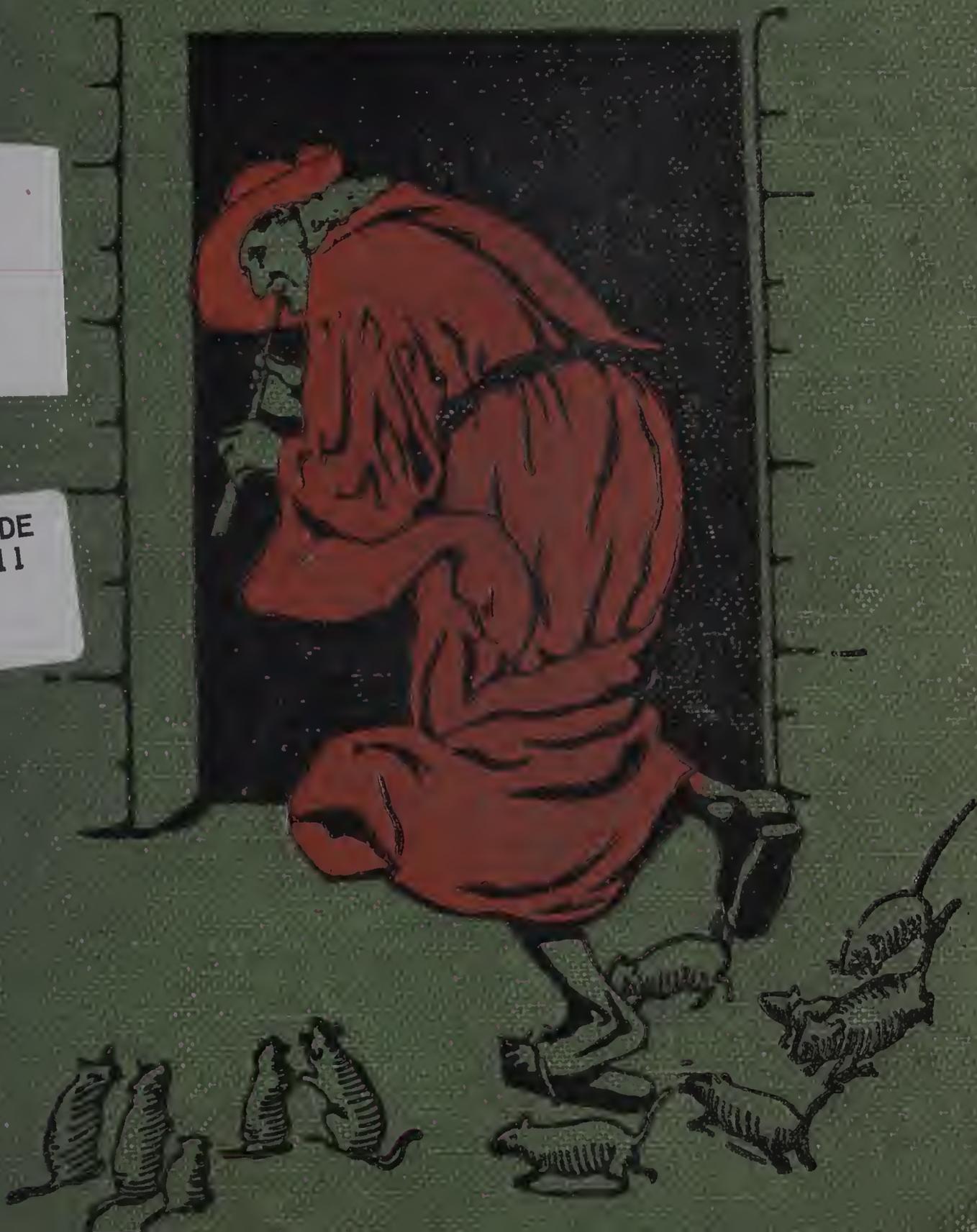


Really Truly Fairy Tales

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DOROTHY DULIN

REALLY TRULY FAIRY TALES

Books by
ALPHA BANTA BENSON

Four-and-Forty Fairies.
Really Truly Fairy Tales.
The Brownie Primer.
Ten Little Brownie Men.
The Brownies and the Goblins.
Three Popular Stories.
Stories from Grimm.
Daffydowndilly and the
Golden Touch.
The Golden Bird and Seven
Ravens.

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Really Truly Fairy Tales

BY

ALPHA BANTA BENSON

ILLUSTRATED BY

JAMES HARVEY DULIN

1923

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CHICAGO

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THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

Many, many years ago, in a country far away, there was a beautiful little village. A large river ran by on the southern side. There were shady streets, and pretty houses with rosy cheeked children playing before the doors. If it had not been for one thing, what a happy spot it would have been. But, at the time this story begins, there were so many rats in the village, that the people began to think they should have to move out and let the rats have the village.

You will open your eyes when you hear of some of the things these rats did.

“They fought the dogs and killed the
cats,
And bit the babies in their cradles.
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cook’s
iron ladles.”

Yes, and very often a man would
find a rat’s nest inside his Sunday hat.

At last the mayor and council met
to see if they could find some way to
get rid of them. They talked an hour
but could think of nothing. They had
almost given it up, when they heard a
rap at the door.

“Come in!” cried the mayor.

The door opened, and in came the
strangest looking man. He had on a
queer, long coat, that came down to
his heels. It was half red and half yel-

low. He was tall and thin, with long, yellow hair, and blue eyes as sharp as pins.

He came up to the table where the council sat.

“My friends,” said he, “I see you have a great many rats in your village. Would you like to get rid of them?”

“Yes, yes!” they all cried at once. We have just met to talk it over, but can think of no way to do it. If you know a way, please tell us at once.”

“I am sure I do,” said the man, “for with this pipe I can draw after me anything that creeps, swims, flies or runs. If I rid your town of rats, will you give me a thousand guilders?”

“Yes, fifty thousand!” they cried. “Only take the rats away.”

“Very well,” said the man, “it is a

bargain.” Then he opened the door and went into the street. He put his pipe to his lips and began to play. Before he had played three notes,

“Out of the houses the rats came tumbling—

Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,

Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,”

all following the piper as if for their lives.

Down to the river he went, drawing the rats after him. In they plunged, head first, and were drowned. All, did I say? No, there was one very large rat that swam across the river and carried the news to Rat-land.



"DOWN TO THE RIVER HE WENT, DRAWING THE RATS AFTER HIM"

You should have heard the people ringing the bells when they saw the last rat go under.

“Go,” cried the mayor, “and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes.”

But by this time the piper had come back, saying,

“First, if you please, my thousand guilders!”

A thousand guilders! The mayor and council turned pale. They began to think what this money would buy. Why should they pay out such a sum?

“Besides,” said they, “we saw the rats go down, and they can not come to life again. Won’t you take fifty guilders instead of a thousand?”

“No,” cried the piper, “not one guilder less than a thousand, will I take. If you do not keep your promise I will play a different tune.”

“Oh, we are not afraid of you,” they said. “You may blow your pipe till you burst. We do not care.”

Once more the piper stepped into the street. He put his pipe to his lips and began to play. Before he had played three notes,

“Out came the children running;
All the little boys and girls
With rosy cheeks and golden curls,
With sparkling eyes and teeth like
pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music, with shouting and
laughter.”

The mayor and council stood as if turned to stone. They saw him go straight toward the river.

“Oh, he will drown our children just as he did the rats!” they cried. But he turned and went toward a mountain. They thought the children were safe then.

“He can never cross that mountain,”
“He will have to stop when he comes to that.”

But when they reached the mountain, a wonderful door opened in the side of it. The piper went in and all the children followed him. The door closed behind them.

“Did I say all? No! One was lame
And could not dance the whole of the
way.”



"THE PIPER WENT IN AND ALL THE CHILDREN FOLLOWED HIM"

He turned and went slowly back to his home. Ever after, he was sad, and when asked the reason, he always said,

“Oh, it is so dull here, since my companions went away. I always think of the good times they are having. The piper said we should see many beautiful things in that strange land.”

The people spent years trying to find the piper. They sent word over the country that they would give him all the gold and silver he wished, if only he would bring back the children. But he was never again heard of.

Ever after, these words were kept in the town, where all could see them :

“Always keep your promise.”

THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE.

Once upon a time an old fisherman and his wife lived in a tiny house by the sea.

They were very poor. Often, when the old man caught no fish, they went to bed hungry; yet they were happy, because they had each other.

One fine morning the fisherman arose early and went down to the sea to fish. The water danced and smiled in the rays of the shining sun. It seemed to say to the old man, "Come, we will help you."

