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THE  
DANISH STORY-BOOK.

By  
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.



Published by James Miller.



# THE DANISH STORY BOOK

BY  
HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

ILLUSTRATED.



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## LITTLE RUDY.

---

**L**ET us pay a visit to Switzerland. Let us look around us in that magnificent mountainous country, where the woods creep up the sides of the precipitous walls of rock ; let us ascend to the dazzling snow-fields above, and descend again to the green valleys beneath, where the rivers and the brooks foam along as if they were afraid that they should not fast enough reach the ocean and be lost in its immensity. The sun's burning rays shine on the deep dales ; and they also shine upon the heavy masses of snow above, so that the ice-blocks which have been accumulating for years melt and become rolling avalanches, piled-up glaciers. Two such lie in the broad mountain clefts under Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn, near the little mountain town of Grindelwald. They are wonderful to behold, and therefore in sum-

mer-time many strangers come here from every foreign land. They come over the lofty snow-covered hills; they come through the deep valleys, and from thence for hours and hours they must mount; and always, as they ascend, the valleys seem to become deeper and deeper, until they appear as if viewed from a balloon high up in the air. The clouds often hang like thick heavy curtains of smoke around the lofty mountain peaks, while down in the valley, where the many brown wooden houses lie scattered about, a bright ray of the sun may be shining, and bringing into strong relief some brilliant patch of green, making it look as if it were transparent. The waters foam and roar as they rush along below—they murmur and tinkle above. They look, up there, like silver ribbons streaming down over the rocks.

On both sides of the ascending road lie wooden houses. Each house has its little potato garden, and this is a necessity; for within-doors yonder are many mouths—the houses are crammed with children—and children often waste their food. From all the cottages they sally forth in swarms, and throng round travellers, whether these are on foot or in carriages. The whole troop of children are little merchants

—they offer for sale charming toy wooden houses, models of the dwellings one sees here among the mountains. Whether it be fair weather or foul, the crowds of children issue forth with their wares.

Some twenty years ago occasionally stood here, but always at a short distance from the other children, a little boy, who was also ready to engage in trade. He stood with an earnest, grave expression of countenance, and holding his deal-box fast with both his hands, as if he were afraid of losing it. The very earnestness of his face, and his being such a little fellow, caused him to be remarked and called forward, so that he often sold the most—he did not himself know why. Higher up among the hills lived his maternal grandfather, who cut out the neat pretty houses, and in a room up yonder was an old press full of all sorts of things—nut-crackers, knives, forks, boxes with very prettily carved leaf-work, and springing chamois: there was every thing to please a child's eye. But the little Rudy, as he was called, looked with greater interest and longing at the old fire-arms and other weapons which were hung up under the beams of the roof. "He should have them some day," said his grandfather,

“when he was big enough and strong enough to make use of them.” Young as the boy was, he was set to take care of the goats; and he who had to clamber after them was obliged to keep a good look-out, and to be a good climber. And Rudy *was* an excellent climber; he even went higher than the goats, for he was fond of seeking for birds’ nests up among the tops of the trees. Bold and adventurous he was, but no one ever saw him smile, except when he stood near the roaring cataract or heard the thunder of a rolling avalanche. He never played with the other children—he never went near them, except when his grandfather sent him down to sell the things he made. And Rudy did not care much for that; he preferred scrambling about among the mountains, or sitting at home with his grandfather, and hearing him tell stories of olden days, and of the people near by at Meyringen, from whence he came. “This tribe had not been settled there from the earliest ages of the world,” he said; “they were wanderers from afar; they had come from the distant North, where their race still dwelt, and were called ‘Swedes.’” This was a great deal for Rudy to learn, but he learned more from other sources, and these were the



The Young Goatherd.



animals domiciled in the house. One was a large dog, Ajola, a legacy from Rudy's father—the other a tomcat. Rudy had much for which to thank the latter—he had taught him to climb.

“Come out upon the roof with me!” the cat had said, distinctly and intelligibly; for when one is a young child, and can scarcely speak, fowls and ducks, cats and dogs, are almost as easily understood as the language that fathers and mothers use. One must be very little indeed then, however; it is the time when grand-papa's stick neighs, and becomes a horse with head, legs, and tail.

Some children retain these infantine thoughts longer than others; and of these it is said that they are very backward, exceedingly stupid children—people say so much!

“Come out upon the roof with me, little Rudy!” was one of the first things the cat said, and Rudy understood him.

“It is all nonsense to fancy one must fall down; you won't fall unless you are afraid. Come! set one of your paws here, the other there, and take care of yourself with the rest of your paws! Keep a sharp look-out, and be active in your limbs! If there be a hole, spring over it, and keep a firm footing, as I do.”

And so also did little Rudy; often and often he sat on the shelving roof of the house with the cat, and often too on the tops of the trees; but he sat also higher up among the towering rocks, which the cat did not frequent.

“Higher! higher!” said the trees and the bushes. “Do you not see how we climb up—to what height we go, and how fast we hold on, even among the narrowest points of rock?”

And Rudy gained the top of the hill earlier than the sun had gained it; and there he took his morning draught, the fresh invigorating mountain air—that drink which only our LORD can prepare, and which mankind pronounces to be the early fragrance from the mountain herbs, and the wild thyme and mint in the valley. All that is heavy the overhanging clouds absorb within themselves, and the winds carry them over the pine woods, while the spirit of fragrance becomes air—light and fresh; and this was Rudy’s morning draught.

The sunbeams—those daughters of the sun, who bring blessings with them—kissed his cheeks; and dizziness stood near on the watch, but dared not approach him; and the swallows from his grandfather’s house beneath (there

were not less than seven nests) flew up to him and the goats, singing, "We and you, and you and we!" They brought him greetings from his home, even from the two hens, the only birds in the establishment, though Rudy was not intimate with them.

Young as he was, he had travelled, and travelled a good deal for such a little fellow. He was born in the Canton of Valais, and brought from thence over the hills. He had visited on foot Staubbach, that seems like a silver veil to flutter before the snow-clad, glittering white mountain Jungfrau. And he had been at the great glaciers near Grindelwald, but that was connected with a sad event; his mother had found her death there, and there, his grandfather used to say, "little Rudy had got all his childish merriment knocked out of him." Before the child was a year old, "he laughed more than he cried," his mother had written; but from the time that he fell into the crevasse in the ice, his disposition had entirely changed. The grandfather did not say much about this in general, but the whole hill knew the fact.

Rudy's father had been a postilion, and the large dog who now shared Rudy's home had

always accompanied him in his journeys over the Simplon down to the Lake of Geneva. Rudy's kindred on his father's side lived in the valley of the Rhone, in the Canton Valais; his uncle was a celebrated chamois-hunter, and a well-known Alpine guide. Rudy was not more than a year old when he lost his father; and his mother was anxious to return with her child to her own family in the Bernese Oberland. Her father dwelt at the distance of a few hours' journey from Grindelwald; he was a carver in wood, and he made so much by this that he was very well off.

Carrying her infant in her arms, she set out homewards in the month of June, in company with two chamois-hunters, over the Gemmi to reach Grindelwald. They had accomplished the greater portion of the journey, had crossed the highest ridges to the snow-fields, and could already see her native valley, with all its well-known scattered brown cottages; they had now only the labor of going over the upper part of one great glacier. The snow had recently fallen, and concealed a crevasse—not one so deep as to reach to the abyss below where the water foamed along, but deeper far than the height of any human being. The young woman who

was carrying her infant slipped, sank in, and suddenly disappeared; not a shriek, not a groan was heard—nothing but the crying of a little child. Upwards of an hour elapsed before her two companions were able to obtain from the nearest house ropes and poles to assist them in extricating her; and it was with much difficulty and labor that they brought up from the crevasse two dead bodies, as they thought. Every means of restoring animation was employed, and they were successful in recalling the child to life, but not the mother; and so the old grandfather received into his house, not a daughter, but a daughter's son—the little one who “laughed more than he cried.” But a change seemed to have come over him since he had been in the glacier-spalten—in the cold underground ice-world, where the souls of the condemned are imprisoned until Doom's day, as the Swiss peasants assert.

Not unlike a rushing stream, frozen and pressed into blocks of green crystal, lies the glacier, one great mass of ice balanced upon another; in the depths beneath tears along the accumulating stream of melted ice and snow; deep hollows, immense crevasses, yawn within it. A wondrous palace of crystal it is, and in

it dwells the Ice-maiden—the queen of the glaciers. She, the slayer, the crusher, is half the mighty ruler of the rivers, half a child of the air; therefore she is able to soar to the highest haunts of the chamois, to the loftiest peaks of the snow-covered hills, where the boldest mountaineer has to cut footsteps for himself in the ice; she sails on the slightest sprig of the pine-tree over the raging torrents below, and bounds lightly from one mass of ice to another, with her long snow-white hair fluttering about her, and her bluish-green robe shining like the water in the deep Swiss lakes.

“To crush—to hold fast—such power is mine!” she cries; “yet a beautiful boy was snatched from me—a boy whom I had kissed, but not kissed to death. He is again among mankind; he tends the goats upon the mountain heights; he is always climbing higher and higher still, away, away from other human beings, but not for me! He is mine—I wait for him!”

And she commanded Vertigo to undertake the mission. It was in summer-time; the Ice-maiden was melting in the green valley where the wild mint grew, and Vertigo mounted and dived. Vertigo has several sisters, quite a flock

of them, and the Ice-maiden selected the strongest among the many who exercise their powers within doors and without—those who sit on the banisters of steep staircases and the outer rails of lofty towers, who bound like squirrels along the mountain ridges, and springing thence, tread the air as the swimmer treads the water, and lure their victims onward, down to the abyss beneath.

Vertigo and the Ice-maiden both grasp after mankind, as the polypus grasps after all that comes within its reach. Vertigo was to seize Rudy.

“Seize him, indeed!” cried Vertigo; “I cannot do it! That good-for-nothing cat has taught him its art. Yon child of the human race possesses a power within himself which keeps me at a distance. I cannot reach the little urchin when he hangs from the branches out over the depths below, or I would willingly loosen his hold, and send him whirling down through the air. But I cannot.”

“We must seize him, though!” said the Ice-maiden, “either you or I! I will—I will!”

“No—no!” broke upon the air, like a mountain echo of the church-bell’s peal; but it was a whisper, it was a song, it was the liquid tones

of a chorus from other spirits of nature—mild, soft, and loving, the daughters of the rays of the sun. They station themselves every evening in a circle upon the mountain-peaks, and spread out their rose-tinted wings, which, as the sun sinks, become redder and redder, until the lofty Alps seem all in a blaze. Men call this the Alpine glow. When the sun has sunk, they retire within the white snow on the crests of the hills, and sleep there until sunrise, when they come forth again. Much do they love flowers, butterflies, and mankind; and among the latter they had taken a great fancy for little Rudy.

“You shall not imprison him—you shall not get him!” they sang.

“Greater and stronger have I seized and imprisoned,” said the Ice-maiden.

Then sang the daughters of the sun of the wanderer whose hat the whirlwind tore from his head, and carried away in its stormy flight. The wind could take his cap, but not the man himself—no, it could make him tremble with its violence, but it could not sweep him away. “The human race is stronger and more ethereal even than we are; they alone may mount higher than even the sun, our parent. They

know the magic words that can rule the wind and the waves so that they are compelled to obey and to serve them. You loosen the heavy oppressive weight, and they soar upwards."

Thus sang the sweet tones of the bell-like chorus.

And every morning the sun's rays shone through the one little window in the grandfather's house upon the quiet child. The daughters of the rays of the sun kissed him—they wished to thaw, to obliterate the ice-kiss that the queenly maiden of the glaciers had given him, when, in his dead mother's lap, he lay in the deep crevasse of ice from which almost as by a miracle he had been rescued.



# THE JOURNEY

TO

## THE NEW HOME.

---



UDY was now eight years of age. His father's brother, who lived in the valley of the Rhone, on the other side of the mountain, wished to have the boy, as he could be better educated and taught to do for himself there; so, also, thought the grandfather, and he, therefore, agreed to part with him.

The time for Rudy's departure drew nigh. There were many more to take leave of than only his grandfather. First there was Ajola, the old dog.

"Your father was the postilion, and I was the postilion's dog," said Ajola. "We have often journeyed up and down, and I know both dogs and men on both sides of the mountains. It has not been my habit to speak much, but

now that we shall have so short a time for conversation, I will say a little more than usual, and will relate to you something upon which I have ruminated a great deal. I cannot understand it, nor can you; but that is of no consequence. But I have gathered this from it—that the good things of this world are not dealt out equally either to dogs or to mankind; all are not born to lie in laps or to drink milk. I have never been accustomed to such indulgences. But I have seen a whelp of a little dog travelling in the inside of a post-chaise, occupying a man's or a woman's seat, and the lady to whom he belonged, or whom he governed, carried a bottle of milk, from which she helped him; she also offered him sponge-cakes, but he would not condescend to eat them; he only sniffed at them, so she ate them herself. I was running in the sun by the side of the carriage, as hungry as a dog could be, but *I* had only to chew the cud of bitter reflection. Things were not so justly meted out as they might have been—but when are they? May you come to drive in carriages, and lie in fortune's lap; but you can't bring all this about yourself. *I* never could, either by barking or growling.”

This was Ajola's discourse; and Rudy threw his arms round his neck and kissed him on his wet mouth; and then he caught up the cat in his arms, but the animal was angry at this, and exclaimed, "You are getting too strong for me, but I will not use my claws against you. Scramble away over the mountains—I have taught you how to do so; never think of falling, but hold fast, have no fear, and you will be safe enough."

And the cat sprang down and ran off, for he did not wish Rudy to see how sorry he was.

The hens hopped upon the floor; one of them had lost her tail, for a traveller, who chose to play the sportsman, had shot off her tail, mistaking the poor fowl for a bird of prey.

"Rudy is going over the hills," murmured one of the hens.

"He is in a hurry," said the other, "and I don't like leave-takings," and they both hopped out.

The goats also bleated their farewells, and very sorry they were.

Just at that time there were two active guides about to cross the mountains; they proposed descending the other side of the Gemmi, and Rudy was to accompany them on foot.

It was a long and laborious journey for such a little fellow, but he had a good deal of strength, and had courage that was indomitable.

The swallows flew a little way with him, and sang to him, "We and you, and you and we!"

The travellers' path led across the rushing Lütchine, which in numerous small streams falls from the dark clefts of the Grindelwald glaciers. The trunks of fallen trees and fragments of rock serve here as bridges. They had soon passed the thicket of alders, and commenced to ascend the mountain, close to where the glaciers had loosened themselves from the side of the hill; and they went upon the glacier over the blocks of ice, and round them.

Rudy crept here, and walked there; his eyes sparkling with joy, as he firmly placed his iron-tipped mountain-shoe wherever he could find footing for it. The small patches of black earth, which the mountain torrents had cast upon the glacier, imparted to it a burned appearance, but still the bluish-green, glass-like ice shown out visibly. They had to go round the little pools which were dammed up, as it were, amidst detached masses of ice; and in

this circuitous route they approached an immense stone, which lay rocking on the edge of a crevasse in the ice. The stone lost its equipoise, toppled over, and rolled down; and the echo of its thundering fall resounded faintly from the glacier's deep abyss, far—far beneath.

Upwards, always upwards, they journeyed on; the glacier itself stretched upwards, like a continued stream of masses of ice piled up in wild confusion, amidst bare and rugged rocks. Rudy remembered, for a moment, what had been told him—that he, with his mother, had lain buried in one of these cold, mysterious fissures; but he soon threw off such gloomy thoughts, and only looked upon the tale as one among the many fables he had heard. Once or twice, when the men with whom he was travelling thought that it was rather difficult for so little a boy to mount up, they held out their hands to help him; but he never needed any assistance, and he stood upon the glacier as securely as if he had been a chamois itself.

Now they came upon rocky ground, sometimes amidst mossy stones, sometimes amidst low pine-trees, and again out upon the green pas-

tures—always changing, always new. Around them towered lofty snow-clad mountains, those of which every child in the neighborhood knows the names—Jungfrau, the Monk, and Eiger.

Rudy had never before been so far from his home—never before beheld the wide-spreading ocean of snow that lay with its immovable billows of ice, from which the wind occasionally swept little clouds of powdery snow, as it sweeps the scum from the waves of the sea. Glacier stretched close to glacier—one might have said they were hand in hand; and each is a crystal palace belonging to the Ice-maiden, whose pleasure and occupation it is to seize and imprison her victims.

The sun was shining warmly, and the snow dazzled the eyes as if it had been strewn with flashing pale-blue diamond sparks. Innumerable insects, especially butterflies and bees, lay dead in masses on the snow; they had winged their way too high, or else the wind had carried them upwards to the regions, for them, of cold and death. Around Wetterhorn hung what might be likened to a large tuft of very fine dark wool, a threatening cloud; it sank, bulging out with what it had concealed

in itself—a Föhn,\* fearfully violent in its might when it should break loose.

The whole of this journey—the night quarters above—the wild track—the mountain clefts, where the water, during an incalculably long period of time, had penetrated through the blocks of stone—made an indelible impression upon little Rudy's mind.

A forsaken stone building, beyond the sea of snow, gave the travellers shelter for the night. Here they found some charcoal and branches of pine-trees. A fire was soon kindled, couches of some kind were arranged as well as they could be, and the men placed themselves near the blazing fire, took out their tobacco, and began to drink the warm spiced beverage they had prepared for themselves, nor did they forget to give some to Rudy.

The conversation fell upon the mysterious beings who haunt the Alpine land: upon the strange gigantic snakes in the deep lakes—the night-folks—the spectre host, that carry sleepers off through the air to the wonderful, almost floating town of Venice—the wild herdsman,

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\* Föhn, a humid south wind on the Swiss mountains and lakes, the forerunner of a storm.—TRANSLATOR.

who drives his black sheep over the green pastures ; if these had not been seen, the sound of their bells had undoubtedly been heard, and the frightful noise made by the phantom herds.

Rudy listened with intense curiosity to these superstitious tales, but without any fear, for *that* he did not know ; and while he listened, he fancied that he heard the uproar of the wild spectral herd. Yes ! It became more and more distinct ; the men heard it too. They were awed into silence ; and as they hearkened to the unearthly noise, they whispered to Rudy that he must not sleep.

It was a Föhn that had burst forth—that violent tempestuous wind which issues downwards from the mountains into the valley beneath, and in its fury snaps large trees as if they were but reeds, and carries the wooden houses from one bank of a river to the other as we would move men on a chess-board.

After an hour had elapsed, Rudy was told that it was all over, and he might now go to sleep safely ; and, weary with his long walk, he did sleep, as if in duty bound to do so.

At a very early hour in the morning the party set off again. The sun that day lighted up for Rudy new mountains, new glaciers, and

new snow-fields. They had entered the Canton Valais, and were upon the other side of the ridge of hills seen from Grindelwald, yet still far from his new home.

Other mountain clefts, other pastures, other woods, and other hilly paths unfolded themselves; other houses, and other people, too, Rudy saw. But what kind of human beings were these? The outcasts of fate they were, with frightful, disgusting, yellowish faces, and necks of which the hideous flesh hung down like bags. They were the cretins—poor diseased wretches, dragging themselves along, and looking with stupid, lustreless eyes upon the strangers who crossed their path—the women even more disgusting than the men. Were such the persons who surrounded his new home?



## THE UNCLE.

---

**I**N his uncle's house, when Rudy arrived there, he saw, and he thanked God for it, people such as he had been accustomed to see. There was only one cretin there, a poor idiotic lad: one of those unfortunate beings who, in their poverty—in fact, in their utter destitution—go by turns to different families, and remain a month or two in each house. Poor Saperli happened to be in his uncle's house when Rudy arrived.

The uncle was a bold and experienced hunter, and was, also, a cooper by trade; his wife, a lively little woman, with a face something like that of a bird, eyes like those of an eagle, and a long skinny throat.

Every thing was new to Rudy—the dress, customs, employments—even the language itself; but his childish ear would soon learn to

understand that. The contrast between his home at his grandfather's and his uncle's abode was very favorable to the latter. The house was larger; the walls were adorned by horns of the chamois, and brightly polished guns; a painting of the Virgin Mary hung over the door, and fresh Alpine roses, and a lamp that was kept always burning, were placed before it.

His uncle, as has been told, was one of the most renowned chamois-hunters of the district, and was, also, one of the best and most experienced of the guides.

Rudy became the pet of the house; but there was another pet as well—a blind, lazy old hound, who could no longer be of any use; but he *had been* useful, and the worth of the animal in his earlier days was remembered, and he, therefore, now lived as one of the family, and had every comfort. Rudy patted the dog, but the animal did not like strangers, and as yet Rudy was a stranger; but he soon won every heart, and became as one of themselves.

“Things don't go so badly in Canton Valais,” said his uncle. “We have plenty of chamois; they do not die off so fast as the wild he-goats; matters are much better now-a-days than in

the old times, although they *are* so bepraised. A hole is burst in the bag, and we have a current of air now in our confined valley. Something better always starts up when antiquated things are done away with."

The uncle became quite chatty, and discoursed to the boy of the events of his own boyhood and those of his father. Valais was then, as he called it, only a receptacle for sick people—miserable cretins; "but the French soldiers came, and they made capital doctors; they soon killed the disease, and the patients with it. They know how to strike—ay, how to strike in many ways—and the girls could smite, too!" and thereupon the uncle nodded to his wife, who was of French descent, and laughed. "The French could split solid stones if they chose. It was they who cut out of the rocks the road over the Simplon—yes, cut such a road that I could say to a child of three years of age, Go down to Italy! You have but to keep to the high road, and you find yourself there." The good man then sang a French romance, and wound up by shouting "hurrah!" for Napoleon Bonaparte.

It was the first time that Rudy had ever heard of France, and he was interested in hear-

ing of it, especially Lyons, that great city on the river Rhone, where his uncle had been.

The uncle prophesied that Rudy would become, in a few years, a smart chamois-hunter, as he had quite a talent for it. He taught the boy to hold, load, and fire a gun; he took him up with him, in the hunting season, among the hills, and made him drink of the warm chamois' blood, to ward off giddiness from the hunter; he taught him to know the time when, upon the different sides of the mountains, avalanches were about to fall, at mid-day or in the evening, whenever the sun's rays took effect; he taught him to notice the movements of the chamois, and learn their spring, so that he might alight on his feet and stand firmly; and told him that if on the fissures of the rock there was no footing, he must support himself by his elbows, and exert the muscles of his thighs and the calves of his legs to hold on fast. Even the neck could be made of use, if necessary.

The chamois are cunning, and place outposts on the watch; but the hunter must be more cunning, and scent them out. Sometimes he might cheat them by hanging up his hat and coat on an Alpine staff and the chamois would

mistake the coat for the man. This trick the uncle played one day when he was out hunting with Rudy.

The mountain pass was narrow; indeed, there was scarcely a path at all; scarcely more than a slight cornice close to the yawning abyss. The snow that lay there was partially thawed, and the stones crumbled away whenever they were trod on. So the uncle laid himself down his full length, and crept forward. Every fragment of stone that broke off, fell, rolling, and knocking from one side of the rocky wall to another, until it sank to rest in the dark depths below. About a hundred paces behind his uncle stood Rudy, upon the verge of the last point of solid rock; and as he stood, he saw careering through the air, and hovering just over his uncle, an immense Lämmergeier, which, with the tremendous stroke of its wing, would speedily cast the creeping worm into the abyss beneath, there to prey upon his carcass.

The uncle had eyes for nothing but the chamois, which, with its young kid, had appeared on the other side of the crevasse. Rudy was watching the bird; well did he know what was its aim, and, therefore, he kept his hand

on the gun to fire the moment it might be necessary. Just then the chamois made a bound upwards; Rudy's uncle fired, and the animal was hit by the deadly bullet, but the kid escaped as cleverly as if it had had a long life's experience in danger and flight. The enormous bird, frightened by the loud report, wheeled off in another direction; and the uncle was freed from a danger of which he was quite unconscious until he was told of it by Rudy.

As in high good-humor they were wending their way homewards, and the uncle was humming an air he remembered from his childish days, they suddenly heard a peculiar noise, which seemed to come from no great distance. They looked round, on both sides—they looked upwards; and there in the heights above, on the sloping verge of the mountain, the heavy covering of snow was lifted up, and it heaved as a sheet of linen stretched out heaves when the wind creeps under it. The lofty mass cracked as if it had been a marble slab—it broke, and resolving itself into a foaming cataract, came rushing down with a rumbling noise like that of distant thunder. It was an avalanche that had fallen, not indeed over Rudy and his uncle, but near them—all too near'

“Hold fast, Rudy—hold fast with all your might!” cried his uncle.

And Rudy threw his arms round the trunk of a tree that was close by, while his uncle climbed above him and held fast to the branches of the tree. The avalanche rolled past at a little distance from them, but the gust of wind that swept like the tail of a hurricane after it, rattled around the trees and bushes, snapped them asunder as if they had been but dry rushes, and cast them down in all directions. Rudy was dashed to the ground, for the trunk of the tree to which he had clung was thus overthrown; the upper part was flung to a great distance. There, amidst the shattered branches, lay his poor uncle, with his skull fractured! His hand was still warm, but it would have been impossible to recognize his face. Rudy stood pale and trembling; it was the first shock in his young life—the first moment he had ever felt terror.

Late in the evening he reached his home with the fatal tidings—his home which was now to be the abode of sorrow. The bereaved wife stood like a statue—she did not utter a word—she did not shed a tear; and it was not until the corpse was brought in that her

grief found its natural vent. The poor cretin stole away to his bed, and nothing was seen of him during the whole of the next day; towards evening he came to Rudy.

“Will you write a letter for me?” he asked. “Saperli cannot write—Saperli can only go down to the post-office with the letter.”

“A letter for you?” exclaimed Rudy; “and to whom?”

“To our Lord Christ!”

“Whom do you mean?”

And the half-idiot, as the cretin was called, looked with a most touching expression at Rudy, clasped his hands, and said solemnly and reverentially—

“Jesus Christ! Saperli would send Him a letter to pray of Him that Saperli may lie dead, and not the good master of the house here.”

And Rudy took his hand and wrung it. “That letter would not reach up yonder—that letter would not restore to us him we have lost.”

But Rudy found it very difficult to convince Saperli of the impossibility of his wishes.

“Now you must be the support of the house,” said his aunt to him; and Rudy became such.

## BABETTE.

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HO is the best marksman in the Canton Valais? The chamois well know —“Save yourselves from Rudy!” they might have said. And “who is the handsomest marksman?” “Oh! it is Rudy!” said the girls. But they did not add, “Save yourselves from Rudy;” neither did the sober mothers say so, for he bowed as politely to them as to the young girls. He was so brave and so joyous, his cheeks so brown, his teeth so white, his dark eyes so sparkling. A handsome young man he was, and only twenty years of age. The most ice-chill water never seemed too cold for him when he was swimming—in fact, he was like a fish in the water; he could climb better than any one else; he could also cling fast, like a snail, to the wall of rock. There were good muscles and sinews in him; this

was quite evident whenever he made a spring. He had learned first from the cat how to spring, and from the chamois afterwards. Rudy had the reputation of being the best guide on the mountain, and he could have made a great deal of money by this occupation. His uncle had also taught him the cooper's trade, but he had no inclination for that. He cared for nothing but chamois-hunting; in this he delighted, and *it* also brought in money. Rudy would be an excellent match, it was said, if he only did not look too high. He was such a good dancer that the girls who were his partners often dreamt of him, and more than one let her thoughts dwell on him even after she awoke.

"He kissed me in the dance!" said Annette, the schoolmaster's daughter, to her dearest friend; but she should not have said this even to her dearest friend. Such secrets are seldom kept—like sand in a bag that has holes, they ooze out. Therefore, however well behaved Rudy might be, it was soon spread about that he kissed in the dance; and yet he had never kissed her whom he would have liked to kiss.

"Take care of him!" said an old hunter; "he has kissed Annette. He has begun with A, and he will kiss through the whole alphabet."

A kiss in the dance was all that the gossips could find to bring against Rudy ; but he certainly had kissed Annette, and yet she was not the flower of his heart.

Below, at Bex, amidst the great walnut-trees, close to a small rushing mountain stream, lived the rich miller. His dwelling-house was a large building of three stories high, with small turrets ; its roof was composed of shavings of wood covered with tinned iron plates, which shone in sunshine and moonshine ; on the highest turret was a vane, a glittering arrow passed through an apple, in allusion to Tell's celebrated arrow-shot. The mill was a conspicuous object, and permitted itself to be sketched or written about ; but the miller's daughter did not permit herself to be described in writing or to be sketched—so at least Rudy would have said. And yet her image was engraved on his heart ; both her eyes blazed in on it, so that it was quite in flames. The fire had, like other fires, come on suddenly ; and the strangest part of it was, that the miller's daughter, the charming Babette, was quite ignorant of it, for she and Rudy had never spoken so much as two words to each other.

The miller was rich, and, on account of his

wealth, Babette was rather high to aspire to. "But nothing is so high," said Rudy to himself, "that one may not aspire to it. One must climb perseveringly; and if one has confidence, one does not fall." He had received this teaching in his early home.

It so happened that Rudy had some business to transact at Bex. It was a long journey to that place, for there was then no railroad. From the glaciers of the Rhone, immediately at the foot of the Simplon, among many and often shifting mountain peaks, stretches the broad valley of the Canton Valais, with its mighty river, the Rhone, whose waters are often so swollen as to overflow its banks, inundating fields and roads, and destroying all. Between the towns of Sion and St. Maurice the valley takes a turn, bending like an elbow, and below St. Maurice becomes so narrow that there is only space for the bed of the river and the confined carriage-road. An old tower, like the guardian of the Canton Valais, which ends here, stands on the side of the mountain, and commands a view over the stone bridge to the custom-house on the other side, where the Canton Vaud commences; and nearest of the not very distant towns lies Bex. In this

part, at every step forward, are displayed increased fruitfulness and abundance; one enters, as it were, a grove of chestnut and walnut-trees. Here and there peep forth cypresses and pomegranates. It is almost as warm there as in Italy.

Rudy reached Bex, got through his business, and looked about him; but not a soul (putting Babette out of the question) belonging to the mill did he see. This was not what he wanted.

Evening came on; the air was filled with the perfume of the wild thyme and the blossoming lime-trees; there lay what seemed like a shining sky-blue veil over the wooded green hills; a stillness reigned around—not the stillness of sleep, not the stillness of death—no, it was as if all nature was holding its breath, in order that its image might be photographed upon the blue surface of the heavens above. Here and there amidst the trees stood poles, or posts, which conveyed the wires of the telegraph along the silent valley: close against one of these leaned an object, so motionless that one might have thought it was the decayed trunk of a tree; but it was Rudy, who was standing there, as still as was all around him at that moment. He was not sleeping,

neither was he dead ; but, as through the wires of the telegraph there are often transmitted the great events of the world, and matters of the utmost importance to individuals, without the wires, by the slightest tremor or the faintest tone, betraying them, so there passed through Rudy's mind anxious overwhelming thoughts, fraught with the happiness of his future life, and constituting, from this time forth, his one unchanging aim. His eyes were fixed on one point before him, and that was a light in the parlor of the miller's house, where Babette resided. Rudy stood so still that one might have thought he was on the watch to fire at a chamois ; but he was himself at that moment like a chamois, which one minute could stand as if it were chiselled out of the rock, and suddenly, if a stone but rolled past, would make a spring and leave the hunter in the lurch. And thus did Rudy, for a thought rolled through his mind.

“Never despair!” said he ; “a visit to the mill, say good-evening to the miller, and good-day to Babette. One does not fall unless one fears to do so. If I am to be Babette's husband, she must see me some day or other.”

And Rudy laughed and made up his mind

to go to the miller's; he knew what he wanted, and that was to marry Babette.

The stream, with its yellowish-white water, was dashing on; the willows and lime-trees hung over it. Rudy, as it stands in the old nursery rhyme,

Found to the miller's house his way;  
But there was nobody at home,  
Except a pussy-cat at play!

The cat, which was standing on the steps, put up its back and mewed; but Rudy was no way inclined to listen to it. He knocked at the door; no one seemed to hear him, no one answered. The cat mewed again. Had Rudy been still a little boy, he might have understood the cat's language, and heard that it said "No one is at home." But now he had to go to the mill to make the necessary inquiries, and there he was told that the master had gone on a long journey to the town of Interlaken—"Inter Lacus, amidst the lakes," as the schoolmaster, Annette's father, in his great learning, had explained the name.

Ah! so far away, then, were the miller and Babette? There was a great shooting-match to be held at Interlaken; it was to begin

the next morning, and to last for eight days. The Swiss from all the German cantons were to assemble there.

Poor Rudy! it was not a fortunate time for him to have come to Bex. He had only to return again; and he did so, taking the road over St. Maurice and Sion to his own valley, his own hills. But he was not disheartened. When the sun rose next morning he was in high spirits, but indeed they had never been depressed.

