



# THE MAGIC BIRD OF CHOMO-LUNG-MA

Tales of Mount Everest, the Turquoise Peak

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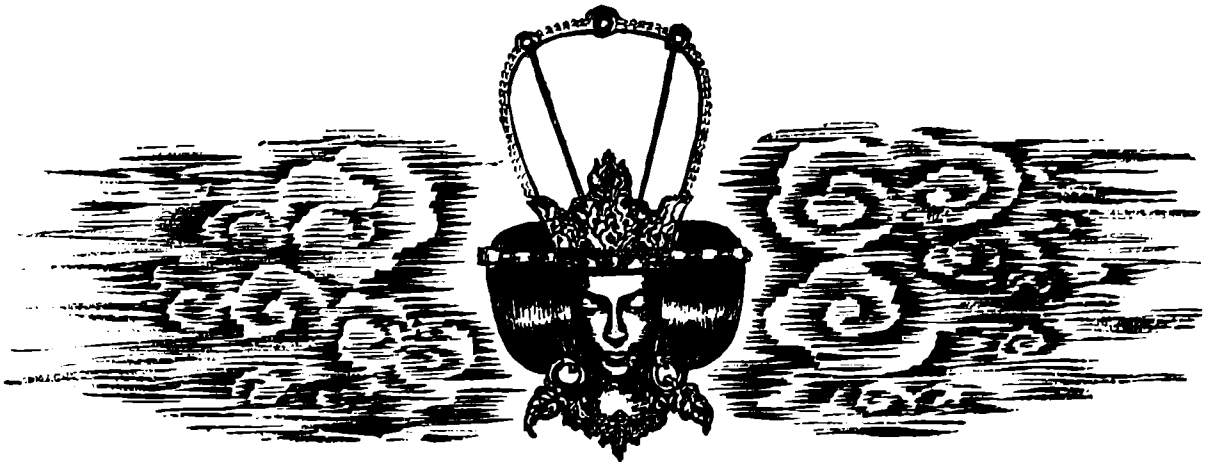


THE MAGIC BIRD OF CHOMO-LUNG-MA

*Tales of Mount Everest, the Turquoise Peak*







## THE GATHERING OF THESE TALES IN TIBET

PERHAPS one of the most fascinating stories of Tibet is that of Padma-Sambhava, the Lotus-born Saint who brought Bhuddism to that country from Udiana in Northern India. Legend tells that he traveled over the distant Himalayas, and that evil spirits of storm and tempest did their utmost to check him on his journey by venting the full force of their wrath against him; causing snowfalls and hail and wind, loosening avalanches in his path, and doing their utmost to prevent him from reaching his destination. Legend tells, too, that because of his holiness he had power to subdue the evil spirits and pass unscathed with his disciples into Tibet, carrying the teachings of the Lord Bhudda with him; and how, when he got there, the Pombo Lama, the teacher

of the ancient faith, challenged him to prove that his teachings were true. "If indeed you carry the truth with you," said he, "then prove it by reaching the greatest height in advance of me. We will set out before dawn to climb the summit of Chomo-Lung-Ma" (Mt. Everest), "and he who reaches the summit first shall be acknowledged the greater teacher."

Now the Pombo Lama was versed in the arts of black magic. He possessed a magic drum on which he could sit and travel through the air wheresoever he willed.

Padma-Sambhava accepted the challenge of the Pombo Lama, who made immediate preparations to go on the journey. In the darkness he sat himself on his drum and put his mind to reaching the summit.

The saint Padma-Sambhava showed no haste but retired to rest. When his disciples saw their master sleeping, they, knowing the Pombo Lama had already started, roused the Saint, crying in alarm, "Master, awaken! The Pombo Lama is already halfway up the mountain while you still sleep."

Padma-Sambhava, however, smiled upon their fears and bade them go and leave him to sleep and to have no fear. Still they begged him to make haste, only to be told once more to leave him in peace. Padma-Sambhava showed no alarm; he knew within himself that his was the greater

teaching. He was versed in white magic—the magic of good over evil—the magic of love and compassion to all men and to all beasts—the great white magic of light to conquer darkness.

The Master slept. Awakening at dawn and going to his window, he sat as one rapt in meditation, gazing at the cold light stealing over the sky: the herald of the coming day. Then, as the sun rose and the first shaft of sunlight pierced the gloom, he mounted the sun ray and was carried instantly to the summit of Chomo-Lung-Ma, there to seat himself on the Throne of Gold and Garnet. The Tibetans say that the throne of Padma-Sambhava remains on the highest peak of the mountain, and they believed that one of the objects of the Mount Everest Expedition was to find this jeweled throne.

There are many stories of miracles performed by this holy saint. To tell of them now would take too much space, for I want to tell you something of how I collected the stories in this book during my stay in Tibet.

I wish I could take you with me, were it but for a day, and show you what I have seen, but since I am not versed in magic of any sort, not even that kind of magic that can produce an enchanted carpet or a broomstick (let alone sun rays and magic drums) on which to whisk you over the distant Himalayas, I must ask you to use your

imagination and make believe we are journeying together over plains, through forests, up, up mountain passes, and then into Tibet itself.

If this were a book of my travels I might begin by telling you that Tibet is a great plateau in central Asia surrounded by the loftiest mountains in the world, and go on to tell you of the wonderful monasteries built into the cliffs, of the communities of Lamist priests and monks who live there. Of the libraries in these monasteries where the books are parchment scrolls, all written out and illuminated by hand or printed on hand-carved wooden blocks. How they are pigeon-holed row on row into the walls with colorful tassels of knotted silks dangling from the ends of them, so that the wall becomes a veritable cascade of colors, faded and mellowed by time—just as the stories and the teachings on the scrolls have become mellowed by time and telling too. And how I should have liked to stay for years and years delving in those dim musty libraries, drawing out the thoughts that were rolled up in those yellowing scrolls, and to spread them before you now. Time would not allow, and so I had to content myself with picking up a story where and when I could with the help of an interpreter and a little seventeen-year-old Tibetan girl who was my greatest help, so good was she at mimicry. Once I had gained her love and confidence

and her interest, my path became more or less easy. I say more or less because you must remember I was, so to speak, taking a double journey: a journey in a strange land and a journey—into the minds of the people.

Having been born in an Eastern country and having spent my childhood there perhaps made my task easier, for I understand Orientals and feel at home with them. I was able to grasp the imagery and symbolism in a way that might have been impossible for me had I been brought up differently. When I arrived in Tibet I set about feeling my way. To have baldly asked to be told a story I knew would have been to court polite refusal. I would have been met by a shy laugh, the assurance that I was jesting, or that no one knew a story worth the telling, so I made up a story to get a story. "You can see," I said, "that my boxes are small. It is difficult to get pack mules. I have to sit on my boxes as it is to get them to close. How can I bring gifts to my friends when I have no room to pack them? I would like to bring something from Tibet for my friends, more especially for the children of my friends, but as I have no room to pack anything in my trunks I must pack in my head. So if you will be kind enough to help me get stories I will pack them in my mind and carry them home." I got my first story, and the nature of it showed me that I stood on a fertile field; then I got

another and another, until not only my mind but my manuscript book was tightly filled.

Odd as it may seem, I found it easier to get a story through my little Tibetan girl alone than with the aid of an interpreter.

What a strange quest it was! Going from door to door like two mendicants begging, not for bread, but just for a simple story. My own journeyings were often as long as any in a fairy tale, and many were the people we visited, from the Great Oracle Lama Chief Magician of Tibet down to a little old wise woman who was reputed to be a witch. When first I visited her hovel and saw her crouched by the embers of her fire, her matted hair falling round her face, I begged my companion to leave the story-telling for that day, but she insisted the old lady could tell many a story, and so she could.

How could I have guessed, though, when I stepped from her filthy yard into a room where cobwebs of years, blackened by soot, hung fully two feet down from the rafters, that the occupant of the room—the little old woman whose skin was glazed and as blue as a mountain bilberry—could unfold tale upon tale as she did?

I can see her now as I write—crouched in her corner by the dying fire. The festoons of black cobwebs hanging like untidy funeral plumes over her matted head—I

can hear her crooning voice telling a story. Yes, the fairy folk were her visitors. Her body was sick, but her spirit—ah! her spirit roamed fancy-free. She could sink back out of her surroundings as one might sink backwards into the sweet waters of a fairy well to step out at the bottom through a secret door into the moonlit hills of a fairydom.

The chief magician was all a chief magician should be. Tall and imposing, with dark piercing eyes that seemed like gimlets boring into the depths of my own mind to see what I kept hidden there. As befits the King of Magicians, he sat on a gilded throne. He wore a great headdress made entirely of peacock feathers, craftily laid one on top of the other and spread out like a great fan. By the winking lights of the tiny tapers that burned beside him the eyes in the feathers looked wide and staring. A double halo of eyes around his magic head!

There were shepherds, too, who could tell their own tales of frolicsome goats and sheep, and Lamist priests who took care to make the moral of each story clear to me. And the mothers of Tibet who knead butter into their babies and tell a tale while doing it. The Driver of Yaks and the cultured people of the upper classes—all kindly folk who by their friendliness enriched my store of fairy lore.

We have only time to glance at them now. The shep-



herd from his yak-hair tent leading his sheep to graze in the valleys when winter sets in will tell you stories of the hairy men who live up in the desolate mountains and who steal down at night to carry off oxen and sheep. Dread monsters called Sokpars. He will tell you how these Sokpars seize men, women, and children, killing them, after biting off the tips of their fingers and toes and the lobes of their ears. Then there is the peasant girl who has smeared her face with kutch, rendering it ugly, because once upon a time long, long ago, the poet-priest Ruling Lama of Tibet, himself a god on earth, fell in love with a humble maiden; there is a dancing girl at an inn; and the Tibetan lady of high degree in silk and brocaded gown with seed pearls threaded into her plaited hair, and an aureole of turquoise and coral framing her dainty head; and the Lamist priest in long robes of saffron or maroon cloth twirling a prayer wheel in one hand and holding a rosary of large beads in the other. To such people as these I had to go to ask to be told a story. Notebook in hand, I would sit on the ground with my little Tibetan maid beside me and watch the face of the one who was telling the story. Watch every shade of expression that flitted over his features—"Tell me why he laughs and is amused there. Why does he look sad here? Why does he speak seriously now? What prompted that action? What

prompted that thought?"—and so on; and I would make careful notes. Then home again, and we would go through the story—this time in mime. The story roughly sketched out, I would go to some other, perhaps more learned person, and ask to be told the story again to get the detail and feeling, until little by little I had traced each individual thread and seen the story as a whole.

I found many stories in Tibet resembling our own old favorites—Cinderella, Red Riding Hood, Jack of Bean-Stalk fame. These are too well known to tell again, even in their novel setting.

The Tibetans are a laughter-loving people. They refer often with amusement to the weaknesses and frailties of human nature. They are particularly fond of telling stories of the well intentioned fool. Stories are told both to amuse and to instruct. Take the story of Dorji and Tipsi, for instance. Dorji, the thoughtless, pleasure-loving boy destined to become the Ruler of a people. Step by step through the narrative we see how he is made to feel with every living creature before he is worthy to come into his kingdom. Then there is Mother Goat. Are we not acquainted with her prototype in the human family? And the absurd gentleman who "not content to ride a horse or mule as other folk do, bought himself an elephant to ride." I have endeavored to show you the twists of sly humor

that so delight the Tibetan mind so you may enter into the thoughts of a little known but none the less cultured people.

And now I would ask you to lay your cares aside as you turn this page and step with me through the portals of mystic Tibet to the land of Once-on-a-time.



## THE MAGIC BIRD OF CHOMO-LUNG-MA

*Chomo-Lung-Ma is the Tibetan name for Mount Everest, lofty, inaccessible throne of their Goddess of the Turquoise Peak.*

THERE was once a maid who, for fairness of face, had no rival. She was the daughter of the headman of the village in which she had been born and brought up. Her mother had died when she was a little girl, and her father, faithful to his wife's memory, had not married again.

There were two sons, both older than the daughter, and the girl's father and two brothers loved her dearly and thought nothing was too good for her. From the hour she was born she became the petted treasure of the household. She had but to express a wish for a plaything when

she was small for it to be given to her. As she grew up her tastes changed; she craved more costly gifts—baubles and fine clothes. Her father, who was well-to-do and, therefore, able to indulge his daughter's whims, gave her everything she asked for.

As time went on, surfeited by luxuries, indulged and spoiled by her father and brothers, she became more and more hard to please.

The brothers worked to help their father with his affairs and undertook the management of the household, while Choni, the daughter, grumbled and found fault, always saying if she had done such or such a thing, she would have done it differently. She did not say in what way she would have done differently, but just "differently." The tone in which she spoke seemed to infer that what had been done left much to be desired. Her father's servants, the farm workers, even her near friends, were made to feel a sense of their own insufficiency, that, though they had given of their best endeavor, they might as well have spared themselves the pains. The results obtained by their best efforts were set at naught.

Choni, who was idle herself, led everyone to suppose that if she had handled their tasks, she would have done them better. What was the use of her lovely face when the pleasure of gazing on it endured only so long as she

kept silent? She was seldom that—grumble, grumble, from morn till night.

Perhaps her father and brothers had grown used to hearing her complaints, for they never crossed her, but actually assured her they would do everything possible to make her life more pleasant.

One day a stranger called to see her father, a young man of remarkably handsome appearance, who, when he saw Choni, thought he had never seen a girl so lovely.

Choni, though she had many suitors, felt greatly attracted to this handsome stranger. He had traveled far, and in the course of conversation he told her of how he had seen a wonderful bird, with ruby eyes, a jeweled breast, and a long, flowing fan-shaped tail, made of little golden feathers, in which every jewel known gleamed. Sapphires, emeralds, diamonds, turquoise, topaz—indeed, he said he could not name half of them. What was more, the bird could speak in the language of humans and had told the young man, as he sat resting under the tree in which it was perched, that its home was on the summit of Chomo-Lung-Ma—the highest mountain in the world.

When the stranger left to go on his way, Choni, who could see that he had thought her fair, hoped he would ask her father's leave to return to pay them a visit on some future occasion.

The young man, however, said no such thing. He bade good-bye, gave thanks for the hospitality, and rode off on his horse, a noble steed, with trappings, bridle, and stirrups of chased silver.

For weeks that trailed into months Choni spent her time gazing from her window up the road, sure that the young man would not be able to resist her beauty for long. She expected to see him riding back at full gallop any day to ask her father for her hand. At last she was bound to admit to herself that his tender glances were no proof that she had won his heart, and her wiles and responsive looks so demurely yet consciously returned had failed in their purpose: to make him her slave. Her impatience and disappointment added to her ill-humor, and, though pride compelled her to keep her secret hidden and to say nothing of her frustrated hopes, a telltale droop at the corners of her mouth made it apparent to all that there was more than usual amiss. By nature talkative, she became silent; when spoken to, she turned her back on the one who spoke to her and asked to be left alone. "What ails her?" asked her father. "She never smiles, nor does she express her wishes. We must find out what is wrong, and at once, so as to apply a remedy."

The younger brother undertook the mission and left his work to stay with his sister. He soon remarked that she

spent her day leaning out of the window or starting up to run to the door, saying she thought she had heard the latch click, and then returning to her place with a sigh.

“Sister,” said the boy, “tell me why you grieve. I do not like to hear such heavy sighs come from your pretty lips. What is wrong? Did our visitor trouble your heart?”

A bright flush spread over Choni’s cheeks as she turned on her brother in a fury. “You think,” said she, “that my thoughts have followed him? Ah, how mistaken you are! It is not for him I pine, but for the magic bird he told us of—the Magic Bird of Chomo-Lung-Ma. Never shall I know contentment again until I possess that bird, with its eyes of red rubies, and its golden tail sparkling with multi-colored gems. I yearn to grasp it to me, and naught else will satisfy.”

“Why did you not tell me sooner?” asked her brother. “I will gladly set out in quest of it, and if the bird is to be caught, you shall have it.”

“What use to lift my hopes with promises so idle?” said Choni. “He alone knew on which tree it was perched. His journeyings had taken him far and wide, and he gave us no clue as to where it was he saw the bird nor yet under which tree he was resting when it spoke to him.”

“He told us enough,” said her brother. “The home of the bird is on the summit of Chomo-Lung-Ma. It may



fly to the forests by day, but it would return to its home to roost."

"Torture me no further with your babble," said Choni sullenly. "Only he could find it, and he took good care not to divulge its whereabouts. No one in their right senses would allow such a treasure to escape. You may be sure he has caught it ere now, or is after it. What use, then, to talk of scaling such heights when he had forestalled you by many months already? If you had thought to go in search of the bird, you should have chosen to do so earlier."

"Fortune may favor me," said her brother. "No harm can come in trying to get it for you. If I fail, at least it cannot be said I let you pine away without making an effort to give you the thing you pined for."

"Go, then," said Choni, "but do not blame me if you suffer hardships. Luck may or may not favor you, but this I know, that unless the bird is mine I shall keep watch at this window, hoping against hope, until death closes my eyes."

"Dear Sister," said the boy, "I will go."

Telling his father and elder brother that he was going to search for the magic bird, and repeating in full his talk with his sister, the boy mounted his horse and rode

away, neither father nor brother trying to deter him from setting forth on so hazardous a journey.

The boy rode for many days through dark forests, till he came in sight of the great mountain. Then, seeing the way clear before him, he began to ascend the steep paths leading to the valleys at its base. He toiled on and on until he had left the zone of trees behind, and here paths were difficult to ride over, and signs of vegetation were scant.

Soon he knew there would not be even a blade of grass for his horse to eat, and seeing a hermit's cave in a rock he made towards it and called the hermit, begging the holy man in charity to take good care of the faithful beast.

"May I ask where you are going, my son?" inquired the hermit. "This is no place for a traveler. I will take care of your horse and take him where he can graze, but if you will listen to my advice you will turn back without delay."

"I cannot do that, holy father," said the boy, "for I am in quest of a bird that makes its home on the heights of Chomo-Lung-Ma," and he went on to tell the good hermit of the bird and for whom he sought to get it.

"Let me warn you," said the hermit, "that there are some things which, however much we crave for them, the gods have ordained, for our own welfare, we should leave

alone. The magic bird you would capture for the fair maid, your sister, is such. She will, if she becomes possessed of it, have cause to cry out, wishing that she had never known of its existence."

"You do not know her," said the boy.

"I know her," replied the hermit, "inasmuch as I know that, had she thought of your safety rather than her own selfish desires, she would not have urged you to leave home on so perilous a quest. For her sake, abandon your plan and make for your home."

"Never," said the boy, preparing to hurry off, "never! If I am spared to capture the prize I will give it to her!"

"This being so, farewell, my son," said the hermit. "My prayers will go with you; yours is a noble but mistaken action; a good intention, made to serve a frivolous purpose. Farewell." And so saying, they parted.

For yet another day and night the boy slowly advanced, his zeal flaying him on to plod through the darkness, though he stumbled over glassy boulders and slipped back one step for each two steps forward. The winds blew, stinging his face, and whistled mournful dirges into his ears. When morning found him he was numb with cold and could hardly drag one foot after another. Nevertheless, he struggled to accomplish his design. Hourly he became more exhausted, and when night fell he crawled

into a cavern of ice, not able to march farther. "Tomorrow," he thought, "as soon as the sun puts fresh life into me, I will redouble my efforts. It is only a short way to the summit"; and he threw himself down in the icy chamber and closed his eyes.

Presently he heard a dog bark, then a howl and the sound of an iron chain grating against the ice, as if a beast were straining at its leash, followed by ear-splitting cracks, of ice breaking into pieces all around him. Now he sat up, alarmed by what he heard—moans and shrieks and demoniacal laughter. "Better to sleep under the stars," he thought, "than to remain where I am—such laughter as that could only have come from evil spirits."

He rubbed his numbed feet and groped to where he knew the entrance to the cavern must be, for he had not ventured more than a few paces into its gloomy interior, but, alas! to his dismay, he found a great slab of ice was before him. Taking a small hatchet, which with his dagger and seal, hung from his girdle, he hacked at the frozen wall that was between him and the outer world.

As each stroke fell, he heard the same terrible mocking, sepulchral laughter, and, passing his hand over the icy slab, he could feel that the hatchet did not so much as leave a scar on the glazed surface. He continued striking feverishly, determined to hack his way out, and rained blow

after blow, until his arm ached and the head of the hatchet broke from its handle and rebounded past him and fell with a clang to the ground.

His tongue and throat felt on fire; though hunger gnawed, he could not eat. He flattened his tongue on the ice to cool it, and it burned him even more. Unable to stand longer, he fell to the ground and lay there. Whether he slept then, he did not know. Consciousness left him, and when he came to his senses he perceived that it was light. But his horror can best be imagined at the gruesome spectacle that now met his gaze. He saw that he was in very truth imprisoned—around, below, and above him was ice. It was not this alone that caused him to stare in terror, it was what he saw embedded in the ice—men, like himself. Were they living or dead? He moved and found that, where he had lain, his tunic was caught in a frozen vise. So that was to be his fate!—to remain there until the glassy walls closed completely and he was merged in one with his surroundings. He tore himself out of the arm of his coat, leaving the piece of cloth behind. His eyes roved from one figure to another. As he bent his head this way or that to look on them, they appeared to grow distorted and misshapen, the faces becoming abnormally long, then seeming to change and spread out, the bodies to elongate and taper off, or get bloated and rotund. He

saw the head of the ax he had broken in the past night beside him now under a covering of clear ice that coated it. There it was, as if it had, while sinking, been caught up and suspended by an invisible filament. And there he supposed it would stay until the crack of doom—just as the trapped beings would stay fixed forever in the positions in which they had been frozen into the icy walls. He knew if he was to save himself from a like fate he must use all his wits. To think of escaping by battering or scraping a way through the blocked orifice of the cavern was futile. He had not a moment to lose, if he would live. Another night, and he too would go to join those poor stark wretches, one among many in this dread galaxy of fleshly images.

He doubled his knees up under his chin and sidled towards the rear of the tunnel. Desperation kept him moving, creeping, wriggling on and on, till, to his relief, just when he felt he could no longer drag himself farther, he came to the end of the tunnel and found himself in a great lighted hall and saw a flight of steps. He raised himself to his feet and stretched his stiffened limbs and looked around him. Here, too, was ice, cold forbidding ice, and here, too, were men encased by the same horrible means, though now, seen through thick, perpendicular crystal slabs, they appeared doubled in size.

One gigantic figure on horseback caused him to totter forward with a startled cry. Where had he seen that face before? Where indeed! Magnificently appareled, handsome and noble of mien, seated high upon his saddle, astride his sleek, proud horse, with its bridle of chased silver and gold. The stranger who had called at his father's house! And stay, what was that he saw blazing on the shoulder of the frozen man? A bird! such a bird as he never could have believed existed, a shimmering, golden-plumaged thing. Ah, yes, with eyes of red rubies and a pouted breast, sparkling with a thousand dancing points. Choni had spoken truly—the stranger had galloped off that same day, on bidding them all farewell, to seek the bird. He had captured it, that was evident. The bird perched upon his shoulder could be no other than the one he had told them of—the Magic Bird of Chomo-Lung-Ma. He had gained the prize and was speeding off with it when the malign influence had sealed him, together with his sought-after treasure, in this glacial tomb.

He saw now that a purple shade was creeping up almost imperceptibly around the walls of the chamber, rising like a silent tide, a somber, pulsing shadow, and from above, other shadows were dipping down the rock in frayed and ghastly tatters to meet with them. Was it the light of day that had shown luminous through the trans-

lucent walls, now ebbing? He gave one last look at the grouped figures that were fast being blotted out in the dimming light, and made to scale the stairs. Above he found a vestibule and a heavy doorway studded with great bosses of iron. He tried the door. Though it was latched and stiff, it was not unyielding, and putting his shoulder against it, and using all the strength he could muster, he pushed it slightly ajar, just enough to peer through. At not more than a few paces distant he perceived a great beast, which at first he thought must be an ox, but a second look showed him that it was an enormous black mastiff, asleep, with its muzzle resting on its outstretched paws. It was chained to an iron pillar driven into a rock that protruded from the ground. Here were ice pinnacles and great boulders knit together in most strange and irregular shapes. Beyond, he could see two archways, a small and a large one, and nothing more. How to get past the sleeping watchdog without awakening it was what now taxed his mind. He pushed the door still wider, and the creature stirred, sniffed, and then jumped to attention and snarled, showing its pointed fangs. Ignoring his own danger, an exclamation of the profoundest pity for the beast burst from the boy. The dog had been starved. Its hulking frame was like a rack of bones over which the skin seemed to have shrunk and tightened to



the point of bursting. "Take this," said the boy impulsively, emboldened by pity, and he flung the whole contents of his knapsack to the dog. The famished beast sprang for the food and devoured it ravenously. "What cruel master do you serve," said the boy, "who could leave you chained thus to starve to death?" The dog crouched, and fixing the boy with its hollow despairing eyes, replied in a gruff, rasping voice: "All serve one master here, and my duty to him is to tear you limb from limb. Pitiful fool, what has brought you to meet the fate of all who have dared to climb to this abode from which none escape alive? Death in its many forms sneaks awaiting its prey at every turn of this domain—the home of the Magic Bird. 'Tis he I serve and dare not disobey."

"You will serve him no more," said the boy, "for he shares the fate of the many who have died in the attempt to snare him."

"So you think in your ignorance," said the dog, "but a sorcerer does not perish by his own sorcery."

"I tell you," said the boy, "that one I know has made him captive, and both are enclosed for eternity in the ice, never more to do good or ill to man or beast."

"Because you have treated me with kindness," said the dog, "I will endeavor to help you to escape, for without help you must perish. The bird, my master, is not dead,

for death can come to him only in one way. A woman's hand must wrench his heart from his breast and wring every drop of life blood from it, knowing that when she does so her own heart will cease to beat—and where is the woman who would wish to do this?

“No, no, merciful friend, that jeweled plumage masks a spirit so evil, so mighty, and so cunning that you could not conceive of its wickedness. My master is working towards an end that neither you nor I can divine. His servants, the invisible spirits of earth and air, work with him. Though I am his slave, I loathe him, but I fear him.

“Go now and make haste. When you come to those two arches you will find they are barred. At the side of the big one you will find a giant conch shell. Read what is written thereon, but do not follow the instructions put to mislead you and warn the guards of your approach. At the side of the small arch you will, by looking carefully, see a small snail shell, used by the bird himself. Blow into it, and a concealed gate will fly open. Through the gate you will come to a courtyard, and in the courtyard you will see a fountain made of precious stones. Behind the fountain is a golden cage, and in the cage is a drinking cup. Get possession of it, for it is a magic cup. By holding it under the mouth of the fountain a stream of boiling water will fall into it. This water is the Water of Life, and by its

virtue you can make the dead to live. Fill the cup with this water and use it only when you feel that you are becoming overpowered by death.”

The boy thanked the dog, who allowed him to pass, and made for the arches. He saw the large conch shell the dog had told him of, and on it was written in letters of blood: “Blow thrice and the gate will open.” Then he turned to the small arch and searched carefully and found the snail’s shell, which was so small he could hardly see it. He blew into the snail’s shell, and a little gate sprang open. With some difficulty he squeezed himself through and got into the courtyard, which was entirely paved with gold. He found the fountain, and from its mouth, where the water should have issued, a long icicle hung. Behind the fountain was the empty golden cage, and there in the middle of the cage was an onyx drinking cup. The boy quickly snatched the cup and only just got his fingers out in time when some bars dropped. He saw that these bars were barbed at the end like arrows and had doubtless been placed to act as a trap to catch a thieving hand. He held the cup under the mouth of the fountain. When he did so drop by drop sparkling water fell into it.

“I will also fill my own flask with this precious liquid,” thought the boy. “I may, by having enough of it, be able to save the poor fellow in that ice chamber, and we can

make off together, taking the bird with us. Death can hold no danger while I have the Water of Life!"

He held his flask to the heat, dissolved the water that had frozen in it, poured it away, and refilled the flask from the fountain. He then went back to the cage and wrenched out one of the barbed bars to use if need be as a tool. It came loose with the most surprising ease, and he retraced his steps. The small gate was still open. He went through it and was astonished to find that the dog was no longer where he had left it, though the chain and collar lay on the ground.

By this time night had gathered. The boy remained in the shelter of the doorway and waited for the dawn before attempting to descend the stairs. He placed the cup at his side.

In the morning, when he picked up the onyx cup, he perceived that around the spot where it had rested, and where a circle of its shadow had fallen like a halo, there was no longer ice, but young tender grasses. Its charmed warmth in this place of desolation had imparted life even to the barren ice-locked earth. With the utmost care he carried the cup to the glacial chamber, hopeful, and intent on the errand of mercy which he had set himself. With the barbed point of his golden rod he pierced the ice *all too easily*. Had he thought then, he must have known

that some sorcery was working with him. The ice shivered at the touch of the rod and split asunder, leaving a great fissure wide enough for him to enter and to approach the figure that was exposed and held up in the cleft. The boy continued to clamber up, and, raising his hand, poured the contents of the cup of life-giving water on the man and his horse. A long and fearful groan smote the silence. The man, drawing a painful breath, shook himself as if awakening from a trance and looked around. A tremor went through the horse; it neighed, snorted, and brought its hoof down with great suddenness, bounded out of the cleft into the chamber, while crumbling ice was strewn in powdered, disordered heaps round about them.

“Where am I?” exclaimed the man, the light of reason returning slowly into his vacant stare, and then, as if remembering, he quickly put his hand to his shoulder. “So I still have you captive, my jeweled wonder,” said he, clutching the bird, which remained as yet stark on his shoulder. “So I still have you captive.” The horse, fretful to be off, reared. The boy clutched the bridle and turning said: “Friend, do you not know me?”

On hearing a voice the man leaned from his saddle and exclaimed with a cry, in tones of surprise and bewilderment: “I know you! I know you! The brother of that most fair maid for whom I have got this prize. So you

soon followed in my footsteps, else why are you here? It is not many days since we parted.”

“Indeed it is,” returned the boy, “not days but months have elapsed. Can it be that you are ignorant of the fate that had overtaken you?” In a few words he made known the history of his own adventures and of how he had filled the cup with the Water of Life to restore the dead man and his horse.

On hearing this, the stranger said with emotion: “Naught that I may say or do can repay you. Come now, evil may yet overtake us in this dread place. Sit behind me, and we will ride on. I will relinquish the prize that you may claim the fair maid’s praise, for in truth it is to you alone that praise is due.”

But ere the words had fallen from his lips, the Magic Bird spread its wings and flapped them fiercely across its captor’s face and uttered a piercing shriek. The startled horse, as if pursued, plunged across the vast chamber and went crashing through the glittering walls, leaving a great yawning chasm which, while the boy gazed in terror, snapped to, grinding like a jaw of jagged teeth, and locked out the flying figures.

“Alas,” wailed the boy, who, on trying to move, found that his feet were riveted to the ground, “from such sorcery there is no escape.”

Soon a chill as of death came sweeping over him. He took the flask and drained the contents. Though still powerful enough to save him from death, the life-giving water, by reason of its being taken from the flask instead of the magic cup, he discovered had lost half its virtue, and he found himself doomed to remain half alive and half dead in the icy dungeon of the evil bird.

In the meanwhile horse and rider traveled over the ground swifter than the wind. The good man, thinking of his rescuer's plight, did his best to draw in his horse, but being held under a spell he was forced to go where he was carried.

For two days and nights the dizzy ride lasted, and then the bird bade the horse to slacken pace, and whispered into the man's ear: "Noble lord, try to lift your right hand." The man tried, and found he could not do so. Again the bird whispered: "Noble lord, try to lift your left hand." Again the man tried and could not. Then said the bird, "Try to turn your head." He tried in vain; it was as if a stake had been driven through his neck and pinned his head to his shoulders. "'Tis well you understand," said the bird, "that henceforth you move to my will. I am not so hard a taskmaster to those who obey me."

Without affecting to understand the full meaning of the evil creature's words, that he must surrender his will,

his soul, and his body willingly, the man replied: "Grant me one wish, and then you may take my body and my soul. Allow me freedom for the span of one month to use my own will."

"Granted," said the bird, "but at the end of that time you will give up your life to me, and what is more, your bride shall be my bride. The bargain is sealed." And with these words the bird spurred on the horse, and by sunset they arrived at their destination.

The young man dismounted from his steed and entered the house and called to ask if anyone was at home.

Now, during the absence of the young brother, the headman had died, and the elder brother had waited anxiously day after day for his young brother to return, for there were many questions to be settled between the two as to the division of the inheritance left by the father. At last, fearing that his brother may have met with harm, he bade his sister Choni to make herself as happy as she could, telling her he would travel along the same road as the boy had taken and ask those he met on the way if perchance they had seen the brother.

"Fear not, dear sister," said he on leaving, "I shall not be long gone, for I shall think of you waiting for me here." He went, but the days passed and he did not return. Having failed to find his brother, he had decided to turn back,



but by a magic spell, all the roads had been made to take on the likeness of the one over which he had just traveled, so he was lured on hour after hour, unsuspecting yet mystified, not towards his home, but away from it.

During his absence Choni, as was to be expected from one so idle and pampered, did nothing to help herself and allowed the house to gather much dirt and dust, so that it seemed as if it were uninhabited. Therefore, when the young stranger entered and called, his first feeling was one of keen disappointment. He thought the bird had made a false promise and that he was not to see the fair object of his desire.

Choni, however, had both seen and heard her suitor enter. With her heart fluttering, she quickly smoothed her tresses, straightened her dress, and called: "I pray you will wait, sir," and descended the stairs.

"Alas," said she, "you have come to a house of sorrow. I am alone here. My father is dead, and my two brothers are away. What keeps them I do not know, and since I am alone I cannot ask you to remain. You will observe that all is disordered, since my grief has been such that I could not set myself to a task without giving way to tears."

Upon hearing this, the young man could not conceal the tenderness of his emotion, and declared his love, at the

same time drawing the magic bird out from under his tunic, where it had crept; he told her how he had gone to snare the bird in the hope that she would reward him by becoming his wife.

When Choni caught sight of the bird she stretched out her hands eagerly for it and exclaimed with wonder at its rare beauty, while the bird assumed great gentleness towards her, and drawing its feathers through its bill, let drop one dazzling stone after another at her feet. Though her lover, seeing this, quaked inwardly, he, perceiving the girl's pleasure, dared not speak and make known to her that the bird was not the beautiful, gentle creature she imagined, but a most evil spirit, to be shunned rather than to be admired. He said only that he was happy he had been able to get it, and entreated her to marry him. This being the true wish of the maiden, she consented, and they were wed.

Each day, on rising, Choni went to speak to the bird, calling it by endearing names, and the bird would preen its feathers, coo as softly as a dove and scatter gems to her. With these gleaming conceits she made earrings and bracelets, necklaces and coronets, and ropes to hang round her neck and twist into the dark strands of her hair. Her husband, while uneasy in his mind, fearing that the magic bird was scattering gems so lavishly while plot-

ting fresh villainy and mischief, entranced at his wife's beauty, day by day put off telling her the fearful truth that haunted him, and spoke only to her of his love and her fair face.

To Choni this was most gratifying. She never wearied of decking herself in fresh gems or hearing her husband tell her how fair she looked in them. Thus the month of freedom swiftly drew to its close. On the eve of the fateful day, while his wife slept, the young man made his way downstairs, and calling to the bird, begged that he would give him yet another month.

"If I grant your wish," said the bird, "what will you give me in return?"

"Anything I can," said the man, and without so much as an answer the bird fell on him and pierced his eyeballs with its beak, and then said: "Your sight, and if I suspect you of showing yourself determined to speak over-freely to your wife of what you know, I shall claim your speech also, and you shall be struck dumb."

To this the man answered nothing, but blamed himself for allowing the days to pass in the service of the moment rather than setting his mind to thinking out ways and means of breaking the evil spell.

"I have been ungrateful," said he to himself, "to the boy who saved my life; secondly, I have been weak in subju-

gating myself to my wife's vanity; and thirdly, I have failed in my duty, which was clearly this—to tell the whole truth.”

The following day Choni, as was her wont, went straightway on rising to the bird, who, to her amazed delight, scratched on the earthen floor and drew out from it with his claw a satin robe, a dazzling headdress, jeweled shoes, and strings of lustrous pearls.

“Fairest of all fair maids,” he cooed, “give me your love, then you shall have all that you can desire. More and more fine clothes, and a golden cage to live in.”

Choni laughed to hear the bird speak, and gathering up the rich clothes, put them on and ran to her husband. “See,” cried she, “did lucky man ever have so fair a wife?”

Her husband turned his sightless eyes upon her and replied: “I cannot see you fair.”

“What,” screamed Choni, “am I then no longer beautiful in your sight?” and she became exceedingly angry and would listen to nothing her husband had to tell her. She flounced from the room in a temper and returned later to cry and scold and complain.

The poor young husband was forced to spend his days listening to his wife scolding, until he began to think he would have been lucky to be left in the cavern of ice.

“Listen you must to what I have to tell you,” said he

at length, and he told her the whole story from beginning to end, even to what the boy had told him—that to kill the bird a woman's hand must pluck the heart from its breast and squeeze every drop of life blood from it.

Choni, on hearing this, began to wring her hands, and said she feared from her husband's strange talk that he had lost his reason.

"Kill the bird," she screamed, "a bird who by his very actions proves his bounty? Kill a bird who can cover the earth with costly gems and scratch satin robes from the bare ground? Kill the *magic bird*?" and at each word she raised her voice louder and louder.

"Hush," said her husband fearfully, "do not scream thus. Quiet yourself and listen to what I have to say." But ere he could say more he felt his throat tighten and knew that the bird had fulfilled its wicked threat. He was dumb!

"Tell," said Choni. "Tell what it is. Ah, you cannot, you cannot, knowing too well that all you have said is untrue. You have been jealous that this splendid creature has power to entice me to his side each day; jealous of my pleasure in receiving his gifts; and you would deprive me of my new-found joy."

Unable to reply, the young man stood grief-stricken, listening to his wife's reproaches.

Choni, unable to understand his strange silence, and thinking he would not speak, left him and went to pour out her displeasure to her pet.

“Do not grieve so,” said the evil creature. “One who can behave so harshly does not deserve a wife as lovely as you are. Come with me of your own consent, and I will comfort you with such rich playthings that you will never tire of seeing them.”

Choni, her mind inflamed with anger, said rashly: “Take me where you will.” She could have bitten out her own tongue the next moment to have left the words unsaid. The instant she gave her consent the bird assumed gigantic proportions, seized her in his talons, and sailed with her, up, up, up into the clouds and away. The beating of great wings and a shriek of horror reached her husband’s ears and proclaimed to him what had taken place.

Now, the elder brother, who had been wandering on false paths for many days and nights and was on the point of despairing, suddenly found himself within sight of his own door, but as he lifted the latch to enter he heard a voice say to him: “Your sister is dead, and the traitor who has killed her is within.” Hurrying into the house he called to his sister. In answer to his call a man approached him.

“Where is my sister?” said the brother in alarm, “and what are you doing here?”

