make fun of the follies of mankind, as they exist in civilised countries. The Danish story of 'The Princess in the Chest' need not be read to a very nervous child, as it rather borders on a ghost story. It has been altered, and is really much more horrid in the language of the Danes, who, as history tells us, were not a nervous or timid people. I

am quite sure that this story is not true. The other Danish and Swedish stories are not alarming. They are translated by Mr. W. A. Craigie. Those from the Sicilian (through the German) are translated, like the African tales (through the French) and the Catalan tales, and the Japanese stories (the latter through the German), and an old French story, by Mrs. Lang. Miss Alma Alleyne did the stories from Andersen, out of the German. Mr. Ford, as usual, has drawn the monsters and mermaids, the princes and giants, and the beautiful princesses, who, the Editor thinks, are, if possible, prettier than ever. Here, then, are fancies brought from all quarters: we see that black, white, and yellow peoples are fond of just the same kinds of adventures. Courage, youth, beauty, kindness, have many trials, but they always win the battle; while witches, giants, unfriendly cruel people, are on the losing hand. So it ought to be, and so, on the whole, it is and will be; and that is all the moral of fairy tales. We cannot all be young, alas! and pretty, and strong; but nothing prevents us from being kind, and no kind man, woman, or beast or bird, ever comes to anything but good in these oldest fables of the world. So far all the tales are true, and no further.

The Cat's Elopement

[From the *Japanische Marchen und Sagen*, von David Brauns (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich).]

Once upon a time there lived a cat of marvellous beauty, with a skin as soft and shining as silk, and wise green eyes, that could see even in the dark. His name was Gon, and he belonged to a music teacher, who was so fond and proud of him that he would not have parted with him for anything in the world.

Now not far from the music master's house there dwelt a lady who possessed a most lovely little pussy cat called Koma. She was such a little dear altogether, and blinked her eyes so daintily, and ate her supper so tidily, and when she had finished she licked her pink nose so delicately with her little tongue, that her mistress was never tired of saying, 'Koma, Koma, what should I do without you?'

Well, it happened one day that these two, when out for an evening stroll, met under a cherry tree, and in one moment fell madly in love with each other. Gon had long felt that it was time for him to find a wife, for all the ladies in the neighbourhood paid him so much attention that it made him quite shy; but he was not easy to please, and did not care about any of them. Now, before he had time to think, Cupid had entangled him in his net, and he was filled with love towards Koma. She fully returned his

passion, but, like a woman, she saw the difficulties in the way, and consulted sadly with Gon as to the means of overcoming them. Gon entreated his master to set matters right by buying Koma, but her mistress would not part from her. Then the music master was asked to sell Gon to the lady, but he declined to listen to any such suggestion, so everything remained as before.

At length the love of the couple grew to such a pitch that they determined to please themselves, and to seek their fortunes together. So one moonlight night they stole away, and ventured out into an unknown world. All day long they marched bravely on through the sunshine, till they had left their homes far behind them, and towards evening they found themselves in a large park. The wanderers by this time were very hot and tired, and the grass looked very soft and inviting, and the trees cast cool deep shadows, when suddenly an ogre appeared in this Paradise, in the shape of a big, big dog! He came springing towards them showing all his teeth, and Koma shrieked, and rushed up a cherry tree. Gon, however, stood his ground boldly, and prepared to give battle, for he felt that Koma's eyes were upon him, and that he must not run away. But, alas! his courage would have availed him nothing had his enemy once touched him, for he was large and powerful, and very fierce. From her perch in the tree Koma saw it all, and screamed with all her might, hoping that some one would hear, and come to help. Luckily a servant of the princess to whom the park belonged was walking by, and he drove off the dog, and picking up the trembling Gon in his arms, carried him

to his mistress.

So poor little Koma was left alone, while Gon was borne away full of trouble, not in the least knowing what to do. Even the attention paid him by the princess, who was delighted with his beauty and pretty ways, did not console him, but there was no use in fighting against fate, and he could only wait and see what would turn up.

The princess, Gon's new mistress, was so good and kind that everybody loved her, and she would have led a happy life, had it not been for a serpent who had fallen in love with her, and was constantly annoying her by his presence. Her servants had orders to drive him away as often as he appeared; but as they were careless, and the serpent very sly, it sometimes happened that he was able to slip past them, and to frighten the princess by appearing before her. One day she was seated in her room, playing on her favourite musical instrument, when she felt something gliding up her sash, and saw her enemy making his way to kiss her cheek. She shrieked and threw herself backwards, and Gon, who had been curled up on a stool at her feet, understood her terror, and with one bound seized the snake by his neck. He gave him one bite and one shake, and flung him on the ground, where he lay, never to worry the princess any more. Then she took Gon in her arms, and praised and caressed him, and saw that he had the nicest bits to eat, and the softest mats to lie on; and he would have had nothing in the world to wish for if only he could have seen Koma again.

Time passed on, and one morning Gon lay before the house door, basking in the sun. He looked lazily at the world stretched out before him, and saw in the distance a big ruffian of a cat teasing and ill-treating quite a little one. He jumped up, full of rage, and chased away the big cat, and then he turned to comfort the little one, when his heart nearly burst with joy to find that it was Koma. At first Koma did not know him again, he had grown so large and stately; but when it dawned upon her who it was, her happiness knew no bounds. And they rubbed their heads and their noses again and again, while their purring might have been heard a mile off.

Paw in paw they appeared before the princess, and told her the story of their life and its sorrows. The princess wept for sympathy, and promised that they should never more be parted, but should live with her to the end of their days. By-and-bye the princess herself got married, and brought a prince to dwell in the palace in the park. And she told him all about her two cats, and how brave Gon had been, and how he had delivered her from her enemy the serpent.

And when the prince heard, he swore they should never leave them, but should go with the princess wherever she went. So it all fell out as the princess wished; and Gon and Koma had many children, and so had the princess, and they all played together, and were friends to the end of their lives.

How the Dragon Was Tricked

From *Griechische und Albanesische Marchen*, von J. G. von Hahn. (Leipzig: Engelmann. 1864.)

Once upon a time there lived a man who had two sons but they did not get on at all well together, for the younger was much handsomer than his elder brother who was very jealous of him. When they grew older, things became worse and worse, and at last one day as they were walking through a wood the elder youth seized hold of the other, tied him to a tree, and went on his way hoping that the boy might starve to death.

However, it happened that an old and humpbacked shepherd passed the tree with his flock, and seeing the prisoner, he stopped and said to him, 'Tell me, my son why are you tied to that tree?'

'Because I was so crooked,' answered the young man; 'but it has quite cured me, and now my back is as straight as can be.'

'I wish you would bind me to a tree,' exclaimed the shepherd, 'so that my back would get straight.'

'With all the pleasure in life,' replied the youth. 'If you will loosen these cords I will tie you up with them as firmly as I can.'

This was soon done, and then the young man drove off the sheep, leaving their real shepherd to repent of his folly; and before he had gone very far he met with a horse boy and a driver of oxen, and he persuaded them to turn with him and to seek for

adventures.

By these and many other tricks he soon became so celebrated that his fame reached the king's ears, and his majesty was filled with curiosity to see the man who had managed to outwit everybody. So he commanded his guards to capture the young man and bring him before him.

And when the young man stood before the king, the king spoke to him and said, 'By your tricks and the pranks that you have played on other people, you have, in the eye of the law, forfeited your life. But on one condition I will spare you, and that is, if you will bring me the flying horse that belongs to the great dragon. Fail in this, and you shall be hewn in a thousand pieces.'

'If that is all,' said the youth, 'you shall soon have it.'

So he went out and made his way straight to the stable where the flying horse was tethered. He stretched his hand cautiously out to seize the bridle, when the horse suddenly began to neigh as loud as he could. Now the room in which the dragon slept was just above the stable, and at the sound of the neighing he woke and cried to the horse, 'What is the matter, my treasure? is anything hurting you?' After waiting a little while the young man tried again to loose the horse, but a second time it neighed so loudly that the dragon woke up in a hurry and called out to know why the horse was making such a noise. But when the same thing happened the third time, the dragon lost his temper, and went down into the stable and took a whip and gave the horse a good beating. This offended the horse and made him angry, and

when the young man stretched out his hand to untie his head, he made no further fuss, but suffered himself to be led quietly away. Once clear of the stable the young man sprang on his back and galloped off, calling over his shoulder, 'Hi! dragon! dragon! if anyone asks you what has become of your horse, you can say that I have got him!'

But the king said, 'The flying horse is all very well, but I want something more. You must bring me the covering with the little bells that lies on the bed of the dragon, or I will have you hewn into a thousand pieces.'

'Is that all?' answered the youth. 'That is easily done.'

And when night came he went away to the dragon's house and climbed up on to the roof. Then he opened a little window in the roof and let down the chain from which the kettle usually hung, and tried to hook the bed covering and to draw it up. But the little bells all began to ring, and the dragon woke and said to his wife, 'Wife, you have pulled off all the bed-clothes!' and drew the covering towards him, pulling, as he did so, the young man into the room. Then the dragon flung himself on the youth and bound him fast with cords saying as he tied the last knot, 'Tomorrow when I go to church you must stay at home and kill him and cook him, and when I get back we will eat him together.'

So the following morning the dragoness took hold of the young man and reached down from the shelf a sharp knife with which to kill him. But as she untied the cords the better to get hold of him, the prisoner caught her by the legs, threw her to the

ground, seized her and speedily cut her throat, just as she had been about to do for him, and put her body in the oven. Then he snatched up the covering and carried it to the king.

The king was seated on his throne when the youth appeared before him and spread out the covering with a deep bow. 'That is not enough,' said his majesty; 'you must bring me the dragon himself, or I will have you hewn into a thousand pieces.'

'It shall be done,' answered the youth; 'but you must give me two years to manage it, for my beard must grow so that he may not know me.'

'So be it,' said the king.

And the first thing the young man did when his beard was grown was to take the road to the dragon's house and on the way he met a beggar, whom he persuaded to change clothes with him, and in the beggar's garments he went fearlessly forth to the dragon.

He found his enemy before his house, very busy making a box, and addressed him politely, 'Good morning, your worship. Have you a morsel of bread?'

'You must wait,' replied the dragon, 'till I have finished my box, and then I will see if I can find one.'

'What will you do with the box when it is made?' inquired the beggar.

'It is for the young man who killed my wife, and stole my flying horse and my bed covering,' said the dragon.

'He deserves nothing better,' answered the beggar, 'for it was

an ill deed. Still that box is too small for him, for he is a big man.'

'You are wrong,' said the dragon. 'The box is large enough even for me.'

'Well, the rogue is nearly as tall as you,' replied the beggar, 'and, of course, if you can get in, he can. But I am sure you would find it a tight fit.'

'No, there is plenty of room,' said the dragon, tucking himself carefully inside.

But no sooner was he well in, than the young man clapped on the lid and called out, 'Now press hard, just to see if he will be able to get out.'

The dragon pressed as hard as he could, but the lid never moved.

'It is all right,' he cried; 'now you can open it.'

But instead of opening it, the young man drove in long nails to make it tighter still; then he took the box on his back and brought it to the king. And when the king heard that the dragon was inside, he was so excited that he would not wait one moment, but broke the lock and lifted the lid just a little way to make sure he was really there. He was very careful not to leave enough space for the dragon to jump out, but unluckily there was just room for his great mouth, and with one snap the king vanished down his wide red jaws. Then the young man married the king's daughter and ruled over the land, but what he did with the dragon nobody knows.

The Goblin and the Grocer

Translated from the German of Hans Andersen

There was once a hard-working student who lived in an attic, and he had nothing in the world of his own. There was also a hard-working grocer who lived on the first floor, and he had the whole house for his own.

The Goblin belonged to him, for every Christmas Eve there was waiting for him at the grocer's a dish of jam with a large lump of butter in the middle.

The grocer could afford this, so the Goblin stayed in the grocer's shop; and this teaches us a good deal. One evening the student came in by the back door to buy a candle and some cheese; he had no one to send, so he came himself.

He got what he wanted, paid for it, and nodded a good evening to the grocer and his wife (she was a woman who could do more than nod; she could talk).

When the student had said good night he suddenly stood still, reading the sheet of paper in which the cheese had been wrapped.

