TALES OF PASSED TIMES

BY

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Freeditorial

Tales Of Passed Times

HE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD

THERE were once a King and Queen, who were very unhappy at not having any children, more unhappy than words can tell. Vows, pilgrimages, everything was tried, but nothing was of any avail; at length, however, a little daughter was born to them.

There was a splendid christening. For godmothers, they gave the young Princess all the fairies they could find in the country—they were seven in number—in order that each making her a gift, according to the custom of fairies in those days, the Princess might, by these means, become possessed of all imaginable perfections. When the ceremony was over, all the company returned to the King's palace, where a great banquet had been prepared for the fairies. The table was magnificently laid for them, and each had placed for her a massive gold case, containing a spoon, a fork, and a knife of fine gold, set with diamonds and rubies.

But as they were all taking their seats, there was seen to enter an old fairy, who had not been invited, for everyone thought that she was either dead or enchanted, as she had not been outside the tower in which she lived for upwards of fifty years. The King ordered a cover to be laid for her, but there was no possibility of giving her a massive gold case, such as the others had, because there had been only seven made expressly for the seven fairies. The old fairy thought she was treated with contempt, and muttered some threats between her teeth. One of the young fairies, who chanced to be near her, overheard her grumblings, and was afraid she might bestow some evil gift on the young Princess. Accordingly, as soon as they rose from table, she went and hid herself behind the hangings, in order to be the last to speak, and so enable herself to repair, as far as possible, any harm the old fairy might have done. Meanwhile the fairies began bestowing their gifts on the Princess. The youngest, as her gift, promised that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next fairy, that she should have the mind of an angel; the third, that every movement of hers should be full of grace; the fourth, that she should dance to perfection; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; the sixth, that she should play on every kind of instrument in the most exquisite manner possible. It was now the turn of the old fairy, and she said, while her head shook more with malice than with age, that the Princess should pierce her hand with a spindle, and die of the wound.

The whole company trembled when they heard this terrible prediction, and there was not one among them who did not shed tears. At this moment the young fairy advanced from behind the tapestry, and said, speaking that all might hear,—

"Comfort yourselves, King and Queen; your daughter shall not die of the wound. It is true that I have not sufficient power to undo entirely what my elder has done. The Princess will pierce her hand with a spindle, but, instead of dying, she will only fall into a deep sleep, which will last a hundred years, at the end of which time a king's son will come and wake her."

The King, in the hope of preventing the misfortune foretold by the old fairy, immediately sent forth a proclamation forbidding everyone, on pain of death, either to spin with a spindle, or to have spindles in their possession.

Fifteen or sixteen years had passed, when, the King and Queen being absent at one of their country houses, it happened that the Princess, while running about the castle one day, and up the stairs from one room to the other, came to a little garret at the top of a turret, where an old woman sat alone spinning with distaff and spindle, for this good woman had never heard the King's proclamation forbidding the use of the spindle.

"What are you doing there?" asked the Princess.

"I am spinning, my pretty child," answered the old woman, who did not know who she was.

"Oh, how pretty it is!" exclaimed the Princess. "How do you do it? Give it to me, that I may see if I can do it as well."

She had no sooner taken hold of the spindle, than, being very hasty, and rather thoughtless, and moreover, the fairies having ordained that it should be so, she pierced her hand with the point of it, and fainted away. The poor old woman was in great distress, and called for help. People came running from all quarters; they threw water in the Princess's face, they unlaced her dress, they slapped her hands, they rubbed her temples with Queen of Hungary's water, but nothing would bring her to. The King, who had run upstairs at the noise, then remembered the prediction of the fairies, and wisely concluded that this accident must have happened as the fairies had said it would. He ordered the Princess to be carried into a beautiful room of the palace, and laid on a bed embroidered with silver and gold. One might have thought it was an angel lying there, so lovely did she look, for the rich colours of her complexion had not faded in her swoon; her cheeks were still rosy, and her lips like coral. Only, her eyes were closed, but they could hear her breathing softly, which showed that she was not dead.

The King gave orders that she was to be left to sleep there in quiet, until the hour of her awaking should arrive. The good fairy who had saved her life, by condemning her to sleep for a hundred years, was in the Kingdom of Mataquin, twelve thousand leagues away, when the Princess met with her accident, but she was informed of it instantly by a little dwarf, who had a

pair of seven-league boots, that is, boots which enabled the wearer to take seven leagues at a stride.

"She fell into a swoon."

The Sleeping Beauty

The fairy set out immediately, and an hour afterwards she was seen arriving in a chariot of fire, drawn by dragons.

The King advanced to hand her out of the chariot. She approved of all he had done, but being gifted with great foresight, she bethought her that the Princess would feel very lost and bewildered on awaking and finding herself all alone in the old castle; so this is what the fairy did. With her wand she touched everybody who was in the castle, except the King and Queen: governesses, maids of honour, women of the bed-chamber, gentlemen, officers, stewards, cooks, scullions, boys, guards, porters, pages, footmen; she also touched the horses that were in the stables with their grooms, the great mastiffs in the courtyard, and little Fluff, the pet dog of the Princess, that was on the bed beside her. As soon as she had touched them, they all fell asleep, not to wake again until the hour arrived for their mistress to do so, in order that they should all be ready to attend upon her as soon as she should want them. Even the spits before the fire, hung with partridges and pheasants, and the very fire itself, went to sleep. All this was done in a moment, for fairies never lost much time over their work.

The King and Queen now kissed their dear daughter, who still slept on, quitted the castle, and issued a proclamation forbidding any person, whosoever, to approach it. These orders were unnecessary, for in a quarter of an hour there grew up around the park such a number of trees, large and small, of brambles and thorns interlacing each other, that neither man nor beast could have got through them, and nothing could be now seen of the castle but the tops of the turrets, and they only from a considerable distance. Nobody doubted that this also was some of the fairy's handiwork, in order that the Princess might be protected from the curiosity of strangers during her long slumber.

When the hundred years had passed away, the son of the King at that time upon the throne, and who was of a different family to that of the sleeping Princess, having been hunting in the neighbourhood, inquired what towers they were that he saw above the trees of a very thick wood. Each person answered him according to the story he had heard. Some said it was an old castle, haunted by ghosts; others, that all the witches of the country held their midnight revels there. The more general opinion, however, was that it was the abode of an ogre, and that he carried thither all the children he

could catch, in order to eat them at his leisure, and without being pursued, he alone having the power of making his way through the wood.

The Prince did not know what to believe of all this, when an old peasant spoke in his turn, and said to him, "Prince, it is more than fifty years ago since I heard my father say, that there was in that castle the most beautiful Princess that was ever seen; that she was to sleep for a hundred years, and would be awakened by a king's son, for whom she was intended and was waiting."

The young Prince, at these words, felt himself all on fire. He had not a moment's doubt that he was the one chosen to accomplish this famous adventure, and urged to the deed by love and glory, he resolved, without delay, to see what would come of it.

Scarcely had he approached the wood, when all those great trees, all those brambles and thorns, made way for him to pass of their own accord. He walked towards the castle, which he saw at the end of a long avenue he had entered, and he was somewhat surprised to find that none of his people had been able to follow him, the trees having closed up again as soon as he had passed. Nevertheless, he continued to advance; a young prince, inspired by love, is always courageous. He came to a large fore-court, where everything he saw might well have frozen his blood with terror. A frightful silence reigned around; death seemed everywhere present; on every side, nothing to be seen but the bodies of men and animals stretched out, apparently lifeless. He soon discovered, however, by the shining noses and red faces of the porters, that they were only asleep; and their goblets, in which still remained a few drops of wine, sufficiently proved that they had dozed off whilst drinking.

He next passed through a large courtyard paved with marble, ascended the staircase, and entered the guard-room, where the guards stood, drawn up in line, their carbines shouldered, and snoring their loudest. He traversed several rooms with ladies and gentlemen all asleep, some standing, others seated. At last he came to one covered with gold, and there on a bed, the curtains of which were open on either side, he saw the most lovely sight he had ever looked upon—a Princess, who appeared to be about fifteen or sixteen, and whose dazzling beauty shone with a radiance which scarcely seemed to belong to this world. He approached, trembling and admiring, and knelt down beside her.

At that moment, the enchantment being ended, the Princess awoke, and gazing at him for the first time with unexpected tenderness, "Is it you, Prince?" she said; "I have waited long for you to come." The Prince, delighted at these words, and still more by the tone in which they were uttered, knew not how to express his joy and gratitude. He assured her that he loved her

better than himself. His words were rather confused, but she was all the more pleased with them; there was little eloquence, but a great deal of love. He was much more embarrassed than she was, which is not to be wondered at. She had had time to think over what she should say to him, for there is reason to believe, although history does not mention it, that during her long, long sleep, the good fairy had let her enjoy very pleasant dreams. In short, they talked for four hours without having said half what they had to say to each other.

In the meanwhile, all the palace had been roused at the same time as the Princess. Everybody remembered his or her duty, and, as they were not all in love, they were dying with hunger. The lady-in-waiting, as hungry as any of them, became impatient, and announced loudly to the Princess that the meat was on the table. The Prince assisted the Princess to rise; she was fully dressed, and most magnificently, but he was careful not to tell her that she was dressed like his grandmother, and wore a stand-up collar, for, in spite of this, she was not a whit less beautiful.

They passed into a hall of mirrors, where they supped, waited upon by the officers of the Princess. The violins and hautboys played old but charming pieces of music, notwithstanding that it was a hundred years since they had been performed by anybody, and after supper, without loss of time, the grand almoner married the royal lovers in the chapel of the castle.

Early next morning the Prince returned to the city, where he knew his father would be in anxiety about him. The Prince told him that he had lost his way in the forest whilst hunting, and that he had slept in the hut of a woodcutter, who had given him black bread and cheese to eat.

The King, his father, who was a simple-minded man, believed him, but his mother was not so easily satisfied. She noticed that he went hunting nearly every day, and had always some story ready as an excuse, when he had slept two or three nights away from home, and so she felt quite sure that he had a lady-love. More than two years went by and the Princess had two children, the first, which was a girl, was named Aurora, and the second, a son, was called Day, because he was still more beautiful than his sister.

The Queen, hoping to find out the truth from her son, often said to him that he ought to form some attachment, but he never dared to trust her with his secret. Although he loved her, he feared her, for she was of the race of ogres, and the King had only married her on account of her great riches. It was even whispered about the court that she had the inclinations of an ogress, and that when she saw little children passing, it was with the greatest difficulty that she restrained herself from pouncing upon them. The Prince, therefore, would never say one word to her about his affairs.

On the death of the King, however, which took place two years later, the Prince, being now his own master, made a public declaration of his marriage, and went in great state to bring the Queen, his wife, to the palace. She made a magnificent entry into the capital, with her two children, one on either side of her.

Sometime afterwards, the King went to war with his neighbour, the Emperor Cantalabute. He left the Queen, his mother, Regent of the Kingdom, earnestly recommending to her care his wife and children. He was likely to be all summer in the field, and he had no sooner left than the Queen-mother sent her daughter-in-law and the children to a country house in the wood, so that she might more easily gratify her horrible longing. She followed them thither a few days after, and one evening said to her head cook, "I will eat little Aurora for dinner to-morrow." "Ah, madam!" exclaimed the cook. "I will," said the Queen, and she said it in the voice of an ogress longing to eat fresh meat; "and I will have her served with my favourite sauce."

The poor man, seeing plainly that an ogress was not to be trifled with, took his great knife and went up to little Aurora's room. She was then about four years old, and came jumping and laughing to throw her arms about his neck, and ask him for sweetmeats. He burst into tears, and the knife fell from his hands; then he went down again and into the farmyard, and there killed a little lamb which he served up with so delicious a sauce, that his mistress assured him she had never eaten anything so excellent. In the meanwhile, he had carried off little Aurora, and given her to his wife, that she might hide her in the lodging which she occupied at the further end of the farmyard. A week later, the wicked Queen said to her head cook, "I will eat little Day for supper." He made no reply, having decided in his own mind to deceive her as before.

He went in search of little Day, and found him with a tiny foil in his hand, fencing with a great monkey, though he was only three years old. He carried the child to his wife, who hid him where she had hidden his sister, and then cooked a very tender little kid in the place of little Day, which the ogress thought wonderfully good. All had gone well enough so far, but one evening this wicked Queen said to the head cook, "I should like to eat the Queen with the same sauce that I had with the children."

Then the poor cook was indeed in despair, for he did not know how he should be able to deceive her. The young Queen was over twenty years of age, without counting the hundred years she had slept, and no longer such tender food, although her skin was still white and beautiful, and where among all his animals should he find one old enough to take her place?

He resolved at last that, to save his own life, he would kill the Queen, and he went up to her room, determined to carry out his purpose without delay. He

worked himself up into a passion, and entered the young Queen's room, dagger in hand. He did not wish, however, to take her by surprise, and so he repeated to her, very respectfully, the order he had received from the Queen-mother. "Do your duty," she said, stretching out her neck to him; "obey the orders that have been given you. I shall again see my children, my poor children, whom I loved so dearly," for she had thought them dead, ever since they had been carried away from her without a word of explanation.

"No, no, madam!" replied the poor cook, touched to the quick, "you shall not die, and you shall see your children again, but it will be in my own house, where I have hidden them; I will again deceive the Queen-mother by serving up to her a young hind in your stead."

He led her forthwith to his own apartments, then, leaving her to embrace her children and weep with them, he went and prepared a hind, which the Queen ate at her supper with as much appetite as if it had been the young Queen. She exulted in her cruelty, and intended to tell the King, on his return, that some ferocious wolves had devoured the Queen, his wife, and her two children.

One evening, while she was prowling, as usual, round the courts and poultry-yards of the castle, to inhale the smell of fresh meat, she overheard little Day crying in one of the lower rooms, because the Queen, his mother, was about to whip him for being naughty, and she also heard little Aurora begging forgiveness for her brother. The ogress recognised the voices of the Queen and her children, and, furious at having been deceived, she gave orders, in a voice that made everybody tremble, that the next morning early there should be brought into the middle of the court a large copper, which she had filled with toads, vipers, adders, and serpents, in order to throw into it the Queen and her children, the head cook, his wife, and his maid-servant. She further commanded that they should be brought thither with their hands tied behind them.

There they stood, and the executioners were preparing to fling them into the copper, when the King, who was not expected back so soon, entered the courtyard on horseback. He had ridden post-haste, and in great astonishment asked what was the meaning of this horrible spectacle? No one dared tell him, when the ogress, enraged at what she saw, flung herself head foremost into the copper, where she was instantly devoured by the horrid reptiles, with which she had herself caused it to be filled. The King could not help being sorry for it; she was his mother; but he quickly consoled himself with his beautiful wife and children.

Some time for a husband to waitWho is young, handsome, wealthy and tender,May not be a hardship too greatFor a maid whom love happy would

render.But to be for a century boundTo live single, I fancy the numberOf Beauties but small would be foundSo long who could patiently slumber.

To lovers who hate time to waste,And minutes as centuries measure,I would hint, those who marry in hasteMay live to repent it at leisureYet so ardently onwards they press,And on prudence so gallantly trample,That I haven't the heart, I confess,To urge on them Beauty's example.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD

THERE was once upon a time a little village girl, the prettiest ever seen or known, of whom her mother was dotingly fond. Her grandmother was even fonder of her still, and had a little red hood made for the child, which suited her so well, that wherever she went, she was known by the name of Little Red Riding-Hood.

One day, her mother having baked some cakes, said to her, "Go and see how your grandmother is getting on, for I have been told she is ill; take her a cake and this little jar of butter." Whereupon Little Red Riding-Hood started off without delay towards the village in which her grandmother lived. On her way she had to pass through a wood, and there she met that sly old fellow, Mr Wolf, who felt that he should very much like to eat her up on the spot, but was afraid to do so, as there were woodcutters at hand in the forest. He asked her which way she was going, and the poor child, not knowing how dangerous it is to stop and listen to a wolf, answered, "I am going to see my grandmother, and am taking a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent her."

"Does she live far from here?" asked the Wolf.

"Oh, yes!" replied Little Red Riding-Hood, "on the further side of the mill that you see down there; hers is the first house in the village."

"Well, I was thinking of going to visit her myself," rejoined the Wolf, "so I will take this path, and you take the other, and we will see which of us gets there first."

The Wolf then began running off as fast as he could along the shorter way, which he had chosen, while the little girl went by the longer way, and amused herself with stopping to gather nuts, or run after butterflies, and with making little nosegays of all the flowers she could find.

It did not take the Wolf long to reach the grandmother's house; he knocked: tap, tap.
"Who is there?"
"It is your grand-daughter, Little Red Riding-Hood," answered the Wolf, imitating the child's voice. "I have brought a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent you." The good grandmother, who was ill in bed, called out, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up." The Wolf pulled the bobbin, and the door opened. He leaped on to the poor old woman, and ate her up in less than no time, for he had been three days without food. He then shut the door again, and laid himself down in the grandmother's bed, to wait for Little Red Riding-Hood. Presently she came and knocked at the door: tap, tap.
'Grandma, what great ears you have!'

Little Red Riding-Hood

"Who is there?" Little Red Riding-Hood was frightened at first, on hearing the Wolf's gruff voice, but thinking that her grandmother had a cold, she answered,—

"It is your grand-daughter, Little Red Riding-Hood. I have brought a cake and a little jar of butter, which my mother has sent you."

The Wolf called out, this time in rather a softer voice, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will go up." Little Red Riding-Hood pulled the bobbin, and the door opened.

When the Wolf saw her come in, he hid himself under the bedclothes, and said to her, "Put the cake and the little jar of butter in the cupboard, and come into bed with me."

Little Red Riding-Hood undressed, and went to the bedside, and was very much astonished to see how different her grandmother looked to what she did when she was up and dressed.

"Grandmother," she exclaimed, "what long arms you have!"

"All the better to embrace you with, my little girl."

"Grandmother, what long legs you have!"

"All the better to run with, child."

"Grandmother, what long ears you have!"

"All the better to hear with, child."

"Grandmother, what large eyes you have!"

"All the better to see with, child."

"Grandmother, what large teeth you have!"

"All the better to eat you with!" and saying these words, the wicked Wolf sprang out upon Little Red Riding-Hood, and ate her up.

MORAL

Now, children, take warning, and chiefly, I pray,You maidens so gentle and fair,When you come across all kinds of folk, have a careNot to listen to what they may say;For it can't be thought strange if you do,Should the Wolf choose to eat up a few.The Wolf, I say here, for you'll findWolves are many, and vary in kind;There are some, easy-mannered and tame,Without malice, or temper, the same,Most obliging and sweet in their way,Like to follow their tender young prey,And will track them right into their homes—lack-a-day!Who among us has not learnt by this time to know,The most dangerous of wolves is the soft, smooth-tongued foe!

BLUE BEARD

ONCE upon a time there was a man who had fine houses in town and country, gold and silver plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilt all over; but, unfortunately, this man had a blue beard, which made him look so ugly and terrible, that there was not a woman or girl who did not run away from him.

One of his neighbours, a lady of rank, had two daughters, who were perfectly beautiful. He proposed to marry one of them, leaving the mother to choose which of the two she would give him. Neither of the daughters, however, would have him, and they sent him from one to the other, each being unable to make up her mind to marry a man with a blue beard. A further reason which they had for disliking him was, that he had already been married several times, and nobody knew what had become of his wives. Blue Beard, in order to improve the acquaintance, took the girls with their mother, three or four of their most intimate friends, and some other young people who resided in the neighbourhood, to one of his country seats, where they spent an entire week. Nothing was thought of but excursions, hunting and fishing-parties, balls, entertainments, suppers; nobody went to bed; the whole night was passed in games and playing merry tricks on one another. In short, all went off so well, that the youngest daughter began to think that the beard of the master of the house was not so blue as it used to be, and that he was a very worthy man. Immediately upon their return to town the marriage took place.

At the end of a month, Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey, which would keep him away from home for six weeks at least, as he had business of great importance to attend to. He begged her to amuse herself as well as she could during his absence, to invite her best friends, and, if she liked, take them into the country, and wherever she was, to have the best of everything for the table.

