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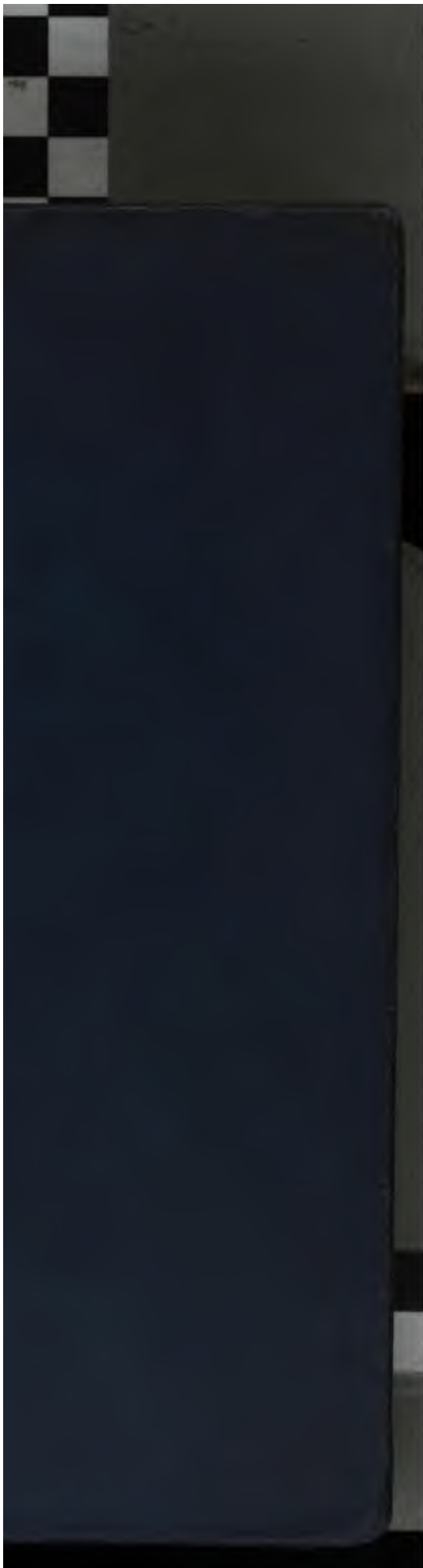
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PREFACE

THESE stories were collected from the mouths of the Turkish peasantry by the Hungarian savant Dr. Ignatius Kunos, during his travels through Anatolia,¹ and published for the first time in 1889 by the well-known Hungarian Literary Society, "A Kisfaludy Társaság," under the title of *Török Népmésék* ("Turkish Folk Tales"), with an introduction by Professor Vámbéry. That distinguished Orientalist, certainly the greatest living authority on the primitive culture of the Turko-Tartaric peoples, who is as familiar with Uzbek epics and Uiguric didactics as with the poetical masterpieces of Western Europe, is enthusiastic in his praises of these folk-tales. He compares the treasures of Turkish folk-lore to precious stones lying neglected in the by-ways of philology for want of gleaners to gather them

¹ He has described his experience in the picturesque and popular *Anatóliai Képek* ("Anatolian Pictures") published at Pest in 1891.

in, and he warns the student of ethnology that when once the threatened railroad actually invades the classic land of Anatolia, these naively poetical myths and legends will, infallibly, be the first victims of Western civilization.

The almost unique collection of Dr. Ignatius Kunos may therefore be regarded as a brand snatched from the burning; in any case it is an important "find," as well for the scientific folk-lorist as for the lover of fairy-tales pure and simple. That these stories should contain anything absolutely new is, indeed, too much to expect. Professor Vámbery himself traces affinities between many of them and other purely Oriental stories which form the bases of *The Arabian Nights*. A few Slavonic and Scandinavian elements are also plainly distinguishable, such, for instance, as that mysterious fowl, the Emerald Anka, obviously no very distant relative of the Bird Mogol and the Bird Zhar, which figure in my *Russian Fairy Tales* and *Cossack Fairy Tales and Folk Tales* respectively, while the story of the *Enchanted Turban* is, in some particulars, curiously like Hans Andersen's story, *The Travelling Companion*. Nevertheless, these tales have a character peculiarly their own; above all, they are remarkable for a vivid imaginativeness, a gorgeous

play of fancy, compared with which the imagery of the most popular fairy tales of the West seem almost prosaically jejune, and if, as Professor Vámbery suggests, these *Népmésék* provide the sort of entertainment which beguiles the leisure of the Turkish ladies while they sip their mocha and whiff their fragrant narghilies, we cannot but admire the poetical taste and nice discrimination, in this respect, of the harem and the seraglio.

I have Englished these tales from the first Hungarian edition, so that this version is, perhaps, open to the objection of being a translation of a translation. Inasmuch, however, as I have followed my text very closely, and having regard to the fact that Hungarian and Turkish are closely cognate dialects (in point of grammatical construction they are practically identical), I do not think they will be found to have lost so very much of their original fragrance and flavour.

I have supplemented these purely Turkish with four semi-Turkish tales translated from the original Roumanian of Ispirescu's *Legende sau Basmele Românilorü*. Bucharest, 1892. This collection, which I commend to the notice of the Folk-Lore Society, is very curious and original, abounding as it

does in extraordinarily bizarre and beautiful variants of the best-known fairy tales, a very natural result of the peculiar combination in Roumanian of such heterogeneous elements as Romance, Slavonic, Magyar, and Turkish.

R. NISBET BAIN.

July 1896

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TURKISH FAIRY TALES

THE STAG-PRINCE

ONCE upon a time, when the servants of Allah were many, there lived a Padishah¹ who had one son and one daughter. The Padishah grew old, his time came, and he died ; his son ruled in his stead, and he had not ruled very long before he had squandered away his whole inheritance.

One day he said to his sister : " Little sister ! all our money is spent. If people were to hear that we had nothing left they would drive us out of doors, and we should never be able to look our fellow-men in the face again. Far better, therefore, if we depart and take up our abode elsewhere." So they tied together the little they had left, and then the brother and sister quitted their father's palace in the night-time, and wandered forth into the wide world.

They went on and on till they came to a vast sandy desert, where they were like to have fallen to

¹ Emperor.

the ground for the burning heat. The youth felt that he could go not a step further, when he saw on the ground a little puddle of water. "Little sister!" said he, "I will not go a step further till I have drunk this water."

"Nay, dear brother!" replied the girl, "who can tell whether it be really water or filth? If we have held up so long, surely we can hold up a little longer. Water we are bound to find soon."

"I tell thee," replied her brother, "that I'll not go another step further till I have drunk up this puddle, though I die for it,"—and with that he knelt down, sucked up every drop of the dirty water, and instantly became a stag.

The little sister wept bitterly at this mischance; but there was nothing for it but to go on as they were. They went on and on, up hill and down dale, right across the sandy waste till they came to a full spring beneath a large tree, and there they sat them down and rested. "Hearken now, little sister!" said the stag, "thou must mount up into that tree, while I go to see if I can find something to eat." So the girl climbed up into the tree, and the stag went about his business, ran up hill and down dale, caught a hare, brought it back, and he and his sister ate it together, and so they lived from day to day and from week to week.

Now the horses of the Padishah of that country were wont to be watered at the spring beneath the large tree. One evening the horsemen led their horses up to it as usual, but, just as they were on the point of drinking, they caught sight of the reflection of the damsel in the watery mirror and reared back. The horsemen fancied that perhaps the water was not quite pure, so they drew off the trough and filled it afresh, but again the horses reared backwards and would not drink of it. The horsemen knew not what to make of it, so they went and told the Padishah.

“Perchance the water is muddy,” said the Padishah.

“Nay,” replied the horsemen, “we emptied the trough once and filled it full again with fresh water, and yet the horses would not drink of it.”

“Go again,” said their master, “and look well about you; perchance there is some one near the spring of whom they are afraid.”

The horsemen returned, and, looking well about the spring, cast their eyes at last upon the large tree, on the top of which they perceived the damsel. They immediately went back and told the Padishah. The Padishah took the trouble to go and look for himself, and raising his eyes perceived in the tree a damsel as lovely as the moon when she is fourteen days old,

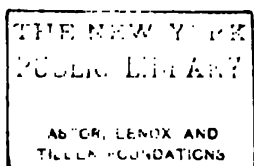
so that he absolutely could not take his eyes off her. "Art thou a spirit or a peri?"¹ said the Padishah to the damsel.

"I am neither a spirit nor a peri, but a mortal as thou art," replied the damsel.

In vain the Padishah begged her to come down from the tree. In vain he implored her, nothing he could say would make her come down. Then the Padishah waxed wroth. He commanded them to cut down the tree. The men brought their axes and fell a-hewing at the tree. They hewed away at the vast tree, they hewed and hewed until only a little strip of solid trunk remained to be cut through; but, meanwhile, eventide had drawn nigh and it began to grow dark, so they left off their work, which they purposed to finish next day.

Scarcely had they departed when the stag came running out of the forest, looked at the tree, and asked the little sister what had happened. The girl told him that she would not descend from the tree, so they had tried to cut it down. "Thou didst well," replied the stag, "and take care thou dost not come down in future, whatever they may say." With that he went to the tree, licked it with his tongue, and immediately the tree grew bigger round the hewed trunk than before.

¹ Fairy.





The Damsel and the Old Witch.—p. 5.

The next day, when the stag had again departed about his business, the Padishah's men came and saw that the tree was larger and harder round the trunk than ever. Again they set to work hewing at the tree, and hewed and hewed till they had cut half through it; but by that time evening fell upon them again, and again they put off the rest of the work till the morrow and went home.

But all their labour was lost, for the stag came again, licked the gap in the tree with his tongue, and immediately it grew thicker and harder than ever.

Early next morning, when the stag had only just departed, the Padishah and his wood-cutters again came to the tree, and when they saw that the trunk of the tree had filled up again larger and firmer than ever, they determined to try some other means. So they went home again and sent for a famous old witch, told her of the damsel in the tree, and promised her a rich reward if she would, by subtlety, make the damsel come down. The old witch willingly took the matter in hand, and bringing with her an iron tripod, a cauldron, and sundry raw meats, placed them by the side of the spring. She placed the tripod on the ground, and the kettle on the top of it but upside down, drew water from the spring and poured it not into the kettle, but on the ground beside it, and with that she kept her eyes closed as if she were blind.

The damsel fancied she really was blind, and called to her from the tree. "Nay but, my dear elder sister! thou hast placed the kettle on the tripod upside down, and art pouring all the water on the ground."

"Oh, my sweet little damsel!" cried the old woman, "that is because I have no eyes to see with. I have brought some dirty linen with me, and if thou dost love Allah, thou wilt come down and put the kettle right, and help me to wash the things." Then the damsel thought of the words of the little stag, and she did *not* come down.

The next day the old witch came again, stumbled about the tree, laid a fire, and brought forth a heap of meal in order to sift it, but instead of meal she put ashes into the sieve. "Poor silly old granny!" cried the damsel compassionately, and then she called down from the tree to the old woman, and told her that she was sifting ashes instead of meal. "Oh, my dear damsel!" cried the old woman, weeping, "I am blind, I cannot see. Come down and help me a little in my affliction." Now the little stag had strictly charged her that very morning not to come down from the tree whatever might be said to her, and she obeyed the words of her brother.

On the third day the old witch again came beneath the tree. This time she brought a sheep

with her, and brought out a knife to flay it with, and began to jag and skin it from behind instead of cutting its throat. The poor little sheep bleated piteously, and the damsel in the tree, unable to endure the sight of the beast's sufferings, came down from the tree to put the poor thing out of its misery. Then the Padishah, who was concealed close to the tree, rushed out and carried the damsel off to his palace.

The damsel pleased the Padishah so mightily that he wanted to be married to her without more ado; but the damsel would not consent till they had brought her her brother, the little stag: until she saw him, she said, she could have not a moment's rest. Then the Padishah sent men out into the forest, who caught the stag and brought him to his sister. After that he never left his sister's side. They lay down together, and together they rose up. Even when the Padishah and the damsel were wedded, the little stag was never far away from them, and in the evening when he found out where they were, he would softly stroke each of them all over with one of his front feet before going to sleep beside them, and say—

“This little foot is for my sister,
That little foot is for my brother.”

But time, as men count it, passes quickly to its fulfilment, more quickly still passes the time of fairy

tales, but quickest of all flies the time of true love. Yet our little people would have lived on happily if there had not been a black female slave in the palace. Jealousy devoured her at the thought that the Padishah had taken to his bosom the ragged damsel from the tree-top rather than herself, and she watched for an opportunity of revenge.

Now there was a beautiful garden in the palace, with a fountain in the midst of it, and there the Sultan's damsel used to walk about. One day, with a golden saucer in her hand and a silver sandal on her foot, she went towards the great fountain, and the black slave followed after her and pushed her in. There was a big fish in the basin, and it immediately swallowed up the Sultan's pet damsel. Then the black slave returned to the palace, put on the golden raiment of the Sultan's damsel, and sat down in her place.

In the evening the Padishah came and asked the damsel what she had done to her face that it was so much altered. "I have walked too much in the garden, and so the sun has tanned my face," replied the girl. The Padishah believed her and sat down beside her, but the little stag came also, and when he began to stroke them both down with his fore-foot he recognized the slave-girl as he said—

“This little foot is for my sister,
And this little foot is for my brother.”

Then it became the one wish of the slave-girl's heart to be rid of the little stag as quickly as possible, lest it should betray her.

So after a little thought she made herself sick, and sent for the doctors, and gave them much money to say to the Padishah that the only thing that could save her was the heart of the little stag to eat. So the doctors went and told the Padishah that the sick woman must swallow the heart of the little stag, or there was no hope for her. Then the Padishah went to the slave-girl whom he fancied to be his pet damsel, and asked her if it did not go against her to eat the heart of her own brother?

“What can I do?” sighed the impostor; “if I die, what will become of my poor little pet? If he be cut up I shall live, while he will be spared the torments of those poor beasts that grow old and sick.” Then the Padishah gave orders that a butcher's knife should be whetted, and a fire lighted, and a cauldron of water put over the fire.

The poor little stag perceived all the bustling about and ran down into the garden to the fountain, and called out three times to his sister—

“The knife is on the stone,
The water's on the boil,
Haste, little sister, hasten!”

And thrice she answered back to him from the fish's maw—

“ Here am I in the fish's belly,
In my hand a golden saucer,
On my foot a silver sandal,
In my arms a little Padishah ! ”

For the Sultan's pet damsel had brought forth a little son in the fish's belly.

Now the Padishah was intent on catching the little stag when it ran down into the garden to the fountain, and, coming up softly behind it, heard every word of what the brother and sister were saying to each other. He quietly ordered all the water to be drained off the basin of the fountain, drew up the fish, cut open its belly, and what do you think he saw? In the belly of the fish was his wife, with a golden saucer in her hand, and a silver sandal on her foot, and a little son in her arms. Then the Padishah embraced his wife, and kissed his son, and brought them both to the palace, and heard the tale of it all to the very end.

But the little stag found something in the fish's blood, and when he had swallowed it, he became a man again. Then he rushed to his sister, and they embraced and wept with joy over each other's happiness.

But the Padishah sent for his black slave-girl,

and asked her which she would like the best—four good steeds or four good swords. The slave-girl replied: “Let the swords be for the throats of my enemies, but give me the four steeds that I may take my pleasure on horseback.” Then they tied the slave-girl to the tails of four good steeds, and sent her out for a ride; and the four steeds tore the black girl into little bits and scattered them abroad.

But the Padishah and his wife lived happily together, and the king’s son who had been a stag abode with them; and they gave a great banquet, which lasted four days and four nights; and they attained their desires, and may ye, O my readers, attain your desires likewise.

THE THREE ORANGE-PERIS

IN the olden times, when there were sieves in straws and lies in everything, in the olden times when there was abundance, and men ate and drank the whole day and yet lay down hungry, in those olden, olden times there was once a Padishah whose days were joyless, for he had never a son to bless himself with.

One day he was in the path of pleasure with his Vizier, and when they had drunk their coffee and smoked their chibooks, they went out for a walk, and went on and on till they came to a great valley. Here they sat down to rest a while, and as they were looking about them to the right hand and to the left, the valley was suddenly shaken as if by an earthquake, a whip cracked, and a dervish, a green-robed, yellow-slippered, white-bearded dervish, suddenly stood before them. The Padishah and the Vizier were so frightened that they dared not budge; but when the

dervish approached them and addressed them with the words, "Selamun aleykyum,"¹ they took heart a bit, and replied courteously, "Ve aleykyum selam."²

"What is thy errand here, my lord Padishah?" asked the dervish.

"If thou dost know that I am a Padishah, thou dost also know my errand," replied the Padishah.

Then the dervish took from his bosom an apple, gave it to the Padishah, and said these words: "Give half of this to thy Sultana, and eat the other half thyself," and with these words he disappeared.

Then the Padishah went home, gave half the apple to his consort, and ate the other half himself, and in exactly nine months and ten days there was a little prince in the harem. The Padishah was beside himself for joy. He scattered sequins among the poor, restored to freedom his slaves, and the banquet he gave to his friends had neither beginning nor end.

Swiftly flies the time in fairy tales, and the child had reached his fourteenth summer while yet they fondled him. One day he said to his father: "My lord father Padishah, make me now a little marble palace, and let there be two springs under it, and let one of them run with honey, and the other with butter!" Dearly did the Padishah love his little son, because he was his only child, so he made him the

¹ "Peace be unto you."

² "Unto you be peace."

marble palace with the springs inside it as his son desired. There then sat the King's son in the marble palace, and while he was looking at the springs that bubbled forth both butter and honey, he saw an old woman with a pitcher in her hand, and she would fain have filled it from the spring. Then the King's son caught up a stone and flung it at the old woman's pitcher, and broke it into pieces. The old woman said not a word, but she went away.

But the next day she was there again with her pitcher, and again she made as if she would fill it, and a second time the King's son cast a stone at her and broke her pitcher. The old woman went away without speaking a word. She came on the third day also, and it fared with her pitcher then as on the first two days. Then the old woman spoke. "Oh, youth!" cried she, "'tis the will of Allah that thou shouldst fall in love with the three Orange-peris," and with that she quitted him.

From thenceforth the heart of the King's son was consumed by a hidden fire. He began to grow pale and wither away. When the Padishah saw that his son was ill, he sent for the wise men and the leeches, but they could find no remedy for the disease. One day the King's son said to his father: "Oh, my dear little daddy Shah! these wise men of thine cannot cure me of my disease, and all their labours are in

vain. I have fallen in love with the three Oranges, and never shall I be better till I find them."

"Oh, my dear little son!" groaned the Padishah, "thou art all that I have in the wide world: if thou dost leave me, in whom can I rejoice?" Then the King's son slowly withered away, and his days were as a heavy sleep; so his father saw that it would be better to let him go forth on his way and find, if so be he might, the three Oranges that were as the balsam of his soul. "Perchance too he may return again," thought the Padishah.

So the King's son arose one day and took with him things that were light to carry, but heavy in the scales of value, and pursued his way over mountains and valleys, rising up and lying down again for many days. At last in the midst of a vast plain, in front of the high-road, he came upon her Satanic Majesty the Mother of Devils, as huge as a minaret. One of her legs was on one mountain, and the other leg on another mountain; she was chewing gum (her mouth was full of it) so that you could hear her half-an-hour's journey off; her breath was a hurricane, and her arms were yards and yards long.

"Good-day, little mother!" cried the youth, and he embraced the broad waist of the Mother of Devils. "Good-day, little sonny!" she replied. "If thou hadst not spoken to me so politely, I should have

gobbled thee up." Then she asked him whence he came and whither he was going.

"Alas! dear little mother," sighed the youth, "such a terrible misfortune has befallen me that I can neither tell thee nor answer thy question."

"Nay, come, out with it, my son," urged the Mother of Devils.

"Well then, my sweet little mother," cried the youth, and he sighed worse than before, "I have fallen violently in love with the three Oranges. If only I might find my way thither!"

"Hush!" cried the Mother of Devils, "it is not lawful to even think of that name, much less pronounce it. I and my sons are its guardians, yet even we don't know the way to it. Forty sons have I, and they go up and down the earth more than I do, perchance they may tell thee something of the matter." So when it began to grow dusk towards evening, ere yet the devil-sons had come home, the old woman gave the King's son a tap, and turned him into a pitcher of water. And she did it not a moment too soon, for immediately afterwards the forty sons of the Mother of Devils knocked at the door and cried: "Mother, we smell man's flesh!"

"Nonsense!" cried the Mother of Devils. "What, I should like to know, have the sons of men to do here? It seems to me you had better all clean your

teeth." So she gave the forty sons forty wooden stakes to clean their teeth with, and out of one's tooth fell an arm, and out of another's a thigh, and out of another's an arm, till they had all cleaned their teeth. Then they sat them down to eat and drink, and in the middle of the meal their mother said to them: "If now ye had a man for your brother, what would ye do with him?"

"Do," they replied, "why love him like a brother, of course!"

Then the Mother of Devils tapped the water-jar, and the King's son stood there again. "Here is your brother!" cried she to her forty sons.

The devils thanked the King's son for his company with great joy, invited their new brother to sit down, and asked their mother why she had not told them about him before, as then they might all have eaten their meal together.

"Nay but, my sons," cried she, "he does not live on the same sort of meat as ye; fowls, mutton, and such-like is what *he* feeds on."

At this one of them jumped up, went out, fetched a sheep, slew it, and laid it before the new brother.

"Oh, what a child thou art!" cried the Mother of Devils. "Dost thou not know that thou must first cook it for him?"

Then they skinned the sheep, made a fire, roasted

it, and placed it before him. The King's son ate a piece, and after satisfying his hunger, left the rest of it. "Why, that's nothing!" cried the devils, and they urged him again and again to eat more. "Nay, my sons," cried their mother, "men never eat more than that."

"Let us see then what this sheep-meat is like," said one of the forty brothers. So they fell upon it and devoured the whole lot in a couple of mouthfuls.

Now when they all rose up early in the morning, the Mother of Devils said to her sons: "Our new brother hath a great trouble."—"What is it?" cried they, "for we would help him."

"He has fallen in love with the three Oranges!"—"Well," replied the devils, "we know not the place of the three Oranges ourselves, but perchance our aunt may know."

"Then lead this youth to her," said their mother; "tell her that he is my son and worthy of all honour, let her also receive him as a son and ease him of his trouble." Then the devils took the youth to their aunt, and told her on what errand he had come.

Now this Aunt of the Devils had sixty sons, and as she did not know the place of the three Oranges, she had to wait till they came home. But lest any harm should happen to this her new son, she gave him a tap and turned him into a piece of crockery.

“We smell man’s flesh, mother,” cried the devils, as they crossed the threshold.

“Perchance ye have eaten man’s flesh, and the remains thereof are still within your teeth,” said their mother. Then she gave them great logs of wood that they might pick their teeth clean, and so be able to swallow down something else. But in the midst of the meal the woman gave the piece of crockery a tap, and when the sixty devils saw their little human brother, they rejoiced at the sight, made him sit down at table, and bade him fall to if there was anything there he took a fancy to. “My sons,” said the Mother of the Devils to her sixty sons when they all rose up early on the morrow, “this lad here has fallen in love with the three Oranges, cannot you show him the way thither?”

“We know not the way,” replied the devils; “but perchance our old great-aunt may know something about it.”

“Then take the youth thither,” said their mother, “and bid her hold him in high honour. He is my son, let him be hers also and help him out of his distress.” Then they took him off to their great-aunt, and told her the whole business. “Alas! I do not know, my sons!” said the old, old great-aunt; “but if you wait till the evening, when my ninety sons come home, I will ask them.”

Then the sixty devils departed and left the King's son there, and when it grew dusk the Mother of the Devils gave the youth a tap, turned him into a broom, and placed him in the doorway. Shortly afterwards the ninety devils came home, and they also smelt the smell of man, and took the pieces of man's flesh out of their teeth. In the middle of their meal their mother asked them how they would treat a human brother if they had one. When they had sworn upon eggs that they would not hurt so much as his little finger, their mother gave the broom a tap, and the King's son stood before them.

The devil brothers entreated him courteously, inquired after his health, and served him so heartily with eatables that they scarcely gave him time to breathe. In the midst of the meal their mother asked them whether they knew where the three Oranges were, for their new brother had fallen in love with them. Then the least of the ninety devils leaped up with a shout of joy, and said that he knew.

"Then if thou knowest," said his mother, "see that thou take this son of ours thither, that he may satisfy his heart's desire."

On arising next morning, the devil-son took the King's son with him, and the pair of them went merrily along the road together. They went on, and on, and on, and at last the little devil said these

words: "My brother, we shall come presently to a large garden, and in the fountain thereof are the three. When I say to thee: 'Shut thine eye, open thine eye!' lay hold of what thou shalt see."

They went on a little way further till they came to the garden, and the moment the devil saw the fountain he said to the King's son: "Shut thine eye and open thine eye!" He did so, and saw the three Oranges bobbing up and down on the surface of the water where it came bubbling out of the spring, and he snatched up one of them and popped it in his pocket. Again the devil called to him: "Open thine eye and shut thine eye!" He did so, and snatched up the second orange, and so with the third also in the same way. "Now take care," said the devil, "that thou dost not cut open these oranges in any place where there is no water, or it will go ill with thee." The King's son promised, and so they parted, one went to the right, and the other to the left.

The King's son went on, and on, and on. He went a long way, and he went a short way, he went across mountains and through valleys. At last he came to a sandy desert, and there he bethought him of the oranges, and drawing one out, he cut it open. Scarcely had he cut into it when a damsel, lovely as a Peri, popped out of it before him; the moon when it is fourteen days old is not more dazzling. "For

Allah's sake, give me a drop of water!" cried the damsel, and inasmuch as there was no trace of water anywhere, she vanished from the face of the earth. The King's son grieved right sorely, but there was no help for it, the thing was done.

Again he went on his way, and when he had gone a little further he thought to himself, "I may as well cut open one more orange." So he drew out the second orange, and scarcely had he cut into it than there popped down before him a still more lovely damsel, who begged piteously for water, but as the King's son had none to give her, she also vanished.

"Well, I'll take better care of the third," cried he, and continued his journey. He went on and on till he came to a large spring, drank out of it, and then thought to himself: "Well, now I'll cut open the third orange also." He drew it out and cut it, and immediately a damsel even lovelier than the other two stood before him. As soon as she called for water, he led her to the spring and gave her to drink, and the damsel did not disappear, but remained there as large as life.

Mother-naked was the damsel, and as he could not take her to town like that, he bade her climb up a large tree that stood beside the spring, while he went into the town to buy her raiment and a carriage.

While the King's son had gone away, a negro

servant came to the spring to draw water, and saw the reflection of the damsel in the watery mirror. "Why, thou art something like a damsel," said she to herself, "and ever so much lovelier than thy mistress; so she ought to fetch water for me, not I for her." With that she broke the pitcher in two, went home, and when her mistress asked where the pitcher of water was, she replied: "I am much more beautiful than thou, so thou must fetch water for me, not I for thee." Her mistress took up a mirror, held it before her, and said: "Methinks thou must have taken leave of thy senses; look at this mirror!" The Moor looked into the mirror, and saw that she was as coal-black as ever. Without another word she took up the pitcher, went again to the spring, and seeing the damsel's face in the mirror, again fancied that it was hers.

"I'm right, after all," she cried; "I'm ever so much more beautiful than my mistress." So she broke the pitcher to pieces again, and went home. Again her mistress asked her why she had not drawn water. "Because I am ever so much more beautiful than thou, so thou must draw water for me," replied she.

"Thou art downright crazy," replied her mistress, drew out a mirror, and showed it to her; and when the Moor-girl saw her face in it, she took up another pitcher and went to the fountain for the third time.

The damsel's face again appeared in the water, but just as she was about to break the pitcher again, the damsel called to her from the tree: "Break not thy pitchers, 'tis my face thou dost see in the water, and thou wilt see thine own there also."

The Moor-girl looked up, and when she saw the wondrously beautiful shape of the damsel in the tree, she climbed up beside her and spake coaxing words to her: "Oh, my little golden damsel, thou wilt get the cramp from crouching there so long; come, rest thy head!" And with that she laid the damsel's head on her breast, felt in her bosom, drew out a needle, pricked the damsel with it in the skull, and in an instant the Orange-Damsel was changed into a bird, and pr-r-r-r! she was gone, leaving the Moor all alone in the tree.

Now when the King's son came back with his fine coach and beautiful raiment, looked up into the tree, and saw the black face, he asked the girl what had happened to her. "A nice question!" replied the Moor-girl. "Why, thou didst leave me here all day, and wentest away, so of course the sun has tanned me black." What could the poor King's son do? He made the black damsel sit in the coach, and took her straight home to his father's house.

In the palace of the Padishah they were all waiting, full of eagerness, to behold the Peri-Bride, and

when they saw the Moorish damsel they said to the King's son: "However couldst thou lose thy heart to a black maid?"

"She is not a black maid," said the King's son. "I left her at the top of a tree, and she was blackened there by the rays of the sun. If only you let her rest a bit she'll soon grow white again." And with that he led her into her chamber, and waited for her to grow white again.

Now there was a beautiful garden in the palace of the King's son, and one day the Orange-Bird came flying on to a tree there, and called down to the gardener.

"What dost thou want with me?" asked the gardener.

"What is the King's son doing?" inquired the bird.

"He is doing no harm that I know of," replied the gardener.

"And what about his black bride?"

"Oh, she's there too, sitting with him as usual."

Then the little bird sang these words:

"She may sit by his side,
But she shall not abide;
For all her fair showing
The thorns are a-growing.
As I hop on this tree,
It will wither 'neath me."

And with that it flew away.

The next day it came again, and inquired once more about the King's son and his black consort, and repeated what it said before. The third day it did in like manner, and as many trees as it hopped upon withered right away beneath it.

One day the King's son felt weary of his black bride, so he went out into the garden for a walk. Then his eye fell on the withered trees, and he called the gardener and said to him: "What is this, gardener? Why dost thou not take better care of thy trees? Dost thou not see that they are all withering away?" Then the gardener replied that it was of but little use for him to take care of the trees, for a few days ago a little bird had been there, and asked what the King's son and his black consort were doing, and had said that though she might be sitting there, she should not sit for ever, but that thorns would grow, and every tree it lit upon should wither.

The King's son commanded the gardener to smear the trees with bird-lime, and if the bird then lit upon it, to bring it to him. So the gardener smeared the trees with bird-lime, and when the bird came there next day he caught it, and brought it to the King's son, who put it in a cage. Now no sooner did the black woman look upon the bird than she knew at once that it was the damsel. So she pretended to be

very ill, sent for the chief medicine-man, and by dint of rich gifts persuaded him to say to the King's son that his consort would never get well unless he fed her with such and such birds.

The King's son saw that his consort was very sick, he sent for the doctor, went with him to see the sick woman, and asked him how she was to be cured. The doctor said she could only be cured if they gave her such and such birds to eat. "Why, only this very day have I caught one of such birds," said the King's son ; and they brought the bird, killed it, and fed the sick lady with the flesh thereof. In an instant the black damsel arose from her bed. But one of the bird's dazzling feathers fell accidentally to the ground and slipped between the planks, so that nobody noticed it.

Time went on, and the King's son was still waiting and waiting for his consort to turn white. Now there was an old woman in the palace who used to teach the dwellers in the harem to read and write. One day as she was going down-stairs she saw something gleaming between the planks of the floor, and going towards it, perceived that it was a bird's feather that sparkled like a diamond. She took it home and thrust it behind a rafter. The next day she went to the palace, and while she was away the bird's feather leaped down from the rafter, shivered a little, and the

next moment turned into a most lovely damsel. She put the room tidy, cooked the meal, set everything in order, and then leaped back upon the rafter and became a feather again. When the old woman came home she was amazed at what she saw. She thought: "Somebody must have done all this," so she went up and down, backwards and forwards through the house, but nobody could she see.

Early next morning she again went to the palace, and the feather leaped down again in like manner, and did all the household work. When the old woman came home, she perceived the house all nice and clean, and everything in order. "I really must find out the secret of this," thought she, so next morning she made as if she were going away as usual, and left the door ajar, but went and hid herself in a corner. All at once she perceived that there was a damsel in the room, who tidied the room and cooked the meal, whereupon the old woman dashed out, seized hold of her, and asked her who she was and whence she came. Then the damsel told her her sad fate, and how she had been twice killed by the black woman, and had come thither in the shape of a feather.

"Distress thyself no more, my lass," said the old woman. "I'll put thy business to rights, and this very day, too." And with that she went straight

to the King's son and invited him to come and see her that evening. The King's son was now so sick unto death of his black bride that he was glad of any excuse to escape from his own house, so the evening found him punctually at the old woman's. They sat down to supper, and when the coffee followed the meats, the damsel entered with the cups, and when the King's son saw her he was like to have fainted. "Nay, but, mother," said the King's son, when he had come to himself a little, "who is that damsel?"

"Thy wife," replied the old woman.

"How didst thou get that fair creature?" inquired the King's son. "Wilt thou not give her to me?"

"How can *I* give her to thee, seeing that she was thine own once upon a time," said the old woman; and with that the old woman took the damsel by the hand, led her to the King's son, and laid her on his breast. "Take better care of the Orange-Peri another time," said she.

The King's son now nearly fainted in real earnest, but it was from sheer joy. He took the damsel to his palace, put to death the black slave-girl, but held high festival with the Peri for forty days and forty nights. So they had the desire of their hearts, and may Allah satisfy your desires likewise.