Receiving no reply, and the room being in darkness so that he could not see the face of the man to whom he spoke, and thinking it was a robber, he drew his dagger and stabbed him. The next morning he perceived who it was he had killed, and making a search of the rooms found a great number of jeweled feathers scattered over the ground. On seeing these feathers the brother was greatly troubled, first wondering and then guessing that some evil influence had been at work during his absence. Resolved to discover what had happened, he at once set off again in all haste to find the abode of the magic bird. After traveling some days he, too, came to the hermit's dwelling in the rock and, calling on the hermit, asked to be directed on his course.

The hermit, on learning the sad story, led him out and showed him the younger brother's horse and said: "I fear for you. All who search for the magic bird come to harm. Many go but none return. I fear the fate that has overtaken your young brother will be your lot, for the magic bird is in truth a powerful and evil spirit. But since the purpose of your journey is seriously to try to right matters, I can serve you. Whatever you do, do not lie down to rest, and pray ceaselessly. Prayer alone can protect you."

Thanking the hermit, the elder brother resumed his journey. Towards evening he came to the same cavern and

entered it. No sooner had he done so than he turned to hear a crash and saw that the entrance had been closed. Then, perceiving the tunnel, he too wormed his way through to the great chamber, where to his glad amazement he found his young brother. Mindful of what the old man had told him, while picking at the ice that held the poor boy fast, he prayed fervently. Then the two brothers, while rejoicing at being reunited, consulted together. The young brother, on being told the fate that had befallen the stranger, was extremely sorrowful.

“Ah,” said he, “Brother, you were made to strike one who was noble and courageous. All that has happened has been brought about by this powerful and evil spirit, who assumes the likeness of a golden-plumaged bird to lure men to his domain and hold them there imprisoned, neither living nor yet dead, but suspended forever between heaven and earth, for some dread purpose, you may be sure, too terrible to contemplate. By prayer and perseverance you may yet free me, and once free, we will make for the fountain, procure the Water of Life and once again retrace our steps homeward and restore our friend and learn from him what has befallen our dear sister.” So the two brothers prayed and planned, the elder one working painfully to release the younger one—and time went on.



Now, Choni, their sister, was carried by the bird to his icy kingdom, high, high, and away from the fertile plains and valleys where she had been used to dwell; and once there, she was locked within the golden cage. Never were treasures heaped so lavishly on any earthly maid as those that were now brought hourly to her. Rubies and diamonds were scattered as if they had been pebbles at her feet, turquoise, garnets, coral, and pearls hung in festoons about the bowers of her golden prison. The floor of the cage was spread with silks and satins in every hue imaginable, from the deep blue of night to the palest rosy hues of dawn. She had but to think of a robe to find herself arrayed in it. From the crown of her head to the tip of her toes, bracelets and jewels flashed colored fires, while the bird strutted up and down, up and down, and sang soft pæans of praise of her beauty.

At first, dazzled and half afraid, Choni accepted all and said nothing. But as the days rolled on she not only wearied of her strange life, but became exceedingly sad, and longed to see her husband and her brothers. The bird, perceiving this, asked why she looked so sorrowful when he gave her everything she could desire.

“Truly,” said the girl, “you have given me treasures greater than I ever dreamed of, but I am a prisoner here.”

“If that is why you grieve,” said the bird, “you shall

be free to step out of your cage, where I have kept you only till that day when the preparations for our marriage are completed and I make you mistress of the wild spirits, even as I am their master. No harm can then come to you wherever you choose to tread in this my kingdom, for you will learn from me how to rule the spirits of earth and air and set them about their business."

"Marry you?" said the girl, turning pale. "I, a human maid, marry a bird? Take me from here and bring me back to my home, my husband, and my brothers."

"Do not chatter so idly," said the bird. "Come now, consent with good grace, for I am a Lord of Evil Spirits, and it were better to be my wife than my slave, for since you consented to come here with me there are but two ways left to you: the first is to become my wife and mistress of evil; the second, to flout me and be my handmaiden, lashed into obedience. Step from the cage, my beautiful one"; and, saying this, the bird lifted his spiked claw and, unlocking the gate of her prison, drew his unwilling victim out.

Foolish, thoughtless, and vain though she had been, Choni had no wish to become a mistress of evil, and face to face with the terrible choice given her to become wife or slave to a lord of evil spirits, the unhappy young woman did not know what to answer.

“What misery I have brought upon myself!” she thought, glancing upon the heap of treasures that all of a sudden had become repellent to her. She looked about, wondering now if she could find a means of escape.

As if reading her thoughts the bird bade her follow him. Taking her to a great pinnacle of ice, he bade her look down into the hollow chasm that lay yawning below.

“See,” said the bird, “the fate that awaits you if you venture to leave here. Deep and fearful are the pits beneath my kingdom. For those who seek to leave or enter it against my wishes, I have various punishments. How easily I can lure men to their doom! I have but to spread my jeweled pinions, and they would track me to the ends of the earth. Look you, even now I spy three plowing their way through the ice and snow in the hope of finding my nest. I will save them further effort.” So saying, he pecked on the ground, and rocks and slabs of ice loosened and with a roar of thunder hurtled down upon the figures, and they were seen no more.

The terrified girl ran shrieking from the spot, while the bird laughed, and she, hearing his laughter, from the sound of it perceived that he was no bird but in truth a demon.

“Are you not pleased, then, pretty maiden, to see how powerful I am?” said the creature, strutting up to the

cowering girl. "You must learn to share in my pleasure, which is to do all manner of hurt to man and beast. But come, now, to-morrow we shall be wed, and I will teach you how to laugh as heartily as I do."

"Never," said Choni, jumping to her feet. "Rather would I be hurled to death over yonder precipice than be partner to your evil. Take all you have given me and set me on my way homeward, poor and humble, to beg forgiveness of those whom, by my vanity, I have brought to grief."

"Your home is rendered desolate; your younger brother is in my dungeon at this hour; the elder one has mistaken your husband for a robber and slain him. What is there to turn back for, foolish maid?"

"Would that I could slay you, you spirit of evil," said the girl, in her despair forgetting her fear.

"Nay, you would not wish to do that," said the bird, "for by so doing you would lose your own life. The one who kills me must die with me. Come, my pretty maid, and sleep in your golden cage, and let no desperate thoughts trouble your rest on this the eve of our wedding day."

In silence the girl obeyed, and throwing herself on her couch lay open-eyed far into the night, thinking how best she could rid herself of her demon lover. At last, with a

prayer, she fell asleep, and in a dream the spirit of her dead husband appeared to her.

"My wife," said he, "have courage, but say neither yea nor nay. To-morrow keep your lips sealed and have no fear to meet death. Die you must, but in dying you will gain merit for your soul and rid yourself of a monstrous demon."

During the time Choni had spent in the bird's domain she had seen no living being other than the magic bird himself. Neither man, woman, nor beast had come near her, but in the morning she awakened to see two old cronies, wizened and ugly beyond belief, standing near her couch.

"How goes it, pretty damsel?" said one. "Let me draw on these golden shoes."

"How goes it, pretty damsel?" said the other. "Let me comb out your raven locks."

"How goes it, fair mistress?" they croaked in unison. "Art ready to slip into thy bridal robes?" And seizing Choni by the wrists they drew her to her feet.

"Answer," said the first one who had spoken. "How goes it?"

Mindful of the warning not to speak, the girl said naught.

"Say, how goes it?" said the second one, and receiving

no answer, while pretending to be engaged in fastening on the bridal clothes, and braiding the girl's hair, the old hags dug their nails into her tender flesh, feigning sorrow the while for hurting her and complaining that the robes were tight and that her hair was tangled. Such was their deceit, for both these serving maids were witches.

"Answer," they screamed both together, one in her right ear and the other in her left ear.

Still Choni remained silent, as if she had heard nothing.

"She is both deaf and dumb, Sister," said the first one. "Our master has chosen wisely." At this jest they both laughed.

"You can see," said the second crony, "that she goes to him an unwilling bride. Did ever you see a maiden look more wretched to greet a bridegroom?"

"If she knew of the powerful dagger our lord has tucked under his left wing," said the first, "it looks as if she would plunge it into his heart rather than be his bride."

"Yes," answered the second, "and if she knew that he would never more regain life if she squeezed the life blood from his heart, you may be sure she would do it."

"Not so, Sister," said the first. "Not if she knew that in killing him she was doomed to drop lifeless beside him." And while they arrayed the bride for the feast, the two

old witches continued their chatter. Then, having done their work, they left as quietly as they had come.

No sooner had they gone than Choni heard the whir of great wings and looking overhead saw the bird wheeling over the cage, the morning sun shining on his golden feathers, which, with their diamonds and gems, now threw up slanting shafts of light, and seemed more dazzling than the sun itself. Presently the bird alighted and greeted her, strutting before her to display his magnificence, spread out one wing and then the other, twisted this way and that, shook his head so that the gems upon his topknot trembled, and puffed the even rows of his smaller breast feathers out till they looked all soft and billowy, while he kept the girl fixed with his dark, cruel eyes. Then, lifting the latch of the cage, he swung the door wide.

“How now,” said he, “what keeps my bride sitting in her cage while the bridegroom waits and the feast is spread? Comes she not willingly?”

With a forced smile Choni advanced and gave her hand to her lover, who led her out of the cage to the terrible feast he had prepared. Through one cavern and another he led the horrified girl, and there she saw, not tables spread, but the stark victims of the unholy bird, who pointed to this or that victim and asked her if she had ever seen a storehouse more richly filled than his. In fear





THE BIRD CALLED LOUDLY: "SPIRITS OF EARTH AND AIR, HITHER.  
ALL TO DANCE AND FEAST AT THIS YOUR LORD AND MASTER'S  
BIDDING."





and trembling the poor girl gazed on the forms, praying inwardly, but uttering no audible word. On and on they went, at last coming to a great rocky hall with many pillars and doors, the pillars being of ebony and the doors deep red. There were many inscriptions on the walls, telling of the delights of evil and the stupidity of good, making out the holy lamas and hermits to be stupid fellows and the selfish and ungodly as being wise and prudent. All the things she had been taught from childhood to regard as pure and righteous were here turned about to look mean and sordid. Love, beauty, charity, were shown as buffoons, while selfishness, hate, and greed were enthroned as if they were gods to be worshiped. And while the bird read out the disgraceful inscriptions carved into the rocky walls he enjoined upon the young woman at his side to be instructed by him and henceforth to tear from her mind all gentleness and faith and give full room to evil. While the bridegroom spoke on, the bride said not a word, but forced herself to keep a smiling countenance and wait till she saw the opportunity to steal the dagger which the two old witches had mentioned. Seeing her smile, the bird was gratified and praised her for listening so intently to his counsel, adding that now he had instructed her into the meaning of their union, no time should be lost in bringing their marriage about and calling his subjects one and all to rejoice.

"Do you come to me willingly?" asked the monster.

Choni bent her head, as if in assent.

"Then," said the bird, "we are indeed wed." And lifting his head he called loudly: "Spirits of earth and air, hither. All to dance and feast at this your lord and master's bidding." Every door burst open at once, and in tumbled a legion of demons, biting one another, snarling, spitting, laughing, scrambling greedily for the sinister food, like famished beasts.

Every spirit most dreaded by those who travel on mountain ways was there. Storm, tempest, avalanche, rock spirits, spirits of hail, deluge, fogs, lightning, thunder, wind—not one was absent. The first light of dawn broke and, gorged to the full, their high spirits ebbing, at their master's bidding, the hideous spirits came and acknowledged Choni to be their mistress and their queen, promising to obey and guard her in wickedness, and then slunk through the doors into the darkness. Cold with terror at the fearful spectacle she had witnessed, Choni fell into a swoon and regained consciousness to find her head pillowed on her bridegroom's feathered breast. Opening her eyes, she saw that a change was coming over him. The bird's head, which was but a covering mask, was slipping away. Presently the entire mask fell off like a hood, and she found herself looking into the eyes—*not of a bird*, but of the *Master of Darkness himself*.

“My fair bride,” said he, “long have I desired to make you my own,” and while the girl became whiter and still more white, breathlessly she swayed forward to meet her bridegroom’s embrace and, drawing him to her, placed her hand under his wing and gently drew the dagger from its sheath.

“My lord,” said she, “I bid you a long good-night.” So saying, with a dreadful cry she plunged the dagger into his breast; her fair hand after it, dragging out his evil heart and draining it until it had ceased to throb; then, with a moan, she rose to her feet, only to totter and fall lifeless beside him.

The girl’s two brothers, while these bridal festivities had been in progress, had found their way to the empty golden cage, and there discovered various things which they remembered as belonging to their sister, Choni—a comb, a ring, and an amulet case. Seeing these familiar objects, they at once guessed that their sister had been carried by the bird to his domain, and they vowed that, be she alive or dead, they would find their sister before aught else. Their search at last brought them to the bridal chamber, where in a glance the full happenings were revealed to them in what they saw. Sorrowfully they lifted up their sister’s lifeless form and were weeping and mourn-

ing for her loss when the younger brother suddenly be-thought himself of the life-giving water. With hope now to spur them on, the two brothers carried their precious burden out of the dark chamber of death up into the outer world and laid her in the golden cage while they went to the fountain, from which they marveled to find water flowing in a steady stream. The terrible bird of Chomo-Lung-Ma being dead, and his subjects still fast asleep after their long night of revelry, the brothers managed in a short time not only to revive their sister but to set out with her on the homeward journey, halting once only for an hour to obtain the aged hermit's blessing, which he gave them right readily. The three at length, footsore but rejoicing, reached home, with the cup of life-giving water, and through its mysterious virtue the noble young husband, though so long lying dead, was brought back to life, and the four, husband, wife, and two brothers, lived under one roof in peace and harmony, remembering each night when they looked up onto the slopes of Chomo-Lung-Ma, the loftiest of all earth's mountains, and seeing there a crimson stain at sunset trickle like spilt blood over the pure snows, to thank the good spirits who had delivered them from the powers of a most evil one.



## THE TRADER MEETS A SOKPAR

FOR so many years that one would be at a loss to say how long, the traders have trekked to and fro to distant lands from Tibet over mountain passes, year in and year out, with their caravans of mules, yaks, and donkeys, chiefly laden with yak and sheep wool and borax. Not all the seasons, however, for half the year the passes are closed, and then it is that the mountain spirits and demons are loose, and they make the snow fall, the paths to freeze, and great avalanches to crash down, to say nothing of the terrific winds which would blow the strongest man or beast hurtling over a precipice and leave him in some terrible abyss for the vultures and mountain crows to pick his bones clean. When summer comes these wild spirits sleep for stretches of time. In the high places they sleep



like cats with one eye half open, and one can never be too sure they won't suddenly awake and give vent to their hideous temper. All of this the traders know, but their livelihood depends on what they can make by the bartering of their goods, and so they trust that the merciful gods will follow in their wake, and if the demons and mountain spirits rise up against them, the merciful gods will fight the enemy in their cause and vanquish them.

In these wild parts there is another being the traders have learned to fear greatly—a creature who is both animal and man—a terrible monster called the Sokpar. Though met with less seldom, he is none the less the most formidable foe. Being half human, half animal, he is subject neither to the good nor to the evil spirits, and man, therefore, must battle with him alone and unprotected. The Sokpar has the face of a man, but an evil face that would strike terror to the boldest. His body appears deformed, for his hands and feet are turned the wrong way about, and from head to foot he is covered with thick black hair. His teeth are like sharp fangs, and his finger and toe nails are like horny claws. He can roll his huge furry body into a hoop and roll over the mountains with such speed that he could overtake anyone so unfortunate as to be seen by him.

Once long, long ago, there was a trader who had set

out to a distant place to exchange his goods and to make purchases. One night he was overtaken by darkness before reaching a village or place where he could rest for the night, so he took shelter in a mountain cave. When he was making ready to sleep he heard the pad of heavy feet outside, and he started up in alarm to see two fiery eyes like glowing wood-cinders turned upon him. So fierce was the glow from these two eyes that it lighted up the whole interior of the cave, as if a fire were shedding its red light over all things, and the Trader perceived from the appearance of the huge hairy monster that confronted him that he was face to face with a Sokpar. The Trader tried to hide his fear, though inwardly he quaked at the sight of the horrible being. The Sokpar entered the cave and sat himself down beside the Trader and asked him what he was doing there.

“I am sheltering for the night,” said the Trader.

The Sokpar then asked the Trader if he was not afraid to sleep in such a lonely and forbidding place, and the Trader replied that he was afraid of nothing, for he had several implements with him that would kill the strongest and most fierce enemy.

“What would you do,” said the Sokpar, glowering at him, “if a robber or a man-eating brute were to fall upon you?”

"I would," said the Trader, "stab him with a dagger I wear at my side."

The Sokpar asked the Trader to let him see the dagger, and the Trader unfastened it from his belt, but when he went to draw it out from its scabbard, he found it was tight-jammed, and pull as he might he could not move it.

The Sokpar watched the Trader struggling to loosen the dagger and laughed a grim and horrible laugh.

"What can you do," said the Sokpar, "to defend yourself against attack now that your dagger is stuck fast in the scabbard?"

"I have a bow and a poisoned arrow," said the Trader, "and I would shoot my enemy through the forehead with it."

"Let me see your bow and arrow," said the Sokpar.

The Trader got his bow and arrow, but to his astonishment he found the arrow was twisted round the bow, and his effort to disengage it was vain.

On seeing the Trader's struggles the Sokpar again laughed his horrible laugh.

"As everything seems to go contrary to your expectation," said the Sokpar, "how could you face your enemy?"

The Trader had his feet on a large slab of stone, which he had noticed, on entering the cave, was loose, so he said:

"I would pick up this slab of stone under my feet and crack my enemy's skull with it."

"Supposing," said the Sokpar, "when you went to pick it up you found the stone as fast to the ground as you found the dagger to the scabbard and the bow to the arrow. Then what would you do?"

The Trader tried the stone, which before had moved easily, and discovered that, push as he might, he could not even move it the fraction of an inch. The Trader was now really in great alarm, for he had nothing but a massive bone ring which he wore on his thumb to do any hurt with, but he said without flinching, "I have one thing left with which I could protect myself, so I am not afraid."

"Let me see what it is," said the Sokpar. But the Trader suspected that his weapons of defense were made useless to him through the Sokpar looking at them with the evil eye, so he said: "The dread weapon I have is invisible."

"If it is invisible," said the Sokpar, "what is it called?"

"It is called 'Something,' " said the Trader, who had become cautious.

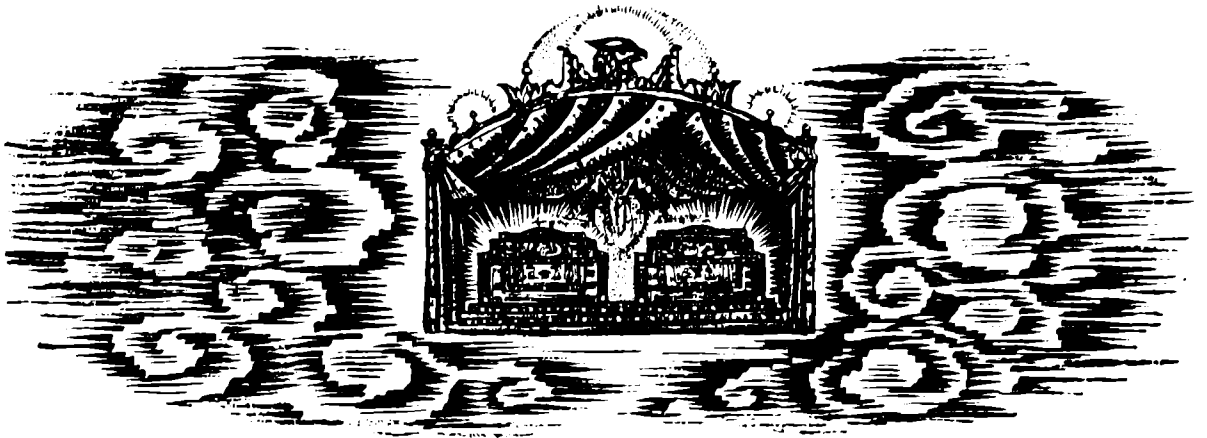
"Every 'Something' has its name," said the Sokpar. "Tell me the name of this particular 'Something.'"

"The name of it is '*a thing*,'" said the Trader, and he doubled his fist and gave the Sokpar a stunning blow be-

tween the eyes with the bone ring, shouting: "This is the thing—this is the thing," and continued raining his well aimed blows.

The Sokpar had been taken off his guard, and in a dazed way hedged around the cave till at last the Trader managed to pin him up against a jagged rock, and with one last mighty blow felled him, and so saved himself from the clutches of the dreaded hairy man.

The next morning he went to find the body of the Sokpar, for he had rolled it some distance out of the cave, but what was his surprise to find on the spot where the body had been the carcass of a wild bull. So the Trader was unable to bring home the scalp of the hairy man to show to his friends, as he had hoped.



## DORJI AND TIPSU

IN A land of great forests, many rivers and streams, there once lived a little boy and a little girl. How they had come there nobody knew, for a basket maker's wife had found them lying asleep together on the water's edge, whence she had gone to pull some rushes. Being a kindly body and having no children of her own, she picked up the two children, who at the time were small babes, and tucking one under each arm went home to her husband. The old basket maker was greatly delighted on seeing the two children and said to his wife:

“We are both old and childless. The gods have sent these children to us to bless our home and to be a comfort to us in our old age. We will cherish them and bring them up as well as our scant means will allow.”

Time passed, and the two foundlings grew into a sturdy boy and girl and were the pride and joy of their foster parents' hearts. The boy was named Dorji and the girl Tipsi.

Dorji was taught to make baskets and could weave them deftly, but he was a self-indulgent boy, and many a time he would slip into the woods to play, leaving his work half finished. Little Tipsi would chide him for this:

"Dorji," she would say, "we owe our good foster parents gratitude, for had they not sheltered us we would have starved to death or been devoured by wild beasts. Our poor old parents are tired, and we should work to keep them, as they worked to keep us when we were helpless babes."

"Next time I will see to it that I finish my work before I go to play," Dorji would say, for he was not altogether a bad boy, but a thoughtless one. "Next time I will finish it, so do not scold me, little Sister." By the morning he would have forgotten his promises. They were lightly made and as lightly broken. Perhaps a butterfly had fluttered past when he was working, and he had run to catch it, or he had seen a wild bee cross his path, hunted out the hive to get the honey, and in hunting out the hive he had spied a bird's nest and could not rest until he had clambered up the tree to see if any eggs were in the nest,

and so one thing led to another, and the day would pass by, and in the evening, worn from hours of honest toil, Dorji's old foster father would find the boy's unfinished task, and he would set to finish it, for it had to be finished.

"My son," said the old mother, "work that is half finished is work left for others to do. The hours that you have wasted have to be paid for by someone. Where have you been, and what have you been doing?"

Dorji hung his head. What had he done? What was the sum of his day? A mangled butterfly, a run from angry bees with a mere taste of honey on the end of a stick, and five little eggs lying broken at the foot of some gnarled tree. That was the sum of his day.

"Do not scold me, good Mother," said Dorji; "next time I shall do better."

"He means to do better," said the old people. "He is a good boy—thoughtless—but for all that a good boy."

Little Tipsi listened to Dorji's promises and wondered how long it would be before the "next time" her brother spoke of would come. "Next time" has feet that are slow to move. Many a time she hurried over her household duties to plait and twist the rushes that Dorji had left, so the old man would not find them, her fingers growing stiff and sore from the unaccustomed work, but though



she worked hard, it would seem she could not do it as quickly as she wished, and it was seldom she had got the work finished before her foster father returned from peddling the wares.

"Brother," said Tipsi, "daily our old parents get more feeble. Are you not ashamed to see our father's trembling hands finishing the work that you have neglected to do?"

Dorji turned his face away that he might not see Tipsi's reproachful eyes, for Tipsi's eyes held something in them that pulled at his heart.

"Do not look at me so," said Dorji. "I will make good my neglect, and next time I will do double my usual work. I promise you, little Sister."

"Promise me nothing," said Tipsi. "When next time does come it may be too late." And her words came true, for within less than a year the old couple were dead, and Dorji and Tipsi were left to themselves.

"Perhaps they might have lived longer," said Dorji, "if they had not toiled so to keep us. Had I only known I would have been a kinder son." Thinking of all he might have done, he wept bitterly.

"Listen, my brother," said Tipsi. "Our tears fall but our prayers rise. Let us then offer our prayers for their happiness and do the work they have taught us to do, for are

we not grateful that they have left us a trade whereby we may earn our bread?"

"Sweet Sister," said Dorji, "I will earn bread for both of us, but come with me now to the river to gather rushes that I may not be alone with my grief." And Tipsi, obedient to her brother's wish, stuck the needle she had been stitching with into her dress, and with the thread still hanging from the eye, followed him out.

The road led them by the forest, and the day was hot. They had not walked far when they came to a clump of bamboo.

"How cool it looks in their shade," said Dorji. "Let us sit here awhile and rest ourselves," and he threw himself on the ground.

"There is much to do before sundown," said Tipsi. "Let us not loiter, Brother."

"The day is before us," said Dorji. "Come, sit beside me. It is cool and pleasant here in the shade," and he drew Tipsi down beside him. Soon they both became drowsy and fell asleep. When they awoke the dew of evening was falling. Tipsi sprang to her feet.

"Dorji," she cried, "we have wasted the day."

"Next time," said Dorji, "we will not sit down. I will rise to-morrow before dawn and gather the rushes, and

by sunset I will have gathered enough rushes to make up for those we must leave unpulled to-day."

"What was that?" exclaimed Tipsi, grasping hold of her brother's hand.

"Only the creaking of the bamboo in the wind," said her brother.

"I am fearful of the night," said Tipsi, "for strange spirits are abroad in it. Let us go."

"Why should we hurry?" said Dorji. "The night is fragrant and young. Look you, Tipsi, the moon is rising. Let us sit yet awhile and watch the moon rise above the tops of the trees."

"Brother," said Tipsi, "if you are to be up before dawn it is time we were home to bed."

"I promise you I will be up in good time," said Dorji. "Only let us enjoy the night, there may never be such another."

Tipsi looked at her brother, and a terrible foreboding of ill crept over her.

"Dorji!" she cried, throwing herself in his arms, "great is my love for you, little Brother; remember this only if ever we are parted, and promise me nothing."

Dorji looked at Tipsi. "How you change in the moonlight, little Sister," he said tenderly, "and how strange are the words you utter. I will go with you where you

will, and nothing shall ever part us. As we were found by our good foster parents together, so we will remain ever together. I will work to keep you in plenty.”

Tipsi shivered, for the night air was chill, and they had eaten nothing but a few herbs and a small bowlful of barley meal that they had brought with them. She thought of the walk along the lonely road, the supper yet to be prepared. She thought of Dorji’s promises. They were as empty as her own stomach. She thought of the kindly old couple who had waited in vain for his promises to be made good. She thought of the toil-worn hands that had toiled for them to the end. How sorrowful she felt that night thinking of it all! Again the bamboo creaked, and Tipsi felt the same awful foreboding.

“Did you hear that?” said Tipsi. “I have heard the creaking of bamboo in the wind, but not such creaking as that. It is as if the bamboo were snapping apart, and there is no wind. The night is still and lovely.”

“Help me out of here. Help me out of here!” cried a voice. “I am caught,” and again the bamboo creaked, this time followed by the sound of cloth tearing.

Dorji and Tipsi looked around and saw a little gnome struggling to free himself from the bamboo thicket.

“Poor little man,” said Tipsi, hurrying forward and helping the Gnome out. “Have you hurt yourself?”

“Look at my new cloak,” said the Gnome. “I’ve torn it from neck to hem. The new cloak that I put on to go to the fair.”

Tipsi’s fingers flew to her needle.

“Is that a needle and thread that I spy?” said the Gnome. “What a good piece of luck! Will you be kind enough to mend my cloak for me?”

“We have no time,” said Dorji. “It is late, and we must make our way homeward. My sister is tired to-night, but if you can come to us to-morrow she will mend it for you.”

“Give me your cloak,” said Tipsi; “it shall be mended in a trice”; and she helped the Gnome off with his cloak and put her needle into the torn stuff. “I wish all my work was as easy to do as your torn cloak,” said Tipsi, for the needle seemed to run the stuff together without the least effort, and the tiny stitches it made were so neat that the tear could hardly be said to show.

“Perhaps it will be,” said the Gnome meaningly. “I’ve seen stranger happenings than that in my time. But the service you have rendered me is a service I still owe you. Follow me; I will take you to the fair.”

Tipsi was about to say the hour was late and they must go to bed, but Dorji spoke up quickly. “You will take us



**GORGEOUS BUTTERFLIES CAME AND SETTLED THEMSELVES IN  
JEWELLED CLUSTERS ON THE TREES UNTIL THE FORESTS SEEMED  
TO BE BLOSSOMING.**







to the fair?" he said. "That will be merry! Lead on, little man. A fair is not to be missed."

The Gnome led the way through the woods, and Dorji and Tipsi followed him. If Tipsi had been tired when she started, she was not tired now. With each step along the path her heart seemed to grow lighter, and when the fair was reached all her cares had forsaken her, and she was ready to join the merry throng. And a merry throng it was! There were birds there, and bees and butterflies, and many a shy denizen of the forest who showed up as lively as the rest. Little creatures whose kin Dorji had routed out of their lairs in the past and crushed to death under his wanton feet. Rows of booths were gayly festooned with flowers and ferns, and shiny leaves set out in rows were piled high with juicy berries and nuts.

The Gnome led Dorji and Tipsi through a maze of merrymakers to a stall, and told them to help themselves plentifully to the cakes and sweetmeats that were spread out on it, and gave them rich good milk to drink.

"Brother," whispered Tipsi, "let us thank our good friend and wend our way homeward, for we have work to do to-morrow."

"Time enough for that," said Dorji. "Why leave in the midst of the gayety?"

"If you have eaten and drunk your fill," said the

Gnome, "come with me." He brushed aside some scrubs, and stooping, at his bidding, to force an entrance, they came to a clearing. Here little men with long beards were lying on a mossy bank, and the Gnome found Dorji and Tipsi a place among them and told them to be seated.

Presently they heard the fluttering of wings, and then a thousand silvery bird voices burst into song. Never had Dorji and Tipsi listened to such singing, for the song which the birds sang was a song locked from mortal ears.

"Do you hear how they are singing?" said the Gnome.

"Yes," said Tipsi. "I hear."

"Why do they never sing such songs for men to hear?" said Dorji.

"The birds," said the Gnome, "fear men, for men rob their nests and imprison them for their song. Yet because they are birds they must sing their little songs, but not as you hear them this night, for they sing without fear of being heard."

Dorji thought of the nests he had robbed, the many little songsters he had snared, and asked no further questions.

"Naught here fears man," said the Gnome, "for within this charmed circle man has no power, and all are joyous and free."

Among the many bird voices was one that rose above

the others, pure as crystal, sweet and insistent. "That," said the Gnome, "is the bird that builds under the waterfalls."

Did ever night hold such witchery? Gorgeous butterflies came and settled themselves in jeweled clusters on the trees until the forests seemed to be blossoming, and fireflies wove fiery twinkling trails across the grasses, or danced until the air was aglitter with winking lights. Sportive dragon flies darted hither and thither and hovered while the moonbeams glanced blue on their gauzy wings.

Thinking only of the beauty of the charmed hour that held them spellbound, Dorji and Tipsi were lulled into forgetfulness while they listened and looked. Presently the birds ceased their singing, the dragon flies sped away, the butterflies broke their jeweled clusters and unlinked themselves to hide under the leaves, and the fireflies put out their fairy lamps.

"To work!" said the Gnome, and the little graybeards jumped up with a shout and took to their heels and scampered off.

Tipsi rubbed her eyes and looked around her. "Where are we?" she said. "I do not know this place."

"Follow the path yonder," said the Gnome. "Do not stray from it, and it will bring you to your home. Here

is a basket of food; the journey you have before you is a long one, and now I will bid you farewell. I give you also two more gifts each, a whip and a bun. Keep these until you need them. Eat what you will from the basket. Remember my words." And with that he vanished.

Dorji opened the basket. It was filled with plump fruits of many kinds, and he and Tipsi stayed their hunger and made their way along the path. They had not gone far when Dorji took his bun, and, unmindful of the Gnome's words, bit into it. "It is stale and has but little taste," he said, pulling a wry face, and he flung it from him.

"Brother," said Tipsi, "what have you done? We were told to guard these gifts until we had need of them. The bun may have tasted good had you needed it."

"Taste yours," said Dorji, "and you will see how dry it is."

"No," said Tipsi, and she hid her bun away safely in the folds of her bodice, for she felt the Gnome would not have spoken as he did without good reason.

They trudged on, stopping only to help themselves from the basket, which had this peculiarity about it, that however much they took out of it, it remained as full as if they had taken nothing. Tipsi, perceiving this, pondered the more on the gift. It was no ordinary gift, of this she felt sure. A basket that remained full though they took

from it, and was as light to carry as thistledown though packed with heavy fruits, could be none but a fairy gift, and the fairy folk did not show themselves to mortals without some purpose, this she knew, for had not her foster mother told her tales of the fairies and of their doings?

Dorji in the meantime was thinking too, and now made known his thoughts to his sister.

“Look, Tipsi,” said he, “the path goes on and on, and doubtless it will take us many days to reach our home if we continue to follow it. There must be shorter cuts, let us make bold and push a way for ourselves through the trees. There must be other and better paths, if we look for them.”

The forest hemmed them in on every side, the trees growing close together, the undergrowth a thick, forbidding tangle. Only the little path showed riband-like and smooth before them.

“We must keep to the path,” said Tipsi, “for we do not know where we are, and we will get lost”; and so, to please her, seeing that she was fearful, Dorji trudged on in silence. Night again was upon them, but no darkness with it, for the moon was risen, and the path now gleamed like a polished silver thread, only losing itself in the distance where their eyes could no longer perceive it.

“We have tramped since dawn broke,” said Dorji. “Night is with us. Another day will break and our feet tread the same path, a path that is straight and unending. Are not your feet weary, Tipsi? And would you not like me to go and search for another path while you wait for me here?”

“No—no!” said Tipsi. “Let us not wander from it. There is no road so long but that there will be an end to it. Come, Dorji, come. My feet carry me as if I had bathed them in the wind. I would not even sit me down to rest, for something within me urges me on.”

“’Tis but your wish to be obedient to the counsel of the little graybeard,” said Dorji. “And who knows but what he is playing us a trick, and by now he and his brethren making sport over their fine jest. Gnomes, ’tis said, are fine tricksters.”

“Brother,” said Tipsi, “I know full well that he has not beguiled us, for my own heart tells me so, and by it I am not deceived. And did he not tell us that the road would be long?”

“In truth he did,” said Dorji. “But had he told us that it would swerve neither to the right nor to the left, and that by nightfall we would be no nearer reaching home than when we first set foot on it, I should not have set out. Now I shall climb a tree and see what there is before

us,” and with that he flung off his coat and made ready to swing himself aloft on the branch of one of those forest giants within his reach, and being an agile boy he was half-way up the tree before Tipsi had time to stop him.

Little Tipsi stood under the tree and looked up at Dorji climbing higher and higher, calling on him to be careful lest he should clutch a spent branch and fall, and at the same time praying that he would see nothing from the tree-top to encourage him to wander from the path.

“What lies beyond, Dorji?” she called, and for answer a shower of leaves and broken twigs fell upon her. What, she thought, if Dorji were to climb to the top of the tree and never come down again. Who could say what might happen to him up there? But she took comfort in the thought that Dorji had climbed many a tree and come to no harm. “Dorji,” she called. “What lies beyond?” Still there was no answer, and again some leaves fell, and she thought as they brushed her cheek that they felt cold and clammy, like the ghostly fingers of the dead, and of a sudden an uncontrollable fear took possession of her, and she screamed, “Dorji! Dorji! Come down, little Brother.”

Dorji, who had made his way to the uppermost branches, had not heard Tipsi calling, but her scream of fear reached him, and smote his ear like a sharp sword, and set him to clamber down to her as fast as he well knew



how. He found Tipsi crouched at the foot of the tree, white and tearful, and though he questioned her as to what was amiss, she gave no answer to his question. It was as if her lips sealed the fears they held. She looked half shyly at him, as though ashamed that he should know the truth.

Dorji's whip lay with his coat where he had flung it on the ground, and he would have gone on without it had Tipsi not turned back to pick it up.

"An ax would have served my purpose better than this," said Dorji, taking the whip from his sister and looking at it. "Had the old graybeard given me an ax I would have hacked clear the undergrowth and made to the left there, for from the tree-top I could see the glint of the river. As for the path, there is nothing whatever to be seen. The river is no distance, and were we to go towards it we would soon find ourselves at our own door. I promise you, little Sister, no harm will befall you, but come now, and we will forsake this weary path and get home with all possible speed."

"The river," said Tipsi, "flows through many lands. Where it begins and where it ends we know not."

"And of the beginning and end of the path we know still less," said Dorji, and crawling on all fours he tore aside the twisted vines and bent the young saplings back,

and called to Tipsi to follow him. As Dorji pushed his way, so the gaps he made closed after him, the supple branches shooting back into place and drawing the coiling tendrils with them. Tipsi, her heart full of misgiving, followed her brother and received many a stinging lash across her face from the rebounding branches that made her wince with pain. The path had been so smooth and she had felt almost as if she had been lifted along when she was on it, but now a great weariness was taking hold of her, and the basket of fruit, strapped with a thong across her forehead and resting on her back, seemed of a sudden to have become so heavy that the weight of it almost crushed her. Just as she was thinking she would sink under its weight, she heard a glad cry from Dorji.

"Come, Tipsi," he called. "Here is a clearing. We can rest ourselves and eat from our basket, for I am hungry." He held the foliage apart to help her through. "Is it not nice here? Like some little nest carpeted with choice moss. Indeed, we can sleep here and continue our journey in the morning, for the river cannot be far distant now."

"Yet," said Tipsi with a sigh, "I wish, dear Brother, we had kept to the path." And so saying she opened the basket, and to her amazement and horror she found it filled with stones.

"What did I tell you?" said Dorji, his astonishment now

mingled with anger at what he saw. "We have been tricked. Gnomes were ever evil fellows. This is a pretty recompense for your kindness in mending his torn cloak for him. A debt he owed you well paid."

Tipsi slipped her hand into her bodice to get the bun she had tucked into the folds, thinking Dorji would be glad enough now, however dry it might be, to share it with her, and to her dismay found it was gone.

"Dorji," she said, "let us retrace our steps and find the path once more. We are being punished for our disobedience. The good Gnome's basket was filled with fruit so long as we followed the path. By leaving it the fruit has been changed to stone. You have thrown the bun he gave you away. The one he gave me is lost, though for safety I hid it in my bodice. Only evil can come of your willfulness. We are both hungry, and our feet that seemed to glide with us are now scratched and torn by thorns and bleeding. There we were protected and provided for. Here we know not what may happen to us." Just as she said this a great snake crawled out of the thicket, as if it had been sent as a warning, and rustled past them. Tipsi grasped her brother's arm. "Oh, Dorji," she cried. "Did you see that?"