"Here," said he to her, "are the keys of my two large store-rooms; these are those of the chests in which the gold and silver plate, not in general use, is kept; these are the keys of the strong boxes in which I keep my money; these open the caskets that contain my jewels, and this is the master-key of all the rooms. As for this little key, it is that of the closet at the end of the long gallery on the ground floor. Open everything, and go everywhere except into that little closet, which I forbid you to enter, and I forbid you so strictly, that if you should venture to open the door, there is nothing that you may not have to dread from my anger!" She promised to obey his orders to the letter, and, after having embraced her, he got into his coach and set out on his journey.

The friends and neighbours of the young bride did not wait for her invitation, so eager were they to see all the rich treasures in the house, and not having ventured to visit her while her husband was at home, so frightened were they at his blue beard. They were soon to be seen running through all the rooms, and into the closets and wardrobes, each one more beautiful and splendid than the last. Then they went upstairs to the store-rooms; there they could not sufficiently express their admiration at the number and beauty of the hangings, the beds, the sofas, the cabinets, the elegant little stands, the tables, the mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot, framed some with glass, some with silver, some with gilt metal, all of a costliness beyond what had ever before been seen. They never ceased enlarging upon, and envying, the good fortune of their friend, who, meanwhile, took no pleasure in the sight of all these treasures, so great was her longing to go and open the door of the closet on the ground floor. Her curiosity at last reached such a pitch that, without stopping to consider how rude it was to leave her guests, she ran down a little back staircase leading to the closet, and in such haste that she nearly broke her neck two or three times before she reached the bottom. At the door of the closet she paused for a moment, calling to mind her husband's prohibition, and reflecting that some trouble might fall upon her for her disobedience; but the temptation was so strong that she could not resist it. So she took the little key, and with a trembling hand opened the door of the closet.

At first she could distinguish nothing, for the windows were closed; in a few minutes, however, she began to see that the floor was covered with blood, in which was reflected the bodies of several dead women hanging on the walls. These were all the wives of Blue Beard, who had killed them one after another. She was ready to die with fright, and the key, which she had taken out of the lock, fell from her hand.

After recovering her senses a little, she picked up the key, locked the door again, and went up to her room to try and compose herself; but she found it impossible to quiet her agitation.

She now perceived that the key of the closet was stained with blood; she wiped it two or three times, but the blood would not come off. In vain she washed it, and even scrubbed it with sand and free-stone, the stain was still there, for the key was an enchanted one, and there were no means of cleaning it completely; when the blood was washed off one side, it came back on the other.

Blue Beard returned that very evening, and said that he had received letters on the road, telling him that the business on which he was going had been settled to his advantage.

His wife did all she could to make him believe that she was delighted at his speedy return.

The next morning he asked her for his keys again; she gave them to him; but her hand trembled so, that he had not much difficulty in guessing what had happened.

"How comes it," said he, "that the key of the closet is not with the others?"
"I must have left it," she replied, "upstairs on my table."
"Fail not," said Blue Beard, "to give it me presently."
After several excuses, she was obliged to go and fetch the key. Blue Beard having examined it, said to his wife, "Why is there blood on this key?" "I don't know," answered the poor wife, paler than death.
"You don't know!" rejoined Blue Beard; "I know well enough. You must needs go into the closet. Well, madam, you shall go in again, and take your place among the ladies you saw there."
She flung herself at her husband's feet, weeping and begging his pardon, with all the signs of a true repentance at having disobeyed him. Her beauty and sorrow might have melted a rock, but Blue Beard had a heart harder than rock.
"You must die, madam," said he, "and at once."
"If I must die," she replied, looking at him with streaming eyes, "give me a little time to say my prayers."
"I give you half a quarter of an hour," answered Blue Beard, "not a minute more."
As soon as she found herself alone, she called her sister, and said to her, "Sister Anne"—for so she was named—"go up, I pray you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not in sight. They promised they would come to visit me to-day, and if you see them, sign to them to make haste."
Sister Anne mounted to the top of the tower, and the poor unhappy wife called to her from time to time, "Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?" and Sister Anne answered her, "I see nothing but the dust turning gold in the sun, and the grass growing green."
Meanwhile, Blue Beard, with a large cutlass in his hand, called out with all his might to his wife, "Come down quickly, or I shall come up there." "One minute more, if you please," replied his wife; and then said quickly in a low voice, "Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?" And Sister Anne answered, "I see nothing but the dust turning gold in the sun, and the grass growing green."
"Come down quickly," roared Blue Beard, "or I shall come up there."
"I am coming," answered his wife; and then called "Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?"
"I see a great cloud of dust moving this way," said Sister Anne.
"Is it my brothers?"

"Alas! no, sister, only a flock of sheep."
"Will you not come down?" shouted Blue Beard.
"One minute more," replied his wife; and then she cried, "Anne! Sister Anne! do you not see anything coming?"
"I see two horsemen coming this way," she replied, "but they are still a great distance off. Heaven be praised!" she exclaimed a moment afterwards. "They are my brothers! I am making all the signs I can to hasten them."
"Your tears are useless" said Bluebeard, "you must die!"
Bluebeard.
Blue Beard began to roar so loudly that the whole house shook again. The poor wife went down and threw herself at his feet with weeping eyes and dishevelled hair. "It is of no use," said Blue Beard; "you must die!" Then, taking her by the hair with one hand, and raising the cutlass with the other, he was about to cut off her head.
The poor wife, turning towards him her dying eyes, begged him to give her one short moment to collect herself. "No, no," said he; "commend yourself to heaven," and, lifting his arm.... At this moment there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Blue Beard stopped short. It was opened, and two horsemen were immediately seen to enter, who, drawing their swords, ran straight at Blue Beard. He recognised them as the brothers of his wife, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer, and he therefore fled at once, hoping to escape; but they pursued him so closely that they overtook him before he could reach the steps to his door, and, running their swords through his body, left him dead on the spot. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength to rise and embrace her brothers.
It was found that Blue Beard had left no heirs, and so his widow came into possession of all his property. She employed part of it in marrying her Sister Anne to a man who had long loved her; another part in buying captains' commissions for her two brothers; and with the remainder she married herself to a very worthy man, who made her forget the dreadful time she had passed with Blue Beard.
Provided one has common sense,And of the world but knows the ways,This story bears the evidenceOf being one of bygone days.No husband now is so terrific,Impossibilities expecting:Though jealous, he is still pacific,Indifference to his wife affecting.And of his beard, whate'er the hue,His spouse need fear no such disaster;Indeed, 'twould often puzzle youTo say which of the twain is master.

MASTER CAT;

OR,

PUSS IN BOOTS

A MILLER bequeathed to his three sons all he possessed of worldly goods, which consisted only of his Mill, his Ass, and his Cat. It did not take long to divide the property, and neither notary nor attorney was called in; they would soon have eaten up the poor little patrimony. The eldest son had the Mill; the second son, the Ass; and the youngest had nothing but the Cat.

The latter was very disconsolate at having such a poor share of the inheritance. "My brothers," said he, "may be able to earn an honest livelihood by entering into partnership; but, as for me, when I have eaten my Cat and made a muff of his skin, I must die of hunger." The Cat, who had heard this speech, although he had not appeared to do so, said to him with a sedate and serious air, "Do not be troubled, master; you have only to give me a bag, and get a pair of boots made for me in which I can go among the bushes, and you will see that you are not left so badly off as you believe." Though his master did not place much reliance on the Cat's words, he had seen him play such cunning tricks in catching rats and mice, when he would hang himself up by the heels, or hide in the flour pretending to be dead, that he was not altogether without hope of being helped by him out of his distress.

As soon as the Cat had what he asked for, he boldly pulled on his boots, and, hanging his bag round his neck, he took the strings of it in his fore-paws, and started off for a warren where there were a great number of rabbits. He put some bran and sow-thistles in his bag, and then, stretching himself out as if he were dead, he waited till some young rabbit, little versed in the wiles of the world, should come and poke his way into the bag, in order to eat what was inside it.

He had hardly laid himself down before he had the pleasure of seeing a young scatterbrain of a rabbit get into the bag, whereupon Master Cat pulled the strings, caught it, and killed it without mercy. Proud of his prey, he went to the palace, and asked to speak to the King. He was ushered upstairs and into the state apartment, and, after making a low bow to the King, he said, "Sire, here is a wild rabbit, which my Lord the Marquis of Carabas—for such was the title he had taken a fancy to give to his master—has ordered me to present, with his duty, to your Majesty."

"Tell your master," replied the King, "that I thank him and am pleased with his gift."

Another day he went and hid himself in the wheat, keeping the mouth of his bag open as before, and as soon as he saw that a brace of partridges had

run inside, he pulled the strings, and so took them both. He went immediately and presented them to the King, as he had the rabbits. The King was equally grateful at receiving the brace of partridges, and ordered drink to be given him.

For the next two or three months, the Cat continued in this manner, taking presents of game at intervals to the King, as if from his master. One day, when he knew the King was going to drive on the banks of the river, with his daughter, the most beautiful Princess in the world, he said to his master, "If you will follow my advice, your fortune is made; you have only to go and bathe in a part of the river I will point out to you, and then leave the rest to me."

The Marquis of Carabas did as his Cat advised him, without knowing what good would come of it. While he was bathing, the King passed by, and the Cat began to call out with all his might, "Help! Help! My Lord the Marquis of Carabas is drowning!" Hearing the cry, the King looked out of the coach window, and recognising the Cat who had so often brought him game, he ordered his guards to fly to the help of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. Whilst they were getting the poor Marquis out of the river, the Cat went up to the royal coach, and told the King that, while his master had been bathing, some robbers had come and carried off his clothes, although he had shouted, "Stop thief," as loud as he could. The rogue had hidden them himself under a large stone. The King immediately ordered the officers of his wardrobe to go and fetch one of his handsomest suits for my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. The King embraced him a thousand times, and as the fine clothes they dressed him in set off his good looks—for he was handsome and well made—the Marquis of Carabas quite took the fancy of the King's daughter, and after he had cast two or three respectful and rather tender glances towards her, she fell very much in love with him. The King insisted upon his getting into the coach, and accompanying them in their drive. The Cat, delighted to see that his plans were beginning to succeed, ran on before, and coming across some peasants who were mowing a meadow, he said to them, "You, good people, who are mowing here, if you do not tell the King that this meadow you are mowing belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be cut in pieces as small as minced meat." The King did not fail to ask the peasants whose meadow it was they were mowing. "It belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas," said they all together, for the Cat's threat had frightened them. "You have a fine property there," said the King to the Marquis of Carabas.

"As you say, sire," responded the Marquis of Carabas, "for it is a meadow which yields an abundant crop every year."

Master Cat, who still kept in advance of the party, came up to some reapers, and said to them, "You, good people, who are reaping, if you do not say that all this corn belongs to my Lord the Marquis of Carabas, you shall all be cut into pieces as small as minced meat."

Puss among the reapers.

The King, who passed by a minute afterwards, wished to know to whom belonged all the cornfields he saw. "To my Lord the Marquis of Carabas," repeated the reapers, and the King again congratulated the Marquis on his property.

The Cat, still continuing to run before the coach, uttered the same threat to everyone he met, and the King was astonished at the great wealth of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas. Master Cat at length arrived at a fine castle, the owner of which was an ogre, the richest ogre ever known, for all the lands through which the King had driven belonged to the Lord of this castle. The Cat took care to find out who the ogre was, and what he was able to do; then he asked to speak with him, saying that he did not like to pass so near his castle without doing himself the honour of paying his respects to him. The ogre received him as civilly as an ogre can, and made him sit down.

"I have been told," said the Cat, "that you have the power of changing yourself into all kinds of animals; that you could, for instance, transform yourself into a lion or an elephant."

"'Tis true," said the ogre, abruptly, "and to prove it to you, you shall see me become a lion." The Cat was so frightened when he saw a lion in front of him, that he quickly scrambled up into the gutter, not without difficulty and danger, on account of his boots, which were worse than useless for walking on the tiles. Shortly afterwards, seeing that the ogre had resumed his natural form, the Cat climbed down again, and admitted that he had been terribly frightened. "I have also been assured," said the Cat, "but I cannot believe it, that you have the power besides of taking the form of the smallest animal; for instance, that of a rat, or a mouse; I confess to you I hold this to be utterly impossible." "Impossible!" exclaimed the ogre, "you shall see!" and he immediately changed himself into a mouse, and began running about the floor. The cat no sooner caught sight of it, than he pounced upon it and ate it.

In the meanwhile, the King, seeing the fine castle of the ogre as he was driving past, thought he should like to go inside. The Cat, who heard the noise of the coach rolling over the draw-bridge, ran to meet it, and said to the King, "Your Majesty is welcome to the Castle of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas!"

"How, my Lord Marquis," exclaimed the King, "this castle belongs to you? Nothing could be finer than this courtyard, and all these buildings which surround it. Let us see the inside of it, if you please."

The Marquis handed out the young Princess, and following the King, who led the way upstairs, they entered a grand hall, where they found prepared a magnificent repast, which the ogre had ordered in expectation of some friends, who were to have visited him that very day, but who did not venture to enter when they heard the King was there. The King, as greatly delighted with the excellent qualities of my Lord the Marquis of Carabas as his daughter, who was more than ever in love with him, seeing what great wealth he possessed, said to him, after having drunk five or six bumpers, "It depends entirely on yourself, my Lord Marquis, whether or not you become my son-in-law." The Marquis, making several profound bows, accepted the honour the King offered him, and that same day was married to the Princess. The Cat became a great lord, and never again ran after mice, except for his amusement.

Be the advantage never so greatOf owning a superb estate,From sire to son descended,Young men oft find, on industry,Combined with ingenuity,They'd better have depended.

If the son of a miller so quickly could gainThe heart of a Princess, it seems pretty plain,With good looks and good manners, and some aid from dress,The humblest need not quite despair of success.

THE FAIRIES

THERE was once a widow who had two daughters. The elder was so like her mother in temper and face, that to have seen the one was to have seen the other. They were both so disagreeable and proud, that it was impossible to live with them. The younger, who was the exact portrait of her father in her kindly and polite ways, was also as beautiful a girl as one could see. As we are naturally fond of those who resemble us, the mother doted on her elder daughter, while for the younger she had a most violent aversion, and made her take her meals in the kitchen and work hard all day. Among other things that she was obliged to do, this poor child was forced to go twice a day to fetch water from a place a mile or more from the house, and carry back a large jug filled to the brim. As she was standing one day by this spring, a poor woman came up to her, and asked the girl to give her some water to drink.

"Certainly, my good woman," she replied, and the beautiful girl at once stooped and rinsed out the jug, and then, filling it with water from the clearest part of the spring, she held it up to the woman, continuing to support the jug, that she might drink with greater comfort. Having drunk, the woman said to her, "You are so beautiful, so good and kind, that I cannot refrain from conferring a gift upon you," for she was really a fairy, who had taken the form of a poor village woman, in order to see how far the girl's kind-heartedness would go. "This gift I make you," continued the fairy, "that with every word you speak, either a flower or a precious stone will fall from your mouth."

The girl had no sooner reached home than her mother began scolding her for being back so late. "I am sorry, mother," said she, "to have been out so long," and as she spoke, there fell from her mouth two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds. The mother gazed at her in astonishment. "What do I see!" she exclaimed, "Pearls and diamonds seem to be dropping from her mouth! How is this, my daughter?"—it was the first time she had called her daughter. The poor child related in all simplicity what had happened, letting fall quantities of diamonds in the course of her narrative. "I must certainly send my other daughter there," said the mother. "Look, Fanchon, see what falls from your sister's mouth when she speaks! Would you not be glad to receive a similar gift? All you have to do, is to go and fetch water from the spring, and if an old woman asks you for some to drink, to give it her nicely and politely." "I should like to see myself going to the spring," answered the rude, cross girl.

"I insist on your going," rejoined the mother, "and that at once."

'She gave it to the Woman.'

The elder girl went off, still grumbling; with her she took the handsomest silver bottle she could find in the house.

She had no sooner arrived at the spring, than she saw a lady magnificently dressed walking towards her from the wood, who approached and asked for some water to drink. It was the same fairy who had appeared to the sister, but she had now put on the airs and apparel of a princess, as she wished to see how far this girl's rudeness would go. "Do you think I came here just to draw water for you?" answered the arrogant and unmannerly girl; "I have, of course, brought this silver bottle on purpose for madam to drink from! Well, all I have to say is—drink from it if you like."

"You are scarcely polite," said the fairy, without losing her temper; "however, as you are so disobliging, I confer this gift upon you, that with every word you speak, a snake or a toad shall fall from your mouth."

Directly her mother caught sight of her, she called out, "Well, my daughter!" "Well, my mother!" replied the ill-tempered girl, throwing out as she spoke two vipers and two toads. "Alack!" cried the mother, "what do I see? This is her sister's doing, but I will pay her out for it," and, so saying, she ran towards the younger girl with intent to beat her. The unhappy girl fled from the house, and went and hid herself in a neighbouring forest. The King's son, who was returning from hunting, met her, and seeing how beautiful she was, asked her what she was doing there all alone, and why she was crying. "Alas! sir, my mother has driven me from home." The King's son, seeing five or six pearls and as many diamonds, falling from her mouth as she spoke, asked her to explain how this was, and she told him all her tale. The King's son fell in love with her, and thinking that such a gift as she possessed was worth more than any ordinary dower brought by another, he carried her off to his father's palace, and there married her.

As for her sister, she made herself so hated, that her own mother drove her from the house. The miserable girl, having gone about in vain trying to find someone who would take her in, crept away into the corner of a wood, and there died.

Of higher worth are gentle wordsThan diamonds or gold,And even o'er the minds of menA great power they hold.

It costs some pains to be polite,And needs some kindly thought,But soon or late, as here you see,Reward will come unsought.

CINDERELLA;

OR, THE LITTLE GLASS SLIPPER

ONCE upon a time there was a nobleman, who took for a second wife the haughtiest and proudest woman that had ever been seen. She had two daughters of the same temper, and who resembled her in everything. The husband, on his side, had a daughter, of unexampled gentleness and goodness. She inherited these qualities from her mother, who had been the best creature in the world.

The wedding was hardly over before the stepmother's ill-humour broke out. She could not endure the young girl, whose good qualities made her own daughters appear still more detestable. She put her to do all the most menial work in the house. It was she who washed up the plates and dishes, and cleaned the stairs; who scrubbed the stepmother's room, and those of her daughters. She slept in a garret at the top of the house, on a wretched straw mattress, while her sisters occupied rooms with inlaid floors, and had the latest fashioned beds, and mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot. The poor girl bore everything with patience, and did not dare complain to her father, who would only have scolded her, as he wasentirely governed by his wife. When she had done her work, she was in the habit of going into the chimney-corner and sitting down amongst the cinders, which caused her to be nicknamed Cindertail by the household in general. The second daughter, however, who was not quite so rude as her sister, called her Cinderella. Nevertheless, Cinderella in her shabby clothes, still looked a thousand times more beautiful than her sisters, although so magnificently dressed.

It happened that the King's son gave a ball, to which he invited everyone of position. Our two fine ladies were among those who received an invitation, for they made a great show in the neighbourhood. They were now in great delight, and very busy choosing the most becoming gowns and head-dresses. A new mortification for poor Cinderella, for it was she who had to iron her sisters' fine linen, and goffer their ruffles. No one talked of anything but of the style in which they were to be dressed. "I," said the eldest, "will wear my red velvet dress, and my English point-lace trimmings." "I," said the youngest, "shall only wear my usual petticoat; but, to make up for that, I shall put on my gold-flowered cloak, and my clasp of diamonds, which are none of the least valuable." They sent for a first-rate milliner, that their caps might be made to fashion, and they bought their patches from the best maker. They called Cinderella to give them her opinion, for her taste was excellent. Cinderella gave them the best advice in the world, and even offered to dress their hair for them, which they were very willing she should do.

Whilst she was busy with the hairdressing, they said to her, "Cinderella, should you be very glad to go to the ball?"

"Alas! you only make fun of me; such a thing would not be suitable for me at all."

"You are right; they would indeed laugh to see a Cindertail at the ball!"