He threw his line into the water, and soon it went to the bottom. When he drew it out, what do you think he saw? A fine large fish, such as he had not

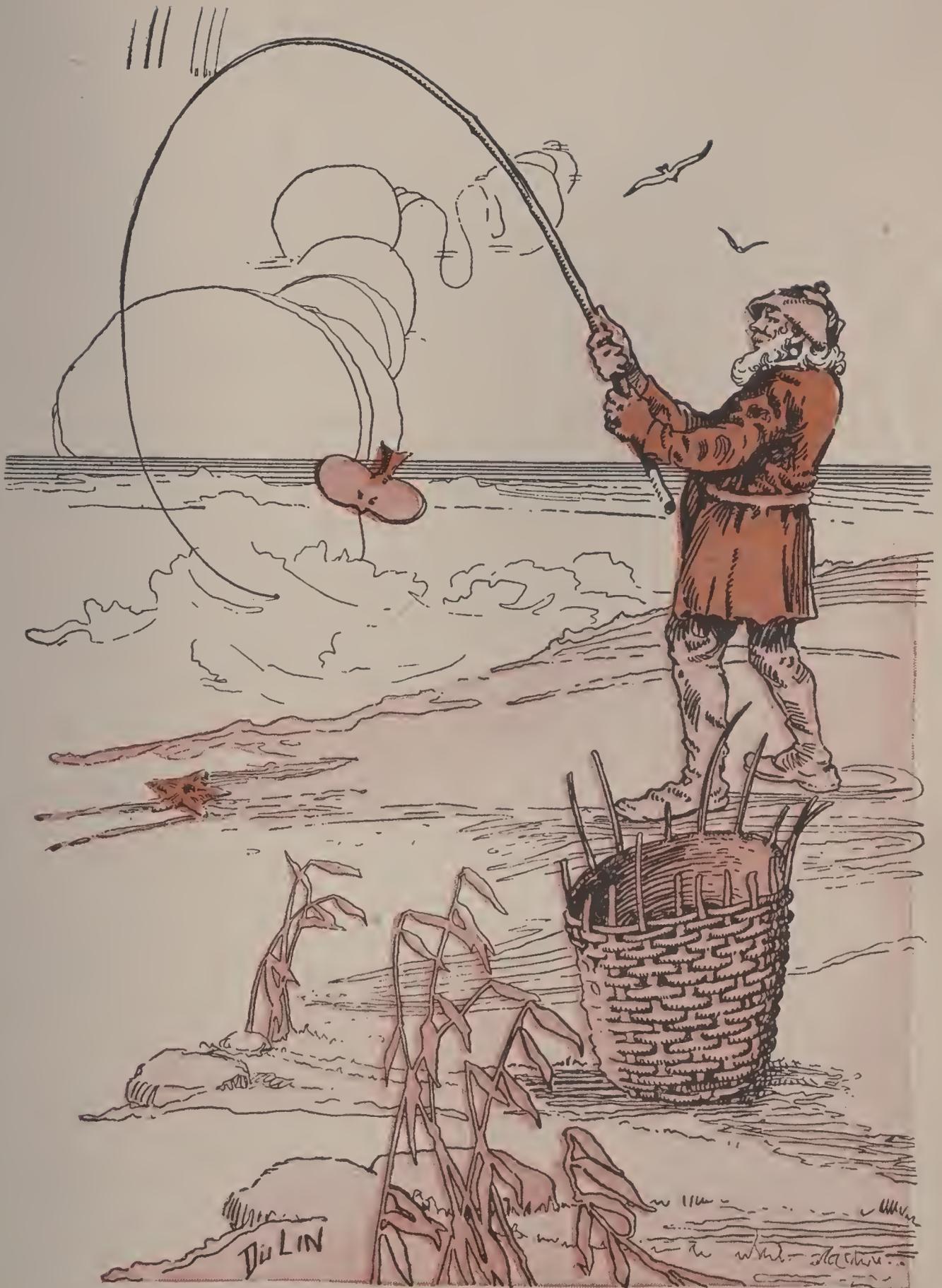
seen for many a day. You may be sure he was very glad.

“Now for a feast,” said he; but just as he was about to take the fish from the hook, it said: “Please let me go, good fisherman; I am not a real fish, but a prince, with the form of a fish. I am not good to eat, so you may as well let me have my life.”

Now the old man had a very kind heart; besides, he had no use for a fish that could not be eaten; so he put it back into the sea.

When he went home his wife asked: “Have you caught anything?”

“Only a flounder,” said the old man. “He said he was a prince, who had been turned to a fish; and begged me to let him go; so I put him back into the water.”



"A FINE LARGE FISH, SUCH AS HE HAD NOT SEEN BEFORE"

“And did you not wish first?”

“No,” said the old man.

“Ah, that is bad,” said his wife. “Go back at once and tell him we want a better house than this.”

“But how can I do that?” asked he.

“Why you must call to him, and when he comes up to the shore, tell him what you wish. He will give it to you because you let him go this morning.”

The kind old man did not like to do this.

“I did only what was right this morning,” said he to himself. “Why should I ask pay for it?”

But he wished also to please his wife, so down he went to the sea. When he reached it, he found the water looking

green and yellow, and it did not seem to smile at him as it had before.

This made him feel sad, for he loved the sea as an old friend.

He stood and looked at it for some time, then he called:

“Flounder, Flounder, in the sea,
Hither, quickly come to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I dare not tell.”

Sure enough, the same fish he had caught in the morning, came swimming up and said, “What do you want with me?”

“Oh,” said the old man, “I came down to catch you again. My wife says I should have made a wish before I let you go.”

“What does she want?” asked the fish.

“She does not like the old hut, and wishes a nice new cottage.”

“Go home,” said the fish, “she has it now.”

When the old man went back, the tiny hut was gone. In its place stood a pretty little cottage. More than that, there was a yard with shade trees in front of the house.

His wife came out to meet him, and he hardly knew her, for she was dressed neatly, and wore a snowy cap and apron.

Her face was bright with smiles as she led him into the house. There, all was neat and bright as she herself. The old man's heart was full of joy, as he looked, first at his wife and then at the cheerful rooms.

“See, now,” said she, “is not this worth wishing for?”

Then she led him back of the house, where he saw a fat, sleek-looking cow, lazily eating grass in a meadow near by. The air was filled with the cackling of hens and the drowsy hum of bees.

There was, too, a fine orchard in full bloom, and so many good things, besides, that the old man could not help saying, “Now, dear wife, we have nothing more to wish for.”

And for many days it did seem as if this were true. But one morning the wife said to her husband:

“This house and yard are too small. The flounder may as well give us a larger one. Go to him and say that I wish to live in a stone castle.”

“Ah, wife,” said the good old man,

“we should thank God for what we have, and not be always wishing for more. The sun can reach us better here than if we were in a stone castle.”

“I care not for the sun,” said his wife. “Give me rather a heap of shining gold. Go at once. I wish to be out of this.”

With a sad heart the old man went again to the sea. When he came near the water it was green and yellow no longer, but dark blue and black. The waves did not dance at all, and he thought, “Ah, my old friend does not know me.” Then he called :

“Flounder, Flounder, in the sea,
Hither, quickly come to me,
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I dare not tell.”

Soon the water parted and the fish came up.

“What do you wish now?” he asked.

“Oh,” said the fisherman, “my wife has grown tired of the cottage and wishes to have a castle.”

“Go home, she has it now,” said the fish.

But this did not cheer the old man, and he went sadly towards his home.

Where the pretty little cottage had stood, he saw a beautiful stone castle. Down the broad marble steps came a grand lady, dressed in silk, and wearing costly jewels. It was his wife.

She took him by the hand and led him through the fine rooms. It was all so dazzling, that when they were through, the old man went out into the sunlight to rest his eyes.

The castle stood in the center of a beautiful park. In the park were tame deer, and birds were singing sweetly, among the branches of the trees. This pleased him very much and his heart began to grow light again.

That evening he said to his wife, "Surely, dear wife, you have all you wish now."

"I am not so sure about that," said she. "I have been thinking how nice it would be if we were king and queen. Go to the flounder and tell him we wish it."

"Ah, but I do not wish to be king; we have so much now, why wish for more?"

"Go, then, and tell him I wish to be queen."

With a very heavy heart, he went

again to the sea. This time the water was black. The waves dashed up at him as though they were angry; but he stood still and called:

“Flounder, Flounder, in the sea,
Hither, quickly come to me,
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I dare not tell.”

“What does she want now,” asked the flounder.

“She wishes to be queen.”

“Go home, and find her so,” said the flounder.

When he came again to his home, the old man found that the castle had become larger. It was now a palace. In front of it was a great gate-way, before which stood a herald and many soldiers.

He found everything about the palace made of marble and pure gold; the curtains were woven of gold and silver thread, and fringed with gold. But the marble was so cold it chilled him; and the gleam of gold and silver hurt his eyes, so that he closed them, and wished for his little cottage. But this could not be; his wife was now queen, and he must go to her.