"Yes," said Dorji. "Were it daylight I would hunt him out. No doubt there is a nest of them hereabouts. We must

press on, we cannot lie down to sleep here. But we will get out of the wood presently. Have courage, Tipsu, the river must be within easy reach."

He took up the basket and emptied it of the stones before pressing forward, for notwithstanding a vague idea that he was at fault, he was determined to have his way and find the river, being loath to acknowledge himself mistaken, though certain doubts and misgivings had begun to lessen his own courage, had Tipsu but known the truth. He had seen what looked to him like water, but the moon played strange freaks with the landscape, and Dorji knew that by now, had the silver trail he had seen from the tree-top been the river, they must have arrived on its bank. It might have been a low-lying cloud or a wisp of mist, who could say, transformed by Dorji's fancy to form itself to his wish, that he might have an excuse to stray from a path that had become irksome in its monotony. Dorji was ever a boy ready to be diverted, and he liked to feel he knew what to do without being told. A graybeard was only half-man, a bit of a fellow, a snip that reached only as high as Dorji's waist, with all his gray hairs. Why should he listen to him? And thus he argued with himself, while yet his reason told him that by straying from the path they were lost in the forest and might have to tramp for days without food or shelter.

To turn back now would be to humble himself in Tipsi's eyes.

Oh! Those eyes of Tipsi's. How he liked to see them glow to warmth when he told her of his valiant deeds, and now to tell her that she had been right and that he was afraid. But was he afraid? No! A thousand times no! If a wild beast sprang out of the thicket and attacked Tipsi he would fight it to his last ounce of strength, and when he had vanquished it, he would bind up Tipsi's wounds, unmindful of his own hurt, and press her tenderly to him and call her "little sister." So thought Dorji, even as Tipsi was wiping away the red beads of blood that were forming on her tender skin where the sharp thorns had pierced the flesh.

Tipsi limped after her brother, who was again forcing his way through the close-grown tangle of thorn bushes, more determined than ever to follow his will rather than, as he felt, retrace one step which to his mind meant giving in to the Gnome, towards whom he now felt an intense hatred.

"Did you ever know such ingratitude, Tipsi?" said he. "I wish you had left the cloak unmended. All this trickery is his doing. Perhaps he has made the likeness of a river appear on purpose to mislead us."

"To mislead us, Brother?" said Tipsi. "Are we then

misled—lost in the forest? Oh, Dorji, where are we?” And with hope gone and her fears realized, weak and worn with hunger, she sank to the ground and burst into a fit of weeping. “I cannot go another step, Dorji,” she sobbed. “Leave me and make your way as best you can. If the gods so will it I shall be here when you have found another path and can return for me. If not, I must accept my fate, be it to be devoured by the beasts or to die of hunger.”

“Dry your tears, dear Tipsi,” said Dorji. “We will turn back. Be comforted, if the path is still there and the graybeard has not spirited it away also, it will be no great matter to find it again. We have only to go the way we came.”

Tipsi, consoled by her brother’s willingness to return, and with fresh hope to spur her on, dried her tears and rose to her feet. Alas, on turning back they could see no sign of a gap. Indeed, it seemed as though the trees had suddenly crowded close together and the vines twined themselves into a thick network of ropes to bind and draw the trunks still closer. It was well-nigh impossible to squeeze between them.

“The evil work of the Gnome,” said Dorji, his eyes blazing and his face burning with passion. “The trees were not pressed close like this, neither were the vines corded in this

manner," and with fury he took the Gnome's whip and slashed a great tree that stood before him.

No sooner had he struck the tree than it began to writhe and shiver and bend as if it were a blade of grass shaken in a fierce gale. Its leaves fell as it shook and tossed to and fro; then two branches lowered themselves like great muscular arms and snatched Dorji up swiftly.

Dorji, surprised into dumbness, had not time to utter a sound, nor could he struggle, before the great strong arms had lifted him up, and he was pushed through a cavity in the tree trunk. As Dorji disappeared a great sigh went through the woods, as if all the trees said, "Ah . . . h . . . Ah."

"Where are you, Dorji?" cried Tipsi, who had not perceived what had happened to her brother, the falling leaves having dropped thick and fast like a curtain before her eyes. "Dorji, where are you?" There was no answer.

Tipsi called and called in vain. The forest rang with her cries, "Dorji, Dorji, Dorji!" until merciful sleep weighted her eyelids, and she was lulled into a quiet and dreamless slumber. When she awoke the sun was shining. She sat up and rubbed her eyes. A pleasant warmth enveloped her. She looked around her. All that had happened seemed like the shadowy remembrance of some terrible dream. A dream in which she and Dorji were lost

in an enchanted forest, where trees rocked and groaned, and leaves fell as in a tempest, and then—"Dorji"— She sprang to her feet. Where was Dorji? He was not beside her. She had fallen asleep on the side of the path. They had never left it. She supposed Dorji had run on ahead. There was the basket. She smiled when she looked into it. She had dreamt it had been filled with stones. Stones! *What a dream!* Here were peaches with the bloom still on their downy cheeks, and apricots and plums. She helped herself to them, and there was her bun, too, just as she had hidden it in the folds of her bodice, and her whip stuck through her belt. She little thought that while she slept the good Gnome and his companions had lifted her tenderly and carried her to the path, nor that they had squeezed the healing juices of berries on her hands and feet to cure them of their hurt.

She fastened the strap of her basket across her forehead. How light it felt. She supposed Dorji had eaten as much fruit as he wanted—she knew him!—and then he had seen a butterfly and was now chasing it. Peaceful and happy in her thoughts, Tipsi trudged on by herself, singing little snatches of those woodland songs her foster mother had taught her. Time went by, but Tipsi was unmindful of it. That Dorji had run ahead so far did not trouble her until the darkness began to set in; then of a sudden she became



afraid of her loneliness. Dorji was thoughtless, not cruel. He knew she was afraid of the darkness. Why did he not wait until she caught him up? Now she called, making a trumpet of her hands that her voice might carry farther, and for answer an echo threw back her own voice to her, making it sound hollow and awful. Her voice returned from afar, calling, "*Dorji, Dorji . . .*" Behind the trees she could see an orb of light. It was the moon rising. Its beams would lighten her path, lighten it and at the same time release the shadows—and the trees—at night-time their tongues were loosened and they whispered strange and sinister things to one another. The forest would be heavy with their mysterious whisperings. She had loved the moonlight and the whispering forest when she and Dorji walked hand in hand.

Already the trees were beginning to whisper. They were saying, "*Tipsi is all alone.*" She hurried on, now walking, now running, sometimes stopping to call Dorji's name. Her own voice frightened her—everything frightened her—the least cracking of a twig, the scream of a distant bird, the swift-winged bats that swooped across her path. Suddenly she bethought herself of the Gnome's gifts and of his words. She had the whip and the bun. He had told her they would serve her in time of need. Dorji had said all gnomes were tricksters. She would see if he were right.

She took out the bun and looked at it. She was not hungry. Was she to eat it only when she felt hungry? She would use the whip. But why should she use a whip? There was no need of it. And so her thoughts and doubts began to gather round her.

“If only I could find a place to shelter,” she said to herself. “Somewhere to lay my head this night. I am not hungry, therefore I do not need my bun, and what should I lash with a whip? Yet I am in need.” Her fingers shook, and the bun dropped from them. As it touched the ground it blazed up, blue and yellow flames shot from it. The flames died down, and Tipsi saw a round heap of glowing embers of what had once been her bun that made her think of the fire on the hearth at home. Fascinated she stared into the embers. They began to tumble apart, and to Tipsi’s wonderment a wall rose up, and then another and another. A little house was building itself up under her eyes. The four walls grew up, higher and higher, and then it seemed as if the walls were about to cave in. Tipsi drew back expecting a crash, but instead of crashing the top of the walls fell over and formed an arched roof. Just as glowing wood embers piled together will fall together and separate, so these embers glowed and shifted, but each movement went to make the little house more perfect. Now a cavity would form into a window, then a

piece fall in and form a door, until at last the house was complete in every detail, and big enough for her to walk into had she dared.

She wondered what would happen when the embers cooled. Would the lovely little house fall into a heap of dreary ashes? She sat herself down on her basket by the fringe of the wood and watched the glow fade from the walls. At length the fire faded out. There stood the house, with a round roof of friendly thatch, and lights shining invitingly from the windows and through the open door. Tipsi got up. Perhaps, she thought, the walls outside have cooled, but the light I see from the windows is from the fire raging within. I will go close and peer in. Just as she thought this a small dog came romping out of the house towards her, wagging his tail.

“You dear little dog,” said Tipsi, stroking the animal’s silken head. “Have you been sent to tell me I may go safely into the house?” And the dumb creature, as if he understood her words, licked her feet, and then gripped the hem of her robe and drew her with playful jerks towards the door and across the threshold.

“What is your name?” said Tipsi. The dog gazed up into her face as much as to say, “Your faithful friend,” and Tipsi said, “Since you have come to me when I am alone and in need I will call you ‘Friend.’ ”

At this the dog barked, wagged his tail, and showed signs that he was well pleased. Inside the house there was everything Tipsi could wish for. She thought how happy she would be if she and Dorji and Friend could live together in this charming little house.

On a wooden bench she saw a tray on which were a cup of milk, a comb of honey, and some crisp cakes like those she and Dorji had eaten at the fair, and in the corner was a couch with a soft coverlet of dried moss plaited with grasses. Tipsi shared the cake and milk with Friend and with a grateful heart threw herself down on the mossy couch and fell asleep. In her dream she saw the Gnome.

"Tipsi," he said, "be at peace. Dorji will be cared for, he is not far from you. Stay here and wait. The time will come when he will have learnt his lesson."

On waking Tipsi remembered what the Gnome had told her in the dream. "I will do as he bids," she said, "for he proves himself no trickster; and if Dorji is being well cared for, I must not complain."

So Tipsi and Friend lived in the house, not straying far from it, and the months went by. Each day Tipsi tried to keep busy and cheerful and to have faith, but oftentimes unbidden the tears would come in spite of herself when she thought of Dorji. They came often and were as often brushed away. Dorji was forever uppermost in her mind.

But what of Dorji all this long time? We will return to the forest and see how he has fared, for little Tipsi is well guarded by Friend, and the watchful Gnome will provide for her needs.

Dorji in his tree was indeed a prisoner. At first he had thought he could make an escape, and had struggled fiercely to break the bonds that held him fast. But all to no purpose: he succeeded only in bruising himself and rubbing and chafing his skin.

"I will have my freedom!" he screamed, banging and beating upon the inside of the tree with his clenched fists. "I will be free." Struggling so, he at length wore himself out. There was no one to hear either his cries, his threats, or his groans, and after a night spent in battling he was forced to admit himself defeated, and his arms fell listless to his sides, and his head dropped forward on his chest. His tired body seemed to crumple under its own weight, and so he slept because he was too tired and overwrought to keep awake.

Dreams came to him, as they had come to Tipsi, but they were vivid and terrible dreams. In them he saw Tipsi pursued by wild beasts; terror-stricken she called on him to save her. He saw great monsters plunging headlong through the forest after her. He heard their snarls and caught the hungry glint in their staring eyes. Scene upon

scene conjured itself up before him, and in all of them was Tipsi, calling on him to defend her.

Morning broke, a thin ray of light from on high reached him. Haggard and broken in spirit Dorji raised his eyes towards the light. "Tipsi," he murmured, "it was my fault. I alone am to blame for all you may suffer." Hardly had the words been uttered when it seemed that he had more room to move. Though it was still dark, Dorji's eyes had accustomed themselves to the gloom, and in the half light he perceived that the interior of the tree was grooved and had notches that would serve as a ladder to climb up to the hole from where the light entered. Gripping fast with his fingers and toes, he managed after a time to work his way up the slippery surface, though this was no small feat and required patience and perseverance.

Again and again, when he had all but reached his goal, he slipped back, the least sign of impatience seemed to be enough to make him lose a hold and to send him sliding down to the bottom, and many were the days that passed before Dorji at last had climbed high enough to be able to peep out of the hole and see something of the green world outside. All thoughts of trying to escape had gone from his mind. He knew a will stronger than his own kept him imprisoned there. The long days were dull and lonely. The only thing he could do was to look out of the hole.

Even then he could not see much, for crisscross branches and leaves stood in the way. He thought how gladly he would have welcomed work. If only he had some rushes and could *weave a basket!* The idleness of his life was hard to bear.

The seasons changed. Summer turned to autumn; autumn to winter; and then came spring. With the coming of spring the desire for freedom became almost past endurance, and the longing to see Tipsi gnawed at his heart. Oh! the glad days when she and he had wandered by the river. Now the banks would soon be gay with flowers. Ah! what delight it had been to wade in the cool waters! He, Dorji. Now a prisoner—a wild thing with its nose pressed against the bars. And so the thoughts he summoned served only to awaken fresh despair.

Then one day he looked out and saw a little bird settled on a twig, the first live thing he had seen since his imprisonment. His heart gave a great thump of joy, and he remained quietly watching hardly daring to move lest the bird should be startled, take to its wings, and fly off. The bird hopped this way and that, and cocked its head to one side, and seemed to be considering its surroundings, and chirped as if to say, "Is this a good place or not?" Then she flew down and presently returned with a twig in her beak. "She is going to build a nest," thought Dorji. Down

flew the bird and up again, always carrying something in her beak.

Dorji forgot his troubles in watching the bird building. He became so interested in the weaving of the nest that he felt he shared in the labor. How beautifully she was building it, and what strange bits and odds and ends she collected before it was completed outside. She hopped on the rim of it and turned and twisted and swung herself about as if she would make sure it was strong and would hold, and then she began once more flying up and down, up and down, fetching bits of moss, a feather or two, in fact, all the softest things she could find, until the nest was all snugly lined. As he had shared, so he felt, in the labor of building, so now the finished nest gave him the pleasure and pride of accomplishment.

The next day the bird returned with a companion. "That is her mate," thought Dorji, watching the two birds fussing and twittering and hopping in and out of the nest. By and by there were five little speckled eggs in the nest, and hour after hour the little bird sat patiently on them while her companion kept watch. Dorji found himself counting the hours until the baby birds would be hatched. How he looked forward to the time when the shells would crack open and the nestlings come out. Never in the whole of his life had he looked forward to anything



so much. He had become accustomed to the stillness of the forest, the wind in the tree-tops, the drip, drip, drip of rain on the leaves, the falling of twigs, but now he heard a strange sound. He listened. What was that? Voices—boys' voices, and the crunch of footsteps. From his hole he saw that a bamboo cane had been hoisted up with something white and sticky coating the end of it. Dorji knew too well what it was. A snare for the birds. He put his lips to the hole and cried a warning. He heard the flutter of wings, and when he looked again the birds had gone—he had startled them by calling. If only he could have spoken in the language of the birds to warn them of their danger! What could he do? They would never desert the nest with the five treasured little eggs in it.

The whirr of wings told him that the birds were returning. He put his eye to the peephole. The mother bird was settling into the nest, but her companion was hovering above. Dorji's heart was beating fast. Where would he alight? He was alighting. Dorji closed his eyes, but not before he had seen the bird alight on the end of the bamboo. A flap of wings, a startled cry, and the bamboo was withdrawn. How could anyone be so wicked? Anger at the foul deed made the blood rush to Dorji's temples. If he could get at the murderers and punish them! His conscience smote him. Had he not done the same himself?

Scrape, scrape—not content with trapping the bird, someone was climbing the tree. A hand reached out and grasped the nest and made off with it. The little nest he had shared with the birds. His indignation gave way to tears, and he wept.

Between his fits of sobbing Dorji looked out of the hole. A short distance away he saw a sorry figure, the remaining bird. She stood first on one leg and then on the other, put her small head under her wing and drew it out again. Dorji saw her beak open and shut. "Would I could let her know," he thought, "that her grief is my own. To-morrow she will fly away."

But days passed, and the little bird moped and showed signs of her distress. The long hours of night were the most terrible, for Dorji's sympathy made him understand the language of the birds. All through the long night he heard the wild bird's plaintive cry. "I built me a little nest of sticks and of straws and lined it with the softest mosses." He thought he could see her shrinking daily and huddling more into her feathers; then one morning he saw that she swayed on the twig as if her strength had failed her, and she fell. Dorji knew she was dead. His grief was now too bitter for tears, and he made his way to his cell at the bottom of the tree to contemplate in the silence.

But out of trouble good was to come. Tipsi in some

mysterious way felt Dorji's grief, and since she told Friend all her joys and sorrows, she now told him what she felt.

"Good Friend," said Tipsi, "you and I have lived together in our forest home. We have been well fed and cared for, and my happiness would have been complete but for one thing—my wish to find Dorji. So long as Dorji and I are parted I can never be wholly happy, for Dorji is the other part of my own self."

Friend nosed against his mistress and fixed her with his eyes. He had learned to know that the mention of Dorji's name was the signal of distress. Tipsi brushed her eyes with her sleeve. "Heretofore, I have contented myself, knowing that for some wise purpose we have been parted. While we have dwelt here the seasons have altered. Autumn and winter have passed us by, and the spring is with us, and with the coming of spring I hear Dorji calling me, and the sound of his voice, always so care-free and gay, is now sorrowful. Therefore, I can no longer live here in ease and plenty, and to-morrow, at the break of dawn, I will journey forth to seek him. Let us now sleep that we may wake early."

No sooner was Tipsi asleep than the Gnome appeared to her in a dream. "Tipsi," said he, "your feeling guides you right. The time has come for you to play your part. Go! but remember one thing: follow Friend. He will lead

you into the forest to a lofty tree and will crouch at the foot of it. Take your whip, and when Friend barks, lash the tree thrice with all your strength, but as soon as Friend runs you must run after him as fast as your legs will carry you. Do not stop until he stops. However great your desire to tarry may be, or your desire to turn back, do not give way to it. If you do, you will lose Dorji forever.”

Tipsi knew the dream was sent to her, and she saw that Friend had received orders from the same source, for when she made a move towards the door the faithful beast got up and hurried in front of her, stalking along, his tail in the air and his ears pricked to attention. So Tipsi followed Friend till it was almost turning dusk, and they were deep in the wood when Friend stopped short, sniffed, and crouched at the foot of a tree. Tipsi drew the whip out of her belt in readiness for the attack. Her breath came fast.

“If it were not for Dorji’s sake,” she said, addressing the tree, “and that I must obey the Gnome’s order, I would not strike you. I do this not out of revenge or spite, for the trees under whose shade I have grown up have been to me as fathers and mothers, and I am, and will always remain, a child of the forests.”

Friend barked. Quickly Tipsi lifted her whip and slashed the tree. There was a scream that rent the air.

"Give me courage," Tipsi breathed. Again she brought the whip down slash. With a crack the tree split asunder. "Only once more," said Tipsi. "*Once more.*" She looked, and her fingers felt as if they froze to the handle of the raised whip. She had seen Dorji. A great welt across his face and the blood spurting from his lips. "Dorji!" Her arm dropped limply to her side. As if to warn her, Friend gave a sharp bark and then another.

"I cannot do it," said Tipsi. "It is Dorji I am slashing, Dorji, my own beloved brother."

"Tipsi," said a voice behind her. She could see no one, but she recognized the voice as belonging to the Gnome. "If you disobey in one thing you will never see Dorji more, and if you delay it will be *too late.*"

Tipsi closed her eyes. Her senses sickened, and without allowing herself time to think, she slashed out with the whip. In a blur she saw Dorji's bloodstained face tortured by pain, and more, it was as if she saw Dorji's innermost being and heard the cry of his heart: "Tipsi, is it you that could wound me so?"

Friend tugged her dress and then bolted. Friend was running away. Should she follow him or stop behind and beg Dorji's forgiveness, tell him she had not meant to hurt him?

“Dorji,” she half screamed, “speak to me!” and then she saw that Friend was traveling over the ground like a streak of light. Hardly conscious now of what she was doing, poor Tipsi ran after him, ran and ran until she stumbled in the darkness and fell against a soft bank. She picked herself up, and as she did so, she felt Friend rubbing against her ankles, and then felt his gentle tug on her skirt—the little trick he had of jerking her along whenever he wanted to guide her home.

“We have left home forever, dear Friend,” said Tipsi. But Friend continued to jerk her along, and because it seemed to matter little in which direction they went, Tipsi allowed herself to be led up the bank, and over the bank she saw her home, the house that had come out of the magic bun. The friendly lights were twinkling in the windows, and the smell of the wood smoke was drifting from under the eaves.

Tipsi had continued up to now to have faith in the Gnome, and that faith had buoyed her up. Never had it entered into her head that there was a possibility that he might trick her, but now the first doubt entered her mind. She had been led to Dorji only to lose him again, and what is worse, she had been made to use her whip to scourge him,

She broke up a millet cake and poured out some milk and gave it to Friend, and then, throwing herself on the mossy couch, buried her face in her hands and gave way to her grief.

Presently she heard her own name, "Tipsi," and turned to see the Gnome standing beside her. His brown eyes looked into hers with a look of pity mingled with reproach. She turned away and again buried her head in the moss.

"Tipsi," the Gnome repeated, "I have come to say that you have done well. As I expected, your faith in me has been shaken, but sit up now and wipe away your tears. I have something to tell you." Tipsi sat up, and the Gnome drew up a stool, and resting himself on it took her hand in his own rough, claw-like one and spoke: •

"Sorrow and joys both come and pass," said he, "for this is way of life. Much of the sorrow is caused through the thoughtlessness of humans, some thinking themselves the lords of the world, conscious of their superior wits, seek to crush those beings weaker than themselves, and to make them slaves to their pride and caprice. They destroy and cause suffering, not with intention, but because they are thoughtless. They break faith with the trust reposed in them and misuse the power that is in their keeping. Dorji is about to have a great trust reposed in him.

The fate of a kingdom is about to be placed in his hands, a kingdom that was misruled and its subjects crushed by the callousness and indifference of his father, who has just died. Till now Dorji has had power only to harm creatures so small and weak that they could not raise their voices against him. By this I mean the birds, the butterflies, and those winged and feathered creatures of the earth and air. He crushed and mangled and destroyed them for the pure love of killing and crushing. He could as well have left them to live their little lives unharmed. He made every diversion an excuse to idle away time, and left others to forfeit their well earned leisure, and burdened them with a double load to pay for his improvidence. Reminded of his want of consideration, he sought to evade censure and made empty promises to retard the tide of their just reproach. What kind of king, think you, would he have made?"

Tipsi was dumbfounded. When she found her voice she said: "Sir, you are mistaken. Dorji is my brother."

"Tipsi," said the Gnome, "I will make known to you the circumstances that led to the finding of you and Dorji by the good basket maker's wife. You were motherless, the only child of a gentle and well loved king, whose kingdom—a lesser one—bordered on that of Dorji's father. Your father ruled his kingdom both wisely and well, his



chief thought being for the happiness of his people. Now the father of Dorji had a kingdom already bigger than he cared to manage, and vast tracts of rich land that lay idle, but rather than stir himself to cultivate it he swooped down upon your father's kingdom and seized it by force. The people were scattered far and wide, and the King, your father, was killed in battle, his palace was ransacked, and you, an innocent babe, thrown from a window into the river to be drowned.

"It so happened that we, the gnomes, were preparing to leave the devastated kingdom and were building a raft of rushes by the river when you were thrown into the waters and were carried unharmed by the waves into our midst. It was I who first saw you and picked you up. For some weeks we kept you, but being the child of human parents, we could not keep you long, and so had scouted the neighborhood in which we had taken up a fresh abode for what we considered the most suitable home for you to grow up in. Knowing that the good basket maker and his wife had longed for and been denied children of their own, we determined to await our time to lead them where they could find you.

"Soon your father's ravished kingdom became, under the rule of the new King, as badly managed and inhospitable as his own had been. He was idle, overbearing, and

thriftless, and from corner to corner his want of consideration was felt. He had, as I have told you, a son, an only one—Dorji. Dorji's mother, like your mother, had died at his birth, and soon after the King took another wife, a woman as idle and pleasure-seeking as himself. This all happened about the time the King, Dorji's father, was invading your father's kingdom. The new Queen was jealous of her husband's love for Dorji, and while he was away she crept out of the palace at night, and making a small boat of broad leaves, she put the baby on it and set him afloat upon the river. She then returned to the Palace and set up a hue and cry because the child was missing. The Queen feigned such grief that the King never suspected her of the crime, and it befell many innocent people to be punished. She neither cared for children nor had them. Recently the King and Queen have both died, and the throne awaits Dorji.

“When Dorji was set afloat he went bobbing down the river. The same river flowed through both kingdoms, and the tides washed him up on the shore at the very spot where we had cradled you, and so it came about that the good woman, your foster mother, going to gather rushes, found you both. Though we gnomes gave you over to those who could mind you best, we have never lost touch with you, and you have had, and always will be given, as

much protection by us as we are able to give you. You being a human, our power over you is limited, but as long as you endeavor to do right, so long will we work for your welfare.”

Tipsi had listened to his long narrative attentively, but she could in no way connect herself with it. She had been reared in humble circumstances. She was Tipsi, the basket weaver's foster child.

“Alas,” said Tipsi, “if this is so, and Dorji is in truth a king and not my brother, as I had thought, then I must resign myself to live without him.”

“The choice,” said the Gnome, “will rest with you.” He smiled till the wrinkles covered his face and reached his ears and could go no farther. His merriment was infectious. Tipsi found herself smiling through her tears, and before he left her she had promised to try and content herself with Friend's company and not stray too far from home.

In the forest strange things were taking place. Dorji had seen Tipsi when she struck him, and he knew Tipsi had seen and recognized him. He was still smarting from the lashes she had given him. The Tipsi he had pined for, gentle Tipsi, could it be she who had taken a whip and lashed him? She had loved him so, and now all that love

had turned to fury because of his conduct towards her. In days gone by she had always proved herself such a true and faithful companion, so tender and forbearing. Only hatred could have prompted her to strike him as she had. And then she had run and left him! He deserved it—he knew. But of all things he had been called upon to bear, this was the hardest. He was free, but what should he do with his freedom?

He cast his eyes to the ground, and he saw that thousands of mushrooms were springing up round where he stood. Everything was changing. The trees seemed to be melting away. Was he dreaming? He might well ask himself, well wonder. The mushrooms were growing up and turning into houses, and before Dorji realized what was taking place he found himself standing in the street of a great city teeming with life. People passed him by. Some looked at him curiously, as if they wondered what he was doing standing there in the middle of the street staring. Presently an old man came up to him.

“Are you a stranger hereabouts?” he asked.

“Yes,” replied Dorji, glad to speak to someone. “I am a stranger. What kind of place is this?”

“You’ll soon find out,” said the old man grimly, and walked on.

Dorji tried to catch him and ask him what he meant,

but he turned a corner, and Dorji lost sight of him in the crowd. He wandered through the maze of ill paved streets. He noticed that the houses were dilapidated and the gutters choked with filth and refuse; and the people he passed looked worn and ragged. Dorji was not only tired, he was hungry and thirsty. He made his way to the door of a house and pushed it open. Inside, a man, woman, and children were squatted on the mud floor, helping themselves from a bowl of unsavory-looking stew.

“Good people,” said Dorji, “can you give me something to eat and drink? I am a stranger in your city and am faint from hunger.”

“Give you food!” said the woman. “We have barely enough for ourselves. Indeed, you must be a stranger to these parts, coming asking for food. Cannot you see we are half starved? I can give you water, if that is what you want. There’s plenty of that in the river for the fetching, though there isn’t much time left when I’ve finished the work I have to do to even fetch that! But here you are. Take it and make off. I’ve no time to spend chattering with strangers,” and she handed him a cup.

Dorji drank from the half filled cup, thanked her, and went out. “No stranger was ever denied at my foster parents’ cottage,” he thought, “and they worked hard

enough. Perhaps these are ill-tempered people. I will try elsewhere."

He went from door to door, driven by hunger, but wherever he went he was met with refusal. Water, yes, but food—food was scarce. Water quenched his thirst but did not stay the pangs of hunger. In all the months he had spent in the tree he had felt neither hunger nor thirst. At last he came to the outskirts of the city and, climbing a hill, saw a great gate. He looked through the gate, and at the end of an avenue saw a palatial building. The setting sun struck the many turrets, and Dorji saw that they were tiled with gold.

"It must be the palace of a king," he thought. What a contrast to the mean-looking dwellings that lined the crooked streets of the city! "And so he lives there," thought Dorji, "while his people live in want." As he was peeping through the gate, someone came up behind him and nudged him. He looked down and saw the same little man he had encountered and spoken to first.

"Well," said the little man, "have you found out what manner of a city you're in yet?"

When Dorji had first seen the little man he had thought his face familiar. Now, when he looked at him a second time, he felt he had known him in the past, but puzzle as he might he couldn't think where he had seen him.

"Come now," said the little man. "Tell me what you are after. I keep the gate here." He took a silver key out of his leathern belt, turned the lock, and threw the gates wide open. Dorji saw magnificent grounds, with fountains playing between the trees. The drops of water fell like cascades of jewels in all the colors of the rainbow.

"To whom does all this belong?" asked Dorji.

"The King," said the little man. "I will show you over."

Dorji followed the little man through the grounds to the palace, and then taking out another key made of gold, he opened the palace door, and they went in. Dorji stared at the great splendid hall in which they found themselves. It looked vast and empty. The walls were encrusted with gems that shot glassy fires, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires. They reminded him of eyes that glittered and were yet hard and ruthless, as if flames that would freeze leaped from them.

They passed from one chamber to another. All were spacious, all were jeweled, and all were deserted. Then they came to one even vaster and more splendid than the rest. On a raised dais at the end of the room were two thrones. These were of gold, and above and draped round the thrones were curtains of some rich fabric embroidered with pearls that hung on loose threads like tears. A great

evil-looking bird of prey held the curtains aloft, as if he carried them in his taloned claws. He seemed to Dorji like a symbol of ill omen.

“Would you not like to climb up there and rest yourself?” said the little man.

Dorji shrank back. “No,” said Dorji, “for I should find no rest while a symbol so evil hovered over me. It is like a vulture who is waiting to devour his prey.”

“Ah! you see that,” said the Gnome, for though Dorji had not recognized him, it was no other than he.

“Where is the King?” asked Dorji. “How comes it that we can wander where we will?”

“The King is here,” replied his companion.

Dorji thought to himself that the old man gave strange answers to his questions. He could see no king. The palace seemed to him to be like a place of the dead. He wondered if he could muster up sufficient courage to ask the old man if he could take him somewhere and give him a bite to eat. What use to take him through all these vast splendid rooms when his stomach was like an empty sack?

The Gnome beckoned to him. He followed, and they came to a great banqueting hall. The sight of the tables was too much for Dorji.

“Sir,” he said, “I am famished. Cannot you give me a



morsel to eat? I have trodden the streets of this city begging bread, and all those I have begged of have refused me.”

“What have you done for them,” said the little man, “that they should feed you?”

Dorji was taken aback. “Nothing,” he said.

“Oh,” said the Gnome, giving him no time to say anything else. “So you think they should deny themselves the little they have to give it to you? Did you not remark that in every house you went a-begging there was not enough to go round?”

“I did,” said Dorji. “But I cannot understand it, for the people tell me they are hard-working and toil from dawn to dusk.”

“They denied you bread because they had not got it to give,” said the Gnome. “What they might have had to offer is on these tables. *Here is the people’s bread,*” and he pulled aside a cloth that covered a table, and Dorji saw that it was piled high with gold and jewels of such value that he could not believe what he saw. The Gnome went from table to table pulling off the covering cloths, and each table uncovered revealed more and more wealth, and “Now,” said he, “help yourself, for all this is yours.”

Dorji flung himself on his knees before the Gnome. “Do not torture and mock me,” he cried. “What I have

told you is the truth. Half a cup of cold water is all that has crossed my lips. If even it were so that half a handful of what is spread on these tables were mine, what use could I make of it?"

"Dorji," said the Gnome, "once I gave you a bun and you threw it away. Now I reveal to you what you have inherited, and you ask me what use it will be to you. My answer to you is this: that the use will be manifested by the way in which you will use it. If you throw it away it will be as much use as the bun that you would gladly have at this moment in exchange for all this heap of glittering treasure."

When the Gnome called Dorji by name he recognized him as the little man who had taken Tipsi and himself to the fair in those far days that seemed so sadly long ago.

"Forgive me," said Dorji, "for my past ingratitude."

"Take this," said the Gnome, "and eat it. It is the same bun you threw away then," and he gave Dorji the bun with the piece bitten out of it. Tipsi's words came back to Dorji. She had told him it might taste good when he needed it. How wise she had been. The bun *did* taste good. He ate it to the last crumb.

The Gnome then told Dorji the long story from beginning to end that he had told Tipsi, and when the story was ended and Dorji knew all, even to why Tipsi had used

the whip on him, the Gnome led him back to the throne room and bade him mount the dais and rest himself on the empty throne. No sooner had he taken his place than he felt a change coming over him. His coarse clothes turned to kingly robes. He put his hands to his head; he touched a heavy circlet that crowned him. He put his hand back to his lap and saw a ring with a seal on his finger.

Where silence had reigned he could hear voices, the opening and shutting of doors and the shuffle of many feet. It was as if the still palace were awakening to fresh life.

Wealth and power were now his, but Dorji was not happy. Soon it was known far and wide that the lost Prince had been found, and Dorji, the King, was acclaimed by his people, and they came to do him homage, but there was no joy or truth in their welcome, for they thought of him as the son of a despotic father and wondered what fresh burdens they would be called upon to bear.

As time went by Dorji saw the real state of affairs, and with patience and love righted the people's wrongs. "When my kingdom is happy and prosperous, then," thought Dorji, "I will go and seek for Tipsi, that she may share a land worthy of her gentleness."

And so he curbed his eagerness and waited and worked. His patience was rewarded, and sooner than he hoped.

One fine day when he stood on his hilltop looking over the city and over the fields where the ripening grain now hung heavy, waiting to be harvested, he saw a procession winding its way up the hill towards him. As it approached him he saw troops of little gray-bearded men marching in double file, and as they marched they sang a song that was familiar to his ears. It was the simple little forest air that Tipsi used to sing at her spinning wheel. He saw, too, that they were carrying a palanquin between them. Dorji went forward to meet them. The haunting melody brought back memories that clutched at his throat. The little men came swinging along, and as Dorji came up to them, with a shout they put down their burden. Then—all that had been, all the sorrows of the past, were forgotten in one glad cry that burst from his lips. The curtains of the palanquin divided and he saw *Tipsi!*

Now let us turn away, for this is no place for prying eyes, and return later, to tiptoe into the palace when the first glad joy of reunion is over.

Here we see the same splendid throne room, the two golden thrones, the rich curtains. But wait! There *is* a difference. Now a fair Queen sits beside the King. The curtains that hang in heavy folds about them no longer look as if pearly tears dropped from them, instead they are brodered with fresh forest flowers. The cruel bird

that held the curtains up in his sharp talons is gone, and two little birds, like those Dorji so mourned when he was a prisoner in the tree, sit lightly on the gathered stuff and look down on the happy pair.

The walls of the palace are still encrusted with jewels, but their fires are as soft as those that burned in Tipsi's gentle eyes. And what of Friend? He has curled himself on a cushion at the foot of the dais and is fast asleep.

We will make our way down the hill and bid farewell to the city. How contented the people seem, returning from work to their little homes, and when we ask them the reason of their happiness they all have the same answer to give: "There reigns over us a merciful and just king—one Dorji, who understands the needs of even the humblest and meanest of those creatures who inhabit his kingdom."



## THE SWASTIKA EGG DEVILS

IN THE city of Lhasa there was once a great nobleman and his pretty young wife. One day, as they were passing through the market place, they chanced to stop at a stall to look at the numerous wares displayed for sale. It was quite a small stall in a dark corner, and the objects appeared to be of little value or interest. Yet, for some reason or other, the young wife seemed bent on having everything on it turned over as if she expected to find a treasure tucked away among the rubbish. At last she picked out a dirty-looking egg-cup, and the shape of it pleased her immensely.

“I should like to buy this egg-cup,” she said, but when they asked the price of it, the stallkeeper demanded a very great sum, saying it was made of pure silver.

That it was made of silver was true enough, for with a bit of polishing the tarnish that had blackened and made it look old disappeared, and it shone like new.

“What a delightful egg-cup!” exclaimed the nobleman’s wife. “I can think of nothing I should like better than to eat an egg out of it.”

The nobleman took up the egg-cup and looked at it inside and outside and could find nothing at all remarkable about it. As for the sum the man demanded, it would have been too much had the egg-cup been made of pure gold. However, as his wife had taken such a fancy to it, he offered the stallkeeper a price which, though still beyond the actual value, was yet within reason. This the man refused, saying he would have all or nothing.

“Very well,” declared the nobleman, “take nothing,” and he insisted that his wife should come home and leave it, saying, “You will see the man will soon follow us and take even less than I have offered for it.”

The days passed, and it became evident that the stallkeeper had no intention of coming to them. From the hour she woke in the morning till she fell asleep at night, the nobleman’s wife talked of nothing at all but the egg-cup.

“If you wish me to buy you a present,” said the nobleman, “let me get you some trinket of coral or amber or jade. The price of the egg-cup is quite absurd.”

"I will have neither amber, nor coral, nor jade," said his wife petulantly. "If I cannot have the egg-cup I will never eat another egg, nor anything else, for that matter."

Her words were no idle threat. From that day on any food brought to her she pushed away, refusing to eat until she became really ill. Every tempting dish procurable was set before her, but she would turn over in her bed and refuse so much as to look at them. Fearing his wife would die of starvation, the nobleman went to her bedside and pleaded earnestly with her to eat something. Anything she thought she would like he would get for her.

"I will eat an egg," said the nobleman's wife in a whisper, for her voice was too weak to talk louder.

The nobleman was delighted, and ordered an egg to be cooked and brought to her as soon as it was ready. When the egg was set in front of her she started to cry and said pitifully: "I cannot eat the egg unless you give it to me in the silver egg-cup."

"Well," thought the nobleman, "there is nothing to be done. If she won't eat the egg unless it is served in the silver egg-cup, I must go to the market place and get it at once for her."

So he started off, accompanied by two of the servants, to search out the stallkeeper. They went straightway to the corner where the stall had been, but found, to their



dismay, that there was neither stall nor stallkeeper. They inquired of all the stallkeepers in the market place what had become of him, but not one of them knew; in fact, they went so far as to say there had never been a stall in that particular corner, and never any man that answered in the least to the description he gave.

"This is terrible," said the distracted nobleman. "Whatever shall I do?"

"Sir," said one of the servants, "if I may be so bold as to suggest it, could you not order a silver egg-cup to be made?"

"Splendid," said the nobleman, and without a moment's delay he commanded a silver egg-cup.

As he had looked at the egg-cup his wife desired both outside and in, he was able to tell the silversmith how it was fashioned to the smallest knob on its rim. Having done this he felt very well pleased with himself, and wondered why he had not thought of it before, quite unmindful that he had not thought of it at all. He hurried back to his wife's side and told her he had bought her the egg-cup, which the stallkeeper would bring in the morning, as he had ordered it to be well cleaned and polished.

As soon as the nobleman's wife heard this she brightened, and even consented to eat some tidbits that night,

saying she would eat an egg in the morning as soon as the egg-cup arrived.