THE ROSE-BEAUTY

ONCE upon a time in the old old days when straws were sieves, and the camel a chapman, and the mouse a barber, and the cuckoo a tailor, and the donkey ran errands, and the tortoise baked bread, and I was only fifteen years old, but my father rocked my cradle, and there was a miller in the land who had a black cat—in those olden times, I say, there was a King who had three daughters, and the first daughter was forty, and the second was thirty, and the third was twenty. One day the youngest daughter wrote this letter to her father: “My lord father! my eldest sister is forty and my second sister is thirty, and still thou hast given neither of them a husband. I have no desire to grow grey in waiting for a husband.”

The King read the letter, sent for his three daughters, and addressed them in these words: “Look now! let each one of you shoot an arrow from a bow and seek her sweetheart wherever her arrow falls!” So

the three damsels took their bows. The eldest damsel's arrow fell into the palace of the Vizier's son, so the Vizier's son took her to wife. The second girl's arrow flew into the palace of the Chief Mufti's son, so they gave her to him. The third damsel also fired her arrow, and lo! it stuck in the hut of a poor young labourer. "That won't do, that won't do!" cried they all. So she fired again, and again the arrow stuck in the hut. She aimed a third time, and a third time the arrow stuck in the hut of the poor young labourer. Then the King was wroth and cried to the damsel: "Look now, thou slut! thou hast got thy deserts. Thy sisters waited patiently, and therefore they have got their hearts' desires. Thou wast the youngest of all, yet didst thou write me that saucy letter, hence thy punishment. Out of my sight, thou slave-girl, to this husband of thine, and thou shalt have nought but what he can give thee!" So the poor damsel departed to the hut of the labourer, and they gave her to him to wife.

They lived together for a time, and on the tenth day of the ninth month the time came that she should bear a child, and her husband, the labourer, hastened away for the midwife. While the husband was thus away his wife had neither a bed to lie down upon nor a fire to warm herself by, though grinding winter was upon them. All at once the walls of

the poor hut opened hither and thither, and three beautiful damsels of the Peri race stepped into it. One stood at the damsel's head, another at her feet, the third by her side, and they all seemed to know their business well. In a moment everything in the poor hut was in order, the princess lay on a beautiful soft couch, and before she could blink her eyes a pretty little new-born baby girl was lying by her side. When everything was finished the three Peris set about going, but first of all they approached the bed one by one, and the first said :

“Rosa be thy damsel's name,
And she shall weep not tears but pearls !”

The second Peri approached the bed and said :

“Rosa be thy damsel's name,
The rose shall blossom when she smiles !”

And the third Peri wound up with these words :

“Rosa be thy damsel's name,
Sweet verdure in her footsteps spring !”

whereupon they all three disappeared.

Now all this time the husband was seeking a mid-wife, but could find one nowhere. What could he do but go home? But when he got back he was amazed to find everything in the poor hut in beautiful order, and his wife lying on a splendid

bed. Then she told him the story of the three Peris, and there was no more spirit left in him, so astounded was he. But the little girl grew more and more lovely from hour to day, and from day to week, so that there was not another like her in the whole world. Whosoever looked upon her lost his heart at once, and pearls fell from her eyes when she wept, roses burst into bloom when she smiled, and a bright riband of fresh green verdure followed her footsteps. Whosoever saw her had no more spirit left in him, and the fame of lovely Rosa went from mouth to mouth.

At last the King of that land also heard of the damsel, and instantly made up his mind that she and nobody else should be his son's consort. So he sent for his son, and told him that there was a damsel in the town of so rare a beauty that pearls fell from her eyes when she wept, roses burst into bloom when she smiled, and the earth grew fresh and green beneath her footsteps, and with that he bade him up and woo her.

Now the Peris had for a long time shown the King's son the beautiful Rose-damsel in his dreams, and the sweet fire of love already burned within him ; but he was ashamed to let his father see this, so he hung back a little. At this his father became more and more pressing, bade him go and woo her at once,

and commanded the chief dame of the palace to accompany him to the hut of the labourer.

They entered the hut, said on what errand they came, and claimed the damsel for the King's son in the name of Allah. The poor folks rejoiced at their good luck, promised the girl, and began to make ready.

Now this palace dame's daughter was also a beauty, and not unlike Rosa. Terribly distressed was the dame that the King's son should take to wife a poor labourer's daughter, instead of her own child; so she made up her mind to deceive them and put her own daughter in Rosa's place. So on the day of the banquet she made the poor girl eat many salted meats, and then brought a pitcher of water and a large basket, got into the bridal coach with Rosa and her own daughter, and set out for the palace. As they were on the road (and a very long time they were about it) the damsel grew thirsty and asked the palace dame for some water. "Not till thou hast given me one of thine eyes," said the palace dame. What could the poor damsel do?—she was dying with thirst. So she cut out one of her eyes and gave it for a drink of water.

They went on and on, further and further, and the damsel again became thirsty and asked for another drink of water. "Thou shalt have it if thou give


me thy other eye," said the palace dame. And the poor damsel was so tormented with thirst that she gave the other eye for a drink of water.

The old dame took the two eyes, pitched the sightless damsel into the big basket, and left her all alone on the top of a mountain. But the beautiful bridal robe she put upon her own daughter, brought her to the King's son, and gave her to him with the words: "Behold thy wife!" So they made a great banquet, and when they had brought the damsel to her bridegroom and taken off her veil, he perceived that the damsel who now stood before him was not the damsel of his dreams. As, however, she resembled her a little he said nothing about it to anybody. So they lay down to rest, and when they rose up again early next morning the King's son was quite undeceived, for the damsel of his dreams had wept pearls, smiled roses, and sweet green herbs had grown up in her footsteps, but this girl had neither roses nor pearls nor green herbs to show for herself. The youth felt there was some trickery at work here. This was not the girl he had meant to have. "How am I to find it all out?" thought he to himself; but not a word did he say to any one.

While all these things were going on in the palace, poor Rosa was weeping on the mountain top, and such showers of pearls fell from her by dint of her

sore weeping that there was scarce room to hold them all in the big basket. Now a mud-carrier happened to be passing by who was carting mud away, and hearing the weeping of the damsel was terribly afraid, and cried: "Who art thou?—A Jinn or a Peri?"—"I am neither a Jinn nor yet a Peri," replied the damsel, "but the remains of a living child of man." Whereupon the mud-raker took courage, opened the basket, and there a poor sightless damsel was sobbing, and her tears fell from her in showers of pearls. So he took the damsel by the hand and led her to his hut, and as the old man had nobody about him he adopted the damsel as if she were his own child and took care of her. But the poor girl did nothing but weep for her two eyes, and the old man had all he could do to pick up the pearls, and whenever they were in want of money he would take a pearl and sell it, and they lived on whatever he got for it.

Thus time passed, and there was mirth in the palace, and misery in the hut of the mud-raker. Now it chanced one day as fair Rosa was sitting in the hut, that something made her smile, and immediately a rose bloomed. Then the damsel said to her foster-father, the mud-raker: "Take this rose, papa, and go with it in front of the palace of the King's son, and cry aloud that thou hast roses for sale that are not to be matched in the wide world. But if the dame of the



palace comes out, see that thou dost not give her the rose for money, but say that thou wilt sell it for a human eye."

So the man took the rose and stood in front of the palace, and began to cry aloud: "A rose for sale, a rose for sale, the like of which is nowhere to be found." Now it was not the season for roses, so when the dame of the palace heard the man crying a rose for sale, she thought to herself: "I'll put it in my daughter's hair, and thus the King's son will think that she is his true bride." So she called the poor man to her, and asked him what he would sell the rose for? "For nothing," replied the man, "for no money told down, but I'll give it thee for a human eye." Then the dame of the palace brought forth one of fair Rosa's eyes and gave it for the rose. Then she took it to her daughter, plaited it in her hair, and when the King's son saw the rose, he thought of the Peri of his dreams, but could not understand whither she had gone. Nevertheless he now fancied he was about to find out, so he said not a word to any one.

Meanwhile, the old man went home with the eye and gave it to the damsel, fair Rosa. Then she fitted it in its right place, sighed from her heart in prayer to Allah, who can do all things; and behold! she could see right well again with her one eye. The

poor girl was so pleased that she could not help smiling, and immediately another rose sprang forth. This also she gave to her father that he might walk in front of the palace and give it for another human eye. The old man took the rose, and scarcely had he begun crying it before the palace when the old dame again heard him. "He has just come at the nick of time," thought she; "the King's son has begun to love my rose-bedizened daughter; if I can only get this rose also, he will love her still better, and this serving-wench will go out of his mind altogether." So she called the mud-raker to her and asked for the rose, but again he would not take money for it, though he was willing to let her have it in exchange for a human eye. Then the old woman gave him the second eye, and the old man hastened home with it and gave it to the damsel. Rosa immediately put it in its proper place, prayed to Allah, and was so rejoiced when her two bright eyes sparkled with living light that she smiled all the day, and roses bloomed on every side of her. Henceforth she was lovelier than ever. Now one day beautiful Rosa went for a walk, and as she smiled continually as she walked along, roses bloomed around her and the ground grew fresh and green beneath her feet. The palace dame saw her and was terrified. What will become of me, she thought, if the affair of this damsel comes to be

known? She knew where the poor mud-scraper lived, so she went all alone to his dwelling, and terrified him by telling him that he had an evil witch in his house. The poor man had never seen a witch, so he was terrified to death, and asked the palace dame what he had better do. "Find out, first of all, what her talisman is," advised the palace dame, "and then I'll come and do the rest."

So the first thing the old man did when the damsel came home was to ask her how she, a mere child of man, had come to have such magic power. The damsel, suspecting no ill, said that she had got her talisman from the three Peris, and that pearls, roses, and fresh sweet verdure would accompany her so long as her talisman was alive.

"What then is thy talisman?" asked the old man.

"A little deer on the hill-top;
If it die, I also dead drop,"

answered she.

The next day the palace dame came thither in the utmost misery, heard all about it from the mud-scraper, and hastened home with great joy. She told her daughter that on the top of the neighbouring hill was a little deer which she should ask her husband to get for her. That very same day the Sultana told her husband of the little deer on the top of the hill, and

begged and implored him to get her its heart to eat. And after not many days the Prince's men caught the little deer and killed it, and took out its heart and gave it to the Sultana. At the same instant when they killed the little fawn fair Rosa died. The mud-raker sorrowed over her till he could sorrow no more, and then took and buried her.

Now in the heart of the little fawn there was a little red coral eye which nobody took any notice of. When the Sultana ate the heart, the little red coral eye fell out and rolled down the steps as if it wanted to hide itself.

Time went on, and in not more than nine months and ten days the Prince's consort was brought to bed of a little daughter, who wept pearls when she cried, dropt roses when she smiled, and sweet green herbs sprang up in her footsteps.

When the Prince saw it he mused and mused over it, the little girl was the very image of fair Rosa, and not a bit like the mother who had borne her. So his sleep was no repose to him, till one night fair Rosa appeared to him in his dreams and spoke these words to him: "Oh, my prince! oh, my betrothed! my soul is beneath thy palace steps, my body is in the tomb, thy little girl is my little girl, my talisman is the little coral eye."

The Prince had no sooner awakened than he went

to the staircase and searched about, and lo ! there was the little coral eye. He picked it up, took it into his chamber, and laid it on the table. Meanwhile, the little girl entered the room, saw the red coral, and scarcely had she laid hold of it than she vanished as if she had never been. The three Peris had carried off the child and taken her to her mother's tomb, and scarcely had she placed the coral eye in the dead woman's mouth than she awoke up to a new life.

But the King's son was not easy in his mind. He went to the cemetery, had the tomb opened, and there in her coffin lay the Rose-beauty of his dreams, with her little girl in her arms and the coral talisman in her mouth. They arose from the tomb and embraced him, and pearls fell from the eyes of both of them as they wept, and roses from their mouths as they smiled, and sweet green herbs grew up in their footsteps.

The palace dame and her daughter paid for their crimes, but beautiful Rosa and her father and her mother, the Sultan's daughter, were all re-united, and for forty days and forty nights they held high revel amidst the beating of drums and the tinkling of cymbals.

MAD MEHMED

ONCE upon a time in the old old days when the camel was only a spy, when toads rose in the air on wings, and I myself rode in the air while I walked on the ground, and went up hill and down dale at the same time, in those days, I say, there were two brothers who dwelt together.

All that they had inherited from their father were some oxen and other beasts, and a sick mother. One day the spirit of division seized upon the younger brother (he was half-witted besides, Allah help him !), and he went to his brother and said : "Look now, brother ! at these two stables ! One of them is as new as new can be, while the other is old and rotten. Let us drive our cattle hither, and whatever goes into the new stable shall be mine, and all the rest shall be thine."

"Not so, Mehmed," said the elder brother ; "let whatever goes into the old stable be thine !" To

this also the half-crazy Mehmed agreed. That same day they went and drove up their cattle, and all the cattle went into the new stable except a helpless old ox that was so blind that it mistook its way and went into the old stable instead. Mehmed said never a word, but took the blind old ox into the fields to graze; every morning early he drove it thither, and late every evening he drove it back again. One day when he was on the road, the wind began to shake a big wayside tree so violently that its vast branches whined and whimpered again. "Hi! whimpering old dad!" said the fool to the tree, "hast thou seen my elder brother?" But the tree, as if it didn't hear, only went on whining. The fool flew into such a rage at this that he caught up his chopper and struck at the tree, when out of it gushed a whole stream of golden sequins. At this the fool rallied what little wits he had, hastened home, and asked his brother to lend him another ox, as he wanted to plough with a pair. He found a cart also, and some empty sacks. These he filled with earth, and set out forthwith for his tree. There he emptied his sacks of their earth, filled them with sequins instead, and when he returned home in the evening, his brother well-nigh dropped down for amazement at the sight of the monstrous treasure.

They could think of nothing now but dividing it, so the younger brother went to their neighbour for

a three-peck measure to measure it with. Now the neighbour was curious to know what such clodpoles could have to measure. So he took and smeared the bottom of the measure with tar, and, sure enough, when the fool brought the measure back a short time afterwards, a sequin was sticking to the bottom of it. The neighbour immediately went and told it to another, who went and told it to a third, and so it was not long before everybody knew all about it.

Now the wiser brother knew not what might happen to them now that they had all this money, and he began to feel frightened. So he snatched up his pick and shovel, dug a trench, buried the treasure, and made off as fast as his heels could carry him. On the way it occurred to the wise brother that he had done foolishly in not shutting the door of the hut behind him, so he sent off his younger brother to do it for him. So the fool went back to the house, and he thought to himself: "Well, since I am here, I ought not to forget my old mother either." So he filled a huge cauldron with water, boiled it, and soused his old mother in it so thoroughly that her poor old head was never likely to speak again. After that he propped the old woman against the wall with the broom, tore the door off its hinges, threw it over his shoulders, and went and rejoined his brother in the wood.

The elder brother looked at the door, and listened to the sad case of his poor old mother, but scold and chide his younger brother as he might the latter grew more cock-a-hoop than ever—he fancied he had done such a clever thing. He had brought the door away with him, he said, in order that no one might get into the house. The wise brother would have given anything to have got rid of the fool, and began turning over in his mind how he might best manage it. He looked before him and behind him, he looked down the high-road, and there were three horsemen galloping along. The thought instantly occurred to the pair of them that these horsemen were on their track, so they scrambled up a tree forthwith, door and all. They were scarcely comfortably settled when the three horsemen drove up beneath the tree and encamped there. The dusk of evening had come on at the very nick of time, so that they could not see the two brothers.

Now the two brothers would have done very well indeed up in the tree had not one of them been a fool. Mehmed the fool began to practise pleasantries which disturbed the repose of the horsemen beneath the tree. Presently, however, came a crash—bang!—and down on the heads of the three sleepers fell the great heavy door from the top of the tree. “The end of the world has come, the end of the world has

come!" cried they, and they rushed off in such a fright that no doubt they haven't ceased running to this very day. This finished the business so far as the elder brother was concerned. In the morning he arose and went on his way, and left the foolish younger brother by himself.

Thus poor silly Mehmed had to go forth into the wide world alone. He went on and on till he came to a village, by which time he was very hungry. There he stood in the gate of a mosque, and got one or two paras¹ from those who went in and out till he had enough to buy himself something to eat. At that moment a fat little man came out of the mosque, and casting his eyes on Mehmed, asked him if he would like to enter his service.

"I don't mind if I do," replied Mehmed, "but only on condition that neither of us is to get angry with the other for any cause whatever. If thou art wroth with me I'll kill thee, and if I get wroth with thee thou mayest kill me also." The fat man agreed to these terms, for there was a great lack of servants in that village.

In order to make short work of the fat little man the fool began by at once chasing all the hens and sheep off his master's premises. "Art angry, master?" he then inquired of his lord. His master was amazed, but he

¹ Farthings.

only answered : “ Angry ? Not I ! Why should I be ? ” At the same time he entrusted nothing more to him, but let him sit in the house without anything to do.

His master had a wife and child, and Mehmed had to look after them. He liked to dandle the child up and down, but he knocked it about and hurt it, so clumsy was he ; so he soon had to leave that off. But the wife began to be afraid that her turn would come next, sooner or later, so she persuaded her husband to run away from the fool one night. Mehmed overheard what they said, hid himself in their store-box, and when they opened it in the next village out he popped.

After a while his master and his wife agreed together that they would go and sleep at night on the shores of a lake. They took Mehmed with them, and put his bed right on the water’s edge, that he might tumble in when he went to sleep. However, the fool was not such a fool but that he made his master’s wife jump into the lake instead of himself. “ Art angry, master ? ” cried he.—“ Angry indeed ! How can I help being angry when I see my property wasted, and my wife and child killed, and myself a beggar—and all through thee ! ” Then the fool seized his master, put him in mind of their compact, and pitched him into the water.

Mehmed now found himself all alone, so he went forth into the wide world once more. He went on and on, did nothing but drink sweet coffee, smoke chibooks, look about over his shoulder, and walk leisurely along at his ease. As he was thus knocking about, he chanced to light upon a five-para piece, which he speedily changed for some lebleb,¹ which he immediately fell to chewing, and, as he chewed, part of it fell into a wayside spring, whereupon the fool began roaring loud enough to split his throat: "Give me back my lebleb, give me back my lebleb!" At this frightful bawling a Jinn popped up his head, and he was so big that his upper lip swept the sky, while his lower lip hid the earth. "What dost thou require?" asked the Jinn.—"I want my lebleb, I want my lebleb!" cried Mehmed.

The Jinn ducked down into the spring, and when he came up again, he held a little table in his hand. This little table he gave to the fool and said: "Whenever thou art hungry thou hast only to say: 'Little table, give me to eat;' and when thou hast eaten thy fill, say: 'Little table, I have now had enough.'"

So Mehmed took the table and went with it into a village, and when he felt hungry he said: "Little table, give me to eat!" and immediately there stood before

¹ Roasted pepper.

him so many beautiful, nice dishes that he couldn't make up his mind which to begin with. "Well," thought he, "I must let the poor people of the village see this wonder also," so he went and invited them all to a great banquet.

The villagers came one after another, they looked to the right, they looked to the left, but there was no sign of a fire, or any preparations for a meal. "Nay, but he would needs make fools of us!" thought they. But the young man brought out his table, set it in the midst, and cried: "Little table, give me to eat!" and there before them stood all manner of delicious meats and drinks, and so much thereof that when the guests had stuffed themselves to the very throat, there was enough left over to fill the servants. Then the villagers laid their heads together as to how they might manage to have a meal like this every day. "Come now!" said some of them, "let us steal a march upon Mehmed one day and lay hands upon his table, and then there will be an end to the fool's glory." And they did so.

What could the poor, empty-bellied fool do then? Why he went to the wayside spring and asked again: "I want my lebleb, I want my lebleb!" And he asked and asked so long that at last the Jinn popped up his head again out of the spring and inquired what was the matter. "I want my lebleb, I want my

lebleb!" cried the fool.—"But where's thy little table?"—"They stole it."

The big-lipped Jinn again popped down, and when he rose out of the spring again he had a little mill in his hand. This he gave to the fool and said to him: "Grind it to the right and gold will flow out of it, grind it to the left and it will give thee silver." So the youth took the mill home and ground it first to the right and then to the left, and huge treasures of gold and silver lay heaped about him on the floor. So he grew such a rich man that his equal was not to be found in the village, nay, nor in the town either.

But no sooner had the people of the village got to know all about the little mill than they laid their heads together and schemed and schemed till the mill also disappeared¹ one fine morning from Mehmed's cottage. Then Mehmed ran off to the spring once more and cried: "I want my lebleb, I want my lebleb!"

"But where is thy little table? Where is thy little mill?" asked the big-lipped Jinn.

"They have stolen them both from me," lamented the witless one, and he wept bitterly.

Again the Jinn bobbed down, and this time he brought up two sticks with him. He gave them to

¹ *Lit.* the place of the mill was cold one morning.

the fool, and impressed upon him very strongly on no account to say : " Strike, strike, my little sticks ! "

Mehmed took the sticks, and first he turned them to the right and then to the left, but could make nothing of them. Then he thought he would just try the effect of saying : " Strike, strike, my little sticks ! " and no sooner were the words out of his mouth than the sticks fell upon him unmercifully, and belaboured him on every part of the body that can feel—the head, the foot, the arm, the back—till he was nothing but one big ache. " Stop, stop, my little sticks ! " cried he, and lo ! the two sticks were still. Then, for all his aches and pains, Mehmed rejoiced greatly that he had found out the mystery.

He had no sooner got home with the two sticks than he called together all the villagers, but said not a word about what he meant to do. In less than a couple of hours everybody had assembled there, and awaited the new show with great curiosity. Then Mehmed came with his two sticks and cried : " Strike, strike, my little sticks, strike, strike ! " whereupon the two sticks gave the whole lot of them such a rub-a-dub-dubbing that it was as much as they could do to howl for mercy. " Now, " said Mehmed, who was getting his wits back again, " I'll have no mercy till you have given back to me my little table and my little mill. "

The people of the village, all bruised and bleeding as they were, consented to everything, and hurried off for the little table and the little mill. Then Mehmed cried: "Stand still, my little sticks!" and there was peace and quiet as before.

Then the man took away the three gifts to his own village, and as he now had money he grew more sensible, and there also he found his brother. He gave all the buried treasure to his brother, and each of them sought out a damsel meet to be a wife, and married, and lived each in a world of his own. And there was not a wiser man in that village than Mad Mehmed now that he had grown rich.

THE GOLDEN-HAIRED CHILDREN

ONCE upon a time, in days long gone by, when my father was my father, and I was my father's son, when my father was my son, and I was my father's mother, once upon a time, I say, at the uttermost ends of the world, hard by the realm of demons, stood a great city.

In this same city there dwelt three poor damsels, the daughters of a poor wood-cutter. From morn to eve, from evening to morning, they did nothing but sew and stitch, and when the embroideries were finished, one of them would go to the market-place and sell them, and so purchase wherewithal to live upon.

Now it fell out, one day, that the Padishah of that city was wroth with the people, and in his rage he commanded that for three days and three nights nobody should light a candle in that city. What were these three poor sisters to do? They could not

work in the dark. So they covered their window with a large thick curtain, lit a tiny rushlight, and sat them down to earn their daily bread.

On the third night of the prohibition, the Padishah took it into his head to go round the city himself to see whether every one was keeping his commandment. He chanced to step in front of the house of the three poor damsels, and as the folds of the curtain did not quite cover the bottom of the window he caught sight of the light within. The damsels, however, little suspecting their danger, went on sewing and stitching and talking amongst themselves about their poor affairs.

“Oh,” said the eldest, “if only the Padishah would wed me to his chief cook, what delicious dishes I should have every day. Yes, and I would embroider him for it a carpet so long that all his horses and all his men could find room upon it.”

“As for me,” said the middling damsel, “I should like to be wedded to the keeper of his wardrobe. What lovely splendid raiment I should then have to put on. And then I would make the Padishah a tent so large, that all his horses and all his men should find shelter beneath it.”

“Well,” cried the youngest damsel, “I’ll look at nobody but the Padishah himself, and if he would only take me to wife I would bear him two little children

with golden hair. One should be a boy and the other a girl, and a half-moon should shine on the forehead of the boy, and a bright star should sparkle on the temples of the girl."

The Padishah heard the discourse of the three damsels, and no sooner did the red dawn shine in the morning sky than he sent for all three to the palace. The eldest he gave to his head pantler, the second to his head chamberlain, but the youngest he took for himself.

And in truth it fared excellently well with the three damsels. The eldest got so many rich dishes to eat, that when it came to sewing the promised carpet she could scarce move her needle for the sleep of surfeit. So they sent her back again to the wood-cutter's hut. The second damsel, too, when they dressed her up in gold and silver raiment, would not deign to dirty her fingers by making tents, so they sent her back too, to keep her elder sister company.

And how about the youngest? Well, after nine months and ten days the two elder sisters came sidling up to the palace to see if the poor thing would really be as good as her word, and bring forth the two wondrous children. In the gates of the palace they met an old woman, and they persuaded her with gifts and promises to meddle in the matter. Now this old woman was the devil's

own daughter, so that mischief and malice were her meat and drink. She now went and picked up two pups and took them with her to the sick woman's bed.

And oh, my soul! the wife of the Padishah brought forth two little children like shining stars. One was a boy, the other a girl; on the boy's forehead was a half-moon and on the girl's a star, so that darkness was turned to light when they were by. Then the wicked old woman exchanged the children for the pups, and told it in the ears of the Padishah that his wife had brought forth two pups. The Padishah was like to have had a fit in the furiousness of his rage. He took his poor wife, buried her up to the waist in the ground, and commanded throughout the city that every passer-by should strike her on the head with a stone. But no sooner had the evil witch got hold of the two children, than she took them a long way outside the town, exposed them on the bank of a flowing stream, and returned to the palace right glad that she had done her work so well.

Now close to the water where the two children lay stood a hut where lived an aged couple. The old man had a she-goat which used to go out in the morning to graze, and come back in the evening to be milked, and that was how the poor people kept body and soul together. One day, however, the old woman was

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surprised to find that the goat did not give one drop of milk. She complained about it to the old man her husband, and told him to follow the goat to see if perchance there was any one who stole the milk.

So the next day the old man went after the goat, which went right up to the water's edge, and then disappeared behind a tree. And what do you think he saw? He saw a sight which would have delighted your eyes also—two golden-haired children were lying in the grass, and the goat went right up to them and gave them to suck. Then she bleated to them a little, and so left them and went off to graze. And the old man was so delighted at the sight of the little starry things, that he was like to have lost his head for joy. So he took the little ones (Allah had not blessed him with children of his own) and carried them to his hut and gave them to his wife. The woman was filled with a still greater joy at the children which Allah had given her, and took care of them, and brought them up. But now the little goat came bleating in as if in sore distress, but the moment she saw the children, she went to them and suckled them, and then went out to graze again.

But time comes and goes. The two wondrous children grew up and scampered up hill and down dale, and the dark woods were bright with the radiance of their golden hair. They hunted the

wild beasts, tended sheep, and helped the old people by word and deed. Time came and went till the children had grown up, and the old people had become very old indeed. The golden-haired ones grew in strength while the silver-haired ones grew in feebleness, till, at last, one morning they lay dead there, and the brother and sister were left all alone. Sorely did the poor little things weep and wail, but was ever woe mended by weeping? So they buried their old parents, and the girl stayed at home with the little she-goat, while the lad went a-hunting, for how to find food was now their great care and their little care too.

One day, while he was hunting wild beasts in the forest, he met his father, the Padishah, but he did not know it was his father, neither did the father recognize his son. Yet the moment the Padishah beheld the wondrously beautiful child, he longed to clasp him to his breast, and commanded those about him to inquire of the child from whence he came.

Then one of the courtiers went up to the youth, and said: "Thou hast shot much game there, my Bey!"—"Allah also has created much," replied the youth, "and there is enough for thee and for me also," and with that he left him like a blockhead.

But the Padishah went back to his palace, and was sick at heart because of the boy; and when they

asked what ailed him, he said that he had seen such a wondrously beautiful child in the forest, and that he loved him so that he could rest no more. The boy had the very golden hair and the same radiant forehead that his wife had promised him.

The old woman was sore afraid at these words. She hastened to the stream, saw the house, peeped in, and there sat a lovely girl, like a moon fourteen days old. The girl entreated the old woman courteously, and asked her what she sought. The old woman did not wait to be asked twice; indeed, her foot was scarce across the threshold when she began to ask the girl with honey-sweet words whether she lived all alone.

“Nay, my mother,” replied the girl; “I have a young brother. In the day-time he goes hunting, and in the evening he comes home.”

“Dost thou not grow weary of being all alone here by thyself?” inquired the witch.—“If even I did,” said the girl, “what can I do? I must fill up my time as best I may.”

“Tell me now, my little diamond! dost thou dearly love this brother of thine?”

“Of course I do.”

“Well, then, my girl,” said the witch, “I’ll tell thee something, but don’t let it go any further! When thy brother comes home this evening, fall to

weeping and wailing, and keep it up with all thy might. When then he asks what ails thee, answer him not, and when he asks thee again, again give him never a word. When, however, he asks thee a third time, say that thou art tired to death with staying at home here all by thyself, and that if he loves thee, he will go to the garden of the Queen of the Peris, and bring thee from thence a branch. A lovelier branch thou hast never seen all thy life long."—The girl promised she would do this, and the old woman went away.

Towards evening the damsel burst forth a-weeping and wailing till both her eyes were as red as blood. The brother came home in the evening, and was amazed to see his sister in such dire distress, yet could he not prevail upon her to tell him the cause of it. He promised her all the grass of the field and all the trees of the forest if she would only tell him what was the matter, and, to satisfy the desire of his sister's heart, the golden-haired youth set off next morning for the garden of the fairy queen. He went on and on, smoking his chibook and drinking coffee, till he reached the boundaries of the fairy realm. He came to deserts where no caravan had ever gone; he came to mountains where no bird could ever fly; he came to valleys where no serpent can ever crawl. But his trust was in Allah, so he went on and on till he

came to an immense desert which the eye of man had never seen nor the foot of man trodden. In the midst of it was a beautiful palace, and by the roadside sat the Mother of Devils, and the smell of her was as the pestilence in the air all round about her.

The youth went straight up to the Mother of Devils, hugged her to his breast, kissed her all over, and said: "Good-day, little mother mine! I am thine own true lad till death!" and he kissed her hand.

"A good-day to thee also, my little son!" replied the Mother of Devils. "If thou hadst not called me thy dear little mother, if thou hadst not embraced me, and if thy innocent mother had not been under the earth, I would have devoured thee at once. But tell me now, my little son, whither away?"

The poor youth said that he wanted a branch from the garden of the Queen of the Peris.

"Who put that word in thy mouth, my little son?" asked the woman in amazement. "Hundreds and hundreds of talismans guard that garden, and hundreds of souls have perished there by reason thereof."

Yet the youth did not hold back. "I can but die once," thought he.—"Thou dost but go to salute thy innocent, buried mother," said the old woman; and then she made the youth sit down beside her and taught him the way: "Set out on thy quest at day-

break, and never stop till thou dost see right in front of thee a well and a forest. Draw forth thine arrows in this forest and catch five to ten birds, but catch them alive. Take these birds to the well, and when thou hast recited a prayer twice over, plunge the birds into the well and cry aloud for a key. A key will straightway be cast out of the well, take it to thee, and go on thy way. Thou wilt come presently to a large cavern; open the door thereof with thy key, and, as soon as thy foot is inside, stretch forth thy right hand into the blank darkness, grip fast hold of whatever thy hand shall touch, drag the thing quickly forth, and cast the key back into the well again. But look not behind thee all the time, or Allah have mercy on thy soul!"

Next day, when the red dawn was in the sky, the youth went forth on his quest, caught the five to ten birds in the forest, got hold of the key, opened therewith the door of the cavern, and—oh, Allah!—stretched forth his right hand, gripped hold of something, and, without once looking behind him, dragged it all the way to his sister's hut, and never stopped till he got there. Only then did he cast his eyes upon what he had in his hand, and it was neither more nor less than a branch from the garden of the Queen of the Peris. But what a branch it was! It was full of little twigs, and the twigs were full of little

leaves, and there was a little bird on every little leaf, and every little bird had a song of its own. Such music, such melody was there as would have brought even a dead man to life again. The whole hut was filled with joy.

Next day the youth again went forth to hunt, and, as he was pursuing the beast of the forest, the Padishah saw him again. He exchanged a word or two with the youth, and then returned to his palace, but he was now sicker than ever, by reason of his love for his son.

Then the old woman strolled off to the hut again, and there she saw the damsel sitting with the magic branch in her hand.

“Well, my girl!” said the old woman, “what did I tell thee? But that’s nothing at all. If thy brother would only fetch thee the mirror of the Queen of the Peris, Allah knows that thou wouldst cast that branch right away. Give him no peace till he get it for thee.”

The witch had no sooner departed than the damsel began screaming and wailing so that her brother was at his wit’s end how to comfort her. He said he would take the whole world on his shoulders to please her, went straight off to the Mother of Devils, and besought her so earnestly that she had not the heart to say him nay.