So through the hall he went, in and out of the great doors, until he came to the throne room.

There sat his wife upon a high throne of gold and diamonds. She wore a crown of gold, set with costly gems. On each side of the throne stood six pages in a row, each a head taller than the other.

The old man stood for a long time



“WHERE THE PRETTY LITTLE COTTAGE HAD STOOD HE SAW
A BEAUTIFUL STONE CASTLE”

looking at this scene. At last he said,

“Ah, wife, are you really queen?”

“Yes,” said she, “now I am queen.”

“And how do you like it? Now you have nothing more to choose.”

“I will think about that,” she said, and the old man wondered where it would end.

The next morning the queen arose very early. The sun was just peeping through the trees, and the drops of dew shone like so many diamonds.

“Why may I not make the sun rise?” thought she. Then calling to her husband, she said, “Go and tell the flounder I want to make the sun rise.”

When the old man heard this, he was so frightened that he could scarcely stand.

“Ah, wife, why do you wish such a thing. It can not be. I dare not ask it,” he said.

“Go at once,” was the answer. “I cannot rest until I have my wish.” So the old man went slowly down to the sea, his heart beating with fear.

When he came to the shore a great storm was raging. The waves were

mountain high, and when he called he could not hear his own voice; but he called as loudly as he could,

“Flounder, Flounder, in the sea,
Hither, quickly come to me;
For my wife, Dame Isabel,
Wishes what I dare not tell.”

“What does she wish now?” asked the fish.

“Ah!” said he, “she wants to make the sun rise.”

“Go back, and find her in her hovel,” said the flounder.

And there they had to live all the rest of their lives.

THE THREE WISHES.

A good man was once traveling through a strange land. Night came on while he was yet far from any inn. He sat down on a stone to rest. He was very tired and hungry, and felt as though he could go no farther.

After resting awhile, he arose and went on. He had gone but a few steps when he saw two houses—one on each side of the road.

One house was large and beautiful. It belonged to a rich man. The other was a tiny old hut. It looked almost ready to fall over.

The stranger looked at them a few moments.

“I will stay with the rich man,” thought he. “He is better able to keep me.”

Then he knocked at the door. The rich man put his head out of the window and said:

“Who are you, and what do you want?”

“I am a traveler,” said the man. “I am very tired and hungry and can go no farther. May I stay here all night?”

“No,” said the rich man, “I have no room for you. If we kept every beggar that came along we should soon have nothing for ourselves.” With that he closed the window.

The man turned away, and went across to the old hut. He knocked softly, and the door was opened wide.

The poor man did not ask who he was nor what he wanted. He only said:

“Come right in, stranger, and sit down. You look very tired.”

“That I am,” said the man. “I have come a long way to-day, and have had nothing to eat since morning.”

The poor man’s wife gave him a chair, saying:

“We haven’t much, but such as it is, you are most welcome to it.”

The stranger thanked her and sat down. While she was getting the supper ready, he told of his travels. He seemed to forget that he was tired and hungry, until the wife said:

“Now, draw your chair to the table, friend. There is not much on it, but it’s the best we have.”

The stranger thanked her, saying:

“Your kindness will make it a feast.”

And it did seem as though he had never eaten such good bread and butter. The potatoes were good enough for a king. And the milk—well, I’m sure it was the sweetest and richest he had ever tasted.

You think it was because he was so hungry. Perhaps it was. Any way the stranger thought it a very good supper.

When he was through eating, they talked until bed-time. Then the wife called her husband aside and said:

“The stranger is very tired. Let us give him our bed and we will sleep on the floor.”

But the good man said:

“I cannot think of such a thing. I will sleep on the floor myself.”

Neither the old man nor his wife would listen to this. So the stranger took their bed, and they lay down upon the floor.

I do not think it seemed very hard to them, after all. As for the stranger, he was soon fast asleep.

The good wife was up before day-break next morning. When the stranger awoke, breakfast was almost ready.

“Well, my friend, have you rested well?” asked the old man.

“I never slept better in my life,” said the stranger. “But you and your good wife must be very tired.”

“Indeed we are not,” said the wife. “I feel as fresh as if I had slept on a bed of down.”

“And I too,” said the old man.

Then they all sat down to breakfast.

And such a breakfast as that was! To be sure they had only corn cakes, butter, honey and coffee. But what more was needed?

As soon as breakfast was over the stranger said, "I am very sorry to leave such good friends, but I must go on my way. You have been so kind to me, that I cannot go without doing something for you."

"No," said the old man, "we do not wish to be paid for doing a kindness."

"Well," said the stranger, "if you will not take pay, I will grant you three wishes."

They thought awhile, and then the old man said, "We wish, first, for good health and enough to eat. Then, we have always thought we should like to die at the same time."

“You shall have what you ask,” said the stranger.” But you have another wish. Is there nothing else you would like to have?”

“We think of nothing else now,” said they.

“Would you not like a new house in the place of this old one?” asked the stranger.

“Well, yes,” said the old man. “That would be nice, if we could have it so.”

No sooner had he said it than they found themselves in a beautiful new house. There stood the stranger smiling at them and bidding them good-bye.

When he was gone, they went through the house. It had everything in it to make them happy. Then they

sat down and looked at each other.

“You look ten years younger,” said the wife.

“And you look fifteen years younger,” said the husband. Then they laughed.

At this time the rich man and his wife were just getting up. The wife looked out of the window.

“Just come here,” she said to her husband. “What does this mean? Last night our neighbors lived in an old hut. Now they have a fine new house.”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” said her husband. “Go over and ask them.”

Tap, tap, tap, sounded on the door of the new house. The good woman ran to open it. There stood the rich man’s wife. She had never been there

before. They kindly asked her to come in.

“What a beautiful new house!” she said. “Do tell me all about it.”

They sat down and told her of the stranger who had stayed with them the night before.

“And when he got ready to go this morning, he granted us three wishes,” said the old man. “We wished first for good health and enough to eat; then that we might die together. He said we should have what we asked, adding, ‘Is there nothing else you want? Would you not like a new house?’”

“We told him it would please us very much. Then he went away.”

The rich man’s wife went home and told the story to her husband.

“Oh, I wish I had known it,” said he.

“Known what?” asked his wife.

“Why, the same man was here last night. He wanted to stay, but I told him we didn’t keep beggars.”

“Saddle your horse and ride after him,” said his wife. “You can soon overtake him. He can not have gone very far.”

“But what good will that do?” asked the husband.

“Why, don’t you see?” said his wife. “Tell him you are sorry for what you did, ask him to come here the next time, and to grant us three wishes.”

The rich man did not wait to be told twice. He saddled his horse quickly and rode after the stranger. By and by he overtook him, resting by

the roadside. After talking awhile, the rich man said:

“You should not have been in such a hurry last night. I was looking for the key to unlock the door, and you went away. The next time you come this way you must stop with us.”

“I will,” said the traveler, “if I ever come back.”

Then the rich man asked if he, too, might have three wishes.

“Yes,” said the traveler, “but you will be sorry you asked for them.”

The rich man thought that could not be, as he was sure he could make good wishes.

“Very well,” said the traveler. “Whatever you wish shall come true.”

The rich man thanked him and

turned towards home. He let the rein fall upon the horse's neck.

The horse soon found that no one



“DOWN FELL THE POOR HORSE AND BROKE HIS NECK”

was holding the rein, and began to prance about.

“Be quiet, will you?” he said. But the horse only pranced the more.

“I wish you would fall and break your neck!” he cried.

Foolish man! Down fell the poor horse and broke its neck. Then he saw that he had lost his first wish and a good horse besides. He stood for awhile and looked at the poor animal.

“Well,” said he, “it will not do to leave that good saddle here.”

So he took off the saddle and threw it across his shoulder. By this time the sun was quite hot. Walking through the deep sand made him warm and tired, and the saddle seemed to grow very heavy. Just then he thought of his wife.

“She is sitting at home in a nice cool room, all this time, while I trudge along in this hot sand and carry this heavy saddle.”

“I wish she was sitting on it this minute, and couldn’t get off?” cried he.

Before the last word was out of his mouth the saddle was gone. He knew then that he had lost his second wish.

When he reached home he ran quickly into the house. Sure enough, there sat his wife upon the saddle.

“Come and wish me off this saddle,” she cried.

“I have only one wish left,” said he. “Do keep quiet and let me think. I must make a good wish.”

“But what good will that do me, if I must sit on this saddle all my life?” said she.

And whether he would or no, he had to wish her off the saddle.

THE GOLDEN TOUCH.

There was once a king who was very rich. His name was Midas. King Midas loved gold better than anything else in the world. There was nothing he loved half so well except his little daughter, Marygold. He thought, foolish man, that the way to show this love, was to get for her as much gold as he could.