"It is really remarkable what a difference such a trifle as that egg-cup has made," thought the nobleman, well pleased at his wife's changed mien, but he did not remain quite so pleased long, for his wife began to ply him with awkward questions.

First she asked to know why her husband had not waited while the man rubbed up the cup, reminding him that the day they found it he had got a splendid shine on it with a few rubs. Then she remarked she thought it strange that the stallkeeper should require an entire night to polish it.

"Go to sleep," said her husband, "and trouble no further about it. You shall have an egg out of your egg-cup in the morning."

So, with still some questions, not untinged with suspicion, framed on her lips, the young wife fell asleep.

The following morning, as her husband had promised, an egg was brought up to her in the shining silver egg-cup, but instead of being pleased when she saw it the young woman fell into as great a rage as her weakened condition would permit.

"I have been deceived," she cried. "That is not the egg-cup I saw on the stall. That is not the egg-cup."

"Hush," said her husband, taking it up in his hand. "Whatever difference is there in it?"

"None," said his wife, "except that it is not *the* egg-cup."

From that hour on she again refused to eat or to utter a word. The poor nobleman was almost demented with grief, seeing the state of his wife's mind, and sent servants out to search in every house in the city where they thought the owner of the egg-cup might be found, offering an unheard-of sum to anyone who would procure it for him.

At length, after four days of searching without success, early one morning an old man called at the nobleman's house and left a small bundle tied in a dirty ragged cloth, saying it was a gift for the nobleman's wife, and without allowing them time even to untie it he disappeared. To the astonishment of the entire household, on the bundle being unfastened it was found to contain the egg-cup, as black and as tarnished as it had been when first they had set eyes on it in the market place.

The nobleman was overjoyed and ran upstairs with it to his wife. Directly she saw it she jumped out of bed and exclaimed, "That is the egg-cup," and announced that the sight of it had cured her, and that she now felt strong enough to go down and have a meal with her husband, and

ordered the servant to boil her an egg and serve it in the silver egg-cup.

This was done, and certainly no one in the city of Lhasa could boast of a more contented young wife than the smiling lady who now began to tap the egg shell with her little enameled spoon.

It is one thing to have an egg-cup and another to eat an egg out of it, it would seem, for with the first crack the egg commenced to bob up and down in the most remarkable manner. The startled young woman dropped the spoon to rub her eyes, for she believed there must be something wrong with them. But her husband and the servants had all seen the egg bob, and the only explanation they could offer for it was that the cook had placed it in such boiling water that the egg was boiling yet.

"All the better," said the nobleman, "give it a good hard crack."

Crack! came the little spoon on the shell, and this time the egg began to spin round and round like a top.

"I want to eat my egg out of my egg-cup," said the nobleman's wife, looking reproachfully at her lord and her train of servants, as if they were in some way responsible for the strange behavior of the egg, "and how can I eat it when it spins like that?"

"I don't like the look of it at all," said the nobleman.

“No good can come of eating such an egg. We will tell the cook to boil you another.”

No sooner had he said this than the egg-cup began to rock to and fro as if it were laughing—if an egg-cup can be said to laugh. The poor servant who had been ordered to remove it was shaking with fright, for he knew that it would be more than his life was worth to disobey his master’s order, and he made a bold grab at the egg-cup, which to his horror wriggled from his fingers and danced wildly round and round the table, faster and faster and faster until everyone was dizzy with watching it.

“Catch it,” cried the nobleman, “catch it!”

“Yes, my lord,” said the servants, falling one on top of the other in their efforts to grasp hold of the elusive cup. “We will catch it,” and still the cup went dancing madly round the table until one by one the servants fell exhausted to the ground, and heedlessly the nobleman’s wife was crying.

“Give me my egg in my lovely silver egg-cup.”

“Will you be quiet,” said the nobleman, bringing his clenched fist down thump on the table, for, noble and great as he was, his patience was strained.

Now the nobleman’s wife was quite charming to look at, and not used to being spoken to harshly, so when her

husband behaved so roughly towards her she stopped her crying and pouted her pretty lips.

"I'm hungry," she said. "I have had nothing to eat."

The nobleman looked at his wife's winsome and tear-stained face, and the longer he looked at her the less reason he could see why she should not have the egg, the egg-cup, or anything else she desired.

"You shall have that egg and every other egg in the country, if you want them," he cried. "You shall not be crossed for a mere egg."

Hardly had the words left his lips than the egg-cup stopped its antics and settled itself before the young woman.

"It will certainly be cold and unappetizing now," she said, "but I shall eat it, because I am weak with hunger," and she took up the spoon and gave the egg a malicious crack, making a deep dent in the top of it.

"So you think you will break up my home, do you?" said a shrill voice, "and gobble me up. We will see about that," and up bobbed a little black demon no bigger than your thumb joint, with a face formed like a swastika. "Eat me up! Eat me up! Eat me up!"

The nobleman and his wife both stared at the little black devil and were too amazed to speak. When the

nobleman found his voice he said: "I knew no good could come of eating such an egg, and I told you so."

"Eat me up! Eat me up! Eat me up! You thought you could break up my house and eat me up," said the little demon, shaking his fists at them. "Eat me up!" and he bobbed down into the eggshell and replaced the top.

The prostrate servants were now coming to their senses, and in fear and trembling were rising to their feet, looking dazed and blanched.

"Take away that egg," said the nobleman to one of them, "and make haste about it. How dare you serve a bad egg at my table!"

"My lord, my lord, I am quick to do your bidding," said a servant, and laid hold of the egg-cup. "Never would I put a bad egg on my lord's table," and he put his nose against the eggshell and sniffed at it.

Crack! Crack! went the shell, and before the unfortunate servant could draw his face away the little black devil was riding astride his nose, screaming angrily, "A bad egg, was it? A bad egg, a very bad egg. Stick your nose into my house, stick your nose into my house," and he bit and scratched the poor servant's nose and dug his heels into the side of it, and cried, "Go on, faster! faster!" as if he were really on a horse instead of a nose. And needless to say the servant went faster and faster round

and round the room, tossing his head and snorting to try and rid himself of his merciless rider, who was piping in his shrill voice, "It was a very good egg until it was broken into—a very good egg."

"You good-for-nothings," yelled the nobleman to the cowering servants. "Get a duster and flick him off. Throw out the egg. Get another one."

Flip, flip, flip, flip. Never before or since have servants flicked dusters so zealously and with so little result. Dusters waved in the air, and dusters came down smack, and dusters whirled and twirled and flapped, but the little swastika devil dug his heels harder and harder into the poor servant's flesh, until his nose was as red as a glowing cinder and extremely swollen.

The nobleman's wife, who had cried because she couldn't eat her egg, and pouted because her husband had been impatient with her, now laughed with merriment to see her household in such a pother, and was convulsed at the sight of her servant's reddened nose.

The swastika egg devil leaped from his perch and demanded to know if she thought it a joke to break up his house. Whereupon the young wife clung to her husband and begged him to protect her.

"Go from here," said the nobleman. "See how you frighten my wife."



"I am going now," said the egg devil, diving into the shell. "But let your wife break another egg and trouble will ensue," and with that he clapped the top on his egg-shell, and before you could have winked, he was gone.

Time passed, and if so be it that the nobleman's wife wanted an egg she never said so, and no one asked her to have one, you may be sure. Then, one fine day the nobleman announced that a friend was coming to stay for a few days, and ordered his room to be made ready and a good dinner to be prepared.

"Yes," said the nobleman's wife, and she tripped upstairs to comb and braid her hair and thread her finest pearls into it. While she was doing this she was also busy thinking what they should have for supper, and the first thing she thought of was eggs.

"We will have eggs," she said to herself, "and then we will have—" she paused to braid another string of lustrous pearls into her silken tresses, and smiled most alluringly to herself, as if her thoughts had pleased her, and she said—"eggs." And again she smiled, and said, "Eggs." So what it ended in was this: that all she had thought to put before her husband's guest that night was *eggs*, and *eggs*, and *eggs*.

The guest arrived as was expected, and the nobleman's wife whispered to him at a moment when they found

themselves alone together: "I wish my guest to have what he would like most to eat. Whan can I order to be placed before him?"

"That which my fair hostess pleases will please me most," said the guest, and the lady said:

"For myself there is nothing I like better than a simple egg."

She said this so sweetly that her guest believed that he would prefer an egg to the most sumptuous dish in the world, and he told her so.

Forthwith she ordered her servants to go far and wide and collect as many eggs as they could carry, and told her husband that her guest had spoken of his liking for eggs, and knowing he would wish to please his guest, she had sent out for eggs. The nobleman, hearing this, and remembering the former occasion on which an egg had been served, looked vexed and reminded his wife of the little swastika devil's ominous words.

"Alas!" said his wife, "in thinking to please my lord I have made him cross with me, and I only wished to please him by pleasing his friend."

"My wife," said the nobleman, "since you have not asked for an egg for so long, why should you wish for one to-night?"

"I wish for eggs?" said his wife. "I never care if I break

another, and for that same reason I have not asked for them. But it would seem indeed strange that all eggs should contain devils, and I believe that the devil was in the cup that held the egg, and not in the egg itself. Do you not remember, my lord, how tarnished and blackened the egg-cup was when we found it in the market place?"

"Yes," said the nobleman. "I remember well enough. Would that you had never set eyes upon it."

"Never more will I," said his wife, "for it has been molten in the fires and thrown out from here. What, then, shall I place before my lord's friend to please my lord? Since my brave lord is afraid of an egg——"

"Afraid of an egg!" thundered the nobleman. "I, afraid of an egg! I will go myself and see to it that the eggs are brought in."

No sooner had he left the room than his wife went to find their guest, and seating herself by his side, told him the story of the egg-cup she had picked from the stall in the market place.

"It was the most beautiful egg-cup that ever you could wish to see," said the nobleman's wife, "made of pure silver and encrusted with precious gems, and the price the stall-keeper asked for it was a mere nothing. Yet my husband begrudged the small sum asked for it, and gave me in its

stead a tarnished and blackened egg-cup that was given him by a beggar man.”

She looked so sweetly sorrowful that her listener's heart melted within him, and he thought how gladly he would have paid great sums to have given her the egg-cup had chance so favored him. In the meantime the servants had spread the table, and it was not long before the nobleman, his wife and their guest were seated at it, the eggs set before them. All three eggs were opened, and they were all that fresh eggs should be. Egg after egg was opened and eaten, and if the swastika egg devil was anywhere about, he did not show himself at the table.

Wine flowed freely, and talk was merry, and the nobleman's wife looked altogether charming and demure. She toyed with her egg-cup most prettily. It was a very ordinary egg-cup, I may tell you, but as her guest watched her white fingers holding it, he thought he could see the gleam of silver and the flash of sparkling gems, and the longer he looked the more the egg-cup seemed to shine, until he was dazzled by its luster and exclaimed:

“What a marvelous egg-cup! Would that I could eat an egg out of it!”

The nobleman, on hearing this, wondered greatly, for all three egg-cups on the table were as alike as three peas and quite commonplace. Besides, he was mistrustful of

egg-cups that were said to be out of the ordinary and would rather not have heard them mentioned. So he rose from the table and ordered the dishes to be cleared. He also spoke of the lateness of the hour and suggested that his friend must be weary from his long journey and that they would retire to rest.

On entering his room the first thing the guest espied was a tarnished egg-cup with an egg in it. It was without doubt the egg-cup his fair hostess had told him of. He took it up and rubbed it, and as if by magic the tarnish disappeared.

“Never have I seen such an egg-cup,” said the guest to himself, and although he had dined both well and amply, he felt as hungry as if he had eaten nothing at all and thought he was ready to die of hunger if he did not eat an egg out of the little silver egg-cup. He tapped the egg, and to his amazement he thought he saw it bob up and down. He tapped it again, and the egg-cup began to spin in circles round and round the room, while the guest ran after it, crying: “Give me the egg in the shining silver egg-cup.”

Of a sudden the egg-cup stopped spinning, and the frenzied guest, who was now dizzy from running round and round after it, snatched at it and to his joy caught it.

“I *will* eat the egg in the shining silver egg-cup,” said

he, and his voice sounded almost as petulant as the nobleman's wife's had been when the egg-cup had played its tricks on her.

He broke open the egg and dipped into it. The egg-shell was as empty as empty could be.

"I have been cheated and tricked," said the guest, taking up the egg-cup and flinging it from him. "Cheated and tricked! What impish work is this?" and he threw himself down to sleep, hungry and worn.

No sooner had he closed his eyes than a shrill voice piped into his ear: "It was a very good egg—a very good egg."

"It was not," cried the guest, "there was nothing in it—nothing at all," and again he closed his eyes and tried to sleep, but the shrill voice piped:

"What is more satisfying than an egg served in a shining silver egg-cup?"

"Begone!" cried the guest, sitting up in his bed and striking out at his unseen tormentor. "There was nothing in the egg-cup but an empty shell."

The following morning the nobleman's wife inquired if the guest had slept well.

"Had I not seen the silver egg-cup I might have slept better," replied the guest.

The nobleman, entering the room, heard the words

“silver egg-cup,” and for the rest of the day his mind harbored dark and troubled thoughts. Every once in a while it seemed to him the little swastika devil’s face showed up, and his penetrating little voice piped:

“It was a good egg until it was broken into. Eat me up! Eat me up! Break into my house and eat me up!”

“I knew that no good would come of serving eggs,” thought the nobleman, and, looking about, he believed he could see, not one swastika devil, but a legion of them. “To-morrow, when our guest departs, I will have you swept out of the house along with him,” said the nobleman to the air. “All this has come about because he would eat eggs. My wife would not have thought of eggs had he not said he liked them. As for the silver egg-cup, he has never seen it—nor is he likely to, for it was thrown into the fire, and if devil there was in it, he is in the flames, where he properly belongs.”

Again the evening meal was spread, and the three, host, hostess, and friend sat down to eat.

“What is this?” exclaimed the nobleman, for the servant had entered with a dish piled with eggs. “Is there nothing else we may eat but eggs?”

“Are they not tempting, my lord?” said the nobleman’s wife. “What is better than a really fresh egg?”

“What, indeed?” said the guest, his eyes resting on the

white hand of the lady as she helped herself to one, and he meant what he said, for as he watched her drop the egg into the cup again, as on the previous night, he thought he saw the egg-cup gleam and sparkle when her fingers closed around it.

"And what," said the nobleman, roused to a sudden fury, "can be worse than an egg that is tainted?" And he took up the dish of eggs and crashed them down on the table.

Immediately the table was agog with little demons all piping shrilly, "Would you break up my house and eat me up?"

"My lord, my lord!" shrieked the nobleman's wife. "See what you have done!"

"Yes, look—and look well," said the nobleman. "Look at their black faces, and the yellow flames that lick around their feet."

"My lord," said the nobleman's wife, "what harm can come from them? The swastika is the omen of good, not evil. I see no flames, only the golden yolks of the eggs."

"If that is all you see staining the board," said the nobleman, "your eyes are at fault," and he took the egg—the one his wife had served to herself, the only one that now remained unbroken—and forced her to swallow it.

"My lord," cried the nobleman's wife, gurgling and



putting her hand to her throat, "the egg is burning within me. Give me water. Give me water."

But the nobleman smiled grimly and said:

"My wife, the golden yolk of an egg cannot burn you, and since you crave eggs I would give them to you."

"Never for such an egg as this," she screamed. "Give me water to stay my suffering."

"I have given you the egg you yourself chose," said the nobleman, "and what could be better to your taste, since you picked it out yourself?"

The guest meanwhile was busy fighting a swarm of devils on his own account. Devils that tugged him this way, and devils that tugged him that way, and devils that tweaked each individual hair on his head, and though he thought he would have paid goodness knows what to have given the nobleman's wife the egg-cup from the stall in the market place had lucky chance granted his desire, when she called for a simple cup of water he was so occupied with his own troubles that he did not so much as hear her cries, and no sooner did the little demons loose their hold on him than he fled from the house and has never been heard of since.

As the nobleman's wife has said, the Swastika is a good symbol, and everyone knows it, but the Swastika on the face of the little devil that came into the house when the

nobleman's wife got her silver egg-cup had the sign of the swastika turned the wrong way about, and when the nobleman told his wife to look well at their black faces, that is what he had seen and wished her to see.

It was no easy task to rid the house of such an army of devils; they were small and quick, and managed to hide themselves in all the corners and to pop up unexpectedly.

"I will have a great chest made," thought the nobleman, "and have every egg I find put into it and lock it up."

And he had the chest made, and the eggs put into the chest, and the chest locked and corded, and the nobleman and his wife lived at peace some while. The chest was opened only when the nobleman found an egg, and quickly sealed again when an egg was put into it.

In time the chest was full, and the nobleman had it sealed with a great seal, and had it put away and forgot about it.

But his wife had not forgotten. The sealed chest was a source of constant irritation to her. She dared not open it, but many a time she slipped secretly into the room where the chest was kept and toyed with the seal until she had all but worn it through.

Then with a crash as of a great storm the sealed chest burst asunder, and the devils swarmed from it in such numbers that they wrecked the nobleman's house.

“Great has been my folly,” cried the nobleman, standing in the midst of his wrecked home. “Had I but sought the advice of some holy man this calamity would not have befallen me”; and forthwith he ran off to call a lama who was great and holy.

“My son,” said the lama, “your folly has been greater than you know. The little devils have become powerful in their numbers, and the chest was not strong enough to contain them. You have sealed the chest while the devils within it were alive and active. Knowing the chest was filled with evil you hid it in your house until the day has come that your house lies in ruins about you and you must build yourself another one.”

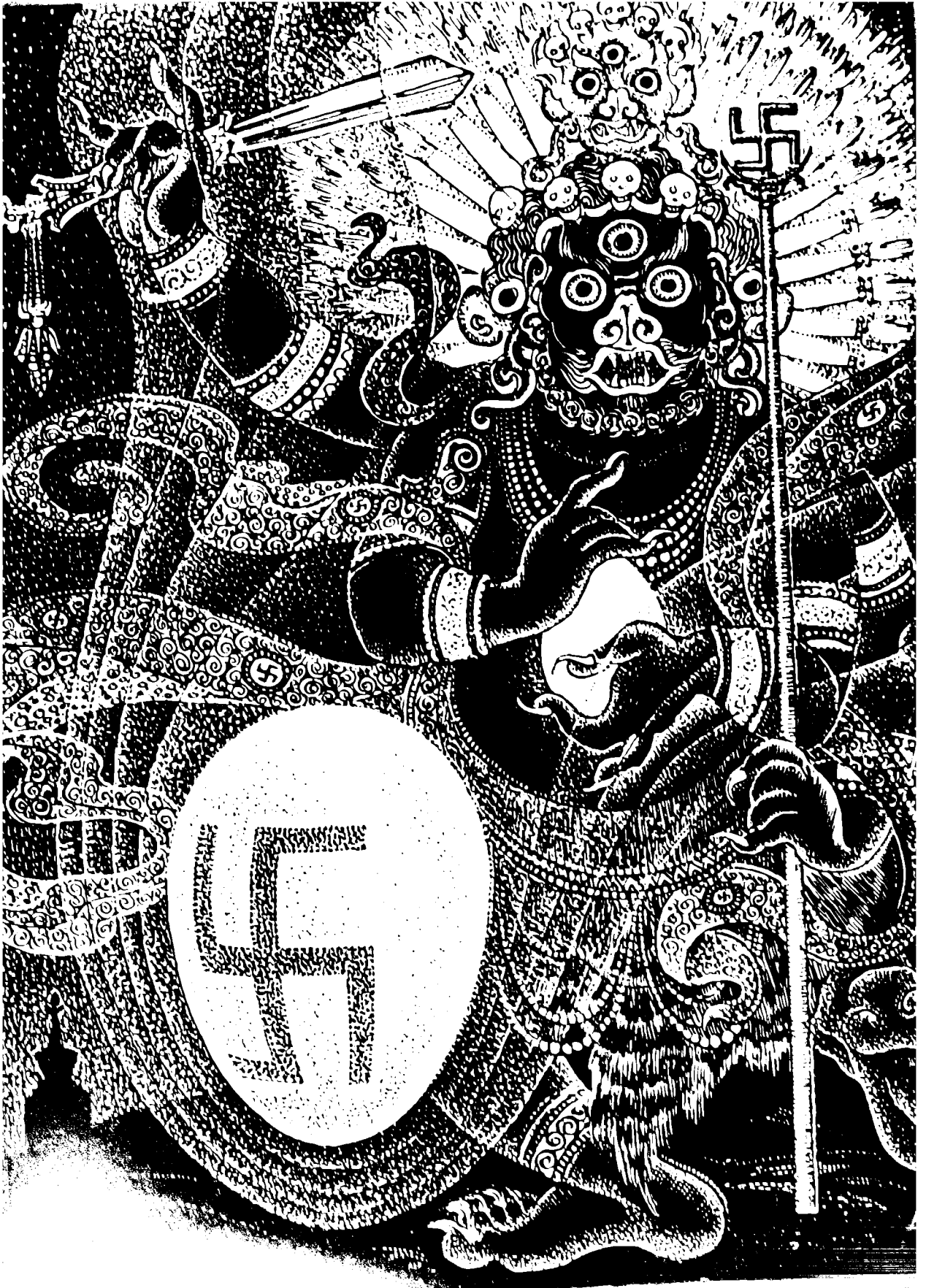
“To be wrecked again,” said the nobleman.

“No,” said the lama, “for I will take the eggs and put them one here and one there on the lonely crossroads, where they should have been put in the first place. For a small devil by himself can be met with and overcome, but devils in numbers can overpower you.”

And this is how it comes about that devils are still to be found on the crossroads in Tibet, and many an unwary traveler has been waylaid and had to fight with one. It often happens that a pretty and wayward wife allows one of these little imps to follow her through an open door and slip in unobserved. But a husband who finds a demon



**MANY AN UNWARY TRAVELER HAS BEEN WAYLAID AND HAD TO  
FIGHT WITH A SWASTIKA EGG DEVIL.**





with a face of the inverted swastika is foolish indeed if he thinks he can get rid of it by sealing it in a box. If one of these little demons finds its way in, you may be sure another will speedily follow on its track, for they are crafty and full of wiles; so the wise husband deals with one little devil at a time, and the holy lama is glad to help him, for he knows that a host of these little egg devils banded together will not rest until they have broken up the home and left it as empty as a shell when the bird is hatched out of it.





## THE TURQUOISE PRINCESS

ONCE upon a time there was an old and widowed queen who had an only son, and feeling that her age prevented her from giving as much care as she had formerly done to the affairs of her state, she called the young Prince to her.

“My son,” she said, “before death calls me to another world I would like to see you happily married, and to give the lands over to you and your wife, for the time has come when you must put pleasure to one side and shoulder the responsibility of your high estate. I would have you marry a princess who is both beautiful and hard-working, for a queen who thinks only of pleasure and fine clothes will never help you to rule wisely, therefore, choose a maiden who can be queenly and yet simple.

“Now I know of three sisters, the daughters of a king. They live at a great distance from here. Rumor has it that all three are fair and diligent. The eldest is called Gold, the second Conch Shell, and the youngest and most beautiful, Turquoise. In choosing one of these maidens be guided by her character rather than by her fairness of face.”

And saying this she took the Prince to a closet, and taking out a casket, opened it and gave him three rings. One was of plain gold, the other made of conch shell, and the third was made of turquoise.

“Whatever you do,” said the Queen, “keep these rings carefully. Hide them and let no one see them except the three Princesses. You cannot help but fall in love with one of them, and to that chosen maid you must give the ring which is the symbol of her name.”

The Queen then gave the Prince rich clothing, a milk-white horse to ride, and a servant to walk beside him, who would attend to his requirements on the road.

The Prince and the servant set forth and journeyed many days and nights. This servant had always been a favorite with the Prince, and as they were wandering on their way they talked together to pass the time. Though the Prince had been warned by his mother to keep the purpose of his journey secret, he began to talk to the servant very freely, telling him about the three Princesses,

that they were rich and beautiful and that he was going to woo one of them.

Now the servant, who pretended to be so faithful and servile, was in reality a most cunning and evil fellow who had made up his mind before the Prince set off to murder his master and decamp with the money bags, and for this dark purpose had concealed a sharp sword inside his tunic. He had also induced the Prince to part with his own dagger which he wore fastened to his belt, saying that he would carry it for the Prince until he had need of it, as he had a soft woolen cloth in which he would wrap it to keep the steel from rusting, which it would do when the mountain mists touched it. "For," said he, "if a spot of rust was to show on my master's dagger they would say at the Court that I was a careless servant, and being proud of my master's appearance I would have him shine from top to toe."

The Prince smiled and thought how fortunate a man he was to have a servant who thought for him even to so small a detail as a speck of rust.

"My good fellow," he said, "if all goes well with us you shall be amply rewarded when we return," and he went on chatting with his servant, telling him that he was not known to the father of the Princesses and wished to make a good impression on him from the start, so that, if it

chanced that he asked for one of the sisters in marriage, the King would not refuse him her hand.

The servant thought over what the Prince had told him and said to himself: "He promises to reward me well *if* all goes well with him, but if not, I stand a chance of getting nothing. If, indeed! There shall be no *ifs* about it, for I shall help myself to my own reward," and thinking thus, he conceived a plot.

The kingdom to which the two were traveling was surrounded on all sides by lofty mountain ranges, so, to get there, the Prince and the servant were forced to cross over a high and lonely pass. The servant, being a hillsman, knew that the passes were guarded by demons who were invisible but had the power to suck the breath of a man, causing him to suffer from weakness and giddiness, and so sapping his strength that he became as helpless, often, as a babe. In his own pocket he carried an herb that the demons particularly disliked owing to its pungent odor. The Prince being a man of the plains, the servant thought he would readily succumb to the influence of the demons, and more so as he knew nothing of the powers of the herb, and feeling a shortness of breath would become the demons' prey, and without knowing what it was that caused his discomfort, gasp for air, give up his breath to them, and in return have his lungs filled with the poisons

that they exhaled from their own. In this he was right, for though the Prince was by no means a weakling, when they got to the highest point of the pass and could see the turrets of the palace in the valley below shining like golden spears in the sun, and knew that by night they would be at their journey's end, the Prince began to gasp like a fish that gets washed up out of a lake, and complained to his servant, saying, "Let us halt here awhile until I feel better, for I have been overtaken by sickness."

The servant, who had been chewing the herb, had breathed nothing in but the pure mountain air, so the demons would not go near him, and he felt his strength doubled to fit him for the evil task he had set himself.

"Do not remain upon your horse, sir," said the servant. "I will help you to dismount."

The Prince dismounted, saying, "My good man, do not distress yourself at my sickness. With a short rest I will feel better, and we can then continue the journey."

"I'm not troubling about you," said the servant rudely, springing at the Prince and knocking him down. "And I would have you know that unless you lie quiet your own dagger will not hang at your side again, but be thrust through your heart to gather rust there up to the hilt."

The unfortunate Prince saw his servant's treachery, but knew he was in the man's power. Weak as he was, he would

have fought to defend himself had he had his dagger, but he well knew that only his wits could now save him, for his servant had his dagger as well as the sword which he brandished over his unfortunate victim, who had only his naked hands to defend himself with.

“Before I kill you,” said the servant, “make haste and get out of those satin robes. I am going to put them on myself, they will suit me well,” and he chuckled, and mimicking his master said, “I must present myself at the Court looking my best, so the King will not refuse me the hand of his daughter.”

The Prince took his rich clothes off and gave them to the servant, who put them on and threw his coarse ones to the Prince, saying, “You may as well have an extra stitch to cover you, for you’ll be cold enough when you’re dead.”

“Since I have nothing to turn on you but my tongue,” said the Prince, who had been busy thinking out a plan to save himself from having his life cut short by his servant’s sword, “I can tell you that you may as well kill me quickly and go back home, for no king would believe you to be anything but the traitorous scoundrel you are. A real prince does not travel without a servant.”

“That’s so,” said the servant, “and since I have been induced to alter my plans once to win a royal damsel to

wife, I may as well change my plans a second time. Thank you for reminding me. A good appearance goes a long way, and I daresay you would rather accompany me as my servant than to be left behind to sleep in the snow. But my old rags are unsuited to your fair skin. However, I have something to remedy that in my pocket," and he took out a ball of brown wax and made the Prince smear it over his hands and face. "Ah! that looks better, and you'll do very well," said he, when the Prince was thickly smeared with the dirty wax. "Now we can go on"; and he jumped on his master's horse.

The Prince said nothing more, but he thought to himself, "My foolish tongue has got me into difficulties, but luckily it has got me out easier than I thought. I will keep a curb on it." And he dragged after the servant without uttering a word.

That night the two travelers arrived at the city walls. It was late. The watchman, hearing a knock, called, "Who goes there?"

"A prince to woo a princess," replied the servant boldly, and the watchman, looking through the window of the watchtower, and seeing a stranger in satin robes riding on a richly caparisoned horse with a servant in attendance, hurried down, and bowing profusely, opened the gates to let the visitors pass, and bade them welcome.

The wicked servant inquired where the best inn was to be found, and, being told, they made their way towards it.

“Stay where you are,” said he to the Prince, “while I go and find the landlord: and mind you keep your mouth shut. If you don’t it will be shut for you.”

“In what a position I find myself,” thought the Prince. “No doubt the impudent fellow imagines that his outward splendor and the power he has usurped from me allows him to be insolent, his vulgar mind conceiving such conduct to be a princely attribute, though from me, who am a prince, he received nothing but gentleness and courtesy.”

“Here is the man,” said the servant, returning shortly with the landlord. “Clap the chains round his ankles and lead him to the cowshed to sleep for the night. He looks meek enough standing there, but his meekness is only feigned. He’s as unruly a scamp as you’d get anywhere. And if in the morning you want a goat-herd, you are welcome to his services for nothing. It will do him good to be kept busy while I go about my business.”

So it was arranged that the poor Prince was to be chained up for the night, and in the morning was to be sent out to mind the innkeeper’s goats.

“Nothing I can say will make me believed,” thought the Prince. “So the best thing I can do is to remain dumb



and await my opportunity to get together enough food to cover my needs for a return journey, and then escape. Whatever task I am given I will do it to the best of my ability. The innkeeper may, seeing my worth, pay me a wage."

Next morning early the innkeeper came along and unchained the Prince. "You're a good-looking youth," he said. "It's a pity you've crossed your master, for there's little doubt he's a person of great importance. I'm not a hard man, but I've got to carry out my orders, or trouble will fall on my head. Your master says you're to have nothing to eat until noon, when he himself will leave you something in the corner of the field." He led the Prince some distance to a field, and showing him the goats, said, "Here are your charges. If you allow one to stray, or your herd to get mixed in with another herd, at night, when you bring them in, you will get a beating."

The Prince was glad to be out of the stuffy and evil-smelling cowshed. He had hardly slept a wink all night, for the restlessness of the cattle had kept him awake, and he was not long lying in the grass watching the flock when his head began to nod, and he fell asleep.

When he awoke the sun was high in the heavens. He looked about him. There was not a single goat to be seen. The Prince scrambled to his feet. "This will never do,"

he thought. "However came it that I gave in to my drowsiness? The first day I am sent out to mind the goats I lose not one but the whole flock."

While the Prince was acting as goat-herd the traitorous servant was playing Prince in great style. He presented himself at the Palace and was very well received there. He put on such grand airs, and accepted all that was done for him with such an indifference, that the King said to the Queen, "His kingdom must be at least double the size of ours."

"It must be," said the Queen, "but his mother has brought him up badly, for even if he thought our kingdom mean in comparison with his own, he need not show it while he is our guest."

"It would be unwise to cross him," said the King. "For if his kingdom is twice the size of our kingdom, he will have twice the number of troops."

The servant was not long making his business known to the King and Queen. "I have come," he said, "to ask for the hand of one of your daughters. I hear that you have three and all are beautiful. The most beautiful of your three beautiful daughters I would take to wife. Mine is a rich and prosperous kingdom and the envy of princes far and wide."

"I had," said the King, "three beautiful daughters. To

the Queen and myself one was not more beautiful than the other. Of these three daughters two are married. I have but one left, the Princess Turquoise. She is said to be the fairest and the most difficult to please. If you can find favor in her eyes we will give our consent. Many are the princes who have wooed her, but none have won her. Not a week passes but that a prince comes here to ask for her hand."

The servant thought of the bags of money he could spill at the Princess Turquoise's feet, and made sure when she saw the heap of gold she would consent to marry him.

When the Princess Turquoise heard that yet another suitor was waiting to see her she said disdainfully, "He may wait. I will not see him."

"I insist," said her father, "that you behave properly. This prince is rich and powerful, and if you treat him disdainfully he may become ill-humored and wage war against us. From his appearance and the ease with which I am told he spends his money, I do not doubt but what he could provide handsomely for you."

"He is neither good-mannered nor good-looking," said the Princess, who had hidden behind a screen when her suitor entered and had seen and heard all that had passed. "I would rather give my hand to a scullion than give it to him. The riches of his kingdom will not buy my love."

“He certainly has bad manners,” said the Queen. “But it would be unwise to annoy him by letting him see you notice his faults. He looks as if he could easily be roused to anger. Therefore, show yourself prepared to meet his wishes, but tell him you must be allowed time to think over his suit, and ask him to return in a month for your answer.”

“In a month or a year,” said the Princess, “I should be of the same mind, so what use to tell him that?”

“Wayward girl,” said the King, “your disdain may cost us our kingdom.”

So determined was the Princess not to speak to her suitor that the next morning early she dressed herself as a village maid, and taking a flock of her father’s goats, she went on to the hillside knowing that no one would ever suspect, finding her there. The poor Prince was in the adjoining field and was keeping a close watch on his goats, for he had had a severe trouncing the night before for allowing them to stray, and had no wish to have another, but when the Princess’s goats began to graze the Prince’s goats ran off to join them. The Prince followed after the goats as fast as he could, and seeing a girl standing among them, went up to her with the purpose of asking her to help him separate her goats from his. From her dress he supposed her to be a goat girl, but when she turned round

and he saw her beautiful face, he quickly dropped his head and gazed on the ground, feeling ashamed that she should look at him in his dirty and ragged clothes.

“Are these your goats?” asked the Princess, who had experienced a strange thrill when she looked into the Prince’s eyes.

“Yes,” said the Prince, “they are my goats.” And he said nothing more, but stood there while the color mounted to his cheeks and glowed dully through the dirty wax that smeared them.

“What ails you, boy?” said the Princess. “And why do you stand dumbly looking at the ground?”

“Fair maid,” replied the Prince, “do not ask me, for I cannot answer you, but pray call your goats to you.”

The Princess’s heart was filled with compassion, for she noticed that the young goat-herd looked weak and sad. “Come,” said she kindly, “let us share our food together and then separate our flocks when we have eaten.”

Now the Prince had only a handful of corn and a dog’s leg, which the wicked servant had thrown to him. The dog’s leg he had buried, and the corn he had eaten, so he had nothing to offer. He shook his head and walked quickly away, calling to his goats to follow him. At first the Princess thought the goat-herd did not wish to give her any of his food, and then, remembering how sorrowful

he looked, she guessed that he had none to give her and blamed herself for asking him.

That night the Princess could not sleep for thinking of the goat-herd. In vain she told herself that he was dirty and ragged, but notwithstanding he filled her thoughts and her dreams, and as soon as it was daylight she donned her peasant's robe and hastened to the field to await him, only to meet with disappointment, for the wicked servant had heard that the Prince had been seen wandering up the hill, and ordered him to take his goats to a more distant field, and threatened to kill him if he was seen leaving it.

The Prince tethered his goats, but the poor fellow could not tether his thoughts, for he had fallen in love with the Princess Turquoise the moment he had set eyes on her, and his thoughts had followed her every moment since.

"If I told her that I was a prince she would not believe me," he thought, "and if she did believe me, being only a peasant girl herself, she would be afraid."

The Princess, on her hill slope, was thinking much the same thing. "If he knew I was a princess he would be afraid to speak to me, and if my parents knew, I would be held a captive and he would be flogged."

The days went on, and the Princess Turquoise could think of nothing at all but the strange goat-herd, and the more she thought of him, the more deeply did she fall

in love with him, and the more sure was she that he was keeping away purposely because, though he thought she was only a peasant maid, he could see she was not as poor and humble as he was.

“If only I could see him once again,” said the Princess to herself, “I would be so humble that he would no longer mind speaking to me,” and she cried out to the goats, “Goats, goats, lead me to my goat-herd.” She said this more to relieve her heart of its cruel ache than anything else, so when the goats pricked up their ears and began forming themselves into line, and walked solemnly two by two, as if they understood what was required of them, no one could have been more surprised than the Princess herself. But she followed them, her heart going pit-a-pat all the while. On and on went the little procession, over the green hills and down the valleys, never loitering to munch by the way until they had led the Princess to the Prince’s side.

The little Princess tried to hide her feelings, and said, “I have come here to ask you to consent to share our meal together,” and opening a napkin in which was some food, set it in front of the Prince.

The tears welled up in the Prince’s eyes. “Sweet maid,” he said, “how can I tell you? Yet I must. All I have is a dog’s leg and a handful of corn thrown to me daily. The

dog's leg I bury, the corn I must eat, for hunger drives me to it."

The Prince looked dirtier and more unkempt than ever. His touselled hair, which he wore in braids round his head, was matted together, and pieces of straw and dead leaves showed in it from having slept in the cowshed, where he was forced to gather straw and leaves nightly to make himself a pillow to rest his head.

The Princess drew the Prince down beside her. "I have more than enough for myself here," she said. "How can I eat, knowing you have nothing?"

"And how," replied the Prince, "can I eat with you, for when I think how dirty I look I am overcome with shame. Your gentle heart has been kindled by pity, but I am not fit company for one so fair."

"I care not for that," said the Princess, her love making her bold. "'Twas not pity that brought me here but——" She stopped, and hid her face in her hands, as if she could say no more, and taking a comb from her dark tresses, she asked the Prince to let her comb and braid his hair neatly, and without giving him time to say "yea" or "nay," she lifted her hands and uncoiled one of his thick braids. As it fell something fell with it. The three rings which the Prince for safety had tied together and hidden in his hair. The Princess picked them up.



"What is this," she exclaimed, "that you have here? Three rings—gold, conch shell, and turquoise? The first is the name of my eldest sister, Gold, the second is the name of my second sister, Conch Shell, and this, the third, is my own name, Turquoise. How came you to have these rings?"

The Prince then realized that the beautiful lady who had captured his heart was none other than the Princess Turquoise. He knelt at her feet and offered her the turquoise ring, saying: "Princess, I was not always the dirty beggar you now see kneeling before you. In the cold my face is black, but were I to stand in the warmth my skin would become fair. If only I could prove my words to you, but, alas, I cannot."

"You shall do so," said the Princess. "To-night, when the world is asleep, come to the Palace. On the right you will see a small door. I will leave it unlatched. Creep in quietly and mount the winding stair. It will bring you to my room. I will have a great fire blazing on the hearth there, and you shall sit before it and tell me the meaning of your mysterious words."