“Thou hast made up thy mind to go under the sod to thy innocent, buried mother, I see,” cried she, “for not by hundreds but by thousands have human souls perished in this quest of thine.” Then she instructed the youth whither he should go and what he should do, and he set off on his way. He took an iron staff in his hand and tied iron sandals to his feet, and he went on and on till he came to two doors, as the Mother of Devils told him he would beforehand. One of these doors was open, the other was closed. He closed the open door and opened the closed door, and there, straight before him, was another door. In front of this door was a lion and a sheep, and there was grass before the lion and flesh before the sheep. He took up the flesh and laid it before the lion, then he took up the grass and laid it before the sheep, and they let him enter unharmed. But now he came to a third door, and in front of it were two furnaces, and fire burned in the one and ashes smouldered in the other. He put out the flaming furnace, stirred up the cinders in the smouldering furnace till they blazed again, and then through the door he went into the garden of the Peris, and from the garden into the Peri palace. He snatched up the enchanted mirror, and was hastening away with it when a mighty voice cried out against him so that the earth and the heavens trembled. “Burning furnace,

seize him, seize him!" cried the voice, just as he came up to the furnace.

"I can't," answered the first furnace, "for he has put me out!" But the other furnace was grateful to him for kindling it into a blaze again, so it let him pass by too.

"Lion, lion, tear him to pieces!" cried the mighty voice from the depths of the palace, when the youth came up to the two beasts.

"Not I," answered the lion, "for he helped me to a good meal of flesh!"—Nor would the sheep hurt him either, because he had given it the grass.—"Open door! let him not out!" cried the voice from within the palace.—"Nay, but I will!" replied the door; "for had he not opened me I should be closed still!"—and so the golden-haired youth was not very long in getting home, to the great joy of his sister. She snatched at the mirror and instantly looked into it, and—Allah be praised!—she saw the whole world in it. Then the damsel thought no more of the Peribranche, for her eyes were glued to the mirror.

Again the youth went a-hunting, and again he caught the eye of the Padishah. But the sight of the youth this third time so touched the fatherly heart of the Padishah that they carried him back to his palace half fainting. Then the witch guessed only too well how matters stood.

So she arose and went to the damsel, and so filled her foolish little head with her tales that she persuaded her not to give her brother rest day and night till he had brought her the Queen of the Peris herself. "That'll make him break his hatchet anyhow!" thought the old woman. But the damsel rejoiced beforehand at the thought of having the Queen of the Peris also, and in her impatience could scarce wait for her brother to come home.

When her brother came home she shed as many tears as if she were a cloud dripping rain. In vain her brother tried to prove to her how distant and how dangerous was the way she would fain have him go. "I want the Queen of the Peris, and have her I must," cried the damsel.

So again the youth set out on his journey, went straight to the Mother of Devils, pressed her hand, kissed her lips, pressed her lips and kissed her hand, and said: "Oh, my mother! help me in this my sore need!" The Mother of Devils was amazed at the valour of the man, and never ceased dissuading him from his purpose, for every human soul that goes on such a quest must needs perish.— "Die I may, little mother!" cried the youth, "but I will not come back without her."

So what could the Mother of Devils do but show him the way? "Go the same road," said she, "that

led thee to the branch, and then go on to where thou didst find the mirror. Thou wilt come at last to a large desert, and beyond the desert thou wilt see two roads, but look neither to the right hand nor yet to the left, but go right on through the sooty darkness betwixt them. When now it begins to grow a little lighter, thou wilt see a large cypress wood, and in this cypress wood a large tomb. In this tomb, turned to stone, are all those who ever desired the Queen of the Peris. Stop not there, but go right on to the palace of the Queen of the Peris and call out her name with the full strength of thy lungs. What will happen to thee after that not even I can tell thee."

Next day the youth set out on his journey. He prayed by the wayside well, opened all the gates he came to, and, looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, went on straight before him through the sooty darkness. All at once it began to grow a little lighter, and a large cypress wood appeared right in front of him. The leaves of the trees were of a burning green, and their drooping crowns hid snow-white tombs. Nay, but they were not tombs, but stones as big as men. Nay, but they were not stones at all, but men who had turned, who had stiffened, into stone. There was neither man, nor spirit, nor noise, nor breath of wind, and the youth froze with horror to his very marrow. Nevertheless he plucked up his

courage and went on his way. He looked straight before him all the time, and his eyes were almost blinded by a dazzling light. Was it the sun he saw? No, it was the palace of the Queen of the Peris! Then he rallied all the strength that was left in him and shouted the name of the Queen of the Peris with all his might, and the words had not yet died away upon his lips when his whole body up to his knee-cap stiffened into stone. Again he shouted with all his might, and he turned to stone up to his navel. Then he shouted for the last time with all his might, and stiffened up to his throat first and then up to his head, till he became a tombstone like the rest.

But now the Queen of the Peris came into her garden, and she had silver sandals on her feet and a golden saucer in her hand, and she drew water from a diamond fountain, and when she watered the stone youth, life and motion came back to him.

“Well, thou youth thou,” said the Queen of the Peris, “’tis not enough, then, that thou hast taken away my Peri branch and my magic mirror, but thou must needs, forsooth, venture hither a third time! Thou shalt share the fate of thy innocent buried mother, stone thou shalt become and stone shalt thou remain. What brought thee hither?—speak!”

“I came for thee,” replied the youth very courageously.

“ Well, as thou hast loved me so exceedingly, no harm shall befall thee, and we will go away together.”

Then the youth begged her to have compassion on all the men she had turned to stone and give them back their lives again. So the Peri returned to her palace, packed up her baggage, which was small in weight but priceless in value, filled the little golden saucer with water, and sprinkled therewith all the stones and the whole multitude of the stones became men. They all took horse, and as they quitted the Peri realm, the earth trembled beneath them and the sky was shaken as if the seven worlds and the seven heavens were mingled together, so that the youth would have died of fright if the Queen of the Peris had not been by his side. Never once did they look behind them, but galloped on and on till they came to the house of the youth's sister, and such was their joy and gladness at seeing each other again that place could scarce be found for the Queen of the Peris. But now the youth was in no great hurry to go hunting as before, for he had changed hearts with the lovely Queen of the Peris, and she was his and he was hers.

Now when the Queen of the Peris had heard the history of the children and their parents, and the fate of their innocent mother, she said one morning to the youth : “ Go a-hunting in the forest, and thou wilt

meet the Padishah. The first thing he will do will be to invite thee to the palace, but beware lest thou accept his invitation." And so indeed it turned out. Scarcely had he taken a turn in the wood than the Padishah stood before him, and, one word leading to another, he invited the youth to his palace, but the youth would not go.

Early next morning the Peri awoke the children, clapped her hands together and called her Lala,¹ and immediately a huge negro sprang up before them. So big was he that one of his lips touched the sky while the other swept the earth. "What dost thou command me, my Sultana?" cried the Lala.

"Fetch me hither my father's steed!" commanded the Peri.

The negro vanished like a hurricane, and, a moment afterwards, the steed stood before them, and the like of it was not to be found in the wide world.

The youth leaped upon the horse, and the splendid suite of the Padishah was already waiting for him at the roadside.

But—O Allah, forgive me!—I have forgotten the best of the story. The Peri charged the youth as he quitted her to take heed, while he was in the palace of the Padishah, to the neighing of his horse. At the first neighing he was to hasten back.

¹ Counsellor.

So the youth went to meet the Padishah on his diamond-bridled charger, and behind him came a gay and gallant retinue. He saluted the people on the right hand and on the left all the way to the palace, and there they welcomed him with a pomp the like of which was never known before. They ate and drank and made merry till the Padishah could scarce contain himself for joy, but then the steed neighed, the youth arose, and all their entreaties to him to stay could not turn him from his set purpose. He mounted his horse, invited the Padishah to be his guest on the following day, and returned home to the Peri and his own sister.

Meanwhile the Peri dug up the mother of the children, and so put her to rights again by her Peri arts that she became just as she was in the days of her first youth. But she spake not a word about the mother to the children, nor a word about the children to the mother. On the morning of the reception of guests she rose up early and commanded that on the spot where the little hut stood a palace should rise, the like of which eye hath never seen nor ear heard of, and there were as many precious stones heaped up there as were to be found in the whole kingdom. And then the garden that surrounded that palace ! There were multitudes of flowers, each one lovelier than the other, and on every flower there was a

singing bird, and every bird had feathers aglow with light, so that one could only look at it all open-mouthed and cry: "Oh! oh!" And the palace itself was full of domestics, there were black harem slaves, and white captive youths, and dancers and singers, and players of stringed instruments—more than thou canst count, count thou never so much, and words cannot tell of the splendour of the retinue which went forth to greet the Padishah as a guest.

"These children are not of mortal birth!" thought the Padishah to himself, when he beheld all these marvels, "or if they *are* of mortal birth a Peri must have had a hand in the matter."

They led the Padishah into the most splendid room of the palace, they brought him coffee and sherbet, and then the music spoke to him, and the singing birds—oh! a man could have listened to them for ever and ever! Then rich meats on rare and precious dishes were set before him, and then the dancers and the jugglers diverted him till the evening.

At eventide the servants came and bowed before the Padishah and said: "My lord! peace be with thee! They await thee in the harem!" So he entered the harem, and there he saw before him the golden-haired youth, with a beautiful half-moon shining on his forehead, and his bride, the Peri-Queen, and his own consort, the Sultana, who had been buried in

the earth, and by her side a golden-haired maiden with a star sparkling on her forehead. There stood the Padishah as if turned to stone, but his consort ran up to him and kissed the edge of his garment, and the Peri-Queen began to tell him the whole of her life and how everything had happened.

The Padishah was nigh to dying in the fulness of his joy. He could scarce believe his eyes, but he pressed his consort to his breast and embraced the two beauteous children, and the Queen of the Peris likewise. He forgave the sisters of the Sultana their offences, but the old witch was mercilessly destroyed by lingering tortures. But he and his consort and her son and the Queen of the Peris, and his daughter, and his daughter's bridegroom sat down to a great banquet and made merry. Forty days and forty nights they feasted, and the blessing of Allah was upon them.

THE HORSE-DEVIL AND THE WITCH

THERE was once upon a time a Padishah who had three daughters. One day the old father made him ready for a journey, and calling to him his three daughters straightly charged them to feed and water his favourite horse, even though they neglected everything else. He loved the horse so much that he would not suffer any stranger to come near it.

So the Padishah went on his way, but when the eldest daughter brought the fodder into the stable the horse would not let her come near him. Then the middling daughter brought the forage, and he treated her likewise. Last of all the youngest daughter brought the forage, and when the horse saw her he never budged an inch, but let her feed him and then return to her sisters. The two elder sisters were content that the youngest should take care of the horse, so they troubled themselves about it no more.

The Padishah came home, and the first thing he

asked was whether they had provided the horse with everything. "He wouldn't let us come near him," said the two elder sisters; "it was our youngest sister here who took care of him."

No sooner had the Padishah heard this than he gave his youngest daughter to the horse to wife, but his two other daughters he gave to the sons of his Chief Mufti and his Grand Vizier, and they celebrated the three marriages at a great banquet, which lasted forty days. Then the youngest daughter turned into the stable, but the two eldest dwelt in a splendid palace. In the daytime the youngest sister had only a horse for a husband and a stable for a dwelling; but in the night-time the stable became a garden of roses, the horse-husband a handsome hero, and they lived in a world of their own. Nobody knew of it but they two. They passed the day together as best they could, but eventide was the time of their impatient desires.

One day the Padishah held a tournament in the palace. Many gallant warriors entered the lists, but none strove so valiantly as the husbands of the Sultan's elder daughters.

"Only look now!" said the two elder daughters to their sister who dwelt in the stable, "only look now! how our husbands overthrow all the other warriors with their lances; our two lords are not

so much lords as lions! Where is this horse-husband of thine, prythee?"

On hearing this from his wife, the horse-husband shivered all over, turned into a man, threw himself on horseback, told his wife not to betray him on any account, and in an instant appeared within the lists. He overthrew every one with his lance, unhorsed his two brothers-in-law, and re-appeared in the stable again as if he had never left it.

The next day, when the sports began again, the two elder sisters mocked as before, but then the unknown hero appeared again, conquered and vanished. On the third day the horse-husband said to his wife: "If ever I should come to grief or thou shouldst need my help, take these three wisps of hair, burn them, and it will help thee wherever thou art." With that he hastened to the games again and triumphed over his brothers-in-law. Every one was amazed at his skill, the two elder sisters likewise, and again they said to their younger sister: "Look how these heroes excel in prowess! They are very different to thy dirty horse-husband!"

The girl could not endure standing there with nothing to say for herself, so she told her sisters that the handsome hero was no other than her horse-husband—and no sooner had she pointed at him than he vanished from before them as if he had never been.

Then only did she call to mind her lord's command to her not to betray her secret, and away she hurried off to the stable. But 'twas all in vain, neither horse nor man came to her, and at midnight there was neither rose nor rose-garden.

"Alas!" wept the girl, "I have betrayed my lord, I have broken my word, what a crime is mine!" She never closed an eye all that night, but wept till morning. When the red dawn appeared she went to her father the Padishah, complained to him that she had lost her horse-husband, and begged that she might go to the ends of the earth to seek him. In vain her father tried to keep her back, in vain he pointed out to her that her husband was now most probably among devils, and she would never be able to find him—turn her from her resolution he could not. What could he do but let her go on her way?

With a great desire the damsel set out on her quest, she went on and on till her tender body was all aweary, and at last she sank down exhausted at the foot of a great mountain. Then she called to mind the three hairs, and she took out one and set fire to it—and lo! her lord and master was in her arms again, and they could not speak for joy.

"Did I not bid thee tell none of my secret?" cried the youth sorrowfully; "and now if my hag of a mother see thee she will instantly tear thee to pieces.

This mountain is our dwelling-place. She will be here immediately, and woe to thee if she see thee !”

The poor Sultan's daughter was terribly frightened, and wept worse than ever at the thought of losing her lord again, after all her trouble in finding him. The heart of the devil's son was touched at her sorrow: he struck her once, changed her into an apple, and put her on the shelf. The hag flew down from the mountain with a terrible racket, and screeched out that she smelt the smell of a man, and her mouth watered for the taste of human flesh. In vain her son denied that there was any human flesh there, she would not believe him one bit.

“If thou wilt swear by the egg not to be offended, I'll show thee what I've hidden,” said her son. The hag swore, and her son gave the apple a tap, and there before them stood the beautiful damsel. “Behold my wife !” said he to his mother. The old mother said never a word, what was done could not be undone. “I'll give the bride something to do all the same,” thought she.

They lived a couple of days together in peace and quiet, but the hag was only waiting for her son to leave the house. At last one day the youth had work to do elsewhere, and scarcely had he put his foot out of doors when the hag said to the damsel: “Come, sweep and sweep not !” and with that she went out,

and said she should not be back till evening. The girl thought to herself again and again: "What am I to do now? What did she mean by 'sweep and sweep not'?" Then she thought of the hairs, and she took out and burned the second hair also. Immediately her lord stood before her and asked her what was the matter, and the girl told him of his mother's command: "Sweep and sweep not!" Then her lord explained to her that she was to sweep out the chamber, but not to sweep the ante-chamber.

The girl did as she was told, and when the hag came home in the evening she asked the girl whether she had accomplished her task. "Yes, little mother," replied the bride, "I have swept and I have not swept."—"Thou daughter of a dog," cried the old witch, "not thine own wit but my son's mouth hath told thee this thing."

The next morning when the hag got up she gave the damsel vases, and told her to fill them with tears. The moment the hag had gone the damsel placed the three vases before her, and wept and wept, but what could her few teardrops do to fill them? Then she took out and burned the third hair.

Again her lord appeared before her, and explained to her that she must fill the three vases with water, and then put a pinch of salt in each vase. The girl did so, and when the hag came home in the evening

and demanded an account of her work, the girl showed her the three vases full of tears. "Thou daughter of a dog!" chided the old woman again, "that is not thy work; but I'll do for thee yet, and for my son too."

The next day she devised some other task for her to do; but her son guessed that his mother would vex the wench, so he hastened home to his bride. There the poor thing was worrying herself about it all alone, for the third hair was now burnt, and she did not know how to set about doing the task laid upon her. "Well, there is now nothing for it but to run away," said her lord, "for she won't rest now till she hath done thee a mischief." And with that he took his wife, and out into the wide world they went.

In the evening the hag came home, and saw neither her son nor his bride. "They have flown, the dogs!" cried the hag, with a threatening voice, and she called to her sister, who was also a witch, to make ready and go in pursuit of her son and his bride. So the witch jumped into a pitcher, snatched up a serpent for a whip, and went after them.

The demon-lover saw his aunt coming, and in an instant changed the girl into a bathing-house, and himself into a bath-man sitting down at the gate. The witch leaped from the pitcher, went to the bath-

keeper, and asked him if he had not seen a young boy and girl pass by that way.

"I have only just warmed up my bath," said the youth, "there's nobody inside it; if thou dost not believe me, thou canst go and look for thyself." The witch thought: "'Tis impossible to get a sensible word out of a fellow of this sort," so she jumped into her pitcher, flew back, and told her sister that she couldn't find them. The other hag asked her whether she had exchanged words with any one on the road. "Yes," replied the younger sister, "there was a bath-house by the roadside, and I asked the owner of it about them; but he was either a fool or deaf, so I took no notice of him."

"'Tis thou who wert the fool," snarled her elder sister. "Didst thou not recognize in him my son, and in the bath-house my daughter-in-law?" Then she called her second sister, and sent her after the fugitives.

The devil's son saw his second aunt flying along in her pitcher. Then he gave his wife a tap and turned her into a spring, but he himself sat down beside it, and began to draw water out of it with a pitcher. The witch went up to him, and asked him whether he had seen a girl and a boy pass by that way.

"There's drinkable water in this spring," replied

he, with a vacant stare, "I am always drawing it." The witch thought she had to do with a fool, turned back, and told her sister that she had not met with them. Her sister asked her if she had not come across any one by the way. "Yes, indeed," replied she, "a half-witted fellow was drawing water from a spring, but I couldn't get a single sensible word out of him."

"That half-witted fellow was my son, the spring was his wife, and a pretty wiseacre thou art," screeched her sister. "I shall have to go myself, I see," and with that she jumped into her pitcher, snatched up a serpent to serve her as a whip, and off she went.

Meanwhile the youth looked back again, and saw his mother coming after them. He gave the girl a tap and changed her into a tree, but he himself turned into a serpent, and coiled himself round the tree. The witch recognized them, and drew near to the tree to break it to pieces; but when she saw the serpent coiled round it, she was afraid to kill her own son along with it, so she said to her son: "Son, son! show me, at least, the girl's little finger, and then I'll leave you both in peace." The son saw that he could not free himself from her any other way, and that she must have at least a little morsel of the damsel to nibble at. So he showed her one of the

girl's little fingers, and the old hag wrenched it off, and returned to her domains with it. Then the youth gave the girl a tap and himself another tap, put on human shape again, and away they went to the girl's father, the Padishah. The youth, since his talisman had been destroyed, remained a mortal man, but the diabolical part of him stayed at home with his witch-mother and her kindred. The Padishah rejoiced greatly in his children, gave them a wedding-banquet with a wave of his finger, and they inherited the realm after his death.

THE CINDER-YOUTH

ONCE upon a time that was no time, in the days when the servants of Allah were many and the misery of man was great, there lived a poor woman who had three sons and one daughter. The youngest son was half-witted, and used to roll about all day in the warm ashes.

One day the two elder brothers went out to plough, and said to their mother: "Boil us something, and send our sister out with it into the field."—Now the three-faced devil had pitched his tent close to this field, and in order that the girl might not come near them he determined to persuade her to go all round about instead of straight to them.

The mother cooked the dinner and the girl went into the field with it, but the devil contrived to make her lose her road, so that she wandered further and further away from the place where she wanted to go. At last, when her poor head was quite con-

fused, the devil's wife appeared before her and asked the terrified girl what she meant by trespassing there. Then she talked her over and persuaded her to come home with her, that she might hide her from the vengeance of the devil, her husband.

But the three-faced devil had got home before them, and when they arrived the old woman told the girl to make haste and get something ready to eat while her maid-servant stirred up the fire. But scarcely had she begun to get the dish ready than the devil crept stealthily up behind her, opened his mouth wide, and swallowed the girl whole, clothes and all.

Meanwhile her brothers were waiting in the field for their dinner, but neither the damsel nor the victuals appeared. Afternoon came and went and evening too, and then the lads went home, and when they heard from their mother that their sister had gone to seek them early in the morning they suspected what had happened—their little sister must have fallen into the hands of the devil. The two elder brothers did not think twice about it, but the elder of them set off at once to seek his sister.

He went on and on, puffing at his chibook, sniffing the perfume of flowers and drinking coffee, till he came to an oven by the wayside. By the oven sat an old man, who asked the youth on

what errand he was bent. The youth told him of his sister's case, and said he was going in search of the three-faced devil, and would not be content till he had killed him.—“Thou wilt never be able to slay the devil,” said the man, “till thou hast eaten of bread that has been baked in this oven.”—The youth thought this no very difficult matter, took the loaves out of the oven, but scarcely had he bitten a piece out of one of them than the oven, the man, and the loaves all disappeared before his eyes, and the bit he had taken swelled within him so that he nearly burst.

The youth hadn't gone two steps further on when he saw on the highway a large cauldron, and the cauldron was full of wine. A man was sitting in front of the cauldron, and he asked him the way, and told him the tale of the devil. “Thou wilt never be able to cope with the devil,” said the man, “if thou dost not drink of this wine.” The youth drank, but: “Woe betide my stomach, woe betide my bowels!” for so plagued was he that he could not have stood upright if he had not seen two bridges before him. One of these bridges was of wood and the other was of iron, and beyond the two bridges were two apple-trees, and one bore unripe bitter apples and the other sweet ripe ones.

The three-faced devil was waiting on the road to

see which bridge he would choose, the wooden or the iron one, and which apples he would eat, the sour or the sweet ones. The youth went along the iron bridge, lest the wooden one might break down, and plucked the sweet apples, because the green ones were bitter. That was just what the devil wanted him to do, and he at once sent his mother to meet the youth and entice him into his house as he had done his sister, and it was not long before he also found his way into the devil's belly.

And next in order, the middling brother, not wishing to be behind-hand, also went in search of his kinsmen. He also could not eat of the bread, his inside also was plagued by the wine, he went across the iron bridge and ate of the sweet apples, and so he also found his way into the devil's belly. Only the youngest brother who lay among the ashes remained. His mother besought him not to forsake her in her old age. If the others had gone he at least could remain and comfort her, she said. But the youth would not listen. "I will not rest," said Cinderer, "till I have found the three lost ones, my two brothers and my sister, and slain the devil." Then he rose from his chimney corner, and no sooner had he shaken the ashes from off him than such a tempest arose that all the labourers at work in the fields left their ploughs where they stood, and ran off as far as

their eyes could see. Then the youngest son gathered together the ploughshares and bade a blacksmith make a lance of them, but a lance of such a kind as would fly into the air and come back again to the hand that hurled it without breaking its iron point. The smith made the lance, and the youth hurled it. Up into the air flew the lance, but when it came down again on to the tip of his little finger it broke to pieces. Then the youth shook himself still more violently in the ashes, and again the labourers in the field fled away before the terrible tempest which immediately arose, and the youth gathered together a still greater multitude of ploughshares and took them to the smith. The smith made a second lance, and that also flew up into the air and broke to pieces when it came down again. Then the youth shook himself in the ashes a third time, and such a hurricane arose that there was scarce a ploughshare in the whole country-side that was not carried away. It was only with great difficulty that the smith could make the third lance, but when that came down on the youth's finger it did not break in pieces like the others. "This will do pretty well," said the youth, and catching up the lance he went forth into the wide world.

He went on and on and on till he also came to the oven and the cauldron. The men who guarded the oven and the cauldron stopped him and asked him his

business, and on finding out that he was going to kill the devil, they told the youth that he must first eat the bread of the oven and then drink the wine in the cauldron if he could. The son of the cinders wished for nothing better. He ate the loaves that were baked in the oven, drank all the wine, and further on he saw the wooden bridge and the iron bridge, and beyond the bridges the apple-trees.

The devil had observed the youth from afar, and his courage began to ooze out of him when he saw the deeds of the son of the ashes. "Any fool can go across the iron bridge," thought the youth, "I'll go across the wooden one," and as it was no very great feat to eat the sweet apples he ate the sour ones.—"There will be no joking with this one," said the devil, "I see I must get ready my lance and measure my strength with him."

The son of the ashes saw the devil from afar, and full of the knowledge of his own valour went straight up to him.

"If thou doest not homage to me, I'll swallow thee straight off," cried the devil.

"And if thou doest not homage to me, I'll knock thee to pieces with my lance," replied the youth.

"Oh ho! if we're so brave as all that," cried the three-faced monster, "let us out with our lances without losing any more time."

So the devil out with his lance, whirled it round his head, and aimed it with all his might at the youth, who gave but one little twist with his finger, and crick-crack! the devil's lance broke all to bits. "Now it's my turn," cried the son of the cinders; and he hurled his lance at the devil with such force that the devil's first soul flew out of his nose.—"At it again once more, if thou art a man," yelled the devil, with a great effort. "Not I," cried the youth, "for my mother only bore me once," whereupon the devil breathed forth his last soul also. Then the youth went on to seek the devil's wife. Her also he chased down the road after her husband, and when he had cut them both in two, lo and behold! all three of his kinsfolk stood before him, so he turned back home and took them with him. Now his brothers and sister had grown very thirsty in the devil's belly, and when they saw a large well by the wayside, they asked their brother Cinder-son to draw them a little water. Then the youths took off their girdles, tied them together, and let down the biggest brother, but he had scarcely descended more than half-way down when he began to shriek unmercifully: "Oh, oh, draw me up, I have had enough," so that they had to pull him up and let the second brother try. And with him it fared the same way. "Now 'tis my turn," cried Cinder-son, "but mind you do not pull me

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The Cinder-Youth and the Three Damsels.—p. 91.

up, however loudly I holloa." So they let down the youngest brother, and he too began to holloa and bawl, but they paid no heed to it, and let him down till he stood on the dry bottom of the well. A door stood before him, he opened it, and there were three lovely damsels sitting in a room together, and each of them shone like the moon when she is only fourteen days old. The three damsels were amazed at the sight of the youth. How durst he come into the devil's cavern? they asked—and they begged and besought him to escape as he valued dear life. But the youth would not budge at any price, till he had got the better of this devil also. The end of the matter was that he slew the devil and released the three damsels, who were Sultan's daughters, and had been stolen from their fathers and kept here for the last seven years. The two elder princesses he intended for his two brothers, but the youngest, who was also the loveliest, he chose for himself, and filling the pitcher with water he brought the damsels to the bottom of the well, right below the mouth of it.

First of all he let them draw up the eldest princess for his eldest brother, then he made them pull up the middling princess for his middling brother, and then it came to the youngest damsel's turn. But she desired that the youth should be drawn up at all hazards and herself afterwards. "Thy brethren,"

she explained, "will be wroth with thee for keeping the loveliest damsel for thyself, and will not draw thee out of the well for sheer jealousy."

"I'll find my way out even then," answered the youth, and though she begged and besought him till there was no more soul in her, he would not listen to her. Then the damsel drew from her breast a casket and said to the youth: "If any mischief befall thee, open this casket. Inside it is a piece of flint, and if thou strike it once a negro efrif will appear before thee and fulfil all thy desires. If thy brethren leave thee in the well, go to the palace of the devil and stand by the well. Two rams come there every day, a black one and a white one; if thou cling fast to the white one, thou wilt come to the surface of the earth, but if thou cling on to the black one thou wilt sink down into the seventh world."

Then he let them draw up the youngest damsel, and no sooner did his brethren see their brother's bride and perceive that she was the loveliest of all, than jealousy overtook them, and in their wrath they left him in the well and went home with the damsels.

So what else could the poor youth at the bottom of the well do than go back to the devil's palace, stand by the well, and wait for the two rams? Not very long afterwards a white ram came bounding along before him, and after that a black ram, and the

youth, instead of catching hold of the white ram, seized the black one and immediately perceived that he was at the bottom of the seventh world. . . . He went on and on, he went for a long time and he went for a short time, he went by day and he went by night, he went up hill and down dale till he could do no more, and stopped short by a large tree to take a little rest. But what was that he saw before him? A large serpent was gliding up the trunk of the tree and would have devoured all the young birds on the tree if Cinder-son had let him. But the youth quickly drew forth his lance and cut the serpent in two with a single blow. Then, like one who has done his work well, he lay down at the foot of the tree, and inasmuch as he was tired and it was warm he fell asleep at once.

Now while he slept the emerald Anka, who is the mother of the birds and the Padishah of the Peris, passed by that way, and when she saw the sleeping youth she fancied him to be her enemy, who was wont to destroy her children year by year. She was about to cut him to pieces, when the birds whispered to her not to hurt the youth, because he had killed their enemy the serpent. It was only then that the Anka perceived the two halves of the serpent. And now, lest anything should harm the sleeping youth, she hopped round and round him, and touched him softly and sheltered him with both her wings lest the sun

should scorch him, and when he awoke from his sleep the wing of the bird was spread over him like a tent. And now the Anka approached him and said she would fain reward him for his good deed, and he might make a request of her. Then replied the youth: "I would fain get to the surface of the earth again."

"Be it so," said the emerald bird, "but first thou must get forty tons of ox-flesh and forty pitchers of water and sit on my back with them, so that when I say 'Gik!' thou mayest give me to eat, and when I say 'Gak!' thou mayest give me to drink."

Then the youth bethought him of his casket, took the flint-stone out of it, and struck it once, and immediately a black efrít with a mouth as big as the world stood before him and said: "What dost thou command, my Sultan?"—"Forty tons of ox-flesh, and forty pitchers of water," said the youth. In a short time the efrít brought the flesh and the water, and the youth packed it all up together and mounted on the wing of the bird. Off they went, and whenever the Anka cried "Gik!" he gave her flesh, and whenever she cried "Gak!" he gave her water. They flew from one layer of worlds to the next, till in a short time they got above the surface of the earth again, and he dismounted from the bird's back and said to her: "Wait here a while, and in a short time I shall be back."

Then the youth took out his coffer, struck the flint-stone, and bade the black bounding efrít get him tidings of the three sisters. In a short time the efrít re-appeared with the three damsels, who were preparing a banquet for the brothers. He made them all sit on the bird's back, took with him again forty tons of ox-flesh and forty pitchers of water, and away they all went to the land of the three damsels. Every time the Anka said "Gik!" he gave her flesh to eat, and every time she said "Gak!" he gave her water to drink. But as the youth now had three with him besides himself, it came to pass that the flesh ran short, so that when the Anka said "Gik!" once more he had nothing to give her. Then the youth drew his knife, cut a piece of flesh out of his thigh, and stuffed it into the bird's mouth.¹ The Anka perceived that it was human flesh and did not eat it, but kept it in her mouth, and when they had reached the realm of the three damsels, the bird told him that he might now go in peace.

But the poor youth could not move a step because of the smart in his leg. "Thou go on first," he said to the bird, "but I will first rest me here a while."

"Nay, but thou art a droll rogue," quoth the bird, and with that it spit out of its mouth the piece of

¹ The same incident occurs in the Cossack fairy-tale of the Bird Zhar and the Russian fairy-tale of the Bird Mogol.

human flesh and put it back in its proper place just as if it had never been cut out.

The whole city was amazed at the sight of the return of the Sultan's daughters. The old Padishah could scarce believe his own eyes. He looked and looked and then he embraced the first princess; he looked and looked and then he kissed the second princess, and when they had told him the story he gave his whole kingdom and his three daughters to Cinder-son. Then the youth sent for his mother and his sister, and they all sat down to the banquet together. Moreover he found his sister a husband who was the son of the Vizier, and for forty days and forty nights they were full of joyfulness.

THE PIECE OF LIVER

ONCE upon a time there was an old woman who felt she would very much like to have a piece of liver, so she gave a girl two or three pence, and bade her buy the liver in the market-place, wash it clean in the pond, and then bring it home. So the girl went to the market-place, bought the liver, and took it to the pond to wash it; and while she was washing it a stork popped down, snatched the liver out of her hand, and flew away with it. Then the girl cried: "Stork, stork! give me back my liver, that I may take it to my mammy, lest my mammy beat me!"—"If thou wilt fetch me a barley-ear instead of it, I'll give thee back thy liver," said the stork. So the girl went to the straw-stalk, and said: "Straw-stalk, straw-stalk! give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy."—"If thou wilt pray Allah for

rain, thou shalt have a little barley-ear," said the straw-stalk. But while she was beginning her prayer, saying: "Oh, Allah, give me rain, that I may give the rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy," while she was praying thus, up came a man to her and said that without a censer no prayers could ever get to heaven, so she must go to the bazaar-keeper for a censer.

So she went to the bazaar-keeper, and cried: "Bazaar-keeper, bazaar-keeper! give me a censer, that I may burn incense before Allah, that Allah may give me rain, that I may give rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give my liver to my mammy!"

"I'll give it thee," said the bazaar-keeper, "if thou wilt bring me a boot from the cobbler."

So the girl went to the cobbler, and said to him: "Cobbler, cobbler! give me a boot, that I may give the boot to the bazaar-keeper, that the bazaar-keeper may give me a censer, that I may burn incense before Allah, that Allah may give me rain, that I may give rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give

me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back the liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy."

But the cobbler said: "If thou fetch me a hide thou shalt have a boot for it."

So the girl went to the tanner, and said: "Tanner, tanner! give me a hide, that I may give the hide to the cobbler, that the cobbler may give me a boot, that I may give the boot to the bazaar-keeper, that the bazaar-keeper may give me a censer, that I may burn incense before Allah, that Allah may give me rain, that I may give the rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy."

"If thou gettest a hide from the ox, thou wilt get a hide fit for making a boot," said the tanner.