Down deep under his castle, was a small, dark room. In this room King Midas kept his gold. Every day he went there to look at it.

He was always careful to lock the door, so that no one could follow him. This room was a very dreary place. Only one little sunbeam ever thought

of peeping into it. King Midas loved this little sunbeam, because his gold could not shine without it.

He used to put his treasure right where the little ray would fall upon it. Then he would play with the pieces of gold, throwing them up and catching them again. He had a large bowl of solid gold. It was so bright that he could see himself in it. He would sit for hours and look at his face in this rich mirror. Sometimes the face seemed to be making fun of him. Then he would lay it aside.

Next, he would bring out his bags of gold dust and let the dust run through his fingers, as a child plays with sand. He often said to himself:

“Oh, I wish I had the whole world for my treasure-room, and full of gold

all my own; then I could be happy.”

One day while he was looking at his gold, he thought the sunbeam grew larger. It seemed to fill the whole room. The rays danced in the corners like fairies. King Midas looked up. There stood a beautiful young man near the door. His face was so bright that the king shaded his eyes with his hands as he looked.

“You are a very rich man, friend Midas. With all this gold you ought to be the happiest man in the world.”

“Yes,” said Midas, “I have done very well; but it has taken almost a lifetime to get this. Now, if I could live a thousand years, I might get rich!”

“Why, haven’t you enough yet?” asked the young man, opening his eyes very wide.

“No,” said Midas.

“Well,” said the stranger, “I should like to know what would satisfy you. Will you be kind enough to tell me?”

The king thought for a time and then said:

“If I could have my way, everything I touch would turn to gold.”

“Are you quite sure this would satisfy you?” asked the young man.

“Sure of it?” cried Midas. “Why shouldn’t it satisfy me?”

“And are you sure you would never be sorry you made such a wish?” said the stranger.

“How could I be sorry? I tell you I should be the happiest man in the world.”

“Very well,” said the stranger, “tomorrow, at sunrise, you will have the Golden Touch.

When King Midas awoke the next morning a little sunbeam shone on his bed. He put out his hand and touched the coverlet. It was changed to gold. With a cry of joy he sprang from his bed.

“Hurrah! I have the Golden Touch.” he cried.

He ran about touching everything in the room. Of course they all turned to gold. Then he dressed himself and was delighted to find that his clothes had become beautiful garments of gold. He put on his spectacles, but could not see through them. Taking them off and rubbing them he saw that the glass had become plates of gold.

As he went down stairs, he put his hand on the railing. It turned to gold.

He opened the door and went into



"IN THIS ROOM KING MIDAS KEPT HIS GOLD"

the garden. The roses were nodding in the fresh morning breeze; the air was filled with their sweet perfume. But King Midas did not care for this. What do you think he did? Why, he changed everyone of those roses into hard, shining gold. The dew drops became diamonds.

Then he went back to the house. Breakfast was ready. Marygold had not yet come in, so he had her called. She always had bread and milk for her breakfast. She ate it out of a beautiful china bowl. This bowl had strange trees and houses painted upon it. While the father waited for her, he thought he would change her bowl to gold.

“That will please her,” thought he.

Just then he heard her coming. The door opened and she came in. She had

her apron to her eyes and was crying as if her heart would break.

“Why, what is the matter my dear child?” asked the king.

“Oh, my beautiful roses! They are all ugly and yellow,” cried she. “When I try to smell them, their hard petals prick my nose.”

“Well, dear, don’t cry about it. Sit down and eat your bread and milk.”

They both sat down to the table. He thought she would forget about the roses, when she saw her golden bowl; but she was too sad to notice it. Perhaps it was best that she did not, for she had always been so fond of looking at the pictures upon it. These faded as soon as the bowl was changed to gold.

His walk in the garden had given

the king a good appetite. His breakfast of baked potatoes, fish, hot cakes and coffee looked very good indeed.

“Well, this is nice,” he said, as he poured out a cup of coffee. He smiled when he saw the coffee pot turn to gold.

“I shall soon have nothing but gold on my table,” thought he, and began to wonder where he could keep his treasure.

He raised the cup of coffee to his lips. That, too, turned to gold. Of course he could not drink it. He set the cup down quickly. Marygold looked up and asked,

“What is the matter, father?”

“Nothing, child, nothing,” said the king.

He thought he would try one of the fish. As soon as he touched it, it be-

came hard and bright. Then he broke one of the cakes. It became yellow and heavy.

“I don’t quite see how I am to get any breakfast,” thought the king.

He looked at Marygold. She was quietly eating her bread and milk. How he longed to have just one bite! What good would all this gold do him, if he could not eat anything?

The potatoes looked so tempting that he thought he would try again.

“Perhaps I can swallow so quickly, that a potato will not have time to turn to gold,” thought he.

Poor foolish Midas! He popped one into his mouth, but it changed as soon as he touched it. The hot gold burned him so that he jumped up and cried out with pain.

“Why, what is the matter, dear father?” cried Marygold. “Have you burned yourself?”

“Oh, my child,” said the king, “I don’t know what is to become of your poor father!”

Marygold got down from her chair and ran to him. By this time Midas hated the very sight of gold. He felt that Marygold was all he had to love now. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

Oh, unhappy Midas! Marygold, too, had become hard, shining gold. There were the tears still on her cheeks; they were little lumps of gold now. Everything was the same, even the pretty dimple in her chin.

Poor Midas! His heart was almost broken. He threw himself upon the

floor and tried to pray. The words would not come.

All at once the room grew very bright. Midas raised his head. There stood the stranger who had given him the Golden Touch. His face was sad, yet Midas thought he saw a smile there, too, as he said :

“ Well, friend Midas, how do you like the Golden Touch ? ”

“ Hush ! ” cried the king. “ I hate the very name of gold ! ”

“ Why, how is this ? ” asked the stranger. “ Have you not enough yet ? ”

“ Enough ! ” cried the king. “ Too much ! I wish I might never see gold again. Gold is not everything. See, ” said he, pointing to Marygold. “ I would give all the gold in the world, just to see her smile again. ”

“You are sure you have had enough of the Golden Touch?” asked the stranger.

Midas' look showed that he thought the question a very foolish one.

“Take a vase,” said the young man, “and go to the river that runs by your garden; jump head first into the river and fill the vase with the water; then put a few drops of it on anything you have changed to gold. It will become as it was before,” and the stranger was gone.

You may be sure the king lost no time. He took a vase, and running to the river, jumped in. As soon as he touched the water his heart seemed to grow light. He was glad to see the vase become china again.

He filled it and went quickly to the

house. The first thing he did was to sprinkle a little water over Marygold. As soon as it touched her, her cheeks became pink and her blue eyes opened wide.

“Why are you throwing water on me, father?” she cried. “You will soil my pretty dress.”

The king said nothing. He did not want her to know how foolish he had been. He took her in his arms and kissed her many times.

While she went to put on another dress, he took the vase into the garden and put a few drops of water on each flower. When Marygold came out she was delighted to see them bowing to her as if nothing had been wrong.

The king did not stop until he had put water on everything he had turned

to gold. Then he remembered that he was very hungry. Never had he eaten anything half so good as that breakfast. He was a happy man now.

Two things were left to remind him of the Golden Touch. The sand in the river sparkled like gold, and Marygold's hair, which had once been brown, now had a tinge of gold. As this made her more beautiful, Midas was not sorry. He used to say it was the only gold he cared for now.

RHÆCUS.

There was once a little boy whose name was Rhæcus. He had neither father nor mother, and was often very lonely. He loved to play in the woods. He used to say that the trees and flowers were his friends, and that the little brook sang to him.

There was one large oak that he loved better than any tree in the forest. He often lay down in its shade, when very tired.

One night there came a great storm. The wind blew very, very hard. The next day Rhæcus went into the forest and ran to the old oak. It was almost ready to fall down. He propped it up. Just as he was going away, he thought

he heard a voice call, "Rhœcus!" He looked around, but could see no one.

Again he turned to go and again the voice called, "Rhœcus!" This time he saw a beautiful woman standing by the tree.

"Rhœcus," she said, "I am the Dryad of this tree. When you propped it up you saved my life. Ask what you will, and I will grant it, if I can."

Rhœcus did not think long before he answered:

"I should like to have you for my friend."

"Very well," said the Dryad, "come back again before sunset, and you shall have your wish."

Then she was gone. Rhœcus listened to hear more, but everything was still.

He turned and went back to the vil-

lage in which he lived. There he saw some boys playing. They asked him to join them and he did so. The hours passed by and Rhœcus forgot his promise.

The sun was just setting when a bee flew close to his ear. He brushed it away. It came again, and again he brushed it away. A third time it came Rhœcus grew angry and struck the bee with his hat. It fell to the ground but soon rose and flew slowly away. Rhœcus watched it fly toward a mountain. He could see the red sun just going down behind the mountain. All at once he remembered and his heart stood still.