Any other than Cinderella would have dressed their hair awry, but she had a good disposition, and arranged it for both of them to perfection. They could eat nothing for nearly two days, so transported were they with joy. More than a dozen laces were broken in making their waists as small as possible, and they were continually before their looking-glasses. At last the happy day arrived. They set off, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could. When they were out of sight she began to cry. Her godmother, who saw her all in tears, asked her what was the matter. "I should so like—I should so like—" she sobbed so violently that she could not finish the sentence. "You would so like to go to the ball, is not that it?"

"Alas! yes," said Cinderella, sighing.

"Well, if you will be a good girl, I will undertake that you shall go." She took her into her room, and said to her, "Go into the garden and bring me a pumpkin." Cinderella went at once, gathered the finest she could find, and brought it to her godmother, wondering the while how a pumpkin could enable her to go to the ball. Her godmother scooped it out, and, having left nothing but the rind, struck it with her wand, and the pumpkin was immediately changed into a beautiful coach, gilt all over. She then went and looked into the mouse-trap, where she found six mice, all alive. She told Cinderella to lift the door of the mouse-trap a little, and to each mouse, as it ran out, she gave a tap with her wand, and the mouse was immediately changed into a fine horse, so that at last there stood ready a handsome train of six horses, of a beautiful dappled mouse-grey colour. As she was in some difficulty as to what she could take to turn into a coachman, Cinderella said, "I will go and see if there is not a rat in the rat-trap; we will make a coachman of him."

"You are right," said her godmother, "go and see."

Cinderella brought her the rat-trap, in which there were three large rats. The fairy chose one from the three on account of its ample beard, and having touched it, it was changed into a fat coachman, with the finest whiskers that ever were seen. She then said, "Go into the garden, and there, behind the watering-pot, you will find six lizards, bring them to me." Cinderella had no sooner brought them than the godmother changed them into six footmen, with their liveries all covered with lace, who immediately jumped up behind the coach, and hung on to it as if they had done nothing

else all their lives. The fairy then said to Cinderella, "Well, there is something in which to go to the ball; are you not well pleased?"

'The King's son gave her his hand.' Cinderella.

"Yes, but am I to go in these dirty old clothes?" Her godmother touched her lightly with her wand, and in the same instant her dress was changed into one of gold and silver, covered with precious stones. She then gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world. When she was thus attired, she got into the coach; but her godmother told her, above all things, not to stay past midnight—warning her, that if she remained at the ball a minute longer, her coach would again become a pumpkin, her horses, mice, her footmen, lizards, and her clothes turn again into her old ones. She promised her godmother that she would not fail to leave the ball before midnight, and drove off, almost out of her mind with joy.

The King's son, who was informed that a grand Princess had arrived whom nobody knew, ran to receive her. He handed her out of the coach and led her into the hall, where the guests were assembled. There was immediately a dead silence; the dancing stopped, and the fiddlers ceased to play, so engaged did everyone become in gazing upon the wonderful beauty of the unknown lady. Nothing was heard but a general murmur of "Oh! how lovely she is!" The King himself, old as he was, could not take his eyes from her, and observed to the Queen, that it was a long time since he had seen so lovely and amiable a person. All the ladies were intently occupied in examining her head-dress and her clothes, that they might order some like them the very next day, provided that they might be able to find materials as costly, and work-people sufficiently clever to make them up.

The King's son conducted her to the most honourable seat, and then led her out to dance. She danced so gracefully that everybody's admiration of her was increased. A very grand supper was served, of which the Prince ate not a morsel, so absorbed was he in the contemplation of her beauty. She seated herself beside her sisters, and showed them a thousand civilities. She shared with them the oranges and citrons which the Prince had given her, at which they were greatly surprised, for she appeared a perfect stranger to them. While they were thus talking together, Cinderella heard the clock strike the three quarters past eleven; she at once made a profound curtsey to the company, and left as quickly as she could. As soon as she had reached home, she went to find her godmother, and after having thanked her, said she much wished to go to the ball again next day, because the King's son had invited her. She was telling her godmother all that had passed at the ball, when the two sisters knocked at the door. Cinderella went and opened it. "How late you are!" said she to them, yawning, rubbing her eyes, and then stretching herself as if she had but just awoke, although

she had had no inclination to sleep since she parted from them. "If you had been at the ball," said one of her sisters to her, "you would not have been weary of it. There came to it the most beautiful princess—the most beautiful that ever was seen; she paid us many attentions, and gave us oranges and citrons." Cinderella was beside herself with delight. She asked them the name of the Princess, but they replied that nobody knew her, that the King's son was much puzzled about it, and that he would give everything in the world to know who she was. Cinderella smiled, and said, "She was very lovely, then? How fortunate you are! Could not I get a sight of her? Alas! Miss Javotte, lend me the yellow gown you wear every day."

"Truly," said Miss Javotte, "I like that! Lend one's gown to a dirty Cindertail like you! I should be mad indeed!" Cinderella fully expected this refusal, and was rejoiced at it, for she would not have known what to do if her sister had lent her the gown.

The next day the sisters went again to the ball, and Cinderella also, but still more splendidly dressed than before. The King's son never left her side, or ceased saying tender things to her. Cinderella found the evening pass very pleasantly, and forgot her godmother's warning, so that she heard the clock begin to strike twelve while still thinking that it was not yet eleven. She rose and fled as lightly as a fawn. The Prince followed her, but could not overtake her. She dropped one of her glass slippers, which the Prince carefully picked up. Cinderella reached home almost breathless, without coach or footmen, and in her shabby clothes, with nothing remaining of her finery but one of her little slippers, the fellow of that which she had dropped. The guards at the palace gate were asked if they had not seen a Princess pass out; they answered that they had seen no one pass but a poorly-dressed girl, who had more the appearance of a peasant than of a lady. When the two sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had been as much entertained as before, and if the beautiful lady had been present. They said yes, but that she had fled as soon as it had struck twelve, and in such haste, that she had dropped one of her little glass slippers, the prettiest in the world; that the King's son had picked it up, and had done nothing but gaze upon it during the remainder of the evening; and that, undoubtedly, he was very much in love with the beautiful person to whom the little slipper belonged. They spoke the truth; for a few days afterwards the King's son caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet that he would marry her whose foot would exactly fit the slipper. They began by trying it on the princesses, then on the duchesses, and so on throughout the Court; but in vain. It was taken to the two sisters, who did their utmost to force one of their feet into the slipper, but they could not manage to do so. Cinderella, who was looking on, and who recognised the slipper, said laughingly, "Let me see if it will not fit me." Her sisters began to laugh and ridicule her. The

gentleman of the Court who had been entrusted to try the slipper, having looked attentively at Cinderella, and seeing that she was very beautiful, said that it was only fair that her request should be granted, as he had received orders to try the slipper on all maidens, without exception. He made Cinderella sit down, and putting the slipper to her little foot, he saw it slip on easily and fit like wax. Great was the astonishment of the two sisters, but it was still greater when Cinderella took the other little slipper out of her pocket and put it on her other foot. At that moment the godmother appeared, who giving a tap with her wand to Cinderella's clothes, they became still more magnificent than those she had worn before.

The two sisters then recognised in her the beautiful person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet to beg for forgiveness for all the ill-treatment she had suffered from them. Cinderella raised and embraced them, said that she forgave them with all her heart, and begged them to love her dearly for the future. She was conducted, dressed as she was, to the young Prince. He found her more charming than ever, and a few days afterwards he married her. Cinderella, who was as kind as she was beautiful, gave her sisters apartments in the palace, and married them the very same day to two great lords of the Court.

Beauty in woman is a treasure rareWhich we are never weary of admiring;But a sweet temper is a gift more fairAnd better worth the youthful maid's desiring.That was the boon bestowed on CinderellaBy her wise godmother—her truest glory.The rest was "nought but leather and prunella."Such is the moral of this little story—Beauties, that charm, become you more than dress,And win a heart with far greater facility.In short, in all things to ensure success,The real Fairy Gift is amiability!

Talent, courage, wit, and worth,Are rare gifts to own on earth;But if you want to thrive at Court—So, at least, the wise report—You will find you need some others,Such as godfathers or mothers.

RIQUET WITH THE TUFT

ONCE upon a time there was a Queen who had a son, so ugly and misshapen, that it was doubted for a long time whether his form was really human. A fairy, who was present at his birth, affirmed, nevertheless, that he would be worthy to be loved, as he would have an excellent wit; she added, moreover, that by virtue of the gift she had bestowed upon him, he would be able to impart equal intelligence to the one whom he loved best. All this was some consolation to the poor Queen, who was much distressed at having brought so ugly a little monkey into the world. It is true that the child was no sooner able to speak than he said a thousand pretty things, and that in all his ways there was a certain air of intelligence, with which everyone was charmed. I had forgotten to say that he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, and so he came to be called Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

About seven or eight years later, the Queen of a neighbouring kingdom had two daughters. The elder was fairer than the day, and the Queen was so delighted, that it was feared some harm might come to her from her great joy. The same fairy who had assisted at the birth of little Riquet, was present upon this occasion, and in order to moderate the joy of the Queen, she told her that this little Princess would have no gifts of mind at all, and that she would be as stupid as she was beautiful. The Queen was greatly mortified on hearing this, but, shortly after, she was even more annoyed, when her second little daughter was born and proved to be extremely ugly. "Do not distress yourself, madam," said the fairy to her, "your daughter will find compensation, for she will have so much intelligence, that her lack of beauty will scarcely be perceived."

"Heaven send it may be so," replied the Queen; "but are there no means whereby a little more understanding might be given to the elder, who is so lovely?" "I can do nothing for her in the way of intelligence, madam," said the fairy, "but everything in the way of beauty; as, however, there is nothing in my power I would not do to give you comfort, I will bestow on her the power of conferring beauty on any man or woman who shall please her." As these two Princesses grew up, their endowments also became more perfect, and nothing was talked of anywhere but the beauty of the elder, and the intelligence of the younger. It is true that their defects also greatly increased with their years. The younger became uglier every moment, and the elder more stupid every day. She either made no answer when she was spoken to, or else said something foolish. With this she was so clumsy, that she could not even place four pieces of china on a mantelshelf, without breaking one of them, or drink a glass of water, without spilling half of it on her dress. Notwithstanding the attraction of beauty, the younger, in whatever society they might be, nearly always bore away the palm from her sister. At first

everyone went up to the more beautiful, to gaze at and admire her; but they soon left her for the cleverer one, to listen to her many pleasant and amusing sayings; and people were astonished to find that in less than a quarter of an hour, the elder had not a soul near her, while all the company had gathered round the younger. The elder, though very stupid, noticed this, and would have given, without regret, all her beauty, for half the sense of her sister. Discreet as she was, the Queen could not help often reproaching her with her stupidity, which made the poor Princess ready to die of grief.

One day, when she had gone by herself into a wood, to weep over her misfortune, she saw approaching her, a little man of very ugly and unpleasant appearance, but magnificently dressed. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who, having fallen in love with her from seeing her portraits, which were sent all over the world, had left his father's kingdom that he might have the pleasure of beholding her and speaking to her. Enchanted at meeting her thus alone, he addressed her with all the respect and politeness imaginable. Having remarked, after paying her the usual compliments, that she was very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot understand, madam, how a person so beautiful as you are can be so unhappy as you appear; for, although I can boast of having seen an infinite number of beautiful people, I can say with truth that I have never seen one whose beauty could be compared with yours."

"You are pleased to say so, sir," replied the Princess, and there she stopped.

"Beauty," continued Riquet, "is so great an advantage, that it ought to take the place of every other, and, possessed of it, I see nothing that can have power to afflict one."

"I would rather," said the Princess, "be as ugly as you are, and have intelligence, than possess the beauty I do, and be so stupid as I am."

"There is no greater proof of intelligence, madam, than the belief that we have it not; it is the nature of that gift, that the more we have, the more we believe ourselves to be without it."

"I do not know how that may be," said the Princess, "but I know well enough that I am very stupid, and that is the cause of the grief that is killing me."

"If that is all that troubles you, madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow."

"And how would you do that?" said the Princess.

"I have the power, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "to give as much intelligence as it is possible to possess, to the person whom I love best; as you, madam, are that person, it will depend entirely upon yourself, whether

or not you become gifted with this amount of intelligence, provided that you are willing to marry me."

The Princess was struck dumb with astonishment, and replied not a word.

"I see," said Riquet with the Tuft, "that this proposal troubles you, and I am not surprised, but I will give you a full year to consider it."

The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time was so anxious to have a great deal, that she thought the end of that year would never come; so she at once accepted the offer that was made her. She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him that day twelve months, than she felt herself quite another person to what she had previously been. She found she was able to say whatever she pleased, with a readiness past belief, and of saying it in a clever, but easy and natural manner. She immediately began a sprightly and well-sustained conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, and was so brilliant in her talk, that Riquet with the Tuft began to think he had given her more wit than he had reserved for himself. On her return to the palace, the whole Court was puzzled to account for a change so sudden and extraordinary; for the number of foolish things which they had been accustomed to hear from her, she now made as many sensible and exceedingly witty remarks. All the Court was in a state of joy not to be described. The younger sister alone was not altogether pleased, for, having lost her superiority over her sister in the way of intelligence, she now only appeared by her side as a very unpleasing-looking person.

The King now began to be guided by his elder daughter's advice, and at times even held his Council in her apartments. The news of the change of affairs was spread abroad, and all the young princes of the neighbouring kingdoms exerted themselves to gain her affection, and nearly all of them asked her hand in marriage. She found none of them, however, intelligent enough to please her, and she listened to all of them, without engaging herself to one.

At length arrived a Prince, so rich and powerful, so clever and so handsome, that she could not help listening willingly to his addresses. Her father, having perceived this, told her that he left her at perfect liberty to choose a husband for herself, and that she had only to make known her decision. As the more intelligence we possess, the more difficulty we find in making up our mind on such a matter as this, she begged her father, after having thanked him, to allow her time to think about it.

She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood in which she had met Riquet with the Tuft, in order to meditate more uninterruptedly over what she had to do. While she was walking, deep in thought, she heard a dull sound beneath her feet, as of many persons running to and fro, and busily

occupied. Having listened more attentively, she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan;" another, "Give me that kettle;" another, "Put some wood on the fire." At the same moment the ground opened, and she saw beneath her what appeared to be a large kitchen, full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants necessary for the preparation of a magnificent banquet. There came forth a band of about twenty to thirty cooks, who went and established themselves in an avenue of the wood, at a very long table, and who, each with the larding-pin in his hand and the tail of his fur cap over his ear, set to work, keeping time to a harmonious song.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, asked the men for whom they were working.

"Madam," replied the chief among them, "for Prince Riquet with the Tuft, whose marriage will take place to-morrow." The Princess, still more surprised than she was before, and suddenly recollecting that it was just a twelvemonth from the day on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft, was overcome with trouble and amazement. The reason of her not having remembered her promise was, that when she made it she had been a very foolish person, and when she became gifted with the new mind that the Prince had given her, she had forgotten all her follies.

She had not taken another thirty steps, when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, gaily and splendidly attired, like a Prince about to be married. "You see, madam," said he, "I keep my word punctually, and I doubt not that you have come thither to keep yours, and to make me, by the giving of your hand, the happiest of men."

"I confess to you, frankly," answered the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind on that matter, and that I do not think I shall ever be able to do so in the way you wish." "You astonish me, madam," said Riquet with the Tuft. "I have no doubt I do," said the Princess; "and assuredly, had I to deal with a stupid person, with a man without intelligence, I should feel greatly perplexed. 'A Princess is bound by her word,' he would say to me, 'and you must marry me, as you have promised to do so.' But as the person to whom I speak is, of all men in the world, the one of greatest sense and understanding, I am certain he will listen to reason. You know that, when I was no better than a fool, I nevertheless could not decide to marry you—how can you expect, now that I have the mind which you have given me, and which renders me much more difficult to please than before, that I should take to-day a resolution which I could not then? If you seriously thought of marrying me, you did very wrong to take away my stupidity, and so enable me to see more clearly than I saw then." "If a man without intelligence," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "who reproached you with your breach of promise, might have a right, as you have just intimated, to be treated with

indulgence, why would you, madam, that I should receive less consideration in a matter which affects the entire happiness of my life? Is it reasonable that persons of intellect should be in a worse position than those that have none? Can you assert this—you who have so much, and who so earnestly desired to possess it? But let us come to the point, if you please. Setting aside my ugliness, is there anything in me that displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, or my manners?"

"Not in the least," replied the Princess; "I admire in you everything you have mentioned."

Then said the Princess "I wish that you may be the handsomest prince in the world."

Riquet with the Tuft.

"If that is so," rejoined Riquet with the Tuft, "I shall soon be happy, as you have it in your power to make me the most pleasing looking of men."

"How can that be done?" asked the Princess.

"It can be done," said Riquet with the Tuft, "if you love me sufficiently to wish that it should be. And, in order, madam, that you should have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy, who, on the day I was born, endowed me with the power to give intelligence to the person I chose, gave you also the power to render handsome the man you should love, and on whom you should wish to bestow this favour."

"If such be the fact," said the Princess, "I wish, with all my heart, that you should become the handsomest and most lovable Prince in the world, and I bestow the gift on you to the fullest extent in my power."

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes, of all men in the world, the handsomest, the best made, and most attractive she had ever seen. There are some who assert that it was not the spell of the fairy, but love alone that caused this metamorphosis. They say that the Princess, having reflected on the perseverance of her lover, on his prudence, and on all the good qualities of his heart and mind, no longer saw the deformity of his body, or the ugliness of his features; that his hump appeared to her nothing more than a good-natured shrug of his shoulders, and that instead of noticing, as she had done, how badly he limped, she saw in him only a certain lounging air, which charmed her. They say also that his eyes, which squinted, only seemed to her the more brilliant for this; and that the crookedness of his glance was to her merely expressive of his great love; and, finally, that his great red nose had in it, to her mind, something martial and heroic. However this may be, the Princess promised on the spot to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King, her father. The King, having learned that

his daughter entertained a great regard for Riquet with the Tuft, whom he knew also to be a very clever and wise Prince, received him with pleasure as his son-in-law. The wedding took place the next morning, as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and according to the orders which he had given a long time before.

No beauty, no talent, has power aboveSome indefinite charm discern'd only by love.

LITTLE THUMBLING

ONCE upon a time there was a woodcutter and his wife who had seven children, all boys. The eldest was but ten years old, and the youngest only seven. People wondered that the woodcutter had so many children so near in age, but the fact was, that several of them were twins. He and his wife were very poor, and their seven children were a great burden to them, as not one of them was yet able to earn his livelihood. What troubled them still more was, that the youngest was very delicate, and seldom spoke, which they considered a proof of stupidity rather than of good sense. He was very diminutive, and, when first born, scarcely bigger than one's thumb, and so they called him Little Thumbling.

This poor child was the scapegoat of the house, and was blamed for everything that happened. Nevertheless, he was the shrewdest and most sensible of all his brothers, and if he spoke little, he listened a great deal.

There came a year of bad harvest, and the famine was so severe that these poor people determined to get rid of their children. One evening, when they were all in bed, and the woodcutter was sitting over the fire with his wife, he said to her, with an aching heart, "You see plainly that we can no longer find food for our children. I cannot let them die of hunger before my very eyes, and I have made up my mind to take them to the wood to-morrow, and there lose them, which will be easily done, for whilst they are busy tying up the faggots, we have only to run away unseen by them." "Ah!" exclaimed the woodcutter's wife, "Can you find the heart to lose your own children?" In vain her husband represented to her their great poverty; she would not consent to the deed. She was poor, but she was their mother. After a while, however, having thought over the misery it would be to her to see them die of hunger, she assented to her husband's proposal, and went weeping to bed.

Little Thumbling had overheard all they said, for having found out, as he lay in his bed, that they were talking of their affairs, he got up quietly and crept under his father's stool, so as to listen to what they were saying without been seen. He went to bed again, but did not sleep a wink the rest of the night, thinking what he should do. He got up early, and went down to the banks of the stream; there he filled his pockets with small white pebbles, and then returned home. They set out all together, and Little Thumbling said not a word to his brothers of what he had overheard. They entered a very thick forest, wherein, at ten paces distant, they could not see one another. The woodcutter began to cut wood, and the children to pick up brushwood for the faggots. The father and mother, seeing them busy at work, gradually stole farther and farther away from them, and then suddenly ran off down a little winding path.