Fortune favored the Prince. The innkeeper, by happy chance, was kept busy attending on late arrivals and forgot to pass by the cattle shed the last thing to chain the Prince up, as was his custom, the fact being that the good

host was overwhelmed at the number of lordly visitors who had arrived at the hostelry, and was at his wit's end to know where to accommodate them all. The Princess Turquoise's beauty had been noised so far abroad that princes from the North, South, East and West of the world were arriving at her father's kingdom, all hoping to carry off so prized a gem as this princess, who was said to be so beautiful and so disdainful.

Dark glances flashed from one to the other of the newcomers, and each wondered if his neighbor would find favor in her eyes, while yet picturing himself the jealous center, on which all eyes would be set when the lovely Princess consented to place her white hand in his and ride away from her father's realm. There were fat princes, and thin princes, short princes and tall ones slumbering under the innkeeper's hospitable roof that night, dreaming of a princess—a princess who, while they dreamed of her, was piling logs on the fire and listening for the footsteps of her goat-herd.

As soon as it was dark the Prince crept out of the cowshed and, making sure that there was nobody about, stole to the Palace. He found the little door open a crack, and pushing it wider mounted the stair and reached the room. A great fire was blazing on the hearth, and beside it stood

the Princess, so radiantly lovely that the Prince could scarce believe his eyes. She had changed her coarse peasant's dress for one of rich brocade, and round her head was an aureole of turquoise and pearl.

"Princess," exclaimed the Prince, dropping on his bended knees, and he kissed her naked feet. "You have made me slave to your gentleness, and now you make me slave to your beauty."

"Tell me what manner of goat-herd is he," whispered the Princess, kneeling beside him, "whose voice so belies his calling?"

And while the Prince told his story the fierce heat melted the black disfiguring grease and revealed to the Princess the pale handsome face of her lover. Until dawn the Prince and Princess spoke together, and many promises and words of endearment were exchanged between them. Then, knowing it would be unwise to stay longer, the Prince took leave of the Princess.

Returning to the dirty hovel he again smeared his face over with black grease and resolved to wait patiently until he and the Princess Turquoise could find an opportunity to flee, for they had plighted their troth, and the Princess had vowed she would marry him and no other.

News of the arrivals of princes from the four quarters of the world reached the ears of the King early, and being

much disturbed he made his way to his daughter's apartment and roused her from her sleep.

"Your unseemly conduct," said the King, "brings me here at this early hour to speak with you. I demand to know where you hide yourself during the day."

"My father," said the Princess, "I have been on the hillside with your goats, preferring the life of a simple maid to that of a princess forced to speak fair words to an unwanted suitor."

The King, on hearing this, became exceedingly wrathful with the Princess. "You have reached the age," said he, "when you must choose a husband. Assembled at this hour in my kingdom are princes from the world over. From among them you must make a choice before the sun sets this night. I shall post guards at your door. The waiting women shall dress you in your best, and you shall be carried to the market place, there to receive your suitors and announce your choice."

True to his threat the King sent forth the Royal criers to proclaim his will that his daughter, the Princess Turquoise, would choose from among the princes assembled one for husband. At the appointed hour crowds collected, and the Princess was drawn in a golden chaise and made to seat herself on the pile of cushions placed on a throne in the center of the market place. Decked in jewels from

head to foot, the lovely young Princess was acclaimed by the multitudes, who jostled and craned their necks in an endeavor to get a better look at her.

“Whom will she choose?” was the question on all lips, as one by one the princely suitors made their obeisance and filed past.

The Princess Turquoise sat upon her throne like a graven image. The King, her father, watched her closely, hoping to see a flicker of interest lighten her marble countenance. He soon perceived that the Princess did not cast a glance on any of her suitors, but stared fixedly into space above their heads. It became apparent to even the greatest dullard among the crowd that the Princess had no intention whatever of selecting a husband.

The Princess had not behaved as the King had expected, and he was obliged to admit to himself that he was at a loss to know what to do with her, but naturally he did not wish to admit this, so he said in an undertone to the Princess, “Which of these handsome young men will you have for your husband?”

“How can I tell you?” replied the Princess. “I have not seen one of them.”

The King knew that what the Princess said was very true, but since he had announced that his daughter was

going to choose a husband, he felt he must satisfy the expectant throng.

“My good people,” said the King. “The Princess Turquoise is overwhelmed by the number of suitors who have paid homage to her this day. It will be perceived that her mind is divided equally among them. At no time has it been known that so many illustrious and worthy princes have at once been gathered together in a kingdom to woo a lady. Were I to be asked the one I would like as my son-in-law, seeing that all are equally handsome and to be desired, I should find myself unable to choose. Therefore, I would have it known that to-morrow at the same hour I will have the Great Divining Elephant brought in your midst, and he shall pick out the rightful husband for my daughter.”

Thereupon the crowds were dispersed, and the Princess was borne back weeping to the Palace. The innkeeper, who had been one of the crowd, was full of talk—he talked over the affair with everyone who would have a word with him. He even made it his business to go to the cowshed to discuss the matter with the goat-herd.

“You should have been there,” said he, “and seen the King’s daughter; she was as white as a piece of marble, and every bit as cold. I’ll warrant she’s having a scolding

this minute. The King was hard put by to know what to say, but His Majesty was exceedingly discreet."

"Give me leave to go to the market place to-morrow," said the young Prince. "You shall never rue it."

"Hump," said the innkeeper, "I don't know so much about that. What if your master discovers your absence?"

The Prince pleaded very earnestly with the innkeeper, who at length consented, provided he promised faithfully to keep well at the back of the crowd.

"You may rest assured," said the Prince, "that I will give you my word and keep to it. My master gave me a bad character, but you have known me long enough to judge me for yourself. True, there have been occasions when I have allowed my goats to stray, but never willfully. I have taken my punishments with a good grace, and at no time have I borne you malice. I get no wage for my services, and I have asked for none. Grant me but one request, for though I am unkempt and dirty I am as other men who are more favored. Beauty lures me as it does them, and I would fain look upon the face of the Princess Turquoise, who is said to be the fairest and most disdainful of all women."

The innkeeper shuffled off rubbing his hands. "A rat must creep sometimes out of his hole," he thought, "and that ragged youth deserves better treatment than he gets;

his master will never know I let him go, he will be too anxious to push himself in the front of the ranks to occupy himself with his miserable servant.”

Neither the Prince in his cow byre nor the Princess in her palace slept—the Princess for thinking she would never see her lover more, and the Prince for thinking it would be the last time he would be permitted to look on her fair face.

The dreaded day dawned. The two lovers bade farewell to hope. Beautiful, in spite of the tears that stained her peach-like cheeks, the Princess Turquoise was conducted once more to the market place, where her princely and unwanted suitors anxiously awaited her coming. Full of eagerness and curiosity, the people, to whom this spectacle was a feast of amusement, waved and cheered. Yesterday the Princess had been dressed in gold and silver; to-day she wore robes of turquoise blue. Ropes of turquoise were wound round her slender throat. The same heaven-sent stone was plaited through her dark hair. Her hands alone were bare of ornament, save for one ring, the band of blue turquoise that her lover had given her the day when he and she had sat together in the green fields, a simple man and maid discovering the secrets of one another's hearts.

There was a loud blare of trumpets as the Great Divin-



ing Elephant drew near. To the Princess the frightful noise sounded like the notes of horns blown over the tombs of dead men, and she was seen to shiver, for in very truth it was to her as if they were sounding the mournful knell of her own unhappy self.

Never was the Great Divining Elephant called but on great occasions. That the King should ask him to choose a husband for his daughter proved beyond dispute that he and his councilors had been unable to solve the problem themselves. They were agreed that the Princess must marry sooner or later, and they were agreed that the sooner she was married the better for the peace of the entire kingdom. For, as the Chief Councilor had said, and not without reason, "Each princeling the Princess flouts leaves here with his pride injured and doubtless inclined to seek revenge."

"The Elephant will choose! The Elephant will choose!" shouted the people.

The King mounted the steps and, standing beside his daughter, said in a loud voice, "Whomever the Elephant chooses, to him will my daughter be given in marriage."

The Princess Turquoise watched the clumsy, uncouth creature led into the circle that had been formed by her suitors, her eyes filled with an expression of fear and of dread. In a few moments her fate would be decided for

her. The Elephant was lifting its thick, heavy trunk, waving it backwards and forwards in all directions like a great tentacle stretching out and feeling for guidance in the air, and then suddenly he folded his trunk inwards, threw it out again, broke the circle, crashed through the crowds scattering them wide, wound his trunk round the waist of a boy, and swiftly lifted him on high and very gently deposited him at the feet of the Princess. A roar of horror broke from the crowd: "The Elephant has chosen a beggar."

"It is a mistake," thundered the King, too thunder-struck to give himself time to think of what he was saying.

A hush fell over the assembly. The King had dared to say the Elephant was mistaken. Such a thing had never been heard of, for the Elephant was guided by the gods and was known to be sacred. The Princess Turquoise rose from her seat and said, "As the Elephant has decreed so it will be," and stretched out both her arms to the beggar boy, who was no other than the goat-herd.

The King ordered the goat-herd to be dragged away. "The Elephant's choice is my own," wailed the Princess, wringing her hands. "Dirty or ragged, I will have him for my husband."

"I would rather see you unwed," said the King. "It is a

terrible mistake. The Elephant must choose once more.”

Again the circle was formed, and again, this time without a moment's hesitation, the Elephant plunged into the crowd and pulled out the same boy.

Now the rejected princes turned on the boy and forced him back, but the Elephant followed after him, and his massive trunk lifted the boy out of their reach and for the third time set him before the Princess. Three times the Elephant had chosen, and the King knew there was nothing further to be done, so he turned to the Princess and said, “Take the beggar and be gone. This calamity has befallen us as a punishment for your willfulness.”

But the people said nothing, for they saw plainly enough that love and happiness shone from the Princess's eyes, and they made a way for her to pass with her humble lover. That very night the Princess and her goat-herd were wed, and the bride's parents, to mark their disapproval, gave her for a dowry a lame horse, a blind donkey, and a cow without a horn.

After many hardships the Princess Turquoise and her husband managed to make their way back to the old Queen, who welcomed her son and his beautiful young wife. Amid great rejoicings the estates were given to them. The lame horse, the blind donkey, and the cow without a horn were returned to the Princess Turquoise's

parents, together with many sacks of gold and a long letter telling them the story from beginning to end. When the King and Queen received these and learned how the wicked servant had betrayed his master, they sent their soldiers out to search for him. He was found and punished as he richly deserved. The innkeeper was rewarded handsomely, and to this very day he will tell you of a prince who once tended his goats.

It was not long before the King and Queen set off to their son-in-law's kingdom humbly to beg his forgiveness, which he readily consented to give. And the Princess Turquoise, who had proved so truly that she could be simple and yet queenly, lived happily with her handsome husband forever afterwards.



## THE LION AND THE HARE

ONCE upon a time a hare was hopping along by the river, and he met a lion. The Lion threatened to eat the Hare.

“Oh, King of Beasts,” pleaded the Hare, “let me live, you will find nothing but skin and bone on a small creature like myself, but if you will deign to accompany me a few paces, I will show you a large animal as well covered as your own self.”

“Show him to me, then,” said the Lion, who was feeling hungry and ready to kill.

The Hare took the Lion to a bridge over a part of the river where the water was very clear.

“Look down,” said the Hare, “and you will see him.”

The Lion looked into the water and saw himself mirrored there, and he shook his mane. Seeing what he took

to be another beast mimicking him, he growled and snarled back at him, and, roused to fury, he jumped into the water and was drowned.

So a timid Hare got the better of a strong Lion simply by reason of using his wits.



## THE WISE AND THE FOOLISH BROTHER

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, who lived in the country with their old grandmother. Now the elder of these two brothers was wise, diligent, and extremely quick-witted; whereas the younger one, though hard-working enough, was silly and slow of understanding—in fact, his stupidity was nothing short of an affliction. They were only poor people, depending on what they earned for a living, and the grandmother being aged and feeble, it was the duty of her two grandsons to support her for her remaining time in this world. The two brothers were fond of their grandmother, who had cared for them from their earliest infancy when they had been left fatherless and motherless. They were equally sincere in their wish

to do everything they could for her well-being and happiness.

One fine afternoon the elder brother said to the younger one, "Go to the paddy field and see how the rice is getting on."

Accordingly the younger brother set out to do as he was told. When he reached the paddy field he discovered the rice was in flower, but being such a foolish youth, he at once imagined the flowers were maggots clinging to the stalks of the paddy.

"This is terrible," he thought. "Our crops will be ruined."

So he immediately commenced clearing the field of the blossom, and worked with a will until no sign of a supposed maggot was left. He then wended his way homeward, singing happily, feeling he had done good work, and convinced he had saved his grandmother and brother from want.

"Sorry days would have followed for us," he thought, "if those maggots had been left there," and his song became cheerier than ever.

On arriving home the elder brother asked him why he had stayed out so long, so the younger brother told him of the discovery he had made, and also how hard he had worked to clear the field of the pest. The next morning



the elder brother thought he had better go to the field himself and see if what his foolish brother had narrated was true, and if indeed the field had been infested with maggots, finding it difficult to believe, as the paddy had looked particularly healthy when he had last visited it only a couple of days before.

“Grandson,” croaked the old grandmother as he was about to leave the house, “my bones are shivering and shaking this day. Don’t forget to close the door well after you.”

The boy, turning back and seeing the old woman shivering, although she was squatting by the fire, called his brother to him and advised him to prepare a tub of warm water and bathe the grandmother’s feet to warm her blood, warning him not on any account to bathe her feet in cold water, as, being old, the cold water would be injurious to her health. Having thus instructed him, he went off to look at the field. Imagine his surprise and horror when he got there to find the once flourishing field had been shorn of all its blossom. He went home filled with rage and wonder.

On entering the house he was more surprised and horrified still to learn from his foolish brother that the grandmother had been put right into the tub of water, and was now leaning against the door of the inner room smiling

at his able services. The elder brother hurried to the door against which the grandmother was supposed to be leaning.

"See," said the foolish brother, "how happy Grandmother is. See how she laughs with her teeth on the outside of her face."

But to the surprise of the younger brother the elder brother looked horrified, for he saw that the grandmother had been bathed in boiling water, and what his foolish brother mistook for a grin was the grandmother standing rigid with her teeth embedded almost into her chin. At this the elder brother was greatly enraged and knocked his younger brother down with his clenched fist, saying, "You have killed our old grandmother."

As the foolish boy fell he bumped against the grandmother, who instantly toppled over flat, face downwards, on the ground.

"Look what you have done now," said the younger brother, picking himself up off the floor. "You have killed Grandmother by causing her to have a fall. Only a minute ago Grandmother was standing smiling with pleasure at my great deeds. Never has Grandmother laughed so heartily before. *You* have killed Grandmother just when she was so happy and found life so pleasant."

The elder brother, seeing that he could never drive any

sense into his younger brother's head, decided that he would ramble away by himself down the valleys and over the mountains, wherever his fancy led him. So when the funeral ceremonies were over and he had lighted all the butter lamps necessary at the native village gompas, to ensure Grandmother a peaceful journey into the spirit world, he called his foolish brother to him.

"Brother," he said, "now that Grandmother has gone we must each take our own way to fortune. You being the younger of us, I will give you all my share of belongings and bid you farewell."

When he said this the foolish brother began to weep bitterly. "Brother," he entreated, "if you go from here take me with you. Never would I rob you of your birth-right. Have mercy on me and do not leave me sorrowful and alone in this place."

The wise brother, seeing the foolish one so grief-stricken, was moved with pity and thought to himself: "He is my brother, and were I to leave him alone, what might not befall him? If I, his own brother, could forsake him, is it to be expected that strangers will befriend him in time of need?" And so thinking, he placed his arm around the foolish boy and told him to calm his fears, assuring him that wherever he wandered, there he would take him too.

After selling their few possessions they started off to

seek their fortune elsewhere. In the far distance they could see a high mountain peeping above the clouds. The elder brother said, "We will direct our footsteps to yonder mountain, for who knows what may lie hidden on the other side for us?"

All day they tramped. At dusk they came to a village, and here they rested at an inn for the night. As they were setting forth at daybreak to continue their journey, the landlord of the inn called them back.

"You journey towards the mountain, good friends. Take this with you. It may be useful," and he presented the brothers with a drum.

They thanked him and went on their way, the elder brother wondering what use a drum would be to them, while the younger and foolish boy soon found a use for it, tat-tatting to amuse himself along the road. Towards evening they came to a house, and being weary and footsore, asked for shelter for the night. The following morning, as they were bidding their kind host farewell, he handed them a pair of tongs, saying, "Friends, take these tongs. I see you are journeying towards the mountain. You may find them useful."

The elder brother, although puzzled at the strange gift, thanked the giver, and they went on. Each successive night the same thing happened. They sought shelter, and

on taking their leave, their host presented them with a gift, telling them as they were traveling towards the mountain they might find it useful. In this way the brothers had given to them, besides the drum and the tongs, two millstones, a dagger, and a pig.

After five days of tramping they at length reached the other side of the mountain and found themselves in a valley of surprising beauty and fertility. Every object on which their eyes rested caused them to exclaim with astonishment. Flowers grew in riotous profusion; fruits hung ripening from great trees, their heavy branches within tempting reach of an uplifted hand. Winding streams purred their way among luscious grasses where sheep and cattle grazed peacefully. Barley and wheat fields nodded, bursting with good grain under a warming sun, little breezes stirring them, shrish-shrish, with a happy tremor in the gladness of full perfection. All this and more met them throughout the livelong day, yet not one human soul did they encounter nor the trace of human habitation.

As night commenced to hem them in, the wise brother clambered with some difficulty onto the projecting ledge of a great rock and looked into the distance in the hope of seeing a place of shelter where they could ask to sleep in safety and comfort, protected from the terrors of night

and the unknown evils that lurk in darkness. He was rewarded for his pains by seeing a far-off light. Towards this the brothers hastened their footsteps.

After walking some hours they came to a big house surrounded by a wall of jagged stones, rough-hewn and piled one on top of the other. In this wall were massive hammered gates that swung back as if by magic at the merest touch. The two brothers passed through the gates into a courtyard and looked about them. Everything was so silent they began to think the place must be deserted, for although they knocked at the door and called out they could get no answer. Finding no way by which they could gain an entrance, they were about to stretch themselves out to sleep on the doorstep when a light shone from a window above.

“Friend,” called the elder brother, “open your door to us.”

Presently they heard someone moving within and the sound of a latch being lifted. The door slowly opened, and the brothers saw a most beautiful young woman standing before them. She was so beautiful that the elder brother, who always acted as spokesman, became quite tongue-tied, gaping at her, and the foolish brother began to titter, which was the only way he could find to express his admiration.

When the young woman saw the brothers she trembled as if a great fear had seized her.

“Young men,” she besought, “go from here as quickly as possible, otherwise you will be devoured by my husband, who is a terrible giant, and out at this very hour seeking for prey.”

“Kind and beautiful lady,” said the elder brother, regaining his speech, “do not turn us adrift into the darkness. Allow us to stop for one night under your hospitable roof. I fear nothing from your husband so long as you will not deny us shelter.”

The elder brother was handsome and had a pleasant manner, and the young woman found herself becoming greatly agitated to think he might be slain by her husband. As she was expecting the giant to return at any moment, she hastily consented to allow them in and conducted them upstairs, telling them to crouch hidden between the rafters and remain there very quietly until the morning, when she would let them out.

They had not been hidden many moments when there was a great roaring sound. The whole house started to creak and rock as if shaken by an earthquake, and in came the giant. No sooner had he entered the room than he began to sniff the air, screwing his nose from right to left.

“Wife,” he bellowed, “I smell human flesh.”

“Human flesh, Husband?” said the woman, pretending to be surprised. “How can that be? No human can get near here.”

“Wife,” he repeated, “I smell human flesh.”

“Come, Husband,” said the woman, going up to him and stroking his great hand, “your dinner is ready for you. What you smell is my flesh. You forget that I am a human being,” and she smiled upon him, showing a row of gleaming teeth.

“That may be,” said the giant, greatly pleased at her tender way of speaking to him, “and as fair a one as I could feed my eyes upon.”

The two brothers hidden upstairs could hear and see all that was going on through a chink in the floor. When the giant had eaten until he could eat no more, he flung himself down on his couch and fell asleep. The foolish brother, seeing the giant was asleep, asked his brother to untie his knapsack and give him a drink from the flask they had with them, saying that he was so thirsty, unless he was given a drink he would have to go downstairs and ask the giant’s wife to give him one.

The wise brother told him to be silent as the giant had only just settled to sleep, and if they moved they would waken him. At this the foolish brother got angry, and said he saw no reason why he should not have a drink



from the flask, as it belonged to them both, and cried out, "I want a drink." Knowing of no way to silence him, and fearful of being discovered, the elder brother endeavored to get out the flask, fumbling in darkness for it. Just as he got at it the foolish brother snatched the bottle and spilt the contents. As they were hiding in the room directly over the couch on which the giant was lying, the liquid trickled through the crack in the floor and onto the giant's head, waking him instantly.

Now the liquid in the flask was a kind of pinkish wine made from millet seed. The giant, seeing this, called for his wife and told her something was dripping from the ceiling onto his head. At first the wife said perhaps the rain was coming through the roof, but seeing the red color of the wine, with great presence of mind she told her husband she had left a jar of hair oil up there, and in some way it must have got broken. Having said this she went upstairs in the pretense of going to fetch the jar, asking the giant to lie at peace until she came down to tell him what was amiss. When she got to the brothers she chided them for not paying heed to her warning, and told them they would soon be discovered, as her husband was now awake and both restless and suspicious.

"If my husband comes up here," she whispered, "tell

him you are the kings of demons," and so saying she ran down the stairs again to her husband.

"Well, Wife," said the giant, "where is that cracked jar?"

"It is upstairs broken in small pieces," lied the woman, "and as I stooped to pick up the fragments, two dark figures appeared, springing of a sudden out of the floor, and told me they were the kings of demons."

"Oh-ho," said the giant, "kings of demons. Yet the flesh smells uncommonly like the good flesh of the human kind. Wait here, and I will soon make them prove to me whether they are demon kings or not," and he rose full of a terrible wrath, swept his wife aside and in two strides was up the stairs.

Finding the two brothers up there he demanded, with a horrible roar, what they were doing in his house.

"Have a care how you approach us," said the elder brother, stepping forward. "We are the kings of demons, and all your great strength is as nothing compared with our powers in magic."

"Prove it," said the giant. "Only then will I believe you."

Fortunately for the brothers, the upper room was practically in darkness, and when the giant asked for

proof, the clever brother quickly took up the drum they had been given and beat upon it, keeping time to the drumming with his feet. He then asked the giant if he could make a noise like that with his feet dancing upon the floor.

"No," said the giant. "Yet I do not believe you. I challenge you to a pinch fight. We will soon see if your little fingers can pinch harder than my big ones."

"Willingly," said the youth, taking up the tongs, and straightway gave the giant such a pinch in the middle that it almost doubled him up.

"Stop," bellowed the giant, "we will fight with daggers."

"As willingly," said the boy, and while the giant was getting his dagger, he slipped the millstones under his clothes. Although the boy had only quite a small dagger, he was able to wound the giant with it, whereas the giant, whose dagger was long and sharp, struck at the millstones, snapping the blade in half.

"With all your skill in fighting," said the giant, throwing down the broken dagger, "I still do not believe you are demon kings, when you cry out you cry with the piping voices of men."

Immediately the giant said this the boy twisted the tail of the pig, who let out such a squeal that the giant took

to his heels and fled. The two brothers, seeing that the giant at last believed their story, chased after him, twisting the tail of the pig so that it shrieked louder and louder. At each new shriek the giant ran faster, for now he was convinced he was being pursued by the kings of demons, and his one thought was to escape from them.

Blinded by fear, he rushed headlong against the mountain that divided his country from the rest of the world, cracking his skull open and rolling dead as a rock into the valley below. The noise of his skull splitting was greater than the crackling of lightning in a storm and the groan he gave before dying was more terrible than the voice of the thunders.

When the brothers saw the giant was quite dead they ran back to the house to inform his wife. On hearing the glad news the poor young woman burst into tears and wept with joy, and kneeling at the feet of the elder brother, thanked him for delivering her from the clutches of the terrible monster who had stolen her from her happy home and had eaten her father and mother and forced her to become his wife. The wise brother dried the girl's tears and assured her that all he had done he would joyfully do over again for her sake.

The day was now dawning, and the elder brother sorrowfully told her they must proceed on their way.

“Friends,” said the young woman, “if you will go, first let me show you the treasures that are hidden here. Take all or anything you wish.”

“Beautiful and gracious lady,” said the wise brother, “I will take nothing, and as for my wish, I have only one. It is this. That a lady as beautiful and as gracious as yourself will consent to marry me.”

“And I,” said the girl shyly, understanding the meaning of his words, “I will live here in the hope that some day I will find a husband as wise and brave as you are.”

And there they sat at the great gates of the giant’s house while the sun rose over the mountain, bidding one another farewell, and again farewell, until the purple shadows stained the wheat and barley fields, and day faded and night closed in on them once more. Then it was too late to wander away, and so it came about that the wise brother’s one wish was fulfilled, and the beautiful girl, too, found the brave husband she had hoped for.

As for the foolish brother, he lived there happily with them in this land of peace and prosperity, where no actions, however foolish, could bring them to poverty or harm.



### WHAT THE FOX DID TO THE WOLF

ONCE upon a time a goat and a sheep set out upon a journey in search of a salt mine. On their way they met a wolf. "Ah," said the Wolf, smacking his lips, "now I will have a good meal." The Goat and the Sheep, seeing that the Wolf intended to eat them, asked the Wolf to wait until they returned from the salt mine, assuring him that when they had fed on salt they would both be extremely plump and tasty. As neither the Sheep nor the Goat was well covered, the Wolf agreed to wait and allowed them to proceed.

The Goat and the Sheep then went on their way and in time came to the salt mine. Here they made themselves a little hut and ate salt daily until they both became fat and sleek.

The time, however, came for them to return to their homes, and they were wondering how to get past the Wolf, who they knew was waiting for them on the road, when they encountered a skinny, half-starved looking Hare. When the Hare saw the Goat and the Sheep he was amazed and asked what they ate to keep themselves in such fine condition.

“We will tell you,” said the Goat, “provided you will help us to get safely past a wolf who is waiting to waylay us on the road.”

“I am skinny but quick-witted,” said the Hare. “I will promise to help you both if you will tell me where you feed.”

Thereupon they told the Hare of the salt mine, and in return the Hare thought out a plan.

“I will,” said he, “pretend to be a trader, but I must have a steed. Friend Goat, you will be my steed, and friend Sheep, you follow behind.”

The Hare mounted the Goat. After a while they met the Wolf. Immediately the Hare leaped from the Goat’s back and called loudly to the Sheep, “I must have one more wolfskin. The eight I have already won’t be enough. I promised the merchant faithfully that when next I crossed to India I would bring him nine wolfskins. He will be vexed

when he sees I have only eight. Come what may, I must get the ninth.”

When the Wolf heard the Hare saying this to the Sheep, he became alarmed and ran away from them.

“We will chase him,” said the Hare, and he and the Goat raced after the Wolf.

Now the Wolf ran towards the edge of a precipice and stopped suddenly short when he came to the brink. The Hare and the Goat, not knowing the danger, rushed on, fell over, and were dashed to pieces. The Wolf then turned and took a path down the cliff side to search for the bodies.

When the Sheep knew that her friends the Goat and the Hare were dead, she was deeply distressed and no longer wished to live in this world. She moaned long and loudly, until her pitiful bleating attracted a fox from a neighboring wood.

“What ails you, Sister,” said the Fox, “and why do you cry, saying you wish to leave this world?”

“My two companions have met their death through the evildoing of a wolf,” said the Sheep, “and my one wish is to join them in the next world. I beg of you, Brother, to search for the Wolf and torment him. As a reward you may have my body to eat.”

The Fox killed the Sheep and made a rug out of her coat. He then sat by the wayside on the sheepskin and



waited for the Wolf to come, knowing full well that the Wolf would come after the Sheep in time. Before settling himself, the Fox dug round the roots of some shrubs, then patted the earth loosely back into place. When he saw the Wolf approaching he got hold of a strongly rooted shrub and tugged with all his might.

“What are you doing that for?” said the Wolf coming up to the Fox.

“I am trying to tear up these shrubs by the roots,” said the Fox. “I have buried a sheep’s carcass under one of them, and I have forgotten which one. I hid it there for safety and skinning it, as you will see. Here is the skin,” and he showed the sheepskin rug to the Wolf. “I think,” went on the Fox, “it is under this shrub,” and he pointed out to the Wolf a shrub which he knew to be loose, telling him at the same time that he had had to give up trying to uproot it because it was so firmly fixed that he could not move it.

“I am stronger than you,” said the Wolf, and taking the shrub he gave a tremendous tug. Up came the shrub, and over went the Wolf, rolling backwards down the hill. When the Wolf picked himself up he was bruised all over and vowed he would wreak his vengeance on the Fox for playing him such a trick.

After a long search he found the Fox, who was dancing on a frozen lake. Every once in a while the Wolf saw the

Fox press his face to the ice, then get up again and dance in the most joyous way. The Wolf became curious and wondered what made the Fox so jubilant. Crossing over the ice to the Fox, the Wolf asked him what made him dance.

“Because,” said the Fox, “soon the whole world will be mine.”

“The whole world!” exclaimed the Wolf enviously. “How can you get that?”

“Because I am fastening it up by degrees,” said the Fox. “Just you look down and I will show you.”

The Wolf looked down, and true enough he saw that the world, with trees and moving clouds, was under the ice.

“You should give me a bit of the world to recompense me for the bruises you caused me to have by your mean trick,” said the Wolf.

“Very well,” said the Fox. “I will sacrifice my claim to the world to atone for my misdeeds, but to get the world you must press your cheek to the ice and keep it there until the middle of the night. You will feel your cheek burning. When your cheek ceases to burn and grows numb, then give a quick pull, and the world will come up to you.”

The Wolf proceeded to obey the Fox, who hastily danced away. The Wolf kept his cheek on the ice until midnight and then did as the Fox had told him, but instead

of the world coming up when he gave a pull, he left his cheek in the ice! Howling with pain and rage, he ran to search for the Fox. This time he found the Fox sitting in a cave.

“You rascal,” said the Wolf, “why did you tell me such a wicked story?”

“A wicked story?” said the Fox, feigning surprise. “I have never laid eyes on you before. I am too busy healing the sick to go out of my cave. I make medicines. Look into my cooking pot. You will see I am boiling an ointment to cure sores.”

When the Wolf looked into the Fox’s cooking pot, the Fox called out, “Oh, my poor friend, whatever have you done to your cheek?” The Fox seemed so truly sorry for the Wolf that the Wolf was taken in and told him his story.

“It is lucky for you that you found my cave,” said the Fox. “I can cure you with my ointment. Come here and let me put some on your cheek.”

Now the Fox had tree-resin in his cooking pot, and when he slapped it onto the Wolf’s face, the Wolf hopped with pain, while the Fox ran out of the cave and left the Wolf there to hop and shriek. When the pain had subsided somewhat the Wolf was more angry than ever with the Fox, whom he discovered later weaving baskets.

"You evil trickster," said the Wolf. "I shall indeed pay you out for your trick in the cave."

"Trick!" exclaimed the Fox. "I don't know what you mean. I am a basket maker by trade—small time I have got to play tricks! You see these baskets here? I am weaving them to take to the King, who has invited me to a banquet."

"The King has invited *you* to a banquet," said the Wolf enviously.

"Yes," said the Fox, "and what is more, he has promised his daughter in marriage to the one who can sing the loudest after the feast."

"How can I get invited to the King's banquet?" said the Wolf, who had forgotten his vow of vengeance against the Fox.

"You pretend to be my horse: I will mount on your back, and we will go together."

The Wolf was delighted, and he set off briskly, with the Fox on his back. As they came to the outskirts of the city, the Fox told the Wolf to halt.

"Let us try our voices," said he to the Wolf, "to see how loudly we can sing. I will try first." The Fox then sang in a very low voice.

"I can do better than you can," said the Wolf, and he raised his voice and howled.

The people in the city, hearing a wolf howling, were alarmed, and came rushing out with sticks and stones and bows and arrows and killed the Wolf, while the Fox, covering himself over with the sheepskin, in his disguise walked unnoticed out of the crowd.

This is how the Fox got even with the Wolf for causing the death of the Goat and the Hare, and how he fulfilled his promise to the poor Sheep.



## WHY THE SOKPAR FEARED THE GOAT

A SOKPAR, or hairy man, one of the tribe who lived on the topmost heights of Everest, once descended fifteen thousand feet at a single bound. Then he took another jump and landed on the outskirts of a village, where he lay in wait till darkness had set in and waylaid an orphan girl returning from her work in the fields. Carrying her back to his house, he married her. In due course a little son was born to the Sokpar and his wife. When the boy reached an age that he could walk by himself, he, seeing how his father could bounce about, went out on the mountains to try his own skill, and bounded joyfully down the snowy slopes till he came to a field where a Nanny Goat was grazing. The Nanny Goat watched him capering for

a time and was delighted with his antics. She hadn't a kid of her own. Her husband, the Billy Goat, was always saying he wished he had a son, so the Nanny Goat stole the Sokpar's child and took him to her house.

When the Sokpar and his wife discovered their loss, they were greatly distressed, and sent word to the Sokpar tribe to tell them of it. A meeting was held, and the Sokpars one and all decided that a father should look for his own son, if he was so careless as to lose him, but promised they would do their best to help in the search by asking news of those they met on their rambles. At length one brought tidings that he had heard that the Sokpar's son was with some goats and he also repeated exactly where the Goat's house was located.

On hearing the glad news the Sokpar set off in all haste to fetch his son home. As he neared the Goat's house, he perceived something coming towards him. The "something" proved to be the Billy Goat. Now the Billy Goat had five heads and, therefore, five pairs of horns. When he saw a goat with five heads and five pairs of horns, the Sokpar was in a fine fright—he turned and fled.

The Billy Goat gave chase till the Sokpar, exhausted, couldn't run any further. As they had now got to the region of soft snows, the Sokpar thought he would escape from the Billy Goat with the five heads and the five pairs

of horns by burying his own head in the snow. This he promptly did.

Up came the Billy Goat. He couldn't have had a better target to use his five pairs of horns on! He used them each in turn with such force that he butted the Sokpar through the snows until he came right out on top of Everest.

The Sokpar tribe were sitting in a great circle, waiting for their friend to return with his son. When they saw him come popping up out of the snow all in fear and trembling, they turned on him and accused him of having buried himself in a snowdrift instead of going out in search of his child.

In vain the Sokpar tried to tell his story; they would have none of it. "Coward," they jibed—"afraid of a Goat."

"He had five pairs of horns," wailed the Sokpar, standing quaking in their midst. *He couldn't sit down!*

"Away with you," said the other Sokpars, and they banished him from the tribe, so he was forced to live alone.

Years afterwards on one of his lonely walks, he met a young Sokpar resembling himself in feature and form. He at once recognized the young Sokpar as being his long-lost child. "My son! My son!" exclaimed the old Sokpar joyfully,



“Your son?” said the young Sokpar in surprise. “What nonsense is this? My father is a Billy Goat.”

On hearing the dread words Billy Goat, the old Sokpar commenced to shiver, and when the young Sokpar said, “Ah, there’s Father Billy Goat coming towards us,” the old Sokpar, without uttering a sound, fell backwards over the cliff. He has never been seen or heard of since.



## THE MONKEY AND THE HERON

A MONKEY and a Heron once struck up a close friendship, and thought it would be amusing to take a journey together. So they set out, the Monkey hopping and leaping along, while the Heron strutted on his long legs beside him. The Monkey continually stopped to pick berries and to play with this, that, or the other, on the road, and the Heron had to urge him not to dawdle. Neither of them knew where they were making for, and when the Monkey asked the Heron why they need hurry, the Heron replied, "To get somewhere before dark."

"If that's all," said the Monkey, "let me be. I'm somewhere at the present moment, and have always been somewhere for as long as I can remember."

However, when it did get dark the Monkey shivered,

his teeth chattered, and he begged the Heron to find a place to sleep. The Heron found a tree growing in the middle of a swamp, and he told the Monkey to get on his back, and he would wade on his long legs through the swamp, and they would sleep safely in the branches.

"I could not have found a better place," said the Heron, "no dangerous beast can get at us here, for the ground is swampy all round."

The Monkey clambered to a topmost branch, and the Heron settled himself on a lower one. The Heron, knowing what a fidgety fellow the Monkey was, and feeling sleepy after his long walk, said to the Monkey, "Let us make a wager for fun. You wager that you will sleep more soundly and longer and stay more still on your branch than I can. I will wager the same. The one to carry it through to be the winner."

The Monkey agreed to the proposal, and they settled themselves for the night. The Heron tucked his head under his wing and remained perfectly still, but the Monkey kept opening and shutting his eyes and peeping down at the Heron. After a short while he cried out: "It's so dark I am unable to see if you move or not."

The Heron made no reply. The Monkey couldn't be quiet. He fidgeted continually. He broke off bits of twig and threw them down on the Heron; shook the branches,

and did all he could to cause a disturbance. Still the Heron remained stock still.

“Are you moving?” shrieked the Monkey.

The Heron was really angry with the Monkey, whose restlessness made it impossible for him to sleep, and the Heron called up, “Be quiet and keep to your wager.”

Now the Heron had a very harsh voice, which sounded still harsher when he raised it in anger, and the noise of it gave the Monkey such a start that he lost his hold of the branch and fell into the swamp. The Heron, hearing a great splash, thought some wild beast had scented them out and was swimming to the tree, and with a flap of his wings flew off in alarm.

The poor Monkey found himself alone and in a sorry plight. He made great efforts to get out of the swamp, but the more he struggled the deeper he sank till only his head showed above. He screamed and shouted for help, but in vain, and there he had to stay, not daring to move a pace now in case he become submerged in the soft mud altogether.

At daybreak a Wildcat slunk by, and the Monkey called to the Wildcat and begged for help, saying, “If you will get me out of here, brother, I will give you my flesh to eat.”

“Very well,” said the Wildcat, “I am hunting for my

breakfast," and he came forward to the edge of the swamp and tried to fish the Monkey up. He fished and fished without being able to get hold of the Monkey, so he said, "I prefer to get my breakfast elsewhere," and stalked on.

"Do not abandon me," called the Monkey, and the Wildcat replied, "Another brother will be sure to pass, ask him to help you."

The Monkey waited anxiously for another brother, and sure enough after awhile he caught sight of a Jackal.

"Brother! Brother!" called the Monkey. "Halt! If you get me out of here you can eat my flesh."

"Oh! If you'll promise to let me eat you," said the Jackal, "I will give you my aid willingly." He laughed, thinking what a fool the Monkey was to make such a rash promise.

However, he found the task more difficult than he supposed, and after making a good try he, too, told the Monkey he would rather get his meal elsewhere. "Be patient," said the Jackal, "you'll find another brother soon."

To the Monkey's joy shortly after the Jackal left him a Leopard sauntered past.

"Help me! Help me!" shouted the Monkey, and promised the Leopard his flesh.

