



2020-2021

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Speech Storytelling Selections

Resource: *The Gutenberg Project* (gutenberg.org)

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Notes:

- 1) Since these stories come from many sources with many authors and editors, it is the suggestion of the storytelling committee that, for the sake of simplicity, students should cite their story in one of the following ways:
 [*Title of story*], as found in the Gutenberg Project.
 [*Title of story*], a [*country/tribe of origin*] story as found in the Gutenberg Project.
- 2) All these stories are in the public domain, and minor edits have been made to certain texts at the discretion of the Storytelling Committee.
- 3) We recognize that many of these tales have been edited and translated from their original sources. Storytellers are encouraged to research the origins of these stories and take those origins into consideration when presenting them for a modern audience.

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2020 Storytelling Theme: JUSTICE

Human hearts recognize Justice. From a very young age, we cultivate a deep concern for what is just and fair. As adults, we may lose faith that Justice is even possible. In this diverse collection of stories, Justice is explored but not defined. Let the storytellers craft their own conclusions and challenge their listeners to decide: What is Just?

1. ASH-MAIDEN

Book: Grimm's Fairy Tales

Editor: Frances Jenkins Olcott

Origin: German

The wife of a rich man fell sick, and as she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, "Dear child, be good and pious, and I will always protect you and be near you." Thereupon she closed her eyes and departed.

Every day, the maiden went out to her mother's grave and wept, and she remained pious and good. When winter came the snow spread a white sheet over the grave, and when the spring-sun had drawn it off again, the man had taken another wife.

The woman had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor child. "Is the stupid goose to sit in the parlor with us?" said they. "He who wants to eat bread, must earn it. Out with the kitchen-wench!"

They took her pretty clothes away from her, put an old gray bedgown on her and gave her wooden shoes. "Just look at the proud Princess, how decked out she is!" they cried, and laughed, and led her into the kitchen.

There she had to do hard work from morning till night, get up before daybreak, carry water, light fires, cook and wash. Besides this, the sisters did her every imaginable injury—they mocked her and emptied her peas and lentils into the ashes, so that she was forced to sit and pick them out again.

In the evening, when she had worked till she was weary, she had no bed to go to, but had to sleep by the fireside in the ashes. And as on that account she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Ash-Maiden.

It happened once that the father was going to the Fair, and he asked the two daughters what he should bring back for them.

"Beautiful dresses," said one. "Pearls and jewels," said the second.

"And you, Ash-Maiden," said he, "what will you have?"

"Father, break off for me the first branch which knocks against your hat on your way home."

So he bought beautiful dresses, pearls and jewels for the two daughters, and on his way home, as he was riding through a green thicket, a hazel twig brushed against him and knocked off his hat. Then he broke off the branch and took it with him.

When he reached home he gave the two daughters the things which they had wished for, and to Ash-Maiden he gave the branch from the hazel-bush. Ash-Maiden thanked him, went to

her mother's grave and planted the branch on it, and wept so much that the tears fell down on it and watered it.

It grew, however, and became a handsome tree. Thrice a day Ash-Maiden went and sat beneath it, and wept and prayed, and a little White Bird always came on the tree. And if Ash-Maiden expressed a wish, the bird threw down to her what she had wished for.

It happened that the King gave a feast, which was to last three days. To it all the beautiful young girls in the country were invited, in order that his son might choose himself a Bride. When the two sisters heard that they too were to appear among the number, they were delighted.

They called Ash-Maiden and said, "Comb our hair, brush our shoes, and fasten our buckles, for we are going to the feast at the King's palace."

Ash-Maiden obeyed, but wept, because she too would have liked to go with them to the dance, and she begged her mother to allow her to do so.

"You go, Ash-Maiden!" said she; "you are dusty and dirty, and would go to the feast? You have no clothes and shoes, and yet would dance!"

As, however, Ash-Maiden went on asking, the mother at last said, "I have emptied a dish of lentils into the ashes for you. If you have picked them out again in two hours, you shall go with us."

The maiden went through the back-door into the garden, and called, "You tame Pigeons, you Turtledoves, and all you birds beneath the sky, come and help me to pick

"The good into the pot, The bad into the crop!"

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterward the turtledoves. And at last all the birds beneath the sky came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the pigeons nodded with their heads and began *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and the rest began also *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and gathered all the good grains into the dish. Hardly had one hour passed before they had finished, and all flew out again.

Then the girl took the dish to the mother, and was glad, and believed that now she would be allowed to go with them to the feast.

But the mother said, "No, Ash-Maiden, you have no clothes and you cannot dance. You would only be laughed at."

And as Ash-Maiden wept at this, the mother said, "If you can pick two dishes of lentils out of the ashes for me in one hour, you shall go with us." And she thought to herself, "That she most certainly cannot do."

When the mother had emptied the two dishes of lentils amongst the ashes, the maiden went through the back-door into the garden and cried, "You tame Pigeons, you Turtledoves, and all you birds under heaven, come and help me to pick

"The good into the pot, The bad into the crop!"

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterward the turtledoves. And at last all the birds beneath the sky came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the doves nodded with their heads and began *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and the others began also *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and gathered all the good seeds into the dishes.

And before half an hour was over they had already finished, and all flew out again.

Then the maiden carried the dishes to the mother and was delighted, and believed that she might now go with them to the feast.

But the mother said, "All this will not help you. You go not with us, for you have no clothes and cannot dance. We should be ashamed of you!"

Then she turned her back on Ash-Maiden, and hurried away with her two proud daughters.

As no one was now at home, Ash-Maiden went to her mother's grave beneath the hazel-tree, and cried:

"Shiver and quiver, Little Tree, Silver and gold throw over me!"

Then the bird threw a gold and silver dress down to her, and slippers embroidered with silk and silver. She put on the dress with all speed, and went to the feast.

Her sisters and the mother, however, did not know her, and thought she must be a foreign Princess, for she looked so beautiful in the golden dress. They never once thought of Ash-Maiden, and believed that she was sitting at home in the dirt, picking lentils out of the ashes.

The Prince went to meet her, took her by the hand, and he danced with her. He would dance with no other maiden, and never let go of her hand. And if anyone else came to invite her, he said, "This is my partner."

She danced till it was evening, and then she wanted to go home. But the King's Son said, "I will go with you and bear you company," for he wished to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged.

She escaped from him, however, and sprang into the pigeon-house. The King's Son waited until her father came, and then he told him that the stranger maiden had leapt into the pigeon-house. The old man thought, "Can it be Ash-Maiden?" and they had to bring him an axe and a pickaxe that he might hew the pigeon-house to pieces, but no one was inside it.

And when they got home, Ash-Maiden lay in her dirty clothes among the ashes, and a dim little oil-lamp was burning on the mantelpiece. For Ash-Maiden had jumped quickly down from the back of the pigeon-house, and had run to the little hazel-tree. There she had taken off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave, and the bird had taken them away again. Then she had placed herself in the kitchen amongst the ashes, in her gray gown.

Next day, when the feast began afresh, and her parents and the sisters had gone once more, Ash-Maiden went to the hazel-tree, and said:

"Shiver and quiver, Little Tree, Silver and gold throw over me!"

Then the bird threw down a much more beautiful dress than on the preceding day. And when Ash-Maiden appeared at the feast in this dress, every one was astonished at her beauty.

The King's Son had waited until she came, and instantly took her by the hand and danced with no one but her. When others came and invited her, he said, "She is my partner."

When evening arrived, she wished to leave, and the King's Son followed her, and wanted to see into which house she went. But she sprang away from him, and into the garden behind the house. Therein stood a beautiful tall tree on which hung the most magnificent pears. She clambered, like a squirrel, so nimbly between the branches, that the King's Son did not know where she was gone.

He waited until her father came, and said to him, "The stranger-maiden has escaped from me, and I believe she has climbed up the pear-tree."

The father thought, "Can it be Ash-Maiden?" and had an axe brought and cut the tree down, but no one was on it.

And when they got into the kitchen, Ash-Maiden lay there amongst the ashes, as usual, for she had jumped down on the other side of the tree, had taken the beautiful dress to the bird on the little hazel-tree, and had put on her gray gown.

On the third day, when the parents and sisters had gone away, Ash-Maiden went once more to her mother's grave, and said to the little tree:

"Shiver and quiver, Little Tree, Silver and gold throw over me!"

And now the bird threw down to her a dress which was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and the slippers were golden.

And when she went to the feast in the dress, no one knew how to speak for astonishment. The King's Son danced with her only, and if any one invited her to dance, he said, "She is my partner."

When evening came, Ash-Maiden wished to leave, and the King's Son was anxious to go with her; but she escaped from him so quickly that he could not follow her. The King's Son, however, had caused the whole staircase to be smeared with pitch, and there, when she ran down, had the maiden's left slipper remained sticking. The King's Son picked it up, and it was small and dainty, and all golden.

Next morning, he went with it to the father, and said to him, "No one shall be my wife, but she whose foot this golden slipper fits."

Then were the two sisters glad, for they had pretty feet. The eldest went with the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her big toe into it, for the shoe was too small for her.

Then her mother gave her a knife, and said, "Cut the toe off. When you are Queen you will have no more need to go on foot."

The maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's Son. Then he took her on his horse as his Bride, and rode away with her. They were, however, obliged to pass the grave, and there, on the hazel-tree, sat the two pigeons and cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep, There's blood within the shoe!

The shoe it is too small for her, The true Bride waits for you!"

Then he looked at her foot, and saw how the blood was streaming from it. He turned his horse round and took the false Bride home again, and said she was not the true one, and that the other sister was to put the shoe on.

Then this one went into her chamber and got her toes safely into the shoe, but her heel was too large.

So her mother gave her a knife, and said, "Cut a bit off your heel. When you are Queen you will have no more need to go on foot."

The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's Son. He took her on his horse as his Bride, and rode away with her. But when they passed by the hazel-tree, two little pigeons sat on it, and cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep, There's blood within the shoe!

The shoe it is too small for her, The true Bride waits for you!"

He looked down at her foot, and saw how the blood was running out of her shoe, and how it had stained her white stocking. Then he turned his horse and took the false Bride home again. "This also is not the right one," said he. "Have you no other daughter?"

"No," said the man; "there is only a little stunted kitchen-girl which my late wife left behind her, but she cannot possibly be the Bride."

The King's Son said he was to send her up to him; but the mother answered, "Oh, no, she is much too dirty, she cannot show herself!"

He insisted on it, and Ash-Maiden had to be called. She first washed her hands and face clean, and then went and bowed down before the King's Son, who gave her the golden shoe.

Then she seated herself on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe, and put it into the slipper, which fitted like a glove.

And when she rose up and the King's Son looked at her face he recognized the beautiful maiden who had danced with him, and cried, "That is the true Bride!"

The mother and the two sisters were terrified and became pale with rage. He, however, took Ash-Maiden on his horse and rode away with her. As they passed by the hazel-tree, the two white doves cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep, No blood is in the shoe!

The shoe is not too small for her, The true Bride rides with you!"

and when they had cried that, the two came flying down and placed themselves on Ash-Maiden's shoulders, one on the right, the other on the left, and remained sitting there.

When the wedding with the King's Son had to be celebrated, the two false sisters came and wanted to get into favor with Ash-Maiden and share her good fortune. When the betrothed couple went to church, the elder was at the right side and the younger at the left, and the pigeons pecked out one eye of each of them. Afterward as they came back, the elder was at the left, and the younger at the right, and then the pigeons pecked out the other eye of each. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.

2. THE MONKEY AND THE CROCODILE

Book: Jataka Tales

Author: Ellen C. Babbitt

Origin: Indian

A monkey lived in a great tree on a river bank.

In the river there were many Crocodiles.

A Crocodile watched the Monkeys for a long time, and one day she said to her son: "My son, get one of those Monkeys for me. I want the heart of a Monkey to eat."

"How am I to catch a Monkey?" asked the little Crocodile. "I do not travel on land, and the Monkey does not go into the water."

"Put your wits to work, and you'll find a way," said the mother.

And the little Crocodile thought and thought.

At last he said to himself: "I know what I'll do. I'll get that Monkey that lives in a big tree on the river bank. He wishes to go across the river to the island where the fruit is so ripe."

So the Crocodile swam to the tree where the Monkey lived. But he was a stupid Crocodile.

"Oh, Monkey," he called, "come with me over to the island where the fruit is so ripe."

"How can I go with you?" asked the Monkey. "I do not swim."

"No—but I do. I will take you over on my back," said the Crocodile.

The Monkey was greedy, and wanted the ripe fruit, so he jumped down on the Crocodile's back.

"Off we go!" said the Crocodile.

"This is a fine ride you are giving me!" said the Monkey.

"Do you think so? Well, how do you like this?" asked the Crocodile, diving.

"Oh, don't!" cried the Monkey, as he went under the water. He was afraid to let go, and he did not know what to do under the water.

When the Crocodile came up, the Monkey sputtered and choked. "Why did you take me under water, Crocodile?" he asked.

"I am going to kill you by keeping you under water," answered the Crocodile. "My mother wants Monkey-heart to eat, and I'm going to take yours to her."

"I wish you had told me you wanted my heart," said the Monkey, "then I might have brought it with me."

"How queer!" said the stupid Crocodile. "Do you mean to say that you left your heart back there in the tree?"