'The boys followed him.'

When the children found themselves all alone, they began to scream and cry with all their might. Little Thumbling let them scream, well knowing how he could get home again, for on their way to the forest, he had dropped all along the road the little white pebbles he had in his pockets. He then said to them, "Have no fear, brothers; my father and mother have left us here, but I will take you safely home; only follow me." They followed him, and he led them back to the house by the same road that they had taken to the forest. They were afraid to go inside at once, but placed themselves close to the door, to listen to what their father and mother were saying. It chanced that just at the moment that the woodcutter and his wife reached home, the lord of the manor sent them ten crowns, which he had owed them a long time, and which they had given up all hope of receiving. This was new life to them, for the poor things were actually starving. The woodcutter immediately sent his wife to the butcher's, and, as it was many a day since they had tasted meat, she bought three times as much as was sufficient for two people's supper. When they had appeased their hunger, the woodcutter's wife said, "Alas! where now are our poor children? They would fare merrily on what we have left. But it was you, William, who would lose them. Truly did I say we should repent it. What are they now doing in the forest? Alas! Heaven help me! the wolves have, perhaps, already devoured them. Cruel man that you are, thus to have lost your children!"

The woodcutter began at last to lose his temper, for she repeated over twenty times that they would repent the deed, and that she had said it would be so. He threatened to beat her if she did not hold her tongue. It was not that the woodcutter was not, perhaps, even more sorry than his wife, but that she made so much noise about it, and that he was like many other people, who are fond of women who say the right thing, but are annoyed by those who are always in the right. The wife was all in tears. "Alas! where are now my children, my poor children?" She uttered her cry, at last, so loudly, that the children, who were at the door, heard her, and began to call out all together, "Here we are! here we are!" She rushed to the door to open it, and embracing them, exclaimed, "How thankful I am to see you again, my dear children; you are very tired and hungry; and you, little Peter, how dirty you are! come here and let me wash you." Peter was her eldest son, and she loved him better than all the rest, because he was red-headed, and she was rather red-haired herself. They sat down to supper and ate with an appetite that delighted their father and mother, to whom they related how frightened they had been in the forest, nearly all keeping on speaking at the same time. The good people were overjoyed to see their children around them once more, and their joy lasted as long as the ten crowns. When the money was spent, however, they fell back into their former state ofmisery, and resolved

to lose their children again; and to make quite sure of doing so this time, they determined to lead them much further from home than they had before.

They could not talk of this so secretly, but that they were overheard by Little Thumbling, who reckoned upon being able to get out of the difficulty by the same means as the first time; but though he got up very early to collect the little pebbles, he did not succeed in his object, for he found the house door double locked. He was at his wit's end what to do, when his mother having given each of them a piece of bread for their breakfast, it occurred to him that he might make the bread take the place of the pebbles, by strewing crumbs along the path as they went, and so he put his piece in his pocket. The father and mother led them into the thickest and darkest part of the forest, and as soon as they had done so, they turned into a bypath, and left them there. Little Thumbling did not trouble himself much, for he believed he could easily find his way back by help of the crumbs which he had scattered wherever he had passed; but he was greatly surprised to find not a single crumb left—the birds had come and picked them all up. The poor children were now, indeed, in great distress; the further they wandered, the deeper they plunged into the forest. Night came on, and a great wind arose, which filled them with terror. They fancied they heard nothing on every side but the howling of wolves, running towards them to devour them. They scarcely dared to speak or look behind them. Then there came a heavy rain, which drenched them to the skin; they slipped at every step, tumbling into the mud, out of which they scrambled covered with dirt, not knowing what to do with their hands. Little Thumbling climbed up a tree to try if he could see anything from the top of it. Having looked about on all sides, he saw a little light, like that of a candle, but it was a long way off, on the other side of the forest. He came down again, and when he had reached the ground, he could no longer see the light. He was in despair at this, but having walked on with his brothers for some time in the direction of the light, he caught sight of it again as they emerged from the forest.

At length they reached the house where the candle was shining, not without many alarms, for often they lost sight of it altogether, and always when they went down into the hollows. They knocked loudly at the door, and a good woman came to open it. She asked them what they wanted. Little Thumbling told her they were poor children who had lost their way in the forest, and who begged a night's lodgings for charity's sake. The woman, seeing they were all so pretty, began to weep, and said to them, "Alas! my poor children, to what a place have you come! Know you not that this is the house of an ogre who eats little children?" "Alas!" replied Little Thumbling, who trembled from head to foot, as indeed did all his brothers, "what shall we do? We shall certainly be all eaten up by the wolves to-night, if you do not give us shelter,

and, in that case, we would rather be eaten by the ogre; perhaps he may have pity upon us, if you are kind enough to ask him." The ogre's wife, who thought that she might be able to hide them from her husband till the next morning, let the children come in, and led them where they could warm themselves by a good fire, for there was a whole sheep on the spit, roasting for the ogre's supper.

Just as they were beginning to get warm they heard two or three loud knocks at the door. It was the ogre who had come home. His wife immediately made the children hide under the bed, and went to open the door. The ogre first asked if his supper was ready, and if she had drawn the wine, and with that he sat down to his meal. The mutton was all but raw, but he liked it all the better for that. He sniffed right and left, saying that he smelt fresh meat. "It must be the calf I have just skinned," said his wife. "I tell you, I smell fresh meat," replied the ogre, giving an angry glance at his wife; "there is something here I do not understand." With these words, he rose from the table and went straight towards the bed. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "so this is the way in which you would deceive me, you wretched woman! I do not know what hinders me from eating you also! It is well for you that you are such an old creature! But here is some game, which comes in handy, and will serve to feast three of my ogre friends, who are soon coming to pay me a visit." He dragged the children from under the bed, one after the other. They fell upon their knees, begging for mercy, but they had to deal with the most cruel of all the ogres, and who, far from feeling pity for them, devoured them already with his eyes, and said to his wife that they would be dainty bits, when she had made a good sauce for them. He went and took up a large knife, and as he came towards the children again, he whetted it on a long stone that he held in his left hand. He had already seized one of them, when his wife said to him, "Why are you doing that at this hour of night? Will it not be time enough to-morrow?" "Hold your peace," replied the ogre. "They will be the more tender." "But you have already too much food," continued his wife. "Here are a calf, two sheep, and half a pig." "You are right," said the ogre, "give them a good supper, that they may keep plump, and then put them to bed." The good woman was rejoiced, and brought them plenty of supper; but they could not eat, they were so overcome with fright. As for the ogre, he seated himself to drink again, delighted to think he had such a treat in store for his friends. He drained a dozen goblets more than usual, which made him feel sleepy and heavy, and obliged him to go to bed.

The ogre had seven daughters, who were still young children. These little ogresses had the most beautiful complexions, as they lived on fresh meat like their father; but they had very small round grey eyes, hooked noses, and very large mouths, with long teeth, exceedingly sharp, and wide apart.

They were not very wicked as yet; but they promised to become so, for they already began to bite little children, that they might suck their blood. They had been sent to bed early, and were all seven in a large bed, each wearing a crown of gold on her head. In the same room was another bed of the same size. It was in this bed that the ogre's wife put the seven little boys to sleep, after which she went to bed herself.

Little Thumbling, who had noticed that the ogre's daughters had golden crowns on their heads, and who was afraid that the ogre might repent not having killed him and his brothers that evening, got up in the middle of the night, and, taking off his own nightcap, and those of his brothers, went very softly and placed them on the heads of the ogre's daughters, first taking off their golden crowns, which he put on his brothers and himself, in order that the ogre might mistake them for his daughters, and his daughters for the boys whom he wanted to kill.

Everything turned out as Little Thumbling had expected. The ogre awoke at midnight, and regretted having put off till the morning what he might have done the evening before. He, therefore, jumped suddenly out of bed, and seizing his great knife, "Let us go, and see," said he, "how the young rogues are getting on! I will not think twice about it this time." So he stole on tiptoes up to his daughters' bedroom, and went up to the bed in which lay the little boys, who were all asleep except Thumbling, who was dreadfully frightened when the ogre put his hand on his head to feel it, as he had in turn felt those of his brothers. The ogre, feeling the golden crowns, said, "Truly, I was about to do a pretty piece of work! It's plain I drank too much wine last night." He then went to the bed where his daughters slept, and having felt the little nightcaps that belonged to the boys, "Aha!" cried he, "here are our fine young fellows. Let us to work boldly!" So saying, he, without pause, cut the throats of his seven daughters.

Well satisfied with his deed, he returned and lay down beside his wife. As soon as Little Thumbling heard the ogre snoring, he awoke his brothers, and bade them dress themselves quickly and follow him. They crept down into the garden and jumped over the wall. They ran nearly all night long, trembling the whole time, and not knowing whither they were going. The ogre, awaking in the morning, said to his wife, "Go upstairs and dress those young scamps you took in last night." The ogress was astonished at her husband's kindness, never guessing what he meant, and only fancying that he wished her to go and put on their clothes. She went upstairs, where she was horrified to find that her own children had been killed. The first thing she did was to faint, for it is the first thing that almost all women do in similar circumstances. The ogre, fearing that his wife would be too long over the job he had given her to do, went upstairs to help her. His surprise was

not less than had been his wife's, when his eyes fell on the frightful spectacle.

"Ah! what have I done?" he exclaimed. "The young wretches shall pay for it, and that at once." He threw a jugful of water in his wife's face, and having brought her to, said, "Quick! fetch me my seven-league boots, that I may go after them and catch them." He set out, and after running in every direction, came at last upon the track of the poor children, who were not more than a hundred yards from their father's house. They saw the ogre striding from hill to hill, and stepping over rivers as easily as if they were the smallest brooks. Little Thumbling, who caught sight of a hollow rock close by where they were, hid his brothers in it, and crept in after them, keeping his eye on the ogre all the while. The ogre, feeling very tired with his long journey to no purpose—for seven-league boots are very fatiguing to the wearer—thought he should like to rest, and, by chance, sat down on the very rock in which the little boys had concealed themselves. As he was quite worn out, he had not rested long before he fell asleep, and began to snore so dreadfully, that the poor children were not less frightened than they were when he took up the great knife to cut their throats.

Little Thumbling was not so much alarmed, and told his brothers to run quickly into the house while the ogre was sound asleep, and not to be uneasy about him. They took his advice and soon reached home. Little Thumbling then going up to the ogre, gently pulled off his boots, and put them on himself. The boots were very large and very long; but as they were enchanted boots, they had the quality of becoming larger or smaller according to the leg of the person who wore them, so that they fitted him as if they had been made for him. He went straight to the ogre's house, where he found the wife weeping over her murdered daughters. "Your husband," said Little Thumbling to her, "is in great danger, for he has been seized by a band of robbers, who have sworn to kill him if he does not give them all his gold and silver. Just as they had their daggers at his throat, he saw me, and begged me to come and tell you what had happened to him, and sent word that you were to give me all his ready money, without keeping back any of it, as otherwise they will kill him without mercy. As time pressed, he insisted on my taking his seven-league boots, which you see I have on, in order that I might make haste, and also that you might be sure I was not imposing upon you."

The good woman, very much alarmed, immediately gave him all the money she could find, for the ogre was not a bad husband to her, although he ate little children. Little Thumbling, thus laden with all the ogre's wealth, hastened back to his father's house, where he was received with great joy.

There are many persons who differ in their account of this part of the story, and who pretend that Little Thumbling never stole the ogre's money, and that he really only took the seven-league boots, as he felt no scruple in doing this, seeing that the ogre used them expressly for running after little children. These people assert that they have heard it from good authority, and that they have eaten and drunk in the woodcutter's house. They assure us that when Little Thumbling had put on the ogre's boots, he went to Court, where he knew they were in much trouble about an army which was within two hundred leagues of them, and were anxious to hear the result of a battle that had been fought. They say he went to find the King, and told him that, if he wished it, he would bring him back news of the army before the end of the day. The King promised him a large sum of money if he did so.

Little Thumbling brought news that very evening, and this first journey having made him well known, he got whatever he chose to ask, for the King paid him most liberally for carrying his orders to the army; a great number of ladies also gave him whatever he wished, in return for news of their lovers, and this brought him in the greatest gain.

After he had been a courier for some time, and had saved a great deal of money, he returned to his father, and it is impossible to imagine the joy of his family at seeing him again. He made them all comfortable. He bought newly-made offices for his father and brothers, and by these means established them all, making his own way at Court at the same time.

Often is the handsome boyMade, alone, his father's joy;While the tiny, timid childIs neglected, or reviled,Notwithstanding, sometimes heLives, of all, the prop to be.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

THERE was once a merchant, who was very, very rich. He had six children, three boys and three girls, and as he was a man of good sense, he spared no expense in order that they might be well educated, and gave them masters of every kind. His daughters were all beautiful, but his youngest one was especially admired, and from the time she was a small child, had been only known and spoken of as "Beauty." The name remained with her as she grew older, which gave rise to a great deal of jealousy on the part of her sisters. The young girl was not only more beautiful than they were, but also kinder and more amiable. The elder daughters gave themselves great airs, for they were overweeningly proud of being so rich, and would not condescend to receive visits from the daughters of other merchants, as they only cared for the society of people in high position. Not a day passed that they did not go to a ball, or a theatre, or for a drive or walk in a fashionable part of the town, and they made fun of their sister, who spent a great part of her time in study. The girls received many offers of marriage from well-to-do merchants, as they were known to be rich, but the two elder ones replied, that they did not intend to marry anyone, unless a duke or an earl could be found for a husband.

Beauty, the youngest, was more polite, and thanked those who asked for her hand, but she was, as she told them, too young as yet, and wished to remain for a few more years as a companion to her father.

Then, all at once, the merchant lost the whole of his fortune; nothing was left to him but a little house, situated far away in the country. He told his children, weeping, that they would be obliged to go and live there, and that, even then, they would have to support themselves by the work of their own hands. His two elder daughters refused to leave the town; they had many admirers, they said, who would be only too glad to marry them, although they were now without fortune. But these young ladies found themselves greatly mistaken, for their admirers did not even care to look at them, now that they were poor. They had made themselves generally disliked, on account of their haughty behaviour. "They do not deserve to be pitied," said everyone; "we are very glad that their pride is humbled; let them go and play the fine lady, keeping sheep." But people spoke differently of Beauty. "We are very sorry," they said, "that she is in trouble; she is such a good girl! she always spoke so kindly to the poor! she was so gentle and courteous!" Several of her suitors, also, still wished to marry her, although she had not a penny, but she told them that she could not think of leaving her father in his distress, and that she intended going with him into the country, to comfort him, and help with the work. Beauty was very unhappy at losing her fortune, but she said to herself, "It is no use crying, tears will not give me back my riches; I must try and be happy without them."

As soon as they were settled in their country house, the merchant and his sons began to till the ground. Beauty rose every morning at four o'clock, and made haste to clean the house and prepare the dinner. She found her duties very painful and fatiguing at first, for she had not been accustomed to do the work of a servant; but in two months' time she had grown stronger, and the activity of her life gave her fresh health and colour. When her day's work was over, she amused herself with reading, or music; sometimes she sat down to her wheel, and sang to her spinning. Meanwhile her two sisters were wearied to death with the dulness of their life; they stayed in bed till ten o'clock, did nothing all day but saunter about, and for their only diversion talked with regret of their former fine clothes and friends. "Look at our young sister," they said to one another; "she is so low-minded and stupid, that she is quite content with her miserable condition."

The good merchant thought differently: he knew that Beauty was better fitted to shine in society than they were; he admired the good qualities of his youngest child, especially her patience, for her sisters, not content with allowing her to do all the work of the house, took every opportunity of insulting her.

The family had lived in this solitude for a year, when a letter arrived for the merchant, telling him that a vessel, on which there was merchandise belonging to him, had arrived safely in port. The two elder girls were nearly out of their minds with joy when they heard this good news, for now they hoped that they should be able to leave the country. They begged their father, ere he departed, to bring them back dresses and capes, head-dresses, and all sorts of odds and ends of fancy attire. Beauty asked for nothing; for, as she thought to herself, all the money that the merchandise would bring in, would not be sufficient to pay for everything that her sisters wished for. "Is there nothing you wish me to buy for you?" her father said to her. "As you are so kind as to think of me," she replied, "I pray you to bring me a rose, for we have not one here." Now Beauty did not really care about the rose, but she had no wish to seem, by her example, to reprove her sisters, who would have said that she did not ask for anything, in order to make herself appear more considerate than they were.

The father left them, but on arriving at his destination, he had to go to law about his merchandise, and after a great deal of trouble, he turned back home as poor as he came. He had not many more miles to go, and was already enjoying, in anticipation, the pleasure of seeing his children again, when, passing on his journey through a large wood, he lost his way. It was snowing hard; the wind was so violent that he was twice blown off his horse, and, as the night was closing in, he was afraid that he would die of cold and hunger, or that he would be eaten by the wolves, that he could hear howling around him. All at once, however, he caught sight of a bright light, which

appeared to be some way off, at the further end of a long avenue of trees. He walked towards it, and soon saw that it came from a splendid castle, which was brilliantly illuminated. The merchant thanked God for the help that had been sent him, and hastened towards the castle, but was greatly surprised, on reaching it, to find no one in the courtyard, or about the entrances. His horse, which was following him, seeing the door of a large stable standing open, went in, and finding there some hay and oats, the poor animal, half dead for want of food, began eating with avidity.

The merchant fastened him up in the stable, and went towards the house, but still no one was to be seen; he walked into a large dining-hall, and there he found a good fire, and a table laid for one person, covered with provisions. Being wet to the skin with the rain and snow, he drew near the fire to dry himself, saying, as he did so, "The master of this house, or his servants, will pardon me the liberty I am taking; no doubt they will soon appear." He waited for a considerable time; but when eleven o'clock had struck, and still he had seen no one, he could no longer resist the feeling of hunger, and seizing a chicken, he ate it up in two mouthfuls, trembling the while. Then he took a draught or two of wine, and, his courage returning, he left the dining-hall and made his way through several large rooms magnificently furnished. Finally he came to a room where there was a comfortable bed, and as it was now past midnight, and he was very tired, he made up his mind to shut the door and lie down.

It was ten o'clock next morning before he awoke, when, to his great surprise, he found new clothes put in place of his own, which had been completely spoiled. "This palace must certainly belong to some good fairy," he said to himself, "who, seeing my condition, has taken pity upon me." He looked out of the window; the snow was gone, and he saw instead, bowers of delicious flowers which were a delight to the eye.

He went again into the dining-hall where he had supped the night before, and saw a little table with chocolate upon it. "I thank you, good madam fairy," he said aloud, "for your kindness in thinking of my breakfast."

The merchant, having drunk his chocolate, went out to find his horse; as he passed under a bower of roses, he remembered that Beauty had asked him to bring her one, and he plucked a branch on which several were growing. He had scarcely done so, when he heard a loud roar, and saw coming towards him a Beast, of such a horrible aspect, that he nearly fainted. "You are very ungrateful," said the Beast in a terrible voice; "I received you into my castle, and saved your life, and now you steal my roses, which I care for more than anything else in the world. Death alone can make amends for what you have done; I give you a quarter of an hour, no more, in which to ask forgiveness of God."

The merchant threw himself on his knees, and with clasped hands, said to the Beast, "I pray you, my lord, to forgive me. I did not think to offend you by picking a rose for one of my daughters, who asked me to take it her." "I am not called my lord," responded the monster, "but simply the Beast, I do not care for compliments; I like people to say what they think; so do not think to mollify me with your flattery. But you tell me you have some daughters; I will pardon you on condition that one of your daughters will come of her own free will to die in your place. Do not stop to argue with me; go! and if your daughter refuses to die for you, swear that you will return yourself in three months' time."