It was a leaf torn out of an old book – a book of poetry

‘There's more of that over there!’ said the grocer ‘I gave an old woman some coffee for the book. If you like to give me twopence you can have the rest.’

‘Yes,’ said the student, ‘give me the book instead of the cheese. I can eat my bread without cheese. It would be a shame to leave the book to be torn up. You are a clever and practical man, but about poetry you understand as much as that old tub over there!’

And that sounded rude as far as the tub was concerned, but the grocer laughed, and so did the student. It was only said in fun.

But the Goblin was angry that anyone should dare to say such a thing to a grocer who owned the house and sold the best butter.

When it was night and the shop was shut, and everyone was in bed except the student, the Goblin went upstairs and took the grocer’s wife’s tongue. She did not use it when she was asleep, and on whatever object in the room he put it that thing began to speak, and spoke out its thoughts and feelings just as well as the lady to whom it belonged. But only one thing at a time could use it, and that was a good thing, or they would have all spoken together.

The Goblin laid the tongue on the tub in which were the old newspapers.

‘Is it true,’ he asked, ‘that you know nothing about poetry?’

‘Certainly not!’ answered the tub. ‘Poetry is something that is in the papers, and that is frequently cut out. I have a great deal more in me than the student has, and yet I am only a small tub in the grocer’s shop.’

And the Goblin put the tongue on the coffee-mill, and how it began to grind! He put it on the butter-cask, and on the till, and all were of the same opinion as the waste-paper tub. and one

must believe the majority.

‘Now I will tell the student!’ and with these words he crept softly up the stairs to the attic where the student lived.

There was a light burning, and the Goblin peeped through the key-hole and saw that he was reading the torn book that he had bought in the shop.

But how bright it was! Out of the book shot a streak of light which grew into a large tree and spread its branches far above the student. Every leaf was alive, and every flower was a beautiful girl’s head, some with dark and shining eyes, others with wonderful blue ones. Every fruit was a glittering star, and there was a marvellous music in the student’s room. The little Goblin had never even dreamt of such a splendid sight, much less seen it.

He stood on tiptoe gazing and gazing, till the candle in the attic was put out; the student had blown it out and had gone to bed, but the Goblin remained standing outside listening to the music, which very softly and sweetly was now singing the student a lullaby.

‘I have never seen anything like this!’ said the Goblin. ‘I never expected this! I must stay with the student.’

The little fellow thought it over, for he was a sensible Goblin. Then he sighed, ‘The student has no jam!’

And on that he went down to the grocer again. And it was a good thing that he did go back, for the tub had nearly worn out the tongue. It had read everything that was inside it, on the one

side, and was just going to turn itself round and read from the other side when the Goblin came in and returned the tongue to its owner.

But the whole shop, from the till down to the shavings, from that night changed their opinion of the tub, and they looked up to it, and had such faith in it that they were under the impression that when the grocer read the art and drama critiques out of the paper in the evenings, it all came from the tub.

But the Goblin could no longer sit quietly listening to the wisdom and intellect downstairs. No, as soon as the light shone in the evening from the attic it seemed to him as though its beams were strong ropes dragging him up, and he had to go and peep through the key-hole. There he felt the sort of feeling we have looking at the great rolling sea in a storm, and he burst into tears. He could not himself say why he wept, but in spite of his tears he felt quite happy. How beautiful it must be to sit under that tree with the student, but that he could not do; he had to content himself with the key-hole and be happy there!

There he stood out on the cold landing, the autumn wind blowing through the cracks of the floor. It was cold – very cold, but he first found it out when the light in the attic was put out and the music in the wood died away. Ah! then it froze him, and he crept down again into his warm corner; there it was comfortable and cosy.

When Christmas came, and with it the jam with the large lump of butter, ah! then the grocer was first with him.

But in the middle of the night the Goblin awoke, hearing a great noise and knocking against the shutters – people hammering from outside. The watchman was blowing his horn: a great fire had broken out; the whole town was in flames.

Was it in the house? or was it at a neighbour's? Where was it?

The alarm increased. The grocer's wife was so terrified that she took her gold earrings out of her ears and put them in her pocket in order to save something. The grocer seized his account books, and the maid her black silk dress.

Everyone wanted to save his most valuable possession; so did the Goblin, and in a few leaps he was up the stairs and in the student's room. He was standing quietly by the open window looking at the fire that was burning in the neighbour's house just opposite. The Goblin seized the book lying on the table, put it in his red cap, and clasped it with both hands. The best treasure in the house was saved, and he climbed out on to the roof with it – on to the chimney. There he sat, lighted up by the flames from the burning house opposite, both hands holding tightly on his red cap, in which lay the treasure; and now he knew what his heart really valued most – to whom he really belonged. But when the fire was put out, and the Goblin thought it over – then —

‘I will divide myself between the two,’ he said. ‘I cannot quite give up the grocer, because of the jam!’

And it is just the same with us. We also cannot quite give up the grocer – because of the jam.

The House in the Wood

From the German of Grimm

A poor woodcutter lived with his wife and three daughters in a little hut on the borders of a great forest.

One morning as he was going to his work, he said to his wife, 'Let our eldest daughter bring me my lunch into the wood; and so that she shall not lose her way, I will take a bag of millet with me, and sprinkle the seed on the path.'

When the sun had risen high over the forest, the girl set out with a basin of soup. But the field and wood sparrows, the larks and finches, blackbirds and green finches had picked up the millet long ago, and the girl could not find her way.

She went on and on, till the sun set and night came on. The trees rustled in the darkness, the owls hooted, and she began to be very much frightened. Then she saw in tile distance a light that twinkled between the trees. 'There must be people living yonder,' she thought, 'who will take me in for the night,' and she began walking towards it.

Not long afterwards she came to a house with lights in the windows.

She knocked at the door, and a gruff voice called, 'Come in!' The girl stepped into the dark entrance, and tapped at the door of the room.

‘Just walk in,’ cried the voice, and when she opened the door there sat an old gray-haired man at the table. His face was resting on his hands, and his white beard flowed over the table almost down to the ground.

By the stove lay three beasts, a hen, a cock, and a brindled cow. The girl told the old man her story, and asked for a night’s lodging.

The man said:

Pretty cock,
Pretty hen,
And you, pretty brindled cow,
What do you say now?

‘Duks,’ answered the beasts; and that must have meant, ‘We are quite willing,’ for the old man went on, ‘Here is abundance; go into the back kitchen and cook us a supper.’

The girl found plenty of everything in the kitchen, and cooked a good meal, but she did not think of the beasts.

She placed the full dishes on the table, sat down opposite the gray-haired man, and ate till her hunger was appeased.

When she was satisfied, she said, ‘But now I am so tired, where is a bed in which I can sleep?’

The beasts answered:

You have eaten with him,
You have drunk with him,

Of us you have not thought,
Sleep then as you ought!

Then the old man said, 'Go upstairs, and there you will find a bedroom; shake the bed, and put clean sheets on, and go to sleep.'

The maiden went upstairs, and when she had made the bed, she lay down.

After some time the gray-haired man came, looked at her by the light of his candle, and shook his head. And when he saw that she was sound asleep, he opened a trapdoor and let her fall into the cellar.

The woodcutter came home late in the evening, and reproached his wife for leaving him all day without food.

'No, I did not,' she answered; 'the girl went off with your dinner. She must have lost her way, but will no doubt come back to-morrow.'

But at daybreak the woodcutter started off into the wood, and this time asked his second daughter to bring his food.

'I will take a bag of lentils,' said he; 'they are larger than millet, and the girl will see them better and be sure to find her way.'

At midday the maiden took the food, but the lentils had all gone; as on the previous day, the wood birds had eaten them all.

The maiden wandered about the wood till nightfall, when she came in the same way to the old man's house, and asked for food and a night's lodging.

The man with the white hair again asked the beasts:

Pretty cock,
Pretty hen,
And you, pretty brindled cow,
What do you say now?

The beasts answered, 'Duks,' and everything happened as on the former day.

The girl cooked a good meal, ate and drank with the old man, and did not trouble herself about the animals.

And when she asked for a bed, they replied:

You have eaten with him
You have drunk with him,
Of us you have not thought,

Now sleep as you ought!

And when she was asleep, the old man shook his head over her, and let her fall into the cellar.

On the third morning the woodcutter said to his wife, 'Send our youngest child to-day with my dinner. She is always good and obedient, and will keep to the right path, and not wander away like her sisters, idle drones!'

But the mother said, 'Must I lose my dearest child too?'

'Do not fear,' he answered; 'she is too clever and intelligent to lose her way. I will take plenty of peas with me and strew them along; they are even larger than lentils, and will show her the way.'

But when the maiden started off with the basket on her arm, the wood pigeons had eaten up the peas, and she did not know which way to go. She was much distressed, and thought constantly of her poor hungry father and her anxious mother. At last, when it grew dark, she saw the little light, and came to the house in the wood. She asked prettily if she might stay there for the night, and the man with the white beard asked his beasts again:

Pretty cock,
Pretty hen,
And you, pretty brindled cow,
What do you say now?

‘Duks,’ they said. Then the maiden stepped up to the stove where the animals were lying, and stroked the cock and the hen, and scratched the brindled cow between its horns.

And when at the bidding of the old man she had prepared a good supper, and the dishes were standing on the table, she said, ‘Shall I have plenty while the good beasts have nothing? There is food to spare outside; I will attend to them first.’

Then she went out and fetched barley and strewed it before the cock and hen, and brought the cow an armful of sweet-smelling hay.

‘Eat that, dear beasts,’ she said, ‘and when you are thirsty you shall have a good drink.’

Then she fetched a bowl of water, and the cock and hen flew

on to the edge, put their beaks in, and then held up their heads as birds do when they drink, and the brindled cow also drank her fill. When the beasts were satisfied, the maiden sat down beside the old man at the table and ate what was left for her. Soon the cock and hen began to tuck their heads under their wings, and the brindled cow blinked its eyes, so the maiden said, 'Shall we not go to rest now?'

Pretty cock,
Pretty hen,
And you, pretty brindled cow,
What do you say now?

The animals said, 'Duks:

You have eaten with us,
You have drunk with us,
You have tended us right,
So we wish you good night.'

The maiden therefore went upstairs, made the bed and put on clean sheets and fell asleep. She slept peacefully till midnight, when there was such a noise in the house that she awoke. Everything trembled and shook; the animals sprang up and dashed themselves in terror against the wall; the beams swayed as if they would be torn from their foundations, it seemed as if the stairs were tumbling down, and then the roof fell in with a

crash. Then all became still, and as no harm came to the maiden she lay down again and fell asleep. But when she awoke again in broad daylight, what a sight met her eyes! She was lying in a splendid room furnished with royal splendour; the walls were covered with golden flowers on a green ground; the bed was of ivory and the counterpane of velvet, and on a stool near by lay a pair of slippers studded with pearls. The maiden thought she must be dreaming, but in came three servants richly dressed, who asked what were her commands. 'Go,' said the maiden, 'I will get up at once and cook the old man's supper for him, and then I will feed the pretty cock and hen and the brindled cow.'

But the door opened and in came a handsome young man, who said, 'I am a king's son, and was condemned by a wicked witch to live as an old man in this wood with no company but that of my three servants, who were transformed into a cock, a hen, and a brindled cow. The spell could only be broken by the arrival of a maiden who should show herself kind not only to men but to beasts. You are that maiden, and last night at midnight we were freed, and this poor house was again transformed into my royal palace.'

As they stood there the king's son told his three servants to go and fetch the maiden's parents to be present at the wedding feast.

'But where are my two sisters?' asked the maid.

'I shut them up in the cellar, but in the morning they shall be led forth into the forest and shall serve a charcoal burner until they have improved, and will never again suffer poor animals to

go hungry.'

Uraschimataro and the Turtle

From the *Japanische Marchen und Sagen*, von David Brauns (Leipzig: Wilhelm Friedrich).