“Babette is at Interlaken, a journey of many days from this,” he said to himself. “It is a long way off if one goes by the circuitous high-road, but not so far if one cuts across the mountains, and that way just suits a chamois-hunter. I have gone that way before; over yonder lies my early home, where, as a little boy, I lived with my grandfather. And there are shooting matches at Interlaken; I shall take my place as the first there, and there also shall I be with Babette, when I become acquainted with her.”

Carrying his light knapsack, with his Sunday finery in it, with his musket and game-bag, Rudy went up the mountain the shortest way, yet still tolerably long; but the shooting match-

es were only to commence that day, and were to continue for a week. During all that time, he had been assured, the miller and Babette would stay with their relatives at Interlaken. So over the Gemmi trudged Rudy: he proposed descending near Grindelwald.

In high health and spirits he set off, enjoying the fresh, pure, and invigorating mountain air. The valleys sank deeper, the horizon became more extensive; here a snow-crested summit, there another, and speedily the whole of the bright shining Alpine range became visible. Rudy knew well every ice-clad peak. He kept his course opposite to Schreckhorn, which raised its white-powdered stone finger high towards the blue vault above.

At length he had crossed the loftier mountain ridge. The pasture-lands sloped down towards the valley that was his former home. The air was pleasant, his thoughts were pleasant; hill and dale were blooming with flowers and verdure, and his heart was full of the glowing dreams of youth; he felt as if old age, as if death, were never to approach him; life, power, enjoyment, were before him. Free as a bird, light as a bird, was Rudy; and the swallows flew past him, and sang as in the days of

his childhood, "We and you, and you and we!" All was motion and pleasure.

Beneath lay the green velvet meadows, dotted with brown wooden houses; the river Lüt-schine rushed foaming along. He saw the glacier with its borders like green glass edging the dirty snow, and he saw the deep chasms, while the sound of the church-bells came upon his ear, as if they were ringing a welcome to his old home. His heart beat rapidly, and his mind became so full of old recollections that for a moment he almost forgot Babette.

He was again traversing the same road where, as a little boy, he had stood along with other children to sell their carved wooden toy horses. Yonder, above the pine-trees, still stood his grandfather's house, but strangers dwelt there now. The children came running after him, as formerly; they wished to sell their little wares. One of them offered him an Alpine rose. Rudy took it as a good omen, and thought of Babette. He had soon crossed the bridge where the two Lütshines unite, and reached the smiling country where the walnut and other embowering trees afford grateful shade. He soon perceived waving flags, and beheld the white cross on the red ground—the standard of

the Swiss as of the Danes—and before him lay Interlaken.

Rudy thought it was certainly a splendid town—a Swiss town in its holiday dress. It was not, like other market towns, a heap of heavy stone houses, stiff, foreign-looking, and aiming at grandeur; no! it looked as if the wooden houses from the hills above had taken a start into the green valley beneath, with its clear stream whose waters rushed swiftly as an arrow, and had ranged themselves into rows—somewhat uneven, it is true—to form the street. And that prettiest of all, the street which had been built since Rudy, as a little boy, had last been there—*that* seemed to be composed of all the nicest wooden houses his grandfather had cut out, and with which the cupboard at home had been filled. These seemed to have transplanted themselves there, and to have grown in size, as the old chestnut-trees had done.

Every house almost was an hotel, as it was called, with carved wooden work round the windows and balconies, with smart-looking roofs, and before each house a flower-garden, between it and the wide macadamized high-road. Near these houses, but only on one side of the road, stood some other houses: had they

formed a double row, they would have concealed the fresh green meadow, where wandered the cows with bells that rang as among the high Alpine pastures. The valley was encircled by lofty hills, which, about the centre, seemed to retire a little to one side, so as to render visible that glittering snow-white Jungfrau, the most beautiful in form of all the mountains of Switzerland.

What a number of gayly dressed gentlemen and ladies from foreign lands—what crowds of Swiss from the adjacent cantons! The candidates for the prizes carried the numbers of their shots in a garland round their hats. There was music of all kinds—singing, hand-organs and wind-instruments, shouting and racket. The houses and bridges were adorned with verses and emblems. Flags and banners waved; the firing of gun after gun was heard, and that was the best music to Rudy's ears. Amidst all this excitement he almost forgot Babette, for whose sake only he had gone there.

Crowds were thronging to the target-shooting. Rudy was soon among them, and he was always the luckiest—the best shot—for he always struck the bull's eye.

“Who is that young stranger—that capital

marksman?" was asked around. "He speaks the French language as they speak it in the Canton Valais; he also expresses himself fluently in our German," said several people.

"When a child he lived here in the valley, near Grindelwald," replied some one.

The youth was full of life; his eyes sparkled, his aim was steady, his arm sure, and therefore his shots always told. Good fortune bestows courage, and Rudy had always courage. He had soon a whole circle of friends round him. Every one noticed him; in short, he became the observed of all observers. Babette had almost vanished from his thoughts. Just then a heavy hand was laid upon his shoulder, and a rough voice accosted him in the French language with—

"You are from the Canton Valais?"

Rudy turned round, and beheld a red jolly countenance and a stout person. It was the rich miller from Bex; his broad bulk hid the slender, lovely Babette, who, however, soon came forward with her dark bright eyes. The rich miller was very proud that it was a huntsman from his own canton that had been declared the best shot, and was so much distinguished and so much praised. Rudy was

truly the child of good fortune; what he had travelled so far to look for, but had since his arrival nearly forgotten, now sought him.

When at a distance from home one meets persons from thence, acquaintance is speedily made, and people speak as if they knew each other. Rudy held the first place at the shooting matches, as the miller held the first place at Bex on account of his money and his mill. So the two men shook hands, although they had never met before; Babette, too, held out her hand frankly to Rudy, and he pressed it warmly, and gazed with such admiration at her that she became scarlet.

The miller talked of the long journey they had made, and the numerous large towns they had seen, and how they had travelled both by steam and by post.

"I came the shorter way," said Rudy; "I went over the mountains. There is no road so high that one cannot venture to take it."

"Ay, at the risk of breaking one's neck!" replied the miller; "and you just look like one who will some day or other break his neck—you are so daring!"

"One does not fall unless one has the fear of doing so," said Rudy.

And the miller's relations at Interlaken, with whom he and Babette were staying, invited Rudy to visit them, since he came from the same canton as did their kindred. It was a pleasant invitation for Rudy. Luck was with him, as it always is with those who depend upon themselves, and remember that "our Lord bestows nuts upon us, but He does not crack them for us!"

And Rudy sat almost like one of the family, among the miller's relations, and a toast was drunk in honor of the best shot, to which Rudy returned thanks, after clinking glasses with Babette.

In the evening the whole party took a walk on the pretty avenue along the gay-looking hotels under the walnut-trees; and there was such a crowd, and so much pushing, that Rudy had to offer his arm to Babette. He told her how happy he was to have met people from the Canton Vaud, for Vaud and Valais were close neighbors. He spoke so cordially, that Babette could not resist slightly squeezing his hand. They seemed almost like old acquaintances, and she was very lively—that pretty little girl. Rudy was much amused at her remarks on what was absurd and over-fine in the dress of

the foreign ladies, and the affectation of some of them; but she did not wish to ridicule them, for there might be some excellent people among them—yes, nice amiable people, Babette was sure of that, for she had a godmother who was a very superior English lady. Eighteen years before when Babette was christened, that lady was at Bex; she had given Babette the valuable brooch she wore. Her godmother had written to her twice, and this year they were to have met her at Interlaken, whither she was coming with her daughters; they were old maids, going on for thirty, said Babette—she herself was only eighteen.

The tongue in her pretty little mouth was not still for a moment, and all that she said appeared to Rudy as matters of the greatest importance. And he told her what he had to tell—told how he had been to Bex, how well he knew the mill, and how often he had seen her, though, of course, she had never remarked him. He said he had been more distressed than he could tell, when he found that she and her father were away, far away; but still not too far to prevent one from scrambling over the wall that made the road so long.

He said all this, and he said a great deal

more; he told her how much she occupied his thoughts, and that it was on her account, and not for the sake of the shooting matches, that he had come to Interlaken.

Babette became very silent—it was almost too much, all that he confided to her.

As they walked on, the sun sank behind the lofty heights, and the Jungfrau stood in strong relief, clothed in a splendor and brilliancy reflected by the green woods of the surrounding hills. Every one stood still and gazed at it; Rudy and Babette also stood and looked at the magnificent scene.

“Nothing can be more beautiful than this!” said Babette.

“Nothing!” said Rudy, with his eyes fixed upon Babette.

“To-morrow I must go,” he added a little after.

“Come and visit us at Bex,” whispered Babette; “my father will be so glad to see you.”

## ON THE WAY HOME.

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H! how much had not Rudy to carry next day when he started on his journey homewards over the mountains! He had actually to carry two handsome guns, three silver goblets, and a silver coffee-pot—the latter would be of use when he set up a house. But these valuables were not the weightiest load he had to bear; a still weightier load he had to carry—or did it carry him?—over the high, high hills.

The road was rough; the weather was dismal, gloomy, and rainy; the clouds hung like a mourning-veil over the summits of the mountains, and shrouded their shining peaks. From the woods had resounded the last stroke of the axe, and down the side of the hill rolled the trunks of the trees; they looked like sticks from the vast heights above, but nearer they were seen to be like the thick masts of ships. The river

murmured with its monotonous sound, the wind whistled, the clouds began to sail hurriedly along.

Close by Rudy suddenly appeared a young girl; he had not observed her until she was quite near him. She also was going to cross the mountain. Her eyes had an extraordinary power; they seemed to have a spell in them—they were so clear, so deep, so unfathomable.

“Have you a lover?” asked Rudy. All his thoughts were filled with love.

“I have none,” she replied with a laugh, but it seemed as if she did not speak the truth. “Let us not go the long way round. We must keep to the left; it is shorter.”

“Yes—to fall into some crevasse,” said Rudy. “You should know the paths better if you take upon yourself to be a guide.”

“I know the way well,” she rejoined, “and I have my wits about me. Your thoughts are down yonder in the valley. Up here one should think of the Ice-maiden. Mankind say that she is not friendly to their race.”

“I am not in the least afraid of her,” said Rudy. “She could not keep me when I was a

child; she shall not catch me now I am a grown up man."

It became very dark, the rain fell, and it began to snow heavily; it dazzled the eyes, and blinded them.

"Give me your hand, and I will help you to mount upwards," said the girl, as she touched him with her ice-cold fingers.

"*You* help me!" cried Rudy. "I do not yet require a woman's help in climbing;" and he walked on more briskly away from her. The snow-storm thickened like a curtain around him, the wind moaned, and behind him he heard the girl laughing and singing. It sounded so strangely. It was surely Glamourie, she surely, one of the attendants of the Ice-maiden; Rudy had heard of such things when, as a little boy, he had spent a night on the mountains, on his journey over the hills.

The snow fell more thickly, the clouds lay below him. He looked back; there was no one to be seen, but he heard laughter and jeering, and it did not seem to come from a human being.

When at length Rudy had reached the highest part of the mountain, where the path led



The Tempter.



down to the valley of the Rhone, he perceived on the pale blue of the horizon, in the direction of Chamouny, two glittering stars. They shone so brightly ; and he thought of Babette, of himself, and of his happiness, and became warm with these thoughts.

6



## THE VISIT TO THE MILL.

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YOU have really brought costly things home," said his old foster-mother, and her strange eagle eyes sparkled, while she worked her thin wrinkled neck even more quickly than usual. "You carry good luck with you, Rudy, I must kiss you, my dear boy."

Rudy allowed himself to be kissed, but it was evident by his countenance that he did not relish this domestic greeting.

"How handsome you are, Rudy!" exclaimed the old woman.

"Oh! don't flatter me," replied Rudy, laughing; but he was pleased at the compliment nevertheless.

"I repeat it," said the old woman, "and good fortune smiles on you."

"Yes, I believe you are right there," he said, while his thoughts strayed to Babette.

Never before had he longed so much for the deep valley.

"They must have come back," he said to himself; "it is now more than two days over the time they fixed for their return. I must go to Bex."

And to Bex he went. The miller and his daughter were at home; he was well received, and many greetings were given to him from the family at Interlaken. Babette did not speak much; she had become very silent. But her eyes spoke, and that was quite enough for Rudy. The miller, who generally had enough to say, and was accustomed to joke and have all his jokes laughed at, for he was *the rich miller*, seemed to prefer listening to Rudy's stirring adventures, and hearing him tell of all the difficulties and dangers that the chamois-hunter had to encounter on the mountain heights—how he had to crawl along the unsafe snowy cornice-work on the edges of the hills, which was attached to the rocks by the force of the wind and weather, and tread the frail bridges the snow-storm had cast over many a deep abyss.

Rudy spoke with much spirit, and his eyes sparkled while he described the life of a hunter,

the cunning of the chamois and the wonderful springs they took, the mighty Föhn, and the rolling avalanche. He observed that, at every new description, he won more and more upon the miller, and that the latter was particularly interested in his account of the Lämmergeier and the bold royal eagle.

Not far from Bex, in the Canton Valais, there was an eagle's nest, built most ingeniously under a projecting platform of rock, on the margin of the hill; there was a young one in it, which no one could take. An Englishman had, a few days before, offered Rudy a large handful of gold if he would bring him the young eagle alive.

"But there are limits even to the most reckless daring," said Rudy. "The young eagle up there is not to be got at: it would be madness to make the attempt."

And the wine circulated fast, and the conversation flowed on fast, and Rudy thought the evening was much too short, although it was past midnight when he left the miller's house after this his first visit.

The lights shone for a short time through the windows, and were reflected on the green branches of the trees, while through the sky-

light on the roof, which was open, crept out the parlor cat, and met in the water conduit on the roof the kitchen cat.

“Don’t you see that there is something new going on here?” said the parlor cat. “There is secret love-making in the house. The father knows nothing of it yet. Rudy and Babette have been all the evening treading on each other’s toes under the table; they trod on me twice, but I did not mew, for that would have aroused suspicion.”

“Well, *I* would have done it,” said the kitchen cat.

“What might suit the kitchen would not do in the parlor,” replied the parlor cat. “I should like very much to know what the miller will say when he hears of this engagement.”

Yes, indeed—what would the miller say? *That* Rudy also was anxious to know. He could not bring himself to wait long. Therefore before many days had passed, when the omnibus rolled over the bridge between the Cantons Valais and Vaud, Rudy sat in it, with plenty of confidence as usual, and pleasant thoughts of the favorable answer he expected that evening.

And when the evening had come, and the

omnibus was returning, Rudy also sat in it, going homewards. But, at the miller's, the parlor cat jumped out again.

"Look here, you from the kitchen—the miller knows every thing now. There was a strange end to the affair. Rudy came here towards the afternoon, and he and Babette had a great deal to whisper about; they stood on the path a little below the miller's room. I lay at their feet, but they had neither eyes nor thoughts for me.

"‘I will go straight to your father,’ said Rudy; ‘my proposal is honest and honorable.’

"‘Shall I go with you,’ said Babette, ‘that I may give you courage?’

"‘I have plenty of courage,’ replied Rudy, ‘but if you are with me, he must put some control upon himself, whether he likes the matter or not.’

"So they went in. Rudy trod heavily on my tail—he is very clumsy. I mewed, but neither he nor Babette had ears for me. They opened the door, and entered together, and I with them, but I sprang up to the back of a chair. I could scarcely hear what Rudy said, but I heard how the master blazed forth: it was a regular turning him out of his doors



The Proposal.



up to the mountains and the chamois; Rudy might look after these, but not after our little Babette."

"But what did they say?" asked the kitchen cat.

"Say! they said all that is generally said under such circumstances when people go a-wooing. 'I love her and she loves me; and when there is milk in the can for one, there is milk in the can for two.'

"'But she is far above you,' said the miller; 'she has lots of gold, and you have none. Don't you see that you cannot aspire to her?'

"'There is nothing or no one so high that one may not reach if one is only determined to do so,' said Rudy, getting angry.

"'But you said not long since that you could not reach the young eagle in its nest. Babette is a still higher and more difficult prize for you to take.'

"'I will take them both,' replied Rudy.

"'Very well! I will give her to you when you bring me the young eaglet alive,' said the miller, and he laughed until the tears stood in his eyes. 'But now thank you for your visit, Rudy! If you come again to-morrow, you will find no one at home. Farewell, Rudy!'

“And Babette also said farewell, in as timid and pitiable voice as that of a little kitten which cannot see its mother.

“‘A promise is a promise, and a man is a man!’ said Rudy. ‘Do not weep, Babette; I shall bring the young eagle.’

“‘You will break your neck, I hope!’ exclaimed the miller; ‘then we shall be free of this bad job.’ I call that sending him off with a flea in his ear! Now Rudy is gone, and Babette sits and cries, but the miller sings German songs which he learnt in his journey. I shall not distress myself about the matter; it would do no good.”

“But it is all very curious,” said the kitchen cat.



## THE EAGLE'S NEST.

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**F**ROM the mountain path came the sound of a person whistling in a strain so lively that it betokened good-humor and undaunted courage. The whistler was Rudy; he was going to his friend Vesinand.

“You must help me! We shall take Ragli with us. I must carry off the young eagle up yonder under the shelving rock!”

“Had you not better try first to take down the moon? That would be about as hopeful an undertaking,” said Vesinand. “You are in great spirits, I see.”

“Yes, for I am thinking of my wedding. But now, to speak seriously, you shall know how matters stand with me.”

And Vesinand and Ragli were soon made acquainted with what Rudy wished.

“You are a daring fellow,” they said, “but you wont succeed—you will break your neck.”

"One does not fall if one has no fear!" said Rudy.

About midnight they set out with alpenstocks, ladders, and ropes. The road lay through copsewood and brushwood, over rolling stones upwards, always upwards, upwards in the dark and gloomy night. The waters roared below, the waters murmured above, humid clouds swept heavily along. The hunters reached at length the precipitous ridge of rock. It became even darker here, for the walls of rock almost met, and light penetrated only a little way down from the open space above. Close by, under them, was a deep abyss, with its hoarse-sounding, raging water.

They sat all three quite still. They had to await the dawn of day, when the parent eagle should fly out; then only could they fire if they had any hope to capture the young one. Rudy sat as still as if he had been a portion of the rock on which he sat. He held his gun ready to fire; his eyes were steadily fixed on the highest part of the cleft, under a projecting rock of which the eagle's nest was concealed. The three hunters had long to wait.

At length, high above them was heard a crashing, whirring noise; the air was darkened

by a large object soaring in it. Two guns were ready to aim at the enormous eagle the moment it flew from its nest. A shot was fired; for an instant the outspread wings fluttered, and then the bird began to sink slowly, and it seemed as if with its size and the stretch of its wings it would fill the whole chasm, and in its fall drag the hunters down with it. The eagle disappeared in the abyss below; the cracking of the trees and bushes was heard, which were snapped and crushed in the fall of the stupendous bird.

And now commenced the business that brought the hunters there. Three of the longest ladders were tied securely together. They were intended to reach the outermost and last stepping-place on the margin of the abyss; but they did not reach so high up, and smooth as a well-built wall was the perpendicular rocky ascent a good way higher up, where the nest was hidden under the shelter of the uppermost projecting portion of rock. After some consultation the young men came to the conclusion, that there was nothing better to be done than to hoist far up two more ladders tied together, and then to attach these to the three which had already been raised. With immense difficulty

they pushed the two ladders up, and the ropes were made fast; the ladders shot out from over the rock, and hung there swaying in the air above the unfathomable depth beneath. Rudy had placed himself already on the lowest step. It was an ice-cold morning; the mist was rising heavily from the dark chasm below. Rudy sat as a fly sits upon some swinging straw which a bird, building its nest, might have dropped on the edge of the lofty eyry it had chosen for its site; but the insect could fly if the straw gave way—Rudy could but break his neck. The wind was howling around him, and away in the abyss below roared the gushing water from the melting glacier—the Ice-maiden's palace.

His ascent set the ladder into a tremulous motion, as the spider does which holds fast to its long waving slender thread. When Rudy had gained the top of the fourth ladder, he felt more confidence in them: he knew that they had been bound together by sure and skilful hands, though they dangled as if they had had but slight fastenings.

But there was even more dangerous work before Rudy than mounting a line of ladders that now swayed like a frame of rushes in the air, and

now knocked against the perpendicular rock : he had to climb as a cat climbs. But Rudy could do that, thanks to the cat who had taught him. He did not perceive the presence of Vertigo, who trod the air behind him, and stretched forth her polypus-arms after him. He gained, at length, the last step of the highest ladder, and then he observed that he had not got high enough even to see into the nest. It was only by using his hands that he could raise himself up to it ; he tried if the lowest part of the thick interlaced underwood, which formed the base of the nest, was sufficiently strong ; and when he had assured himself that the stunted trees were firm, he swung himself up by them from the ladder, until his head and breast had reached the level of the nest. But then poured forth on him a stifling stench of carrion ; for putrefied lambs, chamois, and birds, lay there crowded together.

Swimming-in-the-Head, a sister to Vertigo, though it could not overpower him, puffed the disgusting, almost poisonous odor into his face, that he might become faint ; and down below, in the black yawning ravine, upon the dank dashing waters, sat the Ice-maiden herself, with her long pale green hair, and gazed upwards

with her death-giving eyes, while she exclaimed—

“Now I will seize you!”


In a corner of the eagle's nest, Rudy beheld the eaglet sitting—a large and powerful creature, even though it could not yet fly. Rudy fixed his eyes on it, held on marvellously with one hand, and with the other hand cast a noose around the young eagle; it was captured alive, its legs were in the tightened cord, and Rudy flung the sling with the bird over his shoulder, so that the creature hung a good way down beneath him, as, with the help of a rope, he held on, until his foot touched at last the highest step of the ladder.

“Hold fast! don't fear to fall, and you will not do so!” Such was his early lesson, and Rudy acted on it: he held fast, crept down, and did not fall.

Then arose a shout of joy and congratulation. Rudy stood safely on the rocky ground, laden with his prize, the young eagle.

## WHAT MORE THE PARLOR CAT HAD TO TELL.

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ERE is what you demanded!" said Rudy, as he entered the miller's house at Bex, and placed on the floor a large basket. When he took its cover off, there glared forth two yellow eyes surrounded with a dark ring—eyes so flashing, so wild, that they looked as though they would burn or blast every thing they saw; the short hard beak opened to bite; the neck was red and downy.

"The young eagle!" exclaimed the miller. Babette screamed, and sprang to one side, but could not take her eyes off of Rudy and the eaglet.

"You are not to be frightened!" said the miller, addressing Rudy.

"And you will keep your word," said Rudy; "every one has his object."

"But how is it that you did not break your neck?" asked the miller.

"Because I held fast," replied Rudy; "and so I do now—I hold fast to Babette."

"Wait till you get her!" said the miller, laughing, and Babette thought that was a good sign.

"Let us take the young eagle out of the basket; it is frightful to see how its eyes glare. How did you manage to capture it?"

Rudy had to describe his feat, and, as he spoke, the miller's eyes opened wider and wider.

"With your confidence and your good fortune, you might maintain three wives," said the miller.

"Oh, thank you!" cried Rudy.

"But you wont get Babette just yet," said the miller, slapping the young Alpine hunter with good-humor on his shoulder.

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"Do you know there is something going on again here?" said the parlor cat to the kitchen cat. "Rudy has brought us the young eagle, and takes Babette as his reward. They have kissed each other in the father's presence! That

was as good as a betrothal. The old man did not storm at all; he kept in his claws, took an afternoon nap, and left the two to sit and chatter to each other. They have so much to say that they will not be tired talking till Christmas."

And they were not tired talking till Christmas. The wind whirled in eddies through the groves, and shook down the yellow leaves; the snow-drifts appeared in the valleys as well as on the lofty hills; the Ice-maiden sat in her proud palace, which she occupied during the winter-time; the upright walls of rock were covered with sleet; enormous masses of ice-tapestry were to be seen where, in summer, the mountain streams came pouring down; fantastic garlands of crystal ice hung over the snow-powdered pine-trees. The Ice-maiden rode on the howling wind, over the deepest dales. The carpet of snow was laid as far down as Bex; she could go there, and see Rudy in the house where he now passed so much of his time with Babette. The wedding was to take place in summer, and they heard enough of it—their friends talked so much about it.

There came sunshine; the most beautiful Alpine roses bloomed. The lovely, laughing

Babette was as charming as the early spring—the spring which makes all the birds sing of summer-time, when was to be the wedding-day.


“How these two do sit and hang over each other!” exclaimed the parlor cat. “I am sick of all this stuff.”



## THE ICE-MAIDEN'S

### SCORN OF MANKIND.

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PRING had unfolded her fresh green garlands of walnut and chestnut trees, which were bursting into bloom, particularly in the country that extends from the bridge at St. Maurice to the Lake of Geneva and the banks of the Rhone, which with wild speed rushes from its source under the green glaciers,—the Ice-palace where the Ice-maiden dwells—whence, on the keen wind, she permits herself to be borne up to the highest fields of snow, and, in the warm sunshine, reclines on their drifting masses. Here she sat, and gazed fixedly down into the deep valley beneath, where human beings, like ants on a sunlit stone, were to be seen busily moving about.

“Beings of mental power, as the children of

the sun call you," cried the Ice-maiden, "ye are but vermin! Let a snowball but roll down, and you and your houses and your villages are crushed and overwhelmed." And she raised her proud head higher, and looked with death-threatening eyes around her and below her. But from the valley arose a strange sound; it was the blasting of rocks—the work of men—the forming of roads and tunnels before the railway was laid down.

"They are working underground like moles; they are digging passages in the rock, and therefore are heard these sounds like the reports of guns. I shall remove my palaces, for the noise is greater than the roar of thunder itself."

There ascended from the valley a thick smoke, which seemed agitated like a fluttering veil: it came curling up from the locomotive, which upon the newly opened railway drew the train, that, carriage linked to carriage, looked like a winding serpent. With an arrow's speed it shot past.

"They pretend to be the masters down yonder, these powers of mind!" exclaimed the Ice-maiden; "but the mighty powers of nature are still the rulers."

And she laughed, she sang; her voice resounded through the valley.

“An avalanche is falling!” cried the people down there.

Then the children of the sun sang in louder strains about the power of thought in mankind. It commands all, it brings the wide ocean under the yoke, levels mountains, fills up valleys; the power of thought in mankind makes them lords over the powers of nature.

Just at that moment, there came, crossing the snow-field where the Ice-maiden sat, a party of travellers; they had bound themselves fast to each other, to be as one large body upon the slippery ice, near the deep abyss.

“Vermin!” she exclaimed. “*You* the lords of the powers of nature!” and she turned away from them, and looked scornfully towards the deep valley, where the railway train was rushing by.

“There they go, these thoughts! They are full of might; I see them everywhere. One stands alone like a king, others stand in a group, and yonder half of them are asleep. And when the steam-engine stops still, they get out and go their way. The thoughts then go forth into the world.” And she laughed.

"There goes another avalanche!" said the inhabitants of the valley.

"It will not reach us," cried two who sat together in the train—"two souls, but one mind," as has been said. These were Rudy and Babette; the miller accompanied them.

"Like baggage," he said, "I am with them as a sort of necessary appendage."

"There sit the two," said the Ice-maiden. "Many a chamois have I crushed, millions of Alpine roses have I snapped and broken, not a root left—I destroyed them all! Thought—power of mind, indeed!"

And she laughed again.

"There goes another avalanche!" said those down in the valley.



## THE GODMOTHER.

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AT Montreux, one of the nearest towns, which, with Clarens, Bernex, and Crin, encircle the northeast part of the Lake of Geneva, resided Babette's godmother, the distinguished English lady, with her daughters and a young relation. They had only lately arrived, yet the miller had already paid them a visit, announced Babette's engagement, and told about Rudy and the young eagle, the visit to Interlaken—in short, the whole story; and it had highly interested his hearers, and pleased them with Rudy, Babette, and even the miller himself. They were invited all three to come to Montreux, and they went; Babette ought to see her godmother, and her godmother wished to see her.

At the little town of Villeneuve, about the end of the Lake of Geneva, lay the steamboat, that, in a voyage of half an hour, went from

thence to Bernex, a little way below Montreux. It is a coast which has often been celebrated in song by poets. There, under the walnut-trees, on the banks of the deep bluish-green lake, Byron sat, and wrote his melodious verses about the prisoner in the gloomy mountain-castle of Chillon. There, where Clarens is reflected amidst weeping willows in the clear water, wandered Rousseau, dreaming of Eloise. The river Rhone glides away under the lofty snow-clad hills of Savoy; here there lies not far from its mouth a small island, so small that from the shore it looks as if it were but a toy islet. It is a patch of rocky ground, which about a century ago a lady caused to be walled round and covered with earth, in which three acacia-trees were planted; these now overshadow the whole island. Babette had always been charmed with this little islet; she thought it the loveliest spot that was to be seen on the whole voyage. She said she would like so much to land there—she must land there—it would be so delightful under these beautiful trees. But the steamer passed it by, and did not stop until it had reached Bernex.

The little party proceeded thence up amidst the white sunlit walls that surrounded the vine-

yards in front of the little town of Montreux, where the peasants' houses are shaded by fig-trees, and laurels and cypresses grow in the gardens. Half-way up the ascent stood the boarding-house where the godmother lived.

The meeting was very cordial. The godmother was a stout pleasant-looking woman, with a round smiling face. When a child she must certainly have exhibited quite a Raphael-like cherub's head; it was still an angel's head, but older, and with silver-white hair clustering round it. The daughters were well-dressed, elegant-looking, tall and slender. The young cousin who was with them, and who was dressed in white almost from top to toe, and had red hair and red whiskers large enough to have been divided among three gentlemen, began immediately to pay the utmost attention to little Babette. Splendidly bound books and drawings were lying on the large table; music-books were also to be seen in the room. The balcony looked out upon the beautiful lake, which was so bright and calm that the mountains of Savoy, with their villages, woods, and snow-peaks, were clearly reflected in it.

Rudy, who was generally so lively and so undaunted, found himself not at all at his ease.

He was obliged to be as much on his guard as if he were walking on peas over a slippery floor. How tediously time passed! It was like being in a treadmill. And now they were to go out to walk! This was quite as tiresome. Two steps forward and one backward Rudy had to take to keep pace with the others. Down to Chillon, the gloomy old castle on the rocky island, they went, to look at instruments of torture and dungeons, rusty fetters attached to the rocky walls, stone pallets for those condemned to death, trap-doors through which the unfortunate creatures were hurled down to fall upon iron spikes amidst burning piles. They called it a pleasure to look at all these! A dreadful place of execution it was, elevated by Byron's verse into the world of poetry. Rudy viewed it only as a place of execution. He leaned against the wide stone embrasure of the window, and gazed down on the deep blue-green of the water, and over to the little solitary island with the three acacias; how much he wished himself there—free from the whole babbling party!

But Babette felt quite happy. She had been excessively amused, she said afterwards; the cousin had "found her perfect."

“Oh yes—mere idle talk!” replied Rudy; and this was the first time he had ever said ny thing that did not please her.

The Englishman had made her a present of a little book as a souvenir of Chillon; it was Byron’s poem, the “Prisoner of Chillon,” translated into French, so that Babette was able to read it.

“The book may be good enough,” said Rudy, “but the nicely combed fop who gave it to you is no favorite of mine.”

“He looks like a meal-sack without meal,” cried the miller, laughing at his own wit.

Rudy laughed too, and said it was an excellent remark.



## THE COUSIN.

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WHEN Rudy, a few days afterwards, went to pay a visit to the miller, he found the young Englishman there. Babette had just placed before him a plate of trout, and she had taken much pains to decorate the dish.

Rudy thought that was unnecessary.

What was the Englishman doing there? What did he want? Why was he thus served and pampered by Babette? Rudy was jealous, and that pleased Babette. It amused her to see all the feelings of his heart—the strong and the weak. Love was to her as yet but a pastime, and she played with Rudy's whole heart; but nevertheless it is certain that he was the centre of all her thoughts—the dearest, the most valued in this world. Still, the more gloomy he looked, the merrier her eyes laughed. She could almost have kissed the fair Englishman with the red whiskers, if she could, by doing this,

have seen Rudy rush out in a rage ; it would have shown her how greatly she was beloved by him.

This was not right, not wise in little Babette, but she was only nineteen years of age. She did not reflect on her unkindness to Rudy ; still less did she think how her conduct might appear to the young Englishman, or if it were not lighter and more wanting in propriety than became the miller's modest, lately betrothed daughter.