The merchant had no intention of sacrificing one of his daughters to this hideous monster, but he thought, "At least I shall have the pleasure of embracing them once more." He swore therefore to return, and the Beast told him that he might go when he liked; "but," added he, "I do not wish you to go from me with empty hands. Go back to the room in which you slept, there you will find a large empty trunk; you may fill it with whatever you please, and I will have it conveyed to your house." With these words the Beast withdrew, and the merchant said to himself, "If I must die, I shall at least have the consolation of leaving my children enough for their daily bread."

He returned to the room where he had passed the night, and finding there a great quantity of gold pieces, he filled the trunk, of which the Beast had spoken, with these, closed it, and remounting his horse, which he found still in the stable, he rode out from the castle, his sadness now as great as had been his joy on entering it. His horse carried him of its own accord along one of the roads through the forest, and in a few hours the merchant was again in his own little house.

His children gathered round him; but instead of finding pleasure in their caresses, he began to weep as he looked upon them. He held in his hand the branch of roses which he had brought for Beauty. "Take them," he said, as he gave them to her, "your unhappy father has paid dearly for them." And then he told his family of the melancholy adventure that had befallen him.

The two elder girls, when they had heard his tale, cried and screamed, and began saying all sorts of cruel things to Beauty, who did not shed a tear. "See what the pride of this wretched little creature has brought us to!" said they. "Why couldn't she ask for wearing apparel as we did? but no, she must needs show herself off as a superior person. It is she who will be the cause of our father's death, and she does not even cry!"

"That would be of little use," replied Beauty. "Why should I cry about my father's death? He is not going to die. Since the monster is willing to accept one of his daughters, I will give myself up to him, that he may vent his full

anger upon me; and I am happy in so doing, for by my death I shall have the joy of saving my father, and of proving my love for him."

"No, my sister," said the three brothers, "you shall not die; we will go and find out this monster, and we will either kill him or die beneath his blows." "Do not hope to kill him," said their father to them; "for the Beast is so powerful, that I fear there are no means by which he could be destroyed. My Beauty's loving heart fills mine with gladness, but she shall not be exposed to such a terrible death. I am old, I have but a little while to live; I shall but lose a few years of life, which I regret on your account, and on yours alone, my children."

"I am determined, my father," said Beauty, "that you shall not return to that castle without me; you cannot prevent me following you. Although I am young, life has no great attraction for me, and I would far rather be devoured by the monster than die of the grief which your death would cause me."

In vain the others tried to dissuade her, Beauty persisted in her determination to go to the castle; and her sisters were not sorry about it, for the virtues of their young sister had aroused in them a strong feeling of jealousy.

The merchant was so taken up with grief at losing his daughter, that he quite forgot about the trunk which he had filled with gold pieces, but, to his astonishment, he had no sooner shut himself into his room for the night, than he found it beside his bed. He resolved not to tell his children of his newly-obtained riches, for he knew that his daughters would then wish to return to the town, and he had made up his mind to die where he was in the country. He confided his secret, however, to Beauty, who told him that there had been visitors at the house during his absence, among them two who were in love with her sisters. She begged her father to marry them; for she was so good of heart, that she loved them and freely forgave them all the unkindness they had shown her.

The two hard-hearted girls rubbed their eyes with an onion that they might shed tears on the departure of their father and Beauty; but the brothers wept sincerely, as did also the merchant; Beauty alone would not cry, fearing that it might increase their sorrow. The horse took the road that led to the castle, and as evening fell, it came in view, illuminated as before. Again the horse was the only one in the stable, and once more the merchant entered the large dining-hall, this time with his daughter, and there they found the table magnificently laid for two.

The merchant had not the heart to eat; but Beauty, doing her utmost to appear cheerful, sat down to the table and served him to something. Then

she said to herself, "The Beast wants to fatten me before he eats me, since he provides such good cheer."

They had finished their supper, when they heard a great noise, and the merchant, weeping, said farewell to his poor daughter, for he knew it was the Beast. Beauty could not help shuddering when she saw the dreadful shape approaching; but she did her best not to give way to her fear, and when the Beast asked her if it was of her own free will that she had come, she told him, trembling, that it was so. "You are very good, and I am much obliged to you," said the Beast. "Good man, to-morrow morning you will leave, and do not venture ever to come here again." "Good-bye, Beast," replied Beauty, and the Beast immediately retired. "Alas! my daughter," said the merchant, clasping Beauty in his arms, "I am half dead with fright. Listen to me, and leave me here." "No, my father," said Beauty, without faltering. "You will depart to-morrow morning, and you will leave me under Heaven's protection, maybe I shall find pity and help."

'Her father was just arriving.'

Beauty & the Beast

They retired to rest, thinking that they would have no sleep that night; but no sooner were they in bed than their eyes closed. In her dreams there appeared to Beauty a lady, who said to her, "I have pleasure in the goodness of your heart, Beauty; your good action in giving your life to save that of your father will not be without its reward." Beauty told her father next morning of her dream, and although it afforded him some consolation, it did not prevent his loud cries of grief when at last he was forced to bid good-bye to his dear daughter.

After his departure, Beauty went back and sat down in the dining-hall, and began weeping herself. She was, however, of a courageous disposition, and so she commended herself to God, and resolved not to be miserable during the short time still left her to live, for she quite thought that the Beast would eat her that evening. In the meanwhile she resolved to walk about and look over the fine castle she was in. She found it impossible not to admire its beauty, but her surprise was great when she came to a door over which was written: Beauty's Room. She hastily opened the door, and was dazzled by the magnificence of the whole apartment; what most attracted her admiration, however, was a large bookcase, a piano, and several books of music.

"He does not wish me to feel dull," she said in a low voice. Then the thought came to her, "If I was only going to live here a day, there would not have been so much provided for my amusement." This thought revived her courage.

She opened the bookcase and there saw a book on which was written in letters of gold:—

"Wish what you like, Command what you will, You alone are Queen and Mistress here."

"Alas!" she murmured, sighing, "I wish for nothing but to see my dear father again, and to know what he is doing at this moment." She had only said this to herself in a low voice, what was her surprise, therefore, when, turning towards a large mirror, she saw her home, and her father, just returned, wearing a sad countenance; her sisters went forward to meet him, and in spite of the expression of sorrow which they tried to assume, it was evident in their faces that they were delighted to have lost their sister. In another minute, the picture had disappeared, and Beauty could not help thinking that the Beast was very kind hearted, and that she had not much to fear from him.

She found the table laid for her at noon, and during her dinner she was entertained with a delightful concert, although no creature was visible.

In the evening, as she was just sitting down to her meal, she heard the sound of the Beast's voice, and could not help shuddering. "Beauty," said the monster to her, "will you allow me to look on while you are eating your supper?" "You are master here," replied Beauty, trembling. "Not so," rejoined the Beast, "it is you who alone are mistress; if I annoy you, you have only to tell me to go, and I will leave you at once. But confess now, you think me very ugly, do you not?" "That is true," said Beauty, "for I cannot tell a lie; but I think you are very kind."

"You are right," said the monster; "but, besides being ugly, I am also stupid; I know, well enough, that I am only a Beast."

"No one is stupid, who believes himself to be wanting in intelligence, it is the fool who is not aware of being without it." "Eat, Beauty," said the monster to her, "and try to find pleasure in your own house; for everything here belongs to you. I should be very sorry if you were unhappy." "You are everything that is kind," said Beauty. "I assure you that your goodness of heart makes me happy; when I think of that, you no longer appear so ugly to me." "Ah, yes!" replied the Beast, "I have a kind heart, but for all that I am a monster." "Many men are more monsters than you," said Beauty; "and I care more for you with your countenance, than for those who with their human face hide a false, corrupt, and ungrateful heart." "If I had sufficient wit," responded the Beast, "I would make you a pretty answer in return for your words; but I am too stupid for that, and all I can say is, that I am very grateful to you."

Beauty ate her supper with a good appetite. She had lost almost all her fear of the monster, but she almost died of fright, when he said, "Beauty, will you be my wife?"

She sat for a while without answering; she was alarmed at the thought of arousing the monster's anger by refusing him. Nevertheless she finallysaid, trembling, "No, Beast." At this the poor monster sighed, and the hideous sound he made echoed throughout the castle, but Beauty was soonreassured, for the Beast, after sadly bidding her adieu, left the room, turning his head from time to time to look at her again.

A strong feeling of compassion for the Beast came over Beauty when she was left alone. "Alas!" she said, "it is a pity he is so ugly, for he is so good!"

Beauty spent three months in the castle, more or less happily. The Beast paid her a visit every evening, and conversed with her as she ate her supper, showing good sense in his talk, but not what the world deems cleverness. Every day Beauty discovered some fresh good quality in the monster; she grew accustomed to his ugliness, and far from fearing his visit, she would often look at her watch to see if it was nearly nine o'clock, for the Beast always arrived punctually at that hour. There was only one thing which caused distress to Beauty, and that was, that every evening before retiring, the monster asked her if she would be his wife, and always appeared overcome with sorrow at her refusal. One day she said to him, "You grieve me, Beast; I wish it were possible for me to marry you, but I am too truthful to make you believe that such a thing could ever happen; I shall always be your friend, try to be satisfied with that." "I suppose I must," responded the Beast; "I know I am horrible to look upon, but I love you very much. However, I am but too happy that you consent to remain here; promise me that you will never leave me." The colour came into Beauty's face; her mirror had shown her that her father was ill with the grief of losing her, and she was hoping to see him again. "I would promise without hesitation never to leave you," said Beauty to him, "but I do so long to see my father again, that I shall die of sorrow if you refuse me this pleasure." "I would rather die myself," said the monster, "than give you pain; I will send you home to your father, you will stay there, and your poor Beast will die of grief at your absence." "No, no," said Beauty, crying; "I care for you too much to wish to cause your death; I promise to return in a week's time. You have let me see that my sisters are married, and that my brothers have entered the army. My father is all alone, let me remain with him a week." "You shall be with him to-morrow morning, but remember your promise. When you wish to return, you have only to put your ring on the table before going to bed. Farewell, Beauty." The Beast gave his usual sigh as he said these words, and Beauty went to bed feeling troubled at the thought of the sorrow she had caused him. When she awoke the following morning, she found herself

at home, and ringing a little bell that stood beside her bed, the maid-servant came in, who gave a loud cry of astonishment at seeing her there. Her father ran in on hearing the cry, and almost died of joy when he found his dear daughter, and they remained clasped in each other's arms for more than a quarter of an hour.

Beauty, after the first transports of joy were over, remembered that she had no clothes with her; but the servant told her that she had just found a trunk in the next room, in which were dresses of gold fabric, trimmed with diamonds. Beauty thanked the kind Beast for his thoughtfulness. She took out the least costly of the dresses, and told the maid to lock the others away again, as she wished to give them to her sisters; but she had no sooner uttered these words, than the trunk disappeared. Her father said to her that the Beast evidently wished her to keep them all for herself, and the trunk and the dresses immediately reappeared.

Beauty dressed herself, and, meanwhile, news of her arrival was sent to her sisters, who came in haste with their husbands. They were both extremely unhappy. The eldest had married a young man who was as handsome as nature could make him, but he was so in love with his own face, that he could think of nothing else from morning to night, and cared nothing for the beauty of his wife. The second had married a very witty and clever man, but he only made use of his ability to put everybody in a bad temper, beginning with his wife.

Her sisters nearly died of envy when they saw Beauty dressed like a princess, and beautiful as the day. In vain she showered caresses upon them, nothing could stifle their jealousy, which only increased when she told them how happy she was.

These two jealous creatures went into the garden, that they might cry more at their ease. They said to one another, "Why should this wretched little thing be happier than we are? Are we not more attractive than she is?"

"Sister," said the eldest one, "an idea has occurred to me: let us try to keep her here over the week. Her stupid old Beast will be enraged at her breaking her word, and perhaps he will devour her." "You are right, sister," replied the other; "to carry out our plan, we must appear very loving and kind to her." And having settled this, they went back to the house and were so affectionate to her, that Beauty cried for joy. When the week drew to a close, the two sisters showed such signs of grief at her departure, and made such lamentation, that she promised to stay till the end of the second one. Beauty, however, reproached herself for the sorrow she would cause her poor Beast, whom she loved with all her heart; and she began to miss him very much. On the tenth night of her absence, she dreamed that she was in the garden of the castle, and that she saw the Beast lying on the grass,

apparently dying, and that he reproached her with her ingratitude. Beauty awoke with a start, and wept. "I am indeed wicked," she said, "to behave so ungratefully to a Beast who has been so considerate and kind to me! Is it his fault that he is ugly and that he is not clever? He is good, and that is worth everything else. Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with him than my sisters are with their husbands. It is neither beauty nor wit in a husband which makes a wife happy; it is amiability of character, uprightness and generosity: and the Beast has all these good qualities. I do not love him, but I respect him, and I feel both affection for him, and gratitude. I will not make him unhappy; should I do so, I should reproach myself for it as long as I live."

With these words, Beauty rose, placed her ring on a table, and lay down again. The moment she was in bed, she fell asleep, and when she awoke next morning, she saw with delight that she was back in the Beast's castle. She dressed herself magnificently, in order to please him, and the hours seemed to drag as she waited for nine o'clock to strike; but the hour came, and the Beast did not appear.

Then Beauty began to fear that she had caused his death. She ran through the castle, uttering loud cries, for she was in despair. After having looked everywhere, she remembered her dream, and ran into the garden towards the water, where she had seen him in her sleep. She found the poor Beast stretched on the ground, and unconscious, and she thought he was dead. Forgetting her horror at his appearance, she threw herself upon him, and feeling that his heart was still beating, she fetched some water and threw it over his head. The Beast opened his eyes, and said to Beauty, "You forgot your promise; in my grief at losing you, I determined to let myself die of hunger; but I die happy, since I have had the joy of seeing you once again." "No, my dear Beast, you shall not die," exclaimed Beauty. "You shall live to be my husband; I am yours from this moment, and only yours. Alas! I thought the feeling I had for you was only one of friendship; but now I know, by the grief I feel, that I cannot live without you." Beauty had scarcely uttered these words before she saw the castle suddenly become brilliantly illuminated, while fire-works, music, everything indicated the celebration of some joyful event. She did not gaze long, however, at these splendours, but quickly turned her eyes again towards her dear Beast, the thought of whose danger made her tremble with anxiety. But what was her surprise when she saw that the Beast had disappeared, and that a young and handsome Prince was lying at her feet, who thanked her for having released him from enchantment. Although this Prince was fully worthy of her attention, Beauty, nevertheless, could not help asking what had become of the Beast. "You see him at your feet," said the Prince to her. "A wicked fairy condemned me to remain in the form of a monster, until some fair damsel would

consent to marry me, and she forbade me also to betray that I had intelligence. You are the only one who has been kind enough to allow the goodness of my heart to touch yours, and I cannot, even by offering you my crown, acquit myself of obligation to you."

Beauty, agreeably surprised, gave the young Prince her hand, to help him to rise. They passed, side by side, into the castle, and Beauty nearly died of joy, when she found her father and all her family assembled in the dining-hall, the beautiful lady whom she had seen in her dream having transported them thither. "Beauty," said the lady, who was a well-known fairy, "receive the recompense of your noble choice; you preferred virtue to beauty or intelligence, and you therefore deserve to find all these qualities united in one person. You are soon to become a great queen; I trust your exalted position will not destroy your good disposition. As for you," said the fairy, turning to Beauty's sisters, "I know your hearts and all the malice concealed in them. Be turned, therefore, into statues, but preserve your consciousness beneath the stone which will envelop you. You will remain at the entrance of your sister's palace, and I impose no further punishment upon you, than to be the constant witnesses of her happiness. You will not be able to resume your present forms, until you have recognised and confessed your faults, but I greatly fear that you will always remain statues. Pride, anger, greediness, and laziness may be corrected; but nothing short of a miracle can convert the envious and malicious heart." The fairy then gave a tap with her wand, and all those assembled in the dining-hall were immediately transported into the Prince's kingdom. His subjects greeted him with joy; he married Beauty, who lived a long life with him of perfect happiness, for it was founded upon virtue.

THE BENEVOLENT FROG

THERE was once a King who for many years had been engaged in a war with his neighbours; a great number of battles had been fought, and at last the enemy laid siege to his capital. The King, fearing for the safety of the Queen, begged her to retire to a fortified castle, which he himself had never visited but once. The Queen endeavoured, with many prayers and tears, to persuade him to allow her to remain beside him and to share his fate, and it was with loud cries of grief that she was put into her chariot by the King to be driven away. He ordered his guards, however, to accompany her, and promised to steal away when possible to visit her. He tried to comfort her with this hope, although he knew that there was little chance of fulfilling it, for the castle stood a long distance off, surrounded by a thick forest, and only those who were well acquainted with the roads could possibly find their way to it.

The Queen parted from her husband, broken-hearted at leaving him exposed to the dangers of war; she travelled by easy stages, in case the fatigue of so long a journey should make her ill; at last she reached the castle, feeling low-spirited and distressed. When sufficiently rested, she walked about the surrounding country, but found nothing to interest her or divert her thoughts. She saw only far-spreading desert tracts on either side, which gave her more pain than pleasure to look upon; sadly she gazed around her, exclaiming at intervals, "What a contrast between this place and that in which I have lived all my life! If I stay here long I shall die! To whom have I to talk in these solitudes? With whom can I share my troubles? What have I done to the King that he should banish me? He wishes me, it seems, to feel the full bitterness of our separation, by exiling me to this miserable castle."

Thus she lamented; and although the King wrote daily to her, and sent her good news of the progress of the siege, she grew more and more unhappy, and at last determined that she would return to him. Knowing, however, that the officers who were in attendance upon her had received orders not to take her back, unless the King sent a special messenger, she kept her design secret, but ordered a small chariot to be built for her, in which there was only room for one, saying that she should like sometimes to accompany the hunt. She drove herself, and followed so closely on the hounds, that the huntsmen were left behind; by this means she had sole command of her chariot, and could get away whenever she liked. Her only difficulty was her ignorance of the roads that traversed the forest; but she trusted to the kindness of Providence to bring her safely through it. She gave word that there was to be a great hunt, and that she wished everybody to be there; she herself would go in her chariot, and each was to follow a different route, that there might be no possibility of escape for the wild beasts. Everything was

done according to her orders. The young Queen, feeling sure that she should soon see her husband again, dressed herself as becomingly as possible; her hat was covered with feathers of different colours, the front of her dress lavishly trimmed with precious stones, and her beauty, which was of no ordinary kind, made her seem, when so adorned, a second Diana.

While everybody was occupied with the pleasures of the hunt, she gave rein to her horses, encouraged them with voice and whip, and soon their quickened pace became a gallop; then, taking the bit between their teeth, they flew along at such a speed, that the chariot seemed borne by the winds, and the eye could scarcely follow it. Too late the poor Queen repented of her rashness: "What could I have been thinking of?" she said. "How could I have imagined that I should be able to control such wild and fiery horses? Alas! what will become of me? What would the King do if he knew the great danger I am in, he who loves me so dearly, and who only sent me away that I might be in greater safety! This is my gratitude for his tender care!" The air resounded with her piteous lamentations; she invoked Heaven, she called the fairies to her assistance, but it seemed that all the powers had abandoned her. The chariot was overthrown; she had not sufficient strength to jump quickly enough to the ground, and her foot was caughtbetween the wheel and the axle-tree; it was only by a miracle she was saved.