There was once a worthy old couple who lived on the coast, and supported themselves by fishing. They had only one child, a son, who was their pride and joy, and for his sake they were ready to work hard all day long, and never felt tired or discontented with their lot. This son's name was Uraschimataro, which means in Japanese, 'Son of the island,' and he was a fine well-grown youth and a good fisherman, minding neither wind nor weather. Not the bravest sailor in the whole village dared venture so far out to sea as Uraschimataro, and many a time the neighbours used to shake their heads and say to his parents, 'If your son goes on being so rash, one day he will try his luck once too often, and the waves will end by swallowing him up.' But Uraschimataro paid no heed to these remarks, and as he was really very clever in managing a boat, the old people were very seldom anxious about him.

One beautiful bright morning, as he was hauling his well-filled nets into the boat, he saw lying among the fishes a tiny little turtle. He was delighted with his prize, and threw it into a wooden vessel to keep till he got home, when suddenly the turtle found its voice, and tremblingly begged for its life. 'After all,' it said, 'what good

can I do you? I am so young and small, and I would so gladly live a little longer. Be merciful and set me free, and I shall know how to prove my gratitude.'

Now Uraschimataro was very good-natured, and besides, he could never bear to say no, so he picked up the turtle, and put it back into the sea.

Years flew by, and every morning Uraschimataro sailed his boat into the deep sea. But one day as he was making for a little bay between some rocks, there arose a fierce whirlwind, which shattered his boat to pieces, and she was sucked under by the waves. Uraschimataro himself very nearly shared the same fate. But he was a powerful swimmer, and struggled hard to reach the shore. Then he saw a large turtle coming towards him, and above the howling of the storm he heard what it said: 'I am the turtle whose life you once saved. I will now pay my debt and show my gratitude. The land is still far distant, and without my help you would never get there. Climb on my back, and I will take you where you will.' Uraschimataro did not wait to be asked twice, and thankfully accepted his friend's help. But scarcely was he seated firmly on the shell, when the turtle proposed that they should not return to the shore at once, but go under the sea, and look at some of the wonders that lay hidden there.

Uraschimataro agreed willingly, and in another moment they were deep, deep down, with fathoms of blue water above their heads. Oh, how quickly they darted through the still, warm sea! The young man held tight, and marvelled where they were going

and how long they were to travel, but for three days they rushed on, till at last the turtle stopped before a splendid palace, shining with gold and silver, crystal and precious stones, and decked here and there with branches of pale pink coral and glittering pearls. But if Uraschimataro was astonished at the beauty of the outside, he was struck dumb at the sight of the hall within, which was lighted by the blaze of fish scales.

‘Where have you brought me?’ he asked his guide in a low voice.

‘To the palace of Ringu, the house of the sea god, whose subjects we all are,’ answered the turtle. ‘I am the first waiting maid of his daughter, the lovely princess Otohime, whom you will shortly see.’

Uraschimataro was still so puzzled with the adventures that had befallen him, that he waited in a dazed condition for what would happen next. But the turtle, who had talked so much of him to the princess that she had expressed a wish to see him, went at once to make known his arrival. And directly the princess beheld him her heart was set on him, and she begged him to stay with her, and in return promised that he should never grow old, neither should his beauty fade. ‘Is not that reward enough?’ she asked, smiling, looking all the while as fair as the sun itself. And Uraschimataro said ‘Yes,’ and so he stayed there. For how long? That he only knew later.

His life passed by, and each hour seemed happier than the last, when one day there rushed over him a terrible longing to

see his parents. He fought against it hard, knowing how it would grieve the princess, but it grew on him stronger and stronger, till at length he became so sad that the princess inquired what was wrong. Then he told her of the longing he had to visit his old home, and that he must see his parents once more. The princess was almost frozen with horror, and implored him to stay with her, or something dreadful would be sure to happen. 'You will never come back, and we shall meet again no more,' she moaned bitterly. But Uraschimataro stood firm and repeated, 'Only this once will I leave you, and then will I return to your side for ever.' Sadly the princess shook her head, but she answered slowly, 'One way there is to bring you safely back, but I fear you will never agree to the conditions of the bargain.'

'I will do anything that will bring me back to you,' exclaimed Uraschimataro, looking at her tenderly, but the princess was silent: she knew too well that when he left her she would see his face no more. Then she took from a shelf a tiny golden box, and gave it to Uraschimataro, praying him to keep it carefully, and above all things never to open it. 'If you can do this,' she said as she bade him farewell, 'your friend the turtle will meet you at the shore, and will carry you back to me.'

Uraschimataro thanked her from his heart, and swore solemnly to do her bidding. He hid the box safely in his garments, seated himself on the back of the turtle, and vanished in the ocean path, waving his hand to the princess. Three days and three nights they swam through the sea, and at length Uraschimataro

arrived at the beach which lay before his old home. The turtle bade him farewell, and was gone in a moment.

Uraschimataro drew near to the village with quick and joyful steps. He saw the smoke curling through the roof, and the thatch where green plants had thickly sprouted. He heard the children shouting and calling, and from a window that he passed came the twang of the koto, and everything seemed to cry a welcome for his return. Yet suddenly he felt a pang at his heart as he wandered down the street. After all, everything was changed. Neither men nor houses were those he once knew. Quickly he saw his old home; yes, it was still there, but it had a strange look. Anxiously he knocked at the door, and asked the woman who opened it after his parents. But she did not know their names, and could give him no news of them.

Still more disturbed, he rushed to the burying ground, the only place that could tell him what he wished to know. Here at any rate he would find out what it all meant. And he was right. In a moment he stood before the grave of his parents, and the date written on the stone was almost exactly the date when they had lost their son, and he had forsaken them for the Daughter of the Sea. And so he found that since he had left his home, three hundred years had passed by.

Shuddering with horror at his discovery he turned back into the village street, hoping to meet some one who could tell him of the days of old. But when the man spoke, he knew he was not dreaming, though he felt as if he had lost his senses.

In despair he bethought him of the box which was the gift of the princess. Perhaps after all this dreadful thing was not true. He might be the victim of some enchanter's spell, and in his hand lay the counter-charm. Almost unconsciously he opened it, and a purple vapour came pouring out. He held the empty box in his hand, and as he looked he saw that the fresh hand of youth had grown suddenly shrivelled, like the hand of an old, old man. He ran to the brook, which flowed in a clear stream down from the mountain, and saw himself reflected as in a mirror. It was the face of a mummy which looked back at him. Wounded to death, he crept back through the village, and no man knew the old, old man to be the strong handsome youth who had run down the street an hour before. So he toiled wearily back, till he reached the shore, and here he sat sadly on a rock, and called loudly on the turtle. But she never came back any more, but instead, death came soon, and set him free. But before that happened, the people who saw him sitting lonely on the shore had heard his story, and when their children were restless they used to tell them of the good son who from love to his parents had given up for their sakes the splendour and wonders of the palace in the sea, and the most beautiful woman in the world besides.

The Slaying of the Tanuki

From the Japanische

Murthen und Sagen

Near a big river, and between two high mountains, a man and his wife lived in a cottage a long, long time ago. A dense forest lay all round the cottage, and there was hardly a path or a tree in the whole wood that was not familiar to the peasant from his boyhood. In one of his wanderings he had made friends with a hare, and many an hour the two passed together, when the man was resting by the roadside, eating his dinner.

Now this strange friendship was observed by the Tanuki, a wicked, quarrelsome beast, who hated the peasant, and was never tired of doing him an ill turn. Again and again he had crept to the hut, and finding some choice morsel put away for the little hare, had either eaten it if he thought it nice, or trampled it to pieces so that no one else should get it, and at last the peasant lost patience, and made up his mind he would have the Tanuki's blood.

So for many days the man lay hidden, waiting for the Tanuki to come by, and when one morning he marched up the road thinking of nothing but the dinner he was going to steal, the peasant threw himself upon him and bound his four legs tightly, so that he could not move. Then he dragged his enemy joyfully to the house, feeling that at length he had got the better of the

mischievous beast which had done him so many ill turns. 'He shall pay for them with his skin,' he said to his wife. 'We will first kill him, and then cook him.' So saying, he hanged the Tanuki, head downwards, to a beam, and went out to gather wood for a fire.

Meanwhile the old woman was standing at the mortar pounding the rice that was to serve them for the week with a pestle that made her arms ache with its weight. Suddenly she heard something whining and weeping in the corner, and, stopping her work, she looked round to see what it was. That was all that the rascal wanted, and he put on directly his most humble air, and begged the woman in his softest voice to loosen his bonds, which her hurting him sorely. She was filled with pity for him, but did not dare to set him free, as she knew that her husband would be very angry. The Tanuki, however, did not despair, and seeing that her heart was softened, began his prayers anew. 'He only asked to have his bonds taken from him,' he said. 'He would give his word not to attempt to escape, and if he was once set free he could soon pound her rice for her.' 'Then you can have a little rest,' he went on, 'for rice pounding is very tiring work, and not at all fit for weak women.' These last words melted the good woman completely, and she unfastened the bonds that held him. Poor foolish creature! In one moment the Tanuki had seized her, stripped off all her clothes, and popped her in the mortar. In a few minutes more she was pounded as fine as the rice; and not content with that, the Tanuki placed a pot on the

hearth and made ready to cook the peasant a dinner from the flesh of his own wife!

When everything was complete he looked out of the door, and saw the old man coming from the forest carrying a large bundle of wood. Quick as lightning the Tanuki not only put on the woman's clothes, but, as he was a magician, assumed her form as well. Then he took the wood, kindled the fire, and very soon set a large dinner before the old man, who was very hungry, and had forgotten for the moment all about his enemy. But when the Tanuki saw that he had eaten his fill and would be thinking about his prisoner, he hastily shook off the clothes behind a door and took his own shape. Then he said to the peasant, 'You are a nice sort of person to seize animals and to talk of killing them! You are caught in your own net. It is your own wife that you have eaten, and if you want to find her bones you have only to look under the floor.' With these words he turned and made for the forest.

The old peasant grew cold with horror as he listened, and seemed frozen to the place where he stood. When he had recovered himself a little, he collected the bones of his dead wife, buried them in the garden, and swore over the grave to be avenged on the Tanuki. After everything was done he sat himself down in his lonely cottage and wept bitterly, and the bitterest thought of all was that he would never be able to forget that he had eaten his own wife.

While he was thus weeping and wailing his friend the hare

passed by, and, hearing the noise, pricked up his ears and soon recognised the old man's voice. He wondered what had happened, and put his head in at the door and asked if anything was the matter. With tears and groans the peasant told him the whole dreadful story, and the hare, filled with anger and compassion, comforted him as best he could, and promised to help him in his revenge. 'The false knave shall not go unpunished,' said he.

So the first thing he did was to search the house for materials to make an ointment, which he sprinkled plentifully with pepper and then put in his pocket. Next he took a hatchet, bade farewell to the old man, and departed to the forest. He bent his steps to the dwelling of the Tanuki and knocked at the door. The Tanuki, who had no cause to suspect the hare, was greatly pleased to see him, for he noticed the hatchet at once, and began to lay plots how to get hold of it.

To do this he thought he had better offer to accompany the hare, which was exactly what the hare wished and expected, for he knew all the Tanuki's cunning, and understood his little ways. So he accepted the rascal's company with joy, and made himself very pleasant as they strolled along. When they were wandering in this manner through the forest the hare carelessly raised his hatchet in passing, and cut down some thick boughs that were hanging over the path, but at length, after cutting down a good big tree, which cost him many hard blows, he declared that it was too heavy for him to carry home, and he must just leave it where it

was. This delighted the greedy Tanuki, who said that they would be no weight for him, so they collected the large branches, which the hare bound tightly on his back. Then he trotted gaily to the house, the hare following after with his lighter bundle.