He turned and ran wildly down to the forest. He reached the old oak just as the sun set.

“Rhœcus!” said the voice. He looked but could see no one.

“Oh, Rhœcus! You are too late. I sent the bee to warn you, but you sent it away with bruised wings.”

“Forgive me,” cried Rhœcus. “I will never forget again.”

“I can forgive you,” said the voice, “but you can never see me again.”

Rhœcus fell upon his knees and begged. All in vain. He heard only the one word “Nevermore.” Then all was still and he was alone.

LITTLE DAFFYDOWNDILLY.

There was once a little boy whose name was Daffydowndilly. Isn't that a pretty name? Well, Daffydowndilly was a very pretty little boy. He had bright blue eyes and his cheeks were like roses, while his hair made one think of spun gold.

You think his name sounds like the name of a flower? So it does. That is why it was such a good name for this little boy. He looked like a bright flower. He often played in the meadows all day long. He liked to do only what was easy and pleasant.

Daffydowndilly's mother was very kind to him. Her sweet face always

wore a smile for the little boy. Indeed, I do not think he knew what a frown was.

But Daffydowndilly could not always play. Like all little boys, he was soon old enough to go to school, and then was sent away from his pleasant home to a school so many miles away, that he had to stay there all the time. The schoolmaster's name was Mr. Toil.

Daffydowndilly had never before seen a face like Mr. Toil's. There were such deep lines in it. How he frowned on the lazy boys! How harsh his voice was when he spoke to them!

Daffydowndilly had been at school but a week when he said to himself, "I don't like to go to school. I'm afraid of Mr. Toil. I don't like to work. I want to play. I'll run away."



"I AM RUNNING AWAY FROM SCHOOL BECAUSE I DO NOT
LIKE THE MASTER," HE SAID

So the very next morning, Daffy-downdilly ran away. He had some bread and cheese for his breakfast and a little money in his pocket.

How glad he was to get away from school! He felt like a bird out of its cage.

He had not gone far when he overtook a man who, also, was walking.

“Good morning, my boy,” said the stranger. “Where are you going so early?”

Now, Daffydowndilly had never told a falsehood in his life and would not tell one now. After looking at the stranger for a moment he said,

“I am running away from school because I do not like the master. His name is Mr. Toil, and oh, he is so cross! I want to go where I shall never hear of him again.”

“Oh, very well, my little friend,” said the stranger. “We will go together. I, too, know Mr. Toil, and should like to find a place where he has never been heard of.”

This did not quite please Daffydowndilly. He would like a little boy for his companion much better. Then they could stop and gather flowers or chase butterflies. That would be so pleasant. But he thought,

“This man will know better which way to go. He will take care of me and keep me from harm.”

So he trudged along with the stranger. They had not gone far, when they came to a field where men were at work, cutting the tall grass. Then they spread it out in the sun to dry.

Daffydowndilly was delighted with

the sweet smell of the new-mown grass. The sun shown down on the field. The birds sang in the trees near by.

“Oh, how beautiful!” cried he. “Let us stop and watch them. I wish I might stay here always. How much nicer it is here, than in that old school-room.”

Just then he saw something that made him start back and catch his companion’s hand.

“Quick, quick!” cried he. “Let us run away or he will catch us!”

“Who will catch us?” asked the stranger.

“Mr. Toil, the old schoolmaster,” answered Daffydowndilly. “Don’t you see him in the field there?”

He pointed to an old man who seemed to be the owner of the field.

He had taken off his coat and was working in his shirt sleeves. He did not rest a moment. All the time he kept saying,

“Make hay while the sun shines, my men,”

Sure enough, he did look just like Mr. Toil. His voice, too, was the same. Yet Mr. Toil must have been in the school room at that time.

“Don't be afraid,” said the stranger. This is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster. It is one of his brothers. He is a farmer. People say he is worse than the schoolmaster. But he won't trouble you, unless you go to work on his farm.”

Daffydowdilly believed this, yet was glad to get away. By-and-by they saw some carpenters building a house.

Daffydowndilly wanted to stop again. He loved to watch the men making doors and putting in windows. How neatly they did their work.

It was a pretty sight to see the shavings roll from under the plane. They looked like ribbons.

“How nice it would be to have a saw, a hammer, and a plane, and build a little house for myself,” thought he.

While he was thinking what fine fun this would be, he saw something which made him cry out,

“Make haste. Quick, quick! There he is again!”

“Who?” asked the stranger.

“Old Mr. Toil,” said Daffydowndilly. “There! Don’t you see him among the carpenters? That’s my old schoolmaster, as sure as I live!”

The stranger looked where he pointed. He saw an old man with a carpenter's rule in his hand. He was marking out the work to be done. All the time he was telling the men to work hard. And they sawed and hammered and planed as if for their lives.

"Oh, no!" said the stranger, "this is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster. It is another brother of his. He is a carpenter."

"I'm very glad to hear it," said Daffydowndilly. "But I'd like to get out of his way as soon as I can."

So on they went. Soon they heard the sound of a drum and fife. Daffydowndilly knew there must be soldiers coming.

"Let us make haste," said he "I want to see the soldiers."

They walked as fast as they could, and soon met a company of soldiers. They were gayly dressed, with beautiful feathers in their caps and carried bright guns on their shoulders.

In front marched two drummers and fifers. How they beat their drums and played their fifes! What lively music they made! Daffydowndilly thought he would like to follow them to the end of the world.

“If I were a soldier,” he thought, “Mr. Toil would never dare to look me in the face.”

“Quick step! Forward march!” shouted a gruff voice.

Daffydowndilly started to run.

“There he is again,” he cried. “I know his voice.”

Daffydowndilly pointed to the cap-

tain. He was, indeed, the very image of Mr. Toil. To be sure he wore a cap and feather, and carried a sword instead of a stick. But Daffydowndilly was sure it was his old schoolmaster.

“You are mistaken again, my little friend,” said the stranger. “This is not Mr. Toil, the schoolmaster, but another brother of his. He is a soldier and has been in the army all his life. You and I need not fear him.”

“Well,” said Daffydowndilly, “I’m glad to hear it; but, if you please sir, I don’t want to see the soldiers any more.”

On they went and, by-and-by, came to a house by the roadside. They could hear the sound of a fiddle within and, through the open doorway could see boys and girls dancing. They were

having a merry time. Daffydowndilly thought he had never seen anything half so pretty.

“Oh, let us stop here,” he said. “Mr. Toil would never dare show his face where there is music and dancing. We shall be safe enough here.”

Just then he looked at the fiddler. Whom should he see again but old Mr. Toil. He had a violin bow instead of a stick, but looked exactly like the old schoolmaster.

“Oh, dear me!” said Daffydowndilly, turning pale. “Is there nobody but Mr. Toil in the whole world! Who would have thought he could play a fiddle!”

“This is not your old schoolmaster,” said the stranger. “This is another brother of his. He calls himself Mr.

Pleasure, but his real name is Toil. Those who know him best, say he is worse than any of his brothers.

“Let us go a little farther,” said Daffydowndilly. “I don’t like the looks of this fiddler at all.”

So they went on through shady lanes and pleasant villages. Everywhere the sky was blue, the sun shone, and the birds sang. But go where they would, there was the image of old Mr. Toil. Whether they stopped at a cottage or a mansion, it was all the same. Sometimes they found him in the parlor, very often in the kitchen. He was sure to be there somewhere.

Daffydowndilly was very tired, and seeing some men lying in a shady place by the roadside, he cried,

“Oh, let us sit down and rest. Mr.

Toil will never come here. He hates to see people resting.”

Just then he looked at one of the men. He seemed to be the laziest of all. Who should it be again, but the very image of old Mr. Toil.

“There is a very large family of these Toils,” said the stranger. “This is another one of the schoolmaster’s brothers. He is a very idle fellow and does nothing but have, what he calls, a good time, but I think he has a harder time than any of the others.”

Daffydowndilly began to cry.

“Oh, take me back! Take me back!” said he. “If there is nothing but toil in the world, I may as well go back to the school house!”

“Well, there it is,” said the stranger. And, sure enough, there it was.

You see they had been going in a circle, instead of a straight line.

“Come, we will go back to school together.”

Something in the stranger's voice made Daffydowndilly look at him. There, again, was the face of old Mr. Toil! So the poor boy had been with him all day, even while he was trying so hard to get away from him.

When he came to know the schoolmaster better, he found that he was not so bad, after all. And when he learned his lessons well, the old schoolmaster's smile was almost as pleasant as was that of his own mother.

THE TOY OF THE GIANT'S CHILD

Once upon a time a good giant lived in a great stone castle, far up among the mountains. One bright, sunny day his daughter came out and played beside the door. By-and-by she grew tired of her play.