She remained stretched on the ground at the foot of a tree; her heart scarcely beat, she could not speak, and her face was covered with blood. She lay thus for a long time; when at last she opened her eyes, she saw, standing near her, a woman of gigantic stature, clothed only in a lion's skin, with bare arms and legs, her hair tied up with the dried skin of a snake, the head of which dangled over her shoulders; in her hand was a club made of stone, which served her as a walking-stick, and a quiver full of arrows was fastened to her side. When the Queen caught sight of this extraordinary figure, she felt sure that she was dead, for she did not think it was possible that she could be alive after such a terrible accident, and she said in a low voice to herself, "I am not surprised that it is so difficult to resolve to die, since what is to be seen in the other world is so frightful." The giantess, who overheard her words, could not help laughing at the Queen's idea that she was dead. "Take courage," she said to her, "for know that you are still among the living; but your fate is none the less sad. I am the Fairy Lioness, whose dwelling is near here; you must come and live with me." The Queen looked sorrowfully at her, and said, "If you will be good enough, Madam Lioness, to take me back to my castle, and tell the King what ransom you demand, he loves me so dearly, that he will not refuse you even the half of his kingdom." "No," replied the giantess, "I am rich enough, but for some time past my lonely life has seemed dull to me; you are intelligent, and will be able perhaps to amuse me." As she finished speaking, she took the form of a

lioness, and placing the Queen on her back, she carried her to the depths of her cave, and there rubbed her with a spirit which quickly healed the Queen's wounds. But what surprise and misery for the Queen to find herself in this dreadful abode! It was only reached by ten thousand steps, which led down to the centre of the earth; there was no light but that shed by a number of tall lamps, which were reflected in a lake of quicksilver. This lake was covered with monsters, each hideous enough to have frightened a less timid queen; there were owls, screech-owls, ravens, and other birds of ill omen, filling the air with discordant sounds; in the distance could be seen rising a mountain whence flowed the sluggish waters of a stream composed of all the tears shed by unhappy lovers, from the reservoirs of their sad loves. The trees were bare of leaves and fruit, the ground covered with marigolds, briars, and nettles.

She saw beside her a woman of a gigantic size.

The food corresponded to the climate of this miserable country; for a few dried roots, some horse-chestnuts, and thorn-apples, were all that was provided by the Fairy Lioness to appease the hunger of those who fell into her hands.

As soon as the Queen was well enough to begin work, the fairy told her she could build herself a hut, as she was going to remain with her for the rest of her life. On hearing this, the Queen could no longer restrain her tears: "Alas, what have I done to you," she cried, "that you should keep me here? If my death, which I feel is near, would give you pleasure, I pray you, kill me, it is all the kindness I dare hope from you; but do not condemn me to pass a long and melancholy life apart from my husband."

The Lioness only scoffed at her, and told her that the best thing she could do was to dry her tears, and try to please her; that if she acted otherwise, she would be the most miserable person in the world.

"What must I do then," replied the Queen, "to soften your heart?" "I am fond of fly-pasties," said the Lioness. "You must find means of procuring a sufficient number of flies to make me a large and sweet-tasting one." "But," said the Queen, "I see no flies here, and even were there any, it is not light enough to catch them; and if I were to catch some, I have never in my life made pastry, so that you are giving me orders which it is impossible for me to execute." "No matter," said the pitiless Lioness; "that which I wish to have, I will have."

The Queen made no reply: she thought to herself, in spite of the cruel fairy, that she had but one life to lose, and in the condition in which she then was, what was there to fear in death? Instead, therefore, of going in search of flies, she sat herself down under a yew tree, and began to weep and

complain: "Ah, my dear husband, what grief will be yours, when you go to the castle to fetch me, and find I am not there; you will think that I am dead, or faithless, and I would rather that you should mourn the loss of my life, than that of my love; perhaps someone will find the remains of my chariot in the forest, and all the ornaments which I took with me to please you; and when you see these, you will no longer doubt that death has taken me; and how can I tell that you will not give to another the heart's love which you have shared with me? But, at least, I shall not have the pain of knowing this, since I am not to return to the world." She would have continued communing thus with herself for a long time, if she had not been interrupted by the dismal croaking of a raven above her head. She lifted her eyes, and by the feeble light saw a large raven with a frog in its bill, and about to swallow it. "Although I see no help at hand for myself," she said, "I will not let this poor frog perish if I can save it; it suffers as much in its way, as I do in mine, although our conditions are so different," and picking up the first stick she could find, she made the raven drop its prey. The frog fell to the ground, where it lay for a time half-stunned, but finally recovering its froggish senses, it began to speak, and said: "Beautiful Queen, you are the first benevolent person that I have seen since my curiosity first brought me here." "By what wonderful power are you enabled to speak, little Frog?" responded the Queen, "and what kind of people do you see here? for as yet I have seen none." "All the monsters that cover the lake," replied the little Frog, "were once in the world: some on thrones, some in high positions at court; there are even here some royal ladies, who caused much strife and blood*-shed; it is they whom you see changed into leeches; their fate condemns them to be here for a time, but none of those who come return to the world better or wiser." "I can well understand," said the Queen, "that many wicked people together do not help to make each other better; but you, my little Frog friend, what are you doing here?" "It was curiosity which led me here," she replied. "I am half a fairy, my powers are restricted with regard to certain things, but far-reaching in others; if the Fairy Lioness knew that I was in her dominions, she would kill me."

"Whether fairy or half-fairy," said the Queen, "I cannot understand how you could have fallen into the raven's clutches and been nearly eaten." "I can explain it in a few words," replied the Frog. "When I have my little cap of roses on my head, I fear nothing, as in that resides most of my power; unfortunately, I had left it in the marsh, when that ugly raven pounced upon me; if it had not been for you, madam, I should be no more; and as you have saved my life, you have only to command, and I will do all in my power to alleviate the sorrows of your own." "Alas! dear Frog," said the Queen, "the wicked fairy who holds me captive wishes me to make her a fly-pasty; but there are no flies here; if there were any, I could not see in the

dim light to catch them; I run a chance, therefore, of being killed by her blows."

"Leave it to me," said the Frog. "I will soon get you some." Whereupon the Frog rubbed herself over with sugar, and more than six thousand of her frog friends did likewise; then they repaired to a place where the fairy kept a large store of flies, for the purpose of tormenting some of her unhappy victims. As soon as they smelt the sugar, they flew to it, and stuck to the frogs, and these kind helpers returned at a gallop to the Queen. There had never been such a fly-catching before, nor a better pasty, than that the Queen made for the fairy. The latter was greatly surprised when the Queen handed it to her, and could not imagine how she had been clever enough to catch the flies.

The Queen, finding herself exposed to the inclemencies of the poisonous atmosphere, cut down some cypress branches, wherewith to build herself a hut. The Frog generously offered her services, and putting herself at the head of all those who had gone to collect the flies, they helped the Queen to build as pretty a little tenement as the world could show. Scarcely, however, had she laid herself down to rest, than the monsters of the lake, jealous of her repose, came round her hut, and nearly drove her distracted, by setting up a noise, more hideous than any ever heard before.

She rose in fear and trembling and fled from the house: this was exactly what the monsters desired. A dragon, who had formerly been a tyrant of one of the finest states of the Universe, immediately took possession of it.

The poor Queen tried to complain of the ill-treatment, but no one would listen to her; the monsters laughed and hooted at her, and the Fairy Lioness told her that if she came again to deafen her with lamentations, she would give her a sound thrashing. She was forced, therefore, to hold her tongue, and to have recourse to the Frog, who was the kindest body in the world. They wept together; for as soon as she put on her cap of roses, the Frog was able to laugh or weep like anyone else. "I feel such an affection for you," she said to the Queen, "that I will re-build your house, even though I drive all the monsters of the lake to despair." She immediately cut some wood, and the little rustic palace of the Queen was so quickly reared, that she was able to sleep in it that night. The Frog, who thought of everything that was necessary for the Queen's comfort, made her a bed of wild thyme. When the wicked fairy found out that the Queen did not sleep on the ground, she sent for her: "What gods or men are they who protect you?" she asked. "This land, watered only by showers of burning sulphur, has never produced even a leaf of sage; I am told, nevertheless, that sweet-smelling herbs spring up beneath your feet!"

"I cannot explain it, madam," said the Queen, "unless the cause is due to the child I hope one day to have, who will perhaps be less unhappy than I am."

"What I now wish for," said the fairy, "is a bunch of the rarest flowers; see if this coming happiness you speak of will obtain these for you. If you fail to get them, blows will not fail to follow, for these I often give, and know well how to administer." The Queen began to cry; such threats as these were anything but pleasant to her and she was in despair at the thought of the impossibility of finding flowers.

She went back to her little house; her friend the Frog came to her: "How unhappy you are!" she said to the Queen. "Alas! who would not be so, dear friend? The fairy has ordered a bunch of the most beautiful flowers, and where am I to find them? You see what sort of flowers grow here; my life, nevertheless, is at stake, if I do not procure them for her." "Dear Queen," said the Frog in tender tones, "we must try our best to get you out of this difficulty. There lives a bat in this neighbourhood, the only one with whom I have made acquaintance; she is a good creature, and moves more quickly than I can; I will give her my cap of roses, and aided by this, she will be able to find you the flowers." The Queen made a low curtsey; for there was no possible way of embracing the Frog. The latter went off without delay to speak to the bat; a few hours later she returned, bearing under her wings the most exquisite flowers. The Queen hurried off with them to the fairy, who was more overcome by surprise than before, unable to understand in what miraculous way the Queen received help.

Meanwhile the Queen was continually thinking by what means she could escape. She confided her longing to the Frog, who said to her, "Madam, allow me first to consult my little cap, and we will then arrange matters according to its advice." She took her cap, placed it on some straw, and then burned in front of it a few sprigs of juniper, some capers, and two green peas; she then croaked five times, and the ceremony being then completed, she put on her cap again, and began speaking like an oracle. "Fate, the ruler of all things, forbids you to leave this place. You will have a little Princess, more beautiful than Venus herself; do not trouble yourself about anything else, time alone can comfort you." The Queen's head drooped, a few tears fell from her eyes, but she resolved to trust her friend: "At least," she said to her, "do not leave me here alone; and befriend me when my little one is born." The Frog promised to remain with her, and comforted her as best she could.

But it is now time to return to the King. While the enemy kept him shut up in his capital, he could not continually send messengers to the Queen. At last, however, after several sorties, he obliged the besiegers to retire, and he

rejoiced at his success less on his own account, than on that of the Queen, whom he could now bring back in safety. He was in total ignorance of the disaster which had befallen her, for none of his officers had dared to tell him of it. They had been into the forest and found the remains of the chariot, the runaway horses, and the driving apparel which she had put on when going to find her husband. As they were fully persuaded that she was dead, and had been eaten by wild beasts, their only care was to make the King believe that she had died suddenly. On receiving this mournful intelligence, he thought he should die himself of grief; he tore his hair, he wept many tears, and gave vent to his bereavement in every imaginable expression of sorrow, cries, sobs, and sighs. For some days he would see no one, nor allow himself to be seen; he then returned to his capital, and entered on a long period of mourning, to which the sorrow of his heart testified more sincerely than even his sombre garments of grief. All the surrounding kings sent their ambassadors charged with messages of condolence; and when the ceremonies, indispensable to these occasions, were over, he granted his subjects a period of peace, exempting them from military service, and helping them, in every possible way, to improve their commerce.

The Queen knew nothing of all this. Meanwhile a little Princess had been born to her, as beautiful as the Frog had predicted, to whom they gave the name of Moufette. The Queen had great difficulty in persuading the fairy to allow her to bring up the child, for so ferocious was she, that she would have liked to eat it. Moufette, a wonder of beauty, was now six months old; the Queen, as she looked upon her with a tenderness mingled with pity, continually said: "Ah! if your father could see you, my poor little one, how delighted he would be! how dear you would be to him! But even, already, maybe, he has begun to forget me; he believes, no doubt, that we are lost to him in death; and perhaps another fills the place in his heart, that once was mine."

These sorrowful reflections caused her many tears; the Frog, who truly loved her, seeing her cry like this, said to her one day: "If you would like me to do so, madam, I will go and find the King, your husband; the journey is long, and I travel but slowly; but, sooner or later, I shall hope to arrive." This proposal could not have been more warmly received than it was; the Queen clasped her hands, and made Moufette clasp hers too, in sign of the gratitude she felt towards Madam Frog, for offering to undertake the journey. She assured her that the King also would not be ungrateful; "but," she continued, "of what use will it be to him to know that I am in this melancholy abode; it will be impossible for him to deliver me from it?" "Madam," replied the Frog, "we must leave that to Heaven; we can only do that which depends on ourselves."

They said good-bye to one another; the Queen sent a message to the King, written with her blood on a piece of rag; for she possessed neither ink nor paper. She begged him to give attention to everything the good Frog told him, and to believe all she said, as she was bringing him news of herself.

The Frog was a year and four days climbing up the ten thousand steps which lead from the dark country, in which she had left the Queen, up into the world; it took her another year to prepare her equipage, for she had too much pride to allow herself to appear at the Court like a poor, common frog from the marshes. She had a little sedan-chair made, large enough to hold two eggs comfortably; it was covered on the outside with tortoise-shell, and lined with lizard-skin; then she chose fifty maids of honour, these were the little green frogs which hop about the meadows; each was mounted on a snail, furnished with a light saddle, and rode in style with the leg thrown over the saddle-bow; several water-rats, dressed as pages, ran before the snails, as her body-guard; in short, nothing so pretty had ever been seen before, and to crown it all, her cap of crimson roses, always fresh and in full bloom, suited her in the most admirable manner. She was a bit of a coquette in her way, so she felt obliged to add a little rouge and a few patches; some said that she was painted as were many ladies of that country, but inquiries into the matter proved that this report had only been spread by her enemies.

The journey lasted seven years, during which time the poor Queen went through unspeakable pains and suffering, and if it had not been for the beautiful Moufette, who was a great comfort to her, she would have died a hundred times over. This wonderful little creature could not open her mouth or say a word, without filling her mother with delight; indeed, everybody, with the exception of the Fairy Lioness, was enchanted with her; at last, when the Queen had lived six years in this horrible place, the fairy said that, provided everything she killed was given to her, she might go hunting with her.

The joy of the Queen at once more seeing the sun may be imagined. So unaccustomed had she grown to its light, that at first she thought it would blind her. As for Moufette, she was so quick and intelligent, that even at five or six years of age, she never failed to hit her mark, and so, in this way, the mother and daughter succeeded in somewhat lessening the ferocity of the fairy.

The Frog travelled over mountains and valleys, never stopping day or night; at last she drew near the capital, where the King was in residence. She was surprised to see dancing and festivity in every direction; there was laughter and singing, and the nearer she got to the town, the more joyous and jubilant the people seemed. Her rural equipage caused great astonishment, everyone went after it, and so large had the crowd become by the time she

had reached the town, that she had great difficulty in making her way to the palace. Here everything was as magnificent as possible, for the King, who had been a widower for nine years, had at last yielded to the prayers of his subjects, and was on the eve of marriage with a Princess, less beautiful, it is true, than his wife, but not the less agreeable for that.

The kind Frog, having descended from her sedan-chair, entered the royal presence, followed by her attendants. She had no need to ask for audience, for the King, his affianced bride, and all the princes, were all much too curious to know the reason of her coming, to think of interrupting her. "Sire," said she, "I hardly know if the news I bring you will give you joy or sorrow; the marriage which you are about to celebrate, convinces me of your infidelity to the Queen."

"Her memory is dear to me as ever," said the King, unable to prevent the falling of a tear or two; "but you must know, kind frog, that kings are not always able to do what they wish; for the last nine years, my subjects have been urging me to marry; I owe them an heir to the throne, and I have therefore chosen this young Princess, who appears to me all that is charming." "I advise you not to marry her, for the Queen is not dead; I bring you a letter from her, written with her own blood. A little daughter, Moufette, has been born to you, more beautiful than the heavens themselves." The King took the rag, on which the Queen had scrawled a few words; he kissed it, he bathed it in his tears, he showed it to the whole assembly, saying that he recognised his wife's handwriting; he asked the Frog a thousand questions, which she answered with vivacity and intelligence.

The betrothed Princess, the ambassadors who had come to be present at the marriage, began to pull long faces. One of the most important of the guests turned to the King, and said, "Sire, can you think of breaking so solemn an engagement, on the word of a toad like that? This scum of the marshes has the insolence to come and tell lies before the whole Court, for the pleasure of being heard!" "Know, your Excellency," replied the Frog, "that I am no scum of the marshes, and since I am forced to exhibit my powers: Come forth, fairies all!" And thereupon all the frogs, rats, snails, lizards, with the frog at their head, suddenly appeared; not, however, in the usual form of these reptiles, but with tall, majestic figures, pleasing countenances, and eyes more brilliant than stars; each wore a jewelled crown on his head, and over his shoulders a regal mantle of velvet, lined with ermine, with a long train which was borne by dwarfs. At the same time was heard the sound of trumpets, kettle-drums, hautboys, and drums, filling the air with melodious and warlike music, and all the fairies began to dance a ballet, their every step so light, that the slightest spring lifted them to the vaulted ceiling of the room. The King and his future Queen, surprised as they were at this, were

no less astonished, when they saw all these fairy ballet dancers suddenly change into flowers, jasmine, jonquils, violets, pinks, and tube roses, which still continued to dance as if they had legs and feet. It was like a living flower-bed, of which every movement delighted both the eye and the sense of smell. Another moment, and the flowers had disappeared; in their place several fountains threw their waters into the air and fell into an artificial lake at the foot of the castle walls; this was covered with little painted and gilded boats, so pretty and dainty that the Princess invited the ambassadors to go for a trip on the water. They were all pleased to do so, thinking it was all a merry pastime, which would end happily in the marriage festivities. But they had no sooner embarked, than the boats, water, and fountains disappeared, and the frogs were frogs again. The King asked what had become of the Princess; the Frog replied, "Sire, no queen is yours, but your wife; were I less attached to her than I am, I should not interfere; but she is so deserving, and your daughter Moufette is so charming that you ought not to delay a moment in going to their deliverance." "I assure you, Madam Frog," said the King, "that if I did not believe my wife to be dead, there is nothing in the world I would not do to see her again." "After the wonders I have shown you," she replied, "it seems to me that you ought to be more convinced of the truth of what I have told you. Leave your kingdom in charge of trustworthy men, and start without delay. Here is a ring which will furnish you with the means of seeing the Queen, and of speaking with the Fairy Lioness, although she is the most terrible creature in the world."

The King departed, refusing to have anyone to accompany him, after making handsome presents to the Frog: "Do not be discouraged," she said to him; "you will meet with terrible difficulties, but I hope that you will succeed according to your wishes." Somewhat comforted by her words, the King started in search of his dear wife, with no other guide than his ring.

As Moufette grew older, her beauty became more perfect, and all the monsters of the quicksilver lake fell in love with her; and the dragons, with their hideous and terrifying forms, came and lay at her feet. Although Moufette had seen them ever since she was born, her beautiful eyes could not accustom themselves to the sight of these creatures, and she would run away and hide in her mother's arms. "Shall we remain here long?" she asked her; "is there to be no end to our misery?" The Queen spoke hopefully in order to cheer her child, but in her heart she had no hope; the absence of the Frog, her unbroken silence, the long time that had elapsed since she had news of the King, all these things filled her with sorrow and despair.

The Fairy Lioness had gradually made it a practice to take them with her hunting. She was fond of good things, and liked the game they killed for her, and although all they got in return was the gift of the head or the feet, it was something to be allowed to see again the light of day. The fairy took the form

of a lioness, the Queen and her daughter seated themselves on her back, and thus they went hunting through the forests.

The King happened to be resting in a forest one day, whither his ring had guided him, and saw them pass like an arrow shot from the bow; he was unseen of them, and when he tried to follow them, they vanished completely from his sight. Notwithstanding the constant trouble she had been in, the Queen still preserved her former beauty; she appeared to her husband more charming than ever. He longed for her to return to him, and feeling sure that the young Princess who was with her was his dear little Moufette, he determined to face a thousand deaths, rather than abandon his design of rescuing her.

By the help of his ring, he found his way into the obscure region where the Queen had been so many years; he was not a little surprised when he found himself descending to the centre of the earth, but every fresh thing he saw astonished him more and more. The Fairy Lioness, who knew everything, was aware of the day and the hour when he would arrive; she would have given a great deal if the powers in league with her had ordained otherwise; but she determined at least to oppose his strength with the full might of her own.

She built a palace of crystal, which floated in the centre of the lake of quicksilver, and rose and fell with its waves. In it she imprisoned the Queen and her daughter, and then harangued all the monsters who were in love with Moufette. "You will lose this beautiful Princess," she said to them, "if you do not help me to protect her from a knight who has come to carry her away." The monsters promised to leave nothing in their power undone; they surrounded the palace of crystal; the lightest in weight took their stations on the roof and walls; the others kept guard at the doors, and the remainder in the lake.