The Leopard, tempted by this promise, did his best, but failed. The Monkey was terror-stricken when even the



"I COULD NOT HAVE FOUND A BETTER PLACE," SAID THE  
HERON, "NO DANGEROUS BEAST CAN GET AT US HERE."







Leopard said he had not the necessary strength to pull him out of the swamp, and implored the Leopard to try again.

"It's quite useless," said the Leopard. "I'm not strong enough to do it, but I met a Tigress who told me she would be passing this swamp to-day. Make the same promise you made to me. She may be able to help you," and bidding the Monkey good-bye he went on his way.

The Monkey waited, hoping against hope for the Tigress to come, and screamed himself hoarse. When the Tigress passed that afternoon, it was all the Monkey could do to attract her attention. But he managed to call in a husky voice, "Pray stop! Pray stop!" until she turned and saw him.

"What do you want of me?" she inquired.

"I want to get out of the swamp," wailed the Monkey. "If you will get me out I will give you my flesh to eat."

"I can get you out," said the Tigress. And she took her big paw and dragged him to her with ease. She then carried him to her den where her cubs were clamoring for dinner. The Tigress told the cubs to fetch sticks to make a fire, so that she could roast the Monkey.

"I nearly froze in the swamp," said the Monkey. "It will be a nice change to be roasted," and he pretended to be very pleased.

"I will have to get the mud off you before I put you on the spit," said the Tigress, and she took the Monkey outside and laid him out on a flat stone to dry in the sun. He was caked with sticky mud from his neck to the tip of his tail.

The Tigress then left the Monkey, who lay as if he were going to sleep, and went to help the cubs gather the sticks. In the warm sun the Monkey soon recovered his voice, and when the Tigress moved away he began to sing. He sang these words:

*"Blow, wind, blow, and bend the supple bamboo."*

The Tigress heard him singing and came to ask what he was saying.

"I am singing a song," said the Monkey, "because I feel happy at being roasted by a hot fire after being so cold all night."

"Why do you ask the wind to blow if you are so cold?" said the Tigress.

"Those are just the words of the song," replied the Monkey. "It is very interesting when you think the wind can bend the tops of the bamboo."

The Tigress was satisfied with this explanation and re-

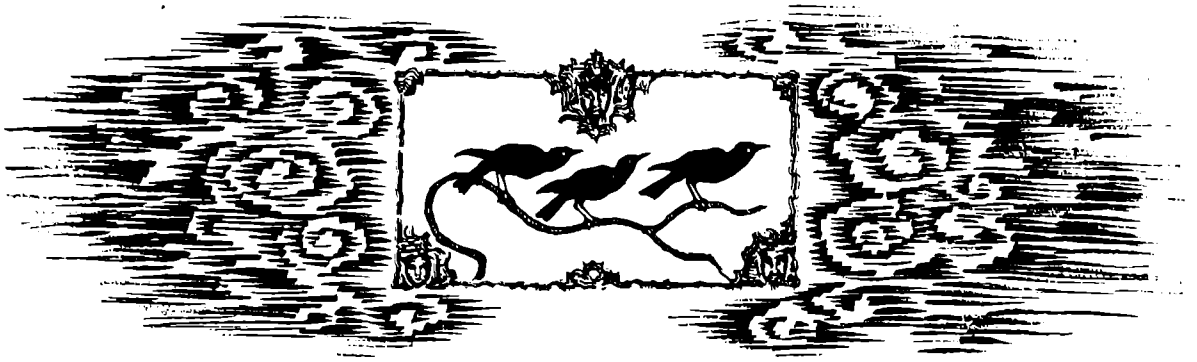
turned to join the cubs, who wanted to know what the Monkey sang.

“The nonsense you would expect from such a silly creature, who could beg to be taken out of a swamp to be eaten,” said the Tigress. “You don’t want to learn anything from him”; and she went into the den and busied herself laying the fire for kindling.

Suddenly the wind really began to blow, but the Tigress did not hear it, for she was using the bellows. So the wind blew and bent the bamboo over, and the Monkey instantly caught hold of the bamboo top, which sprang back, and he was carried swiftly out of danger.

When the Tigress came out with the cubs to bring him in to be roasted, there was not even one of his footprints to be seen.

“Wherever has the silly creature got to?” said the Tigress, looking about her in surprise at the Monkey’s sudden disappearance. But however silly she may have called the Monkey, this did not prevent her or her cubs from going supperless that night to bed.



## THE COUNCILOR AND THE ORPHAN

IN A certain kingdom there had long been discord, owing to the way in which the government muddled the affairs. The King's Councilors spent their time arguing with one another at such length that important questions were never decided and done with, but remained always suspended, awaiting a decision.

The King had remarked that whenever the council assembled, three crows used to perch outside on a tree with an out-jutting branch that spread itself half across the council chamber windows. As soon as the Councilors were seated the crows kept continually cawing and never flew away until the council rose. These crows came daily at the exact hour the Councilors entered the room, and they always took up the same positions on the branch. The King,

who for some time had grown exceedingly weary of hearing his councilors' whys and wherefores, ceased to listen to their debates, but kept his attention fixed on the crows and wondered what they were cawing about.

Now, one day, one of the Councilors, who thought himself of such importance that he could not ride a horse or a mule as other folks do, bought himself an elephant to ride. Riding along on his elephant he came to a large hole in the middle of the road, and the elephant stopped short, for the hole was so big the beast could not cross over it. The Councilor, on looking down, discovered a boy in the hole, and the boy with his two hands was clawing up the earth and flinging it to one side. The Councilor, seeing what the boy was doing, became very angry and told the boy to climb up and fill in the hole, saying: "He who digs a pit must fill it up."

The boy immediately began to do as he was ordered, working with his hands and feet until it was filled with the earth as it had been before. While he worked he said over and over again, "The guilty bring about their own punishment," and told the Councilor to bear in mind what he had said.

The Councilor was much struck by the boy's self-assurance and thought it remarkable one so young and untutored should pass such a remark, and so he asked if the

boy would come and live at his house, saying he would treat him as a son.

The boy, who was an orphan, seemed overjoyed at the Councilor's offer, and agreed to follow him and be a companion to the Councilor's only son.

Some days later, when the council met, the King, who in the meanwhile had been thinking out a perplexing question for his councilors, surprised them by saying that he had a question to put to them, and that his question was to be answered at the next meeting. "Whoever gives the correct answer," said the King, "shall be promoted in rank, and those who fail shall be degraded." And he asked them why it was the three crows came daily when the council met and sat on the branch outside the window. He then told the Councilors to go to their homes to think out the correct answer which they must deliver on the morrow at the hour appointed by him.

The Councilors had been so busy haranguing with one another that they had not observed the crows until that moment when they were bidden to go to their respective homes. As usual, the three crows rose when they did and flew away.

That night all the Councilors plunged themselves in deep thought. The Councilor who had adopted the orphan boy was among them. His real son and his adopted son

came out to greet him on his return and found him looking gloomy and saw he was in an unusually troubled frame of mind. The two boys had the dinner prepared for their father, but he refused to partake of it.

“Tell me what ails you,” said the orphan boy, “and why you look both grave and perplexed, because I am sure I can help you if it is a riddle you have to solve.”

The Councilor felt hopeful when he heard the boy say this, because he had certain faith in the boy’s cleverness. He unfolded the events of the day to his sons and told them of the question the King had posed and the penalty attached for an incorrect answer.

“Eat your dinner,” said the orphan boy. “Do not let such a simple question make you anxious. I can tell you the reason the crows go there daily. The crows have a vexing problem which they have been unable to settle among themselves and are waiting for a hearing from the council. The crow on the left, facing the window, is the husband of the crow in the center, and the crow on the right is merely a lover of the female crow. The two males have been jealous. Once great friends, there is now strife between them, and they wish the council to decide their rights, for both love the lady crow with an equal love. Tell this to the King,” continued the orphan, “and advise him to say to the crows, ‘Bird on the left fly away and



do not seek to find favor in the eyes of your friend's wife. Bird on the right ask your wife to be true to you. Bird in the center comply with your lawful husband's request and fly back to your nest with him.' Then tell the King to watch, and he will see that the left-hand crow will fly away to the left, and the other two crows will fly straight off together, and he will know that you have given him the right answer."

When the council reassembled it was apparent that the Councilors had spent a troubled night, all, that is to say, except the Councilor who concerns us in this story. None of the others had been able to find an answer. For once there was silence in the council chamber, broken only by the cawing of the three crows.

"What answers have you?" asked the King of each of the Councilors in turn. But one after the other were bound to admit that they could give no answer. Last of all he came to our councilor, who, as soon as he was questioned, replied promptly and asked the King to prove what he said by ordering the birds off. The King did so, and to the amazement of all present, the birds obeyed the King's command. The crow on the left took to his wings and flew away to the left, the center crow and the one on the right rose up and flew in a straight line both together.

The King, seeing this, was very well pleased, and complimented the Councilor.

Time proved to the full that the Councilor was right, for the crows never more appeared. True to his word, the King degraded the other Councilors, but the father of the two boys he made Chief Councilor. Instead of being grateful, the newly appointed Chief Councilor, who was obliged more and more to turn to the orphan boy to solve difficult problems, nursed a secret hatred of him, which grew, fed as it was by jealousy. The Chief Councilor saw that the orphan boy was clever and wise, whereas his own son was a dunce.

“When the orphan reaches manhood,” he thought, “he will step into my shoes, and my own son will not be considered fit to succeed me when I’m dead, so before the fast approaching time when they both reach manhood’s estate, I must do away with the orphan boy so that he cannot ruin my own son’s prospects.”

Therefore, one day, in secret he made some sweetmeats in the shape of cakes. He made five large ones and five small ones. He put poison into the large cakes and gave them to the orphan boy. The small cakes he gave to his son, and then he went on his way. The son, perceiving that the cakes his father gave to the orphan were larger

than the cakes he was given, said he had not been treated fairly and became quarrelsome, whereupon the orphan boy said he would give up his large cakes to his adopted brother and take the small ones in exchange.

No sooner had the Councilor's son taken a bite out of one of the large cakes than he fell down dead. The orphan boy saw what had been intended and that the Councilor had mixed aconite into the larger cakes, intending to poison him.

When the Councilor returned home and saw the orphan boy standing mourning over the lifeless form of his foster brother he was aghast.

"Ah!" said the orphan to the Councilor. "You forgot too soon for it to be useful to you those words which I repeated over to you when you were held up by a pit on the road, 'The guilty bring about their own punishment.'"

The Councilor, after the funeral ceremonies were over, went home ill with grief, and grieved sorely until he was unfit to hold office.

"Do not grieve longer," said the boy, "accept your punishment, for grief will not restore your child to you."

"You are right," said the Councilor, "in what you say. I will dry my tears and endeavor to expiate my sin."

Accordingly he set about preparing to go a long pil-

grimace, but before taking his departure he brought the orphan boy to the court and told the King of the boy's wisdom, and how it was he who had given the correct answer as to why the crows sat on the branch outside the council chamber window, and requested the King to appoint the boy Chief Councilor in his own place. The King acceded to his request, and from the day the orphan boy was appointed Chief Councilor to the King, peace and happiness began to reign in the country, for the boy was no idle talker. He took each question as it came up, gave it thoughtful consideration, and had done with it there and then on the spot.



## THE BEE QUEEN AND THE ANT KING

IN THE world of the insects there were once two powerful monarchs, the Bee Queen and the Ant King. Though they were equally rich and had good hard-working subjects, the Ant King was jealous of the Bee Queen, because she was respected and loved for her wisdom and generosity, whereas he was neither loved nor considered generous.

He always wished to be thought first in everything and could not bear the Bee Queen to be given the credit due to her for any achievement. For long he had planned to belittle the Bee Queen, so that it would get abroad that he was greater than she was in what he did.

With this purpose in view he challenged the Bee Queen to a bull fight, knowing that he had a larger bull than

she had. The Bee Queen, without hesitation, accepted the challenge, and forthwith, on the day chosen for the fight, she led her tiny bull into the field. Everyone was of the opinion that the Bee Queen's bull would suffer defeat, for the Ant King's bull was exactly a hundred times bigger, but after some hours of fighting, to the amazement of the onlookers, the small bull was victorious.

The Ant King, however, would not allow the Bee Queen her victory, and said she had used other than fair means in the fight, and challenged her to a horse race. The race was run, and the Bee Queen's horse, which was in no respect as fine a horse as that of her rival, came in first.

The Ant King again refused to accept his defeat with good grace, and said the race had not been run fairly. The Bee Queen said nothing, and when the Ant King challenged her to a dog fight, brought out her little dog to match its strength against the Ant King's huge mastiff. The two dogs fought, and the little dog beat the mastiff.

Still the Ant King was unsatisfied, and found reasons why the small dog had beaten his dog, and made out it was not a fair fight. He again challenged the Bee Queen, this time to a cockfight. The Bee Queen once more agreed to accept the challenge, which she said must be a final one. The Ant King's cock was the larger bird by far, but the

Bee Queen's little cock was game for him, and after a fierce fight was the victor.

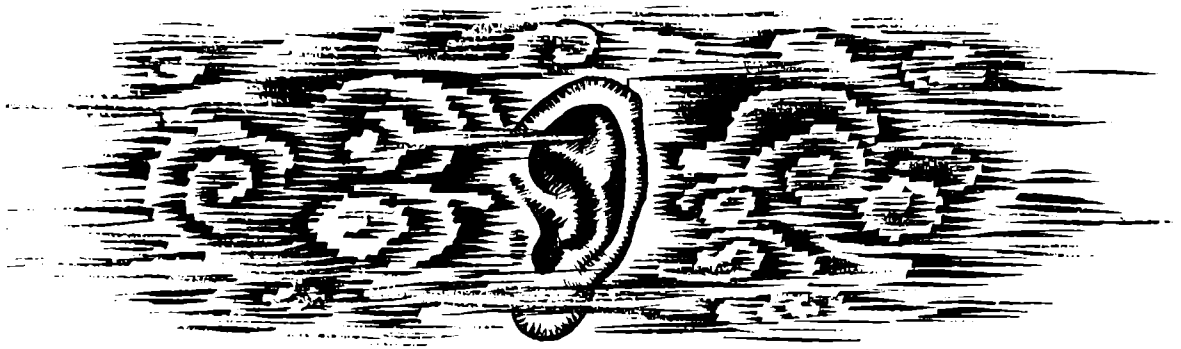
The judges were all agreed that the Bee Queen had gained the day, and she was hailed as the greater monarch. The Ant King crawled off to a subterranean tunnel to think out what he could do to disgrace the Bee Queen and rob her of the fruits of her victory. He used every means in his power to this end, and spent his days and nights plotting against her.

The Bee Queen in the meantime had left for a long annual pilgrimage, taking her servants with her. Her way led through a maze of cells, and at each cell she visited she left behind her proof of her industry to sweeten the lives of others, and won such merit for her manifold good acts that the news spread far and wide and gained her even greater popularity than before.

When the Ant King heard the praises sung of the Bee Queen's achievement his jealousy was intense, and he determined to set forth on the same pilgrimage to show he could do better than the Bee Queen and lessen even her own good acts in the eyes of her subjects. The Bee Queen's scouts had, however, heard of the Ant King's project and came to inform their mistress, who at last saw that there was no end to where the Ant King's mean jealousy would

lead him, and this being so, she kept watch on his movements, and flying swiftly back, she followed behind the Ant King, and when he had entered a cell, she blocked it up and defeated the Ant King once and forever at his own game.





## THE WILL ON THE WIND

ONCE there lived in one village two men of equal means. In fact, it would seem that the fates had ordained that their portion of worldly goods should be the same in every respect. Their houses were the same size; their lands, which adjoined, covered the same acreage; they had the same number of sheep, servants, heads of cattle, horses and mules; so to all outward appearance what one had the other had also.

From boyhood these two men had been companions. They worked at their lessons together, and they played after school hours together. They grew up together, more as if they had been brothers born under one roof than friends.

But when the time came for each to rule over his own

estate, one ruled with honesty and justice, the other was both unjust and dishonest. Therefore, the just one was deeply respected and loved, but the unjust one, though feared, was hated.

“How is it,” mused the unjust man, “that I and my friend, who are of equal importance in this world, do not command the same respect and affection? He has nothing that I can see that I have not got too, and yet his people treat him with as much affection as if he was their father, even spreading out their hands to give to him, without him having to raise his voice in command. Why should this be? We were born and brought up equals, yet now he gets all the people’s respect while I get none of it.”

These thoughts rankled in his mind until at last jealousy so poisoned his heart that he determined to find a means of putting his friend to death, vainly imagining that by so doing the people would be bound to pay him the full share of respect he held was due to himself, though he had done nothing to woo or merit it.

“Once my rival in their affections is out of the way forever,” said he to himself, “I can *force* the people’s love, for there will be none other there for them to give it to.” Thus thought he in the wickedness of his heart and the blindness of his spirit.

The long looked for opportunity to put his cruel plan

into effect offered itself one fine spring day, for his friend's wife and his own were both away. Calling in at the honest man's house, the dishonest man, after greeting his friend with marks of affection, said to him, "My good companion, I have come to ask you to accompany me on an outing. This fair day of spring has filled me with longing to renew our youth, when together you and I would, as you remember, play truant and go secretly up in the mountains and eat our meal there. Let us slip off quietly, without anyone seeing us go, take with us a basket of good things to eat, and pretend we are boys once more, keeping our secret guarded and telling no soul what we are about or what we propose to do."

The just man, amused by the proposal, entered into the game readily. The two then agreed to meet at a certain turn of the road and slipped stealthily out of the house by different doors, joining one another later and laughing merrily, the just man telling his friend that he indeed felt that they were once more truant schoolboys, and that nothing could have given him more pleasure than this simple escapade. They started off early, with the intention of remaining out all day and not returning till late, so as to enter their homes under cover of night. While they trudged on their way the false friend was thinking all the time of his murderous plan, how best to cover up the foul

deed, and so on. The just man, however, knowing nothing of these dark thoughts, and fully enjoying himself, talked of old times and of the many boyish pranks they had played once-upon-a-time, conjuring up memories of the past one after the other—memories that would have softened most men contemplating an evil deed and turned them from it, but which left no impression on his companion, who had allowed rancor so to harden his heart that neither mercy nor justice could abide there.

The path to the mountain place they were making for took them first through a dark and lonely forest. It was a path that was little used, for the country folk preferred to skirt the forest and go by the more pleasant track through the open sunlit fields, but in their adventurous boyhood this forest path was the one they had favored, and having turned their minds back to boyhood's days they took the forest path now. It was very gloomy, and the wind seemed forever to be moaning among the lofty trees. They were deep in the forest when the traitorous man suddenly drew his dagger and with an oath fell upon his friend and was about to strike him, when the other, seeing the intention and realizing that he had been tricked into an outing and brought unarmed into this desolate place to be killed, entreated his false friend to spare him for a few minutes.

“Why should I spare you?” said the hard-hearted villain, “you who have gathered unto yourself the affection of all the people, thereby leaving me none?”

“I entreat you to spare me,” answered the honest man, “only for a few minutes, so that I can leave a will for my relatives in which I can express my wishes before dying.”

On hearing this the wicked man laughed mockingly and asked who would deliver the will, since it was not likely he would deliver it, and there was no other living soul within hearing to do so, but being curious to see how his betrayed friend would act, he consented to give him a few minutes' grace, as he had requested. Thereupon the honest man lifted up his head and said in a clear voice, “O thou blowing wind that in thy journeyings can make a circle round the world, passing through every town and hamlet, in at every window, and through the cracks and crannies of each door—where thou wilt thou canst go. Therefore, in thy generosity, I pray that thou wilt take this my last will to those I leave. Tell them that one I trusted in friendship has betrayed that holy trust, taking me into a lonely wood in pretense of making an outing to renew the joys of youth, only in order to do me to death. Enjoin upon all who loved me to pray for me, and give to him who has betrayed me the same as he has given to me.”

On hearing these words the wicked man was astonished

and hated his companion more than ever, but thinking he had lost his reason from fear, dispatched him without further ado; then, burying his body under the fallen leaves, he hurried home, well satisfied at the way he had carried out his dastardly plan.

Months went by, and in time all hope of discovering the whereabouts of the beloved headman who had disappeared so mysteriously was gone. His friends, relatives, and servants had searched the countryside in vain, and knowing that to do so longer would serve no purpose, they sorrowfully abandoned the search, thinking that without doubt he had been either spirited away, or killed by some wild beast.

Even the wicked villain who had committed the crime ceased to dwell on it more. One night, however, as he was sitting by the hearth with his wife, quite unexpectedly, because the night had been still, the door burst open, and a sharp gust of wind sent things scattering over the floor, rattled the window, and went moaning round the eaves, dying down as suddenly as it had sprung up.

"That's a peculiar thing," said his wife, "the wind rising so suddenly," and she went to look out. "No," said she, returning to her spinning, "it is as still as still can be," and she settled herself down to her work, jerking the wool up and down on the spindle.

"It makes me think——" said her husband, and he cut himself short, and to cover his confusion at having nearly let out his secret, laughed loudly.

"What are you laughing so heartily at?" said his wife.

"Nothing," replied her husband.

"Nothing?" said the wife, in some surprise. "Well, you laughed loudly enough, anyhow, if it was all about nothing, but I don't believe you—and you started to say something, too. What was it you started to say?"

"Nothing," replied the man.

"Very well," said the woman, "don't tell me if you don't want to," and she pulled a long and disagreeable face, so the man could see trouble was brewing. "Ha," she went on, as if talking to the spindle, "my husband was laughing—at nothing. Do you hear, you?—at nothing—at nothing—at nothing," and she bounced the spindle in angry jerks up and down several times.

"If I tell you," began her husband hurriedly, "will you promise never to tell anyone else?"

"What do you mean," said the wife, "by 'promise not to tell anyone else,' when you have just said there is nothing to tell? You may be able to laugh at nothing as if it was something, but I am not so clever as to tell of *nothing* as if it was *something*."

“Promise,” said he, “and I will tell you. It is a great secret. Something happened a long time ago——”

“What!” exclaimed his wife. “You have had a secret and not told me all this time? What is it, then? I promise not to tell a soul,” and she gathered up her stool and came near to her husband’s side to listen the better.

Then her husband told her the story of the Will on the Wind made by his poor friend, only adding to it here and there as he saw fit, and pretending that he had been obliged to kill his friend, as he found him to be a madman. To make his story more realistic and to make his wife in a good temper, he enacted a scene, screwing up his face and dancing about till his wife was rocking with laughter over the affair. The tale was told and forgotten. . . .

One day, as the wicked man’s wife was going out, she met her best friend, who walked along with her. It was autumn time, and as they rounded a bend in the street a sudden gust of wind met them, tossing their petticoats and sending the fallen leaves that lay near their feet careering along like little golden wheels.

“That reminds me of——” said the wicked man’s wife, and quickly slapped her fingers to her mouth, as if to stop herself from saying anything further. Seeing her friend’s look of surprise, she laughed guiltily.



“What makes you laugh?” said the friend. “I see nothing to laugh at, unless, perhaps, it is our petticoats blowing out, and I don’t see anything particularly funny in that, since the wind always blows one’s petticoats out, anyhow.”

“I was not laughing at our petticoats blowing out,” replied her companion. “I wasn’t laughing at anything.”

“Well, you laughed loudly enough,” said the best friend, “as if you had thought of a *grand* joke,” and she sounded quite annoyed.

“Don’t get cross,” said the wicked man’s wife. “I can tell you I was laughing at nothing.”

“A fine tale too, that. Nothing! Pooh!” said the best friend, and she started to walk away, turning to call over her shoulder: “You had better find another friend you *can* trust with your secrets. I don’t want a friend who keeps her thoughts back from me.”

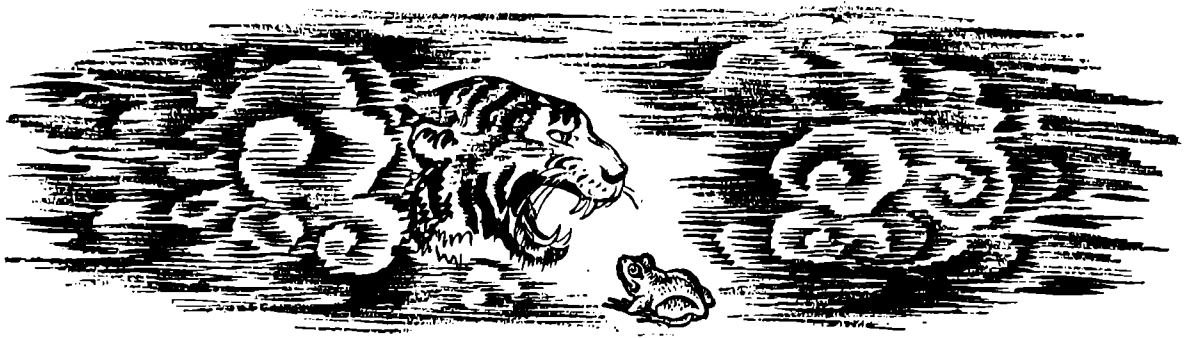
“Don’t let us quarrel,” called the wicked man’s wife, “stop a minute. I really have something very funny to tell you, but you must promise faithfully not to tell anybody.”

“I’ll promise,” said the best friend, retracing her steps, and linking her arm affectionately through her companion’s arm the two friends sauntered along, while the wicked man’s wife recounted to her best friend the story of the Will on the Wind.

Now, in time the best friend, exacting a promise of "not to tell," told her next best friend, and *that* friend told another friend, until the story went the full round, neighbor passing it on to neighbor.

At last the murdered man's relatives got to hear the story, thereupon they set out to search diligently for their kinsman's body. And when they had proved beyond doubt whose traitorous hand it was that had felled the good man, they, in feigned friendship, one fine spring day begged the villain to join them on an outing, and leading him to the same woods, gave to him even as he had given.

Thus it came about that all things were fulfilled in accordance with the *Will on the Wind*.



## THE TIGER AND THE FROG

IT IS but seldom tigers leave their natural haunts, or frogs theirs; the tiger his warm jungle, and the frog his home in the swamp. However, they do, and here follows a story of a tiger and a frog who both wandered very far from their homes. The home of the Tiger was in Nepal, and that of the Frog in Tibet. Thirst had driven the Tiger on a long journey in quest of water. As for the Frog, he was curious, that was all.

In a certain place where the two countries border on one another, the Tiger had found a pool, and he had a long drink, for he was very thirsty. The Frog happened to be hopping near by and saw the Tiger drinking, and the Tiger, looking up, saw the Frog. The curiosity of the Frog led him to hop to the pool, and he too had a

drink. When he swallowed the water, he felt a tickling in his throat.

“Hullo!” said the Tiger. “Who are you?”

“I am a frog,” replied the Frog, and he asked the Tiger who he was.

The Tiger said, “I am a tiger.”

The Frog had heard tell of tigers, and he anxiously inquired of the Tiger what he ate.

“Frogs,” replied the Tiger, promptly opening his large jaws and showing a double row of grinders. “Frogs are most succulent. Yes, I eat frogs.”

On hearing this the Frog felt alarmed and wished he had remained at home. However, the Tiger could have caught him in one fell swoop if he had attempted to hop away, so he said quickly, “That is strange, because I eat tigers.”

On hearing this the Tiger roared with laughter till his great sides shook.

“If,” continued the Frog, “you truly eat frogs, prove it to me. Return what you have eaten, because I find it difficult to believe.”

“Certainly,” said the Tiger, “if you will do the same, for your story is even more difficult to believe.”

“I will,” said the Frog, who knew that it was the Tiger’s hair that was tickling in his throat. “Nothing could be easier than to prove the truth of what I have told you.”

The Tiger thereupon brought up some grass, but the Frog with one cough brought up Tiger's hair.

"There you are," said the Frog. But the Tiger didn't wait to hear any more. He turned tail and bolted and left the Frog to compliment himself on the success of his ruse.

Being a wise frog, he hopped back as quickly as he knew how to his homeland swamp to boast to his friends of how he had outwitted a tiger and saved his own skin.

As for the Tiger, he ran quicker than he had ever run before in his life. He was still running when a jackal crossed his path.

"Hi, Tiger!" called the Jackal. "What's your haste? You run as if a devil was after you."

"A devil," panted the Tiger, slowing down. "Worse than that. Over yonder in Tibet I met a frog who eats tigers."

"A frog who eats tigers!" exclaimed the Jackal. "That is absurd. Come, tie your whiskers to mine, and together we will go back and have a look at the curious monster."

"No, no," said the Tiger, quaking. But the Jackal said, "Tiger, what a coward you are," and insisted they should turn back.

So the Tiger and the Jackal knitted their whiskers together and went back. After awhile they came to the swamp where the Frog lived. The Frog was squatting on a

stone sunning himself when the Tiger and the Jackal made their appearance.

“Ho,” said the Frog, who had told his story so often that he really believed he could eat a tiger. “Ho, so I see you have come back to be eaten, Tiger.”

“There! What did I tell you?” said the Tiger to the Jackal. And he turned back and fled, dragging the poor Jackal after him. The Tiger ran and ran, and the Jackal, who could not run so fast, got more and more breathless, until all the breath left his body, and he died.

The Tiger, feeling the dead weight of the Jackal, thought, “Ah, he is trying to drag me back. He is in league with the Frog.”

“Untie my whiskers,” commanded the Tiger. There was no answer. “Untie my whiskers.” Still no answer. “Take that,” said the Tiger, half turning, and he gave the Jackal a clout on the ear.

The Jackal, who was now rigid, rocked stiffly.

“Hump!” said the Tiger. “So you thought you would take me to the Frog to be eaten,” and he gave the Jackal another good whack and proceeded to lecture him.

“Yes,” went on the Tiger. “You thought you could bind me fast, tying your whiskers to mine, so that I would stand there to be eaten by the Frog, you treacherous beast.

Take *that*—and *that*,” and he gave the Jackal a few more clouts.

The Jackal rocked and fell sideways.

“To suffer the indignity of being eaten by a frog,” and the Tiger wrenched his whiskers free from the Jackal’s.

The Jackal lay stiff and stark on the road. The Tiger noticed an unpleasant odor. “The devil’s entered into him, and he pretends to be asleep,” thought the Tiger, whose nerves were on edge.

Freed from the Jackal, he ran faster yet. Presently he met a tortoise. The Tortoise called: “What makes you run so fast, Tiger?” The Tiger stopped to tell him.

“I’ve left a jackal over there,” said he, “who has a devil in him. A treacherous rascal who tried to get me devoured by a frog.”

“Where?” inquired the Tortoise. “Let me have a look at him.”

“Not I,” said the Tiger, and went into a swoon.

The Tortoise crawled to where the poor Jackal lay and perceived that the Jackal was dead. “What a fool of a tiger,” thought the Tortoise, and he gave the Jackal a decent burial.

“A tiger who is afraid of a dead jackal and a harmless frog. A fine lord of beasts—let him remain in a swoon,” and the Tortoise gave a sniff and slid into the water.



## THE PHANTOM PRINCESS

IN A wretched hut at the mouth of a deep and gloomy ravine there once lived an old father with his only son. To say the hut was wretched was true, for rain came in through the roof, and the wind blew through the cracked walls. Poverty had entered in at the broken door that hung on loose and squeaking hinges and had rooted himself by the cold hearth. Hunger, too, was no uncommon visitor—unwanted guests, but not ones to be uprooted easily when they decide to take a foothold.

There was but little furniture in the hut, for most of it had already been sold to buy food. But the old man had a turquoise. With this stone he had never parted, for the turquoise is the emblem of good luck, and the old man hoped that by keeping it in his house he would one day re-



trieve his lost fortune. Hope is a grand thing to have, and in this turquoise the old man's hopes were all centered. No matter how cold it was, no matter how the rain dripped in and the winds howled, the old man would say to his son, "My boy, we still have the turquoise, so one day our luck must change."

"Unless it does change, and quickly," said the boy, "we will both die of hunger. Let us sell this turquoise, Father."

For long he had urged his father to let him take the turquoise and sell it to buy bread and those few comforts necessary to their health; but each time the old man took the blue stone from its hiding place under his mattress of straw he would look at it, liken it to a sky without cloud, and put it back, saying:

"We must pinch in our belts a bit tighter, my son, and wait, for the day must come when the turquoise will bring us prosperity."

Alas, the days passed, and still their luck did not change. Things went from bad to worse with them. Not only were their belts pinched in, but their faces looked drawn with cold and hunger. Long want at last laid the old man on a bed of sickness, and the son thought to himself:

"My poor old father will never leave his bed again unless I can give him warm and nourishing food. He has been sustained on hope, but hope alone will not fill an

empty belly nor cover old bones. I must take the turquoise without his knowing I have taken it and sell it. It will fetch a good price, and the money will chase out hunger and tempt luck back to us.”

So when his father was asleep he slid his hand furtively under the straw pailasse and took hold of the turquoise. The following morning he did what little he could for his father, and then told him to remain quietly at rest.

“I have thought of a way to get food,” he said, “and will not be long gone. Be at peace until I return.”

For some time after his son had gone out the sick man tossed and turned. A terrible restlessness seemed to have got hold of him, a restlessness that would not allow him a moment's quiet, either of body or mind. His skinny hands foraged in the straw and under it. He felt for the turquoise and discovered it gone. Too weak to raise himself up, he fell to weeping, the tears running like rivulets down the furrows of his withered face and making damp the straw under his cheek. He did not blame his son, for he knew that he had been driven to take the turquoise and that he was on his way to the market to sell it. He knew he had to part with hope in exchange for food. Having come into the world on a Monday, the boy's name was Dawa. Dawa had lost his mother at an early age, so his father had brought him up and been both father and

mother to him. Before his mother died, she said to his father:

“Promise me when Dawa decides to take to himself a wife to give him the turquoise. He must have it set into a single earring and with his own hands put it in his bride’s ear, for unless he can do so his love will not be permitted to remain with him, and will forever answer to a voice other than his.”

These were her last words. Death sealed her lips as she uttered them.

Now, as he lay turning on his bed of sickness, he thought of what his wife had said and was doubly sad, feeling not only that hope was gone, but that he had betrayed a holy trust to one who could no longer demand its fulfillment. Dawa had been a good son, thoughtful and kind, and had well repaid his father for the sacrifices he had made in the early years by his care and patience in the later ones. Such thoughts as these crossed the old man’s mind as he waited for the boy’s return, and it seemed to him that the small patch of sky without cloud embodied in the turquoise would become a lowering sky, ominous with clouds of storm from which no brightness would ever more show itself, and that no earthly power could lift the darkness that would gather and burst over them.

Dawa, as he hurried on his winding way to the market,

ignorant that his father had discovered the loss, took comfort in the thought that his father, when he knew that the turquoise had been sold, would have been nursed and fed back to health, and would see with eyes of health that what he had done had been done for the best.

The road was a long one, and Dawa found devious concealed mule tracks that tempted him to try a short cut over the hills to get to the market quickly, for he was anxious to get back without delay. He chose one that looked promising and half ran, half walked, till he came to a lake, and here the track was swallowed up at the water's edge. He skirted the lake for some time, scanning the ground for traces of other tracks that he might follow, jumping from rock to rock. Just as he had made up his mind that his search was futile he slipped on some slimy weeds and fell. He put out his hand to save himself, when he felt something move under his fingers, and saw that it was a fish that had become netted in the water plants. Dawa thought this was a lucky find, and was about to knock the fish on the head with a sharp flint, when to his astonishment the fish spoke to him.

"Dawa," said the fish "do not kill me. A friend will not leave another friend to starve. I will point out a path that will bring you almost immediately to the market place if, in return, you will throw me back into the water. Don't

delay to do a kindly action, or it may be too late," gasped the fish, whom Dawa was holding aloft by the tail. "Throw me into the lake."

Dawa, surprised to hear the fish speak and plead thus, threw it back without giving thought to what he was doing, and only remembered when the fish was back in the water that he had not pointed out the path as he had promised him. However, it was not long before the surface of the water was disturbed, and the fish poked his head up.

"On the ground, Dawa," said he, "you will discover a trail of fish scales from the backs of some of my poor kindred who were caught yesterday by a wicked fisherman, who scaled them with his knife as he took them to market."

He brought out the words in short gasps and then sank back exhausted into the waters, which closed over him, leaving a few bubbles, a little scum, and a circle of ripples.

Dawa saw the fish scales sure enough, like flakes of mother o' pearl. It was easy to follow the trail, for the sun rays made the scales shoot up rainbow colors, a thread, but sufficient to guide his feet aright. In no time he found the market place. Dawa had only once been to the town before, which was when he was a child, and the sight of so many people gathered together in one place, bartering

and haggling over the price of the wares displayed for sale, made him feel confused. Pretty girls passed him and nudged one another.

“There goes a bumpkin,” he heard one say to her companion. “He’s good-looking, but look at his tatters about to fall off him.” They sniggered.

The girl’s remark made him angry. What if his clothes were tattered? There were men of all kinds at the market; all were not well dressed. Why should they single him out for their pointed wit, prick him with their sharp tongues, and goad him to shame with their scornful glances? It was not his fault that for two successive years the crops had failed. Faugh! She hadn’t known that, the spell of bad luck, and that his father was sick unto death, and—— But what use was it to go over it all to himself? The girl was pretty, and the remark had stung him. She couldn’t have done better if she had taken a lash and cut him across the face with it. He saw rich stuffs, silks and satins and warm woolen cloths, and caps trimmed with fur and bound up with cord with silken tassels, and the fat merchant standing behind his bench measuring out the materials against a stick. Men and women stopped and fingered the stuffs, chose what pleased them best, took coins out of their belts to pay, and went off with their purchases. Dawa watched them. A man had paid for some yellow brocade to make

himself a waistcoat, enough to have kept himself and his father from want for months.

“Were I to have but half of what these people spend so easily,” thought Dawa, “I should say prayers of gratitude for the rest of my life”; and he stood rapt in dreams, thinking what he would buy if he had the money.

He would not want much: a few useful, warm clothes for his father and himself, a cap and woolen boots and food—they could not live without food. He fancied how he would look if he could have a new jacket, and his eyes fixed themselves on a bale of warm maroon-colored cloth. He edged up to the counter. His fingers could not resist the temptation to touch the stuff, to rub it between his fingers and thumb as he had seen others do, and he thought of the girl who had nudged her friend. He could see her wicked, heartless smile, as if even now she looked at him out of the clear sky.

“Go away from there,” cried the merchant in a shrill, angry voice that brought Dawa with a shock to his senses. “You beggar man, daring to soil my stuff by touching it with your grimed hands, and standing blocking up the place so as to hide the goods that you haven’t so much as a coin to pay for.”

Dawa moved a few paces. “A beggar man.” He put his fingers into his belt to get the turquoise. He felt in the

folds where he had tucked it for safety. He felt, but the turquoise was not there. His fingers passed quickly from one fold to another, down the seams of his ragged pantaloons, over his entire body, anywhere he could think the stone might have slipped. Lost! The turquoise—yes, he had to face the fact—he had lost it. But how and where? He tried to think. The stone had been twisted into the rag that served him as a belt, twisted and turned under securely.