By this time the hare had decided what he would do, and as soon as they arrived, he quietly set on fire the wood on the back of the Tanuki. The Tanuki, who was busy with something else, observed nothing, and only called out to ask what was the meaning of the crackling that he heard. 'It is just the rattle of the stones which are rolling down the side of the mountain,' the hare said; and the Tanuki was content, and made no further remarks, never noticing that the noise really sprang from the burning boughs on his back, until his fur was in flames, and it was almost too late to put it out. Shrieking with pain, he let fall the burning wood from his back, and stamped and howled with agony. But the hare comforted him, and told him that he always carried with him an excellent plaster in case of need, which would bring him instant relief, and taking out his ointment he spread it on a leaf of bamboo, and laid it on the wound. No sooner did it touch him than the Tanuki leapt yelling into the air, and the hare laughed, and ran to tell his friend the peasant what a trick he had played on their enemy. But the old man shook his head sadly, for he knew that the villain was only crushed for the moment, and that he would shortly be revenging himself upon them. No, the only way every to get any peace and quiet was to render the Tanuki harmless for ever. Long did the old man and

the hare puzzle together how this was to be done, and at last they decided that they would make two boats, a small one of wood and a large one of clay. Then they fell to work at once, and when the boats were ready and properly painted, the hare went to the Tanuki, who was still very ill, and invited him to a great fish-catching. The Tanuki was still feeling angry with the hare about the trick he had played him, but he was weak and very hungry, so he gladly accepted the proposal, and accompanied the hare to the bank of the river, where the two boats were moored, rocked by the waves. They both looked exactly alike, and the Tanuki only saw that one was bigger than the other, and would hold more fish, so he sprang into the large one, while the hare climbed into the one which was made of wood. They loosened their moorings, and made for the middle of the stream, and when they were at some distance from the bank, the hare took his oar, and struck such a heavy blow at the other boat, that it broke in two. The Tanuki fell straight into the water, and was held there by the hare till he was quite dead. Then he put the body in his boat and rowed to land, and told the old man that his enemy was dead at last. And the old man rejoiced that his wife was avenged, and he took the hare into his house, and they lived together all their days in peace and quietness upon the mountain.

The Flying Trunk

Translated from the German of Hans Andersen

There was once a merchant who was so rich that he could have paved the whole street, and perhaps even a little side-street besides, with silver. But he did not do that; he knew another way of spending his money. If he spent a shilling he got back a florin—such an excellent merchant he was till he died.

Now his son inherited all this money. He lived very merrily; he went every night to the theatre, made paper kites out of five-pound notes, and played ducks and drakes with sovereigns instead of stones. In this way the money was likely to come soon to an end, and so it did.

At last he had nothing left but four shillings, and he had no clothes except a pair of slippers and an old dressing-gown.

His friends did not trouble themselves any more about him; they would not even walk down the street with him.

But one of them who was rather good-natured sent him an old trunk with the message, ‘Pack up!’ That was all very well, but he had nothing to pack up, so he got into the trunk himself.

It was an enchanted trunk, for as soon as the lock was pressed it could fly. He pressed it, and away he flew in it up the chimney, high into the clouds, further and further away. But whenever the

bottom gave a little creak he was in terror lest the trunk should go to pieces, for then he would have turned a dreadful somersault—just think of it!

In this way he arrived at the land of the Turks. He hid the trunk in a wood under some dry leaves, and then walked into the town. He could do that quite well, for all the Turks were dressed just as he was—in a dressing-gown and slippers.

He met a nurse with a little child.

‘Halloa! you Turkish nurse,’ said he, ‘what is that great castle there close to the town? The one with the windows so high up?’

‘The sultan’s daughter lives there,’ she replied. ‘It is prophesied that she will be very unlucky in her husband, and so no one is allowed to see her except when the sultan and sultana are by.’

‘Thank you,’ said the merchant’s son, and he went into the wood, sat himself in his trunk, flew on to the roof, and crept through the window into the princess’s room.

She was lying on the sofa asleep, and was so beautiful that the young merchant had to kiss her. Then she woke up and was very much frightened, but he said he was a Turkish god who had come through the air to see her, and that pleased her very much.

They sat close to each other, and he told her a story about her eyes. They were beautiful dark lakes in which her thoughts swam about like mermaids. And her forehead was a snowy mountain, grand and shining. These were lovely stories.

Then he asked the princess to marry him, and she said yes at once.

‘But you must come here on Saturday,’ she said, ‘for then the sultan and the sultana are coming to tea with me. They will be indeed proud that I receive the god of the Turks. But mind you have a really good story ready, for my parents like them immensely. My mother likes something rather moral and high-flown, and my father likes something merry to make him laugh.’

‘Yes, I shall only bring a fairy story for my dowry,’ said he, and so they parted. But the princess gave him a sabre set with gold pieces which he could use.

Then he flew away, bought himself a new dressing-gown, and sat down in the wood and began to make up a story, for it had to be ready by Saturday, and that was no easy matter.

When he had it ready it was Saturday.

The sultan, the sultana, and the whole court were at tea with the princess.

He was most graciously received.

‘Will you tell us a story?’ said the sultana; ‘one that is thoughtful and instructive?’

‘But something that we can laugh at,’ said the sultan.

‘Oh, certainly,’ he replied, and began: ‘Now, listen attentively. There was once a box of matches which lay between a tinder-box and an old iron pot, and they told the story of their youth.

“We used to be on the green fir-boughs. Every morning and evening we had diamond-tea, which was the dew, and the whole day long we had sunshine, and the little birds used to tell us stories. We were very rich, because the other trees only dressed

in summer, but we had green dresses in summer and in winter. Then the woodcutter came, and our family was split up. We have now the task of making light for the lowest people. That is why we grand people are in the kitchen.”

“My fate was quite different,” said the iron pot, near which the matches lay.

“Since I came into the world I have been many times scoured, and have cooked much. My only pleasure is to have a good chat with my companions when I am lying nice and clean in my place after dinner.”

“Now you are talking too fast,” spluttered the fire.

“Yes, let us decide who is the grandest!” said the matches.

“No, I don’t like talking about myself,” said the pot.

“Let us arrange an evening’s entertainment. I will tell the story of my life.

“On the Baltic by the Danish shore-”

“What a beautiful beginning!” said all the plates. “That’s a story that will please us all.”

‘And the end was just as good as the beginning. All the plates clattered for joy.

“Now I will dance,” said the tongs, and she danced. Oh! how high she could kick!

‘The old chair-cover in the corner split when he saw her.

‘The urn would have sung but she said she had a cold; she could not sing unless she boiled.

‘In the window was an old quill pen. There was nothing

remarkable about her except that she had been dipped too deeply into the ink. But she was very proud of that.

“If the urn will not sing,” said she, “outside the door hangs a nightingale in a cage who will sing.”

“I don’t think it’s proper,” said the kettle, “that such a foreign bird should be heard.”

“Oh, let us have some acting,” said everyone. “Do let us!”

‘Suddenly the door opened and the maid came in. Everyone was quite quiet. There was not a sound. But each pot knew what he might have done, and how grand he was.

‘The maid took the matches and lit the fire with them. How they spluttered and flamed, to be sure! “Now everyone can see,” they thought, “that we are the grandest! How we sparkle! What a light-”

‘But here they were burnt out.’

‘That was a delightful story!’ said the sultana. ‘I quite feel myself in the kitchen with the matches. Yes, now you shall marry our daughter.’

‘Yes, indeed,’ said the sultan, ‘you shall marry our daughter on Monday.’ And they treated the young man as one of the family.

The wedding was arranged, and the night before the whole town was illuminated.

Biscuits and gingerbreads were thrown among the people, the street boys stood on tiptoe crying hurrahs and whistling through their fingers. It was all splendid.

‘Now I must also give them a treat,’ thought the merchant’s

son. And so he bought rockets, crackers, and all the kinds of fireworks you can think of, put them in his trunk, and flew up with them into the air.

Whirr-r-r, how they fizzed and blazed!

All the Turks jumped so high that their slippers flew above their heads; such a splendid glitter they had never seen before.

Now they could quite well understand that it was the god of the Turks himself who was to marry the princess.

As soon as the young merchant came down again into the wood with his trunk he thought, 'Now I will just go into the town to see how the show has taken.'

And it was quite natural that he should want to do this.

Oh! what stories the people had to tell!

Each one whom he asked had seen it differently, but they had all found it beautiful.

'I saw the Turkish god himself,' said one. 'He had eyes like glittering stars, and a beard like foaming water.'

'He flew away in a cloak of fire,' said another. They were splendid things that he heard, and the next day was to be his wedding day.

Then he went back into the wood to sit in his trunk; but what had become of it? The trunk had been burnt. A spark of the fireworks had set it alight, and the trunk was in ashes. He could no longer fly, and could never reach his bride.

She stood the whole day long on the roof and waited; perhaps she is waiting there still.

But he wandered through the world and told stories; though they are not so merry as the one he told about the matches.

The Snow-man

Translated from the German of Hans Andersen

‘How astonishingly cold it is! My body is cracking all over!’ said the Snow-man. ‘The wind is really cutting one’s very life out! And how that fiery thing up there glares!’ He meant the sun, which was just setting. ‘It sha’n’t make me blink, though, and I shall keep quite cool and collected.’

Instead of eyes he had two large three-cornered pieces of slate in his head; his mouth consisted of an old rake, so that he had teeth as well.

He was born amidst the shouts and laughter of the boys, and greeted by the jingling bells and cracking whips of the sledges.

The sun went down, the full moon rose, large, round, clear and beautiful, in the dark blue sky.

‘There it is again on the other side!’ said the Snow-man, by which he meant the sun was appearing again. ‘I have become quite accustomed to its glaring. I hope it will hang there and shine, so that I may be able to see myself. I wish I knew, though, how one ought to see about changing one’s position. I should very much like to move about. If I only could, I would glide up and down the ice there, as I saw the boys doing; but somehow or other, I don’t know how to run.’

‘Bow-wow!’ barked the old yard-dog; he was rather hoarse and couldn’t bark very well. His hoarseness came on when he was a house-dog and used to lie in front of the stove. ‘The sun will soon teach you to run! I saw that last winter with your predecessor, and farther back still with his predecessors! They have all run away!’

‘I don’t understand you, my friend,’ said the Snow-man. ‘That thing up there is to teach me to run?’ He meant the moon. ‘Well, it certainly did run just now, for I saw it quite plainly over there, and now here it is on this side.’

‘You know nothing at all about it,’ said the yard-dog. ‘Why, you have only just been made. The thing you see there is the moon; the other thing you saw going down the other side was the sun. He will come up again tomorrow morning, and will soon teach you how to run away down the gutter. The weather is going to change; I feel it already by the pain in my left hind-leg; the weather is certainly going to change.’

‘I can’t understand him,’ said the Snow-man; ‘but I have an idea that he is speaking of something unpleasant. That thing that glares so, and then disappears, the sun, as he calls it, is not my friend. I know that by instinct.’

‘Bow-wow!’ barked the yard-dog, and walked three times round himself, and then crept into his kennel to sleep. The weather really did change. Towards morning a dense damp fog lay over the whole neighbourhood; later on came an icy wind, which sent the frost packing. But when the sun rose, it was a glorious sight. The trees and shrubs were covered with rime, and

looked like a wood of coral, and every branch was thick with long white blossoms. The most delicate twigs, which are lost among the foliage in summer-time, came now into prominence, and it was like a spider's web of glistening white. The lady-birches waved in the wind; and when the sun shone, everything glittered and sparkled as if it were sprinkled with diamond dust, and great diamonds were lying on the snowy carpet.

'Isn't it wonderful?' exclaimed a girl who was walking with a young man in the garden. They stopped near the Snow-man, and looked at the glistening trees. 'Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight,' she said, with her eyes shining.

'And one can't get a fellow like this in summer either,' said the young man, pointing to the Snow-man. 'He's a beauty!'

The girl laughed, and nodded to the Snow-man, and then they both danced away over the snow.

'Who were those two?' asked the Snow-man of the yard-dog. 'You have been in this yard longer than I have. Do you know who they are?'

'Do I know them indeed?' answered the yard-dog. 'She has often stroked me, and he has given me bones. I don't bite either of them!'

'But what are they?' asked the Snow-man.

'Lovers!' replied the yard-dog. 'They will go into one kennel and gnaw the same bone!'

'Are they the same kind of beings that we are?' asked the Snow-man.

‘They are our masters,’ answered the yard-dog. ‘Really people who have only been in the world one day know very little.’ That’s the conclusion I have come to. Now I have age and wisdom; I know everyone in the house, and I can remember a time when I was not lying here in a cold kennel. Bow-wow!’

‘The cold is splendid,’ said the Snow-man. ‘Tell me some more. But don’t rattle your chain so, it makes me crack!’