The King, advised by his faithful ring, went first to the Fairy's Cave; she was awaiting him in her form of lioness. As soon as he appeared she threw herself upon him; but he handled his sword with a valour for which she was not prepared, and as she was putting out one of her paws to fell him to the earth, he cut it off at the joint just where the elbow comes. She uttered a loud cry and fell over; he went up to her, put his foot on her throat and swore that he would kill her, and in spite of her ungovernable fury and invulnerability, she felt a little afraid. "What do you wish to do with me?" she asked. "What do you want of me?" "I wish to punish you," he replied proudly, "for having carried away my wife, and you shall give her up to me or I will strangle you on the spot." "Look towards the lake," she said, "and see if I have the power to do so." The King turned in the direction towards which she pointed, and saw the Queen and her daughter in the palace of

crystal, which was floating like a vessel, without oars or rudder, on the lake of quicksilver. He was ready to die with mingled joy and sorrow; he called to them with all his might, and they heard him, but how was he to reach them? While thinking over the means by which he might accomplish this, the Fairy Lioness disappeared. He ran round and round the lake, but whenever the palace came close enough to him, on one side or the other, for him to spring upon it, it suddenly floated away again with terrible swiftness, and so his hopes were continually disappointed. The Queen, fearing he would at length grow weary, called to him not to lose courage, that the Fairy Lioness wanted to tire him out, but that true love knew how to face all difficulties. She and Moufette then stretched out their hands towards him with imploring gestures. Seeing this, the King was filled with renewed courage, and raising his voice, he said that he would rather pass the remainder of his life in this melancholy region than go away without them. He needed great patience, for no king on earth ever spent such a wretched time before. He had only the ground, covered with briars and thorns, for his bed; his food consisted of wild fruits, more bitter than gall, and he was incessantly engaged in defending himself from the monsters of the lake.

Three years passed in this manner, and the King could not flatter himself that he had gained the least advantage; he was almost in despair, and over and over again was tempted to throw himself in the lake, and he would certainly have done so if he could have thought that by such a deed he might alleviate the sufferings of the Queen and the Princess. He was running one day as usual, first to one side of the lake then to the other, when one of the most hideous of the dragons called him, and said to him: "If you will swear to me by your crown and sceptre, by your royal mantle, by your wife and child, to give me, whenever I shall ask for it, a certain delicate morsel to eat, for which I have a taste, I will take you on my back, and I promise you that none of the monsters of this lake, who guard the palace, shall prevent us from carrying off the Queen and Princess Moufette."

"Ah! my beloved Dragon!" cried the King, "I swear to you, and to all the family of dragons, that I will give you your fill to eat of what you like, and will for ever remain your humble servant." "Do not make any promises," replied the Dragon, "if you have any thought of not fulfilling them; for, in that case, misfortunes will fall upon you that you will not forget as long as you live." The King renewed his protestations; he was dying of impatience to get possession of his dear Queen. He mounted on the Dragon's back, as if it was the finest horse in the world, but the other monsters now advanced to bar his passage. They fought together, nothing was to be heard but the sharp hissings of the serpents, nothing to be seen but fire, and sulphur, and saltpetre, falling in every direction. At last the King reached the palace, but here his efforts had to be renewed, for the entrances were defended by bats,

owls, and ravens; however, the Dragon, with his claws, his teeth and tail, cut to pieces even the boldest of these. The Queen, on her side, who was looking on at this fierce encounter, kicked away pieces of the wall, and armed herself with these to help her dear husband. They were at last victorious; they ran into one another's arms, and the work of disenchantment was completed by a thunderbolt, which fell into the lake and dried it up.

The friendly Dragon had disappeared with all the other monsters, and the King, by what means he could not guess, found himself again in his own capital, seated, with his Queen and Moufette, in a magnificent dining-hall, with a table spread with exquisite meats in front of them. Such joy and astonishment as theirs were unknown before. All their subjects ran in to see the Queen and the young Princess, who, to add to the wonder of it all, was so superbly dressed, that the eye could hardly bear to look upon her dazzling jewels.

It is easy to imagine the festivities that now went on at the castle; masquerades, running at the ring, and tournaments attracted the greatest princes in the world; but even more were they attracted by the bright eyes of Moufette. Among those who were the handsomest and most accomplished in feats of arms, Prince Moufy everywhere was the most conspicuous. He was universally admired and applauded, and Moufette, who hitherto had been only in the company of dragons and serpents, did not withhold her share of praise. No day passed but Prince Moufy showed her some fresh attention, in the hope of pleasing her, for he loved her deeply; and having offered himself as a suitor, he made known to the King and Queen, that his principality was of a beauty and extent that deserved their special attention.

The King replied that Moufette was at liberty to choose a husband, and that he only wished to please her and make her happy. The Prince was delighted with this answer, and having already become aware that he was not indifferent to the Princess, offered her his hand. She assured him that if he was not her husband, no other man should be, and Moufy, overcome with joy, threw himself at her feet, and in affectionate terms begged her to remember the promise she had given him. The Prince and Princess were betrothed, and Prince Moufy then returned to his principality to make preparations for the marriage. Moufette shed many tears at his departure, for she was troubled with a presentiment of evil which she could not explain. The Queen, seeing that the Prince was also overcome with sorrow, gave him the portrait of her daughter, and begged him rather to lessen the magnificence of the preparations than to delay his return. The Prince, only too ready to obey such a command, promised to comply with what would be for his own happiness.

The Princess occupied herself during his absence with her music, for she had, in a few months, learnt to play well. One day, when she was in the Queen's room, the King rushed in, his face bathed in tears, and taking his daughter in his arms: "Alas, my child," he cried. "Alas! wretched father, unhappy King!" He could say no more, for his voice was stifled with sobs. The Queen and Princess, in great alarm, asked him what was the matter, and at last he was able to tell them that a giant of an enormous height, who gave himself out to be an ambassador from the Dragon of the lake, had just arrived; that in accordance with the promise, made by the King in return for the help he had received in fighting the monsters, the Dragon demanded him to give up the Princess, as he wished to make her into a pie for his dinner; the King added that he had bound himself by solemn oaths to give him what he asked, and in those days no one ever broke his word.

When the Queen heard this dreadful news, she uttered piercing cries, and clasped her child to her breast. "My life shall be taken," she said, "before my daughter shall be delivered up to that monster; let him rather take our kingdom and all that we possess. Unnatural father! can you possibly consent to such a cruel thing? What! my child made into a pie! The thought of it is intolerable! Send me this terrible ambassador, maybe the sight of my anguish may touch his heart."

The King made no reply, but went in search of the giant and brought him to the Queen, who threw herself at his feet. She and her daughter implored him to have mercy upon them, and to persuade the Dragon to take everything they possessed, and to spare Moufette's life; but the giant replied that the matter did not rest with him, and that the Dragon was so obstinate and so fond of good things, that all the powers combined would not prevent him eating whatever he had taken into his head he would like for a meal. He further advised them, as a friend, to consent with a good grace, as otherwise greater evils might arise. At these words the Queen fainted, and the Princess, had she not been obliged to go to her mother's assistance, would have done the same.

No sooner was the sad news spread through the palace, than the whole town knew it. Nothing was heard but weeping and wailing, for Moufette was greatly beloved. The King could not make up his mind to give her to the giant, and the giant, who had already waited some days, began to grow impatient, and to utter terrible threats. The King and Queen, however, said to each other, "What worse thing could happen to us? If the Dragon of the lake were to come and devour us all we could not be more distressed; if Moufette is put into a pie, we are lost."

The giant now told them that he had received a message from his master, and that if the Princess would agree to marry a nephew of his, the Dragon

would let her live; that the nephew was young and handsome; that, moreover, he was a Prince, and that she would be able to live with him very happily. This proposal somewhat lessened their grief; the Queen spoke to the Princess, but found her still more averse to this marriage than to the thought of death. "I cannot save my life by being unfaithful," said Moufette. "You promised me to Prince Moufy, and I will marry no one else; let me die; my death will ensure the peace of your lives." The King then came and endeavoured with all the tenderest of expressions to persuade her; but nothing moved her, and finally it was decided that she should be conducted to the summit of a mountain, and there await the Dragon.

Everything was prepared for this great sacrifice; nothing so mournful had before been seen; nothing to be met anywhere but black garments, and pale and horrified faces. Four hundred maidens of the highest rank, dressed in long white robes, and crowned with cypress, accompanied the Princess, who was carried in an open litter of black velvet, that all might look on this masterpiece of beauty. Her hair, tied with crape, hung over her shoulders, and she wore a crown of jasmine, mingled with a few marigolds. The grief of the King and Queen, who followed, overcome by their deep sorrow, appeared the only thing that moved her. The giant, armed from head to foot, marched beside the litter, and looked with hungry eye at the Princess, as if anticipating his share of her when she came to be eaten; the air resounded with sighs and sobs, and the road was flooded with the tears of the onlookers.

"Ah! Frog, Frog," cried the Queen, "you have indeed forsaken me! Alas! why did you give me help in that unhappy region, and now withhold it from me! Would that I had then died, I should not now be lamenting the loss of all my hopes, I should not now have the anguish of seeing my dear Moufette on the point of being devoured!" The procession meanwhile was slowly advancing, and at last reached the summit of the fatal mountain. Here the cries and lamentations were redoubled, nothing more piteous had before been heard. The giant ordered everyone to say farewell and to retire, and they all obeyed him, for in those days, people were very simple and submissive, and never sought for a remedy in their misfortunes.

The King and Queen, and all the Court, now ascended another mountain, whence they could see all that happened to the Princess: and they had not to wait long, before they saw a Dragon, half a league long, coming through the air. His body was so heavy that, notwithstanding his six large wings, he was hardly able to fly; he was covered with immense blue scales, and poisonous tongues of flame; his tail was twisted into as many as fifty and a half coils; each of his claws was the size of a windmill, and three rows of teeth, as long as those of an elephant, could be seen inside his wide-open jaw. As the Dragon slowly made his way towards the mountain, the good,

faithful Frog, mounted on the back of a hawk, flew rapidly to Prince Moufy. She wore her cap of roses, and although he was locked into his private room, she entered without a key, and said, "What are you doing here, unhappy lover? You sit dreaming of Moufette's beauty, and at this very moment she is exposed to the most frightful danger; here is a rose-leaf, by blowing upon it, I can change it into a superb horse, as you will see."

There immediately appeared a horse, green in colour, and with twelve hoofs and three heads, of which one emitted fire, another bomb-shells, and the third cannon-balls. She gave the Prince a sword, eight yards long, and lighter than a feather. She clothed him with a single diamond, which he put on like a coat, and which, although as hard as a rock, was so pliable that he could move in it at his ease. "Go," she said, "run, fly to the rescue of her whom you love; the green horse I have given you, will take you to her, and when you have delivered her, let her know the share I have had in the matter."

"Generous fairy," cried the Prince, "I cannot at this moment show you all my gratitude; but from henceforth, I am your faithful servitor."

He mounted the horse with the three heads, which instantly galloped off on its twelve hoofs, and went at a greater rate than three of the best ordinary horses, so that in a very little time the Prince reached the mountain, when he found his dear Princess all alone, and saw the Dragon slowly drawing near. The green horse immediately began to send forth fire, bomb-shells, and cannon-balls, which not a little astonished the monster; he received twenty balls in his throat, and his scales were somewhat damaged, and the bomb-shells put out one of his eyes. He grew furious, and made as if to throw himself on the Prince; but his long sword was so finely-tempered, that he could use it as he liked, thrusting it in at times up to the hilt, and at others using it like a whip. The Prince, on his side, would have suffered from the Dragon's claws, had it not been for his diamond coat, which was impenetrable.

Moufette had recognised her lover a long way off, for the diamond that covered him was transparent and bright, and she was seized with mortal terror at the danger he was in. The King and Queen, however, were filled with renewed hope, for it was such an unexpected thing to see a horse with three heads and twelve hoofs, sending forth fire and flame, and a Prince in a diamond suit and armed with a formidable sword, arrive at such an opportune moment, and fight with so much valour. The King put his hat on the top of his stick, and the Queen tied her handkerchief to the end of another, as signals of encouragement to the Prince; and all their Court followed suit. As a fact, this was not necessary, for his own heart and the peril in which he saw Moufette, were sufficient to animate his courage. And

what efforts did he not make! the ground was covered with stings, claws, horns, wings, and scales of the Dragon; the earth was coloured blue and green with the mingled blood of the Dragon and the horse. Five times the Prince fell to the ground, but each time he rose again and leisurely mounted his horse, and then there were cannonades, and rushing of flames, and explosions, such as were never heard or seen before. The Dragon's strength at last gave way, and he fell; the Prince gave him a final blow, and nobody could believe their eyes, when from this last great wound, there stepped forth a handsome and charming prince, in a coat of blue and gold velvet, embroidered with pearls, while on his head he wore a little Grecian helmet, shaded with white feathers. He rushed, his arms outspread, towards Prince Moufy, and embraced him. "What do I not owe you, valiant liberator?" he cried. "You have delivered me from a worse prison than ever before enclosed a king; I have languished there since, sixteen years ago, the Fairy Lioness condemned me to it; and, such was her power, that she would have forced me, against my will, to devour that adorable Princess; lead me to her feet, that I may explain to her my misfortune."

Prince Moufy, surprised and delighted at this extraordinary termination to his adventure, showered civilities on the newly-found Prince. They hastened to rejoin Moufette, who thanked Heaven a thousand times for her unhoped-for happiness. The King, the Queen, and all the Court, were already with her; everybody spoke at once, nobody listened to anybody else, and they all shed nearly as many tears of joy as they had before of grief. Finally, that nothing might be wanting to complete their rejoicing, the good Frog appeared, flying through the air on her hawk, which had little bells of gold on its feet. When the tinkle, tinkle, of these was heard, everyone looked up, and saw the cap of roses shining like the sun, and the Frog as beautiful as the dawn.

The Queen ran towards her, and took her by one of her little paws, and in the same moment, the wise Frog became a great Queen, with a charming countenance. "I come," she cried, "to crown the faithful Moufette, who preferred to risk her life, rather than be untrue to Prince Moufy." She thereupon took two myrtle wreaths, and placed them on the heads of the lovers, and giving three taps with her wand, all the Dragon's bones formed themselves into a triumphal arch, in commemoration of the great event which had just taken place.

They all wended their way back to the town, singing wedding songs, as gaily as they had before mournfully bewailed the sacrifice of the Princess. The marriage took place the following day, and the joy with which it was celebrated may be imagined.

PRINCESS ROSETTE

ONCE upon a time there lived a King and Queen who had two handsome boys; so well-fed and hearty were they, that they grew like the day.

Whenever the Queen had a child, she sent for the fairies, that she might learn from them what would be its future lot. After a while she had a little daughter, who was so beautiful, that no one could see her without loving her. The fairies came as usual, and the Queen having feasted them, said to them as they were going away, "Do not forget that good custom of yours, but tell me what will happen to Rosette"—for this was the name of the little Princess. The fairies answered her that they had left their divining-books at home, and that they would come again to see her. "Ah!" said the Queen, "that bodes no good, I fear; you do not wish to distress me by foretelling evil; but, I pray you, let me know the worst, and hide nothing from me." The fairies continued to make excuses, but the Queen only became more anxious to know the truth. At last the chief among them said to her, "We fear, madam, that Rosette will be the cause of a great misfortune befalling her brothers; that they may even lose their lives on her account. This is allthat we can tell you of the fate of this sweet little Princess, and we are grieved to have nothing better to say about her." The fairies took their departure, and the Queen was very sorrowful, so sorrowful that the King saw by her face that she was in trouble. He asked her what was the matter. She told him she had gone too near the fire and accidentally burnt all the flax that was on her distaff. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he went up to his store-room and brought her down more flax than she could spin in a hundred years.

But the Queen was still very sorrowful, and the King again asked her what was the matter. She told him that she had been down to the river and had let one of her green satin slippers fall into the water. "Is that all?" replied the King, and he sent for all the shoemakers in the kingdom, and made the Queen a present of ten thousand green satin slippers.

Still the Queen was no less sorrowful; the King asked her once more what was the matter. She told him that, being hungry, she had eaten hastily, and had swallowed her wedding-ring. The King knew that she was not speaking the truth, for he had himself put away the ring, and he replied, "My dear wife, you are not speaking the truth; here is your ring, which I have kept in my purse." The Queen was put out of countenance at being caught telling a lie—for there is nothing in the world so ugly—and she saw that the King was vexed, so she told him what the fairies had predicted about little Rosette, and begged him to tell her if he could think of any remedy. The King was greatly troubled, so much so, that at last he said to the Queen, "I see no way of saving our two boys, except by putting the little girl to death, while she is

still in her swaddling clothes." But the Queen cried that she would rather suffer death herself, that she would never consent to so cruel a deed, and that the King must try and think of some other remedy. The King and Queen could think of nothing else, and while thus pondering over the matter, the Queen was told that in a large wood near the town, there lived an old hermit, who made his home in the trunk of a tree, whom people went from far and near to consult.

"It is to him I must go," said the Queen; "the fairies told me the evil, but they forgot to tell me the remedy."

She started early in the morning, mounted on her little white mule, that was shod with gold, and accompanied by two of her maids of honour, who each rode a pretty horse. When they were near the wood they dismounted out of respect, and made their way to the tree where the hermit lived. He did not much care for the visits of women, but when he saw that it was the Queen approaching, he said, "Welcome! what would you ask of me?" She related to him what the fairies had said about Rosette, and asked him to advise her what to do. He told her that the Princess must be shut up in a tower, and not be allowed to leave it as long as she lived. The Queen thanked him, and returned and told everything to the King. The King immediately gave orders for a large tower to be built as quickly as possible. In it he placed his daughter, but that she might not feel lonely and depressed, he, and the Queen, and her two brothers, went to see her every day. The elder of these was called the big Prince, and the younger, the little Prince. They loved their sister passionately, for she was the most beautiful and graceful Princess ever seen, and the least glance of hers was worth more than a hundred gold pieces. When she was fifteen years old, the big Prince said to the King, "Father, my sister is old enough to be married; shall we not soon have a wedding?" The little Prince said the same to the Queen, but their Majesties laughed and changed the subject, and made no answer about the marriage.

Now, it happened that the King and Queen both fell very ill, and died within a few days of one another. There was great mourning; everyone wore black, and all the bells were tolled. Rosette was inconsolable at the loss of her good mother.

As soon as the funeral was over, the dukes and marquises of the kingdom placed the big Prince on a throne made of gold and diamonds; he wore a splendid crown on his head, and robes of violet velvet embroidered with suns and moons. Then the whole Court cried out, "Long live the King!" and now on all sides there was nothing but rejoicing.

Then the young King and his brother said one to another, "Now that we are the masters, we will release our sister from the tower, where she has been shut up for such a long and dreary time." They had only to pass through the

garden to reach the tower, which stood in one corner of it, and had been built as high as was possible, for the late King and Queen had intended her to remain there always. Rosette was embroidering a beautiful dress on a frame in front of her, when she saw her brothers enter. She rose, and taking the King's hand, said, "Good-day, sire, you are now King, and I am your humble subject; I pray you to release me from this tower, where I lead a melancholy life," and with this, she burst into tears. The King embraced her, and begged her not to weep, for he was come, he said, to take her from the tower, and to conduct her to a beautiful castle. The Prince had his pockets full of sweetmeats, which he gave Rosette. "Come," he said, "let us get away from this wretched place; the King will soon find you a husband; do not be unhappy any longer."

When Rosette saw the beautiful garden, full of flowers, and fruits, and fountains, she was so overcome with astonishment, that she stood speechless, for she had never seen anything of the kind before. She looked around her, she went first here, then there, she picked the fruit off the trees, and gathered flowers from the beds; while her little dog, Fretillon, who was as green as a parrot, kept on running before her, saying, yap, yap, yap! and jumping and cutting a thousand capers, and everybody was amused at his ways. Presently he ran into a little wood, whither the Princess followed him, and here her wonder was even greater than before, when she saw a large peacock spreading out its tail. She thought it so beautiful, so very beautiful, that she could not take her eyes off it. The King and the Prince now joined her, and asked her what delighted her so much. She pointed to the peacock, and asked them what it was. They told her it was a bird, which was sometimes eaten. "What!" she cried, "dare to kill and eat a beautiful bird like that! I tell you, that I will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, and when I am their Queen I shall not allow anybody to eat them." The astonishment of the King cannot be described. "But, dear sister," said he, "where would you have us go to find the King of the Peacocks?" "Whither you please, sire; but him, and him alone, will I marry."