So the girl went to the ox, and said to it: "Ox, ox! give me a hide, that I may give the hide to the tanner, that the tanner may give me boot-leather, that I may give the boot-leather to the cobbler, that the cobbler may give me a boot, that I may give the boot to the bazaar-keeper, that the bazaar-keeper may give me a censer, that I may burn incense before Allah, that Allah may give me rain, that I may give the rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give

me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy."

The ox said: "If thou get me straw I'll give thee a hide for it!"

So the girl went to the farmer, and said to him: "Farmer, farmer! give me straw, that I may give the straw to the ox, that the ox may give me a hide, that I may give the hide to the tanner, that the tanner may give me shoe-leather, that I may give the shoe-leather to the cobbler, that the cobbler may give me a shoe, that I may give the shoe to the bazaar-keeper, that the bazaar-keeper may give me a censer, that I may burn incense before Allah, that Allah may give me rain, that I may give rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy."

The farmer said to the girl: "I'll give thee the straw if thou give me a kiss."

"Well," thought the girl to herself, "a kiss is but a little matter if it free me from all this bother." So she went up to the farmer and kissed him, and the farmer gave her straw for the kiss. She took the straw to the ox, and the ox gave her a hide for the straw. She took the hide to the tanner, and the

tanner gave her shoe-leather. She took the shoe-leather to the cobbler, and the cobbler gave her a shoe for it. She took the shoe to the bazaar-keeper, and the bazaar-keeper gave her a censer. She lit the censer and cried: "Oh, Allah! give me rain, that I may give the rain to the straw-stalk, that the straw-stalk may give me a barley-ear, that I may give the barley-ear to the stork, that the stork may give me back my liver, that I may give the liver to my mammy." Then Allah gave her rain, and she gave the rain to the straw-stalk, and the straw-stalk gave her a barley-ear, and she gave the barley-ear to the stork, and the stork gave her back her liver, and she gave the liver to her mammy, and her mammy cooked the liver and ate it.

THE MAGIC TURBAN, THE MAGIC WHIP, AND THE MAGIC CARPET

ONCE upon a time that was no time there were two brothers. Their father and mother had died and divided all their property between them. The elder brother opened a shop, but the younger brother, who was but a feather-brain, idled about and did nothing; so that at last, what with eating and drinking and gadding abroad, the day came when he had no more money left. Then he went to his elder brother and begged a copper or two of him, and when that all was spent he came to him again, and so he continued to live upon him.

At last the elder brother began to grow tired of this waste, but seeing that he could not be quit of his younger brother, he turned all his possessions into sequins, and embarked on a ship in order to go into another kingdom. The younger brother, however, had got wind of it, and before the ship

started he managed to creep on board and conceal himself without any one observing him. The elder brother suspected that if the younger one heard of his departure he would be sure to follow after, so he took good care not to show himself on deck. But scarcely had they unfurled the sails when the two brothers came face to face, and the elder brother found himself saddled with his younger brother again.

The elder brother was not a little angry, but what was the use of that!—for the ship did not stop till it came to Egypt. There the elder brother said to the younger brother: “Thou stay here, and I will go and get two mules that we may go on further.” The youth sat down on the shore and waited for his brother, and waited, but waited in vain. “I think I had better look for him,” thought he, and up he got and went after his elder brother.

He went on and on and on, he went a short distance and he went a long distance, six months was he crossing a field; but once as he looked over his shoulder, he saw that for all his walking he walked no further than a barley-stalk reaches. Then he strode still more, he strode still further, he strode for half a year continuously; he kept plucking violets as he went along, and as he went striding, striding, his feet struck upon a hill, and there he saw three youths

quarrelling with one another about something. He soon made a fourth, and asked them what they were tussling about.

“We are the children of one father,” said the youngest of them, “and our father has just died and left us, by way of inheritance, a turban, a whip, and a carpet. Whoever puts the turban on his head is hidden from mortal eyes. Whoever extends himself on the carpet and strikes it once with the whip can fly far away, after the manner of birds; and we are eternally quarrelling among ourselves as to whose shall be the turban, whose the whip, and whose the carpet.”

“All three of them must belong to one of us,” cried they all. “They are mine, because I am the biggest,” said one.—“They are mine by right, because I am the middling-sized brother,” cried the second.—“They are mine, because I am the smallest,” cried the third. From words they speedily came to blows, so that it was as much as the youth could do to keep them apart.

“You can’t settle it like that,” said he; “I’ll tell you what we’ll do. I’ll make an arrow from this little piece of wood, and shoot it off. You run after it, and he who brings it to me here soonest shall have all three things.” Away flew the dart, and after it pelted the three brothers, helter-skelter; but the

wise youth knew a trick worth two of that, for he stuck the turban on his head, sat down on the carpet, tapped it once with the whip, and cried: "Hipp—hopp! let me be where my elder brother is!" and when he awoke a large city lay before him.

He had scarce taken more than a couple of steps through the street, when the Padishah's herald came along, and proclaimed to the inhabitants of the town that the Sultan's daughter disappeared every night from the palace. Whoever could find out what became of her should receive the damsel and half the kingdom. "Here am I!" cried the youth, "lead me to the Padishah, and if I don't find out, let them take my head!"

So they brought the fool into the palace, and in the evening there lay the Sultan's daughter watching, with her eyes half-closed, all that was going on. The damsel was only waiting for him to go to sleep, and presently she stuck a needle into her heel, took the candle with her, lest the youth should awake, and went out by a side door.

The youth had his turban on his head in a trice, and no sooner had he popped out of the same door than he saw a black efit standing there with a golden buckler on his head, and on the buckler sat the Sultan's daughter, and they were just on the point

of starting off. The lad was not such a fool as to fancy that he could keep up with them by himself, so he also leaped on to the buckler, and very nearly upset the pair of them in consequence. The efrit was alarmed, and asked the damsel in Allah's name what she was about, as they were within a hair's-breadth of falling. "I never moved," said the damsel; "I am sitting on the buckler just as you put me there."

The black efrit had scarcely taken a couple of steps, when he felt that the buckler was unusually heavy. The youth's turban naturally made him invisible, so the efrit turned to the damsel and said: "My Sultana, thou art so heavy to-day that I all but break down beneath thee!"—"Darling Lala!" replied the girl, "thou art very odd to-night, for I am neither bigger nor smaller than I was yesterday."

Shaking his head the black efrit pursued his way, and they went on and on till they came to a wondrously beautiful garden, where the trees were made of nothing but silver and diamonds. The youth broke off a twig and put it in his pocket, when straightway the trees began to sigh and weep and say: "There's a child of man here who tortures us! there's a child of man here who tortures us!"

The efrit and the damsel looked at each other.

“They sent a youth in to me to-day,” said the damsel, “maybe his soul is pursuing us.”

Then they went on still further, till they came to another garden, where every tree was sparkling with gold and precious stones. Here too the youth broke off a twig and shoved it into his pocket, and immediately the earth and the sky shook, and the rustling of the trees said: “There’s a child of man here torturing us, there’s a child of man here torturing us,” so that both he and the damsel very nearly fell from the buckler in their fright. Not even the efrīt knew what to make of it.

After that they came to a bridge, and beyond the bridge was a fairy palace, and there an army of slaves awaited the damsel, and with their hands straight down by their sides they bowed down before her till their foreheads touched the ground. The Sultan’s daughter dismounted from the efrīt’s head, the youth also leaped down; and when they brought the princess a pair of slippers covered with diamonds and precious stones, the youth snatched one of them away, and put it in his pocket. The girl put on one of the slippers, but being unable to find the other, sent for another pair, when, presto! one of these also disappeared. At this the damsel was so annoyed that she walked on without slippers; but the youth, with the turban on his head and the whip and the carpet

in his hand, followed her everywhere like her shadow. So the damsel went on before, and he followed her into a room, and there he saw the black Peri, one of whose lips touched the sky, while the other lip swept the ground. He angrily asked the damsel where she had been all the time, and why she hadn't come sooner. The damsel told him about the youth who had arrived the evening before, and about what had happened on the way, but the Peri comforted her by saying that the whole thing was fancy, and she was not to trouble herself about it any more. After that he sat down with the damsel, and ordered a slave to bring them sherbet. A black slave brought the noble drink in a lovely diamond cup, but just as he was handing it to the Sultan's daughter the invisible youth gave the hand of the slave such a wrench that he dropped and broke the cup to pieces. A piece of this also the youth concealed in his pocket.

"Now didn't I say that something was wrong?" cried the Sultan's daughter. "I want no sherbet nor anything else, and I think I had better get back again as soon as possible."—"Tush! tush!" said the efit, and he ordered other slaves to bring them something to eat. So they brought a little table covered with many dishes, and they began to eat together; whereupon the hungry youth also set to work, and the viands disappeared as if three were eating instead of two.

And the black Peri himself began to be a little impatient, when not only the food but also the forks and spoons began to disappear, and he said to his sweetheart, the Sultan's daughter, that perhaps it would be as well if she did make haste home again. First of all the black efit wanted to kiss the girl, but the youth slipped in between them, pulled them asunder, and one of them fell to the right and the other to the left. They both turned pale, called the Lala with his buckler, the damsel sat upon it, and away they went. But the youth took down a sword from the wall, bared his arm, and with one blow he chopped off the head of the black Peri. No sooner had his head rolled from his shoulders than the heavens roared so terribly, and the earth groaned so horribly, and a voice cried so mightily: "Woe to us, a child of man hath slain our king!" that the terrified youth knew not whether he stood on his head or his heels.

He seized his carpet, sat upon it, gave it one blow with his whip, and when the Sultan's daughter returned to the palace, there she found the youth snoring in his room. "Oh, thou wretched bald-pate," cried the damsel viciously, "what a night I've had of it. So much the worse for thee!" Then she took out a needle and pricked the youth in the heel, and because he never stirred she

fancied he was asleep, and lay down to sleep herself also.

Next morning when she awoke she bade the youth prepare for death, as his last hour had come. "Nay," replied he, "not to thee do I owe an account of myself; let us both come before the Padishah."

Then they led him before the father of the damsel, but he said he would only tell them what had happened in the night if they called all the people of the town together. "In that way I shall find my brother, perhaps," thought he. So the town-crier called all the people together, and the youth stood on a high daïs beside the Padishah and the Sultana, and began to tell them the whole story, from the efrit's buckler to the Peri king. "Believe him not, my lord Padishah and father; he lies, my lord father and Padishah!" stammered the damsel; whereupon the youth drew from his pocket the diamond twig, the twig of gems, the golden slipper, the precious spoons and forks. Then he went on to tell them of the death of the black Peri, when all at once he caught sight of his elder brother, whom he had been searching for so long. He had now neither eyes nor ears for anything else, but leaping off the daïs, he forced his way on and on through the crowd to his brother, till they both came together.

Then the elder brother told *their* story, while the

younger brother begged the Padishah to give his daughter and half the kingdom to his elder brother. He was quite content, he said, with the magic turban and the magic whip and carpet to the day of his death, if only he might live close to his elder brother.

But the Sultan's daughter rejoiced most of all when she heard of the death of the Peri king. He had carried her off by force from her room one day, and so enchanted her with his power that she had been unable to set herself free. In her joy she agreed that the youth's elder brother should be her lord; and they made a great banquet, at which they feasted forty days and forty nights with one another. I also was there, and I begged so much pilaw¹ from the cook, and I got so much in the palm of my hand, that I limp to this day.

¹ Boiled rice, with flesh added and scalded butter.

THE WIND-DEMON

THERE was once upon a time an old Padishah who had three sons and three daughters. One day the old man fell ill, and though they called all the leeches together to help him, his disease would not take a turn for the better. "I already belong to Death," he thought, and calling to him his sons and daughters, he thus addressed them: "If I die, he among you shall be Padishah who watches three nights at my tomb. As for my daughters, I give them to him who first comes to woo them." And with that he died, and was buried as became a Padishah.

Now as the realm could have a Padishah in no other way, the eldest son went to his father's tomb and sat there for half the night, said his prayers upon his carpet, and awaited the dawn. But all at once a horrible din arose in the midst of the darkness, and so frightened was he that he snatched up his slippers and never stopped till he got home. The next night

the middling son also went out to the tomb, and he also sat there for half the night, but no sooner did he hear the great din than he too caught up his slippers and hurried off homewards. So it now came to the turn of the third and youngest son.

The third son took his sword, stuck it in his girdle, and went off to the tomb. Sure enough, when he had sat there till midnight, he heard the horrible din, and so horrible was it that the very earth trembled. The youth pulled himself together, went straight towards the spot from whence the noise came loudest, and behold! right in front of him stood a huge dragon. Drawing his sword, the youth fell upon the dragon so furiously that at last the monster had scarcely strength enough left to say: "If thou art a man, put thy heel upon me and strike me with thy sword but once more!"

"Not I," cried the King's son, "my mother only bore me into the world once," whereupon the dragon yielded up its filthy soul. The King's son would have cut off the beast's ears and nose, but he could not see very well in the dark, and began groping about for them, when all at once he saw afar off a little shining light. He went straight towards it, and there in the midst of the brightness he saw an old man. Two globes were in his hand, one black and the other white; the black globe he was turning

round and round, and from the white globe proceeded the light.

“What art thou doing, old father?” asked the King’s son.

“Alas! my son,” replied the old man, “my business is my bane, I hold fast the nights and let go the days.”—“Alas! my father,” replied the King’s son, “my task is even greater than thine.” With that he tied together the old man’s arms, so that he might not let go the days, and went on still further to seek the light. He went on and on till he came to the foot of a castle wall, and forty men were taking counsel together beneath it.

“What’s the matter?” inquired the King’s son.—“We should like to go into the castle to steal the treasure,” said the forty men, “but we don’t know how.”

“I would very soon help you if you only gave me a little light,” said the King’s son. This the robbers readily promised to do, and after that he took a packet of nails, knocked them into the castle wall, row after row, right up to the top, clambered up himself, and then shouted down to them: “Now you come up one by one, just as I have done.”

So the robbers caught hold of the nails and began to clamber up, one after another, the whole forty of them. But the youth was not idle. He drew his sword, and the moment each one of them reached the

top, he chopped off his head and pitched his body into the courtyard, and so he did to the whole forty. Then he leaped down into the courtyard himself, and there right before him was a beautiful palace ; and no sooner had he opened the door than a serpent glided past him, and crawled up a column close by the staircase. The youth drew his sword to strike the serpent ; he struck and cut the serpent in two, but his sword remained in the stone wall, and he forgot to draw it out again. Then he mounted the staircase and went into a room, and there lay a lovely damsel asleep. So he went out again, closed the door very softly behind him, and ascended to the second flight, and went into a room there, and before him lay a still lovelier damsel on a bed. This door he also closed, and went up to the third and topmost flight, and opened a door there also, and lo ! the whole room was piled up with nothing but steel, and such a splendid damsel lay asleep there that if the King's son had had a thousand hearts, he would have loved her with them all. This door he also closed, remounted the castle wall, re-descended on the other side by means of the nails, which he took out as he descended, and so reached the ground again. Then he went straight up to the old man whose arms he had tied together. " Oh, my son ! " cried he from afar, " thou hast remained a long time away. Every-

body's side will be aching from so much lying down." Then the youth untied his arms, the old man let the white globes of day move round again, and the youth went up to the dragon, cut off its ears and nose, and put them in his knapsack. Then he went back to the palace, and when he drew nigh to it he found that they had made his eldest brother Padishah. However, he let it be and said nothing.

Not very long afterwards a lion came to the palace, and went straight up to the Padishah. "What dost thou want?" asked the Padishah. "I want thy eldest sister to wife," replied the lion. "I give not my sister to a brute beast," said the Padishah, and forthwith they began chasing the lion away; but now the King's son appeared and said: "Such was not our father's will, but he said we were to give her to whomsoever asked for her." With that they brought the damsel and gave her to the lion, and he took her and was gone.

The next day came a tiger, and demanded the middling daughter from the Padishah. The two elder brethren would by no means give her up, but again the youngest brother insisted that they should do so, as it was their father's wish. So they sent for the damsel and gave her to the tiger.

On the third day a bird alighted in the palace, and said that he must have the youngest of the Sultan's

daughters. The Padishah and the second brother were again unwilling to agree to it, but the youngest brother stood them out that the bird ought to be allowed to fly back with his sister. Now this bird was the Padishah of the Peris, the emerald Anka. But now let us see what happened in that castle of which we have before spoken.

In this castle there dwelt just about this time a Padishah and his three daughters. Rising one morning and going out, he saw a man walking in the palace. He went out into the courtyard, and saw a serpent cut in two on the staircase, and a sword sticking in the stone column, and going on still further, and searching in all directions, he perceived the bodies of the forty robbers in his castle moat. "Not an enemy, but only the hand of a friend could have done this," thought he; "and he has saved me from the robbers and the serpent. The sword is my good friend's, but where is the sword's master?" And he took counsel with his Vizier.

"Oh, we'll soon get to the bottom of that," said the Vizier. "Let us make a great bath, and invite every one to come and bathe in it for nothing. We will watch carefully each single man, and whosoever has a sheath without a sword will be the man who has saved us." And the Padishah did so. He made ready a big bath, and the whole realm came and bathed in it.

Next day the Vizier said to him: "Every one has been here to bathe save only the King's three sons, they still remain behind." Then the Padishah sent word to the King's three sons to come and bathe, and looking closely at their garments, he perceived that the youngest of the three wore a sheath without a sword.

Then the Padishah called the King's son to him and said: "Great is the good thou hast done to me, ask me what thou wilt for it!"—"I ask nought from thee," replied the King's son, "but thy youngest daughter."

"Alas! my son, ask me anything but that," sighed the Padishah. "Ask my crown, my kingdom, and I'll give them to thee, but my daughter I cannot give thee."

"If thou givest me thy daughter I will take her," replied the King's son, "but nought else will I take from thy hand."

"My son," groaned the Padishah, "I will give thee my eldest daughter, I'll give thee my second daughter, nay, I'll give thee the pair of them if thou wilt. But my youngest daughter has a deadly enemy, the Wind-Demon. Because I would not give her to him, I must needs fence her room about with walls of steel, lest any of the devil race draw near to her. For the Wind-Demon is such a terrible monster that eye

cannot see nor dart overtake him ; like the tempest he flies, and his coming is like the coming of a whirlwind."

But whatever the Padishah might say to turn him from seeking after the damsel fell on deaf ears. He begged and pleaded so hard for the damsel that the Padishah was wearied by his much speaking, and promised him the damsel, nay they held the bridal banquet. The two elder brothers received the two elder damsels, and returned to their kingdom, but the youngest brother remained behind to guard his wife against the Wind-Demon.

Time came and went, and the King's son avoided the light of day for the sake of his lovely Sultana. One day, however, the King's son said to his wife : "Behold now, my Sultana, all this time I have never moved from thy side, methinks I will go a-hunting, though it only be for a little hour or so."

"Alas! my King," replied his wife, "if thou dost depart from me, I know that thou wilt never see me more." But as he begged her for leave again and again, and promised to be back again immediately, his wife consented. Then he took his weapons and went forth into the forest.

Now the Wind-Demon had been awaiting this chance all along. He feared the famous prince, and durst not snatch his wife from his arms ; but as soon as ever the King's son had put his foot out of

doors, the Wind-Demon came in and vanished with the wife of the King's son.

Not very long afterwards the King's son came back, and could find his wife nowhere. He went to the Padishah to seek her, and came back again, for it was certain that the Demon must have taken her, no other living soul could have got near her. Bitterly did he weep, fiercely did he dash himself against the floor, but then he quickly rose up again, took horse, and galloped away into the wide world, determined to find either death or his consort.

He went on for days, he went on for weeks, in his trouble and anguish he gave himself no rest. All at once a palace sprang up before him, but it seemed to him like a mirage, which baffles the eye that looks upon it. It was the palace of his eldest sister. The damsel was just then looking out of the window, and lo! she caught sight of a man wandering there where never a bird had flown and never a caravan had travelled. Then she recognized him as her brother, and so great was their mutual joy that they could not come to words for hugging and kissing.

Towards evening the damsel said to the King's son: "The lion will be here shortly, and although he is very good to me, he is only a brute beast for all that, and may do thee a mischief." And she took her brother and hid him.

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The King's Son and the Lion.—p. 121.

In the evening the lion came home sure enough, and when they had sat down together and begun to talk, the girl asked him what he would do if any of her brothers should chance to come there. "If the eldest were to come," said the lion, "I would strike him dead with one blow, if the second came I would slay him also, but if the youngest came, I would let him go to sleep on my paws if he liked."

"Then he has come," said his wife.

"Where is he—where is he? Bring him out, let me see him!" cried the lion; and when the King's son appeared, the lion did not know what to do with himself for joy. Then they began to talk, and the lion asked him why he had come there, and whither he was going. The youth told him what had happened, and said he was going to seek the Wind-Demon.

"I know but the rumour of him," said the lion; "but take my word for it, thou hadst better have nothing to do with him, for there is none that can cope with the Wind-Demon." But the King's son would not listen to reason, remained there that night, and next morning mounted his horse again. The lion accompanied him to show him the right way, and then they parted, one going to the right and the other to the left.

Again he went on and on, till he saw another palace, and this was the palace of his middling sister.

The damsel saw from the window that a man was on the road, and no sooner did she recognize him than she rushed out to meet him, and led him into the palace. Full of joy, they conversed together till the evening, and then the damsel said to the youth: "In a short time my tiger-husband will be here, I'll hide thee from him, lest a mischief befall thee," and she took her brother and hid him.

In the evening the tiger came home, and while they talked together his wife asked him what he would do if any of her brothers should chance to look in upon them.

"If the elder were to come," said the tiger, "I would strike them dead, but if the youngest came, I would go down on my knees before him." Whereupon the damsel called to her youngest brother, the King's son, to come forth. The tiger was overjoyed to see him, welcomed him as a brother, and asked him whence he came and whither he was going. Then the King's son told the tiger of all his trouble, and asked him whether he knew the Wind-Demon. "Only by hearsay," replied the tiger; and then he tried to persuade the King's son not to go, for the danger was great. But the red dawn had no sooner appeared than the King's son was ready to set out again. The tiger showed him the way, and the one went back and the other went forward.

He pursued his way, and it was endlessly long, but time passes quickly in a fairy tale, and at last a dark object stood out against him. "What can it be?" thought he, but when he drew nearer he saw that it was a palace. It was the abode of his youngest sister. The damsel was just then looking out of the window. "Alas! my brother!" cried she, and very nearly fell out of the window for pure joy. Then she led him into the house. The youth rejoiced that he had found all his sisters so well, but the lack of his wife was still a weight upon his heart.

Now when evening was drawing nigh the girl said to her brother: "My bird-husband will be here anon; conceal thyself from him, for if he see thee he will tear thy heart out," and with that she took her brother and hid him.

And now there was a great clapping of wings, and the Anka had scarce rested a while when his wife asked him what he would do if any of her brothers came to see them.

"As to the two elder," said the bird, "I would take them in my mouth, fly up to the sky with them, and cast them down from thence; but if the youngest were to come, I would let him sit down on my wings and go to sleep there if he liked." Then the girl called forth her youngest brother.

"Alas! my dear little child," cried the bird, "how

didst thou find thy way hither? Wert thou not afraid of the long journey?"

The youth told what had happened to him, and asked the Anka whether he could help him to get to the Wind-Demon.

"It is no easy matter," said the bird; "but even if thou couldst get to him, I would counsel thee to let it alone and stay rather among us."

"Not I," replied the resolute youth; "I will either release my wife or perish there!" Then the Anka saw that he could not turn him from his purpose, and began to explain to him all about the palace of the Wind-Demon. "He is now asleep," said the Anka, "and thou mayest be able to carry off thy wife; but if he should awake and see thee, he will without doubt grind thee to atoms. Guard against him thou cannot, for eye cannot see and fire cannot harm him, so look well to thyself!"

So next day the youth set out on his journey, and when he had gone on and on for a long, long time, he saw before him a vast palace that had neither door nor chimney, nor length nor breadth. It was the palace of the Wind-Demon. His wife chanced just then to be sitting at the window, and when she saw her husband she leaped clean out of the window to him. The King's son caught his wife in his arms, and there were no bounds to their joy and their

tears, till at last the girl bethought her of the terrible demon.

“This is now the third day that he has slept,” cried she; “let us hasten away before the fourth day is spent also.” So they mounted, whipped up their horses, and were already well on their way when the Wind-Demon awoke on the fourth day. Then he went to the girl’s door and bade her open, that he might at least see her face for a brief moment. He waited, but he got no answer. Then, auguring some evil, he beat in the door, and lo! the place where the damsel should have lain was cold.

“So-ho, Prince Mehmed!” cried he, “thou hast come here, eh, and stolen away my Sultana? Well, wait a while! go thy way, whip up thy fleet steed! for I’ll catch thee up in the long run.” And with that he sat down at his ease, drank his coffee, smoked his chibook, and then rose up and went after them.

Meanwhile the King’s son was galloping off with the girl with all his might, when all at once the girl felt the demon’s breath, and cried out in her terror: “Alas, my King, the Wind-Demon is here!” Like a whirlwind the invisible monster was upon them, caught up the youth, tore off his arms and legs, and smashed his skull and all his bones till there was not a bit of him left.

The damsel began to weep bitterly. “Even if thou

hast killed him," sobbed she, "let me at least gather together his bones and pile them up somewhere, for if thou suffer it, I would fain bury him."—"I care not what thou dost with his bones!" cried the Demon.

So the damsel took the bones of the King's son, piled them up together, kissed the horse between the eyes, placed the bones on his saddle, and whispered in his ear: "Take these bones, my good steed, take them to the proper place." Then the Demon took the girl and led her back to the palace, for the power of her beauty was so great that it always kept the Demon close to her. Into her presence, indeed, she never suffered the monster to come. At the door of her chamber he had to stop, but he was allowed to show himself to her now and then.

Meanwhile the good steed galloped away with the youth's bones till he stopped at the door of the palace of the youngest sister, and then he neighed and neighed till the damsel heard him. She rushed out to the horse, and when she perceived the knapsack, and in the knapsack the bones of her brother, she began to weep bitterly, and dashed herself against the ground as if she would have dashed herself to pieces. She could hardly wait for her lord the Anka to come home. At last there was a sound of mighty wings, and the Padishah of the Birds, the emerald Anka, came home, and when he saw the scattered bones of

the King's son in the basket, he called together all the birds of the air and asked them, saying: "Which of you goes to the Garden of Paradise?"

"An old owl is the only one that goes there," said the birds, "and he has now grown so old that he has no more strength left for such a journey."

Then the Anka sent a bird to bring the owl on his back. The bird flew away, and in a very short time was back again, with the aged owl on his back.

"Well, my father," said the Bird-Padishah, "hast thou ever been in the Garden of Paradise?"

"Yes, my little son," croaked the aged owl, "a long, long time ago, twelve years or more, and I haven't been there since."

"Well, if thou hast been there," said the Anka, "go again now, and bring me from thence a little glass of water." The old owl kept on saying that it was a long, long way for him to go, and that he would never be able to hold out the whole way. The Anka would not listen to him, but perched him upon a bird's back, and the twain flew into the Garden of Paradise, drew a glass of water, and returned to the Anka's palace.

Then the Anka took the youth's bones and began to put them together. The arms, the legs, the head, the thighs, everything he put in its proper place; and when he had sprinkled it all with the water, the youth

fell a-gaping, as if he had been asleep and was just coming to himself again. The youth looked all about him, and asked the Anka where he was, and how he came there.

“Didn’t I say that the Wind-Demon would twist thee round his little finger?” replied the Anka. “He ground all thy bones and sinews to dust, and we have only just now picked them all out of the basket. But now thou hadst better leave the matter alone, for if thou gettest once more into the clutches of this demon, I know that we shall never be able to put thee together again.”

But the youth was not content to do this, but said he would go seek his consort a second time.

“Well, if thou art bent on going at any price,” counselled the Anka, “go first to thy wife and ask her if she knows the Demon’s talisman. If only thou canst get hold of that, even the Wind-Demon will be in thy power.”

So again the King’s son took horse, again he went right up to the Demon’s palace, and as the Demon was dreaming dreams just then, the youth was able to find and converse with his wife. After they had rejoiced with a great joy at the sight of each other, the youth told the lady to discover the secret of the Demon’s talisman, and win it by wheedling words and soft caresses if she could get at it no other way.

Meanwhile the youth hid himself in the neighbouring mountain, and there awaited the good news.

When the Wind-Demon awoke from his forty days' sleep he again presented himself at the damsel's door. "Depart from before my eyes," cried the girl. "Here hast thou been doing nothing but sleep these forty days, so that life has been a loathsome thing to me all the while."

The Demon rejoiced that he was allowed to be in the room along with the damsel, and in his happiness asked her what he should give her to help her to while away the time.

"What canst thou give me," said the girl, "seeing that thou thyself art but wind? Now if at least thou hadst a talisman, that, at any rate, would be something to while away the time with."

"Alas! my Sultana," replied the Demon, "my talisman is far away, in the uttermost ends of the earth, and one cannot fetch it hither in a little instant. If only we had some such brave man as thy Mehmed was, he perhaps might be able to go for it."

The damsel was now more curious than ever about the talisman, and she coaxed and coaxed till at last she persuaded the Demon to tell her about the talisman, but not till she had granted his request that he might sit down quite close to her. The damsel could not refuse him that happiness, so he sat down

beside her, and breathed into her ear the secret of the talisman.

“On the surface of the seventh layer of sea,” began the Demon, “there is an island, on that island an ox is grazing, in the belly of that ox there is a golden cage, and in that cage there is a white dove. That little dove is my talisman.”

“But how can one get to that island?” inquired the Sultana.

“I’ll tell thee,” said the Demon. “Opposite to the palace of the emerald Anka is a huge mountain, and on the top of that mountain is a spring. Every morning forty sea-horses come to drink at that spring. If any one can be found to catch one of these horses by the leg (but only while he is drinking the water), bridle him, saddle him, and then leap on his back, he will be able to go wherever he likes. The sea-horse will say to him: ‘What dost thou command, my sweet master?’ and will carry him whithersoever he bids him.”

“What good will the talisman be to me if I cannot get near it?” said the girl. With that she drove the Demon from the room, and when the time of his slumber arrived, she hastened with the news to her lord. Then the King’s son made great haste, leaped on his horse, hastened to the palace of his youngest sister, and told the matter to the Anka.

Early next morning the Anka arose, called five birds, and said to them: "Lead the King's son to the spring on the mountain beyond, and wait there till the sea-horses come up. Forty steeds will appear by the running water, and when they begin to drink, seize one of them, bridle and saddle it, and put the King's son on its back."

So the birds took the King's son, carried him up to the mountain close by the spring, and as soon as the horses came up, they did to one of them what the Anka had said. The King's son sat on the horse's back forthwith, and the first thing the good steed said was: "What dost thou command, my sweet master?"

"There is an island on the surface of the seventh ocean," cried the King's son, "there should I like to be!" And the King's son had flown away before you could shut your eyes; and before you could open them again, there he was on the shore of that island.

He dismounted from his horse, took off the bridle, stuck it in his pocket, and went off to seek the ox. As he was walking up and down the shore a Jew met him, and asked him what had brought him there.

"I have suffered shipwreck," replied the youth. "My ship and everything I possess have perished, and only with difficulty did I swim ashore."

"As for me," said the Jew, "I am in the service

of the Wind-Demon. Thou must know that there is an ox on this island, and I must watch it night and day. Wouldst thou like to enter the service? Thou wilt have nothing else to do all day but watch this beast."

The King's son took advantage of the opportunity, and could scarce await the moment when he was to see the ox. At watering-time the Jew brought it along, and no sooner did he find himself alone with the beast than he cut open its belly, took out the golden cage, and hastened with it to the sea-shore. Then he drew the bridle from his pocket, and when he had struck the sea with it, the steed immediately appeared and cried: "What dost thou command, sweet master?"—"I desire to be taken to the palace of the Wind-Demon," cried the youth.

Shut your eyes, open your eyes—and there they were before the palace. Then he took his wife, made her sit down beside him, and when the steed said: "What dost thou command, sweet master?" he bade it fly straight to the emerald Anka.

Away with them flew the steed. It flew right up to the very clouds, and as they were approaching the Anka's palace the Demon awoke from his sleep. He saw that his wife had again disappeared, and immediately set off in pursuit. Already the Sultana felt the breath of the Demon, and he had all but overtaken

them when the steed hastily bade them twist the neck of the white dove in the cage. They had barely time to do so, when the Wind died away and the Demon was destroyed.

With great joy they arrived at the Anka's palace, let the horse go his way, and rested themselves awhile. On the next day they went to their second brother, and on the third day to their third brother, and it was only then that the King's son discovered that his lion brother-in-law was the King of the Lions, and his tiger brother-in-law the King of the Tigers. At last they reached their home which was the domain of the damsel's. Here they made a great banquet, and rejoiced their hearts for forty days and forty nights, after which they arose and went to the prince's own empire. There he showed them the tongue of the dragon and its nose, and as he had thus fulfilled the wishes of his father, they chose him to be their Padishah; and their lives were full of joy till the day of their death, and their end was a happy one.

THE CROW-PERI

ONCE upon a time that was no time there was a man who had one son. This man used to go out into the forest all day, and catch birds for sale to the first comer. At last, however, the father died and the son was left all alone. Now he did not know what had been his father's profession, but while he was searching all about the floor he came upon the fowling-snare. So he took it, went out into the forest, and set the snare on a tree. At that moment a crow flew down upon the tree, but as the snare was cunningly laid the poor bird was caught. The youth climbed up after it, but when he had got hold of the bird, the crow began begging him to let her go, promising to give him in exchange something more beautiful and more precious than herself. The crow begged and prayed till at last he let her go free, and again he set the snare in the tree and sat down at the

foot of it to wait. Presently another bird came flying up, and flew right into the snare. The youth climbed up the tree again to bring it down, but when he saw it he was full of amazement, for such a beautiful thing he had never seen in the forest before.