‘Bow-wow!’ barked the yard-dog. ‘They used to say I was a pretty little fellow; then I lay in a velvet-covered chair in my master’s house. My mistress used to nurse me, and kiss and fondle me, and call me her dear, sweet little Alice! But by-and-by I grew too big, and I was given to the housekeeper, and I went into the kitchen. You can see into it from where you are standing; you can look at the room in which I was master, for so I was when I was with the housekeeper. Of course it was a smaller place than upstairs, but it was more comfortable, for I wasn’t chased about and teased by the children as I had been before. My food was just as good, or even better. I had my own pillow, and there was a stove there, which at this time of year is the most beautiful thing in the world. I used to creep right under that stove. Ah me! I often dream of that stove still! Bow-wow!’

‘Is a stove so beautiful?’ asked the Snow-man. ‘Is it anything like me?’

‘It is just the opposite of you! It is coal-black, and has a long neck with a brass pipe. It eats firewood, so that fire spouts out of its mouth. One has to keep close beside it-quite underneath is

the nicest of all. You can see it through the window from where you are standing.’

And the Snow-man looked in that direction, and saw a smooth polished object with a brass pipe. The flicker from the fire reached him across the snow. The Snow-man felt wonderfully happy, and a feeling came over him which he could not express; but all those who are not snow-men know about it.

‘Why did you leave her?’ asked the Snow-man. He had a feeling that such a being must be a lady. ‘How could you leave such a place?’

‘I had to!’ said the yard-dog. ‘They turned me out of doors, and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest boy in the leg, because he took away the bone I was gnawing; a bone for a bone, I thought! But they were very angry, and from that time I have been chained here, and I have lost my voice. Don’t you hear how hoarse I am? Bow-wow! I can’t speak like other dogs. Bow-wow! That was the end of happiness!’

The Snow-man, however, was not listening to him any more; he was looking into the room where the housekeeper lived, where the stove stood on its four iron legs, and seemed to be just the same size as the Snow-man.

‘How something is cracking inside me!’ he said. ‘Shall I never be able to get in there? It is certainly a very innocent wish, and our innocent wishes ought to be fulfilled. I must get there, and lean against the stove, if I have to break the window first!’

‘You will never get inside there!’ said the yard-dog; ‘and if you

were to reach the stove you would disappear. Bow-wow!

‘I’m as good as gone already!’ answered the Snow-man. ‘I believe I’m breaking up!’

The whole day the Snow-man looked through the window; towards dusk the room grew still more inviting; the stove gave out a mild light, not at all like the moon or even the sun; no, as only a stove can shine, when it has something to feed upon. When the door of the room was open, it flared up-this was one of its peculiarities; it flickered quite red upon the Snow-man’s white face.

‘I can’t stand it any longer!’ he said. ‘How beautiful it looks with its tongue stretched out like that!’

It was a long night, but the Snow-man did not find it so; there he stood, wrapt in his pleasant thoughts, and they froze, so that he cracked.

Next morning the panes of the kitchen window were covered with ice, and the most beautiful ice-flowers that even a snow-man could desire, only they blotted out the stove. The window would not open; he couldn’t see the stove which he thought was such a lovely lady. There was a cracking and cracking inside him and all around; there was just such a frost as a snow-man would delight in. But this Snow-man was different: how could he feel happy?

‘Yours is a bad illness for a Snow-man!’ said the yard-dog. ‘I also suffered from it, but I have got over it. Bow-wow!’ he barked. ‘The weather is going to change!’ he added.

The weather did change. There came a thaw.

When this set in the Snow-man set off. He did not say anything, and he did not complain, and those are bad signs.

One morning he broke up altogether. And lo! where he had stood there remained a broomstick standing upright, round which the boys had built him!

‘Ah! now I understand why he loved the stove,’ said the yard-dog. ‘That is the raker they use to clean out the stove! The Snow-man had a stove-raker in his body! That’s what was the matter with him! And now it’s all over with him! Bow-wow!’

And before long it was all over with the winter too! ‘Bow-wow!’ barked the hoarse yard-dog.

But the young girl sang:

Woods, your bright green garments don!

Willows, your woolly gloves put on!

Lark and cuckoo, daily sing – February has brought the
spring!

My heart joins in your song so sweet;

Come out, dear sun, the world to greet!

And no one thought of the Snow-man.

The Shirt-collar

Translated from the German of Hans Andersen

There was once a fine gentleman whose entire worldly possessions consisted of a boot-jack and a hair-brush; but he had the most beautiful shirt-collar in the world, and it is about this that we are going to hear a story.

The shirt-collar was so old that he began to think about marrying; and it happened one day that he and a garter came into the wash-tub together.

‘Hulloa!’ said the shirt-collar, ‘never before have I seen anything so slim and delicate, so elegant and pretty! May I be permitted to ask your name?’

‘I shan’t tell you,’ said the garter.

‘Where is the place of your abode?’ asked the shirt-collar.

But the garter was of a bashful disposition, and did not think it proper to answer.

‘Perhaps you are a girdle?’ said the shirt-collar, ‘an under girdle? for I see that you are for use as well as for ornament, my pretty miss!’

‘You ought not to speak to me!’ said the garter ‘I’m sure I haven’t given you any encouragement!’

‘When anyone is as beautiful as you,’ said the shirt-collar, ‘is

not that encouragement enough?"

'Go away, don't come so close!' said the garter. 'You seem to be a gentleman!'

'So I am, and a very fine one too!' said the shirt-collar; 'I possess a boot-jack and a hair-brush!'

That was not true; it was his master who owned these things; but he was a terrible boaster.

'Don't come so close,' said the garter. 'I'm not accustomed to such treatment!'

'What affectation!' said the shirt-collar. And then they were taken out of the wash-tub, starched, and hung on a chair in the sun to dry, and then laid on the ironing-board. Then came the glowing iron.

'Mistress widow!' said the shirt-collar, 'dear mistress widow! I am becoming another man, all my creases are coming out; you are burning a hole in me! Ugh! Stop, I implore you!'

'You rag!' said the iron, travelling proudly over the shirt-collar, for it thought it was a steam engine and ought to be at the station drawing trucks.

'Rag!' it said.

The shirt-collar was rather frayed out at the edge, so the scissors came to cut off the threads.

'Oh!' said the shirt-collar, 'you must be a dancer! How high you can kick! That is the most beautiful thing I have ever seen! No man can imitate you!'

'I know that!' said the scissors.

‘You ought to be a duchess!’ said the shirt-collar. ‘My worldly possessions consist of a fine gentleman, a boot-jack, and a hair-brush. If only I had a duchy!’

‘What! He wants to marry me?’ said the scissors, and she was so angry that she gave the collar a sharp snip, so that it had to be cast aside as good for nothing.

‘Well, I shall have to propose to the hair-brush!’ thought the shirt-collar. ‘It is really wonderful what fine hair you have, madam! Have you never thought of marrying?’

‘Yes, that I have!’ answered the hair-brush; ‘I’m engaged to the boot-jack!’

‘Engaged!’ exclaimed the shirt-collar. And now there was no one he could marry, so he took to despising matrimony.

Time passed, and the shirt-collar came in a rag-bag to the paper-mill. There was a large assortment of rags, the fine ones in one heap, and the coarse ones in another, as they should be. They had all much to tell, but no one more than the shirt-collar, for he was a hopeless braggart.

‘I have had a terrible number of love affairs!’ he said. ‘They give me no peace. I was such a fine gentleman, so stiff with starch! I had a boot-jack and a hair-brush, which I never used! You should just have seen me then! Never shall I forget my first love! She was a girdle, so delicate and soft and pretty! She threw herself into a wash-tub for my sake! Then there was a widow, who glowed with love for me. But I left her alone, till she became black. Then there was the dancer, who inflicted the wound which

has caused me to be here now; she was very violent! My own hair-brush was in love with me, and lost all her hair in consequence. Yes, I have experienced much in that line; but I grieve most of all for the garter, – I mean, the girdle, who threw herself into a wash-tub. I have much on my conscience; it is high time for me to become white paper!’

And so he did! he became white paper, the very paper on which this story is printed. And that was because he had boasted so terribly about things which were not true. We should take this to heart, so that it may not happen to us, for we cannot indeed tell if we may not some day come to the rag-bag, and be made into white paper, on which will be printed our whole history, even the most secret parts, so that we too go about the world relating it, like the shirt-collar.

The Princess in the Chest

Translated from the Danish

There were once a king and a queen who lived in a beautiful castle, and had a large, and fair, and rich, and happy land to rule over. From the very first they loved each other greatly, and lived very happily together, but they had no heir.

They had been married for seven years, but had neither son nor daughter, and that was a great grief to both of them. More than once it happened that when the king was in a bad temper, he let it out on the poor queen, and said that here they were now, getting old, and neither they nor the kingdom had an heir, and it was all her fault. This was hard to listen to, and she went and cried and vexed herself.

Finally, the king said to her one day, 'This can't be borne any longer. I go about childless, and it's your fault. I am going on a journey and shall be away for a year. If you have a child when I come back again, all will be well, and I shall love you beyond all measure, and never more say an angry word to you. But if the nest is just as empty when I come home, then I must part with you.'

After the king had set out on his journey, the queen went about in her loneliness, and sorrowed and vexed herself more than ever. At last her maid said to her one day, 'I think that some help could

be found, if your majesty would seek it.' Then she told about a wise old woman in that country, who had helped many in troubles of the same kind, and could no doubt help the queen as well, if she would send for her. The queen did so, and the wise woman came, and to her she confided her sorrow, that she, was childless, and the king and his kingdom had no heir.

The wise woman knew help for this. 'Out in the king's garden,' said she, 'under the great oak that stands on the left hand, just as one goes out from the castle, is a little bush, rather brown than green, with hairy leaves and long spikes. On that bush there are just at this moment three buds. If your majesty goes out there alone, fasting, before sunrise, and takes the middle one of the three buds, and eats it, then in six months you will bring a princess into the world. As soon as she is born, she must have a nurse, whom I shall provide, and this nurse must live with the child in a secluded part of the palace; no other person must visit the child; neither the king nor the queen must see it until it is fourteen years old, for that would cause great sorrow and misfortune.'

The queen rewarded the old woman richly, and next morning, before the sun rose, she was down in the garden, found at once the little bush with the three buds, plucked the middle one and ate it. It was sweet to taste, but afterwards was as bitter as gall. Six months after this, she brought into the world a little girl. There was a nurse in readiness, whom the wise woman had provided, and preparations were made for her living with the

child, quite alone, in a secluded wing of the castle, looking out on the pleasure-park. The queen did as the wise woman had told her; she gave up the child immediately, and the nurse took it and lived with it there.

When the king came home and heard that a daughter had been born to him, he was of course very pleased and happy, and wanted to see her at once.

The queen had then to tell him this much of the story, that it had been foretold that it would cause great sorrow and misfortune if either he or she got a sight of the child until it had completed its fourteenth year.

This was a long time to wait. The king longed so much to get a sight of his daughter, and the queen no less than he, but she knew that it was not like other children, for it could speak immediately after it was born, and was as wise as older folk. This the nurse had told her, for with her the queen had a talk now and again, but there was no one who had ever seen the princess. The queen had also seen what the wise woman could do, so she insisted strongly that her warning should be obeyed. The king often lost his patience, and was determined to see his daughter, but the queen always put him off the idea, and so things went on, until the very day before the princess completed her fourteenth year.

The king and the queen were out in the garden then, and the king said, 'Now I can't and I won't wait any longer. I must see my daughter at once. A few hours, more or less, can't make any difference.'

The queen begged him to have patience till the morning. When they had waited so long, they could surely wait a single day more. But the king was quite unreasonable. ‘No nonsense,’ said he; ‘she is just as much mine as yours, and I will see her,’ and with that he went straight up to her room.

He burst the door open, and pushed aside the nurse, who tried to stop him, and there he saw his daughter. She was the loveliest young princess, red and white, like milk and blood, with clear blue eyes and golden hair, but right in the middle of her forehead there was a little tuft of brown hair.

The princess went to meet her father, fell on his neck and kissed him, but with that she said, ‘O father, father! what have you done now? to-morrow I must die, and you must choose one of three things: either the land must be smitten with the black pestilence, or you must have a long and bloody war, or you must as soon as I am dead, lay me in a plain wooden chest, and set it in the church, and for a whole year place a sentinel beside it every night.’