"That is what I mean," said the Monkey. "If you want my heart, we must go back to the tree and get it. But we are so near the island where the ripe fruit is, please take me there first."

"No, Monkey," said the Crocodile, "I'll take you straight back to your tree. Never mind the ripe fruit. Get your heart and bring it to me at once. Then we'll see about going to the island."

"Very well," said the Monkey.

But no sooner had he jumped onto the bank of the river than—whisk! up he ran into the tree.

From the topmost branches he called down to the Crocodile in the water below:

"My heart is way up here! If you want it, come for it, come for it!"

The monkey soon moved away from that tree.

He wanted to get away from the Crocodile, so that he might live in peace.

But the Crocodile found him, far down the river, living in another tree.

In the middle of the river was an island covered with fruit-trees.

Half-way between the bank of the river and the island, a large rock rose out of the water. The Monkey could jump to the rock, and then to the island. The Crocodile watched the Monkey crossing from the bank of the river to the rock, and then to the island.

He thought to himself, "The Monkey will stay on the island all day, and I'll catch him on his way home at night."

The Monkey had a fine feast, while the Crocodile swam about, watching him all day.

Toward night the Crocodile crawled out of the water and lay on the rock, perfectly still.

When it grew dark among the trees, the Monkey started for home. He ran down to the river bank, and there he stopped.

"What is the matter with the rock?" the Monkey thought to himself. "I never saw it so high before. The Crocodile is lying on it!"

But he went to the edge of the water and called: "Hello, Rock!"

No answer.

Then he called again: "Hello, Rock!"

Three times the Monkey called, and then he said:

"Why is it, Friend Rock, that you do not answer me to-night?"

"Oh," said the stupid Crocodile to himself, "the rock answers the Monkey at night. I'll have to answer for the rock this time."

So he answered: "Yes, Monkey! What is it?"

The Monkey laughed, and said: "Oh, it's you, Crocodile, is it?"

"Yes," said the Crocodile. "I am waiting here for you. I am going to eat you."

"You have caught me in a trap this time," said the Monkey. "There is no other way for me to go home. Open your mouth wide so I can jump right into it."

Now the Monkey well knew that when Crocodiles open their mouths wide, they shut their eyes.

While the Crocodile lay on the rock with his mouth wide open and his eyes shut, the Monkey jumped.

But not into his mouth! Oh, no! He landed on the top of the Crocodile's head, and then sprang quickly to the bank. Up he whisked into his tree.

When the Crocodile saw the trick the Monkey had played on him, he said: "Monkey, you have great cunning. You know no fear. I'll let you alone after this."

"Thank you, Crocodile, but I shall be on the watch for you just the same," said the Monkey.

3. WHY THE SEA IS SALT

Book: Folk Tales Every Child Should Know

Translator: George Webbe Dasent

Origin: Norwegian

Once on a time, but it was a long, long time ago, there were two brothers, one rich and one poor. Now, the poor one hadn't so much as a crumb in the house, either of meat or bread, so he went to his brother. It was not the first time his brother had been forced to help him, and you may fancy he wasn't very glad to see his face, but he said:

"If you will do what I ask you to do, I'll give you a whole flitch of bacon."

So the poor brother said he would do anything and was full of thanks.

"Well, here is the flitch," said the rich brother, "and now go straight to Hell."

"What I have given my word to do, I must stick to," said the other; so he took the flitch and set off. He walked the whole day, and at dusk he came to a place where he saw a very bright light.

"Maybe this is the place," said the man to himself. So he turned aside, and the first thing he saw was an old, old man, with a long white beard, who stood in an outhouse, hewing wood for the fire.

"Good even," said the man with the flitch.

"The same to you; whither are you going so late?" said the man.

"Oh! I'm going to Hell, if I only knew the right way," answered the poor man.

"Well, you're not far wrong, for this is Hell," said the old man; "when you get inside they will be all for buying your flitch, for meat is scarce in Hell; but, mind you don't sell it unless you get the hand-quern which stands behind the door for it. When you come out, I'll teach you how to handle the quern, for it's good to grind almost anything."

So the man with the flitch thanked the other for his good advice, and gave a great knock at the Devil's door.

When he got in, everything was just as the old man had said. All the devils, great and small, came swarming up to him like ants round an anthill, and each tried to outbid the other for the flitch.

"Well!" said the man, "by rights, my old dame and I ought to have this flitch for our dinner; but since you have all set your hearts on it, I suppose I must give it up to you; but if I sell it at all, I'll have for it the quern behind the door yonder."

At first the Devil wouldn't hear of such a bargain, and chaffed and haggled with the man; but he stuck to what he said, and at last the Devil had to part with his quern. When the man got out into the yard, he asked the old woodcutter how he was to handle the quern; and after he had learned how to use it, he thanked the old man and went off home as fast as he could, but still the clock had struck twelve before he reached his own door.

"Wherever in the world have you been?" said his old dame; "here have I sat hour after hour waiting and watching, without so much as two sticks to lay together."

"Oh!" said the man, "I couldn't get back before, for I had to go a long way first for one thing, and then for another; but now you shall see what you shall see."

So he put the quern on the table, and bade it first of all grind lights, then a table-cloth, then meat, then ale, and so on. He had only to speak the word, and the quern ground out what he wanted. The old dame stood by blessing her stars, and kept on asking where he had got this wonderful quern, but he wouldn't tell her.

"It's all one where I got it from; you see the quern is a good one, and the mill-stream never freezes, that's enough."

So he ground meat and drink and dainties, and on the third day he asked all his friends and kin to his house, and gave a great feast. Now, when his rich brother saw all that was on the table, and all that was behind in the larder, he grew quite spiteful and wild, for he couldn't bear that his brother should have anything.

"Twas only days ago," he said to the rest, "he was in such straits that he came and asked for a morsel of food, and now he gives a feast as if he were count or king;" and he turned to his brother and said:

"But whence, in Hell's name, have you got all this wealth?"

"From behind the door," answered the owner of the quern, for he didn't care to let the cat out of the bag. But later on in the evening, when he had got a drop too much, he could keep his secret no longer, and brought out the quern and said:

"There, you see what has gotten me all this wealth;" and so he made the quern grind all kind of things. When his brother saw it, he set his heart on having the quern, and, after a deal of coaxing, he got it; but he had to pay three hundred dollars for it, and his brother bargained to keep it till hay-harvest, for he thought, if I keep it till then, I can make it grind meat and drink that will last

for years. So you may fancy the quern didn't grow rusty for want of work, and when hay-harvest came, the rich brother got it, but the other took care not to teach him how to handle it.

It was evening when the rich brother got the quern home, and the next morning he told his wife to go out into the hay-field and toss, while the mowers cut the grass, and he would stay at home and get the dinner ready. So, when dinner-time drew near, he put the quern on the kitchen table and said:

"Grind herrings and broth, and grind them good and fast."

So the quern began to grind herrings and broth; first of all, all the dishes full, then all the tubs full, and so on till the kitchen floor was quite covered. Then the man twisted and twirled at the quern to get it to stop, but for all his twisting and fingering the quern went on grinding, and in a little while the broth rose so high that the man was like to drown. So he threw open the kitchen door and ran into the parlour, but it wasn't long before the quern had ground the parlour full too, and it was only at the risk of his life that the man could get hold of the latch of the house door through the stream of broth. When he got the door open, he ran out and set off down the road, with the stream of herrings and broth at his heels, roaring like a waterfall over the whole farm.

Now, his old dame, who was in the field tossing hay, thought it a long time to dinner, and at last she said:

"Well! though the master doesn't call us home, we may as well go. Maybe he finds it hard work to boil the broth, and will be glad of my help."

The men were willing enough, so they sauntered homeward; but just as they had got a little way up the hill, what should they meet but herrings, and broth, and bread, all running and dashing, and splashing together in a stream, and the master himself running before them for his life, and as he passed them he bawled out: "Would to heaven each of you had a hundred throats! but take care you're not drowned in the broth."

Away he went, as though the Evil One were at his heels, to his brother's house, and begged him to take back the quern that instant; for, said he:

"If it grinds only one hour more, the whole parish will be swallowed up by herrings and broth."

But his brother wouldn't hear of taking it back till the other paid him down three hundred dollars more.

So the poor brother got both the money and the quern, and it wasn't long before he set up a farmhouse far finer than the one in which his brother lived, and with the quern he ground so much gold that he covered it with plates of gold; and as the farm lay by the sea-side, the golden house gleamed and glistened far away over the sea. All who sailed by, put ashore to see the rich

man in the golden house, and to see the wonderful quern, the fame of which spread far and wide, till there was nobody who hadn't heard tell of it.

So one day there came a skipper who wanted to see the quern; and the first thing he asked was if it could grind salt.

"Grind salt!" said the owner; "I should just think it could. It can grind anything."

When the skipper heard that, he said he must have the quern, cost what it would; for if he only had it, he thought he should be rid of his long voyages across stormy seas for a lading of salt. Well, at first the man wouldn't hear of parting with the quern; but the skipper begged and prayed so hard that at last he let him have it, but he had to pay many, many thousand dollars for it. Now, when the skipper had got the quern on his back, he soon made off with it, for he was afraid lest the man should change his mind; so he had no time to ask how to handle the quern, but got on board his ship as fast as he could, and set sail. When he had sailed a good way off, he brought the quern on deck and said:

"Grind salt, and grind both good and fast."

Well, the quern began to grind salt so that it poured out like water; and when the skipper had got the ship full, he wished to stop the quern, but whichever way he turned it, and however much he tried, it was no good; the quern kept grinding on, and the heap of salt grew higher and higher, and at last down sunk the ship.

There lies the quern at the bottom of the sea, and grinds away at this very day, and that's why the sea is salt.

4. BEARSKIN

Book: Grimm's Fairy Tales

Author: Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

Origin: German

There was once upon a time a young fellow who enlisted for a soldier, and became so brave and courageous that he was always in the front ranks when it rained blue beans. As long as the war lasted all went well, but when peace was concluded he received his discharge, and the captain told him he might go where he liked. His parents meanwhile had died, and as he had no longer any home to go to he paid a visit to his brothers, and asked them to give him shelter until war broke out again. His brothers, however, were hard-hearted, and said, "What could we do with you? We could make nothing of you; see to what you have brought yourself"; and so turned a

deaf ear. The poor Soldier had nothing but his musket left; so he mounted this on his shoulder and set out on a tramp. By and by he came to a great heath with nothing on it but a circle of trees, under which he sat down, sorrowfully considering his fate. "I have no money," thought he; "I have learnt nothing but soldiering, and now, since peace is concluded, there is no need of me. I see well enough I shall have to starve." All at once he heard a rustling, and as he looked round he perceived a stranger standing before him, dressed in a gray coat, who looked very stately, but had an ugly cloven foot. "I know quite well what you need," said this being; "gold and other possessions you shall have, as much as you can spend; but first I must know whether you are a coward or not, that I may not spend my money foolishly."

"A soldier and a coward!" replied the other, "that cannot be; you may put me to any proof."

"Well, then," replied the stranger, "look behind you."

The Soldier turned and saw a huge bear, which eyed him very ferociously. "Oho!" cried he, "I will tickle your nose for you, that you shall no longer be able to grumble"; and, raising his musket, he shot the bear in the forehead, so that he tumbled in a heap upon the ground, and did not stir afterward. Thereupon the stranger said, "I see quite well that you are not wanting in courage; but there is yet one condition which you must fulfil." "If it does not interfere with my future happiness," said the Soldier, who had remarked who it was that addressed him; "if it does not interfere with that, I shall not hesitate."

"That you must see about yourself!" said the stranger. "For the next seven years you must not wash yourself, nor comb your hair or beard, neither must you cut your nails nor say one paternoster. Then I will give you this coat and mantle, which you must wear during these seven years; and if you die within that time you are mine, but if you live you are rich, and free all your life long."

The Soldier reflected for awhile on his great necessities, and, remembering how often he had braved death, he at length consented, and ventured to accept the offer. Thereupon the Evil One pulled off the gray coat, handed it to the soldier, and said, "If you at any time search in the pockets of your coat when you have it on, you will always find your hand full of money." Then also he pulled off the skin of the bear, and said, "That shall be your cloak and your bed; you must sleep on it, and not dare to lie in any other bed, and on this account you shall be called 'Bearskin.'" Immediately the Evil One disappeared.

The Soldier now put on the coat, and dipped his hands into the pockets, to assure himself of the reality of the transaction. Then he hung the bearskin around himself, and went about the world chuckling at his good luck, and buying whatever suited his fancy which money could purchase. For the first year his appearance was not very remarkable, but in the second he began to look quite a monster. His hair covered almost all his face, his beard appeared like a piece of dirty cloth, his nails were claws, and his countenance was so covered with dirt that one might have grown cresses upon it if one had sown seed! Whoever looked at him ran away; but because he gave the

poor in every place gold coin they prayed that he might not die during the seven years; and because he paid liberally everywhere, he found a night's lodging without difficulty. In the fourth year he came to an inn where the landlord would not take him in, and refused even to give him a place in his stables, lest the horses should be frightened and become restive. However, when Bearskin put his hand into his pocket and drew it out full of gold ducats the landlord yielded the point, and gave him a place in the outbuildings, but not till he had promised that he would not show himself, for fear the inn should gain a bad name.