While he was still gazing at it and chuckling, the crow again appeared to him and said: "Take that bird to the Padishah, and he will buy it from thee." So the youth took away the bird, put it in a cage, and carried it to the palace. When the Padishah saw the beautiful little creature he was filled with joy, and gave the youth so much money for it that he did not know what to do with it all. But the bird they placed in a golden cage, and the Padishah had his joy of it day and night.

Now the Padishah had a favourite who was grievously jealous of the good fortune of the youth who had brought the bird, and kept cudgelling his brains how he could get him beneath his feet. At last he hit upon a plan, and going in to the Padishah one day he said: "How happy that bird would be if only he had an ivory palace to dwell in!"

"Yes," replied the Padishah, "but whence could I get enough ivory to make him a palace?"

"He who brought the bird hither," said the favourite, "will certainly be able to find the ivory."

So the Padishah sent for the little fowler, and bade

him make an ivory palace for the bird there and then. "I know thou canst get the ivory," said the Padishah.

"Alas, my lord Padishah!" lamented the youth, "whence am I to get all this ivory from?"

"That is thy business," replied the Padishah. "Thou mayest search for it for forty days, but if it is not here by that time thy head shall be where now thy feet are."

The youth was sore troubled, and while he was still pondering in his mind which road he should take, the crow came flying up to him, and asked him what he was grieving about so much. Then the youth told her what a great trouble that one little bird had brought down upon his head.

"Why this is nothing at all to fret about," said the crow; "but go to the Padishah, and ask him for forty wagon-loads of wine!" So the youth returned to the palace, got all that quantity of wine, and as he was coming back with the cars, the crow flew up and said: "Hard by is a forest, on the border of which are forty large trenches, and as many elephants as there are in the wide world come to drink out of these trenches. Go now and fill them with wine instead of water. The elephants will thus get drunk and tumble down, and thou wilt be able to pull out their teeth and take them to the Padishah."

The youth did as the bird said, crammed his cars full of elephants' tusks instead of wine, and returned with them to the palace. The Padishah rejoiced greatly at the sight of all the ivory, had the palace built, rewarded the little fowler with rich gifts, and sent him home.

So there was the sparkling bird in his ivory palace, and right merrily did he hop about from perch to perch, but he could never be got to sing. "Ah!" said the evil counsellor, "if only his master were here he would sing of his own accord."

"Who knows who his master is, or where he is to be found?" asked the Padishah sadly.

"He who fetched the elephants' tusks could fetch the bird's master also," replied the evil counsellor.

So the Padishah sent for the little fowler once more, and commanded him to bring the bird's master before him.

"How can I tell who his master is, when I caught him by chance in the forest?" asked the fowler.

"That is thy look-out," said the Padishah; "but if thou find him not I will slay thee. I give thee forty days for thy quest, and let that suffice thee."

So the youth went home, and sobbed aloud in his despair, when lo! the crow came flying up and asked him what he was crying for.

“Why should I not cry?” said the poor youth, and with that he began to tell the crow of his new trouble.—“Nay, but ’tis a shame to weep for such a trifle,” said the crow. “Go quickly now to the King and ask him for a large ship, but it must be large enough to hold forty maidservants, a beautiful garden also, and a bath-house.” So the youth returned to the King and told him what he wanted for his journey.

The ship was prepared as he had desired it, the youth embarked, and was just thinking whether he should go to the left or the right, when the crow came flying up, and said to him: “Steer thy ship always to the right, and go straight on until thou perceive a huge mountain. At the foot of this mountain dwell forty Peris, and when they perceive thy ship they will feel a strong desire to look at everything on board of it. But thou must allow only their Queen to come on board, for she is the owner of the bird, and while thou art showing her the ship, set sail and never stop till thou reach home.”

So the youth went on board the ship, steered steadily to the right, and never stopped once till he came to the mountain. There the forty Peris were walking on the sea-shore, and when they saw the ship they all came rushing up that they might examine the beautiful thing. The Queen of the Peris asked

the little fowler whether he would not show her the ship, especially the inside of it, and he took her off in a little skiff and brought her to the vessel.

The Peri was monstrously delighted with the beautiful ship, walked in the garden with the damsels on board the ship, and when she saw the bath-room she said to the waiting-maids: "If I have come so far, I may as well have a bath into the bargain." With that she stepped into the bath-room, and while she was bathing the ship went off.

They had gone a good distance across the sea before the Peri had finished her bathing. The Peri made haste, for it was now growing late, but when she stepped upon the deck she saw nothing but the sea around her. At this she fell a-weeping bitterly. What would become of her? she said; whither was she going? into whose hands was she about to fall? But the youth comforted her with the assurance that she was going to a King's palace, and would be among good people.


Not very long afterwards they arrived in the city, and sent word to the King that the ship had come back. Then he brought the Peri to the palace, and as she passed by the ivory palace of the bird, it began to sing so beautifully that all who heard it were beside themselves for joy. The Peri was a little comforted when she heard it, but the King was filled with

rapture, and he loved the beautiful Peri so fondly that he could not be a single moment without her. The wedding-banquet quickly followed, and with the beautiful Peri on his right hand, and the sparkling bird on his left, there was not a happier man in the world than that Padishah. But the poison of envy devoured the soul of the evil counsellor.

One day, however, the Sultana suddenly fell ill, and took to her bed. Every remedy was tried in vain, but the sages said that nothing could cure her but the drug which she had left behind her in her own fairy palace. Then, by the advice of the evil counsellor, the young fowler was again sent for to the palace, and commanded to go and seek for the drug.

So the good youth embarked on his ship again, and was just about to sail when the crow came to him and asked him whither he was going. The youth told her that the Sultana was ill, and he had been sent to fetch the drug from the fairy palace. "Well then, go!" said the crow, "and thou wilt find the palace behind a mountain. Two lions stand in the gates, but take this feather and touch their mouths with it, and they will not lift so much as a claw against thee."

The youth took the feather, arrived in front of the mountain, disembarked, and quickly beheld the palace. He went straight up to the gates, and there



stood the two lions. He took out his feather, and no sooner had he touched their mouths than they lay down one on each side and let him go into the palace. The Peris about the palace also saw the youth, and immediately guessed that their Queen was ill. So they gave him the drug, and immediately he took ship again, and returned to the palace of the Padishah. But the moment he entered the Peri's chamber with the drug in his hand, the crow alighted on his shoulder, and thus they went together to the sick Sultana's bed.

The Sultana was already in the throes of death, but no sooner had she tasted of the healing drug than she seemed to return to life again at a single bound. She opened her eyes, gazed upon the little fowler, and perceiving the crow upon his shoulder thus addressed her: "Oh, thou sooty slave! art thou not sorry for all that this good youth hath suffered for my sake?" Then the Sultana told her lord that this same crow was her serving-maid, whom, for negligence in her service, she had changed into a crow. "Nevertheless," she added, "I now forgive her, for I see that her intentions towards me were good."

At these words the crow trembled all over, and immediately a damsel so lovely stood before the young fowler that there was really very little difference

between her and the Queen of the Peris. At the petition of the Sultana, the Sultan married the youth to the Crow-Peri, the evil-minded counsellor was banished, and the fowler became Vizier in his stead. And their happiness lasted till death.

THE FORTY PRINCES AND THE SEVEN- HEADED DRAGON

THERE was once upon a time a Padishah, and this Padishah had forty sons. All day long they disported themselves in the forest, snaring birds and hunting beasts, but when the youngest of them was fourteen years old their father wished to marry them. So he sent for them all and told them his desire. "We will marry," said the forty brothers, "but only when we find forty sisters who are the daughters of the same father and the same mother." Then the Padishah searched the whole realm through to find forty such sisters, but though he found families of thirty-nine sisters, families of forty sisters he could never find.

"Let the fortieth of you take another wife," said the Padishah to his sons. But the forty brothers would not agree thereto, and they begged their father to allow them to go and search if haply they might

find what they wanted in another empire. What could the Padishah do? He could not refuse them their request, so he gave them his permission. But before they departed he summoned them into his presence, and this is what their father the Padishah said to them: "I have three things to say to you, which bear ye well in mind. When ye come in your journey to a large spring, take heed not to pass the night near it. Beyond the spring is a caravanserai; there also ye must not abide. Beyond the caravanserai is a vast desert; and there also ye must not take a moment's rest." The sons promised their father that they would keep his words, and with baggage light of weight but exceedingly precious, they took horse and set out on their journey.

They went on and on, they smoked their chibooks and drank forty cups of coffee, and when evening descended the large spring was right before them. "Verily," began the elder brethren, "we will not go another step further. We are weary, and the night is upon us, and what need forty men fear?" And with that they dismounted from their horses, ate their suppers, and laid them down to rest. Only the youngest brother, who was fourteen years of age, remained awake.

It might have been near midnight when the youth heard a strange noise. He caught up his arms, and

turning in the direction of the sound saw before him a seven-headed dragon. They rushed towards each other, and thrice the dragon fell upon the prince, but could do him no harm. "Well, now it is my turn," cried the youth; "wilt thou be converted to the true faith?" and with these words he struck the monster such a blow that six of his seven heads came flying down.

"Strike me once more," groaned the dragon.

"Not I," replied the youth, "I myself only came into the world once." Immediately the dragon fell to pieces, but his one remaining head began to roll and roll and roll till it stood on the brink of the well. "Whoever can take my soul out of this well," it said, "shall have my treasure also," and with these words the head bounded into the well.

The youth took a rope, fastened one end of it to a rock, and seizing the other end himself, lowered himself into the well. At the bottom of the well he found an iron door. He opened it, passed through, and there right before him stood a palace compared with which his father's palace was a hovel. Into this palace he went, and in it were forty rooms, and in each room was a damsel sitting by her embroidery frame with enormous treasures behind her. "Art thou a man or a spirit?" cried the terrified damsels.—"A man am I, and the son of a man," replied the prince.

“ I have just slain a seven-headed dragon, and have followed its rolling head hither.”

Oh, how the forty damsels rejoiced at hearing these words. They embraced the youth, and begged and prayed him not to leave them there. They were the children of one father and one mother they said. The dragon had killed their parents and carried them off, and they had nobody to look to in the whole wide world.

“ We also are forty,” said the youth, “ and we are seeking forty damsels.” Then he told them that he would first of all ascend to his brethren, and then he would come for them again. So he ascended out of the well, went to the spring, lay down beside it and fell asleep.

Early in the morning the forty brothers arose and laughed at their father for trying to frighten them with the well. Again they set out on their way, and went on and on till evening overtook them, when they perceived a caravanserai before them. “ Not a step further will we go,” said the elder brothers. The youngest brother indeed insisted that it would be well to remember their father’s words, for his speech could surely not have been in vain. But they laughed at their youngest brother, ate and drank, said their prayers, and lay down to sleep. Only the youngest brother remained wide awake.

About midnight he again heard a noise, The

youth snatched up his arms, and again he saw before him a seven-headed dragon, but much larger than the former one. The dragon rushed at him first of all, but could not overcome him, then the youth dealt him one blow and off went six of the dragon's heads. Then the dragon wished him to take one more blow but he would not; the head rolled into a well, the youth went after it, and came upon a palace larger than the former one, and with ever so much more treasures and precious things in it. He marked the well so that he should know it again, returned to his brothers, and wearied out with his great combat slept so soundly that his brothers had to wake him up with blows next morning.

Again they arose, took horse, went up hill and down dale, and just as the sun was setting, behold! a vast desert stood before them. They fell to eating straightway, drank their fill also, and were just going to lie down to sleep when all at once such a roaring, such a bellowing arose that the very mountains fell down from their places.

The princes were horribly afraid, especially when they saw coming against them a gigantic seven-headed dragon. He vomited forth venomous fire in his wrath, and roared furiously: "Who killed my two brothers? Hither with him! I'll try conclusions with him also!"

The youngest brother saw that his brethren were more dead than alive from fear, so he gave them the keys of the two wells, in one of which was the vast heap of treasure, and in the other the forty damsels. Let them take everything home, he said ; as for himself he must first slay the dragon and then he would follow after them. The thirty-nine brothers lost no time in mounting their horses and galloping off. They drew the treasure out of one well and the forty damsels out of the other, and so returned home to their father. But now we will see what happened to the youngest brother.

He fought the dragon and the dragon fought him, but neither could get the better of the other. The dragon perceived that it was vain to try and vanquish the youth, so he said to him : " If thou wilt go to the Empire of Chin-i-Machin¹ and fetch me thence the Padishah's daughter, I will not worry the life out of thee." To this the prince readily agreed, for he could not have sustained the conflict much longer.

Then Champalak, for that was the dragon's name, gave the prince a bridle and said to him : " A good steed comes hither to feed every day, seize him, put this bridle in his mouth, and bid him take thee to the Empire of Chin-i-Machin ! " So the youth took the bridle and waited for the good charger. Presently

¹ Turkish for the Chinese Empire.

a golden-maned charger came flying through the air, and the moment the prince had put the bridle in its mouth, the charger said: "What dost thou command, little Sultan?" and before you could wink your eyes, the Empire of Chin-i-Machin stood before him. Then he dismounted from his horse, took off the bridle, and went into the town. There he entered into an old woman's hut and asked her whether she received guests. "Willingly," answered the old woman. Then she made ready a place for him, and while he was sipping his coffee he asked her all about the talk of the town. "Well," said the old woman, "a seven-headed dragon is very much in love with our Sultan's daughter. A war has been raging between them on that account these many years, and the monster presses us so hardly that not even a bird can fly into our realm."

"Then where is the Sultan's daughter?" asked the youth.—"In a little palace in the Padishah's garden," replied the old woman, "and the poor thing dare not put her foot outside it."

The next day the youth went to the Padishah's garden, and asked the gardener to take him as a servant, and he begged and prayed till the gardener had not the heart to refuse him. "Very well, I will take thee," said he, "and thou wilt have nought to do but water the flowers of the garden."

Now the Sultan's daughter saw the youth, called him to her window, and asked him how he had managed to reach that realm. Then the youth told her that his father was a Padishah, that he had fought with the dragon Champalak on his travels, and had promised to bring him the Sultan's daughter. "Yet fear thou nothing," added the youth, "my love is stronger than the love of the serpent, and if thou wilt only have the courage to come with me, trust me to find a way of disposing of him."

The damsel was so much in love with the prince, and so eager to escape from her captivity, that she consented to trust herself to him, and one night they escaped from her palace and went straight towards the desert where dwelt the dragon Champalak. They agreed on the way that the girl should find out what the dragon's talisman was, that they might destroy him that way if they could do it no other.

Imagine the joy of Champalak when he perceived the princess! "What joy, what rapture, that thou hast come!" cried Champalak; but fondle her and caress her as he might, the damsel did nothing but weep. Days passed by, weeks passed by, and yet the tears never left the damsel's eyes. "Tell me at least what thy talisman is," said the damsel to him one day, "if thou wouldst see me happy and not wretched with thee all thy days."

“Alas, my soul!” said the dragon, “my talisman is guarded in a place whither it is impossible ever to come. It is in a large palace in a neighbouring realm, and though one may venture thither for it, no one has ever been able to get back again.”

The prince needed no more, that was quite good enough for him. He took his bridle, went with it to the sea-shore, and summoned his golden-maned steed. “What dost thou command me, little Sultan?” said the steed. “I desire thee to convey me to the neighbouring realm, to the palace of the talisman of the dragon Champalak,” cried the youth—and in no more time than it takes to wink an eye, the palace stood before him.

Then the steed said to the youth: “When we reach the palace thou wilt tie the bridle to two iron gates, and when I neigh once and strike my iron hoofs together, a door will open. In this open door thou wilt see a lion’s throat, and if thou canst not kill that lion at one stroke, escape, or thou art a dead man.” With that they went up to the palace, he tied the horse to the two iron gates by his bridle, and when he neighed the door flew open. The youth struck with all his might at the gaping throat of the lion in the doorway and split it right in two. Then he cut open the lion’s belly, and drew out of it a little gold cage with three doves in it, so beautiful that the

like of them is not to be found in the wide world. He took one of them and began softly stroking and caressing it, when all at once—pr-r-r-r!—away it flew out of his hand. The steed galloped swiftly after it, and if he had not caught it and wrung its neck it would have gone hard with the good youth.

Then he mounted his steed again, and in the twinkling of an eye he stood once more before Cham-palak's palace. In the gateway of the palace he killed the second dove, so that when the youth entered the dragon's room, there the monster lay quite helpless, and there was no more spirit in him at all. When he saw the dove in the youth's hand he implored him to let him stroke it for the last time before he died. The youth's heart felt for him, and he was just about to hand the bird to him when the princess rushed out, snatched the dove from his hand, and killed it, whereupon the dragon expired before their very eyes. "Twas well for thee," said the steed, "that thou didst not give him the dove, for if he had got it, fresh life would have flowed into him." And with that the steed disappeared, bridle and all.

Then they got together the dragon's treasures, and went with them to the Empire of Chin-i-Machin. The Padishah was sick for grief at the loss of the damsel, and after searching for her in all parts of the kingdom in vain, was persuaded that she had fallen into the

hands of the dragon. And lo! there she stood before him now, hand in hand with the King's son. Then there was such a marriage-feast in that city that it seemed as if there was no end to it. After the marriage they set out on their journey again, and travelled with a great escort of soldiers to the prince's father. There they had long held the King's son to be dead, and would not believe that it was he even now till he had told them the tale of the three seven-headed dragons and the forty damsels.

The fortieth damsel was waiting patiently for him there, and the prince said to his wife: "Behold now my second bride!"—"Thou didst save my life from the dragon," replied the Princess of Chin-i-Machin, "I therefore give her to thee, do as thou wilt with her!" So they made a marriage-feast for the second bride also, and they spent half their days in the Empire of the prince's father, and the other half in the Empire of Chin-i-Machin, and their lives flowed away in happiness.

THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTEOUS DAMSEL

THERE was once upon a time a Padishah who had an only son. His father guarded him as the apple of his eye, and there was not a desire of his heart that was not instantly gratified.

One night a dervish appeared to the King's son in a dream, and showed him the World's most beautiful Damsel, and there he drained with her the cup of love. After that the prince became another man. He could neither eat nor drink. Sleep brought him neither pleasure nor refreshment, and he all at once grew sallow and withered. They sent for doctor after doctor, they sent for wizard after wizard, but they could not tell the nature of the malady or find a cure for it.

Then the sick prince said to his father: "My lord Padishah and father, no leech, no wise man can help me, wherefore weary them in vain? The World's most beautiful Damsel is the cause of my complaint, and she will be either the life or the death of me."

The Padishah was frightened at the words of his son, and his chief care was to drive the damsel out of the lad's head. "'Tis dangerous to even think of such a thing," said he, "for her love will be thy death." But his son continued to pine away daily, and life had no joy for him. Again and again the father begged his son to tell him his heart's desire and it should be instantly fulfilled, and the eternal reply of the son was: "Let me seek the World's most beauteous Damsel." Then the Padishah thought to himself: "If I do not let him go he will only perish, and he cannot therefore be worse off if he goes." Then said he: "Go, my son, after thy love, and may the righteous Allah be merciful to thee."

So the next day the prince set out on his journey. He went up hill and down dale, he crossed vast deserts, he traversed rugged wildernesses in search of his beloved, the World's most beauteous Damsel. On and on he went, till he came at last to the sea-shore, and there he saw a poor little fish writhing in the sand, and the fish besought him to throw it back into the sea again. The youth had compassion upon the fish, and threw it back into the sea again. Then the little fish gave him three scales, and said to him: "If ever thou dost get into any trouble, burn these scales."

Again the youth went on his way till he came to

a vast desert, and there on the ground in front of him he saw a lame ant. The little creature told him that he was going to a wedding, but could not overtake his comrades because they hastened so quickly. Then the youth took up the ant and carried him to his comrades. As they parted the ant gave him a little piece of its wing and said: "If ever thou shouldst get into any trouble, burn this bit of wing."

Again the youth followed his road, full of weary woefulness, and reaching the borders of a large forest he there saw a little bird struggling with a large serpent. The little bird asked help of the youth, and with one blow he cut the serpent in two. The bird then gave him three feathers. "If ever thou shouldst get into trouble," it said, "burn these little feathers."

Again he took up his pilgrim's staff and went beyond the mountains, beyond the sea, till he came to a large city. It was the realm of the father of the World's most beautiful Damsel. He went straight into the palace to the Padishah, and begged the hand of his daughter in the name of Allah. "Nay," said the Padishah, "thou must first of all accomplish three tasks for me. Only after that canst thou make known thy wishes to my daughter."

With that he took a ring, cast it into the sea, and said to the King's son: "If thou canst not find it for

me in three days, thou art a dead man." Then the King's son fell a-thinking till he bethought him of the three scales, and he had no sooner burnt them than the little fish stood before him and said: "What dost thou command, O my Sultan?"—"The ring of the World's most beauteous Damsel hath been cast into the sea, and I want it back again," said the prince. Then the fish sought for the ring but couldn't find it; it dived down a second time and still it couldn't find it; a third time it descended right down into the seventh ocean, drew up a fish, cut it open, and there was the ring. So the youth gave the ring to the Padishah, and the Padishah gave it to his daughter.

Now there was a cave near the palace full of gravel and grain. "My second task," said the Padishah, "is that thou dost separate the grain from the gravel." Then the youth entered the cave, took out the ant's wing and burned it, whereupon the whole cave was swarming with ants, and they set to work upon the grain in hot haste. The day was now nearly over, and the same evening the youth sent word to the Padishah that the second task also was accomplished.

"The third task still remains," said the Padishah, "and then thou mayest have my daughter." With that he sent for a maid-servant, had her head cut off straightway, and then said to the youth: "Thus shall

be done to thy head also if thou restore not this damsel to life again." The youth quitted the palace in deep thought, and at last he bethought him that the bird's feathers might help him. So he took them out and burned them, and lo! the bird stood before him ere yet his lips had commanded it to appear. And the youth complained bitterly to the bird of the task that was set him.

Now the bird had friends among the Peris, and, flying up into the air, in no very long time was back again with a cruse of water in its beak. "I have brought thee heavenly water which can give life even to the dead," said the bird. So the prince entered the palace, and no sooner had he sprinkled the damsel with the water than she sprang up as if she had never been dead at all.

Now the rumour of all these things reached the ears of the World's most beauteous Damsel, and she ordered the prince to be brought before her. The damsel dwelt in a little marble palace, and before the palace was a golden basin which was fed by the water of four streams. The courtyard of this palace also was a vast garden wherein were many great trees and fragrant flowers and singing-birds, and to the youth it seemed like the gate of Paradise.

Suddenly the door of the palace was opened, and the garden was so flooded with light that the eyes of

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The World's most Beauteous Damsel.—p. 159.

the youth were dazzled even to blindness. It was the World's most beauteous Damsel who had appeared in the door of the palace, and the great light was the rosiness of her two radiant cheeks. She approached the prince and spoke to him, but scarcely did the youth perceive her than he fainted away before her eyes. When he came to himself again they brought him into the damsel's palace, and there he rejoiced exceedingly in the World's most beauteous Damsel, for her face was as the face of a Houri, and her presence was as a vision of Peris.

"Oh, prince!" began the damsel, "thou that art the son of Shah Suleiman, canst aid me in my deep distress. In the vast garden of the Demon of Autumn there is a bunch of singing-pomegranates: if thou canst get them for me I will be thine for ever and ever."

Then the youth gave her his hand upon it, the hand of loyal friendship, and departed far far away. He went on and on without stopping, he went on, and for months and months he crossed deserts where man had never trod, and mountains over which there was no path. "Oh, my Creator," he sighed, "wilt thou not show me the right way?" and he rose up again each morning from the place where he had sunk down exhausted the night before, and so he went on and on from day to day till the path led him right

down to the roots of the mountains. There it seemed to him as if it were the Day of Judgment. Such a noise, such a hubbub, such a hurly-burly of sounds arose that all the hills and rocks around him trembled. The youth knew not whether it was friend or foe, man or spirit, and as he went on further, trembling with fear, the noise grew louder and the dust rose up round about him like smoke. He knew not where he was going, but he might have known from what he heard that the smaller garden of the Demon of Autumn was now but a six-months' journey off, and all this great hubbub and clamour was the talisman of the gate of the garden.

And now he drew still nearer and could see the gate of the smaller garden, and could hear the roaring of the talismans in the gate, and could perceive the guardian of the gate also. Then he went up to him and told him of his trouble. "But art thou not afraid of this great commotion?" asked the guardian of the gate. "Is it not because of thee that all the talismans are so impatient? even I am afraid thereof!"

But the youth did nothing but inquire continually about the cluster of singing-pomegranates.

"'Tis a hard task to reach that," said the guardian, "yet if thou art not afraid, perhaps thou mayest get it after all. Three-months' journey from hence thou wilt come to such another place of talismans, there

also there is a garden, and the guardian of that garden is my own mother. But whatever thou dost, take care not to draw nigh to her, nor let her draw nigh to thee. Give her my salaams, but tell her nothing of thy trouble unless she ask thee."

So the youth went on towards the second garden, and after a three-months' journey such a monstrous din and racket arose around him as to make the former noise seem nothing. This was the greater garden of the Demon of Autumn, and the great din proceeded from the talismans of the garden. The youth lay down beside a rock, and when he had waited a little he saw something like a man approaching him, but as it came nearer he perceived that it was an old woman, a little beldame of thrice thirty winters. The hairs of her head were as white as snow, red circles were round her eyes, her eyebrows were like pointed darts, the fire of hell was in her eyes, her nails were two ells long, her teeth were like faggots, her two lips had only one jaw, she shuffled along leaning on a stick, drew in her breath through her nose, and coughed and sneezed at every step she took. "Oh-oh! oh-oh!" she groaned, shuffling painfully along in her large slippers, till it seemed as if she would never be able to reach the new-comer. This was the mother of the guardian of the lesser garden, and she herself was the guardian of the larger one.

At last she got up to the youth, and asked him what he was doing in those parts? The prince gave her the compliments of her son. "Ah, the vagabond!" said the old woman, "where didst thou meet with him? That wicked lad of mine knew that I would have compassion on thee, so he sent thee hither. Very well, let us make an end of thee." And with that she seized hold of him, and cried: "Hi, Earless!" and something came running up to him, and before he knew where he was, the youth found himself seated on its back. He looked down upon it and saw beneath him a creature like a shrunken huddled toad, that had neither eyes nor ears. This was Earless, and away it went with him. When he first saw it, it was as small as a worm, but the moment he was on its back it took such leaps that every three of them covered as much space as a vast ocean. Suddenly Earless stopped short and said to him: "Whatever thou mayest see, whatever thou mayest hear, take care not to speak, or it will be all up with thee," and with that it vanished.

There in the rippling water in front of the prince, like a dream-shape, lay a large garden. This garden had neither beginning nor end, and within it were such trees and flowers and sweet fruit as the eye of man hath never seen. Whithersoever one turned nothing was to be heard but the rustling of soft

wings and the songs of nightingales, so that the whole atmosphere of that garden seemed to be an eternal song. The youth looked all about him, his reason died away within him, he entered the garden. But then he heard quite near to him such a woeful wailing that his heart was like to break, and the thought of the cluster of pomegranates occurred to his mind. His eyes sought for them in every direction but in vain, till he came to the centre of the garden, where was a fountain and a little palace made of flowers, and the pomegranates hung down from the flowery palace like so many shining lamps. The youth plucked a branch, but no sooner had he done so than there was a horrible cry, and a warning voice exclaimed—

“A son of man of us hath ta'en,
We by a son of man are slain!”

The youth scarce had time to escape from the garden. “Hasten! fly!” cried Earless, who was waiting again at the gate. The youth jumped on its back, and in a couple of leaps they were beyond the ocean. Then only did the youth think of looking at the cluster of pomegranates. There were fifty pomegranates on it, and each one had a different voice, and each voice had a different song—it was just as if all the music in the wide world was gathered together

in one place. By this time they had reached the old grandmother, the old old beldame of thrice thirty winters.

“Guard well thy pomegranate cluster,” said the old woman, “never leave it out of thy sight. If on the first night of thy wedding thou and thy bride are able to listen to their music all night without going to sleep once, these pomegranates will love thee, and after that thou wilt have nothing more to fear, for they will deliver thee from every ill.” Then they went from the old mother to the son; he also bade them take to heart his mother’s words, and then the youth went on his way to his sole-beloved, the World’s most beauteous Damsel.

The girl was awaiting him with the greatest impatience, for she also dearly loved the prince, and her days were passed in anxiety lest some mischief should befall the youth. All at once she heard the sound of music, the fifty pomegranates were singing fifty different songs with fifty different voices, and she opened her heart to the beautiful music. The damsel rushed forth to meet the youth, and at their joyous embrace the pomegranates rang out with a melody so sweet that the like of it is not to be found in this world, but only in Allah’s world beyond the grave. Forty days and forty nights did the wedding-feast last, and on the fortieth day the King’s son went

in unto his bride, and they lay down and listened to the pomegranates. Then when the day was born again they arose, and the pomegranate cluster rejoiced again in their love, and so they went on their way to the prince's own kingdom. There all the feasting began again, and in his joy the old Padishah resigned his kingdom to his son, the Padishah of the Cluster of Pomegranates.

THE PADISHAH OF THE FORTY PERIS

IN the old, old time, in the age of fairy tales, there was once the daughter of a Padishah who was as fair as the full moon, as slim as a cypress-tree, with eyes like coals, and hair like the night, and her eyebrows were like bows, and her eyeballs like the darts of archers. In the palace of the Padishah was a garden, and in the midst of the garden a fountain of water, and there the maid sat the livelong day sewing and stitching.

One day she put her ring upon her sewing-table, but scarcely had she laid it down when there came a little dove and took up the ring and flew away with it. Now the little dove was so lovely that the damsel at once fell in love with it. The next day the damsel took off her bracelet, and immediately the dove was there and flew off with that too. Then the damsel was so consumed with love that she neither ate nor drank, and could scarce tarry till the

next day for the dove to come forth again. And on the third day she brought her sewing-table, put upon it her lace handkerchief, and placed herself close beside it. She waited for the dove, and waited and waited, and lo! all at once there he was right before her, and he caught up the handkerchief and away he flew. Then the damsel had scarce strength enough to rise up; weeping bitterly she went into the palace, and there she threw herself on the ground in a passion of grief.

Her old waiting-woman came running towards her: "O Sultana!" cried she, "wherefore dost thou weep so sorely?—what ails thee?"

"I am sick, my heart is sick!" replied the daughter of the Sultan, and with that she fell a-weeping and a-wailing worse than ever.

The old waiting-woman feared to tell of this new thing, for the damsel was the only daughter of the Padishah, but when she perceived how pale the damsel was growing, and how she wept and sobbed, the waiting-woman took her courage in both hands, went to the Padishah, and told him of his daughter's woe. Then the Padishah was afraid, and went to see his daughter, and after him came many wise men and many cunning leeches, but not one of them could cure her sickness.

But on the next day the Padishah's Vizier said to

him : "The wise men and the leeches cannot help the damsel, the only medicine that can cure her lies hidden elsewhere." Then he advised the Padishah to make a great bath, the water whereof should cure all sick people, but whoever bathed therein was to be made to tell the story of his life. So the Padishah caused the bath to be made, and proclaimed throughout the city that the water of this bath would give back his hair to the bald, and his hearing to the deaf, and his sight to the blind, and the use of his legs to the lame. Then all the people flocked in crowds to have a bath for nothing, and each one of them had to tell the story of his life and his ailment before he returned home again.

Now in that same city dwelt the bald-headed son of a bed-ridden mother, and the fame of the wonder-working bath reached their ears also. "Let us go too," said the son ; " perchance the pair of us shall be cured."

"How can I go when I can't stand on my legs?" groaned the old woman.—"Oh, we shall be able to manage that," replied bald-pate, and taking his mother on his shoulders he set out for the bath.

They went on and on and on, through the level plains by the flowing river, till at last the son was tired and put his mother down upon the ground.

At that same instant a cock lighted down beside them with a big pitcher of water on its back, and hastened off with it. Then the young man became very curious to know why and whither this cock was carrying water; so after the bird he went. The cock went on till it came to a great castle, and at the foot of this castle was a little hole through which water was gurgling. Still the youth followed the cock, squeezed himself with the utmost difficulty through the hole, and no sooner had he begun to look about him than he saw before him a palace so magnificent that his eyes and mouth stood wide open with astonishment. No other human being had ever stood in the path that led up to this palace. All over it he went, through all the rooms, from vestibule to attic, admiring their splendour without ceasing, till weariness overcame him. "If only I could find a living being here!" said he to himself, and with that he hid himself in a large armoury, from whence he could easily pounce out upon any one who came.

He had not waited very long when three doves flew on to the window-sill, and after shivering there a little while turned into three damsels, all so beautiful that the young man did not know which to look at first.

"Alas, alas!" cried the three damsels, "we are

late, we are late! Our Padishah will be here presently, and nothing is ready!" Then one seized a broom and brushed everything clean, the second spread the table, and the third fetched all manner of meats. Then they all three began to shiver once more, and three doves flew out of the window.

Meanwhile the bald-pate had grown very hungry, and he thought to himself: "Nobody sees me, why should I not take a morsel or two from that table?" So he stretched his hand out from his hiding-place, and was just about to touch the food with it when he got such a blow on the fingers that the place swelled up. He stretched out the other hand, and got a still greater blow on that. The youth was very frightened at this, and he had scarcely drawn back his hand when a white dove flew into the room. It fell a-shivering and immediately turned into a beautiful youth.