The king was frightened indeed, and thought she was raving, but in order to please her, he said, ‘Well, of these three things I shall choose the last; if you die, I shall lay you at once in a plain wooden chest, and have it set in the church, and every night I shall place a sentinel beside it. But you shall not die, even if you are ill now.’

He immediately summoned all the best doctors in the country, and they came with all their prescriptions and their medicine

bottles, but next day the princess was stiff and cold in death. All the doctors could certify to that and they all put their names to this and appended their seals, and then they had done all they could.

The king kept his promise. The princess's body was lain the same day in a plain wooden chest, and set in the chapel of the castle, and on that night and every night after it, a sentinel was posted in the church, to keep watch over the chest.

The first morning when they came to let the sentinel out, there was no sentinel there. They thought he had just got frightened and run away, and next evening a new one was posted in the church. In the morning he was also gone. So it went every night. When they came in the morning to let the sentinel out, there was no one there, and it was impossible to discover which way he had gone if he had run away. And what should they run away for, every one of them, so that nothing more was over heard or seen of them, from the hour that they were set on guard beside the princess's chest?

It became now a general belief that the princess's ghost walked, and ate up all those who were to guard her chest, and very soon there was no one left who would be placed on this duty, and the king's soldiers deserted the service, before their turn came to be her bodyguard. The king then promised a large reward to the soldier who would volunteer for the post. This did for some time, as there were found a few reckless fellows, who wished to earn this good payment. But they never got it, for in the morning,

they too had disappeared like the rest.

So it had gone on for something like a whole year; every night a sentinel had been placed beside the chest, either by compulsion or of his own free will, but not a single one of the sentinels was to be seen, either on the following day or any time thereafter. And so it had also gone with one, on the night before a certain day, when a merry young smith came wandering to the town where the king's castle stood. It was the capital of the country, and people of every king came to it to get work. This smith, whose name was Christian, had come for that same purpose. There was no work for him in the place he belonged to, and he wanted now to seek a place in the capital.

There he entered an inn where he sat down in the public room, and got something to eat. Some under-officers were sitting there, who were out to try to get some one enlisted to stand sentry. They had to go in this way, day after day, and hitherto they had always succeeded in finding one or other reckless fellow. But on this day they had, as yet, found no one. It was too well known how all the sentinels disappeared, who were set on that post, and all that they had got hold of had refused with thanks. These sat down beside Christian, and ordered drinks, and drank along with him. Now Christian was a merry fellow who liked good company; he could both drink and sing, and talk and boast as well, when he got a little drop in his head. He told these under-officers that he was one of that kind of folk who never are afraid of anything. Then he was just the kind of man they liked, said they, and he might

easily earn a good penny, before he was a day older, for the king paid a hundred dollars to anyone who would stand as sentinel in the church all night, beside his daughter's chest.

Christian was not afraid of that he wasn't afraid of anything, so they drank another bottle of wine on this, and Christian went with them up to the colonel, where he was put into uniform with musket, and all the rest, and was then shut up in the church, to stand as sentinel that night.

It was eight o'clock when he took up his post, and for the first hour he was quite proud of his courage; during the second hour he was well pleased with the large reward that he would get, but in the third hour, when it was getting near eleven, the effects of the wine passed off, and he began to get uncomfortable, for he had heard about this post; that no one had ever escaped alive from it, so far as was known. But neither did anyone know what had become of all the sentinels. The thought of this ran in his head so much, after the wine was out of it, that he searched about everywhere for a way of escape, and finally, at eleven o'clock, he found a little postern in the steeple which was not locked, and out at this he crept, intending to run away.

At the same moment as he put his foot outside the church door, he saw standing before him a little man, who said, 'Good evening, Christian, where are you going?'

With that he felt as if he were rooted to the spot and could not move.

'Nowhere,' said he.

‘Oh, yes,’ said the little man, ‘You were just about to run away, but you have taken upon you to stand sentinel in the church to-night, and there you must stay.’

Christian said, very humbly, that he dared not, and therefore wanted to get away, and begged to be let go.

‘No,’ said the little one, ‘you must remain at your post, but I shall give you a piece of good advice; you shall go up into the pulpit, and remain standing there. You need never mind what you see or hear, it will not be able to do you any harm, if you remain in your place until you hear the lid of the chest slam down again behind the dead; then all danger is past, and you can go about the church, wherever you please.’

The little man then pushed him in at the door again, and locked it after him. Christian made haste to get up into the pulpit, and stood there, without noticing anything, until the clock struck twelve. Then the lid of the princess’s chest sprang up, and out of it there came something like the princess, dressed as you see in the picture. It shrieked and howled, ‘Sentry, where are you? Sentry, where are you? If you don’t come, you shall get the most cruel death anyone had ever got.’

It went all round the church, and when it finally caught sight of the smith, up in the pulpit, it came rushing thither and mounted the steps. But it could not get up the whole way, and for all that it stretched and strained, it could not touch Christian, who meanwhile stood and trembled up in the pulpit. When the clock struck one, the appearance had to go back into the chest again,

and Christian heard the lid slam after it. After this there was dead silence in the church. He lay down where he was and fell asleep, and did not awake before it was bright daylight, and he heard steps outside, and the noise of the key being put into the lock. Then he came down from the pulpit, and stood with his musket in front of the princess's chest.

It was the colonel himself who came with the patrol, and he was not a little surprised when he found the recruit safe and sound. He wanted to have a report, but Christian would give him none, so he took him straight up to the king, and announced for the first time that here was the sentinel who had stood guard in the church over-night. The king immediately got out of bed, and laid the hundred dollars for him on the table, and then wanted to question him. 'Have you seen anything?' said he. 'Have you seen my daughter?' 'I have stood at my post,' said the young smith, 'and that is quite enough; I undertook nothing more.' He was not sure whether he dared tell what he had seen and heard, and besides he was also a little conceited because he had done what no other man had been able to do, or had had courage for. The king professed to be quite satisfied, and asked him whether he would engage himself to stand on guard again the following night. 'No, thank you,' said Christian, 'I will have no more of that!'

'As you please,' said the king, 'you have behaved like a brave fellow, and now you shall have your breakfast. You must be needing something to strengthen you after that turn.'

The king had breakfast laid for him, and sat down at the table

with him in person; he kept constantly filling his glass for him and praising him, and drinking his health. Christian needed no pressing, but did full justice both to the food and drink, and not least to the latter. Finally he grew bold, and said that if the king would give him two hundred dollars for it, he was his man to stand sentry next night as well.

When this was arranged, Christian bade him 'Good-day,' and went down among the guards, and then out into the town along with other soldiers and under-officers. He had his pocket full of money, and treated them, and drank with them and boasted and made game of the good-for-nothings who were afraid to stand on guard, because they were frightened that the dead princess would eat them. See whether she had eaten him! So the day passed in mirth and glee, but when eight o'clock came, Christian was again shut up in the church, all alone.

Before he had been there two hours, he got tired of it, and thought only of getting away. He found a little door behind the altar which was not locked, and at ten o'clock he slipped out at it, and took to his heels and made for the beach. He had got half-way thither, when all at once the same little man stood in front of him and said, 'Good evening, Christian, where are you going?' 'I've leave to go where I please,' said the smith, but at the same time he noticed that he could not move a foot. 'No, you have undertaken to keep guard to-night as well,' said the little man, 'and you must attend to that.' He then took hold of him, and however unwilling he was, Christian had to go with him right back to the same little

door that he had crept out at. When they got there, the little man said to him, 'Go in front of the altar now, and take in your hand the book that is lying there. There you shall stay till you hear the lid of the chest slam down over the dead. In that way you will come to no harm.'

With that the little man shoved him in at the door, and locked it. Christian then immediately went in front of the altar, and took the book in his hand, and stood thus until the clock struck twelve, and the appearance sprang out of the chest. 'Sentry, where are you? Sentry, where are you?' it shrieked, and then rushed to the pulpit, and right up into it. But there was no one there that night. Then it howled and shrieked again,

My father has set no sentry in,
War and Pest this night begin.

At the same moment, it noticed the smith standing in front of the altar, and came rushing towards him. 'Are you there?' it screamed; 'now I'll catch you.' But it could not come up over the step in front of the altar, and there it continued to howl, and scream, and threaten, until the clock struck one, when it had to go into the chest again, and Christian heard the lid slam above it. That night, however, it had not the same appearance as on the previous one; it was less ugly.

When all was quiet in the church, the smith lay down before the altar and slept calmly till the following morning, when the

colonel came to fetch him. He was taken up to the king again, and things went on as the day before. He got his money, but would give no explanation whether he had seen the king's daughter, and he would not take the post again, he said. But after he had got a good breakfast, and tasted well of the king's wines, he undertook to go on guard again the third night, but he would not do it for less than the half of the kingdom, he said, for it was a dangerous post, and the king had to agree, and promise him this.

The remainder of the day went like the previous one. He played the boastful soldier, and the merry smith, and he had comrades and boon-companions in plenty. At eight o'clock he had to put on his uniform again, and was shut up in the church. He had not been there for an hour before he had come to his senses, and thought, 'It's best to stop now, while the game is going well.' The third night, he was sure, would be the worst; he had been drunk when he promised it, and the half of the kingdom, the king could never have been in earnest about that! So he decided to leave, without waiting so long as on the previous nights. In that way he would escape the little man who had watched him before. All the doors and posterns were locked, but he finally thought of creeping up to a window, and opening that, and as the clock struck nine, he crept out there. It was fairly high in the wall, but he got to the ground with no bones broken, and started to run. He got down to the shore without meeting anyone, and there he got into a boat, and pushed off from land. He laughed immensely to himself at the thought of how cleverly he had managed and how

he had cheated the little man. Just then he heard a voice from the shore, 'Good evening, Christian, where are you going?' He gave no answer. 'To-night your legs will be too short,' he thought, and pulled at the oars. But he then felt something lay hold of the boat, and drag it straight in to shore, for all that he sat and struggled with the oars.

The man then laid hold of him, and said, 'You must remain at your post, as you have promised,' and whether he liked it or not, Christian had just to go back with him the whole way to the church.

He could never get in at that window again, Christian said; it was far too high up.

'You must go in there, and you shall go in there,' said the little man, and with that he lifted him up on to the window-sill. Then he said to him: 'Notice well now what you have to do. This evening you must stretch yourself out on the left-hand side of her chest. The lid opens to the right, and she comes out to the left. When she has got out of the chest and passed over you, you must get into it and lie there, and that in a hurry, without her seeing you. There you must remain lying until day dawns, and whether she threatens you or entreats you, you must not come out of it, or give her any answer. Then she has no power over you, and both you and she are freed.'

The smith then had to go in at the window, just as he came out, and went and laid himself all his length on the left side of the princess's chest, close up to it, and there he lay stiff as a rock until

the clock struck twelve. Then the lid sprang up to the right, and the princess came out, straight over him, and rushed round the church, howling and shrieking ‘Sentry, where are you? Sentry, where are you?’ She went towards the altar, and right up to it, but there was no one there; then she screamed again,

My father has set no sentry in,
War and Pest will now begin.

Then she went round the whole church, both up and down, sighing and weeping,

My father has set no sentry in,
War and Pest will now begin.

Then she went away again, and at the same moment the clock in the tower struck one.

Then the smith heard in the church a soft music, which grew louder and louder, and soon filled the whole building. He heard also a multitude of footsteps, as if the church was being filled with people. He heard the priest go through the service in front of the altar, and there was singing more beautiful than he had ever heard before. Then he also heard the priest offer up a prayer of thanksgiving because the land had been freed from war and pestilence, and from all misfortune, and the king’s daughter delivered from the evil one. Many voices joined in, and a hymn of praise was sung; then he heard the priest again, and heard

his own name and that of the princess, and thought that he was being wedded to her. The church was packed full, but he could see nothing. Then he heard again the many footsteps as ol' folk leaving the church, while the music sounded fainter and fainter, until it altogether died away. When it was silent, the light of day began to break in through the windows.

The smith sprang up out of the chest and fell on his knees and thanked God. The church was empty, but up in front of the altar lay the princess, white and red, like a human being, but sobbing and crying, and shaking with cold in her white shroud. The smith took his sentry coat and wrapped it round her; then she dried her tears, and took his hand and thanked him, and said that he had now freed her from all the sorcery that had been in her from her birth, and which had come over her again when her father broke the command against seeing her until she had completed her fourteenth year.