While Bearskin sat by himself in the evening, wishing from his heart that the seven years were over, he heard in the corner a loud groan. Now the old Soldier had a compassionate heart, so he opened the door and saw an old man weeping violently and wringing his hands. Bearskin stepped nearer, but the old man jumped up and tried to escape; but when he recognized a human voice he let himself be persuaded, and by kind words and soothing on the part of the old Soldier he at length disclosed the cause of his distress. His property had dwindled away by degrees, and he and his daughters would have to starve, for he was so poor that he had not the money to pay the host, and would therefore be put into prison.

"If you have no care except that," replied Bearskin, "I have money enough"; and causing the landlord to be called, he paid him, and put a purse full of gold besides into the pocket of the old man. The latter, when he saw himself released from his troubles, knew not how to be sufficiently grateful, and said to the Soldier, "Come with me; my daughters are all wonders of beauty, so choose one of them for a wife. When they hear what you have done for me they will not refuse you. You appear certainly an uncommon man, but they will soon put you to rights."

This speech pleased Bearskin, and he went with the old man. As soon as the eldest daughter saw him, she was so terrified at his countenance that she shrieked out and ran away. The second one stopped and looked at him from head to foot; but at last she said, "How can I take a husband who has not a bit of a human countenance? The grizzly bear would have pleased me better who came to see us once, and gave himself out as a man, for he wore a hussar's hat, and had white gloves on besides."

But the youngest daughter said, "Dear father, this must be a good man who has assisted you out of your troubles; if you have promised him a bride for the service your word must be kept"

It was a pity the man's face was covered with dirt and hair, else one would have seen how glad at heart these words made him. Bearskin took a ring off his finger, broke it in two, and, giving the youngest daughter one half, he kept the other for himself. On her half he wrote his name, and on his own he wrote hers, and begged her to preserve it carefully. Thereupon he took leave, saying, "For three years longer I must wander about; if I come back again, then we will celebrate our wedding; but if I do not, you are free, for I shall be dead."

When he was gone the poor bride clothed herself in black, and whenever she thought of her bridegroom burst into tears. From her sisters she received nothing but scorn and mocking. "Pay

great attention when he shakes your hand," said the eldest, "and you will see his beautiful claws!" "Take care!" said the second, "bears are fond of sweets, and if you please him he will eat you up, perhaps!" "You must mind and do his will," continued the eldest, "or he will begin growling!" And the second daughter said further, "But the wedding will certainly be merry, for bears dance well!" The bride kept silence, and would not be drawn from her purpose by all these taunts; and meanwhile Bearskin wandered about in the world, doing good where he could, and giving liberally to the poor, for which they prayed heartily for him. At length the last day of the seven years approached, and Bearskin went and sat down again on the heath beneath the circle of trees. In a very short time the wind whistled, and the Evil One presently stood before him and looked at him with a vexed face. He threw the Soldier his old coat and demanded his gray one back. "We have not got so far as that yet," replied Bearskin; "you must clean me first." Then the Evil One had, whether he liked it or no, to fetch water, wash the old Soldier, comb his hair out, and cut his nails. This done, he appeared again like a brave warrior, and indeed was much handsomer than before.

As soon as the Evil One had disappeared, Bearskin became quite light-hearted; and going into the nearest town he bought a fine velvet coat, and hired a carriage drawn by four white horses, in which he was driven to the house of his bride. Nobody knew him; the father took him for some celebrated general, and led him into the room where his daughters were. He was compelled to sit down between the two eldest, and they offered him wine, and heaped his plate with the choicest morsels; for they thought they had never seen any one so handsome before. But the bride sat opposite to him dressed in black, neither opening her eyes nor speaking a word. At length the Soldier asked the father if he would give him one of his daughters to wife, and immediately the two elder sisters arose, and ran to their chambers to dress themselves out in their most becoming clothes, for each thought she should be chosen. Meanwhile the stranger, as soon as he found himself alone with his bride, pulled out the half of the ring and threw it into a cup of wine, which he handed across the table. She took it, and as soon as she had drunk it and seen the half ring lying at the bottom her heart beat rapidly, and she produced the other half, which she wore round her neck on a riband. She held them together, and they joined each other exactly, and the stranger said, "I am your bridegroom, whom you first saw as Bearskin; but I have regained my human form, and am myself once more." With these words he embraced and kissed her; and at the same time the two eldest sisters entered in full costume. As soon as they saw that the very handsome man had fallen to the share of their youngest sister, and heard that he was the same as "Bearskin," they ran out of the house full of rage and jealousy.

5. THE LAMB WITH THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Book: The Folk-Tales of the Magyars

Editors: W. Henry Jones and Lajos Kropf

Origin: Hungarian

There was once a poor man who had a son, and as the son grew up his father sent him out to look for work. The son travelled about looking for a place, and at last met with a man who arranged to take him as a shepherd.

Next day his master gave him a flute, and sent him out with the sheep to see whether he was fit for his work. The lad never lay down all day, very unlike many lazy fellows. He drove his sheep from place to place and played his flute all day long.

There was among the sheep a lamb with golden fleece, which, whenever he played his flute, began to dance. The lad became very fond of this lamb, and made up his mind not to ask any wages of his master, but only this little lamb.

In the evening he returned home; his master waited at the gate; and, when he saw the sheep all there and all well-fed, he was very pleased, and began to bargain with the lad, who said he wished for nothing but the lamb with the golden fleece. The farmer was very fond of the lamb himself, and it was with great unwillingness he promised it; but he gave in afterwards when he saw what a good servant the lad made.

The year passed away; the lad received the lamb for his wages, and set off home with it.

As they journeyed night set in just as he reached a village, so he went to a farmhouse to ask for a night's lodging. There was a daughter in the house who when she saw the lamb with the golden fleece determined to steal it.

About midnight she arose, and lo! the moment she touched the lamb she stuck hard-and-fast to its fleece, so that when the lad got up he found her stuck to the lamb. He could not separate them, and as he could not leave his lamb he took them both.

As he passed the third door from the house where he had spent the night he took out his flute and began to play. Then the lamb began to dance, and on the wool the girl. Round the corner a woman was putting bread into the oven; looking up she saw the lamb dancing, and on its wool the girl. Seizing the peel in order to frighten the girl, she rushed out and shouted, "Get away home with you, don't make such a fool of yourself." As the girl continued dancing the woman called out, "What, won't you obey?" and gave her a blow on her back with the peel, which at once stuck to the girl, and the woman to the peel, and the lamb carried them all off.

As they went they came to the church. Here the lad began to play again, the lamb began to dance, and on the lamb's fleece the girl, and on the girl's back the peel, and at the end of the peel the woman. Just then the priest was coming out from matins, and seeing what was going on began to scold them, and bid them go home and not to be so foolish. As words were of no avail, he hit the woman a sound whack on her back with his cane, when to his surprise the cane stuck to the woman, and he to the end of his cane.

With this nice company the lad went on; and towards dark reached the royal borough and took lodgings at the end of the town for the night with an old woman. "What news is there?" said he.

The old woman told him they were in very great sorrow, for the king's daughter was very ill, and that no physician could heal her, but that if she could but be made to laugh she would be better at once; that no one had as yet been able to make her smile; and moreover the king had issued that very day a proclamation stating that whoever made her laugh should have her for his wife, and share the royal power. The lad with the lamb could scarcely wait till daylight, so anxious was he to try his fortune.

In the morning he presented himself to the king and stated his business and was very graciously received. The daughter stood in the hall at the front of the house; the lad then began to play the flute, the lamb to dance, on the lamb's fleece the girl, on the girl's back the peel, at the end of the peel the woman, on the woman's back the cane, and at the end of the cane the priest.

When the princess saw this sight she burst out laughing, which made the lamb so glad that it shook everything off its back, and the lamb, the girl, the woman, and the priest each danced by themselves for joy.

The king married his daughter to the shepherd; the priest was made court-chaplain; the woman court bakeress; and the girl lady-in-waiting to the princess.

The wedding lasted from one Monday to the other Tuesday, and the whole land was in great joy, and if the strings of the fiddle hadn't broken they would have been dancing yet!

6. THE GHOST WHO WAS AFRAID OF BEING BAGGED

Book: Folk-Tales of Bengal

Author: Lal Behari Day

Origin: Indian

Once on a time there lived a barber who had a wife. They did not live happily together, as the wife always complained that she had not enough to eat. Many were the curtain lectures which were inflicted upon the poor barber. The wife used often to say to her mate, "If you had not the means to support a wife, why did you marry me? People who have not means ought not to indulge in the luxury of a wife. When I was in my father's house I had plenty to eat, but it seems that I have come to your house to fast. Widows only fast; I have become a widow in your life-time." She was not content with mere words; she got very angry one day and struck her husband with the broomstick of the house. Stung with shame, and abhorring himself on account of his wife's reproach and beating, he left his house, with the implements of his craft, and vowed never to return and see his wife's face again till he had become rich. He went from village to village, and towards nightfall came to the outskirts of a forest. He laid himself down at the foot of a tree, and spent many a sad hour in bemoaning his hard lot.

It so chanced that the tree, at the foot of which the barber was lying down, was dwelt in by a ghost. The ghost seeing a human being at the foot of the tree naturally thought of destroying him. With this intention the ghost alighted from the tree, and, with outspread arms and a gaping mouth, stood like a tall palmyra tree before the barber, and said, "Now, barber, I am going to destroy you. Who will protect you?" The barber, though quaking in every limb through fear, and his hair standing erect, did not lose his presence of mind, but, with that promptitude and shrewdness which are characteristic of his fraternity, replied, "O spirit, you will destroy me! wait a bit and I'll show you how many ghosts I have captured this very night and put into my bag; and right glad am I to find you here, as I shall have one more ghost in my bag." So saying the barber produced from his bag a small looking-glass, which he always carried about with him along with his razors, his whet-stone, his strop and other utensils, to enable his customers to see whether their beards had been well shaved or not. He stood up, placed the looking-glass right against the face of the ghost, and said, "Here you see one ghost which I have seized and bagged; I am going to put you also in the bag to keep this ghost company." The ghost, seeing his own face in the looking-glass, was convinced of the truth of what the barber had said, and was filled with fear. He said to the barber, "O, sir barber, I'll do whatever you bid me, only do not put me into your bag. I'll give you whatever you want." The barber said, "You ghosts are a faithless set, there is no trusting you. You will promise, and not give what you promise." "O, sir," replied the ghost, "be merciful to me; I'll bring to you whatever you order; and if I do not bring it, then put me into your bag." "Very well," said the barber, "bring me just now one thousand gold mohurs; and by to-morrow night you must raise a granary in my house, and fill it with paddy. Go and get the gold mohurs immediately: and if you fail to do my bidding you will certainly be put into my bag." The ghost gladly consented to the conditions. He went away, and in the course of a short time returned with a bag containing a thousand gold mohurs. The barber was delighted beyond measure at the sight of the gold mohurs. He then told the ghost to see to it that by the following night a granary was erected in his house and filled with paddy.

It was during the small hours of the morning that the barber, loaded with the heavy treasure, knocked at the door of his house. His wife, who reproached herself for having in a fit of rage struck her husband with a broomstick, got out of bed and unbolted the door. Her surprise was great when she saw her husband pour out of the bag a glittering heap of gold mohurs.

The next night the poor devil, through fear of being bagged, raised a large granary in the barber's house, and spent the live-long night in carrying on his back large packages of paddy till the granary was filled up to the brim. The uncle of this terrified ghost, seeing his worthy nephew carrying on his back loads of paddy, asked what the matter was. The ghost related what had happened. The uncle-ghost then said, "You fool, you think the barber can bag you! The barber is a cunning fellow; he has cheated you, like a simpleton as you are." "You doubt," said the nephew-ghost, "the power of the barber! come and see." The uncle-ghost then went to the barber's house, and peeped into it through a window. The barber, perceiving from the blast of wind which the arrival of the ghost had produced that a ghost was at the window,

placed full before it the self-same looking-glass, saying, "Come now, I'll put you also into the bag." The uncle-ghost, seeing his own face in the looking-glass, got quite frightened, and promised that very night to raise another granary and to fill it, not this time with paddy, but with rice. So in two nights the barber became a rich man, and lived happily with his wife begetting sons and daughters.

7. HOW RABBIT DECEIVED FOX

Book: Canadian Fairy Tales

Author: Cyrus Macmillan

Origin: Canadian

Long ago in Indian days in Canada, when Rabbit worked for Glooskap as his forest guide, he was a great thief. He liked most of all to steal by moonlight, and he crept quietly into gardens and fields where Indian vegetables were growing, for he was very fond of cabbage and lettuce and beans. Not far from his home there lived alone an old widow woman who had no children. She could not hunt game because she was a woman, and she had never been trained to the chase, so she kept a little garden from which she made a good living. All day long from dawn until sunset she toiled hard, tilling her little garden, watering her vegetables and keeping them free from weeds. And she grew green cabbages and red carrots and yellow beans and big fat pumpkins and corn, which she traded with hunters in return for fish and meat. In this way she always had plenty of food, and she lived very well on good fare. But Rabbit, going his rounds one day, discovered her garden, although it was deep in the forest, and every night by moonlight or starlight he robbed it, and grew sleek and fat from the results of his thefts. And morning after morning the old widow woman found that many cabbages and carrots were missing and that much harm had been done to her plants. She had an idea that Rabbit was the pilferer, for she had heard that he was a great thief, but she was not very sure. She watched many nights, but she was never able to catch the robber, so stealthily did he come, and it was not easy to see him in the shadows. So she said to herself, "I will set up a scarecrow, a figure in the shape of a little man, and I will place it at my garden gate, and it will frighten away the robber, whoever he may be, for I must save my vegetables or I shall starve when the cold winter comes."