“I will go down into the valley,” said she, “and see what the people are doing there.”

So she tripped merrily down the mountain side. In the valley she saw a farmer plowing corn. He whistled a merry tune as he worked. His plow shone in the sun like silver. The horses arched their glossy necks and stepped proudly. It was a pretty sight.



“THE GIANT’S DAUGHTER HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT”

The giant's daughter had never seen anything like it before.

"I will take it home and show father," she said.

So she spread her handkerchief upon the ground and placed man, horses, and plow all on it. Then tying the corners nicely, she carried it up to the castle.

"Oh, father, see what I have!" she cried. "Such a beautiful plaything. I found it in the valley."

Her father was reading, but he turned away from his book and said,

"What is it my dear? Let me see it."

She took them from her handkerchief and placed them upon the table.

"Why, my dear child!" cried her father. "This is no plaything. It is a farmer who has been plowing his corn.

Wrap them up carefully and carry them again to the valley. Remember that it was from the farmer that the race of giants came. Know, too, that if it were not for the farmer, we should have no bread."

The girl did as her father told her. She afterwards went many times to the valley to watch the farmer at his work, but she never tried to carry him away again.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN.

There was once a poor miller who had a beautiful daughter. People said there was not so sweet a face in all the country round. She was also a very good girl and her father was proud of her.

One day he had to go to speak with the king. He wished the king to think well of him, so he told him that he had a daughter who could spin straw into gold. Now, the king liked nothing so well as gold. He thought to himself,

“That is an art that would please me well.” So he said to the miller, “Your daughter is indeed very clever, if she can do that. Bring her to the castle

to-morrow. I wish to see if what you say is true.”

The miller saw that he had made a great mistake in telling the king such a story. But he did not like to say that it was not true. So he went home and said to his daughter,

“Ah, daughter, we are getting up in the world. To-day I visited the king and to-morrow you are to visit him.”

“I!” said his daughter. “Why, father, what do you mean? What business have I with the king?”

“Well,” said her father, “I may as well tell you at once. To-day, while I was at the castle, I told him that you could spin straw into gold.”

“What made you think of telling him such a thing as that?” cried the girl.

“Well,” said he, “I wanted the king

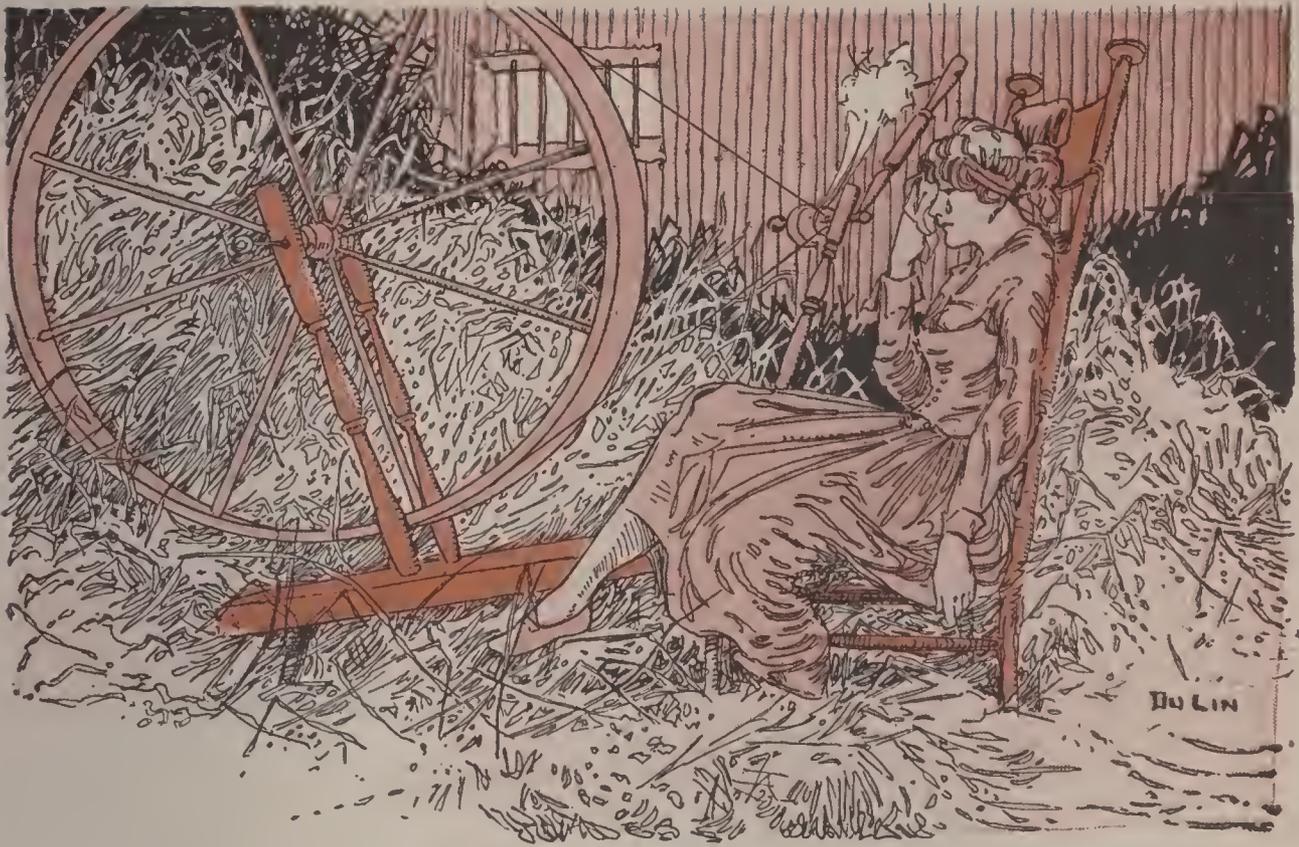
to think well of me. I did not think he would ask me to prove it.”

“Oh, father, father!” You have done a very wrong and foolish thing. You should not have tried to get the king’s good will by telling him what was not true.”

“Well, I am very sorry I did it, but it is too late now to make it right.” So the next morning the poor girl started to the king’s castle. As soon as she got there the king led her into a room full of straw. Giving her a wheel, he said,

“Now set yourself to work, and if you have not spun this straw into gold by sunrise to-morrow morning, you must die.” Then he shut the door and left the maiden alone.

There she sat for a long time think-



“AT LAST SHE BEGAN TO CRY”

ing how to save her life. At last, in despair, she began to cry. All at once the door opened and in stepped the queerest looking little old man.

“Good evening, fair maiden,” said he. “Why do you cry like this?”

“Ah,” she said, “I must spin this straw into gold, and I am sure I do not know how it is to be done.”

“What will you give me if I spin it for you?” asked the little man.

“My necklace,” said the maiden.

The dwarf took it, sat down in front of the wheel, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three times round and the bobbin was full. Then he set up another, and whirr, whirr, whirr, three times around and a second bobbin was full. The wheel went round so fast that the maiden was afraid the dwarf's long beard would be caught in it; but it was not. So he went on spinning all night long. At last all the straw was spun, and the bobbins were full of gold.

At sunrise the king came. He was very much surprised to see the gold. It made his heart glad, but he wanted more yet. He led the girl into a still larger room full of straw.

“Now,” said he, “go to work. If you have not spun this straw into gold by sunrise to-morrow morning, you must die.” Then he shut the door and left the girl alone.

She did not know what to do so she began to cry. While she was crying, the door opened and in came the dwarf.

“What will you give me this time if I spin the straw into gold?” asked the little man.

“The ring from my finger,” she answered. The little man took the ring and began to spin at once. By morning all the straw was changed into shining gold. At sunrise the king came. He was much pleased when he saw the gold. Still he was not satisfied. He led the maiden into another still larger room, full of straw.

“This you must spin to-night,” said he. “If you can do it, you shall become queen. I could not find a richer wife in all the world,” he thought to himself.

When the maiden was left alone, the door opened and the dwarf came in.

“What will you give me to do this for you?” he asked.

“I have nothing left that I can give you,” said the maiden.

“Well,” said the dwarf, “I’ll wait five years, and at the end of that time I’ll come and take the thing you love best. What do you say to that?”

The maiden thought to herself, “When I become queen I will have so many beautiful things that it will be easy enough to pay him then. Besides, he may forget all about it before the five years have gone by. So she said,

“All right. You may do the work, and come again at the end of five years for your pay.”

The dwarf went to work and by morning the spinning was done. When the king came and saw this he said,

“You are worth your weight in gold and you shall be my wife.” And so there was a grand wedding and the miller’s beautiful daughter became queen.

For a long time she thought every day about the little dwarf. But by-and-by she forgot him. Five years passed by. One day when the queen was sitting by the window playing with the little prince the door opened and in came the dwarf.

“I have come for my pay,” said he. And how he did grin.