She said further, that if he who had delivered her would take her in marriage, she would be his. If not, she would go into a nunnery, and he could marry no other as long as she lived, for he was wedded to her with the service of the dead, which he had heard.

She was now the most beautiful young princess that anyone could wish to see, and he was now lord of half the kingdom, which had been promised him for standing on guard the third nigh. So they agreed that they would have each other, and love each other all their days.

With the first sunbeam the watch came and opened the church, and not only was the colonel there, but the king in person, come to see what had happened to the sentinel. He found them both sitting hand in hand on the step in front of the altar, and immediately knew his daughter again, and took her in his arms, thanking God and her deliverer. He made no objections to what they had arranged, and so Christian the smith held his wedding with the princess, and got half the kingdom at once, and the whole of it when the king died.

As for the other sentries, with so many doors and windows open, no doubt they had run away, and gone into the Prussian service. And as for what Christian said he saw, he had been drinking more wine than was good for him.

The Three Brothers

Translated from the German of the Brothers Grimm

There was once a man who had three sons, and no other possessions beyond the house in which he lived. Now the father loved his three sons equally, so that he could not make up his mind which of them should have the house after his death, because he did not wish to favour any one more than the others. And he did not want to sell the house, because it had belonged to his family for generations; otherwise he could have divided the money equally amongst them. At last an idea struck him, and he said to his sons: ‘You must all go out into the world, and look about you, and each learn a trade, and then, when you return, whoever can produce the best masterpiece shall have the house.’

The sons were quite satisfied. The eldest wished to be a blacksmith, the second a barber, and the third a fencing-master. They appointed a time when they were to return home, and then they all set out.

It so happened that each found a good master, where he learnt all that was necessary for his trade in the best possible way. The blacksmith had to shoe the king’s horses, and thought to himself, ‘Without doubt the house will be yours!’ The barber shaved the best men in the kingdom, and he, too, made sure that the house

would be his. The fencing-master received many a blow, but he set his teeth, and would not allow himself to be troubled by them, for he thought to himself, 'If you are afraid of a blow you will never get the house.'

When the appointed time had come the three brothers met once more, and they sat down and discussed the best opportunity of showing off their skill. Just then a hare came running across the field towards them. 'Look!' said the barber, 'here comes something in the nick of time!' seized basin and soap, made a lather whilst the hare was approaching, and then, as it ran at full tilt, shaved its moustaches, without cutting it or injuring a single hair on its body.

'I like that very much indeed,' said the father. 'Unless the others exert themselves to the utmost, the house will be yours.'

Soon after they saw a man driving a carriage furiously towards them. 'Now, father, you shall see what I can do!' said the blacksmith, and he sprang after the carriage, tore off the four shoes of the horse as it was going at the top of its speed, and shod it with four new ones without checking its pace.

'You are a clever fellow!' said the father, 'and know your trade as well as your brother. I really don't know to which of you I shall give the house.'

Then the third son said, 'Father, let me also show you something;' and, as it was beginning to rain, he drew his sword and swung it in cross cuts above his head, so that not a drop fell on him, and the rain fell heavier and heavier, till at last it was

coming down like a waterspout, but he swung his sword faster and faster, and kept as dry as if he were under cover.

When the father saw this he was astonished, and said, 'You have produced the greatest masterpiece: the house is yours.'

Both the other brothers were quite satisfied, and praised him too, and as they were so fond of each other they all three remained at home and plied their trades: and as they were so experienced and skilful they earned a great deal of money. So they lived happily together till they were quite old, and when one was taken ill and died the two others were so deeply grieved that they were also taken ill and died too. And so, because they had all been so clever, and so fond of each other, they were all laid in one grave.

The Snow-queen

Translated from the German of Hans
Andersen by Miss Alma Alleyne

There was once a dreadfully wicked hobgoblin. One day he was in capital spirits because he had made a looking-glass which reflected everything that was good and beautiful in such a way that it dwindled almost to nothing, but anything that was bad and ugly stood out very clearly and looked much worse. The most beautiful landscapes looked like boiled spinach, and the best people looked repulsive or seemed to stand on their heads with no bodies; their faces were so changed that they could not be recognised, and if anyone had a freckle you might be sure it would be spread over the nose and mouth.

That was the best part of it, said the hobgoblin.

But one day the looking-glass was dropped, and it broke into a million-billion and more pieces.

And now came the greatest misfortune of all, for each of the pieces was hardly as large as a grain of sand and they flew about all over the world, and if anyone had a bit in his eye there it stayed, and then he would see everything awry, or else could only see the bad sides of a case. For every tiny splinter of the glass possessed the same power that the whole glass had.

Some people got a splinter in their hearts, and that was

dreadful, for then it began to turn into a lump of ice.

The hobgoblin laughed till his sides ached, but still the tiny bits of glass flew about.

And now we will hear all about it.

In a large town, where there were so many people and houses that there was not room enough for everybody to have gardens, lived two poor children. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other just as much as if they were. Their parents lived opposite one another in two attics, and out on the leads they had put two boxes filled with flowers. There were sweet peas in it, and two rose trees, which grow beautifully, and in summer the two children were allowed to take their little chairs and sit out under the roses. Then they had splendid games.

In the winter they could not do this, but then they put hot pennies against the frozen window-panes, and made round holes to look at each other through.

His name was Kay, and hers was Gerda.

Outside it was snowing fast.

‘Those are the white bees swarming,’ said the old grandmother.

‘Have they also a queen bee?’ asked the little boy, for he knew that the real bees have one.

‘To be sure,’ said the grandmother. ‘She flies wherever they swarm the thickest. She is larger than any of them, and never stays upon the earth, but flies again up into the black clouds. Often at midnight she flies through the streets, and peeps in at

all the windows, and then they freeze in such pretty patterns and look like flowers.'

'Yes, we have seen that,' said both children; they knew that it was true.

'Can the Snow-queen come in here?' asked the little girl.

'Just let her!' cried the boy, 'I would put her on the stove, and melt her!'

But the grandmother stroked his hair, and told some more stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was going to bed, he jumped on the chair by the window, and looked through the little hole. A few snow-flakes were falling outside, and one of the, the largest, lay on the edge of one of the window-boxes. The snow-flake grew larger and larger till it took the form of a maiden, dressed in finest white gauze.

She was so beautiful and dainty, but all of ice, hard bright ice.

Still she was alive; her eyes glittered like two clear stars, but there was no rest or peace in them. She nodded at the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened, and sprang down from the chair. It seemed as if a great white bird had flown past the window.

The next day there was a harder frost than before.

Then came the spring, then the summer, when the roses grew and smelt more beautifully than ever.

Kay and Gerda were looking at one of their picture-books – the clock in the great church-tower had just struck five, when

Kay exclaimed, 'Oh! something has stung my heart, and I've got something in my eye!'

The little girl threw her arms round his neck; he winked hard with both his eyes; no, she could see nothing in them.

'I think it is gone now,' said he; but it had not gone. It was one of the tiny splinters of the glass of the magic mirror which we have heard about, that turned everything great and good reflected in it small and ugly. And poor Kay had also a splinter in his heart, and it began to change into a lump of ice. It did not hurt him at all, but the splinter was there all the same.

'Why are you crying?' he asked; 'it makes you look so ugly! There's nothing the matter with me. Just look! that rose is all slug-eaten, and this one is stunted! What ugly roses they are!'

And he began to pull them to pieces.

'Kay, what are you doing?' cried the little girl.

And when he saw how frightened she was, he pulled off another rose, and ran in at his window away from dear little Gerda.

When she came later on with the picture book, he said that it was only fit for babies, and when his grandmother told them stories, he was always interrupting with, 'But - ' and then he would get behind her and put on her spectacles, and speak just as she did. This he did very well, and everybody laughed. Very soon he could imitate the way all the people in the street walked and talked.

His games were now quite different. On a winter's day he

would take a burning glass and hold it out on his blue coat and let the snow-flakes fall on it.

‘Look in the glass, Gerda! Just see how regular they are! They are much more interesting than real flowers. Each is perfect; they are all made according to rule. If only they did not melt!’

One morning Kay came out with his warm gloves on, and his little sledge hung over his shoulder. He shouted to Gerda, ‘I am going to the market-place to play with the other boys,’ and away he went.

In the market-place the boldest boys used often to fasten their sledges to the carts of the farmers, and then they got a good ride.

When they were in the middle of their games there drove into the square a large sledge, all white, and in it sat a figure dressed in a rough white fur pelisse with a white fur cap on.

The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay fastened his little sledge behind it and drove off. It went quicker and quicker into the next street. The driver turned round, and nodded to Kay in a friendly way as if they had known each other before. Every time that Kay tried to unfasten his sledge the driver nodded again, and Kay sat still once more. Then they drove out of the town, and the snow began to fall so thickly that the little boy could not see his hand before him, and on and on they went. He quickly unfastened the cord to get loose from the big sledge, but it was of no use; his little sledge hung on fast, and it went on like the wind.

Then he cried out, but nobody heard him. He was dreadfully frightened.

The snowflakes grew larger and larger till they looked like great white birds. All at once they flew aside, the large sledge stood still, and the figure who was driving stood up. The fur cloak and cap were all of snow. It was a lady, tall and slim, and glittering. It was the Snow-queen.

‘We have come at a good rate,’ she said; ‘but you are almost frozen. Creep in under my cloak.’

And she set him close to her in the sledge and drew the cloak over him. He felt as though he were sinking into a snow-drift.

‘Are you cold now?’ she asked, and kissed his forehead. The kiss was cold as ice and reached down to his heart, which was already half a lump of ice.

‘My sledge! Don’t forget my sledge!’ He thought of that first, and it was fastened to one of the great white birds who flew behind with the sledge on its back.

The Snow-queen kissed Kay again, and then he forgot all about little Gerda, his grandmother, and everybody at home.

‘Now I must not kiss you any more,’ she said, ‘or else I should kiss you to death.’

Then away they flew over forests and lakes, over sea and land. Round them whistled the cold wind, the wolves howled, and the snow hissed; over them flew the black shrieking crows. But high up the moon shone large and bright, and thus Kay passed the long winter night. In the day he slept at the Snow-queen’s feet.

But what happened to little Gerda when Kay did not come back?

What had become of him? Nobody knew. The other boys told how they had seen him fasten his sledge on to a large one which had driven out of the town gate.

Gerda cried a great deal. The winter was long and dark to her.

Then the spring came with warm sunshine. 'I will go and look for Kay,' said Gerda.

So she went down to the river and got into a little boat that was there. Presently the stream began to carry it away.

'Perhaps the river will take me to Kay,' thought Gerda. She glided down, past trees and fields, till she came to a large cherry garden, in which stood a little house with strange red and blue windows and a straw roof. Before the door stood two wooden soldiers, who were shouldering arms.

Gerda called to them, but they naturally did not answer. The river carried the boat on to the land.

Gerda called out still louder, and there came out of the house a very old woman. She leant upon a crutch, and she wore a large sun-hat which was painted with the most beautiful flowers.

'You poor little girl!' said the old woman.

And then she stepped into the water, brought the boat in close with her crutch, and lifted little Gerda out.

'And now come and tell me who you are, and how you came here,' she said.

Then Gerda told her everything, and asked her if she had seen Kay. But she said he had not passed that way yet, but he would soon come.

She told Gerda not to be sad, and that she should stay with her and take of the cherry trees and flowers, which were better than any picture-bok, as they could each tell a story.

She then took Gerda's hand and led her into the little house and shut the door.

The windows were very high, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow, so that the light came through in curious colours. On the table were the most delicious cherries, and the old woman let Gerda eat as many as she liked, while she combed her hair with a gold comb as she ate.

The beautiful sunny hair rippled and shone round the dear little face, which was so soft and sweet. 'I have always longed to have a dear little girl just like you, and you shall see how happy we will be together.'

And as she combed Gerda's hair, Gerda thought less and less about Kay, for the old woman was a witch, but not a wicked witch, for she only enchanted now and then to amuse herself, and she did want to keep little Gerda very much.