Where the highway from Bex passes under the snow-clad rocky heights, which, in the language of the country are called *Diablerets*, stood the mill, not far from a rapid rushing mountain stream of a grayish-white color, and looking as if covered with soapsuds. It was not that which turned the mill, but a smaller stream, which on the other side of the river came tumbling down the rocks, and through a circular reservoir surrounded by stones, in the road beneath, with its violence and speed forced itself up and ran into an inclosed basin, a wide dam, which, above the rushing river, turned the large wheel of the mill. When the dam was full of water it overflowed, and caused the path to be so damp and slippery that it was difficult to walk on it ; and there was the chance

of a fall into the water, and being carried by it more swiftly than pleasantly towards the mill. Such a mishap had nearly befallen the young Englishman. Equipped in white, like a miller's man, he was climbing the path in the evening, guided by the light that shone from Babette's chamber window. He had never learned to climb, and had almost gone headforemost into the water, but escaped with wet arms and bespattered clothes. Covered with mud and dirty-looking, he arrived beneath Babette's window, clambered up the old lindentree, and there began to mimic the owl—no other bird could he attempt to imitate. Babette heard the sounds, and peeped through the thin curtains; but when she saw the man in white, and felt certain who he was, her little heart beat with terror, and also with anger. She quickly extinguished her light, felt if the window was securely fastened, and then left him to screech at his leisure.

How terrible it would be if Rudy were now at the mill! But Rudy was not at the mill: no—it was much worse—he was close by outside. High words were spoken—angry words—there might be blows, there might even be murder!

Babette hastened to open her window, and, calling Rudy's name, bade him go away, adding that she could not permit him to remain there.

"You will not permit me to remain here!" he exclaimed. "Then this is an appointment! You are expecting some good friend—some one whom you prefer to me! Shame on you, Babette!"

"You are unbearable!" cried Babette; "I hate you!" and she burst into tears. "Go—go!"

"I have not deserved this," said Rudy, as he went away, his cheeks like fire, his heart like fire.

Babette threw herself weeping on her bed.

"And you can think ill of me, Rudy—of me who love you so dearly!"

She was angry—very angry, and that was good for her; she would otherwise have been deeply afflicted. As it was, she could fall asleep and slumber as only youth can do.

## EVIL POWERS.

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UDY left Bex, and took his way homewards, choosing the path up the mountains, with its cold fresh air, where, amidst the deep snow, the Ice-maiden holds her sway. The largest trees with their thick foliage looked so far below, as if they were but potato tops; the pines and the bushes became smaller; the Alpine roses were covered with snow, which lay in single patches, like linen on a bleach-field. One solitary blue gentian stood in his path; he crushed it with the butt-end of his gun.

Higher up, two chamois showed themselves. Rudy's eyes sparkled, and his thoughts took flight into another channel, but he was not near enough for a sure aim. Higher still he ascended, where only a few blades of grass grew amidst the blocks of ice. The chamois passed in peace over the fields of snow. Rudy pressed

angrily on; thick mists gathered around him, and presently he found himself on the brink of the steep precipice of rock. The rain began to fall in torrents. He felt a burning thirst; his head was hot, his limbs were cold. He sought for his hunting-flask, but it was empty: he had not given it a thought when he rushed up the mountains. He had never been ill in his life, but now he experienced a sensation like illness. He was very tired, and felt a strong desire to throw himself down and sleep, but water was streaming all around him. He tried to rouse himself, but every object seemed to be dancing in a strange manner before his eyes.

Suddenly he beheld what he had never before seen there—a newly built low hut that leaned against the rock, and in the doorway stood a young girl. He thought she was the schoolmaster's daughter, Annette, whom he had once kissed in the dance, but she was not Annette; yet certainly he had seen her before, perhaps near Grindelwald the evening he was returning home from the shooting matches at Interlaken.

"How did you come here?" he asked.

"I am at home," she replied; "I am watching my flocks."

"Your flocks! Where do they find grass? Here there is nothing but snow and rocks."

"You know much about it, to be sure," she said, laughing. "Behind this, a little way down, is a very nice piece of pasture-land. My goats go there. I take good care of them; I never miss one; I keep what belongs to me."

"You are stout-hearted," said Rudy.

"And so are you," she answered.

"If you have any milk, pray give me some, my thirst is almost intolerable."

"I have something better than milk," she replied; "you shall have that. To-day some travellers came here with their guides; they left half a flask of wine behind them. They will not return for it, and I shall not drink it, so you shall have it."

She went for the wine, poured it into a wooden goblet, and gave it to Rudy.

"It is excellent," said he; "I never tasted any wine so warming, so reviving." And his eyes beamed with a wondrous brilliancy; there came a thrill of enjoyment, a glow over him, as if every sorrow and every vexation were vanishing from his mind; the free gushing feeling of man's nature awoke in him.

"But you are surely Annette, the schoolmas-

ter's daughter," he exclaimed. "Give me a kiss."

"First give me the pretty ring you wear on your finger."

"My betrothal ring?"

"Yes, just it," said the girl; and, replenishing the goblet with wine, she held it to his lips, and again he drank. A strange sense of pleasure seemed to rush into his very blood. The whole world was his, he seemed to fancy—why torment himself? Every thing is given for our gratification and enjoyment. The stream of life is the stream of happiness: flow on with it, let yourself be borne away on it—that is felicity. He gazed on the young girl. She was Annette, and yet *not* Annette; still less was she the magical phantom, as he had called *her* whom he had met near Grindelwald. The girl up here upon the mountain was fresh as the new-fallen snow; blooming like an Alpine rose, and lively as a kid; yet still formed from Adam's rib, a human being like Rudy himself. And he flung his arms around her, and gazed into her marvelously clear eyes. It was only for a moment; and in that moment how shall it be expressed, how described in words? Was it the life of the

spirit or the life of death which took possession of him? Was he raised higher, or was he sinking down into the deep icy abyss, deeper, always deeper? He beheld the walls of ice shining like blue-green glass; endless crevasses yawned around him, and the waters dripped with a sound like the chime of bells—they were clear as a pearl lighted by pale blue flames. The Ice-maiden kissed him; it chilled him through his whole body. He uttered a cry of horror, broke resolutely away from her, stumbled and fell; all became dark to his eyes, but he opened them again. The evil powers had played their game.

The Alpine girl was gone, the sheltering hut was gone; water poured down the naked rocks, and snow lay all around. Rudy was shivering with cold, soaked through to the very skin, and his ring was gone—the betrothal ring Babette had given him. His gun lay on the snow close by him; he took it up, and tried to discharge it, but it missed fire. Damp clouds rested like thick masses of snow on the mountain clefts. Vertigo sat there, and glared upon her powerless prey, and beneath her rang through the deep crevasse a sound as if a mass of rock had

fallen down, and was crushing and carrying away every thing that opposed it in its furious descent.


At the miller's, Babette sat and wept. Six days had elapsed since Rudy had been there—he was in the wrong, he who ought to ask her forgiveness, for she loved him with her whole heart.

9



## AT THE MILLER'S HOUSE.

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OW frightfully foolish mankind are!" said the parlor cat to the kitchen cat. "It is all broken off now between Babette and Rudy. She sits and cries, and he thinks no more about her."

"I don't like that," said the kitchen cat.

"Nor I either," replied the parlor cat, "but I am not going to distress myself about it. Babette can take the red whiskers for her sweetheart. He has not been here since the evening he wanted to go on the roof."

The powers of evil carry on their game without and within us. Rudy was aware of this, and he reflected on it. What had passed around him and within him up yonder on the mountain? Was it sin, or was it a fever dream? He had never known fever or illness before. While he blamed Babette, he took a retrospective glance within himself. He thought



Babette's Lecture.



of the wild tornado in his heart, the hot whirlwind which had recently broken loose there. Could he confess all to Babette—every thought which, in the hour of temptation, might have been carried out? He had lost her ring, and in this very loss she had won him back. Was any confession due from her to him? He felt as if his heart were breaking when his thoughts reverted to her—so many recollections crowded on his mind. He saw in her a laughing merry child, full of life; many an affectionate word she had addressed to him in the fulness of her heart, came, like a ray of the sun, to gladden his soul, and soon it was all sunshine there for Babette.

She must, however, apologize to him, and she should do so.

He went to the miller's, and confession followed: it began with a kiss and ended in Rudy's being the sinner. His great fault was that he could have doubted Babette's constancy—that was too bad of him! Such distrust, such impetuosity might cause misery to them both. Yes, very true! and therefore Babette preached him a little sermon, which pleased herself vastly, and during which she looked very pretty. But, in one particular, Rudy was right—the

godmother's nephew was a mere babbler. She would burn the book he had given her, and not keep the slightest article that would remind her of him.

"Well, it is all right again," said the parlor cat. "Rudy has come back, they have made friends; and that is the greatest of pleasures, they say."

"I heard during the night," said the kitchen cat, "the rats declaring that the greatest of pleasures was to eat candle-grease and to banquet on tainted meat. Which of them is to be believed, the lovers or the rats?"

"Neither of them," replied the parlor cat. "It is always safest to believe no one."

The greatest happiness for Rudy and Babette was about to take place; the auspicious day, as it is called, was approaching—their wedding-day!

But not in the church at Bex, not at the miller's house, was the wedding to be solemnized; the godmother had requested that the marriage should be celebrated at her abode, and that the ceremony should be performed in the pretty little church at Montreux. The miller was very urgent that this arrangement should be agreed to: he alone knew what the godmother

intended to bestow on the young couple; they were to receive from her a wedding gift that was well worth such a small concession to her wishes. The day was fixed; they were to go to Villeneuve the evening before, in order to proceed by an early steamer next morning to Montreux, that the godmother's daughters might adorn the bride.


"There ought to be a second day's wedding here in this house," said the parlor cat; "else I am sure I would not give a mew for the whole affair."

"There is going to be a grand feast," replied the kitchen cat. "Ducks and pigeons have been killed, and an entire deer hangs against the wall. My mouth waters when I look at all this. To-morrow they commence their journey."

Yes, to-morrow! That evening Rudy and Babette sat as a betrothed couple for the last time at the miller's house. Outside was to be seen the Alpine glow; the evening bells were ringing; the daughters of the sun sang, "That which is best will be!"

## NIGHT VISIONS.

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HE sun had set; the clouds lay low in the valley of the Rhone; amidst the lofty mountains, the wind blew from the south—an African wind. Suddenly over the high Alps there arose a “Föhn,” which swept the clouds asunder; and when the wind had lulled, all became for a moment perfectly still. The scattered clouds hung in fantastic forms amidst the wooded hills that skirted the rapid Rhone; they hung in forms like those of the marine animals of the antediluvian world, like eagles hovering in the air, and like frogs springing in a marsh; they sank down over the gushing river, and seemed to sail upon it, yet it was in the air they sailed. The current carried with it an uprooted pine-tree; the water whirled in eddies around it. It was Vertigo and some of her sisters that were thus dancing in circles

upon the foaming stream. The moon shone on the snow-capped hills, on the dark woods, on the curious white clouds—those appearances or the night that seem to be the spirits of nature. The mountain peasant saw them through his little window; they sailed outside in hosts before the Ice-maiden, who came from her glacier palace. She sat on a frail skiff, the uprooted pine; the water from the glaciers bore her down to the river near the lake.

“The wedding guests are coming!” the air and the waters seemed to murmur and to sing.

Warnings without, warnings within! Babette had an extraordinary dream.

It seemed to her as if she were married to Rudy, and had been so for many years; that he was out chamois-hunting, but she was at home; and that the young Englishman with the red whiskers was sitting with her. His eyes were full of passion, his words had as it were a magic power in them; he held out his hand to her, and she felt compelled to go with him; they went forth from her home, and went always downwards. And Babette felt as it there were a weight in her heart, which was becoming every moment heavier. She was committing a sin against Rudy—a sin against

God. And suddenly she found herself forsaken ; her dress was torn to pieces by thorns, her hair was gray. She looked upwards in deep distress, and on the margin of a mountain ridge she beheld Rudy. She stretched her arms up towards him, but did not dare either to call to him or to pray ; and neither would have been of any avail, for she soon perceived that it was not himself, but only his shooting jacket and cap, which were hanging on an alpenstock, as hunters sometimes place them to deceive the chamois. And in great misery Babette exclaimed—

“ Oh that I had died on my wedding-day—the day that was the happiest of my life ! O Lord my God ! that would have been a mercy—a blessing ! That would have been the best thing that could have happened for me and Rudy. No one knows his future fate.” And in impious despair she cast herself down into the deep mountain chasm. A string seemed to have broken—a tone of sorrow was echoed around.

Babette awoke. Her vision was at an end, and what had happened in the dream-world had partially vanished from her mind ; but she knew that she had dreamt something frightful, and dreamt about the young Englishman, whom

she had not seen or thought of for several months. Could he still be at Montreux? Would she see him at her wedding? A slight shade of displeasure stole around Babette's pretty mouth, and for a moment her eyebrows knitted; but soon came a smile and a gay sparkle in her eyes. The sun was shining so brightly without, and to-morrow was her and Rudy's wedding-day!

He was already in the parlor when she came down, and shortly after they set off for Ville-neuve. The two were all happiness, and the miller likewise; he laughed and joked, and was in the highest spirits. A kind father, a good soul, he was.

"Now we have the house to ourselves," said the parlor cat.



## THE CONCLUSION.

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**I**T was not yet late in the day when the three joyous travellers reached Ville-neuve. After they had dined, the miller placed himself in a comfortable arm-chair with his pipe, intending, when he had done smoking, to take a short nap. The affianced couple went arm in arm out of the town, along the high road, under the wooded hills that bordered the blue-green lake. The gray walls and heavy towers of the melancholy-looking Chillon were reflected in the clear water. The little island with the three acacias seemed quite near; it looked like a bouquet on the calm lake.

“How charming it must be over yonder!” exclaimed Babette, who felt again the greatest desire to go to it; and her wish might be gratified at once, for a boat was lying close to the bank, and the rope by which it was secured was easy

to undo. There was no one to be seen of whom they could ask permission to take it, so they got into it without leave. Rudy knew very well how to row. The oars, like the fins of a fish, divided the mass of water that is so pliant and yet so potent, so strong to bear, so ready to swallow—gentle, smiling, smoothness itself, and yet terror-inspiring and mighty to destroy. A line of foam floated behind the boat, which, in a few minutes, arrived at the little island, where the happy pair immediately landed. There was just room for two to dance.

Rudy swung Babette three or four times round, and then they sat down on the little bench under the drooping acacia, and looked into each other's eyes, and held each other's hands, while around them streamed the last rays of the setting sun. The pine forests on the hills assumed a purplish red tint resembling the hue of the blooming heather; and where the trees stopped, and the bare rocks stood forward, there was a rich lustre, as if the mountain were transparent. The skies were brilliant with a crimson glow; the whole lake was covered with a tinge of pink, as if it had been thickly strewn with fresh blushing roses.

As the shades of evening gathered around the snow-decked mountains of Savoy, they became of a dark blue in color, but the highest peaks shone like red lava, and for a moment reflected their light on the mountain forms before these vast masses were lost in darkness. It was the Alpine glow, and Rudy and Babette thought they had never before beheld one so magnificent. The snow-bedecked *Dent du Midi* gleamed like the disk of the full moon when it shows itself above the horizon.

“Oh, what beauty! oh, what pleasure!” exclaimed the lovers at the same time.

“Earth can bestow no more on me,” said Rudy; “an evening like this is as a whole life. How often have I been sensible of my good fortune, as I am sensible of it now, and have thought, that if every thing were to come at once to an end for me, I have lived a happy life! What a blessed world is this! One day ends, but another begins, and I always fancy the last is the brightest. Our Lord is infinitely good, Babette.”

“I am so happy!” she whispered.

“Earth can bestow no more on me,” repeated Rudy. And the evening bells rang from the hills of Savoy and the mountains of Switzer-

land. In golden splendor stood forth towards the west the dark-blue Jura.

"God grant you all that is brightest and best!" exclaimed Babette fervently.

"He will," said Rudy; "to-morrow will fulfil that wish—to-morrow you will be wholly mine—my own little charming wife."

"The boat!" cried Babette, at that moment.

The boat which was to take them across again had got loose, and was drifting away from the island.

"I will bring it back," said Rudy, as he took off his coat and boots, and springing into the lake, swam vigorously towards the boat.

Cold and deep was the clear bluish-green icy water from the glacier of the mountain. Rudy looked down into it—he took but a glance, yet he saw a gold ring trembling, glittering, and playing there. He thought of his lost betrothal ring, and the ring became larger and extended itself out into a sparkling circle, within which appeared the clear glacier; endless deep chasms yawned around it, and the water dropped tinkling like the sound of bells, and gleaming with pale blue flames. In a second he beheld what it will take many words to describe. Young hunters and young girls, men

and women who had been lost in the crevasses of the glacier, stood there, lifelike, with open eyes and smiling lips; and far beneath them arose from buried villages the church-bells' chimes. Multitudes knelt under the vaulted roofs; ice-blocks formed the organ-pipes, and the mountain torrents made the music. The Ice-maiden sat on the clear transparent ground; she raised herself up towards Rudy, and kissed his feet, and there passed throughout his limbs a death-like chill, an electric shock—ice and fire; it was impossible to distinguish one from the other in the quick touch.

"Mine! mine!" sounded around him and within him. "I kissed thee when thou wert little—kissed thee on thy mouth! Now I kiss thee on thy feet; now thou art wholly mine!"

And he disappeared in the clear blue water.

All was still around. The church-bells had ceased to ring; their last tones had died away along with the last streak of red on the skies above.

"Thou art mine!" resounded in the depths below. "Thou art mine!" resounded from beyond the heights—from infinity!

Happy to pass from love to love, from earth to heaven!

A string seemed to have broken—a tone of sorrow was echoed around. The ice-kiss of death had triumphed over the corruptible; the prelude to the drama of life had ended before the game itself had begun. All that seemed harsh, or sounded harshly, had subsided into harmony.

Do you call this a sad story?

Poor Babette! For her it was an hour of anguish. The boat drifted further and further away. No one on the mainland knew that the betrothed couple had gone over to the little island. The evening advanced, the clouds gathered, darkness came. Alone, despairing, wailing, she stood there. A furious storm came on; the lightning played over the Jura mountains, and over those of Switzerland and Savoy, from all sides flash followed upon flash, while the peals of thunder rolled in all directions for many minutes at a time. One moment the lightning was so vivid that all around became as bright as day—every single vine-stem could be seen as distinctly as at the hour of noon—and in another moment the blackest darkness enveloped all. The lightning darted in zigzags around the lake, and the roar of the thunder was echoed among the surrounding hills. On

land the boats were drawn far up the beach, and all that were living had sought shelter. And now the rain poured down in torrents.

"Where can Rudy and Babette be in this awful weather?" said the miller.

Babette sat with folded hands, with her head in her lap, exhausted by grief, by screaming, by weeping.

"In the deep water," she sobbed to herself, "far down yonder, as under a glacier, *he* lies."

She remembered what Rudy had told her about his mother's death, and of his being saved himself when taken up apparently dead from the cleft in the glacier. "The Ice-maiden has him again!"

And there came a flash of lightning as dazzling as the sun's rays on the white snow. Babette looked up. The lake rose at that moment like a shining glacier; the Ice-maiden stood there, majestic, pale, glittering, and at her feet lay Rudy's corpse.

"Mine!" she cried, and again all around was gloom, and darkness, and torrents of rain.

"Terrible!" groaned Babette. "Why should he die just when our happy day was so close

at hand? Great God, enlighten my understanding—shed light upon my heart! I comprehend not Thy ways, determined by Thine almighty power and wisdom.”

And God *did* shed light on her heart. A retrospective glance—a sense of grace—her dream of the preceding night—all crowded together on her mind. She remembered the words she had spoken—a wish for that which might be best for herself and Rudy.

“Woe is me! Was it the germ of sin in my heart? Was my dream a glimpse into the future, whose course had to be thus violently arrested to save me from guilt? Unhappy wretch that I am!”

She sat wailing there in the pitch-dark night. During the deep stillness seemed to ring around her Rudy’s words—the last he had ever spoken—“Earth can bestow no more on me!” Their sound was fraught with the fulness of joy; they were echoed amidst the depths of grief.

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Some few years have elapsed since then. The lake smiles, its shores smile; the vines

bear luscious grapes; steamboats with waving flags glide swiftly by; pleasure-boats with their two unfurled sails skim like white butterflies over the watery mirror; the railway beyond Chillon is open, and it goes far into the valley of the Rhone. At every station strangers issue from it—they come with their red-bound guide-books, and study therein what they ought to see. They visit Chillon, observe in the lake the little island with the three acacias, and read in the book about a bridal pair who, in the year 1856, rowed over to it one afternoon—of the bridegroom's death, and that not till the next morning were heard upon the shore the bride's despairing cries.

But the guide-book gives no account of Babette's quiet life at her father's house—not at the mill (strangers now live there), but at a pretty spot whence from her window she can often look beyond the chestnut-trees to the snowy hills over which Rudy loved to range; she can see at the hour of evening the Alpine glow—up where the children of the sun revel, and repeat their song about the wanderer whose cap the whirlwind carried off, but it could not take himself.


There is a rosy tint upon the mountain's

snow—there is a rosy tint in every heart, which admits the thought, “God ordains what is best for us!” But it is not vouchsafed to us all so fully to feel this, as it was to Babette in her room.



## THE BUTTERFLY.

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HE Butterfly was looking out for a bride, and naturally he wished to select a nice one among the flowers. He looked at them, sitting so quietly and discreetly upon their stems, as a damsel generally sits when she is not engaged; but there were so many to choose among, that it became quite a difficult matter. The Butterfly did not relish encountering difficulties, so in his perplexity he flew to the Daisy. She is called in France *Marguerite*. He knew that she could “spae,” and that she did so often; for lovers plucked leaf after leaf from her, and with each a question was asked respecting the beloved:—“Is it true love?” “From the heart?” “Love that pines?” “Cold love?” “None at all?”—or some such questions. Every one asks in his own language. The Butterfly came too to put his questions; he did not, however, pluck off the leaves, but

kissed them all one by one, with the hope of getting a good answer.

“Sweet Marguerite Daisy,” said he, “you are the wisest wife among all the flowers; you know how to predict events. Tell me, shall I get this one, or that? or whom shall I get? When I know, I can fly straight to the fair one, and commence wooing her.”

But Marguerite would scarcely answer him; she was vexed at his calling her “wife,” for she was still unmarried, and therefore was not a wife. He asked a second time, and he asked a third time, but he could not get a word out of her; so he would not take the trouble to ask any more, but flew away, without further ado, on his matrimonial errand.

It was in the early spring, and there were plenty of Snowdrops and Crocuses. “They are very nice-looking,” said the Butterfly: “charming little things, but somewhat too juvenile.” He, like most very young men, preferred elder girls. Thereupon he flew to the Anemones, but they were rather too bashful for him; the Violets were too enthusiastic; the Tulips were too fond of show; the Jonquils were too plebeian; the Linden-tree blossoms were too small, and they had too large a family connec-

tion; the Apple blossoms were certainly as lovely as Roses to look at, but they stood to-day, and fell off to-morrow, as the wind blew. It would not be worth while to enter into wedlock for so short a time, he thought. The Sweetpea was the one which pleased him most; she was pink and white, she was pure and delicate, and belonged to that class of notable girls who always look well, yet can make themselves useful in the kitchen. He was on the point of making an offer to her, when at that moment he observed a peapod hanging close by, with a withered flower at the end of it. "Who is that?" he asked. "My sister," replied the Sweetpea. "Indeed! then you will probably come to look like her by and by," exclaimed the Butterfly as he flew on.

The Honeysuckles hung over the hedge; they were extremely ladylike, but they had long faces and yellow complexions. They were not to his taste. But who was to his taste? Ay! ask him that.

The spring had passed, the summer had passed, and autumn was passing too. The flowers were still clad in brilliant robes, but, alas! the fresh fragrance of youth was gone. Fragrance was a great attraction to him, though

no longer young himself, and there was none to be found among the Dahlias and Hollyhocks. So the Butterfly stooped down to the Wild Thyme.

“She has scarcely any blossom, but she is altogether a flower herself, and all fragrance—every leaflet is full of it. I will take her.”

So he began to woo forthwith.

But the Wild Thyme stood stiff and still; and at length she said, “Friendship, but nothing more! I am old, and you are old. We may very well live for each other, but marry—no! Let us not make fools of ourselves in our old age!”

So the Butterfly got no one. He had been too long on the lookout, and that one should not be. The Butterfly became an old bachelor, as it is called.

It was late in the autumn, and there was nothing but drizzling rain and pouring rain; the wind blew coldly on the old willow-trees till the leaves shivered and the branches cracked. It was not pleasant to fly about in summer clothing: this is the time, it is said, when domestic love is most needed. But the Butterfly flew about no more. He had accidentally gone within-doors, where there was fire in the stove,

--yes, real summer heat. He could live, but "to live is not enough," said he; "sunshine, freedom, and a little flower, one must have."

And he flew against the window-pane, was observed, admired, and stuck upon a needle in a case of curiosities. More they could not do for him.

"Now I am sitting on a stem like the flowers," said the Butterfly; "very pleasant it is not, however. It is almost like being married—one is tied so fast." And he tried to comfort himself with this reflection.

"That is poor comfort!" exclaimed the plants in the flower-pots in the room.

"But one can hardly believe a plant in a flower-pot," thought the Butterfly; "they are too much among human beings."



## PSYCHE.

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AT the dawn of day through the red atmosphere shines a large star, morning's clearest star; its ray quivers upon the white wall, as if it would there inscribe what it had to relate—what in the course of a thousand years it has witnessed here and there on our revolving earth.

Listen to one of its histories :

Lately (its *lately* is a century ago to us human beings) my rays watched a young artist; it was in the territory of the Pope, in the capital of the world—Rome. Much has changed there in the flight of years, but nothing so rapidly as the change which takes place in the human form between childhood and old age. The imperial city was then, as now, in ruins; fig-trees and laurels grew among the fallen marble pillars, and over the shattered bath-chambers, with their gold-enamelled walls; the

Coliseum was a ruin; the bells of the churches rang, incense perfumed the air; processions moved with lights and splendid canopies through the streets. The Holy Church ruled all, and art was patronized by it. At Rome lived the world's greatest painter, Raphael; there also lived the first sculptor of his age, Michael Angelo. The Pope himself paid homage to these two artists, and honored them by his visits. Art was appreciated, admired, and recompensed. But even then not all that was great and worthy of praise was known and brought forward.

In a narrow little street stood an old house; it had formerly been a temple, and there dwelt a young artist. He was poor and unknown; however, he had a few young friends, artists like himself, young in mind, in hopes, in thoughts. They told him that he was rich in talent, but that he was a fool, since he never would believe in his own powers. He always destroyed what he had formed in clay; he was never satisfied with any thing he did, and never had any thing finished so as to have it seen and known, and it was necessary to have this to make money.

"You are a dreamer," they said, "and therein lies your misfortune. But this arises from your

never having lived yet, not having tasted life, enjoyed it in large exhilarating draughts, as it ought to be enjoyed. It is only in youth that one can do this. Look at the great master, Raphael, whom the Pope honors and the world admires: *he* does not abstain from wine and good fare."

"He dines with the baker's wife, the charming Fornarina," said Angelo, one of the liveliest of the young group.

They all talked a great deal, after the fashion of gay young men. They insisted on carrying the youthful artist off with them to scenes of amusement and riot—scenes of folly they might have been called—and for a moment he felt inclined to accompany them. His blood was warm, his fancy powerful; he could join in their jovial chat, and laugh as loud as any of them; yet what they called "Raphael's pleasant life" vanished from his mind like a morning mist: he thought only of the inspiration that was apparent in the great master's works. If he stood in the Vatican, near the beautiful forms the masters of a thousand years before had created out of marble blocks, then his breast heaved; he felt within himself something so elevated, so holy, so grand and good, that he

longed to chisel such statues from the marble blocks. He wished to give a form to the glorious conceptions of his mind; but how, and what form? The soft clay that was moulded into beautiful figures by his fingers one day, was the next day, as usual, broken up.

Once, as he was passing one of the rich palaces, of which there are so many at Rome, he stepped within the large open entrance court, and saw arched corridors adorned with statues, inclosing a little garden full of the most beautiful roses. Great white flowers, with green juicy leaves, shot up the marble basin, where the clear waters splashed, and near it glided a figure, that of a young girl, the daughter of the princely house—so delicate, so light, so lovely! He had never beheld so beautiful a woman. Yes—painted by Raphael, painted as Psyche, in one of the palaces of Rome! Yes—there she stood as if living!

She also lived in his thoughts and heart. And he hurried home to his humble apartment, and formed a Psyche in clay; it was the rich, the high-born young Roman lady, and for the first time he looked with satisfaction on his work. It was life itself—it was herself. And his friends, when they saw it, were loud in their

congratulations. This work was a proof of his excellence in art: that they had themselves already known, and the world should now know it also.

Clay may look fleshy and lifelike, but it has not the whiteness of marble, and does not last so long. His Psyche must be sculptured in marble, and the expensive block of marble required he already possessed: it had lain for many years, a legacy from his parents, in the court-yard. Broken bottles, decayed vegetables, and all manner of refuse, had been heaped on it and soiled it, but within it was white as the mountain snow. Psyche was to be chiselled from it.

One day it happened (the clear star tells nothing of this, for it did not see what passed, but we know it), a distinguished Roman party came to the narrow humble street. The carriage stopped near it. The party had come to see the young artist's work, of which they had heard by accident. And who were these aristocratic visitors? Unfortunate young man! All too happy young man, he might also well have been called. The young girl herself stood there in his studio; and with what a smile when her father exclaimed, "But it is you, you your-

self to the life!" That smile could not be copied, that glance could not be imitated—that speaking glance which she cast on the young artist! It was a glance that fascinated, enchanted, and destroyed.

"The Psyche must be finished in marble," said the rich nobleman. And that was a life-giving word to the inanimate clay and to the heavy marble block, as it was a life-giving word to the young man.

"When the work is finished, I will purchase it," said the noble visitor.

It seemed as if a new era had dawned on the humble studio; joy and sprightliness enlivened it now, and ennui fled before constant employment. The bright morning star saw how quickly the work advanced. The clay itself became as if animated with a soul, for even in it stood forth, in perfect beauty, each now well-known feature.

"Now I know what life is," exclaimed the young artist joyfully; "it is love. There is glory in the excellent, rapture in the beautiful. What my friends call life and enjoyment are corrupt and perishable—they are bubbles in the fermenting dregs, not the pure heavenly altar-wine that consecrates life.

The block of marble was raised, the chisel hewed large pieces from it; it was measured, pointed, and marked. The work proceeded; little by little, the stone assumed a form, a form of beauty—Psyche—charming as God's creation in the young female. The heavy marble became life-like, dancing, airy, and a graceful Psyche, with the bright smile so heavenly and innocent, such as had mirrored itself in the young sculptor's heart.

The star of the rose-tinted morn saw it, and well understood what was stirring in the young man's heart—understood the changing color on his cheek, the fire in his eye—as he carved the likeness of what God had created.

“You are a master, such as those in the time of the Greeks,” said his delighted friends. “The whole world will soon admire your Psyche.”

“My Psyche! he exclaimed. “Mine! Yes, such she must be. I too am an artist like those great ones of by-gone days. God has bestowed on me the gift of genius, which raises its possessor to a level with the high-born.”

And he sank on his knees, and wept his thanks to God, and then forgot Him for *her*—for her image in marble. The figure of Psyche

stood there, as if formed of snow, blushing rosy red on the morning sun.

In reality he was to see her, living, moving, her whose voice had sounded like the sweetest music. He was to go to the splendid palace, to announce that the marble Psyche was finished. He went thither, passed through the open court to where the water poured, splashing from dolphins, into the marble basin, around which the white flowers clustered, and the roses shed their fragrance. He entered the large lofty hall, whose walls and roof were adorned with armorial bearings and heraldic designs. Well-dressed, pompous-looking servants strutted up and down, like sleigh-horses with their jingling bells; others of them, insolent-looking fellows, were stretched at their ease on handsomely carved wooden benches; they seemed the masters of the house. He told his errand, and was then conducted up the white marble stairs, which were covered with soft carpets. Statues were arranged on both sides; he passed through handsome rooms with pictures and bright mosaic floors. For a moment he felt oppressed by all this magnificence and splendor—it nearly took away his breath. But he speedily recovered himself; for the princely



The Repulse.



owner of the mansion received him kindly, almost cordially, and, after they had finished their conversation, requested him, when bidding him adieu, to go to the apartments of the young Signora, who wished also to see him. Servants marshalled him through superb saloons and suites of rooms to the chamber where she sat, elegantly dressed and radiant in beauty.

She spoke to him. No *Miserere*, no tones of sacred music, could more have melted the heart and elevated the soul. He seized her hand, and carried it to his lips; never was rose so soft. But there issued a fire from that rose—a fire that penetrated through him and turned his head; words poured forth from his lips, which he scarcely knew himself, like the crater pouring forth glowing lava. He told her of his love. She stood amazed, offended, insulted, with a haughty and scornful look, an expression which had been called forth instantaneously by his passionate avowal of his sentiments towards her. Her cheeks glowed, her lips became quite pale; her eyes flashed fire, and were yet dark as ebon night.

“Madman!” she exclaimed; “begone! away!” And she turned angrily from him, while her

beautiful countenance assumed the look of that petrified face of old with the serpents clustering around it like hair.