She picked from the spruce and the fir trees close by a great store of gum and balsam. This she formed into a figure in the shape of a little man. She made two eyes from glass beads that would shine like fire in the starlight, and a nose from a pine cone, and hair from the corn tassels and yellow moss. Then she placed the figure at the entrance to the garden where she knew the robber would come. "Now," she thought, "I will scare away the thief."

When night fell and the moon rose above the trees, Rabbit came along, as was his custom, to steal his nightly meal. As he came near the garden very softly, he saw in the moonlight what he

thought was a man standing in the path by the garden gate. The moon hung low over the forest, and there was a thin grey mist on the earth, for it was near to autumn and the nights were already cool; and the figure of the little man looked larger than human in the misty light, and it cast a long black shadow like that of a giant on the grass. Rabbit was much afraid and he trembled like an aspen leaf, but he stood quiet behind a tree and watched the strange figure. For a long time he stood still and watched and listened. But the strange figure did not move, and not a sound did Rabbit hear but the chirp of a cricket. Then with great caution he came closer. But still the figure did not move. Then his fear left him and he grew bolder, for he was very hungry, and he could smell the vegetables and the wild honeysuckle in the still night air. So he walked bravely up to the little dummy man and said, "Get out of my way and let me pass." But the man did not move. Then Rabbit struck the man a sharp blow with his fist. But still the figure did not move. Rabbit's fist stuck fast in the gum and he could not pull it away. Then he struck out with his other fist, and it too, like the other, was held firm. "I shall kick you," said Rabbit in a rage. "Take that," and he struck out wildly with his foot. But his foot, like his fists, stuck fast. Then he kicked with the other foot, but that too was held in the gum. Rabbit was now very cross, and in his anger he said, "Now I shall bite you," but when he bit the little man, his teeth, like his feet and hands, stuck fast. Then he pushed with his body with all his might, hoping to knock the little man down, but his whole body stuck to the dummy figure.

He cried out loudly, for he was now beside himself with fear, and the old woman, when she heard his yells, came running out of her house. "Aha!" she said, "so you are the robber who has been stealing from my garden. I will rid the world of a pilfering pest, for I will kill you this very night." Then she pulled him away from the gum figure and put him in a strong bag and tied the mouth of the bag with a stout string. She left the bag on the path by the garden gate and went to look for her axe to kill Rabbit. While Rabbit lay there wondering how he was going to escape, Fox came prowling along. He stumbled over the bag, for he did not see it in the shadows, and he plunged forward headlong to the ground with a great thud. He got up and rained kicks upon the bag. He was mad because he had been tripped. He kicked poor Rabbit's back until Rabbit cried in pain. "Who are you in the bag?" asked Fox when he heard the cries. "I am your friend Rabbit," was the answer. "What are you doing, hiding in the bag?" asked Fox. Then Rabbit suddenly thought of a way of escape. He knew that Fox had long been looking for a wife, but that no one would have him as no one trusted him because his fame for treachery and slyness was so great. "I am not hiding," he said. "The old woman who owns this garden wants me to marry her grand-daughter, and when I refused to do it she caught me and shut me up in this bag; she has just gone to bring the girl from her house, for she is determined to make me marry her here in the moonlight this very night. I don't want to marry her, for she is very big and fat, and I am very small and lean." Then he cried "Boo-hoo-hoo" again, and Fox said, "I have been looking for a wife for a long time, and I like fat people. Let me get into the bag in your place, and I will marry the grand-daughter instead, for the old woman will not know me in the shadows." And Rabbit gladly agreed. Then Fox untied the bag and let Rabbit out and got into the bag himself, and Rabbit tied up the mouth of the bag and hurried away as quickly as he could.

Soon the old woman came back, carrying her axe. She sharpened it on a stone and said, "Now I will kill you, and you will thief no more in my garden. A poor woman must live untroubled by such pilfering rogues." When Fox heard these words and the sound of the stone upon the axe, he knew that he had been deceived by Rabbit, and when the old woman opened the bag he sprang nimbly out with a sudden bound and was away before she could catch him. He swore by the Starlight that he would have vengeance on Rabbit. All night long he searched for him and all the next day, but he could not find him. At last in the gathering twilight he came upon him in an open space in the forest, on the other side of a stream, eating his fill of wild vegetables. Fox tried to coax him across the stream to his side, for he himself was afraid of the water, but Rabbit would not go. "Why don't you eat some cheese?" said Rabbit; "there is a big round cheese in the stream." Fox looked into the stream where Rabbit pointed, and there he saw the reflection of the big round yellow moon. He thought it was a round cheese, and he plunged in after it, for he was very fond of cheese. Rabbit hoped he would be drowned, but the stream was shallow and Fox climbed out with no cheese and with only a bad fright and a wet coat for his pains. He was very cross, for he knew that Rabbit wished to do him harm, but he kept his anger to himself. Rabbit was still eating contentedly.

"What are you eating?" said Fox, trying to hold him in talk until he could think of a plan to catch him. "I am eating good ripe fruit," said Rabbit. "I am eating Indian melons." "Throw me one," said Fox, for he was hungry. Rabbit threw him a large round wild cucumber all covered with green prickles. "Swallow it whole at a mouthful," said Rabbit; "it is very good that way." It was night and the moon shone dimly through the trees, and Fox could not see what he was eating. He swallowed the cucumber at one gulp, as Rabbit had told him, but the prickles stuck in his throat and he almost choked to death. And while he was choking and spluttering and trying to cough up the cucumber, Rabbit ran away as fast as he could, laughing heartily to himself. Fox knew that he had been tricked again, and this time he swore he would kill Rabbit as soon as he could find him; he resolved that when next he saw him he would not give him a moment to live.

Rabbit hid among the dry underbrush all the next day. But when the day went down and the sky was red in the west and the wind was very still, he sat on a log, as was his custom, and played softly on his flute, for he was a great player on the Indian pipe. While he was playing, Fox suddenly came upon him unawares. Rabbit saw him watching him through the trees close at hand, but although taken by surprise, he was not to be outdone. Fox was just about to spring upon him when Rabbit said, "A wedding party will soon be along this way. They asked me to sit here and make music for them with my flute as they pass by. They have promised to pay me well, and they have invited me to the wedding feast. Come and join me and play too, and you will be well paid, and we will go to the wedding feast together and get good things to eat." Fox thought he would let Rabbit get the pay he had been promised, for he was a very greedy fellow; then he would rob him and kill him, and he would take his flute and go to the wedding feast alone, and his vengeance would then be complete. So he decided to let his anger cool for a little time. And he said, "I have no flute, and I cannot therefore make music; but I will sit with you to see the wedding guests go

by." But Rabbit said, "Take my flute. I have another at home. I will go and get it, for there is yet time."

So Fox took the flute and began to play loudly, and Rabbit slipped hurriedly out of sight, pretending to go for his pipe. But he resolved to make an end of Fox, for he feared for his own life, and instead of going home, he set the underbrush on fire. He kindled the fire at many places all around the log on which Fox sat. Fox could not hear the fire crackling because of the loud music of his flute, and he thought the light was but the bright light of the moon. And the fire was almost upon him before he knew that he was in danger. Then he tried to get away, but on all sides his escape was stopped by the flames and he could not find an opening. At last, in despair, to save his life, he jumped through the ring of fire. He escaped with his life, but his eyelids were singed, and his sleek black coat with its silver spots was scorched to a red-brown colour. He was in great pain. He concluded that Rabbit was too clever for him to cope with, and he resolved to leave him alone and to forego his revenge, for he was glad to get away with his life. But he decided never again to live on friendly terms with Rabbit. And since that night Rabbit and Fox have never hunted together. And to the present day the descendants of this Fox have red eyes and a red-brown coat, because Rabbit scorched their ancestor in the olden times.

8. FELICIA AND THE POT OF PINKS

Book: The Blue Fairy Book

Editor: Andrew Lang

Origin: French

Once upon a time there was a poor laborer who, feeling that he had not much longer to live, wished to divide his possessions between his son and daughter, whom he loved dearly.

So he called them to him, and said: "Your mother brought me as her dowry two stools and a straw bed; I have, besides, a hen, a pot of pinks, and a silver ring, which were given me by a noble lady who once lodged in my poor cottage. When she went away she said to me:

"Be careful of my gifts, good man; see that you do not lose the ring or forget to water the pinks. As for your daughter, I promise you that she shall be more beautiful than anyone you ever saw in your life; call her Felicia, and when she grows up give her the ring and the pot of pinks to console her for her poverty.' Take them both, then, my dear child," he added, "and your brother shall have everything else."

The two children seemed quite contented, and when their father died they wept for him, and divided his possessions as he had told them. Felicia believed that her brother loved her, but when she sat down upon one of the stools he said angrily:

"Keep your pot of pinks and your ring, but let my things alone. I like order in my house."

Felicia, who was very gentle, said nothing, but stood up crying quietly; while Bruno, for that was her brother's name, sat comfortably by the fire. Presently, when supper-time came, Bruno had a delicious egg, and he threw the shell to Felicia, saying:

"There, that is all I can give you; if you don't like it, go out and catch frogs; there are plenty of them in the marsh close by." Felicia did not answer, but she cried more bitterly than ever, and went away to her own little room. She found it filled with the sweet scent of the pinks, and, going up to them, she said sadly:

"Beautiful pinks, you are so sweet and so pretty, you are the only comfort I have left. Be very sure that I will take care of you, and water you well, and never allow any cruel hand to tear you from your stems."

As she leaned over them she noticed that they were very dry. So taking her pitcher, she ran off in the clear moonlight to the fountain, which was at some distance. When she reached it she sat down upon the brink to rest, but she had hardly done so when she saw a stately lady coming toward her, surrounded by numbers of attendants. Six maids of honor carried her train, and she leaned upon the arm of another.

When they came near the fountain a canopy was spread for her, under which was placed a sofa of cloth-of-gold, and presently a dainty supper was served, upon a table covered with dishes of gold and crystal, while the wind in the trees and the falling water of the fountain murmured the softest music.

Felicia was hidden in the shade, too much astonished by all she saw to venture to move; but in a few moments the Queen said:

"I fancy I see a shepherdess near that tree; bid her come hither."

So Felicia came forward and saluted the Queen timidly, but with so much grace that all were surprised.

"What are you doing here, my pretty child?" asked the Queen. "Are you not afraid of robbers?"

"Ah! madam," said Felicia, "a poor shepherdess who has nothing to lose does not fear robbers."

"You are not very rich, then?" said the Queen, smiling.

"I am so poor," answered Felicia, "that a pot of pinks and a silver ring are my only possessions in the world."

"But you have a heart," said the Queen. "What should you say if anybody wanted to steal that?"

"I do not know what it is like to lose one's heart, madam," she replied; "but I have always heard that without a heart one cannot live, and if it is broken one must die; and in spite of my poverty I should be sorry not to live."

"You are quite right to take care of your heart, pretty one," said the Queen. "But tell me, have you supped?"

"No, madam," answered Felicia; "my brother ate all the supper there was."

Then the Queen ordered that a place should be made for her at the table, and herself loaded Felicia's plate with good things; but she was too much astonished to be hungry.

"I want to know what you were doing at the fountain so late?" said the Queen presently.

"I came to fetch a pitcher of water for my pinks, madam," she answered, stooping to pick up the pitcher which stood beside her; but when she showed it to the Queen she was amazed to see that it had turned to gold, all sparkling with great diamonds, and the water, of which it was full, was more fragrant than the sweetest roses. She was afraid to take it until the Queen said:

"It is yours, Felicia; go and water your pinks with it, and let it remind you that the Queen of the Woods is your friend."

The shepherdess threw herself at the Queen's feet, and thanked her humbly for her gracious words.

"Ah! madam," she cried, "if I might beg you to stay here a moment I would run and fetch my pot of pinks for you—they could not fall into better hands."

"Go, Felicia," said the Queen, stroking her cheek softly; "I will wait here until you come back."

So Felicia took up her pitcher and ran to her little room, but while she had been away Bruno had gone in and taken the pot of pinks, leaving a great cabbage in its place. When she saw the unlucky cabbage Felicia was much distressed, and did not know what to do; but at last she ran back to the fountain, and, kneeling before the Queen, said:

"Madam, Bruno has stolen my pot of pinks, so I have nothing but my silver ring; but I beg you to accept it as a proof of my gratitude."

"But if I take your ring, my pretty shepherdess," said the Queen, "you will have nothing left; and what will you do then?"

"Ah! madam," she answered simply, "if I have your friendship I shall do very well."

So the Queen took the ring and put it on her finger, and mounted her chariot, which was made of coral studded with emeralds, and drawn by six milk-white horses. And Felicia looked after her until the winding of the forest path hid her from her sight, and then she went back to the cottage, thinking over all the wonderful things that had happened.

The first thing she did when she reached her room was to throw the cabbage out of the window.

But she was very much surprised to hear an odd little voice cry out: "Oh! I am half killed!" and could not tell where it came from, because cabbages do not generally speak.