Through the numbness that the discovery of his loss gave him other thoughts scampered, guilty ones. Why had he not hurried in the purpose of his mission? He had come to the market to find a purchaser for the turquoise. Instead of getting his business done he had occupied his time irrelevantly. First the unknown girl's look had teased him, and then the merchant's brusque taunt had made him rush to disclose his treasure. To hold the stone under the man's nose and cry out:

"There! See, I am not so much of a beggar, after all. You don't see a turquoise like this every day. There isn't a single flaw in it. It's worth a good few yards of your best stuff, I know."

He remembered that in the thick of the crowd people had pressed against him. No doubt the turquoise had been stolen. Some skillful thief had filched it from him while



he was shuffling through the maze of humanity, gaping at the stuffs and what not.

The merchant, who had been watching Dawa curiously, saw how he hunted through his old clothes. He watched, thinking that after all he may have been mistaken, and that perhaps Dawa had a bit to spend, but when Dawa drew his hands out empty from the belt, he cried more shrilly:

“Didn’t I tell you to move out of my sight, beggar?”

“I am a beggar,” said Dawa sadly to himself, moving out of the merchant’s view, and feeling the eyes of people on himself, drawn there by the merchant’s raucous voice. “I shall have to beg my bread. I cannot return to my old father empty-handed.”

A boy swung past him with some fish that looked as if they had been freshly caught. He carried them on a piece of twine that was threaded through their gills, and the twine was hooked over his little finger. Dawa stopped him.

“Give me a fish,” said Dawa, stifling his pride.

“What for?” asked the boy in astonishment.

“Because I am in need,” said Dawa simply.

“Take the lot,” said the boy, and he clapped the clammy fish in Dawa’s face and ran off laughing with them.

“May he feel what it is to want himself,” said Dawa

bitterly, and thought of the fish he had thrown back into the lake, and regretted his impulsive act.

He looked towards the road he had come by. He must get out of the market square with its heartless, indifferent mass of people. It would serve no purpose loitering about among them. Thieves, that's what they were, the whole lot.

The pad of footsteps on his heels made him turn round sharply. A little man had been following him, who bowed when Dawa turned.

"I heard you tell that boy you were in need," he said, "and saw his answer. Here, accept this," and he pushed a coin into Dawa's hand, "and when you have done a good action don't regret it afterwards."

"Strange," thought Dawa, "one would believe he knew of my regret in throwing the fish back into the lake."

"Not any stranger than a fish that can speak," said the man, answering Dawa's unspoken thoughts. "You would have sinned by making a meal off him when you came to think of it." And he hopped off down the road, leaving Dawa to stand with mouth wide gaping after him.

"Hi!" called Dawa, remembering that he had not thanked the man. "I wish to thank you for your bounty."

But the road lay empty and still, though how the man had covered the ground so swiftly was a mystery. How-

ever, he was gone, that was sure, as sure as if the ground had opened and swallowed him up. The little man had been generous, too! Dawa looked down at the coin, a silver disk lying in his flattened palm. He closed his fingers over it tightly, almost afraid it would melt under his eyes, and he retraced his steps to one of the smaller booths at the entrance of the market place, and laid out the money to the best advantage, and had a small sum over. He put the change along with the wares into a cloth he had brought for the purpose, and carried the bundle under his arm for better safety. Nobody should steal from him this time. He was up to their tricks.

Some distance from the town on his homeward journey he came across a knot of boys, their heads bent over a cage in which was a big white rat. The unhappy creature could barely move, the cage was so small and narrow. The boys teased and tortured the rat, poking sharp sticks at it, and when it huddled itself cowering as if it would try to flatten itself on the floor of its prison to escape the weapons of its tormentors, the boys thumped and jolted the cage up and down to force the rat to move. When Dawa came up to them, the rat was already more dead than alive. Dawa stooped to look into the cage. The rat turned a terrified eye on him as if it would, could it have spoken, have said, "Are you another come to torment me?"

Such cruelty to the rat who could do nothing but wait for death to release him made Dawa enraged against the young tormentors, and he told the boys to release the rat.

“We’re taming him, and then we will sell him,” said a boy; while the others laughed scornfully that Dawa should suggest letting the rat go.

Dawa foraged in his bundle, got at the coins he had put there, and after some bargaining induced the boys to part with the rat. He lifted the cage and its burden up gently and went off with it.

“I’ve paid dear for you,” said he, “but what else could I do?”

He heard a squeak, and a thin, quavering voice said: “Let me go.”

“What?” exclaimed Dawa, putting the cage down. “Do you speak too?”

“Yes,” said the rat, who seemed to have recovered. “Thank you, friend, for your sacrifice, it will not have been made in vain.”

Dawa opened the door of the cage, and the rat crawled out, sat up on his haunches, and commenced to wash his face and brush up his whiskers.

“What you can do for me,” said Dawa, “I know not, but that I could have left you in such a sorry plight would have lain on my conscience.”

“Let that conscience guide you, and all will be well with you in future,” said the rat. “You will see me again. Good-bye, Dawa,” and off he whisked.

Dawa took up his bundle and the empty cage and went home. On entering the hut he could see very plainly that his father had been weeping, but being ignorant of the cause of his tears, asked his father to pardon his long absence, and busied himself preparing the food and lighting the fire. Dawa was not much of a one for thinking of the to-morrows; that is, when those to-morrows didn't thrust up hungry faces. He was careful of the food, truly, the barley meal and the tea, but so long as there was a bit over and beyond what he took out for the day, he didn't trouble. His father had gained in strength from the care, and together they worked in the field, plowing the ground to sow some seeds. So the stores dwindled, and starvation again faced them. Not till then did Dawa think of the turquoise. The old man had not said a word, but Dawa had not failed to notice that the worn hands had ceased to poke under the paillasse where it had been concealed, and he guessed the reason. A pang of remorse had stabbed him, and then he had put the matter out of his mind.

Saying he must once more go to the market, he took himself off and covered the road quickly, being now familiar with the way. He had taken his cloth, trusting to

luck to provide him with something to wrap in it. But he soon found that luck is fickle. He met with no adventures. He mingled with the crowds, and no one paid the least heed to him. Then, indeed, the grim future seemed to yawn before him, waiting to swallow him in its empty mouth. The day through he paced the busy streets, a stranger among strangers who had not a kindly word or look for him, and when the night began to gather he turned homeward, his feet weighted with care. Coming to the lake he sat down on a rock and gave vent to his woe. The moon had risen, and a gentle peace brooded over the lake, a peace that had no place in his own troubled heart, torn as it was by fear and anguish.

“I have no friend,” said he, “in this world. Again we are face to face with hunger. I shall have to own to my father that I have lost the turquoise.”

The waters that had been as smooth as a silken sheet showed ruffles in one place. Dawa fixed his eyes on the spot and wondered what caused the water to look rent, and now to be forming a double stream of little wavelets, and then he saw that it was a fish steadily swimming towards him, churning the waters up as he cut through them. The fish swam straight up to where Dawa sat raking the pebbles with his toes and spoke to him, saying:

“You were merciful to me once, friend. Tell me what troubles you?”

It was the same fish Dawa had found netted in the water weed. Dawa told the fish his story, glad to have someone he could confide in.

“Wait here,” said the fish. “I can help you,” and he turned a regular somersault into the water and came back with the turquoise in his round, open mouth.

“Take it,” said the fish. “You dropped it the day you fell, and it rolled into the bottom of the lake. I have taken care of it against your coming back. I knew you would return.”

The fullness of Dawa's joy at recovering the stone was indescribable. He fairly danced along the road, cutting the wildest capers, and bounding down the hillside like a young goat. The moon had hidden behind a cloud, and the faint light of the winking stars was insufficient to show a trailing root that was stretched treacherously, snake-like, across his path, and before he knew what had happened, it had tripped him up, and he lay sprawling on the ground. He picked himself up, but in falling he had again lost the turquoise that he had so recently recovered. The entire night he spent in searching, but to no purpose, and by day he knew that he must give up his search.

A movement in the grass and a twittering attracted his

attention, and, stooping, he saw a bird with a broken wing. Always moved to pity at the sight of suffering, Dawa carried the bird home and put him in the empty cage that had lately housed the white rat, and tended the bird until its wing was knit, and then released it.

"Tweet, tweet," chirruped the bird, "I shall remember you, friend, long after you have forgotten me," and it flew up beyond the treetops and was gone.

When it seemed as if the tide of their troubles was at its full, as sometimes happens, a turn came. Dawa had fallen asleep, worn in body and weary in spirit, when a squeaking in his ear awoke him, and he felt a rat.

"My name," said the rat, "is Khartu. Wake up, Dawa, and listen to what I have to say. There is a fair land beyond this dreary ravine where you live, and in that land there is a castle. Follow me, and I will lead you there, and you shall live in the castle itself."

Dawa believed he must be dreaming.

"Ah!" said he drearily. "A castle is there? For beggars to make their home in?" and he brushed the rat aside and turned to sleep once more.

It was no untoward occurrence for a rat to run near him at night. The hut swarmed with them, and in the corner on the floor where he slept they frequently played their games of catch-as-catch-can over his prostrate form,



squeaking and scuttling and making as much noise as if they were hauling rocks up into the beams and dropping them. However, the insistent voice continued, saying, "Wake up, Dawa," till by its very insistence it pierced the dull weight of sleep that overshadowed his senses, and he became alert and sat up. The first light of day had entered to dispel the shadows, and Dawa saw that the rat was a white one, and recognized his old friend.

"Oh," said Dawa, "so you have come here. Well, you might have saved yourself a journey, for I can offer you no hospitality. We're in a sorry way, as you will perceive."

"Dawa," said the rat, "let us talk together. I am no ordinary rat. I can tell you of something that may change your misery into joy. Tell me your needs."

"My needs," said Dawa, "are few. A warm bed. Clothes to cover me. A roof above my head that is sound, and enough to eat for my father and myself. I am not as other men who have enough and yet want more."

"This being so," said the rat, "you have only to follow where I lead you. Promise to be satisfied with what you are given, and for the remainder of your life want will never more touch you."

Dawa rose as he was bidden and followed the rat. They went together through the ravine, traversed many rivers, climbed many hills, descended into valleys, and at length

came to a wondrous fair country, unlike any place Dawa had ever seen. The earth looked rich with flourishing crops. A mighty difference from the barren, rocky land he had left, where every blade had to be coaxed to yield a pittance, and then often was blighted before it reached fruition.

“How fortunate are the beings who live here,” said Dawa. “Repaid for their labor by a royal harvest.”

“A fair land indeed,” said Khartu, the rat. “There is no want as you understand it. The people here can have nothing to want for, though they can create want for themselves. All misery is self-sought.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Dawa. “So you know how to jest. Could not one see oneself beckoning want to follow at one’s side?”

The rat said naught, and Dawa continued to chuckle. They came to the castle of which the rat had spoken, and went in. It seemed to be unoccupied, though the rat said, “No.” This was the first time Dawa had been in a castle, and the splendor and luxury of the rooms made him hold his breath with wonder, though when he drew his breath in again it was to prepare to pour out a stream of questions. The rat did not appear disposed to answer them, and left Dawa to wonder.

Khartu took him from room to room, and when he

had shown him all, told the young man that he could live there with his father for as long as he was satisfied.

“All this,” said Khartu, “is yours. You will find your storeroom always full, and in the chests the clothes you need. However, I must give you a warning. You have seen here a vast library, scroll upon scroll of writings. Since you will no longer have to work with your hands, spend your time in acquiring knowledge. Until you have instructed yourself and become familiar with the teachings contained in these books, do not attempt to ascend the staircase to the rooms above. This condition is exacted from you for your own happiness.”

Dawa promised readily enough.

“Come out with me,” said Khartu, “and you shall see the manner in which this house is built. Do you see,” continued Khartu, as they faced the building, “it is built on two shelves of rock? It’s a single structure, and yet so divided as to be two separate houses. One is the lower house of the earth, and the other the upper house of the spirit. The tower that crowns it touches the sky. The staircase joins the upper and lower houses. There is nothing further to tell you. You will find your father asleep in your apartment where he has been spirited while he slept. And now I will bid you farewell and leave you to do as you will.”

Dawa's old father soon settled himself into his new life of ease and plenty. When he spoke it was always to compare the past with the present and to say that the gods now repaid him for the years of hardship and toil. At first Dawa enjoyed the ease, but his enjoyment began to wane. He became restless. The objects surrounding him were familiar. He craved for something new, though he knew not what. Near by was a town, and Dawa began to pay frequent visits to it. He mixed with gay company and stayed late at the eating houses. He had money to spend and fine clothes and was well enough received, but he was one of many. The men with whom he went had money and clothes, too, but in time he felt they had something else that he had not. Words came easily to them. They talked freely of many things of which he understood nothing, and he was obliged to remain silent for fear they would divine his ignorance.

He bethought himself of the scrolls in the castle and determined to master their contents. He could read a little and write, and in time he became a fair scholar and joined in with the conversations of his companions, but often he voiced an opinion that sounded masterly to himself, and caught his companions smiling to each other slyly. Dawa continued to pore over the scrolls, scanning the lines hur-

riedly. He found them dull reading. His eyes passed from word to word, passages were retained in his memory, but the teachings or meanings never sank into his heart.

At length he tired and let the scrolls gather dust on the shelves. He disturbed them no more. He seldom went to the town now, and when he did, it was to mix with uncouth fellows with whom he could not converse either, for he knew just enough to be annoyed by their want of knowledge. At home his old father, become childish with age, repeated incessantly the same story over and over again. Then came the time when curiosity pricked Dawa, and he thought to himself:

“I am weary of these rooms and their contents. Overhead there are other rooms I have not looked into,” and, tempted, he opened the door that led through a long passage to the forbidden staircase.

He mounted the stairs three steps at a time and found himself in a gallery with a number of closed doors. He stood hesitating what to do next when one of the doors opened of itself, and Dawa saw a maiden whose pale loveliness eclipsed that of any earthly maiden he had ever seen—and he had seen many a maid since those far-off days when he had gone to sell the turquoise in the market place, where a curling lip, a meaning glance, had charmed while it riled him. Being half afraid to move, he stood in the

shadow of a massive pillar that supported the arched roof and watched the maiden. Her footsteps, so light that they made no sound, seemed to glide over the floor to where he stood, and then she looked into his eyes, and he saw all that life had denied him.

She beckoned to him, and Dawa stretched out his hand to touch her, to clasp the hand she held out to him, and as he did so, she became all vague and shadowy and indistinct like a wraith, and she disappeared. Dawa pushed open the door nearest to him and looked in. The room was empty. He opened the door next to it. Each of the doors he opened disclosed empty rooms. Then he came to the last door of all and opened that. Behind it was a curtain of some curious woven stuff. Dawa drew the curtain aside and he saw a room, almost as bare as the rest except for a dais, at the far end, on which a man was seated. Dawa concealed himself behind the curtain, watched this man, and could not determine whether the man was awake or asleep, he sat there so still. His head that was encircled by a crown was slightly tilted back against the wall, and his eyes were half closed. On his lap Dawa saw lying a book with pages of gold, and in his fingers, fallen limply by his side, was a pen. Presently the man stirred. Dawa saw a smile tremble and break on his parted lips. His fingers grasped the pen, and he sat up

and wrote in the book. Strange things began to happen as the pen moved over the paper. The walls of the room seemed to recede and then to melt away entirely. Gauzy mists gathered on which changing lights played, trees grew up in a moment, burst into leaf, blossomed, shed their petals, and withered. Wonderful flowers like globulous jewels formed on the ground, and bright-plumaged birds hovered overhead and sang heavenly songs. Waters gurgled and gushed up, and waterfalls threw up silver spray. There were constant change, movement, and life. Now the man let his pen rest and looked before him like one entranced, and he called in a soft voice: "Come, most fair phantom, beloved Princess," and Dawa saw the same unearthly maiden appear in answer to the call, her brown hair spangled with gleaming gems.

The King held out his arms and drew the strange maiden to him and told her of his love. Long they sat and gazed on the scene before them so conjured up, his cheek close to hers, her hand resting lightly on his, while once more he wrote in the golden book. Such glory and brightness came upon all things now that Dawa could no longer bear to look, and like a man in a stupor he reeled out into the gallery. The doors to the rooms were open as he had left them. He rushed past, and he saw that the rooms were no longer empty nor bare, though what was in them he could

not say. Formless odd shapes, neither real nor unreal, moving somethings that were yet nothings, swinging, dancing, crowding together, parting and joining again. The far-off sound of music, haunting and faint, filled the air. Dawa's one thought was to flee, though from what he could not plainly have told—from the beauty so terrible and unearthly, from the unshapen, curdling things that assembled and dispersed in those rooms—from the melody with its haunting lilt. If he had stayed his head would have burst. He felt as if his brain were pounding even now against his temples.

Down the long gallery he flew; he could not find the staircase. Back into the rooms among the untouchable, formless horrors. Phantoms! Phantoms! He ran. He stumbled over his own feet to escape them, and at last he got out. Out into the fresh cool air of out-of-doors. He sank down on his knees and uttered a prayer. Once more he could see and think clearly, and he looked about him. He saw that he was in a narrow gorge, where high cliffs towered on either side of him, that the sun was setting, and that its light fell on the rock in shafts, that the rocks were seamed, and that those seams were blue, the blue of a mid-summer sky. Turquoise! Wealth of precious stone beyond the dreams of men. He took the knife he wore in his belt and chipped at a piece of the cliff when a sinister voice



called: "The rocks will fall and close you in—close you in."

Dawa dropped his knife in alarm and ran, not waiting to look either to the right or to the left to discover to whom the voice belonged. Somehow he got out of the valley, and as he ran he could hear great boulders crashing down, letting loose thundering echoes behind him. Once out of the gorge he seemed to sense his direction, and scrambling down a hillside path got to the entrance of the castle.

For some few days following his adventures, exhausted, he slept.

"I will content myself with my life and rejoice in the tranquillity," Dawa affirmed to himself when he awoke. "I have all a man can desire," but his affirmation rang hollow in his own ears.

It was not true. The desire to draw the enchanting maiden to himself gnawed at his heart. He wanted her above all else, and without her the savor of life was gone. And yet—and yet, he was afraid of those shades that had flitted so strangely and danced so noiselessly in those rooms above. What was she, and who was she? The ethereal enchantress in whose fathomless eyes he fain would have drowned himself. Who was the occupant of the room, the man with the golden book? The sorcerer who had brushed

those blank pages with the pen and transformed empty spaces into gardens of delight, for whom trees blossomed and withered, and waters gushed and rivulets trickled, and to whose call the maiden had responded? The passing days only served to make Dawa's impatience and his longing grow greater.

Unable to resist the temptation to look once more on the maiden, he quelled his fears and went up the stairs. All was as it had been on his first visit, save that the doors remained open wide, disclosing everywhere the emptiness, and Dawa's courage strengthened, and he became more serene, seeing that the formidable shadows had deserted the rooms, though once or twice, as he made his way along a corridor to the room at the end, the suspicion of something seemed to dart swiftly and darkly, like a bat, across his path and cause him to recoil with a start. The King, for Dawa knew him to be such from the crown he wore, was alone and appeared to be asleep. The golden book lay open at his side, and the pen with which he wrote was fallen on the floor. Dawa, hidden, watched from between the heavy curtains. Anxiously he waited. The King never stirred but slept on. An inner voice seemed to tell him that the maiden was subject to him who owned the book, and that the magic words inscribed therein were instrumental in producing the visions he had witnessed. It was the talis-

man to open the flood gates to those profound delights without which his spirit would languish, and contrary to the prompting of his conscience, Dawa, while knowing the wrong he was about to commit, crept stealthily towards the sleeping King, stole the book, and made off with it. Nothing happened to stop him; the hush of a cloister steeped the quiet room. Never a shade wavered to trouble the infinite calm that everywhere made itself felt, and he found his way back to his own rooms this time as he had come, encountering no difficulty.

In the solitude of his own chamber he opened the book, turning the close-covered pages, gold upon gold, till he was halfway through, when the writing abruptly ceased. He turned back the leaves and read from the beginning the songs that were inscribed there. If he had thought to conjure the same vision and make fair the garden for the Princess to step into, he was mistaken. He read and read on, and naught that he read altered the aspect of the things about him. They remained unchanged, the walls around him solid, but his memory, persistently retentive, held each line as though the words were engraven on his brain, never to be erased. As the bird whose tongue is split mimics men, talking as they do, so Dawa repeated the songs, and in the town where he again began to go, a disappointed man, seeking to find consolation in the com-

pany of his fellow men, oftentimes he would repeat the poesies as if they were his own making, for when he was asked who had composed them he would shake his head, not answering, and soon it began to be noised abroad that Dawa was a great poet, and he was hailed as such.

His ill-gotten fame only tended to make him more unhappy. He found that the spoken word uttered aloud to a company brought about the magic change he could not induce when he read to himself from the golden book in the quiet of his own room. He made trees blossom for others to see, and waters to gush, and rivulets to flow. They spoke of the unearthly maid as if she moved, a maiden of flesh and blood, in their midst. He saw her, too, but dimly, always spectral, always beyond his grasp, an unwilling smile upon her lips.

The passage of time brought about a few differences in the manner of his life. His old father had died, and the big castle without him seemed an eerie and lonely place, and yet he could not bring himself to leave it, and so he stayed. In the town new faces came to fill the places of the old ones. Dawa and his poems sank into the range of the past. He had told all that was written in the book, and they were known and sung by others as well as if he had sung them himself. He was not wanted—he had nothing more to give.

It came upon him suddenly that he was a poor man, poorer by far than when he had had to beg his bread, for the hunger he felt now was not appeased by meat or drink. At last, not knowing how to pass his time, he turned to the dust-laden shelves and took down the books, pored over them, and found that by so doing he was beginning to see clearer. From being merely a scholar with an easy memory, he became a student, meditating on what he read. Instead of the labor being irksome, he discovered a new-born joy in the task he had set himself, and little by little he mastered the works one by one, until he had read and pondered over them all. His knowledge, however, made him realize to the full the enormity of the crime he had committed in stealing the golden book and giving to the world that which was not his to give, and he penitently resolved to return the book to its rightful owner. With this project in mind once again he scaled the stair. The long years at first, he thought, had made no difference. Still the same empty rooms. Only in himself he felt a change. He was no longer afraid. With steadfast tread he hastened to the room at the end to confess all to the King and to beg forgiveness. He drew back the curtain and entered. No King was there, but in the place where his head had rested against the wall was written in words of flame:

“Forgiveness is his who takes up the pen and by his own labors continues to fill the blank pages of the golden book. Only those thoughts that are most pure and holy will remain engraved upon the leaves. To him prepared to give himself up to this task belongs my place, my pen, and at last my crown.”

And under the words Dawa saw the pen and the crown. Dust and the webs of spiders showed that for long they had remained undisturbed. Dawa felt the message was intended for him, for as he read the fiery letters died out, leaving the wall bare.

To redeem his sin he took up the pen in his hand. For long, long months he labored without being able to leave an imprint on the empty pages. After that came faint traces of writing, and at the same time the terrible shapes without form crowded round him and filled him, not with fear as they had done before, but with despair, from which he made a fierce struggle to free himself.

One day he wrote a message, and to his glad surprise the letters showed deep and bold, and when he drew his eyes off the page he saw one of the globular flowers at his feet, red as a ruby. Dawa understood that he had crystallized a thought, colored and shaped it with his own effort. Understanding now, he labored the harder, until

he too was able to fill his surroundings with images of beauty.

Slowly and laboriously he strove to earn forgiveness. Then one night he sat, the book open upon his knee, and his thoughts turned to the maiden. The bitter-sweet memories brought tears to his eyes, for his state was a lonely one. A mist began to gather, and as he looked into the mist the heavenly maiden appeared. Spellbound, Dawa looked on her face and called her to his side, but she did not seem to hear his voice.

He remembered the story his father had told him, of his mother's trust as she lay dying. He had loved and desired this maiden now for many years above all. She alone he would make his bride. Without the turquoise he would woo her in vain, she would never be permitted to remain with him, or answer though he called. He remembered how, though he had been young, he had thought of no other way out of their difficulties than to sell the turquoise, and how lightly he had gone off to part with it and lost the sacred stone that now he would give his life to possess.

The sound of wings above his head broke his reverie. A bird was circling above him. It alighted on his shoulder.

"Dawa," it piped, "do not give way to such sadness. You have forgotten me, as I said you would, friend, but I have not forgotten how tenderly you cared for me when

my wing was broken. I come as a messenger to you. Listen to what I have to tell you. I have had your turquoise in my nest. It was your inheritance and could not be sold. You lost it, but all the creatures, the birds, fish, and beasts, knew it was yours by right, and that when the time came that you could appreciate its value it must be returned to you. There is no need for me to tell you what to do with it. You will remember a narrow gorge you once came upon where you saw the rocks were seamed with turquoises. You were led there with a purpose, to remind you of the stone you had lost, but at that time you were dazzled by the quantity of stone, none of which has the value of yours, which is truly flawless, and thought to possess yourself of it in great pieces. My nest lay above those rocks"; and saying this, the bird disgorged the stone and flew away.

Dawa lost no time in having the precious turquoise set into an earring. When again the maiden appeared Dawa swiftly caught her and fastened the earring in her ear. Then what joy was his, for the maiden lost her shadowiness, and came to him willingly in all her heavenly beauty, and put the crown with her own white hands upon his head. He spoke to her, and she answered.

"My king," said the maiden, "long have I hovered around you waiting till the hour fulfilled itself, when I



could hear your voice and be for you a living being. I am not a human maid of blood and flesh, but an immortal phantom come to dwell with you in the deep realm of spiritual ideals. At all times and in every age it is I who am the bride of him who can engrave his thoughts in the pages of the golden book—the mystical bride of the great poets.”



**“IF MY GREAT-GRANDMOTHER WAS A SHEEP, I MUST BE A  
QUARTER SHEEP.”**







## FOOLISH MOTHER GOAT

OLD Mother Goat had for long been envious of the sheep who had nice soft curly coats, and whose lambs skipped about in all weathers with nice fluffy coats too. Her coat was coarse, and as for her kid, his coat was coarse also, and in rainy weather they both looked positive frights with their hair all wet and straight and draggled.

One fine day a little lamb got astray from his mother, and being afraid, he made for Mother Goat and snuggled up to her. She gave the lamb a warm drink, and he slept at her side all the morning with her own kid. Mother Goat dozed herself, and when she woke up her kid and the lamb were frisking together.

Mother Goat had a poor memory so far as her children

were concerned. She had brought up a numerous family. She watched the two young things frisking and playing their games and noticed that one had a fleecy woolly coat. She blinked and then swelled up with pride.

“At last,” said Mother Goat, “I have a child with a soft curly coat,” and she shouted for old Father Goat, who was busy munching, to come at once. “Look there,” said Old Mother Goat, “now, you see, we have a child with fluffy, curly hair. I always knew that my great-grandmother was a sheep.”

Father Goat was a bit surprised.

“Without doubt,” said Mother Goat, ready to burst with pride, “I am a quarter sheep.”

“You don’t look it,” said Father Goat, “you look a thorough goat.”

“What are you saying?” said Mother Goat crossly. “If my great-grandmother was a sheep, I must be a quarter sheep.”

“I don’t believe your great-grandmother was a sheep,” said Father Goat.

“Well,” said Mother Goat, “perhaps you will tell me how it has come about that I have a child that looks like a lamb.”

Father Goat racked his brains, but he could not think for the life of him. “If your great-grandmother was a

sheep," said Father Goat, "and you are a quarter sheep—that would make the lamb less than a quarter sheep."

"But you can see," said Mother Goat, "that it is a pure lamb. How can you answer that?"

This was altogether too much for Father Goat. He couldn't answer.

"I thought as much," said Mother Goat. "You can't answer." Thereupon Father Goat lost his temper, and Father Goat, losing his temper, made Mother Goat lose hers, and they raised their voices to such a pitch that the kid and the lamb frisked up to see what all the bother was about.

"How is it," said Father Goat, "that one of you has straight hair and the other curly hair?"

"Why haven't I got curly hair?" said the kid to the lamb.

"Because I'm different," said the lamb.

"Keep quiet," said Mother Goat. "You have curly hair because you are a lamb, and because your great-great-grandmother was a sheep."

Just then the old sheep came over the slope of the hill. "That's my mother," said the lamb, and he ran to her, and the two disappeared over the side of the hill.

"Where's my son?" screamed Mother Goat.

"Here he is," said Father Goat, butting the kid.



“I mean the other one,” said Mother Goat. “The one with curly hair.”

“His mother,” said Father Goat, “is a sheep.”

“Ah!” said Mother Goat, “so now you will admit I was more than right. Tell me, if my great-grandmother was a sheep, and my one son is a lamb, that would make me a pure sheep?”

But Father Goat was too exhausted to answer. He lay with his tongue hanging dry and his eyes nearly popping out of their sockets, while Mother Goat said over and over again, “*I always knew I was a sheep.*”



## THE STORY OF YUKPACHEN

YUKPACHEN was a foolish fellow. He meant well, but he was foolish, utterly and absurdly foolish. All his intentions were good, but his actions showed that what he did was done without thought. Fortunately for Yukpachen, luck favored him. Without luck, whatever would have become of him? Now, I will tell you what happened to Yukpachen one day of his foolish life. Some day, unless he learns to think, his luck will forsake him; then where will he be? In the meanwhile luck walks hand-in-hand with Yukpachen. Let us follow him along the road and see how foolish and lucky he is.

Yukpachen was walking along with never so much as a care in his empty head when he saw a pony galloping towards him.

"Hi," called the owner of the pony, "my pony has bolted. Stop him, stop him."

"I will stop him," said Yukpachen, and he picked up a sharp stone and threw it with all his might at the pony's leg. Certainly he stopped the pony running, for he broke its leg.

"There, I have stopped him running," he cried cheerfully. "He won't run off again in a hurry."

This was quite true, of course, but the owner of the pony was very cross, and well he may have been. He got hold of Yukpachen by the arm and said:

"I will take you to the King and tell him what you have done."

"Come along," said Yukpachen happily. "It is a fine day for an outing, and I would like to see the King."

So away they went. When they had walked some distance they came to a stream. In the middle of the stream was a man laden with bundles. He was so heavily laden that he was obliged to carry his ax in his mouth.

"Oh, brother," called Yukpachen, "how deep is the water?"

The man naturally could not answer, so Yukpachen shouted again.

"Brother, tell us how deep is the water."

At this the man became irritable and opened his mouth

to say something, and the ax fell from his mouth into the stream.

"I have lost my good ax," said the man angrily. "You shall come with me to the King. I will tell him how it happened."

"Willingly, brother," said Yukpachen. "We are now on our way to the King. Let us get there with all possible speed."

They had not gone far when they came to a wall.

"A wall," said Yukpachen. "There is only one way to get over it quickly," and he took a flying leap.

On the other side of the wall a man was sitting weaving. Yukpachen landed on his head and killed him instantly. The man's wife, who happened to be working in the fields near by, saw Yukpachen jump on her husband's head.

"You have killed my husband," she screamed. "You shall be brought before the King."

"How sad," said Yukpachen. "I am sure the King will be sorry to hear it. But console yourself, he died at least easily."

So the owner of the runaway horse, the owner of the ax, and the dead man's wife took Yukpachen to the King.

"O King," said the owner of the horse, "I bring before you a man who, when I shouted to him to stop my horse

bolting, took up a sharp stone and threw it at the animal's leg, injuring him in such a manner as to render him useless to me. Pray judge him according to his wickedness."

"O King," said the owner of the ax, "I bring before you this man who, when I was fording the stream so burdened that, having no hand disengaged, I was forced to carry my ax between my teeth, questioned me as to the depth of the water, and seeing my plight, called me a second time, whereupon I opened my mouth to tell him to close his, and my ax slipped from the grip of my teeth into the water and is lost to me. Pray judge him as you see fit."

"O King," said the woman on whose husband's head Yukpachen had jumped, "I bring before you a man who leaped over a high wall onto my husband's head, thus killing him and leaving me husbandless. Pray give him the punishment he so richly deserves."

"In the first case," said the King, addressing Yukpachen, "I order the owner of the pony to have his tongue cut off for shouting to you on the road to catch his pony for him. And you, Yukpachen, you shall have your hands cut off at the wrists for throwing the stone and injuring the pony's leg."

"O King," pleaded the owner of the pony, "I beseech

you to let this man off, as his action was foolish, not wicked.”

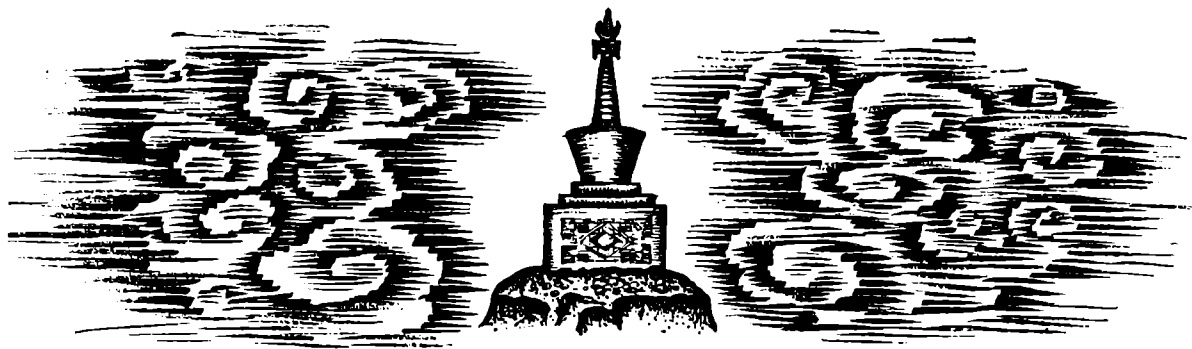
“In the second case,” said the King, “I order that all the teeth of the man carrying the ax shall be drawn for allowing the ax to slip into the water, and that your tongue, Yukpachen, shall be pulled out from the roots for asking needless questions.”

“O King,” said the owner of the ax, “grant this man pardon. True, he shouted to me, but not with any intent to cause me loss. I, therefore, plead with you to let him go unpunished.”

“In the third case,” said the King, “this poor woman wishes you to be punished as you deserve. I order, Yukpachen, that your legs shall be chopped off for jumping the wall, and that you shall marry your victim’s wife so that she shall not remain husbandless.”

“O King,” said the woman, “his punishment is far greater than he deserves. Grant him pardon.”

The King thereupon ordered them to return to their homes and trouble him no further with their grievances. So Yukpachen went unpunished, Yukpachen the lucky, Yukpachen the foolish, Yukpachen the well meaning fellow.



### A FATHER'S ADVICE

A LONG time ago there was a widower who had a son called Lobsang.

The widower was a wise and scholarly man, and his associates were pleased to seek his advice and to be guided by his counsel, knowing that whatever advice he gave had received his careful thought. Lobsang, however, who was young and inexperienced, could not see why his father should be considered a sage, and decided that he was well able to conduct his own affairs, and resented interference.

As a matter of fact, Lobsang knew nothing of life at all. Those things that seemed pleasing outwardly he believed were the things to be sought after.

When his father told him not to be misled by appearances Lobsang would smile and say to himself, "He has

forgotten what it is to be young. I will bear with him but go my own way, notwithstanding. What have I eyes for, and what have I ears for but to see and to hear.”

Lobsang was still young and inexperienced when his father was stricken by a grievous malady. Knowing that his time in this world was drawing to a close, Lobsang's father called his son to his bedside, saying, “My dear son, we are about to part. Before I breathe my last I wish you to listen to what I have on my mind. Be advised by me and conduct yourself in accordance with my wishes. I know you to be ambitious, and foresee that you will never accept service to anyone of a lesser rank than a king. This being the case I advise you to refuse to serve a small and cruel king. Wait until you can offer yourself to a big and righteous king. This is my first wish; see you abide by it when the time comes. Secondly, in choosing your friends, choose those who are respected, temperate, truth-loving, and sincere. Thirdly, when you would marry, do not think a pretty face so to be desired that you can overlook a maiden's character for the sake of her appearance. First acquaint yourself with her hidden thoughts and aspirations. If you find her a tittle-tattle, vain, and empty-headed, however fair she may seem, turn away. You will soon tire of her outward charms. These, then, are my three last wishes for you: That you serve justice, associate with



good friends and marry a woman of good sense and good character.”

Lobsang, after his father's death, packed up his own belongings and set out to seek adventure. He came to a big town, and here he settled himself in the hope of finding work to his liking. He could well afford to take time to look round, for his father had been a thrifty man, and Lobsang had more than enough for his daily bread tucked in his wallet.

Finding himself his own master with a tidy sum to spend, Lobsang soon gathered comrades about him, willing to help him to dispose of his fortune. His new comrades made him feel a fine fellow. They praised him, no matter what he did, until Lobsang began to think he must indeed be someone quite out of the ordinary. As his so-called friends fattened on his generosity, so his wallet diminished in bulk. One day he found himself penniless.

“Oh, well,” said Lobsang, “I have a host of friends; when they hear I have come to the end of my fortune, they will be pleased to do what they can for me. They think me too good a fellow; they won't want to be robbed of my company.”

Alas for Lobsang, he discovered that without the bulky wallet he wasn't considered such a fine fellow after all.

This discovery made Lobsang bitter. He determined to

leave the town where he had had a good time while his money lasted, to go farther afield to seek fame and fortune and to make new friends—friends more worthy of his friendship, he told himself. He stepped out briskly, and in a few days he found himself on the outskirts of a forest. He plunged into the forest and had been wandering some while, not knowing in which direction to turn, when he heard a commotion. A party of huntsmen, led by a king, hove into sight. As the King came galloping towards him, a tiger darted out of the thicket, sprang at the King, who was knocked from his horse and would have been killed had it not been for Lobsang's courage. Lobsang lacked nothing in courage, if he lacked in common sense. Without a moment's thought of his own danger Lobsang hurled himself against the ferocious beast and drove his dagger into the back of its skull.

He thus saved the King's life.

The King, owing to Lobsang's quick action in dispatching the tiger, escaped without a scratch on his skin. Thanking Lobsang, he told him he would take him into his service if he cared to come, and would reward him royally for having saved his life.

Lobsang, who had forgotten his father's deathbed wishes, failed to observe that the King, who was offering to take him into his services, was an extremely small man—almost

a dwarf. He was proud to think he would be in the employ of one in such an exalted station. Without question as to what services would be required of him, he agreed at once to return with the little King to his kingdom.

“I wonder how I shall be rewarded for saving the King’s life,” thought Lobsang. “In time, no doubt, he will make me Chief Councilor or give me a very high position at his court.”

Time, however, slipped by. Lobsang was kept employed at a small wage and given menial tasks to do. He thought at first the unpleasant tasks he was given were given him to test his endurance. He did them cheerfully, always hoping for the promised reward and a good position.

As the King took so long to fulfill his promise, Lobsang’s patience gave out. He grumbled at his daily tasks and ceased to do them with care. In fact, he was contemplating giving up his work altogether when he chanced to fall into the company of a serving girl, who was a very picture of comeliness. She was a pert maiden and a saucy one. It wasn’t only Lobsang she favored with her sly glances, either—she had more than a dozen on whom she lavished her favors. Lobsang knew this. It made him all the more eager to win her smiles. She used to smile on Lobsang one day and frown on him the next. Lobsang told himself every night when he returned home, that to-

morrow he would leave the King's service. When tomorrow came he would set off to work just to see if he would gain a smile or a frown.