Like a sinking lifeless thing, he descended into the street; like a sleep-walker he reached his home. But there he awoke to pain and fury; he seized his hammer, lifted it high in the air, and was on the point of breaking the beautiful marble statue, but in his distracted state of mind he had not observed that Angelo was standing near him. The latter caught his arm, exclaiming, "Have you gone mad? What would you do?"

They struggled with each other. Angelo was the stronger of the two, and, drawing a deep breath, the young sculptor threw himself on a chair.

"What has happened?" asked Angelo. "Be yourself, and speak."

But what could he tell? what could he say? And when Angelo found that he could get nothing out of him, he gave up questioning him.

"Your blood thickens in this constant dreaming. Be a man like the rest of us, and do not live only in the ideal: you will go deranged at this rate. Take wine until you feel it get a little into your head; that will make you sleep

well. Let a pretty girl be your doctor ; a girl from the Campagna is as charming as a princess in her marble palace. Both are the daughters of Eve, and are not to be distinguished from each other in Paradise. Follow your Angelo ! Let me be your angel, the angel of life for you ! The time will come when you will be old, and your limbs will be useless to you. Why, on a fine sunny day, when every thing is laughing and joyous, do you look like a withered straw that can grow no more ? I do not believe what the priests say, that there is a life beyond the grave. It is a pretty fancy, a tale for children—pleasant enough, if one could put faith in it. I, however, do not live in fancies only, but in the world of realities. Come with me ! Be a man !”

And he drew him out with him ; it was easy to do so at that moment. There was a heat in the young artist’s blood, a change in his feelings ; he longed to throw off all his old habits, all that he was accustomed to—to throw off his own former self—and he consented to accompany Angelo.

On the outskirts of Rome was a hostelry much frequented by artists. It was built amidst the ruins of an old bath-chamber ; the large

yellow lemons hung among their dark bright leaves, and adorned the greatest part of the old reddish-gilt walls. The hostelry was a deep vault, almost like a hole in the ruin. A lamp burned within it, before a picture of the Madonna; a large fire was blazing in the stove (roasting, boiling, and frying, were going on there);" on the outside, under lemon and laurel trees, stood two tables spread for refreshments.

Kindly and joyously were the two artists welcomed by their friends. None of them ate much, but they all drank a great deal; that caused hilarity. There was singing and playing the guitar; Saltarello sounded, and the merry dance began. A couple of young Roman girls, models for the artists, joined in the dance, and took part in their mirth—two charming Bacchantes! They had not, indeed, the delicacy of Psyche—they were not graceful lovely roses—but they were fresh, hardy, ruddy carnations.

How warm it was that day! Warm even after the sun had gone down—heat in the blood, heat in the air, heat in every look! The atmosphere seemed to be composed of gold and roses—life itself was gold and roses.

"Now at last you are with us! Let yourself be borne on the stream around you and within you."

"I never before felt so well and so joyous," cried the young sculptor. "You are right, you are all right; I was a fool, a visionary. Men should seek for realities, and not wrap themselves up in phantasies."

Amidst songs and the tinkling of guitars, the young men sallied forth from the hostelry, and took their way, in the clear starlit evening, through the small streets; the two ruddy carnations, daughters of the Campagna, accompanied them. In Angelo's room, amidst sketches and folios scattered about, and glowing voluptuous paintings, their voices sounded more subdued, but not less full of passion. On the floor lay many a drawing of the Campagna's daughters in various attractive attitudes; they were full of beauty, yet the originals were still more beautiful. The six-branched chandeliers were burning, and the light glared on the scene of sensual joy.

"Apollo! Jupiter! Into your heaven and happiness am I wafted. It seems as if the flower of life has in this moment sprung up in my heart."

Yes, it sprung up, but it broke and fell, and a deadening hideous sensation seized upon him. It dimmed his sight, stupefied his mind; perception failed, and all became dark around him.

He gained his home, sat down on his bed, and tried to collect his thoughts. "Fie!" was the exclamation uttered by his own mouth from the bottom of his heart. "Wretch! begone! away!" And he breathed a sigh full of the deepest grief.

"Begone! away!" These words of hers—the living Psyche's words—were re-echoed in his breast, re-echoed from his lips. He laid his head on his pillow: his thoughts became confused, and he slept.

At the dawn of day he arose, and sat down to reflect. What had happened? Had he dreamt it all—dreamt *her* words—dreamt his visit to the hostelry, and the evening with the flaunting carnations of the Campagna? No, all was reality—a reality such as he had never before experienced.

Through the purplish haze of the early morning shone the clear star; its rays fell upon him and upon the marble Psyche. He trembled as he gazed on the imperishable image; he felt that

there was impurity in his look, and he threw a covering over it. Once only he removed the veil to touch the statue, but he could not bear to see his own work.

Quiet, gloomy, absorbed in his own thoughts, he sat the livelong day. He noticed nothing, knew nothing of what was going on about him, and no one knew what was going on within his heart.

Days, weeks passed; the nights were the longest. The glittering star saw him one morning, pale, shaking with fever, arise from his couch, go to the marble figure, lift the veil from it, gaze for a moment with an expression of deep devotion and sorrow on his work, and then, almost sinking under its weight, he dragged the statue out into the garden. In it there was a dried-up, dilapidated, disused well, which could only be called a deep hole; he sank his Psyche in it, threw in earth over it, and covered the new-made grave with brushwood and nettles.

“Begone! away!” was the short funeral service.

The star witnessed this through the rose-tinted atmosphere, and its ray quivered on two large tears upon the corpse-like cheeks of the

young fever-stricken man—death-stricken they called him on his sick-bed.

The monk Ignatius came to see him as a friend and physician—came with religion's comforting words, and spoke to him of the Church's happiness and peace, of the sins of mankind, the grace and mercy of God.

And his words fell like warm sunbeams on the damp spongy ground; it steamed, and the misty vapors ascended from it, so that the thoughts and mental images which had received their shapes from realities were cleared, and he was enabled to take a more just view of man's life. The delusions of guilt abounded in it, and such there had been for him. Art was a sorceress that lured us to vanity and earthly lusts. We are false towards ourselves, false towards our friends, false towards our God. The serpent always repeats within us, "*Eat thereof; then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods!*"

He seemed now for the first time to understand himself, and to have found the way to truth and rest. On the Church shone light from on high; in the monk's cell dwelt that peace amidst which the human tree might grow to flourish in eternity.

Brother Ignatius encouraged these sentiments, and the artist's resolution was taken. A child of the world became a servant of the Church: the young sculptor bade adieu to all his former pursuits, and went into a monastery.

How kindly, how gladly, was he received by the Brothers! What a Sunday fête was his initiation! The Almighty, it seemed to him, was in the sunshine that illumined the church. His glory beamed from the holy images and from the white cross. And when he now, at the hour of the setting sun, stood in his little cell, and, opening the window, looked out over the ancient Rome, the ruined temples, the magnificent but dead Coliseum—when he saw all this in the spring-time, when the acacias were in bloom, the evergreens were fresh, roses bursting from their buds, citrons and orange-trees shining, palms waving—he felt himself tranquilized and cheered as he had never been before. The quiet open Campagna extended towards the misty snow-decked hills, which seemed painted in the air. All, blended together, breathed of peace, of beauty, so soothingly, so dreamily—a dream the whole.

Yes, the world was a dream here. A dream

may continue for an hour, and come again at another hour; but life in a cloister is a life of years, long and many.

He might have attested the truth of this saying, that from within comes much which taints mankind. What was that fire which sometimes blazed throughout him? What was that source from which evil, against his will, was always welling forth? He scourged his body, but from within came the evil yet again. What was that spirit within him, which with the pliancy of a serpent coiled itself up, and crept into his conscience under the cloak of universal love, and comforted him? The saints pray for us, the holy mother prays for us, Jesus Himself has shed his blood for us. Was it weakness of mind or the volatile feelings of youth that caused him sometimes to think himself received into grace, and made him fancy himself exalted by that—exalted over so many? For had he not cast from him the vanities of the world? Was he not a son of the Church?

One day, after the lapse of many years, he met Angelo, who recognized him.

“Man!” exclaimed Angelo. “Yes, surely it is yourself. Are you happy now? You have sinned against God, for you have

thrown away His gracious gift, and abandoned your mission into this world. Read the parable of the confided talent. The Master who related it spoke the truth. What have you won or found? Have you not allotted to yourself a life of dreams? Is your religion not a mere coinage of the brain? What if all be but a dream—pretty yet fantastic thoughts!”

“Away from me, Satan!” cried the monk, as he fled from Angelo.

“There is a devil, a personified devil! I saw him to-day,” groaned the monk. “I only held out a finger to him, and he seized my whole hand! Ah, no!” he sighed. “In myself there is sin, and in that man there is sin; but he is not crushed by it—he goes with brow erect, and lives in happiness. I seek my happiness in the consolations of religion. If only they were consolations—if all here, as in the world I left, were but pleasing thoughts! They are delusions, like the crimson skies of evening, like the beautiful sea-blue tint on the distant hills. Close by, these look very different. Eternity, thou art like the wide, interminable, calm-looking ocean: it beckons, calls us, fills us with forebodings, and if we venture on it we sink,

we disappear, die, cease to exist! Delusions! Begone! away!"

And tearless, lost in his own thoughts, he sat upon his hard pallet; then he knelt. Before whom? The stone cross that stood on the wall? No, habit alone made him kneel there.

And the deeper he looked into himself, the darker became his thoughts. "Nothing within, nothing without—a lifetime wasted!" And that cold snowball of thought rolled on, grew larger, crushed him, destroyed him.

"To none dare I speak of the gnawing worm within me: my secret is my prisoner. If I could get rid of it, I would be Thine, O God!"

And a spirit of piety awoke and struggled within him.

"Lord! Lord!" he exclaimed in his despair. "Be merciful, grant me faith! I despised and abandoned Thy gracious gift—my mission into this world. I was wanting in strength; Thou hadst not bestowed that on me. Immortal fame—Psyche—still lingers in my heart. Begone! away! They shall be buried like yonder Psyche, the brightest gem of my life. *That* shall never ascend from its dark grave."

The star in the rose-tinted morn shone brightly—the star that assuredly shall be extinguished

and annihilated, while the spirits of mankind live amidst celestial light. Its trembling rays fell upon the white wall, but it inscribed no memorial there of the blessed trust in God, of the grace, of the holy love, that dwell in the believer's heart.

"Psyche within me can never die—it will live in consciousness! Can what is inconceivable be? Yes, yes! For I myself am inconceivable. Thou art inconceivable, O Lord! The whole of Thy universe is inconceivable—a work of power, of excellence, of love!"

His eyes beamed with the brightest radiance for a moment, and then became dim and corpse-like. The church-bells rang their funeral peal over him—the dead; and he was buried in earth brought from Jerusalem, and mingled with the ashes of departed saints.

Some years afterwards the skeleton was taken up, as had been the skeletons of the dead monks before him; it was attired in the brown cowl, with a rosary in its hand, and it was placed in a niche among the human bones which were found in the burying-ground of the monastery. And the sun shone outside, and incense perfumed the air within, and masses were said.

Years again went by.

The bones of the skeletons had fallen from each other, and become mixed together. The skulls were gathered and set up—they formed quite an outer wall to the church. There stood also *his* skull in the burning sunshine: there were so many, many death's heads, that no one knew now the names they had borne, nor his. And see! in the sunshine there moved something living within the two eye-sockets. What could that be? A motley-colored lizard had sprung into the interior of the skull, and was passing out and in through the large empty sockets of the eye. There was life now within that head, where once grand ideas, bright dreams, love of art, and excellence had dwelt—from whence hot tears had rolled, and where had lived the hope of immortality. The lizard sprang forth and vanished; the skull mouldered away, and became dust in dust.

It was a century from that time. The clear star shone unchanged, as brightly and beautifully as a thousand years before; the dawn of day was as red, and fresh, and blushing as a rosebud.

Where once had been a narrow street, with the ruins of an ancient temple, stood now a convent. A grave was to be dug in the garden,

for a young nun had died, and at an early hour in the morning she was to be buried. In digging the grave, the spade knocked against a stone. Dazzling white it appeared—the pure marble became visible. A round shoulder first presented itself: the spade was used more cautiously, and a female head was soon discovered, and then the wings of a butterfly. From the grave in which the young nun was to be laid, they raised, in the red morning light, a beautiful statue—Psyche carved in the finest marble. “How charming it is! how perfect!—an exquisite work, from the most glorious period of art!” it was said. Who could have been the sculptor? No one knew that—none knew him except the clear star that had shone for a thousand years; *it* knew his earthly career, his trials, his weakness. But he was dead, returned to the dust. Yet the result of his greatest effort, the most admirable, which proved his vast genius—Psyche—that never can die; that might outlive fame. That was seen, appreciated, admired, and loved.


The clear star in the rosy-streaked morn sent its glittering ray upon Psyche, and upon the delighted countenances of the admiring beholders, who saw a soul created in the marble block.

All that is earthly returns to earth, and is forgotten; only the star in the infinite vault of heaven bears it in remembrance. What is heavenly obtains renown from its own excellence; and when even renown shall fade, Psyche shall still live.



## THE SNAIL AND THE ROSEBUSH.

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 ROUND a garden was a fence of hazel bushes, and beyond that were fields and meadows, with cows and sheep; but in the centre of the garden stood a Rosebush in full bloom. Under it lay a Snail, who had a great deal in him, according to himself. "Wait till my time comes," said he; "I shall do a great deal more than to yield roses, or to bear nuts, or to give milk as the cows do."

"I expect an immense deal from you," said the Rosebush. "May I venture to ask when it is to come forth?"

"I shall take my time," replied the Snail. "You are always in such a hurry with your work, that curiosity about it is never excited."

The following year the Snail lay, almost in the same spot as formerly, in the sunshine un-

der the Rosebush; it was already in bud, and the buds had begun to expand into full-blown flowers, always fresh, always new. And the Snail crept half out, stretched forth its feelers, and then drew them in again.

“Every thing looks just the same as last year; there is no progress to be seen anywhere. The Rosebush is covered with roses—it will never get beyond that.”

The summer passed, the autumn passed; the Rosebush had yielded roses and buds up to the time that the snow fell. The weather became wet and tempestuous, the Rosebush bowed towards the ground, the Snail crept into the earth.

A new year commenced, the Rosebush revived, and the Snail came forth again.

“You are now only an old stick of a Rosebush,” said he; “you must expect to wither away soon. You have given the world all that was in you. Whether that were worth much or not, is a question I have not time to take into consideration; but this is certain, that you have not done the least for your own improvement, else something very different might have been produced by you. Can you deny this? You will soon become only a bare stick. Do you understand what I say?”

"You alarm me," cried the Rosebush. "I never thought of this."

"No, you have never troubled yourself with thinking much. But have you not occasionally reflected why you blossomed, and in what way you blossomed—how in one way and not in another?"

"No, answered the Rosebush; "I blossomed in gladness, for I could not do otherwise. The sun was so warm, the air so refreshing; I drank of the clear dew and the heavy rain; I breathed—I lived! There came up from the ground a strength in me, there came a strength from above. I experienced a degree of pleasure, always new, always great, and I was obliged to blossom. It was my life; I could not do otherwise."

"You have had a very easy life," remarked the Snail.

"To be sure, much has been granted to me," said the Rosebush, "but no more will be bestowed on me now. *You* have one of those meditative, deeply thinking minds, one so endowed that you will astonish the world."

"I have by no means any such design," said the Snail. "The world is nothing to me. What have I to do with the world? I have

enough to do with myself, and enough in myself."

"But should we not in this earth all give our best assistance to others—contribute what we can? Yes! I have only been able to give roses; but you—you who have got so much—what have you given to the world? What will you give it?"

"What have I given? What will I give? I spit upon it! It is good for nothing. I have no interest in it. Produce your roses—you cannot do more than that—let the hazel bushes bear nuts, let the cows give milk! You have each of you your public; I have mine within myself. I am going into it myself, and shall remain there. The world is nothing to me."

And so the Snail withdrew into his house, and closed it up.

"What a sad pity it is!" exclaimed the Rosebush. "*I* cannot creep into shelter, however much I might wish it. I must always spring out, spring out into roses. The leaves fall off, and they fly away on the wind. But I saw one of the roses laid in a psalm-book belonging to the mistress of the house; another of my roses was placed on the breast of a young and beautiful girl; and another was kissed by a

child's soft lips in an ecstasy of joy. I was so charmed at all this: it was a real happiness to me—one of the pleasant remembrances of my life."

And the Rosebush bloomed on in innocence, while the Snail retired into his slimy house—the world was nothing to him!

Years flew on.

The Snail had returned to earth, the Rosebush had returned to earth, also the dried rose-leaf in the psalm-book had disappeared, but new rosebushes bloomed in the garden, and new snails were there; they crept into their houses, spitting—the world was nothing to them!

Shall we read their history too? It would not be different.

## TWELVE BY THE MAIL.

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**I**T was bitterly cold; the sky gleamed with stars, and not a breeze was stirring. “Bump! an old pot was thrown at the neighbors’ house-doors. ‘Bang, bang,’ went the gun; for they were welcoming the New Year. It was New Year’s Eve! The church clock was striking twelve!”

“Tan-ta-ra-ra!” the mail came lumbering up. The great carriage stopped at the gate of the town. There were twelve persons in it; all the places were taken.

“Hurrah! hurrah!” sang the people in the houses of the town; for the New Year was being welcomed, and as the clock struck they stood up with the filled glass in their hand, to drink success to the new-comer.

“Happy New Year!” was the cry. “A pretty wife! plenty of money! and no sorrow or care!”

This wish was passed round, and then glasses were clashed together till they rang again, and in front of the town gate the post-carriage stopped with the strange guests, the twelve travellers.

And who were these strangers? Each of them had his passport and his luggage with him; they even brought presents for me and for you, and for all the people of the little town. Who were they? What did they want, and what did they bring with them?

“Good-morning!” they cried to the sentry at the town gate. “Good-morning!” replied the sentry, for the clock had struck twelve.

“Your name and profession?” the sentry inquired of the one who alighted first from the carriage.

“See yourself, in the passport,” replied the man. “I am myself!” and a capital fellow he looked, arrayed in a bear-skin and fur boots. “I am the man on whom many persons fix their hopes. Come to me to-morrow; I’ll give you a New-Year’s present. I throw pence and dollars among the people. I even give balls, thirty-one balls; but I cannot devote more than thirty-one nights to this. My ships are frozen in, but in my office it is warm and com-

fortable. I'm a merchant. My name is JANUARY, and I only carry accounts with me.

Now the second alighted: he was a merry companion; he was a theatre director, manager of the masque balls, and all the amusements one can imagine. His luggage consisted of a great tub.

"We'll dance the cat out of the tub at carnival time," said he. "I'll prepare a merry tune for you, and for myself too. I have not exactly long to live,—the shortest, in fact, of my whole family; for I only become twenty-eight days old. Sometimes they pop me in an extra day, but I trouble myself very little about that—hurrah!"

"You must not shout so!" said the sentry.

"Certainly, I may shout!" retorted the man. "I'm Prince Carnival, travelling under the name of FEBRUARY!"

The third now got out; he looked like Fasting itself, but carried his nose very high, for he was related to the "Forty Knights," and was a weather prophet. But that's not a profitable office, and that's why he praised fasting. In his button-hole he had a little bunch of violets, but they were very small.

"MARCH! MARCH!" the fourth called after

him, and slapped him on the shoulder: "Do you smell nothing? Go quickly into the guard room; there they're drinking punch, your favorite drink; I can smell it already out here. Forward, Master MARCH! But it was not true; the speaker only wanted to let him feel the influence of his own name, and make an APRIL fool of him; for with that the fourth began his career in the town. He looked very jovial, did little work, but had the more holidays. "If it were only a little more steady in the world!" said he; but sometimes one is in a good humor, sometimes in a bad one, according to circumstances; now rain, now sunshine. I am a kind of house and office letting agent; also a manager of funerals; I can laugh or cry, according to circumstances. Here in this box I have my summer wardrobe, but it would be very foolish to put it on. Here I am now! On Sundays I go out walking in shoes and white silk stockings, and with a muff!"

After him a lady came out of the carriage. She called herself Miss MAY. She wore a summer costume and overshoes, a light-green dress and anemones in her hair, and she was so scented with wild thyme that the sentry had to sneeze. "God bless you!" she said, and that

was her salutation. How pretty she was! and she was a singer: not a theatre singer nor a ballad singer—no, a singer of the woods; for she warmed through the gay green forest and sang there for her own amusement.

“Now comes the young dame!” said those in the carriage, and the young dame stepped out, delicate, proud, and pretty. It was easy to see that she was Mistress JUNE, accustomed to be served by drowsy marmots. She gave a great feast on the longest day of the year, that the guests might have time to partake of the many dishes at her table. She, indeed, kept her own carriage; but still she travelled in the mail with the rest, because she wanted to show that she was not high-minded. But she was not without protection; her younger brother, JULY, was with her.

He was a plump young fellow, clad in summer garments, and with a panama hat. He had but little baggage with him, because it was cumbersome in the great heat; therefore he had only provided himself with swimming trowsers, and those are not much.

Then came the mother herself, Madam AUGUST, wholesale dealer in fruit, proprietress of a large number of fishponds, and land cultivator

in a great crinoline; she was fat and hot, could use her hands well, and would herself carry out beer to the workmen in the fields. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," said she; that is written in the *Book*. Afterwards come the excursions, dance, and playing in the green wood, and the harvest-feasts! She was a thorough housewife.

After her, a man came out of the coach, a painter, Mr. Master-colorer SEPTEMBER; the forest had to receive him; the leaves were to change their colors, but how beautifully, when he wished it. Soon the wood plumed with red, yellow, and brown. The master whistled like the black magpie, was a quick workman, and wound the brown-green hop plants round his beer-jug. That was an ornament for the jug, and he had a good idea for ornament. There he stood with his color-pot, and that was his whole luggage!

A landed proprietor followed him, one who cared for the ploughing and preparing of the land, and also for field-sports. Squire OCTOBER brought his dog and his gun with him, and had nuts in his game-bag; "Crack! crack!" He had much baggage, even an English plough: he spoke of farming; but one could scarcely

hear what he said, for the coughing and gasping of his neighbor.

It was NOVEMBER who coughed so violently, as he got out. He was very much plagued by a cold ; he was continually having recourse to his pocket-handkerchief ; and yet, he said, he was obliged to accompany the servant-girls and initiate them into their new winter service. He said he should get rid of his cold when he went out wood-cutting, and had to saw and split wood, for he was a sawyer-master to the fire-wood guild. He spent his evenings cutting the wooden soles for skates, for he knew, he said, that in a few weeks there would be occasion to use these amusing shoes.

At length appeared the last passenger, old Mother DECEMBER, with her fire-stool : the old lady was cold, but her eyes glistened like two bright stars. She carried on her arm a flower-pot, in which a little fir-tree was growing.

“This tree I will guard and cherish, that it may grow large by Christmas-eve, and may reach from the ground to the ceiling, and may rear itself upward with flaming candles, golden apples, and little carved figures. The fire-stool warms like a stove. I bring the story-book out of my pocket, and read aloud, so that all the

children in the room become quite quiet, but the little figures on the trees become lively, and the little waxen angel on the top spreads out his wings of gold-leaf, flies down from the green perch, and kisses great and small in the room; yes, even the poor children who stand out in the passage and in the street, singing the carol about the Star of Bethlehem.

“Well, now the coach may drive away!” said the sentry, “we have the whole twelve. Let the chaise drive up.”

“First, let all the twelve come in to me!” said the captain on duty. “One after the other! The passports I will keep here. Each of them is available for a month; when that has passed, I shall write the behavior on each passport. Mr. January, have the goodness to come here,” and Mr. January stepped forward.

“When a year is passed, I think I shall be able to tell what the twelve have brought me, and to you, and to all of us. Now I do not know it, and they don’t probably know it themselves; for we live in strange times.

## ROSE

### FROM THE GRAVE OF HOMER.

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ALL the songs of the East tell of the love of the nightingale to the rose; in the silent starlit nights the winged songster serenades his fragrant flower.

Not far from Smyrna, under the lofty plantains, where the merchant drives his loaded camels, that proudly lift their long necks and tramp over the holy ground, I saw a hedge of roses. Wild pigeons flew among the branches of the high trees, and their wings glistened, while a sunbeam glided over them, as if they were of mother-of-pearl.

The rose-hedge bore a flower, which was the most beautiful among all, and the nightingale sang to her of his woes. But the rose was silent; not a dew-drop lay, like a tear of sympathy, upon her leaves,—she bent down over a few great stones.

“Here rests the greatest singer of the world!” said the rose; “over his tomb will I pour out my fragrance, and on it I will let fall my leaves when the storm tears them off! He who sang of Troy became earth, and from that earth I have sprung! I, a rose from the grave of Homer, am too lofty to bloom for a poor nightingale!”

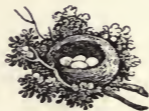
And the nightingale sang himself to death.

The camel-driver came with his loaded camels and his black slaves: his little son found the dead bird, and buried the little songster in the grave of the great Homer; and the rose trembled in the wind. The evening came, and the rose wrapped her leaves more closely together, and dreamed thus: “It was a fair sunny day: a crowd of strangers drew near, for they had undertaken a pilgrimage to the grave of Homer. Among the strangers was a singer from the north, the home of clouds and of the northern light; he plucked the rose, placed it in a book, and carried it away into another part of the world, to his distant fatherland. The rose faded with grief, and lay in the narrow book, which he opened in his home, saying, ‘Here is a rose from the grave of Homer.’”

This the flower dreamed; and she awoke

and trembled in the wind. A drop of dew fell from the leaves upon the singer's grave. The sun rose, and the rose glowed more beautiful than before: it was a hot day, and she was in her own warm Asia. Then footsteps were heard, and Frankish strangers came, such as the rose had seen in her dream, and among the strangers was a poet from the north; he plucked the rose, pressed a kiss upon her fresh mouth, and carried her away to the home of the clouds and of the northern light.

Like a mummy the flower corpse now rests in his "Iliad;" and as in a dream, she hears him open the book and say: "Here is a rose from the grave of Homer."



## THE RACERS.

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PRIZE, or rather two prizes, had been appointed—a great one and a little one—for the greatest swiftness, not in a single race, but for swiftness throughout an entire year.

“I got the first prize!” said the hare; “there must be justice when relations and good friends are among the prize committee; but that the snail should have received the second prize, I consider almost an insult to myself.”

“No!” declared the fence-rail, who had been witness at the distribution of prizes, “reference must also be had to industry and perseverance. Many respectable people said so, and I understood it well. The snail certainly took half a year to get across the threshold of the door; but he did himself an injury, and broke his collar-bone in the haste he was compelled to make. He devoted himself entirely to his

work, and he ran with his house on his back! All that is very charming! and that's how he got the second prize!"

"I might certainly have been considered, too!" said the swallow. "I should think that no one appeared swifter in flying and soaring than myself, and how far I have been around—far—far—far!"

"Yes, that's just your misfortune," said the fence-rail. "You're too fond of fluttering. You must always be journeying about, into far countries, when it begins to be cold here. You've no love of fatherland in you. You cannot be taken into account."

"But if I lay in the moor all through the winter," said the swallow—"suppose I slept through the whole time—should I be taken into account then?"

"Bring a certificate from the old moor-hen that you have slept away half the time in your fatherland, and you shall be taken into account."

"I deserved the first prize, and not the second," said the snail. "I know so much, at least, that the hare only ran from cowardice, because he thought each time there was danger in delay. I, on the other hand, made my run-

ning the business of my life, and have become a cripple in the service! If any one was to have the first prize, I should have had it; but I don't understand chattering and boasting; on the contrary, I despise it!" And the snail looked quite haughty.

"I am able to depose with word and oath that each prize, at least my vote for each, was given after proper consideration," observed the old boundary post in the wood, who had been a member of the college of judges. "I always go on with due consideration, with order, and calculation. Seven times before I have had the honor to be present at the distribution of prizes, and to give my vote; but not till to-day have I carried out my will. I always went to the first prize from the beginning of the alphabet, and to the second from the end. Be kind enough to give me your attention, and I will explain to you how one begins at the beginning. The eighth letter from A is H, and there we have the hare, and so I awarded him the first prize; the eighth letter from the end of the alphabet is S, and therefore the snail received the second prize. Next time I will have its turn for the first prize, and R for the second: there must be due order and calculation in

every thing! One must have a certain starting point!"

"I should certainly have voted for myself, if I had not been among the judges," said the mule, who had been one of the committee. "One must not only consider the rapidity of advance, but every other quality also that is found,—as for example, how much a candidate is able to draw; but I would not have put that prominently forward this time, nor the sagacity of the hare in his flight, or the cunning with which he suddenly takes a leap to one side to bring people on a false track, so that they may not know where he has hidden himself. No! there is something else on which many lay great stress, and which one may not leave out of the calculation. I mean what is called the beautiful: on the beautiful I particularly fixed my eyes; I looked at the beautiful well-grown ears of the hare; it's quite a pleasure to see how long they are: it almost seemed to me as if I saw myself in the days of my childhood, and so I voted for the hare."

"But!"—said the fly,—“I'm not going to talk, I'm only going to say that I have overtaken more than one hare. Quite lately I crushed the hind-legs of one; I was sitting on

the engine in front of a railway train—I often do that, for thus one can best notice one's own swiftness. A young hare ran for a long time in front of the engine; he had no idea that I was present—but at last he was obliged to give in and spring aside—but then the engine crushed his hind-legs, for I was upon it. The hare lay there, but I rode on. That certainly was conquering him! But I don't count the prize!"

"It certainly appears to me"—thought the wild-rose—but she did not say it; for it is not her nature to give her opinion, though it would have been quite well if she had done so. "It certainly appears to me that the sunbeam ought to have had the first prize, and the second too. The sunbeam flies with intense rapidity along the enormous path from the sun to ourselves, and arrives in such strength that all nature awakes at it; such beauty does it possess, that all we roses blush, and exhale fragrance in its presence! Our worshipful judges do not appear to have noticed this at all! If I were the sunbeam, I would give each of them a sunstroke—but that would only make them mad, and that they may become, as things stand. I say nothing!" thought the wild-rose. "May peace reign in the forest! It is glorious to blossom, to scent,

and to live,—to live in song and legend! The sunbeam will outlive us all!”


“What’s the first prize?” asked the earthworm, who had overslept the time, and only came up now.

“It consists in a free admission to a cabbage-garden!” replied the mule. “I proposed that as the prize. The hare was decidedly to have it, and therefore I, as an active and reflective member, took especial notice of the advantage of him who was to get it; now the hare is provided for. The snail may sit upon the fence and lick up moss and sunshine, and has further been appointed one of the first umpires in the racing. That’s worth a great deal, to have some one of talent in the thing men call a committee. I must say I expect much from the future—we have made a very good beginning!”



THE  
MUD-KING'S DAUGHTER.

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 HE storks are in the habit of relating to their little ones many tales, all from the swamps and the bogs. They are, in general, suitable to the ages and comprehensions of the hearers. The smallest youngsters are contented with mere sound, such as "kribble, krable, plurremurre." They think that wonderful; but the more advanced require something rational, or at least something about their family. Of the two most ancient and longest traditions that have been handed down among the storks, we are all acquainted with one; that about Moses, who was placed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, was found there by the king's daughter, was well brought up, and became a great man, such as has never been

heard of since in the place where he was buried.

The other story is not well known, probably because it is a tale of home; yet it has passed down from one stork grandam to another for a thousand years, and each succeeding narrator has told it better and better, and now we shall tell it best of all.

The first pair of storks who related this tale had themselves something to do with its events. The place of their summer sojourn was at the Viking's log-house, up by *the wild morass*, at Vendsyssel. It is in Hjöring district, away near Skagen, in the north of Jutland, speaking with geographical precision. It is now an enormous bog, and an account of it can be read in descriptions of the country. This place was once the bottom of the sea; but the waters have receded, and the ground has risen. It stretches itself for miles on all sides, surrounded by wet meadows and pools of water, by peat-bogs, cloudberries, and miserable stunted trees. A heavy mist almost always hangs over this place, and about seventy years ago wolves were found there. It is rightly called "the wild morass;" and one may imagine how savage it must have been, and how much swamp and sea

must have existed there a thousand years ago. Yes, in these respects the same was to be seen there as is to be seen now. The rushes had the same height, the same sort of long leaves, and blue-brown, feather-like flowers, that they bear now; the birch-tree stood with its white bark and delicate drooping leaves, as now; and, in regard to the living creatures, the flies had the same sort of crape clothing as they wear now; and the storks' bodies were white, with black and red stockings. Mankind, on the contrary, at that time wore coats cut in another fashion from what they do in our days; but every one of them, serf or huntsman, whosoever he might be who trod upon the quagmire, fared a thousand years ago as they fare now: one step forward—they fell in, and sank down to the MUD-KING, as *he* was called who reigned below in the great morass kingdom. Very little is known about his government; but that is, perhaps, a good thing.