As soon as it was light, Felicia, who was very unhappy about her pot of pinks, went out to look for it, and the first thing she found was the unfortunate cabbage. She gave it a push with her foot, saying: "What are you doing here, and how dared you put yourself in the place of my pot of pinks?"

"If I hadn't been carried," replied the cabbage, "you may be very sure that I shouldn't have thought of going there."

It made her shiver with fright to hear the cabbage talk, but he went on:

“If you will be good enough to plant me by my comrades again, I can tell you where your pinks are at this moment—hidden in Bruno’s bed!”

Felicia was in despair when she heard this, not knowing how she was to get them back. But she replanted the cabbage very kindly in his old place, and, as she finished doing it, she saw Bruno’s hen, and said, catching hold of it:

“Come here, horrid little creature! you shall suffer for all the unkind things my brother has done to me.”

“Ah! shepherdess,” said the hen, “don’t kill me; I am rather a gossip, and I can tell you some surprising things that you will like to hear. Don’t imagine that you are the daughter of the poor laborer who brought you up; your mother was a queen who had six girls already, and the King threatened that unless she had a son who could inherit his kingdom she should have her head cut off.

“So when the Queen had another little daughter she was quite frightened, and agreed with her sister (who was a fairy) to exchange her for the fairy’s little son. Now the Queen had been shut up in a great tower by the King’s orders, and when a great many days went by and still she heard nothing from the Fairy she made her escape from the window by means of a rope ladder, taking her little baby with her. After wandering about until she was half dead with cold and fatigue she reached this cottage. I was the laborer’s wife, and was a good nurse, and the Queen gave you into my charge, and told me all her misfortunes, and then died before she had time to say what was to become of you.

“As I never in all my life could keep a secret, I could not help telling this strange tale to my neighbors, and one day a beautiful lady came here, and I told it to her also. When I had finished she touched me with a wand she held in her hand, and instantly I became a hen, and there was an end of my talking! I was very sad, and my husband, who was out when it happened, never knew what had become of me. After seeking me everywhere he believed that I must have been drowned, or eaten up by wild beasts in the forest. That same lady came here once more, and commanded that you should be called Felicia, and left the ring and the pot of pinks to be given to you; and while she was in the house twenty-five of the King’s guards came to search for you, doubtless meaning to kill you; but she muttered a few words, and immediately they all turned into cabbages. It was one of them whom you threw out of your window yesterday.

“I don’t know how it was that he could speak—I have never heard either of them say a word before, nor have I been able to do it myself until now.”

The Princess was greatly astonished at the hen’s story, and said kindly: “I am truly sorry for you, my poor nurse, and wish it was in my power to restore you to your real form. But we must not despair; it seems to me, after what you have told me, that something must be going to happen soon. Just now, however, I must go and look for my pinks, which I love better than anything in the world.”

Bruno had gone out into the forest, never thinking that Felicia would search in his room for the pinks, and she was delighted by his unexpected absence, and thought to get them back without

further trouble. But as soon as she entered the room she saw a terrible army of rats, who were guarding the straw bed; and when she attempted to approach it they sprang at her, biting and scratching furiously. Quite terrified, she drew back, crying out: "Oh! my dear pinks, how can you stay here in such bad company?"

Then she suddenly bethought herself of the pitcher of water, and, hoping that it might have some magic power, she ran to fetch it, and sprinkled a few drops over the fierce-looking swarm of rats. In a moment not a tail or a whisker was to be seen. Each one had made for his hole as fast as his legs could carry him, so that the Princess could safely take her pot of pinks. She found them nearly dying for want of water, and hastily poured all that was left in the pitcher upon them. As she bent over them, enjoying their delicious scent, a soft voice, that seemed to rustle among the leaves, said:

"Lovely Felicia, the day has come at last when I may have the happiness of telling you how even the flowers love you and rejoice in your beauty."

The Princess, quite overcome by the strangeness of hearing a cabbage, a hen, and a pink speak, and by the terrible sight of an army of rats, suddenly became very pale, and fainted away.

At this moment in came Bruno. Working hard in the heat had not improved his temper, and when he saw that Felicia had succeeded in finding her pinks he was so angry that he dragged her out into the garden and shut the door upon her. The fresh air soon made her open her pretty eyes, and there before her stood the Queen of the Woods, looking as charming as ever.

"You have a bad brother," she said; "I saw he turned you out. Shall I punish him for it?"

"Ah! no, madam," she said; "I am not angry with him.

"But supposing he was not your brother, after all, what would you say then?" asked the Queen.

"Oh! but I think he must be," said Felicia.

"What!" said the Queen, "have you not heard that you are a Princess?"

"I was told so a little while ago, madam, but how could I believe it without a single proof?"

"Ah! dear child," said the Queen, "the way you speak assures me that, in spite of your humble upbringing, you are indeed a real princess, and I can save you from being treated in such a way again."

She was interrupted at this moment by the arrival of a very handsome young man. He wore a coat of green velvet fastened with emerald clasps, and had a crown of pinks on his head. He knelt upon one knee and kissed the Queen's hand.

"Ah!" she cried, "my pink, my dear son, what a happiness to see you restored to your natural shape by Felicia's aid!" And she embraced him joyfully. Then, turning to Felicia, she said:

"Charming Princess, I know all the hen told you, but you cannot have heard that the zephyrs, to whom was entrusted the task of carrying my son to the tower where the Queen, your mother, so anxiously waited for him, left him instead in a garden of flowers, while they flew off to tell your mother. Whereupon a fairy with whom I had quarrelled changed him into a pink, and I could do nothing to prevent it.

“You can imagine how angry I was, and how I tried to find some means of undoing the mischief she had done; but there was no help for it. I could only bring Prince Pink to the place where you were being brought up, hoping that when you grew up he might love you, and by your care be restored to his natural form. And you see everything has come right, as I hoped it would. Your giving me the silver ring was the sign that the power of the charm was nearly over, and my enemy’s last chance was to frighten you with her army of rats. That she did not succeed in doing; so now, my dear Felicia, if you will be married to my son with this silver ring your future happiness is certain. Do you think him handsome and amiable enough to be willing to marry him?”

“Madam,” replied Felicia, blushing, “you overwhelm me with your kindness. I know that you are my mother’s sister, and that by your art you turned the soldiers who were sent to kill me into cabbages, and my nurse into a hen, and that you do me only too much honor in proposing that I shall marry your son. How can I explain to you the cause of my hesitation? I feel, for the first time in my life, how happy it would make me to be beloved. Can you indeed give me the Prince’s heart?”

“It is yours already, lovely Princess!” he cried, taking her hand in his; “but for the horrible enchantment which kept me silent I should have told you long ago how dearly I love you.”

This made the Princess very happy, and the Queen, who could not bear to see her dressed like a poor shepherdess, touched her with her wand, saying:

“I wish you to be attired as befits your rank and beauty.” And immediately the Princess’s cotton dress became a magnificent robe of silver brocade embroidered with carbuncles, and her soft dark hair was encircled by a crown of diamonds, from which floated a clear white veil. With her bright eyes, and the charming color in her cheeks, she was altogether such a dazzling sight that the Prince could hardly bear it.

“How pretty you are, Felicia!” he cried. “Don’t keep me in suspense, I entreat you; say that you will marry me.”

“Ah!” said the Queen, smiling, “I think she will not refuse now.”

Just then Bruno, who was going back to his work, came out of the cottage, and thought he must be dreaming when he saw Felicia; but she called him very kindly, and begged the Queen to take pity on him.

“What!” she said, “when he was so unkind to you?”

“Ah! madam,” said the Princess, “I am so happy that I should like everybody else to be happy too.”

The Queen kissed her, and said: “Well, to please you, let me see what I can do for this cross Bruno.” And with a wave of her wand she turned the poor little cottage into a splendid palace, full of treasures; only the two stools and the straw bed remained just as they were, to remind him of his former poverty. Then the Queen touched Bruno himself, and made him gentle and polite and grateful, and he thanked her and the Princess a thousand times. Lastly, the Queen restored the hen and the cabbages to their natural forms, and left them all very contented. The

Prince and Princess were married as soon as possible with great splendor, and lived happily ever after.

9. THE TWO JUGGLERS

Book: A Chinese Wonder Book

Editor: Norman Hinsdale Pitman

Origin: Chinese

One beautiful spring day two men strolled into the public square of a well-known Chinese city. They were plainly dressed and looked like ordinary countrymen who had come in to see the sights. Judging by their faces, they were father and son. The elder, a wrinkled man of perhaps fifty, wore a scant grey beard. The younger had a small box on his shoulder.

At the hour when these strangers entered the public square, a large crowd had gathered, for it was a feast day, and every one was bent on having a good time. All the people seemed very happy. Some, seated in little open-air booths, were eating, drinking, and smoking. Others were buying odds and ends from the street-vendors, tossing coins, and playing various games of chance.

The two men walked about aimlessly. They seemed to have no friends among the pleasure-seekers. At last, however, as they stood reading a public notice posted at the entrance of the town-hall or yamen, a bystander asked them who they were.

"Oh, we are jugglers from a distant province," said the elder, smiling and pointing towards the box. "We can do many tricks for the amusement of the people."

Soon it was spread about among the crowd that two famous jugglers had just arrived from the capital, and that they were able to perform many wonderful deeds. Now it happened that the mandarin or mayor of the city, at that very moment was entertaining a number of guests in the yamen. They had just finished eating, and the host was wondering what he should do to amuse his friends, when a servant told him of the jugglers.

"Ask them what they can do," said the mandarin eagerly. "I will pay them well if they can really amuse us, but I want something more than the old tricks of knife-throwing and balancing. They must show us something new."

The servant went outside and spoke to the jugglers: "The great man bids you tell him what you can do. If you can amuse his visitors he will bring them out to the private grand stand, and let you perform before them and the people who are gathered together."

"Tell your honourable master," said the elder, whom we shall call Chang, "that, try us as he will, he will not be disappointed. Tell him that we come from the unknown land of dreams and visions, that we can turn rocks into mountains, rivers into oceans, mice into elephants, in short, that there is nothing in magic too difficult for us to do."

The official was delighted when he heard the report of his servant. "Now we may have a little fun," he said to his guests, "for there are jugglers outside who will perform their wonderful tricks before us."

The guests filed out on to the grand stand at one side of the public square. The mandarin commanded that a rope should be stretched across so as to leave an open space in full view of the crowd, where the two Changs might give their exhibition.

For a time the two strangers entertained the people with some of the simpler tricks, such as spinning plates in the air, tossing bowls up and catching them on chopsticks, making flowers grow from empty pots, and transforming one object into another. At last,

however, the mandarin cried out: "These tricks are very good of their kind, but how about those idle boasts of changing rivers into oceans and mice into elephants? Did you not say that you came from the land of dreams? These tricks you have done are stale and shopworn. Have you nothing new with which to regale my guests on this holiday?"

"Most certainly, your excellency. But surely you would not have a labourer do more than his employer requires? Would that not be quite contrary to the teachings of our fathers? Be assured, sir, anything that you demand I can do for you. Only say the word."

The mandarin laughed outright at this boasting language. "Take care, my man! Do not go too far with your promises. There are too many impostors around for me to believe every stranger. Hark you! no lying, for if you lie in the presence of my guests, I shall take great pleasure in having you beaten."

"My words are quite true, your excellency," repeated Chang earnestly. "What have we to gain by deceit, we who have performed our miracles before the countless hosts of yonder Western Heaven?"

"Ha, ha! hear the braggarts!" shouted the guests. "What shall we command them to do?"

For a moment they consulted together, whispering and laughing.

"I have it," cried the host finally. "Our feast was short of fruit, since this is the off season. Suppose we let this fellow supply us. Here, fellow, produce us a peach, and be quick about it. We have no time for fooling."

"What, masters, a peach?" exclaimed the elder Chang in mock dismay. "Surely at this season you do not expect a peach."

"Caught at his own game," laughed the guests, and the people began to hoot derisively.

"But, father, you promised to do anything he required," urged the son. "If he asks even a peach, how can you refuse and at the same time save your face?"

"Hear the boy talk," mumbled the father, "and yet, perhaps he's right. Very well, masters," turning to the crowd, "if it's a peach you want, why, a peach you shall have, even though I must send into the garden of the Western Heaven for the fruit."

The people became silent and the mandarin's guests forgot to laugh. The old man, still muttering, opened the box from which he had been taking the magic bowls, plates, and other articles. "To think of people wanting peaches at this season! What is the world coming to?"

After fumbling in the box for some moments he drew out a skein of golden thread, fine spun and as light as gossamer. No sooner had he unwound a portion of this thread than a sudden gust of wind carried it up into the air above the heads of the onlookers. Faster and faster the old man paid out the magic coil, higher and higher the free end rose into the heavens, until, strain his eyes as he would, no one present could see into what far-region it had vanished.

"Wonderful, wonderful!" shouted the people with one voice, "the old man is a fairy."

For a moment they forgot all about the mandarin, the jugglers, and the peach, so amazed were they at beholding the flight of the magic thread.

At last the old man seemed satisfied with the distance to which his cord had sailed, and, with a bow to the spectators, he tied the end to a large wooden pillar which helped to support the roof of the grand stand. For a moment the structure trembled and swayed as if it too would be carried off into the blue ether, the guests turned pale and clutched their chairs for support, but not even the mandarin dared to speak, so sure were they now that they were in the presence of fairies.