Having come to this decision, she was now conducted by her brothers to their castle; the peacock had to be brought and put into her room, so fond was she of it. All the Court ladies who had not before seen Rosette now hastened to greet her, and pay their respects to her. Some brought preserves with them, some sugar, and others dresses of woven gold, beautiful ribbons, dolls, embroidered shoes, pearls, and diamonds. Everyone did their best to entertain her, and she was so well brought up, so courteous, kissing their hands, curtseying when anything beautiful was given to her, that there was not a lord or lady who did not leave her presence gratified and charmed. While she was thus occupied, the King and the Prince were turning over in their minds how they should find the King of the Peacocks, if there was such

a person in the world to be found. They decided that they would have Rosette's portrait painted; and when completed it was so life-like, that only speech was wanting. Then they said to her, "Since you will marry no one but the King of the Peacocks, we are going together to look for him, and will traverse the whole world to try and find him for you. If we find him, we shall be very glad. Meanwhile take care of our kingdom until we return."

Rosette thanked them for all the trouble they were taking; she promised to govern the kingdom well, and said that, during their absence, her only pleasure would be in looking at the peacock, and making her little dog dance. They all three cried when they said good-bye to each other.

So the two Princes started on their long journey, and they asked everyone whom they met, "Do you know the King of the Peacocks?" but the reply was always the same, "No, we do not." Each time they passed on and went further, and in this way they travelled so very, very far, that no one had ever been so far before.

They came to the kingdom of the cock-chafers; and these were in such numbers, and made such a loud buzzing, that the King feared he should become deaf. He asked one of them, who appeared to him to have the most intelligence, whether he knew where the King of the Peacocks was to be found. "Sire," replied the cock-chafer, "his kingdom lies thirty thousand leagues from here; you have chosen the longest way to reach it." "And how do you know that?" asked the King. "Because," answered the cock-chafer, "we know you very well, for every year we spend two or three months in your gardens." Whereupon the King and his brother embraced the cock-chafer, and they went off arm in arm to dine together, and the two strangers admired all the curiosities of that new country, where the smallest leaf of a tree was worth a gold piece. After that, they continued their journey, and having been directed along the right way, they were not long in reaching its close. On their arrival, they found all the trees laden with peacocks, and, indeed, there were peacocks everywhere, so that they could be heard talking and screaming two leagues off.

The King said to his brother "If the King of the Peacocks is a peacock himself, how can our sister marry him? it would be folly to consent to such a thing, and it would be a fine thing for us to have little peacocks for nephews." The Prince was equally disturbed at the thought. "It is an unhappy fancy she has taken into her head," he said. "I cannot think what led her to imagine that there was such a person in the world as the King of the Peacocks."

When they entered the town, they saw that it was full of men and women, and that they all wore clothes made of peacocks' feathers, and that these were evidently considered fine things, for every place was covered with them.

They met the King, who was driving in a beautiful little carriage of gold, studded with diamonds, and drawn by twelve peacocks at full gallop. This King of the Peacocks was so handsome, that the King and the Prince were delighted; he had long, light, curly hair, fair complexion, and wore a crown of peacocks' feathers. Directly he saw them, he guessed, seeing that they wore a different costume to the people of the country, that they were strangers, and wishing to ascertain if this was so, he ordered his carriage to stop, and sent for them.

'Oh, you are jesting;' replied the King of the Peacocks.

Princess Rosette

The King and the Prince advanced, bowing low, and said, "Sire, we have come from afar, to show you a portrait." They drew forth Rosette's portrait and showed it to him. After gazing at it a while, the King of the Peacocks said, "I can scarcely believe that there is so beautiful a maiden in the whole world." "She is a thousand times more beautiful," said the King. "You are jesting," replied the King of the Peacocks. "Sire," rejoined the Prince, "here is my brother, who is a King, like yourself; he is called King, and my name is Prince; our sister, of whom this is the portrait, is the Princess Rosette. We have come to ask if you will marry her; she is good and beautiful, and we will give her, as dower, a bushel of golden crowns." "It is well," said the King. "I will gladly marry her; she shall want for nothing, and I shall love her greatly; but I require that she shall be as beautiful as her portrait, and if she is in the smallest degree less so, I shall make you pay for it with your lives." "We consent willingly," said both Rosette's brothers. "You consent?" added the King. "You will go to prison then, and remain there until the Princess arrives." The Princes made no difficulty about this, for they knew well that Rosette was more beautiful than her portrait. They were well looked after while in prison, and were well served with all they required, and the King often went to see them. He kept Rosette's portrait in his room, and could scarcely rest day or night for looking at it. As the King and his brother could not go to her themselves, they wrote to Rosette, telling her to pack up as quickly as possible, and to start without delay, as the King of the Peacocks was awaiting her. They did not tell her that they were prisoners, for fear of causing her uneasiness.

The Princess scarcely knew how to contain herself with joy, when she received this message. She told everybody that the King of the Peacocks had been found, and that he wanted to marry her. Bonfires were lit, and guns fired, and quantities of sweetmeats and sugar were eaten; everyone who came to see the Princess, during the three days before her departure, was given bread-and-butter and jam, rolled wafers, and negus. After having thus dispensed hospitality to her visitors, she presented her beautiful dolls to her

best friends, and handed over the government to the wisest elders of the town, begging them to look well after everything, to spend little, and to save up money for the King on his return. She also prayed them to take care of her peacock, for with her she only took her nurse, and her foster-sister, and her little green dog, Fretillon. They set out in a boat on the sea, carrying with them the bushel of golden crowns, and sufficient clothes for two changes a day for ten years. They made merry on their voyage, laughing and singing, and the nurse kept on asking the boatman if they were nearing the Kingdom of the Peacocks; for a long time, all he said was, "No, no, not yet." Then at last, when she asked again, "Are we anywhere near it now?" he answered, "We shall soon be there, very soon." Once more she said, "Are we near, are we anywhere near it now?" and he said, "Yes, we are now within reach of shore." On hearing this, the nurse went to the end of the boat, and sitting down beside the boatman, said to him, "If you like, you can be rich for the remainder of your life." He replied, "I should like nothing better." She continued, "If you like, you can earn good money." "That would suit me very well," he answered. "Well," she went on, "then to-night, when the Princess is asleep, you must help me throw her into the sea. After she is drowned, I will dress my daughter in her fine clothes, and we will take her to the King of the Peacocks, who will only be too pleased to marry her; and as a reward to you, we will give you as many diamonds as you care to possess." The boatman was very much astonished at this proposal; he told the nurse that it was a pity to drown such a pretty Princess, and that he felt compassion for her; but the nurse fetched a bottle of wine and made him drink so much, that he had no longer any power to refuse.

Night having come, the Princess went to bed as usual, her little Fretillon lying at her feet, not even stirring one of his paws. Rosette slept soundly, but the wicked nurse kept awake, and went presently to fetch the boatman. She took him into the Princess's room, and together they lifted her up, feather bed, mattress, sheets, coverlet, and all, and threw them into the sea, the Princess all the while so fast asleep, that she never woke. But fortunately, her bed was made of Phœnix-feathers, which are extremely rare, and have the property of always floating on water; so that she was carried along in her bed as in a boat. The water, however, began gradually first to wet her feather bed, then her mattress, and Rosette began to feel uncomfortable, and turned from side to side, and then Fretillon woke up. He had a capital nose, and when he smelt the soles and cod-fish so near, he started barking at them, and this awoke all the other fish, who began swimming about. The bigger ones ran against the Princess's bed, which, not being attached to anything, span round and round like a whirligig. Rosette could not make out what was happening. "Is our boat having a dance on the water?" she said. "I am not accustomed to feeling so uneasy as I am to-night," and all the while Fretillon

continued barking, and going on as if he was out of his mind. The wicked nurse and the boatman heard him from afar, and said: "There's that funny little beast drinking our healths with his mistress. Let us make haste to land," for they were now just opposite the town of the King of the Peacocks.

He had sent down a hundred chariots to the landing-place; they were drawn by all kinds of rare animals, lions, bears, stags, wolves, horses, oxen, asses, eagles, and peacocks: and the chariot which was intended for the Princess was harnessed with six blue monkeys, that could jump, dance on the tight rope, and do endless clever tricks; they had beautiful trappings of crimson velvet, overlaid with plates of gold. Sixty young maids of honour were also in attendance, who had been chosen by the King for the amusement of the Princess; they were dressed in all sorts of colours, and gold and silver were the least precious of their adornments.

The nurse had taken great pains to dress her daughter finely; she had put on her Rosette's best robe, and decked her all over from head to foot with the Princess's diamonds; but with all this, she was still as ugly as an ape, with greasy black hair, crooked eyes, bowed legs, and a hump on her back; and, added to these deformities, she was besides of a disagreeable and sulky temper, and was always grumbling.

When the people saw her get out of the boat, they were so taken aback by her appearance, that they could not utter a sound. "What is the meaning of this?" she said. "Are you all asleep? Be off, and bring me something to eat! A nice set of beggars you are! I will have you all hanged." When they heard this, they murmured, "What an ugly creature! and she is as wicked as she is ugly! A nice wife for our King; well, we are not surprised! but it was scarcely worth the trouble to bring her from the other side of the world." Meanwhile she still behaved as if she were already mistress of all and everything, and for no reason at all, boxed their ears, or gave a blow with her fist to everybody in turn.

As her escort was a very large one, the procession moved slowly, and she sat up in her chariot like a queen; but all the peacocks, who had stationed themselves on the trees, so as to salute her as she passed, and who had been prepared to shout, "Long live the beautiful Queen Rosette!" could only call out, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" as soon as they caught sight of her. She was so enraged at this, that she called to her guards, "Kill those rascally peacocks who are insulting me." But the peacocks quickly flew away, and only laughed at her.

The treacherous boatman, seeing and hearing all this, said in a low voice to the nurse, "There is something wrong, good mother; your daughter should have been better looking." She answered, "Hold your tongue, stupid, or you will bring us into trouble."

The King had word brought him that the Princess was approaching. "Well," he said, "have her brothers, I wonder, told me the truth? Is she more beautiful than her portrait?" "Sire," said those near him, "there will be nothing to wish for, if she is as beautiful." "You are right," replied the King, "I shall be well content with that. Come, let us go and see her," for he knew by the hubbub in the courtyard that she had arrived. He could not distinguish anything that was said, except, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" and he imagined that the people were calling out about some little dwarf or animal that she had brought with her, for it never entered his head that the words were applied to the Princess herself.

Rosette's portrait was carried uncovered, at the top of a long pole, and the King walked after it in solemn state, with all his nobles and his peacocks, followed by ambassadors from various kingdoms. The King of the Peacocks was very impatient to see his dear Rosette; but when he did see her—well, he very nearly died on the spot. He flew into a violent rage, he tore his clothes, he would not go near her, he felt quite afraid of her. "What!" he cried, "have those two villains I have in prison had the boldness and impudence to make a laughing-stock of me, and to propose my marrying such a fright as that? They shall both be killed; and let that insolent woman, and the nurse, and the man who is with them, be immediately carried to the dungeon of my great tower, and there kept." While this was going on, the King and his brother, who knew that his sister was expected, had put on their bravest apparel ready to receive her; but instead of seeing their prison door open and being set at liberty, as they had hoped, the gaoler came with a body of soldiers and made them go down into a dark cellar, full of horrible reptiles, and where the water was up to their necks; no one was ever more surprised or distressed than they were. "Alas!" they said to one another, "this is indeed a melancholy marriage feast for us! What can have happened that we should be so ill-treated?" They did not know what in the world to think, except that they were to be killed, and they were very sorrowful about this. Three days passed, and no news reached them of any kind. At the end of that time, the King of the Peacocks came, and began calling out insulting things to them through a hole in the wall. "You called yourselves King and Prince, that I might fall into your trap, and engage myself to marry your sister; but you are nothing better than two beggars, who are not worth the water you drink. I am going to bring you before the judges, who will soon pass their verdict upon you; the rope to hang you with is already being made." "King of the Peacocks," replied the King, angrily, "do not act too rashly in this matter, or you may repent it. I am a King as well as you, and I have a fine kingdom, and rich clothing, and crowns, to say nothing of good gold pieces. You must be joking to talk like this of hanging us; have we stolen anything from you?"

When the King heard him speak so boldly, he did not know what to think, and he felt half inclined to let them and their sister go without putting them to death; but his chief adviser, who was an arrant flatterer, dissuaded him from this, telling him that if he did not revenge the insult that had been put upon him, all the world would make fun of him, and look upon him as nothing better than a miserable little King worth a few coppers a day. The King thereupon swore that he would never forgive them, and ordered them to be brought to trial at once. This did not take long; the judges had only to look at the real Rosette's portrait and then at the Princess who had arrived, and, without hesitation, they ordered the prisoners' heads to be cut off as a punishment for having lied to the King, since they had promised him a beautiful Princess, and had only given him an ugly peasant girl. They repaired with great ceremony to the prison to read this sentence to them; but the prisoners declared that they had not lied, that their sister was a Princess, and more beautiful than the day; that there must be something under this which they did not understand, and they asked for a respite of seven days, as before that time had expired their innocence might have been established. The King of the Peacocks, who had worked himself up to a high pitch of anger, could with great difficulty be induced to accord them this grace, but at last he consented.

While these things were going on at the Court, we must say something about poor Rosette. Both she and Fretillon were very much astonished, when daylight came, to find themselves in the middle of the sea, without a boat, and far from all help. She began to cry, and cried so piteously, that even the fishes had compassion on her: she did not know what to do, nor what would become of her. "There is no doubt," she said, "that the King of the Peacocks ordered me to be thrown into the sea, having repented his promise of marrying me, and to get rid of me quietly he has had me drowned. What a strange man!" she continued, "for I should have loved him so much! We should have been so happy together," and with that she burst out crying afresh, for she could not help still loving him. She remained floating about on the sea for two days, wet to the skin, and almost dead with cold; she was so benumbed by it, that if it had not been for little Fretillon, who lay beside her and kept a little warmth in her, she could not have survived. She was famished with hunger, and seeing the oysters in their shells, she took as many of these as she wanted and ate them; Fretillon did the same, to keep himself alive, although he did not like such food. Rosette became still more alarmed when the night set in. "Fretillon," she said, "keep on barking, to frighten away the soles, for fear they should eat us." So Fretillon barked all night, and when the morning came, the Princess was floating near the shore. Close to the sea at this spot, there lived a good old man; he was poor, and did not care for the things of the world, and no one

ever visited him in his little hut. He was very much surprised when heard Fretillon barking, for no dogs ever came in that direction; he thought some travellers must have lost their way, and went out with the kind intention of putting them on the right road again. All at once he caught sight of the Princess and Fretillon floating on the sea, and the Princess, seeing him, stretched out her arms to him, crying out, "Good man, save me, or I shall perish; I have been in the water like this for two days." When he heard her speak so sorrowfully, he had great pity on her, and went back into his hut to fetch a long hook; he waded into the water up to his neck, and once or twice narrowly escaped drowning. At last, however, he succeeded in dragging the bed on to the shore. Rosette and Fretillon were overjoyed to find themselves again on dry ground; and were full of gratitude to the kind old man. Rosette wrapped herself in her coverlet, and walked bare-footed into the hut, where the old man lit a little fire of dry straw, and took one of his dead wife's best dresses out of a trunk, with some stockings and shoes, and gave them to the Princess. Dressed in her peasant's attire, she looked as beautiful as the day, and Fretillon capered round her and made her laugh. The old man guessed that Rosette was some great lady, for her bed was embroidered with gold and silver, and her mattress was of satin. He begged her to tell him her story, promising not to repeat what she told him if she so wished. So she related to him all that had befallen her, crying bitterly the while, for she still thought that it was the King of the Peacocks who had ordered her to be drowned.

"What shall we do, my daughter?" said the old man. "You are a Princess and accustomed to the best of everything, and I have but poor fare to offer, black bread and radishes; but if you will let me, I will go and tell the King of the Peacocks that you are here; if he had once seen you, he would assuredly marry you." "Alas! he is a wicked man," said Rosette; "he would only put me to death; but if you can lend me a little basket, I will tie it round Fretillon's neck, and he will have very bad luck, if he does not manage to bring back some food."

The old man gave her a basket, which she fastened to Fretillon's neck, and then said, "Go to the best kitchen in the town, and bring me back what you find in the saucepan." Fretillon ran off to the town, and as there was no better kitchen than that of the King, he went in, uncovered the saucepan, and cleverly carried off all that was in it; then he returned to the hut. Rosette said to him, "Go back and take whatever you can find of the best in the larder." Fretillon went back to the King's larder, and took white bread, wine, and all sorts of fruits and sweetmeats; he was so laden that he could only just manage to carry the things home.

When the King of the Peacocks' dinner hour arrived, there was nothing for him either in the saucepan or in the larder; his attendants looked askance

at one another, and the King was in a terrible rage. "It seems, then, that I am to have no dinner; but see that the spit is put before the fire, and let me have some good roast meat this evening." The evening came, and the Princess said to Fretillon, "Go to the best kitchen in the town and bring me a joint of good roast meat." Fretillon obeyed, and knowing no better kitchen than that of the King, he went softly in, while the cooks' backs were turned, took the meat, which was of the best kind, from the spit, and carried it back in his basket to the Princess. She sent him back without delay to the larder, and he carried off all the preserves and sweetmeats that had been prepared for the King.

The King, having had no dinner, was very hungry, and ordered supper to be served early, but no supper was forthcoming; enraged beyond words, he was forced to go supperless to bed.

The same thing happened the following day, both as to dinner and supper; so that the King, for three days, was without meat or drink, for every time he sat down to table, it was found that the meal that had been prepared had been stolen. His chief adviser, fearing for the life of the King, hid himself in the corner of the kitchen to watch; he kept his eyes on the saucepan, that was boiling over the fire, and what was his surprise to see enter a little green dog, with one ear, that uncovered the pot, and put the meat in its basket. He followed it to see where it would go; he saw it leave the town, and still following, came to the old man's hut. Then he went and told the King that it was to a poor peasant's home that the food was carried morning and evening. The King was greatly astonished, and ordered more inquiries to be made. His chief adviser, anxious for favour, decided to go himself, taking with him a body of archers. They found the old man and Rosette at dinner, eating the meat that had been stolen from the King's kitchen, and they seized them, and bound them with cords, taking Fretillon prisoner at the same time.

They brought word to the King that the delinquents had been captured, and he replied, "To-morrow, the last day of reprieve for my two insolent prisoners will expire; they and these thieves shall die together." He then went into his court of justice. The old man threw himself on his knees before him, and begged to be allowed to tell him everything. As he was speaking, the King looked towards the beautiful Princess, and his heart was touched when he saw her crying. When, therefore, the old man said that she was the Princess Rosette who had been thrown into the water, in spite of the weak condition he was in from having starved for so long, he gave three bounds of joy, ran and embraced her, and untied her cords, declaring the while that he loved her with all his heart.

They at once went to find the Princes, who thought they were going to be put to death, and came forward in great dejection and hanging their heads; the nurse and her daughter were brought in at the same time. The brothers and sister recognised one another, as soon as they were brought face to face, and Rosette threw herself on her brothers' necks. The nurse and her daughter, and the boatman, begged on their knees for mercy, and the universal rejoicing and their own joy were so great, that the King and the Princess pardoned them, and gave the good old man a handsome reward, and from that time he continued to live in the palace.

Finally, the King of the Peacocks did all in his power to atone for his conduct to the King and his brother, expressing the deepest regret at having treated them so badly. The nurse restored to Rosette all her beautiful clothes and the bushel of golden crowns, and the wedding festivities lasted a fortnight. Everyone was happy down to Fretillon, who ate nothing but partridge wings for the rest of his life.

THE END