Near the bog, close by Lüm fjorden, lay the Viking's log-house of three stories high, and with a tower and stone cellars. The storks had built their nest upon the roof of this dwelling. The female stork sat upon her eggs, and felt certain they would be all hatched.

One evening the male stork remained out

very long, and when he came home he looked rumped and flurried.

"I have something very terrible to tell thee," he said to the female stork.

"Thou hadst better keep it to thyself," said she. "Remember, I am sitting upon the eggs: a fright might do me harm, and the eggs might be injured."

"But it *must* be told thee," he replied. "She has come here—the daughter of our host in Egypt. She has ventured the long journey up hither, and she is lost."

"She who is of the fairies' race? Speak, then! Thou knowest that I cannot bear suspense while I am sitting."

"Know, then, that she believed what the doctors said, which thou didst relate to me. She believed that the bog-plants up here could cure her invalid father; and she has flown hither, in the magic disguise of a swan, with the two other swan princesses, who every year come hither to the north to bathe and renew their youth. She has come, and she is lost."

"Thou dost spin the matter out so long," muttered the female stork, "the eggs will be quite cooled. I cannot bear suspense just now."

“I will come to the point,” replied the male. “This evening I went to the rushes where the quagmire could bear me. Then came three swans. There was something in their motions which said to me, ‘Take care; they are not real swans; they are only the appearance of swans, created by magic.’ Thou wouldst have known as well as I that they were not of the right sort.”

“Yes, surely,” she said; “but tell me about the princess. I am tired of hearing about the swans.”

“In the midst of the morass—here, I must tell thee, it is like a lake,” said the male stork—“thou canst see a portion of it, if thou wilt raise thyself up a moment—yonder, by the rushes and the green morass, lay a large stump of an alder-tree. The three swans alighted upon it, flapped their wings, and looked about them. One of them cast off her swan disguise, and I recognized in her our royal princess from Egypt. She sat now with no other mantle around her than her long dark hair. I heard her desire the other two to take good care of her magic swan garb, while she ducked down under the water to pluck the flower which she thought she saw. They nodded, and raised the

empty feather dress between them. 'What are they going to do with it?' said I to myself; and she probably asked herself the same question. The answer came too soon, for I saw them take flight up into the air with her charmed feather dress. 'Dive thou there!' they cried: 'Never more shalt thou fly in the form of a magic swan—never more shalt thou behold the land of Egypt. Dwell thou *in the wild morass!*' And they tore her magic disguise into a hundred pieces, so that the feathers whirled around about as if there were a fall of snow; and away flew the two worthless princesses."

"It is shocking!" said the lady stork; "I can't bear to hear it. Tell me what more happened."

"The princess sobbed and wept. Her tears trickled down upon the trunk of the alder-tree, and then it moved; for it was the mud-king himself—he who dwells in the morass. I saw the trunk turn itself, and then there was no more trunk—it stuck up two long miry branches like arms; then the poor child became dreadfully alarmed, and she sprang aside upon the green slimy coating of the marsh; but it could not bear me, much less her, and she sank im-

mediately in. The trunk of the alder-tree went down with her—it was that which had dragged her down: then arose to the surface large black bubbles, and all further traces of her disappeared. She is now buried in ‘the wild morass;’ and never, never shall she return to Egypt with the flower she sought. Thou couldst not have borne to have seen all this, mother.”

“Thou hadst no business to tell me such a startling tale at a time like this. The eggs may suffer. The princess can take care of herself: she will no doubt be rescued. If it had been me or thee, or any of our family, it would have been all over with us.”

“I will look after her every day, however,” said the male stork; and so he did.

A long time had elapsed, when one day he saw that far down from the bottom was shooting up a green stem, and when it reached the surface a leaf grew on it. The leaf became broader and broader; close by it came a bud; and one morning, when the stork flew over it, the bud opened in the warm sunshine, and in the centre of it lay a beautiful infant, a little girl, just as if she had been taken out of a bath. She so strongly resembled the princess from

Egypt, that the stork at first thought it was herself who had become an infant again; but when he considered the matter, he came to the conclusion that she was the daughter of the princess and the mud-king, therefore she lay in the calyx of a water-lily.

"She cannot be left lying there," said the stork to himself; "yet in my nest we are already too over-crowded. But a thought strikes me. The Viking's wife has no children; she has much wished to have a pet. I am often blamed for bringing little ones; I shall now, for once, do so in reality. I shall fly with this infant to the Viking's wife; it will be a great pleasure to her."

And the stork took the little girl, flew to the log-house, knocked with his beak a hole in the window-pane of stretched bladder, laid the infant in the arms of the Viking's wife, then flew to his mate, and unburdened his mind to her; while the little ones listened attentively, for they were old enough now to do that.

"Only think, the princess is not dead. She has sent her little one up here, and now it is well provided for."

"I told thee from the beginning it would be all well," said the mother stork. "Turn thy

thoughts now to thine own family. It is almost time for our long journey; I begin now to tingle under the wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I hear the quails saying that we shall soon have a fair wind. Our young ones are quite able to go, I know that."

How happy the Viking's wife was when, in the morning, she awoke and found the lovely little child lying on her breast! She kissed it and caressed it, but it screeched frightfully, and floundered about with its little arms and legs: it evidently seemed little pleased. At last it cried itself to sleep, and as it lay there it was one of the most beautiful little creatures that could be seen. The Viking's wife was so pleased and happy, she took it into her head that her husband, with all his retainers, would come as unexpectedly as the little one had done; and she set herself and the whole household to work, in order that every thing might be ready for their reception. The colored tapestry which she and her women had embroidered with representations of their gods—ODIN, THOR, and FREIA, as they were called—were hung up; the serfs were ordered to clean and polish the old shields with which the walls

were to be decorated; cushions were laid on the benches, and dry logs of wood were heaped on the fireplace in the centre of the hall, so that the pile might be easily lighted. The Viking's wife had labored so hard herself that she was quite tired by the evening, and slept soundly.

When she awoke towards morning she became much alarmed, for the little child was gone. She sprang up, lighted a twig of the pine-tree, and looked about; and, to her amazement, she saw, in the part of the bed to which she stretched her feet, not the beautiful infant, but a great, ugly frog. She was so much disgusted with it that she took up a heavy stick, and was going to kill the nasty creature; but it looked at her with such wonderfully sad and speaking eyes, that she could not strike it. Again she searched about. The frog gave a faint, pitiable cry. She started up, and sprang from the bed to the window: she opened the shutters, and at the same moment the sun streamed in, and cast its bright beams upon the bed and upon the large frog; and all at once it seemed as if the broad mouth of the noxious animal drew itself in, and became small and red—the limbs stretched themselves

into the most beautiful form—it was her own little, lovely child that lay there, and no ugly frog.

“What is all this?” she exclaimed. “Have I dreamed a bad dream? That certainly is my pretty, little elfin child lying yonder.” And she kissed it and strained it affectionately to her heart; but it struggled, and tried to bite like the kitten of a wild cat.

Neither the next day nor the day after came the Viking, though he was on the way, but the wind was against him; it was for the storks. A fair wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

In the course of a few days and nights it became evident to the Viking's wife how things stood with the little child—that it was under the influence of some terrible witchcraft. By day, it was as beautiful as an angel, but it had a wild, evil disposition; by night, on the contrary, it was an ugly frog, quiet, except for its croaking, and with melancholy eyes. It had two natures, that changed about, both without and within. This arose from the little girl whom the stork had brought possessing by day her own mother's external appearance, and at the same time her father's temper; while, by

night, on the contrary, she showed her connection with him outwardly in her form, whilst her mother's mind and heart inwardly became hers. What art could release her from the power which exercised such sorcery over her? The Viking's wife felt much anxiety and distress about it, and yet her heart hung on the poor little being, of whose strange state she thought she should not dare to inform her husband when he came home; for he assuredly, as was the custom, would put the poor child out on the high-road, and let any one take it who would. The Viking's good-natured wife had not the heart to allow this; therefore she resolved that he should never see the child but by day.

At dawn of day the wings of the storks were heard fluttering over the roof. During the night more than a hundred pairs of storks had been making their preparations, and now they flew up to wend their way to the south.

"Let all the males be ready," was the cry. "Let their mates and little ones join them."

"How light we feel!" said the young storks, who were all impatience to be off. "How charming to be able to travel to other lands!"

"Keep ye all together in one flock," cried

the father and mother, "and don't chatter so much—it will take away your breath."

So they all flew away.

About the same time the blast of a horn sounding over the heath, gave notice that the Viking had landed with all his men; they were returning home with rich booty from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in Britain, sang in their terror—

"Save us from the savage Normans!"

What life and bustle were now apparent in the Viking's castle near "the wild morass!" Casks of mead were brought into the hall, the pile of wood was lighted, and horses were slaughtered for the grand feast which was to be prepared. The sacrificial priests sprinkled with the horses' warm blood the slaves who were to assist in the offering. The fires crackled, the smoke rolled up under the roof, the soot dropped from the beams; but people were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and they brought handsome gifts; rancor and falseness were forgotten—they all became drunk together, and they thrust their doubled fists into each other's faces—which was a sign of good-humor. The skald—he was a sort of poet and musician, but at the same time a warrior

—who had been with them, and had witnessed what he sang about, gave them a song, wherein they heard recounted all their achievements in battle and wonderful adventures. At the end of every verse came the same refrain—

“Fortune dies, friends die, one dies one’s self;  
but a glorious name never dies.”

And then they all struck on their shields, and thundered with their knives or their knuckle-bones on the table, so that they made a tremendous noise.

The Viking’s wife sat on the cross bench in the open banquet hall. She wore a silk dress, gold bracelets, and large amber beads. She was in her grandest attire, and the skald named her also in his song, and spoke of the golden treasure she had brought her husband; and HE rejoiced in the lovely child he had only seen by daylight, in all its wondrous beauty. The fierce temper which accompanied her exterior charms pleased him. “She might become,” he said, “a stalwart female warrior, and able to kill a giant adversary.” She never even blinked her eyes when a practised hand, in sport, cut off her eyebrows with a sharp sword.

The mead casks were emptied, others were

brought up, and these, too, were drained; for there were folks present who could stand a good deal. To them might have been applied the old proverb, "The cattle know when to leave the pasture; but an unwise man never knows the depth of his stomach."

Yes, they all know it; but people often know the right thing, and do the wrong. They know also that "one wears out one's welcome when one stays too long in another man's house;" but they remained there for all that. Meat and mead are good things. All went on merrily, and towards night the slaves slept amidst the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers into the fat skimmings of the soup, and licked them. It was a rare time!

And again the Viking went forth on an expedition, notwithstanding the stormy weather. He went after the crops were gathered in. He went with his men to the coast of Britain—"it was only across the water," he said—and his wife remained at home with her little girl; and it was soon to be seen that the foster-mother cared almost more for the poor frog, with the honest eyes and plaintive croaking, than for the beauty who scratched and bit everybody around.

The raw, damp, autumn mist, that loosens

the leaves from the trees, lay over wood and hedge; "Birdfeatherless," as the snow is called, was falling thickly; winter was close at hand. The sparrows seized upon the storks' nest, and talked over, in their fashion, the absent owners. They themselves, the stork pair, with all their young ones, where were they now?

The storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun was shining warmly as with us on a lovely summer day. The tamarind and the acacia grew there; the moonbeams streamed over the temples of Mohammed. On the slender minarets sat many a pair of storks, reposing after their long journey: the whole immense flock had fixed themselves, nest by nest, amidst the mighty pillars and broken porticos of temples and forgotten edifices. The date-tree elevated to a great height its broad leafy roof, as if it wished to form a shelter from the sun. The gray pyramids stood with their outlines sharply defined in the clear air towards the desert, where the ostrich knew he could use his legs; and the lion sat with his large grave eyes, and gazed on the marble sphinxes that lay half imbedded in the sand. The waters of the Nile

had receded, and a great part of the bed of the river was swarming with frogs; and that, to the stork family, was the pleasantest sight in the country where they had arrived. The young ones were astonished at all they saw.

"Such are the sights here, and thus it always is in our warm country," said the stork-mother, good-humoredly.

"Is there yet more to be seen?" they asked "Shall we go much further into the country?"

"There is nothing more worth seeing," replied the stork-mother. "Beyond this luxuriant neighborhood there is nothing but wild forests, where the trees grow close to each other, and are still more closely entangled by prickly creeping plants, weaving such a wall of verdure, that only the elephant, with his strong clumsy feet, can there tread his way. The snakes are too large for us there, and the lizards too lively. If ye would go to the desert, ye will meet with nothing but sand; it will fill your eyes, it will come in gusts, and cover your feathers. No, it is best here. Here are frogs and grasshoppers. I shall remain here, and so shall you."

And they remained. The old ones sat in their nest upon the graceful minaret; they reposed themselves, and yet they had enough to

do to smooth their wings and rub their beaks on their red stockings; and they stretched out their necks, saluted gravely, and lifted up their heads with their high foreheads and fine soft feathers, and their brown eyes looked so wise.

The female young ones strutted about proudly among the juicy reeds, stole sly glances at the other young storks, made acquaintances, and slaughtered a frog at every third step, or went lounging about with little snakes in their bills, which they fancied looked well, and which they knew would taste well.

The male young ones got into quarrels; struck each other with their wings; pecked at each other with their beaks, even until blood flowed. Then they all thought of engaging themselves—the male and the female young ones. It was for that they lived, and they built nests, and got again into new quarrels; for in these warm countries every one is so hotheaded. Nevertheless they were very happy, and this was a great joy to the old storks. Every day there was warm sunshine—every day plenty to eat. They had nothing to think of except pleasure. But yonder, within the splendid palace of their Egyptian host, as they called him, there was but little pleasure to be found.

The wealthy, mighty chief lay upon his couch, stiffened in all his limbs—stretched out like a mummy in the centre of the grand saloon with the many-colored painted walls: it was as if he were lying in a tulip. Kinsmen and servants stood around him. Dead he was not, yet it could hardly be said that he lived. The healing bog-flower from the far-away lands in the north—that which she was to have sought and plucked for him—she who loved him best—would never now be brought. His beautiful young daughter, who in the magic garb of a swan had flown over sea and land away to the distant north, would never more return. “She is dead and gone,” had the two swan ladies, her companions, declared on their return home. They had concocted a tale, and they told it as follows.

“We had flown all three high up in the air when a sportsman saw us, and shot at us with his arrow. It struck our young friend; and, slowly singing her farewell song, she sank like a dying swan down into the midst of the lake in the wood. There, on its banks, under a fragrant weeping birch-tree, we buried her. But we took a just revenge: we bound fire under the wings of the swallow that built under

the sportsman's thatched roof. It kindled—his house was soon in flames—he was burned within it—and the flames shone as far over the sea as to the drooping birch, where she is now earth within the earth. Alas! never will she return to the land of Egypt."

And they both wept bitterly; and the old stork-father, when he heard it, rubbed his bill until it was quite sore.

"Lies and deceit!" he cried. "I should like, above all things, to run my beak into their breasts."

"And break it off," said the stork-mother; "you would look remarkably well then. Think first of yourself, and the interests of your own family; every thing else is of little consequence."

"I will, however, place myself upon the edge of the open cupola to-morrow, when all the learned and the wise are to assemble to take the case of the sick man into consideration: perhaps they may then arrive a little nearer to the truth."

And the learned and the wise met together, and talked much, deeply, and profoundly, of which the stork could make nothing at all; and, sooth to say, there was no result obtained

from all this talking, either for the invalid or for his daughter in "the wild morass;" yet, nevertheless, it was all very well to listen to—one *must* listen to a great deal in this world.

But now it were best, perhaps, for us to hear what had happened formerly. We shall then be better acquainted with the story—at least, we shall know as much as the stork-father did.

"Love bestows life; the highest love bestows the highest life; it is only through love that his life can be saved," was what had been said; and it was amazingly wisely and well said, the learned declared.

"It is a beautiful thought," said the stork-father.

"I don't quite comprehend it," said the stork-mother, "but that is not my fault—it is the fault of the thought; though it is all one to me, for I have other things to think upon."

And then the learned talked of love between this and that—that there was a difference. Love such as lovers felt, and that between parents and children; between light and plants; how the sunbeams kissed the ground, and how thereby the seeds sprouted forth—it was all so diffusely and learnedly expounded, that it was impossible for the stork-father to follow the

discourse, much less to repeat it. It made him very thoughtful, however; he half closed his eyes, and actually stood on one leg the whole of the next day, reflecting on what he had heard. So much learning was difficult for him to digest.

But this much the stork-father understood. He had heard both common people and great people speak as if they really felt it, that it was a great misfortune to many thousands, and to the country in general, that the king lay so ill, and that nothing could be done to bring about his recovery. It would be a joy and a blessing to all if he could but be restored to health.

“But where grew the health-giving flower that might cure him?” Everybody asked that question. Scientific writings were searched, the glittering stars were consulted, the wind and the weather. Every traveller that could be found was appealed to, until at length the learned and the wise, as before stated, pitched upon this: “Love bestows life—life to a father.” And though this dictum was really not understood by themselves, they adopted it, and wrote it out as a prescription. “Love bestows life”—well and good. But how was this to be applied? Here they were at a stand. At length,

however, they agreed that the princess must be the means of procuring the necessary help, as she loved her father with all her heart and soul. They also agreed on a mode of proceeding. It is more than a year and a day since then. They settled that, when the new moon had just disappeared, she was to betake herself by night to the marble sphinx in the desert, to remove the sand from the entrance with her foot, and then to follow one of the long passages which led to the centre of the great pyramids, where one of the most mighty monarchs of ancient times, surrounded by splendor and magnificence, lay in his mummy-coffin. There she was to lean her head over the corpse, and then it would be revealed to her where life and health for her father were to be found.

All this she had performed, and in a dream had been instructed that from the deep morass high up in the Danish land—the place was minutely described to her—she might bring home a certain lotus-flower, which beneath the water would touch her breast, that would cure him.

And therefore she had flown, in the magical disguise of a swan, from Egypt up to “the wild morass.” All this was well known to

the stork-father and stork-mother: and now, though rather late, we also know it. We know that the mud-king dragged her down with him, and that, as far as regarded her home, she was dead and gone; only the wisest of them all said, like the stork-mother, "She can take care of herself;" and, knowing no better, they waited to see what would turn up.

"I think I shall steal their swan garbs from the two wicked princesses," said the stork-father; "then they will not be able to go to 'the wild morass' and do mischief. I shall leave the swan disguises themselves up yonder till there is some use for them."

"Where could you keep them?" asked the old female stork.

"In our nest near 'the wild morass,'" he replied. "I and our eldest young ones can carry them; and if we find them too troublesome, there are plenty of places on the way where we can hide them until our next flight. One swan's dress would be enough for her, to be sure; but two are better. It is a good thing to have abundant means of travelling at command in a country so far north."

"You will get no thanks for what you propose doing," said the stork-mother; "but you

are the master, and must please yourself. I have nothing to say except at hatching-time."

At the Viking's castle near "the wild morass," whither the storks were flying in the spring, the little girl had received her name. She was called Helga; but this name was too soft for one with such dispositions as that lovely little creature had. She grew fast month by month; and in a few years, even while the storks were making their habitual journeys in autumn towards the Nile, in spring towards "the wild morass," the little child had grown up into a big girl, and before any one could have thought it, she was in her sixteenth year, and a most beautiful young lady—charming in appearance, but hard and fierce in temper—the most savage of the savage in that gloomy, cruel time.

It was a pleasure to her to sprinkle with her white hands the reeking blood of the horse slaughtered for an offering. She would bite, in her barbarous sport, the neck of the black-cock, which was to be slaughtered by the sacrificial priest; and to her foster-father she said in positive earnestness:

"If your enemy were to come and cast ropes

over the beams that support the roof, and drag them down upon your chamber whilst you were sleeping, I would not awaken you if I could—I would not hear it—the blood would tingle as it does now in that ear on which, years ago, you dared to give me a blow. I remember it well.”

But the Viking did not believe she spoke seriously. Like every one else, he was fascinated by her extreme beauty, and never troubled himself to observe if the mind of little Helga were in unison with her looks. She would sit on horseback without a saddle, as if grown fast to the animal, and go at full gallop; nor would she spring off, even if her horse and other ill-natured ones were biting each other. Entirely dressed as she was, she would cast herself from the bank into the strong current of the fiord, and swim out to meet the Viking, when his boat was approaching the land. Of her thick, splendid hair she had cut off the longest lock, and plaited for herself a string to her bow.

“Self-made is well made,” she said.

The Viking's wife, according to the manners and customs of the age in which she lived, was strong in mind, and decided in purpose; but

with her daughter she was like a soft, timid woman. She was well aware that the dreadful child was under the influence of sorcery.

And Helga apparently took a malicious pleasure in frightening her mother. Often, when the latter was standing on the balcony, or walking in the courtyard, Helga would place herself on the side of the well, throw her arms up in the air, and then let herself fall headlong into the narrow, deep hole, where, with her frog nature, she would duck and raise herself up again, and then crawl up as if she had been a cat, and run dripping of water into the grand saloon, so that the green rushes which were strewed over the floor partook of the wet stream.

There was but one restraint upon little Helga—that was the *evening twilight*. In it she became quiet and thoughtful—would allow herself to be called and guided: then, too, she would seem to feel some affection for her mother; and when the sun sank, and the outer and inward change took place, she would sit still and sorrowful, shrivelled up into the form of a frog, though the head was now much larger than that little animal's, and therefore she was uglier than ever: she looked like a

miserable dwarf, with a frog's head and webbed fingers. There was something very sad in her eyes; voice she had none, except a kind of croak like a child sobbing in its dreams. Then would the Viking's wife take her in her lap; she would forget the ugly form, and look only at the melancholy eyes; and more than once she exclaimed:

"I could almost wish that thou wert always my dumb fairy-child, for thou art more fearful to look at when thy form resumes its beauty."

And she wrote Runic rhymes against enchantment and infirmity, and threw them over the poor creature; but there was no change for the better.

"One could hardly believe that she was once so small as to lie in the calyx of a water-lily," said the stork-father. "She is now quite a woman, and the image of her Egyptian mother. Her, alas! we have never seen again. She did not take good care of herself, as thou didst expect, and the learned people predicted. Year after year I have flown backwards and forwards over 'the wild morass,' but never have I seen a sign of her. Yes, I can assure thee, during the years we have been coming up here, when I have arrived some days before

thee, that I might mend the nest and set every thing in order in it, I have for a whole night flown, as if I had been an owl or a bat, continually over the open water, but to no purpose. We have had no use either for the two swan disguises, which I and the young ones dragged all the way up here from the banks of the Nile. It was hard enough work, and it took us three journeys to bring them up. They have now lain here for years at the bottom of our nest; and should a fire by any chance break out, and the Viking's house be burned down, they would be lost."

"And our good nest would be lost," said the old female stork; "but thou thinkest less of that than of these feather things and thy bog princess. Thou hadst better go down to her at once, and remain in the mire. Thou art a hard-hearted father to thine own: *that* I have said since I laid my first eggs. What if I or one of our young ones should get an arrow under our wings from that fierce crazy brat at the Viking's? She does not care what she does. This has been much longer our home than hers, she ought to recollect. We do not forget our duty; we pay our rent every year—a feather, an egg, and a young one—as we

ought to do. Dost thou think that when *she* is outside *I* can venture to go below, as in former days, or as I do in Egypt, where I am almost everybody's comrade, not to mention that I can there even peep into the pots and pans without any fear? No; I sit up here and fret myself about her—the hussy! and I fret myself at thee too. Thou shouldst have left her lying in the water-lily, and there would have been an end of her.”

“Thy words are much harder than thy heart,” said the stork-father. “I know thee better than thou knowest thyself.”

And then he made a hop, flapped his wings twice, stretched his legs out behind him, and away he flew, or rather sailed, without moving his wings, until he had got to some distance. Then he brought his wings into play; the sun shone upon his white feathers; he stretched his head and his neck forward, and hastened on his way.

“He is, nevertheless, still the handsomest of them all,” said his admiring mate; “but I will not tell him that.”

Late that autumn the Viking returned home, bringing with him booty and prisoners. Among

these was a young Christian priest, one of the men who denounced the gods of the northern mythology. Often, about this time, was the new religion talked of in baronial halls and ladies' bowers—the religion that was spreading over all lands of the south, and which, with the holy Ansgarius,\* had even reached as far as Hedeby. Even little Helga had heard of the pure religion of Christ, who, from love to

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\* Ansgarius was originally a monk from the monastery of New Corbie, in Saxony, to which several of the monks of Corbie in France had migrated in A. D. 822. Its abbot, Paschasius Radbert, who died in 865, was, according to Cardinal Bellarmine, the first fully to propagate the belief, now entertained in the Roman-catholic Church, of the corporeal presence of the Saviour in the sacrament. Ansgarius, who was very enthusiastic, accepted a mission to the north of Europe, and preached Christianity in Denmark and Sweden. Jutland was for some time the scene of his labors, and he made many converts there; also in Sleswig, where a Christian school for children was established, who, on leaving it, were sent to spread Christianity throughout the country. An archbishopric was founded by the then Emperor of Germany in conformity to a plan which had been traced, though not carried out, by Charlemagne; and this was bestowed upon Ansgarius. But the church he had built was burnt by some still heathen Danes, who, gathering a large fleet, invaded Hamburg, which they also reduced to ashes. The Emperor then constituted him Bishop of Bremen.—*Trans.*

mankind, had given himself as a sacrifice to save them ; but with her it went in at one ear and out at the other, to use a common saying. The word *love* alone seemed to have made some impression upon her, when she shrunk into the miserable form of a frog in the closed-up chamber. But the Viking's wife had listened to, and felt herself wonderfully affected by, the rumor and the Saga about the Son of the one only true God.

The men, returning from their expedition, had told of the splendid temples of costly hewn stone raised to Him whose errand was love. A pair of heavy golden vessels, beautifully wrought out of pure gold, were brought home, and both had a charming, spicy perfume. They were the censers which the Christian priests swung before the altars, on which blood never flowed ; but wine and the consecrated bread were changed into the blood of Him who had given himself for generations yet unborn.

To the deep, stone-walled cellars of the Viking's log-house was the young captive, the Christian priest, consigned, fettered with cords round his feet and his hands. He was as beautiful as Baldur to look at, said the Viking's wife, and she was grieved at his fate ; but

young Helga wished that he should be hamstrung, and bound to the tails of wild oxen.

“Then I should let loose the dogs. Halloo! Then away over bogs and pools to the naked heath. Hah! that would be something pleasant to see—still pleasanter to follow him on the wild journey.”

But the Viking would not hear of his being put to such a death. On the morrow, as a scoffer and denier of the high gods, he was to be offered up as a sacrifice to them upon the blood-stone in the sacred grove. He was to be the first human sacrifice ever offered up there.

Young Helga prayed that she might be allowed to sprinkle with the blood of the captive the images of the gods and the assembled spectators. She sharpened her gleaming knife, and, as one of the large ferocious dogs, of which there were plenty in the court-yard, leaped over her feet, she stuck the knife into his side.

“That is to prove the blade,” she exclaimed.

And the Viking's wife was shocked at the savage-tempered, evil-minded girl; and when night came, and the beauteous form and dispo-

sition of her daughter changed, she poured forth her sorrow to her in warm words, which came from the bottom of her heart.

The hideous frog with the ogre head stood before her, and fixed its brown sad eyes upon her, listened, and seemed to understand with a human being's intellect.

"Never, even to my husband, have I hinted at the double sufferings I have through you," said the Viking's wife. "There is more sorrow in my heart on your account than I could have believed. Great is a mother's love. But love never enters your mind. Your heart is like a lump of cold hard mud. From whence did you come to my house?"

Then the ugly shape trembled violently; it seemed as if these words touched an invisible tie between the body and the soul—large tears started to its eyes.

"Your time of trouble will come some day, depend on it," said the Viking's wife, "and dreadful will it also be for me. Better had it been had you been put out on the highway, and the chilliness of the night had benumbed you until you slept in death;" and the Viking's wife wept salt tears, and went angry and distressed away, passing round behind the loose

skin partition that hung over an upper beam to divide the chamber.

Alone in a corner sat the shrivelled frog. She was mute, but after a short interval she uttered a sort of half-suppressed sigh. It was as if in sorrow a new life had awoke in some nook of her heart. She took a step forward, listened, advanced again, and grasping with her awkward hands the heavy bar that was placed across the door, she removed it softly, and quietly drew away the pin that was stuck in over the latch. She then seized the lighted lamp that stood in the room beyond: it seemed as if a great resolution had given her strength. She made her way down to the dungeon, drew back the iron bolt that fastened the trap-door, and slid down to where the prisoner was lying. He was sleeping. She touched him with her cold, clammy hand; and when he awoke, and beheld the disgusting creature, he shuddered as if he had seen an evil apparition. She drew her knife, severed his bonds, and beckoned to him to follow her.

He named holy names, made the sign of the cross, and when the strange shape stood without moving, he exclaimed, in the words of the Bible,—

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.’ Who art thou? How comes it that, under the exterior of such an animal, there is so much compassionate feeling?”

The frog beckoned to him, and led him, behind tapestry that concealed him, through private passages out to the stables, and pointed to a horse. He sprang on it, and she also jumped up; and, placing herself before him, she held by the animal’s mane. The prisoner understood her movement; and at full gallop they rode, by a path he never could have found, away to the open heath.

He forgot her ugly form—he knew that the grace and mercy of God could be evinced even by means of hobgoblins—he put up earnest prayers, and sang holy hymns. She trembled. Was it the power of the prayers and hymns that affected her thus? or was it a cold shivering at the approach of morning, that was about to dawn? What was it that she felt? She raised herself up into the air, attempted to stop the horse, and was on the point of leaping down; but the Christian priest held her fast with all his might, and chanted a psalm, which he thought would have sufficient strength to

overcome the influence of the witchcraft under which she was kept in the hideous disguise of a frog. And the horse dashed more wildly forward, the heavens became red, the first rays of the sun burst forth through the morning sky, and with that clear gush of light came the miraculous change—she was the young beauty, with the cruel, demoniacal spirit. The astonished priest held the loveliest maiden in his arms he had ever beheld; but he was horror-struck, and, springing from the horse, he stopped it, expecting to see it also the victim of some fearful sorcery. Young Helga sprang at the same moment to the ground, her short, childlike dress reaching no lower than her knees. Suddenly she drew her sharp knife from her belt, and rushed furiously upon him.

“Let me but reach thee—let me but reach thee, and my knife shall find its way to thy heart. Thou art pale in thy terror, beardless slave!”

She closed with him; a severe struggle ensued, but it seemed as if some invincible power bestowed strength upon the Christian priest. He held her fast; and the old oak-tree close by came to his assistance by binding down her feet with its roots, which were half loosened

from the earth, her feet having slid under them. There was a fountain near, and he splashed the clear, fresh water over her face and neck, commanding the unclean spirit to pass out of her, and signed her according to the Christain rites; but the baptismal water had no power where the fountain of belief had not streamed upon the heart.

Yet still he was the victor. Yes, more than human strength could have accomplished against the powers of evil lay in his acts, which, as it were, overpowered her. She suffered her arms to sink, and gazed with wondering looks and blanched cheeks upon the man whom she deemed some mighty wizard, strong in sorcery and the black art. These were mystic Rhunes he had recited, and magic characters he had traced in the air. Not for the glancing axe or the well-sharpened knife, if he had brandished these before her eyes, would they have blinked, or would she have winced; but she winced now when he made the sign of the cross upon her brow and bosom, and she stood now like a tame bird, her head bowed down upon her breast.

Then he spoke kindly to her of the work of mercy she had performed towards him that night, when, in the ugly disguise of a frog, she

had come to him, had loosened his bonds, and brought him forth to light and life. She also was bound—bound even with stronger fetters than he had been, he said; but she also should be set free, and like him attain to light and life. He would take her to Hedeby, to the holy Ansgarius. There, in the Christian city, the witchcraft in which she was held would be exorcised; but not before him must she sit on horseback, even if she wished it herself—he dared not place her there.

“Thou must sit behind me on the horse, not before me. Thine enchanting beauty has a magic power bestowed by the evil one. I fear it; and yet the victory shall be mine through Christ.”

He knelt down and prayed fervently. It seemed as if the surrounding wood had been consecrated into a holy temple; the birds began to sing, as if they belonged to the new congregation; the wild thyme sent forth its fragrant scent, as if to take the place of incense; while the priest proclaimed these Bible words: “To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

And he spoke of everlasting life; and as he

discoursed, the horse which had carried them in their wild flight stood still, and pulled at the large bramble berries, so that the ripest ones fell on little Helga's hand, inviting her to pluck them for herself.