"Everything is ready for the journey," said old Chang calmly.

"What! shall you leave us?" asked the mayor, finding his voice again.

"I? Oh, no, my old bones are not spry enough for quick climbing. My son here will bring us the magic peach. He is handsome and active enough to enter that heavenly garden. Graceful, oh graceful is that peach tree—of course, you remember the line from the poem—and a graceful man must pluck the fruit."

The mandarin was still more surprised at the juggler's knowledge of a famous poem from the classics. It made him and his friends all the more certain that the newcomers were indeed fairies.

The young man at a sign from his father tightened his belt and the bands about his ankles, and then, with a graceful gesture to the astonished people, sprang upon the magic string, balanced

himself for a moment on the steep incline, and then ran as nimbly up as a sailor would have mounted a rope ladder. Higher and higher he climbed till he seemed no bigger than a lark ascending into the blue sky, and then, like some tiny speck, far, far away, on the western horizon.

The people gazed in open-mouthed wonder. They were struck dumb and filled with some nameless fear; they hardly dared to look at the enchanter who stood calmly in their midst, smoking his long-stemmed pipe.

The mandarin, ashamed of having laughed at and threatened this man who was clearly a fairy, did not know what to say. He snapped his long finger nails and looked at his guests in mute astonishment. The visitors silently drank their tea, and the crowd of sightseers craned their necks in a vain effort to catch sight of the vanished fairy. Only one in all that assembly, a bright-eyed little boy of eight, dared to break the silence, and he caused a hearty burst of merriment by crying out, "Oh, daddy, will the bad young man fly off into the sky and leave his poor father all alone?"

The greybeard laughed loudly with the others, and tossed the lad a copper. "Ah, the good boy," he said smiling, "he has been well trained to love his father; no fear of foreign ways spoiling his filial piety."

After a few moments of waiting, old Chang laid aside his pipe and fixed his eyes once more on the western sky. "It is coming," he said quietly. "The peach will soon be here."

Suddenly he held out his hand as if to catch some falling object, but, look as they would, the people could see nothing. Swish! thud! it came like a streak of light, and, lo, there in the magician's fingers was a peach, the most beautiful specimen the people had ever seen, large and rosy. "Straight from the garden of the gods," said Chang, handing the fruit to the mandarin, "a peach in the Second Moon, and the snow hardly off the ground."

Trembling with excitement, the official took the peach and cut it open. It was large enough for all his guests to have a taste, and such a taste it was! They smacked their lips and wished for more, secretly thinking that never again would ordinary fruit be worth the eating.

But all this time the old juggler, magician, fairy or whatever you choose to call him, was looking anxiously into the sky. The result of this trick was more than he had bargained for. True, he had been able to produce the magic peach which the mandarin had called for, but his son, where was his son? He shaded his eyes and looked far up into the blue heavens, and so did the people, but no one could catch a glimpse of the departed youth.

"Oh, my son, my son," cried the old man in despair, "how cruel is the fate that has robbed me of you, the only prop of my declining years! Oh, my boy, my boy, would that I had not sent you on so perilous a journey! Who now will look after my grave when I am gone?"

Suddenly the silken cord on which the young man had sped so daringly into the sky, gave a quick jerk which almost toppled over the post to which it was tied, and there, before the very eyes of the people, it fell from the lofty height, a silken pile on the ground in front of them.

The greybeard uttered a loud cry and covered his face with his hands. "Alas! the whole story is plain enough," he sobbed. "My boy was caught in the act of plucking the magic peach from the garden of the gods, and they have thrown him into prison. Woe is me! Ah! woe is me!"

The mandarin and his friends were deeply touched by the old man's grief, and tried in vain to comfort him. "Perhaps he will return," they said. "Have courage!"

"Yes, but in what a shape?" replied the magician. "See! even now they are restoring him to his father."

The people looked, and they saw twirling and twisting through the air the young man's arm. It fell upon the ground in front of them at the fairy's feet. Next came the head, a leg, the body. One by one before the gasping, shuddering people, the parts of the unfortunate young man were restored to his father.

After the first outburst of wild, frantic grief the old man by a great effort gained control of his feelings, and began to gather up these parts, putting them tenderly into the wooden box.

By this time many of the spectators were weeping at the sight of the father's affliction. "Come," said the mandarin at last, deeply moved, "let us present the old man with sufficient money to give his boy a decent burial."

All present agreed willingly, for there is no sight in China that causes greater pity than that of an aged parent robbed by death of an only son. The copper cash fell in a shower at the juggler's feet, and soon tears of gratitude were mingled with those of sorrow. He gathered up the money and tied it in a large black cloth. Then a wonderful change came over his face. He seemed all of a sudden to forget his grief. Turning to the box, he raised the lid. The people heard him say: "Come, my son; the crowd is waiting for you to thank them. Hurry up! They have been very kind to us."

In an instant the box was thrown open with a bang, and before the mandarin and his friends, before the eyes of all the sightseers the young man, strong and whole once more, stepped forth and bowed, clasping his hands and giving the national salute.

For a moment all were silent. Then, as the wonder of the whole thing dawned upon them, the people broke forth into a tumult of shouts, laughter, and compliments. "The fairies have surely come to visit us!" they shouted. "The city will be blessed with good fortune! Perhaps it is Fairy Old Boy himself who is among us!"

The mandarin rose and addressed the jugglers, thanking them in the name of the city for their visit and for the taste they had given to him and his guests of the peach from the heavenly orchard.

Even as he spoke, the magic box opened again; the two fairies disappeared inside, the lid closed, and the chest rose from the ground above the heads of the people. For a moment it floated round in a circle like some homing pigeon trying to find its bearings before starting on a return journey. Then, with a sudden burst of speed, it shot off into the heavens and vanished from the sight of those below, and not a thing remained as proof of the strange visitors except the magic peach seed that lay beside the teacups on the mandarin's table.

According to the most ancient writings there is now nothing left to tell of this story. It has been declared, however, by later scholars that the official and his friends who had eaten the magic peach, at once began to feel a change in their lives. While, before the coming of the fairies, they had lived unfairly, accepting bribes and taking part in many shameful practices, now, after tasting of the heavenly fruit, they began to grow better. The people soon began to honour and love them, saying, "Surely these great men are not like others of their kind, for these men are just and honest in their dealings with us. They seem not to be ruling for their own reward!"

However this may be, we do know that before many years their city became the centre of the greatest peach-growing section of China, and even yet when strangers walk in the orchards and look up admiringly at the beautiful sweet-smelling fruit, the natives sometimes ask proudly, "And have you never heard about the wonderful peach which was the beginning of all our orchards, the magic peach the fairies brought us from the Western Heaven?"

10. THE JUDGMENT OF THE FLOWERS

Book: Fairy Tales From Spain

Author: J. Munoz Escomez

Origin: Spanish

"Is it true that the rose is the queen of the flowers?" asked Richard of his papa.

And the latter said to him jokingly:

"Ask them themselves, they ought to be better informed."

Richard took what his father told him literally, and going down into the garden, approached a plum-tree which gallantly waved to and fro in the wind, and taking off his hat with great respect, asked it:

"Mr. Plum-tree, will you be good enough to tell me if the rose is the queen of the flowers?"

But the plum-tree continued to move to and fro in the wind without answering him.

And drawing near to an almond tree, whose white blossoms had just opened, he repeated his question.

"Mr. Almond-tree, is it true that the rose is the queen of the flowers?"

The almond-tree remained silent, but its blossoms went red with envy.

"The almond-tree is also unprincipled," thought Richard. "All these trees have a discourteous tone. Let us ask the plants."

A splendid double pink, which raised its splendid corolla with a gallantry worthy of its nobility, as soon as he heard the question, graciously bowed upon his stalk and answered:

"Quite so, the rose is our beloved queen, on account of being so beautiful and because her delicate aroma has no rival. But if you wish to know more, come back to-night at twelve o'clock and notice what happens in your garden."

"Thank you, kind pink. I will not miss to-night."

Richard went to bed at the usual time, but he could not sleep. At half-past eleven he dressed himself again, and slipping secretly down stairs arrived in the garden and awaited events. On the last stroke of midnight a bright light appeared from the sky and that ray of light condensed on the earth, taking the figure of a beautiful woman crowned with flowers, who carried in her hand a little golden wand which gave off brilliant reflections. The fairy extended her hand and immediately an unusual movement was produced among the plants. The pinks turned into elegant gentlemen in bright costumes of ruby, pink, and green; the hyacinths and jasmines into gallant little pages with fair hair; the white lilies were pale ladies of singular beauty, dressed in white; the dahlias wore long trains and at the neck a ruffle of delicate lace of colours which recalled the flowers which had preceded; the violet modestly tried to hide her beautiful countenance of velvety skin and her eyes of gentle aspect among a group of poppies, who passed arm-in-arm, attracting attention by their blood red costumes. Finally from amongst a group of mournful evergreens, who were chatting with some beautiful pansies, appeared the queen of the fête, the rose. Her presence produced a murmur of admiration, never had she been so lovely. Her face held the freshness of the flower, and her pink dress with a long train was of very fine silk which rustled as the sovereign walked. An olive-tree turned into a throne and dais, and the rose, without any other ceremony than a general greeting, took her seat on the throne. She raised her arm, imposing silence, and everybody became silent.

"Gentlemen," said the queen, "once again the good magician Spring has re-animated our hearts. We have not met since last year and there are several grave matters to resolve, but the most important is the manner of defending ourselves from the bees, wasps, and butterflies who continually sip our honey, accelerating our end. On this point I have already begged Spring to have the accused appear before me, so that this gathering is really an oral judgment."

At a signal from the magician the accused appeared in costumes of etiquette, the butterfly wearing its finest clothes.

It appeared before the queen with its head modestly bent and its face lighted up by a blush.

"What does your majesty wish?" it asked.

"To inquire the motive why you presume to take away our nectar," said the rose.

"Ah, madam!" replied the butterfly, touched, "little harm I do you, because I never take more than is necessary to feed myself, and I have never abused your hospitality."

"That is well; we will take that into account as an extenuating circumstance for you. Let the wasp approach."

The wasp entered in a black dress-coat and a yellow necktie striped with black.

"I," it said, "gather nectar from you because I have proposed to work like the bee, although I have not yet succeeded in doing so since the beginning of the world, but still not much time has passed and I hope to learn."

"How can you hope to learn," interrupted the queen, "if all that you do is to eat it all without having any to make honeycombs? Your case is a very bad one. As you have not a good lawyer you are lost. Fetch the bee."

The latter appeared, her presence awakening a general murmur. It wore neither a dress-coat nor a frock-coat, nor even a lounge-coat; it was wearing a blouse covered with stains of honey and wax. All drew away from the bee for fear of getting soiled.

"Now I know what I am coming to," it said without keeping quiet. "It is always the same song: that we do take away, that we do not take away the nectar from the flowers. Good, what about it? We do not do so for ourselves, but for our master. All the sweet syrup of your corollas we enclose in the hive, and from there every year it comes out so that Man, our master, rejoices his palate with it and embalms his breath with your aroma. After dying in summer and losing your green leaves in autumn, you still live in us, that we may make your remembrance lasting. And still you complain! You, it is true, give your blood, but it would be worth nothing if we did not gather it in order to store it. The work is ours, and the work is worth as much as your nectar. If you have to condemn me, do so quickly, I beg of you, as I am losing a great deal of work time, and we are somewhat behindhand with the work."

The rose called the pink and the violet, discussed the case with them, and after some minutes' reflection, spoke in this manner:

"The wasp is an unconscientious glutton who, under the pretext of making honeycombs, which she never succeeds in doing, robs us. Give her five hundred hard lashes."

On hearing this a deadly nightshade seized the wasp and carried her away to bestow the correction.

"The butterfly's innocence and moderation favour her," said the queen, "therefore I declare her absolved with all favourable pronouncements."

The butterfly bowed respectfully and kissed the sovereign's hand. Her golden feelers glistened, she shook her wings, filling the ambient air with diamond dust, and took to flight showering cascades of light.

"With regard to the bee," continued the rose, "not only do I find her without any guilt, but wish that henceforth you do not close your petals to her, but leave her at liberty to carry away the honey that she requires. As a reward for her laboriousness, and as a symbol of perpetual friendship between us, I am going to give her a kiss."

The bee, much moved, advanced, and placing her blushing forehead within reach of the queen's lips, received a kiss of peace, which made tears of gratitude gather in her eyes.

A delicious perfume invaded the garden, the fairy raised her wand, and each flower returned to its post, recovering its original form.

The magician flew into space, wrapped in a moonbeam, and Richard remained alone, pensive in the recollection of what he had seen.

"What a beautiful lesson!" he said. "Even in the kingdom of flowers work gains the most precious reward."

11. CAP 'O RUSHES

Book: English Fairy Tales

Editor: Joseph Jacobs

Origin: English

Well, there was once a very rich gentleman, and he'd three daughters, and he thought he'd see how fond they were of him. So he says to the first, "How much do you love me, my dear?"

"Why," says she, "as I love my life."

"That's good," says he.

So he says to the second, "How much do *you* love me, my dear?"

"Why," says she, "better nor all the world."

"That's good," says he.

So he says to the third, "How much do *you* love me, my dear?"

"Why, I love you as fresh meat loves salt," says she.