And now he went to a cupboard, opened it, and took out a ring, a bracelet, and a lace handkerchief. "Oh, lucky ring that thou art!" cried he, "to be allowed to sit on a beautiful finger; and oh, lucky bracelet, to be allowed to lie on a beautiful arm." Then the beautiful youth fell a-sobbing, and dried his tears one by one on the lace handkerchief. Then he put them into the cupboard again, tasted one or two of the dishes, and laid him down to sleep.

It was as much as the bald-pate could do to await

the dawn of the day. But then the beautiful youth arose, shivered, and flew away as a white dove. Bald-pate too came out of his hiding-place, went down into the courtyard, and crept once more through the hole at the foot of the tower.

Outside he found his poor old mother weeping all alone, but the youth pacified her with the assurance that their troubles were nearly at an end, took her on his back again, and went to the bath. There they bathed, and immediately the old woman was able to stand on her legs, and the bald-pate got his hair back again. Then they began to tell their stories, and when the Sultan's daughter heard what the youth had seen and heard at midnight, it was as though a stream of fresh health instantly poured into her. She rose from her bed and promised the youth a great treasure if he would bring her to that tower. So the youth went with the princess, showed her the walls of the palace, helped her through the little hole, brought her into the chamber of the doves, and pointed out to her the armoury where he had been able to hide himself. After that the youth returned home with great treasure and perfect health, and lived all his days with his old mother.

At eventide the three doves flew into the room. They scoured and cleaned, brought the meats for the table, and flew away again. Soon afterwards the

white dove came flying in, and how did that damsel feel when she saw her darling little dove once more? But when the dove had turned into a youth again, and stood there like a glorious full moon, the damsel scarcely knew where she was, but gazed continuously on his dazzling face.

Then the youth went to the cupboard, opened it, and took out the ring, the bracelet, and the lace handkerchief that belonged to the daughter of the Sultan. "Oh, thou ring! how happy shouldst thou be to sit on a beauteous finger! Oh, thou bracelet! how happy thou shouldst be to lie on a beauteous arm!" he cried. Then he took the lace handkerchief and dried his tears, and at the sight thereof the heart of the damsel was nigh to breaking. Then she tapped with her fingers on the door of the armoury. The youth approached it, opened the door, and there stood his heart's darling. Then the joy of the youth was so great that it was almost woe.

He asked the damsel how she had come thither to the palace of the Peris. Then she told him of her journey, and how sick for love she had been.

Then the youth told her that he also was the son of a mortal mother, but when he was only three days old the Peris had stolen him, and carried him to this palace and made him their Padishah. He was with them the whole day, and had only two hours to

himself in the twenty-four. The damsel, he said, might stay with him, and walk about here the whole day, but towards evening she must hide herself; for if the forty Peris came and saw her with him they would not leave her alive. To-morrow, he said, he would show her his mother's palace, where they would live in peace, and he would be with her for two hours out of the twenty-four.

So the next day the Padishah of the Peris took the damsel and showed her his mother's palace. "When thou goest there," said the Padishah, "bid them have compassion on thee, and receive thee in memory of Bahtiyar Bey, and when my mother hears my name she will not refuse thy request."

So the damsel went up to the house and knocked at the door. An old woman came and opened it, and when she saw the damsel and heard her son's name, she burst into tears and took her in. There the damsel stayed a long time, and every day the little bird came to visit her, until a son was born to the daughter of the Sultan. But the old woman never knew that her son came to the house, nor that the damsel had been brought to bed.

One day the little bird came, flew upon the window-sill, and said: "Oh, my Sultana, what is my little seedling doing?"—"No harm hath happened to our little seedling," replied she, "but he awaits the coming of

Bahtiyar.”—“ Oh ! if only my mother knew,” sighed the youth, “ she would open her best room.” With that he flew into the room, turned into a man, and fondled in his arms his wife and his little child. But when two hours had passed he shivered a little, and a little dove flew out of the window.

But the mother had heard her son’s speech, and could scarce contain herself for joy. She hastened to her daughter-in-law, fondled and caressed her, led her into her most beautiful room, and put everything in order against her son’s arrival. She knew that the forty Peris had robbed her of him, and she took counsel with herself how she might steal him back again.

“ When my son comes to-morrow,” said the old woman, “ contrive so that he stays beyond his time, and leave the rest to me.”

The next day the bird flew into the window, and lo ! the damsel was nowhere to be seen in the room. Then he flew into the more beautiful room, and cried: “ Oh ! my Sultana, what is our little seedling doing ? ” — And the damsel replied: “ No harm hath befallen our little seedling, but he awaits the coming of Bahtiyar.” Then the bird flew into the room and changed into a man, and was so taken up with talking to his wife, so filled with the joy of playing with his child and seeing it play, that he took no count of time at all.

But what was the old woman doing all this time ?



The Padishah of the Peris.—p. 174.

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ASTOR LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

There was a large cypress-tree in front of the house, and there the forty doves were sometimes wont to alight. The old woman went and hung this tree full of venomous needles. Towards evening, when the Padishah's two hours had run out, the doves who were the forty Peris came to seek their Padishah, and alighted on the cypress-tree, but scarcely had their feet touched the needles than they fell down to the ground poisoned.

Meanwhile, however, the youth suddenly remembered the time, and great was his terror when he came out of the palace so late. He looked to the right of him and he looked to the left, and when he looked towards the cypress-tree there were the forty doves. And now his joy was as great as his terror had been before. First he fell upon the neck of his consort, and then he ran to his mother and embraced her, so great was his joy that he had escaped from the hands of the Peris.

Thereupon they made them such a banquet that even after forty days they had not got to the end of it. So they had their hearts' desires, and ate and drank and rejoiced with a great joy. May we too get the desires of our hearts, with good eating and drinking to comfort us!

THE SERPENT-PERI AND THE MAGIC MIRROR

THERE was once upon a time a poor wood-cutter who had an only son. One day this poor man fell sick and said to his son : “ If I should die follow thou my handicraft, and go every day into the wood. Thou mayest cut down whatever trees thou dost find there, but at the edge of the wood is a cypress-tree, that thou must leave standing.” Two days afterwards the man died and was buried.

But the son went into the wood and cut down the trees, only the cypress-tree he left alone. One day the youth stood close to this tree and thought to himself : “ What can be the matter with this tree, seeing that I am not allowed to lay a hand upon it ? ” So he looked at it, and considered it curiously, till at last he took his axe and went with evil intent towards the tree. But he had scarcely lifted his foot when the cypress-tree drew away from him. The

wood-cutter mounted his ass and pursued the tree but could not overtake it, and in the meantime eventide came upon them. Then he dismounted from his ass and tied it to a tree, but he himself climbed to the top of the tree to await the dawn.

Next morning, when the sky grew red, he descended from the tree, and there at the foot of it lay only the bones of his ass. "Never mind, I'll go on foot," said the wood-cutter, and he continued his pursuit of the cypress, the tree going on before and he following after. All that day he pursued but could not come up with it. The third day also he shouldered his axe and pursued the tree, when he suddenly came upon an elephant and a serpent fighting with each other. Believe the truth or not as you will, but the truth is this, that the serpent was swallowing the elephant; but the elephant's great tusk stuck in the serpent's throat, and both beasts, seeing the youth staring at them, begged him to help them.

What didn't the elephant promise him if only he would slay the serpent! "Nay, but all I would have thee do," said the serpent, "is to break his tusk off; the work is lighter, and the reward will be greater." At these words the youth seized his axe and chopped the elephant's tusk right off. The serpent then swallowed the elephant, thanked the youth, and promised to keep his word and give him his reward.

While they were on the road the serpent stopped at a spring and said to the youth : “ Wait while I bathe in this water, and whatever may happen, fear not ! ” With that the serpent plunged into the water, and immediately there arose such a terrible storm, such a tempest, such a hurricane, with lightning-flash upon lightning-flash, and thunder-bolt upon thunder-bolt, that the Day of Judgment could not well be worse. Presently the serpent came out of the bath, and then all was quiet again.

They went a long way, and they went a little way, they took coffee, they smoked their chibooks, they gathered violets on the road, till at last they drew near to a house, and then the serpent said : “ In a short time we shall arrive at my mother’s house. When she opens the door, say thou art my kinsman, and she will invite thee into the house. She will offer thee coffee but do not drink it, she will offer thee meat but do not eat it ; but there’s a little bit of a mirror hanging up in the corner of the door, ask my mother for that ! ”

So they came to the house, and no sooner had the Peri knocked at the door than his mother came and opened it. “ Come, my brother ! ” said the serpent to the youth behind him.—“ Who is thy brother ? ” asked his mother.—“ He who hath saved my life,” replied her son, and with that he told her the whole

story. So they went into the house, and the woman brought the youth coffee and a chibook, but he would not take them. "My journey is a hasty one," said he, "I cannot remain very long."

"Rest awhile at least," said the woman, "we cannot let our guests depart without anything."

"Nothing do I want, but if thou wilt give me that bit of mirror in the corner of the door I will take it," said the youth. The woman did not want to give it, but the youth insisted that perhaps his life might depend upon that very piece of mirror, so at last she gave it to him, though very unwillingly.

So the youth went on his way with the bit of mirror, and as he looked into it he turned over in his mind what use he should make of it. As he was still turning it over and looking at it, suddenly there stood before him a negro efit, one of whose lips touched the heavens, and the other lip the earth. The poor youth was so frightened, that if the negro had not said: "What are thy commands, my Sultan?" he would have run away for ever and ever. As it was, it was as much as he could do to ask for something to eat, and immediately there stood before him a rich and rare banquet, the like of which he had never seen at his father's, the wood-cutter's.

Then the youth felt very curious about the mirror, and looked into it again, and immediately the black

efrit stood before him again and said : " What dost thou command, my Sultan ? " Nothing would occur to his mind at first, but at last his lips murmured the word " Palace," and immediately there stood before him a palace so beautiful that the Padishah himself could not have a finer one. " Open ! " cried the youth, and immediately the gates of the palace flew open before him.

The youth rejoiced greatly in his bit of mirror, and his one thought was what he should ask it to get him next. The beautiful Sultana-damsel, the Padishah's daughter, occurred to his mind, and the next moment his eye sought his mirror and he desired from the big-lipped negro efrit a palace in which the world-renowned daughter of the Padishah should be sitting beside him, and he had scarce time to look around him when he found himself sitting in the palace with the Sultan's daughter by his side. Then they kissed and embraced each other, and lived a whole world of joy.

Meanwhile the Sultan learnt that his daughter had disappeared from her own palace. He searched for her the whole realm through, he sent heralds in every direction, but in vain were all his labours, the girl could not be discovered. At last an old woman came to the Padishah and told him to make a large casket, line it well with zinc, put her inside it, and cast it into the sea. She would find the daughter of the Sultan,

she said, for if she was not here, she must be beyond the sea. So they made ready the great casket, put the old woman inside it, put food for nine days beside her, and cast it into the sea. The casket was tossed from wave to wave, till at last it came to that city where the Sultan's daughter dwelt with the youth.

Now the fishermen were just then on the shore, and saw the huge casket floating in the sea. They drew it ashore with ropes and hooks, and when they opened it an old woman crept out of it. They asked her how she had got inside it.

"Oh, that my enemy might lose the sight of his little eye that is so dear to him!" lamented the old woman; "I have not deserved this of him!" and with that she fell a-weeping and wailing till the men believed every word she said. "Where is the Bey of your city?" cried she; "perhaps he will have compassion upon me and receive me into his house," she said to the men. Then they showed her the palace, and exhorted her to go thither, as perhaps she might get an alms.

So the old woman went to the palace, and when she knocked at the door, the Sultan's daughter came down to see who it was. The old woman immediately recognized the damsel, and begged her (for the damsel knew not the old woman) to take her into her service. "My lord comes home to-night, I will ask him,"

replied the damsel ; “ meanwhile rest in this corner ! ” And the damsel’s lord allowed her to receive the old woman into the house, and the next day she waited upon them.

There the old woman was for one day and for two days, for a week, for two weeks, and there was no cook to cook the food, and no servant to keep the place clean, and yet every day there was a costly banquet and everything was as clean as clean could be. Then the old woman went to the damsel and asked her whether she did not feel dull at being alone all day. “ If I were allowed to help thee pass the time away,” added she, “ perhaps it might be better.” — “ I must first ask my lord,” replied the damsel. The youth did not mind the old woman helping his wife to pass away the time, and so she went up to the rooms of the damsel and stayed with her for days together.

One day the old woman asked the damsel whence came all the rare meats, and who did the service of the house. But the damsel knew not of the piece of mirror, so she could tell the old woman nothing. “ Find out from thy lord,” said the old woman, and scarcely had the youth come home, scarce had he had time to eat, than she wheedled him so that he showed her the mirror.

That was all the old woman wanted. A couple of days she let go by, but on the third and the fourth

days she bade the damsel beg her lord for the piece of mirror so that she might amuse herself therewith, and make the time pass more easily. And indeed she had only to ask her lord for it, for he, not suspecting her falseness, gave it to her. And in the meantime the old woman was not asleep. She knew where the damsel had put the mirror, stole it, and when she looked into it the negro efrif appeared. "What is thy command?" inquired he of the old woman. "Take me with this damsel to her father's palace," was her first command. Her second command made of the youth's palace a heap of ashes, so that when the young wood-cutter returned home he found nought but the cat meeowing among the ashes. There was also a small piece of meat there; the Sultan's daughter had thrown it down for the cat.

The youth took up the fragment of meat and set out to seek his consort. Find her he would, though he roamed the whole world over. He went on and on, he searched and searched till he came to the city where his wife lived. He went up to the palace, and there he begged the cook to take him into the kitchen as a servant out of pure compassion. In a couple of days he had learnt from his fellow-servants in the kitchen that the Sultan's daughter had returned home.

One day the cook fell sick and there was no heart

in him to attend to the cooking. The youth, seeing this, bade him rest, and said he would cook the food in his stead. The cook agreed, and told him what to cook, and how to season it. So the youth set to work, roasting and stewing, and when he sent up the dishes, he also sent up the scrap of food that he had found on the ashes, and put it on the damsel's plate. Scarcely had the damsel cast eyes on this little scrap than she knew within herself that her lord was near her. So she called the cook and asked whom he had with him in the kitchen. At first he denied that he had any one, but at last he confessed that he had taken a poor lad in to assist him.

Then the damsel went to her father and said to him that there was a young lad in the kitchen who prepared coffee so well that she should like some coffee from his hands. So the lad was ordered up, and from thenceforth he prepared the coffee and took it to the Sultan's daughter. So they came together again, and she told her lord how the matter had gone. Then they took counsel how they should await their turn and get the mirror back again.

Scarcely had the youth gone in to the damsel than the old woman appeared. Although she had not seen him for long, she recognized him, and, looking into the mirror, caused the poor lad to be sent back again

to the ashes of his old palace. There he found the cat still squatting. When she felt hungry she caught mice, and such ravages did she make upon them that at last the Padishah of the mice had scarce a soldier left.

Very wroth was the poor Padishah, but he durst not tackle the cat. One day, however, he observed the youth, went up to him, and begged his assistance in his dire distress, for if he waited till the morrow his whole realm would be ruined.

“I’ll help thee,” said the youth, “though, indeed, I have enough troubles of my own to carry already.”

“What is thy trouble?” asked the Padishah of the mice. The youth told him about the history of the piece of looking-glass, and how it had been stolen from him, and into whose hands it had fallen.

“Then I can help thee,” cried the Padishah, whereupon he called together all the mice in the world. And he asked which of them had access to this palace, and which knew of such-and-such an old woman, and the piece of looking-glass. At these words a lame mouse hobbled forth, kissed the ground at the feet of the Padishah, and said that it was his wont to steal food from the old woman’s box. He had seen through the keyhole how she took out a little bit of looking-glass every evening and hid it under a cushion.

Then the Padishah commanded him to go and steal

this bit of mirror. The mouse, however, begged that he might have two comrades, sat on the back of one of them, and so went on to the old woman. It was evening when they arrived there, and the old woman was just eating her supper. "We have come at the right time," said the lame mouse, "we shall get something to eat." And with that they scampered into the room, satisfied their hunger, and waited for the night. They arranged between them what they should do, and when the old woman lay down they waited till she was asleep. Scarcely had she fallen asleep than the lame mouse leaped into her bed, made for her face, and began tickling her nose with the end of its tail.

"P-chi! p-chi!" the old woman sneezed, so that her head nearly leaped from her shoulders. "P-chi! p-chi!" she sneezed again, and meanwhile the two other little mice rushed out, picked up the piece of looking-glass from underneath the cushion, took the lame mouse on their backs, and hurried home again.

The youth rejoiced greatly at the sight of the mirror, then he took the cat with him so that it should do no more harm to the mice, and went into other parts. There he took out the bit of mirror, looked into it, and lo! the black efrî stood before him and said: "What is thy command, my Sultan?"

The youth asked for a raiment of cloth of gold and

a whole army of soldiers, and before he had time to look round, in front of him stood costly raiment, and he put it on; and a beautiful horse, and he sat on its back; and a large army which marched behind him into the city. When he arrived there he stood before the palace, and surrounded it with his soldiers. Oh, how terrified the Padishah was at the sight of that vast army!

The youth went into the palace, and demanded the damsel from her father. In his terror the Padishah gave him not only his daughter but his realm. The old woman was given into the hands of the big-lipped efrit, but the bride and bridegroom lived happily in the midst of their glorious kingdom. And close beside them stood the magic mirror that made all their woes to vanish.

STONE-PATIENCE AND KNIFE-PATIENCE

THERE was once a poor woman who had one daughter, and this poor woman used to go out and wash linen, while her daughter remained at home at her working-table. One day she was sitting by the window as was her wont, when a little bird flew on to the sewing-table and said to the damsel: "Oh, little damsel, poor little damsel! death is thy Kismet!"¹ whereupon it flew away again. From that hour the damsel's peace of mind was gone, and in the evening she told her mother what the bird had said to her. "Close the door and the window," said her mother, "and sit at thy work as usual."

So the next morning she closed the door and the window and sat her down at her work. But all at once there came a "Whirr-r-r-r!" and there was the little bird again on the work-table. "Oh, little damsel, poor little damsel! death is thy Kismet," and with that it flew away again. The damsel was more

¹ Fate.

and more terrified than ever at these words, but her mother comforted her again: "To-morrow," said she, "close fast the door and the window, and get into the cupboard. There light a candle, and go on with thy work!"

Scarcely had her mother departed with the dawn than the girl closed up everything, lit a candle, and locked herself in the cupboard with her work-table. But scarcely had she stitched two stitches when the bird stood before her again, and said: "Oh, little damsel, poor little damsel! death is thy Kismet!" and whirr-r-r-r! it flew away again. The damsel was in such distress that she scarce knew where she was. She threw her work aside, and began tormenting herself as to what this saying might mean. Her mother, too, could not get to the bottom of the matter, so she remained at home the next day, that she also might see the bird, but the bird did not come again.

So their sorrow was perpetual, and all the joy of their life was gone. They never stirred from the house but watched and waited continually, if perchance the bird might come again. One day the damsels of their neighbour came to them and asked the woman to let her daughter go with them. "If she went for a little outing," said they, "she might forget her trouble." The woman did not like to let

her go, but they promised to take great care of her and not to lose sight of her, so at last she let her go.

So the damsels went into the fields and danced and diverted themselves till the day was on the decline. On the way home they sat down by a well and began to drink out of it. The poor woman's daughter also went to drink of the water, when lo! a wall rose up between her and the other damsels, but such a wall as never the eye of man yet beheld. A voice could not get beyond it, it was so high, and a man could not get through it, it was so hard. Oh, how terrified was the poor woman's daughter, and what weeping and wailing and despair there was among her comrades. What would become of the poor girl, and what would become of her poor mother!

"I will not tell," said one of them, "for she will not believe us!"—"But what shall we say to her mother," cried another, "now that she has disappeared from before our eyes?"—"It is thy fault, it is thy fault!"—"Twas thou that asked her!"—"No, 'twas thou." So they fell to blaming each other, looking all the time at the great wall.

Meanwhile the mother was awaiting her daughter. She stood at the door of the house and watched the damsels coming. The damsels came weeping sore, and scarce dared to tell the poor woman what had befallen her daughter. The woman rushed to the



The Poor Woman and the Three Damsels.—p. 190.

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great wall, her daughter was inside it and she herself was outside, and so they wept and wailed so long as either of them had a tear to flow.

In the midst of this great weeping the damsel fell asleep, and when she woke up next morning she saw a great door beside the wall. "Happen to me what may, if I am to perish, let me perish, but open this door I will!"—so she opened it. Beyond the door was a beautiful palace, the like of which is not to be seen even in dreams. This palace had a vast hall, and on the wall of this hall hung forty keys. The damsel took the keys and began opening the doors of all the rooms around her, and the first set of rooms was full of silver, and the second set full of gold, and the third set full of diamonds, and the fourth set full of emeralds—in a word, each set of rooms was full of stones more precious than the precious things of the rooms before it, so that the eyes of the damsel were almost blinded by their splendour.

She entered the fortieth room, and there, extended on the floor, was a beautiful Bey, with a fan of pearls beside him, and on his breast a piece of paper with these words written on it: "Whoever fans me for forty days and prays all that time by my side will find her Kismet!" Then the damsel thought of the little bird. So it was by the side of this sleeper that she was to meet her fate! So she made her

ablutions, and, taking the fan in her hand, she sat down beside the Bey. Day and night she kept on fanning him, praying continually till the fortieth day was at hand. And on the morning of the last day she peeped out of the window and beheld a negro girl in front of the palace. Then she thought she would call this girl for a moment and ask her to pray beside the Bey, while she herself made her ablutions and took a little repose. So she called the negro girl and set her beside the Bey, that she might pray beside him and fan his face. But the damsel hastened away and made her ablutions and adorned herself, so that the Bey, when he awoke, might see his life's Kismet at her best and rejoice at the sight.

Meanwhile the black girl read the piece of paper, and while the white damsel tarried the youth awoke. He looked about him, and scarcely did he see the black girl than he embraced her and called her his wife. The poor white damsel could scarce believe her own eyes when she entered the room; but the black girl, who was jealous of her, said to the Bey: "I, a Sultan's daughter, am not ashamed to go about just as I am, and this chit of a serving-maid dares to appear before me arrayed so finely!" Then she chased her out of the room, and sent her to the kitchen to finish her work and boil and fry. The Bey was surprised, but he would not say a word, for the negro girl was

his bride, while the other damsel was only a kitchen-wench.

Now the Feast of Bairam fell about this time, and as is the custom at such times, the Bey would fain have given gifts to them of his household. So he went to the negress and asked her what she would like on the Feast of Bairam. And the negress asked for a garment that never a needle had sewn and never scissors had cut. Then he went down into the kitchen and asked the damsel what she would like. "The stone-of-patience has a yellow colour, and the knife-of-patience has a brown handle, bring them both to me," said the damsel. So the Bey went on his way, and got the negress her garment, but the stone-of-patience and the knife-of-patience he could find nowhere. What was he to do?—he could not return home without the gifts. So he got on board his ship.

The ship had only got half-way when suddenly it stopped short, and could neither go backwards nor forwards. The captain was terrified, and told his passengers that there was some one on board who had not kept his word, and that was why they could not get on. Then the Bey came forward, and said that he it was who had not kept his word. So they put the Bey ashore, that he might keep his promise and then return back to the ship. Then the Bey walked along the sea-shore, and from the sea-shore he came to a

great valley, and he went wandering on and on till he stood beside a large spring. And he had scarce trodden on the stones around it when suddenly a huge negro stood before him and asked him what he wanted.

“The stone-of-patience is of a yellow colour and the knife-of-patience has a brown sheath, bring them both to me!” said the Bey to the negro. And the next moment both the stone and the knife were in his hand, and he came back to the ship, went on board, and returned home. He gave the garment to his wife, but the stone and the knife he put in the kitchen. But the Bey was curious to know what the damsel would do with them, so one evening he crept down into the kitchen and watched her.

When night approached she took the knife in her hand and placed the stone in front of her and began telling them her story. She told them what the little bird had thrice told her, and in what great terror both her mother and herself had fallen.

And while she was looking at the stone it suddenly began to swell, and its yellow hue hissed and bubbled as if there were life in it.

Then the damsel went on to say how she had wandered into the palace of the Bey, how she had prayed forty days beside him, and how she had entrusted the negress with the praying while she went to wash and dress herself.

And the yellow stone swelled again, and hissed and foamed as if it were about to burst.

Then the damsel told how the negress had deceived her, how instead of her the Bey had taken the negress to wife.

And all this time the yellow stone went on swelling and hissing and foaming as if there were a real living heart inside it, till suddenly it burst and turned to ashes.

Then the damsel took the little knife by the handle and said: "Oh, thou yellow patience-stone, thou wert but a stone, and yet thou couldst not endure that I, a tender little damsel, a poor little damsel, should thus be thrust out." And with that she would have buried the knife in her breast, but the Bey rushed forward and snatched away the knife.

"Thou art my real true Kismet," cried the youth, as he took her into the upper chamber in the place of the negress. But the treacherous negress they slew, and they sent for the damsel's mother and all lived together with great joy.

And the little bird came sometimes and perched in the window of the palace, and sang his joyful lay. And this is what he sang: "Oh, little damsel, happy little damsel, that hast found thy Kismet!"

THE GHOST OF THE SPRING AND THE SHREW

ONCE upon a time which was no time if it was a time, in the days when my mother was my mother and I was my mother's daughter, when my mother was my daughter and I was my mother's mother, in those days, I say, it happened that we once went along the road, and we went on and on and on. We went for a little way and we went for a long way, we went over mountains and over valleys, we went for a month continually, and when we looked behind us we hadn't gone a step. So we set out again, and we went on and on and on till we came to the garden of the Chin-i-Machin Pasha.¹ We went in, and there was a miller grinding grain, and a cat was by his side. And the cat had woe in its eye, and the cat had woe on its nose, and the cat had woe in its mouth, and the cat had woe in its fore paw, and the cat had woe in its hind paw, and the cat had woe in its

¹ Emperor of China.

throat, and the cat had woe in its ear, and the cat had woe in its face, and the cat had woe in its fur, and the cat had woe in its tail.

Hard by this realm lived a poor wood-cutter, who had nothing in the world but his poverty and a horrid shrew of a wife. What little money the poor man made his wife always took away, so that he had not a single *para*¹ left. If his supper was over-salted—and so it was many a time—and her lord chanced to say to her: “Mother, thou hast put too much salt in the food,” so venomous was she that next day she would cook the supper without one single grain of salt, so that there was no savour in it. But if he dared to say: “There is no savour in the food, mother!” she would put so much salt in it next day that her husband could not eat thereof at all.

Now what was it that befell this poor man one day? This is what befell. He put by a couple of pence from his earnings to buy a rope to hang himself withal. But his wife found them in her husband’s pocket: “Ho, ho!” she cried, “so thou dost hide thy money in corners to give it to thy comrades, eh?” In vain the poor man swore by his head that it was not so, his wife would not believe him. “My dear,” said her husband, “I wanted to buy me a rope with the money.”

¹ Farthing.

“To hang thyself with, eh?” inquired his affectionate spouse.

“Well, thou knowest what a hideous racket thou dost make sometimes,” replied her husband, meaning to pacify her.

“What I have done hitherto is little enough for a blockhead like thee,” she replied, and with that she gave her husband such a blow that it seemed to him as if the red dawn was flashing before him.

The next morning the wood-cutter rose early, saddled his ass, and went towards the mountains. All that he said to his wife before starting was to beg her not to follow him into the forest. This was quite enough for the wife. Immediately he was gone she saddled her ass, and after her husband she went without more ado. “Who knows,” murmured she to herself, “what he may not be up to in the mountains, if I am not there to look after him!”

The man saw that his wife was coming after him, but he made as if he did not see, never spoke a word, and as soon as he got to the foot of the mountain he set about wood-cutting. His wife, however, for she was a restless soul, went up and down and all about the mountain, poked her nose into everything, till at last her attention was fixed by a deserted well, and she made straight for it.

Then her husband cried to her: "Take care, there's a well right before thee!"

The only effect this warning had upon the wife was to make her draw still nearer. Again he cried to her: "Dost thou not hear me speak to thee? Go not further on, for there's a well in front of thee."

"What do I care what he says?" thought she. Then she took another step forward, but before she could take another the earth gave way beneath her, and into the well she plumped. As for the husband, he was thinking of something else, for he always minded his own business, so, his work over, he took his ass and never stopped till he got home.

The next day, at dawn, he again arose, saddled the ass, and went to the mountains, when the thought of his wife suddenly came into his mind. "I'll see what has become of the poor woman!" said he. So he went to the opening of the well and looked into it, but nothing was to be seen or heard of his wife. His heart was sore, for anyhow was she not his wife? and he began to think whether he could get her out of the well. So he took a rope, let it down into the well, and cried into the great depth thereof: "Catch hold of the rope, mother, and I'll draw thee up!"

Presently the man felt that the rope had become very heavy. He pulled away at it with all his might, he tugged and tugged—what creature of

Allah's could it be that he was pulling out of the well? And lo! it was none other than a hideous ghost! The poor wood-cutter was sore afraid.

"Rise up, poor man, and fear not," said the ghost. "The mighty Allah rather bless thee for thy deed. Thou hast saved me from so great a danger, that to the very day of judgment I will not forget thy good deed."

Then the poor man began to wonder what this great danger might be.

"How many many years I lived peaceably in this well I know not," continued the ghost, "but up to this very day I knew no trouble. But yesterday—whence she came I know not—an old woman suddenly plumped down on my shoulders, and caught me so tightly by both my ears, that I could not get loose from her for a moment. By a thousand good fortunes thou didst come to the spot, let down thy rope, and call to her to seize hold of it. For in trying to get hold of it she let me go, and I at once seized the rope myself, and, the merciful Allah be praised for it, here I am on dry land again. Good awaits thee for thy good deed; list now to what I say to thee!"

With that the ghost drew forth three wooden tablets, gave them to the wood-cutter, and said to him: "I now go to take possession of the daughter of the Sultan. Up to this day the princess has been hale

and well, but now she will have leeches and wise men without number, but all in vain, not one of them will be able to cure her. Thou also wilt hear of the matter, thou wilt hasten to the Padishah, moisten these three wooden tablets with water, lay them on the face of the damsel, and I will come out of her, and a rich reward will be thine."

With that the wood-cutter took the three tablets, put them in his pocket, and the ghost went to the right and he went to the left, and neither of them thought any more of the old woman in the well. But let us first follow the ghost.

Scarcely had this son of a devil quitted the wood-cutter than he stood in the Serai of the Padishah, and entered into the poor daughter of the Sultan. The poor girl immediately fell to the ground in great pain. "O my head! O my head!" she cried continually. They sent word to the Padishah, and he, hastening thither, found his daughter lying on the ground and groaning. Straightway he sent for leeches, wise men, drugs, and incense, but none of them assuaged her pain. They sent for them a second time, they sent for them a third time, but all their labour was in vain. At last they had ten doctors and ten wise men trying what they could do, and all the time the poor girl kept moaning: "My head, my head!"

“O my sweet child,” groaned the Padishah, “if thy head aches, believe me my head, and my heart also, ache a thousand times as much to hear thee. What shall I do for thee? I know what I will do. I will go call the astrologers, perchance they will know more than I do.” And with that he called together all the most famous astrologers in his kingdom. One of them had one plan, another had another, but not one of them could cure the complaint of the poor damsel.

But now let us see what became of the poor wood-cutter.

He lived on in the world without his wife, and gradually he forgot all about her, and about the ghost and the three wooden tablets, and the ghost's advice and promise. But one day, when he had no thought at all of these things, a herald from the city of the Padishah came to where he was with a firman¹ in his hand, and read this out of it in a loud voice: “The damsel, the Sultan's daughter, is very sick. The leeches, the wise men, the astrologers, all have seen her, and not one of them can cure her complaint. Whoever is a master of mysteries, let him come forward and doctor her. If he be a Mussulman, and cure her, the Sultan's daughter now and my realm after my death shall be his

¹ An Imperial rescript.

reward ; and if he be a Giaour¹ and cure her, all the treasures in my realm shall be his."

The wood-cutter needed no more to remind him of the ghost, the three tablets, and his wife. He arose and went up to the herald. "By the mercy of Allah I will cure the Sultan's daughter, if she be still alive," said he. At these words the servant of the Padishah caught hold of the wood-cutter, and led him into the Serai.

Word was sent at once of his arrival to the Padishah, and in an instant everything was made ready for him to enter the sick chamber. There before him lay the poor damsel, and all she did was to cry continually: "My head, my head!" The wood-cutter brought forth the wooden tablets, moistened them, and scarcely had he spread them on the Sultan's daughter than immediately she became as well again as if she had never been ill. At this there was great joy and gladness in the Serai, and they gave the daughter of the Sultan to the wood-cutter ; so the poor man became the son-in-law of the Padishah.

Now this Padishah had a brother who was also a Padishah, and his kingdom was the neighbouring kingdom. He also had a daughter, and it occurred to the ghost of the well to possess her likewise.

¹ An unbeliever.

So she also began to be tormented in the same way, and nobody could find a cure for her complaint. They searched and searched for assistance high and low, till at last they heard how the daughter of the neighbouring Padishah had been cured of a like sickness. So that other Padishah sent many men into the neighbouring kingdom, and begged the first Padishah, for the love of Allah, to send thither his son-in-law to cure the other damsel also. If he cured her he was to have the damsel for his second wife.