The queen was not at all afraid, for she had plenty of gold and jewels. So she said,

“What shall I give you?”

“You promised to give me the thing you love best,” said he, and he looked straight at the young prince.

The poor queen was now all in a tremble. Sure enough she had promised to give him the thing she loved best. And she loved the little prince better than anything else on earth. She clasped the child in her arms and cried,

“No, no, I cannot do that. I will give you all the gold and jewels I have if you will let me keep my child.” Then she began to cry and groan so much that the dwarf said,

“I will give you three days to think.

If in that time you can find out my name you may keep your child."

All night long the queen lay awake thinking over all the names she had ever heard. She also sent a servant through the country to find new names. The next morning the little dwarf came. The queen began with "Caspar," and went over all the odd names she knew. Each time the dwarf would stroke his long beard and say,

"That is not my name."

The second day the queen asked all her people for strange names. When the dwarf came she called him "Ribs of beef," "Sheepshank," "Whalebone," and so on; but each time he stroked his long beard and said,

"That is not my name."

The third day the queen sent the

servant out again. When he came back he said,

“I have not found a single name. But as I came to a high mountain near the edge of a forest, where foxes and hares say good night to each other, I saw a little house. A fire was burning before the door, and round this fire a strange little man was dancing on one leg, and singing,

“To-day I stew, and then I’ll bake,
For to-morrow the prince comes in;
How good it is that nobody knows
That my name is Rumpelstiltskin.”

When the queen heard this she was very glad, for she knew the name. Soon after the dwarf came and asked,

“Now, my lady queen, what is my name?”



"AROUND THE FIRE A STRANGE LITTLE MAN WAS DANCING
AND SINGING"

First she said, "are you called Conrad?"

"No," and he stroked his beard.

"Are you called Hal?"

"No." And by this time he was in such glee that he caught up his long beard, whirled it round and round and then tied it in a knot.

Then the queen looked straight at him and said,

"Are you called Rumpelstiltskin?"

When the little dwarf heard that you may be sure he was very angry. He stamped his right foot so hard that it went into the ground and he could not get it out. Then he took hold of his left leg and pulled so hard that he pulled himself in two.

THE SEVEN RAVENS.

There was once a man who had seven sons. They were beautiful boys, strong and healthy, and their parents loved them dearly. But they could not help wishing for a daughter. The boys, too, wished many times for a little sister to play with.

At last a daughter was born and they were all very happy. But the child was so weak and small they feared it would die. It lived on, day after day, however, until it was almost a year old. Then one day it became very ill. They sent quickly for the doctor and when he came he said,

“She is very sick, but a hot bath may save her.”

So the father called one of the boys to run to the spring for a pail of water. Now they were all so anxious to do something for the sick child, that they could not decide which should go. So the eldest said,

“I will carry the pail to the spring. The one who reaches the spring first may carry the water back to the house. All be ready, and when I say ‘go!’ all run. Ready! One, two, three, go!” and away they all ran, pell mell, down the hill. Just before they reached the spring the one who was carrying the pail tripped and fell. The pail slipped from his hand and rolled into the spring.

They stood there, not knowing what to do. None of them dared to go home. Their parents waited and waited, and they did not come.

“They have forgotten all about it,” said the father. “More than likely they are playing on the way.”

He was so afraid that the child would die, that he said, without thinking,

“I wish they were changed into ravens!”

The words were hardly out of his mouth when he heard a rustling of wings. Looking up he saw seven ravens flying over the house. The parents were much grieved over the loss of their sons, but it could not be helped.

The little girl did not die, but grew stronger and more beautiful every day. She did not know that she had any brothers, for her parents were very careful not to say anything about them when she was near. But one day she

heard some people talking about her. They said,

“Yes, she is very beautiful, but the curse of her brothers is upon her.”

This made her very sad. She went to her parents and asked them what it meant. They told her the story.

“Then I am the cause of it all!” she cried.

“Yes, my dear child,” said her father, “but you are innocent.”

This did not make her think less of it, however.

“I will never be happy until I have found my brothers,” she said to herself. But where was she to go?

At last she made up her mind to leave home, and never to come back until she could bring her brothers with her. She took nothing but a little gold



"LOOKING UP HE SAW SEVEN RAVENS FLYING OVER THE HOUSE"

ring, a piece of bread, a jug of water and a stool.

She traveled on, and on, and on, until she came to the end of the world. Here she ran up against the sun and burned herself. This frightened her so that she turned and ran quickly away. Before she knew it she found herself very near the moon. It was cold and dark, and she heard it say,

“I smell, I smell man’s flesh.”

This frightened her again and she turned and ran to the stars. They were all seated upon golden chairs, and were very kind to her. The morning star was standing. She said to her,

“Where are you going, little girl?”

“Oh, good star, I am looking for my brothers, the seven ravens,” said she.

Then the morning star gave her a crooked bone, and said,

“Your brothers are in the glass palace and you cannot get in without this bone. Be very careful not to lose it.”

The little girl thanked her and went on her way. She had not gone far when she came to the glass palace. But when she looked for the crooked bone it was gone. What was to be done? She stood for a moment thinking. Then she put her finger into the lock, and after working for some time she got the door open.

A little dwarf met her and asked her what she wanted.

“Oh,” said she, “I am looking for my brothers, the seven ravens.”

“My lord ravens are not at home.”



"A LITTLE DWARF MET HER AND ASKED HER WHAT SHE WANTED"

said the dwarf. "But if you wish to wait, come inside."

The dwarf led her into a room where a tiny table stood. On it were seven plates, seven knives, seven forks, and seven cups. The dwarf brought in the supper for the ravens, and she ate a few crumbs from each plate and drank a few drops from each cup.

When she came to the last cup she dropped the gold ring into it. Before she could get it out, she heard the rustling of wings and hid herself. The ravens came in and sat down to supper. When they saw the crumbs, each asked the other,

“Who has been eating from my plate? Who has been drinking from my cup?” But when the seventh raven looked into his cup and found the ring, he knew it and said,

“Our sister must be here. Now we are saved.”

Then she came from her hiding place, and after she had kissed them all they were changed to boys again, and all went home together.

THE GOLDEN BIRD.

Long, long ago, there was a king who had a beautiful garden near his palace. In this garden stood a very wonderful tree. It was not at all like other trees. The apples which grew upon it were pure gold.

The tree had to be guarded day and night lest someone might steal the apples before they were ripe. As soon as they were ripe they were counted. Now it happened that the very next day one of them was missing. This vexed the king very much.

“They have not been carefully watched,” he said to his eldest son. “To-night you must guard the tree. Be

very careful not to close your eyes. I wish to find the thief.”

So when night came the young man went into the garden. He sat down beneath the tree. All went well for a time, but about midnight he fell asleep. In the morning another apple was missing.

The next night the second son had to watch. He was quite sure that he would not be so weak as his brother. But before midnight he grew so sleepy that he could no longer hold his eyes open. In the morning, another apple was missing.

The third son now wished to try it. But his father said,

“I fear you will be even less wakeful than your brothers.”

At last he told him he might try.

The boy lay down under the tree and watched steadily until midnight. Just as the clock struck twelve, he heard a rustling in the air. Looking up, he saw a bird flying by. Its feathers were of pure gold.

The bird lighted upon the tree and picked off one of the apples. Just as it was ready to fly away, he shot at it. The bird was not hurt, but one of its golden feathers dropped off.

The boy took the feather up and went back to the palace. The next morning he showed it to the king and told him what he had seen. The king at once said that he must have the whole bird. So the next morning the eldest son started out in search of the golden bird. He did not doubt in the least that he should find it. When he

had walked about a mile he saw a fox sitting at the edge of a forest. He lifted his gun to shoot, but the fox cried out,

“Do not shoot me, and I will give you a piece of good advice! You are now on the right road to the golden bird. This evening you will come to a village where there are two inns. One of them will be brightly lit up. There will be feasting and merriment going on inside. Do not stop there. Go to the other one, though it will seem a poor place to you.”

The young man thought to himself, “How can such a silly beast know anything about it?”

Then, going nearer, he shot at the fox. But he missed, and the fox ran away with his tail in the air. The

young man walked on, and in the evening he came to the village where stood the two inns. In the one singing and dancing were going on. The other was dark and gloomy.

“I should be very foolish,” he said to himself “if I were to go into this dirty inn while that good one stands so near.”

So he entered the good inn. There he feasted and danced and forgot the golden bird, his father and all good manners.

Time passed by and the eldest son did not return. So the second son started out to find the golden bird. When he reached the edge of the forest he met the fox. He raised his gun to shoot, but the fox cried out,

“Do not shoot me, and I will give you a piece of good advice.” Then he

told the young man of the two inns.