She allowed herself patiently to be lifted upon the horse, and she sat on his back like a somnambulist, who was neither in a waking nor a sleeping state. The Christian priest tied two small green branches together in the form of a cross, which he held high aloft; and thus they rode through the forest, which became thicker and thicker, and the path, if path it could be called, taking them further into it. The blackthorn stood as if to bar their way, and they had to ride round outside of it; the trickling streams swelled no longer into mere rivulets, but into stagnant pools, and they had to ride round them; but as the soft wind that played among the foliage of the trees was refreshing and strengthening to the travellers, so the mild words that were spoken in Christian charity and truth served to lead the benighted one to light and life.

It is said that a constant dripping of water will make a hollow in the hardest stone, and that the waves of the sea will in time round

the edges of the sharpest rocks. The dew of grace which fell for little Helga softened the hard, and smoothed the sharp, in her nature. True, it was not discernible yet in her, nor was she aware of it herself. What knows the seed in the ground of the effect which the refreshing dew and the warm sunbeams are to have in producing from it vegetation and flowers?

As a mother's song to her child, unmarked, makes an impression upon its infant mind, and it prattles after her several of the words without understanding them, but in time these words arrange themselves into order, and they become clearer, so in the case of Helga worked *that word* which is mighty to save.

They rode out of the forest, and crossed an open heath; then again they entered a pathless wood, where, towards evening, they encountered a band of robbers.

"Whence didst thou steal that beautiful wench?" they shouted, as they stopped the horse and dragged its two riders down; for they were strong and robust men. The priest had no other weapon than the knife which he had taken from little Helga. With that he now stood on his defence. One of the robbers swung his ponderous axe, but the young Chris-

tian fortunately sprang aside in time to avoid the blow, which then fell on the unfortunate horse, and the sharp edge entered into its neck ; blood streamed from the wound, and the poor animal fell to the ground. Helga, who had only at that moment awoke from her long, deep trance, sprang forward, and cast herself over the gasping creature. The Christian priest placed himself before her as a shield and protection from the lawless men ; but one of them struck him on the forehead with an iron hammer, so that it was dashed in, and the blood and brains gushed forth, while he fell down dead on the spot.

The robbers seized Helga by her white arms ; but at that moment the sun went down, its last beam faded away, and she was transformed into a hideous-looking frog. The pale green mouth stretched itself over half the face, its arms became thin and slimy, and a broad hand, with webbed-like membranes, extended itself like a fan. Then the robbers withdrew their hold of her in terror and astonishment. She stood like the ugly animal among them, and, according to the nature of a frog, she began to hop about, and, jumping faster than usual, she soon escaped into the depths of the thicket. The

robbers were then convinced that it was some evil artifice of the mischief-loving Loke, or else some secret magical deception ; and in dismay they fled from the place.

The full moon had risen, and its silver light penetrated even the gloomy recesses of the forest, when from among the low thick brush-wood, in the frog's hideous form, crept the young Helga. She stopped when she reached the bodies of the Christian priest and the slaughtered horse ; she gazed on them with eyes that seemed full of tears, and the frog uttered a sound that somewhat resembled the sob of a child who was on the point of crying. She threw herself first over the one, then over the other ; then took water up in her webbed hand, and poured it over them ; but all was in vain—they were dead, and dead they would remain. She knew that. Wild beasts would soon come and devour their bodies. No, that must not be ; therefore she determined to dig a grave in the ground for them, but she had nothing to dig it with except the branch of a tree and both her own hands. With these she worked away until her fingers bled. She found she made so little progress, that she

feared the work would never be completed. Then she took water, and washed the dead man's face; covered it with fresh green leaves; brought large boughs of the trees, and laid them over him; sprinkled dead leaves amongst the branches; fetched the largest stones she could carry, and placed them over the bodies, and filled up the openings with moss. When she had done all this she thought that their tomb might be strong and safe; but during her long and arduous labor the night had passed away. The sun arose, and young Helga stood again in all her beauty, with bloody hands, and, for the first time, with tears on her blooming cheeks.

During this change it seemed as if two natures were wrestling within her; she trembled, looked around her as if awakening from a painful dream, then seized upon the slender branch of a tree near, and held fast by it as if for support; and in another moment she climbed like a cat up to the top of the tree, and placed herself firmly there. For a whole long day she sat there like a frightened squirrel in the deep loneliness of the forest, where all is still and dead, people say. Dead! There flew by butterflies chasing each other either in sport or in

strife. There were ant-hills near, each covered with hundreds of little busy laborers, passing in swarms to and fro. In the air danced innumerable gnats; crowds of buzzing flies swept past; lady-birds, dragon-flies, and other winged insects, floated hither and thither; earth-worms crept forth from the damp ground; moles crawled about; otherwise it was still—*dead*, as people say and think.

None remarked Helga, except the jays that flew screeching to the top of the tree where she sat; they hopped on the branches around her with impudent curiosity, but there was something in the glance of her eye that speedily drove them away; they were none the wiser about her, nor, indeed, was she about herself. When the evening approached, and the sun began to sink, the transformation time rendered a change of position necessary. She slipped down the tree, and, as the last ray of the sun faded away, she was again the shrivelled frog, with the webbed-fingered hands; but her eyes beamed now with a charming expression, which they had not worn in the beautiful form; they were the mildest, sweetest, girlish eyes that glanced from behind the mask of a frog—they bore witness to the deeply-thinking

human mind, the deeply-feeling human heart ; and these lovely eyes burst into tears—tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Close to the lately raised grave lay the cross of green boughs that had been tied together—the last work of him who was now dead and gone. Helga took it up, and the thought presented itself to her that it would be well to place it amidst the stones, above him and the slaughtered horse. With the sad remembrances thus awakened, her tears flowed faster ; and in the fulness of her heart she scratched the same sign in the earth round the grave—it would be a fence that would decorate it so well. And just as she was forming, with both of her hands, the figure of the cross, her magic disguise fell off like a torn glove ; and when she had washed herself in the clear water of the fountain near, and in amazement looked at her delicate white hands, she made the sign of the cross between herself and the dead priest ; then her lips moved, then her tongue was loosened ; and that name which so often, during the ride through the forest, she had heard spoken and chanted, became audible from her mouth—she exclaimed : “JESUS CHRIST !”

When the frog's skin had fallen off she was

again the beautiful maiden ; but her head drooped heavily, her limbs seemed to need repose—she slept.

Her sleep was only a short one, however ; she awoke about midnight, and before her stood the dead horse full of life ; its eyes glittered, and light seemed to proceed from the wound in its neck. Close to it the dead Christian priest showed himself—“more beautiful than Bal-dur,” the Viking’s wife would have said ; and yet he came as a flash of fire.

There was an earnestness in his large, mild eyes, a searching, penetrating look—grave, almost stern—that thrilled the young pros-elyte to the utmost depths of her heart. Helga trembled before him ; and her memory awoke as if with the power it would exercise on the great day of doom. All the kindness that had been bestowed on her, every affectionate word that had been said to her, came back to her mind with an impression deeper than they had ever before made. She understood that it was love that, during the days of trial here, had supported her—those days of trial in which the offspring of a being with a soul, and a form of mud, had writhed and struggled. She under-stood that she had only followed the prompt-

ings of her own disposition, and done nothing to help herself. All had been bestowed on her—all had been ordained for her. She bowed herself in lowly humility and shame before Him who must be able to read every thought of the heart; and at that moment she felt as if a purifying flame darted through her—a light from the Holy Spirit.

“Daughter of the dust!” said the Christian priest, “from dust, from earth hast thou arisen—from earth shalt thou again arise! A ray from God’s invisible sun shall stream on thee. No soul shall be lost. But far off is the time when life takes flight into eternity. I come from the land of the dead. Thou also shalt once pass through the dark valley into yon lofty realms of brightness, where grace and perfection dwell. I shall not guide thee now to Hedeby for Christian baptism. First must thou disperse the slimy surface over the deep morass, draw up the living root of thy life and thy cradle, and perform thy appointed task, ere thou darest to seek the holy rite.”

And he lifted her up on the horse, and gave her a golden censer like those she had formerly seen at the Viking’s castle; and strong was the perfume which issued from it. The open

wound on the forehead of the murdered man shone like a diadem of brilliants. He took the cross from the grave, and raised it high above him; then away they went through the air, away over the rustling woods, away over the mountains where the giant heroes are buried, sitting on the slaughtered steed. Still onward the phantom forms pursued their way; and in the clear moonlight glittered the gold circlet round their brows, and the mantle fluttered in the breeze. The magic dragon, who was watching over his treasures, raised his head and gazed at them. The hill-dwarfs peeped out from their mountain recesses and plough-furrows. There were swarms of them, with red, blue, and green lights, that looked like the numerous sparks in the ashes of newly-burned paper.

Away over forest and heath, over limpid streams and stagnant pools, they hastened towards the "wild morass," and over it they flew in wide circles. The Christian priest held aloft the cross, which looked as dazzling as burnished gold, and as he did so he chanted the mass hymns. Little Helga sang with him as a child follows its mother's song. She swung the censer about as if before the altar, and there came a perfume so strong, so powerful in its effect,

that it caused the reeds and sedges to blossom, every sprout shot up from the deep bottom—every thing that had life raised itself up; and with the rest arose a mass of water-lilies, which looked like a carpet of embroidered flowers. Upon it lay a sleeping female, young and beautiful. Helga thought she beheld herself mirrored in the calm water; but it was her mother whom she saw—the mud-king's wife—the princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead Christian priest prayed that the sleeper might be lifted upon the horse. At first the latter sank under the additional burden, as if its body were but a winding-sheet fluttering in the wind; but the sign of the cross gave strength to the airy phantom, and all three rode on it to the solid ground.

Then crowed the cock at the Viking's castle, and the apparitions seemed to disappear in a mist, which was wafted away by the wind; but the mother and daughter stood together.

“Is that myself I behold in the deep water?” exclaimed the mother.

“Is that myself I see on the shining surface?” said the daughter.

And they approached each other till form met form in a warm embrace, and wildly the

mother's heart beat when she perceived the truth.

“My child! my heart's own flower! my lotus from the watery deep!”

And she encircled her daughter with her arm, and wept. Her tears caused a new sensation to Helga—they were the baptism of love for her.

“I came hither in the magic disguise of a swan, and I threw it off,” said the mother. “I sank through the swaying mire deep into the mud of the morass, which, like a wall, closed around me; but soon I perceived that I was in a fresher stream—some power drew me deeper and still deeper down. I felt my eyelids heavy with sleep—I slumbered and I dreamed. I thought that I was again in the interior of the Egyptian pyramid, but before me still stood the heaving alder trunk that had so terrified me on the surface of the morass. I saw the cracks in the bark, and they changed their appearance, and became hieroglyphics. It was the mummy's coffin I was looking at; it burst open, and out issued from it the monarch of a thousand years ago—the mummy form, black as pitch, dark and shining as a wood-snail, or as that thick slimy mud. It was the mud-king,

or the mummy of the pyramids; I knew not which. He threw his arms around me, and I felt as if I were dying. I only felt that I was alive again when I found something warm on my breast, and there a little bird was flapping with its wings, twittering and singing. It flew from my breast high up in the dark, heavy space; but a long green string bound it still to me. I heard and I comprehended its tones and its longing: 'Freedom! Sunshine! To the father!' Then I thought of my father in my distant home, that dear sunny land—my life, my affection—and I loosened the cord, and let it flutter away home to my father. Since that hour I have not dreamed. I have slept a long, dark, heavy sleep until now, when the strange sounds and perfume awoke me and set me free."

That green tie between the mother's heart and the bird's wings, where now did it flutter? what now had become of it? The stork alone had seen it. The cord was the green stem; the knot was the shining flower—the cradle for that child who now had grown up in beauty, and again rested near her mother's heart.

And as they stood there embracing each other the stork-father flew in circles round them, has-

tened back to his nest, took from it the magic feather disguises that had been hidden away for so many years, cast one down before each of them, and then joined them, as they raised themselves from the ground like two white swans.

“Let us now have some chat,” said the stork-father, “now we understand each other’s language, even though one bird’s beak is not exactly made after the pattern of another’s. It is most fortunate that you came to-night; to-morrow we should all have been away—the mother, the young ones, and myself. We are off to the south. Look at me! I am an old friend from the country where the Nile flows; and so is the mother, though there is more kindness in her heart than in her tongue. She always believed that the princess would make her escape. The young ones and I brought these swan garbs up here. Well, how glad I am, and how fortunate it is that I am here still! At dawn of day we shall take our departure—a large party of storks. We shall fly foremost, and if you will follow us you will not miss the way. The young ones and myself will have an eye to you.”

“And the lotus-flower I was to have brought,” said the Egyptian princess; “it shall

go within the swan disguise, by my side, and I shall have my heart's darling with me. Then homewards—homewards!”

Then Helga said that she could not leave the Danish land until she had once more seen her foster-mother, the Viking's excellent wife. To Helga's thoughts arose every pleasing recollection, every kind word, even every tear her adopted mother had shed on her account; and, at that moment, she felt that she almost loved that mother best.

“Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle,” said the stork; “there my young ones and their mother await me. How they will stare! The mother does not speak much; but, though she is rather abrupt, she means well. I will presently make a little noise, that she may know we are coming.”

And he clattered with his bill as he and the swans flew close to the Viking's castle.

Within in it all were lying in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had retired late to rest: she lay in anxious thought about little Helga, who now for full three days and nights had disappeared along with the Christian priest: she had probably assisted him in his escape, for it was her horse that was missing from the stables.

By what power had all this been accomplished? The Viking's wife thought upon the wondrous works she had heard had been performed by the immaculate Christ, and by those who believed on Him and followed Him. Her changing thoughts assumed the shapes of life in her dreams; she fancied she was still awake, lost in deep reflection; she imagined that a storm arose—that she heard the sea roaring in the east and in the west, the waves dashing from the Kattegat and the North Sea; the hideous serpents which encircled the earth in the depths of the ocean struggling in deadly combat. It was the night of the gods—RAGNAROK, as the heathens called the last hour, when all should be changed, even the high gods themselves. The reverberating horn sounded, and forth, over the rainbow,\* rode the gods, clad in steel, to fight the final battle; before them flew the winged Valkyries, and the rear was brought up by the shades of the dead giant-warriors; the whole atmosphere around them was illuminated by the northern lights, but darkness conquered all—it was an awful hour!

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\* The Bridge of Heaven in the fables of the Scandinavian mythology.—*Trans.*

And near the terrified Viking's wife sat upon the floor little Helga in the ugly disguise of the frog; and she shivered and worked her way up to her foster-mother, who took her in her lap, and, disgusting as she was in that form, lovingly caressed her. The air was filled with the sounds of the clashing of swords, the blows of clubs, the whizzing of arrows, like a violent hailstorm. The time was come when heaven and earth should be destroyed, the stars should fall, and all be swallowed up below in Surtur's fire; but a new earth and a new heaven she knew were to come; the corn was to wave where the sea now rolled over the golden sands; the unknown God at length reigned; and to him ascended Baldur, the mild, the lovable, released from the kingdom of death. He came; and the Viking's wife beheld him: she recognized his countenance: it was that of the captive Christian priest. "Immaculate Christ!" she cried aloud; and whilst uttering this holy name she impressed a kiss upon the ugly brow of the frog-child. Then fell the magic disguise, and Helga stood before her in all her radiant beauty, gentle as she had never looked before, and with speaking eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for

all the care and kindness which she, in the days of distress and trial, had lavished upon her; thanked her for the thoughts with which she had inspired her mind—thanked her for mentioning *that name* which she now repeated, “Immaculate Christ!” and then lifting herself up in the suddenly adopted shape of a graceful swan, little Helga spread her wings widely out with the rustling sound of a flock of birds of passage on the wing, and in another moment she was gone.

The Viking's wife awoke, and on the outside of her casement were to be heard the same rustling and flapping of wings. It was the time, she knew, when the storks generally took their departure; it was them she heard. She wished to see them once more before their journey to the south, and bid them farewell. She got up, went out on the balcony, and then she saw, on the roof of an adjoining outhouse, stork upon stork, while all around the place, above the highest trees, flew crowds of them, wheeling in large circles; but below, on the brink of the well, where little Helga had but so lately often sat, and frightened her with her wild actions, sat now two swans, looking up at her with expressive eyes; and she remem-

bered her dream, which seemed to her almost a reality. She thought of Helga in the appearance of a swan; she thought of the Christian priest, and felt a strange gladness in her heart.

The swans fluttered their wings and bowed their necks, as if they were saluting her; and the Viking's wife opened her arms, as if she understood them, and smiled amidst her tears and manifold thoughts.

Then, with a clattering of bills and a noise of wings, the storks all turned towards the south to commence their long journey.

"We will not wait any longer for the swans," said the stork-mother. "If they choose to go with us, they must come at once; we cannot be lingering here till the plovers begin their flight. It is pleasant to travel as we do in a family party, not like the chaffinches and strutting cocks. Among their species the males fly by themselves, and the females by themselves: that, to say the least of it, is not at all seemly. What a miserable sound the stroke of the swans' wings has compared with ours!"

"Every one flies in his own way," said the stork-father. "Swans fly slantingly, cranes in triangles, and plovers in serpentine windings."

"Name not serpents or snakes when we are about to fly up yonder," said the stork-mother. "It will only make the young ones long for a sort of food which they can't get just now."

"Are these the high hills, beneath yonder, of which I have heard?" asked Helga, in the disguise of a swan.

"These are thunder-clouds driving under us," replied her mother.

"What are these white clouds that seem so stationary?" asked Helga.

"These are the mountains covered with everlasting snow that thou seest," said her mother; and they flew over the Alps towards the blue Mediterranean.

"There is Africa! there is Egypt!" cried in joyful accents, under her swan disguise, the daughter of the Nile, as high up in the air she descried, like a whitish-yellow billow-shaped streak, her native soil.

The storks also saw it, and quickened their flight.

"I smell the mud of the Nile and the wet frogs," exclaimed the stork-mother. "It makes my mouth water. Yes, now ye shall have nice things to eat, and ye shall see the marabout,

the ibis, and the crane: they are all related to our family, but are not nearly so handsome as we are. They think a great deal, however, of themselves, particularly the ibis: he has been spoiled by the Egyptians, who make a mummy of him, and stuff him with aromatic herbs. I would rather be stuffed with living frogs; and that is what ye would all like also, and what ye shall be. Better a good dinner when one is living, than to be made a grand show of when one is dead. That is what I think, and I know I am right."

"The storks have returned," was told in the splendid house on the banks of the Nile, where, within the open hall, upon soft cushions, covered with a leopard's skin, the king lay, neither living nor dead, hoping for the lotus-flower from the deep morass of the north. His kindred and his attendants were standing around him.

And into the hall flew two magnificent white swans—they had arrived with the storks. They cast off the dazzling magic feather garbs, and there stood two beautiful women, as like each other as two drops of water. They leaned over the pallid, faded old man; they threw back their long hair; and, as little Helga bowed

over her grandfather, his cheeks flushed, his eyes sparkled, life returned to his stiffened limbs. The old man rose hale and hearty; his daughter and his grand-daughter pressed him in their arms, as if in a glad morning salutation after a long heavy dream.

And there was joy throughout the palace, and in the storks' nest also; but *there* the joy was principally for the good food, the swarms of nice frogs; and whilst the learned noted down in haste, and very carelessly, the history of the two princesses and of the lotus-flower as an important event, and a blessing to the royal house, and to the country in general, the old storks related the history in their own way to their own family; but not until they had all eaten enough, else these would have had other things to think of than listening to any story.

"Now thou wilt be somebody," whispered the stork-mother; "it is only reasonable to expect that."

"Oh! what should *I* be?" said the stork father. "And what have *I* done? Nothing!"

"Thou hast done more than all the others put together. Without thee and the young

ones the two princesses would never have seen Egypt again, or cured the old man. Thou wilt be nothing ! Thou shouldst, at the very least, be appointed court doctor, and have a title bestowed on thee, which our young ones would inherit, and their little ones after them. Thou dost look already exactly like an Egyptian doctor in my eyes."

The learned and the wise lectured upon "the fundamental notion," as they called it, which pervaded the whole tissue of events. "Love bestows life." Then they expounded their meaning in this manner :

"The warm sunbeam was the Egyptian princess ; she descended to the mud-king, and from their meeting sprang a flower—"

"I cannot exactly repeat the words," said the stork-father, who had been listening to the discussion from the roof, and was now telling in his nest what he had heard. "What they said was not easy of comprehension, but it was so exceedingly wise that they were immediately rewarded with rank and marks of distinction. Even the prince's head cook got a handsome present—that was, doubtless, for having prepared the repast."

"And what didst thou get?" asked the

stork-mother. "They had no right to overlook the most important actor in the affair, and that was thyself. The learned only babbled about the matter. But so it is always."

Late at night, when the now happy household reposed in peaceful slumbers, there was one who was still awake; and that was not the stork-father, although he was standing upon his nest on one leg, and dozing like a sentry. No; little Helga was awake, leaning over the balcony, and gazing through the clear air at the large blazing stars, larger and brighter than she had ever seen them in the north, and yet the same. She was thinking upon the Viking's wife near "the wild morass"—upon her foster-mother's mild eyes—upon the tears she had shed over the poor frog-child, who was now standing under the light of the glorious stars, on the banks of the Nile, in the soft spring air. She thought of the love in the heathen woman's breast—the love she had shown towards an unfortunate being, who in human form was as vicious as a wild beast, and in the form of a noxious animal was horrible to look upon or to touch. She gazed at the glittering stars, and thought of the shining circle on the brow of the dead priest, when they flew over the forest.

and the morass. Tones seemed again to sound on her ears—words she had heard spoken when they rode together, and she sat like an evil spirit there—words about the great source of love, the highest love, that which included all races and all generations. Yes, what was not bestowed, won, obtained? Helga's thoughts embraced by day, by night, the whole of her good fortune; she stood contemplating it like a child who turns precipitately from the giver to the beautiful gifts; she passed on to the increasing happiness which might come, and would come. Higher and higher rose her thoughts, till she so lost herself in the dreams of future bliss that she forgot the Giver of all good. It was the superabundance of youthful spirits which caused her imagination to take so bold a flight. Her eyes were flashing with her thoughts, when suddenly a loud noise in the court beneath recalled her to mundane objects. She saw there two enormous ostriches running angrily round in a narrow circle. She had never before seen these large heavy birds, who looked as if their wings were clipped; and when she asked what had happened to them, she heard for the first time the Egyptian legend about the ostrich.

Its race had once been beautiful, its wings broad and strong. Then one evening the largest forest birds said to it, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, God willing, to the river, and drink?" And the ostrich answered, "Yes, I will." At dawn they flew away, first up towards the sun, higher and higher, the ostrich far before the others. It flew on in its pride up towards the light; it relied upon its own strength, not upon the Giver of that strength; it did not say, "God willing." Then the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the streaming flames, and in that moment the bird's wings were burnt, and he sank in wretchedness to the earth. Neither he nor his species were ever afterwards able to raise themselves up in the air. They fly timidly—hurry along in a narrow space; they are a warning to mankind in all our thoughts and all our enterprises to say, "God willing."

And Helga humbly bowed her head, looked at the ostriches rushing past, saw their surprise and their simple joy at the sight of their own large shadows on the white wall, and more serious thoughts took possession of her mind, adding to her present happiness—inspiring brighter hopes for the future. What was yet

to happen? The best for her, "God willing."

In the early spring, when the storks were about to go north again, Helga took from her arm a golden bracelet, scratched her name upon it, beckoned to the stork-father, hung the gold band round his neck, and bade him carry it to the Viking's wife, who would thereby know that her adopted daughter lived, was happy, and remembered her.

"It is heavy to carry," thought the stork, when it was hung round his neck; "but gold and honor must not be flung away upon the high road. The stork brings luck—they must admit that up yonder."

"Thou layest gold, and I lay eggs," said the stork-mother; "but thou layest only once, and I lay every year. But neither of us gets any thanks, which is very vexatious."

"One knows, however, that one has done one's duty," said the stork-father.

"But that can't be hung up to be seen and lauded; and if it could be, fine words butter no parsnips."

So they flew away.

The little nightingale that sang upon the

tamarind-tree would also soon be going north, up yonder near "the wild morass." Helga had often heard it—she would send a message by it; for, since she had flown in the magical disguise of the swan, she had often spoken to the storks and the swallows. The nightingale would therefore understand her, and she prayed it to fly to the beech wood upon the Jutland peninsula, where the tomb of stone and branches had been erected. She asked it to beg all the little birds to protect the sacred spot, and frequently to sing over it.

And the nightingale flew away, and time flew also.

And the eagle stood upon a pyramid, and looked in the autumn on a stately procession with richly-laden camels, with armed and splendidly equipped men on snorting Arabian horses shining white like silver, with red trembling nostrils, with long thick manes hanging down to their slender legs. Rich guests—a royal Arabian prince, handsome as a prince should be—approached the gorgeous palace where the storks' nests stood empty. Those who dwelt in these nests were away in the far north, but they were soon to return; and they

arrived on the very day that was most marked by joy and festivities. It was a wedding feast; and the beautiful Helga, clad in silk and jewels, was the bride. The bridegroom was the young prince from Arabia. They sat at the upper end of the table, between her mother and grandfather.

But she looked not at the bridegroom's bronzed and manly cheek, where the dark beard curled. She looked not at his black eyes, so full of fire, that were fastened upon her. She gazed outwards upon the bright twinkling stars that glittered far away in the heavens.

Then a loud rustling of strong wings was heard in the air. The storks had come back; and the old pair, fatigued as they were after their journey, and much in need of rest, flew immediately down to the rails of the verandah, for they knew what festival was going on. They had heard already at the frontiers that Helga had had them painted upon the wall, introducing them into her own history.

"It was a kind thought of hers," said the stork-father.

"It is very little," said the stork-mother.  
"She could hardly have done less."

And when Helga saw them she rose, and went out into the verandah to stroke their backs. The old couple bowed their necks, and the youngest little ones felt themselves much honored by being so well received.

And Helga looked up towards the shining stars, that glittered more and more brilliantly; and between them and her she beheld in the air a transparent form. It floated nearer to her. It was the dead Christian priest, who had also come to her bridal solemnity—come from the kingdom of heaven.

“The glory and beauty up yonder far exceed all that is known on earth,” he said.

And Helga pleaded softly, earnestly, that but for one moment she might be allowed to ascend up thither, and to cast one single glance on those heavenly scenes.

Then he raised her amidst splendor and magnificence, and a stream of delicious music. It was not around her only that all seemed to be brightness and music, but the light seemed to stream in her soul, and the sweet tones to be echoed there. Words cannot describe what she felt.

“We must now return,” he said: “thou wilt be missed.”

"Only one more glance!" she entreated.  
"Only one short minute!"

"We must return to earth—the guests are all departing."

"But one more glance—the last!"

And Helga stood again in the verandah, but all the torches outside were extinguished; all the light in the bridal saloon was gone; the storks were gone; no guests were to be seen—no bridegroom. All had vanished in those three short minutes.

Then Helga felt anxious. She wandered through the vast empty halls—there slept foreign soldiers. She opened the side door which led to her own chambers, and, as she fancied she was entering them, she found herself in the garden: it had not stood there. Red streaks crossed the skies; it was the dawn of day.

Only three minutes in heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away.

Then she perceived the storks. She called to them, spoke their language, and the old stork turned his head towards her, listened, and drew near.

"Thou dost speak our language," said he.  
"What wouldst thou? Whence comest thou, thou foreign maiden?"

"It is I—it is Helga! Dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were talking together in the verandah."

"That is a mistake," said the stork. "Thou must have dreamt this."

"No, no," she said, and reminded him of the Viking's castle, "the wild morass," the journey thence.

Then the old stork winked with his eyes.

"That is a very old story; I have heard it from my great-great-grandmother's time. Yes, truly there was once in Egypt a princess from the Danish land; but she disappeared on the evening of her wedding, many hundred years ago, and was never seen again. Thou canst read that thyself upon the monument in the garden, upon which are sculptured both swans and storks, and above it stands one like thyself in the white marble."

And so it was. Helga saw, comprehended it all, and sank on her knees.

The sun burst forth in all its morning splendor, and as, in former days, with its first rays fell the frog disguise, and the lovely form became visible; so now, in the baptism of light, arose a form of celestial beauty, purer than the air, as if in a veil of radiance to the Father

above. The body sank into dust, and where she had stood lay a faded lotus-flower!

"Well, this is a new finale to the story," said the stork-father, "which I by no means expected; but I am quite satisfied with it."

"I wonder what the young ones will say to it?" replied the stork-mother.

"Ah! that, indeed, is of the most consequence," said the stork-father.



## THE LAST PEARL.

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WE are in a rich, a happy house; all are cheerful and full of joy, master, servants, and friends of the family; for on this day an heir, a son, had been born, and mother and child were doing exceedingly well.

The burning lamp in the bedchamber had been partly shaded, and the windows were guarded by heavy curtains of some costly silken fabric. The carpet was thick, and soft as a mossy lawn, and every thing invited to slumber—was charmingly suggestive of repose—and the nurse found that, for she slept; and here she might sleep, for every thing was good and blessed. The guardian spirit of the house leaned against the head of the bed; over the child at the mother's breast there spread as it were a net of shining stars in endless number, and each star was a pearl of happiness. All the good stars of life had brought their gifts to the

new-born one; here sparkled health, wealth, fortune, and love—in short, every thing that man can wish for on earth.

“Every thing has been presented here!” said the guardian spirit.

“No, not every thing,” said a voice near him, the voice of the child’s *good angel*.

“One fairy has not yet brought her gift; but she will do so some day, even if years should elapse first, she will bring her gift; the *last pearl* is yet wanting.”

“Wanting! here nothing may be wanting, and if it should be the case, let me go and seek the powerful fairy; let us betake ourselves to her!”

“She comes! she will come some day unsought! Her pearl may not be wanting; it must be there, so that the complete crown may be won.”

“Where is she to be found? Where does she dwell? Tell it me, and I will procure the pearl.”

“You will do that?” said the good angel of the child. “I will lead you to her directly, wherever she may be. She has no abiding place—sometimes she rules in the emperor’s palace, sometimes you will find her in the peas-

ant's humble cot ; she goes by no person without leaving a trace ; she brings two gifts to all ; be it a world or a trifle ! To this child also she must come. You think the time is equally long, but not equally profitable. Come, let us go for this pearl, the last pearl in all this wealth."

And hand in hand they floated towards the spot where the fairy was now lingering.

It was a great house with dark windows, and empty rooms, and a peculiar stillness reigned therein ; a whole row of windows had been opened, so that the rough air could penetrate at its pleasure ; the long, white, hanging curtains moved to and fro in the current of wind.

In the middle of the room was placed an open coffin, and in this coffin lay the corpse of a woman, still in the bloom of youth, and very beautiful. Fresh roses were scattered over her, so that only the delicate folded hands, and the noble face, glorified in death by the solemn look of consecration and entrance to the better world, were visible.

Around the coffin stood the husband and the children, a whole troop ; the youngest child rested on the father's arm, and all bade their mother the last farewell ; the husband kissed

her hand, the hand which now was as a withered leaf; but which a short time ago had been working and striving in diligent love for them all. Tears of sorrow rolled over their cheeks, and fell in heavy drops to the floor; but not a word was spoken. The silence which reigned here expressed a world of grief. With silent footsteps and with many a sob, they quitted the room.

A burning light stands in the room, and the long red wick peers out high above the flame that flickers in the current of air. Strange men come in, and lay the lid on the coffin over the dead one, and drive the nails firmly in, and the blows of the hammer resound through the house, and echo in the hearts that are bleeding.

“Whither art thou leading me?” asked the guardian spirit. “Here dwells no fairy whose pearl might be counted amongst the best gifts for life!”


“Here she lingers; here in this sacred hour,” said the angel, and pointed to a corner of the room; and there where in her lifetime the mother had taken her seat amid flowers and pictures; there from whence, like the beneficent fairy of the house, she had greeted husband, children, and friends; from whence, like

the sunbeams, she had spread joy and cheerfulness, and been the centre and the heart of all; there sat a strange woman, clad in long garments, it was "the Chastened Heart," now mistress and mother here in the dead lady's place. A hot tear rolled down into her lap, and formed itself into a pearl glowing with all the colors of the rainbow; the angel seized it, and the pearl shone like a star of sevenfold radiance.

The pearl of Chastening, the last, which must not be wanting! it heightens the lustre and the meaning of the other pearls. Do you see the sheen of the rainbow—of the bow that unites heaven and earth! A bridge has been built between this world and the heaven beyond. Through the earthly night we gaze upward to the stars, looking for perfection. Contemplate it, the pearl of Chastening, for it hides within itself the wings that shall carry us to the better world.

## THE METAL PIG.

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N the city of Florence, not far from the *Piazza del Granduca*, there runs a little cross-street. I think it is called *Porta Rosa*. In this street, in front of a kind of market-hall where vegetables are sold, there lies a pig artistically fashioned of metal. The fresh clear water pours from the jaws of the creature, which has become a blackish-green from age; only the snout shines as if it had been polished; and indeed it has been, by many hundreds of children and lazzaroni, who seize it with their hands, and place their mouths close to the mouth of the animal, to drink. It is a perfect picture to see the well-shaped creature clasped by a half-naked boy, who lays his red lips against its jaws.