Well, he was that angry. "You don't love me at all," says he, "and in my house you stay no more." So he drove her out there and then, and shut the door in her face.

Well, she went away on and on till she came to a fen, and there she gathered a lot of rushes and made them into a kind of a sort of a cloak with a hood, to cover her from head to foot, and to hide her fine clothes. And then she went on and on till she came to a great house.

"Do you want a maid?" says she.

"No, we don't," said they.

"I haven't nowhere to go," says she; "and I ask no wages, and do any sort of work," says she.

"Well," says they, "if you like to wash the pots and scrape the saucepans you may stay," said they.

So she stayed there and washed the pots and scraped the saucepans and did all the dirty work. And because she gave no name they called her "Cap o' Rushes."

Well, one day there was to be a great dance a little way off, and the servants were allowed to go and look on at the grand people. Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, so she stayed at home.

But when they were gone she offed with her cap o' rushes, and cleaned herself, and went to the dance. And no one there was so finely dressed as her.

Well, who should be there but her master's son, and what should he do but fall in love with her the minute he set eyes on her. He wouldn't dance with any one else.

But before the dance was done Cap o' Rushes slipt off, and away she went home. And when the other maids came back she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next morning they said to her, "You did miss a sight, Cap o' Rushes!"

"What was that?" says she.

"Why, the beautifullest lady you ever see, dressed right gay and ga'. The young master, he never took his eyes off her."

"Well, I should have liked to have seen her," says Cap o' Rushes.

"Well, there's to be another dance this evening, and perhaps she'll be there."

But, come the evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go with them. Howsoever, when they were gone, she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son had been reckoning on seeing her, and he danced with no one else, and never took his eyes off her. But, before the dance was over, she slipt off, and home she went, and when the maids came back she, pretended to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Next day they said to her again, "Well, Cap o' Rushes, you should ha' been there to see the lady. There she was again, gay and ga', and the young master he never took his eyes off her."

"Well, there," says she, "I should ha' liked to ha' seen her."

"Well," says they, "there's a dance again this evening, and you must go with us, for she's sure to be there."

Well, come this evening, Cap o' Rushes said she was too tired to go, and do what they would she stayed at home. But when they were gone she offed with her cap o' rushes and cleaned herself, and away she went to the dance.

The master's son was rarely glad when he saw her. He danced with none but her and never took his eyes off her. When she wouldn't tell him her name, nor where she came from, he gave her a ring and told her if he didn't see her again he should die.

Well, before the dance was over, off she slipped, and home she went, and when the maids came home she was pretending to be asleep with her cap o' rushes on.

Well, next day they says to her, "There, Cap o' Rushes, you didn't come last night, and now you won't see the lady, for there's no more dances."

"Well I should have rarely liked to have seen her," says she.

The master's son he tried every way to find out where the lady was gone, but go where he might, and ask whom he might, he never heard anything about her. And he got worse and worse for the love of her till he had to keep his bed.

“Make some gruel for the young master,” they said to the cook. “He's dying for the love of the lady.” The cook she set about making it when Cap o' Rushes came in.

“What are you a-doing of?”, says she.

“I'm going to make some gruel for the young master,” says the cook, “for he's dying for love of the lady.”

“Let me make it,” says Cap o' Rushes.

Well, the cook wouldn't at first, but at last she said yes, and Cap o' Rushes made the gruel. And when she had made it she slipped the ring into it on the sly before the cook took it upstairs.

The young man he drank it and then he saw the ring at the bottom.

“Send for the cook,” says he.

So up she comes.

“Who made this gruel here?” says he.

“I did,” says the cook, for she was frightened.

And he looked at her,

“No, you didn't,” says he. “Say who did it, and you shan't be harmed.”

“Well, then, 'twas Cap o' Rushes,” says she.

“Send Cap o' Rushes here,” says he.

So Cap o' Rushes came.

“Did you make my gruel?” says he.

“Yes, I did,” says she.

“Where did you get this ring?” says he.

“From him that gave it me,” says she.

“Who are you, then?” says the young man.

“I'll show you,” says she. And she offed with her cap o' rushes, and there she was in her beautiful clothes.

Well, the master's son he got well very soon, and they were to be married in a little time. It was to be a very grand wedding, and every one was asked far and near. And Cap o' Rushes' father was asked. But she never told anybody who she was.

But before the wedding she went to the cook, and says she:

“I want you to dress every dish without a mite o' salt.”

“That'll be rare nasty,” says the cook.

“That doesn't signify,” says she.

“Very well,” says the cook.

Well, the wedding-day came, and they were married. And after they were married all the company sat down to the dinner. When they began to eat the meat, that was so tasteless they couldn't eat it. But Cap o' Rushes' father he tried first one dish and then another, and then he burst out crying.

“What is the matter?” said the master's son to him.

“Oh!” says he, “I had a daughter. And I asked her how much she loved me. And she said 'As much as fresh meat loves salt.' And I turned her from my door, for I thought she didn't love me. And now I see she loved me best of all. And she may be dead for aught I know.”

“No, father, here she is!” says Cap o' Rushes. And she goes up to him and puts her arms round him.

And so they were happy ever after.

12. THE WOUNDED LION

Book: The Pink Fairy Book

Editor: Andrew Lang

Origin: Spanish

There was once a girl so poor that she had nothing to live on, and wandered about the world asking for charity. One day she arrived at a thatched cottage, and inquired if they could give her any work. The farmer said he wanted a cowherd, as his own had left him, and if the girl liked the place she might take it. So she became a cowherd.

One morning she was driving her cows through the meadows when she heard near by a loud groan that almost sounded human. She hastened to the spot from which the noise came, and found it proceeded from a lion who lay stretched upon the ground.

You can guess how frightened she was! But the lion seemed in such pain that she was sorry for him, and drew nearer and nearer till she saw he had a large thorn in one foot. She pulled out the thorn and bound up the place, and the lion was grateful, and licked her hand by way of thanks with his big rough tongue.

When the girl had finished she went back to find the cows, but they had gone, and though she hunted everywhere she never found them; and she had to return home and confess to her master, who scolded her bitterly, and afterwards beat her. Then he said, ‘Now you will have to look after the asses.’

So every day she had to take the asses to the woods to feed, until one morning, exactly a year after she had found the lion, she heard a groan which sounded quite human. She went straight to the place from which the noise came, and, to her great surprise, beheld the same lion stretched on the ground with a deep wound across his face.

This time she was not afraid at all, and ran towards him, washing the wound and laying soothing herbs upon it; and when she had bound it up the lion thanked her in the same manner as before.

After that she returned to her flock, but they were nowhere to be seen. She searched here and she searched there, but they had vanished completely!

Then she had to go home and confess to her master, who first scolded her and afterwards beat her. 'Now go,' he ended, 'and look after the pigs!'

So the next day she took out the pigs, and found them such good feeding grounds that they grew fatter every day.

Another year passed by, and one morning when the maiden was out with her pigs she heard a groan which sounded quite human. She ran to see what it was, and found her old friend the lion, wounded through and through, fast dying under a tree.

She fell on her knees before him and washed his wounds one by one, and laid healing herbs upon them. And the lion licked her hands and thanked her, and asked if she would not stay and sit by him. But the girl said she had her pigs to watch, and she must go and see after them.

So she ran to the place where she had left them, but they had vanished as if the earth had swallowed them up. She whistled and called, but only the birds answered her.

Then she sank down on the ground and wept bitterly, not daring to return home until some hours had passed away.

And when she had had her cry out she got up and searched all up and down the wood. But it was no use; there was not a sign of the pigs.

At last she thought that perhaps if she climbed a tree she might see further. But no sooner was she seated on the highest branch than something happened which put the pigs quite out of her head. This was a handsome young man who was coming down the path; and when he had almost reached the tree he pulled aside a rock and disappeared behind it.

The maiden rubbed her eyes and wondered if she had been dreaming. Next she thought, 'I will not stir from here till I see him come out, and discover who he is.' Accordingly she waited, and at dawn the next morning the rock moved to one side and a lion came out.

When he had gone quite out of sight the girl climbed down from the tree and went to the rock, which she pushed aside, and entered the opening before her. The path led to a beautiful house. She went in, swept and dusted the furniture, and put everything tidy. Then she ate a very good dinner, which was on a shelf in the corner, and once more clambered up to the top of her tree.

As the sun set she saw the same young man walking gaily down the path, and, as before, he pushed aside the rock and disappeared behind it.

Next morning out came the lion. He looked sharply about him on all sides, but saw no one, and then vanished into the forest.

The maiden then came down from the tree and did exactly as she had done the day before. Thus three days went by, and every day she went and tidied up the palace. At length, when the

girl found she was no nearer to discovering the secret, she resolved to ask him, and in the evening when she caught sight of him coming through the wood she came down from the tree and begged him to tell her his name.

The young man looked very pleased to see her, and said he thought it must be she who had secretly kept his house for so many days. And he added that he was a prince enchanted by a powerful giant, but was only allowed to take his own shape at night, for all day he was forced to appear as the lion whom she had so often helped; and, more than this, it was the giant who had stolen the oxen and the asses and the pigs in revenge for her kindness.

And the girl asked him, 'What can I do to disenchant you?'

But he said he was afraid it was very difficult, because the only way was to get a lock of hair from the head of a king's daughter, to spin it, and to make from it a cloak for the giant, who lived up on the top of a high mountain.

'Very well,' answered the girl, 'I will go to the city, and knock at the door of the king's palace, and ask the princess to take me as a servant.'

So they parted, and when she arrived at the city she walked about the streets crying, 'Who will hire me for a servant? Who will hire me for a servant?' But, though many people liked her looks, for she was clean and neat, the maiden would listen to none, and still continued crying, 'Who will hire me for a servant? Who will hire me for a servant?'

At last there came the waiting-maid of the princess.

'What can you do?' she said; and the girl was forced to confess that she could do very little.

'Then you will have to do scullion's work, and wash up dishes,' said she; and they went straight back to the palace.

Then the maiden dressed her hair afresh, and made herself look very neat and smart, and everyone admired and praised her, till by-and-bye it came to the ears of the princess. And she sent for the girl, and when she saw her, and how beautifully she had dressed her hair, the princess told her she was to come and comb out hers.

Now the hair of the princess was very thick and long, and shone like the sun. And the girl combed it and combed it till it was brighter than ever. And the princess was pleased, and bade her come every day and comb her hair, till at length the girl took courage, and begged leave to cut off one of the long, thick locks.

The princess, who was very proud of her hair, did not like the idea of parting with any of it, so she said no. But the girl could not give up hope, and each day she entreated to be allowed to cut off just one tress. At length the princess lost patience, and exclaimed, 'You may have it, then, on condition that you shall find the handsomest prince in the world to be my bridegroom!'

And the girl answered that she would, and cut off the lock, and wove it into a coat that glittered like silk, and brought it to the young man, who told her to carry it straight to the giant. But that she must be careful to cry out a long way off what she had with her, or else he would spring upon her and run her through with his sword.

So the maiden departed and climbed up the mountain, but before she reached the top the giant heard her footsteps, and rushed out breathing fire and flame, having a sword in one hand and a club in the other. But she cried loudly that she had brought him the coat, and then he grew quiet, and invited her to come into his house.

He tried on the coat, but it was too short, and he threw it off, and declared it was no use. And the girl picked it up sadly, and returned quite in despair to the king's palace.

The next morning, when she was combing the princess's hair, she begged leave to cut off another lock. At first the princess said no, but the girl begged so hard that at length she gave in on condition that she should find her a prince as bridegroom.

The maiden told her that she had already found him, and spun the lock into shining stuff, and fastened it on to the end of the coat. And when it was finished she carried it to the giant.

This time it fitted him, and he was quite pleased, and asked her what he could give her in return. And she said that the only reward he could give her was to take the spell off the lion and bring him back to his own shape.

For a long time the giant would not hear of it, but in the end he gave in, and told her exactly how it must all be done. She was to kill the lion herself and cut him up very small; then she must burn him, and cast his ashes into the water, and out of the water the prince would come free from enchantment for ever.

But the maiden went away weeping, lest the giant should have deceived her, and that after she had killed the lion she would find she had also slain the prince.

Weeping she came down the mountain, and weeping she joined the prince, who was awaiting her at the bottom; and when he had heard her story he comforted her, and bade her be of good courage, and to do the bidding of the giant.

And the maiden believed what the prince told her; and in the morning when he put on his lion's form she took a knife and slew him, and cut him up very small, and burnt him, and cast his ashes into the water, and out of the water came the prince, beautiful as the day, and as glad to look upon as the sun himself.

Then the young man thanked the maiden for all she had done for him, and said she should be his wife and none other. But the maiden only wept sore, and answered that that she could never be, for she had given her promise to the princess when she cut off her hair that the prince should wed her and her only.

But the prince replied, 'If it is the princess, we must go quickly. Come with me.'

So they went together to the king's palace. And when the king and queen and princess saw the young man a great joy filled their hearts, for they knew him for the eldest son, who had long ago been enchanted by a giant and lost to them.

And he asked his parents' consent that he might marry the girl who had saved him, and a great feast was made, and the maiden became a princess, and in due time a queen, and she richly deserved all the honours showered upon her.

13. ECHO AND NARCISSUS

Book: The Metamorphoses of Ovid

Translator: Henry T. Riley

Origin: Latin

Echo, having often amused Juno with her stories, to give time to Jupiter's mistresses to make their escape, the Goddess, at last, punishes her for the deception. She is slighted and despised by Narcissus, with whom she falls in love.