So the Padishah sent his son-in-law that he might cure the damsel—'twould be nothing to such a master of mysteries as he, they said. All that he could say was in vain, the poor fellow had to set out, and as soon as he arrived they led him at once into the sick-chamber. But now the ghost of the well had a word to say in the matter.

For that evil spirit was furious with his poor comrade. "Thou didst a good deed to me, it is true," began the ghost, "but thou canst not say that I remained thy debtor. I left for thy sake the beautiful daughter of the Sultan, and I chose out another for myself, and thou wouldst now take her from me also? Well, wait a while, and thou shalt see that for this deed of thine I will take them *both* away from thee."

At this the poor man was sore troubled.

"I did not come hither for the damsel," said he, "she is thy property, and, if such be thy desire, thou mayest take mine away also."

"Then what's thy errand here?" roared the ghost.

"Alas! 'tis my wife, the old woman of the well," sighed the former wood-cutter, "and I only left her in the well that I might be rid of her."

On hearing this the ghost was terribly frightened, and it was with a small voice that he now inquired whether by chance she had come to light again.

"Yes, indeed, she's outside," sighed the man, "wherever I may go I am saddled with her. I haven't the heart to free myself from her. Hark! she's at the door now, she'll be in the room in a moment."

The ghost needed no more. Forthwith he left the daughter of the Sultan, and the Serai, and the whole city, and the whole kingdom, so that not even the rumour of him remained. And not a child of man has ever seen him since.

But the daughter of the Sultan recovered instantly, and they gave her to the former wood-cutter, and he took her home as his second wife.

ROUMANIAN FAIRY TALES

11

11

THE STORY OF THE HALF-MAN-RIDING-
ON-THE-WORSE-HALF-OF-A-LAME-
HORSE

ONCE upon a time, long long ago, in the days when poplars bore pears and rushes violets, when bears could switch themselves with their tails like cows, and wolves and lambs kissed and cuddled each other, there lived an Emperor whose hair was already white, and who yet had never a son to bless himself with. The poor Emperor would have given anything to have had a little son of his own like other men, but all his wishes were in vain.

At last, when he was quite an old old man, Fortune took pity on him also, and a darling of a boy was born to him, the like of which the world had never seen before. The Emperor gave him the name of Aleodor, and gathered east and west, north and south, together to rejoice in his joy at the child's christening. The revels lasted three days and three nights, and all

the guests who made merry there with the Emperor could think of nothing else for the rest of their lives.

But the lad grew up as strong as an oak and as lovely as a rose, while his father the Emperor drew nearer every day to the edge of the grave, and when the hour of his death arrived he took the child on his knees and said to him :

“My darling son, behold the Lord calls me. The moment is at hand when I am to share the common lot of man. I foresee that thou wilt become a great man, and though I be dead my bones will rejoice in the tomb at thy noble deeds. As to the administration of this realm I need tell thee nought, for thou, with thy wisdom, wilt know how it behoves a king to rule. One thing there is, nevertheless, that I must tell thee. Dost thou see that mountain over yonder? Beware of ever setting thy foot upon it, for 'twill be to thy hurt and harm. That mountain belongs to the ‘Half-man-riding-on-the-worse-half-of-a-lame-horse,’ and whosoever ventures upon that mountain cannot escape unscathed.”

He had no sooner said these words than his throat rattled thrice, and he gave up the ghost. He departed to his place like every other human soul that is born into the world, though there was never Emperor like him since the world began. Those of his household bewailed him, his great nobles bewailed



The Emperor and the Young Aleodor.—p. 210.

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him, his people bewailed him also, and then they had to bury him.

Aleodor, from the moment that he ascended the throne of his father, ruled the land wisely like a mature statesman, though in age he was but a child. All the world delighted in his sway, and men thanked Heaven for allowing them to live in the days of such a prince.

All the time that was not taken up by affairs of State, Aleodor spent in the chase. But he always bore in mind the precepts of his father, and took care not to exceed the bounds which had been set him.

One day, however—how it came about I know not—but anyhow he fell into a brown study, and never noticed that he had overstepped the domains of the Half-man till, after taking a dozen steps or so onwards, he found himself face to face with the monster. That he was trespassing on the grounds of this stunted and terrible creature did not trouble him over-much, it was the thought that he had transgressed the dying command of his dear father that grieved him.

“Ho, ho!” cried the hideous monster, “dost thou not know that every scoundrel who oversteps my bounds becomes my property?”

“Yes,” replied Aleodor, “but I must tell thee that it was through want of thought and without wishing

it that I have trodden on thy ground. Against thee I have no evil design at all."

"I know better than that," replied the monster; "but I see that, like all cowards, thou dost think it best to make excuses."

"Nay, so sure as God preserves me, I am no coward. I have told thee the simple truth; but if thou wouldst fight, I am ready. Choose thy weapons! Shall we slash with sabres, or slog with clubs, or wrestle together?"

"Neither the one nor the other," replied the monster. "One way only canst thou escape thy just punishment—thou must fetch me the daughter of the Green Emperor!"

Aleodor would very much have liked to have got out of the difficulty some other way, as affairs of State would not allow him to take so long a journey, a journey on which he could find no guide to direct him; but what did the monster know of all that? Aleodor felt that if he would avoid the shame of being thought a robber and a trampler on the rights of others, he must indeed find the daughter of the Green Emperor. Besides, he wanted to escape with a whole skin if he could; so at last he promised that he would do the service required of him.

Now the Half-man-riding-on-the-worse-half-of-a-lame-horse knew very well that, as a man of honour,

Aleodor would never depart from his plighted word, so he said to him : “ Go now, in God’s name, and may good luck attend thee ! ”

So Aleodor departed. He went on and on, thinking over and over again how he was to accomplish his task, and so keep his word, when he came to the margin of a pond, and there he saw a pike dashing its life out on the shore. He immediately went up to it to satisfy his hunger with it, when the pike said to him : “ Slay me not, Boy-Beautiful !¹ but cast me rather back into the water again, and then I will do thee good whenever thou dost think of me.”

Aleodor listened to the pike, and threw it back into the water again. Then the pike said to him again : “ Take this scale, and whenever thou dost look at it and think of me I will be with thee.”

Then the youth went on further and marvelled greatly at such a strange encounter.

Presently he fell in with a crow that had one wing broken. He would have killed the crow and eaten it, but the crow said to him : “ Boy-Beautiful, Boy-Beautiful ! why wilt thou burden thy soul on my account ? Far better were it if thou didst bind up my wing, and much good will I requite thee with for thy kindness.”

¹ *Fet frumosă*, the favourite name for all young heroes in Roumanian fairy-tales.

Aleodor listened, for his heart was as kind as his hand was cunning; and he bound up the crow's wing. When he made ready to go on again, the crow said to him: "Take this feather, thou gallant youth! and whenever thou dost look at it and think of me, I will be with thee."

Then Aleodor took the feather and went on his way. He hadn't gone a hundred paces further when he stumbled upon an ant. He would have trodden upon it, when the ant said to him: "Spare my life, O Emperor Aleodor, and I'll deliver thee also from death! Take this little bit of membrane from my wing, and whenever thou dost think of me, I'll be with thee."

When Aleodor heard these words, and how the ant called him by his name, he raised his foot again and let the ant go where it would. He also went on his way, and after journeying for I know not how many days he came at last to the palace of the Green Emperor. There he knocked at the door, and stood waiting for some one to come out and ask him what he wanted.

He stood there one day, he stood there two days, but as for any one coming out to ask him what he wanted, there was no sign of it. When the third day dawned, however, the Green Emperor called to his servants and gave them a talking to that they were

likely to remember. "How comes it," said he, "that a man should be standing at my gates three days without any one going out to ask him what he wants? Is this what I pay you wages for?"

The servants of the Green Emperor looked up, and they looked down, but they had not one word to say for themselves. At last they went and called Aleodor and led him before the Emperor.

"What dost thou want, my son?" inquired the Emperor; "and wherefore art thou waiting at the gates of my court?"

"I have come, great Emperor, to seek thy daughter."

"Good, my son. But, first of all, we must make a compact together, for such is the custom of my court. Thou must hide thyself wheresoever thou wilt three times running. If my daughter finds thee all three times, thy head shall be struck off and stuck on a stake, the only one out of a hundred that has not a suitor's head upon it. But if she does not find thee thrice, thou shalt have her from me with all imperial courtesy."

"My hope, great Emperor, is in the Lord, Who will not allow me to perish. We will put something else on this stake of thine, but not the head of a man. Let us make the compact."

"Thou dost agree?"

“ I agree.”

So they made them a compact, and the deeds were drawn out and signed and sealed.

Then the daughter of the Emperor met him next day, and it was arranged that he should hide himself as best he could. But now he was in an agony that tortured him worse than death, for he bethought him again and again where and how he could best hide himself, for nothing less than his head was at stake. And as he kept walking about, and brooding and pondering, he remembered the pike. Then he took out the fish's scale, looked at it, and thought of the fish's master, and immediately, oh wonderful!—the pike stood before him and said : “ What dost thou want of me, Boy-Beautiful ? ”

“ What do I want ? Thou mayest well ask that ! Look what has happened to me ! Canst thou not tell me what to do ? ”

“ That is thy business no longer. Leave it to me ! ”

And immediately striking Aleodor with his tail, he turned him into a little shell-fish, and hid him among the other little shell-fish at the bottom of the sea.

When the damsel appeared, she put on her eye-glass and looked for him in every direction, but could see him nowhere. Her other woers had hidden

themselves in caves, or behind houses, or under haycocks and haystacks, or in some hole or corner, but Aleodor hid himself in such a way that the damsel began to fear that she would be vanquished. Then it occurred to her to turn her eye-glass towards the sea, and she saw him beneath a heap of mussels. But you must know that her eye-glass was a magic eye-glass.

“I see thee, thou rascal,” cried she, “how thou hast bothered me, to be sure! From being a man thou hast made thyself a mussel, and hidden thyself at the bottom of the sea.”

This he couldn't deny, so of course he had to come up again.

But she said to the Emperor: “Methinks, dear father, this youth will suit me. He is nice and comely. Even if I find him all three times let me have him, for he is not stupid like the others. Why, thou canst see from his figure even how different he is.”

“We shall see,” replied the Emperor.

On the second day Aleodor bethought him of the crow, and immediately the crow stood before him, and said to him: “What dost thou want, my master?”

“Look now, senseless one! what has happened to me. Canst thou not show me a way out of it?”

“Let us try!” and with that it struck him with its wing and turned him into a young crow, and placed him in the midst of a flock of crows that were flying high in the air in the teeth of a fierce tempest.

Then the damsel came again with her eye-glass and searched for him in every direction. He was nowhere to be found. She looked for him on the earth, but he was not there. She looked for him in the rivers and in the sea, but he was not there. The damsel grew pensive. She searched and searched till mid-day, when it occurred to her to look upwards also. And perceiving him in the glory of the sky in the midst of a swarm of crows, she pointed him out with her finger and cried: “Look! look! Rogue that thou art! Come down from there, O man, that hast made thyself into a bit of a bird! Nothing in the fields of heaven can escape my eye!”

Then he came down, for what else could he do? Even the Emperor himself now began to be amazed at the skill and cunning of Aleodor, and lent an ear to the prayers of his daughter. Inasmuch, however, as the compact declared that Aleodor was to hide three times, the Emperor said to his daughter: “Wait once more, for I am curious to see what place he will find to hide himself in next.”

The third day, early in the morning, he thought

of the ant, and—whisk!—the ant was by his side. When she had found out what he wanted she said to him: “Leave it to me, and if she find thee I am here to help thee.”

So the ant turned him into a flower-seed, and hid him in the very skirts of the damsel without her perceiving it.

Then the Emperor’s daughter rose up, took her eye-glass, and sought for him all day long, but look where she would she could not find him. She plagued herself almost to death in her search, for she felt that he was close at hand, though see him she could not. She looked through her eye-glass on the ground, and in the sea, and up in the sky, but she could see him nowhere, and towards evening, tired out by so much searching, she exclaimed: “Show thyself then, this once! I feel that thou art close at hand, and yet I cannot see thee. Thou hast conquered, and I am thine.”

Then when he heard her say that he had conquered, he slipped slowly down from her skirts and revealed himself. The Emperor had now nothing more to say, so he gave the youth his daughter, and when they departed, he escorted them to the boundaries of his empire with great pomp and ceremony.

While they were on the road they stopped at a place to rest, and after they had refreshed themselves

somewhat with food, he laid his head in her lap and fell asleep. The daughter of the Emperor could not forbear from looking at him, and her eyes filled with tears as they feasted on his comeliness and beauty. Then her heart grew soft within her, and she could not help kissing him. But Aleodor, when he awoke, gave her a buffet with the palm of his hand that awoke the echoes.

"Nay but, my dear Aleodor!" cried she, "thou hast indeed a heavy hand."

"I have slapped thee," said he, "for the deed thou hast done, for I have not taken thee for myself, but for him who bade me seek thee."

"Good, my brother! but why didst thou not tell me so at home? for then I also would have known what to do. But let be now, for all that is past."

Then they set out again till they came alive and well to the Half-man-riding-on-the-worse-half-of-a-lame-horse.

"Lo, now! I have done my service," said Aleodor, and with that he would have departed. But when the girl beheld the monster, she shivered with disgust, and would not stay with him for a single moment. The hideous cripple drew near to the maiden, and began to caress her with honeyed words, that so she might go with him willingly. But the girl said to him: "Depart from me, Satan, and go to thy mother

Hell, who hath cast thee upon the face of the earth !”
Then the half-monster half-man was near to melting **for** the love he had for the damsel, and, writhing away **on** his belly, he fetched his mother that she might **help** to persuade the maid to be his wife. But **mean-**
while the damsel had dug a little trench all round **her**, and stood rooted to the spot with her eyes fixed **on** the ground. The hideous satanic skeleton of a **monster** could not get at her.

“Depart from the face of the earth, thou abomination !” cried she ; “the world is well rid of such a pestilential monster as thou art !”

Still he strove and strove to get at her, but finding at last he could not reach her, he burst with rage and fury that a mere woman should have so covered him with shame and reproach.

Then Aleodor added the domain of the Half-man-riding-on-the-worse-half-of-a-lame-horse to his own possessions, took the daughter of the Green Emperor to wife, and returned to his own empire. And when his people saw him coming back in the company of a smiling spouse as beautiful as the stars of heaven, they welcomed him with great joy, and, mounting once more his imperial throne, he ruled his people in peace and plenty till the day of his death.

And now I’ll mount my horse again, and say an “Our Father” before I go.

THE ENCHANTED HOG

ONCE upon a time, a long long time ago, when fleas were shod with ninety and nine pieces of iron, and flew up into the blue sky to fetch us down fairy-tales, there lived an Emperor who had three daughters. One day, when he was going to battle, he called these daughters to him and said to them:

“Look now, my darlings! Needs must that I go to the wars. My foe is advancing against me with a huge host. 'Tis with great bitterness of heart that I part from you. In my absence, take care that you have your wits about you, behave well, and look after the affairs of the household. You have my leave to walk in the garden and enter all the rooms of my house, only in the chamber at the bottom of the corridor on the right-hand side you must not enter, or it will not be well with you.”

“Depart in peace, papa!” cried they. “Never yet have we disobeyed the words of thy commands,

Go without any fear of us, and God give thee victory over all thine enemies !”

So when he was quite ready to depart, the Emperor gave them the keys of all his chambers ; but once more he put them in mind of his command, and then he bade them good-bye and departed.

The daughters of the Emperor kissed his hand with tears in their eyes, and wished him victory once more, and then the eldest of the three daughters received the keys from the hands of the Emperor.

When the daughters of the Emperor found themselves all alone they knew not what to do with themselves, the time hung so heavily. At last they agreed to work a part of the day, and to read another part of the day, and spend the rest of the day walking in the garden. This they did, and things went well with them.

But the Deceiver of mankind was vexed at the tranquillity of the maidens, so he must needs twist his tail in their affairs.

“ My sisters,” said the eldest of the three damsels one day, “ why do we spend the live-long day in sewing and knitting and reading ? I am sick and tired of it all. It is ever so many days now since we were left to ourselves, and there’s not a corner of the garden that we have not walked in over and over again. We have also been through all the rooms of

our father's palace, and looked at all the ornaments there till we know them by heart. Let us now enter into that chamber which our father told us not to enter."

"Woe is me, dear sister!" said the youngest damsel. "I wonder that thou shouldst persuade us to tread underfoot the precepts of our father. When our father told us not to enter there, he must needs have known what he was saying, and why he told us so to do."

"Dost thou fancy, silly, that there's some evil serpent there that will eat us, or some other foul beast perhaps?" cried the middle sister. "Besides, how is papa to know whether we were there or not?"

Talking and arguing thus, they had reached the door of the chamber, and the eldest sister, who was the guardian of the keys, popped the key into the key-hole, and turning it round—crack-rack!—the door flew wide open.

The damsels entered.

What do you think they saw there? The room was bare of furniture, but in the middle of it stood a large table covered with a beautiful cloth, and on the top of it was a wide-open book.

The girls, all full of impatience, wanted to find out what was written in this book, and the eldest went up to it and read these words: "The eldest daughter

of the Emperor will marry a son of the Emperor of the East."

Then the second daughter went up to the book, and turning over the leaf, read these words: "The second daughter of the Emperor will marry a son of the Emperor of the West."

The girls laughed and made merry at these words, and giggled and joked among themselves. But the youngest daughter would not go up to the book.

But the elder ones would not leave her in peace, but dragged her up to the long table, and then, though very unwillingly, she turned over the leaf and read these words—

"The youngest daughter of the Emperor will have a pig for her spouse."

A thunderbolt falling from the sky could not have hurt her more than the reading of these words. She was like to have died of horror, and if her sisters had not held her she would have dashed her head to pieces against the ground.

When she had come to herself again, her sisters began to try to comfort her. "How canst thou believe all that nonsense?" said they. "When didst thou ever hear of the daughter of an Emperor marrying a pig?"

"What a baby thou art!" added the eldest, "as if papa hadn't armies enough to save thee, even if so

loathsome a monster as that *did* come and try and make thee his wife !”

The youngest daughter of the Emperor would very much have liked to believe what her sisters said, but her heart would not allow it. She thought continually of the book which promised her sisters such handsome bridegrooms, while it foretold that that should happen to her which had never yet happened since the world began. Then she reflected how she had transgressed the commands of her father, and her heart smote her. She began to grow thin, and ere a few days had passed she had so changed that none could recognize her. She became sad and sallow, instead of rosy and rollicking, and could take part in nothing at all. She ceased to play with her sisters in the garden ; she ceased to cull posies and make garlands of them for her head, and when her sisters sang over their distaffs and embroideries her voice was dumb.

Meanwhile the Emperor, the father of these girls, succeeded beyond even the wishes of his dearest friends, and vanquished and dispersed his enemies. As his thoughts were continually with his daughters, he did what he had to do quickly and returned home. Crowds and crowds of people turned out to meet him with fifes and drums and trumpets, and great was their joy at the sight of their victorious Emperor.

When he reached his capital, before going home, he gave thanks to God for aiding him against the enemies who had tried to do him evil. Then he went to his own house, and his daughters came out to meet him. His joy was great when he saw how well they were, for his youngest daughter did her best to appear as gay and happy as the others.

But it was not very long before the Emperor observed that, little by little, his youngest daughter was growing sadder and thinner. "What if she has broken my commands?" thought he, and as it were a red-hot iron pierced his soul. Then he called his daughters to him, and bade them speak the truth. They confessed, but they did not say which of them had first persuaded them.

When the Emperor heard this he was filled with bitterness, and from henceforth sadness took possession of him. But he held his tongue, and did but make all the more of his youngest daughter because he was about to lose her. What's done is done, and he knew that thousands and thousands of words can't make one farthing.

Time went on, and he had almost come to forget the circumstance, when one day there appeared at the Emperor's court the son of the Emperor of the East, who sought the hand of his eldest daughter. The Emperor gave her to him with joy. They had a

splendid wedding, and after three days he conducted them with great pomp to the frontier. A little while afterwards the same thing happened to the second daughter, for the son of the Emperor of the West came and sought her in marriage likewise.

Accordingly as she saw what had been written in the book gradually fulfilled, the youngest daughter of the Emperor grew sadder and sadder. She no longer enjoyed her food; she would not go out walking; she even lost all pleasure in raiment; she preferred to die rather than become the laughing-stock of the whole world. But the Emperor did not give her the opportunity of doing anything foolish, but took care to divert her with all manner of pleasant stories.

Time went on, and lo!—oh, wonderful!—one day a large hog entered the royal palace and said: “Hail, O Emperor! May thy days be as rosy and as joyous as sunrise on a cloudless day!”

“Good and fair is thy greeting, my son!” replied the Emperor; “but what ill wind hath blown thee hither, I should like to know?”

“I have come as a wooer,” replied the hog.

The Emperor marvelled greatly at hearing such a pretty speech in the mouth of a hog, and immediately felt within himself that all was not right here. He would have put the hog off with some excuse if he could, to save his daughter, but when he heard

the court and all the ways leading to it full of the grunts of the hogs who had accompanied the wooer, he had nothing to say for himself, and promised the hog that he would do what it asked. But the hog was not content with his bare promise, but insisted that the wedding should take place within a week. Only when it had obtained the Emperor's word that it should be so did it go away.

The Emperor told his daughter that she must submit to her fate, as it was clearly the will of God. Then he added: "My daughter, the speech and sensible bearing of this hog belong to no brute beast with which I am acquainted. I'll wager my head upon it that he was never *born* a hog. There must be a touch of sorcery here, or some other devilry. If thou art obedient, thou wilt not depart from thy given word, for God will not allow thee to be tormented for long."

"If thou dost think it good, dear father," replied the girl, "I will obey thee, and put my trust in God. Let Him do what He will with me. It must be so, I have no other way to turn."

In the meantime the wedding-day arrived. The marriage was celebrated in secret. Then the hog got into one of the imperial carriages with his bride, and so they set off homewards.

On the journey they had to pass by a large marsh.

The hog ordered the carriage to stop, got down, and wallowed about in the mire till he was pretty nearly one with it. Then he got into the carriage again, and told his bride to kiss him. Poor girl, what could she do? She took out her cambric pocket-handkerchief, wiped his snout a little, and then kissed him. "I am but obeying my father's commands," thought she.

At last they reached the hog's house, which was in the midst of a dense forest. It was now evening, and when they had rested a little from the fatigues of the road they supped together and lay down to rest. In the night the daughter of the Emperor perceived that her husband was a man and not a hog, and she marvelled greatly. Then she called to mind the words of her father, and hope once more arose in her breast.

Every evening the hog shook off his hog-skin, and every morning before she awoke he put it on again.

One night passed, two nights passed, a great many nights passed, and the damsel could not make out how it was that her husband was a man at night and a hog in the daytime. For he was under a spell; an enchanter had done him this mischief.

Gradually she began to love him, especially when she felt that she was about to become a mother, but

what grieved her most was that she was 'all alone, with none at hand to aid her in her hour of need.

One day, however, she saw an old long-nosed witch pass by that way. Now as she had seen no human creature for a long time, she was full of joy, and called to her, and they had a long talk together.

"Tell me now, old woman," cried she, "the meaning of this marvel. In the daytime my husband is a hog, but when he sleeps beside me at night he is a man. Explain this marvel to me!"

"I'll tell thee that later on, but in the meanwhile shall I give thee some medicines that will put an end to the spell that holds him?"

"Oh, do, little mother, and I'll pay thee for them whatever thou wilt, for I hate to see him as he is now."

"Very well, then. Take this bit of rope, my little chicken, but let him not know anything about it, or it will lose its effect. Now when he is asleep, rise up, and going to him very very softly, tie his left leg as hard as thou canst, and thou wilt see, dear heart, that on the morrow he'll remain a man. Money I do not want. I shall be more than repaid if I release him from this scourge. My very heart-strings are bursting with compassion for thy lord, my rose-bud, and I grieve, oh how bitterly I grieve, that I did not come this way before, so as to help thee sooner."

When the old hag had departed, the daughter of the Emperor took care to carefully conceal the piece of rope, but in the middle of the night she softly arose so that he shouldn't hear her, and holding her very breath, tied the string round her husband's left leg, but when she tied the knot—r-rah!—the string broke, for it was rotten, and instantly her husband started up.

“Unhappy woman!” cried he, “what hast thou done? But three days more and I should have been free of this vile spell, but now who knows how long I may have to carry this vile bestial skin! And know, moreover, that thy hand can never touch me again till thou hast worn out three pairs of iron sandals, and worn down three staves of steel, seeking me all over the wide world, for now I must depart.”

And with these words he disappeared.

The poor daughter of the Emperor, when she found herself all alone, began to cry and sob as if her heart would break. She cursed the vile witch with fire and sword, but all in vain, and when at last she saw that all her cursing and moaning did no good, she got up and went whithersoever the mercy of God and the desire of her husband might lead her.

At the first city she arrived at she bade them make her three pairs of iron sandals and three staves of

steel, made provision for her journey, and set off to seek her husband.

She went on and on, past nine kingdoms and nine seas, she passed through vast forests where the tree-stumps were like barrels, she got black and blue from stumbling over the trunks of fallen trees, yet often as she fell, she always got up again and resumed her way; the branches of the trees struck her in the face, the briars tore her hands, yet on and on she went without so much as looking back once. At last, weary with her journey and her burden, bowed down with grief and yet with hope in her heart, she came to a little house. And who should be living there but the Holy Moon.

The damsel knocked at the door and begged them to let her come in and rest a little, especially as she was about to become a mother.

The mother of the Holy Moon had compassion on her and her afflictions, so she let her come inside and took good care of her. Then she asked her: "How is it that thou, a creature of another race, hast managed to come so far as this?"

Then the poor daughter of the Emperor told her everything that had happened to her, and wound up by saying: "I praise and thank God first of all for directing my footsteps even to this place, and I thank Him in the second place because He allows not my

child to perish at the hour of its birth. And now I beg thee to tell me whether thy daughter, the Holy Moon, hath seen my husband anywhere ?”

“That I cannot tell thee, my dear,” replied the mother of the Holy Moon ; “but if thou dost go on thy way towards the east till thou comest to the house of the Holy Sun, maybe he will be able to tell thee somewhat.”

Then she gave her a roast fowl to eat, and told her to be very careful not to lose one of the bones, as they would be very useful to her.

The daughter of the Emperor thanked the mother of the Moon for her hospitality and kind words, and after throwing away the pair of iron sandals which she had worn out, she put on another pair, placed the fowl's bones in her bosom, took her child on her arm, and a second staff of steel in her hand, and took to the road again.

She went on and on through nothing but plains of sand, and the way was so bad that she glided one step backwards for every two steps she went forwards. On and on she struggled till at last she left these plains behind her ; and now she got amongst high mountains, steep and rugged, and crawled from rock to rock and from crag to crag. Whenever she came to a little plot of level ground she stopped and rested a little, and reflected that now she was a little nearer

her husband than she was before, and then she went on her way again. The sides of the mountains were of hard-pointed flints, which bruised and cut her feet, knees, and sides till they were covered with blood; for you must know that these mountains were so high that they reached beyond the clouds. There were precipices in the way too that she could only pass by going down on her hands and knees and guiding herself with her staff.

At last, quite overcome by fatigue, she came to a palace.

Here lived the Sun.

She knocked at the door and begged them to take her in.

The mother of the Sun received her, and was amazed to see a creature of another race in those regions, and full of compassion when she heard what had befallen her. Then, when she had promised to ask her son about the damsel's husband, she hid her in the cellar, that the Sun might not perceive her when he came home in the evening, for he always came back in a bad temper.

Next day the daughter of the Emperor was afraid she would be found out, as the Sun said he smelt a creature from another world. But his mother soothed him with soft words, and told him that it was pears that he smelt. The daughter of the Emperor took

courage when she saw how well she was treated, and said :

“Tell me now, how can the Sun be ever vexed, seeing that he is so beauteous, and doeth so much good to mortals ?”

“I’ll tell thee,” replied the mother of the Sun. “In the morning he stands in the gate of Heaven, and then he is merry, so merry, and smiles upon the whole world. But at mid-day he is full of disgust, inasmuch as he sees all the follies of men, and so his wrath burns and he gets hotter and hotter ; while in the evening he is vexed and sorrowful because he stands in the gate of Hades, for that is the usual way by which he comes home.”

She told her besides that she had asked about her husband, and her son had replied that he knew not anything about him, as he was living in the midst of a vast and dense forest, so that his beams could not pierce through the thick foliage ; the only thing to do was to go and ask the Wind about it. Then she also gave her a roast fowl, and told her to take great care of the bones.

So the daughter of the Emperor pitched away the second pair of iron sandals that she had worn out, tied up the bones, took her child on her arm and a third staff in her hand, and went after the Wind.

On this journey she met with hardships greater

than any before, for she came upon mountains of flint-stones, one after another, through which darted flames of fire, forests untrodden by man, and fields of ice dark with snow-storms. More than once the poor creature was on the point of falling, but with perseverance and the help of God she overcame even these great hardships, and at last she reached a ravine between two mountains, large enough to hold seven cities.

This was the abode of the Wind.

There was a gate in the wall which surrounded it. She knocked and implored them to let her in. The mother of the Wind had compassion on her, and let her in and invited her to rest. "If she had hidden from the Sun," she said, "surely the Wind would not find her out."

The next day the mother of the Wind told her that her husband was living in a huge dense wood, which the axe of man had never yet reached, and there he had made him a sort of house by piling up the trunks of trees one on the top of another, and plaiting them together with withy bands, where he lived all alone for fear of wicked men. Then, after she had given her a roast fowl and told her to take good care of the bones, the mother of the Wind counselled her to follow the road that led straight to the sky, and let the stars of heaven be her guides. She said she

would, and after thanking her with tears of joy for her hospitality and for her glad tidings, she went on her way.

The poor woman turned night into day. She stopped neither to eat nor to rest, so fiercely did the desire to find her husband burn within her. She went on and on till she quite wore out the third pair of sandals. She threw them away, and began to walk with bare feet. She cared not for the hard clumps of earth, she took no heed of the thorns that entered into her feet, nor of the pain she suffered when she stumbled over the hard stones. At last she came to a green and beauteous meadow on the margin of a forest, and her heart rejoiced within her when she felt the soft grass and saw the sweet flowers. She stopped and rested a little. But when she saw the birds in couples and couples on the branches of the trees, a burning desire for her own husband came upon her, and she began to weep bitterly, and with her child on her arm, and her bundle of bones in her girdle, she went on her way. She entered the forest. She did not once look at the soft green turf which soothed her feet, she listened not to the birds that chirped enough to deafen her, she regarded not the flowers that peeped out from among the bushes, but groped her way step by step into the depths of the forest. For from the tokens given her by the mother

of the Wind she perceived that this must be the forest in which her husband was staying.

Three days and three nights she roamed through the forest, and could see no one. So worn was she now with fatigue that she fell to the ground, and there she lay for a day and a night without moving, nor did she eat and drink.

At last she rallied all her remaining strength, rose up, and tottering along, tried to support herself on her staff; but it could help her no more, for that also was quite worn down so that it was now no good to her. Still trusting in God, she went on as best she could. She hadn't taken ten steps forward when she saw in a cleft of the rock just such a sort of house as the mother of the Wind had told her of. She went towards it, and just managed to get up to it and no more. It was a house that had neither window nor door, but there was an opening in the roof. She looked around her, but there was no sign of a ladder.

What was she to do to get inside it?

She thought and thought again. She tried to climb up it, but in vain. Suddenly she thought of the bones which she had been carrying all this way. "If only I could find out," said she, "how these bones are to assist me!" She took them out of the bundle, looked at them, reflected a little, and then put one atop the other, and—oh, wonderful!—they joined

on to each other as if they had been glued. Then she joined another on to the first two and then another till she made out of them two long bars. Then she put a little bone across the two bars, and it stuck fast like the rung of a ladder. She mounted on it, and placed another little bone across a bit higher, and then she mounted on that also, and so she ascended from rung to rung, placing the small bones across as she went along, till she got quite near the top; but then she saw that there was a wide gap between the last rung of her ladder and the door in the roof of the house, and she now had no more bones to make the last rung. She must have lost it on the way. What was she to do now? She bethought her for a while, and then she cut off a finger and placed that between the bars. Sure enough it joined on to and formed the last rung, and mounting on it she entered the door of the house with her child in her arms. There she rested for awhile, gave her child to suck, and sat down herself on the threshold.

When her husband came he was so amazed at what he saw that he could scarce believe his eyes, and there he stood looking at the ladder of bones, the last rung of which was a severed human finger. Fear came upon him lest there should be some evil enchantment about the thing, and he would have turned his back upon the house if God had not put it into his mind

to enter. So turning himself into a dove, and flying up into the air without once touching the ladder, lest evil spells should lay hold of him, he entered the house in full flight, and there he beheld his wife nursing a child; and instantly he was full of tenderness and compassion towards her, for he bethought him of how much she must have suffered and endured before she could have found her way to him. Nay, he could scarce recognize her, so changed was she by her hardships and sufferings.

But the daughter of the Emperor, when she saw him, sprang from her seat, and her heart failed her for fright, for she did not know him. Then he made himself known to her, and she regretted no longer all she had gone through to find him, nay, she forgot it altogether, for he was as tall and straight as a lordly pine.

Then they began talking together. She told him all that had befallen her, and he wept for pity. Then he also spoke, and told her his story.