Every one who comes to Florence can easily find the place; he need only ask the first beggar he meets for the metal pig, and he will find it.

It was late on a winter evening. The moun-

tains were covered with snow; but the moon shone, and moonlight in Italy is just as good as the light of a murky northern winter's day; nay, it is better, for the air shines and lifts us up, while in the north the cold gray leaden covering seems to press us downwards to the earth,—the cold damp earth, which will once press down our coffin.

In the garden of the grand duke's palace, under a penthouse roof, where a thousand roses bloom in winter, a little ragged boy had been sitting all day long, a boy who might serve as a type of Italy, pretty and smiling, and yet suffering. He was hungry and thirsty, but no one gave him any thing; and when it became dark, and the garden was to be closed, the porter turned him out. Long he stood musing on the bridge that spans the Arno, and looked at the stars, whose light glittered in the water between him and the splendid marble bridge *Della Trinitá*.

He took the way towards the metal pig, half knelt down, clasped his arms round it, put his mouth against its shining snout, and drank the fresh water in deep draughts. Close by lay a few leaves of salad and one or two chestnuts; these were his supper. No one was in the

street but himself; it belonged to him alone, and he boldly sat down on the pig's back, bent forward, so that his curly head rested on the head of the animal, and before he was aware he fell asleep.

It was midnight. The Metal Pig stirred, and he heard it say quite distinctly, "You little boy, hold tight, for now I am going to run," and away it ran with him. This was a wonderful ride. First they got to the *Piazza del Granduca*, and the metal horse which carries the duke's statue neighed aloud; the painted coats-of-arms on the old council-horse looked like transparent pictures; and Michael Angelo's "David" swung his sling: there was a strange life stirring among them. The metal groups representing persons, and the rape of the Sabines, stood there as if they were alive: a cry of mortal fear escaped them, and resounded over the splendid square.

By the *Palazzo degli Uffizi*, in the arcade where the nobility assemble for the Carnival amusements, the metal pig stopped. "Hold tight," said the creature, "for now we are going up-stairs." The little boy spoke not a word, for he was half frightened, half delighted.

They came into a long gallery where the boy

had already been. The walls shone with pictures; here stood statues and busts, all in the most charming light, as if it had been broad day: but the most beautiful of all was when the door of a side-room opened; the little boy could remember the splendor that was there, but on this night every thing shone in the most glorious colors.

Here stood a beautiful woman, as radiant in beauty as nature and the greatest master of sculpture could make her; she moved her graceful limbs, dolphins sprang at her feet, and immortality shone out of her eyes. The world calls her the *Venus de Medici*. By her side are statues in which the spirit of life has been breathed into the stone; they are handsome unclothed men—one was sharpening a sword, and was called the grinder; the wrestling gladiators formed another group; and the sword was sharpened, and they strove for the goddess of beauty.

The boy was dazzled by all this pomp; the walls gleamed with bright colors, every thing was life and movement.

What splendor, what beauty shone from hall to hall! and the little boy saw every thing plainly, for the metal pig went step by step

from one picture to another, through all this scene of magnificence. Each fresh glory effaced the last. One picture only fixed itself firmly in his soul, especially through the very happy children introduced into it; for these the little boy had greeted in the daylight.

Many persons pass by this picture with indifference; and yet it contains a treasure of poetry. It represents the Saviour descending into hell. But these are not the damned whom the spectator sees around him, they are heathen. The Florentine Angiolo Bronzino painted this picture. Most beautiful is the expression on the faces of the children, the full confidence that they will get to heaven; two little beings are already embracing; and one little one stretches out his hand towards another who stands below him, and points to himself as if he were saying, "I am going to heaven!" The older people stand uncertain, hoping, but bowing in humble adoration before the Lord Jesus. The boy's eyes rested longer on this picture than on any other. The metal pig stood still before it. A low sigh was heard; did it come from the picture or from the animal? The boy lifted up his hands towards the smiling children; then the pig ran away with him, away

through the open vestibule. "Thanks and blessings to you, you dear thing!" said the little boy, and caressed the metal pig, as it sprang down the steps with him."

"Thanks and blessings to yourself," replied the metal pig. "I have helped you, and you have helped me, for only with an innocent child on my back do I receive power to run! Yes, you see I may even step into the rays of the lamp, in front of the picture of the Madonna, only I mayn't go into the church. But from without, when you are with me, I may look in through the open door. Do not get down from my back; if you do so, I shall lie dead as you see me in the daytime at the *Porta Rosa*."

"I will stay with you, my dear creature!" cried the child; so they went in hot haste through the streets of Florence, out into the place before the church *Santa Croce*."

The folding-doors flew open and lights gleamed out from the altar through the church on the deserted square.

A wonderful blaze of light streamed forth from a monument in the left aisle, and a thousand moving stars seemed to form a glory round it. A coat of arms shone upon the grave, a red ladder in a blue field seemed to glow like fire;

it was the grave of Galilei. The monument is unadorned, but the red ladder is a significant emblem, as if it were that of art, for here the way always leads up a burning ladder, towards heaven. The prophets of mind soar upwards towards heaven, like Elias of old.

To the right, in the aisle of the church, every statue on the richly carved sarcophagi seemed endowed with life. Here stood Michael Angelo, there Dante with the laurel wreath round his brow, Alfieri and Machiavelli; for here the great men, the pride of Italy, rest side by side.\* It is a glorious church, far more beautiful than the marble cathedral of Florence, though not so large.

It seemed as if the marble vestments stirred, as if the great forms raised their heads higher and looked up, amid song and music, to the

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\* Opposite to the grave of Galilei is the tomb of Michael Angelo. On the monument his bust is displayed, with three figures, representing Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Close by is a monument to Dante, whose corpse is interred at Ravenna; on this monument Italy is represented pointing to a colossal statue of the poet, while Poetry weeps over his loss. A few paces further on is Alfieri's monument, adorned with laurel, the lyre, and dramatic masks: Italy weeps at his grave. Machiavelli here closes the series of celebrated men.

bright altar glowing with color, where the white-clad boys swing the golden censers; and the strong fragrance streamed out of the church into the open square.

The boy stretched forth his hand towards the gleaming light; and in a moment the metal pig resumed his headlong career; he was obliged to cling tightly, and the wind whistled about his ears: he heard the church-door creak on its hinges as it closed; but at the same moment his senses seemed to desert him—he felt a cold shudder pass over him, and awoke.

It was morning; and he was still sitting on the metal pig, which stood, where it always stood on the *Porta Rosa*, and he had slipped half off its back.

Fear and trembling filled the soul of the boy at the thought of her whom he called mother, and who had yesterday sent him forth to bring money; for he had none, and was hungry and thirsty. Once more he clasped his arms round the neck of his metal horse, kissed its lips, and nodded farewell to it. Then he wandered away into one of the narrowest streets where there was scarcely room for a laden ass. A great iron-clamped door stood ajar; he passed through it, and climbed up a brick stair with dirty walls

and a rope for a balustrade, till he came to an open gallery hung with rags: from here a flight of stairs led down into the court, where there was a fountain, and great iron wires led up to the different stories, and many water-buckets hung side by side, and at times the roller creaked, and one of the buckets would dance into the air, swaying so that the water splashed out of it down into the courtyard. A second ruinous brick staircase here led upwards: two Russian sailors were running briskly down, and almost overturned the poor boy. They were going home from their nightly carouse. A large woman, no longer young, followed them. "What do you bring home?" she asked the boy.

"Don't be angry," he pleaded. "I received nothing, nothing at all," and he seized the mother's dress, and would have kissed it. They went into the little room. I will not describe it, but only say that there stood in it an earthen pot with handles, made for holding fire, and called a *marito*. This pot she took in her arms, warmed her fingers, and pushed the boy with her elbow. "Certainly you must have brought some money," said she.

The boy wept, and she struck him with her foot, so that he cried aloud.

“Will you be silent, or I’ll break your screaming head!” and she brandished the fire-pot which she held in her hand; the boy crouched down to the earth with a scream of terror. Then a neighbor stepped in, also with a *marito* in her arms. “Felicita,” she said, “what are you doing to the child?”

“The child is mine,” retorted Felicita. “I can murder him if I like, and you, too, Giannina,” and she swung her fire-pot. The other lifted up hers in self-defence, and the two pots clashed together with such fury that fragments, fire, and ashes flew about the room: but at the same moment the boy rushed out at the door, sped across the courtyard, and fled from the house. The poor child ran till he was quite out of breath: he stopped by the church whose great doors had opened to him the previous night, and went in. Every thing was radiant: the boy knelt down at the first grave on the right hand, the grave of Michael Angelo; and soon he sobbed aloud. People came and went, and Mass was performed; but no one noticed the boy, only an elderly citizen stood still, looked at him, and then went away like the rest.

Hunger and thirst tormented the child; he

was quite faint and ill, and he crept into a corner between the marble monuments, and went to sleep. Towards evening he was awakened by a tug at his sleeve: he started up, and the same citizen stood before him.

“Are you ill? Where do you live? Have you been here all day?” were three of the many questions the old man asked of him. He answered, and the old man took him into his little house, close by, in a back street. They came into a glover’s workshop, where a woman sat sewing busily. A little white Spitz-dog, so closely shaven that his pink skin could be seen, frisked about on the table, and gambolled before the boy.

“Innocent souls make acquaintance,” said the woman; and she caressed the boy and the dog. The good people gave the child food and drink, and said he should be permitted to stay the night with them; and next day Father Giuseppe would speak to his mother. A little simple bed was assigned to him; but for him who had often slept on the hard stones it was a royal couch; and he slept sweetly, and dreamed of the splendid pictures and of the metal pig.

Father Giuseppe went out next morning; the poor child was not glad of this, for he knew

that the object of the errand was to send him back to his mother. He wept, and kissed the little merry dog, and the woman nodded approvingly at both.

What news did Father Giuseppe bring home? He spoke a great deal with his wife, and she nodded and stroked the boy's cheek. "He is a capital lad!" said she. "He may become an accomplished glove maker, like you; and look what delicate fingers he has! Madonna intended him for a glove-maker!"

And the boy stayed in the house, and the woman herself taught him to sew: he ate well, slept well, and became merry, and began to tease Bellissima, as the little dog was called; but the woman grew angry at this, and scolded and threatened him with her finger. This touched the boy's heart, and he sat thoughtful in his little chamber. This chamber looked upon the street in which skins were dried; there were thick bars of iron before his window; he could not sleep, the metal pig was always present in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard outside a pit-pat. That must be the pig! He sprang to the window; but nothing was to be seen, it had passed by already.

"Help the gentleman to carry his box of col-

ors!" said the woman next morning, to the boy, when their young neighbor the artist passed by carrying a paint-box and a large rolled canvas. The boy took the box and followed the painter; they betook themselves to the gallery, and mounted the same staircase, which he remembered well from the night when he had ridden on the metal pig. He recognized the statues and pictures, the beautiful marble Venus, and the Venus that lived in the picture; and again he saw the Madonna, and the Saviour, and St. John.

They stood still before the picture by Bronzino, in which Christ is descending into hell, and the children smiled around him, in the sweet expectation of heaven; the poor child smiled too, for he felt as if his heaven were here.

"Go home now!" said the painter, when the boy had stood until the other had set up his easel.

"May I see you paint?" asked the boy. "May I see you put the picture upon this white canvas?"

"I am not going to paint yet," replied the man; and he brought out a piece of white chalk. His hand moved quickly; his eye measured the great picture, and though nothing ap-

peared but a thin line, the figure of the Saviour stood there, as in the colored picture.

"Why don't you go?" said the painter. And the boy wandered home silently, and seated himself on the table and learned to sew gloves.

But all day long his thoughts were in the picture gallery; and so it came that he pricked his fingers, and was awkward; but he did not tease Bellissima. When evening came, and when the house-door stood open, he crept out. It was cold but starlight, a bright beautiful evening. Away he went through the already deserted streets, and soon came to the metal pig; he bent down on it, kissed its shining mouth, and seated himself on its back. "You happy creature," he said: "how I have longed for you! we must take a ride to-night."

The metal pig lay motionless, and the fresh stream gushed forth from its mouth. The little boy sat astride on its back: then something tugged at his clothes. He looked down, and there was Bellissima,—little smooth-shaven Bellissima,—barking as if she would have said, "Here am I too, why are you sitting there?" A fiery dragon could not have terrified the boy so much, as did the little dog in this place.

Bellissima in the street and not *dressed*, as the old lady called it! What would be the end of it? The dog never came out in winter, except attired in a little lambskin, which had been cut out and made into a coat for her; it was made to fasten with a red riband round the little dog's neck and body, and was adorned with bows and with bells. The dog almost looked like a little kid, when in winter she got permission to patter out with mistress. Bellissima was outside and not dressed! what would be the end of it? All his fancies were put to flight; yet the boy kissed the metal pig once more, and then took Bellissima on his arm; the little thing trembled with cold, therefore the boy ran as fast as he could.

"What are you running away with there?" asked two police-soldiers whom he met, and at whom Bellissima barked. "Where have you stolen that pretty dog?" they asked, and they took it away from him.

"Oh, give it back to me!" cried the boy despairingly.

"If you have not stolen him, you may say at home that the dog may be sent for from the watch-house,"—and they told him where the watch-house was, and went away with Bellissima.

Here was a terrible calamity. The boy did not know whether he should jump into the Arno, or go home and confess every thing; they would certainly kill him, he thought. "But I will gladly be killed; then I shall die and get to heaven," he reasoned; and he went home, principally with the idea of being killed.

The door was locked, he could not reach the knocker; no one was in the street, but a stone lay there, and with this he thundered at the door.

"Who is there?" cried somebody from within.

"It is I," said he. "Bellissima is gone. Open the door, and then kill me!"

There was quite a panic; Madame was especially concerned for poor Bellissima. She immediately looked at the wall, where the dog's dress usually hung—and there was the little lambskin.

"Bellissima in the watch-house!" she cried loud. "You bad boy! How did you entice her out? She'll be frozen, the poor delicate little thing, among those rough soldiers!"

The father was at once dispatched—the woman lamented, and the boy wept. All the inhabitants of the house came together, and

among the rest, the painter; he took the boy between his knees and questioned him; and in broken sentences he heard the whole story about the metal pig and the gallery, which was certainly rather incomprehensible. The painter consoled the little fellow, and tried to calm the old lady's anger; but she would not be pacified until the father came in with Bellissima, who had been among the soldiers; then there was great rejoicing; and the painter caressed the boy, and gave him a handful of pictures.

Oh, those were capital pieces—such funny heads!—and truly the metal pig was there among them, bodily. Oh, nothing could be more superb! By means of a few strokes it was made to stand there on the paper, and even the house that stood behind it was sketched in.

Oh! for the ability to draw and paint! He who could do this, could conjure up the whole world around him!

On the first leisure moment of the following day, the little fellow seized the pencil, and on the back of one of the pictures he attempted to copy the drawing of the metal pig;—and he succeeded! It was certainly rather crooked, rather up and down, one leg thick and another

thin, but still it was to be recognized, and he rejoiced himself at it. The pencil would not quite work as it should do, that he could well observe: on the next day a second metal pig was drawn by the side of the first, and this looked a hundred times better; the third was already so good, that every one could tell what it was meant for.

But the glove-making prospered little, and the orders given in the town were executed but slowly; for the metal pig had taught him that all pictures may be drawn on paper; and Florence is a picture-book for any one who chooses to turn over its pages. On the *Piazza del Trinitá* stands a slender pillar, and upon it the goddess of Justice blindfolded, and with her scales in her hand. Soon she was placed on the paper; and it was the glove-maker's little boy who placed her there. The collection of pictures increased; but as yet it only contained representations of lifeless objects; when one day Bellissima came gambolling before him. "Stand still!" said he, "then you shall be made beautiful and put into my collection!" But Bellissima would not stand still, she had to be bound fast; her head and tail were tied, and she barked and jumped, and the string had

to be pulled tight; and then the signora came in.

"You wicked boy! The poor creature!" was all she could utter; and she pushed the boy aside, thrust him away with her foot, forbade him to enter her house again, and called him a most ungrateful good-for-nothing and a wicked boy; and then weeping, she kissed her little half-strangled Bellissima.

At this very moment the painter came downstairs, and here is the turning point of the story.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition in the Academy of Arts at Florence. Two pictures, placed side by side, collected a number of spectators. The smaller of the two represented a merry little boy who sat drawing, with a little white Spitz-dog, curiously shorn, for his model; but the animal would not stand still, and was therefore bound by a string, fastened to its head and its tail; there was a truth and life in this picture, that interested every one. The painter was said to be a young Florentine, who had been found in the streets in his childhood, had been brought up by an old glove-maker, and had taught himself to draw. It was further said that a painter, now become

famous, had discovered this talent just as the boy was to be sent away for tying up the favorite little dog of Madame, and using it as a model.

The glove-maker's boy had become a great painter, the picture proved this, and still more the larger picture that stood beside it. Here was represented only one figure, a handsome boy, clad in rags, asleep in the streets, and leaning against the metal pig in the *Porta Rosa* street. All the spectators knew the spot. The child's arms rested upon the head of the pig; the little fellow was so fast asleep—the lamp before the picture of the Madonna threw a strong effective light on the pale delicate face of the child—it was a beautiful picture! A great gilt frame surrounded it, and on one corner of the frame a laurel wreath had been hung; but a black band wound unseen among the green leaves, and a streamer of crape hung down from it; for within the last few days the young artist had—died!

## THE MONEY PIG.

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**I**N the nursery a number of toys lay strewn about. High up, on the wardrobe, stood the money-box, made of clay and purchased of the potter, and it was in the shape of a little pig: of course the pig had a slit in its back; and this slit had been so enlarged with a knife, that whole dollar pieces could slip through; and, indeed, two such had slipped into the box, besides a number of pence. The money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, and that is the highest point of perfection a money-pig can attain. There it stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon every thing else in the room: it knew very well that what it had in its stomach would have bought all the toys, and that's what we call having self-respect.

The others thought of that too, even if they did not exactly express it, for there were many

other things to speak of. One of the drawers was half pulled out, and there lay a great handsome doll, though she was somewhat old, and her neck had been mended. She looked out and said, "Now we'll play at men and women, for that is always something !" And now there was a general uproar, and even the framed prints on the walls turned round and showed that there was a wrong side to them ; but they did not do it to protest against the proposal.

It was late at night ; the moon shone through the window frames and afforded the cheapest light. The game was now to begin, and all, even the children's go-cart, which certainly belonged to the coarser playthings, were invited to take part in the sport.

"Each one has his own peculiar value !" said the go-cart : "we cannot all be noblemen ! There must be some who do the work, as the saying is." The money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation, for he was of high standing, and they were afraid he would not accept the verbal message. Indeed, he did not answer to say whether he would come. Nor did he come ; if he was to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home : they were to arrange accordingly, and so they did.

The little toy-theatre was now put up in such a way that the money-pig could look directly in. They wanted to begin with a comedy; and afterwards there was to be a tea-party, and a discussion for mental improvement, and with this latter part they began immediately. The rocking-horse spoke of training and race; the go-cart of railways and steam-power, for all this belonged to their profession, and it was quite right they should talk of it. The clock talked politics—ticks—ticks, and knew what was the time of day, though it was whispered he did not go correctly: the bamboo cane stood there, stiff and proud, for he was conceited about his brass ferule and his silver top, for being thus bound above and below: on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty and stupid. And now the play began.

All sat and looked on, and it was requested the audience should applaud, and crack and stamp according as they were gratified. But the riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for young ones who were not yet married. "I crack for every thing," said the cracker; and these were the thoughts they had while the play went on. The piece was worthless, but it was well played; all the characters

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turned their painted side to the audience, for they were so made that they should only be looked at from that side, and not from the other; and all played wonderfully well, coming out quite beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long, but that only made them come out the more. The darned doll was quite exhausted with excitement—so thoroughly exhausted that she burst at the darned place in her neck; and the money-pig was so enchanted in his way, that he formed the resolution to do something for one of the players, and to remember him in his will as the one who should be buried with him in the family vault, when matters were so far advanced.

It was true enjoyment; such true enjoyment that they quite gave up the thoughts of tea, and only carried out the idea of mental recreation. That's what they called playing at men and women, and there was nothing wrong in it, for they were only playing; and each one thought of himself and what the money-pig might think; and the money-pig thought furthest of all, for he thought of making his will and of his burial. And when might this come to pass? Certainly far sooner than was expected. Crack! it fell down from the cupboard,—fell on

the ground, and was broken to pieces; and the pennies hopped and danced in comical style: the little ones turned round like tops, and the bigger ones rolled away, particularly the one great silver dollar, who wanted to go out into the world. And he came out into the world, and they all succeeded in doing so; and the pieces of the money-pig were put into the dust-bin: but the next day a new money-pig was standing on the cupboard; it had not yet a farthing in its stomach, and therefore could not rattle, and in this it was like the other—and that was a beginning—and with that we will make an end.



## THE WICKED PRINCE.

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HERE was once a wicked Prince. His aim and object was to conquer all the countries in the world, and to inspire all men with fear; he went about with fire and sword, and his soldiers trampled down the corn in the fields, and set fire to the peasant's house, so that the red flames licked the leaves from the trees, and the fruit hung burnt on the black charred branches. With her naked baby in her arms, many a poor mother took refuge behind the still smoking walls of her burnt house; but here even the soldiers sought for their victims, and if they found them it was new food for their demoniac fury: evil spirits could not have raged worse than did these soldiers; but the Prince thought their deeds were right, and that it must be so. Every day his power increased; his name was feared by all,

and fortune accompanied him in all his actions. From conquered countries he brought vast treasures home; in his capital an amount of wealth was heaped, unequalled in any other place. And he caused gorgeous palaces, churches, and halls to be built, and every one who saw those great buildings and these vast treasures cried out respectfully, "What a great Prince!" They thought not of the misery he had brought upon other lands and cities; they heard not all the sighs and all the mournings that arose from among the ruins of demolished towns.

The Prince looked upon his gold, and upon his mighty buildings, and his thoughts were like those of the crowd, "What a great Prince am I! But," so his thought ran on, "I must have more, far more! No power may be equal to mine, much less exceed it!" And he made war upon all his neighbors, and overcame them all. The conquered kings he caused to be bound with fetters of gold to his chariot, and thus he drove through the streets of his capital: when he banqueted, those kings were compelled to kneel at his feet, and at the feet of his courtiers, and to receive the broken pieces which were thrown to them from the table.

At last the Prince caused his own statue to

be set up in the open squares and in the royal palaces, and he even wished to place it in the churches before the altars; but here the priests stood up against him, and said, "Prince, thou art mighty, but heaven is mightier, and we dare not fulfil thy commands."

"Good, then," said the Prince, "I will vanquish heaven likewise." And in his pride and impious haughtiness he caused a costly ship to be built, in which he could sail through the air: it was gay and glaring to behold, like the tail of a peacock, and studded and covered with thousands of eyes; but each eye was the muzzle of a gun. The Prince sat in the midst of the ship, and needed only to press on a spring, and a thousand bullets flew out on all sides, while the gun-barrels were reloaded immediately. Hundreds of eagles were harnessed in front of the ship, and with the speed of an arrow they flew upwards towards the sun. How deep the earth lay below them! With its mountains and forests it seemed but a field through which the plough had drawn its furrows, and along which the green bank rose covered with turf; soon it appeared only like a flat map with indistinct lines, and at last it lay completely hidden in mist and cloud. Ever

higher flew the eagles up into the air : then one of the innumerable angels appeared. The wicked Prince hurled thousands of bullets against him ; but the bullets sprang back from the angel's shining pinions, and fell down like common hailstones ; but a drop of blood, one single drop, fell from one of the white wing-feathers, and this drop fell upon the ship in which the Prince sat, and burnt its way deep into the ship, and weighing like a thousand hundred-weight of lead, dragged down the ship in headlong fall towards the earth ; the strongest pinions of the eagles broke, the wind roared round the Prince's head, and the clouds aroused—formed from the smoke of burned cities—drew themselves together in threatening shapes like huge sea-crabs, stretching forth their claws and nippers towards him, and piled themselves up in great overshadowing rocks, with crushing fragments rolling down them ; and then to fiery dragons, till the Prince lay half dead in the ship, which at last was caught with a terrible shock in the thick branches of a forest.

“I will conquer heaven,” said the Prince. “I have sworn it, and my will *must* be done !” and for seven years he caused his men to work at making ships for sailin through the air, and

had thunderbolts made of the hardest steel, for he wished to storm the fortress of heaven : out of all his dominions he gathered armies together, so that when they were drawn up in rank and file they covered a space of several miles. The armies went on board the ships, and the Prince approached his own vessel ; then there was sent out against him a swarm of gnats, a single little swarm of gnats. The swarm buzzed round the Prince, and stung his face and hands ; raging with anger he drew his sword, and struck all around him ; but he only struck the empty air, for he could not hit the gnats. Then he commanded his people to bring costly hangings, and to wrap them around him, so that no gnat might further sting him ; and the servants did as he commanded them. But a single gnat had attached itself to the inner side of the hangings, and crept into the ear of the Prince, and stung him ; it burned like fire, and the poison penetrated to his brain : like a madman he tore the hangings from his body and hurled them far away, tore his clothes and danced about naked before the eyes of his rude, savage soldiers, who now jeered at the mad Prince, who wanted to overcome heaven, and who himself was conquered by one single little gnat.

## CHILDREN'S PRATTLE.

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AT the rich merchant's there was a children's party; rich people's children and grand people's children were there. The merchant was a learned man; he had once gone through the college examination, for his honest father had kept him to this, his father who had at first only been a cattle-dealer, but always an honest and industrious man; the trade had brought money, and the merchant had managed to increase the store. Clever he was, and he had also a heart, but there was less said of his heart than of his money. At the merchant's, grand people went in and out; people of blood, as it is called, and people of intellect, and people who had both of these, and people who had neither. Now there was a children's party there, and children's prattle; and children speak frankly from the heart.

Among the rest there was a beautiful little girl, but the little one was terribly proud; but the servants had taught her that, not her parents, who were far too sensible people. Her father was a groom of the bedchamber, and that is a very grand office, and she knew it.

"I am a child of the bedchamber," she said. Now she might just as well have been a child of the cellar, for nobody can help his birth; and then she told the other children that she was "well-born," and said "that no one who was not well-born could get on far in the world; it was of no use to read and to be industrious, if one was not well-born one could not achieve any thing."

"And those whose names end with 'sen,'" said she, "they cannot be any thing at all! One must put one's arms akimbo and make the elbows quite pointed, and keep them at a great distance, these 'sen! sen!'" And she struck out her pretty little arms, and made the elbows quite pointed, to show how it was to be done, and her little arms were very pretty. She was a sweet little girl.

But the little daughter of the merchant became very angry at this speech, for her father's name was Petersen, and she knew that the name

ended in "sen," and therefore she said, as proudly as ever she could—

"But my papa can buy a hundred dollars' worth of bon-bons and strew them to the children! Can your papa do that?"

"Yes, but my papa," said an author's little daughter, "my papa can put your papa and everybody's papa into the newspaper. All people are afraid of him, my mamma says, for it is my father who rules in the newspaper."

And the little maiden looked exceedingly proud, as though she had been a real princess, who is expected to look proud.

But outside, at the door which was ajar, stood a poor boy, peeping through the crack of the door. He was of such lowly station that he was not even allowed to enter the room. He had turned the spit for the cook, and she had allowed him to stand behind the door, and to look at the well-dressed children who were making a merry day within, and for him that was a great deal.

"Oh, to be one of them!" thought he; and then he heard what was said, which was certainly calculated to make him very unhappy. "His parents at home had not a penny to spare to buy a newspaper, much less could they

write one; and what was worst of all, his father's name, and consequently his own, ended completely in 'sen,' and so he could not turn out well. That was terrible. But after all, he had been born, and very well born as it seemed to him; that could not be otherwise."

And that is what was done on that evening.

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Many years have elapsed since then, and in the course of years children become grown-up persons.

In the town stood a splendid house; it was filled with all kinds of beautiful objects and treasures, and all people wished to see it, even people who dwelt out of town came in to see it. Which of the children of whom we have told might call this house his own? To know that is very easy. No, no; it is not so very easy. The house belonged to the poor little boy who had stood on that night behind the door, and he had become something great, although his name ended in "sen,"—Thorwaldsen.

And the three other children—the children of *blood* and of money, and of spiritual pride?

Well, they had nothing wherewith to reproach each other—they turned out well enough, for they had been well dowered by nature—and what they had thought and spoken on that evening long ago was mere *children's prattle*.





The Two Brothers.



## TWO BROTHERS.

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IN one of the Danish islands where old Thingstones, the seats of justice of our forefathers, are found in the fields, and great trees tower in the beechwoods, there lies a little town, whose low houses are covered with red tiles. In one of these houses wondrous things were brewed over glowing coals on the open hearth: there was a boiling in glasses, a mixing and a distilling, and herbs were cut up, and bruised in mortars, and an elderly man attended to all this.

“One must only do the right thing,” said he, “yes, the right thing; one must learn the truth about every created particle, and keep close to this truth.”

In the room with the good housewife sat her two sons, still small; but with grown-up thoughts. The mother had always spoken to

them of right and justice, and had exhorted them to hold truth fast, declaring that it was as the countenance of the Almighty in this world.

The elder of the boys looked roguish, and enterprising: it was his delight to read of the forces of nature, of the sun and of the stars; no fairy tale pleased him so much as these. Oh! how glorious it must be, he thought, to go out on voyages of discovery, or to find out how the wings of birds could be imitated, and then to fly through the air! Yes, to find that out would be the right thing; father was right, and mother was right, truth keeps the world together.

The younger brother was quieter, and quite lost himself in books. When he read of Jacob clothing himself in sheepskins to be like Esau, and to cheat his brother of his birthright, his little fist would clench in anger against the deceiver; when he read of tyrants, and of all the wickedness and wrong that is in the world, the tears stood in his eyes, and he was quite filled with the thought of the right and truth which must and will at last be triumphant. One evening he already lay in bed; but the curtains were not yet drawn close, and the light

streamed in upon him : he had taken the book with him to bed, because he wanted to finish the story of Solon.

And his thoughts lifted and carried him away marvellously, and it seemed to him that his bed became a ship, careering onward with swelling sails. Did he dream? or what was happening to him? It glided onward over the rolling waters and the great ocean of time, and he heard the voice of Solon. In a strange tongue, and yet intelligible to him, he heard the Danish motto, "With law the land is ruled."

And the Genius of the human race stood in the humble room, and bent down over the bed, and printed a kiss on the boy's forehead. "Be thou strong in fame, and strong in the battle of life! With the truth in thy breast, fly thou towards the land of truth!"

The elder brother was not yet in bed; he stood at the window gazing out at the mists that rose from the meadows. They were not elves dancing there, as the old muse had told him; he knew better; they were vapors, warmer than the air, and that consequently mounted. A shooting-star gleamed athwart the sky, and the thoughts of the boy were roused from the

mists of the earth to the shining meteor. The stars of heaven twinkled, and golden threads seemed to hang from them down upon the earth.

“Fly with me,” it sang and sounded in the boy’s heart, and the mighty genius, swifter than the bird, than the arrow, than any thing that flies with earthly means, carried him aloft to the region where rays stretching from star to star bind the heavenly bodies to each other—our earth revolved in the thin air—the cities on its surface seemed quite close together, and through the sphere it sounded: “What is near, what is far, when the mighty genius of mind lifts them up?”

And again the boy stood at the window and gazed forth, and the younger brother lay in his bed, and their mother called them by their names, “Anders Sandoe” and “Hans Christian!”

Denmark knows them—the world knows them—the two brothers Oersted.



The Old Pensioner.



BY THE

ALMSHOUSE WINDOW.

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NEAR the grass-covered rampart which encircles Copenhagen lies a great red house; balsams and other flowers greet us from the long rows of windows in the house, whose interior is sufficiently poverty-stricken; and poor and old are the people who inhabit it.

The building is the Warton Almshouse.

Look! at the window there leans an old maid; she plucks the withered leaf from the balsam and looks at the grass-covered rampart, on which many children are playing. What is the old maid thinking of? A whole life-drama is unfolding itself before her inward gaze.

The poor little children, how happy they are, how merrily they play and romp together! What red cheeks and what angels' eyes! but they have no shoes nor stockings. They danced on the green rampart, just on the place where,

according to the old story, the ground always sank in, and where a sportive frolicsome child had been lured by means of flowers, toys, and sweetmeats into an open grave ready dug for it, and which was afterwards closed over the child ;—and from that moment, the old story says, the ground gave way no longer, the mound remained firm and fast, and was quickly covered with fine green turf. The little people who now play on that spot know nothing of the old tale, else would they fancy they heard the child crying deep below the earth, and the dew-drops on each blade of grass would be to them tears of woe. Nor do they know any thing of the Danish king, who here, in the face of the cunning foe, took an oath before all his trembling courtiers, that he would hold out with the citizens of his capital, and die here in his nest ;—they knew nothing of the men who had fought here, or of the women who from here had drenched with boiling water the enemy, clad in white, and abiding in the snow to surprise the city.