This maiden kept Lobsang in a state of suspense. Had the truth been known, Lobsang need not have worried himself. The maiden thought Lobsang handsome and, "by and by," she told herself, "he will be promoted by the King." It was common talk that it was Lobsang who had saved the King's life.

When Lobsang had been smiled and frowned upon by the maid for some weeks, he ceased to care if the King rewarded him or not. All he could find worth considering was whether the girl would be willing to marry him.

He worked hard now to gain her affection, and skimped himself of food to buy her trinkets. The day that she became Lobsang's wife, Lobsang thought himself the luckiest man alive. *We shall see.*

Lobsang and his bride went to live in a humble little house which he had built himself, and his wife thought the house very humble indeed, although she had come from a far humbler one. She had hardly placed her feet across the threshold than she told her husband this. Lobsang recalled the King's promise and entreated his wife to forbear from finding fault. "I will remind the King of the promise he once made me," said he.

Lobsang sought an audience with the King. He was refused. The courtier to whom he entrusted his message returned post-haste to say the King could not be bothered with Lobsang, of whom he had never heard.

"Perhaps you will be good enough to ask the King if he has ever heard of a tiger?" muttered Lobsang angrily as he took himself off.

When he got home he told his wife that the King denied having known him. "That, after saving his life at the risk of my own," said Lobsang. He felt sure his wife would sympathize with him. "Oh," said she, "what a fool I have been. The King thinks nothing of you, then? He doesn't even recall you to memory. Oh, dear! Oh, dear! I stand no chance of becoming the wife of a high official."

Lobsang understood. If he wished to keep his wife by his side he would have to attain some kind of rank; otherwise her charming smiles would be bestowed on another with good prospects.

Lobsang was thinking what he might do to bring himself to the King's notice when he struck on an idea.

The King owned a marvelous dancing peacock, the like of which had never been seen elsewhere. He was exceedingly proud of this unusual bird; he was aware that there was not another peacock like it in the whole world.

He owed his fame—not to his good reputation, for he

had none—to the fact that he owned this peacock. He was known throughout the world as “the King who owns the dancing peacock.” In these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the little King prized the dancing peacock greatly.

It was of this very peacock Lobsang was thinking. He planned to entice it away and to keep it hidden until such time as the King offered a reward. Then to bring back the peacock to the King, and not only claim a reward for doing so, but remind the King of his long-forgotten promise, too. Lobsang didn't tell his wife of his plan. He had discovered that whatever he told his wife she repeated to her friends. What he did say, however, to stop her from sneering at him for not getting promoted, was this, “Before long the King will have to give me a double reward.”

“I hope he will hurry over it,” said Lobsang's wife, not too pleasantly.

Many days passed before Lobsang managed to entice the dancing peacock to his side. When he caught it, it set up a shrill squawk. He was very much afraid he would be discovered carrying it off. To trap the peacock, he had risen at daybreak, and when he had it fast he hurried off to a friend's house with it. He asked his friend to conceal the bird from all eyes until such time as he came to fetch it.

Lobsang had found in this man a staunch friend; therefore he knew he could let him enter into his confidence.

"I advise you," said the friend, "to go to the market and buy a second peacock, and bring it as a present to your wife. Who knows but what you have been seen with this one under your arm? It is never too early for curious eyes to peep. And if your wife hears of it——"

Lobsang acted on his friend's advice. He went to the market and bought a peacock.

"It will make a very good stew," said his wife, when he gave it to her. That's all she thought of the peacock!

The peacock was plucked of his lovely feathers and cast into a stew-pot.

Early in the afternoon it was discovered that the King's dancing peacock was missing. When the King heard of it he was both angry and upset.

"Order the Drummers to go out at once," said he, "and beat their drums before every door in my kingdom to make my people aware of my loss. Announce to all that I offer a great reward to anyone who brings me news of my precious bird. A still greater reward to anyone who brings it back here to the palace."

In due course the Drummers were beating their drums outside Lobsang's house. His wife heard them, and what they had to say. *It didn't take her long to put two and*

*two together.* "So that's it," said she, "Lobsang has stolen the peacock to spite the King."

Lobsang's wife thought of a great many things at once. She thought of the reward. She thought, too, when the King saw her, he would think her finer than the finest peacock. She put on her best dress, and, taking the stew-pot with her, she set off for the palace to acquaint the King of her husband's theft.

When the King heard the woman's story he fell into a rage and told his servants to find Lobsang and to bring him into his presence. Lobsang was surprised when he reached the throne room to find his wife standing beside the King, her stew-pot in her hand. "Wretch," screamed the King, "is it true what your wife here tells me, that you stole my peacock this morning and gave it to her to make into a stew?"

Lobsang, to test the King, replied, "It is true. I stole your peacock to remind you of a promise you have left unfulfilled. A promise to reward me for having saved you from death."

"Your reward," said the King, "shall be given you. You shall be cast into my darkest dungeon."

Lobsang, on hearing what the King said, remembered his father's dying words: "Do not serve a small and cruel king. Do not marry a tittle-tattle." He looked at his wife



exchanging glances with the King. He looked at the King and saw how small and how cruel he was. Then he said, "King, my eyes are more than opened. I now both see and *think*. I realize what kind of King I have served, and what manner of woman I have married. I will now tell you the truth. The peacock in my wife's stew-pot is not your dancing peacock but one I bought at the market place. If you will give me leave to go, I will bring your dancing peacock to you, for I know where it is lodged. I shall not claim a reward, either for saving your life or for restoring your prized possession to you. I shall beg one thing only of you—that is, to leave your service." The King seemed greatly pleased. He smiled on Lobsang's wife and told her *she* should have the reward. He bade Lobsang go.

Lobsang made his way to his honest friend's house, fetched the peacock, and returned it to its Royal Owner. So the King got his peacock and Lobsang's vain wife into the bargain. Free from the toils of a cruel little king and a vain traitorous wife, Lobsang set off for another country.

After some days of hard traveling, he arrived at a prosperous city, where he was told a big and famous king reigned. Taking his courage in both hands, Lobsang made straight for the palace and asked to see the monarch. He was allowed to approach him without the least difficulty being put in his way.

He told the King his story and begged the King to take him into his service. The King listened attentively to Lobsang's tale of woe, and being pleased with the young man, gave him a favorable answer. Lobsang thereupon became the servant of the big King.

One day the King went out hunting, taking none but Lobsang with him. They rode out a great distance from the city into a dark and lonely forest. So intent were they on the chase that they were overtaken by night. When they turned homewards they lost the way.

Throughout the night the King and Lobsang sought a path out of the forest, only to wander deeper into it. Hour upon hour the two wandered, and all they saw before them were tier upon tier of trees, their thick branches locked above.

At length the strain began to tell on the King. "I fear," said he, "our end is come. I suffer so greatly from thirst, unless we can find water to drink I shall die."

"I will search for a spring," said Lobsang. "I too am parched for want of a drink." His search was unavailing: no water was to be found anywhere. "Alas," said the King, "nothing can save us now," and he sank to the ground in a swoon.

Lobsang thought the King was about to die. In a hurry he stripped himself of his coat to roll it into a pillow to

support his master's head. As he did so three tiny oranges tumbled from the pocket. Lobsang was overjoyed, for he had forgotten he had stowed these oranges there. Faint from thirst himself, he curbed his own longing for refreshment and squeezed the juice of all three oranges between the King's parched lips. *Thus he saved the big King's life.*

The King, revived by the juice of the three oranges, could not find enough words to express his gratitude to Lobsang.

"My faithful servitor," said he, "though in need yourself you have given me all three oranges and saved me from dying of thirst. Your kind action shall not be forgotten. If we get home I shall reward you."

They did get home, and had been home a considerable time, but Lobsang saw no sign of the promised reward. "Ah," thought Lobsang, "this king has a poor memory too. I must find a means to remind him of the promise he made."

Now, the King had two children, a son and a daughter. The Princess was fully grown at the time, but the little Prince was quite a young child. The boy was very attached to Lobsang and would follow him wherever he went. Lobsang persuaded the child to come to his house, and when he got him there he hid him. He took off the young Prince's robes and ornaments and told the boy to

stay quietly at play and to remain hidden from everyone until he came for him.

He wrapped up the Prince's clothes and jewels and took them to a man he knew to be *un*trustworthy. "Keep these things well guarded from prying eyes," said he. "I have killed the young Prince. These are his fine clothes and jewels. When I return we will divide the spoils."

The man told Lobsang not to fear. "I shan't breathe a word," said he, and he hid the bundle away in a closet.

Soon the young Prince's loss was discovered. The King was almost beside himself with grief. A great hue and cry was set up. The King's drummers drummed up and down the city streets. Almost every minute they increased the greatness of the reward offered, to any who would come forward to give news of the little Prince.

Lobsang's false friend waited awhile. When he thought the reward greater than the value of the treasure he harbored, he set off to the palace to betray Lobsang. He took the garments and the jewels with him and, spreading them out before the King, told him that Lobsang had killed the boy and given him the clothes to hide. He then demanded the reward.

The King, on hearing of his son's death, was horrified. He could not believe he had heard aright. He sent for Lobsang to come to him without delay. When Lobsang

stood before him he demanded to know if the man's statement was true.

"True enough," said Lobsang. "I have taken these means to remind you of your unfulfilled promise to me. The promise you made when I saved your life in that dismal forest with my three oranges."

When the King heard Lobsang's speech, he bowed his head and said, "Lobsang, I spare your life though you have killed my dearly loved son, to repay you for the *first orange*. I will give you half of my kingdom, to repay you for the *second orange*. I will give you the hand of my sweet daughter in marriage, to repay you for the *third orange*. Go now, and forgive me for my neglect to reward you sooner for saving my own life."

Lobsang left the King's presence, and running home as fast as his legs would carry him he caught up the young Prince in his arms and carried him back to his father.

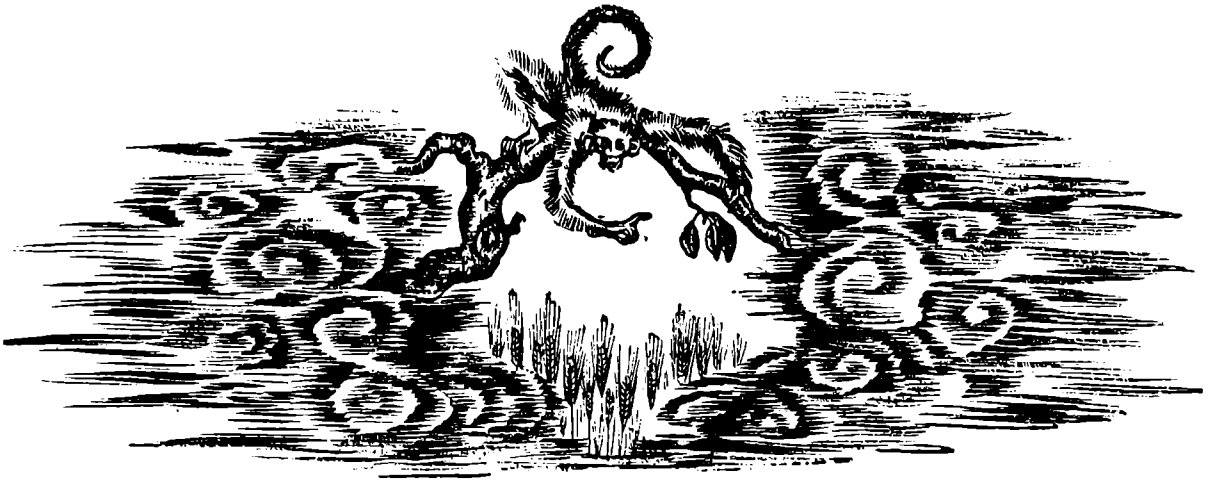
"My master," said Lobsang, kneeling before the King. "To serve you till the end of my days is all the reward I ask. I see that you are a great and generous King. Never shall I find one greater. He who could find forgiveness in his heart towards a servant who he believed to have killed his own child must be the greatest and most generous monarch living."

In time to come Lobsang won for himself, not only the

right to succeed to half the kingdom, but the love of the Princess as well. The Princess and Lobsang were married. They had five handsome sons.

When the young princes reached manhood's estate, Lobsang told them the tale of his own youthful mistakes. "Trust not to outward appearances," said he, "for there is more in life than what you can see with your eyes."

Lobsang's sons said between themselves, "Our father's sight is failing him. He must be growing an old, old man."



## THE WILY MONKEYS

IT HAPPENED once that an old man and his wife were busy planting barleycorn in a field behind their house when two monkeys strolled by.

“Good-day,” said the monkeys. “We see you are busy planting your barley, and, no doubt, you hope to have a good crop, but we must tell you, you are relying wholly on chance. In fact, we know that it is a mere gamble in which the odds are heavily against you.”

“How so?” replied the old man. “There is nothing unusual in what I am doing. I am sowing my seed in the good earth, as my father and grandfather did before me.”

“Truly spoken,” said the monkeys, “and provided you have the right amount of rain and sunshine, that you are

able to frighten the birds off and clear the ground of harmful insects, you will garner a rich harvest. If, on the other hand, the weather is unfavorable, as it so often is, and the birds and insects get at the grain, all your labor will have been in vain. However, it is not for us to thrust our advice upon you. Gambling is, no doubt, an amusing pastime for those who can afford to take risks; we will, therefore, bid you farewell. We monkeys cannot while away precious moments in such amusements, *my lord.*” And with that they made to walk off.

“Stay,” said the old man, “I am only a poor ignorant husbandman, toiling day by day for my food. Plowing and sowing and hoping in due course to reap. As you have said, I run the risk of my labor turning to naught, but my good ancestors had also the same risks to run. However, if it be true you know of some wonderful way to lighten my labors, pray be good enough to inform me.”

“We lay no claim to being workers in magic,” observed the monkeys modestly, “we claim only to safeguarding ourselves against the vagaries of chance by adhering to reason. But tell me, now, have you ever in your life seen a field of barley in which each ear was perfect? Fat to the point of bursting, ripe and ready to garner within seven days of being sown?”

“No indeed,” exclaimed the old couple, “never has it



been our good fortune to hear of such a thing, let alone to see it with our own eyes.”

“Yet you tell us you toil from dawn to dusk, unfortunate people, praying one day for rain to fall on your carefully prepared field, praying the next for the sun to shine, chasing off the pecking birds, and fearful of crawling mischief workers under the sods. Is this not so?”

And the peasant and his wife admitted it was.

“Now,” said the monkeys, “by following our directions, instead of wasting endless days, your work could be done in a few hours.”

The old people, who were listening attentively to all the monkeys had told them, again entreated them to tell further, how to attain such marvelous results with so little effort.

“First,” said the monkeys, “you must get a large pot and put plenty of butter into it, place it by the fire until the butter is melted. Then stir in the barleycorn and let it fry until it becomes a ripe golden color.” Seeing that the couple looked somewhat horrified, the monkeys told them to pay careful heed to their instructions, as they intended to give them a sound reason later. “When they are ripe gold,” repeated the monkeys, who were now leaning over the wall, and also it may be said rolling their tongues in a circle about their lips, “take some water that you have

heated and pour it into your pot nearly to the top. You then leave it to boil at a gentle heat until it is swollen and good to eat. When all this has been done, you must gather some large leaves, put a handful of prepared barley in each leaf, wrap it up well, and plant the packets at regular intervals along your fields, cover them lightly with earth, and do not go near the field for a week. In this manner we can assure you your barley will be perfect in every way."

"Good friends," said the astonished farmer, "it seems almost past belief."

"Belief or no belief," went on the monkeys, "it is a fact. By putting the butter into the pot and stirring the barley-corn into it, you start by providing your seed with a richness no soil, however well prepared, could supply; by frying it you get a ripe golden color; by pouring water on it you do the work of the rain; in setting it by the fire you give it the heat of the sun, added to which you protect it from birds and insects by wrapping it in large leaves. Pray, can you think of anything left to chance in this our most reasonable and simple method?"

"No," said the farmer, completely captured by the monkeys' wily reasoning. "I can think of nothing left undone, nothing whatever left to chance."

"Well, now," said the monkeys, "we will bid you fare-

well. Remember, plenty of butter, and cook it carefully, so as to make it appetizing. The more care taken in preparing before planting, the better the crop will quite naturally be after." With that they ran off, leaving the astonished pair congratulating one another on having learnt to reap a weekly harvest with so little work. The old woman picked up the basket and took it back to the house. She and her husband sat far into the night discussing what they would do with the wealth coming to them from the successive crops of perfect barley.

The following morning they rose earlier than usual, built up a good fire, picked the big leaves, and dug holes in readiness for the packets of barley. Then they took the largest cooking pot and put into it not only all the butter they had, but, thinking it would be to their advantage, used a double quantity of barley, and cooked it with the greatest care, according to the monkeys' instructions. When the mixture was ready, done to a turn, they wrapped it handful by handful in the leaves and buried each packet in the earth, working diligently until they had planted the entire field.

On the seventh day they went to look at the crop, fully expecting to find the barleycorn ripe and ready to garner, but though the earth seemed somewhat disturbed, not a vestige of green could they see.

“Strange,” said the old man, “the soil is broken, but no blade shows above it. We will dig this patch of ground, for perhaps the holes are too deep.” So they turned up the earth, and, needless to relate, found every bit of barley gone. The wily monkeys had come each night to the field while the farmer and his wife slept, and they had eaten it all.

Furious at the way in which they had been tricked, the old man decided to be revenged. “Now,” said he to the wife, “you must go to the tree in which the monkeys live and call: ‘My husband is dead, I have prepared a great funeral feast. Kind friends, I invite you to attend.’ In the meantime, I will smear my body with the rotting carcass of a sheep and feign death, lying out in the field with a big stick beside me. When the monkeys come to me, I will seize them and give them a sound thrashing.”

He thereupon went to find a stout stick for the purpose, and his wife hurried away to the monkeys’ dwelling place. When she got there she made a fine ado, weeping and lamenting and calling: “Alas, my husband is dead—my husband is dead.”

Presently the two monkeys, attracted by her cries, appeared and asked why she made so great a noise.

“I weep because my poor old husband is dead,” said the woman, making believe to wipe away the tears with her

sleeve. "I have come here to invite you to attend the great feast I have prepared for his burial." She then went on to tell of the various dishes she would spread out in honor of the departed spirit.

The monkeys eagerly agreed to accompany her to the feast, and they wasted no time getting to the field. The old man was stretched out at full length, and without the least doubt he had smeared himself over with the rotting carcass.

"Come up nearer," said the old woman, "and have a good look at him," and she ushered the monkeys up close to the supposed corpse. Immediately the angry farmer grasped the stick, knocked the monkeys over and managed to give each of them a severe whack on the back and head.

"Oh, my head, my head," shouted the monkeys, "oh, my back, my back"; but, being monkeys, they soon picked themselves up and raced back to the trees.

Ever after that the monkey tribe would wait in swarms by the roadside. Sometimes they would swing head downwards from overhanging branches and smack the old couple on the cheeks as they passed along the road so the smacks could be heard clack-clack for many, many miles, but most times they would merely look down from their treetops and *grin*—and *grin*.

But, there! What did you expect would happen in the end to people so utterly foolish as to imagine they had found a loophole to escape from the common tasks of daily life in listening to the idle chatter and glowing promises of—*Monkeys*.



## APPLE-TREE WITCH

IT WAS the same each year. When the apple trees for miles round were blighted by frost, and their snowy blooms, turned rusty in a night, had shriveled and begun to fall off the trees as though a revengeful sprite had lighted a taper under them to sear every cluster of blossom, *this* apple tree was unharmed. The frost never seemed to touch it. It grew in a corner by a wall, and the wall may have sheltered it, but, nevertheless, it was *strange* that it alone should escape harm. The country was bleak; even in the late spring sudden storms swept the valley and icy winds came tearing down from the mountains—winds that lashed great giants of trees and snapped their branches off as if they had been rotten twigs. Yet there it stood, gay

with its billowy blossoms, tossing and swaying to and fro in the blast, not a single flower fallen to the ground.

In the autumn it was a sight to behold, nobody could deny that; for though the apples were small, they were bunched together, and the tree was laden with them. In the sun they shone like little golden balls. Yet people said it was an unlucky tree. Sinister tales were told how boys had disappeared and never been seen again when they had gone at nightfall to sneak an apple. Such tempting apples they were too, as sweet and toothsome as wild-bees' honey, waxen, thin-skinned, and juicy.

The Farmer who owned the tree made no secret of the fact that danger lurked round his apple tree.

"If boys will come after dark to steal the apples," said he, "they must take their chance of coming to grief. I have warned my own son of the danger. I cannot do more."

But boys will steal apples, it seems, and such apples as these were a great temptation. Year in and year out, when the fruit hung ripe, one or more boys continued to disappear.

Not only did boys like the apples, the birds liked them as well.

"See how the birds are pecking your apples," said the neighbors, "you should shoo them off."



But the Farmer would shake his head and say, "No, the birds are my friends. They sing to me when I am at work. I will not shoo them away, poor things. Let them get food easily while they can. They have the hard winter to face." So the birds were allowed to peck at the apples, and no one disturbed them. They chirruped and twittered and sharpened their bills up in the branches of the apple tree, and pecked at the apples and dug into the soft skins till the waxy apples were covered with pits.

"It seems as if more and more birds flock to our tree each season," said the Farmer's wife. "Presently there won't be an apple on the tree fit to gather. Really, it is getting beyond all reason to allow the birds to take such liberties with our tree."

"We can till the ground, and store our harvest, and have enough put by to last us through the barren months," said the Farmer. "The birds have no storehouses; when winter comes they well-nigh have to splinter their beaks to dig out a crumb from the ice-locked earth. Leave them in peace."

The Farmer's young son listened to his parents wrangling over the tree. He thought it a great ado about nothing. When he wanted an apple he took one; they tasted just as sweet to him when they were pitted as they did when they were whole.

The Farmer's wife was not thinking of the *taste* of the apples, she was thinking of the value of them. Everyone said the same: "If you sent those apples to the market, they would fetch a good price. They are such delicate apples, and so luscious, and as pretty as you could wish to see, heaped together in a basket. Of course, when the birds have been at them they're no use to anyone at all. What a pity it is, to be sure."

"They are right," thought the Farmer's wife. "It is not only a pity, but a foolish waste of good fruit. However, what can *I* do when my husband is so stubborn about the matter?"

One year the harvest was wretched. The weather had been bad—worse than bad. Either it had rained too much so that some crops rotted, or it hadn't rained at all, so that others were parched for want of moisture. There was nothing worth garnering. That was the sad truth. Only the apple tree weathered the vagaries of the season. It was loaded, as usual. The branches bowed from the weight of heavy fruit.

"I suppose," said the Farmer's wife to her good man, "you will agree with me that we must guard our apples this year. We had better build a scarecrow to frighten off the birds."

“What!” exclaimed the Farmer. “Frighten off the birds? I shall allow no such thing.”

“Well, then,” said his wife, “we shall go short; you can’t deny that, for there is nothing to speak of in the storehouse, and unless we strip the apple tree and sell the apples to buy bread, as like as not we’ll go without.”

“The birds,” said the Farmer, “have to go without most years. We must use our wits and manage somehow. Let the birds be: the birds are my friends.”

“You’ll find them poor friends when your inside gnaws,” said the Farmer’s wife. “It’s a great shame you’re so unreasonable.”

In the mornings when the Farmer’s wife was busying herself about the household tasks, she had to stop a dozen times to look out of the door towards the wall at the apple tree.

“My husband’s friends are great chatterboxes, I’ll admit,” she said aloud to herself. “They talk a deal, but I wonder when trouble falls upon us what they will do. Trouble will come, and then—ah, yes, I know. They will have taken all they can get, and they will fly away.”

The chattering in the tree seemed to become deafening. “You may well chatter,” she went on sourly. “That’s about all you’ll ever do for us in return for our bounty,” and

looking to see that the Farmer was nowhere within hearing, she raised up her apron and, flapping it, cried, "Shoo there! Shoo!" The birds didn't seem to heed at all; they went on twittering and sharpening their beaks and pecking and hopping and fluttering in the branches.

"They have become so bold," said the Farmer's wife, "that they defy me." Once more she flapped her apron, as if she were shaking ashes out of it, and afraid that her temper would get the better of her she turned indoors and slammed the door.

Winter was not long following on the heels of autumn. A bitter hard winter it was. It was all the Farmer's wife could do to keep want at bay. She was certainly called upon to use her wits daily to contrive to serve up a dinner for her husband and her son.

"It's no use complaining," said she, "if we are deprived of a little luxury—a delicacy now and again. If we'd sold our apples I might have had a bit to spend on sweetmeats and the like."

"Never mind," said the Farmer, "next year we may have a good harvest."

"Next year," said the Farmer's wife, "I shall take no chances." She thought of the apple tree. Poor old apple tree, it looked bare and dead enough, its naked branches

sprawling against the wall with a sad crumpled leaf or two left to hint of past glories.

"The birds don't give us much of a song now," said the Farmer's wife. "Our friends have deserted us and the tree too."

"I wish," thought the Farmer's son, "my father had listened to my mother's advice and sold the apples. We would have had cakes then. Now we have very little to eat."

The Farmer's son slept in a small room upstairs. From his window he could look down upon the apple tree. He often looked out at it and remembered how it looked when it was heavy with apples. One night, as he was looking, a strange thing occurred. The moon came out from behind a dark cloud, and as he looked on the apple tree he saw it was covered with white blossom. *It was a pretty sight!* "Our apple tree is blossoming," said the boy to himself, "blossoming in the winter. We are in luck: after the blossom will come the fruit."

Next morning he told his mother what he had seen. She only laughed at him. "What you saw," said she, "was snow-blossom in the moonlight. That's what you saw."

"It was not," said the boy, "it was *true* apple blossom."

His mother still smiled. "Go and look out of the door,

then," said she. The boy went to the door and looked out. The apple tree was naked and shivering in the wind.

"It's bare enough," said the boy, turning in, "but it wasn't last night, whatever you may choose to say. Last night when I looked down on it our apple tree was in full flower." His mother said nothing further one way or another.

The boy continued to look out each night so long as the moon made it bright enough for him to see. Yes, the apple tree appeared just as it did in the springtime, all decked with delicate white posies. The moon waned, and the garden was wrapped in darkness. When next the moon threw down her silvery beams the boy saw the apple tree was leafy.

It was small use telling his mother about it. She only laughed when she heard his story and said, "Go, then, look at the apple tree, even the last shriveled leaves that clung to it have now been blown off by the wind."

The third full moon revealed a more wonderful spectacle. The apple tree covered with brilliant apples, each one luminous as if it were on fire.

"I know I will not be believed," said the boy, gazing at the strange sight, "but I must tell my mother. Our tree is bearing jeweled apples. What will *they* fetch at the market?"

He told his mother in the morning. She said, "You have been dreaming, my son."

"I will show that the dream is *real*," thought the boy. "I wonder what my mother will say when she finds a basket of jeweled apples in the kitchen to-morrow morning. She will think it a very good dream."

While his parents slept the boy crept downstairs, and taking his mother's basket, he slipped quietly out of doors and made for the apple tree. The night was glorious, a beautiful clear night, and as warm as summer. The world around him seemed all a-sparkle; even the blades of grass were shimmering. The boy put his basket down at the foot of the tree and prepared to pluck an apple. This was no dream! The apples were growing on the tree right enough. What was that! He started back in alarm, for he thought he saw two sharp eyes peering at him out of the rough trunk of the tree—two eyes set in a crabbed old face. No, he had been mistaken. The eyes were nothing but knots in the rough wood, and the face—why, it was a round bit where a branch had been lopped away. He soon forgot his fears, gazing at the apples. He had not been mistaken about them. They *were* jewels. Great glowing jewels formed in the shape of apples. What would his parents say? *What would they say!* Once more he stretched up his arm and this time plucked an apple and let it fall

into the basket. Then he plucked another one and was about to drop that into the basket too, when he saw the first one had disappeared.

“Where can it have rolled to?” he mused, searching the ground for the missing apple, but, thinking there were such a great number of them on the tree, he didn’t trouble to look far. Bending down, he placed the apple he held in his hand carefully in the corner of the basket and made to pick the third. He picked it, and went to put it in the basket when he found to his dismay the second apple had disappeared also.

“That couldn’t have rolled out,” he exclaimed aloud in his astonishment, when he heard a shrill cackle, and a little old wrinkled woman issued, as it were, from out of the tree. In her hand she held a great sack.

“Pluck me some apples, little master,” said she. “If you want to keep your apples you must pick me some, otherwise you will find them melt under your eyes.”

“You seem to have helped yourself,” said the boy. “Did you take the two apples I put into my basket?”

“No,” said the old woman, “I didn’t take them. My back is too stiff to bend, little master; my arms too shrunken to reach the boughs.”

“You have a big sack,” said the boy. “Why do you carry that?”



"In hopes the kind wind will shake me a few brittle twigs into it to kindle myself a fire," said the old woman. "I am poor and hungry, little master. It has been a hard, cruel winter. Could you not find pity in your heart and spare me the apple you have there in your hand?"

"It is my father's apple tree," said the boy; "for all that, I will give you an apple. He is a generous man; I am sure, if he knew you were in want, he would give you one himself."

"They are very precious apples," said the old woman. "If I have but one to sell it will bring me in enough money to buy both food and wood to cook with. I pray you to put it right into the palm of my hand and to see I close my fingers around it. I am an old, old woman, little master, my eyes are dim and my hand is shaky."

The Farmer's son did as the old woman bade him. He took the apple and put it into the palm of her outstretched hand. As he did so the apple dissolved, and before he had time to realize what was happening the old woman's fingers had coiled themselves round his own hand and made it fast.

"Now I have you," she croaked, and with her other hand she opened the mouth of the big sack and popped the boy into it, tied the sack up, swung it across her back, and set forth with him over the fields towards her home.

The boy was terror-stricken when he found himself in the sack, and remembered how he had been warned by his father never to go near the apple tree after dusk. Now he knew why. The old woman was a witch. It was she who had lured him to the apple tree with her evil witchcraft. The splendid apples he had seen had been invented by her sorcery. He cried for his father, and he cried for his mother, as the old Witch took him jolting along the road in her sack. His cries were unavailing. At that late hour everyone was in bed and sound asleep.

The Farmer's wife went to rouse her son in the morning. When she got upstairs she found he was not in his bed. She searched the house for him, she called and got no answer. The Farmer heard his wife's repeated calls and came hurrying from the goat shed. His wife told him their son was missing.

"Where *can* he be?" she said. "He is such a sleepy one, I always have to shake him to get him up in the mornings." They inquired of the neighbors. The neighbors hadn't seen him. Later the mother spied her basket lying under the apple tree. When she saw it she grew alarmed and told her husband of their son's three dreams.

"Alas," she cried, "that I had paid more heed! I am afraid he has come to harm."

The Farmer endeavored to calm his wife's fears, yet

when he spoke his voice betrayed him. It was not the first time a boy had been missed after visiting the apple tree. Their boy was an only son.

“You know as well as I do,” said the mother, “that something terrible has come to our son.” She looked at the telltale basket lying deserted under the tree, and her tears fell thick and fast into it.

Above in the boughs of the apple tree a little bird had settled himself. He seemed to be listening to what the Farmer and his wife had to tell each other. He peered at them with his bright eyes and cocked his head to one side. It was all he could do to keep a hold on the swaying bough with the wind behind him ruffling up his feathers. Still he clung tightly to his perch. When he had heard enough he spread his wings and flew away. He soared high up and looked down on the world below. From the great height he could see in all directions, and he spotted the figure of the old Witch stumbling along the road with the sack upon her back. The Witch’s house was a full day’s journey from the farmstead. The boy was no light load to carry, and he wriggled a great deal.

“I’ll be bound,” thought the bird, “that the son of our good friend the Farmer is in that sack.”

He swooped down to make sure. As he neared the

Witch he heard groans coming from the sack, and speedily he winged his way to inform his friends. In no time he had collected a swarm of birds. The birds kept a watch on the old hag, and when they saw her sit down to rest herself in a field they alighted in a flock and began pecking busily as if they had found a feast of good things to eat.

“What are you eating?” asked the old woman, who could speak the birds’ language. “The earth looks hard and bare, but you seem to be getting a good breakfast, nevertheless.”

“We are getting more than you think,” said the birds. “If you care to remain a while among us we will get you together not only a good meal but a flagon of sweet wine to wash it down with.”

Two of the number having flown off to beg wine and millet cake, they soon returned with both and set them in front of the old woman. The Witch was delighted; there was nothing she liked better than sweet wine. She tossed the millet cake aside, took up the flagon, and quaffed it to the dregs.

The strong wine made her extremely sleepy, as the birds intended. In a minute or so she rolled over and began to snore. The clever birds, seeing the old Witch was fast asleep, unfastened the sack and released the boy, telling

him to make haste and run home as fast as he could. The boy had not to be told a second time. Thanking the birds, he ran off as swiftly as a hare.

The birds then collected heavy stones, placed these in the sack, and flew away.

Under the influence of the wine the Witch slept soundly for an hour or two, and what is more, when she awoke she was quite stupid. She picked up the bag of stones, slung it on her back, and continued on her journey home. Arriving at her destination she called to her daughter and told her to fill the cooking pot with water and to put it on the fire.

“Do not open the sack,” said she, “pop it right into the cauldron just as it is; there is a tasty morsel inside. I will go to get another log to coax up the blaze.”

The Witch’s daughter did as her mother bade her. When she dropped the sack into the water it sank heavily to the bottom. The stones cracked the pot, and the fire was extinguished.

“Mother, Mother,” shrieked the Witch’s daughter. “There is a demon in the pot.”

“Whatever are you shrieking for?” said the Witch, returning hurriedly into the kitchen. “You careless wench, you have upset the water onto the fire.”

“I have not,” said the daughter. “I only put the sack

into the cooking pot as I was told, and when I did so a demon knocked the bottom out of the pot.”

The Witch lifted the lid off the pot and looked in. Her rage was terrible when she saw how she had been cheated. No dinner and a cracked pot to recompense her for the toilsome journey home with a heavy sack on her back.

The Farmer's son in the meanwhile had arrived home to find his mother in tears and his father with a troubled face.

“Oh, my son, my son, where have you been?” said his mother, clasping him to her while the Farmer looked on, not knowing whether to welcome his son in his relief or to scold him for causing such anxiety.

“Where have you been?” said he.

The boy told his parents of his adventures and how the birds had come to his rescue.

“I have always believed,” said the Farmer, “that the birds were grateful.” His wife was silent, but she went without her breakfast and put it under the apple tree as a thank-offering to the birds. The Farmer's son wisely refrained from looking out of the window after that. He had had a good fright.

“He has learnt his lesson,” said the mother. “There is no danger of him venturing out after dusk.” It was true;

he had learnt a lesson, but unfortunately he soon forgot it again.

One day he told a friend how on a moonlight night he had seen the apple tree bearing jeweled apples, how he had gone out to pluck them, and how he had been caught by a witch. The friend thought he was being told a tale.

"Jeweled apples," said he. "If I had been there I would have had the basket full."

"But what about the Witch and the sack?" said the Farmer's son.

"Oh," said his companion boastfully, "I would have popped the old woman into her own sack. She wouldn't have caught me so easily. You were a dumpling. I suppose you were afraid."

"I was not afraid," said the boy, "I was caught by a trick."

"Then," said the other, "you were a dunce. No one would be caught by an old woman who used his wits. Jeweled apples! I wish I had been there."

What his friend said started the boy thinking. When the moon was at its full he went to the window and looked on the tree. Was it possible? The tree looked more lovely than ever. It was a blaze of glory. A veritable wealth of precious gems in every color imaginable hung from it. There were ruby apples, emerald apples, apples the color of topaz,

some like red coral. He rubbed his eyes. The splendor of the jeweled tree almost dazzled him.

"I am not afraid," said he, "afraid of an old woman, witch or no witch. Let her try to trap me with her trickery, and she will find herself in her own sack. Yes, I can put her there too. A dumpling and a dunce—we shall see. As to my wits, I know how to make use of them. What will my friend say when he sees me with a load of precious gems?" Having thus reassured himself, he felt bold indeed. Down the stairs he ran, and snatching up his mother's basket made for the apple tree with it.

He picked one apple after the other. Nothing happened to them as it had the last time. His courage strengthened.

"Why," he exclaimed, "the very leaves are turning to silver and gold! I must tear down the branches, take them in a sheaf as they grow."

He bent a bough and was wrestling with it when down fell a covering over his head, and he found himself once more a prisoner in the Witch's sack.

"Ho, ho," croaked the familiar voice. "You were easily lured, little master."

"The birds will befriend me," thought the boy, and he settled quietly into the sack.

Now the birds had kept watch. They again spied the



Witch stumbling along the road from the direction of the farmstead with her sack. The first bird to spy her was quick to give the alarm to his companions. The birds spied the Witch, but the Witch had spied them too.

“I shall not wait to be tempted by their sweet wine,” said she to herself, and though the birds circled round, flapped their wings in her face, and pecked her, she went on and on with her heavy load and never rested by the way, but got home in double-quick time.

Arriving at her house she dumped the sack on the floor and called to her daughter.

“Hurry up, my fat wench,” said she. “Get the water to boil, and when it is boiling drop the sack into it as it is. I have a tasty morsel inside. Do as I bid you while I hurry off to invite your uncle to sup with us.”

The Witch’s daughter filled up the pot with water as soon as her mother had gone, but she thought to herself, “No matter what my old mother tells me I shall open the sack to assure myself she hasn’t brought home a bag of stones again.” She untied the sack, and the Farmer’s son scrambled out.

“What are you going to do with me, you ragged wench?” said the boy. “If you put me into the hot water you will spoil my nice clothes. You see I have my best cloak

on and my new boots. You cannot eat my clothes, so you had better give me your old things and dress yourself in these.”

The Witch's daughter thought it a sensible idea. The boy took off his cloak and boots and gave them to the Witch's daughter. While she stooped to get into the boots he gave her a push and sent her head first into the pot. He then clapped on the lid and ran out of the house.

The Ogre Uncle and the Witch returned shortly. The Witch, seeing the empty sack lying on the floor, called to her daughter. She muttered angrily at the girl's disobedience and lifted up the lid of the pot.

“Those are your daughter's feet,” cried the Ogre Uncle, peering into the pot. It is a well known fact that if witches and ogres eat of their own kind the flesh becomes poison and they die. The Ogre Uncle was most annoyed.

“Ah,” said he, “you enveigled me here to give me a poisoned supper,” and taking up a burning brand from the fire he cracked the Witch's skull with it. So that was her end!

As for the Farmer's son he got home safely. Nobody could make him tell where he had been. He got a sound whipping for losing his best clothes, but he put up with that, and he doesn't crave for jeweled apples any more.

The apple tree still bears apples in the autumn time, but

since the Witch no longer haunts it, it bears no more apples than any ordinary apple tree. What apples there are, are always left with real good will for the Farmer's feathered friends.