He, much celebrated by fame throughout the cities of Aonia, gave unerring answers to the people consulting him. The azure Liriope was the first to make essay and experiment of his infallible voice; whom once Cephisus encircled in his winding stream, and offered violence to, when enclosed by his waters. The most beautiful Nymph produced an infant from her teeming womb, which even then might have been beloved, and she called him Narcissus. Being consulted concerning him, whether he was destined to see the distant season of mature old age; the prophet, expounding destiny, said, "If he never recognizes himself." Long did the words of the soothsayer appear frivolous; but the event, the thing itself, the manner of his death, and the novel nature of his frenzy, confirmed it.

And now the son of Cephisus had added one to three times five years, and he might seem to be a boy and a young man as well. Many a youth, and many a damsel, courted him; but there was so stubborn a pride in his youthful beauty, that no youths, no damsels made any impression on him. The noisy Nymph, who has neither learned to hold her tongue after another speaking, nor to speak first herself, resounding Echo, espied him, as he was driving the timid stags into his nets. Echo was then a body, not a voice; and yet the babbler had no other use of her speech than she now has, to be able to repeat the last words out of many.

Juno had done this; because when often she might have been able to detect the Nymphs in the mountains in the embrace of her husband, Jupiter, she purposely used to detain the Goddess with a long story, until the Nymphs had escaped. After the daughter of Saturn perceived this, she said, "But small exercise of this tongue, with which I have been deluded, shall be allowed thee, and a very short use of thy voice." And she confirmed her threats by the event. Still, in the end of one's speaking she redoubles the voice, and returns the words she hears. When, therefore, she beheld Narcissus wandering through the pathless forests, and fell in love with him, she stealthily followed his steps; and the more she followed him, with the nearer flame did she burn. In no other manner than as when the native sulphur, spread around the tops of torches, catches the flame applied to it. Ah! how often did she desire to accost him in soft accents, and to employ

soft entreaties! Nature resists, and suffers her not to begin; but what Nature does permit, that she is ready for; to await his voice, to which to return her own words.

By chance, the youth, being separated from the trusty company of his attendants, cries out, "Is there any one here?" and Echo answers "Here!" He is amazed; and when he has cast his eyes on every side, he cries out with a loud voice, "Come!" Whereon she calls the youth who calls. He looks back; and again, as no one comes, he says, "Why dost thou avoid me?" and just as many words as he spoke, he receives. He persists; and being deceived by the imitation of an alternate voice, he says, "Let us come together here;" and Echo, that could never more willingly answer any sound whatever, replies, "Let us come together here!" and she follows up her own words, and rushing from the woods, is going to throw her arms around the neck she has so longed for. He flies; and as he flies, he exclaims, "Remove thy hands from thus embracing me; I will die first, before thou shalt have the enjoyment of me." She answers nothing but "Have the enjoyment of me." Thus rejected, she lies hid in the woods, and hides her blushing face with green leaves, and from that time lives in lonely caves; but yet her love remains, and increases from the mortification of her refusal. Watchful cares waste away her miserable body; leanness shrivels her skin, and all the juices of her body fly off in air. Her voice and her bones alone are left.

Her voice still continues, but they say that her bones received the form of stones. Since then, she lies concealed in the woods, and is never seen on the mountains: but is heard in all of them. It is her voice alone which remains alive in her.

14. THE TIGER, THE BRAHMAN, AND THE JACKAL

Book: Indian Fairy Tales

Editor: Joseph Jacobs

Origin: Indian

Once upon a time, a tiger was caught in a trap. He tried in vain to get out through the bars, and rolled and bit with rage and grief when he failed.

By chance a poor Brahman came by. "Let me out of this cage, oh pious one!" cried the tiger.

"Nay, my friend," replied the Brahman mildly, "you would probably eat me if I did."

"Not at all!" swore the tiger with many oaths; "on the contrary, I should be for ever grateful, and serve you as a slave!"

Now when the tiger sobbed and sighed and wept and swore, the pious Brahman's heart softened, and at last he consented to open the door of the cage. Out popped the tiger, and, seizing the

poor man, cried, "What a fool you are! What is to prevent my eating you now, for after being cooped up so long I am just terribly hungry!"

In vain the Brahman pleaded for his life; the most he could gain was a promise to abide by the decision of the first three things he chose to question as to the justice of the tiger's action.

So the Brahman first asked a *pipal* tree what it thought of the matter, but the *pipal* tree replied coldly, "What have you to complain about? Don't I give shade and shelter to every one who passes by, and don't they in return tear down my branches to feed their cattle? Don't whimper—be a man!"

Then the Brahman, sad at heart, went further afield till he saw a buffalo turning a well-wheel; but he fared no better from it, for it answered, "You are a fool to expect gratitude! Look at me! Whilst I gave milk they fed me on cotton-seed and oil-cake, but now I am dry they yoke me here, and give me refuse as fodder!"

The Brahman, still more sad, asked the road to give him its opinion.

"My dear sir," said the road, "how foolish you are to expect anything else! Here am I, useful to everybody, yet all, rich and poor, great and small, trample on me as they go past, giving me nothing but the ashes of their pipes and the husks of their grain!"

On this the Brahman turned back sorrowfully, and on the way he met a jackal, who called out, "Why, what's the matter, Mr. Brahman? You look as miserable as a fish out of water!"

The Brahman told him all that had occurred. "How very confusing!" said the jackal, when the recital was ended; "would you mind telling me over again, for everything has got so mixed up?"

The Brahman told it all over again, but the jackal shook his head in a distracted sort of way, and still could not understand.

"It's very odd," said he, sadly, "but it all seems to go in at one ear and out at the other! I will go to the place where it all happened, and then perhaps I shall be able to give a judgment."

So they returned to the cage, by which the tiger was waiting for the Brahman, and sharpening his teeth and claws.

"You've been away a long time!" growled the savage beast, "but now let us begin our dinner."

"*Our* dinner!" thought the wretched Brahman, as his knees knocked together with fright; "what a remarkably delicate way of putting it!"

"Give me five minutes, my lord!" he pleaded, "in order that I may explain matters to the jackal here, who is somewhat slow in his wits."

The tiger consented, and the Brahman began the whole story over again, not missing a single detail, and spinning as long a yarn as possible.

"Oh, my poor brain! oh, my poor brain!" cried the jackal, wringing its paws. "Let me see! how did it all begin? You were in the cage, and the tiger came walking by——"

"Pooh!" interrupted the tiger, "what a fool you are! / was in the cage."

"Of course!" cried the jackal, pretending to tremble with fright; "yes! I was in the cage—no I wasn't—dear! dear! where are my wits? Let me see—the tiger was in the Brahman, and the cage came walking by——no, that's not it, either! Well, don't mind me, but begin your dinner, for I shall never understand!"

"Yes, you shall!" returned the tiger, in a rage at the jackal's stupidity; "I'll *make* you understand! Look here—I am the tiger——"

"Yes, my lord!"

"And that is the Brahman——"

"Yes, my lord!"

"And that is the cage——"

"Yes, my lord!"

"And I was in the cage—do you understand?"

"Yes—no—— Please, my lord——"

"Well?" cried the tiger impatiently.

"Please, my lord!—how did you get in?"

"How!—why in the usual way, of course!"

"Oh, dear me!—my head is beginning to whirl again! Please don't be angry, my lord, but what is the usual way?"

At this the tiger lost patience, and, jumping into the cage, cried, "This way! Now do you understand how it was?"

"Perfectly!" grinned the jackal, as he dexterously shut the door, "and if you will permit me to say so, I think matters will remain as they were!"

15. MOLLY WHUPPIE

Book: English Fairy Tales

Editor: Joseph Jacobs

Origin: English / Scottish

Once upon a time there was a man and a wife had too many children, and they could not get meat for them, so they took the three youngest and left them in a wood. They travelled and travelled and could see never a house. It began to be dark, and they were hungry. At last they saw a light and made for it; it turned out to be a house. They knocked at the door, and a woman came to it, who said: "What do you want?" They said: "Please let us in and give us something to eat." The woman said: "I can't do that, as my man is a giant, and he would kill you if he comes home." They begged hard. "Let us stop for a little while," said they, "and we will go away before he comes." So she took them in, and set them down before the fire, and gave them milk and bread; but just as they had begun to eat a great knock came to the door, and a dreadful voice said:

*"Fee, fie, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of some earthly one.*

Who have you there wife?" "Eh," said the wife, "it's three poor lassies cold and hungry, and they will go away. Ye won't touch 'em, man." He said nothing, but ate up a big supper, and ordered them to stay all night. Now he had three lassies of his own, and they were to sleep in the same bed with the three strangers.

The youngest of the three strange lassies was called Molly Whuppie, and she was very clever. She noticed that before they went to bed the giant put straw ropes round her neck and her sisters', and round his own lassies' necks he put gold chains. So Molly took care and did not fall asleep, but waited till she was sure every one was sleeping sound. Then she slipped out of the bed, and took the straw ropes off her own and her sisters' necks, and took the gold chains off the giant's lassies. She then put the straw ropes on the giant's lassies and the gold on herself and her sisters, and lay down.

And in the middle of the night up rose the giant, armed with a great club, and felt for the necks with the straw. It was dark. He took his own lassies out of bed on to the floor, and battered them until they were dead, and then lay down again, thinking he had managed fine. Molly thought it time she and her sisters were out of that, so she wakened them and told them to be quiet, and they slipped out of the house. They all got out safe, and they ran and ran, and never stopped until morning, when they saw a grand house before them. It turned out to be a king's house: so Molly went in, and told her story to the king. He said: "Well, Molly, you are a clever girl, and you have managed well; but, if you would manage better, and go back, and steal the giant's sword that hangs on the back of his bed, I would give your eldest sister my eldest son to marry." Molly said she would try.

So she went back, and managed to slip into the giant's house, and crept in below the bed. The giant came home, and ate up a great supper, and went to bed. Molly waited until he was snoring, and she crept out, and reached over the giant and got down the sword; but just as she got it out over the bed it gave a rattle, and up jumped the giant, and Molly ran out at the door and the sword with her; and she ran, and he ran, till they came to the "Bridge of one hair"; and she got

over, but he couldn't, and he says, "Woe worth ye, Molly Whuppie! never ye come again." And she says "Twice yet, carle," quoth she, "I'll come to Spain." So Molly took the sword to the king, and her sister was married to his son.

Well, the king he says: "Ye've managed well, Molly; but if ye would manage better, and steal the purse that lies below the giant's pillow, I would marry your second sister to my second son." And Molly said she would try. So she set out for the giant's house, and slipped in, and hid again below the bed, and waited till the giant had eaten his supper, and was snoring sound asleep. She slipped out, and slipped her hand below the pillow, and got out the purse; but just as she was going out the giant wakened, and ran after her; and she ran, and he ran, till they came to the "Bridge of one hair," and she got over, but he couldn't, and he said, "Woe worth ye, Molly Whuppie! never you come again." "Once yet, carle," quoth she, "I'll come to Spain." So Molly took the purse to the king, and her second sister was married to the king's second son.

After that the king says to Molly: "Molly, you are a clever girl, but if you would do better yet, and steal the giant's ring that he wears on his finger, I will give you my youngest son for yourself." Molly said she would try. So back she goes to the giant's house, and hides herself below the bed. The giant wasn't long ere he came home, and, after he had eaten a great big supper, he went to his bed, and shortly was snoring loud. Molly crept out and reached over the bed, and got hold of the giant's hand, and she pulled and she pulled until she got off the ring; but just as she got it off the giant got up, and gripped her by the hand, and he says: "Now I have catcht you, Molly Whuppie, and, if I had done as much ill to you as ye have done to me, what would ye do to me?"

Molly says: "I would put you into a sack, and I'd put the cat inside with you, and the dog aside you, and a needle and thread and a shears, and I'd hang you up upon the wall, and I'd go to the wood, and choose the thickest stick I could get, and I would come home, and take you down, and bang you till you were dead."

"Well, Molly," says the giant, "I'll just do that to you."

So he gets a sack, and puts Molly into it, and the cat and the dog beside her, and a needle and thread and shears, and hangs her up upon the wall, and goes to the wood to choose a stick.

Molly she sings out: "Oh, if ye saw what I see."

"Oh," says the giant's wife, "what do ye see, Molly?"

But Molly never said a word but, "Oh, if ye saw what I see!"

The giant's wife begged that Molly would take her up into the sack till she would see what Molly saw. So Molly took the shears and cut a hole in the sack, and took out the needle and thread with her, and jumped down and helped, the giant's wife up into the sack, and sewed up the hole.

The giant's wife saw nothing, and began to ask to get down again; but Molly never minded, but hid herself at the back of the door. Home came the giant, and a great big tree in his hand, and he took down the sack, and began to batter it. His wife cried, "It's me, man;" but the dog barked and the cat mewed, and he did not know his wife's voice. But Molly came out from the back of the door, and the giant saw her, and he after her; and he ran and she ran, till they came to the "Bridge

of one hair," and she got over but he couldn't; and he said, "Woe worth you, Molly Whuppie! never you come again." "Never more, carle," quoth she, "will I come again to Spain."

So Molly took the ring to the king, and she was married to his youngest son, and she never saw the giant again.