The young man laughed and said,

“How should a silly beast like you know anything about it?” Then going nearer, he shot at the fox. But he missed, and the fox ran away with his tail in the air. The young man went on his way, and soon came to the two inns. Here he found all as the fox had said. He saw his brother, also, who asked him to stop with him. He went in and spent his time in feasting and dancing.

Again a long time passed by, and neither of the brothers returned home. So the youngest son wished to try his luck. But his father said,

“It is useless. You are less likely than your brothers to find the golden bird. If you get into trouble you can-

not help yourself, for you are not very quick.”

But the lad begged so hard, that the king at last said he might go. On the edge of the forest he saw the fox who cried out,

“Do not shoot me, and I will give you a piece of good advice.”

The boy had a kind heart, and said,

“Do not be afraid, little fox, I will not harm you.”

“You shall not be sorry for this,” said the fox. “I will help you find the golden bird, because you are so kind hearted. That you may travel faster, just get on my tail.”

The lad had hardly seated himself when away they went, over hedges and ditches, uphill and downhill, so fast that their hair whistled in the wind.

As soon as they came to the village the youth got off and went into the mean looking inn as the fox told him to do. He slept well and was up early next morning. After breakfast he went into the fields and found the fox waiting for him.

“Now I will tell you what you must do next,” said the fox. “Go straight ahead and you will come to a castle. Before the castle a great many soldiers will be sleeping. Do not be frightened at them, but go right through their midst into the castle. Go through all the rooms until you come into one where the golden bird hangs in a wooden cage. Near by stands an empty golden cage for show, but you must not take the bird out of its ugly cage and place it in the golden one. If you do,

you will fare badly. That you may travel faster, just get on my tail.”

The youth did as the fox told him, and away they went over hill and valley, so fast that their hair whistled in the wind. When they reached the castle the king's son found everything as the fox had said. He soon found the room where the golden bird sat in its wooden cage. There were also three golden apples lying near, the very ones which the bird had taken from his father's tree. The youth thought it would be a pity to take the bird in such an ugly cage. So he took it out and put it in the splendid one.

As soon as he did this the bird began to sing. The windows were open and the soldiers heard it. They came rushing in and made him prisoner. The

next morning he was brought before the king, who said he must die. He begged so hard for his life that at last the king told him he might go free if he brought the golden horse to him.

“This golden horse,” said the king, “can travel faster than the wind. Bring him to me and you shall have the golden bird as a reward.”

The young man went out feeling very sad, for where was he to find the golden horse? All at once he saw his old friend the fox, who said,

“There, you see what has happened because you did not do as I told you. But you are a good lad, and I will show you where to find the golden horse. You must go straight ahead until you come to a castle. In the stable stands this horse. Before the

door a boy will lie fast asleep, so you must lead the horse away quietly. But there is one thing you must mind. Put on the horse the old saddle of wood and leather, and not the golden one which hangs close by. If you do it will be very unlucky.”

Again the fox stretched out his tail, and again they went as fast as the wind. Everything was as the fox had said. The youth went into the stall where the golden horse stood and was about to put on him the old dirty saddle. Just then he saw the golden one and he thought it would be a pity not to put that on him. So he took up the golden saddle. It had hardly touched the back of the horse when he set up a loud neigh. This woke the stable boys, and they took the youth

and put him into prison. The next morning he was told that he must die. But the king promised to give him his life if he would bring the beautiful daughter of the king of the golden castle.

With a heavy heart the youth set out. Which way was he to go? Soon he met his old friend the fox.

“I should have left you in your trouble,” he said, “but I felt sorry for you. I am willing to help you once more. You must go straight ahead until you come to the palace. When you reach there the princess will be taking a walk in the garden. Just outside the palace gates there is a tiny plant which bears a blossom like a white star. Pluck this and carry it to the princess. It is a magic flower and

as soon as she touches it she will be willing to come with you. Only take care that she does not first say good-bye to her parents. If she does, all will be lost.”

With these words the fox again stretched out his tail. The king's son seated himself, and away they went over hill and valley like the wind. When they reached the golden palace, the young man found everything as the fox had said. He plucked the white flower and took it into the garden. As soon as the princess touched it she said she would go with him. But she begged him to allow her to say good-bye to her parents. At first he told her she must not; but when she fell down at his feet and wept, he gave his consent. As soon as the king heard that the young man

was there, he had him put into prison.

The next morning the king said to him,

“I have said that you must die, but there is one way in which you can save your life. There is a mountain before my window, and I cannot see over it. I wish to have it cleared away. If you can do this in eight days you shall have my daughter.”

The king's son at once began digging and shoveling away. But he could do so little that at the end of seven days he gave up all hope. That same evening the fox came to him and said,

“You do not deserve to be helped again, but go away and sleep while I work for you.”

When the young man awoke the next morning and looked out of the

window the mountain was gone. Full of joy he went to the king and told him the work was done. And the king had to keep his promise and give up his daughter.

Then away they went together, and before long they met the fox.

“The golden horse belongs to the princess of the golden castle,” said he. And since you have the one you must also have the other.”

“How shall I get it?” asked the young man.

“That I will tell you,” answered the fox.

“First take the princess to the king who sent you to the golden castle. He will be so overjoyed that he will readily bring out the golden horse. Then you must get upon his back and give your

hand to each for a parting shake. Last of all shake hands with the princess, but keep tight hold of her hand and pull her up behind you. As soon as that is done ride away. No one can catch you for the horse goes as fast as the wind."

"But that will be stealing the horse," said the young man, "and I do not wish to do that."

"No, you will not be stealing him," said the fox, "for he belongs to the princess of the golden castle. The king gave the princess to you and you have a perfect right to take the horse also."

The young man did as the fox told him, and he and the princess rode away on the golden horse. Again they met the fox, who said,



“HE AND THE PRINCESS RODE AWAY ON THE GOLDEN HORSE”

“Now I will help you to get the golden bird. That also belongs to the princess. When you come near the castle where it is, let the princess get down and I will take her into my cave. Then you ride into the castle yard. At sight of the golden horse there will be such joy that they will readily give you

the bird. As soon as you hold the cage in your hand ride back to us.”

As soon as this was done the fox said,

“Now you must reward me for what I have done.”

“What do you wish?” asked the young man.

“When we come into yonder wood, shoot me and cut off my head and feet.”

“That would be a queer reward,” said the prince. “I cannot think of doing such a thing.”

“If you will not do it, I must leave you,” said the fox. “But before I go I will give you some good advice. On your way home do not pay anybody’s debts, and do not sit on the brink of a spring.” With these words it ran into the forest.

The prince thought, "Ah, that is a wonderful animal, but it has some strange fancies! Who would ask me to pay their debts, and why should I wish to sit on the brink of a spring?"

He and the princess rode on, and it chanced that the way led them through the village where his brothers had stopped. There he heard that they had spent all their money and were now in prison because they could not pay their debts. Without thinking of what the fox had told him he paid the money and his two brothers were set free.

After this they all four set out together, and soon came to the forest where they had first met the fox. As it was cool and pleasant beneath the trees, the two brothers said,

"Come, let us rest awhile here by

this spring, and eat and drink.”

The youngest forgot what the fox told him, and they all sat down by the spring. All at once the brothers pushed him into it, and taking the princess, the horse, and the bird, went home to their father.

“We bring you,” said they, “not only the golden bird, but also the golden horse and the princess of the golden castle.”

Everybody was filled with joy. But the horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the princess would not speak, but cried from morning till night.

The youngest brother, however, was not dead. Luckily the spring was dry, and he fell upon some soft moss without hurting himself. But he could not get out. Soon the fox came up again, and

scolded him for not doing as it told him.

“Still I cannot forsake you,” it said. “I will again help you out of your trouble. Hold fast to my tail and I will draw you up to the top.”

When this was done, the fox said, “You are not yet out of danger, for your brothers are not sure you are dead. They have placed men all round the forest to watch. These men have been told to kill you if they see you.”

The young man then changed clothes with a poor old man who was sitting near, and went to the king's palace. Nobody knew him; but as soon as he entered the palace gates the bird began to sing, the horse began to eat, and the princess stopped crying. The king did not understand this, and asked what it meant.

“I do not know,” said the princess; “but I who was sad am now gay, for I feel as if the young prince has returned.”

Then she told the king all that had happened. The king called before him all the people who were in the castle. Among them came the poor young man dressed as a beggar. But the princess knew him. The wicked brothers were punished as they deserved, while the youngest married the princess and afterwards became king.

But what became of the poor fox? Long after, the prince went once again into the wood. There he met the fox, who said,

“You now have everything that you wish, but there is no end to my troubles, although you can help me if

you will.” And once more it begged the prince to cut off its head and feet. At last he did so, and immediately the fox became a man. He was the brother of the princess, and had been changed into a fox. From that day the prince and princess were as happy as they deserved to be.





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