No! the poor little ones are playing with light childish spirits. Play on, play on, thou little maiden! Soon the years will come—yes, those glorious years. The priestly hands have

been laid on the candidates for confirmation : hand in hand they walk on the green rampart : thou hast a white frock on, it has cost thy mother much labor, and yet it is only cut down for thee out of an old and larger dress ! You will also wear a red shawl ; and what if it hang too far down ? People will only see how large, how very large it is. You are thinking of your dress, and of the Giver of all good ; so glorious is it to wander on the green rampart !

And the years roll by ; they have no lack of dark days, but you have your cheerful young spirit, and you have gained *a friend*, you know not how. You met, oh, how often ! You walk together on the rampart in the fresh spring, on the high days and holidays, when all the world come out to walk on the ramparts, and all the bells of the church steeples seem to be singing a song of praise for the coming spring.

Scarcely have the violets come forth ;—but there on the rampart, just opposite the beautiful castle of Rosenberg, there is a tree bright with the first green buds. Every year this tree sends forth fresh green shoots ;—alas, it is not so with the human heart. Dark mists, more in number than those that cover the northern

skies, cloud the human heart. Poor child—thy friend's bridal chamber is a black coffin, and thou becomest an old maid. From the alms-house window behind the balsams thou shalt look on the merry children at play, and shalt see thy own history renewed.

And that is the life-drama that passes before the old maid, while she looks out upon the rampart, the green sunny rampart, where the children with their red cheeks and bare shoeless feet are rejoicing merrily, like the other free little birds.





Grandmother.



## GRANDMOTHER.

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GRANDMOTHER is very old; she has many wrinkles, and her hair is quite white; but her eyes, which are like two stars, and even more beautiful, look at you mildly and pleasantly, and it does you good to look into them.

And then she can tell the most wonderful stories; and she has a gown, with great flowers worked in it, and it is of heavy silk, and it rustles. Grandmother knows a great deal, for she was alive before father and mother, that's quite certain! Grandmother has a hymn-book, with great silver clasps, and she often reads in that book: in the middle of the book lies a rose, quite flat and dry; it is not as pretty as the roses she has standing in the glass, and yet she smiles at it most pleasantly of all, and tears even come into her eyes. I wonder why grandmother looks at the withered

flower in the old book in that way? Do you know? Why, each time that grandmother's tears fall upon the rose its colors become fresh again; the rose swells and fills the whole room with its fragrance; the walls sink as if they were but mist, and all around her is the glorious green wood, where in summer the sunlight streams through the leaves of the trees; and grandmother—why she is young again, a charming maiden with light curls and full blooming cheeks, pretty and graceful, fresh as any rose; but the eyes, the mild blessed eyes, they have been left to grandmother. At her side sits a young man, tall and strong; he gives the rose to her, and she smiles; grandmother cannot smile thus now!—yes, now she smiles! But now he has passed away, and many thoughts and many forms of the past, and the handsome young man is gone, and the rose lies in the hymn-book, and grandmother she sits there again, an old woman, and glances down at the withered rose that lies in the book.

Now grandmother is dead. She had been sitting in her arm-chair, and telling a long, long capital tale; and she said the tale was told now, and she was tired, and she leaned her head back to sleep awhile. One could hear

her breathing as she slept; but it became quieter and more quiet, and her countenance was full of happiness and peace; it seemed as if a sunshine spread over her features; and she smiled again, and then the people said she was dead.

She was laid in the black coffin; and there she lay shrouded in the white linen folds, looking beautiful and mild, though her eyes were closed; but every wrinkle had vanished, and there was a smile around her mouth; her hair was silver-white and venerable, and we did not feel at all afraid to look at the corpse of her who had been the dear good grandmother. And the hymn-book was placed under her head, for she had wished it so, and the rose was still in the old book; and then they buried grandmother.


On the grave, close by the churchyard wall, they planted a rose-tree, and it was full of roses, and the nightingale flew singing over the flowers and over the grave; in the church the finest psalms sounded from the organ; the psalms that were written in the old book under the dead one's head. The moon shone down upon the grave; but the dead one was not here: every child could go safely, even at night,

and pluck a rose there by the churchyard wall. A dead person knows more than all we living ones. The dead know what a terror would come upon us, if the strange thing were to happen that they appeared among us: the dead are better than we all; the dead return no more. The earth has been heaped over the coffin, and it is earth that lies in the coffin; and the leaves of the hymn-book are dust, and the rose with all its recollections has returned to dust likewise. But above, there bloom fresh roses; the nightingale sings and the organ sounds, and the remembrance lives of the old grandmother, with the mild eyes that always looked young. *Eyes can never die!* Ours will once behold grandmother again, young and beautiful, as when for the first time she kissed the fresh red rose that is now dust in the grave.



## FIVE OUT OF ONE SHELL.

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 HERE were five peas in one shell: they were green, and the pod was green, and so they thought all the world was green; and that was just as it should be! The shell grew, and the peas grew; they accommodated themselves to circumstances, sitting all in a row. The sun shone without, and warmed the husk, and the rain made it clear and transparent: it was mild and agreeable in the bright day and in the dark night, just as it should be; and the peas as they sat there became bigger and bigger, and more and more thoughtful, for something they must do.

“Are we to sit here everlastingly?” asked one. “I’m afraid we shall become hard by long sitting. It seems to me, there must be something outside; I have a kind of inkling of it.”

And weeks went by; the peas became yel-

low, and the pods turned yellow. "All the world's turning yellow," said they; and they had a right to say it.

Suddenly they felt a tug at the shell. The shell was torn off, passed through human hands, and glided down into the pocket of a jacket, in company with other full pods. "Now we shall soon be opened!" they said; and that is just what they were waiting for.

"I should like to know who of us will get furthest!" said the smallest of the five. Yes, now it will soon show itself."

"What is to be, will be," said the biggest. "Crack!" the pod burst, and all the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a child's hand; a little boy was clutching them, and said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter; and he put one in directly and shot it out.

"Now I'm flying out into the wide world, catch me if you can!" and he was gone. "I," said the second, "I shall fly straight into the sun. That's a shell worth looking at, and one that exactly suits me," and away he went.

"We'll go to sleep wherever we arrive," said the two next, "but we shall roll on all the same." And they certainly rolled and tum-

bled down on the ground before they got into the pea-shooter, but they were put in for all that. "We shall go furthest," said they.

"What is to happen will happen!" said the last, as he was shot forth out of the pea-shooter; and he flew up against the old board under the garret window, just into a crack which was filled up with moss and soft mould; and the moss closed round him: there he lay, a prisoner indeed, but not forgotten by provident nature.

"What is to happen will happen," said he.

Within, in the little garret, lived a poor woman, who went out in the day to clean stoves, chop wood small, and to do other hard work of the same kind, for she was strong and industrious too. But she always remained poor; and at home in the garret lay her half-grown only daughter, who was very delicate and weak; for a whole year she had kept her bed, and it seemed as if she could neither live nor die.

"She is going to her little sister," the woman said. "I had only the two children, and it was not an easy thing to provide for both, but the good God provided for one of them by taking her home to Himself: now I should be glad to keep the other that was left to me; but I sup

pose they are not to remain separated, and my sick girl will go to her sister in heaven."

But the sick girl remained where she was; she lay quiet and patient all day long, while her mother went to earn money out of doors. It was spring, and early in the morning, just as the mother was about to go out to work, the sun shone mildly and pleasantly through the little window, and threw its rays across the floor; and the sick girl fixed her eyes on the lowest pane in the window.

"What may that green thing be that looks in at the window? See, it is moving in the wind."

And the mother stepped to the window and half opened it. "Oh!" said she, "on my word, that is a little pea which has taken root here, and is putting out its little leaves. How can it have got here into the crack? That is a little garden with which you can amuse yourself."

And the sick girl's bed was moved nearer to the window, so that she could see the growing pea; and the mother went forth to her work.

"Mother, I think I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening. "The sun shone in upon me to-day, delightfully warm. The little pea is prospering famously, and I shall prosper

too, and get up, and go out into the warm sunshine."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would be so; but she took care to prop with a little stick the green plant which had given her daughter the pleasant thoughts of life, so that it might not be broken by the wind: she tied a piece of string to the window-sill, and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea might have something round which it could twine, when it shot up; and it did shoot up, one could see how it grew every day.

"Really, here is a flower coming!" said the woman one day, and now she began to cherish the hope that her sick daughter would recover; she remembered that lately the child had spoken much more cheerfully than before, that in the last few days she had risen up in bed of her own accord, and had sat upright, looking with delighted eyes at the little garden in which only one plant grew. A week afterwards the invalid for the first time sat up for a whole hour. Quite happy she sat there in the warm sunshine; the window was opened, and outside, before it, stood a pink pea-blossom fully blown. The sick girl bent down, and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This day was like a festival.

“The heavenly Father Himself has planted that pea, and caused it to prosper, to be a joy to you, and to me also, my blessed child!” said the glad mother, and she smiled at the flower, as if it had been a good angel.

But about the other peas? Why, the one who flew out into the wide world, and said, “Catch me if you can,” fell into the gutter on the roof, and found a home in a pigeon’s crop. The two lazy ones got just as far, for they, too, were eaten up by pigeons, and thus at any rate they were of some real use; but the fourth, who wanted to go up into the sun, fell into the sink, and lay there in the dirty water for weeks and weeks, and swelled prodigiously.

“How beautifully fat I am growing!” said the pea. “I shall burst at last; and I don’t think any pea can do more than that. I’m the most remarkable of all the five that were in the shell;” and the sink said he was right.

But the young girl at the garret window stood there with gleaming eyes, with the roseate hue of health on her cheeks, and folded her thin hands over the pea-blossom, and thanked heaven for it.

“I,” said the sink, “stand up for my own pea.”

## THE GIRL WHO TROD UPON BREAD.

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YOU have doubtless heard of the girl who trod upon bread, not to soil her pretty shoes, and what evil this brought upon her. The tale is both written and printed.

She was a poor child, but proud and vain. She had a bad disposition, people said. When she was a little more than an infant, it was a pleasure to her to catch flies, to pull off their wings, and maim them entirely. She used, when somewhat older, to take lady-birds and beetles, stick them all upon a pin, then put a large leaf or a piece of paper close to their feet, so that the poor things held fast to it, and turned and twisted in their endeavors to get off the pin.

“Now the lady-birds shall read,” said little Inger. “See how they turn the paper!”

As she grew older she became worse instead of better; but she was very beautiful, and that was her misfortune. She would have been punished otherwise, and in the long run she was.

"You will bring evil on your own head," said her mother. "As a little child you used often to tear my aprons; I fear that when you are older you will break my heart."

And she did so sure enough.

At length she went into the country to wait on people of distinction. They were as kind to her as if she had been one of their own family; and she was so well dressed that she looked very pretty, and became extremely arrogant.

When she had been a year in service, her employers said to her—

"You should go and visit your relations, little Inger."

She went, resolved to let them see how fine she had become. When, however, she reached the village, and saw the lads and lasses gossiping together near the pond, and her mother sitting close by on a stone, resting her head against a bundle of firewood which she had picked up in the forest, Inger turned back. She felt ashamed that she who was dressed so

smartly should have for her mother such a ragged creature, one who gathered sticks for her fire. - It gave her no concern that she was expected—she was so vexed.

A half year more had passed.

“You must go home some day and see your old parents, little Inger,” said the mistress of the house. “Here is a large loaf of white bread—you can carry this to them; they will be rejoiced to see you.”

And Inger put on her best clothes and her nice new shoes, and she lifted her dress high, and walked so carefully, that she might not soil her garments or her feet. There was no harm at all in that. But when she came to where the path went over some damp, marshy ground, and there were water and mud in the way, she threw the bread into the mud, in order to step upon it and get over with dry shoes; but just as she had placed one foot on the bread, and had lifted the other up, the bread sank in with her deeper and deeper, till she went entirely down, and nothing was to be seen but a black bubbling pool.

That is the story.

What became of the girl? She went below to the *Old Woman of the Bogs*, who brews

down there. The Old Woman of the Bogs is an aunt of the fairies. *They* are very well known. Many poems have been written about them, and they have been printed; but nobody knows any thing more of the Old Woman of the Bogs than that, when the meadows and the ground begin to reek in summer, it is the old woman below who is brewing. Into her brewery it was that Inger sank, and no one could hold out very long there. A cesspool is a charming apartment compared with the old Bog-woman's brewery. Every vessel is redolent of horrible smells, which would make any human being faint, and they are packed closely together and over each other; but even if there were a small space among them which one might creep through, it would be impossible, on account of all the slimy toads and snakes that are always crawling and forcing themselves through. Into this place little Inger sank. All this nauseous mess was so ice-cold that she shivered in every limb. Yes, she became stiffer and stiffer. The bread stuck fast to her, and it drew her as an amber bead draws a slender thread.

The Old Woman of the Bogs was at home. The brewery was that day visited by the devil

and his dam, and she was a venomous old creature who was never idle. She never went out without having some needlework with her. She had brought some there. She was sewing running leather to put into the shoes of human beings, so that they should never be at rest. She embroidered lies, and worked up into mischief and discord thoughtless words, that would otherwise have fallen to the ground. Yes, she knew how to sew and embroider, and transfer with a vengeance, that old grandam!

She beheld Inger, put on her spectacles, and looked at her.

“That is a girl with talents,” said she. “I shall ask for her as a *souvenir* of my visit here; she may do very well as a statue to ornament my great-grandchildren’s ante-chamber;” and she took her.

It was thus little Inger went to the infernal regions. People do not generally go straight through the air to them: they can go by a roundabout path when they know the way.

It was an ante-chamber in an infinity. One became giddy there at looking forwards, and giddy at looking backwards, and there stood a crowd of anxious, pining beings, who were waiting and hoping for the time when the

gates of grace should be opened. They would have long to wait. Hideous, large, waddling spiders wove thousands of webs over their feet; and these webs were like gins or foot-screws, and held them as fast as chains of iron, and were a cause of disquiet to every soul—a painful annoyance. Misers stood there, and lamented that they had forgotten the keys of their money chests. It would be too tiresome to repeat all the complaints and troubles that were poured forth there. Inger thought it shocking to stand there like a statue; she was, as it were, fastened to the ground by the bread.

“This comes of wishing to have clean shoes,” said she to herself. “See how they all stare at me!”

Yes, they did all stare at her; their evil passions glared from their eyes, and spoke, without sound, from the corner of their mouths: they were frightful.

“It must be a pleasure to them to see me,” thought little Inger. “I have a pretty face and am well dressed;” and she dried her eyes. She had not lost her conceit. She had not then perceived how her fine clothes had been soiled in the brewhouse of the Old Woman of the Bogs. Her dress was covered with the

dabs of nasty matter; a snake had wound itself among her hair, and it dangled over her neck; and from every fold of her garment peeped out a toad, that puffed like an asthmatic lap-dog. It was very disagreeable. "But all the rest down here look horrid too," was the reflection with which she consoled herself.

But the worst of all was the dreadful hunger she felt. Could she not stoop down and break off a piece of the bread on which she was standing? No; her back was stiffened; her hands and her arms were stiffened; her whole body was like a statue of stone; she could only move her eyes, and these she could turn entirely round, and that was an ugly sight. And flies came and crept over her eyes backwards and forwards. She winked her eyes; but the intruders did not fly away, for they could not—their wings had been pulled off. That was another misery added to the hunger—the gnawing hunger that was so terrible to bear!

"If this goes on, I cannot hold out much longer," she said.

But she had to hold out, and her sufferings became greater.

Then a warm tear fell upon her head. It trickled over her face and her neck, all the

way down to the bread. Another tear fell, then many followed. Who was weeping over little Inger? Had she not a mother up yonder on the earth? The tears of anguish which a mother sheds over her erring child always reach it; but they do not comfort the child—they burn, they increase the suffering. And oh! this intolerable hunger; yet not to be able to snatch one mouthful of the bread she was treading under foot! She became as thin, as slender as a reed. Another trial was that she heard distinctly all that was said of her above on the earth, and it was nothing but blame and evil. Though her mother wept, and was in much affliction, she still said—

“Pride goes before a fall. That was your great fault, Inger. Oh, how miserable you have made your mother!”

Her mother and all who were acquainted with her were well aware of the sin she had committed in treading upon bread. They knew that she had sunk into the bog, and was lost; the cowherd had told that, for he had seen it himself from the brow of the hill.

“What affliction you have brought on your mother, Inger!” exclaimed her mother. “Ah, well! I expected no better from you.”

"Would that I had never been born!" thought Inger; "that would have been much better for me. My mother's whimpering can do no good now."

She heard how the family, the people of distinction who had been so kind to her, spoke. "She was a wicked child," they said; "she valued not the gifts of our Lord, but trod them under her feet. It will be difficult for her to get the gates of grace open to admit her."

"They ought to have brought me up better," thought Inger. "They should have taken the whims out of me, if I had any."

She heard that there was a common ballad made about her, "the bad girl who trod upon bread, to keep her shoes nicely clean," and this ballad was sung from one end of the country to the other.

"That any one should have to suffer so much for such as that—be punished so severely for such a trifle!" thought Inger. "All these others are punished justly, for no doubt there was a great deal to punish; but ah, how I suffer!"

And her heart became still harder than the substance into which she had been turned.

"No one can be better in such society. I

will not grow better here. See how they glare at me !”

And her heart became still harder, and she felt a hatred towards all mankind.

“They have a nice story to tell up there now. Oh, how I suffer !”

She listened, and heard them telling her history as a warning to children, and the little ones called her “ungodly Inger.” “She was so naughty,” they said, “so very wicked, that she deserved to suffer.”

The children always spoke harshly of her. One day, however, that hunger and misery were gnawing her most dreadfully, and she heard her name mentioned, and her story told to an innocent child—a little girl—she observed that the child burst into tears in her distress for the proud, finely-dressed Inger.

“But will she never come up again ?” asked the child.

The answer was :

“She will never come up again.”

“But if she will beg pardon, and promise never to be naughty again ?”

“But she will *not* beg pardon,” they said.

“Oh, how I wish she would do it !” sobbed the little girl in great distress. “I will give

my doll, and my doll's house too, if she may come up! It is so shocking for poor little Inger to be down there!"

These words touched Inger's heart; they seemed almost to make her good. It was the first time any one had said "poor Inger," and had not dwelt upon her faults. An innocent child cried and prayed for her. She was so much affected by this that she felt inclined to weep herself; but she could not, and this was an additional pain.

Years passed on in the earth above; but down where she was there was no change, except that she heard more and more rarely sounds from above, and that she herself was more seldom mentioned. At last one day she heard a sigh, and "Inger, Inger, how miserable you have made me! I foretold that you would!" These were her mother's last words on her death-bed.

And again she heard herself named by her former employers, and her mistress said—

"Perhaps I may meet you once more, Inger. None know whither they are to go."

But Inger knew full well that her excellent mistress would never come to the place where *she* was.

Time passed on, and on, slowly and wretchedly. Then once more Inger heard her name mentioned, and she beheld as it were, directly above her, two clear stars shining. These were two mild eyes that were closing upon earth. So many years had elapsed since a little girl had cried in childish sorrow over "poor Inger," that that child had become an old woman, whom our Lord was now about to call to himself. At that hour, when the thoughts and the actions of a whole life stand in review before the parting soul, she remembered how, as a little child, she had wept bitterly on hearing the history of Inger. That time, and those feelings, stood so prominently before the old woman's mind in the hour of death, that she cried with intense emotion :

"Lord, my God! have not I often, like Inger, trod under foot Thy blessed gifts, and placed no value on them? Have I not often been guilty of pride and vanity in my secret heart? But Thou, in Thy mercy, didst not let me sink; Thou didst hold me up. Oh, forsake me not in my last hour!"

And the aged woman's eyes closed, and her spirit's eyes opened to what had been formerly invisible; and as Inger had been present in her

latest thoughts, she beheld her, and perceived how deep she had been dragged downwards. At that sight the gentle being burst into tears; and in the kingdom of heaven she stood like a child, and wept for the fate of the unfortunate Inger. Her tears and her prayers sounded like an echo down in the hollow form that confined the imprisoned, miserable soul. That soul was overwhelmed by the unexpected love from those realms afar. One of God's angels wept for her! Why was this vouchsafed to her? The tortured spirit gathered, as it were, into one thought, all the actions of its life—all that it had done; and it shook with the violence of its remorse—remorse such as Inger had never felt. Grief became her predominating feeling. She thought that for her the gates of mercy would never open, and as in deep contrition and self-abasement she thought thus, a ray of brightness penetrated into the dismal abyss—a ray more vivid and glorious than the sunbeams which thaw the snow figures that the children make in their gardens. And this ray, more quickly than the snowflake that falls upon a child's warm mouth can be melted into a drop of water, caused Inger's petrified figure to evaporate,

and a little bird arose, following the zigzag course of the ray, up towards the world that mankind inhabit. But it seemed afraid and shy of every thing around it; it felt ashamed of itself; and apparently wishing to avoid all living creatures, it sought, in haste, concealment in a dark recess in a crumbling wall. Here it sat, and it crept into the furthest corner, trembling all over. It could not sing, for it had no voice. For a long time it sat quietly there before it ventured to look out and behold all the beauty around. Yes, it was beauty! The air was so fresh, yet so soft; the moon shone so clearly; the trees and the flowers scented so sweetly; and it was so comfortable where she sat—her feather garb so clean and nice! How all creation told of love and glory! The grateful thoughts that awoke in the bird's breast she would willingly have poured forth in song, but the power was denied to her. Yes, gladly would she have sung as do the cuckoo and nightingale in spring. Our gracious Lord, who hears the mute worm's hymn of praise, understood the thanksgiving that lifted itself up in the tones of thought, as the psalm floated in David's mind before it resolved itself into words and melody

As weeks passed on, these unexpressed feelings of gratitude increased. They would surely find a voice some day, with the first stroke of the wing, to perform some good act. Might not this happen?

Now came the holy Christmas festival. The peasants raised a pole close by the old wall, and bound an unthrashed bundle of oats on it, that the birds of the air might also enjoy the Christmas, and have plenty to eat at that time which was held in commemoration of the redemption brought to mankind.

And the sun rose brightly that Christmas morning, and shone upon the oat-sheaf, and upon all the chirping birds that flew around the pole; and from the wall issued a faint twittering. The swelling thoughts had at last found vent, and the low sound was a hymn of joy, as the bird flew forth from its hiding-place.

The winter was an unusually severe one. The waters were frozen thickly over; the birds and the wild animals in the woods had great difficulty in obtaining food. The little bird, that had so recently left its dark solitude, flew about the country roads, and when it found by chance a little corn dropped in the ruts, it

would eat only a single grain itself, while it called all the starving sparrows to partake of it. It would also fly to the villages and towns, and look well about; and where kind hands had strewed crumbs of bread outside the windows for the birds, it would eat only one morsel itself, and give all the rest to the others.


At the end of the winter the bird had found and given away so many crumbs of bread, that the number put together would have weighed as much as the loaf upon which little Inger had trodden in order to save her fine shoes from being soiled; and when she had found and given away the very last crumb, the gray wings of the bird became white, and expanded wonderfully.

“It is flying over the sea!” exclaimed the children who saw the white bird. Now it seemed to dip into the ocean, now it arose into the clear sunshine; it glittered in the air; it disappeared high, high above; and the children said that it had flown up to the sun.

# THE OLD OAK-TREE'S LAST DREAM

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

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 HERE stood in a wood, high up on the side of a sloping hill near the open shore, a very old oak-tree. It was about three hundred and sixty-five years old; but those long years were not more than as many single rotations of the earth for us men. We are awake during the day, and sleep during the night, and have then our dreams: with the tree it is otherwise. A tree is awake for three-quarters of a year. It only sleeps in winter—that is *its* night—after the long day which is called spring, summer, and autumn.

Many a warm summer day had the ephemeron insect frolicked around the oak-tree's

head—lived, moved about, and found itself happy; and when the little creature reposed for a moment in calm enjoyment on one of the great fresh oak-leaves, the tree always said—

“Poor little thing! one day alone is the span of thy whole life. Ah, how short! It is very sad.”

“Sad!” the ephemeron always replied. “What dost thou mean by that? Every thing is so charming, so warm and delightful, that I am quite happy.”

“But for only one day; then all is over.”

“All is over!” exclaimed the insect. “What is the meaning of ‘all is over?’ Is all over with thee also?”

“No; I may live, perhaps, thousands of thy days, and my lifetime is for centuries. It is so long a period that thou couldst not calculate it.”

“No, for I do not understand thee. Thou hast thousands of my days; but I have thousands of moments to be happy in. Is all the beauty in the world at an end when thou diest?”

“Oh! by no means,” replied the tree. “It will last longer—much, much longer than I can conceive.”

“Well, I think we are much on a par, only that we reckon differently.”

And the ephemeron danced and floated about in the sunshine, and enjoyed itself with its pretty little delicate wings, like the most minute flower—enjoyed itself in the warm air, which was so fragrant with the sweet perfumes of the clover-fields, of the wild roses in the hedges, and of the elder-flower, not to speak of the woodbine, the primrose, and the wild mint. The scent was so strong, that the ephemeron was almost intoxicated by it. The day was long and pleasant, full of gladness and sweet perceptions; and when the sun set, the little insect felt a sort of pleasing languor creeping over it after all its enjoyments. Its wings could no longer carry it, and very gently it glided down upon the soft blade of grass that was slightly waving in the evening breeze; there it drooped its tiny head, and fell into a calm sleep—the sleep of death.

“Poor little insect!” exclaimed the oak-tree, “thy life was far too short.”

And every summer's day were repeated a similar dance, a similar conversation, and a similar death. This went on with the whole generation of ephemera, and all were equally

happy, equally gay. The oak-tree remained awake during its spring morning, its summer day, and its autumn evening; now it was near its sleeping time, its night—the winter was close at hand.

Already the tempests were singing, “Good-night, good-night! Thy leaves are falling—we pluck them!—we pluck them! Try if thou canst slumber; we shall sing thee to sleep, we shall rock thee to sleep; and thy old boughs like this—they are creaking in their joy! Softly, softly sleep! It is thy three hundred and sixty-fifth night. Sleep calmly! The snow is falling from the heavy clouds; it will soon be a wide sheet, a warm coverlet for thy feet. Sleep calmly and dream pleasantly!”

And the oak-tree stood disrobed of all its leaves to go to rest for the whole long winter, and during that time to dream many dreams, often something stirring and exciting, like the dreams of human beings.

It, too, had once been little. Yes, an acorn had been its cradle. According to man’s reckoning of time, it was now living in its fourth century. It was the strongest and loftiest tree in the wood, with its venerable head reared high above all the other trees; and it was seen

far away at sea, and looked upon as a beacon by the navigators of the passing ships. It little thought how many eyes looked out for it. High up amidst its green coronal the wood-pigeons built their nests, and the cuckoo's note was heard from thence; and in the autumn, when the leaves looked like hammered plates of copper, came birds of passage, and rested there before they flew far over the sea. But now it was winter, and the tree stood leafless, and the bended and gnarled branches were naked. Crows and jackdaws came and sat themselves there alternately, and talked of the rigorous weather which was commencing, and how often difficult it was to find food in winter.

It was just at the holy Christmas time that the tree dreamt its most charming dream. Let us listen to it.

The tree had a distinct idea that it was a period of some solemn festival; it thought it heard all the church-bells round ringing, and it seemed to be a mild summer day. Its lofty head, it fancied, looked fresh and green, while the bright rays of the sun played among its thick foliage. The air was laden with the perfume of wild-flowers; various butterflies chased each other in sport around its boughs, and the ephemera

danced and amused themselves. All that during years the tree had known and seen around it, now passed before it as in a festive procession. It beheld, as in the olden time, knights and ladies on horseback, with feathers in their hats and falcons on their hands, riding through the greenwood; it heard the horns of the huntsmen, and the baying of the hounds; it saw the enemies' troops, with their various uniforms, their polished armor, their lances and halberds, pitch their tents and take them down again; the watch-fires blazed, and the soldiers sang and slept under the sheltering branches of the tree. It beheld lovers meet in the soft moonlight, and cut their names—that first letter—upon its olive-green bark. Guitars and *Æolian* harps were again—but there were very many years between them—hung up on the boughs of the tree by gay travelling swains, and again their sweet sounds broke on the stillness around. The wood-pigeons cooed, as if they were describing the feelings of the tree, and the cuckoo told how many summer days it should yet live.

Then it was as if a new current of life rushed from its lowest roots up to its highest branches, even to the furthest leaves; the tree

felt that it extended itself therewith, yet it perceived that its roots down in the ground were also full of life and warmth; it felt its strength increasing, and that it was growing taller and taller. The trunk shot up—there was no pause—more and more it grew—its head became fuller, broader—and as the tree grew it became happier, and its desire increased to rise up still higher, even until it could reach the warm, blazing sun.

Already had it mounted above the clouds, which, like multitudes of dark migratory birds, or flocks of white swans, were floating under it; and every leaf of the tree that had eyes could see. The stars became visible during the day, and looked so large and bright: each of them shone like a pair of mild, clear eyes. They might have recalled to memory dear, well-known eyes—the eyes of children—the eyes of lovers when they met beneath the tree.

It was a moment of exquisite delight. Yet in the midst of its pleasure it felt a desire, a longing that all the other trees in the wood beneath—all the bushes, plants, and flowers—might be able to lift themselves like it, and to participate in its joyful and triumphant feelings. The mighty oak-tree, in the midst of its

glorious dream, could not be entirely happy unless it had all its old friends with it, great and small; and this feeling pervaded every branch and leaf of the tree as strongly as if it had lived in the breast of a human being.

The summit of the tree moved about as if it missed and sought something left behind. Then it perceived the scent of the woodbine, and soon the still stronger scent of the violets and wild thyme; and it fancied it could hear the cuckoo repeat its note.

At length amidst the clouds peeped forth the tops of the green trees of the wood; they also grew higher and higher, as the oak had done; the bushes and the flowers shot up high in the air; and some of these, dragging their slender roots after them, flew up more rapidly. The birch was the swiftest among the trees: like a white flash of lightning it darted its slender stem upwards, its branches waving like green wreaths and flags. The wood and all its leafy contents, even the brown-feathered rushes, grew, and the birds followed them singing; and in the fluttering blades of silken grass the grasshopper sat and played with his wings against his long thin legs, and the wild bees hummed, and all was song and gladness as up in heaven.

"But the blue-bell and the little wild tansy," said the oak-tree; "I should like them with me too."

"We are with you," they sang in their low, sweet tones.

"But the pretty water-lily of last year, and the wild apple-tree that stood down yonder, and looked so fresh, and all the forest flowers of years past, had they lived and bloomed till now, they might have been with me."

"We are with you—we are with you," sang their voices far above, as if they had gone up before.

"Well, this is quite enchanting," cried the old tree. "I have them all, small and great—not one is forgotten. How is all this happiness possible and conceivable?"

"In the celestial paradise all this is possible and conceivable," voices chanted around.

And the tree, which continued to rise, observed that its roots were loosening from their hold in the earth.

"This is well," said the tree. "Nothing now retains me. I am free to mount to the highest heaven—to splendor and light; and all that are dear to me are with me—small and great—all with me."

“All !”

This was the oak-tree's dream ; and whilst it dreamt, a fearful storm had burst over sea and land that holy Christmas eve. The ocean rolled heavy billows on the beach—the tree rocked violently, and was torn up by the roots at the moment it was dreaming that its roots were loosening. It fell. Its three hundred and sixty-five years were now as but the day of the ephemeron.

On Christmas morning, when the sun arose, the storm was passed. All the church-bells were ringing joyously ; and from every chimney, even the lowest in the peasant's cot, curled from the altars of the Druidical feast the blue smoke of the thanksgiving oblation. The sea became more and more calm, and on a large vessel in the offing, which had weathered the tempest during the night, were hoisted all its flags in honor of the day.

“The tree is gone—that old oak-tree, which was always our landmark !” cried the sailors. “It must have fallen in the storm last night. Who shall replace it ? Alas ! no one can.”

This was the tree's funeral oration—short, but well meant—as it lay stretched at full length amidst the snow upon the shore, and

over it floated the melody of the psalm-tunes from the ship—hymns of Christmas joy, and thanksgivings for the salvation of the souls of mankind by Jesus Christ, and the blessed promise of everlasting life.

“Let sacred songs arise on high,  
Loud hallelujahs reach the sky;  
Let joy and peace each mortal share,  
While hymns of praise shall fill the air.”

Thus ran the old psalm, and every one out yonder, on the deck of the ship, lifted up his voice in thanksgiving and prayer, just as the old oak-tree was lifted up in its last and most delightful dream on that Christmas eve.





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