So she went into the garden and waved her stick over all the rose bushes and blossoms and all; they sank down into the black earth, and no one could see where they had been.

The old woman was afraid that if Gerda saw the roses she would begin to think about her own, and then would remember Kay and run away.

Then she led Gerda out into the garden. How glorious it was, and what lovely scents filled the air! All the flowers you can think

of blossomed there all the year round.

Gerda jumped for joy and played there till the sun set behind the tall cherry trees, and then she slept in a beautiful bed with red silk pillows filled with violets, and she slept soundly and dreamed as a queen does on her wedding day.

The next day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine, and so many days passed by. Gerda knew every flower, but although there were so many, it seemed to her as if one were not there, though she could not remember which.

She was looking one day at the old woman's sun-hat which had hte painted flowers on it, and there she saw a rose.

The witch had forgotten to make that vanish when she had made the other roses disappear under the earth. it was so difficult to think of everything.

'Why, there are no roses here!' cried Gerda,, and she hunted amongst all the flowers, but not one was to be found. Then she sat down and cried, but her tears fell just on the spot where a rose bush had sunk, and when her warm tears watered the earth, the bush came up in full bloom just as it had been before. Gerda kissed the roses and thought of the lovely roses at home, and with them came the thought of little Kay.

'Oh, what have I been doing!' said the little girl. 'I wanted to look for Kay.'

She ran to the end of the garden. The gate was shut, but she pushed against the rusty lock so that it came open.

She ran out with her little bare feet. No one came after her.

At last she could not run any longer, and she sat down on a large stone. When she looked round she saw that the summer was over; it was late autumn. It had not changed in the beautiful garden, where were sunshine and flowers all the year round.

‘Oh, dear, how late I have made myself!’ said Gerda. ‘It’s autumn already! I cannot rest!’ And she sprang up to run on.

Oh, how tired and sore her little feet grew, and it became colder and colder.

She had to rest again, and there on the snow in front of her was a large crow.

It had been looking at her for some time, and it nodded its head and said, ‘Caw! caw! good day.’ Then it asked the little girl why she was alone in the world. She told the crow her story, and asked if he had seen Kay.

The crow nodded very thoughtfully and said, ‘It might be! It might be!’

‘What! Do you think you have?’ cried the little girl, and she almost squeezed the crow to death as she kissed him.

‘Gently, gently!’ said the crow. ‘I think – I know I think – it might be little Kay, but now he has forgotten you for the princess!’

‘Does he live with a princess?’ asked Gerda.

‘Yes, listen,’ said the crow.

Then he told her all he knew.

‘In the kingdom in which we are now sitting lives a princess who is dreadfully clever. She has read all the newspapers in the

world and has forgotten them again. She is as clever as that. The other day she came to the throne, and that is not so pleasant as people think. Then she began to say, "Why should I not marry?" But she wanted a husband who could answer when he was spoken to, not one who would stand up stiffly and look respectable – that would be too dull.

'When she told all the Court ladies, they were delighted. You can believe every word I say,' said the crow, 'I have a tame sweetheart in the palace, and she tells me everything.'

Of course his sweetheart was a crow.

'The newspapers came out next morning with a border of hearts round it, and the princess's monogram on it, and inside you could read that every good-looking young man might come into the palace and speak to the princess, and whoever should speak loud enough to be heard would be well fed and looked after, and the one who spoke best should become the princess's husband. Indeed,' said the crow, 'you can quite believe me. It is as true as that I am sitting here.'

'Young men came in streams, and there was such a crowding and a mixing together! But nothing came of it on the first nor on the second day. They could all speak quite well when they were in the street, but as soon as they came inside the palace door, and saw the guards in silver, and upstairs the footmen in gold, and the great hall all lighted up, then their wits left them! And when they stood in front of the throne where the princess was sitting, then they could not think of anything to say except to repeat the

last word she had spoken, and she did not much care to hear that again. It seemed as if they were walking in their sleep until they came out into the street again, when they could speak once more. There was a row stretching from the gate of the town up to the castle.

‘They were hungry and thirsty, but in the palace they did not even get a glass of water.

‘A few of the cleverest had brought some slices of bread and butter with them, but they did not share them with their neighbour, for they thought, “If he looks hungry, the princess will not take him!”’

‘But what about Kay?’ asked Gerda. ‘When did he come? Was he in the crowd?’

‘Wait a bit; we are coming to him! On the third day a little figure came without horse or carriage and walked jauntily up to the palace. His eyes shone as yours do; he had lovely curling hair, but quite poor clothes.’

‘That was Kay!’ cried Gerda with delight. ‘Oh, then I have found him!’ and she clapped her hands.

‘He had a little bundle on his back,’ said the crow.

‘No, it must have been his skates, for he went away with his skates!’

‘Very likely,’ said the crow, ‘I did not see for certain. But I know this from my sweetheart, that when he came to the palace door and saw the royal guards in silver, and on the stairs the footmen in gold, he was not the least bit put out. He nodded

to them, saying, "It must be rather dull standing on the stairs; I would rather go inside!"

'The halls blazed with lights; councillors and ambassadors were walking about in noiseless shoes carrying gold dishes. It was enough to make one nervous! His boots creaked dreadfully loud, but he was not frightened.'

'That must be Kay!' said Gerda. 'I know he had new boots on; I have heard them creaking in his grandmother's room!'

'They did creak, certainly!' said the crow. 'And, not one bit afraid, up he went to the princess, who was sitting on a large pearl as round as a spinning wheel. All the ladies-in-waiting were standing round, each with their attendants, and the lords-in-waiting with their attendants. The nearer they stood to the door the prouder they were.'

'It must have been dreadful!' said little Gerda. 'And Kay did win the princess?'

'I heard from my tame sweetheart that he was merry and quick-witted; he had not come to woo, he said, but to listen to the princess's wisdom. And the end of it was that they fell in love with each other.'

'Oh, yes; that was Kay!' said Gerda. 'He was so clever; he could do sums with fractions. Oh, do lead me to the palace!'

'That's easily said!' answered the crow, 'but how are we to manage that? I must talk it over with my tame sweetheart. She may be able to advise us, for I must tell you that a little girl like you could never get permission to enter it.'

‘Yes, I will get it!’ said Gerda. ‘When Kay hears that I am there he will come out at once and fetch me!’

‘Wait for me by the railings,’ said the crow, and he nodded his head and flew away.

It was late in the evening when he came back.

‘Caw, caw!’ he said, ‘I am to give you her love, and here is a little roll for you. She took it out of the kitchen; there’s plenty there, and you must be hungry. You cannot come into the palace. The guards in silver and the footmen in gold would not allow it. But don’t cry! You shall get in all right. My sweetheart knows a little back-stairs which leads to the sleeping-room, and she knows where to find the key.’

They went into the garden, and when the lights in the palace were put out one after the other, the crow led Gerda to a back-door.

Oh, how Gerda’s heart beat with anxiety and longing! It seemed as if she were going to do something wrong, but she only wanted to know if it were little Kay. Yes, it must be he! She remembered so well his clever eyes, his curly hair. She could see him smiling as he did when they were at home under the rose trees! He would be so pleased to see her, and to hear how they all were at home.

Now they were on the stairs; a little lamp was burning, and on the landing stood the tame crow. She put her head on one side and looked at Gerda, who bowed as her grandmother had taught her.

‘My betrothed has told me many nice things about you, my dear young lady,’ she said. ‘Will you take the lamp while I go in front? We go this way so as to meet no one.’

Through beautiful rooms they came to the sleeping-room. In the middle of it, hung on a thick rod of gold, were two beds, shaped like lilies, one all white, in which lay the princess, and the other red, in which Gerda hoped to find Kay. She pushed aside the curtain, and saw a brown neck. Oh, it was Kay! She called his name out loud, holding the lamp towards him.

He woke up, turned his head and – it was not Kay!

It was only his neck that was like Kay’s, but he was young and handsome. The princess sat up in her lily-bed and asked who was there.

Then Gerda cried, and told her story and all that the crows had done.

‘You poor child!’ said the prince and princess, and they praised the crows, and said that they were not angry with them, but that they must not do it again. Now they should have a reward.

‘Would you like to fly away free?’ said the princess, ‘or will you have a permanent place as court crows with what you can get in the kitchen?’

And both crows bowed and asked for a permanent appointment, for they thought of their old age.

And they put Gerda to bed, and she folded her hands, thinking, as she fell asleep, ‘How good people and animals are to me!’

The next day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and

satin. They wanted her to stay on in the palace, but she begged for a little carriage and a horse, and a pair of shoes so that she might go out again into the world to look for Kay.

They gave her a muff as well as some shoes; she was warmly dressed, and when she was ready, there in front of the door stood a coach of pure gold, with a coachman, footmen and postilions with gold crowns on.

The prince and princess helped her into the carriage and wished her good luck.

The wild crow who was now married drove with her for the first three miles; the other crow could not come because she had a bad headache.

‘Good-bye, good-bye!’ called the prince and princess; and little Gerda cried, and the crow cried.

When he said good-bye, he flew on to a tree and waved with his black wings as long as the carriage, which shone like the sun, was in sight.

They came at last to a dark wood, but the coach lit it up like a torch. When the robbers saw it, they rushed out, exclaiming, ‘Gold! gold!’

They seized the horses, killed the coachman, footmen and postilions, and dragged Gerda out of the carriage.

‘She is plump and tender! I will eat her!’ said the old robber-queen, and she drew her long knife, which glittered horribly.

‘You shall not kill her!’ cried her little daughter. ‘She shall play with me. She shall give me her muff and her beautiful dress, and

she shall sleep in my bed.’

The little robber-girl was as big as Gerda, but was stronger, broader, with dark hair and black eyes. She threw her arms round Gerda and said, ‘They shall not kill you, so long as you are not naughty. Aren’t you a princess?’

‘No,’ said Gerda, and she told all that had happened to her, and how dearly she loved little Kay.

The robber-girl looked at her very seriously, and nodded her head, saying, ‘They shall not kill you, even if you are naughty, for then I will kill you myself!’

And she dried Gerda’s eyes, and stuck both her hands in the beautiful warm muff.

The little robber-girl took Gerda to a corner of the robbers’ camp where she slept.

All round were more than a hundred wood-pigeons which seemed to be asleep, but they moved a little when the two girls came up.

There was also, near by, a reindeer which the robber-girl teased by tickling it with her long sharp knife.

Gerda lay awake for some time.

‘Coo, coo!’ said the wood-pigeons. ‘We have seen little Kay. A white bird carried his sledge; he was sitting in the Snow-queen’s carriage which drove over the forest when our little ones were in the nest. She breathed on them, and all except we two died. Coo, coo!’

‘What are you saying over there?’ cried Gerda. ‘Where was

the Snow-queen going to? Do you know at all?

‘She was probably travelling to Lapland, where there is always ice and snow. Ask the reindeer.’

‘There is capital ice and snow there!’ said the reindeer. ‘One can jump about there in the great sparkling valleys. There the Snow-queen has her summer palace, but her best palace is up by the North Pole, on the island called Spitzbergen.’

‘O Kay, my little Kay!’ sobbed Gerda.

‘You must lie still,’ said the little robber-girl, ‘or else I shall stick my knife into you!’

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said. She nodded. ‘Do you know where Lapland is?’ she asked the reindeer.

‘Who should know better than I?’ said the beast, and his eyes sparkled. ‘I was born and bred there on the snow-fields.’

‘Listen!’ said the robber-girl to Gerda; ‘you see that all the robbers have gone; only my mother is left, and she will fall asleep in the afternoon – then I will do something for you!’

When her mother had fallen asleep, the robber-girl went up to the reindeer and said, ‘I am going to set you free so that you can run to Lapland. But you must go quickly and carry this little girl to the Snow-queen’s palace, where her playfellow is. You must have heard all that she told about it, for she spoke loud enough!’

The reindeer sprang high for joy. The robber-girl lifted little Gerda up, and had the foresight to tie her on firmly, and even gave her a little pillow for a saddle. ‘You must have your fur boots,’

she said, 'for it will be cold; but I shall keep your muff, for it is so cosy! But, so that you may not freeze, here are my mother's great fur gloves; they will come up to your elbows. Creep into them!'

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