“I am the son of an Emperor,” said he. “In the war which my father waged with the dragons, our neighbours (and evil neighbours they were, ever ravaging his domains), I slew the smallest of the dragons. Now his mother knew that thou wert my destined bride, so she laid the curse of her spells upon me, and constrained me to wear the skin of an unclean

beast, with the design of preventing me from having thee. Yet God aided me, and I won thee nevertheless. That old woman who gave thee the cord to tie my legs with was the dragon's mother, and when I had but three days more to bear the spell, I was forced, by thy folly, to go about in pigskin three years longer. But now since thou hast suffered for me and I have suffered for thee, let us praise God and return to our parents. Without thee I should have resigned myself to living the life of a hermit, and so I chose this desert for my habitation, and built me this house so that no child of man should get at me."

Then they embraced each other full of joy, and promised to forget all their past sorrows.

The next day they rose early and went back first of all to the Emperor his father. When it was known that he and his consort had arrived, all the world wept with joy; but his father and mother embraced them tightly, and the public rejoicings lasted three days and three nights.

Then he went on to the Emperor the father of his wife, and he was like to have gone out of his mind for joy when he saw them. When he had heard all their adventures he said to his daughter: "Did I not tell thee not to believe that he who sought thy hand was ever born a hog? Thou hast done well, my daughter, to listen to my words."



And being an old man, and having no heirs, he descended from his throne and put them upon it in his stead. Then they reigned in peace, and if they are not dead they are living still.

And now I'll mount my horse again and say an "Our Father" before I go.

BOY-BEAUTIFUL, THE GOLDEN APPLES, AND THE WERE-WOLF

ONCE upon a time, a long while ago, when the very flies wrote upon the walls more beautifully than the mind can picture, there lived an Emperor and an Empress who had three sons, and a very beautiful garden alongside their palace. At the bottom of this garden there grew an apple-tree, entirely of gold from the top to the bottom. The Emperor was wild with joy at the thought that he had in his garden an apple-tree, the like of which was not to be found in the wide world. He used to stand in front of it, and poke his nose into every part of it, and look at it again and again, till his eyes nearly started out of his head. One day he saw this tree bud, blossom, and form its fruit, which began to ripen before him. The Emperor twisted his moustache, and his mouth watered at the thought that the next day he would have a golden apple or two on his table, an unheard-of thing up to that moment since the world began.

Day had scarcely begun to dawn next morning, when the Emperor was already in the garden to feast his eyes to the full on the golden apples; but he almost went out of his mind when, instead of the ripened golden apples, he saw that the tree was budding anew, but of apples there was no sign. While he stood there he saw the tree blossom, the blossoms fall off, and the young fruit again appear.

At this sight his heart came back to him again, and he joyfully awaited the morrow, but on the morrow also the apples had gone—goodness knows where! The Emperor was very wroth. He commanded that the tree should be strictly guarded, and the thief seized; but, alas! where were they to find him?

The tree blossomed every day, put forth flowers, formed its fruit, and towards evening the fruit began to ripen. But in the middle of the night somebody always came and took away the fruit, without the Emperor's watchers being aware of it. It was just as if it were done on purpose. Every night, sure enough, somebody came and took the apples, as if to mock at the Emperor and all his guards! So though this Emperor had the golden apple-tree in his garden, he not only never could have a golden apple on his table, but never even saw it ripen. At last the poor Emperor took it so to heart that he said he would

give up his throne to whosoever would catch and bind the thief.

Then the sons of the Emperor came to him, and asked him to let them watch also. Great was the joy of the Emperor when he heard from the mouth of his eldest son the vow he made to lay hands upon the thief. So the Emperor gave him leave, and he set to work. The eldest son watched the first night, but he suffered the same disgrace that the other watchers had suffered before him.

On the second night the second son watched, but he was no cleverer than his brother, and returned to his father with his nose to the earth.

Both the brothers said that up to midnight they had watched well enough, but after that they could not keep their feet for weariness, but fell down in a deep sleep, and recollected nothing else.

The youngest son listened to all this in silence, but when his big brothers had told their story, he begged his father to let *him* watch too. Now, sad as his father was at being unable to find a valiant warrior to catch the thief, yet he burst out laughing when he heard the request of his youngest son. Nevertheless, he yielded at last, though only after much pressing, and now the youngest son set about guarding the tree.

When the evening had come, he took his bow, and

his quiver full of arrows, and his sword, and went down into the garden. Here he chose out a lonely place, quite away from wall and tree, or any other place that he might have been able to lean against, and stood on the trunk of a felled tree, so that if he chanced to doze off, it might slip from under him and awake him. This he did, and when he had fallen two or three times, sleep forsook him, and weariness ceased to torment him.

Just as it was drawing nigh to dawn, at the hour when sleep is sweetest, he heard a fluttering in the air, as if a swarm of birds was approaching. He pricked up his ears, and heard something or other pecking away at the golden apples. He pulled an arrow from his quiver, placed it on his bow, and drew it with all his might—but nothing stirred. He drew his bow again—still there was nothing. When he had drawn it once more, he heard again the fluttering of wings, and was conscious that a flock of birds was flying away. He drew near to the golden apples, and perceived that the thief had not had time to take all of them. He had taken one here, and one there, but most of them still remained. As now he stood there he fancied he saw something shining on the ground. He stooped down and picked up the shining thing, and, lo and behold! it was two feathers entirely of gold.¹

¹ Compare the incident of the Bird Zhar in my *Russian Fairy Tales*.

When it was day he plucked the apples, placed them on a golden salver, and with the golden feathers in his hat, went to find his father. The Emperor, when he saw the apples, very nearly went out of his mind for joy; but he controlled himself, and proclaimed throughout the city that his youngest son had succeeded in saving the apples, and that the thief was discovered to be a flock of birds.

Boy-Beautiful now asked his father to let him go and search out the thief; but his father would hear of nothing but the long-desired apples, which he was never tired of feasting his eyes upon.

But the youngest son of the Emperor was not to be put off, and importuned his father till at last the Emperor, in order to get rid of him, gave him leave to go and seek the thief. So he got ready, and when he was about to depart, he took the golden feathers out of his cap, and gave them to his mother, the Empress, to keep for him till he returned. He took raiment and money for his journey, fastened his quiverful of arrows to his back, and his sword on his right hip, and with his bow in one hand and the reins in the other, and accompanied by a faithful servant, set off on his way. He went on and on, along roads more and more remote, till at last he came to a desert. Here he dismounted, and taking counsel with his faithful servant, hit upon a road that

led to the east. They went on a good bit further, till they came to a vast and dense wood. Through this tangle of a wood they had to grope their way (and it was as much as they could do to do that), and presently they saw, a long way off, a great and terrible wolf, with a head of steel. They immediately prepared to defend themselves, and when they were within bow-shot of the wolf, Boy-Beautiful put his bow to his eye.

The wolf seeing this, cried: "Stay thy hand, Boy-Beautiful, and slay me not, and it will be well for thee one day!" Boy-Beautiful listened to him, and let his bow fall, and the wolf drawing nigh, asked them where they were going, and what they were doing in that wood, untrodden by the foot of man. Then Boy-Beautiful told him the whole story of the golden apples in his father's garden, and said they were seeking after the thief.

The wolf told him that the thief was the Emperor of the Birds, who, whenever he set out to steal apples, took with him in his train all the birds of swiftest flight, that so they might strip the orchards more rapidly, and that these birds were to be found in the city on the confines of this wood. He also told them that the whole household of the Emperor of the Birds lived by the robbing of gardens and orchards; and he showed them the nearest and easiest way to the city.

Then giving them a little apple most lovely to look upon, he said to them: "Accept this apple, Boy-Beautiful! Whenever thou shouldst have need of me, look at it and think of me, and immediately I'll be with thee!"

Boy-Beautiful took the apple, and concealed it in his bosom, and bidding the wolf good-day, struggled onwards with his faithful servant through the thickets of the forest, till he came to the city where the robber-bird dwelt. All through the city he went, asking where it was, and they told him that the Emperor of that realm had it in a gold cage in his garden.

That was all he wanted to know. He took a turn round the court of the Emperor, and noted in his mind all the ramparts which surrounded the court. When it was evening, he came thither with his faithful servant, and hid himself in a corner, waiting till all the dwellers in the palace had gone to rest. Then the faithful servant gave him a leg-up, and Boy-Beautiful, mounting on his back, scaled the wall, and leaped down into the garden. But the moment he put his hand on the cage, the Emperor of the Birds chirped, and before you could say boo! he was surrounded by a flock of birds, from the smallest to the greatest, all chirping in their own tongues. They made such a noise that they awoke all the servants of the Emperor. They rushed into the garden, and

there they found Boy-Beautiful, with the cage in his hand, and all the birds darting at him, and he defending himself as best he could. The servants laid their hands upon him, and led him to the Emperor, who had also got up to see what was the matter.

“I am sorry to see thee thus, Boy-Beautiful,” cried the Emperor, for he knew him. “If thou hadst come to me with good words, or with entreaties, and asked me for the bird, I might, perhaps, have been persuaded to give it to thee of my own good-will and pleasure; but as thou hast been taken hand-in-sack, as they say, the reward of thy deed according to our laws is death, and thy name will be covered with dishonour.”

“Illustrious Emperor,” replied Boy-Beautiful, “these same birds have stolen the golden apples from the apple-tree of my father’s garden, and therefore have I come all this way to lay hands on the thief.”

“What thou dost say may be true, Boy-Beautiful, but I have no power to alter the laws of this land. Only a signal service rendered to our empire can save thee from a shameful death.”

“Say what that service is, and I will venture it.”

“Listen then! If thou dost succeed in bringing me the saddle-horse in the court of the Emperor my neighbour, thou wilt depart with thy face unblackened, and thou shalt take the bird in its cage along with thee.”

Boy-Beautiful agreed to these conditions, and that same day he departed with his faithful servant.

On reaching the court of the neighbouring Emperor he took note of the horse and of all the environs of the court. Then as evening drew near, he hid with his faithful servant in a corner of the court which seemed to him to be a safe ambushade. He saw the horse walked out between two servants, and he marvelled at its beauty. It was white, its bridle was of gold set with gems inestimable, and it shone like the sun.

In the middle of the night, when sleep is most sweet, Boy-Beautiful bade his faithful servant stoop down, leaped on to his back, and from thence on to the wall, and leaped down into the Emperor's courtyard. He groped his way along on the tips of his toes till he came to the stable, and opening the door, put his hand on the bridle and drew the horse after him. When the horse got to the door of the stable and sniffed the keen air, it sneezed once with a mighty sneeze that awoke the whole court. In an instant they all rushed out, laid hands on Boy-Beautiful, and led him before the Emperor, who had also been aroused, and who when he saw Boy-Beautiful knew him at once. He reproached him for the cowardly deed he had nearly accomplished, and told him that the laws of the land decreed death to all thieves, and



Boy-Beautiful and his Faithful Servant.—p. 262.

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that he had no power against those laws. Then Boy-Beautiful told him of the theft of the golden apples by the birds, and of what the neighbouring Emperor had told him to do. Then said the Emperor: "If, Boy-Beautiful, thou canst bring me the divine Craiessa,¹ thou mayest perhaps escape death, and thy name shall remain untarnished." Boy-Beautiful risked the adventure, and accompanied by his faithful servant set off on his quest. While he was on the road, the thought of the little apple occurred to him. He took it from his bosom, looked at it, and thought of the wolf, and before he could wipe his eyes the wolf was there.

"What dost thou desire, Boy-Beautiful?" said he.

"What do I desire, indeed!—look here, look here, look here, what has happened to me! Whatever am I to do to get out of this mess with a good conscience?"

"Rely upon me, for I see I must finish this business for thee." So they all three went on together to seek the divine Craiessa.

When they drew nigh to the land of the divine Craiessa they halted in the midst of a vast forest, where they could see the Craiessa's dazzling palace, and it was agreed that Boy-Beautiful and his servant should await the return of the wolf by the trunk of a large tree. The proud palace of the divine Craiessa was

¹ Queen.

so grand and beautiful, and the style and arrangement thereof so goodly, that the wolf could scarce take his eyes therefrom. But when he came up to the palace he did what he could, and crept furtively into the garden.

And what do you think he saw there? Not a single fruit-tree was any longer green. The stems, branches, and twigs stood there as if some one had stripped them naked. The fallen leaves had turned the ground into a crackling carpet. Only a single rose-bush was still covered with leaves and full of buds, some wide open and some half closed. To reach this rose-bush the wolf had to tread very gingerly on the tips of his toes, so as not to make the carpet of dry leaves crackle beneath him; and so he hid himself behind this leafy bush. As now he stood there on the watch, the door of the dazzling palace was opened, and forth came the divine Craiessa, attended by four-and-twenty of her slaves, to take a walk in the garden.

When the wolf beheld her he was very near forgetting what he came for and coming out of his lair, though he restrained himself; for she was so lovely that the like of her never had been and never will be seen on the face of the whole earth. Her hair was of nothing less than pure gold, and reached from top to toe. Her long and silken eyelashes seemed

almost to put out her eyes. When she looked at you with those large sloe-black eyes of hers, you felt sick with love. She had those beautifully-arched eyebrows which look as if they had been traced with compasses, and her skin was whiter than the froth of milk fresh from the udder.

After taking two or three turns round the garden with her slaves behind her, she came to the rose-bush and plucked one or two flowers, whereupon the wolf who was concealed in the bush darted out, took her in his front paws, and sped down the road. Her servants scattered like a bevy of young partridges, and in an instant the wolf was there, and put her, all senseless as she was, in the arms of Boy-Beautiful. When he saw her he changed colour, but the wolf reminded him that he was a warrior and he came to himself again. Many Emperors had tried to steal her, but they had all been repulsed.

Boy-Beautiful had compassion upon her, and he now made up his mind that nobody else should have her.

When the divine Craiessa awoke from her swoon and found herself in the arms of Boy-Beautiful, she said: "If *thou* art the wolf that hath stolen me away, I'll be thine." Boy-Beautiful replied: "Mine thou shalt be till death do us part."

So they made a compact of it, and they told each other their stories.

When the wolf saw the tenderness that had grown up between them he said : "Leave everything to me and your desires shall be fulfilled !" Then they set out to return from whence they had just come, and, while they were on the road, the wolf turned three somersaults and made himself exactly like the divine Craiessa, for you must know that this wolf was a magician.

Then they arranged among themselves that the faithful servant of Boy-Beautiful should stand by the trunk of a great tree in the forest till Boy-Beautiful returned with the steed. So on reaching the court of the Emperor who had the steed, Boy-Beautiful gave him the made-up divine Craiessa, and when the Emperor saw her his heart died away within him, and he felt a love for her which told in words would be foolishness.

"Thy merits, Boy-Beautiful," said the Emperor, "have saved thee this time also from a shameful death, and now I'll pay thee for this by giving thee the steed." Then Boy-Beautiful put his hand on the steed and leaped into the jewelled saddle, and, reaching the tree, placed the divine Craiessa in front of him and galloped across the boundaries of that empire.

And now the Emperor called together all his counsellors and went to the cathedral to be married to the divine Craiessa. When they got to the door of the

cathedral, the pretended Craiessa turned a somersault three times and became a wolf again, which, gnashing its teeth, rushed straight at the Emperor's retinue, who were stupefied with terror when they saw it. On coming to themselves a little, they gave chase with hue-and-cry: but the wolf, take my word for it! took such long strides that not one of them could come near him, and joining Boy-Beautiful and his friends went along with them. When they drew nigh to the court of the Emperor with the bird, they played him the same trick they had played on the Emperor with the horse. The wolf changed himself into the horse, and was given to the Emperor, who could not contain himself for joy at the sight of it.

After entertaining Boy-Beautiful with great honour, the Emperor said to him: "Boy-Beautiful, thou hast escaped a shameful death. I will keep my imperial word and my blessing shall always follow thee." Then he commanded them to give him the bird in the golden cage, and Boy-Beautiful took it, wished him good-day, and departed. Arriving in the wood where he had left the divine Craiessa, his horse, and his faithful servant, he set off with them for the court of his father.

But the Emperor who had received the horse commanded that his whole host and all the grandees of his empire should assemble in the plain to see him

mount his richly-caparisoned goodly steed. And when the soldiers saw him they all cried: "Long live the Emperor who hath won such a goodly steed, and long live the steed that doth the Emperor so much honour!"

And, indeed, there was the Emperor mounting on the back of the horse, but no sooner did it put its foot to the ground than it flew right away. They all set off in pursuit, but there was never the slightest chance of any of them catching it, for it left them far behind from the first. When it had got a good way ahead the pretended horse threw the Emperor to the ground, turned head over heels three times and became a wolf, and set off again in full flight, and ran and ran till it overtook Boy-Beautiful. Then said the wolf to him: "I have now fulfilled all thy demands. Look to thyself better in future, and strive not after things beyond thy power, or it will not go well with thee." Then their roads parted, and each of them went his own way.

When he arrived at the empire of his father the old Emperor came out to meet his youngest son with small and great as he had agreed. Great was the public joy when they saw him with a consort the like of whom is no longer to be found on the face of the earth, and with a steed the excellence whereof lives only in the tales of the aged. When he got home

Boy-Beautiful ordered a splendid stable to be made for his good steed, and put the bird-cage in the terrace of the garden. Then his father prepared for the wedding, and after not many days Boy-Beautiful and the divine Craiessa were married; the tables were spread for good and bad, and they made merry for three days and three nights. After that they lived in perfect happiness, for Boy-Beautiful had now nothing more to desire. And they are living to this day, if they have not died in the meantime.

And now I'll mount my steed again and say an "Our Father" before I go.

YOUTH WITHOUT AGE, AND LIFE WITHOUT DEATH

ONCE upon a time there was a great Emperor and an Empress; both were young and beautiful, and as they would fain have been blessed with offspring they went to all the wise men and all the wise women and bade them read the stars to see if they would have children or not; but all in vain. At last the Emperor heard that in a certain village, hard by, dwelt a wiser old man than all the rest; so he sent and commanded him to appear at court. But the wise old man sent the messengers back with the answer that those who needed him must come to him. So the Emperor and the Empress set out, with their lords and their ladies, and their servants and their soldiers, and came to the house of the wise old man. And when the old man saw them coming from afar he went out to meet them.

“Welcome,” cried he; “but I tell thee, oh Emperor! that the wish of thy heart will only work thee woe.”

“I came not hither to take counsel of thee,” replied the Emperor; “but to know if thou hast herbs by eating whereof we may get us children.”

“Such herbs have I,” replied the old man; “but ye will have but one child, and him ye will not be able to keep, though he be never so nice and charming.”

So when the Emperor and the Empress had gotten the wondrous herbs, they returned joyfully back to their palace, and a few days afterwards the Empress felt that she was a mother. But ere the hour of her child’s birth came the child began to scream so loudly that all the enchantments of the magicians could not make him silent. Then the Emperor began to promise him everything in the wide world, but even this would not quiet him.

“Be silent, my heart’s darling,” said he, “and I will give thee all the kingdoms east of the sun and west of the moon! Be silent, my son, and I will give thee a consort more lovely than the Fairy Queen herself.” Then at last, when he perceived that the child still kept on screaming, he said: “Silence, my son, and I will give thee Youth without Age, and Life without Death.”


Then the child ceased to cry and came into the world, and all the courtiers beat the drums and blew the trumpets, and there was great joy in the whole realm for many days.

The older the child grew the more pensive and melancholy he became. He went to school and to the wise men, and there was no learning and wisdom that he did not make his own, so that the Emperor, his father, died and came to life again for sheer joy. And the whole realm was proud that it was going to have so wise and goodly an Emperor, and all men looked up to him as to a second Solomon. But one day, when the child had already completed his fifteenth year, and the Emperor and all his lords and great men were at table diverting themselves, the fair young prince arose and said: "Father, the time has now come when thou must give me what thou didst promise me at my birth!"

At these words the Emperor was sorely troubled. "Nay but, my son," said he, "how can I give thee a thing which the world has never heard of? If I did promise it to thee, it was but to make thee quiet."

"Then, oh my father, if thou canst not give it me, I must needs go forth into the world, and seek until I find that fair thing for which I was born."

Then the Emperor and his nobles all fell down on their knees, and besought him not to leave the empire. "For," said the nobles, "thy father is now growing old, and we would place thee on the throne, and give thee to wife the most beautiful Empress under the sun." But they were unable to turn him from his



purpose, for he was as steadfast as a rock, so at last his father gave him leave to go forth into the wide world to find what he sought.

Then Boy Beautiful went into his father's stables, where were the most beautiful chargers in the whole empire, that he might choose one from among them ; but no sooner had he laid his hand on one of them than it fell to the ground trembling, and so it was with all the other stately chargers. At last, just as he was about to leave the stable in despair, he cast his eye over it once more, and there in one corner he beheld a poor knacker, all weak, spavined, and covered with boils and sores. Up to it he went, and laid his hand upon its tail, and then the horse turned its head and said to him : "What are thy commands, my master? God be praised who hath had mercy upon me and sent a warrior to lay his hand over me !"

Then the horse shook itself and became straight in the legs again, and Boy Beautiful asked him what he should do next.

"In order that thou mayest attain thy heart's desire," said the horse, "ask thy father for the sword and lance, the bow, quiver, and armour which he himself wore when he was a youth ; but thou must comb and curry me with thine own hand six weeks, and give me barley to eat cooked in milk."

So the Emperor called the steward of his household,

and ordered him to open all the coffers and wardrobes that his son might choose what he would, and Boy Beautiful, after searching for three days and three nights, found at last at the bottom of an old armoury, the arms and armour which his father had worn as a youth, but very rusty were these ancient weapons. But he set to work with his own hands to polish them up and rub off the rust, and at the end of six weeks they shone like mirrors. He also cherished the steed as he had been told. Grievous was the labour, but it came to an end at last.

When the good steed heard that Boy Beautiful had cleansed and polished his armour, he shook himself once more, and all his boils and sores fell from off him. There he now stood a stout horse, and strong, and with four large wings growing out of his body. Then said Boy Beautiful: "We go hence in three days!"—"Long life to thee, my master!" replied the steed; "I will go wherever thou dost command."

When the third day came the Emperor and all his court were full of grief. Boy Beautiful, attired as became a hero, with his sword in his hand, bounded on to his horse, took leave of the Emperor and the Empress, of all the great nobles and all the little nobles, of all the warriors and all the courtiers. With tears in their eyes they besought him not to depart on this quest; but he, giving spurs to his horse,

departed like a whirlwind, and after him went sumpter horses with money and provisions, and some hundreds of chosen warriors whom the Emperor had ordered to accompany him on his journey.

But when he had searched a wilderness on the confines of his father's realm, Boy Beautiful took leave of the warriors, and sent them back to his father, taking of the provisions only so much as his good steed could carry. Then he pursued his way towards sunrise, and went on and on for three days and three nights till he came to an immense plain covered with the bones of many dead men. Here they stopped to rest, and the horse said to him: "Know, my master, that we are now in the domains of the witch Gheonoea, who is so evil a being that none can set a foot on her domains and live. Once she was a woman like other women, but the curse of her parents, whom she would never obey, fell like a withering blast upon her, and she became what she now is. At this moment she is with her children in the forest, but she will come speedily to seek and destroy thee. Great and terrible is she, yet fear not, but make ready thy bow and arrows, thy sword and lance, that thou mayest make use of them when the time comes."—Then they rested, and while one slept the other watched.

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the forest ; Boy Beautiful bridled and saddled his horse, drew the reins tighter than at other times, and set out. At that moment they heard a terrible racket. Then the horse said : " Beware, my master, Gheonoea is approaching." The trees of the forest fell to this side and to that as the witch drew nigh like the tempest, but Boy Beautiful struck off one of her feet with an arrow from his bow, and he was about to shoot a second time when she cried : " Stay thy hand, Boy Beautiful, for I'll do thee no harm ! " And seeing he did not believe her, she gave him a promise written in her blood.

" Look well to thy horse, Boy Beautiful," said she, " for he is a greater magician than I. But for him I should have roasted thee, but now thou must dine at my table. Know too that no mortal hath yet succeeded in reaching this spot, though some have got so far as the plain where thou didst see all the bones."

Then Gheonoea hospitably entertained Boy Beautiful as men entertain travellers, but now and then, as they conversed together, Gheonoea groaned with pain, but as soon as Boy Beautiful threw her her foot which he had shot off, she put it in its place and immediately it grew fast on to her leg again. Then, in her joy, Gheonoea feasted him for three days and begged him to take for his consort one of her three daughters, who

were divinely beautiful, but he would not. Then he asked her concerning his quest. "With such valour and such a good steed as thine," she answered, "thou must needs succeed."

So after the three days were over they went on their way again. Boy Beautiful went on and on, and the way was very long, but when they had passed the boundaries of Gheonoea they came to a beauteous meadow-land, but on one side the grass was fresh and bright and full of flowers, and on the other side it was burnt to cinders. Then Boy Beautiful asked the horse the meaning of the singed grass, and this is what the horse replied: "We are now in the territories of Scorpia, the sister of Gheonoea. Yet so evil-minded are these two sisters that they cannot live together in one place. The curse of their parents has blasted them, and they have become witches as thou dost see; their hatred of each other is great, and each of them is ever striving to wrest a bit of land from the dominions of the other. And when Scorpia is angry she vomits forth fire and flame, and so when she comes to her sister's boundaries the grass of the border withers up before her. She is even more dreadful than her sister, and has, besides, three heads; but be of good cheer, my master, and to-morrow morning be ready to meet her."

At dawn, next day, they were preparing to depart

when they heard a roaring and a crashing noise, the like of which man has never heard since the world began.

“Be ready, my master, for now Scorpia is approaching,” cried the faithful steed.

And indeed, Scorpia it was. With jaws reaching from earth to heaven, and spitting forth fire as she approached, Scorpia drew near, and the noise of her coming was like the roar of a whirlwind. But the good steed rose into the air like a dart, and Boy Beautiful shot an arrow which struck off one of the witch’s three heads. He was about to lay another arrow on his bow, when Scorpia begged him to forgive her and she would do him no harm, and by way of assurance she gave him a promise written in her blood.

Then she feasted him as her sister had done before, and he gave her back her severed head, which she stuck in its place again, and then, after three days, Boy Beautiful and his faithful steed took to the road again.

When they had crossed Scorpia’s borders they went on and on without stopping till they came to a vast meadow covered with nothing but flowers, where Spring reigned eternally. Every flower was wondrously beautiful and full of a fragrance that comforted the soul, and a light zephyr ran continually over the

flowery billows. Here then they sat them down to rest, and the good steed said :

“Hitherto, oh my master! we have prospered, but now a great danger awaits us, which if by the help of the Lord God we overcome, then shall we be heroes indeed. Not far from here stands the palace of Youth without Age, and Life without Death, but it is surrounded by a high and deep forest, and in this forest are all the savage monsters of the wide world. Day and night they guard it, and if a man can count the grains of sand on the sea-shore, then also can he count the number of these monsters. We cannot fight them, they would tear us to pieces before we were half-way through the forest, so we must try if we can leap clean over it without touching it.”

So they rested them two days to gather strength, and then the steed drew a long breath and said to Boy Beautiful : “Draw my saddle-girths as tightly as thou art able, and when thou hast mounted me, hold on fast with all thy might to my mane, and press thy feet on my neck instead of on my flanks, that thou mayest not hinder me.”

Boy Beautiful arose and did as his steed told him, and the next moment they were close up to the forest.

“Now is the time, my master,” cried the good steed.

“The wild monsters are now being fed, and are gathered together in one place. Now let us spring over!”

“I am with thee, and the Lord have mercy upon us both,” replied Boy Beautiful.

Then up in the air they flew, and before them lay the palace, and so gloriously bright was it that a man could sooner look into the face of the midday sun than upon the glory of the Palace of Youth without Age, and Life without Death. Right over the forest they flew, and just as they were about to descend at the foot of the palace-staircase, the steed with the tip of his hind leg touched lightly, oh, ever so lightly! a twig on the topmost summit of the tallest tree of the forest. Instantly the whole forest was alive and alert, and the monsters began to howl so awfully that, brave as he was, the hair of Boy Beautiful stood up on his head. Hastily they descended, but had not the mistress of the palace been outside there in order to feed her kittens (for so she called the monsters), Boy Beautiful and his faithful steed would have been torn to pieces. But the mistress of the monsters, for pure joy at the sight of a human being, held the monsters back and sent them back to their places. Fair, tall, and of goodly stature was the Fairy of the Palace, and Boy Beautiful felt his heart die away within him as he beheld her. But she was full of

compassion at the sight of him, and said : " Welcome, Boy Beautiful ! What dost thou seek ? "

" We seek Youth without Age, and Life without Death," he replied.

Then he dismounted from his steed and entered the palace, and there he met two other fair dames of equal beauty ; these were the elder sisters of the Fairy of the Palace. They regaled Boy Beautiful with a banquet served on gold plate, and the good steed had leave to graze where he would, and the Fairy made him known to all her monsters, that so he might wander through the woods in peace. Then the fair dames begged Boy Beautiful to abide with them always, and Boy Beautiful did not wait to be asked twice, for to stay with the Fairy of the Palace was his darling desire.

Then he told them his story, and of all the dangers he had passed through to get there, and so the Fairy of the Palace became his bride, and she gave him leave to roam at will throughout her domains. " Nevertheless," said she, " there is one valley thou must not enter or it will work thee woe, and the name of that valley is the Vale of Complaint."

There then Boy Beautiful abode, and he took no count of time, for though many days passed away, he was yet as young and strong as when he first came there. He went through leagues of forest without once feeling weary. He rejoiced in the golden palace, and

lived in peace and tranquillity with his bride and her sisters. Oftentimes too he went a-hunting.

One day he was pursuing a hare, and shot an arrow after it and then another, but neither of them hit the hare. Never before had Boy Beautiful missed his prey, and his heart was vexed within him. He pursued the hare still more hotly, and sent another arrow after her. This time he did bring her down, but in his haste the unhappy man had not perceived that in following the hare he had passed through the Vale of Complaint!

He took up the hare and returned homewards, but while he was still on the way a strange yearning after his father and his mother came over him. He durst not tell his bride of it, but she and her sisters immediately guessed the cause of his heaviness.

“Wretched man!” they cried, “thou hast passed through the Vale of Complaint!”

“I have done so, darling, without meaning it,” he replied; “but now I am perishing with longing for my father and mother. Yet need I desert thee for that? I have now been many days with thee, and am as hale and well as ever. Suffer me then to go and see my parents but once, and then will I return to thee to part no more.”

“Forsake us not, oh beloved!” cried his bride and her sisters. “Hundreds of years have passed away

since thy parents were alive ; and thou also, if thou dost leave us, wilt never return more. Abide with us, or, an evil omen tells us, thou wilt perish !”

But the supplications of the three ladies and his faithful steed likewise could not prevail against the gnawing longing to see his parents which consumed him.

At last the horse said to him : “ If thou wilt not listen to me, my master, then ’tis thine own fault alone if evil befall thee. Yet I will promise to bring thee back on one condition.”

“ I consent whatever it may be,” said Boy Beautiful ; “ speak, and I will listen gratefully.”

“ I will bring thee back to thy father’s palace, but if thou dismount but for a moment, I shall return without thee.”

“ Be it so,” replied Boy Beautiful.

So they made them ready for their journey, and Boy Beautiful embraced his bride and departed, but the ladies stood there looking after him, and their eyes were filled with tears.

And now Boy Beautiful and his faithful steed came to the place where the domains of Scorpia had been, but the forests had become fields of corn, and cities stood thickly on what had once been desolate places. Boy Beautiful asked all whom he met concerning Scorpia and her habitations, but they only answered

that these were but idle fables which their grandfathers had heard from their great-grandfathers.

“But how is that possible?” replied Boy Beautiful; “’twas but the other day that I passed by——” and he told them all he knew. Then they laughed at him as at one who raves or talks in his sleep; but he rode away wrathfully without noticing that his beard and the hair of his head had grown white.

When he came to the domain of Gheonoea he put the same questions and received the same answers. He could not understand how the whole region could have utterly changed in a few days, and again he rode away, full of anger, with a white beard that now reached down to his girdle and with legs that began to tremble beneath him.

At length he came to the empire of his father. Here there were new men and new dwellings, and the old ones had so altered that he scarce knew them.

So he came to the palace where he had first seen the light of day. As he dismounted the horse kissed his hand and said: “Fare thee well, my master! I return from whence I came. But if thou also wouldst return, mount again and we’ll be off instantly.”

“Nay,” he replied, “fare thee well, I also will return soon.”

Then the horse flew away like a dart.

But when Boy Beautiful beheld the palace all in

ruins and overgrown with evil weeds, he sighed deeply, and with tears in his eyes he sought to recall the glories of that fallen palace. Round about the place he went, not once nor twice: he searched in every room, in every corner for some vestige of the past; he searched the stable in which he had found his steed, and then he went down into the cellar, the entrance to which was choked up by fallen rubbish.

Here and there and everywhere he searched about, and now his long white beard reached below his knee, and his eyelids were so heavy that he had to raise them on high with his hands, and he found he could scarce totter along. All he found there was a huge old coffer which he opened, but inside it there was nothing. Yet he lifted up the cover, and then a voice spoke to him out of the depths of the coffer and said: "Welcome, for hadst thou kept me waiting much longer, I also would have perished."

Then his Death, who was already shrivelled up like a withered leaf at the bottom of the coffer, rose up and laid his hand upon him, and Boy Beautiful instantly fell dead to the ground and crumbled into dust. But had he remained away but a little time longer his Death would have died, and he himself would have been living now. And so I mount my nag and utter an "Our Father" ere I go.

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